

# **GEORGETOWN SUMMIT**

## **Wildlife Management Area**

### **Management Plan**

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**Idaho Department Of Fish And Game  
Southeast Region  
1345 Barton Road  
Pocatello, Idaho 83204**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area (GSWMA) is located 12 miles south of Soda Springs in Bear Lake County. It is one of the properties managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Department) to provide wildlife habitat and wildlife related recreation. The Department owns 772 acres, leases 907 acres from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), and holds a 50% share in the grazing lease on 1670 acres in two adjacent parcels owned by Idaho Department of Lands (Figure 1). Funding for the initial land purchase was from the Land Acquisition and Habitat Development account and the RMEF. Operating funds come primarily from license revenues and Pittman-Robertson (Federal Aid) cost-share programs. The primary management objective is deer and elk winter range. Access for hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing on GSWMA will be maintained as possible without compromising wildlife habitat values

This plan includes the vision and mission for GSWMA; the goals, objectives and strategies for its management; and descriptive details of its location, wildlife, vegetation and history. It supplements the Department's Policy Plan 1990-2005: A Vision for the Future, and was developed using public involvement. Appendix IX provides details of the issues and discussion topics from the final public open houses held during the planning process in 1996. This is a long-term plan for management of GSWMA, with an indefinite life span. The plan will be modified as necessary to accommodate adaptive management, and to incorporate available new knowledge and techniques.

The mission of the GSWMA is to enhance elk and mule deer winter range and sharp-tailed grouse habitat through vegetation management; maintain optimal successional stage and vegetation type diversity while improving plant vigor for the benefit of wildlife and fish; and provide opportunities for nonconsumptive and consumptive wildlife-based recreation that is compatible with maintaining high quality wildlife and fish habitat. Under Department management, these lands are also protected from future development.

Winter forage for deer and elk is provided through a variety of vegetation management approaches. Forage quantity and quality will be maintained or improved by using prescribed burns, tree removal, planting, fertilization, and/or grazing management. Evaluation will continue using an established vegetation monitoring program. Winter security and thermal cover for wildlife will be provided by protecting riparian areas and by limiting shrub treatments to those necessary to meet forage objectives. Security will be further provided by restricting motorized access, marking boundaries and posting informational signs.

Upland game, waterfowl and nongame habitat needs will also be considered in management of the area. Needs of nongame and sensitive species will be evaluated before vegetation manipulations are implemented to benefit game species.

Motorized vehicles will be restricted to established roads, while nonmotorized access will be permitted except when necessary to prevent excessive stress to wildlife during severe winters.

**Figure 1. Map of Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area.**

Facilities will be limited to parking areas and interpretive signs. Primitive roads will be maintained as budgets permit.

Another significant issue addressed in this plan is to establish good working relationships with neighboring landowners. Long-term progress toward this goal is planned by the development of a Coordinated Resource Management Plan between Idaho Department of Lands, the Caribou National Forest, the Georgetown Grazing Association and the Department.

## **VISION**

The GSWMA will be managed to provide and improve deer and elk winter range and provide diverse upland and riparian communities for game and nongame species.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the GSWMA is to enhance elk and mule deer winter range and sharp-tailed grouse habitat through vegetation management; maintain optimal successional stage and vegetation type diversity while improving plant vigor for the benefit of wildlife and fish; provide opportunities for nonconsumptive and consumptive wildlife-based recreation that is compatible with maintaining high quality wildlife and fish habitat; and protect habitat from future development.

## **DURATION OF PLAN**

This is a long-term plan for management of GSWMA, with an indefinite life span. The plan will be modified as necessary to accommodate adaptive management, and to incorporate available new knowledge and techniques.

## **LOCATION**

The Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area (GSWMA) is located in Bear Lake County approximately 12 miles southeast of Soda Springs. The legal description includes parts of T10S, R43E, Sections 10, 15, 22, 26, 27, 28, 34 and 35. Topographic map coverage appears on USGS 7.5-Minute Series Fossil Canyon Quadrangle.

## **DESCRIPTION**

The GSWMA is comprised of 1678 acres in two parcels separated by U.S. Highway 30 at Georgetown Summit. Nine hundred seven acres of the south parcel is deeded to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) and leased to the Department (see Appendix XI). Nearly 2,000 acres of land between the two parcels is owned by the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL).

Of that acreage, 1,670 acres is leased to the Georgetown Grazing Association in which the Department has a 50 percent interest.

Vegetation is generally a complex of three dominant groups: 1) sagebrush-grasslands, 2) aspen and tall shrub deciduous forests, and 3) mixed mountain brush types (Kuck 1984). The majority of the WMA is represented by the two former groups, although vegetation in specific locations is dependant upon climatic factors as well as land use and management history. Fifty acres of the Bear River Valley bottom have been seeded to alfalfa.

The GSWMA provides year-round habitat for elk and mule deer, with winter and spring being the most important seasons of use. Elk calving has occurred on the area. Other wildlife on the GSWMA include: bald and golden eagles, various hawks, falcons, sandhill cranes, ducks, Canada geese, ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, gray partridge, many species of songbirds, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, badgers, cottontail rabbits, weasels, and ground squirrels. Several species of trout, whitefish and nongame fish are found in the Bear River. A more complete list of birds, mammals, fish and reptiles is included in Appendix VII.

## **MANAGEMENT ISSUES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES**

### **Issue 1: Perpetuation and enhancement of wildlife populations and habitat (Appendix IX).**

Discussion: The mission of the GSWMA is to provide winter habitat for elk and mule deer and year-round habitat for upland game and nongame species. Within budget and time constraints, we will explore every reasonable method to improve habitat. Any habitat manipulation that takes place on GSWMA must be in keeping with the mission of the area.

The Georgetown Summit area has historically been a wintering site for big game. The number of elk wintering there has increased in recent years and currently exceeds 200 elk. These elk have caused depredation problems for one adjacent landowner since 1985. In addition to providing a fence around his feedlot, the Department will attempt to reduce the incidence of depredations on his and other adjacent private lands by manipulating vegetation on the GSWMA. The Department has also initiated a land-use trade agreement with another adjacent landowner. He is permitted to continue his use of some of the GSWMA property in exchange for excluding cattle and leaving unharvested grain on portions of his property along the Bear River. This arrangement will also benefit waterfowl and upland game.

U.S. Highway 30 runs through or near parts of GSWMA. Because deer and elk may cross or concentrate near the highway, the risk of collisions between animals and vehicles is always present. One management goal is to provide secure winter habitat on the area to reduce winter movements of elk and permit them to forage in areas away from the highway. The Department is concerned about the potential impacts of planned improvements to U.S. Highway 30 through GSWMA in that traffic may move faster and the risk of mortalities for wildlife may increase.

While the GSWMA was purchased primarily as mule deer winter range, we will manage the area for other wildlife species, including upland game and furbearers. Any habitat manipulation that takes place on GSWMA must be in keeping with the mission of the area. Most projects that are funded with license dollars also provide significant benefits to nongame species. Projects intended to specifically enhance nongame wildlife populations or habitat will be supported by nongame funding sources.

Although predation may also have an impact on elk and deer populations, area management will not be directed at controlling predation; rather, management will focus on providing the forage and security needs to produce healthy big game populations.

- I. Goal: Provide secure winter habitat for big game, upland game and nongame wildlife.
  - A. Objective: Provide winter forage for elk and mule deer.
    1. Strategies:
      - (a) Forage will be protected from trespass or excessive grazing by livestock with boundary fencing and/or closely monitored grazing agreements. The habitat biologist is currently working on a Coordinated Resource Management Plan with IDL and a neighboring sheep operator who grazes IDL and USFS leases.
      - (b) Forage will be maintained in optimum condition through prescribed burns (in cooperation with IDL and USFS), controlled grazing and/or herbicides.
      - (c) Bitterbrush seedlings will be planted on burned or disturbed sites as needed.
      - (d) Emergency big game feeding will be conducted on GSWMA in accordance with state-wide Department policy. The policy states that the Department is authorized to feed big game only to prevent damage to private property, for public safety or to prevent excessive mortality in drainages that would affect the recovery of the herd.
      - (e) Selected portions of the GSWMA have been fertilized by helicopter. Based on results from these experimental plots as well as budgets constraints, we may expand this program.
    2. Monitoring: Vegetation transects will be evaluated annually. These will provide information about vegetation composition, cover and utilization. Using this information we will be able to determine the need for additional treatments.
  - B. Objective: Provide winter security for wildlife.
    1. Strategies:
      - (a) Human entry onto the GSWMA will be restricted to prevent harassment of wintering big game.



- (b) Boundaries will be clearly marked and roads gated to prevent closed-season entry by motorized vehicles.
- (c) Maps of the area and information signs will be placed on all areas explaining the purpose and location of restrictions.
- (d) All gates and information signs will be maintained.
- (e) Tall brush and timber will be maintained for security and thermal cover by excluding riparian areas and aspen/shrub communities from fire or herbicide treatment.
- (f) In cooperation with Idaho Department of Transportation elk and deer crossing signs will be placed at key points on U.S. Highway 30 to warn motorists of the danger of animals on the roadway.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Big game winter use will be monitored in conjunction with regional big game aerial surveys.
- (b) Upland game and nongame will not be formally monitored, but records of sightings will be kept.
- (c) Impacts of Highway 30 improvements will be evaluated by monitoring big game winter highway mortalities.

II. Goal: Provide good breeding habitat for small game and nongame wildlife species.

A. Objective: Provide for upland game bird production.

Strategies:

- 1. Preserve natural perennial and ephemeral springs and seeps along with associated vegetation.
- 2. Protect grouse nesting cover by controlling trespass grazing.

B. Objective: Maintain or increase populations of nongame wildlife species.

1. Strategies:

- (a) Maintain or improve the diversity of vegetation types.
- (b) Preserve natural perennial and ephemeral springs and seeps and associated vegetation.
- (c) Evaluate needs for nongame wildlife and provide developments as necessary.
- (d) Consider non-target and sensitive species before habitat manipulation practices are put into effect.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Determine use of and maintain nongame bird nest boxes annually.
- (b) Develop "listening post" survey route for song birds.

**Issue 2: Need to provide a variety of nonconsumptive and consumptive recreational opportunities consistent with the GSWMA mission (Appendix IX).**

Discussion: A primary mission of GSWMA is to provide adequate public access for consumptive and nonconsumptive public uses, and public information regarding the history and mission of the GSWMA without compromising the quality of the habitat, wildlife security, or the outdoor experience. License fees have been used in the purchase of WMA property and license holders, as well as others, expect reasonable access to these properties. Questions relevant to this issue are "How accessible should the land be?" and "What kinds of access are appropriate?" Foot access appears to cause few problems for wildlife during most of the year, due to low densities of area users on foot, although studies indicate big game do avoid humans regardless of the mode of travel. During severe winters when animals are already stressed by cold temperatures and/or deep snow, human presence may induce unacceptable levels of stress and reduce animal survival. Vehicle access can also be detrimental to wildlife security and can impact the condition of animals due to disturbance. Increased vulnerability during hunting seasons is directly related to vehicular access. Additionally, area users may define the quality of their experience by the amount of traffic or number of hunters they encounter. For these reasons, vehicle access on GSWMA may be limited to specific times and locations, consistent with the Department's objectives of providing opportunities to a wide range of constituents while protecting wildlife and associated habitat.

Goal: Manage access to provide quality opportunities for hunting, trapping and wildlife appreciation.

Objective: Manage type and timing of use.

1. Strategies:
  - (a) Maintain security cover for game animals during the hunting season by limiting motorized vehicles to open and maintained roads and providing parking areas at selected access points.
  - (b) Horse access will be allowed, but no facilities will be provided, other than parking.
  - (c) Access maps will be available at parking areas and vehicular access points.
  - (d) Primitive camping is allowed, but no facilities are provided.
  - (e) Quality of roads will be maintained as budgets allow.
  - (f) Non-motorized public access, such as cross-country skiing, will be allowed. Signs will be placed at access sites addressing wintering big game. In the event of a severe winter (as defined in the regional winter feeding advisory guidelines), the GSWMA may be closed to ANY human entry to reduce the stress to wintering wildlife.
2. Monitoring: Collect user survey forms throughout the year and compile results annually.

**Issue 3: We must maintain and/or improve working relationships with neighboring landowners (Appendix IX).**

Discussion: It is important for the Department to establish a working relationship with neighboring landowners and permittees by maintaining open lines of communication for discussing mutual concerns. Some important concerns in neighbor relations on the GSWMA are grazing management, depredations on private land, noxious weed control and public information regarding the boundaries between public and private land. Building and maintaining boundary fences will eliminate potential and current livestock trespass problems. There have been conflicts between wildlife and neighboring livestock owners, and in response the Department built a fence around the feed yard south of the WMA to protect it from depredations. A Winter Feeding Advisory Board and Winter Feeding Plan have been established to determine when deer and/or elk should be fed during severe winters, reducing the impact of big game on private land. Control of noxious weeds is pursued on a continuing basis throughout the growing season to reduce the impact of weeds on wildlife habitat and prevent their spread to adjacent private land.

The development of a Coordinated Resource Management Plan will provide an opportunity for Department personnel to form a better working relationship with neighboring landowners.

I. Goal: Establish all boundaries, monitor easements, and address other common concerns.

Objective: Clearly mark boundaries.

Strategies:

1. Survey all boundaries that are not established.
2. Place or replace boundary markers on GSWMA.
3. Maintain boundary fence constructed in 1997 between GSWMA and private property to the south.
4. Participate in land-use trade agreements with adjacent property owners when wildlife will benefit from improved habitat and landowners are willing cooperators
5. Purchase land or obtain easements in accordance with Department policy when necessary to achieve the mission of GSWMA.

II. Goal: Work to control noxious weeds (mandated by state law) which cause poor neighbor relations and may be a threat to native vegetation on GSWMA.

A. Objective: Control Dyers' wood and thistle on GSWMA.

Strategies:

1. Identify noxious weed problem areas and map them.
2. Seasonal temporary employees and permanent staff will apply chemical herbicides using a four-wheeler and backpack sprayers.
3. Biological insect control will be used for Canada and musk thistle.
4. Maintain working relationship with county weed control officer.

5. Aerial herbicide application may be considered for small areas of thick weeds, but every precaution will be taken to insure that native vegetation, particularly bitterbrush and other shrub species, are not adversely affected.
6. Spraying will begin as early as possible in the spring and continue throughout the growing season.

B. Monitoring:

1. Habitat personnel will maintain logs documenting chemical and biological weed treatments.
2. We will map the location of insect releases and inspect the areas to monitor effectiveness.
3. We will work with Bear Lake County weed control officer to identify and help control noxious weeds.

III. Goal: Develop land management strategy that includes other land ownership.

Objective: Complete cooperative resource management plan for Georgetown Summit area by March, 2000.

Strategies:

1. Meet with IDL representative and partner in Georgetown Summit Grazing Association to work out grazing strategies.
2. Plan prescribed burning on GSWMA and IDL property to maintain vegetation in a mix of seral stages in cooperation with Caribou National Forest and adjacent private landowners.

**Issue 4: The Department will acquire additional property to help achieve the WMA mission.**

Discussion: The Department has purchased land for many years to improve and protect wildlife habitat as well as to provide public access. The practice has been welcomed by some but has been a topic of controversy for others. Sportsmen have always encouraged the Department to purchase additional land in order to provide the benefits listed above. However, some sportsmen have been concerned about how land purchases are funded.

County commissions have resisted the Department's purchase of lands because those lands were then removed from the county tax base. Private individuals resented the Department taking productive lands out of the hands of citizens who could farm or graze those lands for income. Both groups have felt that the Department has had enough problems managing the lands that they already owned without adding more land.

In order to reduce the resistance to Department ownership of land, several steps were taken. First, the Department introduced legislation that now allows "in lieu of taxes" payments to each county where the Department owns land. This satisfied county concerns. Secondly, the Department decided to focus its acquisition dollars towards: 1) key big game habitat, 2) wetlands capable of producing significant numbers of waterfowl and hunting opportunities, 3) access to waterways for fishing, 4) access for hunting, 5) lands adjacent to existing wildlife management

areas, 6) upland habitats close to population centers, and 7) sites for fishing reservoir development (Dept. Policy A-14.04). The purchase of agricultural lands will be avoided, mostly due to their high cost. Also, when possible, easements will be purchased to provide access to the public and not take the land from private ownership.

Department policy A-14.04 states "The primary sources of funds for land acquisition are the Land Acquisition and Habitat Development Account [I.C. 36-107(c)], the waterfowl Habitat Improvement Program, Pittman-Robertson and Dingle-Johnson funds, Ducks Unlimited M.A.R.S.H. funds, some limited license funds, salmon-steelhead tag funds, and occasionally mitigation funds. Most of these funding sources have some restrictions on the kinds of properties which can be acquired." This policy controls how a particular acquisition can be funded.

For the WMA's within the Southeast Region, additional land will be acquired if some or all of the following criteria are met: 1) the land is adjacent to the WMA, 2) there is a willing seller, and 3) the land provides a benefit to wildlife (winter range, wetlands, etc).

Goal: To improve and protect wildlife habitat by acquiring land or easements.

A. Objective: Purchase land adjacent to WMA's.

Strategies:

1. Identify land that is being offered for sale and/or that falls within guidelines.
2. Approach owners with proposals that follow all Department policies.
3. Make neighbors and other agencies aware that the Department is interested in land purchases from willing sellers.
4. Identify land that may be acquired through trades with other individuals and/or agencies.
5. Ensure county commission is apprised of Department intentions prior to any land purchase and hold public meetings if requested or deemed appropriate.

B. Objective: Acquire easements on lands that have high wildlife value and are not for sale.

Strategies:

1. Identify land that is not for sale but that is deemed to have important wildlife values.
2. Approach owners with easement options.

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## **APPENDIX I**

### **PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

#### **Physiography and Climate**

The WMA lies within the Great Basin/Rocky Mountain vegetation transition zone. Elevation in the vicinity ranges from 5800 feet on the Bear River to 7000 feet on the ridgetops. Aspect is generally south to westerly. Soils are generally light clay with fine gravel texture, but vary greatly depending on slope and aspect.

The climate of the area is moderated by predominantly moist, warm air masses moving inland from the North Pacific Ocean. Occasional Arctic air masses bring extreme winter cold. Climatic conditions are influenced locally by major mountain ranges which lie north to south, lying across west-to-east airflows.

Winter weather is cold, with mean daily temperature in January rarely exceeding 20°F, and minimums of -20°F are not unusual. Temperatures range from -40°F to 100°F. Annual precipitation is 12-15 inches, more than half of which falls in the winter as snow.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

In 1991, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) purchased 1656 acres from the Bingham family. The RMEF sold 749 acres to the Department and leased the remaining 907 acres to the Department for 20 years. The property lies in two parcels. The north parcel is joined on the north and east by Caribou National Forest land and on the south and west by land belonging to the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). The south parcel is adjacent to IDL and private land. An additional 23-acre parcel adjoining the southwest boundary of the RMEF lease was acquired from the McCammon estate in 1998 by the Monsanto Corporation and RMEF, with title being granted to the Department.

With the purchase of the property, the Department acquired a 50% interest in the Georgetown Grazing Association from the Bingham family. The Association maintains grazing rights on 1,670 acres of state-owned land administered by IDL. The Grazing Association dates back to the 1800's when the grazing rights were for horse pasture. Later, the Smart family grazed sheep and the Bingham family ran cattle. Currently, the only other partner in the Association is a sheep operation. In February, 1993, the grazing lease was renewed for ten years.

The area on Georgetown Summit has long been a winter range for big game. Recently, the number of elk wintering in the area has increased, and presently over 200 elk winter there. For 10-12 years, elk have caused depredation problems for an adjacent rancher. We have provided supplemental feed on at least two occasions to keep elk out of this sheep operation. During the winter of 1992-93, approximately 80 elk and 100 deer were counted in very close proximity to this feed area and hay sheds.

The northern portion of the GSWMA was part of the study area covered by the Cooperative Wildlife-Phosphate Study (Kuck 1984). During their study period, 1977-1981, more than 500 mule deer wintered on the Georgetown Front. Historically, this area wintered many more deer (1500 in 1970 and 1300 in 1969).



## **APPENDIX III**

### **DEVELOPMENT HISTORY**

#### **Developments**

A cabin is located on the northern portion of the GSWMA, in the Jones Creek drainage. There is a developed spring nearby which provides water for the cabin. This site also has a small, corrugated metal shed and other outbuildings. Near the Bear River there is a wooden barn and corral.

An abandoned radio tower pad exists on North Hill with a trail and power line leading up to it. There are several other dirt/gravel roads on the GSWMA, some of which provide access to the Caribou National Forest in Big Canyon and Jones Canyon. A dirt track also provides access along the high-voltage power line right-of-way which crosses the northern parcel.

At the time of purchase, several fences were present on the area. Most were in poor repair. Improvements to existing fences have been made each year, and in 1997 approximately two miles of additional fence was constructed between GSWMA and the private lands to the south.

#### **Public Use**

The previous owners had posted most of the property south of Highway 30 to restrict public access. This area will now be open for public hunting on foot or horseback. The public and private land adjacent to the GSWMA is open to snowmobile activity in the winter. Because the primary use on the GSWMA is big game winter range, we will restrict the use of snowmobiles to limit disturbance to wildlife. We will work with adjacent land management agencies to do the same.

#### **Administration**

The GSWMA will be managed by the Regional Wildlife Biologist assigned to the East Habitat District of the Southeast Region. Funding will be provided by Federal Aid to Wildlife and Fish and Game license fees. Equipment will be borrowed from the regional pool or from other regions, rented or contracted.

**APPENDIX IV  
LAND AND WATER CONTROL**

**LAND ACQUISITIONS:**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acquired From</i>
1991	HB530	748.7	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
1998	RMEF/Monsanto Corp. Gift	23.5	Lois McCammon Estate
<b>Total</b>		<b>772.2</b>	

**LAND LEASES:**

<i>Effective Date/Length</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Leased From</i>
3/6/91, 10 years	1,670.0	IDL
3/6/91, 20 years	906.7	RMEF
<b>Total</b>	<b>2576.7</b>	

In 1991, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) purchased 1656 acres from the Bingham family. Most of the property lies in two parcels. The RMEF sold 750 acres (the north parcel) to the Department and leased the remaining 906 acres to the Department for 20 years. The north parcel is bound on the north and east by Caribou National Forest land and on the south and west by land belonging to the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). The south parcel is adjacent to IDL and private land. An additional 23-acre parcel adjoining the southwest boundary of the RMEF lease was purchased from the McCammon estate in 1998 by the Monsanto Corporation and RMEF, with title being granted to the Department. The Department is a 50 % partner in the Georgetown Grazing Association, which holds the grazing lease on IDL lands adjacent to GSWMA. The Department's share is used to provide wildlife forage.

**COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT**

The Department has entered into a cooperative agreement with a local farmer. He is allowed to farm approximately 28 acres and graze about 70 acres of Department property in exchange for leaving 25% of the grain crop standing and providing fencing to keep his cattle out of the riparian areas. All of the stubble from grain grown on Department property is left standing. He also allows department personnel to use the road through his property to access Department property. This agreement is for one year and is renewable annually.

**WATER RIGHTS**

The Department also acquired a 0.8 cfs water right in Jones Canyon. This water right was originally granted for both livestock and domestic use. We will use this right to provide water for the cabin and for use by wildlife/livestock.

## **APPENDIX V**

### **VEGETATION AND HABITAT TYPES**

#### **VEGETATION**

The principal grass species are bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*), various other wheatgrasses (*Agropyron* spp.), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and other bromes (*Bromus* spp.), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), various bluegrasses (*Poa* spp.), and needle-and-thread grass (*Stipa comata*).

Predominant forbs are arrowleaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagitta*), buckwheats (*Eriogonum* spp.), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), and mule's ear (*Wyethia amplexicaulis*). The principal shrub species are big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), three-tip sagebrush (*Artemisia tripartita*), chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*), mountain snowberry (*Symphoricarpus oreophilus*) and bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*).

Tree species present are Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*), Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and a few Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*).

A riparian area associated with the Bear River is dominated by black hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*) and willows (*Salix* spp.).

The following plant species occur on Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area:

#### **TREES**

Utah Juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*)  
Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopularum*)  
Bigtooth maple (*Acer grandidentatum*)  
Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)  
Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menzesii*)

#### **SHRUBS**

Big sagebrush (*Artemesia tridentata*)  
Three-tipped sage (*Artemesia tripartita*)  
Bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*)  
Utah serviceberry (*Amelanchior utahensis*)  
Mountain snowberry (*Symphocarpos oreophilus*)  
Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)  
Rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*)  
Douglas rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*)  
Oregon grape (*Berberis repens*)  
Wood's rose (*Rosa woodsii*)  
Mountain-lover (*Pachistima myrsinites*)  
Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)

Willow (*Salix* spp.)  
Mountain alder (*Alnus incana*)  
Water birch (*Betula occidentalis*)  
Black hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*)  
Currant (*Ribes* spp.)  
Skunkbush sumac (*Rhus trilobata*)

## **GRAMINOIDS**

Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*)  
Western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*)  
Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*)  
Pine reedgrass (*Calamagrostis rubescens*)  
Great Basin wildrye (*Elymus cinereus*)  
Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*)  
Oniongrass (*Melica bulbosa*)  
Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*)  
Bulbous bluegrass (*Poa bulbosa*)  
Nevada bluegrass (*Poa nevadense*)  
Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)

## **FORBS**

Western yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)  
Silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*)  
Wild onion (*Allium* spp.)  
Aster (*Aster* spp.)  
Milkvetch (*Astragalus* spp.)  
Curlycup gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*)  
Hairy goldaster (*Heterotheca villosa*)  
Prairie goldenrod (*Solidago missouriensis*)  
Bushy birdbeak (*Cordylanthus ramosus*)  
Western salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*)  
Small stalk falseflax (*Camelina microcarpa*)  
Smartweed (*Polygonum* spp.)  
Sego lily (*Calochortus eurycarpus*)  
Arrowleaf balsomroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*)  
Buckwheat (*Erigonum* spp.)  
Little sunflower (*Helianthella quinquenervis*)  
Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*)  
Western gromwell (*Lithospermum ruderale*)  
Yellow sweetclover (*Melilotus occininalus*)  
Rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*)  
Blue flax (*Linum perenne*)  
Hawksbeard (*Crepis acuminata*)  
Dandelion (*Taraxicum officinale*)  
Halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*)

Hoary cress (*Cardaria draba*)  
Western sticktight (*Bidens vulgata*)  
Prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*)  
Kochia (*Kochia scoparia*)  
Russian thistle (*Salsola iberica*)  
Lupine (*Lupinus* spp.)  
Scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*)  
Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*)  
Penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.)  
Clasping pepperweed (*Lepidium perfoliatum*)  
Field cress (*Lepidium campestre*)  
Sticky geranium (*Geranium richardsonii*)  
Moth mullein (*Verbascum blattaria*)  
Violet (*Viola* spp.)  
Jim Hill mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*)  
Large-fruited biscuitroot (*Lomatium macrocarpum*)  
Daisy fleabane (*Erigeron strigosus*)  
Lance-leaved stonecrop (*Sedum lanceolatum*)  
Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)  
Musk thistle (*Cirsium nutans*)  
Cinquefoil (*potentilla* spp.)

## HABITAT TYPES FOUND ON GSWMA

<i>Type Description</i>	<i>Number of Acres</i>
Aspen type with scattered conifers. Rocky Mountain maple also common. Usually with a good forb component and pine grass common.	90
Mountain sage/snowberry/Idaho fescue habitat type. Mountain sage type with snowberry abundant and bitterbrush common. Understory a good mix of forbs and grasses.	1,027
Mixed mountain brush type. Very similar to above type but with much more maple and less snow-berry and mountain sage.	361
Three-tip/Idaho fescue habitat type. Three-tip sage type with good mix of understory species. Mostly located in draw bottoms.	27
Mountain sage/bluebunch wheatgrass habitat type. This mountain sage type is restricted to flat outwash areas and has received heavy cattle use in the past. It has a good mix of under-story species with bluebunch wheatgrass being most common.	35
Willow and hawthorn dominated riparian area. Much of it is along the Bear River.	16
Mixture of alfalfa and grass in an area that had been farmed for hay previously.	32
Grass type almost completely dominated by Great Basin wildrye.	14
Cropland	38

**APPENDIX VI**  
**WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES**

**MAMMALS**

Moose (*Alces alces*)  
Elk (*Cervus elaphus*)  
Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)  
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)  
Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)  
Black bear (*Ursus americanus*)  
Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)  
Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)  
River otter (*Lutra canadensis*)  
Mink (*Mustela vison*)  
Weasel (*Mustela* spp.)  
Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus nutallii*)  
Black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)  
Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)  
Yellow-bellied marmot (*Marmota flaviventris*)  
Golden-mantled ground squirrel (*Spermophilus lateralis*)  
Northern pocket gopher (*Thomomys talpoides*)  
Deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)  
Mountain vole (*Microtus montanus*)  
Sagebrush vole (*Lagurus curtatus*)  
Chipmunk (*Eutamias* spp.)  
Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*)  
Richardson's ground squirrel (*Spermophilus richardsonii*)  
Bushy-tailed wood rat (*Neotoma cinerea*)  
Merriam shrew (*Sorex merriami*)

**BIRDS**

Blue grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*)  
Sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)  
Sharp-tailed grouse (*Pedioecetes phasianellus*)  
Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)  
Gray partridge (*Perdix perdix*)  
Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)  
Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)  
Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)  
Rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*)  
Northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)  
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)  
Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)  
Black-billed magpie (*Pica pica*)

Common raven (*Corvus corax*)  
American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)  
Brewer's blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)  
Brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)  
Turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*)  
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)  
Great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*)  
Long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*)  
Common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)  
Yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)  
House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)  
Vesper sparrow (*Poocetes gramineus*)  
Yellow-rumped warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)  
Song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)  
Chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)  
Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)  
Dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*)  
Rufous-sided towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)  
Green-tailed towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*)  
Cassin's finch (*Carpodacus cassinii*)  
House finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)  
Evening grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)  
American goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*)  
Lazuli bunting (*Passerina amoena*)  
Calliope hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*)  
Broad-tailed hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*)  
Black-chinned hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*)  
Common flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)  
Eastern kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)  
Western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)  
Western wood pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)  
Horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*)  
Violet-green swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*)  
Bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*)  
Black-capped chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)  
Sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)  
American robin (*Turdus migatorius*)  
Northern shrike (*Lanius excubitor*)  
European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)  
Common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)



## **HERPTILES**

Western terrestrial garter snake (*Thamnophis elegans*)  
Great basin rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*)  
Gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*)  
Rubber boa (*Charina bottae*)  
Sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*)  
Short-horned lizard (*Phrynosoma douglasii*)  
Western toad (*Bufo boreas*)

## **FISH**

Cutthroat trout (*Salmo clarki*)  
Rainbow trout (*Salmo gairdneri*)  
Brown trout (*Salmo trutta*)  
Carp (*Cyprinus carpio*)  
Mountain whitefish (*Prosopium williamsoni*)  
Utah chub (*Gila atraria*)  
Longnose dace (*Rhinichthys cataractae*)  
Speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*)  
Redside shiner (*Richardsonius balteatus*)  
Utah sucker (*Catostomus ardens*)  
Mountain sucker (*Catostomus platyrhynchus*)  
Mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdi*)

## **APPENDIX VII**

### **HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area (GSWMA) is managed by the Regional Wildlife Biologist assigned to the East Habitat District of the Southeast Region, under the supervision of the Regional Habitat Manager. The habitat management program on GSWMA is focused primarily on vegetation management in order to carry out the mission of enhancing elk and mule deer winter range and providing quality habitat for other fish and wildlife. By improving the quality and quantity of the available forage, we will also reduce depredation problems and the incidence of big game/vehicle collisions. Land control, high quality forage and security from disturbance are the keys to meeting wildlife needs and minimizing wildlife depredations on adjacent private land.

Numerous techniques are available to manage vegetation, each depending on the objectives, limitations, potential natural vegetation and present state of a given site. Soils and climate are the primary constraints which determine the long-term potential for the plant species diversity and abundance on a site, which in turn determine the presence and carrying capacity of animal species there. The habitat management program for GSWMA will apply techniques such as planting desirable species; chemical, biological and mechanical control of less desirable species, including noxious weeds; fertilization of selected areas; prescribed burns; and control of livestock to reduce competition for forage. Any of these techniques may be applied when appropriate to achieve site-specific objectives, although vegetation management often requires no intervening action other than permitting natural ecological processes to occur.

In order to evaluate the outcome and efficacy of management actions, monitoring is essential. An important component of the habitat management program on GSWMA is vegetation monitoring. Annual monitoring of vegetation using fixed transects provides a measure of species diversity, abundance, and utilization which can be used to evaluate previous actions and identify the need for additional action. Photographs taken annually at fixed photo points provide a visual record of change over time. By comparing results in treated and untreated areas, the efficacy of vegetation manipulations is evaluated. Using an adaptive management approach, future activity on a site will be planned based on the results of past activities as well as new techniques available or additional knowledge gained.

Monitoring for effects of vegetation management on wildlife is also important. Because it is not practical to measure these effects directly, the habitat management program on GSWMA will primarily depend on regional game surveys, big game highway mortalities and depredations on adjacent private land to provide evidence of wildlife response. As future funding permits, monitoring may be expanded to include increased site-specific and time-based surveys of wildlife populations on GSWMA.

We will also monitor winter recreational use in the area and cooperate with the other land management agencies in implementing area closures, if necessary.

Although all available information is utilized in planning management actions, baseline information for GSWMA is not yet compiled in a comprehensive format, and some is not available. As part of the habitat management program, baseline mapping of soils and habitat types will be compiled as part of a future revision to the management plan.

Vegetation treatments to date have included aerial fertilization, sponsored by RMEF, and an 80-acre prescribed burn conducted with the cooperation of Caribou National Forest and Idaho Department of Lands. Other vegetation treatments will also be considered. We may slash aspen to stimulate new growth in the aspen as well as in the associated shrub species. We will seek funding from the winter feeding/depredation account, as well as a cost-share from RMEF, to experiment with other techniques to enhance the forage quality on the winter range.

Control of livestock trespass on the GSWMA is necessary to manage forage effectively. However, managed livestock grazing may be used as one method to keep the vegetation on the winter range in the desired state of succession. If the decision is made to use livestock grazing, its use will be seasonally conducive to elk winter range management. The majority of the GSWMA has not been grazed by livestock since 1992, with the exception of a brief period of sheep grazing on 300 acres in 1997. This gives the Department an opportunity to compare vegetation on unglazed versus grazed habitats. As members of the Georgetown Grazing Association, the Department may also be able to influence use on adjacent IDL and USFS land.

We have developed a farming agreement with a neighboring landowner. He had been farming approximately 28 acres of Bingham property and grazing cattle on 70 acres. In exchange for continued use of this land, he has agreed to leave 25% of the grain crop standing through the winter for use by wildlife. He has also fenced part of the riparian area along the Bear River to exclude his cattle. These considerations will provide waterfowl and upland game benefits.

We will evaluate needs for habitat development for nongame wildlife and provide developments as necessary. For example, bluebird nest boxes were placed on the GSWMA in 1991 and we will place kestrel nest boxes. Non-target and sensitive species will be considered before habitat manipulation practices are implemented.

A near future objective of the Habitat Management Program on GSWMA is to enter into a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP) agreement with surrounding landowners. Habitat management on Department lands is more likely to achieve desired results if it is done as part of an integrated program conducted on a broader landscape scale. Rather than manage GSWMA as an island of habitat among other lands with distinct management objectives, a CRMP will provide an opportunity to integrate plans so that activities on adjacent ownerships contribute to the goals of each other. Off-site projects may then be conducted and resources of participating agencies may be pooled to benefit wildlife habitat over a broader area. Intended participants in a Georgetown Summit CRMP include the Department, Idaho Department of Lands, Caribou National Forest, the Georgetown Grazing Association, and interested adjacent private landowners.

## **APPENDIX VIII**

### **TRAVEL PLAN**

The Georgetown Summit WMA is open to public access with some restrictions:

- All motorized vehicles must remain on open, established roads.
- All human access may be prohibited during severe winters to provide wildlife security.
- Motorized access may be prohibited to protect roads when extremely wet or during periods of thawing

A parking area is provided on the west side of Georgetown Summit. Parking is also available at the cabin in Jones Canyon. Additional parking areas may be provided in the future to improve opportunities for nonmotorized access as funding permits.

## **APPENDIX IX**

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS**

The regional wildlife habitat staff conducted three open house public meetings in March, 1996. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the future management of the Wildlife Management Areas in the Southeast Region. Meetings were held in Aberdeen, Pocatello, and Soda Springs.

We created displays demonstrating 1995 projects and the future management issues that we had identified prior to the meetings. We encouraged the attendees to give us written or verbal comments regarding management of the WMA's and any issues they felt that we need to address in our future management. We provided comment sheets for this purpose.

Over 400 invitations were mailed to neighbors, cooperators, legislators, sportsmen's groups, land management agencies and concerned citizens. Display advertisements were placed in area newspapers and a news release was issued concerning the open house meetings.

Fourteen people attended the public open house in Aberdeen on March 11, twelve attended the open house in Pocatello on March 12, ten people attended in Soda Springs on March 13 and two people telephoned with their input. The final document will be provided to the public in an open house forum in February, 1999.

The following is a list of issues mentioned by members of the public at the open house meetings or in written comments with a discussion of each issue.

#### **Issue 1: Establish a fish-rearing facility on BRWMA.**

Discussion: This idea was proposed as a method to help speed up the recovery of cutthroat populations in the Blackfoot River system. Fisheries biologists place fertilized cutthroat trout eggs in incubation boxes in some of the Blackfoot River tributaries. When the fry hatch and swim up, they enter the river from these tributaries and, it is hoped, return to these streams to spawn as adults. The project has been implemented with incubation boxes placed in tributaries of the Blackfoot River on BRWMA in 1997 and 1998 and will continue subject to evaluation of its efficacy by regional fisheries biologists.

In 1990, after considerable study of historical data and meetings with the public, the Fish and Game Commission approved an upper Blackfoot system fishery management plan to restore the wild cutthroat trout. The plan included ample harvest opportunity for hatchery trout in the reservoir, selective release of all wild cutthroat in the reservoir and limited harvest opportunity of only post-spawning cutthroat trout in the upper river and its tributaries. In October, 1997, the Commission approved rules allowing no harvest of cutthroat trout in the upper river and its tributaries. Artificial flies and lures with one barbless hook (no bait) are required as well. The plan also proposed to improve habitat. The 1995 purchase of the Stocking Ranch at the head of the Blackfoot River by the Department was a major boost to habitat improvement as well as guaranteed sportsmen access to 6.4 miles of the upper Blackfoot River (18.5% of the river's total length) and 1.3 miles of lower Angus Creek. Riparian areas on the BRWMA have been rested

from livestock grazing in both 1995 and 1996. Stream bank stability has improved and sedge and willow communities have expanded. The only uncontrolled aspect of fishery habitat on the BRWMA is the quality of water entering the area from adjacent upstream lands. The proposed land use trade with upstream neighbors will partially alleviate this water quality problem on the BRWMA.

Ideal cutthroat trout habitat exhibits the following characteristics: cool, clean water with deep pools for cover and resting, clean gravel bottom for spawning, aquatic insect diversity, stable stream banks and riparian vegetation for shade and woody debris. We are using available funding and manpower into rehabilitating trout habitat in the Blackfoot River on the BRWMA. With improved habitat, the cutthroat trout numbers will increase.

**Issue 2: I would like to see more educational programs for families and children in Bear Lake and Caribou counties.**

Discussion: Wildlife Management Areas provide excellent opportunities for educational programs dealing with fish and wildlife habitat. They also provide examples of habitat manipulation practices that can be used to benefit fish and wildlife. However, this issue seems to deal more with educational programs that do not necessarily relate to the management of our WMAs and, therefore, is outside the scope of this document.

We currently work with schools and summer camps to provide speakers on wildlife topics. Conservation officers, biologists and I&E staff make presentations to civic groups, in school classrooms and at outdoor activities. We also use volunteers/school groups to carry out habitat improvement projects.

**Issue 3: Big game crossing Highway 30 at Georgetown Summit are frequently involved in vehicle/game collisions.**

Discussion: This continues to be a problem not only at GSWMA, but also at the PWMA (Highway 91) and MWMA (Highway 89). The Idaho Department of Transportation (IDT) has erected warning signs. The cost of building and maintaining a deer and/or elk-proof fence would be prohibitive. We will work with IDT to improve conditions if this section of Highway 30 is upgraded in the future.

By improving the quality and quantity of the available forage, we are working to reduce depredation problems as well as the incidence of big game/vehicle collisions.

**Issue 4: No more money should be spent on pheasants - spend more money on native species.**

Discussion: Pheasants are the most popular upland game bird in Idaho. As a result, pheasant production is an important goal at SWMA. However, pheasants are not an indigenous species to Idaho, or even to the United States. Although pheasant hunting has become a traditional past time, there is a percentage of professionals, sportsmen and non-consumptive users who would

prefer to focus Department time and finances on the native species of the area (sharp-tailed, sage and forest grouse). The thought is that in order to maintain populations of exotic birds species, if indeed it can be done, unacceptable levels of funding will be required. Since these birds are not evolved for this environment, extensive and expensive alterations are needed to create suitable habitat. Native species, on the other hand, are suited to this area and can be managed more effectively without having to artificially manipulate the habitat.

In conjunction with the wide-spread appeal of the ring-necked pheasant is the fact that much of the funding available for upland game bird management is generated by the popularity of pheasant hunting. A major thrust of the Habitat Improvement Program, which is funded by the sale of upland game stamps, is to improve habitat for pheasants and some other upland game birds. Sharp-tailed, sage and forest grouse are not, at this time, included in that program.

**Issue 5: No license funds should be spent on nongame projects.**

Discussion: Most of the Department programs are funded, either directly or indirectly, by sportsmen dollars. This segment of the population is more interested in consumptive uses of wildlife and, therefore, prefers that their money be used in a way that benefits that type of use. They prefer that dollars generated by license sales go toward improving hunting and fishing. Efforts are being made on a National level to create a means by which the non-consumptive recreational users will also help support Fish and Wildlife programs. But at this time, the major share of wildlife programs are funded by the consumptive users.

All projects that are targeted specifically for a nongame species will be funded through appropriate nongame funds or through donations. Most projects that are funded with license dollars also provide significant benefits to nongame species. However, the reverse is not necessarily true. Many of the nongame projects are nesting structures that are only suitable for nongame species. Most license-funded projects are general habitat-oriented plantings.

**Issue 6: Do not use any license fees for the pheasant release program.**

Discussion: As mentioned in Issue #4, above, some sportsmen prefer that Department funds go toward the management of native game bird species. In addition to that segment of the Department's constituency, is a group that prefers to put money into managing for wild bird populations rather than game farm pheasants. Pheasants Forever is an example of a group that promotes wild bird management and denounces game farm production.

Research has shown that stocking pheasants is NOT a viable solution to increasing a population. The sole reasoning for the stocking program is to provide hunting opportunity. In addition to not supplementing the wild population, research has also shown that introducing pen-reared pheasants, in fact, can be detrimental to the wild population by attracting predators, spreading disease, and passing on genetic problems. The stocking program currently costs the Department approximately \$50,000 per year for the birds. Department employee time and operating expenses are additional. This program has been in place for many years and has developed a strong support base. Seniors and young hunters seem to most benefit from this type of hunting.

Currently, sportsmen that hunt the game farm pheasants on a WMA purchase a WMA pheasant permit. In effect, the people that use that program pay for the program. The permit allows a hunter to harvest 10 pheasants from a WMA where game farm birds are released.

**Issue 7: On Sterling WMA, leave 10-20 acre plots of 3-4' vegetation for goose pasture. May through July. Use grazing and burning to achieve and maintain these areas. One acre per 100 acres.**

Discussion: As the new grazing plan is developed, consideration will be given to how to best provide goose pasture and not adversely impact waterfowl nesting habitat. Neighbors have brought this point up previously. Although attempts have been made to provide this type of area, they have been ineffective. American Falls reservoir is an extremely large body of water that attracts thousands of geese. The acreage that SWMA could manage for goose pasture is insignificant when compared to the available area around the reservoir. Other landowners adjacent to American Falls reservoir often provide the conditions for goose pasture just by the nature of the land use. These uses, however, typically do not provide high quality nesting cover. A main stumbling block for the Department is the cost and labor involved to adequately fence an area in order to control the grazing intensity that would be required to provide goose pasture. An additional concern would be that this high intensity grazing would be incompatible with the SWMA goal of providing quality nesting cover.

Goose pasture management may be considered for the BRWMA. There again, we will consider the overall need for this habitat component. We will also consider costs in terms of reduced nesting cover which may be at more of a premium than goose pasture.

**Issue 8: There is still a weed problem on Sterling WMA.**

Discussion: Traditionally, the wildlife profession and agri-business have disagreed on the effects of "weeds". This disagreement has been the root of the neighbor relations problem on SWMA for many years. Wildlife biologists considered the "forb" component (broad-leafed, herbaceous plants) as a critical part of the vegetation that makes up wildlife habitat. The forbs provide density and visual obstruction that increases the chances that a nest will be successful. The agri-business community however saw weeds as a threat to their livelihood in the form of reduced crop production. Eventually it became obvious to the wildlife supporters, that "noxious weeds" are everyone's concern. By law, weeds that are listed as "noxious" must be controlled by landowners. "Noxious" weeds are usually exotic plants that have not evolved with the same natural controls as native plants. The result of a noxious weed infestation is a monotypic plant community that usually is not suited for most wildlife species. These infestations tend to reduce crop and range yields as well as reduce the quality and quantity of wildlife habitat. It now is accepted that noxious weed control is a problem for everyone. There still is a division between the two groups concerning forbs that are not on the Noxious Weeds list. This may be one of those issues that is never resolved. However, SWMA neighbors do acknowledge that the Department has recognized the problem and is taking active measures to fulfill their responsibility.



A major effort has been made over the past years to control noxious weeds on SWMA. This effort will be continued for as long as necessary or as long as finances allow. Crews of temporary employees have used tractors, 4-wheelers and backpack sprayers to work on problem areas. A helicopter has also been hired for aerial spraying. The Bingham County Weed Supervisor makes periodic checks on the area to help identify problem spots. Logs are kept of the time and dollars spent on this problem.

These efforts to control noxious weeds are carried out just as intensively on all of the WMA's in the region. In particular, Department staff and temporary employees as well as the Bannock County Inmate Labor Detail have sprayed, dug and pulled dyer's woad and white top on PWMA. Department personnel have sprayed dyer's woad, thistle and henbane on GSWMA and MWMA. We have sprayed and pulled Canadian thistle and yellow toadflax on BRWMA. The regional habitat biologist stays in contact with the county weed supervisors in regards to weed infestations, new technologies for controlling weeds and contracting with counties to help control weeds.

#### **Issue 9: Predators need to be controlled on SWMA.**

Discussion: For many years wildlife professionals believed that because predators and prey evolved together, predation would not impact a prey species beyond the tolerance of that prey population. Recent research has shown that in some instances this previous theory does not hold true. In cases where habitat quality and/or quantity has been severely degraded or where predator levels are being sustained at unusually high levels, prey populations are being significantly impacted. In particular, waterfowl numbers are being suppressed at unhealthy levels by predators such as feral cats, skunks, foxes and raccoons. All of these predators are maintaining unusually high populations levels because of human subsidized den sites and food sources. These subsidies combined with fragmented nesting cover for waterfowl allow the predators to have an insurmountable advantage over nesting birds.

Research has shown that predation on the SWMA waterfowl nests is consistent with that unusually high impact. Since the top priority of SWMA is waterfowl production, a change in management seems to be appropriate. Several possibilities exist which include, but are not limited to, predator habitat management, sub-lethal poisoning, trapping and re-locating, and lethal removal. The statewide goal on WMA's is to achieve 30% nesting success. The recent study showed that SWMA is well below that level. The goals of the WMA do not include removing all predators. The goal is more to create a better balance between predators and their prey.

#### **Issue 10: Do not construct a new building on SWMA**

Discussion: A common perception by the public is that the Department spends more dollars on equipment (such as trucks) than on wildlife. In fact, equipment and facilities are critical to the Department being able to effectively carry out its programs.

The "Headquarters" on SWMA is used to store equipment, provide a work area for repairs and construction, and provide a shelter for employees and visitors during meetings and events. The

current facility on SWMA is inadequate. The building is not weather proof, animal proof or secure. Equipment and supplies are constantly being damaged by birds and mice. In addition, conditions are conducive to health problems, such as Hantavirus, associated with deer mice. Very little work can be done inside of the building during the winter because of the cold temperatures, rain, wind, and snow accumulation. Equipment that is stored outside of the building is subject to vandalism and theft because of the poor condition of the fence and the remoteness of the compound. Finances will not allow a new building to be constructed entirely with Department funds. A continuing effort is being made to locate outside cost sharing to help fund the project.

**Issue 11: Crop sharing should be stopped on SWMA and that land planted with habitat.**

Discussion: The purpose of WMA management is to develop and/or protect wildlife habitat. Every reasonable opportunity to improve habitat is explored, however, financial and/or logistic problems often constrain projects. Because of SWMA's unique situation of being a relatively small area surrounded by intense farming and grazing, habitat enhancements are required to sustain wildlife populations at levels requested by the public. Otherwise, the acreage could not provide the necessary habitat requirements. Additionally, wildlife species such as the ring-necked pheasant are closely linked to agriculture. In order to manage for pheasants, a farming program is necessary to provide the feeding, nesting and wintering habitat. Finally, in an effort to provide a diverse landscape to provide for a variety of wildlife species, woody cover plantings are needed to provide nesting, wintering, loafing and escape cover for nongame as well as game species. Currently, all agricultural land that is farmed on SWMA (approximately 366 acres) is part of the share-crop program. Cooperating local farmers provide compensation to the Department in exchange for the opportunity to farm on the WMA. The compensation is in the form of food plots, maintenance, planting of trees and nesting cover, and irrigation of trees and nesting cover on the WMA. No cash payments are made to the Department. This form of compensation is critical to the functioning of SWMA. The Department does not have access to equipment or the means to develop irrigation to properly supply the needs of wildlife populations. This program provides the Department with additional habitat developments on the WMA that, otherwise, would not be feasible. However, it is also important that the Department, and the resource, get a fair return on the leases that are made.

**Issue 12: Restrict access to roads and trails necessary to satisfy diverse recreation objectives.**

Discussion: Part of the mission of WMA's is to provide adequate public access for consumptive and non-consumptive public uses without compromising the quality of the habitat, the wildlife security, or the outdoor experience. License fees have been used in the purchase of WMA property and license holders, as well as others, need to have adequate access to these properties. The questions that arise are "How accessible should the land be?" and "What kinds of access are appropriate?" Foot access does not seem to cause many problems for wildlife during most of the year. An exception in the case of PWMA would be during a severe winter when animals are stressed by the cold temperatures and/or snow levels.

Vehicle access, however, can be detrimental to the quality of wildlife security and to the condition of the animals. Higher vulnerability during the hunting season is also a direct result of increased vehicular access. In addition, many sportsmen and women define the quality of their experience by the amount of traffic or the number of other hunters they encounter during an outdoor experience. The Department has always tried to provide opportunity for a wide range of constituents while protecting wildlife and its habitat.

**Issue 13: Neighbor relations need to be improved on SWMA.**

Discussion: Since the inception of SWMA, neighbors and sportsmen have voiced concerns with the management practices used on the area. Often, the criticisms or suggestions were contradictory, unrealistic or contrary to the purpose and goals of the WMA. The topics included: "Not enough grazing", "Too much grazing", "Not enough farming", "Too much farming", "Too much wildlife", "Not enough wildlife", "Too many weeds", "Not enough vegetation". There were however, several suggestions that warranted a change and were incorporated. The Department has worked very hard to make sure that neighbor relations receive equal consideration with sportsmen concerns. The Department understands that effective management of SWMA is significantly easier with the cooperation and support of the local landowners. Over the past few years, relations have improved greatly. An on-going effort is being continued to further improve the relationships with neighbors. An Aberdeen office day has been established to allow better access to Department employees by neighbors. A local working team has been developed that is made up of local landowners, the local Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist, and sportsmen. This group meets to discuss issues, provide input and to help disseminate information. This is part of the increased effort to keep neighbors informed about activities on the WMA. Improving communication is a top priority and several areas for improvement have been identified. However, despite all efforts, there are several chronic issues that may never be completely resolved to the complete satisfaction of some citizens (i.e. goose depredations and weeds). In these instances, it is important that both parties understand the positions and that efforts are made to minimize the impacts.

**Issue 14: The public should never be locked out of a WMA. The BRWMA should have some sort of motorized access to forest property on both the north and south side of the river.**

Discussion: In comparing this issue with issue #12, one can see that as WMA managers, Department personnel are caught in trying to satisfy constituents who have varying ideas regarding the kind and amount of access that should be provided on our WMA's. Some sportsmen and women want increased levels of motorized access while other hunters and anglers want to see reduced levels of motorized access. The Department has attempted to provide varying degrees of motorized access on the WMA's in the Southeast Region. Please refer to the travel plans and maps for each WMA.

Motorized access to the Caribou National Forest (CNF) exists on the south side of the Blackfoot River at this time. Access can be gained by fording the river near the southwest corner of the BRWMA and following a four-wheeler trail up a draw along the west boundary of the BRWMA.

Also, access can be gained by driving up Kendall Canyon to Mill Canyon at the southeast corner of the BRWMA.

Access to the CNF is also available on the north side of the Blackfoot River by driving up the Rasmussen Valley road and on to a road system on Rasmussen Ridge.

**Issue 15: Children, senior citizens and handicapped people need closer access to the Blackfoot River.**

Discussion: As stated previously, public access is a major part of the mission of all Department WMA's. This includes access for those of all physical abilities. Varying levels of barrier-free access is considered on all Department properties and is provided based on the level of use at each area. At the current time, the level of use at the BRWMA does not warrant the expenditure of funds and manpower that would be involved in creating barrier-free access. This situation will undoubtedly change as more people use the area for hunting, fishing and outdoor appreciation. We will continue to monitor the level of use and respond to the needs of our users. We will also consider providing barrier-free access at points further downstream that receive higher levels of traffic.

**Issue 16: Mutual cooperation with other land management agencies (USFS and BLM) to accomplish habitat improvements.**

Discussion: Wildlife and their associated habitats obviously cross the jurisdictional boundaries of several agencies and private land ownerships. Cooperation with these other land managers is necessary to provide the best possible habitat for fish and wildlife. We have worked with these agencies on fish and wildlife habitat projects on Department lands and well as on BLM, USFS, IDL and private property.

Projects such as prescribed burns, bitterbrush and Hobble Creek sagebrush plantings and Hobble Creek sagebrush seeding have been carried out on PWMA in cooperation with BLM. We have also planted bitter brush seedlings on critical winter range on BLM land. The regional habitat biologist is working on an Coordinated Resource Management Plan for the Georgetown Summit area with IDL and private landowners. The Department would then have the opportunity to influence a larger portion of the big game winter range than that encompassed by the GSWMA. We also work with IDL and USFS in the BRWMA area on grazing and logging issues.

**Issue 17: Exclude livestock grazing on elk calving meadows on the BRWMA.**

Discussion: The presence of domestic livestock can displace elk from traditional calving areas. Therefore, the timing of any livestock grazing that occurs on the BRWMA should be such that it does not interfere with elk calving. Any livestock grazing done on the BRWMA must be consistent with the mission of the area and will be timed so as not to conflict with wildlife production and/or use of the BRWMA.

**APPENDIX X**

The following document is included as part of the Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area (GSWMA) management plan. The Federal Aid Project for GSWMA is part of the annual management plan for the Southeast Region East Habitat District, so only selected portions of the document are specific to GSWMA. Conversely, these excerpts reflect only those WMA activities relevant to the Federal Aid Project and may not include a complete list of planned activities for the current year on GSWMA.

**FEDERAL AID PROJECT STATEMENT AND PROGRESS REPORT**

State: Idaho, Project Number: Other Funds, Project Leader: Jerry Deal, Period: 7/1/98-6/30/99  
Southeast Region Habitat Management

EAST HABITAT DISTRICT AND GEORGETOWN, MONTPELIER, PORTNEUF AND BLACKFOOT RIVER WMAs

Management Priorities:

1. Big Game Winter Range
2. Public Access for Hunting and Fishing
3. Other Wildlife Appreciation and Production

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
<b>BIG GAME WINTER RANGE</b>						
<b>Management Program – Vegetation Rejuvenation</b>						
Coordinate collection of bitterbrush and sagebrush seed	1322	1 week		1440		Species benefited:
Coordinate planting of 8000 bitterbrush and sage brush seedlings on WMA’s and other public lands	1322	1 week		1440		Species benefited:

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Coordinate with Bureau of Land Management to perform controlled burn on Portneuf WMA	1710	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
Monitor vegetation transects on Montpelier, Georgetown and Portneuf WMAs	1332	2 weeks		2,880		Species benefited:
Control noxious weeds on all areas	1211	4 weeks		5,760		Species benefited:
<b>Management Program - Control Trespass Grazing</b>						
Supervise construction of boundary fence at Portneuf WMA Quinn Creek area	1211	2+ miles 3.5 weeks		5,040		
Repair and maintain boundary fencing on WMA's and conservation easements.	1211	25 miles 3 weeks		4,320		Species benefited: Elk, waterfowl, cutthroat trout
<b>Management Program - Provide Security</b>						
Maintain winter road/trail closures with gates and signing	1211	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
<b>PUBLIC HUNTING</b>						
<b>Management Program - Provide Access</b>						
Maintain signs and information boards at all WMA's	1211	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:
Place/replace boundary markers and other information signs at Georgetown Summit, Montpelier, Portneuf and Blackfoot River WMA's	1211	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Provide/maintain access roads/trails and parking areas	1211	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:
Control noxious weeds in cooperation with counties	1211	(See winter range)				Species benefited:
Monitor hunter and angler use, enforce regulations and WMA management policies	1211	1.5 week		2,160		Species benefited:
<b>OTHER WILDLIFE APPRECIATION AND PRODUCTION</b>						
<b>Management Program - Provide Nesting and Brooding Habitat</b>						
Vegetation rejuvenation through burning, herbicides, and grazing	1322	(See winter range)				Species benefited:
Provide nest sites with structures and by preserving snags	1322	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
<b>Management Program - Monitor Grouse Breeding Populations</b>						
Conduct lek counts and drumming counts	1460	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
<b>Management Program - Provide Public Access</b>						
Provide and maintain access roads/trails and parking areas		(See public hunting)				
Compile species lists for distribution	1630	1.5 weeks		2,160		Species benefited:

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>						
<b>Management Program - Provide Technical Assistance</b>						
Review environmental impacts of proposed projects	1710	8 projects 2 weeks		2,880		Species benefited:
Assist landowners on wildlife management practices	1720	25 landowners 6 weeks		8,640		Species benefited:
<b>Management Program - Administrative Duties</b>						
Develop planning documents, review and evaluation	1620	15 documents 6 weeks		8,640		Species benefited:
Complete long-term management plans for WMAs	1630	6 weeks		8,640		
Maintain files; prepare administrative documents (reports, budgets, purchasing requests, time sheets, etc.)	1630	6 weeks		8,640		Species benefited:
Other duties (as assigned)	1630	5 weeks		7,200		Species benefited:
<b>Management Program - Cooperation With Other Agencies</b>						
Coordinate and meet with citizen working groups associated with Portneuf and Blackfoot River WMAs		2.5 weeks		3,600		
Attend coordination meetings, tours, and meetings related to projects by land management agencies	1630	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:



Total PR Contract With Overhead	\$0
Other Funds	\$82,080
Grand Total	\$82,080

**NARRATIVE**

This project will provide 8,000 acres of big game winter range and benefit 500 wintering elk and 1,000 wintering mule deer. The 1,720-acre Blackfoot River WMA will also provide waterfowl breeding habitat and improved cutthroat trout habitat on several miles of the Blackfoot River. This project will provide an estimated 3,000 person-days of hunting opportunity and 1,500 person-days of wildlife viewing and fishing opportunity.

## **APPENDIX XI**

### **ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

The following two pages show a copy of the MOU under which the Department manages the lands of both the Department and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation at Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area.

## Georgetown Summit Wildlife Management Area Plan

Submitted by:

Jerry Deal, Regional Wildlife Biologist

Date:

Reviewed by:

Date:

Paul Wackenhut, Regional Habitat Manager

Date:

Tom Parker, State Wildlife Habitat Manager

Approved by:

Date:

Dexter Pitman, Regional Supervisor