

Meeting Date: November 20, 2020

Agenda Item No. 8

Agenda Item: IDFG Range Grant Program

Bureau Chief Approval: PK

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background: At the November 2019 meeting, the Commission was briefed by staff about IDFG shooting ranges and the Range Grant Program. Briefly, the range grant program funds projects that increase opportunities for the public to learn and improve shooting skills in a safe environment. The grant program had been funded by Fine and Forfeiture funds remitted for violations of fish and game laws for many years, which had been statutorily directed not to exceed \$125,000 each year for improvement of shooting ranges. This funding was enhanced in FY18, when the Department received additional spending authority for \$400,000 in Pittman Robertson (PR) funding, including the license match. Funding to support FY20 shooting range grants was \$455,000 in blended PR funds and \$109,000 in Fines and Forfeiture funds. Since inception of the shooting range grant program, projects have been funded in all Fish and Game regions.

The shooting range grant program was recently modified by House Bill 396 passed by the 2020 Idaho Legislature and supported by the Commission. <https://legislature.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sessioninfo/2020/legislation/H0396.pdf>

House Bill 396 enhanced current elements of the shooting range grant program by directing the following:

- Expanded the authority of the Commission to acquire lands or easements for public shooting ranges to provide places where the public can target shoot, train and compete.
- Expanded the authority of the Commission to enter into agreements with and assist other entities (such as counties, cities, recreation districts, nonprofit clubs) with locating or relocating shooting ranges.
- Charged the Director to consult with other agencies to identify land suitable for shooting ranges.
- Created a new Public shooting Range Fund administered by the Commission and requiring an annual report to the Legislature. The fund includes the existing Fines and Forfeitures funds and other funds from grants and gifts, including the current blended PR funds. In addition, the fund incorporates revenues derived by any sale or lease of Commission property for providing public shooting ranges, revenue from the sale of goods and services at Commission-owned shooting range, and any new funds appropriated by the Legislature.
- Directed the Commission to approve any award of funds for shooting range grants, which will require a Commission action item each April beginning in 2021 to ensure grant funding is released at the beginning of each fiscal year (early July). Eligible ranges must be operated by government or nonprofit entities for multiple purposes that range from shooting range design, noise abatement, and projects necessary to enhance or preserve a shooting range under good practices and management. These elements are similar to eligible purposes under the current range grant program.

●Charged the Director to appoint an advisory committee with representation by active recreational shooters to advise the department about the annual shooting range applications and funding decisions. The application period for the Citizen Shooting Range Advisory Committee is slated to close October 30, 2020. A copy of the application is included with this briefing (Appendix A). The Committee is expected to be most active during February and March to advise the Department about making a recommendation to the Commission for approval of grant applications in April. The Committee will operate pursuant to Idaho Open Meeting procedures. A timeline for the shooting range grant program is also included to reflect implementation of House Bill 396 (Appendix B).

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: House Bill 396 creates new authority and policy for the Commission to implement House Bill in concert with the Director and staff.

Public Involvement Process: The public had opportunity to be involved with the 2020 Legislature during development and passage of this legislation and will have opportunity to provide input through the new Committee as well as addressing the Commission about their action each year to approve range grant funding.

Staff Recommendation: Proceed with revisions to the existing shooting range program to implement House Bill 396.

Justification: Implementation of House Bill 396 necessary to comply with new law.