

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

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Annual Statewide Report



WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

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2015
Boise, Idaho

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STATEWIDE REPORT HABITAT MANAGEMENT

JOB TITLE: Statewide Habitat Management

PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015

Summary

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission are charged with the preservation, protection, perpetuation, and management of all wildlife in Idaho. Maintaining adequate habitat to support big game, upland game, waterfowl, and furbearers is of great importance to those who hunt, trap, and view wildlife throughout the state. Nongame species, which are of great aesthetic, cultural, scientific, and educational value to the citizens of Idaho, also benefit from maintaining adequate habitat.

Thirty-two Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) located in Fish and Game regions have been established to protect wildlife habitat and are available for hunting, fishing and other public enjoyment of wildlife (Figure 1). Varying from 275 to 85,000 acres, each area is dedicated to primary purposes such as big game, waterfowl and upland game. Researchers from the University of Idaho and The Nature Conservancy evaluated the value of Idaho's WMAs to wildlife. They found the WMA network, created to support game species, "also conserves the full range of Idaho's wildlife and other ecological features" (Karl et al. 2005).

Each WMA is managed as part of a larger habitat district, which may also include other lands owned or operated by the Department for wildlife habitat or public access. Management of lands for wildlife habitat could not succeed without the cooperation and collaboration of many partners, with the Department as either a licensed tenant or a neighbor. Examples include Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), USDI Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USDA Forest Service (USFS), Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Idaho Power Corporation, and other private landowners.

Personnel and operating funds for regional wildlife habitat programs are provided through a combination of hunting licenses and fees, federal aid from excise taxes under the Pittman-Robertson Act, and to some degree by BPA and BOR as mitigation for habitat losses resulting from construction of various dams in the region. Hunters fund a large portion of management costs, and they are rewarded with habitat management areas that sustain many of the region's big game herds and provide consistent waterfowl and upland game bird production and hunting opportunities. Non-hunters, who value the varied benefits provided by the Departments habitat management also benefit from the broad ranging conservation values associated with Department lands.

Objectives

Project I - Coordination and Administration

Establish and maintain an efficient and effective workforce organized to fulfill annual project objectives of the Wildlife Habitat Management Program.

Project II - Operations & Maintenance

Operate and maintain buildings, structures, and infrastructure on about 370,000 acres of Department-owned or managed properties.

Project III - Habitat Development

1. Improve key wildlife habitats such as crucial big game, waterfowl and upland game habitat, gamebird production and migration areas, riparian areas, and native plant communities to meet existing wildlife habitat needs on lands managed by the Department.
2. Create additional habitat on Department-managed land lacking adequate habitat to support desired population levels of wildlife.
3. Work with private and public landowners to enhance wildlife habitat on their property.

Project IV - Surveys and Inventory

1. Collect current public-use information on Department-managed lands including recreational use, opinions, hunting success, and harvest.
2. Collect current wildlife habitat and population characteristics information on Department-managed lands.
3. Collect current wildlife habitat and population characteristics information for statewide management recommendations.

Project V - Technical Guidance

1. Provide current wildlife habitat and population information, express concerns, and provide recommendations to state, federal, and private parties considering projects that may affect wildlife.
2. Provide technical habitat and population management advice to public and private landowners and other agencies in order to sustain or enhance wildlife resources.

Project VI - Access Yes!

Provide up to 300,000 acres statewide of sportsmen access to private land through lease agreements between the Department and private landowners at an estimated cost of \$1.25 per acre.

Approach

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has management plans for each species or groups of species and for Wildlife Management Areas to provide guidance on habitat management. These plans provide information and input to other agencies-as well as help keep the public informed.

The Department uses public input and the information collected from past Federal Aid projects to adjust habitat management efforts to ensure wildlife population and habitat objectives are being met throughout the state.

Expected Benefits

Project I - Coordination and Administration: This project will ensure that the Wildlife Habitat Management Program is adequately staffed, trained, and supervised so that program objectives are achieved and contract obligations are fulfilled.

Project II - Operations & Maintenance: Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), Wildlife Management Units (WMUs), and Wildlife Habitat Areas (WHAs) provide more than 700,000 visitor-use days for public hunting and other wildlife-related recreation.

Project III - Habitat Development: Lands managed by the Department provide habitat for a high percentage of the wildlife species that reside in Idaho. In 2002, Idaho Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit provided an assessment of habitats found on WMAs. Their findings indicated that WMAs collectively provide habitat for 98% of Idaho's wildlife species and all federal and state-listed threatened, endangered, or candidate terrestrial vertebrates. Maintaining and enhancing wildlife habitat on these lands is important to Idaho's ecological diversity and sustains wildlife-related recreation. Protecting and restoring wildlife habitat on private land will complement this system of WMAs and significantly contribute to conservation of game, nongame, and species of special concern statewide.

Project IV - Surveys and Inventories: Visitor-use information collected on lands managed by the Department will complement statewide surveys (i.e., strategic planning survey, hunter activity surveys, etc.) and provide site-specific feedback necessary for a responsive management approach. Wildlife habitat and population information collected will help the Department evaluate management actions to see if the desired conditions were achieved on Department-managed lands. Statewide habitat and population information will be used to develop conceptual area plans, develop game harvest recommendations, and provide technical guidance based on current habitat and population characteristics.

Project V - Technical Guidance: The information and recommendations provided to developers, industries dependent on natural resources, and land managers are intended to reduce, eliminate, and/or mitigate impacts to wildlife populations, which could result from habitat changes associated with their actions. Providing technical advice about wildlife resources to other agencies and the public will result in improved wildlife habitat conditions and wildlife restoration. Providing technical assistance to develop an early detection and rapid response system for noxious weed control in Idaho will maintain wildlife habitat and reduce long-term statewide vegetation management costs. Providing information on Department management programs, policies, and positions to other agencies may result in decisions by those agencies that benefit wildlife resources. Providing information to private landowners on opportunities and financial programs to enhance private lands for wildlife will result in better stewardship of the 31% of the state that is in private ownership.

Project VI - Access Yes!: Additional acres of access for the hunters and anglers of Idaho will be made available. These acres may also maintain and improve wildlife habitat by keeping working lands undeveloped.

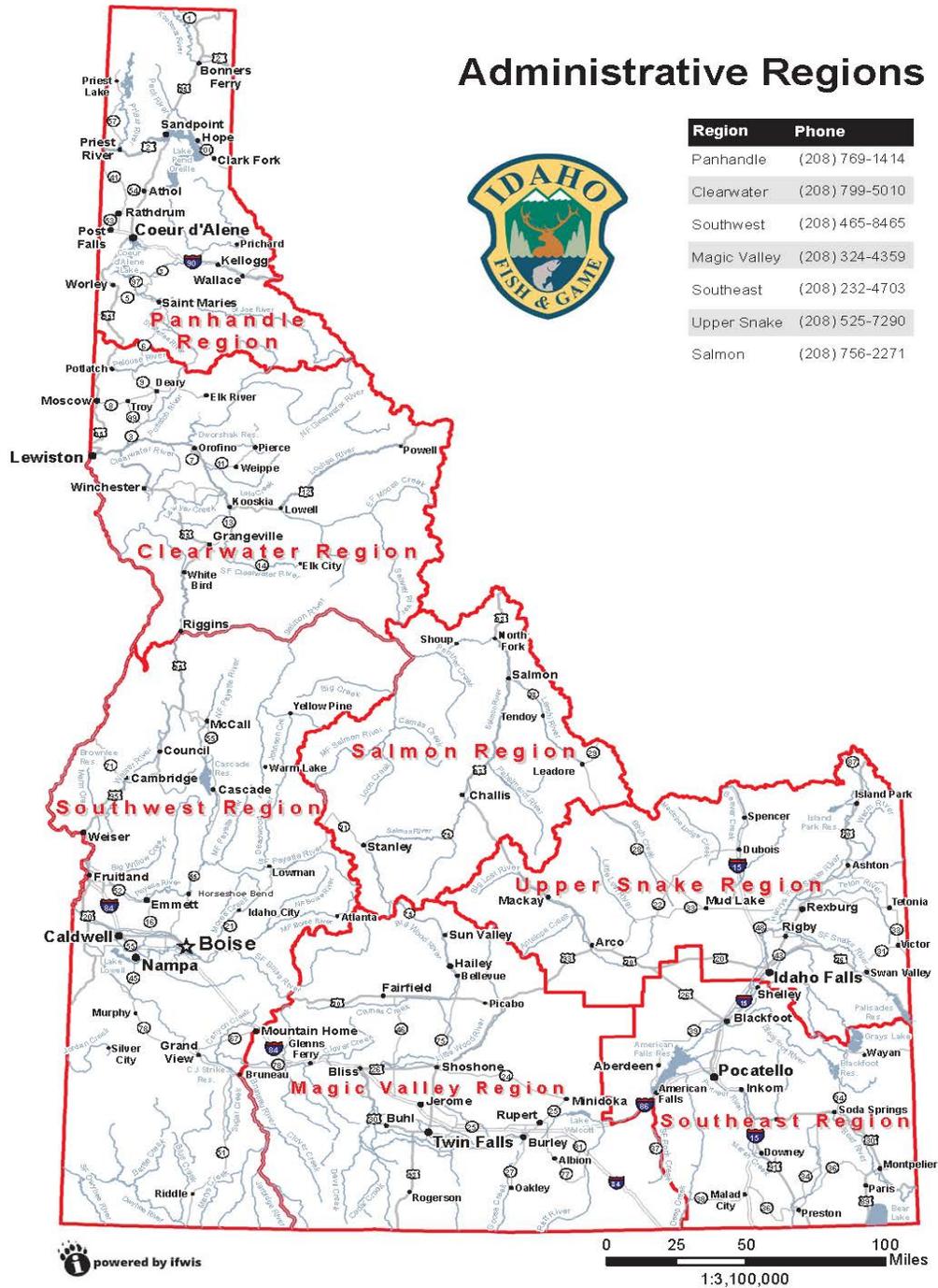


Figure 1. Administrative regions for Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

STATEWIDE

Coordination and Administration

One State Habitat Manager provided habitat program direction, coordinated work plan activities, administered budgets, facilitated recruiting efforts, and provided interagency coordination statewide. Six Regional Habitat Managers and one Regional Habitat Biologist coordinated and administered habitat program activities at the regional level and supervised 25 Regional Wildlife Biologists and 5 Maintenance Foreman. Regional Wildlife Biologists administered all habitat program responsibilities within their designated Habitat District and supervised 7 Wildlife Technicians assigned to specific Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) or a portion of a Habitat District. Maintenance Foreman coordinated habitat maintenance activities region wide. Biologists and Maintenance Foreman recruit, train, and supervise temporary employees hired to complete specific assignments (Table 1).

Table 1. Statewide Habitat Personnel.

| Personnel | R1 | R2 | R3 | R4 | R5 | R6 | R7 | HQ | Total |
|-------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------|
| State Habitat Manager | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Program Coordinator | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 |
| Regional Habitat Mgr | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 6 |
| Staff Biologist | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| Reg. Wildlife Biologist | 4 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 1 | | 26 |
| Farm Bill Biologist | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | | | 3 |
| Wildlife Technician | | 1 | 3 | 1 | | 2 | | 1 | 8 |
| Maintenance Foreman | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | 5 |
| Maintenance Craftsman | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| Total | 6 | 8 | 11 | 8 | 4 | 10 | 1 | 8 | 56 |

Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance activities on lands managed by the Department are funded by Wildlife Restoration (WR) and State License funds with assistance from other Federal grants. Federal Assistance funds (including Idaho’s funding match) accounted for a part of the combined expenditures associated with this larger undertaking, the Idaho Habitat Program.

Operate and maintain buildings, structures, and infrastructure on Department-owned or managed properties, totaling 370,000 acres, at current levels of use.

Habitat personnel maintained approximately 301 miles of roads, 82.5 miles of trails, 470 miles of fences, 169 parking areas, 117 buildings, 34 restrooms, 168 water control structures, 52 miles of dikes, numerous signs, and equipment used for operation and maintenance (Table 2).

Table 2. Facilities to be operated and maintained by Department statewide.

| FEATURE | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | TOTAL |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| Roads (mi) | 26 | 60 | 150 | 14 | 12 | 52 | 7 | 321 |
| Trails (mi) | 2 | 20 | 118 | 9 | 5 | 27.5 | | 82.5 |
| Maintained Fence (mi) | 12 | 80 | 193 | 18 | 30 | 147 | 4 | 493 |
| Parking Areas | 33 | 10 | 34 | 7 | 27 | 26 | 32 | 169 |
| Informational Signs | 50 | 12 | 12 | 40 | 50 | 19 | 17 | 200 |
| Buildings | 20 | 20 | 36 | 8 | 4 | 31 | 5 | 118 |
| Restrooms | 6 | 1 | | 6 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 34 |
| Water Structures | 29 | | 54 | 33 | 12 | 84 | 3 | 215 |
| Dikes (mi) | 15 | | 13 | 4 | 1.4 | 19 | 1 | 52.4 |
| Irrigation Pipe and Ditches(mi) | | | 2 | 8 | 2 | 37 | 1 | 33 |
| Canal (mi) | | | 7 | 10 | 1 | 12 | | 31 |
| Center Pivot | | | | 1 | | 7 | | 3 |
| WMAs and WMUs | 7 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 7 | | 32 |
| WHAs and other parcels | 24 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 35 |
| Acres administered | 54,987 | 128,980 | 79,944 | 9,649 | 17,204 | 89,057 | 1,140 | 380,961 |

Habitat Development

Habitat development and enhancement activities are funded by WR and State License funds with assistance from other Federal grants. Farm Bill conservation programs, federal and state conservation programs, competitive conservation grants typically fund projects on private land. Region habitat staff improved key wildlife habitats such as big game winter range, waterfowl and upland game production areas, riparian areas, and native plant communities to meet existing wildlife habitat needs on lands managed by the Department.

Another goal is to create additional habitat in areas lacking adequate habitat to support a desired population level. Working with private landowners to enhance wildlife habitat on private property projects include:

- Wetland restoration
- Nesting cover development
- Shrub plantings
- Juniper removal for shrub-steppe restoration
- Grain food plots

Surveys and Inventory

Survey and inventory activities conducted by habitat personnel are funded by PR and State License funds, with assistance from other Federal grants. Department staff collected visitor use information at most WMAs using traffic counters, random visitor surveys, targeted field

contacts, hunter participation check stations, and trailhead surveys. For 2014 over 35% of visitor use can be attributed to hunting, fishing or trapping.

Wildlife habitat and population information collected on Department-managed lands is site-specific and designed to monitor the primary objectives of each parcel. Survey and inventory activities included vegetation transects on big game winter range and riparian habitats, stream flow and water table monitoring, noxious weed monitoring and mapping, breeding bird surveys, waterfowl brood and pair counts, sage-grouse lek counts, and aerial big game surveys. All Regions participated at the levels anticipated.

Habitat personnel were involved in survey and inventory activities within their area of responsibility (i.e., habitat district or region). Activities were similar to those listed above but included more collaborative work with outside agencies and Department personnel.

Technical Guidance

Technical guidance provided by habitat personnel to outside entities is funded by WR and State License funds with assistance from other Federal grants.

Habitat personnel dedicated several hundred days to implement the technical guidance project. Objectives were often met by working cooperatively and collaboratively with other state and federal agencies, private parties, and non-governmental organizations. Examples of how these objectives were met include the following: Mule Deer Initiative, Clearwater Pheasant Initiative, hydropower relicensing, urban-wildland development, forest practices, livestock grazing management, range rehabilitation, wetland and riparian enhancement, transportation projects, wind-power development, and wildlife habitat improvements on private property using funding from the Federal Farm Bill in cooperation. This year's work included technical assistance on reenrollment on existing CRP land, including SAFE applications.

Access Yes

Access Yes! is partially funded by PR and State License funds and other non-federal grants. Federal Assistance funds (including Idaho's funding match) accounted for part of the combined expenditures associated with this larger undertaking.

Actual expenditure of these funds was primarily for lease agreements between the Department and private landowners. In calendar year 2014, the *Access Yes!* Program opened up 437,177 acres of private land and 606,255 adjacent and land-locked public lands for sportsmen.

Our objective was to provide at least 300,000 acres in lease agreements to sportsmen using these funds and this goal was exceeded.

Every year, Outdoor Life Magazine acknowledges individuals, non-profits, corporations and state/government agencies with their "Open Country" awards. This year the award for a

state/government agency was given to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for the Access Yes! Program.

According to Outdoor Life, "Hunters and anglers across the nation consistently list one challenge as their primary obstacle to spending more time in the field: access." In giving the award to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the magazine praised Access Yes! as "one of the finest access programs..." To learn more about the "Open Country" awards go to <http://www.outdoorlife.com/blogs/open-country/open-country-congratulations-2014-award-winners>

PANHANDLE REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Panhandle Habitat Section is funded by a variety of sources including state-generated license funds, WR, Sport Fish Restoration (SFR), Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and Coeur d'Alene Basin Hecla Settlement funds. Funding sources are used in a coordinated fashion to attain similar, supporting objectives.

The Panhandle Region is divided into 3 habitat districts, each being assigned one regional wildlife habitat biologist. Each regional wildlife habitat biologist is provided a crew of seasonal employees and a series of budgets originating from multiple funding sources to implement the habitat program at the district level. Additionally, there is a shared Regional Habitat Biologist who splits their time between the wildlife habitat section work and population section work and helps establish a bridge between the 2 sections. This position includes a strong emphasis in federal lands conservation work, providing WMA project support, GIS support, regional waterfowl data and disease monitoring, coordination, and technical assistance to federal and state land management agencies and private landowners. One utility craftsman and associated crew is available to assist with the development, maintenance, and operation of Department facilities when not working on Fishing and Boating Access sites. One Regional Wildlife Habitat Manager (RWHM) supervises the referenced employees and provides regional oversight of program direction, budgeting, and planning.

Operations and Maintenance

The Panhandle region operates and maintains buildings, structures, and infrastructure on 7 WMAs and 24 smaller parcels totaling 27,910 deeded acres and 27,077 acres managed under agreement, for a total of 54,987 acres. Panhandle WMAs include:

Table 3. Areas to be operated and maintained in the Panhandle Region.

| Area | Acres |
|--------------------|--------|
| Boundary Creek WMA | 2,072 |
| McArthur Lake WMA | 1,891 |
| Pend Oreille WMA | 7,432 |
| Farragut WMA | 1,418 |
| Coeur d' Alene WMA | 7,538 |
| St. Maries WMA | 2,344 |
| Snow Peak WMA | 32,292 |

Operation and maintenance activities during this reporting period included:

- Maintained 26 miles of roads, 12 miles of fence, 33 parking areas, 20 buildings, 6 restrooms, 50 signs, 29 water control structures, and 15 miles of dikes.

- Maintained and replaced as necessary approximately 300 Canada goose nesting platforms and 500 wood duck nest boxes on the Boundary Creek, McArthur Lake, Pend Oreille, and Coeur d'Alene River WMAs.
- Installed constructed frame and POWMA signage at Trout Creek parking access sites to instruct the public of property rules.
- Determined structural damage to Deer Creek storage building on POWMA and sought repair estimates.
- Removed 0.5 mile of old fence on 3 parcels on POWMA and replace with boundary line signage.
- Reconstruct 0.25 mile of fence on the Tall Pines parcel on POWMA to address livestock trespass.
- Determined flood damage to Rapid Lightning Administrative Use Road and received assistance from IDL and BLM for repairs.
- Completed construction of Trout Creek segment bunkhouse expansion to include larger room sizes for increased staff use. Expand driveway and parking area for fire lane safety access.
- Removed approximately 0.75 miles of fence on the Robinson Creek property. . Maintain the 0.5 mile south boundary fence to address livestock grazing on neighboring private lands.
- Prepared the Robinson Creek site for public access by constructing a gravel parking area and installing general rules signage.
- Maintained access roads on BSCWMA by re-graveling 1 mile of road.
- Installed new gravel parking access area on Tall Pines habitat segment.
- Completed safety improvements to the Farragut Shooting Range. Initiated construction of Farragut Shooting Range administration/education building. Initiated archery developments at the range. Began full operations of the Farragut Public Shooting Range after resolution of past legal issues and completion of all required safety improvements have been met.

Habitat Development

Management activities on Department-administered lands located within the Panhandle included a variety of activities. Approximately 25,695 acres on WMAs, excluding Snow Peak WMA, were evaluated for noxious weed infestations. Control actions were implemented as appropriate. Approximately 8,910 acres of wetlands were managed to maintain important hydrologic functions, maximize waterfowl production, maintain nongame species habitat, and provide waterfowl hunting opportunities. Approximately 44,528 acres of a variety of wildlife habitats were managed to promote critical habitat features for both game species and overall species diversity including winter range, forest management and shrub management. Habitats were managed also to provide big and small game hunting opportunities. On the remaining 1,549 acres, habitat improvement activities were completed in a fashion peripheral to facility development and operation. Habitat development projects completed on Department-managed lands in FY14 include the following:

- Approximately 60 combined acres of grain food plots were planted on the BSCWMA, MLWMA, POWMA, and CDARWMA to provide feed for upland game birds including wild turkeys, and migrating waterfowl.
- Approximately 25 acres of forb (broadleaf) forage plots were planted on the POWMA, BSCWMA, and CDRWMA.
- Approximately 30 acres of goose pasture on the MLWMA, POWMA, and CDARWMA were maintained through mowing and planting.
- Initiated Western White Pine restoration planning on 70+ acres of the Farragut WMA.
- Converted 10 acres of cattails on BSCWA to maintain hemi-marsh conditions.
- Completed 40 acres of brush treatments to improve forage for big game.
- Completed 20 acres of Ponderosa Pine Restoration through selective logging at Farragut WMA.
- Completed a comprehensive noxious weed control/eradication effort on all of the Panhandle WMAs.
- Continued a moist soil management strategy on the BSCWMA wetland complexes to enhance wetland productivity and maintain hemi-marsh conditions.
- Planned and administered reed canary grass control, followed by native wetland vegetation plantings on POWMA, CDARWMA, and MLWMA.
- Planned and administered grassland burns on MLWMA, BSCWMA, POWMA and CDARWMA for grassland rejuvenation. Coordinated with Idaho Dept. of Lands. Interseeded the burn area with native grasses.
- Began reed canary grass and broadleaf weed control efforts on the Clark Fork Delta project.
- Completed the Sunnyside Salvage Sale after contractor defaulted. Worked with new a contractor and an IDL Forester to complete the project. This 26 acre sale resulted in 347 MBF removed for a value of \$28,628 that will be applied to the Panhandle Forestry Program.
- Completed five acres of flowering rush treatment on submerged land on Oden Bay of POWMA. The Bonner County Weed Control conducted the herbicide applications.
- Completed all aspects of Bare Marsh NAWCA Grant Phase II Vegetation Management. Cattail control measures included prescribed burning and aerial spraying of approximately 60 acres.
- Reviewed final project design of the Cocolalla Wetland Restoration Project and prepared a reed canary grass control plan for the site. Provided a vegetation management plan and wetland cell design modification.
- Completed Shadowy St. Joe Wetland Project with the construction of 2 large big game exclosures (2.25 acre) to protect seedling plants on Phase II parcel. Planted 1,000 one gallon seedling plants within the exclosures.
- Completed 2014/2015 reed canary grass control efforts for vegetation management on Robinson Creek Wetland Restoration Project in preparation for wetland construction phase. Completed a vegetation management plan, secured approach permits with the road district and secured approval for transmission line structure replacement/relocation with Avista Utilities.

- Completed several phases of wetland restoration work on the Cocolalla Habitat Segment of Pend Oreille WMA, Shadowy St. Joe Habitat Segment of the St. Maries WMA, and the Robinson Creek Segment of the Coeur d'Alene River WMA in the Panhandle Region.
- Engaged and collaborated with the USFS St Joe Ranger District staff to promote elk habitat improvement planning and development on the Snow Peak WMA (SPWMA). Elk habitat improvement projects included prescribed burns, timber harvest, and fire breaks.
- Collaborated with IDEQ and the CDA Basin Restoration Partnership to develop wetland restoration design and implementation plans for the Robinson Creek habitat segment of the CDARMWA. Began implementing vegetation control treatments and initialed construction infrastructure for the restoration project.

Surveys and Inventory

Survey and inventory work completed on Department-managed lands in the Panhandle included the following:

- Approximately 1,400 ducks were banded on the BSCWMA, MLMWA, POWMA, and CDARWMA.
- Waterfowl hunter check stations were operated on the BSCWMA, MLMWA, POWMA, and CDARWMA.
- Waterfowl migration surveys were conducted during the spring and fall migrations on MLWMA and BSCWMA.
- Waterfowl breeding pair/brood counts were completed on the BSCWMA and MLMWA.
- Goose nest platform and wood duck nest box surveys were conducted on the BSCWMA, MLMWA, POWMA, and CDARWMA.
- Osprey nests were surveyed on the CDARWMA.
- Western grebe colonies were monitored on the POMWA and CDARWMA.
- Black Tern colonies and heron rookeries were monitored at POWMA.
- Pheasant crow counts were conducted on BSCWMA.
- Stream flows and wetland water levels were monitored on the BSCWMA.
- Active eagle nesting sites at eight locations were monitored on the POWMA and CDRWMA.
- Photo-points were retaken and vegetation was monitored on the POWMA and BSCWMA habitat segments acquired with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) funds.
- Noxious weed infestations were monitored and treatment success was evaluated on seven WMAs.
- Completed cow elk calving area and calf search in the CDA River drainage, CDA National forest.

In addition to activities on Department-managed lands, the habitat staff assisted with the following surveys and inventories. The assistance helped collect regional data used by the Wildlife Population Management Section.

- Assisted with elk mortality searches in North Fork CDA basin and wolf camera setups throughout the region.
- Assisted with various non-game surveys.
- Completed white pelican surveys on four WMAs.
- Assisted with deer and elk hunter check stations.
- Assisted with winter aerial surveys for big game.

Technical Guidance

Panhandle Habitat Section staff met regularly with the USFS, BLM, ACOE, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), USFWS, NRCS, FSA, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), IDL, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), and Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). Additionally, contact was maintained with the major private landowners throughout the Panhandle including primarily timber companies, large farmers/ranchers, and hydropower operators. As requested by private entities and as deemed prudent with public entities, Panhandle Habitat Section staff reviewed project proposals and provided input to reduce, eliminate, and/or mitigate for potential wildlife impacts associated with land management activities. Specific technical assistance accomplishments included:

- Worked with the USFS to conduct an elk habitat assessment and is developing a restoration project for the Snow Peak WMA.
- Staff is continuing work on the USFS Panhandle Forest Collaborative.
- Staff is working with the Restoration Partnership to develop and implement the Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Plan as part of the HECLA and ASACO mining settlements.
- Provided technical assistance and comments on 12 USFS forest management projects.

CLEARWATER REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Clearwater region's goal was to develop and maintain an effective work force to implement habitat program objectives. This included working closely with agencies, NGOs, and the public, including private landowners, to maintain and improve habitat on both public and private lands. Habitat staff provided technical assistance to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) through the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program and a Contribution Agreement. In addition, habitat staff offered outdoor recreational mentorship opportunities and shared information with internal and external constituents.

The Clearwater region implemented the Wildlife Habitat Program objectives through regional program personnel, including four Habitat Biologists, one Senior Wildlife Technician, one Recreation Site Maintenance Foreman, one Senior Maintenance Craftsman, one Habitat Manager, and numerous seasonal support personnel. Personnel were involved with habitat management activities on three WMAs comprised of 84,000 deeded acres and 40,000 acres under lease or cooperative management agreement, four WHAs encompassing 437 acres, and custodial management of five conservation easements. Habitat staff coordinated and managed budgets, including both state and federal funding. Additional accomplishments included:

- Provided Technical Service Provider (TSP) support to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).
- Coordinated with Latah Soil and Water Conservation District on private land wildlife habitat projects.
- Participated on the Tri-State, Palouse, Clearwater, and Salmon River Weed Management Committees.
- Participated in training including, Herbicide Safety and Training, ATV operation and safety, supervision, NRCS-TSP, Defensive Driving, Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society workshops, and Wildlife Bureau Biologist meetings.
- Participated on the Department's Lands Committee to evaluate potential habitat acquisitions in Idaho.
- Assisted in the development of a Craig Mountain/Joseph Plains Long-Range Fire Management Working Group along with Idaho and Nez Perce counties, the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT), and the Nature Conservancy (TNC).
- Participated on the development of a new statewide Idaho Elk Habitat Plan.
- Participated on a statewide team to develop vegetation monitoring strategies and protocols for Department lands.
- Participated on a statewide team to develop a GIS-based noxious weed database.
- Worked with adjacent landowners and members of the public on motorized and administrative access related issues on Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA).

- Coordinated with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), BLM, TNC, and NPT on CMWMA management, including the Dworshak Advisory Committee.
- Coordinated with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation and private landowners on Joseph Plains WMA management.
- Authored or participated in newspaper articles and county newsletter articles on wildlife related issues.
- Coordinated with other regional and headquarters personnel and individual outfitters and guides regarding permits outfitting on CMWMA.
- Provided presentations on habitat related issues during sportsman's breakfasts or as requested by other groups.
- Coordinated with Avista Corporation on forestry and access related issues with transmission lines on CMWMA.
- Conducted training for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) enhancement and Continuous CRP (CCRP) implementation techniques for IDFG and USDA staff.
- Participated on a Clearwater Wildlife Habitat Restoration Team with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Clearwater Nez Perce National Forest.
- Participated in Forest Plan meetings with the Clearwater Nez Perce National Forest.
- Provided technical assistance regarding the new Travel Plan for the USFS Clearwater-Nez Perce National Forest and the BLM Cottonwood Field Office Area.
- Provided technical assistance regarding new Idaho Department of Transportation construction for Highway 95, south of Moscow, Idaho.
- Coordinated with USFS on Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project in the Clear Creek drainage east of Kooskia, ID.
- Coordinated with USFS regarding integrating IDFG wildlife staff into forest and zone planning efforts and increasing wildlife staff capacity.
- Coordinated with IDL on silvicultural projects throughout CMWMA.
- Worked with the IDFG Wildlife Bureau regarding a new commercial use policy on Department lands.
- Worked with IDFG Communications staff to create outreach material highlighting IDFG activities.
- Coordinated and commented on Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) land use proposals on Dworshak Reservoir.
- Served as a Department representative on the Clearwater Basin Collaborative team and, in this capacity, coordinated a region-wide elk monitoring project.

Operations and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance activities provided quality habitat, public hunting and other wildlife-oriented recreation on over 128,000 acres of WMAs, WHAs, and conservation easements in the Clearwater Region. Buildings, structures and other necessary infrastructure included:

Table 4. Areas to be operated and maintained in the Clearwater Region.

| Area | Acres |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Red River WMA | 314 |
| Craig Mountain WMA | 124,224 ^a |
| Joseph Plains | 1,300 |
| South Fork Clearwater | 330 |
| Aspendale WHA | 13 |
| Fir Island WHA | 38 |
| Paradise WHA | 19 |
| Anderson (White Bird Crk) Easement | 21 |
| Henderson (Lawyers Crk) Easement | 29 |
| Koehler (Tolo Lake) Easement | 16 |

^a Includes 81,400 deeded acres, balance cooperatively managed with BLM and IDL, and 5,500 acres cooperatively managed with the Nez Perce Tribe.

Operation and Maintenance activities in the Clearwater region included:

- Maintained 60 miles of road.
- Maintained 80 miles of fence and boundary markers.
- Maintained 5,000 trees and shrubs, and grass plantings along 1.5 miles of stream on Red River Wildlife Management Area (RRWMA).
- Managed noxious weeds on over 100,000 acres. This included treating 815.66 acres; spot-treating along 217 miles of roads and trails on CMWMA, and assessing 1,400 acres (No PR funds were used to purchase or apply herbicides).
- Maintained facilities at RRWMA and at Billy Creek, Wapshilla Creek, Benton Meadows and six backcountry cabins on CMWMA.
- Maintained 11 miles of roads specifically for mobility impaired sportsmen on CMWMA.
- Maintained seasonal motorized route on Redbird segment of CMWMA.
- Completed a salvage sale across >200 acres to address a mountain pine beetle outbreak.
- Inventoried 100 acres for noxious weeds on RRWMA.
- Completed a cooperative grant from the Idaho Department of Lands with which we mechanically thinning 232 acres to improve wildlife habitat and wildfire resiliency.
- Spot treated noxious weeds on RRWMA.
- Inventoried and managed noxious weeds on all listed easements.
- Began replacing property boundary fence on Redbird Canyon, CMWMA.
- Maintained 1,000 aspen and willow plantings at Deyo reservoir and wetland.

Habitat Development

Clearwater staff maximized private lands enhancements for upland game birds and other wildlife by combining funds from the Department's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP), grants, and Natural Resource Conservation Services (NRCS) Farm Bill. BPA funds, Trust funds, and

Department license funds were used to accomplish the majority of habitat developments on Department lands.

Improved wildlife habitat on Department lands

- Continued maintenance of shrub planting and grazing enclosure project at Red River WMA with BPA funds. Built an additional enclosure to protect shrubs from browsing. Goal is to establish riparian community where one historically occurred.
- Completed a salvage sale across >200 acres to address a mountain pine beetle outbreak.
- Used an IDL grant to improve wildlife habitat and increase fire resiliency by mechanically thinning 232 acres of timbered habitat on CMWMA.

Improve wildlife habitat on private lands

- Planted over 5,000 shrubs on private land parcels in Nez Perce and Latah Counties.
- Enhanced > 1,000 acres of existing CRP land by inter-seeding and/or reseeded diverse forb mixes.
- Worked on over 50 private lands projects resulting in over 2,000 acres of habitat development or enhancement.
- Developed mid-contract management plans on over 35 CRP contracts to improve the capacity of conservation cover to support wildlife. Work entailed developing reseeded plans, prescribed burn plans, and other stand invigoration techniques.

Improve wildlife habitat on other public lands.

- Assisted local sportsman's habitat group on brush cutting projects to improve elk winter range on the Clearwater Nez Perce National Forest.

Surveys and Inventory

The objective of this projects was to collect current public use information on Department managed lands, including public use levels, activities and harvest information; collect current information on wildlife habitat and population characteristics on lands managed by the Department; assist in collecting regional wildlife population information for statewide population management decisions; monitor upland game populations in reference to new habitat improvements and from programs including HIP, Clearwater Pheasant Initiative, and the NRCS Farm Bill implementation; and to assess wildlife habitat distributions and conditions on private and public lands in the Clearwater Region. Accomplishments included:

- Assisted population staff in conducting road-side upland game bird surveys.
- Continued surveying and mapping noxious weeds across CMWMA.
- Inventoried 100 acres and mapped noxious weeds on RRWMA.
- Assessed resource conditions following the 65,200 acre Big Cougar Fire.
- Assisted in monitoring bighorn sheep associated with CMWMA.
- Assisted with monitoring wolves across the Clearwater Region.

- Continued surveys for potential Palouse Prairie remnant parcels for the presence of native vegetation plant communities.
- Conducted post fall burn vegetation surveys monitoring with the Latah Soil and Water Conservation District to determine the effect of broadcast seeding post burn on Palouse Prairie Remnants.
- In coordination with USFS, monitored post burn habitats across national forestlands in relation to habitat effectiveness for elk. Conducted preliminary assessments.
- Continued bird surveys at new Deyo wetland site to observe changes in species.
- Worked with Fisheries staff and a post-doctoral student from the University of Idaho on re-evaluation of stream condition/fish habitat and population responses to restoration work on RRWMA.
- Coordinated a project in cooperation with the Clearwater Basin Collaborative to monitor elk across the Clearwater Region.

Technical Guidance

Habitat staff provide current and past information on wildlife populations and habitat and provide recommendations to federal, state and local government agencies, industry and private parties regarding potential wildlife impacts and mitigation actions related to potential and ongoing projects within the Clearwater Region. They work closely with the public, including private landowners to maintain and improve habitat on both public and private lands; provide technical assistance to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) through the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program; provide outdoor recreational opportunities; and share information with internal and external customers.

During the last year, Clearwater regional personnel have continued to act as TSPs for planning and implementing wildlife practices within the USDA Farm Bill, under the terms of a Contribution Agreement. NRCS funded the Contribution Agreement. The Contribution Agreement greatly expanded the Department's landowner contacts and our ability to affect large acres of habitat for upland game and other wildlife species. The Department received funding from USDA FSA to install over 25,000 new acres of dense nesting cover for upland game birds in 10 counties along western Idaho. Technical guidance activities included:

- Provided TSP services to NRCS. Worked with landowners to enhance existing CRP fields for wildlife.
- Provided TSP services to the USFS in the development of a Forest Management Plan for the Clearwater/Nez Perce Forest.
- Began implementing State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement project across 10 Idaho counties to improve and protect habitat for high priority wildlife species.
- Assisted Environmental Staff Biologist when requested to respond to requests for Department input on proposed projects within respective Clearwater habitat districts. Commented on USFS Travel Plans, USFS river recreation and development, ACOE Dworshak Travel/Recreation Plan, BLM Resource Management Plans, and BLM Outfitter issues.

- Participated on the Tri-State Weed Management Committee, the Salmon River Weed Management Committee, the Clearwater Weed Management Committee, and Palouse Weed Cooperative Management Committee, Dworshak Master Planning Committee, and the Nez Perce and Latah County EQUIP Technical Committees.
- Worked on local committees for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever, and the Latah Wildlife Association.
- Provided technical guidance to the Idaho Outfitter and Guides Board on Outfitter issues on CMWMA.
- Participated in RMEF horseback tour of CMWMA, providing technical information on habitat conditions, habitat projects, and elk populations.
- Worked closely with USFS on the development of action alternatives for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project in the Clear Creek drainage east of Kooskia, ID.

SOUTHWEST REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Southwest region developed and maintained an effective and efficient work force to implement habitat program objectives; administer project resources; coordinate project activities and share information with internal and external customers; and managed the disposal of dead wildlife and control of predators.

Additional license funds were budgeted for this project to provide for operations, maintenance, capital improvements and a portion of personnel costs throughout the Southwest Region, including Fort Boise, Boise River, Cecil D. Andrus, C.J. Strike, Montour and Payette River WMAs. Federal project funds provided a portion of personnel funds for administration and implementation of project objectives, including the Nampa Habitat District. The Southwest Region habitat management program also includes the McCall Subregion, and various habitat areas which are funded entirely through other sources.

Southwest Region Wildlife Habitat Program objectives were met through regional program personnel. Wildlife Habitat Program responsibilities are structured as follows:

- One Regional Habitat Manager oversees program coordination and administration at the regional level and supervises Regional Habitat Biologists and other program personnel.
- Six Regional Habitat Biologists implement program activities at the district level and supervise Wildlife Technicians and seasonal staff.
- Three Senior Wildlife Technicians assist with district-level activities and supervise seasonal employees.
- One Maintenance Foremen assists with operation and maintenance on Habitat Program facilities when not working on Fish and Boating Access sites.

Operations and Maintenance

The Southwest region operates and maintains buildings, structures, and other infrastructure on the following regional WMAs, WHAs, and conservation easements, totaling approximately 95,000 acres, to provide wildlife habitat, public hunting, and other wildlife-oriented recreation:

Table 5. Areas to be operated and maintained in the Southwest Region.

| Area | Acres |
|---------------------|--------|
| Payette River WMA | 996 |
| Montour WMA | 1,110 |
| Fort Boise WMA | 1,608 |
| C.J. Strike WMA | 10,065 |
| Boise River WMA | 36,000 |
| Cecil D. Andrus WMA | 23,928 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Mann Creek WHA | 325 |
| Roswell Marsh WHA | 676 |
| Ted Trueblood WHA | 292 |
| Rocking M CE Easement | 16,506 |

Operation and Maintenance activities in the Southwest region included:

- Maintained 150 miles of roads and 19 miles of trails with associated gates, culverts, bridges, and signs.
- Maintained 193 miles of fences and boundary markers.
- Maintained 36 buildings, restrooms, and other structures.
- Maintained 34 gravel parking areas and associated signs.
- Maintained 54 water control structures.
- Maintained 13 miles of dikes.
- Treated 942 acres of weeds on lands owned or managed by the Department. (No project funds were used to purchase or apply herbicides.)

Specific projects to maintain WMA infrastructure during this reporting period included:

- Replaced entrance signs at 6 WMAs.
- Maintained structures and other facilities at backcountry WHAs in the Southwest Region.
- Completed installing pipe and a head gate on the irrigation system at the Hot Springs Segment of CJ Strike WMA.

Habitat Development

Habitat development in the Southwest region included:

- Improved the quality of key wildlife habitats such as big game winter range, waterfowl and upland bird production areas, riparian areas, and native plant communities to provide for existing wildlife habitat needs on lands managed by the Department.
- Developed additional quantity of wildlife habitat to support increased production on Department-managed lands.
- Assisted private landowners to enhance wildlife habitat on their lands.
- Improved wildlife habitat quality on Department lands by the following:
 - Managed livestock grazing on 48,000 acres of big game winter range to improve rangeland plant communities.
 - Treated noxious weeds and invasive plant species on 942 acres of Department-managed wildlife habitat.
 - Managed water levels on 1,360 acres of ponds and wetlands to improve waterfowl nesting and brood-rearing habitat.
 - Maintained, replaced, or installed 1,300 waterfowl nest structures.
 - Planted and maintained 160 acres of food plots.
 - Restored 180 acres of fire affected winter range by planting or seeding grasses, shrubs, and forbs.

- Revegetated 67 acres of permanent nesting cover.
- Planted 145 native shrubs and trees on Gold Island, surveyed areas for dryland seeding, installed new irrigation pump system and 1,000 feet of above ground drip irrigation line

Developed wildlife habitat on private lands by the following:

- Coordinated with federal, state, and nongovernmental agencies to develop wildlife habitat on private lands within respective habitat districts through the Farm Bill, competitive grants, and other conservation programs as opportunities became available and varying degrees of partnership occurred throughout the region.
- Used HIP funds to develop five upland projects totaling 49 acres of wildlife habitat on private land.

Surveys and inventory work accomplished under this grant was done, in part, in support of regional and statewide wildlife population and habitat survey and inventory projects funded from non-project sources.

Survey and inventory activities:

- Collected current public use information on Department-managed lands including public use levels, activities, and harvest information.
- Collected current information on wildlife habitat and population characteristics on Department managed lands.
- Assisted in collecting regional wildlife population information for statewide population management decisions.

Public use information:

- Quantified visitor use on Department-managed areas using car counters and random surveys.
- Collected on-line and in-person user feedback on WMA operations and expectations using standardized surveys
- Monitored indices of hunter participation and success using annual check stations on opening days of upland and waterfowl seasons on Fort Boise WMA.
- Monitored use and success of hunters on Cecil D. Andrus WMA using season-long hunter check-in procedures.

Wildlife on Department lands:

- Conducted annual brood pair counts on WMAs emphasizing waterfowl production.
- Collected herd composition data on Boise River WMA mule deer winter range.
- Measured forage utilization using standard techniques on Department lands with livestock grazing management.

Regional wildlife surveys:

- Trapped and banded mourning doves and ducks.
- Conducted counts of sage-grouse leks and roadside counts for other game birds, including pheasants, quail and mourning doves.
- Conducted aerial surveys of big game.
- Collected and analyzed condition and location information for big game traffic mortalities.
- Coordinated with CWMA's to inventory and map noxious weed infestations in respective habitat districts.
- Assisted in capture operations for regional mule deer winter survival studies and sage grouse movement studies.

Technical Guidance

Technical guidance in the Southwest region included:

- Provided technical assistance regarding wildlife impacts related to livestock management and motorized travel management to USFS, BLM, and University of Idaho Range program
- Advised six CWMA's on noxious weed control issues relative to wildlife habitat
- Participated in interagency wetland review group
- Participated as partner in the interagency Boise Forest Coalition to develop consensus solutions to diverse forest management issues including natural resource, economic, social and recreation interests
- Participated as a partner in the Boise River Wildlife Linkage Partnership to maintain habitat connectivity in a major transportation corridor
- Provided technical assistance for planning and mitigation to City of Boise Open Space Management Plan for the Boise Foothills, Ridge to Rivers Partnership for recreational trails, Harris ranch Wildlife Mitigation Association, Idaho Foundation for Parks and Recreation, and the interagency Healthy Hills Initiative
- Reviewed, commented on, and proposed mitigation for 10 residential development projects
- Continued progress in the area of developing geographic information systems application skills through training, practice, and software support for WMA personnel to document and communicate wildlife habitat and population information on Department lands.

MAGIC VALLEY REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Magic Valley habitat staff maintained contact and acted as a liaison with federal, state, and local government and private entities within the region regarding fish and wildlife habitat and population monitoring. Regional habitat staff held coordination meetings with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) regional staff to discuss issues and provide project updates. Regional staff attended county commission NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA) meetings, and sportsmen organizational meetings and banquets to discuss fish and wildlife habitat and population monitoring. Regional habitat staff worked with regional staff, reservists, and volunteers on numerous projects in the Magic Valley region, including population monitoring, habitat improvement, and public access projects.

Operations and Maintenance

Operate and maintain facilities, buildings, fences, gates, irrigation water delivery systems, roads, and infrastructure on six WMAs in the Magic Valley Region to provide wildlife habitat, public hunting, wildlife viewing, wildlife conservation education, and other wildlife-related recreational opportunities on 11,141 acres of Department managed lands. Magic Valley region WMAs include:

Table 6. Areas to be operated and maintained in the Magic Valley Region.

| Area | Acres |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Hagerman WMA | 880 |
| Billingsley Creek WMA | 275 |
| Centennial Marsh WMA | 6,240 |
| Carey Lake WMA | 750 |
| Big Cottonwood WMA | 814 |
| Niagara Springs WMA | 976 |

Operation and Maintenance activities in the Magic Valley region included:

- Nine miles of hiking and horseback riding trails for public access to Department-managed lands
- Eighteen miles of fence; 14 miles of unimproved roads; seven acres of vehicle parking areas; six restrooms
- Eight miles of gated, wheel, and hand-line irrigation pipe; 10 miles of irrigation canals and laterals
- Maintained and repaired nine project buildings and equipment; operated and maintained 33 water structures, four dikes, six pumps, and one center pivot
- Completed construction of Carey Lake WMA storage building
- Continued to work on Carey Lake Irrigation Line Easement

- Completed installing seven WMA entrance signs.

Habitat Development

Habitat development projects in the Magic Valley included:

- Managed water levels throughout winter on 25 acres of water impoundment areas at Hagerman WMA to provide refuge for 30,000 wintering waterfowl.
- Maintained 190 acres of wetland vegetation on Hagerman and Billingsley Creek WMAs to provide thermal and escape cover for wintering upland birds.
- Maintained 6 miles of shelterbelts on Carey Lake and Hagerman WMAs to provide cover and food.
- Irrigated 705 acres of herbaceous cover for nesting habitat on Centennial Marsh, Hagerman, Niagara Springs, Big Cottonwood and Carey Lake WMAs.
- Maintained 350 artificial nesting platforms for waterfowl on Centennial Marsh, Carey Lake, and Hagerman WMAs.
- Inventoried and/or controlled weeds on 6,512 acres of regional WMAs.
- Maintained water levels for 4,200 acres of wetlands on Niagara Springs, Billingsley Creek, Hagerman, Carey Lake, and Centennial Marsh WMAs.
- Developed six HIP projects on private lands in the Magic Valley Region.
- Planted and irrigated 110 acres of food plots on Carey Lake and Niagara Springs WMAs.
- Improved cover and species composition on approximately 50 acres of irrigated nesting fields and shelterbelts at Niagara Springs WMA.
- Installed an additional 2,000 linear feet of shelterbelts at Carey Lake WMA.
- Managed water levels in Hagerman WMA impoundments to reduce carp populations.
- Planted trees and shrubs along Big Cottonwood Creek at the Big Cottonwood WMA to rehabilitate riparian habitat burned in wildfire.
- Restored 10 acres of diver duck habitat on Riley Pond at Hagerman WMA.

Surveys and Inventory

Public-use (e.g. hunting success and harvest, other recreational uses, and public opinions) of Department managed lands was collected by: of

- Installing and collecting data at trailhead sign-in registers and survey boxes.
- Conducting random field surveys to determine visitor use on WMAs.
- Conducting random field checks of hunters on opening day of specific hunts and on weekends.
- Working with local Conservation Officers to enforce motorized closures on WMAs.
- Mapped noxious weed infestations and treatment areas using GPS and ArcView software on Department-owned lands.
- Assisting regional Department population biologists, and BLM and USFS biologists with various field projects to determine fish and wildlife presence/absence, distribution,

relative abundance, hunter or angler harvest information, and public response/acceptance, etc. to wildlife management programs and policies. .

Regional habitat staff worked with population staff, and /or BLM or USFS biologists to collect the following fish and wildlife habitat and population information in Magic Valley region:

- Conducted winter flock counts of turkeys on Big Cottonwood WMA.
- Conducted surveys for Bighorn sheep on the Big Cottonwood WMA and adjacent drainages prior to domestic sheep trailing periods.
- Participated in conducting mid-winter waterfowl counts at the Hagerman WMA.
- Collected harvest and other data at big game check stations.
- Conducted pronghorn surveys
- Conducted roadside counts for upland game.
- Trapped & radio-collared sage-grouse.
- Picked up inactive big game collars.
- Conducted lek counts.
- Flew aerial surveys for big game and sage-grouse.
- Conducted Sandhill crane counts.
- Maintained user survey boxes on WMAs.
- Operated sage-grouse check stations.
- Conducted surveys to detect presence of West Nile Virus in bird populations on WMAs
- Monitored transects in rehab areas to determine survival percentages of seedlings.
- Monitored habitat restoration plantings.
- Surveyed public response/acceptance to wildlife management programs and policies.
- Mapped noxious weed infestations and treatment areas using GPS and ArcView software on Department-owned lands.

Technical Guidance

Provide current wildlife habitat and population information, concerns, and recommendations to state, federal, and private parties contemplating projects with the potential to affect fish and wildlife resources in the Magic Valley Region.

- Supported four sage-grouse local working groups in Magic Valley Region.
- Provided technical assistance to 12 private landowners in Magic Valley Region wishing to improve wildlife habitat on their properties.
- Provided 27 written comments regarding proposed land management practices to city, county, state, and federal agencies.

SOUTHEAST REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Southeast region worked to establish and maintain an efficient workforce organized to fulfill annual project objectives of the regional Wildlife Habitat Management Program. Work force included three full time permanent employees, all of whom have salaries partially funded by Federal Aid. Temporary employees included up to four seasonal bio-aides during the summer months and one part time year-round technician.. Habitat biologists directly supervised temporary employees. Habitat staff:

- Reviewed 17 habitat proposals primarily on state and federal lands.
- Participated in management of the BPA Soda Hills Wildlife Mitigation Area including; coordination meetings, one field work day and one field tour with BLM and Shoshone Bannock Tribes (SBT) to address access facilities and control, vegetative treatments, and grazing management.
- Represented the Department on the Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group. Habitat personnel were actively involved with the Science and Technology subcommittee.
- Regional personnel continued their leading roles in the Curlew and East Idaho Uplands greater sage-grouse Local Working Groups (LWSs). Personnel attended one meeting. Participation centered on review and renewal of annual goals and compiling information for the annual report. LWGs developed and submitted recommendation for sage-grouse hunting seasons to the Department.
- Represented the region on the Department's Lands Committee - attended five meetings and conference calls.
- Provided technical assistance to several requests.

Operations and Maintenance

The Southeast region operated and maintained buildings, structures, and infrastructure on five Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), one Nature Area, and five conservation easement areas. The majority of the 17,000 acres managed are on WMA.s. The Department also assisted with the administration of the Soda Hills Wildlife Mitigation Area. The Department provided assistance on private property enrolled in the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) and the Mule Deer Initiative (MDI). Southeast region WMAs include:

Table 7. Areas to be operated and maintained in the Southeast Region.

| Area | Acres |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Sterling WMA | 4,106 |
| Portneuf WMA | 3,950 |
| Blackfoot River WMA | 2,400 |
| Georgetown Summit WMA | 4,353 |
| Montpelier WMA | 2,137 |

Operation and Maintenance activities in the Southeast region included:

- Approximately 12 miles of roads or trails and 27 parking areas were maintained through mowing, spraying, graveling and grading to provide good quality and controlled access.
- Information centers and sign-in stations were maintained at all parking areas. Signs, gates, and stiles to control access on the Soda Springs Mitigation Area were maintained in cooperation with BLM and SBT.
- All structures were maintained.
- Thirteen hundred and twenty feet of fence was replaced on the Georgetown Summit WMA.
- Directional and informational signs were evaluated and maintained. Property boundary markers were acquired to improve marking of boundaries. Eleven new WMA entrance signs were installed.
- Equipment was maintained including seven road vehicles, three ATVs, two farm tractors, implements and trailers.
- Additional pond maintenance (excavation to maintain open water) was completed on Sterling WMA.

Habitat Development

Habitat development projects in the Southeast region included:

- Habitat staff coordinated 17 habitat projects with private landowners, coordinated three habitat projects with BLM (seedling planting and field restorations) coordinated one habitat project with USFWS (Oxford Slough), and provided comments on 27 technical assistance projects.
- Monitored and managed water levels on one waterfowl production area to maximize nesting and brooding habitat and to prevent disease outbreak. Particular effort was made to regulate and/or monitor levels in all ponds on Sterling WMA.
- Maintained or replaced artificial goose nesting structures (n=300) at Sterling WMA, Blackfoot River WMA, and throughout the region.
- Managed approximately 600 acres to maintain high-quality nesting and brooding areas. Methods included grazing, mowing, and disking, and cutting and chemical treatment of

Russian olives. All other Department acreages were protected from grazing, early mowing, and wildfire to maximize vegetation structure for cover.

- Grew approximately 375 acres of high-energy grains on Department managed properties to serve as food for upland game and/or waterfowl.
- Assisted MDI staff with planting 30,000 shrub seedlings.
- Attended field tours and meetings and/or wrote comments on 17 project proposals or inquiries from other land management agencies or interested parties. Some projects involved considerable time commitments from all habitat staff and continue as ongoing projects (i.e. Sage Grouse Planning Areas/Local Working Groups, Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group, and Soda Springs Hills Wildlife Mitigation Area).
- Treated approximately 1,500 acres for noxious weeds in cooperation with county weed departments and Cooperative Weed Management Areas.
- Three cooperative farming agreements were renewed on Sterling WMA.
- Renewed the lease on 760 acres of property adding to the Georgetown Summit WMA. Renewed the land use trade to prevent trespass grazing on WMA riparian areas and relieve grazing pressure on private land riparian areas.
- Reviewed aspen restoration projects. Assisted in planning future projects by the Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group.
- Assisted with monitoring of highway mortality and maintenance of existing highway fencing.
- Inspected Farmers Home Administration easements and investigated management alternatives.

Surveys and Inventory

Survey and inventory activities included:

- Employed sign-in stations on all WMAs to determine the level and type of public use throughout the year.
- Conducted a systematic randomized user survey and data analysis on Sterling WMA.
- Conducted waterfowl pair counts, brood surveys and nest searches on Sterling WMA to continue monitoring of nesting success.
- Banded approximately 200 doves on Sterling WMA as part of statewide effort.
- Monitored nest structure use on Sterling WMA.
- Coordinated greater sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse lek surveys in the Curlew and East Idaho Uplands Sage Grouse Planning Areas particularly in the vicinity of WMAs, historical locations and areas of priority for SAFE program enrollments, . Particular effort was also focused on areas to be potentially impacted by a proposed transmission line installation in Caribou County.
- Assisted with biological check stations.
- Assisted with research projects to monitor movements and population trends of upland game, waterfowl, and big game.
- Staff assisted with regional pica survey.
- Participated on the habitat program wetland review team.

Technical Guidance

Habitat staff technical assistance work included:

- Working with the regional environmental staff biologist and other staff to gather information and provide written comments, attend tours and meetings to provide comments on 17 projects. Of particular note were lead roles in the sage grouse local working groups and ongoing participation in the Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group.
- Corresponded with the BLM, Caribou County, and the Shoshone Bannock tribes regarding the Soda Hills Wildlife Mitigation Area Management Plan, including BLM vegetation projects, grazing plan and travel management plan. Meetings and tours focused on aspen/mountain brush restoration projects, weed control and public access.
- Provided technical assistance to private landowners or other land management agencies for the improvement or development of wildlife habitat.
- Served on two Department species management plan revision committees (elk, sharp-tailed grouse).
- Served on the State Wildlife Action Plan revision team and lead the development and revision of the Northwest Basin and Range section of the plan.
- Continued working with BLM and a mining company regarding impacts of the Rasmussen Valley phosphate mine to wildlife and Blackfoot River WMA.
- Continued working with Bonneville Power Administration regarding impacts of the Hooper Springs Transmission Line on wildlife and the Blackfoot River WMA..

UPPER SNAKE REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Upper Snake Region Habitat Management Program is administered by 1 Regional Wildlife Habitat Manager (RWHM) and includes all of Idaho Fish and Game's Upper Snake Region. The Region is divided into 5 Habitat Districts. One Regional Habitat Biologist (RHB) is responsible for administering Department-managed properties within each Habitat District as well as other programs within the Habitat District. Two of 5 Habitat Districts have permanent wildlife technicians assigned to Department-managed properties to assist the RHBs. Seasonal employees are assigned to work under the oversight of the wildlife technicians and RHBs on Department-managed properties. An Access Manager assists all 5 Habitat Districts with construction and maintenance projects on Department-managed properties. Each of the 5 Habitat Districts has a mixture of funding sources including PR funds and state license funds. Habitat Districts receive federal or other mitigation funding as well. Activities are charged to appropriate funding sources.

- Regional habitat staff held coordination meetings with the BLM and USFS regional staff to discuss issues and coordinate activities and provide project updates.
- Regional habitat staff attended County Commissioner meetings, NRCS and FSA meetings, project open houses, Smart Growth Solutions and sportsmen organizational meetings and banquets to discuss fish and wildlife habitat modifications and population monitoring in the Upper Snake Region.
- Regional habitat staff worked with other regional staff and volunteers on numerous projects in the Upper Snake Region. Population monitoring, habitat improvements, and public access projects comprised the majority of work performed.
- The RWHM and RHBs participated at the state level to assist in the hiring of habitat biologists and technicians.
- The RWHM participated at the state level on the Lands Committee identifying and prioritizing properties for easement or acquisition.
- Training opportunities were provided for employees including attendance at professional society meetings.

Operations and Maintenance

The Upper Snake Habitat Management Program consists of 5 Habitat Districts comprising about 85,000 acres. These management areas are a mixture of land ownership including IDFG, IDL, BLM, and BOR.

Table 8. Areas to be operated and maintained in the Upper Snake Region.

| Area | Acres |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Cartier Slough WMA | 1,028 |
| Deer Parks WMU | 3,054 |
| Twin Bridges (Allen) WMU | 81 |

| Area | Acres |
|------------------------------|--------|
| Cartier Habitat Access Areas | 600 |
| Market Lake WMA | 5,067 |
| Gem State WHA | 70 |
| Mud Lake WMA | 11,468 |
| Chilly Slough WCA | 1,800 |
| Sand Creek WMA | 32,489 |
| Tex Creek WMA | 34,000 |
| Winterfeld/Hamilton Easement | 422 |
| Birch Creek Ranches Easement | 300 |

Cartier Slough WMA (CSWMA) and a portion of Tex Creek WMA (TCWMA) are BOR mitigation projects for the Ririe Dam and Teton Dam projects. Gem State WHA is a City of Idaho Falls mitigation project that is now included in Market Lake WMA (MKLWMA) and will no longer be reported separately. Deer Parks and Twin Bridges WMU are BPA mitigation projects. The Department owns lands at MKLWMA, Mud Lake WMA, Chilly Slough WCA, Sand Creek WMA (SCWMA), and TCWMA. Other properties are managed by the Department via agreements and management plans. Operation and Maintenance activities in the Upper Snake region included:

- Implemented the Upper Snake Region Habitat Management Program objectives as defined in existing long-range Department plans through Regional personnel.
- The Access Manager engineered and helped construct and maintain projects on all management areas as needed. The Access Manager is designated as the Habitat section's safety officer and, as such, periodically inspected equipment and provided safety training.
- Volunteers were utilized to accomplish projects when feasible.

Table 9. Facilities to be operated and maintained in the Upper Snake region.

| Feature | Market Lake and Chilly | | | | Sand Creek | Cartier HD and Access Areas | TOTAL |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| | Mud Lake | Slough | Tex Creek | | | | |
| Roads (mi) | 18 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 2.75 | 50.75 | |
| Trails (mi) | 4 | 2.5 | 15 | 5 | 15.25 | 41.75 | |
| Maintained Fence (mi) | 12 | 35 | 9 | 57 | 18 | 131 | |
| Parking Areas | 12 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 26 | |
| Informational Signs | 5 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 25 | |
| Buildings | 7 | 7 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 31 | |
| Restrooms | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | |
| Water Structures | 15 | 21 | 0 | 36 | 1 | 84 | |
| Irrigation | | | | | | | |
| Wells/pumps | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 14 | |
| Dikes (mi) | 5 | 8 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 19 | |
| Irrigation Pipe (mi) | 5.08* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2.7 | 7.78 | |
| Irrigation Ditch (mi) | 14.78 | 3 | 0 | 10 | 1.6 | 29.38 | |
| Canal (mi) | 4 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 12 | |
| Center Pivot | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 7 | |
| WMAs and WMUs | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 7 | |
| WHAs and other parcels | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 7 | |
| Acres administered | 11,468 | 6,871 | 22,130 | 32,000 | 1,628 | 74,297 | |

*Note – 11 wheel lines (371 sections x 40 ft./section), 300 sections of hand line (at 40 ft./section).

Habitat Development

Upper Snake Region responded to a new, priority mule deer management plan, as directed by the Commission and IDFG leadership. The Idaho Governor's office through the Office of Species Conservation has also identified sage-grouse habitat conservation as a high priority. Habitat development projects in the Upper Snake region included:

- Improved and maintained high-quality waterfowl and upland game habitat.
- Improved and maintained high-quality big game transition, migration, and winter range habitats.
- Inventoried Department managed properties for non-game wildlife species.
- Focused efforts to improve habitat for mule deer as per MDI and the MDI action plan.
- Pursued projects that benefit greater sage-grouse.
- Restored or replaced in-kind habitat on mitigation properties.
- Provided high-quality habitat for wildlife species at risk (T&E, sensitive, etc.).
- Provided custodial management of federally threatened Ute's Ladies Tresses on SCWMA.
- Managed habitat on Department-administered properties to provide diverse recreational opportunities.
- Pursued habitat developments on Department-administered properties within the context of healthy ecosystems and landscape management.
- Assisted private landowners in efforts to improve or develop wildlife habitat on private land.
- Collaborated with public land managers to improve or develop wildlife habitat on public land.
- Investigated opportunities to secure wildlife habitat on private and public lands. Administered HIP and Adopt-A-Wetland programs on private and public lands.
- Participated in the Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group to address concerns about aspen decline in eastern Idaho.
- Established regional programs, priorities, and policies regarding habitat development.
- Reviewed and approved habitat improvement plans.
- Administered regional budgets and resources toward habitat development.
- Administered management agreements and leases including 4 sharecrop or use/trade agreements.
- Reviewed and developed land acquisition proposals. Evaluated and supported conservation easements proposed by Land Trusts in the region. Actively pursuing acquisition of critical winter range, wetlands and wildlife corridors.
- Participated in the High Divide Collaborative proposal to acquire Land and Water Conservation Fund funds for landscape level conservation projects.
- Attended a tour of the South Fork of the Snake River with congressional staff.
- Manipulated existing habitat via prescribed fire, mowing, and harvest techniques.
- Monitored for West Nile Virus, Avian Cholera, Avian Botulism, and Avian Influenza.
- Supported Forest Service in Fire Use areas.
- Administered vehicle and human entry restrictions.

- Coordinated fence maintenance with neighbors.
- Rebuilt fence to improve wildlife permeability.
- Monitored area closures to protect habitats and wildlife.
- Monitored and protected sensitive plant species.
- Coordinated with other agencies to treat more acres on public and private lands.
- Monitored water rights and coordinated water delivery to WMAs.
- Protected nesting habitats for T&E species.
- Established food plots on WMAs via sharecrop agreements, volunteer support from NGOs, and through IDFG labor and equipment.
- Replaced water delivery structures to provide better water level control in marshes and ponds.
- Initiated Wetland Reserve Program restoration project on Marty Segment of Mud Lake.
- Administered motorized use plans on WMAs to regulate motorized use.
- Monitored existing habitat improvement agreements, conservation easements, and leases.
- Participated in management activities of Coordinated Weed Management Areas.
- Continued with annual goat grazing project on Cartier WMA to control leafy spurge.

Table 10. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Upper Snake region.

| Feature | Mud Lake | Market Lake | Tex Creek | Sand Creek | Cartier HD and Access Areas | TOTAL |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Winter Range (ac) | 0 | 0 | 10,000 | 3,000 <small>*(300,000)</small> | 280 | 13,280 |
| Wetlands (ac) | 150 | 1,710 | 0 | 1,500 | 1,963 | 5,323 |
| Forest Mgmt (ac) | 0 | 0 | 2,000 | 2,000 <small>*(200)</small> | 0 | 4,000 |
| Shelterbelts (ft.) | 650 | 3300 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3,950 |
| Shelterbelts (ac) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 6 |
| Artificial Nest Struc. | 101 | 23 | 0 | 30 | 150 | 304 |
| Food Plots (ac) | 110 | 220 | 170 | 105 | 157 | 762 |
| Nest Cover (ac) | 100 | 0 | 115 | 32,000 <small>*(320,000)</small> | 1,020 | 33,235 |
| Shrub Planting (ac) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | .1 | 3.1 |
| Water Mgmt (ac) | 100 | 50 | 0 | 700 | 538 | 1,388 |
| Grazing Lands (ac) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 <small>*(139,000)</small> | 80 | 80 |
| Riparian (mi) | 1 | 0 | .25 | 4.33 | 5 | 10.58 |
| Controlled Burn (ac) | 12 | 250 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 265 |
| Weed Control (ac) | 600 | 400 | 780 | 200 | 1,500 | 3,480 |
| Guzzlers (#) | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 11 |
| Ponds/marshes (#) | 2 | 6 | 2 | 20 | 2 | 32 |

*Work within the habitat district to enhance habitat conditions (comment letters, cost share, closures etc.)

Table 11. New habitat development activities in the Upper Snake region.

| Feature | Mud Lake | Market Lake | Tex Creek | Sand Creek | Cartier HD and Access Areas | TOTAL |
|------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Winter Range (ac) | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Wetlands (ac) | 150 | | 0 | 35 | 0 | 185 |
| Forest Mgmt (ac) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shelterbelts (mi) | 0 | 0 | .1 | 0 | 0 | .1 |
| Artificial Nests (#) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 60 |
| Nesting Cover (ac) | 0 | 0 | 180 | 0 | 0 | 180 |
| HIP Projects (#) | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 7 |
| Shrub Planting (ac) | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | .1 | 5.1 |
| Shrub Planting (#) | 0 | 0 | 420 | 0 | 1,400 | 1,820 |
| Forb Plantings (ac) | 0 | 0 | 180 | 60 | 0 | 240 |
| Livestock water (#) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Riparian (mi) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| New/rebuilt Fence (mi) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Fence Removed (mi) | 1.0 | 0.5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1.5 |

Surveys and Inventory

Survey and inventory projects included:

- Sand Creek personnel developed an intensive sage-grouse lek survey on a portion of the Sand Creek Desert to verify whether or not historic leks were still active and to document new leks. Many new leks were found.
- Tex Creek personnel initiated a Masters Level study on sharp-tailed grouse habitat use in relation to wind farm projects and hunting pressure. Over 80 birds were marked with tracking devices, making it one of the largest sample sizes ever reported.
- Partnered with PF in wild pheasant relocation, production, survival, and habitat use project on Mud Lake WMA. This project will answer questions related to wild pheasant population concerns and habitat use of the Mud Lake area and will continue on in 2015.
- Monitored wildlife habitat on managed properties with permanent vegetation transects, photo points, spotlight surveys and GIS mapping. An emphasis was placed on mapping noxious weeds and control operations.
- Monitored wildlife populations through a wide variety of methods. Some of those methods included lek survey routes, hunter harvest reports; aerial surveys, goose pair counts, point count surveys, wing barrels, brood counts, spotlight counts, capture and marking of doves, ducks, sharptails, deer, elk, and moose, small mammal live trapping, and direct observations of individuals and groups of animals.

- Monitored piezometers at SCWMA to monitor water tables in order to determine effects on federally threatened Ute's Ladies Tresses.
- Monitored piezometers at Market Lake WMA to build a profile of ground water levels and establish a baseline there.
- Monitored piezometers at Mud Lake to measure ground water flows.
- RHBs monitored habitat on public land via field tours with federal and state agency personnel and through independent inspections of grazing allotments and proposed timber and range projects.
- Banded ducks at Mud Lake WMA and Sand Creek WMA and geese were banded at Market Lake WMA.
- RHBs inspected sites for proposed subdivisions and reported findings in comment letters to county planning and zoning officials.
- RHBs inspected proposed conservation easements submitted by the Teton Regional Land Trust (TRLT) as requested and reported findings to TRLT personnel.
- Lead on trapping and banding of mourning doves.
- Assisted with trapping and radio-collaring deer, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goats and elk.
- Assisted with monitoring of bighorn sheep lamb production.
- Assisted Research with determining the best methods for converting sod forming grasses to native cover.
- Assisted Research with determining the most effective ways to plant shrubs into native range.

Technical Guidance

Technical assistance is provided to the public and other agencies from a variety of employees in Upper Snake Region. The Habitat Section is responsible for providing technical assistance to private landowners who wish to improve their property for wildlife. The Habitat Section is also responsible for projects that are proposed at the Habitat District level, which may affect wildlife habitat. These would include subdivisions, timber sales, range allotment plans, prescribed fires, and other projects submitted by area agency representatives. The Region's Environmental Staff Biologist handles programs and projects that will impact the entire Upper Snake Region or a significant portion thereof. The Environmental Staff Biologist is also responsible for projects that deal with water issues and most fisheries issues. The Region's Landowner Sportsmen Coordinator is responsible for responding to landowners with wildlife depredation complaints and public access issues.

- Requests for technical assistance were routed through the Regional Supervisor who assigned them to the RWHM, Environmental Staff Biologist, or Landowner Sportsman Coordinator.
- The RWHM assigned technical assistance projects to the appropriate RHB.
- The RHB prepared draft comment letters for subsequent approval by the RWHM and the Regional Supervisor.

- The Habitat section did its best to respond to all requests for technical assistance and to provide some technical guidance independent of whether cost-sharing was available from the Department.
- Of note, the Habitat Section continues to be involved in three sage-grouse local working groups and the Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group.
- The Tex Creek HB served on the Interdisciplinary Team of the USFS Rainey Creek Vegetation Enhancement Project, helped develop a proposal and participated in public meetings regarding the proposed project.
- Regional habitat personnel helped organize, plan and execute a successful Aspen Management Workshop.
- RHBs have been instrumental in providing comments on conservation easement proposals. In many instances Department comments have been critical in obtaining the easements.
- RHBs were encouraged to become familiar with and maintain current knowledge of habitats, issues, and projects within their Habitat Districts.
- Regional Habitat staff was encouraged to develop and maintain close working relationships with field-level personnel of local, state, and federal agencies as well as key members of non-governmental organizations operating within their Habitat District.
- All RHBs actively participate with their corresponding CWMA.
- Personnel gave presentations to elementary, high school and college classes, civic organizations and offered workshops and mentored young hunters.
- Technical assistance is provided in written form, verbally, and often in person and onsite.

SALMON REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Salmon Region is comprised of one habitat district divided into thirds and administered by three wildlife biologists. Each wildlife biologist shares two budgets (one PR and one License from the Wildlife Habitat Program). One wildlife biologist acts as the regional habitat manager and serves as the Lands Committee regional representative. This lead-habitat biologist is supervised by the regional wildlife manager. One non-benefited wildlife technician assists with management of the Pahsimeroi River Access Area (PRAA).

The Salmon Region maintained contact and liaison with federal, state, and local government and private entities within the region regarding fish and wildlife habitat modifications and population monitoring. Regional staff attended sportsmen organizational and local working group meetings and banquets to discuss fish and wildlife habitat modifications and population monitoring.

Operations and Maintenance

Operations and maintenance of Salmon region habitat included:

- Irrigated and treated weeds at the Outdoor Classroom
- Acquired Lemhi Access Site
- Supervised and maintained the region's seven backcountry WHA's; dug new outhouse hole and repaired propane shower at Lower Loon Creek/Simplot Ranch
- Maintained 10 acres of food plots at the PRAA.
- A Salmon Region Lands Review was completed resulting in Cougar Ranch backcountry property being removed from the disposal list.

Habitat Development

Improve key wildlife habitats such as big game winter range, waterfowl and upland game production areas, riparian areas and native plant communities to meet existing wildlife habitat needs on lands managed by the Salmon region. Habitat development projects on department lands included:

- Treated weeds and maintained a 10 acre food plot at the PRAA
- Administered management agreement and lease on 1 backcountry property
- Reviewed and developed land acquisition proposals.
- Irrigated native plantings at the Outdoor Classroom
- Assisted private landowners in efforts to improve or develop wildlife habitat on private land.
- Collaborated with public land managers to improve or develop wildlife habitat on public land.
- Planned an aspen restoration project and surveyed aspen plots.

- Participated in the Central Idaho Aspen Working Group to address concerns about aspen decline in Central Idaho.
- Established HIP tree and shrub plantings on 2 private ownerships
- Habitat personnel also worked within the region to help develop and implement conservation programs and grants that are designed to restore wildlife habitat on private lands.
- Implemented the noxious weed control program on the region's WHAs.
- Coordinated with the Lemhi, Custer, and Frank Church CWMAs
- Implemented tree and shrub plantings and other practices designed to improve riparian, rangeland, grassland, and forestland plant communities on public and private lands.

Surveys and Inventory

This work was completed in conjunction with the region's Wildlife Population Management Program.

- Assisted CWMA's with regional noxious weed inventory and mapping projects.
- Assisted with all aerial big game surveys, deer and elk mortality studies, sage grouse lek counts, and trapping/banding studies.
- Updated the statewide elk habitat landscape productivity map as part of the Department Elk Management Plan
- Compiled location data from GPS collared elk to look at winter habitat use and address depredation issues

Technical Guidance

- Coordinated with the Upper Snake Region Environmental Staff Biologist (ESB) to provide current wildlife habitat and population information, concerns, and recommendations to state, federal, NGO and private parties contemplating projects with the potential to affect wildlife on a year-round basis
- Provided technical habitat and population management advice to public and private landowners and other agencies in order to sustain or enhance wildlife resources on a year-round basis
- Participated as a committee member for the Lemhi, Custer, and Frank Church CWMAs,
- Provided wildlife habitat and population information upon request (3 letters, 4 meetings attended) on proposed projects and activities within the Salmon Habitat District. Technical advice and information on Department management programs and policies was provided to the public and personnel of the USFWS, BLM, USFS, Challis Local Sage-grouse Working Group, Lemhi and Frank Church CWMA's and the Lemhi and Custer Counties Planning and Zoning Commissions. All responses were coordinated with the ESB.
- Wildlife population and habitat information was provided to the Idaho Transportation Department, Salmon Valley Stewardship, and other local groups by telephone, letter, person-to-person, and through participation in inter-agency technical and advisory committees.

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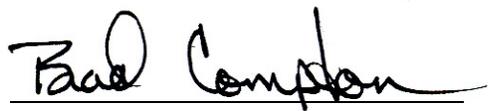
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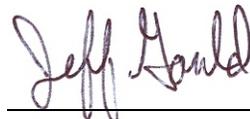
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