

Meeting Date: July 25, 2019

Agenda Item No. 5J

Agenda Item: Upland Game Management Plan

Bureau Chief Approval: TAB

Prepared by: Jeff Knetter

Background:

Staff presented an overview of the status and content of Upland Game Management Plan revision at the Commission's November 2018 meeting. A second update and a draft of the plan were presented to the Commission at the January 2019 meeting. A final plan was presented to the Commission prior to the March 2019 meeting; however, action on the Plan was deferred until May 2019, to allow commissioners additional time for review. No action was taken on the Plan at the May 2019 meeting.

This revision of the upland game management plan will provide guidance to the Department and their partners to implement management actions that will enhance upland game habitat and populations in Idaho. This plan will function as the action plan for upland game management. Major issues that affect upland game species are identified, which set overall direction for upland game management during the next 6 years (2019-2024). This plan will guide the Department in annual work plan development and program prioritization, and will provide guidance on development of regulatory recommendations.

Staff will update the Commission on the harvest objectives added to the Plan since the May 2019 meeting.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through supervision and management of the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Species Management Plans are the guiding documents to manage wildlife and are a direct reflection of the Department Strategic Plan. The Upland Game Management Plan will function as the action plan for upland game management in Idaho.

Public Involvement Process:

The draft Upland Game Management Plan was posted on the Department's website on January 25, 2019; comments were accepted through February 19, 2019 (26 days). A summary of public input was provided to the Commission during the March and May meetings.

Public input summary:

- 287 unique submissions with 205 written comments.
- 94% of respondents were Idaho residents.
- When asked to indicate their satisfaction with the plan:
 - 59% (n=169) of respondents generally supported the plan
 - 25% (n=72) of respondents supported the plan with some concerns
 - 10% (n=29) of respondents were neutral
 - 6% (n=17) of respondents did not support the plan

Justification:

The Commission sets policy and provides direction, considers input from the public, and has the authority to adopt, amend, or reject Department-recommended plans. The upland game management plan will guide management actions, monitoring activities, and harvest season recommendations through 2024.

Staff Recommendation:

The staff recommendation is to adopt the Idaho Upland Game Management Plan (2019-2024).

Suggested Motion: The Commission adopt the staff recommendation to adopt the Idaho Upland Game Management Plan (2019-2024).