



Charting the Future of Idaho's Outdoor Havens

In 1940, Idaho Fish and Game bought 423 acres about four miles south of Hagerman and with it, established the state's first wildlife management area.

Since then, Fish and Game has established 32 wildlife management areas around the state, and the Hagerman area has more than doubled in size to 912 acres since its purchase.

Hagerman, like many of the wildlife management areas, was established to provide habitat for waterfowl and upland game birds, but over the years has turned into much more.

The spring-fed ponds stay ice-free during most winters, attracting as many as 55,000 ducks and 4,000 Canada geese. Riley Creek, irrigation canals, and 16 constructed ponds provide resting, feeding and nesting areas for waterfowl. It also offers several places to fish.

The wildlife management areas around the state are available for hunting, trapping, fishing, bird watching, hiking, photography and other public enjoyment of wildlife.

The areas provide about 700,000 user days annually. Fish and Game's vision for this land is: "To provide and showcase important habitat for all wildlife and to offer high-quality, wildlife-based public recreation."

Two of the most popular activities are waterfowl and pheasant hunting. Fish and Game stocks about 16,000 pheasants on nine wildlife management areas in southern Idaho during the hunting season.

The wildlife management areas cover 314,000 acres – about 204,000 acres are owned by Fish and Game and 80,000 acres are owned by other agencies and managed through cooperative agreements. In addition, Fish and Game has 26 long-term leases with Idaho Department of Lands that cover about 30,000 acres.

They range in size from the 82,000-acre Craig Mountain WMA to the 314-acre Red River WMA. Twenty one are



The Hagerman Wildlife Management Area draws anglers of all ages.

IDFG photo

wetland-oriented and eleven are mostly upland habitats. Nine include large tracts purchased as mitigation, primarily for habitat lost to hydroelectric dams and reservoirs.

Each area is dedicated to a primary purpose. Some are managed for waterfowl, others for big game winter range. All are managed to provide hunting opportunity. Each area has its own management plan. These 10-year plans describe management direction and priorities for each wildlife management area.

Idaho Fish and Game has begun the process to chart the future of these wildlife management areas. The last time Fish and Game went through this process was over 10 years ago.

Over the past two years, Fish and Game has sought comments and opinions from the public about the uses of the area and how they are run and about these important wildlife habitats, and how their management is funded. The process generated about 3,000 comments from the public that will help guide management.

In early 2014, proposed plans for each wildlife management area will be released for public review and comment.

Inside this issue

Page 2:

Hunters and Anglers Help Buy Wildlife Legacy

Page 3:

WMA Planning Process Includes Public

Hunters and Anglers Have Helped Buy a Wildlife Habitat Legacy

The land that became the Hagerman Wildlife Management Area in 1940 was only the second land purchase in the country using Pittman-Robertson funds.

In the 1940s and through 1960s, Pittman-Robertson funds were the primary acquisition funding for wildlife management areas in Idaho. This funding mechanism was created by the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937 – also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act. The law imposed an excise tax on the sale of firearms and ammunition for distribution to the states for wildlife restoration.

In 1974, the Idaho Legislature established an acquisition account funded by a \$2-set-aside from every hunting license, and it generates about \$450,000 annually.

In the 1990s, Idaho began to get money from the Bonneville Power Administration as mitigation for the effects of hydroelectric projects, including Dworshak, Anderson Ranch and Palisades dams. Fish and Game acquired the Cecil D. Andrus Wildlife Management Area in 1993 as a donation from the Mellon Foundation.

But in the past 15 years, almost all acquisitions have occurred within or adjacent to existing wildlife management areas.

To date, money for land acquisition has come from:

- Pittman-Robertson – 31 percent.



Thousands of elk winter on the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

IDFG photo

- License sales – 20 percent.
- Mitigation – 42 percent.
- Donations – 7 percent.

Fish and Game spends about \$5 million annually to manage wildlife management areas. Pittman-Robertson and license funds cover about 75 percent of this cost, the rest comes mostly from Bonneville Power Administration as mitigation.

The state owns the land, but Fish and Game makes payments in lieu of taxes to counties – in 2013 that amounted to \$176,237, money that helps replace county property taxes.

The acquisition of land for sustainable fish and wildlife habitat and associated recreation is focused on:

- Key habitats for game animals and fish.
- Access for recreational use of fish and wildlife.
- Mitigation for unavoidable impacts to fish and wildlife resources.

- Habitats identified in state or regional fish or wildlife conservation plans.
- Additions to existing wildlife management areas, easements or ownerships.

Of the 53 million acres in Idaho, one third of one percent is in Fish and Game wildlife management areas, but they provide a higher percentage of the most important habitat for wildlife. They provide habitat for nearly every wildlife species found in Idaho.

About two thirds of the wildlife management areas have large wetland components, such as the Pend Oreille, Fort Boise, Cartier Slough and Boundary Creek wildlife management areas.

The rest are primarily upland habitats which vary from semiarid shrub habitats in the southern part of the state to forested habitats in northern Idaho. Many of these properties include major big game winter ranges.

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WMA Planning Process Includes Public Participation

Idaho Fish and Game began its effort to update and revise existing plans for its 32 wildlife management areas in 2012.

Fish and Game started the process by reaching out to the public through a survey that was available on the Fish and Game website, mailed to folks and used when we contacted users in the field. Fish and Game also hosted open house meetings.

These efforts generated about 3,000 surveys that have helped identify the issues on the wildlife management areas.

This year, Fish and Game is working to finish proposed plans that will be released to the public this winter for review and comment.

Much about the new plans will be the same, but three important aspects will be a little different. The new plans will:

1. Emphasize the landscape perspective – not just what is happening on the wildlife management area, but also what is happening on the landscape around it.
2. Expand efforts to measure outcomes of our management actions.
3. Have more information about each of these areas available on the Fish and



Trapping ducks on the Boundary Creek Wildlife Management Area.

IDFG photo

Game website.

For each plan, Fish and Game defined landscapes that it will include. For example, deer from Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area use more of the landscape than just the WMA. If fawning habitat is limited on the summer range,

biologists won't be able to maintain wintering deer numbers no matter what they do to the winter range.

Monitoring outcomes of management actions on habitats and populations is also essential. Each wildlife management area will include an expanded monitoring program to measure outcomes of its management actions.

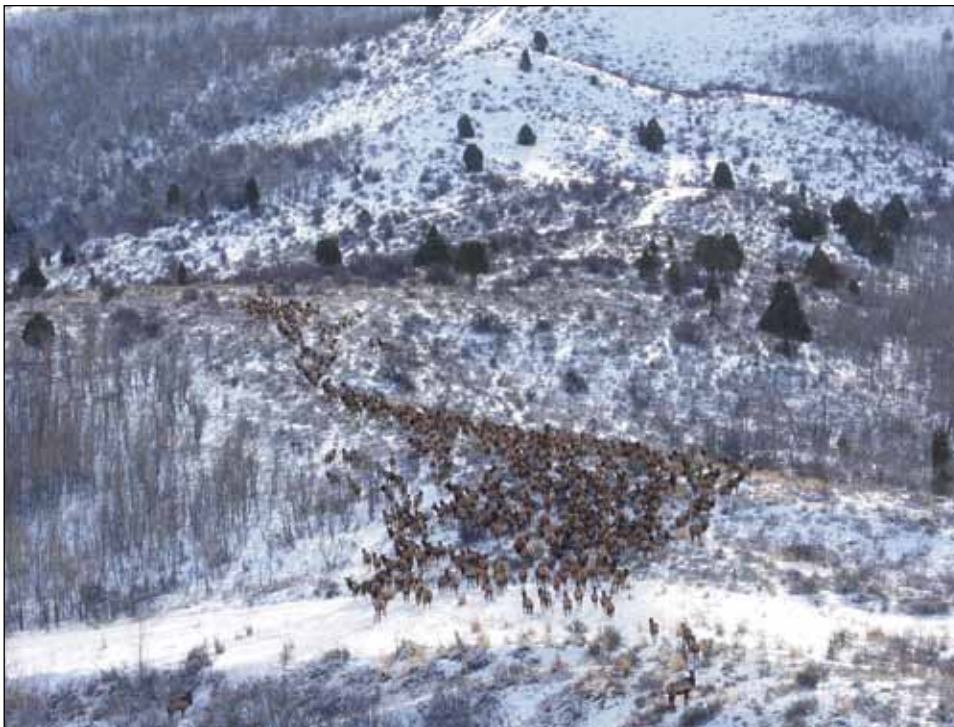
Management priorities vary with each area but include:

- Big game habitat.
- Upland game habitat.
- Waterfowl habitat.
- Special species habitat.
- Wildlife-based recreation and education.

Most wildlife management areas have specific management constraints that include:

- Legal mandates (e.g., mitigation).
- Biological constraints.
- Land owned by other entities.

When completed, proposed new plans will be available on the Fish and Game website for public review and comment. Copies of individual plans will also be available at Fish and Game offices.



IDFG photo by Eric Anderson

Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area provides winter range for hundreds of elk.

Idaho's Wildlife Management Areas Offer a Variety of Activities

Panhandle Region: 208-769-1414

Boundary Creek: Waterfowl and white-tailed deer hunting and wildlife viewing.

McArthur Lake: Waterfowl, white-tailed deer, black bear and moose hunting and wildlife viewing.

Pend Oreille: Hunting and fishing, sight-seeing, photography and boating.

Farragut: Archery hunting, hiking, boating, bird watching, horseback and mountain bike riding and snowmobiling.

Coeur d'Alene: Waterfowl and big game hunting, camping, boating, sightseeing, bird watching and hiking.

St. Maries: Upland and big game hunting, trapping, fishing, camping, horseback riding, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing and hiking.

Snow Peak: Hunting pack trips, back-packing, hiking, photography and fishing.

Clearwater Region: 208-799-5010

Craig Mountain: Horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing, camping. Hunting for white-tailed deer, black bear and mountain lion, mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep and upland game birds and trapping.

Red River: Ranch house available for conservation related meetings, education and training sessions. Hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Southwest Region: 208-465-8465

Cecil D. Andrus: Upland bird and big game hunting, wildlife viewing, hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Payette River: Hiking, waterfowl and upland game bird hunting, rainbow trout and bass fishing

Montour: Game bird hunting, wildlife viewing, fishing and camping.

Fort Boise: Hunting, trapping, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Boise River: Big game, upland bird and small game hunting. Some areas are closed to the public during winter.

C.J. Strike: Waterfowl hunting, fishing, trapping, sight-seeing, camping, picnicking, boating, water skiing, wildlife and bird watching.

Magic Valley Region: 208-324-4359

Camas Prairie: Early-season waterfowl, upland bird and small game hunting.

Carey Lake: Bluegill, bass and bullhead fishing, waterfowl and big game hunting and trapping.

Billingsley Creek: Waterfowl hunting, fishing and shotgun-only deer hunting.

Hagerman: Walking trails, bird viewing, bluegill, bass, catfish, rainbow trout and sturgeon fishing; and waterfowl and upland game hunting.

Niagara Springs: Waterfowl, upland game bird and small game hunting and trout and sturgeon fishing.

Big Cottonwood: Hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding, upland game bird, mule deer hunting, Yellowstone cutthroat trout fishing.

Southeast Region: 208-232-4703

Sterling: Waterfowl and pheasant hunting.

Portneuf: Deer, elk and upland game hunting, hiking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.

Blackfoot River: Deer, elk, upland game and waterfowl hunting; fishing, hiking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.

Georgetown Summit: Wildlife viewing, cross-country skiing, hunting, trapping and fishing.

Montpelier: Mule deer and upland game hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding and cross-country skiing.

Upper Snake: 208-525-7290

Tex Creek: Hiking, biking and horseback riding; big game, upland game and small game hunting and trapping.

Market Lake: Hiking, horseback riding, and upland, waterfowl and big game hunting and trapping.

Mud Lake: Fishing for largemouth bass, yellow perch and tiger muskies; waterfowl, upland game hunting and trapping.

Deer Parks: Hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing and waterfowl, upland game and big game hunting.

Cartier Slough: Big game, upland bird and waterfowl hunting, hiking, biking and horseback riding and wildlife viewing.

Sand Creek: Big game, upland game, small game hunting, trout fishing, camping, hiking, birding and biking.

(Please contact regional offices for more information.)



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Fort Boise Wildlife Management Area is popular with hunters, anglers and bird watchers.