

Meeting Date: May 14, 2020

Agenda Item No. 5.C.3.

Agenda Item: Region 1 – Ten Mile Ranch Conservation Easement Acquisition (Action)

Approved by: TB

Prepared by: Don Kemner and Steve Elam

Background:

Ten Mile ranch is located 5 miles southwest of Lewiston Idaho, and contains 2,919 acres with 5 miles of Snake River frontage. The property contains winter and summer range for mule deer and bighorn sheep. The property is widely recognized as having some of the most important Bighorn sheep lambing and lamb-rearing areas, and is otherwise important to the bighorn sheep population in Game Management Unit 11. The ESA-listed (threatened) Spalding’s catchfly plant is found on the property. The property also provides important habitat for a variety of other game species, including mule deer and upland birds such as chukar, California quail, Hungarian Partridge, and wild turkey.

The purposes of this Easement are to: (1) conserve the bighorn sheep population and protect an important lambing area and (2) conserve Spalding’s catchfly where it occurs on the property, as well as the diversity of other native plants reflective of the canyon ecosystem. The conservation easement will eliminate future subdivision, and limit future development and livestock grazing (no domestic sheep or goats).

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in March 2020.

Acquisition cost is \$680,000 of license funds, \$20,000 from the Idaho Chapter of Wild Sheep Foundation, and \$250,000 of donated value by Western Rivers Conservancy, for a total appraised easement cost of \$950,000.

Annual maintenance costs are estimated \$0.

FILT is estimated at \$0 per year.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

Although the acquisition is not a fee title purchase, the Department notified the Nez Perce County Commission of the potential conservation easement acquisition.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends acquiring the 2,919 acre Ten Mile Ranch Conservation Easement.

Suggested Motion: I move to approve acquiring the 2,919 acre Ten Mile Ranch Conservation Easement under the terms described by staff.