Background:
This 68-acre property is located approximately 3 miles Southwest of Emmet, ID. The primary purpose of this acquisition is to provide additional fishing opportunities in Gem County. Previously donated Sawyer I is one of the most heavily fished waters in Gem County. It ranked third (to Sage Hen Reservoir and the Payette River) in the 2011 economic survey. An estimated 5,849 trips and over $301,826 were expended here during 2011. We expect that Sawyer II will provide similar and additional amounts of fishing effort. The addition of a pond of this size will provide a substantial increase in fishing opportunities in Gem County.

The primary fish species that would benefit from this acquisition would be warm water species such as largemouth bass, bluegill, and channel catfish. A cursory evaluation of the current north pond indicated that largemouth bass and bluegill already exist at this location. In addition, nearby ponds provide habitat for waterfowl, piscivorous birds, and small mammals. It is very likely that these species will utilize Sawyer II when disturbance declines after gravel mining activities are completed. Lastly, it is our intention to establish riparian trees and shrubs that would provide habitat for a variety of song and game birds.

We expect development to approximate $100,000 to $150,000. Development may include improvement or addition of roads, fencing, signage, parking area, boat ramp, and fishing docks.

This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in January 2018.

FILT is estimated at $1075 per year and annual maintenance costs are estimated at $1,000.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:
Land acquisition in accordance with Commission land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:
Gem County commissioners have been notified.

Staff Recommendation:
The Lands Committee recommends accepting the donation of the 68-acre parcel.

Suggested Motion:
Approve accepting donation of the 68-acre Sawyer property.