

Idaho Fish and Game Commission Annual Meeting - January 26-27, 2011

Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 S. Walnut, Boise, Idaho

Note: Times on the agenda are approximate and subject to change.

JANUARY 26 - AGENDA

- 1:30 p.m. Commissioners to meet with Senate Resources and Environment Committee at Statehouse
- 3:45 p.m. Executive Session I.C. 67-2345(1) (f)
- 7:00 p.m. **Public Hearing** — Fish and Game Headquarters, 600 S. Walnut, Boise, Idaho

JANUARY 27 - AGENDA

- 8:05 a.m. 1. Opening Comments — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:10 a.m. 2. Agenda Changes — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:15 a.m. 3. Review of Public Comment — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:30 a.m. 4. Consent Calendar (Action Requested by Department)
 - a. Minutes
 - b. [Financial Report](#)
 - c. [Appointments Winter Feeding Advisory Committee](#)
- 8:35 a.m. 5. [Turkey Waterfowl Workgroup Report](#) — Dr. Richard L. Gardner, Facilitator, Boot Strap Solutions
- 9:05 a.m. 6. [Trophy Species Season Setting](#) (Action Requested by Department) — Dale Toweill, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 9:30 a.m. 7. [Deer and Elk Population Status Update](#) — Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager
- 10:00 a.m. 8. [Mandatory Harvest Report Briefing](#) — Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager

10:10 A.M. — BREAK

- 10:30 a.m. 9. [Ungulate Predation Research Update](#) — Brad Compton, Assistant Chief, Wildlife
- 11:00 a.m. 10. Land Acquisitions: [Cooper](#) and [Hayden Lake](#) (Action Requested by Department) — Gregg Servheen, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 11:15 a.m. 11. [Director's Annual Report to the Commission](#) — Cal Groen, Director
- 11:30 a.m. 12. [JFAC Budget Preview](#) — Cal Groen, Director

NOON — LUNCH

Recess until 3:45 p.m. (Commissioners meet with House Resources and Conservation Committee at Statehouse)

- 3:45 p.m. 13. [Proposed Rule to Exempt Military Members and Peace Officers From the Live Fire Exercise Requirement of the Hunter Education Course](#) — Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy
- 4:00 p.m. 14. [Legislative Update](#) — Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy

- 4:30 p.m.** 15. [Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report](#) — Ann Dehner, Executive Director
- 4:45 p.m.** 16. [Update on Salmon Forecasts and Potential Seasons in 2011](#) — Peter Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager
- 5:00 p.m.** 17. Director's Report — Cal Groen, Director
- 5:15 p.m.** 18. Commission Reports — Commissioners
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Individuals with disabilities may request meeting accommodations by contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Director's office at (208) 334-5159 or through the Idaho Relay Service at 1-800-377-2529 (TDD).

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 4b

Agenda Item: Financial Report

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jim Lau, Chief, Bureau of Administration

Background:

Update the Commission on the Financial Status of the Department

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

None

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 4c

Agenda Item: Winter Feeding Advisory Committee
Appointments (**Action**)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael

Background:

Regional Winter Feeding Advisory Committees (WFAC) were established following passage of Senate Bill 1406 in 1994. Committees are charged with assisting the Department in implementing the Commission's Emergency Big Game Feeding Policy (enclosed). Committees exist in every region where emergency winter feeding is a normal occurrence (Southwest, Magic Valley, Southeast, Upper Snake, and Salmon regions). Committee members are appointed by unanimous vote of the Commission with appointments lasting 2 years.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Code 36-123. WINTER FEEDING ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

(1) A winter feeding advisory committee shall be established for each district where winter feeding of antelope, elk, and deer normally occurs. Each committee shall consist of five (5) members. The members shall be appointed and removed for cause by unanimous vote of the Idaho fish and game commission. It is intended that the committees reflect the cross section of the major interest groups associated with each district. Each committee shall meet at such times as appropriate, but not less frequently than annually, on or before December 1, before the winter feeding season arrives, whichever is earlier.

(2) The term of office of a member shall be two (2) years, except a portion of the initial appointments may be for a term of one (1) year to provide staggered terms. Appointments to fill vacancies shall be for the balance of the unexpired term. The committees shall serve without compensation.

(3) Each winter feeding advisory committee established pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall appoint a chairman. The chairmen of the committees shall meet at least annually to coordinate activities and promote consensus on issues of common interest among the winter feeding advisory committees. The chairmen may elect a leader from among the chairmen to call meetings and conduct and coordinate activities of the group.

(4) The department of fish and game shall provide staff assistance and support for the committees.

(5) The committees shall have the authority to:

(a) Act as an independent resource in each district to give advice and recommendations on the administration of winter feeding programs;

(b) Act as a liaison between the commission, the department, interest groups, and the public on winter feeding issues.

Public Involvement Process:

Nominees are selected by Regional Supervisors with input from various stakeholders, including Department staff, sportsmen organizations, and local publics.

Staff Recommendation:

Appoint/reappoint WFAC members. Current committee members are provided on the next page. A final list of recommended appointments/reappointments will be provided to the Commission during presentation of this agenda item.

Justification:

Commission action required to appoint Winter Feeding Advisory Committee members.

REVISED: April 30, 1996

APPROVED:

TITLE: BIG GAME FEEDING POLICY (Deer, Elk, Antelope, Moose)

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission recognizes that the big game population should be maintained under natural conditions and by naturally available forage. Winter forage is the major limiting factor that determines the basic size of the big game populations and it must be maintained if these animals are to prosper and propagate. The Department will work with the appropriate land management agencies in an effort to maintain winter ranges in a condition suitable to meet big game management objectives, including the restoration of ranges damaged from such long-term impacts as disease, weed infestation, and/or overgrazing. These restorations could include temporary solutions for short-term impacts caused by fire and/or drought. In order to maintain these winter ranges, big game numbers must be controlled through adequate harvest. We, therefore, do not sanction any wide-spread supplemental winter feeding programs.

Big game animals, especially elk, when concentrated by supplemental feeding, are very susceptible to infectious disease, which can be transmitted to livestock and to other big game animals. Every effort should be made to lessen this threat.

We are aware that big game harvests and weather will vary from year to year throughout the state. In most years, snow depths, temperatures, and animal body condition do not create adverse conditions for wintering animals. However, there are times when unusual weather patterns may create critical periods of stress when winter forage becomes limited, unavailable, or animals are forced into areas involving public safety. We recognize that we cannot manage game populations for these extreme weather conditions--nor should we.

The Department is authorized to feed big game only if the following conditions exist:

1. To prevent damage to private property or for public safety when other methods of preventing damage and providing safety measures are determined to be impractical, inappropriate, or ineffective and the amount of damage or cost of protection is expected to exceed the cost of feeding.
2. To prevent the excessive mortality of big game populations in drainages that would affect the recovery of the herd. Some mortality should be expected, especially from the young and old segments of the population.

It is the responsibility of all field personnel to advise the regional supervisor of weather, animal conditions and numbers, and public input on situations that meet the feeding criteria outlined above. If the regional supervisor, in consultation with the regional winter feeding advisory committee, determines that the criteria has been met and that an emergency exists, he will inform the Bureau of Wildlife of his decision and the Bureau of Wildlife will notify the Director's Office, Bureau of Enforcement, and the Bureau of Information and Education. The regional big game operational plan will then be implemented.

It is the responsibility of all field personnel to advise the regional supervisor of weather, animal conditions and numbers, and public input on situations that meet the feeding criteria outlined above. If the regional supervisor, in consultation with the regional winter feeding advisory committee, determines that the criteria has been met and that an emergency exists, he will inform the Bureau of Wildlife of his decision and the Bureau of Wildlife will notify the Director's Office, Bureau of Enforcement, and the Bureau of Information and Education. The regional big game operational plan will then be implemented.

Meeting Date:**Agenda Item No.****Agenda Item:** Turkey Waterfowl Workgroup Report**Bureau Chief Approval:** _____**Prepared by:** Lance Hebdon and Virgil Moore

Background: At the November 2009 joint meeting between the Commission and the Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board (OGLB) staff from both agencies gave information relative to the temporary moratorium on outfitting for Waterfowl and Turkey Hunting (IOGLB Policy 2027). It was recognized that due to the increased interest in these activities and due to Idaho's administrative decision making requirement in state law, a more comprehensive approach was needed so IOGLB can appropriately address these matters. An advisory work group was formed by a series of appointments made jointly with the Department and IOGLB.

The advisory work group was formed to:

- 1) To understand the current conditions around the issue,
- 2) To find areas of agreement,
- 3) To prioritize possible solutions,
- 4) To make policy recommendations to the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board (IOGLB) and Commission, and
- 5) To be clear on whether the recommendations for turkeys and waterfowl were the same or needed to be different in some regards.

The group completed its final meeting in December 2010 and a final report from the Advisory Work Group will be presented to the Commission. The group failed to reach a consensus but did come to some points of agreement.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

The Commission reaffirmed its policy against outfitting and guiding for waterfowl and upland game birds in 2006.

Public Involvement Process:

None at this time.

Staff Recommendation:

Recommend the Commission convene joint meeting with the IOGLB in March.

Justification:

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 6

Agenda Item: Biological Rules for Moose, Sheep, and Goat **Bureau Chief Approval:** _____

Prepared by: Dale Toweill

Background:

Harvest proposals for trophy species (moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat) are established for a two-year period and are presented to the Commission for approval in January of each odd-numbered year.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None. This item is to establish statewide hunting rules and allocation of permits for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats for the 2011 and 2012 seasons.

Public Involvement Process:

Proposals were generated by in-house data analyses, and discussions among biologists and law enforcement personnel. Proposed changes were scoped statewide. Public input included Regional open houses statewide; news releases in all media outlets; and public response to the regional proposals posted on the Department's website.

A summary of public input by species will be provided during presentation of the agenda item.

Action Requested:

Approve 2011 – 2012 moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat seasons and permit levels, leading to publication of a statewide two-year trophy species harvest brochure available to the public.

Staff Recommendation:

Recommendations were presented to Commissioners in November and have been posted on-line for public review and comment. Based on comments received during statewide Open Houses and through our website, final recommendations will be provided during presentation of the agenda item.

Justification:

Establish hunting regulation and harvest opportunities for moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat during 2011-2012.

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 7

Agenda Item: Deer and Elk Status Overview

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Game Manager

Background:

Staff will present a statewide overview of the status of deer and elk populations in relation to deer Population Management Unit objectives and elk zone objectives. The Commission will also be briefed on upcoming aerial surveys that will aid in the development of deer and elk hunt recommendations for the Commission meeting in March 2011.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Public Involvement Process:

Status of all big game species except for moose, sheep, and goat is made available to the public during regional open houses in February and March 2011. The Department will collect public input on big game season proposals at that time.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, clarifications, or recommendations from the public.

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 8

Agenda Item: Mandatory Harvest Report Briefing

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael and Bruce Ackerman

Background:

Mandatory Harvest Reporting is underway for the 2010 deer, elk, and pronghorn hunting season. There have been 110,000 reports received as of January 3 out of the 221,000 tags sold. A much higher percentage of the reports (81% this year compared to 65% last year) have been received online compared to other methods of reporting. Online reporting has been an increasing trend in recent years. Beginning in July hunters were not issued harvest report forms with their tag purchase, and in fall 2010 we moved to all-digital reporting. Hunters may report online or by telephone.

Phone surveys began in December and continue through January to a random sample of 40,000 hunters who have not yet reported. Harvest data will be analyzed so 2010 harvest results are available to regional staff to aid in development of final recommendations for changes to regulations in March.

Commissioners will be briefed on preliminary harvest results.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Public Involvement Process:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, clarifications, or recommendations from the public.

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 9

Agenda Item: Ungulate Predation Research Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Brad Compton

Background:

Since 1997, the Department has focused intensive elk investigations on determining the population level impacts of predation. Initially, the investigations were focused on the impacts of black bear and mountain lion predation. Since 2005, the focus shifted to evaluating population level impacts of wolf predation. Between 2005 - 2008, biologists captured and monitored over 700 adult female and calf elk in 11 of 29 elk management zones to determine survival and cause-specific mortality. Results from this work were and are used to: 1) develop 10(j) proposals, 2) provide a foundation for elk and wolf harvest recommendations, and 3) provide science-backed information to the public and policy makers.

Beginning in 2009, intensive elk investigations were restructured to develop a management tool that could reliably estimate wolf impacts on elk populations more cost-effectively and across all elk management zones in Idaho.

In September 2010, the Department submitted a 10(j) proposal to the USFWS requesting approval to remove wolves from the Lolo Elk Management Zone because of unacceptable impacts. Upon implementation, the Department would continue to intensively monitor elk and wolf populations to evaluate effectiveness of the management effort.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Public Involvement Process:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Action Requested:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is for informational purposes.

Justification:

Provide the Commission an update on the status and near-future plans, along with contingency plans, for intensive elk investigations in Idaho.

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: Region 7 – Hayden Lake acquisition

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Katherine Cousins and Gregg Servheen

Background:

This 203-acre fee title acquisition is located in Kootenai County to the northeast of Hayden Lake and is adjacent to U.S. Forest Service ownership and the 320-acre Vanderbilt conservation easement held by the Department. Acquisition of the subject property will preserve habitat and recreational opportunities in a rapidly developing area. Protection of the site would retain habitat for upland and big game species and a variety of non-game species in an area that is quickly being developed. In addition, neighbors to the subject property have stated that they would donate a 110-acre conservation easement to the Department if the property were to become protected.

Acquisition of this parcel will also provide partial habitat mitigation for the construction and operation of Albeni Falls Dam and abides by IDFG goals outlined in the Albeni Falls Wildlife Protection, Mitigation, and Enhancement Plan. A new management plan will need to be developed for the property, and additional BPA funding will be added to the existing operations and maintenance contract for the Department's Wildlife Management Areas.

No buildings are part of the acquisition. IDFG pays a fee in lieu of taxes (FILT) for all fee-title properties. The FILT for properties acquired in Kootenai County is estimated at approximately \$2.24 per acre, for a total of approximately \$454.72 for the subject property.

The property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session on May 20, 2010.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission and Department land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

County commissioners have been notified and support the acquisition. The public will be informed and contacted for their input regarding management of the property.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends proceeding with the acquisition.

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: Region 7 – Cooper land acquisition

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Steve Elam and Gregg Servheen

Background:

This 11.63-acre property borders the Salmon River 3 miles North of the town of Salmon. This project would ensure public access to one of the most heavily used sections of the Salmon River. Fishing/boating conflicts and boating safety issues would be minimized and steelhead fishing pressure distributed from Salmon to Morgan Bar. This property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session in April of 2010.

Acquisition cost is \$283,500 of Salmon and Steelhead funds. PILT is estimated at \$1,200/year. O&M costs are estimated at \$1,000 annually.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Land acquisition in accordance with Commission and Department land acquisition policy.

Public Involvement Process:

County commissioners have been notified and asked for their input. The public will be informed and contacted for their input regarding management of the property.

Staff Recommendation:

The Lands Committee recommends proceeding with the acquisition.

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 11

**Agenda Item: IDFG Director's Annual Report to
the Commission**

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by:

**Background: Director Groen will present a report to the Commission showing
Department financial summaries for FY10 and an overview of major
Department programs.**

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues: N/A

Public Involvement Process: N/A

Staff Recommendation: N/A

Justification: N/A

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: JFAC Budget Preview

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jim Lau

Background:

On Tuesday, February 1 the department will present the Governor's Fiscal Year 2012 budget for IDFG to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC). The Director will provide the Commission with a preview of his planned presentation to JFAC for their information and input. The presentation will focus upon the role of the Commission in setting key policy direction and the actions of the Department to carry our Commission policy.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Annual formal budget request to the Legislature

Public Involvement Process:

N/A

Staff Recommendation:

The financial aspect of our budget request has previously been approved by the Commission and the Director will present this overview to brief Commissioners on key aspects of our presentation to JFAC.

Justification:

For information and input only.

Meeting Date: January 27

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: Proposed Rule to Exempt Military Members and Peace Officers from the Live Fire Exercise Requirement of the Hunter Education Course

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background:

At the November 2010 Commission meeting, staff briefed the Commission about a legislative request to consider Hunter Education live fire exercise exemption for military personnel and peace officers that could result in a rule change in IDAPA 13.01.02.

Staff will present a draft of the rule but will not ask the Commission to act on the rule at the January meeting. Prior to the beginning of the legislative session, a moratorium is imposed on state agencies that restricts them from promulgating proposed rules. This moratorium on proposed rulemaking begins in mid-November and is in effect until the adjournment of the legislature session. Because staff recommends eventual adoption of the rule as “temporary and proposed” the current moratorium applies. Therefore, staff have not yet submitted a Proposed Administrative Rules Form (PARF), which is required prior to Commission action.

However, staff believes the benefit of providing the rule proposal to the Commission for a preview demonstrates agency intent for rulemaking and provides stakeholders additional opportunity for review.

Staff will present the rule for Commission action at the first scheduled opportunity after the legislature session concludes, likely the May meeting.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: Commission has statutory authority to conduct rulemaking for the hunter education program.

Public Involvement Process: The proposal concept was initiated by interested legislators in 2010 on behalf of constituents. Public involvement is ongoing per the Commission public involvement process.

Staff Recommendation: Continue public involvement and consider the rule for Commission action at the conclusion of the agency rule moratorium period.

Justification: Legislative and other stakeholder interest in a live-fire exercise exemption for personnel already trained in weapon handling and safety; exemption may encourage hunter education certification of certain adults interested in hunting.

Meeting Date: January 27

Agenda Item No. 14

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background:

Staff will update the Commission about legislative activity since the January 20 Commission meeting (teleconference).

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Informational. Commission has authority to provide legislative policy guidance.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Staff Recommendation:

Continue implementation of the legislative process already discussed by the Commission. Provide staff support for the Commission meetings with the House Resources and Conservation Committee and the Senate Resources and Environment Committee.

Justification:

Legislative process requested by the Commission.

Meeting Date: January 26-27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 15

Agenda Item: Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report **Bureau Chief Approval:** _____

Prepared by: Ann Dehner

Background:

Commission has requested updates about the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation activities.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

Present update as follows.

Justification:

Requested by Commission.

1. The Foundation acquired a 5.2 acre property along the Little Salmon River near Riggins, Idaho, on January 4, 2011. The Foundation will engage the Department in discussions regarding leasing and management of the property, and explore issues and needs surrounding fishing access at the site.
2. The Foundation is currently planning for its annual online auction, to be held February 18-27, 2011. The fundraising event will again offer unique educational and outdoor experiences, in addition to related auction items, in an online format that is growing in recognition and popularity.
3. The Foundation is continuing a comprehensive strategic planning process to update its last strategic plan that expired in 2008. It is anticipated that the future direction for programs, projects and operations of the Foundation will be identified through this process. The Foundation wishes to engage members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission in this process and will solicit the Commission's input as the process unfolds.

Meeting Date: January 27, 2011

Agenda Item No. 16

Agenda Item: Update on Salmon Forecasts and Potential Seasons in 2011

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Pete Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This is an explanation, to inform the Commission, of the forecasts for spring and summer Chinook salmon returning to the Snake River this spring and potential salmon seasons. These salmon will begin leaving the ocean and entering the Columbia River in late February and early March. Fisheries staff proposes to return to the Commission in March with recommendations for 2010 Chinook salmon sport fisheries to be conducted in the Clearwater River, Salmon River and Snake River drainages. During January and February Fisheries staff will be involved in Columbia River basin processes that set spring Chinook fishing seasons on the Columbia River. Those season setting processes and the potential impacts of Columbia River fisheries on Idaho-bound salmon will be described.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

None

Public Involvement Process:

None

Staff Recommendation:

None

Justification:

Keeps Commission informed prior to setting Chinook salmon fishing seasons in March.