



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

Date: January 29, 2025

Agenda Item No. 16

Agenda Item: Valley & Paddock Fire Action Plan

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

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Position/Title: BL - Southwest Regional Habitat Manager, AM – Southwest Regional Habitat Biologist

Background:

The Paddock Fire (187,000 acres) and the Valley Fire (9,904 acres) burned important mule deer and elk winter range in 2024. IDFG immediately put restoration efforts in motion following each of these fires.

The Paddock Fire burned 109,704 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property, 62,018 acres of private property, and 15,463 acres of Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) property. We have provided assistance on BLM's planning efforts, have worked with private landowners to augment their seed mixes and to plant cover crops, and have contracted shrub plantings on IDL lands most heavily used by big game.

The Valley Fire, having occurred largely on IDFG land (6,293 acres), necessitated more direct restoration action by the Department. Our efforts are aimed at mitigating the spread of invasive annual grasses and noxious weeds while also restoring native vegetation. We have applied herbicide along roadways and trails with plans to expand that effort as funding becomes available. We have planted roughly 24,000 shrub, grass, and forb seedlings and put approximately 1,800 pounds of seed in the ground.

The Department led a sagebrush seed collection effort. The collected sagebrush seed will be applied with a helicopter in both fire areas in January 2025. Some of this seed, and bitterbrush seed that will be collected in the summer of 2025, will also be used to grow seedlings that will be planted in the fall and spring over the next several years to augment broadcast seeding efforts.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through the Department including land acquisition and management for the purposes of game, bird, fish, or fur-bearing animal restoration, propagation, or protection; and for public hunting,



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fishing, or trapping areas to provide places where the public may fish, hunt, or trap (Idaho Code 36-104 (b) 7 (A&B)).

Public Involvement Process:

Public may comment on this agenda topic at the public meeting prior to the Commission business meeting. Additionally, Department staff have led and participated in multiple public meetings on fire effects and rehabilitation efforts in the Southwest Region since the 2024 fires.

Justification:

This agenda item is to update the Commission on actions taken or planned related to the Department's efforts in the wake of the Paddock and Valley fires within the Southwest Region. This presentation will enhance the Commission's understanding of the habitat work being conducted and aid them in responding to questions and concerns raised by sportsmen and landowners.

Staff Recommendation:

N/A. This presentation is for Commission information only.