

Meeting Date: November 19, 2015

Agenda Item No. 5F

Agenda Item: Spalding's Catchfly and Palouse Prairie
Second RLA Grant

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Katherine Cousins and Gregg Servheen

Background:

This proposal is for the permanent protection of up to 412 acres of high-priority private grassland on the Palouse Prairie of northern Idaho through the acquisition of fee-title lands and conservation easements. Funding for this effort is provided under the Endangered Species Act, Section 6 Recovery Lands Acquisition (RLA) grants program. Preserving, protecting, and perpetuating the federally threatened plant *Silene spaldingii* (Spalding's catchfly) is the basis for the RLA grant submission and award. This is the second of such awards.

The first, submitted in 2014 and approved by the Commission in May, 2015, was granted to IDFG and its partners, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Latah Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Palouse Land Trust. The award was for \$232,425, allowing the protection of 16 acres under a conservation easement and 62-acres in fee title.

This one, the second, was submitted to complete purchase of the remaining 333 acres of conservation easements on identified high-priority grasslands. This second RLA application requested \$454,475 and was awarded in full. A total of \$240,875 in value will be donated by the landowners as match for that RLA grant for a project total of \$695,350.

All fee-title lands and conservation easements acquired under the RLA grants will be held in perpetuity by the Palouse Land Trust with IDFG given third-party right-of-enforcement to ensure compliance with Federal Aid grant requirements.

This proposal was initially presented to the Commission during Executive Session on January 21, 2015.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

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

Public Involvement Process:

Local landowners support the acquisitions. County commissioners will be contacted and have been supportive of past acquisitions.

Justification:

Acquisition of property would support the Department mission to preserve, protect and perpetuate wildlife habitat. The Department has a role in plant management such that in 2003, House Bill 67 transferred authority for plants from Idaho Parks and Recreation to IDFG.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends proceeding with the acquisition.

Action Requested:

Approval of Commission to proceed with the acquisition.

Suggested Motion: Commission adopt staff recommendations to proceed with acquisition.