

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission Meeting
Special Meeting
March 23-24, 2015
Boise, Idaho**

March 23

Southwest Regional Tour

Commissioners Brad Corkill, Blake Fischer, Lane Clezie and Will Naillon toured the Southwest Regional office.

RULES

Public Hearing

Chairman Trevey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Commissioners Brad Corkill, Blake Fishcer, Mark Doerr, Lane Clezie, Kenny Anderson and Will Naillon were present. Chairman Trevey reviewed the rules for conduct of the hearing and the hearing was opened up for public comment.

The following individuals provided public comment:

Mike Apostulon, Mark Galaviz, Kayla Griffin, Anne Olden, Suzanne Stone, Mike Gibson, Bert Bowler, Grant Simonds, Steve Goodall, Jonathan Hall, Randy Scott, Jake Benintendi, Monte Mason, Tyler Strickland, Matt Borg, Tim Hunt, Trish Woodruff, Peter Fitzsmmensm Tad Sherman, Travis Bullock, Kirk Chandler, Brian Shanahan, and David Goodwin. Written comment was received from Washington and Adams County Commissioners and Michael Gibson (Appendix 48, Exhibit 23).

March 24

MISCELLANEOUS

Opening Comments

Chairman Trevey called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. with Commissioners Brad Corkill, Blake Fischer, Mark Doerr, Lane Clezie, Kenny Anderson and Will Naillon present.

Chairman Trevey requested for Director Moore to provide an update on events relative to legislative action on HB32. Chairman Trevey, Vice-Chairman Doerr and Director Moore previously met with Pro Temp Brent Hill and Speaker of the House Scott Bedke to discuss HB32. The outcome of the meeting was not to request any action for HB32 at this time due to the legislative session coming to an end. It would be highly unlikely that there would be time for a hearing.

Director Moore commended the Commission on their actions taken in the OP-Ed article (Appendix 48, Exhibit 24). The Commission has received numerous comments and support from sportsmen on the article.

While the FY15 supplemental spending authority for erosion control actions in the Clark Fork Delta and the purchase of Rock Creek property did not pass the House, several legislators recognized the need for the Department to be able to move forward to complete these activities. At the request of these legislators; a new supplemental for the erosion control actions in the Clark Fork Delta and additional anadromous fisheries habitat restoration was prepared and sent to JFAC for approval.

The Department's FY16 budget passed through with good support from JFAC.

Chairman Trevey stated that the Commission and Department are well positioned to move forward with a fee increase for next year.

Vice Chair Doerr heard from individuals in his region they supported the OP-Ed. Chairman Trevey received many positive comments at the public hearing from sportsmen.

Director Moore stated that as we prepare to bring the revenue package back next year it is important to continue to engage a variety of individuals to gain ownership in our existing budget and for new revenue to be used as we move forward. The Commission's full intent is to continue to work on these issues.

Review of Public Comment

There were 23 individual who spoke at the public hearing and the Commission discussed and reviewed the comments. Eleven individuals addressed the Unit 22-31 bear hunting issue regarding the youth hunt and should the hunt allow hounds at the same time. Wolves, the balancing of, concern on the Lolo hunt, and information on non-lethal livestock depredation. Too many permits issued for units 66-69. IOGA is supportive of 2 year big game rules. Allocations- some of the controlled hunts that are new need allocation. Unit 41-A youth hunt overlaps a regular hunt, try to look at keeping the youth hunts exclusively for first time opportunity. A suggestion was made for an inclusive citizen's initiative to increase revenue. Request to allow lighted nocks. Other comments heard were website transparency, allowing nonresidents to purchase leftover tags and the use of drones. Commissioners were presented a copy of Defending Idaho's Natural Heritage from Bert Bowler. Ken Robison is the author of this book. It is an excellent description of Idaho's natural treasures and the battles to preserve them.

The Commission requests a technology presentation at the May Commission meeting to address the comments received on drones and requests to use lighted nocks.

Consent Calendar

- Minutes, January 13, 21-23, and January 29, 2015
- Financial Report

15-14 Commissioner Fischer moved and Commissioner Anderson seconded a motion to approve the minutes listed in the consent calendar. All Commissioners voted in favor.

15-15 Commissioner Doerr moved and Commissioner Naillon seconded a motion to approve the financial report listed in the consent calendar. All Commissioners voted in favor.

RULES

Season Setting: Deer, Elk, Pronghorn, Bear, Mountain Lion and Wolves

Jon Rachael, State Wildlife Manager, presented the recommendations for each big game species. Also recommendations for adjustments to Landowner Appreciation Program tags proportional to recommended changes to corresponding big game tag numbers and proposal for big game seasons be set on a 2-year cycle for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 hunting seasons (Appendix 48, Exhibit 25).

Regional staff scoped proposals for big game season changes and controlled hunt tag limits at 21 open houses, web chats, and online February 17 – March 8. Following assessment of public input and final regional recommendations, regional staff submitted recommendations to the wildlife bureau on March 10. A final big game seasons package of recommendations was developed for presentation to the Commission.

15-16 Commissioner Fischer moved and Commissioner Anderson seconded a motion to adopt the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 big game seasons and Landowner Appreciation Program seasons and tag numbers 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 seasons with the following modifications:

Regular Deer Tag General Any Weapon Season:

Keep “Private land only” restriction on Antlerless, Youth only hunt in Region 7 Units (21, 21A, 28, 29, 30, 30A, 36, 36A, 36B, 37A).

White-tailed Deer Tag General Any Weapon Season:

Keep “Private land only” restriction on Antlerless, Youth only hunt in Region 7 Units (21, 21A, 28, 29, 30, 30A, 36, 36A, 36B, 37A).

Deer Controlled Hunts:

Delete proposed Muzzleloader Hunt in Unit 37 with 10 tags, Nov 25 - Dec 9, Antlered only.
(**Delete** corresponding Outfitter Allocation Hunt in Unit 37 with 1 tag.)

Elk Controlled Hunts:

Keep Antlerless Controlled Hunt tags in Hunt Areas 36A-1 (10 tags) and 36A-2 (150 tags) at 2014 tag levels. No Change.

Make same adjustments to corresponding LAP hunts 2378 and 2379. 36A-1 = 1 tag. 36A-2 = 15 tags.

Black Bear:

Create a Fall Youth Only Hunt in Hunt Area 22 (all of Units 22 and 31) with 25 tags as proposed, **EXCEPT** with seasons and opportunity mirroring the existing Adult Controlled Hunt in Hunt Area 22.

Aug 15 - Aug 31, Bait Prohibited, Private land only, excluding corporate timber lands

Sep 1 - Oct 31, Bat prohibited, Dogs prohibited Oct 1 - Oct 31

Wolves:

Panhandle Zone: Adjust trapping current trapping season: Oct 10 - Nov 14 - Season open Only in Units 7, 9, and that portion of Unit 6 within the North Fork of the St. Joe River drainage, and that part of Game Management Unit 4 within the North Fork of the Coeur d' Alene River drainage upstream from Cataract Creek. FOOTHOLD TRAPS only.

Foothold trap restriction WILL apply to existing area open Oct 10 - Nov 14 (Units 7, 9, and part of 6). All Commissioners voted in favor.

Proposal for a big game seasons to be set on a 2-year cycle for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 hunting seasons.

Jon Rachel reported that the Department is proposing to convert the big game season-setting process to a 2 year cycle for white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, pronghorn, black bears, mountain lions, and gray wolves. The Department has been setting moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat seasons, and upland game seasons, on a 2 year cycle for more than 20 years, and now sets fishing seasons for a 3 year period.

The current annual season-setting process commences in December each year with development of proposals that are scoped with the public and further refined based on input received prior to final commission action in mid- March. Year-to-year changes tend to be relatively minor. A 2 year season cycle would provide greater stability in seasons and allow staff to engage the public in a variety of forums over a longer period of time. A two-year season cycle would benefit families and individuals who need to schedule vacation time well in advance by providing greater certainty on hunting season dates and allow greater time for planning. The change would also result in a modest reduction in regulation printing costs.

Staff would continue to monitor harvest and big game population objectives annually and provide the Fish and Game Commission status updates every year. In non-season setting years, staff would have more time to focus on extra monitoring and management activities. If necessary due to fire, bad winter weather, a disease event, or other factors, the Commission could still make season changes and adjust controlled hunt tag numbers to respond to those types of emergencies should they occur in an off year.

Commission discussion followed regarding the proposal.

15-17 Commissioner Doerr moved and Commissioner Clezie seconded a motion to approve a 2-year cycle for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 big game seasons including the landowner appreciation tags with the seasons previously set with the modifications. All Commissioners voted in favor.

Season Setting: 2015 Spring Season Chinook Salmon Fisheries

Peter Hassemer, Anadromous Fisheries Manager, presented the proposal (Appendix 48, Exhibit 26) for the 2015 spring season chinook salmon fisheries.

15-18 Commissioner Naillon moved and Commissioner Corkill seconded a motion to approve the proposed 2015 fishing seasons for Chinook salmon in the Snake, mainstem Clearwater, North fork Clearwater, Middle Fork Clearwater, South Fork Clearwater, Locsha, lower Salmon and Little Salmon rivers. All Commissioners voted in favor.

Review of Commission Authority for Auction and Lottery Tags

Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director, provided a review of special tags to determine if the current structure is creating social or biological concerns within certain units. The Commission did not complete their discussion in January and requested this item be placed on the March agenda.

There is a suite of special tags each year that are not included in either over-the-counter sales or the regular control hunt process including outfitters set-aside and LAP tags. These special tags are created through both statutory mandate and Commission discretionary authority. There are 4 primary components of special tags: 1) auction tags, 2) lottery tags, 3) mandatory hunter report tags, and 4) free disabled veteran/special needs children tags.

No action taken by the Commission.

Management Plans and Policies

Draft Idaho Management Plan for the Conservation of Sharp-tailed Grouse

Jeff Knetter, Wildlife Program Coordinator, provided a report on the draft plan. The Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (CSTG) is one of seven subspecies (one extinct) of sharp-tailed grouse in North America. They were once considered the most abundant and well-known upland game bird in the Pacific Northwest. Idaho supports an estimated 63% of the remaining CSTG in the United States.

The Draft Management Plan for the Conservation of Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse (Plan):

- Will provide guidance to IDFG and partners to implement conservation measures that will enhance CSTG habitat and populations (e.g., CRP-SAFE).
- Prevent the need for ESA protection of CSTG in the future.
- Lead state efforts to proactively ensure the long-term persistence and viability of CSTG in Idaho.

A completed draft Plan will be submitted to Commission members for review on May 1. Staff will request feedback from the Commission on the draft Plan at their May 20 meeting. Edits will be incorporated into the Plan, and a 30-day public comment period will begin on May 22. Staff will request Commission review and action to approve the final Plan at their July 30 meeting.

LEGISLATION

Legislative Update

Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director, provided an update (Appendix 48, Exhibit 27) about legislative activity since the last legislative call. There will not be a legislative conference call on March 26th. The last legislative conference call is scheduled for April 2nd at 8:00 a.m. This call will be a wrap up of legislative items. Ms. Kiefer reported that the Idaho Fish and Game Commission is one of the most engaged boards during the legislative sessions. During this time the Commission has conducted 2 regular meetings and 8 conference calls. Job well done.

REPORTS

Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Ann Dehner, Executive Director, presented the IFWF report.

- The Foundation's fiscal year ended in December 2014. Total support to the Department for 2014 for a variety of statewide projects exceeded \$160,000. Other support included the facilitation of property transfers, marketing of the wildlife license plates, and the creation of three new funds for mitigation and conservation education projects.
- The Foundation and Department have signed an Agreement which outlines a partnership for an endowment campaign for the MK Nature Center. The goal is to raise permanent funds that will augment the center's operational needs.
- The Foundation is seeking requests for proposals for its 2015 competitive grants cycle. The grants program is open to tax-exempt organizations. Projects available for funding include those that support habitat preservation and restoration, wildlife management and conservation education. The deadline for applications is May 1.
- The Foundation is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. The Foundation's Board has approved a new organization logo. We hope to increase public awareness and support of the Foundation's work through new avenues for philanthropic giving.
- The next meeting of the Foundation's Board of Directors will be held on May 2 in Hailey.

Morrison Knudsen Nature Center Messaging Concepts

Mike Keckler, Chief, Communications, provided an overview of potential messaging for signs and displays. The Commission requested the incorporation of the “sportsman as conservationist” message at the MK Nature Center. Commissioners were provided examples of signs (Appendix 48, Exhibit 28) that might work in the Nature Center.

RULES

Trapper Education Rule Update

Jeff Gould, Chief, Wildlife, provided the update.

At the November 2014 Commission meeting, the Fish and Game Commission asked the Department to seek input from key stakeholders and develop a proposal for implementation of a mandatory trapper education program for future consideration. Staff from Wildlife, Enforcement, Legal, and Communications bureaus met with the presidents of the Idaho Trappers Association and the Upper Snake River Trappers of Idaho on Nov. 25, 2014. The trapper’s association presidents expressed support for a trapper education requirement and provided recommendations for rules and implementation.

At the January 2014 Commission meeting, staff summarized the basic elements of a draft rule that could be considered for future rulemaking. The Fish and Game Commission directed the Department to move forward with the Negotiated Rule Making process for the administration of mandatory trapper education.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) to promulgate rules is a public notice that states the agency intends to promulgate rules and desires public comment prior to formal rulemaking procedures. The NOI for mandatory trapper education program rules was submitted March 6 (attached) and indicated rulemaking would establish a mandatory trapper education class, the class length, and required subject matter to be covered. Additional training, including a field component, will be required for newer trappers. The following details will be incorporated in the initial draft:

- Trapper education certification is mandatory to be eligible for a trapping license BEGINNING July 1, 2017
- Minimum of 2 hours for everyone to cover ethics, responsibility, non-target avoidance
- Minimum of 4 additional hours to cover rules, species ID, methods/tech., and wildlife management, for new trappers and anyone that has purchased their first Idaho trapping license after July 1, 2010
 - Exceptions – Trappers that have successfully passed and are certified through the Idaho Voluntary trapper education course.

Public input on these elements of a draft rule will be collected during April. The Commission will receive a progress update in May.

Update Regarding Existing Training for Enforcement Staff

At the request of the Commission, Gregg Wooten, Chief, Enforcement , provided information relative to trapping training that Idaho Conservation Officer’s receive. The Department hires

smart educated people. All officers complete a 10 week field evaluation that includes trapping. The officers also attend an eight day Fish and Game Academy with one day devoted to trapping. Currently there are 12 officers who teach tapper education.

REPORTS

Director's Report

Topics in the Director's report included:

- Sal Palazzolo was honored at the North American conference by the Wild Federation for his work with NRCS, Kudos to Sal.
- ESA items on all levels are taking up a lot of time.
- An update on the process and timeline for State Sage-grouse Plan.
- Work continues with the director's from Montana and Wyoming on a grizzly bear proposal.
- Provided testimony before the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies of the House of Interior Appropriations Committee on behalf of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.
- Ed Schriever has been hired as the new Deputy Director of Operations.

Commission Reports

Panhandle Region, Brad Corkill reported that the calf:cow ratios are up in the Panhandle.

Southwest Region, Blake Fischer, stated that he has been attending a number of conservation groups banquets. He participated in a round table discussion with hound and bow hunters regarding bears seasons.

Magic Valley Region, Mark Doerr, reported that there are lots of elk and land owner issues in the region. The public meetings for big game season setting were well attended and he appreciates the hard work from Toby Boudreau, Daryl Meints and staff in making this a success. The department is going through the negotiated rule making process to rescind the Hagerman Goose closure. This will be an action item at the May Commission meeting.

Salmon Region, Will Naillon, reports good steelhead fishing in the region. Still waiting to hear on the hiring of a conservation officer for Custer County. Transplanted 61 turkeys from the Southeast Region to Carmen and Tower Creeks.

Upper Snake, Kenny Anderson reports that the public in his region were well attended and sportsmen were happy with changes made.

Southeast Region, Lane Clezie, attended six big game season setting public meetings; the meetings had good questions and discussions. The 2015 fishing outlook is good. The region has completed the Bannock PMU mule deer survey this winter. The outlook is bright for continued recovery for Southeast Region mule deer.

Clearwater Region, Fred Trevey, reported that the regional staff will be discussing with the public how to balance a plethora of new angling opportunities for fall chinook and coho salmon with the long-standing and very popular fall catch and release steelhead fishery in the lower Clearwater River. This winter the department placed 2 GPS collars on adult female fishers in the Clearwater National Forest.

Commissioner Reports stand as written (Appendix 48, Exhibit 29).

MISCELLANEOUS

Planning for Next Meeting

The Commissioners discussed scheduled items for the May 19-21, 2015 meeting in Lewiston.

Executive Session

15-19 Commissioner Doerr moved and Commissioner Naillon seconded a motion to hold an executive session pursuant of subsections (b)(c)(f) of Idaho Code Section 67-2345 to discuss legal, lands and personnel.

Roll Call Vote:Ayes: Brad Corkill, Blake Fischer, Mark Doerr, Lane Clezie, Kenny Anderson, Will Naillon and Fred Trevey.

The executive session ended at 4:00 p.m. with no action taken.



Mark Doerr
Chairman



Virgil Moore
Secretary

