



IDAHO FISH AND GAME GOLDSHEET

July 2026 Commission Meeting

Agenda Item: *Big Willow Elk Depredation and Translocation Update*

Presented by: *Regan Berkley and Kenny Randall*

Position/Title: *Southwest Region – McCall Wildlife Manager and Panhandle Regional Wildlife Biologist*

Agenda Item No.: 9
Bureau Chief Approval: SR

Background:

The Idaho Elk Management Plan 2024-2030 provides management direction to implement measures to minimize, eliminate, or compensate for elk depredations. In early May of 2026, Southwest Region staff captured 37 elk in the Big Willow drainage in GMU 32 as part of an effort to reduce elk damage to private lands. Elk were darted from a helicopter, then transported to a central processing site. At the processing site, blood samples were collected for disease and pregnancy monitoring, and elk were fitted with radio collars before being loaded into trailers. Elk were then transported north to GMU 7 and released in the Upper St. Joe River drainage. This presentation will provide the Commission with an update on capture activities, monitoring and movements, elk survival, and project costs.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Commission is charged with administering wildlife policy, and through IDFG, is responsible for preserving, protecting, perpetuation and managing the state's wildlife (Idaho Code 36-103). Idaho Code 36-1108 provides direction for control of and compensation for damage caused by elk.

Public Involvement Process:

The Big Willow project was first presented to the Commission during the January 2026 Commission meeting and was shared widely via a press release shortly after that meeting. The Commission and IDFG have received input from the public on this project via social media, email, and phone calls. Public also have the opportunity to comment on this topic at the July Commission Public Meeting.

Justification:

The information presented will inform Commissioners of ongoing elk management actions in the Big Willow drainage in GMU 32, the status of elk that were translocated to the Panhandle, and costs associated with the project to date.

Staff Recommendation:

N/A – Informational only.