

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission
Annual Meeting – January 15-16, 2014
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Boise, Idaho**

January 15

Chairman Barowsky called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. with Commissioners Brad Corkill, Fred Trevey, Mark Doerr, Randy Budge, Kenny Anderson and Will Naillon present.

MISCELLANEOUS

Agenda Review and Commission Discussion

Commissioners discussed presentation topics for the Senate Resources & Environment Committee meeting and reviewed agenda items. Commissioner Trevey identified the federal land management planning process as an important topic for future discussion, and it will be considered for the agenda at either the March or May meeting.

Commissioners recessed to attend the Senate Resources & Environment Committee meeting, which included confirmation hearing for Commissioners Corkill and Doerr as well as presentations on matters of Committee interest by the Commission. Minutes of Committee meetings are taken by the Committee Secretary and published following approval by the Committee.

The meeting reconvened at 4:15 p.m.

Executive Session

14-01 Commissioner Corkill moved and Commissioner Naillon seconded a motion to hold an executive session pursuant of subsections (c) of Idaho Code Section 67-2345 to discuss lands. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Kenny Anderson, Brad Corkill, Mark Doerr, Will Naillon, Fred Trevey and Bob Barowsky. Commissioner Randy Budge joined the session at 5:00 p.m.

The Commission discussed potential land acquisition. The executive session ended at 5:27 p.m. with no official action taken.

Public Hearing

The public hearing was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Bob Barowsky. He introduced Commissioners Brad Corkill, Fred Trevey, Mark Doerr, Randy Budge, Kenny Anderson and Will Naillon.

Director Virgil Moore, Representative Marc Gibbs and Department personnel were introduced.

Chairman Barowsky reviewed the rules for conduct of the hearing and the hearing was opened for public comment.

The following individuals provided public comment:

Jake Feist, Jay Stark, Wally Vanantwerp, Matthew Borg, Mike Gann, Frank Schwartz, Scott Rudel, Ron Shirts, Jeffrey McKeever, Leon Smith, Tim Kemery, Larry Thorngren, Burk Mantel, David Ransom, Angel Lovan, Ernest Lombard, Jack Hammack, Robin Purcell, Pete Feist, Cliff Hansen, Troy Cobb, Mark Hotchkiss, Ed Allen, Triton Rimkins, Rusty Kramer, Tim Conant, Diane Jones, Lee Juan Tyaler, Judy Ouder Kirk, Lani Gallimore, Sarah Biggers, Joanie Favci, Jo Faulkner, Ronnie Kewley, Dr. Olin Balch, Mady Rothchild, Mary Ann Compton, Wayne Butts, Trish Woodruff, Dr. Karen Balch, Zachary Jones, Peter Fitzsimmons, Cay Marquart, Ron Marquart, Danielle Oremus, Herb Meyr, Josiah Nebeker, Patrick Carney, Jack Hogue, Jeff Halligan, Stabe Hedges, Andrea Sparzo, Mike Medbuerry, Tom Demorest, Lynne W. Lamprecht, Jennifer Pierce, Paul Ostler, Ed Bottum, Mike Settell, Anna Demetriades, Pam Marcum, Grant Simonds, Ken Cole, Alexandra Delis-Abrams, Andy White, Lanette McDermott, John Robison. Written comment submitted: Michael Hossack, Carol Wiens, Eric Zechmann, Louise Stark, Isaac Babcock, Quang and Richard Francisco, Cordell Hanson and Jason Wright (Appendix 47, Exhibit 1).

Testimony topics included: Elk Management Plan and elk recovery, quota on bobcats, wolf trapping season, treaty rights, combining Smoky Mountain and Bennet Hill zones, Little Salmon River access, trapping regulations, Hydatid disease in wolves, wolf-livestock conflict in the southern mountains, disabled hunting, bighorn sheep, wolf bill funding, landowner appreciation tags, bear seasons in Units 22, 31, 32 and 32 A, predator control in the Frank Church Wilderness, beaver trapping in Mine Creek in Bannock County, commission information in advance of meeting, air gun hunting, lighted nocks on arrows and hunting with the aid of an aircraft.

January 16

MISCELLANEOUS

Opening Comments

The Commission meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Barowsky. Commissioners Brad Corkill, Fred Trevey, Mark Doerr, Randy Budge, Kenny Anderson, Will Naillon, and Commission Secretary Virgil Moore were present.

Posting of the Colors and Pledge of Allegiance

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game Honor Guard presented the colors. Members presenting: Nathan Stohosky, Brian Flatter and Roger Westfall.

Review of January 15 Public Comment

There were 67 individuals who spoke at the public hearing, and the Commission discussed and reviewed their comments.

Consent Calendar

The consent calendar included the following items:

- Financial Report
- Appointments Winter Feeding Advisory Committee

14- 02 Commissioner Naillon moved and Commissioner Anderson seconded a motion to accept the items listed in the consent calendar. All Commissioners voted in favor.

REPORTS

Foundation for Wildlife Management Report

Tony McDermott, Pete Feist and Jack Hammack, members from the Foundation for Wildlife Management shared information about the activities of the organization with the Commission. Participation of licensed hunters and trappers is vital to effective state management of predation where it is significantly impacting, elk, moose and other big game populations in several of Idaho's traditional backcountry hunting areas. The organization helps offset expenses to increase participation by license-holders in wolf hunting and trapping activities.

The Commission will consider the organization's proposals for changes to the existing seasons and rules, along with other public input, during the Commission's process for rulemaking and season setting. The Commission has authority to determine whether or not negotiated rulemaking is feasible regarding such rule changes.

14- 03 Commissioner Trevey moved and Commissioner Corkill seconded a motion that the Commission send a letter to the Foundation that supports the concept of offsetting expenses to increase sportsmen participation in support of the Departments objectives to restore elk in those units where they are below objectives. All Commissioners voted in favor.

RULES

Upland/Small Game & Furbearer Season Setting

Upland game bird, upland game animal, furbearer, and migratory bird (crow, dove, and crane) season dates, bag, and possession limits are set on even-numbered years and cover a two-year period. The purpose of this agenda item is to adopt changes to the Rules governing the taking of Game Birds (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 09), the taking of Game Animals (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 07), the taking of Furbearing Animals (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 16), the taking of Migratory Birds (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 13), and Falconry (IDAPA 13, Title 01, Chapter 14).

A statewide press release was issued on these proposed seasons. Regions provided the public with opportunities to comment on Department-proposed changes, and the Department website had a questionnaire asking for public input on the proposed changes to upland game rules.

Seasons are designed to manage Idaho's upland game and furbearer resources for maximum hunting and trapping opportunity while considering biological and sociological implications.

Jeff Knetter, Upland Game & Migratory bird Coordinator, presented the season proposals for upland/small game (Appendix 47, Exhibit 2).

WMA Upland Game Bird Permit

Recommendation: Add Niagara Springs WMA and Sterling WMA to the list of WMAs where hunting hours start at 10:00 a.m. A notice of intent for negotiated rulemaking was published on January 10.

Turkeys

Clearwater Region

General Fall Turkey Season: November 21- December 31

Recommendation: Add the following sentence to the end of the turkey season hunt description: For the purpose of this hunt, "private lands" do not include corporate timberlands. (This is the same wording that is included in the Big Game Rules brochure).

Southwest Region

Controlled youth-only spring turkey hunt in Unit 38 (9004).

Recommendation: Split hunt 9004 (April 8-May 25) into two separate hunts and increase the number of permits (40).

Magic Valley Region

Controlled spring turkey hunts in Unit 54 (Hunt 9008, 9009, & 9010).

Recommendation: Reduce the number of permits by 33% (26) in each spring controlled hunt in Unit 54.

- Hunt 9009; April 8-May 25; youth-only; reduce permits from 30 to 20.
- Hunt 9010; April 15-May 5; reduce permits from 24 to 16.
- Hunt 9011; May 6-25; reduce permits from 24 to 16.

Controlled fall turkey hunt in Unit 54 (Hunt 9020, Hunt Area 54-4, 50 permits).

Recommendation: Eliminate this hunt.

Southeast Region

Controlled spring turkey hunts in Unit 71 (Hunt 9015 & 9016).

Recommendation: Increase the number of permits by 50% (50) in each of the controlled spring turkey hunts in Unit 71.

- Hunt 9016; April 15-30; increase permits from 50 to 75.
- Hunt 9017; May 1-25; increase permits from 50-75.

Controlled fall turkey in Unit 71 (Hunt 9021 & 9022).

Recommendation: Increase the number of permits by 33% (50) in each of the controlled fall turkey hunts in Unit 71.

- Hunt 9021; September 15-November 30; increase permits from 75 to 100.
- Hunt 9022: September 15-December 31; youth-only; increase permits from 75 to 100.

14-04 Commissioner Doerr moved and Commissioner Budge seconded a motion to accept the department recommendations for the 2014/2015 upland game and turkey seasons. All Commissioners voted in favor.

Steve Nadeau, Staff Biologist, presented the proposal for the furbearer proposals (Appendix 47, Exhibit 3).

Reciprocal Agreement

Recommendation: Allow trapping privileges to nonresidents from other states that grant Idaho residents similar trapping privileges.

Bobcat Season – Statewide

Recommendation: Reduce the season length by 2 weeks to stabilize harvest and catch per unit effort trend under current participation level. The new season would run:

- December 14- January 31

River Otter

Recommendation: close the following additional sections of river to otter harvest in the Southwest Region:

- Payette River confluence of the Middle Fork and South fork Payette River downstream to Banks, North Fork of the Payette River from Cabarton Bridge downstream to Banks, and Banks downstream to the confluence with the Snake River; Closed.
- Boise River: Lucky Peak Dam to the confluence with the Snake River; Closed.
- Snake River: Grandview to Farewell Bend; Closed.

Recommendation: Reduce the regional otter quota from 30 to 20 otters in the Southwest Region.
Recommendation: Increase the regional otter quota from 30 to 40 otters in the Panhandle Region.

Beaver

Recommendation: Change beaver closures and exceptions to read as follows:

- Nez Perce County: All northern tributaries to the Salmon River downstream from but excluding Maloney Creek, and all tributaries to the Snake River below the mouth of the Salmon River to the Clearwater River, excluding the Clearwater River drainage: Closed.
- Bannock County: Controlled Hunt Beaver Trapping Unit 201 area description: That portion of Mink Creek drainage in Bannock county, except the East Fork Mink Creek and West Fork Mink Creek.
Reservoir Dam, Copper Creek (trib. To Muldoon Creek); Rock Creek and all lands within Little Fish Creek: Closed.

After discussion the Commissioners delayed their decision on two trapping season proposals: changes to Idaho's reciprocal agreement for nonresidents and the reduction of the statewide bobcat trapping season length. Commissioners requested additional information and time to review the public comments. The Commission will re-evaluate the reciprocal agreement clarification information at their March meeting.

14- 05 Commissioner Doerr moved and Commissioner Naillon seconded a motion to accept the staff recommendations to set seasons for furbearers with the exception of bobcat for the 2014/2015 furbearer season. All Commissioners voted in favor.

MISCELLANEOUS

Shikar-Safari Award

Each year Shikar-Safari Club International asks to honor the outstanding "Wildlife Officer of the Year" for Idaho. The nominee must demonstrate exemplary conduct and initiative in the performance of their duties. Shikar-Safari Club strives to recognize the officer who has done the most outstanding job in the enforcement of wildlife laws, the protection of wildlife and the implementation of conservation programs. Jon Heggen, Chief, Enforcement, and Jon Mellen, Shikar-Safari, presented the 2013 Idaho Wildlife Officer of the Year award to Senior Conservation Officer Brandon Chamberlin. Chief Heggen stated that "Brandon's tenacity, investigation skills and innovative approaches in detecting and apprehending wildlife violators have made him a great asset not only to the Southeast Region but to the entire state as well."

MANAGEMENT PLANS AND POLICIES

Elk Management Plan

Toby Boudreau, Wildlife Program Coordinator, presented the final draft Elk Management Plan for Commission approval. Commissioners were provided a copy of "A Guide to Idaho's 2014 Elk Plan" (Appendix 47, Exhibit 4). The guide is a short 10-page document summarizing the high points of the Elk Plan.

The Commission expressed their appreciation and thanks to Department staff for a job well done.

14-06 Commissioner Naillon moved and Commissioner Corkill seconded a motion to approve the final draft of the Elk Management Plan. All Commissioners voted in favor.

REPORTS

Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Ann Dehner, Executive Director provided the report.

- The Foundation is working with the Department to distribute donated funds for repairs to the roof at the MK Nature Center. At its December meeting, the Foundation's Board of Directors also approved the distribution of \$1,200 to the MK Nature Center for a work-study student from BSU to assist with maintenance and customer service.
- At its December meeting, the Foundation's Board of Directors approved its annual budget for 2014, including recommended distributions of its endowed and non-endowed funds established by donors that are restricted to projects of the Department of Fish and Game.
- The Foundation continues to hold many conversations with Department directors to further develop the organizations' working relationship and service opportunities, including exploring new avenues for fundraising to benefit shared missions and goals.
- The next Board meeting of the Foundation will be February 1, 2014 in Boise.

MISCELLANEOUS

Idaho Wildlife Appreciation Day

Director Moore acknowledged and thanked Mr. Jim Nunley for his work in organizing an Idaho Wildlife Appreciation Day. A Proclamation was signed by Governor Otter declaring January 8, 2014 as Idaho Wildlife Appreciation Day.

Selection of Fish and Game Commission Liaison to IFWF

14-07 Commissioner Naillon moved and Commissioner Budge seconded a motion to appoint Commissioner Mark Doerr as the IFWF Liaison for 2014. All Commissioners voted in favor.

LEGISLATION

Legislative Update

Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director, provided a status report of RSs and Bills (Appendix 47, Exhibit 5).

Senate Bill 1207 - Amend Wildlife Special Plate legislation terms from "elk wildlife special plate" and "cutthroat wildlife special plate" to "animal wildlife special plate" and "fish wildlife special plate" to allow broader spectrum of designs to retain customer interest.

Legislative Proposals - RS

RS 22356 - Exempt duplicate licenses and tags from set-aside requirements because set-asides are met at the time of original purchase and revise the set-aside for the reduced fee Disabled Combination-Fishing License to be a value that is proportional to the Adult Combination License set-aside. Print hearing will be in the Senate Resources and Environment Committee.

RS 22357 - Expand wildlife species covered by a reimbursable penalty of \$50 to all protected wildlife that is not otherwise identified in Idaho Code 36-1404.
Print hearing will be in the Senate Resources and Environment Committee.

RS 22359 - Lower age to hunt big game from 12 to 10 years of age.

RS 22354 - Amends existing law to provide for discounted license fees, to authorize a discount in fees to encourage hunting, fishing and trapping, to encourage purchase of licenses in consecutive years and to encourage the purchase of multiple tags and permits.

RS 22427 - Increase resident fees in Idaho Code 36-416 and make other changes:
Increase fees for all resident licenses, tags, and permits by about 20% to affect 2015 fees.

RS 22354 is a companion bill to RS 22427 to create ability for individuals who have purchased at least an annual license in 2014 to “lock in” 2014 prices for licenses, tags, and permits via Commission discount as long as they continue to purchase an annual license each year.

The confirmation votes for Commissioners Brad Corkill and Mark Doerr is scheduled for January 20, 2014.

Department staff will provide a Wolf Update to the Senate Resources and Environment Committee on January 22, 2014 and a presentation on “Sockeye Salmon Recovery Program” on January 27, 2014.

The Department’s Joint Finance Appropriations Committee (JFAC) presentation is scheduled for January 28, 2014.

REPORTS

Annual Deer and Elk Status Update

Toby Boudreau, Wildlife Program Coordinator, presented an overview of the status of deer and elk populations in relation to deer game management unit objectives and elk zone objectives; and a briefing on upcoming aerial surveys that will aid in the development of deer and elk hunt recommendations for the Commission meeting in March 2014 (Appendix 47, Exhibit 6).

RULES

Nonbiological Rulemaking Update

The Department is advancing two nonbiological rule proposals through the negotiated rulemaking process: modifications to the Landowner Appreciation Program and bear baiting.

Jeff Gould, Chief, Wildlife, provided a briefing on the negotiated rulemaking for the two draft rule proposals (Appendix 47, Exhibit 7).

General Summary of on-line comments submitted on IDFG's 2014 Landowner Appreciation Program Proposal

As of Wednesday, January 15, 2014, approximately 62 people completed IDFG's on-line survey on its proposed Landowner Appreciation Program-Private Land Tag Program proposal. Of that, 21 people were identified as landowners and 11 as hunters. The remainder could not be identified as to which category they fell into. Additionally, HQ staff received 13 phone calls from landowners requesting clarification.

Summary of on-line Comments submitted on Bear Baiting Proposal

As of Wednesday, January 15, 2014, 75 people have provided comments through IDFG's website and phone calls on the proposed rule to modify bear baiting regulations in some units in eastern Idaho. Comments are still coming in through the website and telephone and will be logged.

The Notice of Intent to initiate the Negotiated Rule Making process was published in the state Administrative Bulletin and posted on the IDFG website on January 1. The public comment period runs through January 22, 2014. Information on the proposed rule was included in the IDFG statewide media package and was also sent directly to 900 individuals who received the Upper Snake Region email newsletter list. Additionally, a letter was sent to 429 individuals in the Upper Snake Region who purchased bear bait site tags in 2013.

Department staff will continue to brief the Commission on the progress of the two draft rules.

MISCELLANEOUS

Appreciation of Thanks to Bonnie Butler

Director Moore presented Bonnie Butler with a plaque of appreciation and thanks. Ms. Butler recently retired from the Governor's Office where she was the Senior Special Assistant for Agriculture & Natural Resources.

Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon 2014 Return Forecast

Pete Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager, provided an update on the forecasts for spring and summer Chinook salmon returning to the Snake River; and potential salmon seasons (Appendix 47, Exhibit 8). 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 2014 Chinook salmon spring/summer seasons for 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.

The Department is anticipating a good return for this year. Staff will be working with the regional fish managers to develop the season setting and conducting public meetings as to what types of seasons to set.

Mr. Hassemer provided a summary of the 2013 Chinook salmon fisheries (Appendix 47, Exhibit 9).

FISCAL

JFAC Budget Preview

On Tuesday, January 28, 2014 the Department will present the Governor's recommended budget for IDFG to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (JFAC). Director Moore provided the Commission a preview of his planned presentation to JFAC for their information and input. The presentation covered current Department revenue projections compared to budget, and steps the agency is taking to address the differential.

REPORTS

IDFG/ITD Wildlife Collision Project

Gregg Servheen, Wildlife Program Coordinator, provided a report on the project (Appendix 47, Exhibit 10). Wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVC) are a continuing source of wildlife mortality, economic cost, and hazard to public safety. There has been little or no quantified data about how WVC affect Idaho's big game and other species in terms of direct mortality, migratory patterns, and connectivity among habitats and populations. WVCs have become an increasing concern for wildlife management and public safety as transportation systems in Idaho have continued to develop and the increasing human population has increased the number of vehicles on Idaho's highways and roads.

To address these issues, ITD and IDFG have focused on data development and sharing, increased coordination between the agencies, and cooperation in identifying and implementing wildlife crossing priorities and mitigation. This report provided a summary of a recent ITD funded research project that contracted with Utah State University to evaluate Idaho WVC data, wildlife linkage and connectivity, and mitigation priorities statewide.

Director's Report

Topics in the Director's report included the retirement of Enforcement Chief Jon Heggen. For a variety of reasons there are a number of wildlife manager positions in the regions becoming open. The Department will be recruiting statewide to fill these positions. Jim Hayden, Staff Biologist has accepted a new position for the Predation Management Program and Hollie Miyasaki, Regional Staff Biologist, has accepted a new position as Wildlife Staff Biologist for bighorn sheep, mountain goat and pronghorn.

Director's Annual Report to the Commission

Director Moore presented the fifth edition of the Director's Annual Report to the Commission (Appendix 47, Exhibit 11) showing Department financial summaries for FY13 and outlining challenges for FY14. The report also contains an overview of major Department programs.

Director Moore introduced Dustin Miller, Administrator, Office of Species Conservation.

Commission Reports

Commissioner Anderson noted that snowpack ranges vary widely across the Upper Snake Region from 109% to 63%. An elk survey scheduled for the Beaverhead Zone found that elk are still on their summer range with many elk working the ridges at the state line.

Commissioner Budge reported that the plans for the Pocatello Wellness Park at the Bannock County Fairgrounds will include an urban fishing opportunity for Pocatello and Portneuf Valley residents. This will be the second urban fishing pond in the city, with the Edson-Fichter Pond already a huge success.

Commissioner Corkill reported that the predator (lake trout) control efforts at Lake Pend Oreille are successful. The Christmas week eagle watch, in collaboration with BLM, was a big success on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

Commissioner Doerr reported that the Magic Valley Region has created a Facebook page to share information with the sporting public. Elk have expanded across the southern portion of the region and depredation complaints have followed.

Commissioner Naillon reported on a pilot hazing program the region has used in coordination with landowners and depredating elk.

Commissioner Trevey reported that the region held a sportsmen chili dinner in December with 83 participants and a BBQ dinner with 109 participants.

Commissioner Barowsky reported that on January 12th an aerial survey was conducted to identify big game numbers and distribution in the Mayfield area. The region is working hard to reduce the conflicts in this area.

Commissioner Reports stand as written (Appendix 47, Exhibit 12).

MISCELLANEOUS

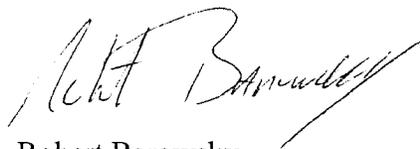
Executive Session

14-08 Commissioner Anderson moved and Commissioner Corkill seconded a motion to hold an executive session pursuant to subsections (c) of Idaho Code Section 67-2345 to discuss lands. Roll Call Vote: Ayes: Kenny Anderson, Randy Budge, Brad Corkill, Mark Doerr, Will Naillon, Fred Trevey and Bob Barowsky. The Commission discussed potential land acquisition.

14-09 Commissioner Corkill moved and Commissioner Anderson seconded a motion to come out of executive session. All Commissioners voted in favor.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m. with no official action taken.



Robert Barowsky
Chairman



Virgil Moore
Secretary