

**Meeting Date:** May 17, 2017

**Agenda Item No.** 12

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**Bureau Chief Approval:** ES

**Prepared by:** Windy Schoby

**Background: Recognition of Larry Weeks earning the Sigurd F. Olson Award for outstanding effort conserving rivers, lakes or wetland habitat from the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.**

**Nomination Letter**

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers-  
Sigurd F. Olson Award for outstanding effort conserving rivers, lakes or wetland habitat

I am writing today to nominate Larry Weeks, Easement Specialist for Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), for the Sigurd F. Olson Award. Twenty-two years ago Larry came to work with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game as our Landowner Relations and Easement Specialist in the Anadromous Fish Screen and Habitat Program in Salmon Idaho.

Our program works primarily with private landowners to install fish screens on their irrigation diversions to prevent endangered Chinook Salmon, Steelhead, and Bull Trout from being stranded in irrigation ditches and fields. We also work to reconnect critical habitats by removing barriers such as irrigation diversions and culverts and work with irrigators to improve irrigation infrastructure and increase instream flow. Over his career with IDFG Larry has negotiated with over 2,500 individual landowners and water users in the Upper Salmon Basin. His ability to work with people on the ground and gain their trust has resulted in significant conservation outcomes. Larry has directly influenced the installation of over 250 fish screens that annually save between 25-80% of our out-migrating juvenile salmon and steelhead population from these streams. Furthermore, he has been part of a team that has opened up over 120 miles of fish habitat and helped put hundreds of cubic feet of water in our rivers and streams. In the West, where water is gold, getting a landowner to voluntarily allow you to influence their irrigation diversion and water right with no financial compensation is not an easy task.

Larry is a special individual that been successful because he is not afraid to pick up the phone, knock on a door, and listen. In a day of technology, tweeting, emails and cell phones Larry's approach to always make time and meet face to face is a testament to human nature that we can all learn from. Larry is looking to retire this year to spend more time tying flies at his vise, rowing his boat on the river, pursuing elk and deer in his backyard, and sharing the passion of the outdoors with his grandkids. Thank you for consideration of this very humble and unsung conservation hero.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: None**

**Public Involvement Process: None**

**Staff Recommendation: None**

**Justification:**

Recognition by the BHA is a testament of the valuable conservation outcomes delivered by the IDFG's Salmon Fish Screen program and Larry's specific skills and dedication to relationships that continue to make this important work possible and relevant to the water users and ranching community.