

Meeting Date: January 23, 2020

Agenda Item No. 5C

Agenda Item: IDFG – Heitstuman exchange

Approved by: TB

Prepared by: Gregg Servheen and Steve Elam

Background:

Two parcels (320 and 40 acres) currently owned by Stephen Heitstuman are inholdings within the Craig Mountain WMA. These private lands are surrounded by IDFG and Tribal ownership lands managed for non-motorized public access and for the benefit of wildlife and wildlife habitat under the Bonneville Power – State of Idaho Dworshak settlement agreement. These inholdings are used by Mr. Heitstuman to provide dryland grazing for his livestock. But because they are inholdings surrounded by mostly IDFG-owned lands, they are a continuing source of recurring livestock trespass on Craig Mountain WMA and make public access management on the WMA and Heitstuman lands problematic for both IDFG and the private landowner.

Although Mr. Heitstuman has offered the properties for sale on the open market, he is willing to do a value for value exchange with the Commission to improve his livestock grazing abilities and to help resolve trespass and public access issues for both parties. IDFG has identified the 540 acre Reeves parcel as eligible for exchange to Heitstuman. This parcel is currently made up of about 50% meadow and 50% timbered land and is currently outside the boundary of the current core of Craig Mountain WMA. Therefore, private ownership of this property would not create management or public access concerns under private ownership. Furthermore, Mr. Heitstuman has agreed to accept the Reeves property with an encumbrance of a public access easement to be held by IDFG and that would provide for non-motorized public access on the exchanged Reeves property in perpetuity. The public access easement also would, for all intents and purposes, insure that the property remained undeveloped and continue to provide wildlife habitat in perpetuity.

Appraisal of the 3 properties to be exchanged has been completed. The appraised value of the two Heitstuman parcels totaled \$313,000 while the Reeves parcel, encumbered with the public access easement, appraised at \$460,000. As a result, the value for value exchange will result in a cash equalization payment from Heitstuman to IDFG for \$147,000.

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in July 2017.

Annual maintenance costs on Craig Mountain WMA lands would decrease slightly as a result of this exchange.

FILT costs/ year would also decrease slightly.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

Nez Perce County commissioners have been notified.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends completion of the exchange.

Suggested Motion: Approve a value for value exchange on Craig Mountain WMA of 540 acres of IDFG land encumbered with a public access easement for two parcels of 320 and 40 acres owned by Stephen Heistuman in Nez Perce County.