

Meeting Date: November 15, 2022

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: Draft Management Plan for the Conservation of Fisher, Wolverine, and Canada Lynx

Bureau Chief Approval: JR

Prepared by: Cory Mosby, Furbearer Staff Biologist

Background:

Fisher, wolverine, and Canada lynx are charismatic carnivores that are important to diverse interest groups. The occurrence of all three species in Idaho represents the edge of their species' distribution. Due to a variety of biological constraints, these species are considered rare, and/or species of heightened conservation need in Idaho. An important component of successful conservation of these species is maintaining state management authority. Currently, fisher has been unsuccessfully petitioned multiple times for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), wolverine is currently a candidate species for listing, and the Canada lynx is listed as threatened. The adding or continued listing of these species under ESA could have wide ranging affects to managing wildlife and forests.

The last management plan that included fisher and Canada lynx was developed in 1990. The Department developed an extensive plan for wolverine that was designed to guide conservation and management activities through 2019. The current draft plan provides needed updates to fisher and Canada lynx conservation and provides an updated and prioritized version of the more recent wolverine plan. The priorities identified in this plan will guide annual work plan development and program prioritization related to fisher, wolverine, and Canada lynx.

With Commission approval, the current draft will be posted on the Department website to provide the public an opportunity to review and comment. After consideration of public input, a final plan will be prepared to present to the Commission for adoption at a future Commission meeting.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Species management plans are the guiding documents to manage wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. The Management Plan for the Conservation of Fisher, Wolverine, and Canada Lynx will function as the action plan for this trio of species in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

With approval from the Commission, the Management Plan for the Conservation of Fisher, Wolverine, and Canada lynx will be posted on the Department website for a three-week period to provide opportunity for public review and comment.

Justification:

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff seeks Commission concurrence to release the draft Fisher, Wolverine, and Canada Lynx Management Plan for public review and input.