

Idaho Fish and Game Commission
March 21-22, 2012
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Trophy Room
600 South Walnut
Boise, Idaho

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

March 21

7:00 pm Public Hearing

March 22

- 8:00 am 1. Opening Comments
 -- Tony McDermott, Commission Chairman
- 8:05 am 2. Agenda Changes
 -- Chairman McDermott
- 8:15 am 3. Review of Public Comment
 -- Chairman McDermott
- 8:30 am 4. Consent Calendar (**Action Requested by Department**)
 a. Financial Report
- 8:35 am 5. Season Setting: Spring Season Chinook Salmon Fisheries
 (**Action Requested by Department**)
 -- Ed Schriever, Fisheries Chief
- 8:55 am 6. Results of 2011 Angler Opinion Survey
 --Jeff Dillon, State Fisheries Manager
- 9:10 am 7. Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Update
 --Ann Dehner, Executive Director
- 9:20 am 8. Legislative Update
 --Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director
- 9:50 am 9. Land Acquisitions (**Action Requested by Department**)
 -- Gregg Servheen, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 10:00 am BREAK
- 10:20 am 10. Salvage Rule Implementation
 -- Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director
- 10:30 am 11. Season Setting: Big Game
 (**Action Requested by Department**)
 --Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager

- 12:00 LUNCH Catered
- 1:00 pm 12. Hunter Education Instructor Award
--Don Sturtevant, Region 3 Wildlife Educator
- 1:05 pm 13. Award Presentation to Landowner
--Director Moore
- 1:10 pm 14. State of Idaho Gas Leases on the Payette River Report
-- Tom Hemker, Wildlife Habitat Program Manager
--Rebecca Rutan, Idaho Department of Lands
- 1:30 pm 15. LAP Program Update
-- Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director
- 2:00 pm 16. Sage-grouse Task Force Report
-- Director Moore
- 2:15 pm 17. Winter Feeding / Depredation Program Update
--Jeff Gould, Wildlife Chief
- 2:45 pm 18. Briefing on Nonbiological Rule Changes
--Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager
- 3:15 pm BREAK
- 3:30 pm 19. Update on Elk Management Plan
--Craig White, Wildlife Staff Biologist
- 3:45 pm 20. Director's Report
--Director Moore
- 4:00 pm 21. Commission Reports
--Commissioners
- 4:45 pm 22. Executive Session I.C. 67-2345(1) (c) (f)

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 4a

Agenda Item: Financial Report

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jeff Seward, Acting Chief, Bureau of Administration

Background:

Update the Commission on the Financial Status of the Department

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

None

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 5

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 2011. For all proposed fishing areas, staff is forecasting that a sufficient number of hatchery salmon will return to the Snake River in 2012 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 2012 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 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 6

Agenda Item: Results of 2011 Angler Opinion Survey

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: State Fishery Manager, Jeff Dillon

Background:

The Fisheries Bureau conducts a statewide angler opinion survey every five to six years to assess angler preferences and satisfaction with Department fisheries programs, and to gauge public support for changes in management direction. This information contributes to updating the Statewide Fisheries Management Plan for 2013-2018. The Plan provides a broad framework for implementing ongoing conservation and sportfish management actions. Additionally, the survey includes questions on specific management issues which may develop into rule change proposals and be carried through the rulemaking process.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

N/A

Public Involvement Process:

The angler opinion survey is one of several public inputs venues provided as Fisheries Bureau staff revise the Statewide Fish Management Plan and develop new fishing rule proposals. Survey emphasis was on a random mail sampling, with 16,000 names drawn from the license database. Additional non-random input was received by posting an identical survey on the Department website and announcing the survey in two statewide press releases. Over 5,600 responses were gathered with the random mail survey, and another 1,200 responses from the non-random web survey. Other input on the Fish Management Plan and 2013-2014 fishing rules is being gathered at public scoping meetings in each region around the state.

Staff Recommendation:

N/A – informational only

Justification:

N/A – informational only

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 7

Agenda Item: Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report

Bureau Chief Approval:

Prepared by: Ann Dehner

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 Foundation completed the sale and transfer of title to the Spirit Lake property in northern Idaho.
2. The Foundation has launched its new Website www.IFWF.org. A new feature of the site is that the public can make online donations for general support or to support specific projects.
3. As part of its marketing of the Wildlife license plates, the Foundation is the title sponsor of the upcoming "Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom" that will be held at the Morrison Center on the campus of Boise State University on April 28. There are special ticket prices on a limited basis for employees of the Department of Fish and Game.
4. The Foundation will hold its annual meeting in Boise on April 28, 2012.
5. The Foundation continues to work internally to clarify its service capabilities and relationship with the Department. This review includes looking at the 2006 MOU between the Foundation, Department and the Commission and the Foundation's capacities for greater self-sufficiency, fundraising, and other avenues that further define its partnership with IDFG and the Commission. MOU to be addressed at the Board's April meeting.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 8

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:

Report of legislative public involvement during the session is included in the update.

Staff Recommendation:

Continue implementation of the legislative process as needed.

Justification:

Legislative process requested by the Commission.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 9

Agenda Item: Ginter Acquisition (Pack River)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Katherine Cousins and Gregg Servheen

Background:

This is a proposal to acquire 26.24 acres adjacent to the Rapid Lightning Creek Habitat Segment of the Pend Oreille Wildlife Management Area. The subject property is located in Bonner County, east of the Pack River and approximately 10 miles north of Highway 200 where the Rapid Lightning road intersects Ginter Lane. Access is provided to the Department and the public via an easement roadway that lies along the eastern border of the subject property. This access easement has been challenged in the past and so acquisition of the property would secure the access.

Most of the property has been hayed and grazed in the past and a small portion of wetland habitat lies to the south of the parcel. Protection of this parcel would add a small portion of wetland to the Rapid Lightning Creek parcel and would also provide a protective buffer to the wetlands.

There is also a house and barn on the property. The house is on a solid foundation and would be salvaged prior to being demolished. The barn would also be dismantled and salvaged, with the funds from the salvage paying for the demolition of the structures and general clean-up of the home site.

The property was appraised at \$325,000. IDFG pays a fee in lieu of taxes (FILT) for all fee-title properties. The FILT for properties acquired in Bonner County is estimated at approximately \$3.66 per acre, for a total of approximately \$96.00 for the subject property.

This was a proposal presented to the Commission during Executive Session on January 27, 2011.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission and Department land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

The public is supportive of Department ownership and management on the Pend Oreille WMA. County commissioners will be contacted and have been supportive of past acquisitions. The public will be informed and contacted for their input regarding management of the property.

Justification:

Acquisition of this parcel would provide partial habitat mitigation for the construction and operation of Albeni Falls Dam and abides by IDFG goals outlined in the Albeni Falls Wildlife Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Plan. Additionally, this property fulfills Department land acquisition objectives by providing wetlands for waterfowl production and public access and hunting opportunities.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends proceeding with the acquisition.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 9

Agenda Item: Region 1 – James Conservation
Easement

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Katherine Cousins and Gregg Servheen

Background:

The Department would hold a 17.7 acre conservation easement fronting the North Fork of the Coeur d’Alene River for the purpose of protecting a portion of a cold water spring that provides cold water refuge to westslope cutthroat trout. The Avista Corporation will acquire the conservation easement as partial mitigation for their Post Falls dam. The conservation easement was appraised at a value of \$161,000. The terms of the easement will allow the James family to continue to live and enjoy their property while providing permanent protection of the wildlife habitat surrounding the cold water spring. Protection of the property may also raise awareness among other streamside landowners of the benefits and opportunities associated with conservation easements.

The property currently consists of a mixture of large canopy riparian vegetation (e.g., cottonwood, cedar and aspen) and riparian shrub-scrub (e.g., willow, dogwood, and alder). There is a home and two outbuildings located on the property. The easement allows the James family to continue to live and enjoy their property, but the vegetation and area around the cold water spring cannot be altered. The easement restricts subdivision and development of the property. Public access is not part of the easement, but the owners have agreed to allow educational tours of the easement area. The landowner remains responsible for the property taxes. Avista will hold a covenant for access and diligence.

This was a proposal presented to the Commission during Executive Session on May 20, 2010.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission and Department land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

The public is supportive of Department ownership and management on the Coeur d’Alene River WMA. County commissioners will be notified and have been supportive of past acquisitions. The public will be informed and contacted for their input regarding management of the property.

Justification:

Acquisition of this parcel would provide partial fish and wildlife mitigation for the construction and operation of the Post Falls Dam. Additionally, this property protects habitat for native trout in the Coeur d’Alene River drainage fulfilling a guiding principle in the 2007-2012 Fisheries Management Plan which identifies the following program: Promote lessons learned from cutthroat trout research in the Coeur d’Alene River to improve habitat critical to cutthroat trout survival.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends proceeding with the acquisition.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: Salvage Rule Implementation

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background: The Commission adopted a proposed rule in July, 2011 to provide for salvage and sale of certain wildlife killed by accidental motor-vehicle collision. The rule requires development of verbal notification and written report protocols. Staff has also been investigating electronic reporting.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: This is an operational procedure to effectively and efficiently implement Commission policy.

Public Involvement Process: Occurred during rule development.

Staff Recommendation: Provide guidance about whether protocol meets Commission intent.

Justification: A report protocol is necessary to implement the rule per Commission intent.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 11

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

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Game Manager

Background:

Staff will present deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, mountain lion, and gray wolf season recommendations for 2012/2013. A summary of recommended changes include:

DEER

- Expand muzzleloader opportunity in Panhandle 10 days to return to normal seasons.
- Adjust extra antlerless controlled hunt permits in Clearwater Region.
- Adjust antlerless hunt tag numbers in northern portion of Southwest Region.
- Add new deer hunt to Deer Flat NWR to address depredations on neighboring private land and convert antlerless youth hunt in Units 40/41 to youth extra-antlerless controlled hunt.
- Restructure antlerless hunts in Smoky-Bennett PMU and move rotating muzzleloader hunt in Magic Valley Region Units 47, 54, 55, and eastern half of unit 45.
- Reflect reductions made to controlled hunt tags in Upper Snake last May.
- Convert Unit 36A unlimited controlled buck hunt to 120 tags; add Unit 29 to CH Area 37 muzzleloader hunt.

ELK

- Eliminate general season antlerless elk hunts in the Panhandle. Create separate controlled either-sex hunts in Units 1, 2, 3, and 5.
- Reduce antlerless controlled hunt tags in McCall zone.
- Increase antlerless elk tags in Owyhee CH Area 40.
- Restructure Landowner Permission Hunts and antlerless hunts in Units 45, 49, 52A, 56, and 68 to address depredation concerns; convert Landowner Permission Hunts to Extra tag hunts.
- Reduce antlerless opportunity in Teton zone by shortening A-tag season.
- Create 3 new controlled hunts with 20 permits each to address depredation concerns in Unit 36B.

PRONGHORN

- Increase opportunity in Units 45 and 52.
- Convert Landowner Permission hunts to Extra tag hunts.
- Separate out Unit 68 from existing archery either-sex pronghorn hunts and create new unlimited controlled hunt.

BLACK BEAR

- Extend Unit 6 spring season to June 30.
- Extend spring season in Units 23, 24, and 25 by one week to close June 7.
- Shorten spring season in Units 29, 30, 30A, 36A, 37, and 37A by 2 weeks to close on June 15.

MOUNTAIN LION

- Increase season by 60 days in Unit 6 and 44 days in Units 7 and 9.

GRAY WOLF

- Incorporate wolf seasons into big game regulations booklet.
- Increase bag limit for hunting and trapping in Panhandle and Clearwater region wolf zones.
- Extend season on private land in Panhandle zone.
- Add trapping season in Units 19A and 25.
- Increase harvest limit in Southern Mountain zone from 25 to 30.
- Increase season length in Beaverhead and Island Park zones to close on January 31.

Statutory Authority and/or 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.

Justification:

Commission action required to adopt 2012-2013 hunting seasons for mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, pronghorn, black bears, mountain lions, and gray wolves.

Staff Recommendation:

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.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: 12

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Colleen Cade (presentation given by Don Sturtevant)

Background: “The Continuing the Heritage” Award is presented to Volunteer Instructor, Steve Masters, Nampa, Idaho for reaching the 3500 point level in the Idaho Hunter Education Program. He was certified in September 2005.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Public Involvement Process:

Staff Recommendation:

Justification:

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 14

Agenda Item: State of Idaho Gas Leases on the
Payette River

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Tom Hemker

Background:

The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) has held several auctions to lease State land for drilling for natural gas and potential well development. There will be an auction of State land under the Payette River between Black Canyon Dam and the Snake River in 2012. An informational presentation by staff and IDL will outline the leasing process and stipulations that would be included in these leases.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission holds mineral rights associated with land along the Payette River. These mineral rights could be auctioned during the 2012 IDL auction. Commission direction on this issue is requested by the May Commission meeting.

Public Involvement Process:

Informational.

Staff Recommendation:

Informational.

Justification:

Informational.

Meeting Date: March 22

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: LAP Program Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background: During the 2012 Legislative session, there have been legislative bills and a Commission rule docket potentially modifying the current LAP program under discussion. Staff will update the Commission about the possible interaction of legislative bills with the rule docket and discuss outcomes.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: Understanding of either congruence or conflict between potential new statute and rule is necessary for further Commission action if any new rules are required.

Public Involvement Process: Will occur during any new rule development.

Staff Recommendation: Provide guidance about any new rules or rescission of rules.

Justification: Understanding of potential interplay between legislation and rules for the LAP program necessary for appropriate policy implementation.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 17

Agenda Item: Winter Feeding/Depredation Program
Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Brad Compton for Jeff Gould

Background:

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has periodically provided supplemental feed to deer and elk during emergency winter conditions dating back to the early 1940s. In 1984, the Idaho Legislature adopted legislation creating a dedicated funding source for winter feeding, winter range rehabilitation, and depredation prevention efforts for deer, elk, and pronghorn. Idaho Fish and Game Commission policy acknowledges wildlife populations should be maintained consistent with available habitat, but recognizes certain conditions may occur when emergency supplemental feeding is appropriate. Commission policy authorizes the Department to provide emergency supplemental feed to prevent private property damage, for public safety, or to prevent excessive mortality.

Idaho State Department of Agriculture rules prohibit the public feeding of big game animals in portions of eastern Idaho to manage brucellosis.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Two statutes and Commission policy guide implementation of emergency winter feeding for big game in Idaho. Idaho Code §36-111 (Appendix A) establishes a dedicated fund source for emergency winter feeding, winter range rehabilitation, and depredation prevention. Idaho Code §36-123 (Appendix B) establishes regional winter feeding advisory committees. Idaho Fish and Game Commission policy (Appendix C) provides guidance for implementing emergency winter feeding.

IDAPA 02.04.25 (<http://adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/02/0425.pdf>) prescribe public restrictions for feeding of big game animals in eastern Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

Regional Winter Feeding Advisory Committees are established in regions where winter feeding normally occurs; including Southwest, Magic Valley, Southeast, Upper Snake, and Salmon. These committees provide input to the Department throughout winter regarding conditions and winter feeding needs. The committees were also instrumental in developing local area criteria defining when emergency conditions exist.

Justification:

Informational.

Staff Recommendation:

Informational.

Appendix A
TITLE 36
FISH AND GAME
CHAPTER 1

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

36-111. Fish and game set-aside account. (1) There is hereby established the fish and game set-aside account in the dedicated fund. The account shall have paid into it moneys as follows:

Subsections (a), (b), (d), and (e) excluded for brevity.

(c) One dollar and fifty cents (\$1.50) from each antelope, elk and deer tag sold as provided in section [36-409](#), Idaho Code. Not less than seventy-five cents (75¢) of each one dollar and fifty cents (\$1.50) collected shall be placed in a separate account to be designated as a feeding account. Moneys in this account shall be used exclusively for the purposes of winter feeding of and rehabilitation of winter range for antelope, elk and deer. The balance of moneys realized from this source may be used for the control of depredation of private property by antelope, elk and deer and control of predators affecting antelope, elk and deer. Moneys in the feeding account shall not be used for any purpose other than winter feeding as herein specified until the total funds in the account, including any interest earnings thereon, equal or exceed four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000). Moneys in the feeding account may not be expended except upon the declaration of a feeding emergency by the director of the department of fish and game. Such emergency need not exist on a statewide basis but can be declared with respect to one (1) or more regions of the state. The department shall by rule establish the criteria for a feeding emergency.

Appendix B
TITLE 36
FISH AND GAME
CHAPTER 1
FISH AND GAME COMMISSION

36-123. Winter feeding advisory committees.

- (1) A winter feeding advisory committee shall be established for each district where winter feeding of antelope, elk, and deer normally occurs. Each committee shall consist of five (5) members. The members shall be appointed and removed for cause by unanimous vote of the Idaho fish and game commission. It is intended that the committees reflect the cross section of the major interest groups associated with each district. Each committee shall meet at such times as appropriate, but not less frequently than annually, on or before December 1, before the winter feeding season arrives, whichever is earlier.
- (2) The term of office of a member shall be two (2) years, except a portion of the initial appointments may be for a term of one (1) year to provide staggered terms. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the balance of the unexpired term. The committees shall serve without compensation.
- (3) Each winter feeding advisory committee established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall appoint a chairman. The chairmen of the committees shall meet at least annually to coordinate activities and promote consensus on issues of common interest among the winter feeding advisory committees. The chairmen may elect a leader from among the chairmen to call meetings and conduct and coordinate activities of the group.
- (4) The department of fish and game shall provide staff assistance and support for the committees.
- (5) The committees shall have the authority to:
 - (a) Act as an independent resource in each district to give advice and recommendations on the administration of winter feeding programs;
 - (b) Act as a liaison between the commission, the department, interest groups, and the public on winter feeding issues.

Appendix C

| | |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">POLICY NO. FW-10.00</p> |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">PAGE 1 OF 2</p> |
| <p>REVISED: April 30, 1996</p> | <p>APPROVED:</p> |
| <p>TITLE: BIG GAME FEEDING POLICY (Deer, Elk, Antelope, Moose)</p> | |
| <p>The Idaho Fish and Game Commission recognizes that the big game population should be maintained under natural conditions and by naturally available forage. Winter forage is the major limiting factor that determines the basic size of the big game populations and it must be maintained if these animals are to prosper and propagate. The Department will work with the appropriate land management agencies in an effort to maintain winter ranges in a condition suitable to meet big game management objectives, including the restoration of ranges damaged from such long-term impacts as disease, weed infestation, and/or overgrazing. These restorations could include temporary solutions for short-term impacts caused by fire and/or drought. In order to maintain these winter ranges, big game numbers must be controlled through adequate harvest. We, therefore, do not sanction any wide-spread supplemental winter feeding programs.</p> <p>Big game animals, especially elk, when concentrated by supplemental feeding, are very susceptible to infectious disease, which can be transmitted to livestock and to other big game animals. Every effort should be made to lessen this threat.</p> <p>We are aware that big game harvests and weather will vary from year to year throughout the state. In most years, snow depths, temperatures, and animal body condition do not create adverse conditions for wintering animals. However, there are times when unusual weather patterns may create critical periods of stress when winter forage becomes limited, unavailable, or animals are forced into areas involving public safety. We recognize that we cannot manage game populations for these extreme weather conditions--nor should we.</p> <p>The Department is authorized to feed big game only if the following conditions exist:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To prevent damage to private property or for public safety when other methods of preventing damage and providing safety measures are determined to be impractical, inappropriate, or ineffective and the amount of damage or cost of protection is expected to exceed the cost of feeding. 2. To prevent the excessive mortality of big game populations in drainages that would affect the recovery of the herd. Some mortality should be expected, especially from the young and old segments of the population. | |

It is the responsibility of all field personnel to advise the regional supervisor of weather, animal conditions and numbers, and public input on situations that meet the feeding criteria outlined above. If the regional supervisor, in consultation with the regional winter feeding advisory committee, determines that the criteria has been met and that an emergency exists, he will inform the Bureau of Wildlife of his decision and the Bureau of Wildlife will notify the Directors Office, Bureau of Enforcement, and the Bureau of Information and Education. The regional big game operational plan will then be implemented.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 18

Agenda Item: Nonbiological Rules Briefing for game animals

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael

Background:

Annually or biennially, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission considers proposed changes for two types of hunting rules, biological and nonbiological. Biological rules are published annually (i.e. Big Game, Waterfowl) or biennially (e.g. Moose, Bighorn Sheep, and Mountain Goat; Upland Game) and include seasons, limits, size, sex, and harvestable species. Nonbiological rules include all other rules adopted by the Commission. Examples of nonbiological rules include methods of take, tagging requirements, evidence-of-sex requirements, and controlled hunt eligibility requirements. Nonbiological rules are officially published in the Idaho Administrative Code (<http://adm.idaho.gov/adminrules/agyindex.htm>) and included in hunting regulation brochures.

Historically, nonbiological rule changes were adopted by the Commission throughout the year. To accommodate requirements of the Idaho Administrative Procedures Act, the Commission now considers nonbiological rule changes during late spring through summer. The Department will be proposing a number of changes to big game and upland game nonbiological rules at the July 2011 Commission meeting.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Idaho Code 36-104 grants authority to the Commission to promulgate biological and nonbiological rules. Idaho Code 67-52 (Idaho Administrative Procedure Act) governs the process for considering, adopting, and implementing nonbiological rules.

Public Involvement Process:

Proposed rules were scoped via the Department website, at regional meetings, and/or with affected stakeholder groups. In addition, proposed Landowner Appreciation Program changes were scoped with registered landowners via a direct mailing.

Justification:

Commission action is required to modify Administrative Rules. Staff will present a preliminary list of potential big game and upland game rule changes to be scoped with the public, and considered by the Commission in July. Items currently identified for consideration include:

- a. Allow use of rimfire rifle, rimfire handgun, or muzzle-loading handgun to kill a gray wolf in a trap or snare.
- b. Consider allowing use of legally salvaged road kill as bait for trapping wolves.
- c. Clarify that wolves may be dispatched in a trap or snare outside of big game hunting hours.
- d. Consider allowing use of big game found dead of natural causes to be used to trap furbearers, unprotected nongame, and predatory wildlife. Currently carcasses are allowed for trapping wolves, but not for furbearers. Furbearers caught incidental to wolf trapping must be surrendered.
- e. Consider allowing use of bait for taking wolves. Currently wolves may be taken incidental to bear baiting at permitted bait site, but may not be baited specifically.
- f. Create a mentored hunting authorization. This authorization would allow any person who has not yet received hunter education certification or acquired a

hunting license to receive special authorization to hunt while accompanied by a mentor.

- g. For capped elk zones, allow the release of unsold nonresident tags to residents after the resident quota has been sold out.
- h. Consider making online black bear/grizzly bear ID course mandatory.
- i. Modify Rules Governing Classification and Protection of Wildlife to update nomenclature of animal species names, including common names and scientific names, to be consistent with existing checklist standards or current use.
- j. Modify rule regarding trapping on WMAs to require trappers to register to trap on the WMA in advance of trapping and enable Regional Supervisors to limit the number of trappers who may trap on a WMA at any given time, and/or further modify seasons or restrictions on the WMA.

Staff Recommendation:

Final recommended rules will be developed following public input and provided to the Commission during the agenda item.

Action Requested:

This item is for information only, no action is required.

Meeting Date: March 22, 2012

Agenda Item No. 19

Agenda Item: Elk Management Plan – Survey Update **Bureau Chief Approval:** _____

Prepared by: Craig White

Background:

The current Elk Management Plan was implemented in 1999, and established management direction, strategies, and guidelines for the elk program statewide. The Department is revising the current Elk Management Plan to address current and future needs and expectations. As part of that planning process the Department is surveying current elk hunter demographics, desires, expectations, and hunting experiences.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Species management plans represent Commission policy and provide guidance to the Department on implementing management actions and developing rule recommendations. During management plan development, staff assesses constituent preferences and biological needs, and sets management direction and goals.

Public Involvement Process:

The public will be surveyed in April-June 2012, and will be provided with additional opportunities to provide input throughout the process.

Justification:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff is providing a draft copy of the survey as an update, and for review.