

IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Virgil Moore, Director

**Annual Statewide Report
Wildlife Restoration Grant Report**



WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT

July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018

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September 2018
Boise, Idaho

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES	1
Project I - Coordination and Administration	1
Project II - Operations & Maintenance.....	2
Project III - Habitat Development.....	2
Project IV - Surveys and Inventory	2
Project V - Technical Guidance	2
Project VI - Access Yes!.....	2
APPROACH	2
EXPECTED BENEFITS	4
STATEWIDE SUMMARY	8
Coordination and Administration	8
Operation and Maintenance	9
Habitat Development	13
Surveys and Inventory	15
Technical Guidance	21
Access Yes	25
HEADQUARTERS	27
Coordination and Administration	27
Operations and Maintenance.....	27
Habitat Development	27
Survey and Inventory.....	28
Technical Guidance	28
Access Yes!.....	29
PANHANDLE REGION	30
Coordination and Administration	30
Operations and Maintenance.....	30
Habitat Development	32
Surveys and Inventory	34
Technical Guidance	35
CLEARWATER REGION	38
Coordination and Administration	38

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Operations and Maintenance.....	39
Habitat Development	40
Surveys and Inventory	43
Technical Guidance	44
SOUTHWEST REGION	47
Coordination and Administration	47
Operations and Maintenance.....	47
Habitat Development	48
Surveys and Inventory	50
Technical Guidance	51
MAGIC VALLEY REGION	53
Coordination and Administration	53
Operations and Maintenance.....	53
Habitat Development	54
Surveys and Inventory	56
Technical Guidance	56
SOUTHEAST REGION	58
Coordination and Administration	58
Operations and Maintenance.....	58
Habitat Development	60
Surveys and Inventory	62
Technical Guidance	62
UPPER SNAKE REGION.....	65
Coordination and Administration	65
Operations and Maintenance.....	65
Habitat Development	66
Surveys and Inventory	69
Technical Guidance	69
SALMON REGION.....	71
Coordination and Administration	71
Operations and Maintenance.....	71
Habitat Development	71

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Surveys and Inventory72
Technical Guidance73

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Statewide Habitat Personnel.....	8
Table 2. Facilities operated and maintained by IDFG statewide in FY18.....	9
Table 3. Acres of habitat developed and managed statewide in FY18.....	14
Table 4. Survey and inventory activities conducted in FY18.....	16
Table 5. Technical Guidance activity summary for FY18.....	21
Table 6. <i>Access Yes!</i> acres leased in FY18.....	26
Table 7. Areas operated and maintained in the Panhandle Region.....	30
Table 8. Facilities operated and maintained in the Panhandle Region.....	32
Table 9. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Panhandle Region.....	34
Table 10. New habitat development activities in the Panhandle Region.....	34
Table 11. Areas operated and maintained in the Clearwater Region.....	39
Table 12. Facilities operated and maintained in the Clearwater Region.....	40
Table 13. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Clearwater Region.....	42
Table 14. New habitat development activities in the Clearwater Region.....	42
Table 15. Areas operated and maintained in the Southwest Region.....	47
Table 16. Facilities operated and maintained in the Southwest Region.....	48
Table 17. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Southwest Region.....	49
Table 18. New habitat development activities in the Southwest Region.....	50
Table 19. Areas operated and maintained in the Magic Valley Region.....	53
Table 20. Facilities operated and maintained in the Magic Valley Region.....	54
Table 21. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Magic Valley Region.....	55
Table 22. New habitat development activities in the Magic Valley Region.....	55
Table 23. Areas operated and maintained in the Southeast Region.....	58
Table 24. Facilities operated and maintained in the Southeast Region.....	59
Table 25. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Southeast Region.....	61
Table 26. New habitat development activities in the Southeast Region.....	61
Table 27. Areas operated and maintained in the Upper Snake Region.....	65
Table 28. Facilities to be operated and maintained in the Upper Snake Region.....	66
Table 29. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Upper Snake Region.....	68
Table 30. New habitat development activities in the Upper Snake Region.....	68

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Idaho Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Management Areas.....	6
Figure 2. Idaho Department of Fish and Game administrative regions.....	7

INTRODUCTION

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) 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, that have important ecological, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, and educational value to the citizens of Idaho, also benefit from maintaining adequate habitat.

Thirty-one Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) (Fig. 1), located in 6 of the 7 IDFG administrative regions (Fig. 2), have been established to protect wildlife habitat and are available for hunting, fishing and other public enjoyment of wildlife. Varying in size from 275 to 85,000 acres, each is dedicated to primary purposes such as big game, waterfowl, and upland game. Researchers from the University of Idaho and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) 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 IDFG for wildlife habitat or public access. Management of lands for wildlife habitat could not succeed without the cooperation and collaboration of many partners, with IDFG 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 Company, 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 Wildlife Restoration Act (PR), 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 benefit from 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 also benefit from the broad ranging conservation values associated with IDFG-managed lands.

This report includes the FY18 Wildlife Restoration Grant Project Statement components and required reporting elements for the Statewide Habitat Management Program. Included are the specific activities and objectives that are identified in the Project Statement and the implementation results and information. Also included is additional detailed information on projects and activities for each IDFG administrative region.

PROGRAM 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 390,000 acres of IDFG-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 IDFG.
2. Create additional habitat on IDFG-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 IDFG-managed lands including recreational use, opinions, hunting success, and harvest.
2. Collect current wildlife habitat and population characteristics information on IDFG-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 of private land access statewide for sportsmen through lease agreements between IDFG and private landowners.

APPROACH

The IDFG has management plans for Idaho species or groups of species as well as for each WMA. These plans provide management guidance to IDFG, and information to other agencies and the public. The IDFG uses public input, wildlife surveys, and habitat monitoring information, including information collected from past Federal Aid projects, to adjust habitat management activities to ensure wildlife population and habitat objectives are being met throughout the state.

Project I – Coordination and Administration: The IDFG is divided statewide into 7 regions each having a regional office and staff. Each region is subdivided into several Wildlife Habitat Districts, most of which include one or more WMAs, with at least one employee from the Wildlife Habitat Program assigned to the district.

Project II - Operations & Maintenance: Annual maintenance at WMA facilities include the following infrastructure that may be maintained each year:

- 308 miles of roads
- 492 miles of fences
- 137 parking areas
- 91 buildings
- 29 restrooms
- 3,000 waterfowl nesting structures

Project III – Habitat Development: Annual habitat management activities on IDFG managed lands included the following: water level control on wetlands; irrigation of habitat establishments; integrated noxious weed control; production of food and cover crops (i.e. food plots); shrub seedling planting; hand collection of native shrub seeds (i.e. bitterbrush and sagebrush); and other practices designed to maintain or improve riparian, rangeland, grassland, and forestland habitat communities.

Project IV - Surveys and Inventories: Regional habitat personnel may use traffic counters, sign-in registers, and stratified random surveys to monitor visitor use on WMAs. Annual hunter surveys or check stations will be conducted during periods of peak hunting use (i.e., opening weekends for upland game and waterfowl) to monitor annual harvest trends on WMAs that provide significant hunting opportunities. Special management surveys to solicit input from visitors may be combined with scheduled surveys or data collected during field contacts made during periods of high visitation. Regional habitat personnel will conduct surveys to document noxious weed distribution and treatment areas using GPS and ARCVIEW software. Forage utilization and riparian condition will be documented in areas where grazing standards have been established for livestock grazing on lands managed by IDFG. Waterfowl surveys will occur on IDFG properties that are managed primarily for waterfowl benefits. Regional habitat personnel will assist with aerial big game surveys, aerial waterfowl surveys, roadside brood counts, and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse/sage-grouse lek counts. Aerial big game surveys, aerial waterfowl surveys, roadside brood counts, and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse/ sage-grouse lek counts protocols are covered in ID - FY17/FY18 Statewide Wildlife Surveys and Inventories. Regional habitat personnel might also assist with surveys for vertebrate Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SWGNC) or their habitats identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) for Idaho.

Project V – Technical Guidance: Current wildlife habitat and population information will be provided upon request on proposed projects or activities within individual habitat districts, regions, or statewide. Technical advice and information on IDFG management programs and policies will be provided to the public and personnel of the USFWS, ACOE, BOR, BLM, USFS, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Services Agency, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Parks and Recreation (IDPR), Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission, land trusts, NGOs, and other groups by telephone, letter, person-to-person, site visits, field trips and through participation in inter-agency technical and advisory committees. The State Habitat Manager, or their designee, will continue to serve as a committee member on the Idaho Weed Coordination Committee (IWCC) and Idaho Wildfire Rehabilitation Committee. Habitat projects on private land will be coordinated through FSA/NRCS and other federal agencies to ensure compliance reviews are completed.

Project VI – Access Yes!: Regional field staffs provide technical assistance to landowners to manage public access to and through private land. Operating funds will provide financial incentives to encourage private landowners to provide access for hunters and anglers. Bids for participation in the Access Yes! Program will be solicited. Successful applicants will sign lease agreements with the IDFG and receive payment as dictated in the lease agreement.

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, 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 IDFG 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 IDFG 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 IDFG evaluate management actions to see if the desired conditions are being achieved on IDFG-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 IDFG 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.

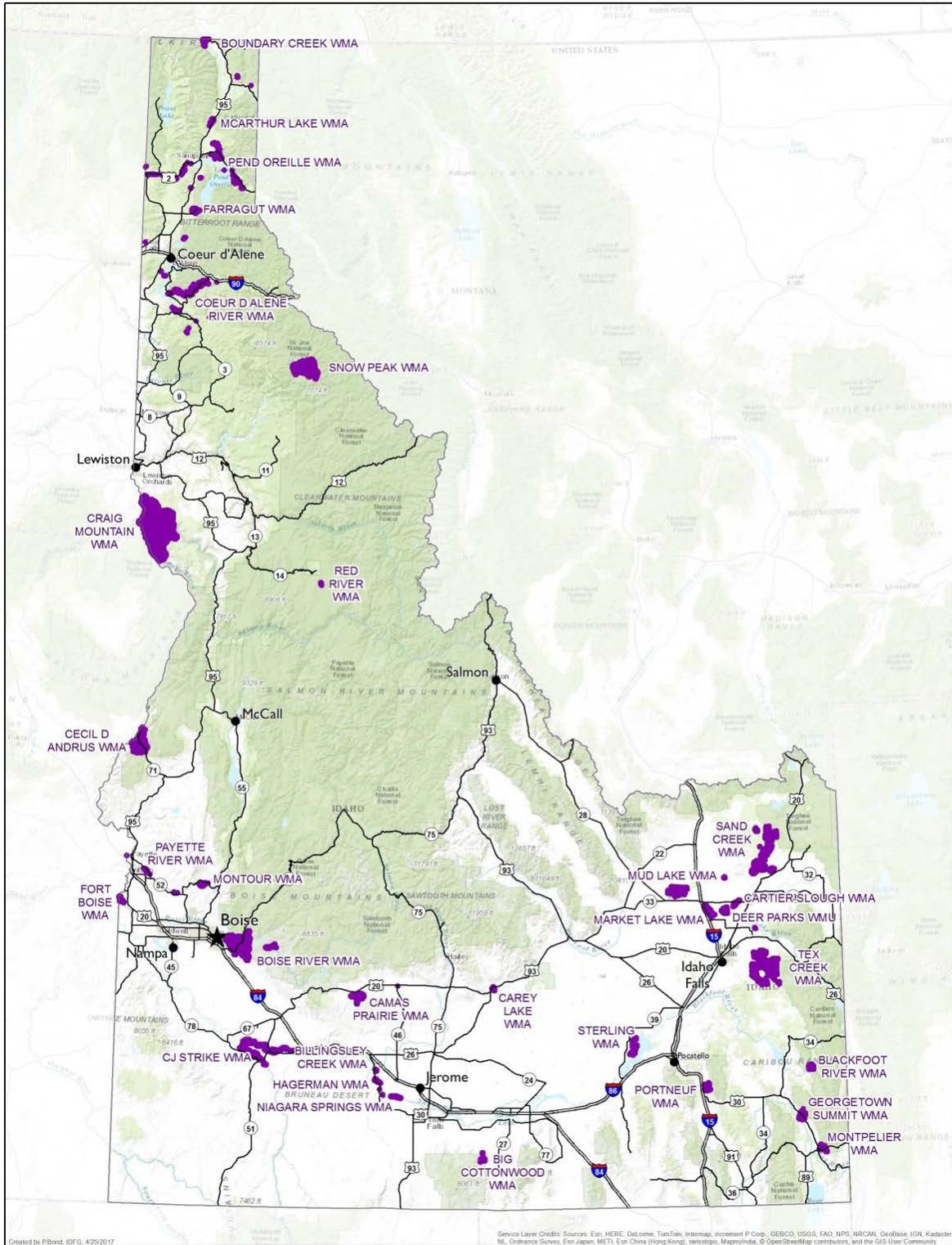


Figure 1. Idaho Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Management Areas.

Administrative Regions



Region	Phone
Panhandle	(208) 769-1414
Clearwater	(208) 799-5010
Southwest	(208) 465-8465
Magic Valley	(208) 324-4359
Southeast	(208) 232-4703
Upper Snake	(208) 525-7290
Salmon	(208) 756-2271

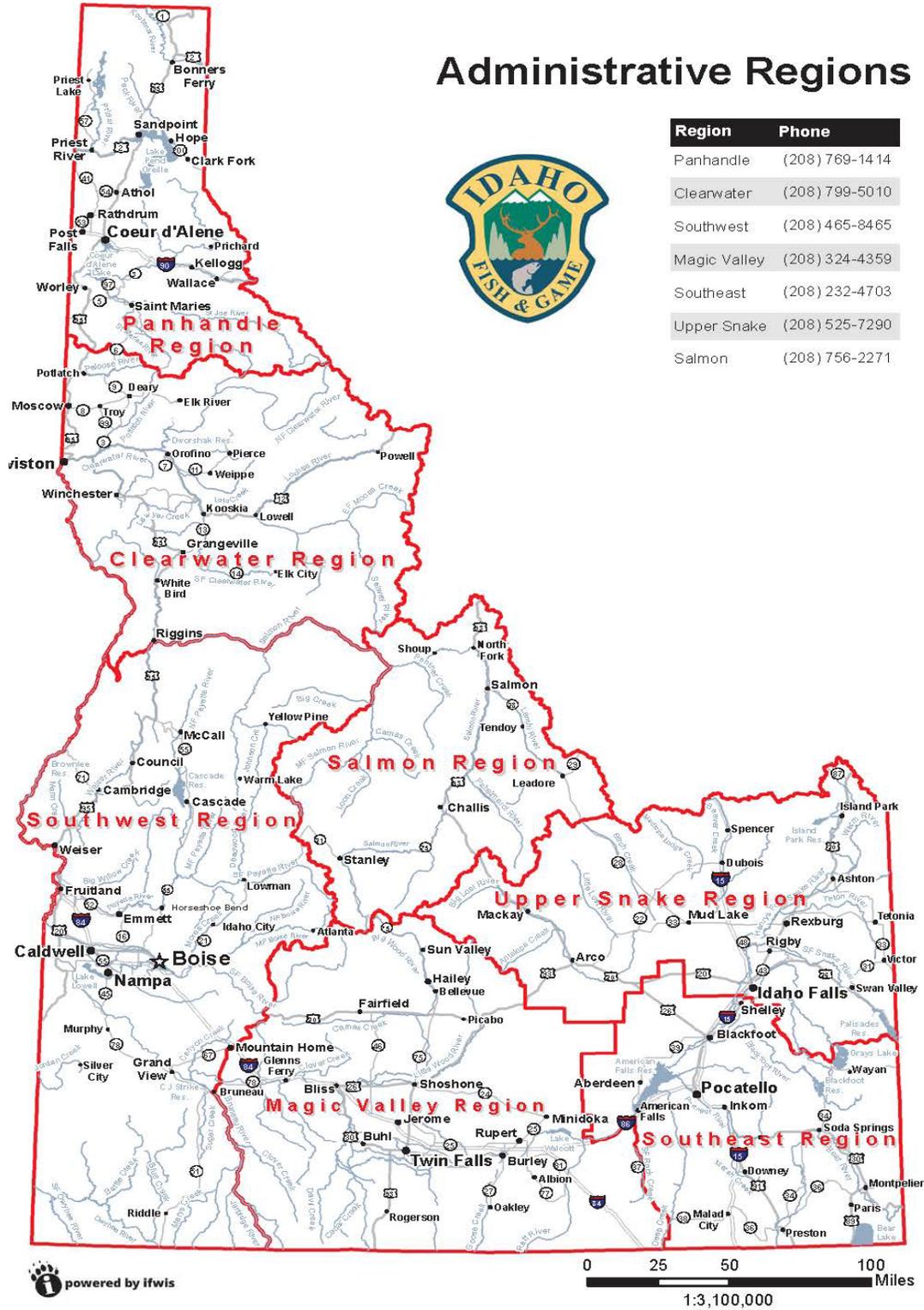


Figure 2. Idaho Department of Fish and Game administrative regions.

STATEWIDE SUMMARY

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 27 Regional Wildlife Biologists, 5 Maintenance Foremen, and one Maintenance Craftsman. Regional Wildlife Biologists administered all habitat program responsibilities within their designated Habitat District and supervised 7 Wildlife Technicians assigned to specific WMAs or a portion of a Habitat District. Maintenance Foremen coordinated habitat maintenance activities region-wide. Biologists and Maintenance Foremen 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 Manager	1	1	1	1	1	1			6
Staff Biologist ^a								4	4
Regional Wildlife Biologist	4	3	7	4	2	5	1	1	27
Farm Bill Biologist		1			1	1			3
Senior Wildlife Technician		1	3					2	6
Maintenance Foreman ^b	1	1	1	1		1			5
Maintenance Craftsman ^b		1							1
Total	6	8	12	6	4	10	1	8	55

^a one part-time staff biologist is a six month part-time position

^b partially funded with PR habitat management program funds

Grant objectives identified for the Coordination and Administration project differed from expected values as follows.

Objective 1: The PR grant project statement objective for program supervision was to provide direct and indirect supervision for 57 Full Time Employees (FTEs) for the habitat program. *In FY18, 55 FTEs were partially- or fully-funded by the habitat management PR grant. The difference resulted from the loss of one senior technician and maintenance craftsman who were partially funded from the habitat management PR grant.*

Objective 2: The PR grant project statement objective for grant administration was to administer one grant. *Actions to meet this objective were conducted throughout FY18.*

Objective 3: The PR grant project statement objective for staff meetings was to conduct 10 statewide habitat staff meetings. *In FY18, the objective was met by conducting two in-person program coordination meetings, seven annual work plan meetings, and monthly conference calls with Habitat Program headquarters and regional leadership staff.*

Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance activities on lands managed by IDFG are funded by Wildlife Restoration PR grant 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.

Regional habitat program staff operate and maintain buildings, structures, and infrastructure on IDFG-owned or managed properties, totaling approximately 390,000 acres, at current levels of use (Table 2).

In FY18, regional habitat personnel maintained approximately 398 miles of roads, 166 miles of trails, 320 miles of fences, 160 parking areas, 135 buildings, 19 restrooms, 317 water developments, 54 miles of dikes, numerous signs, and equipment used for operation and maintenance.

Table 2. Facilities operated and maintained by IDFG statewide in FY18.

Feature	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Total	PR Grant Objective
Roads (mi)	16.1	192.7	94.2	18	26	51	0	398	308
Trails (mi)	71.5	30	7	9	6	42	1	166.5	
Maintained Fence (mi)	13.9	48.5	171.3	15	58	13.5	0	320.2	492
Parking Areas (#)	37	9	41	17	28	26	2	160	137
Informational Signs (#)	52	10	38	14	23	30	0	167	
Buildings (#)	27	33	32	8	3	31	1	135	91
Restrooms (#)	4	1	0	6	0	5	3	19	29
Water Developments (#)	35	8	158	35	3	77	1	317	48
Dikes (mi)	11.6	0	21	2.5	0	19	0	54.1	
Ditches and canals (mi)	11.3	0	3.5	12.5	0	13.18	1	41.48	
Center Pivot (#)	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	
Irrigation Pipe (mi)	0	0	9	31	1.84	9.3	0	51.14	
Waterfowl nest structures (#)	390	52	233	147	0	0	0	822	2,000
WMAs and WMUs (#)	6	2	6	6	5	6	0	31	32
WHAs and other parcels (#)	0	5	4	0	1	1	1	11	
Acres administered	54,179	126,459	93,212	10,857	17,026	91,801	198	393,662	

Operations and maintenance objective results identified in Table 2.

Objective 1-1: The PR grant project statement objective for WMA-managed areas was 32 WMAs managed. *In FY18, staff managed and maintained 31 WMAs, one fewer than included in the FY18 grant. Most of the property that comprised the St. Maries WMA was sold, with a few parcels being incorporated into the Coeur d’Alene River WMA, thus reducing the number of WMAs to 31.*

Objective 1-2: The PR grant project statement objective for roads was to maintain 308 miles. *In FY18, staff maintained 398 miles of roads, 90 more miles than anticipated. This difference was*

in part the result of some specific needs and opportunities that arose during the course of the year. Additionally, a short-term increase in spending authority allowed for the completion of previously unplanned but need maintenance projects.

Objective 1-3: The PR grant project statement objective for fence was to maintain 492 miles of fence. *In FY18, staff maintained approximately 320.2 miles of fence, 171.8 miles less than anticipated. Fence maintenance is often dependent on events that cannot be predicted well from year to year, such as environmental conditions, unforeseen damage, and needs to adjust priorities.*

Objective 1-4: The PR grant project statement objective for parking areas was to maintain 137 parking areas. *In FY18, staff maintained 160 parking areas, 23 more than anticipated. This difference was in part the result of some specific needs and opportunities that arose during the course of the year. Additionally, a short-term increase in spending authority allowed for the completion of previously unplanned but needed projects.*

Objective 1-5: The PR grant project statement objective for restrooms was to maintain 29 restrooms. *In FY18, staff maintained 19 restrooms, 10 fewer than anticipated. Other IDFG program staff maintained some restrooms previously maintained by habitat program staff.*

Objective 1-6: The PR grant project statement objective for the Highway 21 Fence Project was to install cattle guards to prevent ungulates from crossing roads. *This project was completed as planned in FY18.*

Objective 1-7: The PR grant project statement objective for water developments was to maintain 48 water developments. *In FY18, staff reported maintaining 317 water developments, 261 more than anticipated. This difference is likely the result of current managers and biologists categorizing and including water developments differently than previous regional staff. Additionally, the Andrus WMA and Boise River WMA managers have numerous spring and wildlife/livestock water developments that were checked and maintained in FY18.*

Objective 1-8: The PR grant project statement objective for building maintenance was 91 buildings maintained. *In FY18, staff maintained 135 buildings, 44 more than anticipated. This difference was in part the result of some specific needs and opportunities that arose during the course of the year. Additionally, a short-term increase in spending authority allowed for the completion of previously unplanned but needed projects.*

Objective 2-1: Market Lake WMA workshop upgrade. *This project was completed as planned in FY18.*

Objective 2-2: Coeur d'Alene River WMA bunkhouse. *The bunkhouse was completed in FY18. The gravel RV pad construction was not completed due to costs estimates exceeding available funds.*

Objective 2-3: Farragut WMA Derr Creek storage shed. *This construction was not completed in FY18. FY18 funds were encumbered and the project is scheduled for completion in FY19.*

Objective 3-1: The PR grant statement objective for nest structures was to maintain 2,000 structures. *In FY18, staff maintained 822 structures, 1,178 fewer than anticipated. This difference is due to factors such as environmental conditions not allowing maintenance during the year. Additionally, some areas are removing and not replacing structures as they deteriorate, so there are fewer structures on some WMAs than there have been historically.*

Specific facilities operations and maintenance projects identified in the FY18 PR project statement and the resulting actions are described below. Additional habitat program accomplishments are included in regional and headquarters reports beginning on page 27.

Region 1 – Panhandle

- Replace Shepherd Lake water control structure on Pend Oreille WMA. *This project was not completed because it was determined it was not necessary.*
- The IDFG will contract the construction of the new bunkhouse at the Thompson Lake headquarters of the Coeur d’Alene River WMA. Construct/install a bunkhouse and associated septic system and a gravel RV pad to provide on-site housing for Coeur d’Alene River WMA staff. *The bunkhouse aspect of this project was completed in FY18. The RV pad was dropped from the project due to higher than anticipated overall construction costs.*
- Coeur d’Alene River WMA. Develop two parking areas and three boat launches at Black Rock Slough and Black Lake Ranch. Boat launches will be developed at Black Rock Slough, Bull Run Lake, and Black Lake Ranch. Boat launches will be 12’ wide and designed for small water craft such as kayaks, canoes, and small row boats. This project is located in Kootenai County on the Coeur d’Alene River WMA. Timeline for all projects, Jul – Jun. *Project was not completed in FY18 due to time constraints and plans to do as part of larger maintenance project. It is expected to be completed in FY19.*
- ADA Hunting and Wildlife Viewing Blinds – Regional staff will select appropriate sites, one on each of three WMAs, Coeur d’Alene River WMA, Boundary-Smith Creek WMA, and McArthur Lake WMA. Regional staff will construct and install three blinds approximately 8’ x 16’ in size. The blinds will be constructed and installed such that they are ADA accessible. Locations include Benewah, Boundary, and Kootenai counties. Jul – Jun timeline. *Project was not completed, but plan to complete in FY19 using non-PR funds.*

Region 2 – Clearwater

- Repair fence at Craig Mountain WMA to reduce trespass grazing. *This project was not completed in FY18 due to a contractor that failed to show up for the project. Anticipate project completion in FY19.*

Region 3 – Southwest

- Complete the Highway 21 exclusion fence project at Boise River WMA. Project includes the hiring of a contractor to install specially designed double cattle guards to prevent big game from entering SH-21 from Spring Shores Road. *This project was completed in FY18.*

- Replace spring box system and water line at the Boise River WMA HQ. Sep – Oct. *This project was completed in FY18.*
- Road upgrade and maintenance on the Boise Front and Charcoal Creek Segments of the Boise River WMA, including improvements in culverts, water bars, and ditches. Apr – May. *This project was not completed due to personnel changes, time constraints, and engineering time constraints. This project will be carried over to FY19.*
- Install approximately one mile of 4-strand wire fencing on boundary of Charcoal Creek Segment of the Boise River WMA. Apr – Sep. *This project was not completed due to time constraints. This project will be carried over to FY19.*
- Construct a new 500 ft² parking lot at Montour WMA. Jul – May. *This project will not be completed using PR funds. BOR is planning to fund and complete the project.*
- Replace approximately ½ mile of wire fencing with wood rail fencing along access roads at Montour WMA. Sep. *This project will be completed without the use of PR funds. BOR is planning to fund and complete the project.*
- Replace wood dam boards with an automated head gate on water supply ditch at Payette River WMA. Feb. *Planning for this project has been put on hold due to personnel changes. Planning and project development will continue in FY19.*
- Repair water delivery system including two 100 foot pipes and three control structures at Montour WMA. Aug – May. *This project was completed in FY18.*
- Repair or contract to repair foundation on Bugle Basin barn at Cecil D. Andrus WMA. Sep. *This project was completed without the use of PR funds. License and Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant funds were used for this project.*
- Retrofit up to one mile of existing 4-strand barbed wire fence to wildlife-friendly fence standards on Fort Boise WMA. Jul – May. *This project was completed without the use of PR funds*
- Bridge/culvert replacement at Fort Boise WMA. Jul – Jun. *Not completed due to time constraints. Anticipate completing project in FY19.*
- Boise River WMA. Demolish and remove an old shop. Construct a 2,135 sq. ft. shop at Boise River WMA. *This project is ongoing, scheduled to be completed in FY19.*

Region 4 – Magic Valley

- Repair 10 miles of 4-strand smooth and barbed wire fence wildlife isolated tracts. Year-round. *The project was completed using license funds; no PR funds were used on this project.*
- Repair 1.5 miles of 4-strand smooth and barbed wire fence line on Big Cottonwood WMA. Year-round. *This project was completed in FY17.*
- Repair 0.5 miles of 4-strand smooth and barbed wire fence line on Clover Creek WHA. Year-round. *This project was not completed due to personnel changes and time constraints. Anticipate completion in FY19.*
- Install two wildlife interpretive signs at Camas Prairie-Centennial Marsh WMA. Jul - Oct. *This project was completed in FY17.*

Region 5 – Southeast

- Replace 5,800 feet of fence on Georgetown Summit WMA to control trespass grazing (cost-share with private landowner). May. *Completed in FY17.*

- Replace 900 feet of fence on Georgetown Summit WMA with post/pole fencing to control vehicle access and improve winter range for big game. Aug. *Completed in FY17.*

Region 6 – Upper Snake

- Rebuild approximately two miles of fence on Sand Creek WMA boundary with private landowner to address cattle trespass. Jul – Oct. *Completed in FY17.*
- Build buck fence to close illegal motorized trails on Sand Creek WMA. Jul – Nov. *This project was completed without the use of PR funds.*
- Rebuild approximately one mile of fence on Market Lake WMA boundary with private landowner to address cattle trespass. Jul – Nov. *This project was completed using license funds; no PR funds were used.*
- Repair two miles of dike at Market Lake WMA. Jul – Nov, Mar – Jun. *This project will be completed without the use of PR funds.*
- Construction of shop addition at Market Lake WMA. *This project was completed in FY18.*
- Mud Lake WMA. Demolish and remove old shop. Construct a 2,135 sq. ft. shop at Mud Lake WMA. *This project is ongoing and scheduled to be completed in FY19.*

Region 7 – Salmon

- Install a well at Pahsimeroi River Access Area. Jul – Oct. *Not completed because a contractor could not be found. Anticipate completion of this project in FY19.*
- Corn Creek Access improvements. *This project was completed without the use of PR funds.*

Habitat Development

Habitat development and enhancement activities are funded by Wildlife Restoration PR and State License funds with assistance from other Federal grants. For projects on private land, Federal Aid funds were used only for personnel and administrative costs associated with habitat development. Farm Bill conservation programs, federal and state conservation programs, and competitive conservation grants typically fund projects on private land.

Regional 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 IDFG.

A habitat program goal is to create additional habitat in areas lacking adequate habitat to support a desired population level. Habitat staff worked with private and public landowners to enhance wildlife habitat.

In FY18, habitat staff treated 701 acres of habitat to improve diversity and productivity, planted 2,560 acres to native habitat, restored 1,497 acres of wetlands, planted and maintained 2,101 acres of food plots, and controlled noxious weeds on 18,879 acres (Table 3).

Table 3. Acres of habitat developed and managed statewide in FY18.

Management Activity (Acres)	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Total	PR Grant Objective
Burned or mechanically treated	292	7.5	14.5	357	30	0	0	701	890
Native habitat plantings	247	134	154.3	5	20	2,000	0	2,560.3	150
Wetland restored	1,494	3	0	0	0	0	0	1,497	83
Food plots	76	3	55	66	60	1,827	14	2,101	256
Noxious weed control	0	350	1,413.4	482	13,019	3,600	15	18,879.4	32,000

Grant objectives identified in Table 3 differed from expected values as follows.

Objective 1-1: The PR grant project statement objective for native habitat plantings was to plant 150 acres of native habitat plantings in FY18. *Staff planted 2,560 acres to native habitat, 2,412 more than anticipated. The additional acres were primarily the result of plantings for habitat restoration following a fire on Tex Creek WMA.*

Objective 1-2: The PR grant project statement objective for improving native habitat productivity and diversity was to mechanically treat or burn 890 acres of habitat in FY18. *Staff treated 701 acres of habitat to improve productivity and diversity, 189 acres fewer than anticipated. This relatively small difference could be due to planning/mapping discrepancies, environmental conditions, or schedules/priorities not allowing planned work to be completed.*

Objective 1-3: The PR grant project statement objective for noxious weed control was to control weeds on 32,000 WMA acres. *In FY18, staff controlled weeds on 18,879 acres, 13,121 acres less than anticipated. This difference may be due to mapping discrepancies, changing personnel documenting weed control activities differently, or environmental conditions not allowing some planned work to be completed.*

Objective 2-1: The PR grant project statement objective for wetlands was to restore 83 acres of wetlands in FY18. *Habitat staff restored 1,497 acres of wetlands in FY18, 1,414 acres more than anticipated. This was primarily due to new opportunities associated with property managed in Region 1.*

Objective 3-1: The PR grant project statement objective for food plots was to establish 256 acres of food plots in FY18. *Habitat staff planted and maintained 2,101 acres of food plots in FY18. Additional acres of food plots were established in Region 6 for acreage where poor quality permanent grass cover has been planted to wheat as grass/weed control in preparation for future native vegetation restoration.*

Specific facilities operations and maintenance projects identified in the FY18 PR project statement and the resulting actions are described below. Additional habitat program accomplishments are included in regional and headquarters reports beginning on page 27.

Region 1 – Panhandle

- Plant and establish native wetland grass/sedge/rush plantings in areas of cattail control for diversity in native wetland vegetation on Boundary-Smith Creek WMA, McArthur Lake

WMA, Pend Oreille WMA, and Coeur d'Alene River WMA. Oct, Nov, Apr, May. Carry-over project from previous grant segment (F15AF00850). *Project completed in FY18.*

- Regional habitat staff will use a mix of prescribed burns and replanting of 100 acres to remove or control reed canarygrass on Panhandle regional WMAs. Projects could occur throughout the year depending on the activity, water management and weather. Carry-over project from previous grant segment (F15AF00850). *This project was not completed as it was determined that burning is not effective at controlling reed canarygrass.*
- Complete brush mastication projects to revitalize decadent brush stands on Coeur d'Alene River WMA and McArthur Lake WMA. Mechanical. Feb – Mar. *Project completed in FY18.*
- Complete controlled burning projects on Boundary-Smith Creek WMA, McArthur Lake WMA, Pend Oreille WMA, and Coeur d'Alene River WMA to maintain early serial species and/or rejuvenate vegetation. Feb – Mar. Carry-over project from previous grant segment (F15AF00850). *Project completed in FY18.*
- Complete wetland restoration work at Pend Oreille WMA, St. Maries WMA, and Coeur d'Alene River WMA. Carry-over project from the previous grant segment (F15AF00850). *Project completed in FY18. St. Maries WMA no longer exists; however, some parcels were retained and incorporated in the Coeur d'Alene River WMA.*

Region 3 – Southwest

- Enhance forested riparian habitat by planting trees and shrubs at Payette River WMA and Montour WMA. Hand planting. Oct. *This activity was not completed due to change in WMA staff and priorities.*
- Plant perennial grasses and forbs and native riparian tree and shrub species on 20 acres of Payette River WMA and Montour WMA. *Project was completed in FY17.*
- Complete habitat restoration on the Gold Island Segment of Fort Boise WMA. Mechanical, hand. Year-round. Carry-over project from previous grant segment (F15AF00850). *Project Completed in FY18.*
- Plant mule deer forage shrubs on 25 acres at Boise River WMA. Hand. Nov – Mar. *Project completed in FY18.*
- Plant mule deer forage grass and forbs on 75 acres at Boise River WMA. Interseed, broadcast, drill. Nov – Mar. *Project was completed in FY17.*

Region 5 – Southeast

- Create four to five natural openings (total of 15 acres) in brush at Portneuf WMA. Oct – Nov. Mechanical mowing. *Project completed in FY18.*

Region 6 – Upper Snake

- Complete dike modification and add a water control structure at Market Lake WMA to improve water management. Mechanical. Year-round. *This project will be completed without using PR funds.*

Surveys and Inventory

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

targeted field contacts, hunter participation check stations, and trailhead surveys. Wildlife habitat and population information collected on IDFG-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 big game surveys.

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 IDFG personnel. Table 4 summarizes habitat staff survey and inventory activities.

Table 4. Survey and inventory activities conducted in FY18.

Survey and Inventory Activities	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	HQ	Total	PR Grant Objective
Public use	1	1	10	3	0	0	0	0	15	34
Noxious weed, baseline, grazing use	5	2	45	6	5	5	2	10	80	42
Waterfowl surveys, banding	6	1	3	1	0	3	0	0	14	9
Photo point surveys	5	1	16	3	0	1	0	10	36	31
Big game and upland surveys	0	3	6	28	3	3	6	6	49	55
Vegetation surveys	6	272	11	7	2	2	0	0	300	1,000
Elk collaring/data collection	1	62	0	2	0	1	2	0	68	30

Surveys and inventory objective results identified in Table 4.

Objective 1-1: The PR project statement grant objective for public use surveys was to conduct 34 surveys to estimate public use on WMAs. *In FY18, staff conducted 15 public use surveys, 19 fewer than anticipated. Changing project and funding priorities affect the number of these surveys that occur from year to year.*

Objective 2-1: The PR project statement grant objective for vegetation surveys was to conduct 42 surveys to document noxious weeds, baseline habitat condition and grazing use. *Staff conducted 80 surveys, 38 more than anticipated. More surveys were conducted on Boise River WMA than expected due to fire restoration and grazing use surveys.*

Objective 2-2: The PR project statement grant objective for waterfowl surveys was to conduct nine waterfowl surveys and capture/banding projects in FY18. *Habitat staff conducted 14 waterfowl surveys and capture/banding projects, five more than anticipated.*

Objective 2-3: The PR project statement grant objective for photo point surveys was to establish or revisit 31 photo points in FY18. *Habitat staff completed 36 photo point surveys, 5 more than anticipated.*

Objective 2-4: The PR project statement grant objective for game surveys was to conduct 56 surveys for big game and upland game in FY18. *Habitat staff conducted or assisted with 55 surveys, including big game check stations, one fewer than anticipated.*

Objective 2-5: The PR project statement grant objective for vegetation surveys was to conduct 1,000 vegetation surveys on WMAs in FY18. *Staff conducted 300 surveys, and the previously discussed 80 specifically for noxious weeds, baseline and grazing use. This is 620 fewer surveys than anticipated. Workload, changing priorities, and environmental conditions may influence the number of surveys that are conducted from year to year.*

Objective 3-1: The PR project statement objective for elk collar operations was to assist with 30 elk collar operations and data collection in FY18. *Habitat staff assisted with 68 elk collar operations and data collection, 38 more than anticipated. This increased participation in elk monitoring was primarily due to projects in Region 2 where habitat staff have become more involved in elk monitoring studies.*

Specific facilities operations and maintenance projects identified in the FY18 PR project statement and the resulting actions are described below. Additional Habitat Program accomplishments are included in regional and headquarters reports beginning on page 27.

Region 1 – Panhandle

- Regional staff and volunteers will operate waterfowl hunter check stations on opening weekend on the Panhandle Region WMAs to estimate hunter use. *Project completed annually.*
- Regional habitat staff will assist in an elk mortality study in the North Fork of Coeur d’Alene basin to collect data to better understand elk mortality in this area of Idaho. *Project completed annually.*

Region 2 – Clearwater

- Regional habitat staff will conduct surveys to inventory and map conifer habitat on Craig Mountain WMA. Year-round. *Conifer habitat was mapped using GIS; a ground inventory was conducted in the Benton Meadows area.*

Region 3 – Southwest

- Regional staff and volunteers will conduct public use surveys on Southwest Region WMAs to estimate annual public use. *Boise River WMA conducted seven user surveys in FY18. Fort Boise WMA initiated a digital user survey in FY18. Cecil D. Andrus WMA surveyed users using written survey forms in FY18.*
- Regional habitat staff will monitor vegetation planting establishment in fuel breaks in the Mayfield area (Jul, Aug, Sep). *Evaluated the nine miles of fuel break adjacent to Ditto Creek Road, Baseline Road, and Martha Avenue that were seeded to forage kochia in 2016 and 2017.*

Region 4 – Magic Valley

- Regional staff will install cameras at key access points on Billingsley Creek WMA to collect visitor use data throughout the year to better understand public use and how to manage it. *Partially completed; camera equipment failure reduced the amount and duration of data collection. We will continue this project during FY19.*

Region 5 – Southeast

- Regional staff will deploy trail counters at Edson Fichter Nature Area (EFNA) to collect public user information throughout the year to better understand public use and how to manage it. *Project completed annually.*

Statewide

- Regional staff will survey IDFG backcountry properties during peak hunting seasons to estimate hunting use, type, and access needs.
 - *Region 7 completed the survey on the Loon Creek backcountry property.*
- Continue to implement surveys to estimate public use of WMAs.
 - *Region 2 set up and analyzed wing barrel information from hunter harvested birds on Craig Mountain WMA to better understand upland game bird population and hunter use.*
 - *Region 3 used trail counters, vehicle counters, digital surveys, and written surveys; WMAs in the Southwest Region continue to monitor public use.*
 - *Region 4 maintained user survey boxes on WMAs.*
- Regional habitat staff will establish or revisit photo points to document vegetative change through time. May, Jun, Jul, Aug.
 - *Region 2 conducted vegetation surveys on Thorn Creek Habitat Project area and revisited photo points on Craig Mountain WMA and Red River WMA.*
 - *Region 4 staff revisited three photo points.*
 - *Region 3 used photo points to document vegetation, including shrub plantings conducted by the volunteer program.*
 - *Region 5 staff relocated/established photo points on WMAs.*
 - *Region 6 maintains photo points on the Tex Creek WMA to monitor long-term vegetation recovery and changes as a result of the Henry's Creek fire.*
- Regional habitat staff will monitor stream flows and water levels. Mar – Dec.
 - *Region 4 staff monitors stream flows and water levels at Hagerman WMA and Niagara Springs WMA.*
 - *Region 5 recorded water levels and flows on Sterling WMA.*
 - *Region 6 staff monitored wetland water levels at managed wetlands on Market Lake WMA, Deer Parks WMA, Mud Lake WMA, and Sand Creek WMA.*
- Regional habitat staff will conduct surveys to monitor effectiveness of vegetative manipulations and noxious weed abundance (Jul, Aug, Sep, May, Jun).
 - *Region 2 conducted this action on Craig Mountain and Red River WMAs.*
 - *Region 3, Boise River WMA conducted vegetative survey after MM14 fire utilizing herbicide and MB906 (biocontrol). Following all weed control activities, follow-up surveys are conducted to determine effectiveness of control.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff conducted surveys for noxious weeds on 6 WMAs in the Magic Valley Region; 4,480 acres were surveyed.*
 - *Region 5 conducted surveys.*
 - *Region 6 conducts these actions on Tex Creek WMA, Market Lake WMA, Deer Parks WMU, Mud Lake WMA, and Sand Creek WMA, Cartier Slough WMA and Chilly Slough WHA.*

- Regional habitat staff will conduct vegetation surveys to document baseline habitat, noxious weed distribution and grazing utilization levels. May, Jun, Jul, Aug.
 - *Region 2 conducted this action on Craig Mountain WMA and Red River WMA.*
 - *Region 3, Boise River WMA conducted a grazing utilization survey on Charcoal Creek Segment.*
 - *Region 5 conducted weed surveys and mapping done across all WMAs as part of noxious weed control efforts. Region 6 staff are conducting weed distribution monitoring on Tex Creek WMA, Market Lake WMA, Deer Parks WMU, Mud Lake WMA, Sand Creek WMA, Cartier Slough WMA, and Chilly Slough WHA; and baseline habitat monitoring on Tex Creek WMA and on the greater Sand Creek Desert in cooperation with the BLM.*
 - *Baseline vegetation surveys were conducted on Region 1 and Region 5 WMAs.*
- Regional habitat personnel will assist with aerial big game surveys, aerial waterfowl surveys, roadside brood counts, and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse/sage-grouse lek counts annually. Regional habitat personnel might also assist with surveys for vertebrate Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) or their habitats identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) for Idaho.
 - *Region 2 habitat staff assisted with roadside brood counts, elk monitoring cameras, wolf rendezvous site surveys and monitoring camera placement, and owl surveys.*
 - *Region 3 staff assisted with aerial big game surveys, roadside brood counts, and sage and sharp-tailed grouse lek counts in FY18.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff assisted regional population biologists, BLM, and USFS biologists with the following field projects: conducted winter flock counts of turkeys on Big Cottonwood WMA; conducted surveys for bighorn sheep on 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; picked up inactive big game GPS collars; conducted sage-grouse lek counts; flew aerial surveys for big game and sage-grouse; conducted Sandhill crane counts;*
 - *Region 5 staff assisted with moose, elk, sage-grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, and bat surveys.*
 - *Region 6 staff played an integral role in aerial big game surveys, grizzly bear and big game capture and collaring activities, and waterfowl surveys. Region 6 staff is active and banding, Sandhill crane surveys and banding, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and sage-grouse lek surveys, and assisted with a variety of SGCN surveys such as white-faced ibis, trumpeter swan, and peregrine falcon.*
 - *Region 7 staff conducted the Lemhi Elk survey, East Fork mountain goat survey and regional mule deer comp survey. Sage-grouse lek counts. Pronghorn ground counts.*
- Regional habitat staff will conduct surveys on vertebrate species or their habitats identified in SWAP.
 - *Region 2 conducted avian.*
 - *Region 4 staff conducted sage-grouse, Sandhill crane, and bighorn sheep surveys.*
 - *Region 5 staff assisted with bat surveys.*

- *Region 7 assisted with bat acoustic surveys.*
- *Region 6 staff is active and banding, Sandhill crane surveys and banding, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and sage-grouse lek surveys, and assisted with a variety of SGCN surveys for white-faced ibis, trumpeter swan, and peregrine falcon.*
- Regional habitat staff will conduct surveys to monitor effectiveness of vegetative manipulations and noxious weed abundance.
 - *Region 2 conducted surveys.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff monitored seven transects to determine survival of seedlings planted on big game winter ranges in the region.*
 - *Region 5 conducted weed surveys and mapping done across all WMAs as part of noxious weed control efforts.*
- Regional habitat staff will provide assistance to the FY18 Statewide Wildlife Surveys & Inventory project banding approximately 2,000 ducks. May – Jul.
 - *Region 6 habitat staff provided assistance.*
 - *Region 3 staff conducted waterfowl banding at Fort Boise WMA and C.J. Strike WMA.*
- Regional habitat staff will provide assistance to the FY18 Statewide Wildlife Surveys & Inventory project banding approximately 600 doves. May – Jul.
 - *Region 3 staff assisted with dove banding at Payette River WMA and several locations throughout the region for a total of 34 doves.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff trapped and banded mourning doves on the Billingsley Creek WMA and Niagara Springs WMA.*
 - *Region 5 habitat staff trapped and banded mourning doves.*
 - *Region 6 habitat staff provided assistance.*
 - *Region 7 habitat staff banded 20 mourning doves.*
- Regional habitat staff may participate in surveys for avian influenza, cholera, and avian botulism throughout the year to identify and manage avian disease outbreaks.
 - *Region 3 staff assisted with surveys with particular emphasis on Fort Boise WMA and Roswell Marsh WHA.*
 - *Region 6 habitat staff established check stations at Market Lake WMA and Sand Creek WMA to swab harvested ducks to test for avian influenza.*
- Regional habitat staff may participate in pelican management activities in southern Idaho during spring through fall to implement IDFG’s pelican management plan.
 - *Region 5 habitat staff assisted with pelican management activities, installation and removal of deterrents, nest counts, and banding.*
- Regional habitat staff may participate in wolverine surveys throughout the year to collect data on wolverines in Idaho.
 - *Region 6 submitted observations on wolverine presence.*
- Regional habitat staff will update the statewide elk habitat landscape productivity map annually as part of IDFG’s Elk Management Plan.
 - *Region 2 completed updates.*
 - *Region 4 completed updates.*
- Regional habitat staff will contract Utah State University to develop a beaver restoration assessment (BRAT) tool for statewide use in Idaho.

- *Headquarters staff contracted with Utah State University is in place and the project is ongoing. The tool is expected to be completed in FY19.*

Technical Guidance

Technical guidance provided by habitat personnel to outside entities is funded by Wildlife Restoration PR and State License funds.

Regional habitat personnel assisted public agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private landowners in order to implement the technical guidance project and implement wildlife habitat projects (Table 5). Objectives were often met by working cooperatively and collaboratively with other state and federal agencies, private parties, and NGOs. Examples of how these objectives were met include the following: Mule Deer Initiative (MDI), Clearwater Pheasant Initiative, Boise Forest Coalition, 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.

In addition to regional habitat staff, Farm Bill biologists who are supervised from Headquarters, working with the NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided technical assistance on reenrollment on existing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land, including State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) applications. In FY18, they had over 613 landowner contacts with technical assistance to improve wildlife habitat on over 350,000 acres of privately owned land.

Table 5. Technical Guidance activity summary for FY18.

Technical guidance activities	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	HQ	Total	PR Grant Objective
Technical assistance to improve private land (acres)	184	3,939	1,521	30,415	1,400	5,500	0	350,000	392,959	11,870
Technical assistance (number of contacts)	63	78	76	25	40	35	25	613	955	675

Technical guidance objectives identified in Table 5.

Objective 1-1: The PR statement grant objective for private lands habitat acres was to provide technical guidance to private landowners to improve 11,870 acres of wildlife habitat. *Regional habitat biologists and Farm Bill biologists combined provided technical guidance to private landowners for nearly 393,000 acres in FY18. Much of this increased acreage results from the efforts of Farm Bill biologists working in conjunction with NRCS to provide technical services to landowners for CRP and SAFE program habitat projects. Improving habitat on private property is dependent on landowner interest and thus is difficult to predict annually.*

Objective 1-2: The PR statement grant objective for technical guidance was to provide 675 assists to private landowners, other state and federal agencies, and NGOs in FY18. *Regional habitat biologists provided 342 technical assists, mostly to agencies and NGOs. Farm Bill*

biologists provided 613 private landowner contacts for technical assistance. Combined, 280 more technical assists were provided than expected. The need from agencies, NGOs and private landowners are difficult to predict and vary annually based on project proposals and private landowner interest in habitat programs.

Specific facilities operations and maintenance projects identified in the FY18 PR project statement and the resulting actions are described below. Additional Habitat Program accomplishments are included in regional and headquarters reports beginning on page 27.

Region 1 – Panhandle

- The Panhandle staff is providing technical assistance to the Restoration Partnership overseeing implementation of the Coeur d’Alene Basin Restoration Plan as part of the HECLA and ASACO mining settlements.
- Regional habitat staff will provide technical assistance to the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative and the Shoshone-Benewah Forest Health Collaborative.
- Habitat and Diversity Staff will provide assistance to ITD to on three highway-related habitat and wildlife passage projects; a timber removal project to improve wildlife and public safety on the McArthur Lake WMA, roadside pollinator habitat improvements, and planning to improve wildlife passage by developing a bridge within the McArthur Corridor.
- Regional habitat staff continues to work with the USFS Panhandle Forest Collaborative to improve implementation of the Panhandle Forest Plan.
- Regional habitat staff continues to work with the USFS St. Joe Ranger District to conduct elk habitat assessments, develop an environmental assessment report and habitat restoration plan for the 33,000-acre Snow Peak WMA. *Completed. EA is scheduled for completion in FY19.*

Region 2 – Clearwater

- Regional habitat staff participates in the Palouse Conservation District Resource Conservation Partnership Program by providing guidance on directives and goals to meet their grant needs.
- Regional habitat staff participates in the regional NRCS working group to help identify resource concerns and help direct funding to specific issues in the Clearwater Region.
- Regional habitat staff participates in the Craig Mountain Fire Planning Group to help identify areas prone to extreme fire events for future planning and funding opportunities.
- Create a new local working group (including local organizations and agencies) for the Craig Mountain WMA to help identify concerns and work collaboratively to manage the WMA.
- Regional habitat staff create new upland game habitat on private lands as part of the Thorn Creek.
- Staff completed projects and other directed efforts through the Clearwater Region’s Farm Bill Incentive Program.
- Regional habitat staff participates in the Clearwater Basin Collaborative.
- Regional habitat staff will assist USFS with planning 300 acres of burns to enhance elk habitat in the North Fork Clearwater drainage.

- Regional habitat staff advises the Army Corp of Engineers management of lands around Dworshak Reservoir – access management and elk winter range management.

Region 3 – Southwest

- Regional habitat staff provides technical assistance to the Boise Forest Coalition.
- Regional habitat staff provides technical assistance to the Boise River Wildlife Linkage Partnership.
- Regional habitat staff provides technical assistance to the Ridge to Rivers trail system.

Region 5 – Southeast

- Regional habitat staff evaluates options and implement projects to communicate the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation at the EFNA..

Region 6 – Upper Snake

- Regional habitat staff coordinates with the Teton Regional Land Trust on region-wide conservation planning.

Region 7 – Salmon

- Regional habitat staff provides technical assistance on the Salmon-Challis National Forest plan revision.
- Salmon Region provides technical assistance on U.S. Forest Service Plan and BLM Plan revisions and three Wilderness Management plans in the Salmon and Challis Districts – revisions are expected to occur during the next four years.
- Regional habitat staff participates on the Central Idaho Aspen Working Group to improve management of aspen habitats.

Statewide

- Support Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA).
 - *Region 2 participated on the Tri-State Weed Management Committee, the Salmon River Weed Management Committee, the Clearwater Weed Management Committee, and the Palouse Weed Cooperative Management Committee.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff participated in joint weed spraying activities with 2 CWMA's.*
 - *Region 3 staff actively participates in 2 CWMA's and works closely with county staff on weed management throughout the region.*
 - *Region 5 staff coordinated with 3 CWMA's.*
 - *Region 6 collaborates with CWMA's in their region.*
 - *Region 7 staff is on the steering committee and working collaboratively to treat weeds on state and federal lands.*
- Support 11 sage-grouse local working groups and one statewide sage-grouse advisory group gathering data and developing plans to conserve sage-grouse.
 - *Region 3 habitat staff actively participated in the Mountain Home and Owyhee Sage-grouse Local Working Groups.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff participated in 3 local working groups.*
 - *Region 5 habitat staff supported 2 local working groups.*

- Continue to participate in the Eastern Idaho Aspen Working Group to improve management of aspen habitats in eastern Idaho.
 - *Region 3 staff worked closely with state and federal agencies in continuing efforts to rehabilitate areas burned by wildfires throughout the region. In addition, we have provided technical assistance on juniper removal projects.*
- Assist the Idaho Governor's Office, state and federal land management agencies, and private landowners to improve sage-grouse habitat.
 - *Region 4 staff provided technical assistance to Twin Falls District-BLM regarding post-fire restoration efforts in burned sage-grouse habitats.*
 - *Region 6 hosted a two-day sage-grouse workshop to disseminate information to agency partners and landowners on managing sage-steppe habitat with an emphasis on appropriateness of brush treatments in important sage-grouse habitat.*
- Provide technical assistance to private landowners interested in improving wildlife habitat on their lands.
 - *Region 2 provided Technical Service Provider (TSP) services to NRCS. Worked with landowners to enhance existing CRP fields for wildlife. Have provided technical assistance to landowners throughout region to improve wildlife and habitats on their lands.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff provided technical assistance to 17 private landowners interested in improving wildlife habitat on their lands.*
 - *Region 5 staff worked with interested landowners and implemented projects through the Habitat Improvement Program (HIP).*
 - *Region 6 habitat staff worked with 9 private landowners on habitat enhancements.*
- Provide technical assistance to private industry, local, city, county, state, and federal agencies and representatives, NGOs, soil and water conservation districts, resource collaborative groups and restoration partnerships.
 - *Region 2 habitat biologists assisted the Environmental Staff Biologist with IDFG input on proposed projects within respective habitat districts. Provided significant comments concerning USFS timber projects, USFS river recreation and development, ACOE Dworshak Travel and Recreation Plan, BLM Resource Management Plans, IDL timber sales, rock quarry development, grazing leases, and outfitter and guide issues.*
 - *Region 4 habitat staff reviewed habitat restoration plans and participated in post-fire tours with IDL, BLM, and USFS.*
 - *Region 5 provided technical assistance to other agencies and NGOs.*
 - *Region 6 provided technical assistance support to the Regional Environmental Staff biologist for development proposals, mine proposals, and proposed brush treatments. Region 6 staff initiated the Lower Henry's Fork Restoration Initiative, is the IDFG leader in the High Divide Conservation Partnership, and participates in the Henrys Fork Legacy Partnership.*
 - *Region 7 staff is on the Lemhi Forest Restoration Collaborative.*
- Regional staff assists with enrollment and development of new CRP/SAFE contracts that incorporate quality wildlife habitat to enhance nearly 3,000 acres.

- *Region 2, 5, and 6 Farm Bill Biologists provided TSP services to NRCS. Worked with landowners to enhance existing CRP fields for wildlife.*
- Regional habitat staff assists with development of mid-contract management plans for CRP.
 - *Region 2, 5, and 6 Farm Bill Biologists provided TSP services to NRCS. Assisted with development of mid-contract management plans.*
- Regional habitat staff assists USFS with planning for trail maintenance for hunter access to areas that will help with big game population objectives.
 - *Region 2 continued working with USFS to accomplish habitat objectives identified in the Statewide Elk Management Plan. Provided significant comments concerning USFS timber projects, USFS river recreation and development, ACOE Dworshak Travel and Recreation Plan, BLM Resource Management Plans, IDL timber sales, rock quarry development, grazing leases, and outfitter and guide issues.*
 - *Region 3 Habitat Manager served on the Idaho Non-motorized Trail Committee, whose focus is on identifying trail maintenance needs.*
 - *Region 7 habitat staff met with Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA), three district rangers, and the Region 1 & 4 USFS lead trail staff to discuss trail conditions and issues in Central Idaho. Worked collaboratively with Idaho Parks and Recreation (IDPR) to map and prioritize trail conditions. Helped maintain 3 miles of trail near bighorn crags and five miles of trail near Camas Creek.*
- Regional habitat staff provides technical assistance in the development of a travel management plan for the Idaho Falls District BLM.
 - *Region 6 staff has been interacting with the BLM on development of their Travel Management Plan including providing resource information and analyses.*
- Regional habitat staff provides assistance to separate bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goats.
 - *Region 4 staff conducted surveys to determine proximity of bighorn sheep to domestic sheep bands in GMU 54.*
 - *Region 7 staff met with 4 landowners and swab-sampled 50 domestic sheep and goats to test for disease in areas near bighorn sheep. Removed 2 goats on public land.*

Access Yes

Access Yes! is partially funded by Wildlife Restoration 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. Our objective was to provide at least 300,000 acres in lease agreements to sportsmen using these funds.

These funds were primarily for lease agreements between IDFG and private landowners. In calendar year 2018, the *Access Yes!* Program opened up 335,879 acres of private land for sportsmen statewide (Table 6).

Table 6. *Access Yes!* acres leased in FY18.

<i>Access Yes!</i>	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Total	PR Grant Objective
Access provided (acres)	94,397	16,652	22,530	108,611	58,218	22,233	13,238	335,879	300,000

Access Yes objectives identified in Table 6.

Objective 1-1: The objective number of *Access Yes!* acres in the FY18 PR statement was 300,000. *IDFG staff enrolled 335,879 acres, 35,879 acres more than anticipated. Enrollment is dependent on landowner interest and access valuation, which are subject to change annually.*

HEADQUARTERS

Coordination and Administration

Staff conducted the following activities:

- Planned and participated in an IDFG water rights workshop.
- Completed a Draft Statewide WMA Assessment.
- Worked with Director's office to prepare for past legislative session related to HB 230.
- Revision of the IDFG's Depredation hand book-last revised in 2005. This effort resulted in a cumbersome 49-page book becoming a 12-13 page booklet.
- Creation of depredation webpage with printable forms and resource materials.
- Planned and participated in two compliance coordination meetings with U.S. Fish and wildlife Service and the Idaho State Historical Preservation Office.
- Completed compliance for the Wildlife Bureau's WSFR grant funded programs and the State Wildlife Action Plan implementation grant activities.
- Initiated a review of biological weed control on WMAs as part of the Habitat Programs weed control program.
- Participated in an annual biocontrol task force meeting coordinated by BLM.
- Completed the annual statewide weed control report for the Bureau's Habitat Program.
- Completed the Wildlife Bureau's conservation lease renewals for IDL parcels.
- Competed proposal that resulted in permission to use PR grant funds for the purchase and application of herbicides on approved WMAs.

Operations and Maintenance

Staff provided support for regional projects such as:

- Market Lake WMA shop upgrade.
- Coeur d'Alene WMA bunkhouse construction.
- Fencing repairs on Tex Creek WMA.
- Updated the WMA infrastructure inventory

Habitat Development

Staff provided support for regional projects such as:

- Tex Creek fire habitat restoration activities.
- Developed a cost-benefit analysis process for sharecrop activities and provided review of agreements.
- Assisted regional staff preparing an (Safari Club International) SCI grants application for a sagebrush rehabilitation project in southwest Idaho.
- Worked with Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests to develop agreements and transfer funds to implement Selway Bitterroot Wilderness invasive Weed Control
- Worked with Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests to develop agreements and transfer funds to support trail maintenance that will opens trails and improves access for hunters and anglers
- Worked with the Mule Deer Foundation and the BLM to plant over 100,000 sage brush and bitter brush plants during restoration efforts on over 2,000 acres in critical mule deer winter range in the Bennet Hills, and developed cooperative agreement to duplicate that effort in FY 2109

- Worked with Sawtooth National Forest to develop agreement and transfer funds to support and implement aspen restoration on over 1000 acres in the South Hills
- Collaborated with USFS and Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust and provided funding to conduct riparian and in-stream restoration in the Curlew National Grasslands
- Provided technical input and funding (due diligence) to Teton Regional Land Trust to secure a conservation easement on 150 acres of critical mule deer winter range on the Heise Face
- Worked with the Caribou Targhee Forest to develop an agreement and transfer funds to support a habitat restoration project in Rainey Creek that includes instream and riparian restoration as well as aspen restoration in the uplands

Survey and Inventory

Staff conducted the following activities:

- Completed a *WMA Habitat Monitoring Plan and Techniques Manual*
- Planned and implemented annual long-term habitat monitoring fieldwork in the Panhandle and Southeast Regions, including supervision of vegetation monitoring crew for WMAs. Completed habitat condition reports for Magic Valley Region WMAs and Montour WMA.
- Initiated and implemented adoption of a commercial software product to monitor weed control efforts on IDFG owned and managed lands. Designed and created a custom data collection form for use with the Habitat Program's weed control data collection software. Completed weed control annual report.
- Assisted with mule deer trapping.
- Assisted with hunter check stations.

Technical Guidance

Staff provided technical input as follows:

- Is a member of the Idaho Weed Coordination Committee, providing input and financial support for committee activities, including the state's Weed Awareness Campaign.
- Provided technical input for a private industry proposed wetland restoration/water quality project for Fort Boise WMA.
- Provided technical and policy guidance for bird habitat conservation to the Intermountain West Joint Venture by participating on the Management Board.
- Representative the IDFG at Idaho Bird Conservation Partnership meetings and co-chaired the Habitat Delivery Working Group.
- Provided technical and policy guidance on sage-grouse conservation to the Governor's Office of Species Conservation and federal land management agencies.
- Participated on the Rock Creek Advisory Committee.
- Participated in developing the Idaho Rangeland Conservation Partnership.
- Assisted the Director's Office with developing a MOU with BLM regarding agency coordination.
- Co-chaired the IDFG's Lands Committee.
- Provided mapping and data development to support efforts to develop a backcountry airfield access initiative in the Salmon Region.

- Assisted Fisheries Bureau with GIS-related compliance mapping and ESA species queries.
- Created and disbursed custom background maps to be used with the Habitat Program's mobile mapping and weed data collection platform.
- Provided assistance to IFWIS for SWAP implementation webpage development.

Access Yes!

- Worked with Communication bureau to update the functions within the Access Yes! database. This will make it easier for the IDFG to create the paper guide and transfer information for payments

PANHANDLE REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Panhandle Habitat Section is funded by a variety of sources including state-generated license funds, PR, Sport Fish Restoration (SFR), 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 4 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. One of these positions 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 two 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 IDFG facilities when not working on Fishing and Boating Access sites. One Regional Wildlife Habitat Manager 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 6 WMAs and 24 smaller parcels totaling 27,905 deeded acres and 26,274 acres managed under agreement, for a total of 54,179 acres. Panhandle WMAs and acreages are included in Table 7.

Table 7. Areas operated and maintained in the Panhandle Region.

Area	Acres
Boundary-Smith Creek WMA	2,072
McArthur Lake WMA	1,821
Pend Oreille WMA	7,432
Farragut WMA	1,418
Coeur d'Alene River WMA	9,074
Snow Peak WMA	32,292

Operation and maintenance activities (Table 8) during this reporting period included:

- A total of 16.1 miles of roads, 71.5 miles of trails, 13.9 miles of fence, 37 parking areas, 27 buildings, four restrooms, 52 signs, 30 water control structures, 11.6 miles of dikes and 11.3 miles of ditches and canals were maintained.
- Maintained approximately 390 artificial nest structures on Boundary-Smith Creek WMA (BSCWMA), McArthur Lake WMA (MLWMA), Pend Oreille WMA (POWMA), and Coeur d'Alene River WMA (CDARWMA).
- Treated 1,192 acres and monitored 3,857 acres for noxious weeds.
- Maintained and repaired 0.4 miles of fence across all WMAs.
- Installed new or replaced existing property boundary markers on all WMA parcels.

- Installed 3 new interpretive signs at BSCWMA and 4 new interpretive signs at MLWMA.
- Work underway on Bees to Bears Climate Adaptation Project, funded by 3 complementary grants (USFWS Section 6 and Bombus Habitat Seed Library grants administered by IDFG and Doris Duke CF/Wildlife Conservation Society Climate Adaptation Fund grant administered by Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative). Work addresses current and anticipated needs of 6 SGCN's in climate change context. Deliverables include re-establishing ~250 acres of forested lowland habitat and native forb/grass communities, 2 ephemeral ponds and one mile of ephemeral streambed, ~25 acres of cool-air refugia, and provides community and professional outreach and education through a citizen science volunteer program and workshops.
- Cleared and improved 11 miles of trails on Snow Peak WMA (SPWMA) to improve public access. Montana Conservation Corps was hired through the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR) trail grant to complete 6 miles of the trail work.
- Added new camping limit signs on SPWMA.
- Continued to manage operations at Farragut WMA (FWMA) Rifle Range – over 2,500 shooter days in FY18. Completed construction of a 20 shooting-point 3-D archery range and initiated KD (known distance) archery range developments at the range.
- Continued water management and access development activities on the newly acquired Black Lake Ranch property.
- Continued field assessments, restoration planning, and compliance and permitting on the Black Rock Slough wetland on the CDARWMA. Obtained a small North American Wetland Conservation Act grant to complete Phase One of the multi-year project. Construction is scheduled for completion in FY19.
- Maintained an estimated one mile of green vegetative fire breaks on the BSCWMA to enable to conduct controlled burning projects more efficiently and safely.
- Conducted prescribed burn operations on 198 acres of previously disturbed farm fields on BSCWMA, in partnership with IDL.
- Completed new parking lot and installed sign board on West Trout segment of POWMA.
- Completed bridge repairs and 0.5 mile of road resurfacing on Rapid Lightning segment of POWMA, improving public access.
- Improved Administrative Use access by clearing the 1.5 mile road system linking Rapid Lightning segment with Trout Creek on POWMA facilities to a road standard to provide access for fire response vehicles/equipment.
- Completed major Trout Creek house renovation and repairs as part of a Facilities Enhancement Project on POWMA. Structural repairs included repairs to subfloor damage, construction of two decks, replacement of all 3 entry doors and the removal of original composite roofing and installation of steel roof and gutter system. Additionally, all old carpet was replaced with LV flooring throughout the house.
- Built a new bunk house at the CDARWMA Headquarters for seasonal technicians.
- Installed 70 ft x 21" culvert with waterman valve in the dike road to passively drain the west field of Black Lake (Gray's Meadow) property.
- Developed 3 public access sites on the Black Lake (Gray's Meadow) property.
- Removed approximately 5 miles of decadent and hazardous barbwire fence and 6 miles of white vinyl fence on the Black Lake (Gray's Meadow) property. (Sep FY 18).

- Installed signs and new fencing at four parking areas at the Clagstone conservation/access easement property.

Table 8. Facilities operated and maintained in the Panhandle Region.

Feature	Boundary-Smith Creek	McArthur Lake	Pend Oreille	Farragut	Coeur d'Alene	Snow Peak	TOTAL
Roads (mi)	0	0	5	1.6	9.5	0	16.1
Trails (mi)	12.3	1	2	6.2	0	50	71.5
Maintained Fence (mi)	0	0	6	5.9	2	0	13.9
Parking Areas	6	8	12	3	8	0	37
Informational Signs	10	5	13	6	12	6	52
Buildings	4	5	8	5	5	0	27
Restrooms	2	1	0	1	0	0	4
Water Structures	21	1	4	0	4	0	30
Irrigation Wells/pumps	0	0	0	1	4	0	5
Dikes (mi)	10.5	0.1	0	0	1	0	11.6
Irrigation Pipe (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Irrigation Ditch (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canal (mi)	4.9	0	0	0	6.4	0	11.3
Center Pivot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Habitat Development

Management activities on IDFG-administered lands located within the Panhandle Region included a variety of activities (Tables 9 and 10). With exclusion of SPWMA, the remaining 22,690 acres were evaluated for noxious weed infestations, and 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, shrub management and to provide big and small game hunting opportunities. Additional habitat improvements included:

- Approximately 40 combined acres of grain food plots were planted on the BSCWMA, MLWMA, POWMA, and CDARWMA to provide feed for upland game birds, wild turkeys, and migrating waterfowl.
- Planted 6,000 native trees and shrubs on BSCWMA for the Bears to Bees Climate Adaptation Project, adding plants in 2 newly constructed exclosures totaling 11.1 acres. Exclosures equaled 3,830 ft of 10' tall wildlife exclusion fence to prevent browse damage.
- Approximately 20 acres of forb (broadleaf) forage plots were planted on the POWMA, BSCWMA, and CDARWMA.
- Approximately 30 acres of goose pasture on the MLWMA, POWMA, and CDARWMA were maintained through mowing and planting.
- Developed a regional pollinator habitat seed mix and seeded 3 acres at West Trout segment of POWMA as a pollinator test plot.

- Planned and administered reed canarygrass control on the Robinson Creek, Cocolalla Lake, BSCWMA, MLWMA, and Clark Fork Delta habitat segments.
- Fertilized 10 acres of established rangeland to improve forage quality on the Thompson Lake segment of the CDARWMA.
- Maintained 4,000 herbaceous and 3,000 woody plants and 16 acres of wetland seed mix and 12 acres of upland perennial seed on the Robinson Creek Segment of the CDARWMA.
- Continue reed canarygrass and broadleaf weed control efforts on Clark Fork Delta project to achieve full establishment of native seeding and seedling plants.
- Continue to expand big game winter range and improve forage condition on POWMA by beginning the conversion of 40 acres of decadent hayfields to big game forage mixes.
- Continue with management efforts to establish the Cocolalla Wetland Restoration Project with excavation of six wetland cells restored on Fish Creek channel.
- Continue weed control projects on the Western White Pine restoration planning on 70+ acres of the FWMA.
- Continue a moist soil management strategy for the BSCWMA and MLWMA wetland complexes to enhance wetland productivity and maintain hemi-marsh conditions.
- Conducted comprehensive noxious weed control/eradication efforts on all of the Panhandle WMAs.
- Continued to engage and collaborate with the USFS St. Joe Ranger District staff to promote elk habitat improvement planning and development on the SPWMA. Elk habitat improvement projects included prescribed burns, timber harvest, and fire breaks.
- Continued to expand big game winter range and improve forage condition on POWMA by beginning the conversion of 40 acres of decadent hayfields to big game forage mixes. This project was completed with the conversion of 42 additional acres of hayfield to big game food plot/perennial forage mix on two parcels (Derr Creek-28 acres/West Trout-14 acres).
- Mowed and fertilized 18 acres of hayfield on Trout Creek segment of POWMA to improve forage quality for big game.
- Continued with management efforts to establish the Cocolalla Wetland Restoration Project with perennial wetland vegetation and restore Fish Creek channel. This project was completed in 2018, by continuing with a third season of noxious weed/reedcanary grass control on eight acres, and planting those areas with forage oat cover crop.
- Completed the Sunnyside Cedar Sale, with direct involvement in all aspects of the timber sale administration in coordination with IDL Forester. This forest management project enhanced 52 acres of mixed conifer forest habitat on this POWMA segment, resulting in over 980 MBF harvest.
- Worked with IDL shared forester to set up contract for 100 acres of pre-commercial thinning on Tall Pines segment of POWMA to improve forest health and big game forage conditions. Project planned for completion in FY19.

Table 9. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Panhandle Region.

Feature	Boundary-Smith Creek	McArthur Lake	Pend Oreille	Farragut	Coeur d'Alene	Snow Peak	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	0	0	18	1325	100	5000	6443
Wetlands (ac)	302	422	2000	0	7825	0	10549
Forest Management (ac)	0	0	32	1325	0	8000	9357
Shelterbelts (ft.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Artificial Nest Structures	42	118	100	0	130	0	390
Food Plots (ac)	11	4	36	0	25	0	76
Nest Cover (ac)	0	0	45	0	60	0	105
Shrub Planting (ac)	5.5	10	8	0	60	0	83.5
Water Mgmt (ac)	735	316	13	0	760	0	1824
Grazing Lands (ac)	0	0	0	0	415	0	415
Riparian (mi)	3.25	0.85	34	0	30	0	68.1
Controlled Burn (ac)	198	0	0	70	0	0	268
Weed Control (ac)	372	75	275	110	360	0	1192
Guzzlers (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ponds/marshes (#)	8	1	16	0	21	0	46

Table 10. New habitat development activities in the Panhandle Region.

Feature	Boundary-Smith Creek	McArthur Lake	Pend Oreille	Farragut	Coeur d'Alene	Snow Peak	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	0	0	24	0	0	0	24
Wetlands (ac)	0	0	8	0	1486	0	1494
Forest Mgmt (ac)	0	0	152	115	0	0	267
Shelterbelts (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Artificial Nests (#)	0	0	0	0	12	0	12
Nesting Cover (ac)	0	0	32	0	25	0	57
HIP Projects (#)	0	0	1	0	1	1	3
Shrub Planting (ac)	11	0	1	0	60	0	72
Shrub Planting (#)	6000	0	450	0	3000	0	9450
Forb Plantings (ac)	0	0	8	0	10	0	18
Livestock water (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian (mi)	0	0	0.8	0	0	0	0.8
New/rebuilt Fence (mi)	0	0	0.3	0.1	0	0	0.4
Fence Removed (mi)	0	0	0.5	0	12	0	12.5

Surveys and Inventory

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

- Regional wildlife habitat biologist assisted with elk mortality searches in North Fork Coeur d'Alene basin.
- Regional wildlife habitat staff assisted with various amphibian wetland and alpine surveys.

- Approximately 2,033 ducks were banded on BSCWMA, MLMWA, POWMA, and CDARWMA.
- Fifty-three mourning doves were banded on the CDARWMA and MLWMA.
- Operated waterfowl hunter check stations on the BSCWMA, MLWMA, POWMA, and CDARWMA.
- Conducted waterfowl migration surveys during the spring and fall migrations on MLWMA and BSCWMA.
- Conducted waterfowl breeding pair/brood counts on BSCWMA and MLMWA.
- Conducted goose nest platform and wood duck nest box surveys on BSCWMA, MLMWA, POWMA, and CDARWMA.
- Monitored Western grebe colonies on POMWA and CDARWMA.
- Monitored Black Tern colonies and heron rookeries at POWMA.
- Conducted pheasant crow counts on the BSCWMA.
- Monitored stream flows and wetland water levels on the BSCWMA and CDARWMA.
- Monitored active eagle nesting sites at eight locations on POWMA and CDARWMA.
- Conducted photo points on the habitat segments acquired through funds from the BPA, which include various habitat segments on POWMA and BSCWMA.
- Monitored noxious weed infestations and evaluated treatment effectiveness on all WMAs.
- The Region worked with IDFG research personnel to develop a LANDSAT eight satellite imagery based spectral signature for *Phragmites australis* in the lower Coeur d'Alene Basin and mapped its distribution using outside (non-PR) grant funds. This survey will provide a basis for future control and wetlands restoration efforts on the CDARWMA in particular and the entire lower basin in general.
- Provided assistance for Gonzaga University's wood duck study by helping them trap and attach radio transmitters.
- Assisted USGS and FWS trap and attach transmitters for a Pacific Flyway cinnamon teal study.

Technical Guidance

Panhandle habitat staff met regularly with the USFS, BLM, ACOE, Environmental Protection Agency, USFWS, NRCS, FSA, Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD), IDL, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). Additionally, contact was maintained with the major private landowners throughout the Panhandle Region including timber companies, large farms and ranches, and hydropower operations. As requested by private entities and as deemed prudent with public entities, Panhandle habitat staff reviewed project proposals and provided input to reduce, eliminate, and/or mitigate for potential wildlife impacts associated with land management activities. Technical assistance specific accomplishments included:

Provide technical assistance to private landowners to improve wildlife habitat:

- Panhandle habitat staff provides technical assistance to private landowners interested in improving wildlife habitat on their lands. Some efforts are coordinated through the USDA agencies. Funding assistance using IDFG's Habitat Improvement Program (HIP) was used if warranted by project need. Assistance will primarily occur across 5 northern counties within agriculture areas.

- In FY18, habitat staff provided technical assistance to approximately 5 private landowners to help improve wildlife habitat on 184 acres.

Provide technical habitat and population management advice to public and private landowners and other agencies in order to sustain or enhance wildlife resources:

- Panhandle habitat staff completed 58 technical assistance contacts and consultations that provided benefits to fish and wildlife on 56,000 acres.
- Panhandle habitat staff provided technical assistance to private industry, local, city, county, state, and federal agencies and representatives, NGOs, soil and water conservation districts, resource collaborative groups and restoration partnerships.
- Habitat staff are actively involved in two county-based resource groups, which are the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative and the Shoshone-Benewah Forest Health Collaborative. Both groups review land use and environmental-based projects in their counties (Boundary, Shoshone, and Benewah counties) and provide recommendations back to the land agency or organization. Habitat staff provided information to the groups to make informed decisions.
- Habitat staff actively participate in Inland Empire and Selkirk CWMA activities. This included several collaborative meetings and group noxious weed control projects. CWMAs cover most of the 5 northern counties and facilitates information and funding exchange between County Weed Superintendents, habitat staff, and other participating members.
- Habitat and diversity program staff provides assistance to ITD to specifically include one annual coordination meeting and planning on three highway-related habitat and wildlife passage projects. Projects include a timber removal project to improve wildlife and public safety on the MLWMA, roadside pollinator habitat improvements across the Panhandle, and planning to improve wildlife passage within the McArthur Corridor through development of new bridge.
- Panhandle regional habitat staff worked with the USFS St. Joe Ranger District to conduct elk habitat assessments, an environmental assessment (EA) report, and Habitat Restoration Plan (Plan) for the 33,000-acre SPWMA. The EA and plan is scheduled to be complete in FY19 and over half of the WMA will receive vegetation treatments (timber harvest and controlled burns) to improve elk habitat over the next 10 years. Cooperative efforts will allow landscape vegetation management projects to occur across land ownerships.
- The habitat staff worked on the USFS Panhandle Forest Collaborative to better implement the Panhandle Forest Plan across North Idaho.
- The habitat staff worked with the Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Partnership to develop and implement the Coeur d'Alene Basin Restoration Plan as part of the Hecla and Asarco mining settlements and funding within the Coeur d'Alene River Basin. The EA and Plan will be completed in FY18 and project selection and implementation will begin.
- Habitat and Diversity program staff provided ITD assistance in developing a North Idaho Pollinator seed mix for future ITD Highway expansion programs in the region. ITD has reviewed and accepted seed mix, and plans to incorporate it into the Highway 41 Expansion Project's revegetation plan planned for 2020-2021.

- Regional habitat staff continues to provide technical assistance to the US Army Corps of Engineers (Albeni Falls Dam) on shoreline stabilization efforts on USACE lands managed by IDFG, to include more extensive vegetation restoration components integrated into their design criteria.
- Regional habitat staff will provide assistance to US Army Corps of Engineers (Albeni Falls Dam) to determine the feasibility and process to initiate forest management activities (specifically timber harvest) on USACE lands managed by IDFG for wildlife, forest health and public use objectives as identified in our 2014 POWMA Management Plan.

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 coordinated with and provided technical assistance to the NRCS, ACOE, USFS, BLM, the Clearwater Basin Collaborative (CBC), and Selway Wilderness noxious weed managers (USFS, Idaho County, and Nez Perce Tribe [NPT]). 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, five WHAs encompassing 1,701 acres. Habitat staff coordinated and managed budgets, including both state and federal funding. Additional accomplishments included:

- Participate in training including Herbicide Safety and noxious weed ecology and management training, ATV operation and safety, field first aid, supervision and leadership, New Employee Orientation Training, NRCS-TSP, Idaho Chapter Wildlife Society meeting, Water Rights training.
- Authored or participate in newspaper articles and county newsletter articles on wildlife-related issues.
- Provide presentations, lectures, and field tours on habitat-related issues during sportsmen's breakfasts, public meetings, and as requested by other groups.
- Coordinate with Avista Corporation on forestry and access related issues with transmission lines and line repairs on CMWMA.
- Trained one new biologist to duties and responsibilities.
- Trained two biologists on CRP enhancements and Continuous CRP implementation techniques.
- Work with Communication Bureau staff to create outreach material highlighting IDFG activities.
- Assisted with revision of IDFG upland game bird plans.
- Participated in the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) Jakes Day, All Star hunter education youth clinic, Hunt & Fish Idaho, Environmental Awareness Days, and Steelhead in the Classroom.
- Mentor high school and college students who had interest in outdoor conservation.
- Participated in Commission meetings.
- Assisted Headquarters staff on developing a monitoring platform for statewide infrastructure on WMAs.

Operations and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance activities provided quality habitat, public hunting and other wildlife-oriented recreation on approximately 128,000 acres of WMAs, WHAs, and conservation easements in the Clearwater Region (Table 11).

Table 11. Areas operated and maintained in the Clearwater Region.

Area	Acres
Red River WMA	314
Craig Mountain WMA	124,445 ^a
Joseph Plains WHA	1,300
South Fork Clearwater	330
Aspendale WHA	13
Fir Island WHA	38
Paradise WHA	19

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

Operation and Maintenance activities (Table 12) in the Clearwater Region included:

- Maintained 192.7 miles of road.
- Maintained 45.5 miles of fence and boundary markers.
- Maintained 38 buildings associated with WMAs.
- Maintained 7 parking areas associated with WMAs.
- Maintained 8 water developments associated with WMAs.
- Maintained 5,000 tree, shrub, and grass plantings along 1.5 miles of stream on Red River WMA (RRWMA).
- Monitored noxious weeds on over 100,000 acres. This included chemically treating over 350 acres and assessing and spot treating along over 150 miles of roads and trails on CMWMA (no PR funds were used to purchase or apply herbicides).
- Received two grants (\$12,000 and \$240,000) from BLM to help control noxious weeds on CMWMA.
- Maintained facilities at Red River WMA (RRWMA) and at Billy Creek, Wapshilla Creek, and Benton Meadows administrative facilities and six back-country cabins.
- Fire-proofed 3 remote cabins on CMWMA.
- Continued repairing thrust cement floors on RRWMA garage.
- Repaired front deck at RRWMA by replacing cement patio with trex deck.
- Rebuilt 2 back-country cabins (Hermit Springs and Frenchy Creek) for public use that was lost in the 2014 Big Cougar fire on CMWMA.
- Constructed a parking area and installed public information signs on the recently acquired Gaiser property.
- Maintained 11 miles of roads specifically for mobility-impaired sportsmen on CMWMA.
- Maintained seasonal motorized route on Redbird segment of CMWMA.
- Restored and maintained 23 miles of road specifically for sportsmen, BLM, emergency, and administrative access to the Salmon River from the CMWMA.
- Inventoried 100 acres for noxious weeds on RRWMA.

- Spot-treated noxious weeds on RRWMA.
- Inventoried property boundary fence on Redbird Canyon, CMWMA in preparation for developing a plan for constructing and repairing all fences on Redbird and Crowers canyons.
- Conducted significant repair/maintenance on Wapshilla Ranch on CMWMA.
- Worked with Idaho Aeronautics to establish a public airstrip at Wapshilla Ranch on CMWMA.
- Opened up over 20 miles of trails for sportsmen and administrative use on CMWMA.
- Developed a 3-year project plan for opening, maintaining, and constructing over 120 miles of trails on CMWMA for sportsmen and firefighting use.
- Repaired/checked over 20 miles of cattle fence on CMWMA.
- Established fencing to protect riparian plantings on RRWMA.
- Facilitated snow machine travel on CMWMA by designating routes.

Table 12. Facilities operated and maintained in the Clearwater Region.

Feature	Craig Mountain	Red River	TOTAL
Roads (mi)	192.7	0	192.7
Trails (mi)	30	0	30
Maintained Fence (mi)	45.5	3	48.5
Parking Areas	7	2	9
Informational Signs	8	2	10
Buildings	28	5	33
Restrooms	1	0	1
Water Structures	8	0	8
Irrigation			
Wells/pumps	0	0	0
Dikes (mi)	0	0	0
Irrigation Pipe (mi)	0	0	0
Irrigation Ditch (mi)	0	0	0
Canal (mi)	0	0	0
Center Pivot	0	0	0

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

Habitat Development

By combining IDFG HIP funds, funds from outside grants, and NRCS Farm Bill funds, Clearwater staff was able to maximize enhancement of private lands for upland birds and other wildlife species. IDFG license funds, PR funds, and BPA funds were utilized to accomplish the majority of habitat developments on IDFG lands (Tables 13 and 14).

Improved wildlife habitat on IDFG lands:

- Continue maintenance of shrub plantings and a grazing exclosure at RRWMA. Built an additional exclosure to protect shrubs from browsing. Goal is to establish riparian community where one historically occurred.
- Managed 40 acres of haying lease on RRWMA for elk forage rejuvenation.

- Maintained grazing exclosures on CMWMA.
- Planted 44,000 conifer seedlings on 134 acres of big game winter range to help regeneration after the 2014 wildfire.
- Mechanically removed 2.5 acres of tree of heaven on CMWMA and followed up with a prescribed burn to remove vegetative material.
- Used herbicides to control reemerging tree of heaven on CMWMA totaling 2.5 acres.
- Removed approximately five miles of fence from CMWMA.
- Installed 48 wood duck boxes on CMWMA to help monitor waterfowl use on the WMA.
- Installed several beaver dam analogs as a way to restore hydrology to help improve forage and calving habitat for elk and other animals on CMWMA.
- Prepped 3 acres of food plots on CMWMA for upland and big game.
- Planted conifers to revegetate areas burned in 2014 wildfire. Contracted to plant 44,000 conifer seedlings on CMWMA.
- Managed wet meadow complex for biodiversity and big game forage on RRWMA.
- Coordinated with Latah SWCD on private land wildlife habitat projects.

Improved wildlife habitat on private lands:

- Continued working with 6 landowners with lands adjacent to Thorn Creek. Implemented over 8 miles of riparian forest buffers, over 80 acres of SAFE, and 30 acres of non-USDA program enhancements.
- Planted over 21,000 shrubs on 6 private land parcels in Latah County covering over 95 acres.
- Planted over 30,000 sedges and rushes on 6 private land parcels in Latah County as part of the Thorn Creek Restoration Project.
- Worked on approximately 90 private lands projects resulting in approximately 4,000 acres of habitat development or enhancement.
- Lead SAFE contract development on approximately 4,000 acres in 11 counties.
- Installed, maintained and monitored approximately 100 acres of upland game habitat as part of the Thorn Creek Project. Sedge, rush, tree, shrub, grass, and forb planting have been accomplished on the majority of the project.
- Created and maintained new upland game habitat through the Farm Bill program and our Regional habitat improvement programs.
- Worked with private landowners to create upland wildlife habitat as part of HIP.

Improved wildlife habitat on other public lands:

- Placed 112 releases (600 weevils) of bio-control for spotted knapweed (*Cyphocleonus achates*) in the Selway Wilderness and Kelly Creek at 28 sites.
- Coordinated with IDL on silvicultural projects throughout CMWMA and discussed strategic forest management on IDFG lands throughout the Region.

Table 13. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Clearwater Region.

Feature	Craig Mountain	Red River	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	88,414	0	88,414
Wetlands (ac)	2,249	0	0
Forest Management (ac)	55,075	0	55,075
Shelterbelts (ft.)	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (ac)	0	0	0
Artificial Nest Structures	0	0	0
Food Plots (ac)	3	0	3
Nest Cover (ac)	3	0	3
Shrub/Tree Planting (ac)	134	5	139
Water Mgmt (ac)	0	0	0
Grazing/Haying Lands (ac)	1,360	40	1,400
Riparian (mi)	0	2.5	2.5
Controlled Burn (ac)	2.5	0	2.5
Weed Control (ac)	0	100	100
Guzzlers (#)	8	0	8
Ponds/marshes (#)	6	0	6

Table 14. New habitat development activities in the Clearwater Region.

Feature	Craig Mountain	Red River	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	134	0	134
Wetlands (ac)	3	0	3
Forest Mgmt (ac)	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (mi)	0	0	0
Artificial Nests (#)	48	3	51
Nesting Cover (ac)	1	0	1
HIP Projects (#)	0	0	11
Shrub/Tree Planting (ac)	134	2	136
Shrub/Tree Planting (#)	44,000	0	44,000
Forb Plantings (ac)	1	0	45
Livestock water (#)	0	0	0
Riparian (mi)	.5	0	8.5
New/rebuilt Fence (mi)	0	0	0
Fence Removed (mi)	5	0	5

Surveys and Inventory

The objective of this project was to collect current public use information on IDFG-managed lands, including public use levels, activities, and harvest information; collect current information on wildlife habitat and population characteristics on lands managed by IDFG; 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 brood route surveys.
- Assisted research staff with placing elk monitoring cameras.
- Assisted population staff with wolf rendezvous site surveys.
- Assisted botanist with Spalding's Catchfly rare plant species weeding project in Ten Mile Canyon on CMWMA.
- Assisted population staff with placing wolf monitoring cameras.
- Assisted population staff with retrieving elk monitoring collars.
- Continued surveying and mapping noxious weeds across CMWMA.
- Conducted seven photo point surveys along the Thorn Creek Restoration Project.
- Assisted with 12 big game/upland game surveys.
- Inventoried 100 acres and mapped noxious weeds on RRWMA.
- Assisted non-game biologist in conducting Hells Canyon snail surveys on CMWMA.
- Continued surveys for potential Palouse Prairie remnant parcels for the presence of native vegetation plant communities.
- Monitored with USFS post burn habitats across national forestlands in relation to habitat effectiveness for elk. Conducted preliminary assessments.
- Coordinated IDFG personnel and with the CBC for their Wildlife Habitat Restoration Initiative to monitor 114 and 25 previously radio-collared elk across the Clearwater Region and the St. Joe NF, respectively.
- Trained and supervised 5 seasonal field botanists and one graduate student and assisted with and completed 271 vegetation surveys within the Clearwater and lower Panhandle Regions.
- Surveyed 26 points replicated over 3 days targeting pheasant densities at Thorn Creek habitat project area.
- Surveyed 26 points replicated over 4 days targeting migratory song birds at Thorn Creek habitat project area.
- Conducted 18 vegetation surveys at Thorn Creek habitat project area.
- Facilitated the installation of continuous water quality survey equipment on 2 locations and 9 discrete sampling stations at Thorn Creek habitat project area.
- Conducted public use/upland bird wing survey on CMWMA.
- Continued collaboration with CBC.
 - Conducted vegetation surveys to evaluate elk habitat carrying capacity throughout the Clearwater and lower Panhandle Regions to inform USFS and state management plans for restoration planning.

- Collared, tracked and monitored elk populations aimed to (1) understand differential population dynamics among and within herds of the Clearwater and lower Panhandle Regions of Idaho; (2) gather pertinent summer habitat use data to identify nutritional limitations which will inform and validate nutrition models; and (3) assess seasonal variation in animal condition relative to reproductive state.
- Conducted water quality, photo point, vegetation, songbird, and upland game bird surveys on Thorn Creek habitat project.
- Assisted population staff with deploying wolf, fisher, and elk trail cameras.
- Assisted with mussel collections, harlequin duck surveys, and upland bird routes.
- Assisted with Big Game Check stations.
- Assisted with depredation program in clipping vegetation to evaluate losses in target fields.

Technical Guidance

Habitat staff provides 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. Technical assistance includes the following:

- Working closely with the public, including private landowners, to maintain and improve habitat on both public and private lands.
- Providing technical assistance to NRCS through the TSP program.
- Providing outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Sharing information with internal and external customers.

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 provided funding or Contribution Agreement. The IDFG greatly expanded our landowner contacts and ability to affect large acres of habitat for upland birds and other wildlife species through the Contribution Agreement in combination with HIP and the Landowner Incentives Program funds. The IDFG received funding from 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 technical support to the USFS in the development of a Forest Management Plan for the Clearwater/Nez Perce Forest.
- Continued implementing the SAFE project across 11 Idaho counties to improve and protect habitat for high priority wildlife species.
- Habitat Biologists assisted the Environmental Staff Biologist with IDFG input on proposed projects within respective habitat districts. Provided significant comments concerning USFS timber projects, USFS river recreation and development, ACOE Dworshak Travel and Recreation Plan, BLM Resource Management Plans, IDL timber sales, rock quarry development, grazing leases, and outfitter and guide issues.
- Participated on the Tri-State Weed Management Committee, the Salmon River Weed Management Committee, the Clearwater Weed Management Committee, Palouse Weed

Cooperative Management Committee, Dworshak Master Planning Committee, and Regional NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program technical committees.

- Worked on local committees for the RMEF, NWTF, and worked with Palouse Land Trust, Palouse Soil and Water Conservation District, and Backcountry Horsemen Association.
- Provided technical guidance to the Idaho Outfitter and Guides Board on outfitter issues on CMWMA.
- Provided technical guidance to Lapwai Water District.
- Provided technical guidance on Dworshak Advisory Committee.
- Continued working with USFS to accomplish habitat objectives identified in the Statewide Elk Management Plan.
- Participated on the CBC and provided technical guidance on elk monitoring, vegetation surveys, wild and scenic rivers designations, monitoring advisory committee, habitat restoration initiative, and landscape forest health.
- Provided technical guidance to the ACOE on creation of a Wildlife Management Plan for Dworshak Reservoir.
- Provided technical guidance to noxious weed managers (USFS, Idaho County, NPT) in the Selway Wilderness.
- Provided technical assistance to the Palouse Conservation District on what farming practices are wildlife-friendly and provided guidance on their project ranking.
- Participated in the Craig Mountain/Joseph Plains Long-Range Fire Management Working Group.
- Worked with adjacent landowners and members of the public on motorized and administrative access related issues on Craig Mountain WMA (CMWMA).
- Coordinated with BPA, BLM, TNC, and NPT on CMWMA management, including the Dworshak Advisory Committee.
- Coordinated with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF), the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation (IFWF), and private landowners on Joseph Plains WHA management.
- Participated on a Clearwater Wildlife Habitat Restoration Team with USFS, Clearwater Nez Perce National Forest.
- Coordinated with USFS on Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project in the Clear Creek drainage east of Kooskia, Idaho and on the North Fork Clearwater River.
- Coordinated with USFS regarding integrating IDFG wildlife staff into forest and zone planning efforts and increasing wildlife staff capacity.
- Collaborated with ACOE on protecting, enhancing, and cultivating elk forage.
- Coordinated with the Clearwater Nez Perce National Forest on opening trails for sportsman access.
- Coordinated with IDL, BLM, and NPT to hold annual Craig Mountain Cooperative Management meeting regarding cooperative fire management on the CMWMA and surrounding areas.
- Participated in Frank Church Wilderness Working Group meeting.
- Participated in Nez Perce County Office of Emergency Management meeting.
- Participated in USFS Regional Outfitters and Guides Annual meeting.

Regional Notes

A 55,000-acre fire on CMWMA started on July 14, 2017. Two lightning strikes resulted in a large rangeland wildfire on the WMA. IDFG personnel played an active role in coordination and served as a resource advisor for incident command. After the fire, IDFG personnel worked closely with IDL and BLM on fire rehabilitation efforts.

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, share information with internal and external customers, and manage 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 WMA (FBWMA), Boise River WMA (BRWMA), Cecil D. Andrus WMA (AWMA), C.J. Strike WMA (CJWMA), Montour WMA (MWMA), and Payette River WMA (PRWMA). 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 Sub-region, 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 Foreman assists with operation and maintenance on Habitat Program facilities when not working on Fishing and Boating Access sites.
- One Volunteer Services Coordinator utilizes a volunteer work force to implement habitat improvement projects throughout the region.

Operations and Maintenance

The Southwest Region operates and maintains buildings, structures, and other infrastructure on the following regional WMAs, WHAs, and conservation easements, totaling 93,212 acres, to provide wildlife habitat, public hunting, and other wildlife-oriented recreation. Table 15 includes acreages of the region's WMAs, WHAs, and easements.

Table 15. Areas operated and maintained in the Southwest Region.

Area	Acres
Payette River WMA	1,251
Montour WMA	1,561
Fort Boise WMA	1,608
C.J. Strike WMA	10,065
Boise River WMA	37,000
Cecil D. Andrus WMA	23,928
Mann Creek WHA	325
Roswell Marsh WHA	676

Area	Acres
Ted Trueblood WHA	292
Rocking M CE Easement	16,506

Operation and Maintenance activities (Table 16) in the Southwest Region included:

- Maintained 101.2 miles of roads and trails with associated gates, culverts, bridges, and signs.
- Maintained 171.3 miles of fences and boundary markers.
- Maintained 32 buildings, restrooms, and other structures.
- Maintained 41 gravel parking areas and associated signs.
- Maintained 158 water control structures.
- Maintained 21 miles of dikes.
- Treated 1,085 acres of weeds on lands owned or managed by IDFG.

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

- Boat Shed improvement project at CJWMA.
- Fences maintained and repaired at CJWMA and AWMA.
- Maintained structures and other facilities at backcountry WHAs in the Southwest Region.
- Completed installing 2 head gates on the irrigation system at MWMA.

Table 16. Facilities operated and maintained in the Southwest Region.

Feature	Cecil D. Andrus	Fort Boise	Montour	Payette	Boise River	C.J. Strike	TOTAL
Roads (mi)	19	14	8.7	5	45	2.5	94.2
Trails (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	7	7
Maintained Fence (mi)	89	0.4	0.8	1.6	75	4.5	171.3
Parking Areas	3	9	8	10	8	3	41
Informational Signs	3	3	8	10	8	6	38
Buildings	22	5	0	0	3	2	32
Restrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water Structures	42	38	12	15	48	3	158
Irrigation Wells/pumps	0	6	0	1	0	1	8
Dikes (mi)	0	14	2	2.8	0	2.2	21
Irrigation Pipe (mi)	0	0.5	3	5	0	0.5	9
Irrigation Ditch (mi)	0	2.5	0	0	0	1	3.5
Canal (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Center Pivot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Habitat Development

Habitat development (Tables 17 and 18) 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 on IDFG-managed lands.
- Developed additional wildlife habitat to support increased production on IDFG-managed lands.

- 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 1,413 acres of IDFG-managed land.
- Managed water levels on 843 acres of ponds and wetlands to improve waterfowl nesting and brood-rearing habitat.
- Maintained, replaced, or installed 160 waterfowl nest structures. A late winter freeze of rivers and windy days prevented maintenance and installation of remaining structures.
- Planted and maintained 55 acres of food plots.
- Restored 29,950 acres of fire-affected winter range by planting or seeding grasses, shrubs, and forbs.
- Managed livestock grazing and noxious weed spraying on 750 acres of upland habitat in order to help control noxious weeds.
- Coordinated with federal agencies and provided native seed for winter range improvements to federal lands affected by wildfire.
- The volunteer program planted 35,000 shrubs throughout the region.

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.
- Improved 2.8 miles of riparian corridor.
- Worked with 4 landowners to plant 3,850 bitterbrush shrubs in mule deer winter range.
- Installed 16 beaver dam analogs on two creeks.
- Initiated 12 upland projects to establish 2,742 acres of wildlife habitat on private land, including cost-share agreements using IDFG HIP funds.

Table 17. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Southwest Region.

Feature	Cecil D. Andrus	Fort Boise	Montour	Payette	Boise River	C.J. Strike	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	23,928	0	0	0	37,000	0	60,928
Wetlands (ac)	0	263	63	42	0	475	843
Forest Management (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (ft.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Artificial Nest Structures	0	35	0	0	0	38	233^a
Food Plots (ac)	0	6	10	11	0	28	55
Nest Cover (ac)	0	0	10	11	0	0	21
Shrub Planting (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water Mgmt (ac)	0	56	63	42	0	700	861
Grazing Lands (ac)	23,928	183	0	0	15,528	750	40,389
Riparian (mi)	26	4	6	6.5	18	2	62.5
Controlled Burn (ac)	0	14.5	0	0	0	0	14.5
Weed Control (ac)	474	69	0	69	51.4	750	1,413.4
Guzzlers (#)	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Ponds/marshes (#)	1	11	5	8	0	6	31

^a Includes 160 artificial nest structures maintained by volunteer program.

Table 18. New habitat development activities in the Southwest Region.

Feature	Cecil D. Andrus	Fort Boise	Montour	Payette	Boise River	C.J. Strike	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	0	0	0	0	328	0	328
Wetlands (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Mgmt (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Artificial Nests (#)	0	0	0	0	0	8	8
Nesting Cover (ac)	0	0	10	11	0	0	21
HIP Projects (#)	0	0	0	0	0	1	12^a
Shrub Planting (ac)	13	4	6.3	0	131	0	154.3
Shrub Planting (#)	3,000	10,400	3,000	0	29,950	0	81,350^a
Forb Plantings (ac)	0	0	0	0	131	0	131
Livestock water (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian (mi)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
New/rebuilt Fence (mi)	0.5	0.4	0	0	0.4	2	3.3
Fence Removed (mi)	0	0.4	0	0	0	0.5	0.9

^a Includes HIP projects completed by staff not associated with a WMA.

Surveys and Inventory

Survey and inventory activities included:

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

Public use information collected included:

- Quantified visitor use on IDFG-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 FBWMA.
- Monitored use and success of hunters on AWMA using season-long hunter check-in procedures.

Surveys on IDFG lands:

- Conducted annual brood pair counts on WMAs prioritizing waterfowl production.
- Conducted herd composition counts on BRWMA mule deer winter range.
- Measured livestock grazing forage utilization on IDFG lands under grazing management plans.
- Continued geographic information systems training and software support for WMA personnel so they may document and communicate wildlife habitat and population information about IDFG lands.

Regional wildlife surveys:

- Trapped and banded migratory birds, including mourning doves and ducks.
- Conducted counts of sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse leks and roadside counts for other game birds, including pheasants, quail, and mourning doves.
- Andrus staff assisted with elk aerial sightability surveys in Weiser and Brownlee elk zones and Game Management Unit (GMU) 39.
- Assisted with GMU 39 aerial mule deer surveys.
- Collected and analyzed condition and location information for big game traffic mortalities around BRWMA.
- 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.
- Monitored and clipped seven exclosure cages to determine domestic livestock and wildlife use on the Charcoal Creek segment of the Boise River WMA.

Technical Guidance

Technical guidance included:

- Provided technical assistance regarding wildlife impacts related to livestock management and motorized travel management to USFS, BLM, and University of Idaho Rangeland program.
- Provided comments on nine NRCS Conservation Plans contracting brush management.
- Advised CWMA's on noxious weed control issues relative to wildlife habitat.
- Participated in the interagency wetland review group.
- Participated 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 of wildlife habitat by City of Boise, Ridge to Rivers Partnership for recreational trails, Harris Ranch Wildlife Mitigation Association, Idaho Foundation for Parks and Recreation, and the interagency Healthy Hills Initiative.
- Participated in the Weiser River Soil Conservation District USDA local working group to assist in project priorities. Participated in the Ada, Canyon, Owyhee, Adams, and Washington USDA working group meetings.
- Advised Boise River Enhancement Network on two riparian projects.
- Provided technical assistance and information to Federal Emergency Management Agency in regards to flood damage to FBWMA.
- Provided technical assistance and information to Private Corporation regarding the use of natural wetlands for water quality treatment.
- Provided technical assistance to the Barber Pool Advisory Council/Idaho Foundation for Parks and Recreation.
- Provided technical assistance to the Barber Valley Neighborhood Association and Harris Ranch Mitigation Association.

- Provided technical assistance to the Ada County Fire Adapted Community.
- Provided technical assistance to ITD to improve wildlife passage and habitat connectivity by developing a wildlife overpass within the SH-21 Corridor.
- Provided technical assistance to Ada County on the Red Hawk Trail property.
- Provided technical assistance to Interagency Healthy Hills Initiative.
- Provided technical assistance to the City of Boise and Ada County regarding habitat mitigation on 236 acres from residential development.
- Provided technical assistance to three private landowners regarding habitat rehabilitation on 75 acres.
- Provided technical assistance to the BLM regarding the MM14 Fire Rehabilitation Proposal for 4,700 acres of the BRWMA.
- Regional habitat staff will provide technical assistance to the BLM regarding the installation of an Idaho Power Distribution Line from Horseshoe Bend to Garden Valley on 127 acres.

MAGIC VALLEY REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Magic Valley Region maintained contact and liaison with federal, state, and local government and private entities within the region regarding fish and wildlife habitat modifications plus population monitoring. Habitat staff worked with regional staff, reservists, etc., on WMA habitat projects, access sites, isolated tracts, or other public lands projects as needed.

Regional habitat staff held coordination meetings with the BLM and USFS regional staff to discuss issues and provide project updates. Regional staff attended County Commissioner meetings, NRCS and Farm Services Agency (FSA) meetings, and sportsmen organizational meetings and banquets to discuss fish and wildlife habitat modifications and population monitoring in the Magic Valley Region. Regional habitat staff worked with regional staff, reservists, and volunteers on numerous projects in the Magic Valley Region. The majority of work conducted included habitat improvement, public access, and population monitoring projects.

Operations and Maintenance

Operated and maintained facilities, buildings, fences, gates, irrigation water delivery systems, roads, and infrastructure on six WMAs to provide wildlife habitat, public hunting, wildlife viewing, wildlife conservation education, and other wildlife-related recreational opportunities on 10,857 acres of IDFG-managed lands. Magic Valley Region WMAs are listed in Table 19.

Table 19. Areas operated and maintained in the Magic Valley Region.

Area	Acres
Hagerman WMA	1,024
Billingsley Creek WMA	277
Centennial Marsh WMA	6,190
Carey Lake WMA	759
Big Cottonwood WMA	1,444
Niagara Springs WMA	1,163

Operation and Maintenance activities (Table 20) in the Magic Valley Region included:

- Nine miles of hiking and horseback riding trails for public access to IDFG-managed lands.
- 15 miles of fence.
- 18 miles of unimproved roads.
- 17 vehicle parking areas.
- Six restrooms.
- Gated, wheel, and hand-line irrigation pipe.
- 12.5 miles of irrigation canals and laterals.
- Maintained and repaired eight project buildings and equipment.
- Operated and maintained 35 water structures.

Table 20. Facilities operated and maintained in the Magic Valley Region.

Feature	Billingsley Creek	Hagerman	Niagara Springs	Centennial Marsh	Carey Lake	Big Cottonwood	TOTAL
Roads (mi)	1	1	11	1	2	2	18
Trails (mi)	0	2	6	0	0	1	9
Maintained Fence (mi)	3	3.5	1	5	.5	2	15
Parking Areas	2	5	5	2	2	1	17
Informational Signs	2	3	2	3	0	4	14
Buildings	0	2	1	2	1	2	8
Restrooms	1	2	1	1	1	0	6
Water Structures	0	12	4	13	3	3	35
Irrigation Wells/pumps	0	2	1	5	1	1	6
Dikes (mi)	0	1	.5	0	1	0	2.5
Irrigation Pipe (mi)	0	4	3	3	17	4	31
Irrigation Ditch (mi)	0	5	3	1	1.5	2	12.5
Canal (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Center Pivot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Habitat Development

Habitat development projects (Tables 21 and 22) in the Magic Valley included:

- Managed water levels throughout winter on 25 acres of water impoundment areas at Hagerman WMA (HWMA) to provide refuge for 30,000 wintering waterfowl.
- Provided 190 acres of wetlands vegetation on HWMA and Billingsley Creek WMA (BCWMA) to provide thermal and escape cover for wintering upland birds.
- Provided 6.2 miles of shelterbelts on Carey Lake WMA (CLWMA), Big Cottonwood WMA (BGCWMA), and HWMA to provide cover and food.
- Irrigated 750 acres of herbaceous cover for nesting habitat on Camas Prairie-Centennial Marsh WMA (CPCMWMA), HWMA, Niagara Springs WMA (NSWMA), BGCWMA, and CLWMA.
- Maintained 147 artificial nesting platforms for waterfowl on Camas CPCMWMA, CLWMA, and HWMA.
- Inventoried and/or controlled weeds on 4,480 acres on WMAs.
- Maintained water levels for 1,390 acres of wetlands on NSWMA, BCWMA, HWMA, CLWMA, CPCMWMA, and BGCWMA.
- Planted and irrigated 66 acres of food plots on CLWMA and NSWMA.
- Improved cover and species composition on approximately 30 acres of irrigated nesting fields and shelterbelts at NSWMA.

Table 21. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Magic Valley Region.

Feature	Billingsley Creek	Hagerman	Niagara Springs	Centennial Marsh	Carey Lake	Big Cottonwood	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	5	5
Wetlands (ac)	40	45	35	1,020	250	0	1,390
Forest Management (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (ft.)	0	0	850	0	3,800	2,800	7,250
Shelterbelts (ac)	0	0	1	0	14	5	20
Artificial Nest Structures	2	20	16	100	10	0	147
Food Plots (ac)	0	20	10	0	25	11	66
Nest Cover (ac)	0	55	66	466	83	80	750
Shrub Planting (ac)	0	0	1	0	14	5	20
Water Mgmt (ac)	0	272	23	3,400	405	0	4,100
Grazing Lands (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian (mi)	2.3	3.5	7.5	5.2	1.2	2.3	22
Controlled Burn (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weed Control (ac)	0	35	275	60	15	75	482
Guzzlers (#)	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Ponds/marshes (#)	2	15	6	17	2	0	42

Table 22. New habitat development activities in the Magic Valley Region.

Feature	Billingsley Creek	Hagerman	Niagara Springs	Centennial Marsh	Carey Lake	Big Cottonwood	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetlands (ac)	40	45	35	1,020	250	0	1,390
Forest Mgmt (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (mi)	0	0	1	0	14	5	20
Artificial Nests (#)	2	20	16	100	10	0	147
Nesting Cover (ac)	0	55	66	466	83	80	750
HIP Projects (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shrub Planting (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shrub Planting (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forb Plantings (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Livestock water (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
New/rebuilt Fence (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fence Removed (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Surveys and Inventory

The following work projects were completed to collect current public-use information on IDFG-managed lands including recreational uses, opinions, hunting success, and harvest:

- Installed and collected trailhead sign-in registers, survey boxes, and conducted random field surveys to determine visitor use on WMAs. Conducted random field checks of hunters on opening day of specific hunts and on weekends.
- Mapped noxious weed infestations and treatment areas using GPS and ArcView software on IDFG-owned lands.
- Assisted regional IDFG 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.
- Maintained user survey boxes on WMAs.

The following work projects were completed to collect and obtain current fish and wildlife habitat and population characteristics throughout the Magic Valley Region for statewide management recommendations:

- Assisted regional population biologists, BLM, and USFS biologists with the following field projects:
 - Conducted winter flock counts of turkeys on BGCWMA.
 - Conducted surveys for bighorn sheep on the BGCWMA and adjacent drainages prior to domestic sheep trailing periods.
 - Participated in conducting mid-winter waterfowl counts at the HWMA.
 - Collected harvest and other data at big game check stations.
 - Conducted pronghorn surveys.
 - Picked up inactive big game collars.
 - Conducted sage-grouse lek counts.
 - Flew aerial surveys for big game and sage-grouse.
 - Conducted Sandhill crane counts.
 - Monitored transects in rehab areas to determine percent survival of planted seedlings.
- Monitored habitat restoration plantings, and public response/acceptance, etc. to wildlife management programs and policies.

Technical Guidance

Staff provided 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. Technical assistance included:

- Provided 17 written comments regarding proposed land management practices to city, county, state, and federal agencies.
- Provided technical assistance to 25 private landowners wishing to improve habitat for wildlife resources.
- Worked with IDFG MDI Coordinator and the Mule Deer Foundation to plan and implement a habitat rehabilitation project in the Bennett Hills on big game winter range.

- Regional habitat staff will provide technical assistance to BLM-Twin Falls District and USFS-Sawtooth National Forest regarding restoration efforts following wildfires. Regional habitat staff reviewed habitat restoration plans and participated in post-fire tours with IDL, BLM, and USFS.
- Regional habitat staff will continue to provide technical assistance to University of Idaho (U of I), TNC, and Wood River Land Trust (WRLT) regarding management of Rinker Rock Creek Ranch research extension facility. Regional habitat staff participated in tours of Rinker Rock Creek Ranch with staff from U of I, TNC, and WRLT.

SOUTHEAST REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Southeast Region worked to establish and maintain an efficient workforce organized to fulfill annual project objectives of the region's Wildlife Habitat Management Program. In the Southeast Region this includes 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, one seasonal technician, and one part-time year-round technician for general habitat management. Habitat biologists directly supervised temporary employees.

Regional habitat staff held coordination meetings with the BLM, USFS, IDL, and BOR regional staff to discuss issues and provide project updates. Regional staff attended coordination meetings with multiple CWMAs, grazing associations, and irrigation districts; they attended sportsmen banquets to discuss fish and wildlife habitat projects and population monitoring in the Southeast Region. Regional habitat staff worked with regional staff, reservists, volunteers, and a developing Master Naturalist group on regional projects and educational activities. The majority of activities included habitat improvement projects, public use monitoring, educational field trips and trainings for volunteers and Master Naturalists, and wildlife population monitoring projects. Staff also is participating on the team revising the statewide Upland Game Management Plan and participates on the statewide Lands Committee.

Operations and Maintenance

The Southeast Region operated and maintained buildings, structures, and infrastructure on five WMAs, one Nature Area, and one Wildlife Habitat Area. Of the 17,000 acres involved, the majority are managed as WMAs. The IDFG is also directly responsible for assisting with the administration of the Soda Hills Wildlife Mitigation Area and private property enrolled in the HIP and the MDI. Southeast Region WMAs, WHA, and acreages are provided in Table 23.

Table 23. Areas 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
Dingle Swamp WHA	80

Operation and Maintenance activities (Table 24) in the Southeast Region included:

- Maintained approximately 26 miles of roads and 6 miles of trails and 28 parking areas by mowing, spraying, graveling, and grading to provide good quality and controlled access.
- Maintained 5 road vehicles, 2 ATVs, one UTV, 2 farm tractors, implements, and trailers.
- Blackfoot River WMA (BWMA) – obtained UBC grant and internal funding for fencing projects to facilitate grazing exchange program.
- Completed one mile of road rebedding and upgrade towards west entrance of Portneuf WMA (PWMA). Initiated rebedding and upgrade of an additional half mile of road up to

the west entrance gate. Replaced perimeter buck and rail fence on Crane Creek access site. Mowed parking areas on PWMA.

- Repaired/improved approximately 3 miles of roads, repaired 2 gravel parking areas, and constructed two new parking areas on Georgetown Summit WMA (GSWMA). Installed a 10' culvert to improve water drainage across road.
- Repaired/upgraded approximately 1/2 mile of road and six parking areas on Sterling WMA (SWMA). Expanded parking space in one parking area and installed additional perimeter fence. Contracted additional road repairs for spring 2018. New section of buck and rail fence was added to the South Orth parking lot following new gravel. Recorded pond measurements and flow meter measurements for Orth and Johnson ponds. Tore out old fence and began signage installation on Edson Fichter Nature Area (EFNA) and SWMA.
- Repaired/improved old cabin on BWMA; installed new flooring, wood stove firewall and floor pad, shelving and some wall sheet material, replaced some ceiling sheeting; constructed eight folding bunk beds and replaced mattresses. Constructed outdoor dry sink facility adjacent to cabin. Conducted winter inspection and snow removal at BWMA. Set up and repaired eight miles of letdown fence on BWMA.
- Addressed issues with groundwater pump compliance on SWMA, replaced flow meter and electrical panel to bring the Johnson Pond into compliance; repairs completed 3/27/18. Worked with Plant Materials Center (PMC) staff to bring PMC segment into compliance as per PMC agreement. Made arrangements to fix Thompson pump in early April.
- Attended Water Rights Workshop in Boise to surface issues related to WMA water rights management and answer questions.
- Hosted student earth day volunteer habitat maintenance project at EFNA; removed weeds and trash, maintained grounds, trails, and seating areas.

Table 24. Facilities operated and maintained in the Southeast Region.

Feature	Sterling	Portneuf	Blackfoot River	Georgetown Summit	Montpelier	TOTAL
Roads (mi)	5	9	4	3	2	26
Trails (mi)	0	0	3	0	3	6
Maintained Fence (mi)	13	4	15	11	15	58
Parking Areas	15	4	4	4	1	28
Informational Signs	15	4	1	1	1	23
Buildings	1	0	3	0	0	3
Restrooms	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water Structures	3	0	0	0	0	3
Irrigation Wells/pumps	2	0	0	0	0	2
Dikes (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Irrigation Pipe (mi)	1.84	0	0	0	0	1.84
Irrigation Ditch (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Canal (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Center Pivot	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

Habitat Development

Habitat development projects (Tables 25 and 26) in the Southeast Region included:

- PWMA & GSWMA – ordered seed and prepped for 60 acres of spring food plot plantings. NWTF partnered on this and other funding was used.
- Coordinated with BLM and Eagle Scout on guzzler project on the big desert; supplied all the materials for the work.
- Hosted CWMA spray day on BWMA; attended by 20 partners and private landowners; 5,000+ acres treated.
- Conducted/coordinated all weed control activities on five WMAs and one Nature Area.
- Conducted Russian olive removal on 3 acres of SWMA; tillage, weed control and planting of treated site. Met with PMC staff to discuss rehabilitation options at the Russian olive project site as well as feasibility of rehabilitating the potential Funk segment land exchange.
- Met with Greenway, ITD, and community volunteers to coordinate a joint weed control effort for the pathways at and around EFNA, to be implemented in March/April. Utilized student volunteer work day to conduct grounds maintenance.
- Met with Angus Creek permittee, USFS, and Agrium to discuss grazing management issues related to the Rasmussen Ridge mine and the BWMA grazing exchange.
- SWMA – field preparation of three acres of old food plot area to convert to permanent cover including pollinator forbs. Replaced dead shelterbelt trees.
- PWMA – planted 250 deciduous shrubs in Crane Creek as a Cub Scout project, surveyed and determined fish barrier locations on Robber’s Roost Creek, and started planning remediation with fisheries program.
- BWMA – secured UBC grant funding for LiDAR survey of the river and engineering personnel to develop restoration plan; secured funding for installation of pasture fences for proposed grazing exchange in development.
- Assisted with and presented at the Master Naturalist (MN) open house for the Pocatello area to recruit and develop a local MN group to assist with WMA and regional habitat and wildlife management needs.
- Planted corn/pea/vetch/sunflower food plot mix on about two acres, plus ~ 125 different native trees and shrubs for shelter belts on SWMA. Began noxious weed control for thistles, houndstongue, and whitetop. Treated approximately eight acres of prepped ground with RoundUp to continue weed control in preparation for fall plantings.
- PWMA – installed drip systems on tree plantings at Crane Creek Access and Crane Creek Trailhead.
- GSWMA and PWMA – finished planting food plots/lure crops/ fire breaks, 60 acres total.
- GSWMA – mechanically treated 30 acres of annual weeds by lightly disking over perennial legume/grass field.
- Provided references and contacts to Pocatello Rotary club regarding their tree planting initiative project for this year; developed the Crane Creek Access Site habitat improvement project with them and the Century High School Rotary Club. Worked with them to develop and implement an improvement project to increase the habitat and public use values for the access site. Developed second project with Preston Rotary Club for upland habitat improvement projects to plant 2,000 trees in Franklin County, as part of

their 100-year anniversary – located tree source, funding, and partnered with Pheasants Forever on project.

Table 25. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Southeast Region.

Feature	Sterling	Portneuf	Blackfoot River	Georgetown Summit	Montpelier	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	0	3,907	0	4,277	2,137	10,321
Wetlands (ac)	1,212.2		258	76	9	1,555
Forest Management (ac)	66	127	376	387	261	1,217
Shelterbelts (ft.)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (ac)	42.16	0	0	0	0	42
Artificial Nest Structures	63	0	15	0	0	78
Food Plots (ac)	43.5	9	0	0	0	52
Nest Cover (ac)	1,605	3,907	2,360	4,277	2,137	14,286
Shrub Planting (ac)	1.2	20	20	100	300	441
Water Mgmt (ac)	33.3	0	33	160	0	226
Grazing Lands (ac)	0	0	0	63	0	63
Riparian (mi)	112 acres	3	8	3	0	14 miles; 112 acres
Controlled Burn (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Weed Control (ac)	278	3,907	2,360	4,277	2,188	13019
Guzzlers (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ponds/marshes (#)	28	0	15	5	0	48

Table 26. New habitat development activities in the Southeast Region.

Feature	Sterling	Portneuf	Blackfoot River	Georgetown Summit	Montpelier	TOTAL
Winter Range (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wetlands (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Mgmt (ac)	4	0	2	0	0	6
Shelterbelts (mi)	1.2 acres	0	0	0	0	1
Artificial Nests (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nesting Cover (ac)	8	0	0	0	0	8
HIP Projects (#)	0	2	0	0	0	2
Shrub Planting (ac)	1.2	6	1	2	0	10
Shrub Planting (#)	5	2	2	1	0	10
Forb Plantings (ac)	3	5	0	5	0	13
Livestock water (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0
New/rebuilt Fence (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fence Removed (mi)	.26	0	1	3	0	4.26

Surveys and Inventory

Survey and inventory activities included:

- Deployed trail counters at EFNA to collect public user information; downloaded monthly.
- Staff participated in big game check stations and regional mule deer capture/radio collaring.
- Staff participated in Sandhill crane baiting, capture and radio collaring efforts northeast of Soda Springs.
- Initiated ISU student project on SWMA to evaluate wildlife use of Russian olive stands; information will be used to prioritize Russian olive removal and retention on the WMA landscape; poster presentation of project at Idaho Chapter TWS 2018 meeting.
- Participated in regional pronghorn survey routes.
- Participated in regional elk and mule deer capture and radio collaring, and elk population surveys in Diamond Creek Zone. Participated in Diamond Creek Zone moose surveys.
- Participated in regional sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse lek surveys.
- Tested a new potential weed application for collection of noxious weed control information and mapping of treatments.
- Located two abandoned hard rock mines on Montpelier WMA and assessed entrance gate conditions for bat habitat. Assisted with additional bat hibernacula surveys.
- Began weed survey and treatment using AgTerra software on all WMAs.
- Conducted elk surveys on BWMA and adjacent private lands to collect data for proposed BWMA grazing exchange.
- Banded approximately 200 doves on SWMA as part of statewide effort.
- Assisted with biological check stations and research projects to monitor movements and population trends of upland game, waterfowl, and big game as requested.
- Began relocating historic photo points for future surveys on BWMA.

Technical Guidance

Habitat staff technical guidance included:

- Provided input on the Powerline Fire rehabilitation; coordinated with BLM, Shoshone Bannock Tribe and IDFG MDI during planning; provided forb seed for dozer line rehabilitation.
- Surveyed a subset of Big Desert guzzlers for location accuracy and condition to prioritize for repairs. Supplied materials for Eagle Scout guzzler repair project on the Big Desert. Worked with BLM Upper Snake District on coordination and wildfire info for that project.
- Participated in Curlew project tour to look at established habitat improvement projects and discuss ideas and locations for additional work.
- Participated in spring/seep willow planting/seeding with BLM, Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust and other partners on Rock Springs restoration project.
- Hosted a monarch and milkweed public workshop field day at SWMA in conjunction with the IDFG Diversity program. Attended by 35 members of the public. Worked with Caribou-Targhee NF staff to create a joint monarch butterfly and habitat display for the Marsh Public Library in Pocatello for January.

- Participated in phosphate patch mining tour with Sagebrush Steppe Land Trust to see and discuss landscape level impacts and develop future conservation projects and directions.
- Participated in the Idaho Climate Summit as wildlife/habitat technical expert on two discussion panels.
- Review and comment on the Toponce Habitat Enhancement Project (habitat improvement and fuels reduction; USFS).
- Participated in review of regional easements proposals and provided input on fit/suitability for further development consideration.
- Collected input from regional staff and forwarded suggestions of private properties for sale through reporting chain for consideration by IDL for acquisition in their lands program.
- Worked with Pocatello BLM and MDI for Pleasant Views Aspen habitat enhancement projects; participated in project development and coordination meetings.
- Participated in Upper Snake River CWMA; attended planning meeting in Dec. 2017 to draft projects and obtain group funding for 2018 projects. Met with U&I Cooperative Weed Management Association; planned weed control projects (spray days) in Bannock and Franklin counties; ~10,000 acres impacted on private, state, USFS, BLM, and county lands. Met with Highlands CWMA; planned weed control projects (spray days) in Caribou and Bear Lake counties; ~10,000 acres impacted on private, state, USFS, BLM, and county lands.
- Participated in BLM coordination meeting to refining Pleasant Views stand treatment perimeters, treatment types, and project phases (approximately 3,000 acres total).
- Worked with USFWS, R5 Diversity biologist, and the Blackfeet Tribe in Browning, MT to organize, collect, and ship off 13 trumpeter swan carcasses to be used for tribal ceremonies this June. In confluence, this required working with the Springfield hatchery and Idaho Power to reduce swan collision mortalities around the area. Our reports and actions helped facilitate proper placement of power line diverters, reduction of power outages, and reduced swan mortality.
- Participated in the Partners Sage-grouse workshop in Idaho Falls with state and federal agency, NGO, and sage-grouse working group partners to improve technical assistance.
- Organized a lead so the Century High School senior engineering students could make bat houses for the local community and surrounding area; provided design and specification assistance along with nongame staff. Distributed houses to private individuals and organizations for installation.
- Provided input on American Falls Solar Project development mitigation for lost raptor nesting site.
- Participated with BLM/USFS/USFWS/ACOE on Dairy Syncline mitigation tour with Simplot mining.
- Participated in BLM coordination meeting to discuss Soda Hills winter range fencing, Pleasant Views mule deer summer range enhancements, and other projects on BLM lands in Southeast Idaho. Hosted second meeting to finalize Soda Hills fencing for 2018.
- Toured Rocky Point (mule deer migration/highway crossing/high road mortality) area with Region 5 and 6 staff to familiarize new folks with location and issues; collected roadkill for CWD surveying as part of trip.

- Met with Idaho State University and IDFG program staff to discuss using SWMA as a pilot area for a university Naturalist project; would involve students recording observations during any time of the year to help build species occurrence information.
- Met with Angus Creek permittee, USFS, and Agrium to discuss grazing management issues related to the Rasmussen Ridge mine and the BWMA grazing exchange.
- Participated in BLM/USFS mine operation inspections in Rasmussen Ridge.
- Presentation at Ducks Unlimited Banquet on Adopt-A-Wetland opportunities, Feb 10th.
- Participated as IDFG rep to multi-agency Habitat Improvement Team (HIT); developed and implemented process to use Agrium mitigation funds from Rasmussen Valley Mine project for habitat protection and enhancement related to area of mining impact.
- Participated in ITD MOU coordination meeting and on team to review right-of-way vegetation treatment options for wildlife enhancements; further discussion on Rocky Point migration corridor issues.
- Provided comment on Monsanto's Fox Hills Ranch proposed sage-grouse habitat research project.
- Met with IDFG Region 4 and Minidoka NWR (MNWR) staff to provide input on a Raft River aquifer recharge proposal potentially impacting the MNWR.
- Met with Caribou-Targhee National Forest to discuss implementing collaborative pollinator education grant with IDFG. Will help organize a traveling exhibit to local community libraries in Southeast Idaho with free materials and information geared towards 4th grade classrooms.
- Strategized with BLM on development and submission of HIT habitat project proposals for funding consideration/implementation.
- Provided assistance on private land management to the following: 1) habitat projects on 1,000 acre property in the mouth of Cub River; 2) habitat projects on several properties – 1,000 acres total; 3) discussed habitat projects and fish passage projects on Robber's Roost Creek – 150 acres; 4) Met with the Big Onion landowners; provided input on a proposed timber project, weed control, juniper treatment, grazing rotation, and wildlife compatible fencing – 10,250 acres.
- Attended the Sage Brush Steppe Land Trust, Portneuf Water Conservation Planning Workshop to discuss current and future conservation efforts for the Portneuf watershed to help identify key areas of concern and project starting points.
- 3 HIP projects within the region. Met with all landowners requesting information or assistance to improve their private lands.
- Participated in the East Idaho Grazing Association Grazing Workshop on the "Providing for Livestock and Wildlife" panel, Feb 10th, potentially affecting >10,000 acres.

Regional Notes

Staff focused on relieving chronic depredations via WMA habitat management actions; plantings and work plan goals reflected commitment to increasing acreages of lure crops.

UPPER SNAKE REGION

Coordination and Administration

The Upper Snake Region Habitat Management Program is administered by one Regional Wildlife Habitat Manager and includes approximately 7.4 million acres of the Upper Snake River watershed. This land base is 68% public lands (primarily USFS, BLM, Idaho National Laboratory, and IDL) and 32% private lands. The Region is organized into five Habitat Districts. One Regional Habitat Biologist is responsible for administering IDFG-managed properties and collaborating with public and private landowners within their respective habitat district to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat quality.

Two of 5 habitat districts have permanent wildlife technicians assigned to IDFG-managed properties to assist the Regional Habitat Biologists. Seasonal employees are assigned to work under the oversight of the wildlife technicians and Regional Habitat Biologists on IDFG-managed properties. An Access Manager assists all 5 habitat districts with construction and maintenance projects on IDFG-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. Habitat staff accomplished the following:

- We hosted public habitat presentations on sharp-tailed grouse ecology, winter wildlife survival strategies, wind energy and wildlife, wildlife and transportation, etc.
- The Regional Habitat Manager participated at the state level on the IDFG Lands Committee identifying and prioritizing properties for easement or acquisition. We have advanced several projects that will result in over 1,500 acres of permanent protection for key wetland and upland habitats.
- Provided training opportunities for employees including attendance of professional conferences, society meetings, specific technical training sessions, and safety training.
- Habitat staff presented at the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society, Jackson Hole Wildlife Symposium, Trumpeter Swan Society annual conference and others.
- Administered budgets and resources toward habitat development.

Operations and Maintenance

The Upper Snake Region habitat management program consists of approximately 91,800 acres of IDFG-managed lands (Table 27). These managed areas are a mixture of land ownership including IDFG, IDL, BLM, and BOR.

Table 27. Areas operated and maintained in the Upper Snake Region.

Area	Acres
Cartier Slough WMA	1,628
Deer Parks WMU	3,054
Twin Bridges (Allen) WMU	81
Cartier Habitat Access Areas	600
Market Lake WMA	5,067
Gem State WHA	70
Mud Lake WMA	11,468
Chilly Slough WCA	1,800

Area	Acres
Sand Creek WMA	32,489
Tex Creek WMA	34,822
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 (MKWMA) and will no longer be reported separately. Deer Parks WMU, Beaver Dick WMU, and Twin Bridges WMU are BPA mitigation projects. The IDFG owns lands at MKWMA, Mud Lake WMA (MDWMA), Chilly Slough WHA, Sand Creek WMA (SCWMA), and TCWMA. Other properties are managed by IDFG via agreements and management plans.

Operation and maintenance activities (Table 28) in the Upper Snake Region included:

- Implemented the Upper Snake Region habitat management program objectives as defined in existing long-range IDFG 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.
- Utilized volunteers to accomplish projects when feasible.
- Coordinated fence maintenance and/or removals with neighbors.
- Rebuilt fence to improve wildlife movement.

Table 28. Facilities to be operated and maintained in the Upper Snake Region.

Feature	Mud Lake	Market Lake and Chilly Slough	Tex Creek	Sand Creek	Cartier HD and Access Areas	TOTAL
Roads (mi)	18	13	7	10	3	51
Trails (mi)	4	2.5	15	5	16	42
Maintained Fence (mi)	12	35	10	60	18	13.5
Parking Areas	12	6	0	0	8	26
Informational Signs	4	3	9	11	3	30
Buildings	7	7	1	9	7	31
Restrooms	2	2	0	1	0	5
Water Structures	19	21	0	36	1	77
Irrigation Wells/pumps	6	0	0	0	8	14
Dikes (mi)	5	8	0	5	1	19
Irrigation Pipe (mi)	6.6*	0	0	0	2.7	9.3
Irrigation Ditch (mi)	13.8	4	0	10.78	1.6	.18
Canal (mi)	4	6	0	2	1	13
Center Pivot	2	0	0	0	5	7

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

Habitat Development

Upper Snake Region habitat staff provided technical assistance to the Salmon Challis National Forest, the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Idaho Falls District BLM, and East Idaho Office

USFWS. Staff worked on a variety of private lands habitat improvement projects that will benefit game animals, trout, and Idaho SGCN.

Habitat development projects (Tables 29 and 30) in the Upper Snake Region included:

- Improved and maintained high-quality waterfowl and upland game habitat, including significant enhancements on MKWMA and MDWMA.
- Improved and maintained high-quality big game transition, migration, and winter range habitats, including thousands of acres on the TCWMA.
- Restored or replaced in-kind habitat on mitigation properties.
- Provided high-quality habitat for wildlife species at risk (T&E, sensitive, etc.) including Ute-ladies'-tresses orchid, yellow-billed cuckoo, and grizzly bear.
- Provided custodial management of federally threatened Ute-ladies'-tresses on SCWMA.
- Pursued habitat developments on IDFG-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.
- Administered HIP on private lands.
- Helped establish an interagency beaver restoration cooperative.
- Established regional programs, priorities, and policies regarding habitat development.
- Reviewed and approved habitat improvement plans.
- Administered management agreements and leases including four 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.
- Administered vehicle and human entry restrictions.
- 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.
- Lead participant in a Sandhill crane habitat management initiative.
- Continued Wetland Reserve Program restoration project on Marty Segment of MDWMA.
- Administered motorized use plans on WMAs to regulate motorized use.
- Monitored existing habitat improvement agreements, conservation easements, and leases.
- Participated in management activities of CWMA's.
- Actively participated in the local Weed Warrior Workshop and IDFG-only noxious weed trainings.
- Constructed a fence around a fen wetland where cattle were repeatedly becoming mired and then preyed on by grizzly bears. We worked with the landowner to build a jack fence around the wetland. Since construction we have had no grizzly conflicts. This project also protects sensitive wetland habitat.

Table 29. Ongoing habitat maintenance activities in the Upper Snake Region.

Feature	Mud Lake	Market Lake	Tex Creek	Sand Creek	Cartier HD and Access Areas	TOTAL
	0	0	22,000	3,000		25,000
Winter Range (ac)				*(300,000)		
Wetlands (ac)	150	1710	20	1500	1,963	5343
Forest Management (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
				*(4,000)	*(500)	
Shelterbelts (ft.)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	10
Artificial Nest Structures	101	23	0	30	150	304
Food Plots (ac)	110	220	1,300	40	157	1827
	40	0	1,300	32,000	1,020	343605
Nest Cover (ac)				*(320,000)		
)		
Shrub Planting (ac)	0	0	2000	0	0	2000
Water Mgmt (ac)	100	50	0	700	542	1,392
				0		
Grazing Lands (ac)	0	0	0	*(360)	80	80
Riparian (mi)	1.	0	3	4.33	5	13033
Controlled Burn (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
					1,500	
Weed Control (ac)	600	400	8,00	300		3,60050
Guzzlers (#)	0	0	4	7	0	11
Ponds/marshes (#)	2	6	2	20	2	32

Table 30. 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	400	0	0	400
Wetlands (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Mgmt (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shelterbelts (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Artificial Nests (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nesting Cover (ac)	0	0	0	0	0	0
HIP Projects (#)	1	1	0	3	4	9
Shrub Planting (ac)	0	0	2,000	0	0	2,000
Shrub Planting (#)	0	0	142,000	0	0	142,000
Forb Plantings (ac)	0	0	80	0	0	80
Livestock water (#)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian (mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0
New/rebuilt Fence (mi)	0	0	6	0	0	6
Fence Removed (mi)	0	0	1	0	0	1

Surveys and Inventory

Survey and inventory projects included:

- Habitat staff partnered with the BLM to complete vegetation data collection at known sage-grouse nests shortly after hatch or failure. This work is part of an ongoing sage-grouse research project in the Sand Creek Desert.
- Habitat staff are integral to sage-grouse and sharp-tailed grouse lek monitoring.
- Monitored wildlife habitat on managed properties with permanent vegetation transects, photo points, spotlight surveys, and GIS mapping. Emphasized mapping noxious weeds and control operations.
- Monitored wildlife populations including 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, sharp-tailed grouse, deer, elk, and moose, small mammals, and direct observations of individuals and groups of animals.
- Monitored piezometers at SCWMA to monitor ground water levels.
- Monitored piezometers at MKWMA to build a profile of ground water levels and establish a baseline there.
- Monitored piezometers at MDWMA to measure ground water flows.
- 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 MDWMA and SCWMA. Banded geese at MKWMA.
- Led the effort to trap and band mourning doves.
- Assisted with trapping and radio-collaring Sandhill crane, deer, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and elk.
- Continued a project to identify important transition range for migrating mule deer and elk in the Tex Creek Landscape based on existing radio-collar data.
- Started developing a tablet-based aerial survey application for use in winter big-game surveys.
- Conducted outreach and provided technical service through direct contact with private landowners, county planning staff, NRCS/FSA meetings, sporting organizational meetings and banquets to discuss fish and wildlife habitat modifications and population monitoring in the Upper Snake Region.
- We worked with Madison, Teton, and Fremont counties providing technical input related to planning and wildlife.
- Inventoried IDFG-managed properties for SGCN wildlife species.

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.

- Provided technical input on proposed large-scale sage-grouse projects in the Big and Little Lost River Valleys and the Sand Creek Desert.

- Provided technical support to key private land conservation partners including the High Divide Partnership, TNC, and Teton Regional Land Trust (TRLT).
- Habitat biologists prepared draft comment letters for some proposed projects.
- Responded to requests for technical assistance and to provide some technical guidance independent of whether cost-sharing was available from IDFG.
- The TCWMA Habitat Biologist 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.
- The Regional Habitat Manager served on the High Divide Advisory Committee, Sandhill Crane Habitat Management Initiative, and Greater Yellowstone Trumpeter Swan Working Group.
- Habitat biologists were instrumental in providing comments on conservation easement proposals. In many instances, IDFG support is critical in obtaining the easements.
- Regional habitat staff develops ongoing close working relationships with field-level personnel of local, state, and federal agencies as well as key members of NGOs operating within their habitat district.
- All habitat biologists actively participate with their corresponding CWMA.
- Habitat staff gave presentations to elementary, high school, and college students, civic organizations, and offered workshops and mentored young hunters.
- Habitat staff provided technical assistance on timber sales, recreational developments, proposed rural residential subdivision, grazing allotment reviews, travel management planning, forest land updates and revisions, and proposed infrastructure projects including highway and airport. The habitat program is leading efforts to provide technical service input on an ongoing BLM travel management plan to ensure adequate protections for crucial fish and wildlife habitats.
- We contributed to the forest plan revision for the Salmon-Challis National Forest, working collaboratively with the Targhee National Forest to ensure adequate consideration of fish and wildlife in proposed forest actions (timber sales and recreational developments).
- We communicated regularly with the USFWS on issues related to ESA-listed species and migratory birds.
- We worked with the ITD to maintain or enhance wildlife connectivity as ITD pursues planned Highway 20 transportation improvements.
- We led field-based habitat/wildlife tours to the public and for NGO partners related to National Forest Planning and BLM travel management.
- Habitat biologists inspected sites for proposed subdivisions and reported findings in comment letters to county planning and zoning officials.
- Habitat biologists inspected proposed conservation easements submitted by the TRLT as requested and reported findings to TRLT personnel.

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 habitat program budgets (one PR and one License). One wildlife biologist serves as the lead habitat biologist, and coordinates the region-wide habitat program and serves as the IDFG Lands Committee regional representative. The regional wildlife manager supervises this lead habitat biologist. The lead habitat biologist is also a member of IDFG Backcountry small working group.

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, population monitoring, and maintenance of hunting access portals and trails. 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:

- Supervised and maintained the region's seven backcountry WHAs.
- Graded the airstrip at Loon Creek and rebuilt the Cougar Ranch Airstrip.
- Maintained and irrigated 14 acres of food plots at Pahsimeroi River Access Area (PRAA).
- Maintained the outhouse and parking area at PRAA.
- Build two new outhouses and one new shed at Cougar Ranch.
- Training opportunities were provided for employees including attendance at professional society meetings, attended wind energy workshop, and led Central Idaho Aspen Working Group talks and tours. Attended Women and Leadership Conference.
- Maintained the Outdoor Classroom.

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 IDFG lands included:

- Planted and irrigated 14-acre food plot at PRAA.
- IDFG and Lemhi CWMA weed spray project on backcountry properties. Sprayed weeds on PRAA, Mormon Ranch, and Loon Creek.
- Developed weed treatment and habitat restoration plans for Cougar Ranch and Mitchell Ranch.
- Administered management agreement and lease on one backcountry property. For Loon Creek, we changed the lease to specify IDFG as maintaining the airstrip, because the permittee was not doing it to our standards in exchange for tractor owned by permittee.
- Reviewed and developed land acquisition proposals. Evaluated and supported conservation easements proposed by land trusts in the region.

Enhance habitat conditions on public lands to support desired wildlife population levels as opportunities arise.

- Collaborated with public land managers to improve or develop wildlife habitat on public land.
- Collaborated with BLM and USFS to improve treatment of cheatgrass.

Complete restoration in five aspen plots on public land totaling 50 acres:

- Funded and attended aspen workshop for government agencies and the public to look at aspen projects in the area, discuss aspen ecology, and determine future priorities for aspen restoration in the Salmon-Challis areas.
- Provided comments to BLM and USFS on general range condition concerns in the Salmon-Challis areas.
- Provided funding and technical assistance for conifer removal for aspen restoration in the Salmon and Challis BLM field districts. Treated 100 acres of aspen.

Work with private landowners to enhance wildlife habitat on private property:

- Provided disease and separation information to landowners with domestic goats and sheep living near bighorn sheep.
- Provided technical assistance to landowners wanting dimensions for wildlife-friendly fencing.
- Participated in the Lemhi Forest Restoration and High Divide Collaborative.

Management activities in the Salmon Region included implementing the noxious weed control program on the region's WHAs, coordinating with the Lemhi, Custer, and Frank Church CWMAs, and tree and shrub plantings and other practices designed to improve riparian, rangeland, grassland, and forestland plant communities.

Surveys and Inventory

This work was completed in conjunction with the region's wildlife population management program:

- Regional habitat personnel assisted CWMAs with regional noxious weed inventory and mapping projects for weed treatment on IDFG property.
- Regional habitat personnel assisted with all aerial big game surveys, deer, elk, and bighorn sheep mortality studies, sage-grouse lek counts, pronghorn ground surveys, and trapping/banding studies.
- Updated the statewide elk habitat landscape productivity map as part of the IDFG Elk Management Plan.
- Contracted aspen stand assessment plots with Salmon Valley Stewardship.
- Compiled location data from GPS collared elk to look at winter habitat use and address depredation issues.
- Compiled location data from VHF & GPS collared elk to estimate elk abundance in the Sawtooth Zone during hunting seasons.
- Assisted with a bighorn sheep research project involving capture, monitoring, vegetation surveys, and lamb production.
- Regional habitat staff inventoried noxious weeds at 2 backcountry properties.

- Regional habitat staff assisted in an elk mortality study in the Beaverhead and Salmon Elk zones to collect data to better understand elk mortality in this area of Idaho.
- Regional habitat staff assisted with elk aerial surveys in the Lemhi Zone, Mule Deer comp survey in the Salmon Region, and Mountain Goat survey in the East Fork Salmon River, ground pronghorn surveys, and sage-grouse lek counts.
- Regional habitat staff trapped and banded doves.
- Regional staff deployed wolf predator monitoring cameras in GMUs 27, 28 and 36B.

Technical Guidance

- Coordinated with Jeff Richards 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.
- Provided technical habitat and population management advice to public and private landowners and agencies in order to sustain or enhance wildlife resources on a year-round basis.
- Participated as a steering committee member for the Lemhi, Custer, and Frank Church CWMAs.
- Participated as a member on the Salmon-Challis Forest Plan Revision Collaborative.
- Provided current wildlife habitat and population information upon request on proposed projects and activities within the Salmon Region.
- Provided technical advice and information on IDFG management programs and policies to the public and personnel of the USFWS, BLM, USFS, NRCS, FSA, Challis Local Greater Sage-grouse Working Group, Lemhi and Frank Church CWMAs, and the Lemhi and Custer counties planning and zoning commissions. All responses were coordinated with Jeff Richards.
- Provided wildlife population and habitat information to ITD and ISDA, Salmon Valley Stewardship, and other local groups by telephone, letter, person-to-person, and through participation in inter-agency technical and advisory committees.
- Provided comments and technical assistance for the Boulder White Cloud, Jerry Peak, and Jim McClure Wilderness plans.
- Participated in the Salmon Municipal Watershed Restoration Project.
- Provided comments on 15 USFS fuels reduction, wildlife habitat restoration, and thinning projects in the Salmon-Challis National Forest.
- Provided comments on five BLM fuels reduction, wildlife habitat restoration, and thinning projects in the Salmon-Challis Field Districts.
- Provided comments on Panther Test Drilling Development.
- Provided funding and technical guidance on restoring backcountry access in and near the Frank Church Wilderness. Served as NEPA team member for the Hoodoo Meadows Airstrip restoration on the Salmon Challis National Forest. Provided funding for trail maintenance on Yellowjacket Trail. Provided funding for NEPA on Hoodoo Meadows Airstrip. Began a preliminary database for trail condition and access issues in Central Idaho. Working in partnership with IDPR. Provided technical assistance on several backcountry airstrip access issues.

Regional Notes

The Salmon Region is rearranging some priorities. Backcountry access is a new subject to work in, and has become one of the top priorities on the habitat side of the region. Future work will include more work on IDFG properties to help support additional hunting opportunities, more assistance with partners to improve hunting access, and additional work to document access and conditions.

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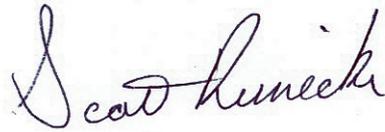
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FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program consists of funds from a 10% to 11% manufacturer's excise tax collected from the sale of handguns, sporting rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Federal Aid program then allots the funds back to states through a formula based on each state's geographic area and the number of paid hunting license holders in the state. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game uses the funds to help restore, conserve, manage, and enhance wild birds and mammals for the public benefit. These funds are also used to educate hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be responsible, ethical hunters. Seventy-five percent of the funds for this project are from Federal Aid. The other 25% comes from license-generated funds.

