

MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR
THE CHESTER WETLANDS SEGMENT
OF
SAND CREEK
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

April 2002

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
UPPER SNAKE REGION

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FOREWORD

Key elements of fish and wildlife management in Idaho involve managing land and water-the habitat base for all fish and wildlife species. Providing public access for hunting, fishing, trapping, or simply viewing wildlife is also an integral part of Idaho's wildlife management program.

To provide habitat for fish and wildlife species and public access, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has developed a system of Wildlife Management Areas on Department-owned or managed lands throughout the state.

This document is the plan for the Chester Wetlands Segment (CWS) of Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area (SCWMA) in Fremont County and is a supplement to the Long Range Management Plan for Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area which was adopted in 1999. All aspects of the Long Range Management Plan for Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area will also apply to the Chester Wetlands Segment. This plan was developed to address new issues and resources that came with the addition of the Chester Wetlands Segment to the Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area. The plan supplements the Department's Policy Plan 1990-2005: A Vision For The Future. The plan contains management priorities with defined goals, objectives, and strategies and will be used to guide activities on the Chester Wetlands Segment of SCWMA into the future.

This planning effort is being done to ensure long-term protection and management of fish and wildlife resources on Department property within biological limits, economic, social, and manpower constraints.

This plan should be viewed as a guideline for land and resource management decisions that will periodically be subject to change if necessary as new data regarding fish and wildlife resources, hunters, anglers, non-consumptive users, and other segments of the public become available.

This plan was developed by incorporating public comments obtained from public meetings; comments received from the public and a variety of organizations; and comments obtained from internal review by Department employees (Appendix A).

INTRODUCTION AND PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game, a number of other agencies, organizations, and private citizens have long recognized the wildlife habitat potential and public use values of the Chester Wetlands. In 1989, IDFG attempted to acquire the property, but was unsuccessful. Instead, a private individual purchased the property and eliminated public access to the river and all other access to the property.

In the recent past, a proposal to establish a 59-lot subdivision on the property by the owner prompted a combined effort by numerous individuals, agencies, and organizations to protect the property. Partners on this project included the Nature Conservancy, Fremont County, Henry's Fork Foundation, Teton Regional Land Trust, Natural Resources Conservation Service and Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The property was acquired by The Nature Conservancy on August 1, 2001 and will be sold over two years to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Some of the funds to acquire the property are the result of land exchanges by the IDFG. Through an interim cooperative agreement, IDFG assumed management responsibilities on August 2, 2001. The Chester Wetlands will be owned and managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game as part of the Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area. The property will be managed to provide optimum wildlife habitat and public access for wildlife and fisheries based recreation and education for this and future generations.

The Chester Wetlands is located in Fremont County 6 miles northeast of St. Anthony along the northwest bank of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River (Appendix B). The headquarters is located in the center of the property at the end of North River Road. The property is accessible by the public along North River Road (Appendix C).

The Chester Wetlands consists of 1,501 acres of deeded land, 1,481 acres of which is irrigated, wetlands cover 762 acres, and 371 acres of the property have been farmed historically (Appendix C). The property has a 37.2 cfs decreed water right, 1260 acre feet storage in Henry's Lake, and 589 acre feet in Island Park Reservoir all through the Dewey Canal (Appendix K).

The general topography of the area is gentle with flat pastures that are broken with ponds and small hills. The northern boundary of the CWS lies along the transition from river bottom to upland habitat. The southeast boundary is along the Henry's Fork of the Snake River with 1.75 miles of river frontage. The south and western boundaries cut across irrigated pastureland. The property is at an elevation of 5,000 feet (Appendix C).

Most of CWS is under laid with basalt lava flows resting on rhyolytic rocks and mantled by sediment of several different types. Alluvial deposits during the Pleistocene and more recent eras consist largely of horizontal clay beds with lesser amounts of silt and sand (Appendix G and Appendix H). Overgrazing by livestock has caused some severe soil erosion on the property.

The summers are warm and winters generally long and cold. Snow depths range from two feet to three feet or more. The mean annual temperature is approximately 43⁰ F with summer

temperatures reaching 100⁰ F at times and winter temperatures dipping to -40⁰ F. Typically there are only 90 frost free days each year. Annual precipitation is around 15 inches and is distributed nearly evenly throughout the year with slightly less in July, August, and September.

Most of the CWS is irrigated grassland pasture and is interspersed with wetlands. There are over 30 ponds, two irrigation canals and approximately 1.75 miles of river front present on the CWS creating large wetlands and riparian habitats. On the northern and western edges of the property the area is dominated by sagebrush-grass rangeland with bitterbrush, chokecherry, shiny-leaf ceanothus, snowberry and other shrubs. The principal grass species present on the property are needle and thread grass, various wheat grasses, bluegrasses, Indian rice grass, fescues and bromes. Some of the forb species include goats beard, geranium, buckwheat, prickly pear cactus, and lupine. There are several stands of cottonwoods, aspen groves and willows along the river, irrigation canals and on the edges of the ponds. The property has been overgrazed in the past and currently has severe weed problems (Appendix L).

The CWS plays a key role in the perpetuation of wildlife in the upper Snake River Plain. Valuable wetland habitats such as those on the CWS are critical to the continued existence of trumpeter swans, ducks, and geese in the area, as well as numerous other wildlife species. Singleton Pond on the property is a historic trumpeter swan nesting area. Upland habitats on the property are valuable for restoration of sharp-tailed and sage grouse. Additionally, in recent years, bald eagle nests on and adjacent to the property have produced young annually (Appendix I and Appendix J).

Expected public uses include waterfowl hunting, upland bird hunting, big game hunting, fishing, bird watching, wildlife viewing, and limited winter recreation. (Appendix A).

MISSION STATEMENT

Protect and provide high quality and secure habitat on the Chester Wetlands for a variety of wildlife species including waterfowl, big game, small game, upland game, nongame, and threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Provide high quality fish and wildlife-based recreational and nature viewing opportunities for the public that are compatible with the WMA's goals.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

The desired future condition of the Chester Wetlands is described as follows:

1. Vegetation is characterized by plant communities composed of native and desirable non-native plant species in a variety of successional stages. Plant communities exist in a complex mosaic of types providing wildlife habitats and habitat connectivity. Noxious and undesirable weeds are eliminated or controlled, and native plant communities are restored to their inherent biological diversity.
2. Rivers, streams and lotic areas are characterized by riparian areas in functional condition providing habitat for fish and wildlife populations.
3. Soil erosion is minimized by using proper land management practices such as Best Management Practices (BMPs).
4. Opportunities for wildlife and fisheries-associated recreation are provided for present and future generations provided they are consistent with the mission of the WMA.
5. Cultural and historic sites are protected.
6. The Chester Wetlands Segment is a significant Idaho resource, a good neighbor to adjoining landowners, and an outstanding example of excellence in wildlife and habitat management.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to document newly acquired public resources and management issues with the Chester Wetlands Segment addition to Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area and to guide future management activities on the CWS. This plan establishes management direction and will be supplemented by specific programmatic and annual implementation plans.

MANAGEMENT GOALS LISTED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

- I. Waterfowl Habitat**
- II. Wildlife and Plant Species at Risk**
- III. Public Access and Use of the Property**
- IV. Habitat For Other Wildlife Species**
- V. Fish and Wildlife Education and Other Recreational Opportunities**
- VI. Good Neighbor Relations**

MANAGEMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The accomplishment of goals and objectives and implementation of strategies will be dependent on priorities and available funding for projects and personnel.

I. Goal: **Waterfowl Habitat**

- A. Objective: Provide optimal and secure nesting and brood rearing terrestrial habitat for waterfowl production.

Strategies:

1. Research and document waterfowl nesting areas and nesting success as outlined in the Department's Statewide Waterfowl Management Plan.
2. Research necessary habitat components and develop and implement plans to improve those areas that are presently not being used or receive little nesting use.
3. Provide artificial nesting structures where appropriate and maintain, monitor, and document use (Appendix M).
4. Restrict public use of nesting areas during nesting periods. Sign and patrol nesting areas to minimize disturbance.
5. Census goose and duck production periodically as required in the Department's Statewide Waterfowl Management Plan (Appendix M).
6. Work in cooperation with Ducks Unlimited and other partners to develop habitat criteria and a long-term vegetation management plan.
7. Conduct periodic nest surveys to determine the effects of predators and develop a predator management plan accordingly (Appendix M).
8. Exclude livestock grazing except when and where grazing can be used to improve habitat.
 - a. Grazing shall not detract from the goals and objectives of the WMA (IDFG 2001).
 - b. In the event that grazing is to be used for habitat improvement it will be for limited periods of time and according to the departments farming, sharecropping, and grazing policy (IDFG 2001).

- c. Maintain boundary fences to control unauthorized livestock use of area (Appendix N).

B. Objective: Provide optimum aquatic and wetland habitats for waterfowl production.

Strategies:

1. Maintain water levels in ponds and wetlands throughout the waterfowl production season to provide suitable waterfowl habitat.
2. Survey the property to determine the potential for improving existing ponds as well as opportunities to create new ones.
3. Creation of new wetlands should be undertaken in a manner that minimizes impacts on native plant communities.
4. Develop a plan for water management consistent with the present water right and in cooperation with adjacent landowners.
5. Do not establish a sport fishery in the ponds (see: pg. 16, issue 12 and Appendix I, Section 11).

C. Objective: Provide adequate water in as many ponds as possible throughout the fall waterfowl hunting seasons.

Strategies:

1. Maintain ditches and water control structures
2. Maintain and monitor water levels and flows consistent with water rights and a water management plan.
3. Monitor and document water use annually (Appendix M).

D. Objective: Provide appropriate food for waterfowl use and to reduce wildlife depredation on neighboring properties.

Strategies:

1. Provide cereal grains, legumes, or other waterfowl food crops on farmable ground (Appendix O).
2. Wildlife use of crops will be evaluated and documented annually (Appendix M).

II. Goal: **Wildlife and Plant Species at Risk**

- A. Objective: Provide secure habitat for wildlife at risk, such as, species listed as threatened, endangered, sensitive or species of special concern.

Strategies:

1. Inventory, map, and monitor locations or areas of use by wildlife species at risk. Develop and implement plans to provide optimum protection and habitat security for species at risk (Appendix M).
2. Provide and protect nesting areas for trumpeter swans as necessary. Monitor and document nesting results annually (Appendix M).
 - a. A site specific habitat management strategy will be developed and implemented for each active and/or historic trumpeter swan nesting territory on the CWS.
 - b. Public access will be restricted near active trumpeter swan nesting territories during the pre-nesting and nesting seasons (April-June).
 - c. Access for floating devices on ponds with swan broods will be restricted from June-September.
3. Provide and protect wintering areas for trumpeter swans as necessary. Monitor and document winter use (Appendix M). Evaluate the need for a trumpeter swan fall and winter sanctuary area on portions of CWS.
4. Provide and protect habitat for bald eagles.
 - a. A site-specific Habitat Management strategy will be developed for each active bald eagle territory.
 - b. Bald eagle breeding areas will be managed according to guidelines in the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Management Plan, 1995 Update.
 - c. The harvest of wood and wood products will be prohibited to protect bald eagle perch and nest sites.
 - d. Human activity around active territories will be restricted during the production season (February 1 though August 15).
5. Provide and protect habitat for sage and sharp-tailed grouse.

- a. Identify, inventory, map, and monitor locations or areas of use by sage and sharp-tailed grouse (Appendix M).
 - b. Identified habitats will be managed according to guidelines in the IDFG Sage and sharp-tailed grouse plans (IDFG 1997 and Ulliman et al. 1998).
- B. Objective: Protect plant species at risk, such as, species listed as threatened, endangered, sensitive or species of special concern.

Strategies:

- 1. Conduct plant surveys to determine if species at risk are present (Appendix M).
- 2. Inventory, map, and monitor locations of plant species at risk. Develop and implement plans to provide optimum protection and habitat security for species at risk (Appendix M).

III. Goal: **Public Access and Use of the Property**

- A. Objective: Provide Quality Public Recreational Opportunities and public access Consistent With The SCWMA Mission.

Strategies:

- 1. Evaluate the possibility of constructing footbridges over Last Chance canal for access to the property and to the Henry's Fork (Appendix C).
- 2. Construct designated primitive parking areas for public use (Appendix C).
- 3. Provide and maintain nonmotorized facilities such as trails.
- 4. Mow roadways and parking areas and prohibit campfires and fireworks to prevent or control fires.
- 5. Allow only day use of the CWS.
- 6. Allow limited nonmotorized winter recreation in designated areas only.
- 7. Evaluate the possibility of providing restroom facilities at high use sites(Appendix C).
- 8. Allow non-motorized watercraft on ponds only from July 1 to December 31.

9. Will not provide boat ramps on the Henry's Fork due to a lack of suitable sites and the presence of adequate public boat launching sites directly across the river.
 10. Allow trapping on the property on a permit basis.
 11. Require permits for special use activities (e.g. large group use, trapping, field trials) obtained from the WMA headquarters.
 12. Hunting will be allowed during regulated hunting seasons.
- B. Objective: Manage motorized vehicle access to provide wildlife security and habitat protection throughout the year.

Strategies:

1. Spring, Summer, and Fall--Allow motorized access along North River Road to Chester Dam for highway licensed vehicles only.
 2. Restrict motorized vehicle use to designated roadways.
 3. Winter—Motorized vehicles will be allowed in designated parking areas only.
- C. Objective: Provide for public and department employee safety on the CWS.

Strategies:

1. Maintain a no hunting or shooting safety zone around the office/conference room/residence facility and outbuildings and across from houses on the river (Appendix D).
 2. Allow hunting with short range weapons only on the CWS (Legal weapons under this restriction are muzzleloader, archery equipment, shotgun and crossbow).
 3. Promote hunting safety via field contacts with hunters, education and signs.
- D. Objective: Utilize the buildings on the Chester Wetlands Segment.

Strategies:

- a. Move the SCWMA office, shop, storage facilities and technician residence from the Parker facilities to the CWS facilities (Appendix E).

- b. Utilize the large room in the house at the CWS for IDFG and fish and wildlife resource related meetings.

IV. Goal: **Habitat For Other Wildlife Species**

- A. Objective: Provide high quality and secure year round habitat for game and nongame, resident and migratory wildlife species.

Strategies:

1. Maintain and improve habitat for moose, mule and white-tailed deer, and a variety of game and nongame wildlife species (Appendix I and Appendix J).
2. Manage vehicle access to provide wildlife security and habitat protection throughout the year.
3. Provide a diversity of habitats on the CWS for a variety of wildlife and plant species.
4. Evaluate the need for nest boxes or structures for blue birds, bats, swallows, osprey, and kestrels and install where appropriate.
5. Implement pertinent guidelines for management of sage grouse habitats (Connelly et al. 2000)

- B. Objective: Provide appropriate food for use by other wildlife species and to reduce wildlife depredation on neighboring properties.

Strategies:

1. Provide cereal grains, legumes, or other food crops for wildlife on farmable ground (Appendix O).
2. Consider planting lure crops for sandhill cranes.
3. Wildlife use of crops will be evaluated and documented annually (Appendix M).

V. Goal: **Fish and Wildlife Education and Other Recreational Opportunities**

- A. Objective: Provide fish and wildlife based education, viewing, and other non-consumptive opportunities.

Strategies:

1. Conduct tours, provide information, and give presentations to appropriate groups, organizations, and individuals.
2. Explore the possibility of constructing and maintaining a nature trail(s).
3. Provide informational signs in appropriate areas to inform and educate users.
4. Provide informational brochures about the area.
5. Monitor use by non-consumptive user groups (Appendix M).
6. Develop a brochure with a map of the CWS.
7. Use the conference room for educational presentations by SCWMA personnel.
8. Use the conference room and property for special events such as school tours, educational events, and field days for hunter and bow hunter education.

VI. Goal: **Good Neighbor Relations**

- A. Objective: Strive to develop and maintain good working relationships with neighboring landowners and residents

Strategies:

1. Clearly mark WMA boundaries.
2. Cooperatively maintain common fences to regulate livestock.
3. Attend and participate in local meetings where appropriate.
4. Actively promote the IDFG “Ask First” campaign to encourage hunters, anglers, trappers and other visitors to obtain permission before entering private land.
5. Coordinate with adjacent private landowners and the county weed supervisor to control noxious weeds.
6. Coordinate with adjacent private landowners to manage water flow in canals.

7. Maintain contact with neighboring landowners and address problems caused to neighboring landowners as they occur.
8. Notify neighbors when IDFG is planning an action which might affect or concern neighbors.
9. Notify neighbors of personnel changes on the CWS and SCWMA.

B. Objective: Minimize wildlife depredations on nearby privately owned land.

Strategies:

1. Monitor and evaluate local wildlife depredations on private land near the Chester Wetlands (Appendix M).
2. IDFG will address complaints of wildlife depredations on private land near the CWS consistent with IDFG policy.
3. Manage cropland on CWS with consideration for the impacts it may have on adjacent private land and crops.

APPENDIX A. MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Major Issues

The following major management issues associated with the CWS have been identified by contacts with the public and from within the Department. Goals and objectives that address each issue in the plan are identified.

1. **ISSUE:** Protection and enhancement of trumpeter swan nest sites should be a top priority on the CWS (Goal II, Objective A).

BACKGROUND: Trumpeter swans are currently listed as a Priority Species under the Species of Special Concern designation in Idaho. In general, trumpeter swans require a large, undisturbed territory for successful nesting, and if their chosen area is infringed upon repeatedly, they will often abandon their nest and eggs completely. Although trumpeter swans have in the past nested at Singleton Pond on the CWS, they have not nested there in recent history. Swans currently inhabit the CWS area throughout the year commonly using the river, ponds and fields.

2. **ISSUE:** The Department should maintain or improve landowner/sportsman relations (Goal VI, Objective A).

BACKGROUND: The CWS is surrounded on all sides by private land. This necessitates a strong effort by Fish and Game to be a good neighbor. Department personnel work closely with adjacent and affected landowners to establish good working relationships. IDFG personnel also work with sportsmen by providing information and education and by making field contacts.

3. **ISSUE:** Fishing access to the Henry's Fork of the Snake River (Goal III, Objective A).

BACKGROUND: The Henry's Fork of the Snake River is a very productive and popular fishery. The CWS property has 1.75 miles of river front on the Henry's Fork of the Snake River in a popular area for fishing. Fisheries issues are beyond the scope of the SCWMA plan but are addressed in the regional Fisheries Plan.

4. **ISSUE:** Off-Road vehicles should not be used on the property (Goal III, Objective B).

BACKGROUND: In general, the use of off-road vehicles can cause habitat damage, reduced security for wildlife, complaints from other users, and safety concerns. The effects of motorized vehicle use is the same whether the vehicle is being used for hunting, riding or game retrieval.

5. **ISSUE:** Livestock grazing on the CWS (Goal I, Objective A; Goal II, Objective A; Goal IV, Objective A).

BACKGROUND: At the present time pastures on the CWS are in a very degraded condition. The range needs sufficient rest from grazing to restore it to a functioning system. Any future livestock grazing on the CWS should be for the good of wildlife habitat, consistent with the WMA mission and comply with conservation and management guidelines.

6. **ISSUE:** Farming and other vegetative manipulations to improve habitat for wildlife. (Goal I, Objective D; Goal IV, Objective B).

BACKGROUND: Over the years, the Department has been involved in a variety of vegetation manipulation projects to improve wildlife habitat on Department owned lands. Included were seeding of grass species and a variety of shrubs, providing hay and grain crops for wildlife use and the use of controlled burning in some areas. Several methods have been used to accomplish these projects including Department personnel using Department owned equipment to do the work, contracting projects and sharecrop agreements where a private party does the work for a specified portion of the crop.

7. **ISSUE:** The need to provide a variety of recreational opportunities (Goal III, Objective A).

BACKGROUND: During the last ten years of private ownership the CWS was not open to general public access. The public has made it clear that it is a valuable area for several types of outdoor recreation. Now that the CWS is under public ownership it will be available for a wide variety of recreational opportunities for both consumptive and non-consumptive user groups.

8. **ISSUE:** The need to protect and preserve plant and wildlife species that are listed with special management designations (Goal II, Objective A and B).

BACKGROUND: The CWS provides habitat elements for a variety of rare wildlife species. Rare plant species and all species that are listed with special management designations on CWS have not yet been identified.

9. **ISSUE:** The need to provide suitable and secure habitat for waterfowl production (Goal I, Objective A,B,C, and D).

BACKGROUND: The CWS has valuable wetlands. The CWS provides habitat elements for a variety of waterfowl species.

10. **ISSUE:** Boat launch access to the Henry's Fork of the Snake River (Goal III, Objective A).

BACKGROUND: The Henry's Fork of the Snake River is a very popular river for floating and fishing. The CWS property has 1.75 miles of riverfront on the Henry's Fork of the Snake River. Boat launch access is available directly on the other side of the river. Constructing a boat launch on the river would require a bridge to be built across the canal and a suitable site for a launch on the Chester Dam backwater is not available due to dangerous water conditions. The public and fly fisherman groups have expressed that boat launch access on the CWS side of the river is not necessary and undesirable.

11. **ISSUE:** Snowmobiles should not be used on the property (Goal III, Objective B).

BACKGROUND: In general, the use of snowmobiles can cause reduced security for big game and other wildlife, habitat damage, complaints from other users, and safety concerns. The consensus of neighboring landowners and public individuals that attended public meetings were that snowmobile use would cause problems and detract from the aesthetic value of the area.

12. **ISSUE:** Stocking fish in ponds on the property (Appendix I, Section 11).

BACKGROUND: The ponds on the property are not deep enough to support a fishery. Singleton Pond, the largest pond on the property, has been planted with trout by past owners and has not been able to support fish. The ponds are valuable for waterfowl production and the absence of a sport fishery in the ponds is beneficial to nesting birds. Fishing access to the Henry's Fork of the Snake River will be open year round so ample fishing opportunities are provided without a fishery in the ponds.

13. **ISSUE:** Camping on the property (Goal III, Objective A).

BACKGROUND: The department does not have the resources or personnel available to provide, clean and maintain additional campground facilities. Campgrounds can often create conflicts with wildlife goals in an area. Neighbors to the property are concerned with the area being used for parties during the night and day use only is preferred.

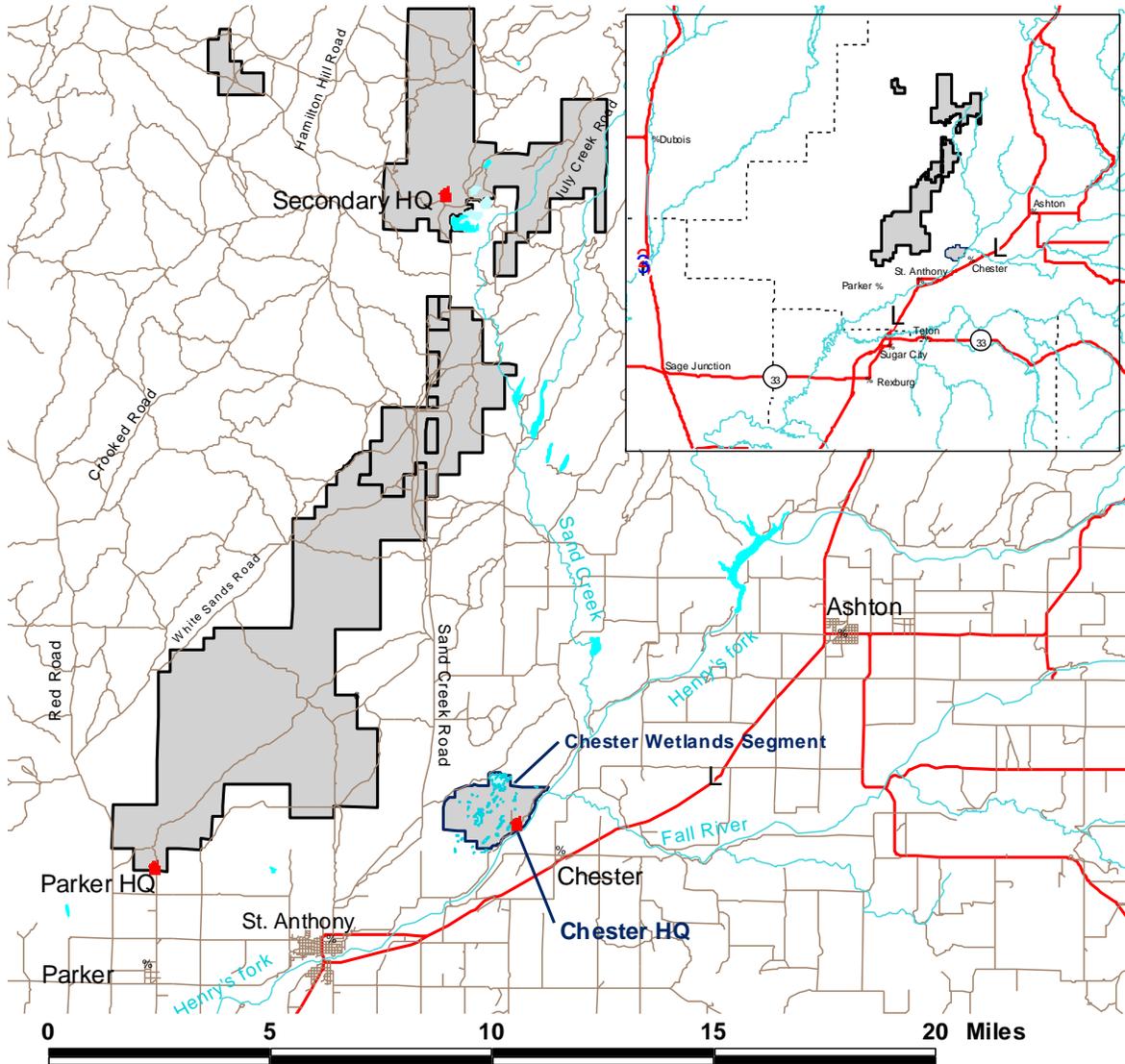
Public Scoping Issues

Public meetings were held on July 31, 2001 and August 2, 2001 at the Fremont County Courthouse to identify public issues associated with the CWS and IDFG ownership. Twenty eight people attended the first meeting and seventeen attended the second meeting. The following issues, opinions and comments were identified and discussed by the public at the meetings. Some issues are also addressed in the section above.

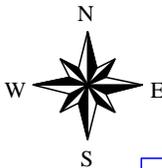
1. Issue: Will snow machines be allowed?
Public Opinion: Public input did not support snowmachine use.
2. Issue: The property provided a resting place for waterfowl in the past and concern about hunting and public access causing birds to leave and problems for neighbors from hunters.
Public Opinion: High densities of waterfowl are present so hunting wouldn't really affect anything. Neighbor stated that the property has been hunted regularly over the past 10 years.
3. Issue: Improvement of the road to Chester Dam.
Public Opinion: Preferred the road remain primitive.
4. Issue: Access to the property.
Public Opinion: Preferred restricted access and walk in access while still allowing access.
5. Issue: Restroom facilities.
Public Opinion: Preferred primitive restroom facilities.
6. Issue: Boat access on the CWS side of the river.
Public Opinion: Would like to have no boat access on the CWS side of the river. Public opinion was that there was good access on the opposite side of the river for boats. Public was concerned with added traffic from a boat launch. No objections to no boat access on CWS side of river. Issue could be re-addressed if east side access is no longer available.
7. Issue: Neighbor worried about trespass, thinks it should still be a cattle ranch, that range needs to be recovered, concerned about the canal and his water and concern about traffic.
8. Issue: Parking.
Public Opinion: Preferred designated parking areas.
9. Issue: Reservation hunting to reduce hunting pressure.
Public Opinion: Hard to keep people honest and to try to leave it open for now.
10. Issue: Access with horses.
Public Opinion: Preferred allowing access with horses.
11. Issue: Access from Sand Creek Road.
Department Response: Road goes through private property so access is privately controlled.
12. Issue: Concerned about young people partying on property.
Public Opinion: Provide day use only and have the IDFG watch for that type of activity.
13. Issue: Off road motorized vehicle use.
Public Opinion: Against off road motorized vehicle use.
14. Issue: Was water right on the property adequate for the ponds?
Public Opinion: Suggested that IDFG acquire a well water right if needed.
15. Issue: Traffic regulation for increased traffic on North River Road.
Public Opinion: Post speed limit signs on the road. Children at play signs. Right of way sign at Fun Farm Bridge.
16. Issue: Livestock grazing.

- Public Opinion: That any grazing should not hurt wildlife.
17. Issue: Habitat restoration
Public Opinion: IDFG should do as much as they can.
18. Issue: Concern about mountain lions and bobcats.
Public Opinion: IDFG should try to reduce predator conflicts with humans.
19. Issue: Does IDFG plan on a fishery in the ponds on the property.
Public Opinion: Not needed.
20. Issue: Winter recreation.
Public Opinion: Consider limited winter recreation activities such as grooming a ski trail.
21. Issue: Access to Chester Dam.
Public Opinion: Some concerned about walking to the Chester Dam—it is too far and want road open. Some others were not concerned and want road closed.
22. Issue: Neighbor concerned about getting water to his livestock from our canal.
Department Response: IDFG plans on running water to that area for ponds anyway and would like to be a good neighbor.
23. Public Comment: Grateful that there are not going to be 59 homes on the property.
24. Public Comment: Audubon Society members supportive of project saving bird and wetland habitat.
25. Public Comment: Upper Snake Fly Fishers members supportive of project.
26. Public Comment: Overall neighbors and public were happy that property is in public ownership and not subdivided.

APPENDIX B. CHESTER WETLANDS VICINITY MAP



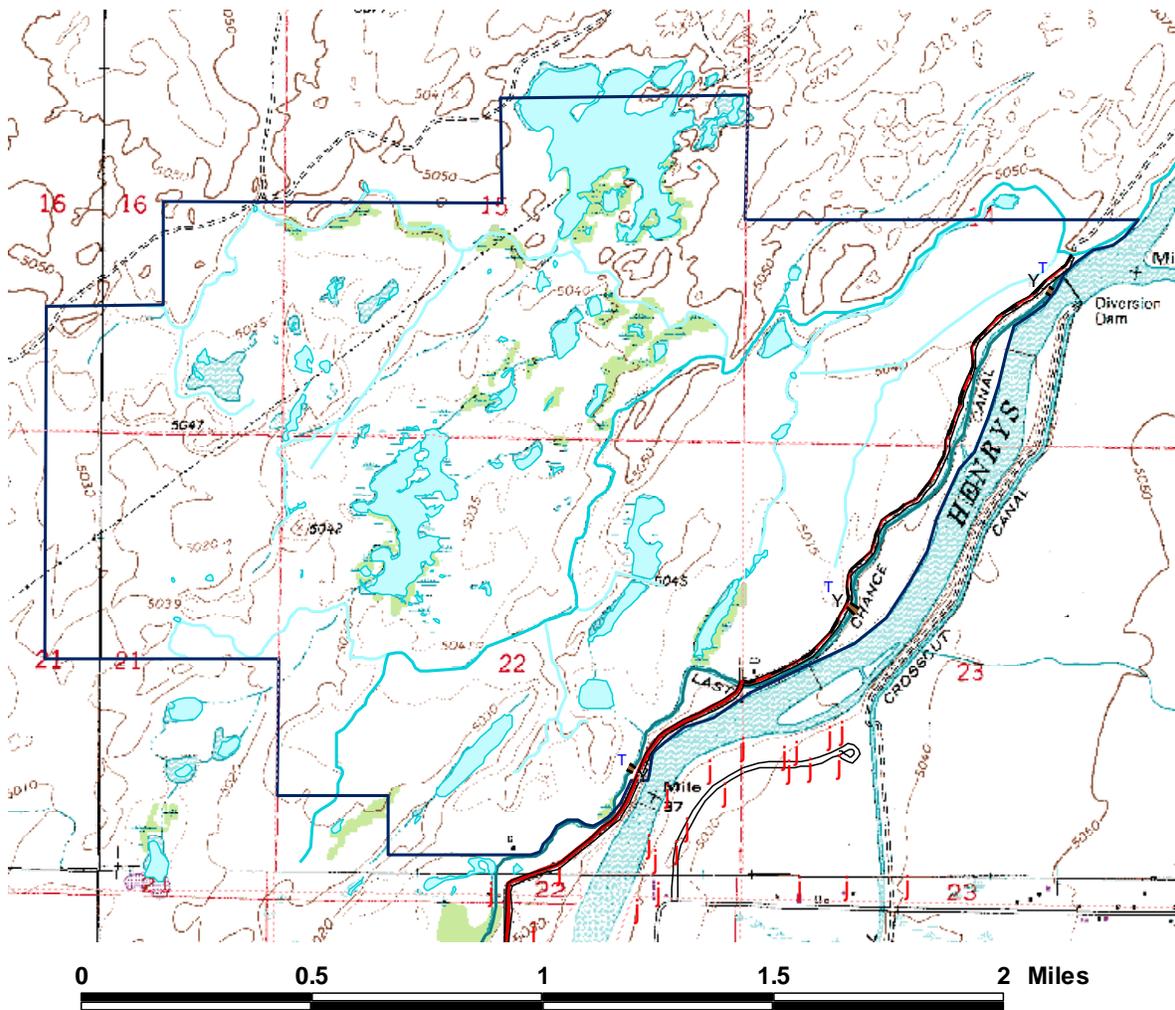
- Landmarks
- Towns
- Chester ponds
- Lakes
- Ponds
- Major Streams
- Other Roads
- Highways
- Chester Wetlands
- Sand Creek WMA



Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Upper Snake Region GIS
 1515 Lincoln Rd
 Idaho Falls, Id 83401-2198
 (208) 525-7290

Upper Snake Region (MAR 11, 02 15:50)
 (Chester Vicinity Layout)
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APPENDIX C. CHESTER WETLANDS MAP



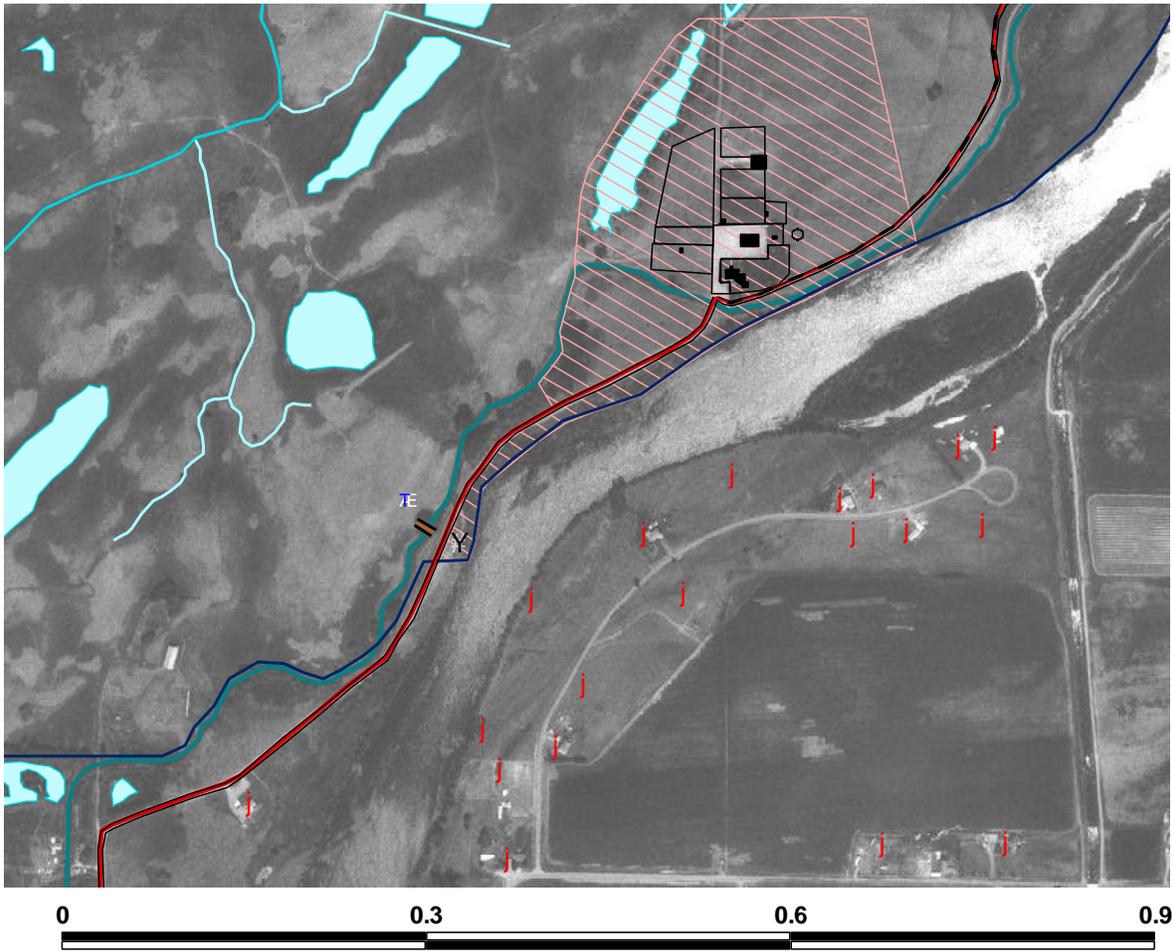
- Proposed parking area sites
- Proposed foot bridge sites
- Proposed restroom sites
- North river road
- Chester dam road
- Houses
- Section Lines
- Chester wetlands boundary
- Ponds
- Last chance canal
- Dewey canal
- Canals



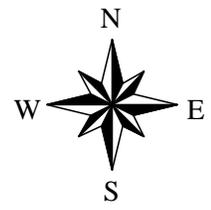
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Upper Snake Region GIS
 1515 Lincoln Rd
 Idaho Falls, Id 83401-2198
 (208) 525-7290

Upper Snake Region (MAR 11, 02 13:06)
 (Chester Wetlands Topo Layout)
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APPENDIX D. SAFETY ZONE MAP



-  North river road
-  Chester dam road
-  Proposed Parking Area Locations
-  Proposed Restroom Locations
-  Proposed Foot bridge Locations
-  Chester wetlands boundary
-  Corrals
-  Buildings
-  Safety Zone
-  Chester ponds
-  Last chance canal
-  Dewey canal
-  Canals
-  Houses





Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Upper Snake Region GIS
 1515 Lincoln Rd
 Idaho Falls, Id 83401-2198
 (208) 525-7290

Upper Snake Region (MAR 11, 02 13:31)
 (Layout1)
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APPENDIX E. BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

A large house, a large shop and a metal barn are currently present in the center of the property. The house is 30 feet from the public access road to the property and 10 feet from the access to two service roads to the property. To move these roads would require constructing new bridges across the last chance canal. Due to the location of the house and buildings the house would not be easy to dispose of and conflicts could easily arise if there was a private inholding in the property.

To utilize the buildings at the CWS the Sand Creek WMA headquarters will be moved from the Parker facility to the CWS facility. The current WMA headquarters is located north of Parker and includes a residence, a shop and office, two equipment storage sheds and a grainery. The Parker Facility is located on the far southwestern edge of the SCWMA property. The Chester facility is 10 miles closer to Sand Creek road, which is the primary access to the SCWMA. The Chester house has been divided into two parts, a one level, 1,431 square foot, 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom residence and a two level, 1,644 square foot, one bathroom office and conference room facility. The Wildlife Technician assigned to the SCWMA resides in the residence. The CWS headquarters provides offices for the wildlife technician and regional habitat biologist assigned to SCWMA. The conference room can hold approximately 30 people and is used by IDFG and others for fish and wildlife and natural resource related meetings. One of the equipment storage sheds could be moved from the Parker facility to the Chester facility.

APPENDIX F. CONSTRAINING AGREEMENTS, PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

Idaho Sage Grouse Management Plan 1997 (IDFG 1997) Provides guidelines to identify, protect, and improve sage grouse habitat in Idaho.

Idaho Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Conservation Plan, in Draft form 1998 (IDFG 1998). Provides guidelines to identify, protect and improve Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitat in Idaho.

Habitat Conservation Assessment and Conservation Strategy for the Townsend's big-eared bat, 1995 (Pierson, et al. 1999).

Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Management Plan (Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Working Group 1996).

IDFG Farming, Sharecropping and Grazing on Department Lands Policy September, 2001 (IDFG 2001a). The current Department policy pertaining to farming Department owned lands.

IDFG Sand Creek Wildlife Management Area Long Range Management Plan (IDFG 1999). The current Department plan pertaining to management of SCWMA.

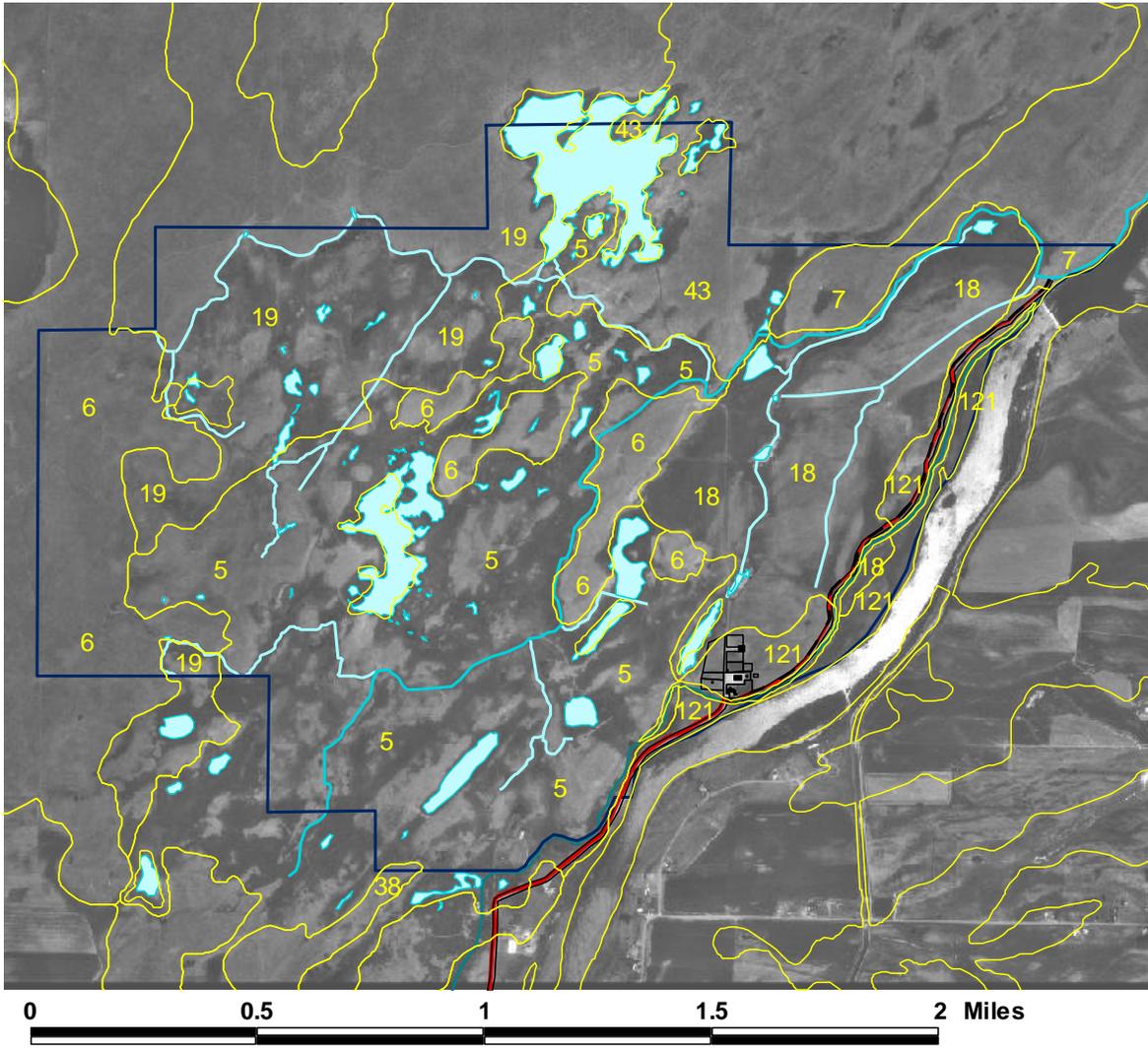
IDFG Department Policy Plan 1990-2005: A Vision For the Future (IDFG 1990a). The current Department policy plan.

Species Management Plans. These are department plans regarding management of wildlife species that utilize the CWS:

- a. White-tailed Deer, Mule Deer and Elk Management Plan (IDFG 1998).
- b. Moose Management Plan (IDFG 1995).
- c. Upland Game Management Plan (IDFG 1990b).
- d. Waterfowl Management Plan (IDFG 1990c).
- e. Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Management Plan (IDFG 1991).
- f. Fisheries Management Plan (IDFG 2001b).
- g. Furbearer Management Plan (IDFG 1990).

Henry's Fork Weed Management Area Plan (Colwell et al. 1990). A cooperative agreement among numerous public entities in three states, signed in 1994. This plan provides guidelines for coordinated management of noxious weeds in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

APPENDIX G. CHESTER WETLANDS SOIL SURVEY MAP



Soil Type

- 121
- 18
- 19
- 38
- 43
- 5
- 6
- 7

- North river road
- Chester dam road
- Chester wetlands boundary
- Corrals
- Buildings
- Ponds
- Last chance canal
- Dewey canal
- Canals





Idaho Department of Fish and Game
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Upper Snake Region (MAR 11, 02 13:43)
 (Soil Type Layout)
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APPENDIX H. SOIL CLASSIFICATIONS

Soil number, name and definition taken from "Soil Survey of Fremont County, Idaho, Western Part," (Grow 1993).

Soil Type

5 - Blacksan-Eginbench-Nayrib complex, 1 to 6 percent slopes.

This soil is composed of 40% Blacksan loamy fine sand, 20% Eginbench loamy fine sand, 20% Nayrib very cobbly fine sand loam and 20% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on basalt plains, at elevations of approximately 5,040 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 14 inches. It has rapid permeability and very low available water capacity. It has a slight hazard of water erosion and a very severe hazard of wind erosion. Dominant vegetation in potential natural plant community is not listed. Major use is irrigated pasture.

6 - Blacksan-Engett, bedrock substratum-Sandcreek complex, 1 to 6 percent slope.

This soil is composed of 40% Blacksan loamy fine sand, 25% Engett fine sand, 20% Sandcreek sand and 15% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on basalt plains, at elevations of approximately 5,200 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 16 inches. It has rapid permeability and low available water capacity. It has a slight hazard of water erosion and a very severe hazard of wind erosion. Dominant vegetation in potential natural plant community is antelope bitterbrush, basin and mountain big sagebrush, bluebunch wheatgrass and needle and thread. Major use is rangeland.

7 - Blacksan-Sandcreek-Rock outcrop complex, 1 to 6 percent slope.

This soil is composed of 40% Blacksan loamy fine sand, 30% Sandcreek sand, 15% rock outcrop and 15% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on basalt plains, at elevations of approximately 5,200 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 16 inches. It has rapid permeability and low available water capacity. It has a slight hazard of water erosion and a very severe hazard of wind erosion. Dominant vegetation in potential natural plant community is antelope bitterbrush, basin and mountain big sagebrush, thickspike, western and bluebunch wheat grasses, and needle and thread. Major use is rangeland.

18 – Eginbench loamy fine sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes.

This soil is composed of 35% Engett fine sand, bedrock substratum, 30% Engett fine sand, 20% Blacksan loamy fine sand and 15% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on basalt plains, at elevations of approximately 5,200 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 16 inches. It has rapid permeability and low available water capacity. It has a slight hazard of water erosion and a very severe hazard of wind erosion. Dominant vegetation in potential natural plant community is needle and thread, antelope bitterbrush, western wheatgrass, basin big sagebrush and arrowleaf balsamroot. Major uses are irrigated cropland and windbreaks. Suitable crops are wheat, barley, alfalfa, pasture and potatoes. Trees suitable for planting are Russian olive, golden willow, Idahybrid poplar, Rocky Mountain juniper and Norway spruce. Shrubs suitable for planting are lilac, Nanking cherry and Siberian peashrub.

19 - Engett, bedrock substratum-Engett Blacksan complex, 1 to 6 percent slopes.

This soil is composed of 35% Engett fine sand, bedrock substratum, 30% Engett fine sand, 20% Blacksan loamy fine sand and 15% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on basalt plains, at elevations of approximately 5,200 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 16 inches. It has rapid permeability and low available water capacity. It has a slight hazard of water erosion and a very severe hazard of wind erosion. Dominant vegetation in potential natural plant community is needle and thread, antelope bitterbrush, western wheatgrass, basin big sagebrush and arrowleaf balsamroot. Major uses are irrigated cropland and rangeland. Commonly grown crops are barley and potatoes.

38 - Jipper-Nayrib-Stipe complex, 1 to 8 percent slopes.

This soil is composed of 50% Jipper fine sandy loam, 20% Nayrib very cobbly fine sandy loam, 20% Stipe fine sandy loam and 10% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on swales of basalt plains, at elevations of approximately 5,200 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 15 inches. It has moderately rapid permeability and high available water capacity. It has a slight hazard of water erosion and a severe hazard of wind erosion. Dominant vegetation in potential natural plant community is bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, Letterman needlegrass, mountain big sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush. Major uses are irrigated and nonirrigated cropland and rangeland. Suitable crops are wheat, barley, alfalfa, pasture and potatoes.

43 - Juniperbute fine sand, 2 to 30 percent slopes.

This soil is composed of 85% Juniperbute soil and 15% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on stabilized dunes and basalt plains, at elevations of approximately 5,500 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 14 inches. It has very rapid permeability and low available water capacity. It has a moderate hazard of water erosion and a very severe hazard of wind erosion. Dominant vegetation in potential natural plant community is needle and thread, thickspike wheatgrass, arrowleaf balsamroot, basin big sagebrush and antelope bitterbrush. Major use is rangeland.

121 - St. Anthony gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes.

This soil is composed of 80% St. Anthony soil and 20% contrasting inclusions. It occurs on stream terraces, at elevations of approximately 5,000 feet. Average annual precipitation is about 14 inches. It has moderately rapid permeability and low available water capacity. It has a slight hazard of water erosion. Presence of gravel and cobbles on the surface can make seed bed preparation difficult. Dominant vegetation is not listed. Major uses are irrigated cropland, pasture and windbreaks. Suitable crops are wheat, barley, alfalfa, pasture and potatoes. Trees suitable for planting are Idaho hybrid poplar, Russian olive, golden willow, Rocky Mountain juniper, Austrian pine, Norway spruce and Scotch pine. Shrubs suitable for planting are lilac, Siberian peashrub, European privet, Tatarian honeysuckle and Peking cotoneaster.

APPENDIX I. WILDLIFE RESOURCES

Section 1. Waterfowl

The property has the potential to become an excellent waterfowl production and hunting area with its ponds and wetlands if managed for that purpose. There are also numerous areas where additional ponds could be created which would increase that potential.

A variety of waterfowl species utilize the CWS. Canada geese, lesser scaup, bufflehead, ring-necked, redhead, ruddy, canvasback, gadwall, mallard, widgeon, shoveler, cinnamon teal, greenwing teal, bluewing teal and wood ducks could all potentially nest on the CWS. With future protection of nesting areas and the construction of nesting structures, waterfowl production should increase dramatically.

Section 2. Trumpeter Swans

Trumpeter Swans are among the rarest of all North American waterfowl. In September of 1994, the local Tri-State trumpeter swan population, including resident nesting adults, was at its lowest numbers since 1945. Trumpeter swans are currently listed as a Priority Species under the Species of Special Concern designation in Idaho and are federally listed as a Species of Concern. The Chester Wetlands offers the best potential for trumpeter swan nesting sites in all of eastern Idaho.

The large pond at the north end of the property known as Singleton Pond is a historic trumpeter swan nesting territory. There have been swans on the pond at various times but nesting, at least successful nesting, has not occurred for some time. In recent years, two swans were noted in the fall of 1994 on the pond but no cygnets were observed. In early July of 1995, there were again two swans on the pond but no cygnets. In 1996 the territory was noted as being "vacant." In 1997 there were four swans but no nest mound observed, in 1998 and 1999 there have been four swans, two on the main pond and two on one of the ponds to the south but these birds were noted as "nonbreeders" on the survey. Human disturbances, flooding during nesting and/or the livestock grazing program on the surrounding pastures may have been effecting nesting swans.

The pond complex on the CWS has the potential to provide excellent trumpeter swan nesting habitat if managed for that purpose. There are a number of ponds in addition to the Singleton Pond that may be potential trumpeter swan nesting territories.

Trumpeter swans are sensitive to human disturbance on their breeding grounds and nest abandonment is often a result. Although trumpeter swans have not nested here for several years, this pond complex has the potential to be some of the best trumpeter swan nesting habitat in the area. Regulating human disturbance during the nesting season and managing for nesting habitat will be strategies to improve success of nesting swans.

Section 3. Bald Eagles

The bald eagle is listed as Threatened under the ESA. Even though the federal classification for the bald eagle was changed from “Endangered” to “Threatened” in 1995, management of bald eagles remains under the Endangered Species Act and is administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. In the Greater Yellowstone area, bald eagle management is outlined in the *Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Management Plan—1995 Update* (Greater Bald Eagle Working Group 1996) which incorporates recovery and maintenance steps for bald eagle populations in this area. Bald eagles are frequently seen on the CWS and along the Henry’s Fork in the area. There is an active bald eagle nest that has been occupied since at least 1989 on the CWS. That nest was not documented until 1989 but was active for at least three years prior to that according to the previous landowner. There is a second nest on the property of which use is unknown and another on private land close by.

Section 4. Sandhill Cranes

The property is a significant staging and production area for sandhill cranes. With future management to improve habitat the CWS should provide good habitat for sandhill cranes. The IDFG will attempt to reduce sandhill crane depredation on neighboring properties by providing appropriate food crops for use by sandhill cranes.

Section 5. Big Game

White-tailed deer, mule deer and moose have historically used the CWS property. Use would likely increase with management directed toward improving wildlife habitat.

White-tailed deer numbers appear to be increasing along the Henry’s Fork of the Snake River. Population surveys have not been conducted to date, consequently, little is known about this population.

Mule deer have been noted to use sagebrush habitats on the property during the spring, summer and fall.

Moose use the area year round. As willow habitats regenerate on the property use of the area by moose should increase. With the extensive willow communities and wetlands present on the property the area should provide excellent moose habitat.

Section 6. Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse

Due to population declines throughout its range, the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse is presently under petition for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Consequently, a state wide Conservation Assessment and Strategy is currently being developed for this species and is in draft form (IDFG 1998).

The Chester Wetlands is within occupied habitat for sharp-tailed grouse. There are two active and three historic sharptail leks within 2.5 miles of this property. Hens typically nest within 2 km (1.2 miles) of a lek and sharptails spend most if not all of their life cycle within 6.5 km (4 miles) of a lek. Populations in the area north of the CWS have apparently been increasing where several thousand acres of farm land was enrolled in the Conservaton Reserve Program in the late 1980's. Much of this land is due to come out of CRP which may have a significant impact on sharptails in this area in the future. The CWS could become a significant wintering area. Wintering sharptails were noted on the property in December 2001. Management issues pertaining to Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are covered extensively in the SCWMA management plan.

Section 7. Sage Grouse.

The Chester Wetlands is within occupied sage grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat. Sage grouse populations in the Upper Snake River region have been declining for the last forty years and are currently at historic low numbers. Much of that decline is suspected to be a result of habitat degradation and loss.

There are four historic leks on lands adjacent to the Chester Wetlands Segment. In addition, there are 5 historic and two active leks within 1.5 miles of the property. These leks are located on the south, west, and north sides of the CWS property. For migratory sage grouse populations, leks generally are associated with nesting habitats but migratory birds may also move as far as 18 km (11 miles) to nest sites. Consequently, the CWS is well within occupied sage grouse nesting and brood rearing habitat.

The Idaho Sage Grouse Management Plan was completed and signed in 1997 to address habitat issues state wide. Management issues pertaining to sage grouse are covered extensively in the SCWMA management plan. In addition new guidelines have been published about managing sage grouse populations and their habitats (Connelly et al. 2000). Information in these guidelines will be utilized to manage sage grouse habitats.

Section 8. Furbearers.

Beaver, mink, otter and muskrat inhabit the riparian areas of the CWS. Coyote, red fox, badger, bobcat, raccoon, weasels, black-tailed jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, pygmy rabbits, snowshoe rabbits, white-tailed jackrabbits and striped skunks also inhabit the CWS. Trapping is allowed on the CWS and trappers must register with the manager.

Section 9. Species of Special Concern, Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Plant and Animal Species that are or could potentially use the Chester Wetlands

Status taken from "Idaho Conservation data center " (IDFG 2002).

Status

- S - Sensitive Species
- SC - Species of Special Concern
- E - Endangered Species
- T – Threatened
- P – Protected Nongame
- W – Watch Species

<u>Wildlife Species</u>	<u>State Status</u>	<u>Federal</u>
Bald Eagle	E	T
Trumpeter Swan	SC	SC
Long Billed Curlew	P	SC
Great Gray Owl	SC	W
Burrowing Owl	P	SC
Whooping Crane	E	E
Peregrin Falcon	E	
Ferruginous Hawk	P	W
White Pelican	SC	
Common Loon	SC	W
Flammulated Owl	SC	W
Columbian sharp-tailed grouse	SC	SC
Townsend’s big-eared bat	SC	SC
<u>Plant Species</u>		
St. Anthony Evening Primrose		SC

Section 10. Nongame

The property provides habitat for a wide variety of nongame wildlife species. The Chester Wetlands property has potential to provide habitat for many species of amphibians and reptiles. The area will be surveyed in the future to determine what species are present. There are approximately 160 species of nongame birds and 15 nongame mammals that would most likely utilize the CWS (Appendix J).

Section 11. Fisheries

Prior to the purchase of the CWS, there was no public fishing access to the 1.75 mile section of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River on the property. The ponds on the property are not deep enough to support a fishery. Singleton Pond, the largest pond on the property, has been planted with trout by past owners and has not been able to support fish. The ponds are valuable for waterfowl production and the absence of a sport fishery in the ponds is beneficial to nesting birds.

APPENDIX J. WILDLIFE SPECIES INVENTORY

Relative Abundance

A - abundant	A species which is numerous.
C - common habitat.	Certain to be seen or heard in suitable habitat.
U - uncommon	Present, but not certain to be seen.
O - occasional	Seen only a few times during the season.
R - rare	Seen at intervals of two to five years.

MAMMALS

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>POPULATION RESIDENCY</u>	<u>LEVEL BY SEASON*</u>			
		<u>Sp</u>	<u>Su</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
moose	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
white-tailed deer	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
mule Deer	Occasional	O	O	O	-
elk	Occasional	O	O	O	-
bobcat	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
coyote	Year-Long	A	U	A	A
mink	Year-Long	C	C	C	U
red fox	Year-Long	A	A	A	A
weasel	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
badger	Year-Long	A	A	A	A
beaver	Year-Long	U	C	C	U
muskrat	Year-Long	A	A	A	C
otter	Year-Long	O	O	O	O
porcupine	Year-Long	A	C	C	A
raccoon	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
striped skunk	Year-Long	A	A	A	U
black-tailed jackrabbit	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
cottontail rabbit	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
pygmy rabbit	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
snowshoe rabbit	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
white-tailed jackrabbit	Year-Long	A	C	A	A
chipmunk	Year-Long	U	A	A	-
deer mouse	Year-Long	A	A	A	A
ground squirrel	Year-Long	C	A	-	-
kangaroo rat	Year-Long	A	A	A	-
meadow vole	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
northern flying squirrel	Year-Long	Unknown			
pocket gopher	Year-Long	A	A	A	-
wood rat	Year-Long	C	C	C	U

yuma myotis	Occasional	-	-	O	-
long-eared myotis	Occasional	-	-	O	-
western small-footed myotis	Occasional	-	-	O	-
hoary bat	Occasional	-	-	O	-
Townsend's big-eared bat	Year-long	U	U	U	U

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>POPULATION RESIDENCY</u>	<u>LEVEL BY SEASON</u>			
		<u>Sp</u>	<u>Su</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
horned toads	Year-Long	C	C	-	-
leopard frogs	Year-Long	A	A	-	-
water snakes	Year-Long	A	A	-	-
tiger salamander	Year-Long	Unknown			
blue racer	Year-Long	Unknown			
rubber boa	Year-Long	Unknown	-	-	-

FISH

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>POPULATION RESIDENCY</u>	<u>LEVEL BY SEASON</u>			
		<u>Sp</u>	<u>Su</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
cutthroat trout	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
rainbow trout	Year-Long	A	A	A	A
brown trout	Year-Long	A	A	A	A

BIRDS

<u>LOONS-GREBES</u>	<u>POPULATION RESIDENCY</u>	<u>LEVEL BY SEASON</u>			
		<u>Sp</u>	<u>Su</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>W</u>
common loon	Occasional	O	-	-	-
eared grebe	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
pied-bill grebe	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
western grebe	Seasonal	O	O	O	-

PELICANS-CORMORANTS

American white pelican	Occasional	O	-	-	-
double crested cormorant	Seasonal	C	C	C	-

HERONS-IBISES-CRANES

American bittern	Seasonal	U	U	U	-
black-crowned night-heron	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
great blue heron	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
green-backed heron	Seasonal	U	U	-	-
sandhill crane	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
snowy egret	Occasional	O	O	-	-
white-faced ibis	Occasional	O	O	-	-

SWANS-GEESE-DUCKS

American widgeon	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
Barrow's goldeneye	Rare	R	R	R	R
blue-winged teal	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
bufflehead	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
Canada goose	Year-Long	A	A	A	C
canvasback	Rare	R	R	R	-
cinnamon teal	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
common goldeneye	Occasional	O	O	O	R
common merganser	Occasional	O	O	O	-
gadwall	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
green-winged teal	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
lessor scaup	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
mallard	Year-Long	A	A	A	C
northern pintail	Occasional	O	O	O	-
northern shoveler	Occasional	O	O	O	-
redhead	Seasonal	C	O	O	-
ring-necked duck	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
ruddy duck	Occasional	O	O	O	-
snow goose	Occasional	R	-	-	-
tundra swan	Occasional	O	-	-	O
trumpeter swan	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
wood duck	Occasional	R	R	R	-
red-breasted merganser	Occasional	O	O	-	-

RAILS-COOTS

American coot	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
Sora rail	Seasonal	U	U	U	-
Virginia rail	Seasonal	U	U	U	-

AVOCETS-PLOVERS

American avocet	Occasional	O	O	-	-
killdeer	Seasonal	A	A	A	-

SANDPIPERS

common snipe	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
long-billed curlew	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
marbled godwit	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
short-billed dowitcher	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
solitary sandpiper	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
spotted sandpiper	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
willet	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
Wilson's phalarope	Seasonal	O	O	-	-

GULLS-TERNS

California gull	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
Franklin's gull	Seasonal	O	-	-	-
ring-billed gull	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
common tern	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
Forster's tern	Seasonal	O	O	-	-

VULTURES-EAGLES-HAWKS-FALCONS

American kestrel	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
bald eagle	Year-Long	O	O	O	O
Cooper's hawk	Occasional	O	O	O	-
ferruginous hawk	Occasional	O	O	O	-
golden eagle	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
northern goshawk	Seasonal	U	U	U	-
northern harrier	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
osprey	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
peregrine	Rare	R	R	R	-
prairie falcon	Occasional	O	O	O	-
red-tailed hawk	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
rough-legged hawk	Occasional	O	O	O	-
sharp-shinned hawk	Occasional	O	O	O	-
Swainson's hawk	Seasonal	O	A	A	-
turkey vulture	Seasonal	C	C	C	-

GROUSE

blue grouse	Occasional	U	U	U	U
gray partridge	Occasional	U	U	U	U
ring-necked pheasant	Occasional	O	U	O	-
ruffed grouse	Occasional	C	C	C	C
sage grouse	Occasional	U	U	U	U
sharp-tailed grouse	Year-Long	C	C	C	C

DOVES-CUCKOOS

mourning dove	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
rock dove	Year-Long	O	O	O	O

OWLS

burrowing owl	Occasional	O	O	-	-
flamulated owl	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
great gray owl	Year-Long	U	U	U	-
great horned owl	Year-Long	O	O	O	O
northern pygmy-owl	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
northern saw-whet owl	Year-Long	U	U	U	U
short-eared owl	Occasional	O	O	-	-
western screech owl	Year-Long	U	U	U	U

NIGHTJARS-SWIFTS

common nighthawk	Seasonal	-	A	-	-
common poorwill	Seasonal	U	U	-	-

HUMMINGBIRDS

calliope hummingbird	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
rufous hummingbird	Seasonal	O	O	-	-

KINGFISHER

belted kingfisher	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
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WOODPECKERS

downy woodpecker	Seasonal	C	C	-	-
hairy woodpecker	Seasonal	C	C	C	C
Lewis' woodpecker	Seasonal	C	C	-	-
northern flicker	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
Williamson's sapsucker	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
red-naped sapsucker	Occasional	O	O	-	-

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

dusky flycatcher	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
olive-sided flycatcher	Seasonal	-	C	C	-
Say's phoebe	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
willow flycatcher	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
eastern kingbird	Seasonal	-	C	C	-

western kingbird	Seasonal	-	C	C	-
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LARKS-SWALLOWS

horned lark	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
barn swallow	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
cliff swallow	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
northern rough-winged swallow	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
tree swallow	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
violet-green swallow	Seasonal	A	A	O	-

JAYS-CROWS

American crow	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
black-billed magpie	Year-Long	A	A	A	A
common raven	Year-Long	A	A	A	O

CHICKADEES-BUSHTITS

black-capped chickadee	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
mountain chickadee	Year-Long	C	C	C	C

CREEPERS-NUTHATCHES-WRENS

red-breasted nuthatch	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
white-breasted nuthatch	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
house wren	Seasonal	U	U	U	-
marsh wren	Seasonal	C	C	O	-

THRUSHES-SHRIKES-MIMIC THRUSHES

American robin	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
mountain bluebird	Seasonal	A	A	C	-
sage thrasher	Seasonal	A	A	-	-
Townsend's solitaire	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
golden-crowned kinglet	Seasonal	U	U	U	-
ruby crowned kinglet	Seasonal	U	U	U	-
loggerhead shrike	Seasonal	-	-	A	A
northern shrike	Seasonal	O	O	-	-

PIPITS-DIPPERS-WAXWINGS

American dipper	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
cedar waxwing	Year-Long	O	O	O	O

STARLINGS-VIREOS-WARBLERS

common yellowthroat	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
European starling	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
MacGillivray's warbler	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
solitary vireo	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
Wilson's warbler	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
yellow-rumped warbler	Seasonal	C	C	C	-
yellow warbler	Seasonal	C	C	C	-

GROSBEAKS-BUNTINGS-SPARROWS

black-headed grosbeak	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
brewer's sparrow	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
chipping sparrow	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
dark-eyed junco	Year-Long	C	C	C	C
fox sparrow	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
green-tailed towhee	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
lark sparrow	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
lazuli bunting	Rare	R	R	-	-
rufous-sided towhee	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
song sparrow	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
snow bunting	Seasonal	U	U	-	-
vesper sparrow	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
white-crowned sparrow	Seasonal	O	O	O	-

BLACKBIRDS-ORIOLES

bobolink	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
Brewer's blackbird	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
brown-headed cowbird	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
northern oriole	Seasonal	C	C	O	-
red-winged blackbird	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
western meadowlark	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
western tanager	Seasonal	O	O	O	-
yellow-headed blackbird	Seasonal	A	A	A	-

WEAVERS-FINCHES

American goldfinch	Seasonal	A	A	A	-
Cassin's finch	Seasonal	O	O	-	-
evening grosbeak	Seasonal	O	O	U	-
house finch	Year-Long	A	A	A	A
house sparrow	Year-Long	C	C	C	O
pine siskin	Year-Long	O	O	O	O
red crossbill	Seasonal	U	U	U	U

ACCIDENTAL BIRD SPECIES

barn owl
eastern bluejay
purple martin
rosy finch
western gull

APPENDIX K. WATER RIGHTS

Description of water rights.

- I. Dewey Canal: Two owners of 200 shares of stock. Chester Wetlands owns 162 shares and neighbor owns 38 shares.
 - A. Natural flow is 37.2 cfs (1,860 miners inches) for 1,707 acres. Chester Wetlands acreage is 1,436 or 84% of total.
 - B. Henry's Lake storage total of 2,096 acre feet. 1,689 allocated to Chester Wetlands based on share ownership.

Fremont Madison Irrigation

- A. Chester Wetlands owns 507-acre feet of Fremont Madison irrigation district space.
- B. Neighbor owns 82- acre feet.

APPENDIX L. NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL PLAN

Little is known about the state of noxious weeds at the time this plan was created. During the first weed season in 2002 IDFG will survey and map the area to determine what species are present and the extent of weed problems. Noxious weed control efforts will begin immediately and target all species that are identified on the property.

The CWS has several known infestations of noxious weed species, which are:

Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*);
field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*);
musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*);
spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*).

Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) has not been detected. Other, undetected noxious weeds may be present on the CWS.

Infestations of Canada thistle, musk thistle and field bindweed are spread throughout the CWS. Spotted knapweed has only been found along North River road where it enters the property. Infestations of field bindweed have been found in some of the agricultural fields.

Noxious weed control efforts will be a combination of chemical, physical, and biological control methods (commonly referred to as integrated pest management). Infestations will be evaluated on an individual basis to determine the best methods of treatment. A greater emphasis will be placed on the use of biological control methods wherever possible to reduce herbicide use and long term control costs. Control efforts where biological control is not feasible will primarily rely on treating infestations with herbicides (2,4-D most commonly used), hand pulling small infestations, and summer fallowing some agricultural fields.

Noxious weed infestations will be monitored. Monitoring will involve inspecting infected areas throughout the growing season for response to current and previous year's treatments (Appendix M). Areas will be monitored for new infestations of noxious weeds during the course of other activities. Locations of new infestations will be recorded and appropriate control measures implemented. Annual treatment measures and monitoring results will be documented and submitted annually.

The staff of the Sand Creek WMA is involved in the implementation of the Henry's Fork Weed Management Area Plan and the Coordinated Management of Noxious Weeds in the Greater Yellowstone Area Plan. Weed control efforts will be coordinated with neighbors and Fremont County.

APPENDIX M. MONITORING PLAN

A monitoring program is essential in order to provide the information necessary for managers and management agencies to develop sound management plans. It should provide baseline data, and post-application data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The following is an outline of anticipated monitoring for the CWS. A more detailed monitoring plan will be developed.

The goals of the CWS monitoring program are to:

1. Obtain reliable baseline information on the status of wildlife species and habitats on the property.
2. Obtain reliable information to evaluate responses of wildlife and habitats to various future management practices.
3. Provide a permanent record of information to evaluate long-term trends in species occurrence, production, and distribution.
4. Document habitat changes over time.
5. Document management practices over time.
6. Document public use over time.

Potential Surveys and Monitoring on the CWS.

I. Waterfowl

A. Goose Production

Objective: Determine production of Canadian geese on the CWS. Conduct goose brood surveys to determine production.

B. Nesting Structure Use Survey

Objective: If artificial nesting structures are constructed then monitor their use.

C. Duck Nesting survey

Objective: Obtain data on habitats used by ducks for nesting and on nesting success. Determine whether or not current management practices and habitats are providing optimum nesting opportunity.

II. Trumpeter Swans

A. Trumpeter Swan Production Survey

Objective: Document production of trumpeter swans on CWS.

B. Trumpeter Swan Wintering Survey

Objective: Document presence of trumpeter swans wintering on CWS.

III. Other Wildlife Species

A. Sage and sharp-tailed grouse Distribution

Objective: Monitor, record, and map locations of sage and sharp-tailed grouse concentration areas.

Background: An initial lek search will be conducted in the spring of 2002 for baseline data. In the course of performing normal duties on CWS, locations of sage and sharp-tailed grouse will be noted and recorded on the GPS data base. Data on winter distribution of sage and sharp-tailed grouse is limited. In addition, ground searches for wintering grouse, especially sharptails, will be conducted.

B. White-tailed Deer

Objective: Obtain baseline data on the CWS white-tailed deer population.

C. Species of Special Concern; Rare, Threatened and Endangered species

Objective: Obtain baseline data on the occurrence of any species with special designations.

Background: There are numerous wildlife species and one plant species that are listed under special designations and have been reported in the general area (See Appendix H, Section 10).

D. Other Nongame

Objective: Obtain baseline data for a variety of nongame species to determine presence or absence and relative abundance.

IV. Habitat Condition, Use and Changes

A. Habitat Monitoring

Objective: Obtain baseline vegetation data on the various habitat types on the CWS.

Background: Permanent vegetative transects and photo plots will be established in the various habitat types on the CWS using appropriate methodology. A vegetation and habitat classification map will be generated and maintained.

B. Habitat Utilization

Objective: Monitor wildlife use of specific areas.

Background: Permanent pellet and vegetation transects will be established to monitor big game use of specific areas.

C. Habitat Manipulation

Objective: Monitor the effects of habitat manipulation projects over time.

Background: Plans that include objectives and monitoring will be completed prior to project implementation. Monitoring will be used to determine whether or not objectives are met.

V. Management Practices

A. Water Flow Measurements

Objective: Monitor water flows for water rights documentation.

B. Farming

Objective: Monitor farming activities, crops planted, crop success, use by wildlife, weed control, and crop rotations.

Background: Farming data is documented in the Department's annual farming and sharecropping report.

C. Weed Control

Objective: Monitor area infested, species controlled, control method, area treated and treatment success.

Background: Weed control data is documented in the Department's annual noxious weed control report. Weed control plans are reported in the Department's annual noxious weed control plan.

VI. Public Use

A. Monitor waterfowl hunter harvest.

Objective: Conduct check stations and field checks to determine success of waterfowl hunters on the CWS.

B. Monitor big game hunter harvest

Objective: Conduct field checks to determine success of big game hunters on the CWS.

C. Monitor upland game bird harvest

Objective: Conduct field checks to determine success of upland game bird hunters on the CWS. Wing will be collected to assess population status and reproduction success.

D. Angler Survey

Objective: Document angler participation and catch rates on the CWS section of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River.

E. Trapping

Objective: Monitor trapping success and species taken.

Background: Trappers are presently required to register with the WMA manager prior to trapping activities.

F. General Public Use

Objective: Monitor relative amounts and types of use by the public and maintain a user database to provide input on management activities.

APPENDIX N. FENCING PLAN

There are 5.75 miles of perimeter fence on the CWS. All of this is permanent fence of various types and conditions. The fence will have to be maintained to keep neighboring livestock out of CWS pastures. Perimeter fence will be evaluated annually to determine if replacement of sections is necessary. Funding levels will dictate whether targeted replacement sections are completed. There is also a considerable amount of interior fence on the property. Each year sections of interior fence will be evaluated and slated for removal if they are deemed unnecessary. Fence will be removed as resources are available. IDFG will utilize workers from the St. Anthony Work Camp to assist with the fencing responsibilities when possible.

APPENDIX O. FARMING PLAN

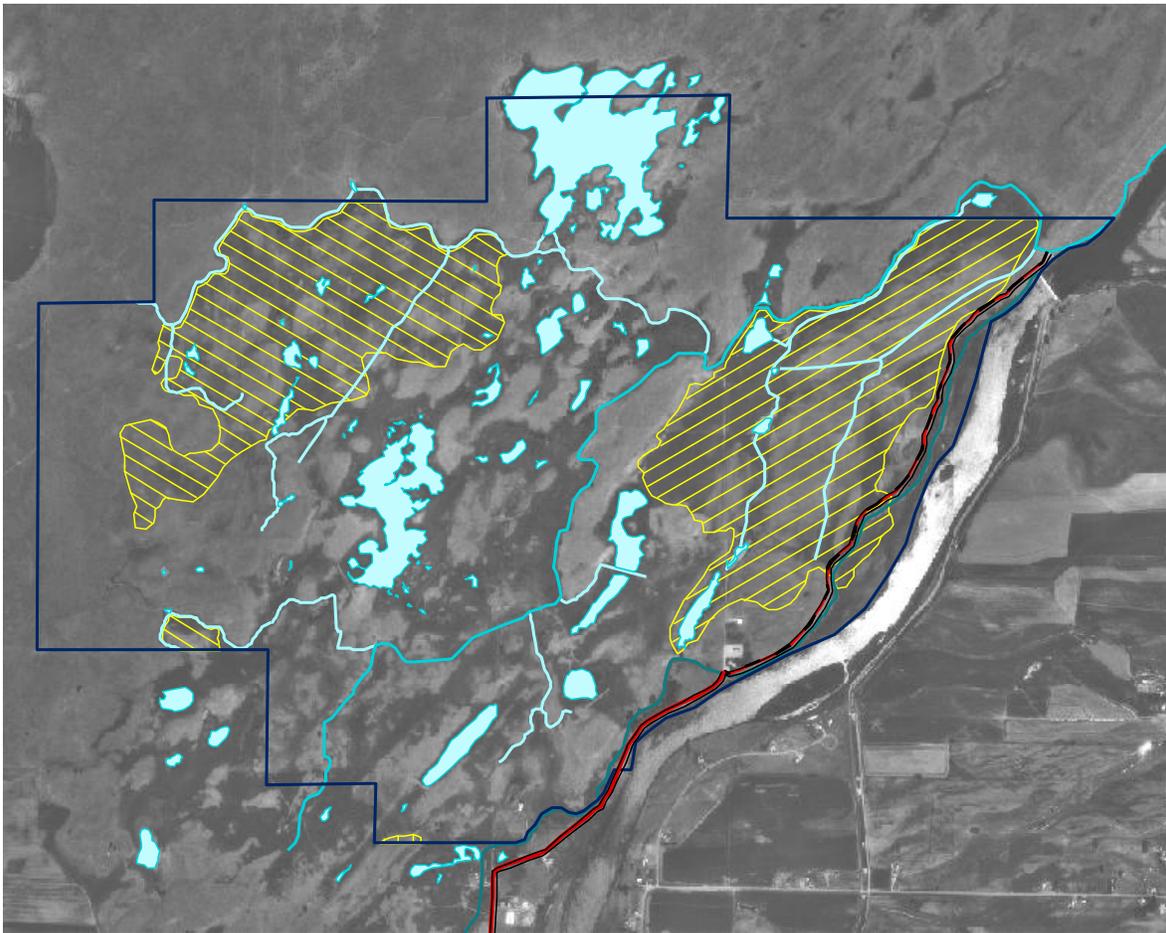
The department will explore the potential of farming to produce food plots for wildlife use on the property. The suitability of the area for farming and available water for irrigation will be determined. Initially, department personnel will plant small food plots to determine how successful planting can be. Most of the farmable lands are listed as highly erodible and this designation must be carefully considered in plan development. Planting windbreaks and cover may be necessary to reduce erosion. A farming plan may include share-crop and/or use-trade agreements with appropriate cooperators. Consideration will be given to reducing existing depredation problems on adjacent properties and minimizing future concerns. Agricultural fields that are not used for crop production will be planted into permanent cover using a seed mixture of native plant species or acceptable non-native species that provide optimum nesting cover for waterfowl.

There are approximately 405 acres of farmable land on the CWS. About 371 acres have been farmed historically but have been most recently used for irrigated pasture. Flood irrigation is available to irrigate farmland if enough water is available after securing water levels in ponds.

Farming activities will be structured to provide optimum benefits to wildlife but will depend on suitability of soil and water resources, funding, personnel levels and according to the departments farming, sharecropping, and grazing policy (IDFG 2001). The following are options that will be considered in future farming plans:

1. Use department personnel and resources to plant small acreages of food crops and leave standing for wildlife use. Sand Creek WMA personnel and department equipment can be used for farming activities. (This system requires a great deal of time, considerable funding, and good equipment but all of the crops can be used for wildlife purposes.)
2. Seek opportunities to sharecrop or develop use-trade agreements that include farming. Any such agreements must be consistent with the SCWMA mission. (This will require that large acreages be farmed in order to be profitable for the cooperator. The Department's share of the crops is typically one third.)
3. Use a custom farmer to farm the cropland. This option leaves all the crops for wildlife but is expensive.
4. Do not pursue crop farming operations and plant all fields into permanent cover

APPENDIX P. MAP OF FARMABLE FIELDS



-  North river road
-  Chester dam road
-  Chester wetlands boundary
-  Chester ponds
-  Last chance canal
-  Dewey canal
-  Canals
- Chester farmable fields by soil type**
-  18
-  19
-  38





Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Upper Snake Region GIS
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Upper Snake Region (MAR 14, 02 16:02)
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APPENDIX Q. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

A cultural resources reconnaissance survey of the Chester Wetlands property was completed in August of 2001. The survey was designed to develop a sampling strategy for the entire property, and if possible to locate potentially significant archeological or other sites that would need to be recorded. It was also designed to inform the Idaho Fish and Game of areas where archeological testing would probably be needed given the proposals that are being discussed for the future.

The survey involved pre-field research with several sources and field reconnaissance. Pre-field research determined that there is really nothing known about the local area and that archeological sites may be expected along the river and natural bodies of water. The reconnaissance identified areas where additional survey is needed. Three cultural properties were identified: 1) Ranch Buildings. 2) Lithic Quarry. 3) Irrigation System.

It was recommended that intensive surveys of the whole property be completed, costing nearly \$20,000, or to survey areas on an as needed basis where individual surface disturbance projects are to take place.

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