

Idaho Fish and Game Commission

Special Meeting - March 17-18, 2010

Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 S. Walnut, Boise, Idaho

Note: Times on the agenda are approximate and subject to change.

MARCH 17

- 1:00 p.m.** Presentations by the Fish Research Group - Nampa Research, 1414 E. Locust Ln., Nampa, ID
- 7:00 p.m.** **Public Hearing** — Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 S. Walnut, Boise, Idaho

MARCH 18

- 8:00 a.m.** 1. Opening Comments — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:05 a.m.** 2. Agenda Changes — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:10 a.m.** 3. Review of Public Comment — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:25 a.m.** 4. Director's Report — Cal Groen, Director
- 8:45 a.m.** 5. Commission Reports — Commissioners
- 9:40 a.m.** 6. Consent Calendar (Action Requested by Department)

a. Financial Report

- 9:45 a.m.** 7. [Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report](#) — Gayle Valentine, Executive Director
- 9:55 a.m.** 8. [Auction Tag Guidelines](#) — Jeff Gould, Chief, Wildlife Bureau

10:10 A.M. — BREAK

- 10:30 a.m.** 9. [Reservists Award](#) — Mary Dudley, Volunteer Coordinator
- 10:35 a.m.** 10. [Wolf Season Preliminary Report](#) — Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager
- 11:05 a.m.** 11. [Season Setting: Big Game Species](#) (Action Requested by Department) — Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager

12:00 — LUNCH

- 1:00 p.m.** 12. [Surrogator Project Information](#) — Sal Palazzolo, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 1:20 p.m.** 13. [LQ Drain Land Acquisition](#) & [Camas Creek Donation](#) (Action Requested by Department) — Gregg Servheen, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 1:40 p.m.** 14. [Legislative Update](#) — Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy
- 2:00 p.m.** 15. [Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Overview](#) — Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy
- 2:35 p.m.** 16. [Season Setting: Spring Season Chinook Salmon Fisheries](#) (Action Requested by Department) — Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries Bureau

2:55 P.M. — BREAK

- 3:15 p.m.** 17. [Hunter Education Instructor's Award](#) — Dan Papp, Regional Wildlife Educator
- 3:35 p.m.** 18. [Hunter Education 2009 State Instructor of the Year Presentation](#) —

Clayton Nielson, Hunter Ed Technician

- 3:40 p.m.** 19. [Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director's Annual Report to the Commission](#) — Cal Groen, Director
- 4:00 p.m.** 20. Increase Spring Season Steelhead Limit in the Salmon River (Action Requested by Department) — Ed Schriever, Chief, Fisheries Bureau
- 4:10 p.m.** 21. Executive Session I.C. 67-2345(1) (f) (c)

Individuals with disabilities may request meeting accommodations by contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director's office at (208) 334-5159 or through the Idaho Relay Service at 1-800-377-2529 (TDD).

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No: 7

Agenda Item: Idaho Fish & Wildlife Foundation
Report

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Gayle Valentine

Background: Commission has requested updates about the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation activities.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: None

Public Involvement Process: None

Staff Recommendation: Present update as follows.

Justification: Requested by Commission

1. The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Foundation) 2010 online trip auction began February 19 and ended February 28. Over 40 trips were auctioned with a lot of bidding activity. Preliminary results of the auction will be presented.
2. The Foundation's project funding applications were due March 12, 2010. As of mid-February we have received five applications with approximately seven more applications expected by the deadline. The IFWF Board will vote on proposals at their April 2010 board meeting.
3. The IFWF Board met by teleconference call on February 5, 2010. The Board approved renewal of our Foundation insurance policy and discussions were held concerning Springfield Hatchery.
4. The next IFWF Board meeting will be held in Lewiston on April 23, 24 and 25, 2010. Agenda includes election of officers and board member term renewals, project funding applications, committee updates and an IDFG Clearwater regional report.
5. An Idaho Department of Fish and Game fisheries project to help enhance/restore aquatic functions on two tributaries of the Upper Blackfoot River (Lanes and Diamond Creeks) has been approved by the US Army Corps of Engineers per the Upper Blackfoot River Basin Trust Fund Agreement established with the Foundation, IDFG, Astaris and USACE in May 2001. A \$6,000 check was mailed to the Bear Lake Grazing Company the end of January 2010. Project lead is Dave Teuscher, IDFG Fish Biologist in the southeast regional office.
6. The announcement for the Foundation Development Coordinator job with Fish and Game was released by Division of Human Resources on February 17, 2010. The application closed on March 2, 2010.

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No: 8

Agenda Item: Auction Tag Guidelines

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Jeff Gould

Background:

Following the July 2009 Commission meeting, Bureau of Wildlife staff was directed, with input from Administrative staff, to develop guidelines for a wildlife auction and lottery tag bid process. In response, agency staff has developed a fair and open qualification and selection process that will help in selecting which conservation groups receive special wildlife tags to sell through lottery or auction. The need for such a process came to the forefront in 2009 when the Commission considered competing proposals from 2 groups interested in special bighorn sheep tags and the Director considered proposals from 6 groups interested in special wolf tags.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

The Commission is authorized under IC 36-408 to release 2 special bighorn sheep tags and up to 10 special wolf tags each year for auction or lottery. Selection of tag recipients is assigned to the Commission for bighorn sheep tags and to the Director for wolf tags. This qualification and selection process ensures that these special tags are awarded in a credible and independent fashion. The qualification process also helps conservation groups submit competitive bids in a timely manner.

Public Involvement Process:

We received input from at least 6 conservation groups throughout the year.

Justification:

Pre-certification allows organizations to establish eligibility and qualifications, and allows the Department to address incomplete or unclear applications well ahead of award deadlines. Providing all interested parties sufficient information up front assures that coveted special tags are fairly and reasonably allocated. This has become increasingly important as more tags are issued and additional groups are interested in these opportunities.

Action Requested:

This is a review of the qualification and selection process

Staff Recommendations:

Initiate the RFP process for bighorn sheep special tags which will be released during the July Commission meeting

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No: 9

Agenda Item: Idaho Wildlife Reservist Award 2010
For Grant Jemmett

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Mary Dudley

Background: Mr. Jemmett retired at age 69 from a life of farming and ranching, Grant Jemmett began volunteering with the IDFG – that was twenty years ago! Grant has served as an exemplary Idaho Wildlife Reservist, contributing over 3,200 hours and driving more than 21,100 miles in his personal vehicles on projects benefitting Idaho’s wildlife. (see letter for more information.)

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Public Involvement Process:

Staff Recommendation:

Justification: Recognition for exemplary volunteer service.

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No: 10

Agenda Item: Wolf Hunting Season Update

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Game Manager

Background:

Wolf harvest seasons have closed in 6 wolf management zones when harvest limits were met: Upper Snake zone (November 2), McCall-Weiser zone (November 9), Dworshak-Elk City zone (November 17), Palouse-Hells Canyon zone (December 18), Southern Mountains zone (December 31), and the Middle Fork zone (January 31). All 6 remaining zones are open until March 31, 2010 or until harvest limits for individual zones are met, whichever comes first.

From Sep. 1, 2009 through Feb. 25, 2010, 160 wolves were taken. Hunters harvested 25 wolves in Sep, 64 in Oct., 30 in Nov., 22 in Dec., 7 in January, and 12 in Feb (as of 2/25).

Harvest in 2 zones (Lolo and Selway) is currently less than 50% of harvest limit. Hunter harvest under current season framework is least effective in remote, rugged, or heavily forested terrain.

Despite the take of 135 wolves by hunters during 2009 and aggressive response to livestock depredations, the year-end minimum wolf population estimate was essentially unchanged from year-end 2008.

The Department sold 26,428 wolf tags (25,744 resident, 684 nonresident) in 2009.

The Commission will be provided summary harvest statistics , an updated Idaho wolf activity map, and copy of the 2009 annual report at the commission meeting.

Policy issues:

Information only.

Public Involvement Process:

Information only.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, clarifications, or recommendations from the public.

Action Requested:

None. This item is provided for Commissioner information only.

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. 11

Agenda Item: Season Setting: Big Game Species
(Action)

Approved by: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Game Manager

Background:

Staff will present deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, and mountain lion season recommendations for 2010/2011. A summary of recommended changes include:

DEER

- Consider moving traditional Oct. 10 hunt opening dates to Saturday, Oct. 9 for the 2010 season.
- Provide special opportunity for Sr. and disabled hunters and increase youth opportunity.
- Adjust controlled hunt permit levels in response to population changes and desired hunt quality, and to address chronic depredation concerns.

ELK

- Consider moving traditional Oct. 10 hunt opening dates to Saturday, Oct. 9 for the 2010 season.
- Allow hunters age 12 -17 who purchase a general season elk zone tag to participate in both A and B tag seasons.
- Reduce antlerless harvest in north Idaho to help rebuild populations.
- Further reduce caps on Sawtooth Zone A & B tags, reduce existing caps on Lolo B tags, implement cap on Lolo Zone and Smoky Mountain Zone A tags, evaluate options to cap on Diamond Creek 'A' tags implemented in 2009, implement cap on Salmon Zone B-tags.
- Adjust controlled hunt permit levels in response to population changes, and to address chronic depredation concerns.

PRONGHORN

- Adjust unlimited controlled archery hunts for pronghorn that were implemented in 2009 to reduce hunter congestion concerns, achieve management objectives, and provide an equitable distribution of participation and harvest among user groups.

BLACK BEAR

- No changes proposed.

MOUNTAIN LION

- Consider re-implementing female quota in Southeast region units to reduce change of overharvest.

Policy issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104 authorizes the Commission to establish rules for the taking of wildlife consistent with state policy. Species management plans provide Commission direction for population and harvest management.

Public Involvement Process:

The recommendations have resulted from year-round public involvement, population and harvest monitoring, and have been scoped internally and with the public through regional meetings and the website.

Staff Recommendations:

Preliminary recommendations are attached. Final Department recommendations, after considering public input, will be provided during the presentation. Staff recommends Landowner Appreciation Program hunts and permit levels be consistent with, and proportionate to, Commission adopted changes in regular controlled hunts and permit levels.

Justification:

Commission action required to adopt 2010-2011 hunting seasons for mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, and mountain lion.

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: Surrogator® Evaluation Project

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sal Palazzolo

Background:

This presentation is intended to outline the concepts of a 2010 Pheasant Surrogator® Evaluation Program. Sportsmen groups, landowners, conservation organizations and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game will collaborate to implement and evaluate the feasibility and success of raising pheasant chicks in Surrogators® as a tool to improve hunting opportunities.

The Evaluation is designed to enable sportsmen groups and landowners that desire to utilize Surrogators®, to employ biological and technical expertise of the Department and to increase dialogue between sportsmen, landowners, and the Department. The hope would also be to encourage and motivate landowners to improve habitat and provide sportsmen with access and hunting opportunity.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

This project is designed to help meet Department policies of maintaining game populations to meet demand for hunting.

Public Involvement Process:

Informational presentation.

Justification:

Information requested by the Commission.

Action Requested:

N/A

Staff Recommendation:

N/A

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: Region 4 – Camas Creek Donation

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Gregg Servheen and Steve Elam

Background:

This 6-acre property borders Camas Creek in the Magic Valley region. It is currently being used by the public for ingress and egress for non-motorized craft on Camas Creek for the purpose of fishing, observing wildlife, hunting, and kayaking. The property is being donated by a long-time resident of Camas Prairie, Hugh Koonce. This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in January 2010. FILT is not applicable because of the less than 10-acre size. O&M costs are estimated at \$500 annually.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

County commissioners will be notified and asked for their input.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends proceeding with the acquisition.

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: Region 4 – LQ Drain Addition

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Gregg Servheen and Steve Elam

Background:

This acquisition would add 13 acres of private agricultural land to the existing 17.1-acre LQ Drain Wildlife Habitat Area in the Magic Valley region. IDFG is cooperating with DEQ, Twin Falls Canal Company, Pheasants Forever, and Southern Idaho Land Trust on the acquisition. IDFG will hold title, the same as the initial LQ drain purchase. The LQ drain is a cooperative effort to provide additional wildlife habitat and also improve water quality on irrigation water before re-entering the Snake River. This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in January 2010.

Total cost is @ \$52,000 and the IDFG Portion is \$15,000 of HB 530 funds.

FILT is estimated at \$63 annually. O&M costs are estimated at \$2,000 annually.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

County commissioners will be notified and asked for their input.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends proceeding with the acquisition.

Meeting Date: March 18

Agenda Item No. 14

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background:

Staff will update the Commission about legislative activity since the last Commission legislative call and provide preliminary assessment of Department action needed to implement new legislation.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Informational.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Staff Recommendation:

Continue implementation of the legislative process.

Justification:

Legislative process requested by the Commission.

Meeting Date: March 18

Agenda Item No. 15

Agenda Item: Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Overview

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background: Idaho is facing development of landscape-scale infrastructure particularly for energy generation and transmission. This is cumulative to continuing development for other land uses. Staff anticipates significant involvement forthcoming over the next two years pursuant to these large projects, needing Department evaluation and mitigation recommendations to the State and permitting agencies. A review of the Department's approach to mitigation is timely to assess whether current policy and principles sufficiently support the Department's mission described in Idaho Code 36-103 and fulfills expectations described in our strategic plan, *The Compass*, and other species management plans.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: The Commission establishes Department policy and gives policy guidance to the Department.

Public Involvement Process: None, informational.

Staff Recommendation: Review and assess the current mitigation framework to ensure a sound foundation for the Department to fulfill statutory obligations and expectations for appropriate mitigation recommendations for adverse effects of development to wildlife, habitat, and wildlife-related activities.

Justification: Upcoming EIS processes support policy review and assessment at this time to support policy expectations and recommendations.

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. 16

Agenda Item: Season Setting, Spring Season Chinook
Salmon Fisheries

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Peter Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns the setting of Chinook salmon fishing seasons targeting adult anadromous Chinook salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, South Fork Clearwater River and Lochsa River. Chinook salmon fisheries were conducted on these waters in 1997 and 2000 through 2009. For all proposed fishing areas, staff is forecasting that a sufficient number of hatchery salmon will return to the Snake River in 2010 to allow sport fisheries that target the non-tribal harvestable share when hatchery production and brood stock targets are considered.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to make a rule or proclamation establishing seasons and methods for the taking of fish. Fishing Rules are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

Public Involvement Process:

The public involvement process was on-going at the time this gold sheet was prepared. Findings from the Public Involvement Process will be reported to the Commission during their meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed 2010 fishing seasons for Chinook salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, South Fork Clearwater River and Lochsa River.

NOTE: At the time of preparation of this gold sheet, Regional and Bureau fisheries staffs were in the process of updating salmon return forecasts and scoping fishery options. The specific fishery proposals were not completed are not included here but will be delivered to the Commission during the week prior to the March Commission meeting.

Justification:

Title 36 of Idaho State Code gives the Commission the authority to set rules to preserve, protect, or manage fish and wildlife in Idaho. The proposed fisheries are to address biological issues, mitigation hatchery programs and angler desires.

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. 17

Agenda Item: 17

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Colleen Cade

Background: Presentation of the “Continuing the Heritage” Award. Four recipients of the Idaho Hunter and Bowhunter education programs reached the 3500 pt level in the program.

**Randy Irish
Rocky Widner
Mark Pinney
Jay Stark**

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Public Involvement Process:

Staff Recommendation:

Justification:

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. _____

Agenda Item: 18

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Colleen Cade

Background: Presentation of Idaho Hunter's Education 2009 State Instructor of the Year. This year's recipient is Dell Wuebbenhorst, from the Magic Valley Region.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Public Involvement Process:

Staff Recommendation:

Justification:

Meeting Date: March 18, 2010

Agenda Item No. 19

**Agenda Item: IDFG Director's Annual Report to
the Commission**

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by:

**Background: Director Groen will present a report to the Commission showing
Department financial summaries for FY09 and an overview of major
Department programs.**

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues: N/A

Public Involvement Process: N/A

Staff Recommendation: N/A

Justification: N/A