IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

November 2026 Commission Meeting ***Agenda Item No.:*** *16*
Agenda Item: *Strategic Habitat Conservation Planning in the Magic Valley Region* ***Supervisor Approval:*** *FE*
Presented by: *Bradley Dawson and John Guthrie*
Position/Title: *Regional Technical Assistance Manager; Regional Habitat Manager*

Background:
Land uses that cause landscape-level habitat changes continue to increase on the lands and waters that support Idaho's fish and wildlife resources. These changes can cause habitat loss and degradation, resulting in reduced carrying capacities for these resources. Given the increasing land use pressures, it is necessary for the Department to expand the scale and accelerate the pace of strategic habitat conservation. Although IDFG has Commission-approved plans that prioritize habitat conservation (2026 Department Strategic Plan, Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan, and various species management plans), there remains a need at the regional level to identify key areas for strategic and proactive conservation actions consistent with priorities in these plans.

The Magic Valley Region's staff recently conducted a planning effort to identify and prioritize key areas for strategic and proactive habitat conservation actions, namely protecting habitat, improving habitat, and influencing land use decisions. Staff utilized a suite of data sources (e.g., wildlife telemetry data, survey data, habitat suitability data, and biologist expert knowledge) to create information products that identify key conservation areas and actions. These products will guide allocation of the Department's limited resources toward durable habitat conservation actions in areas most important for sustaining fish and wildlife for future generations of Idahoans.

The presentation will showcase the Magic Valley Region's recent progress on this strategic habitat conservation planning effort.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:
Per Idaho Code § 36-103, the Commission administers the State's policy to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage fish and wildlife resources to be available to the citizens of Idaho for continued supplies for hunting, fishing, and trapping. The Technical Assistance Procedure DIR-3.0 within the Department's Procedures Manual guides Technical Assistance Program implementation and operations.

Public Involvement Process:
Conservation actions guided by this planning effort are anticipated to influence positive and productive Department interactions with the public and external decision-makers, including achieving support for voluntary conservation actions in key areas on private and public lands. Moreover, this planning effort is intended to contribute to the Department's

overarching goals for conserving intact, well connected, and healthy landscapes to sustain robust fish and wildlife populations and abundant public hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunities into the future for Idaho's citizens.

Justification:
It is important that the Commission be informed about regional planning efforts that leverage Department data and staff knowledge to inform external stakeholders and decision-makers about strategic and proactive opportunities to conserve fish and wildlife resources.

Staff Recommendation:
N/A – Informational only.

Suggested Motion:
N/A – Informational only.