

Idaho Fish and Game Commission Special Meeting - March 28-31, 2011

Red Lion Hotel Boise Downtowner, 1800 Fairview Avenue, Boise, ID

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

MARCH 28 - AGENDA

- 1:00 p.m. Executive Session to discuss land acquisitions and pending litigation I.C. 67-2345(1) (c) (f)
- 2:00 p.m. Executive Session IC 67-2345(1) (a) to consider the hiring of a new Director.
- 7:00 p.m. **Public Hearing**

MARCH 29 - AGENDA

- 8:00 a.m. 1. Opening Comments — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:05 a.m. 2. Agenda Changes — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:10 a.m. 3. Review of Public Comment — Wayne Wright, Commission Chairman
- 8:25 a.m. 4. Consent Calendar
(Action Requested by Department)
 - a. Minutes
 - b. [Financial Report](#)
- 8:30 a.m. 5. [Season Setting: Big Game Species](#)
(Action Requested by Department) — Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager

10:00 A.M. — BREAK

- 10:20 a.m. 6. [Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report](#)
— Ann Dehner, Executive Director
- 10:30 a.m. 7. [Surrogator Evaluation Update](#)
— Sal Palzzolo, Wildlife Program Coordinator
- 10:45 a.m. 8. [License Restructuring](#)
— Craig Wiedmeier, License Operations Supervisor
- 11:00 a.m. 9. Commission Liaison IOGLB Update
— Alex Irby, IFG Liaison
- 11:15 p.m. 10. [Legislative Update](#)
— Sharon Kiefer, Assistant Director-Policy
- 11:30 a.m. 11. [Wolf Update](#)
— Jim Unsworth, Deputy Director

12:00 — LUNCH

- 1:00 p.m. 12. [Hunter Education Instructor Awards](#)
— Don Sturtevant, Region 3 Wildlife Educator

- 1:30 p.m.** 13. [Season Setting: Spring Season Chinook Salmon Fisheries](#)
(Action Requested by Department)
— Peter Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager
- 1:50 p.m.** 14. Director's Report
— Cal Groen, Director
- 2:10 p.m.** 15. Commission Reports
— Commissioners
- 2:45 p.m.** 16. Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Information Report
— Dennis Radocha, State Chair

3:00 P.M. — RECESS

MARCH 30-31 - AS NECESSARY

17. Executive Session IC 67-2345(1) (a) to consider the hiring of a new Director
18. Hiring of a new Director
(Action Item) (Tentative)

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: March 29, 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: March 29, 2011

Agenda Item No. 5

Agenda Item: Season Setting: Big Game Species
(Action)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Game Manager

Background:

Staff will present deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear, and mountain lion season recommendations for 2011/2012. A summary of recommended changes include:

DEER

- Expand opportunity in Panhandle to return to normal seasons.
- Adjust extra antlerless controlled hunt permits in Clearwater Region to address crop damage.
- Decrease antlerless permits in Unit 32 and increase permits in Unit 32A.
- Eliminate youth antlerless hunt with problematic boundary in Units 40 and 41, replace with controlled hunt and Landowner Permission hunt to address depredations.
- Rotating muzzleloader hunt in Magic Valley Region proposed to move from Units 52 and 56 to Units 47, 54, and 55.
- Initiate new rotating controlled hunts for archery and muzzleloader hunters in Southeast Region.
- Adjust controlled hunt permit levels in response to population changes, desired hunt quality, and to address chronic depredation concerns.

ELK

- Expand opportunity in 6 northern Panhandle units, reduce seasons in southern 3 Panhandle units.
- Reduce hunter congestion in Unit 11 controlled hunts.
- Remove all antlerless hunting from Middle Fork Zone.
- Implement final phase-in of A and B tag quota reductions in the Sawtooth Zone.
- New hunts proposed in Units 41, 46, & 47 to provide opportunity on expanding elk herds.
- New high-quality muzzleloader controlled hunt in Unit 30A.
- Adjust controlled hunt permit levels in response to population changes, and to address chronic depredation concerns.

PRONGHORN

- Reduce permits in Unit 40 any-weapon hunt to attempt to improve buck quality.
- Increase permits in Unit 44.

BLACK BEAR

- Add one week to bear season in Units 64, 65, 66, 66A, 67, and 76.

MOUNTAIN LION

- Distribute female quota in Southeast Region among 4 groups of units to better distribute harvest.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104 authorizes the Commission to establish rules for the taking of wildlife consistent with state policy. Species management plans provide Commission direction for population and harvest management.

Public Involvement Process:

The recommendations have resulted from year-round public involvement, population and harvest monitoring, and have been scoped internally and with the public through regional meetings and the website.

Staff Recommendation:

Preliminary recommendations are attached. Final Department recommendations, after considering public input, will be provided during the presentation. Staff recommends Landowner Appreciation Program hunts and permit levels be consistent with, and proportionate to, Commission-adopted changes in regular controlled hunts and permit levels.

Justification:

Commission action required to adopt 2011-2012 hunting seasons for mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, pronghorn, black bears, and mountain lions.

Meeting Date: March 29, 2011

Agenda Item No. 6

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 wishes to acknowledge the dedication and service of John Barker, who passed away in February. John was an active and long-standing member of the Foundation's Board of Directors who worked to support the Department of Fish and Game and other partners in service to conservation and wildlife management in the state.

2. The Foundation is continuing its strategic planning process, with a retreat for its Board of Directors and staff scheduled to follow its annual board meeting in April. It is anticipated that the future direction for programs, projects, and operations of the Foundation will be identified and/or clarified through this process.

3. The Foundation issued an RFP, conducted interviews and has engaged a new auditor, Sanders and Associates, PLLC. The audit is currently underway and is anticipated to be completed within the next few weeks.

4. The Foundation has been in discussions and interviews with candidates to join the Foundation's Board of Directors. Candidates have been nominated to fill regional vacancies. The Foundation currently has 16 voting board members.

5. At its February meeting of the Board of Directors, the Foundation approved two requests from the Department to distribute funds from trust accounts: 1) \$50,000 from the Demsey Trust to support the construction of a **property manager's residence on the Andrus WMA** in Region 3; and 2) up to \$22,200 to repair and construct fencing on the Joseph Plains property in Region 2.

6. The Foundation is implementing its annual plan to promote the sales of the Idaho Wildlife license plates. The plan includes multi-media exposure, direct marketing, sponsorships and public relations activities throughout the state.

7. The Foundation continues to engage in inquiries regarding potential land acquisitions, conservation easements and partnership requests. Foundation staff continues to work in consultation with the Department regarding stewardship and management issues for such inquiries.

Meeting Date: March 29, 2011

Agenda Item No. 7

Agenda Item: Surrogator® Evaluation Program

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sal Palazzolo

Background:

This presentation provides an update on the 2010 Pheasant Surrogator® Evaluation Program. Sportsmen groups, landowners, conservation organizations, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Department) partnered to implement and evaluate the feasibility and success of raising pheasant chicks in Surrogators® as a tool to improve hunting opportunities.

The Evaluation is designed to enable sportsmen groups and landowners that desire to utilize Surrogators® to employ biological and technical expertise of the Department and to increase dialogue between sportsmen, landowners, and the Department. This presentation provides an overview of 2010 results and discusses plans for 2011.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

This project is designed to help meet Department policies of maintaining game populations to meet demand for hunting.

Public Involvement Process:

Informational presentation.

Staff Recommendation:

N/A.

Justification:

Information requested by the Commission.

Meeting Date: March 29, 2011

Agenda Item No. 8

Agenda Item: License Restructure Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Craig Wiedmeier

Background: A team of Fish and Game staff has been formed to conceptualize new ways of issuing and packaging the items the Department sells. Meetings have been held with the team to discuss potential restructuring ideas. The team has also met with internal staff from around the state this month to gather additional ideas.

The team has contacted two outside organizations that have assisted other states through similar projects. Our plan is to contract with one of the organizations to help us through our project.

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:

Provide the Commission an update on the progress of the license restructure project.

Meeting Date: March 29, 2011

Agenda Item No. 10

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Sharon W. Kiefer

Background:

Staff will update the Commission about legislative activity since the last Commission legislative call and provide preliminary assessment of Department action needed to implement new legislation.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Informational.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Staff Recommendation:

Continue implementation of the legislative process as needed.

Justification:

Legislative process requested by the Commission.

Meeting Date: March 29, 2011

Agenda Item No. 11

Agenda Item: Wolf Update

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Jim Unsworth

Background:

In May 2009, wolves were delisted from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in Idaho and Montana. Idaho held a successful hunting season for wolves in fall and winter 2009-2010, but following a Federal District Court decision, wolves were relisted under ESA. On August 5, 2010, Judge Molloy vacated the rule that delisted wolves in Montana and Idaho and returned them to protections of the ESA, effectively restricting state management and eliminating the possibility of a state-regulated wolf hunt.

Governor Otter informed the Secretary of Interior on October 18, 2010 that Idaho would no longer manage wolves as the designated agent of the federal government until wolves were again delisted.

Since that time, IDFG staff has ceased involvement in wolf monitoring, and is no longer involved in responding to wolf depredations on livestock, or investigation of violations of the ESA. IDFG has continued to focus efforts on our research project and assessing impacts of wolves on ungulates in the Lolo and Sawtooth study areas. Staff completed a proposal under Section 10j of the ESA to reduce the wolf population in the Lolo Zone in September and has provided input on the preparation of the Environment Assessment on that proposal which was released for a 30-day comment period on February 11. Staff continues to monitor elk populations closely throughout the state and has documented additional declines in high-density wolf areas during January-March 2011.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Nez Perce Tribe are expected to complete and release their annual report on wolf management in Idaho in mid-March. IDFG has not been involved with the development of that report or the calculation of the minimum year-end estimate of wolves that will be reported in that document.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Information only.

Public Involvement Process:

Information only.

Action Requested:

None. This item is provided for Commissioner information only.

Justification:

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

Meeting Date: 03/29/2011

Agenda Item No. 12

Agenda Item: 12

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Don Sturtevant

Background: Hunter Education Instructor Awards.

These seven individuals are receiving the top award in the Idaho Hunter and Bowhunter Education program. They have reached the 3500 point level by teaching and assisting in classes.

**Ken Brown....Nampa
Richard Clem....Kuna
Rick Gabiola....Boise
Merl Holaday....New Plymouth
Al Jennings....Nampa
Jim Parkhouse....Kuna
Theresa Vogt....Emmett**

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Public Involvement Process:

Staff Recommendation:

Justification:

Meeting Date: March 29, 2011

Agenda Item No. 13

Agenda Item: Season Setting, Spring Season Chinook
Salmon Fisheries

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Peter Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager

Background:

This agenda item concerns the setting of Chinook salmon fishing seasons targeting adult anadromous Chinook salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, South Fork Clearwater River and Lochsa River. Chinook salmon fisheries were conducted on these waters in 1997 and 2000 through 2010. For all proposed fishing areas, staff is forecasting that a sufficient number of hatchery salmon will return to the Snake River in 2011 to allow sport fisheries that target the non-tribal harvestable share when hatchery production and brood stock targets are considered.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

Idaho Statute 36-104(b)2 gives the Commission the authority to make a rule or proclamation establishing seasons and methods for the taking of fish. Fishing Rules are provided in IDAPA 13.01.11

Public Involvement Process:

The public involvement process was on-going at the time this gold sheet was prepared. Findings from the Public Involvement Process will be reported to the Commission during their meeting.

Staff Recommendation:

Approve the proposed 2011 fishing seasons for Chinook salmon in the Snake River, Lower Salmon River, Little Salmon River, Mainstem Clearwater River, North Fork Clearwater River, South Fork Clearwater River and Lochsa River.

NOTE: At the time of preparation of this gold sheet, Regional and Bureau fisheries staffs were in the process of updating salmon return forecasts and scoping fishery options. The specific fishery proposals were not completed are not included here but will be delivered to the Commission during the week prior to the March Commission meeting.

Justification:

Title 36 of Idaho State Code gives the Commission the authority to set rules to preserve, protect, or manage fish and wildlife in Idaho. The proposed fisheries are to address biological issues, mitigation hatchery programs and angler desires.