

FISH AND GAME COMMISSION MEETING

Public Hearing 7:00 p.m. Wed., Mar. 24, 2004 Fish and Game Headquarters, Boise, ID

Commissioners Hadley, Irby, Watts, Wood, Gibbs, Wheeler, Burns and 50+ members of the public attending.

1. Dave Claycomb, trails coordinator for IDPR, wants a more clear definition of what is and isn't hunting with regard to the ATV rule.
2. Travis Bullock, IOGA, wants wolves to be a furbearer, not a big game animal so trapping can be used, wants 36A to be ATV restricted, wants 85 percent letoff for bows. Wants a boundary change for clarification between 30 and 56A, should be the highway not the ridge.
3. Clinton Scott not in favor of ATV restrictions because of elderly parents, would like to see designated trails left open, does not approve of off-trail travel.
4. Bob Minter, Ada County F&G League. Supports F&G application of restrictions where it will benefit wildlife, but more education and enforcement is needed. Retrieval rule proposal is good. Depredation hunts could offer a "green field" opportunity for youth. Trophy hunt proposal in SW region, support in one unit only, that being 23. Supports having a whitetail and a mule deer tag, allowing hunters to take two deer, one in a general hunt, one in controlled.
5. George Peter, Fairfield outfitter, supports FG management of wolves not Nez Perce.
6. Ron Stolberg opposes the ATV rule, says organized ATV groups could help enforce.
7. Mike Murphy, Idaho Muzzleloaders Assn. wants more restrictions on muzzleloader seasons, prohibiting smokeless powder, sabots, some projectile restrictions, keeping muzzleloaders in traditional mode.
8. William Jones, Idaho ATV Assn. thinks F&G is going beyond what his group and gov't. agencies agreed on two years ago. Thinks the rules are not enforceable. Opposes the closure rule and believes education is the answer.
9. Daryl Allread, Garden Valley outfitter. Supports youth mentored program etc and thinks there should be a youth lion tag. Wolves, second draft between state (Gov) and tribe is an improvement. Does not support sharing wolf harvest with Nez Perce or any other group. Supports 10J.
10. Troy ? Opposes ATV rules, would drive the ATV to the ridge top then walk back and get his gun. Rules are not detailed or clear enough.

11. Dick Niebaur, Marsing, sees ATV problems, people causing damage, we already have rules governing harvest level, should not need an ATV rule for that. Where roads are closed already, we don't need a new rule. Don't penalize the legitimate hunter. Additional rules are probably not needed, if you have them limit use to before sunrise and a couple hours in the middle of the day. Split Unit 39 into two units, the high country and the "low" country.
12. Tom Judge, Idaho State Bowhunters. Supports the new rule much more than they did the rule last year. Would like to see a requirement for uncased and unloaded weapons.
13. Richard Renstrom, Boise, has researched travel rules. Federal agencies only have authority over travel on federal land, believes an unloaded and unassembled gun means you are not hunting and you can ride to a spot and then put your gun together and hunt. Opposes restrictions on unit 39.
14. Dave Smith SW director of Falconer's Assn. to inform commission about their concern about a proposed BSU research project to examine, kill and take the brains of 16-36 baby American kestrels. The Assoc. opposes the study but has not published an official position yet.
15. Grant Simonds, IOGA. Sees several increases in controlled hunt tag numbers and sees two that meet permit levels for outfitter allocation, elk in Unit 11 and deer in 11A. Presents data on historic use.
16. J.R. Phillips on muzzleloader hunt in Unit 45 planned to be moved to 52 and make it a traditional hunt.
17. Steve Snyder, ATV and cycle owner very strongly in favor of ATV restrictions, supports Mike Murphy viewpoint on muzzleloader technology. Supports trophy mule deer hunt but thinks different management is needed. Thinks two-point rule in Unit 40 is taking many bucks out and should be cut back. Is afraid big game herds are for sale to the highest bidder, i.e. buying leftover nonresident tags, super tag lottery, etc.
18. Joseph Peterson outfitter, supports allocation in 11 and 11A. Is happy to see the increase in elk in the Clearwater.
19. Jim Hagedorn, Concerned Sportsmen of Idaho. Supports separate mule deer and whitetail management. Supports continuing a Clearwater whitetail tag. Believes giving landowners a 25 percent share of controlled hunts is excessive. Does not feel FG is doing an adequate job of taking public input. To control excess deer in the Clearwater you have to work with landowners and sportsmen and if Fish and Game can't get the job done, then sportsmen are organizing right now and we will get the job done, if we have to have a new Fish and Game department! Does not believe the reports that elk herds are on the increase in the Clearwater.
20. Larry Meredith, Boise, hunts with an ATV for health reasons. Feels the problem is lack of enforcement between USFS, BLM and F&G. you have to

work with enforcement not just outright ban them, taking the easy way out. Its an enforcement thing. Gotta do something about wolves.

21. Tom Demorest, Diamond D Ranch in Unit 27, supports a three-point minimum on deer in that unit. Supports the 10J Rule.
22. Scott Farr, outfitter, Middle Fork, supports classifying wolf in such a manner to allow trapping and snaring to manage populations. Points to a Minn. Study estimating how much harvest it would take to stabilize populations. Supports classification as furbearer or a special classification that would allow traps and snares.
23. Terry Hendrickson, supports youth seasons but not during general season because it encourages party hunting. Supports longer deer seasons but restricting them by point count as the season progresses. Make it uniform across the state to spread out hunters.
24. Alfred Dufty, BSU professor, supporting the research on kestrels, notes that FG and USFWS have signed off on the research. He has had approval to harvest 16 kestrel nestlings for two years and has not exercised it because he wants the research to show that the harvest is necessary first. Nest boxes put up by his grad students produce 160 young per year. Notes that stealing of his nest boxes has done more to harm the population than his study would. The goal of the study is to determine the effect of handling as in measuring, tagging etc. has on young birds. Kestrels are abundant and would serve as a model for more rare birds.
25. Brian Beckly opposes the ATV rule proposals. Says there will be no hunters in Unit 39 with out ATVs.

**Resolution and Action on Agenda Items
Idaho Fish and Game Commission Meeting
Mar. 25-26, 2004**

Fish and Game Headquarters, Boise, ID

Commissioners Hadley, Irby, Watts, Wood, Gibbs, Wheeler, Burns, attending.

Items in these notes may be in different order than the agenda.

1. Opening Comments, Chairman Hadley
2. Agenda changes, Chairman Hadley
3. Review of Mar. 24 public comment- **Director Huffaker clarifies that it is up to the commission to allow traps or snares for wolves if they are listed as a big game animal. They do not have to be listed as furbearers in order to be trapped.**
4. Director's Report, Steve Huffaker. Credits Nadeau for training staff in wolf management and governor's staff for accomplishing the 10J amendment to ESA listing, for wolf management. Update on the potential for listing sage grouse under ISA, preliminary report is due in May, final decision the end of December.
5. Commission Reports. Gibbs reports a low-water winter, concerns in many drainages. Irby reports anglers excited about another salmon season; Deer Creek reservoir is filling and looking good. Mostly with wildland fires, 121,000 acres of forest were disturbed in the Clearwater Region, the most since 1934. Recent anti-wolf meetings in Kooskia and Riggins were lightly attended. Wood reports some snow but not adequate in Magic Valley region. Deer populations up in Unit 45, fawn survival good all over region. We have a couple of new archery antelope hunts proposed this year. Watts reports that the dead elk in Lucky Peak reservoir have sunk. Burns reports few comments about motor vehicle rule. People are enthusiastic about the possibility of a salmon season on the upper river. Wheeler reports efforts to improve habitat at Tex Cr. WMA to hold elk which traditionally wander into farm ground. Siddoway's fenced ground did not result in a deadly barrier to migrating deer. Hadley reported on public meeting for Lake Pend Orielle, where most were satisfied with plans to control lake trout and recover kokanee. We continue to hear reports of walleye in Pend Orielle.
6. Consent calendar; a. Minutes, Jan. 21-23, Feb. 2, Mar. 1 Commission meetings
b. financial report
Action: Wood moves, Watts seconds to approve consent calendar with the exception of minutes of Jan. 21-23. Unanimous.
Action: Watts moves, Gibbs seconds to approve minutes as amended with regard to technical advances in muzzleloader and archery rules. Unanimous
7. Legislative report, Steve Barton
8. 2003 big game harvest summary, Brad Compton. Compliance rate on mandatory report is 86 percent, close to where it has been for the previous two years. Deer harvest was 44,900, elk 18,900, antelope 1,300. There were 119,000 deer hunters last year and 87,000 elk hunters.
9. Big game seasons and rules proposed for 2004, Brad Compton. Access Yes will provide access to about 250,000 acres this year. There were more applicants than money

to pay for them so some had to be turned down. Congratulations to the Panhandle, which will spend \$30,000 for an easement in perpetuity to 16,000 acres. Last winter FG fed 2,780 deer at 36 different sites, mostly in SE Idaho. 252 fawns were collared last winter.

DEER

- Shift opening dates to Oct 9 from Oct 10 in northern Idaho to take advantage of a Saturday opener.
- Convert up to 4 general hunt units in southern Idaho to special buck management opportunities by implementing controlled hunts.
- Offer alternatives to the general season in eastern Idaho that maintains or extends season length and allows for hunting later in October.
- Reduce antlerless harvest in Clearwater Region in response to EHD.
- Reduce late season harvest mortality by eliminating muzzleloader hunts or converting existing muzzleloader hunts to Traditional muzzleloader.
- Convert controlled any buck hunt in Unit 56 to short general season.

ELK

- Shift opening dates to Oct 9 from Oct 10 in 'B' tag hunts to take advantage of a Saturday opener.
- Increase antlerless harvest opportunity in agricultural areas within the Clearwater Region.
- Adjust antlered (-25 permits), antlerless (-1025 permits), either-sex (-1 permit), and youth (+30) permits in response to population changes or conversion from controlled to general hunting opportunity.

PRONGHORN

- Add units 44, 48, 52 to general archery season.
- Convert existing hunts in units 30A and 47 to Traditional muzzleloader

BLACK BEAR

- Expand harvest opportunity in Clearwater and Panhandle regions.

MOUNTAIN LION

- Expand harvest opportunity in Clearwater Region.

Motorized Vehicle Rule Proposals:

Existing Units (hunts):

32, 32A, 48, 49, 50, 51, 58, 59, 59A, 70, 73 (all big game hunting)

47 (all upland and big game hunting)

72 (late season archery deer hunting)

75, 77, 78 (muzzleloader deer and elk hunting)

Proposed Units (hunts):

All existing units and hunts, and

29, 30, 30A, 36A, 37A, 45, 52, 53, 56, 66 (all big game hunting) Discussion of the need for a long-range plan to deal with ATVs; federal land agency travel management responsibilities

Discussion on Landowner Appreciation hunts. The Advisory Committee wants to increase the LAP permits to 25 percent in any hunt over-subscribed by 25 percent or more. Sportsmen are opposed in every region involved. Staff recommends no change. Commission currently can increase permits in individual hunts up to 25 percent.

Individual elk proposals discussed.

Adjourned for lunch 11:55, returned at 1:30, returned to elk discussion on controlled hunts. Discuss antelope proposals. Steve Nadeau leads discussion on proposals for black bears and mountain lions. Compton returns for deer proposals,

Action: Wood moves, Watts seconds to approve proposals as recommended with respect to elk, bear, lion and antelope, excluding outfitter allocations and motorized vehicle regulations. Unanimous.

Deer proposals for individual hunts discussed. Gibbs comments that they have lost 9,000 does in the last two years. And one unit has a buck doe ratio of six to 100. He suggests shorter seasons in some units than have been proposed. Local hunters and Gibbs want a four-point or better season in units 70 and 73, Oct. 5 or 9-13. In the rest of the region he wants a season Oct 5 or 9-19. Archery and muzzleloader seasons would be for male deer only on all hunts. No doe harvest in Southeast Region. Commissioner Wood would like to discuss with his regional supervisor, as his region abuts Gibbs'. So does Wheeler.

Action: Watts moves to instruct staff to identify controlled hunts in all species and identify all hunts where the number of permits has increased or decreased and recommend the proper adjustment in outfitter allocation.

Burns points out there are only two hunts in question

Watts modifies motion, Burns seconds, to accept the department recommendation for outfitter allocated hunts, with the addition of a three percent allocation for mule deer in 11A and youth hunts in 28. Unanimous.

Motorized rules, discussion of recommendation to drop the vehicle rule in traditional hunts (more restrictive) and replacing it with the standard rule so they will be standard.

Action: Wood moves, Wheeler seconds to adopt the proposal to go to the less restrictive rule for all hunts. Passes with Watts opposed.

Action: Gibbs moves, Wood seconds to include the ten units proposed by staff in the motorized vehicle restricted use areas. Wood suggests a long-term statewide goal for ATV use restrictions should be completed within the next year. Passes unanimously.

Compton leads discussion on proposal that a nonresident youth mentored license holder must have a mentor with a tag valid in the same hunt and that these tags not be valid for bear and lion. Gibbs wants to include that in the SE region the mentored tags would come out of the nonresident quota(will be noticed for a conference call early next week).

Action: Gibbs moves, Irby seconds that a nonresident youth mentored license holder must have a mentor with a tag valid in the same hunt and that these tags not be valid for bear and lion. Unanimous.

14a. Due to the presence of legislators, the chair skips to item 14a, the part dealing with gray wolf. Director Huffaker makes a presentation proposing the department recommendation that the commission classify the gray wolf as a big game animal and notes that there is no prohibition on trapping or snaring a big game animal if approved by the Commission.

Action: Wheeler moves, Wood seconds to approve the recommendation. Unanimous.

Compton leads discussion on Landowner Appreciation Permits. Dept. recommends increasing permits on one deer hunt and two elk hunts in Unit 45 to 25 percent, and in unit 69 cow elk hunt.

Action: Wood moved, Irby seconds to adopt the LAP rules, unanimous.

10. Motorized vehicle use, Dallas Burkhalter. Last year's motor vehicle restrictions should be upgraded to: This use restriction is in addition to all federal, state and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances and orders; including, but not limited to, any motorized vehicle licensing, registration, and permitting requirements and traffic laws. Hunters must comply with all motorized vehicle limits or prohibitions instituted by the landowner or land manager. Also, this use restriction rule is not an exception from, and is in addition to, the statutory prohibition against hunting from or by the use of any motorized vehicle set forth in Idaho Code Section 36-1101(b)(1). This modification to the rule comes at the request of legislators. Units with restrictions are identified in the big game rules.

Action: Gibbs moves, Irby seconds to adopt. Wheeler suggests an amendment to exempt private landowners on their own land. Unanimous to approve, action on Wheeler's suggestion put off till next break.

11. Changes to nonresident refund rules, Craig Wiedmeier. Department proposes to allow refunds in the event of the death, prior to the season, of the license holder or his or her parent, spouse or child. Refund applications must be made in the calendar year of the license, except for "event of death" refunds, which would be submitted within one year of the death. A controlled hunt permit and tag is proposed to be made available in the same hunt for purchase by an immediate family member of a person who died prior to using his/her permit, and whose family had the fees refunded.

Action: Irby moves, Wood seconds to approve. Unanimous

12. Temporary rule for refund or rain check for military personnel, Craig Wiedmeier. The Commission previously approved a similar refund or rain check rule for resident and nonresident military license buyers who have been called to active duty due to an armed conflict. This temporary rule will allow those who had no opportunity to participate in hunting or fishing activities due to the deployment to receive a refund of license and tag fees or to receive a rain check for a license and tags in the 2005 season. It would also allow for exchange for a same-species tag in a different area or zone in 2004.

Action: Irby moves, Wood seconds to approve. Unanimous.

13. Demonstration of new IDFG website, Roger Fuhrman and Gina Glahn. New website is scheduled to be online by mid-April. Moved to tomorrow, before Item 22.
- 14a. Classification and Protection of Wildlife, Chuck Harris. IDFG Policy No. FW-1.00 (Classification and Protection of Wildlife) has not been updated since 28 September 1990, and IDAPA 13.01.06 – Classification and Protection of Wildlife has not been updated since 1 July 1993. Changes need to be made to reflect current taxonomy and additions or deletions to the lists of Threatened and Endangered species. We also propose simplifying the Rule by dropping the list of Species of Special Concern and using this list to prioritize species conservation

for the Department and other agencies. Some former Species of Special Concern small mammals and fish are proposed to be added to the category of Protected Nongame along with all bats, reptiles, and amphibians. Provisions are proposed to allow reasonable take for protection of human health and property as per 36-1107 *Idaho Code*. The public has been involved extensively in the development of the State Wolf Plan that recommended the change in classification to a big game animal. The public will be involved in developing the rules and regulations associated with management and hunting of wolves once they are delisted.

Action: Irby moves, Wood seconds to approve the proposal. Unanimous

- 14b. With the change in IDAPA 13.01.06 to not define American crow as a migratory bird, but rather to include it as a distinct category under Game Birds, the Commission needs to change the section “Governing the taking of Migratory Birds” to “Governing the taking of American crow.” This proposal only affects the American Crow.

Action: Wood moves, Irby seconds to approve. Unanimous.

15. Southeast Idaho Mule Deer Action Plan, Brad Compton. Mule deer are an important wildlife resource to Idaho’s hunters and citizens. Southern and eastern Idaho have been renowned for abundant populations providing ample opportunity for hunting and taking mature bucks. The long-term trend in mule deer populations across the West, including Idaho, is downward. However, an exceptional period of high productivity and over-winter survival occurred between 1984 and 1992, resulting in high mule deer numbers. The combined effects of a dry summer in 1992 and a hard winter during 1992/93 resulted in a significant loss of mule deer throughout much of the west, including southern Idaho. Relatively low recruitment levels since 1992 and significant mortality during the winter of 2001/02 in portions of eastern, southeastern and south-central Idaho has resulted in mule deer populations lower than desired by both Department biologists and hunters. The Department’s desire, consistent with public expectations, is to intensively manage to improve mule deer populations and the proportion of mature bucks. Proposed habitat efforts will include improving CRP stands, improving condition of aspen stands, improving winter range and transitional fall shrubfields, reducing effects of invasive species and improving summer range. Population management efforts will include monitoring, adjusting season frameworks where necessary, predator management where needed and addressing highway mortality, winter feeding, competition with elk or cattle and research. A public involvement and outreach effort is also in the plan. Gibbs and Wheeler like it, but Wheeler would like to see it be more aggressive, and implemented faster. Wood recounts how long it took to get the elk zone plan in place. He thinks a plan should be developed for mule deer management statewide south of the Salmon. Recommends Huffaker get together with wildlife and come back in April with a plan. There is agreement around the table, including the director.
16. Commercial Lake Trout Fishing Rules for Lake Pend Oreille, Bill Hutchinson. Last year the Commission approved commercial fishing rules for the taking of lake trout on Lake Pend Oreille. These rules allowed the Department to issue 10 commercial fishing permits for the taking of lake trout with conventional fishing

gear as well as allowing for experimental trap netting of lake trout. This legislative session, the legislative rules committee rejected the Commission's rules for the commercial fishing of lake trout on Lake Pend Oreille. Staff met with local Legislators and developed acceptable language for establishing commercial fishing rules for the taking of lake trout on Lake Pend Oreille. Public review process for similar rules adopted last year was extensive and supported by a majority of the public. There was a minority in opposition for the taking of lake trout through trap netting. The proposed rule does not include trap nets.

Action: Gibbs, Wheeler seconds to approve as proposed. Unanimous.

17. Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation, Rita Dixon. Until now, state fish and wildlife agencies have tried to conserve hundreds of species of fish and wildlife on inadequate budgets. While game species' conservation has fared well, thanks to the sales of hunting and fishing licenses and user fees on gear, the rest of our nation's wildlife has lacked secure and adequate funding for long-term conservation. From 2001 to 2004, Idaho received \$347,714 to \$914,231 of federal dollars annually via State Wildlife Grants (SWG). The availability of these dollars is tied to the completion of a statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) by October 2005. A strong strategy will lead to greater funding at the federal and state level. With 1,246 species nationwide federally listed as threatened or endangered, State Wildlife Grants are our best hope for aggressively stemming this decline. Investing these leveraged federal dollars now to protect or restore wildlife populations is far more effective than waiting until the populations reach critically low levels and need emergency room care through the Endangered Species Act. Ultimately, State Wildlife Grants will both save our nation's precious wildlife heritage and our nation's taxpayer's dollars. Huffaker's quote: "This is going to get us out in front of the Endangered Species Act, instead of having to dig out from under it when species are listed."
- Information only, no action required.**

18. **Wood moves, Irby seconds to go to executive session to discuss personnel. Unanimous. Adjourned 7:15.**

Convened 8:00 a.m. March 26.

Action: Wood moves, Irby seconds to give director Huffaker a performance bonus of \$850. Unanimous.

Return to Item 10, motorized vehicle rules. Previous motion is voted removed from the table. A new section is proposed for inclusion in the rule:

- d. Private landowners, their authorized agents and persons with written landowner permission may use a motorized vehicle on their private land; however, they may not hunt from or by the use of any motorized vehicle as prohibited by Idaho Code Section 36-1101(b)(1).

- e. **Action: Burns moves, Irby seconds to approve the regulation as modified. Unanimous.**

Return to item 8, big game, mule deer and outfitter elk. Units in Magic Valley, Southeast and Upper Snake regions changed so all open Oct. 5, closing date of Oct 19 in units where regions abut. All archery and muzzleloader hunts in the southeast region will be for male deer only.

Action: Gibbs moves, Watts seconds to enact a four-point or better rule in units 70 and 73, including archery with general season dates Oct. 5-9. Unanimous.

Action: Watts moves, Gibbs seconds to approve deer as modified. Unanimous.

19. Department Policy issues: A. use of department facilities, report by the director regarding the employee use of facilities. B. Supertag eligibility; Department makes policy that Director's office staff, Bureau of Administration chief and License Section staff will not be eligible to participate in Super Tag raffles.
20. Super Tag marketing discussion, Steve Barton. Discussion of possible radio and newspaper advertising, postcards to nonresident 02-03 tag holders, big game regulations and Internet. No action required.
21. Georgetown Summit Acquisition, Gregg Servheen. The Georgetown Summit WMA was established in 1991 through a joint acquisition effort between the Department and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF). Currently 200 elk and 100 deer winter on the WMA. The summit area provides a corridor of native vegetation connecting big game management units 76 to the north and 75 to the south. Mountain shrubs on the south exposure and mountain shrubs/timber on the north exposure offer security cover for wildlife in this key migration corridor. Georgetown Summit WMA is comprised of 3,326 acres managed by the Department (1,670 acres leased from IDL, 907 acres leased from RMEF, and 749 acres owned in fee title). The core of the WMA is the 907-acre property purchased by RMEF in 1991. At the time RMEF purchased the property, the Department entered into a purchase option and right of first refusal should RMEF wish to sell the property. In March 2002, the Department received a notice of intent to sell from RMEF. The Department explained to RMEF that money was not available to acquire the property at the time, and the Department was developing a land acquisition process to evaluate new proposals. Subsequently, the Southeast Region submitted to the Lands Committee a proposal to acquire the RMEF property at Georgetown Summit. Bear Lake County Commissioners and legislators have not been notified pending approval of the Commission to proceed with the acquisition. Elected officials will be notified after we reach agreement with the landowner. It could either be purchased, or possibly a property trade.

Action: Gibbs moves, Burns seconds to proceed but not to exceed the price RMEF paid for the property. Discussion of RMEF practice of selling lands it originally bought for elk habitat.

Action: Gibbs amends motion, Burns seconds to authorize staff to explore the possibility of purchase at a price not to exceed the price RMEF paid for the property. Discussion of RMEF practice of selling lands it originally bought for elk habitat. Unanimous.

22. **Pending Communication Bureau projects, Roger Fuhrman. Background:** At the October 2003 meeting, Commissioners directed staff to develop proposals to address activities on the "Needs Improvement List" in Dr. Steve McMullin's report to the Commission. McMullin analyzed the results of focus groups and surveys and identified a number of activities where Department performance needs to be improved. The high importance – low performance activities included "Educating and informing the public in general about fish and wildlife" and "Enhancing awareness of IDFG and its programs." **Policy issues:**

Department outreach, information and education efforts. **Public Involvement Process:** During the strategic planning process, Idaho residents were surveyed about Department of Fish and Game activities and performance. Respondents felt that Department performance needs improvement in the areas of “educating and informing the public in general about fish and wildlife” and “enhancing awareness of IDFG and its programs.” The public was also asked to identify the best method of providing information on fish and wildlife-associated recreation.

The results were:

<u>Method of Providing Information</u>	<u>Percent of Respondents</u>
Newspapers	64%
Television	51%
Direct mail	48%
Regulations booklets	47%
Radio	38%
Public meetings	34%
IDFG magazine	32%
IDFG Internet Web Site	30%
National outdoor magazines	16%
E-mail	16%
Other methods	3%

Justification:

During the strategic planning process, the public, employees and Commissioners said Department performance needs improvement in the areas of “educating and informing the public in general about fish and wildlife” and “enhancing awareness of IDFG and its programs.” **Action Requested:** The gold sheet prepared for the October 2003 Commission meeting outlined the process for addressing needs identified in the McMullin report. According to the gold sheet, the Department would propose programs and costs for Commission consideration and “programs and funding could then be incorporated into the Commission’s budget direction.” **Staff Recommendations:**

Incorporate into Commission budget direction to Department

23. FY06 Budget direction, Steve Barton. Nonresident deer and elk tag sales continue to show changes in buyer patterns. NR deer tag sales are “soft.” The forecast for FY 06 continues to indicate that a fee increase will be needed. The department is on-line with its projections in 2000 that a fee increase would be needed in 2006. The legislation to allow the commission to set fees up to a maximum was delayed from this year to the 2005 legislative session. Department expenditures and the FY 05 budget are focuses on maintaining operations. Any changes in program direction have been accomplished by reprioritizing funds internally and by reducing the level of license funded capital outlay. The strategic planning process identified 14 areas of high importance-low performance. Four activities related to public access and land acquisition (Access Yes!), four activities related to education or public information, two activities related to improving stakeholder understanding and involvement and two activities related to nongame and species conservation. **Staff Recommendations:**

1. Authorize department staff to work with Legislative sponsors and leadership to draft legislation for the 2005 Legislative session that will provide the fee increase necessary in 2006 to maintain operations and to allow the commission to adjust fees by rule up to a maximum.
2. Begin to implement the 14 areas of high importance-low performance from the strategic plan into department operations by reprioritizing internal operations as much as practical.
3. Continue to implement Access Yes!
4. Continue fleet management, regional office improvements and better business practices.
5. Continue Cascade Lake fish restoration project as the 'new fishing waters' project.
6. Restore FY 05 cuts to license funded capital outlay for high priority equipment and facility repairs and maintenance.

Huffaker adds:

7. In light of yesterday's discussion, we need to shift some time and money to start a mule deer plan.
8. With each project we undertake, we need to include an enhanced communication effort to inform the public. We do lots of good things that the public doesn't find out about.
24. Review scoping process for upland game birds, Jeff Gould. Scoping starts next week. Proposals include uniform starting time statewide for pheasant seasons., change from three pheasants to two daily on stocked WMAs so the supply of birds lasts longer; starting time on WMAs in southwest of 10 a.m. to avoid conflict with waterfowl hunters and allow staff to stock birds. Quail, chukar, huns and sage grouse opener on third weekend of Sept. rather than second, sharptails same weekend; possibility of extending seasons to Jan. 31. possibility of ATV restrictions on some bird hunts. Forest grouse, no change.

Adjourn 10:40