

**Meeting Date:** March 24, 2009

**Agenda Item No. 15**

**Agenda Item:** Update on Outfitting for Upland Game  
& Waterfowl

**Bureau Chief Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** Jeff Gould, Wildlife Chief; Virgil Moore, Deputy Director

**Background:**

There has been a moratorium on outfitted upland game and waterfowl hunting since 1989 due to concerns over public access. Exceptions have included minor activities such as forest grouse, chukar, and gray partridge hunting while engaged in other major guided activities. In 2002, an additional exception was made to allow outfitting for turkey hunting on private land owned by the licensed outfitter. Expansion onto public land had been discussed but not recommended since 2002.

In June 2008, the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA) proposed that outfitters currently licensed for turkeys on their private lands/ground also be licensed for additional leased land. Doing so could make some of those lands available to the public because the outfitter is facilitating use on those lands that might otherwise be closed to the general public. IOGA's perspective on outfitted turkey hunting is that it is a public access issue because there are people who do not know how to hunt turkeys, and who do not have the proper equipment to do so. They choose to use an outfitter because outfitters have the capability of providing this public service.

This type of expansion captures the concerns that were expressed by a majority of Idaho turkey hunters surveyed by IDFG in 2002. The Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board (IOGLB) tabled the matter and indicated they will not make a decision regarding outfitted turkey licensing until after the matter is fully discussed with the IDFG. Since that meeting, a few members of IOGLB and IDFG have met to discuss the development of broader policy changes that may help resolve future issues primarily on private land.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

IOGLB would like to develop policy that addresses outfitting on private lands. Policy will improve the evaluation of license applications and substantiate the need for such services which together will serve to develop a clear record of decision. IOGLB is consulting with IDFG on policy development.

**Public Involvement Process:**

Additional discussions are needed before a timeline and scoping process can be recommended to the Idaho Outfitter and Guides License Board and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Information only

**Justification:**

NA