



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

SOUTHEAST REGION

1345 Barton Road
Pocatello, Idaho 83204

C.L. "Butch" Otter / Governor
Virgil Moore / Director

Dear concerned citizen,

I am writing this letter to sincerely thank you for your thoughtful comments during our Upland & Furbearer season setting process.

Although we received numerous comments on a multitude of topics, a significant portion of those comments pertained to furbearer management, and in particular beaver management. As such, the following information is directed to help address some of the specific beaver management topics that were brought forward.

First and foremost, I want to emphasize the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) fully recognizes and appreciates the critical role beaver populations play in the maintenance of healthy ecosystem function, both for terrestrial and aquatic habitats. IDFG recently revised its State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), and beaver conservation is central to many aspects of this document. Across the state, IDFG is engaging with partners on various projects where beaver are the focus to achieve desired objectives. For example, in the Southeast Region, we recently assembled a team that is working to develop a beaver management strategy for the region that will help direct future efforts such as translocation, conflict management, and public outreach. IDFG is also currently working with a university to run a predictive model that will identify areas where beaver conservation projects might be best implemented. We are excited to see the elevated emphasis on beaver conservation in Idaho, and will continue to seek projects that can benefit from healthy beaver populations.

Many comments received suggested either elimination or significant reduction in beaver trapping opportunity. Before addressing some of these specific comments, it is important to understand trapping relative to IDFG's mission statement and the Idaho State Constitution.

Trapping is a key component to the Department's mission:

"All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall be only captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping."

Additionally, in 2012, Idaho amended its Constitution so that the right to hunt, fish, and trap shall forever be preserved. Article 1, Section 23 says in part: "The rights to hunt, fish and trap,

including by the use of traditional methods, are a valued part of the heritage of the State of Idaho and shall forever be preserved for the people and managed through the laws, rules and proclamations that preserve the future of hunting, fishing and trapping.”

Several comments received during this season setting process noted a fundamental opposition to any sort of trapping. While we can appreciate this stance, it is important to understand that trapping will forever be a part of Idaho’s wildlife management and recreational opportunities.

Other comments called for either elimination or reduction in allowable take of beaver in some specific drainages within the region. All of these comments were taken under consideration, but ultimately IDFG felt confident that the current conservative trapping regulations were appropriate. IDFG is focused on beaver populations as a whole, and in most cases harvest is extremely conservative or limited by access to private lands. For example, within the Mink Creek drainage south of Pocatello, trapping harvest is limited to 5 beaver annually and the East Fork and West Fork tributaries are closed to trapping altogether. We are continuing to conduct beaver surveys in this area, and will use this data along with other information to evaluate if harvest needs to be adjusted in the future.

We did appreciate the comments suggesting the controlled trapping permit for Toponce and Pebble creeks be split, and this recommendation was sent to the Idaho Fish and Game Commission for their consideration. Additionally, the Southeast Region of IDFG did submit a request to add drainage and location information to the mandatory trapping report following numerous comments from the public. This modification is currently being evaluated.

Public engagement is central to many of the IDFG directives, and your involvement during the 2018-2019 Upland & Furbearer season setting process was extremely appreciated. All of your comments were read, discussed, and taken into consideration.

We are eager to continue to engage with the public on Upland and Furbearer management as well as continue to implement projects aimed at improving habitat with beaver as the catalyst.

If you have any additional questions please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Zach Lockyer
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