



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

November 2025 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: Harris Trust Land Acquisition **(Action)**

Presented by: Casey Pozzanghera

Position/Title: Lands/Mitigation Program Coordinator

Agenda Item No.: 6D
Supervisor Approval: SR

Background:

The Department is proposing fee-title acquisition of the Harris Trust property, a 280-acre property split between 2 parcels on the northern border of Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area, just east of Idaho Falls. The WMA provides important habitat (both summer range and terminal winter range) for many big game species. An estimated 5,500 elk and 3,000 mule deer from 6 adjacent game management units use the WMA, and this opportunity to expand the WMA footprint will help to protect that vital resource and create additional public access opportunities.

In addition to big game, the habitat supports several species of upland game birds and is located within the Columbia Sharp-tailed and Greater Sage-grouse Area of Influence in the Tex Creek WMA Plan.

The property will also provide additional administrative and public access opportunities onto the WMA. The parcels represent 2 of the last private inholdings within an area comprised mostly of state and federal public lands, this acquisition will provide great continuity to the WMA and help to streamline management and reduce potential land conflicts in the future.

The appraised value is \$540,000. The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation is contributing \$135,000 and the Department would use \$405,000 of Land Acquisition Funds from the sale of hunting licenses to cover the remainder.

Staff estimate maintenance costs would be under \$15,000 annually and Fee in Lieu of Tax payments to Bonneville County would be less than \$500 annually.

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in May 2023.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission has the authority to acquire land (Idaho Code 36-104(b)(7)). Land acquisition is in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

Bonneville County commissioners have been notified.



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Justification:

The proposed action will protect valuable wildlife habitat and improve landscape connectivity within the Tex Creek WMA.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommend acquiring the 280-acre Harris Trust property in Bonneville County.

Suggested Motion:

I move the Commission acquires the 280-acre Harris Trust property in Bonneville County.

