

**Meeting Date:** November 17, 2016

**Agenda Item No. 5B**

**Agenda Item:** Region 1 – Clagstone Meadows/Cape Horn Conservation Easement (**Action**)

**Bureau Chief Approval:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prepared by:** Katherine Cousins and Gregg Servheen

**Background:**

This is a proposal to acquire a conservation easement (CE) on a 13,169-acre property known as Clagstone Meadows Ranch – the largest contiguous block of privately-owned land in Bonner County – and on 1,263 acres in two parcels on the west shore of Lake Pend Oreille at Cape Horn. The value of the Clagstone Meadows/Cape Horn CE is \$12,600,000.00. The conservation easement will be jointly held by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission and the Idaho Department of Lands. Cash contributions to the project include \$5.5 million from the Forest Legacy Program; \$2 million from a private donation through the Trust for Public Lands; and, IDFG proposes to provide \$2 million in Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds.

The Clagstone Meadows property is largely forested, containing identified priority wetlands, and portions are within identified focal areas of the State's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Over 11,600 acres are forested; about 280 acres of the property consists of wetland, riparian, and lake habitats; and another 770 acres consists of a mosaic of scrub-shrub and grassland areas with some rocky outcrops. It is home to elk, deer, black bear, wild turkey, migratory birds, waterfowl, and forest grouse. The property has historically been managed for timber production and some agricultural use. The CE would protect both the continued management of timber and the property's fish and wildlife resources, and would open up the opportunity for year-round public access and enjoyment of these resources, including hunting and trapping.

No fee in lieu of taxes (FILT) is required as this is an easement and the landowner retains fee-title and is responsible for payment of taxes on the property.

The property was previously presented to the Commission during Executive Session on January 17, 2013.

**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 do not oppose the conservation easement. The public has been informed and contacted for their input regarding the protection and public access on the property.

**Staff Recommendation:**

The Lands Committee recommended to proceed to acquire the conservation easement and ensure public access in accordance with an approved Access Management Plan that includes trapping and hunting.

**Action Requested:**

Recommend to proceed as a signatory to the conservation easement for the Clagstone Meadows/Cape Horn conservation easement.

Suggested Motion: Commission adopt staff recommendation to proceed with the acquisition of the Clagstone Meadows/Cape Horn conservation easement.