

Meeting Date: September 1, 2021

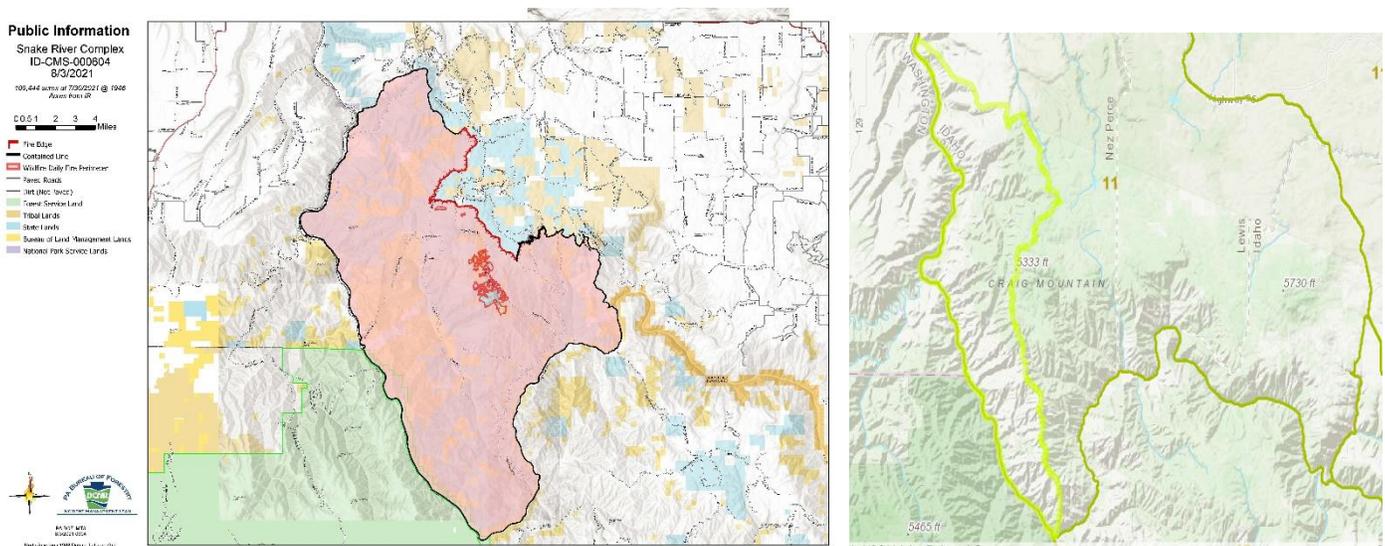
Agenda Item No. 7

Agenda Item: Bighorn Sheep Hunt Area 11
(request for Accommodation by Bighorn Auction Tag Holder)

Bureau Chief Approval: TAB

Prepared by: Toby Boudreau

Background: The Snake River Complex began on July 7, 2021, with three fires merging following lightning starts. As of perimeter containment on August 15, it burned approximately 110,000 acres (left-hand map). This fire affects Game Management Unit 11 and Bighorn Sheep Hunt Area 11 (right-hand map).



Because of the fire, Bighorn Sheep Auction Tag Holder Shelly Sayer has asked for accommodation (see attached letter), with the preference of adding area in Units 13 and 18 to Hunt Area 11.

In alternating years, the auction tag includes Hunt Area 11 in addition to other controlled hunt units statewide. There is one other bighorn sheep tag in Hunt Area 11 for 2021, which is drawn in a controlled hunt limited to Hunt Area 11. The controlled hunt tag holder has also indicated the preference for expanding the hunt area, or a secondary preference of extending the season into November.

IDFG monitors collared sheep in Unit 11, representing 47% of the female population and 13% of the Class III and larger rams. To date, no mortality on collared sheep has been documented or observed in un-collared sheep. No collared sheep have left the unit and we have not observed increased numbers of sheep on the other side of the Snake or Salmon rivers in Washington, Oregon or Unit 13. There has been movement of sheep within the Hunt Area. Although the fire affected much of Hunt Area 11, there are mosaic burns, with lower end of some drainages are intact and we have observed groups of sheep using those areas.

Units 13 and 18 were included in Hunt Area 11 in 2017 based on ram availability. Following ram harvest in 2017, these units were not included in Hunt Area 11.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: The Commission has authority to define Hunt Area boundaries. The Commission has not delegated authority for issuing rainchecks

or refunds for controlled hunt tags awarded via auction or for bighorn sheep tags, unless related to widespread environmental incidents where opportunity or access is severely limited.

Justification: Wildfire occurrence in Bighorn Sheep Hunt Area 11 has prompted request for hunter accommodation.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommend addition of Unit 13 to Bighorn Sheep Controlled Hunt Area 11 for 2021.

Suggested Motion: I move the Commission add Unit 13 to Bighorn Sheep Controlled Hunt Area 11 for 2021.