Meeting Date: May 19, 2022  
Agenda Item No. 5D  
Agenda Item: Adopt Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (ACTION)  
Bureau Chief Approval: JR

Prepared by: Hollie Miyasaki, Wildlife Staff Biologist

Background:  
Staff presented an overview of the status and content of a draft Bighorn Sheep Management Plan revision at the Commission’s January meeting.

The intent of the revision to the Bighorn Sheep Management Plan is to provide guidance for the Department and their partners to implement management actions that will aid in protection and management of bighorn sheep populations in Idaho and guide harvest season recommendations. This plan will provide guidance for annual action plans for bighorn sheep management in Idaho. Major issues that could affect bighorn sheep are identified, as well as overall direction for bighorn sheep management during the next 6 years (2022-2027). This plan will guide the Department in annual work plan development and program prioritization, and will provide guidance on development of regulatory recommendations.

Staff will provide a review of public comments received on the draft plan and improvements made in preparing the final draft in response in the input received.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:  
The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through 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 Bighorn Sheep Management Plan will function as the primary action plan for bighorn sheep management in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:  
The Department solicited input on the draft Bighorn Sheep Management Plan from the public, interested groups, tribes, and other state and federal agencies. The draft Bighorn Sheep Management Plan was posted on the Department’s website on February 3, 2022 and the Department accepted comments on the website through February 25, 2022 (23 days). The planning team reviewed comments and will provide the Commission a more in-depth summary of public input and how this input was used to revise the draft to create the proposed final plan.

Public input summary:
- 81 unique submissions with 74% (n=60) of people providing additional written comments.
- 84% (n=68) of the respondents identified themselves as Idaho residents.
- When asked to indicate their level of support for the plan:
  - 57% (n=46) of respondents generally supported the plan
  - 38% (n=31) of respondents supported the plan with some concerns
  - 5% (n=4) of respondents did not support the plan

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 recommends the Commission adopt the Idaho Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (2022-2027) as presented.

**Suggested Motion:** That the Commission adopt the Idaho Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (2022-2027).