



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

SOUTHWEST REGION

MCCALL OFFICE

555 Deinhard Lane

McCall, Idaho 83638

Brad Little / Governor

Ed Schriever / Director

August 2, 2019

Keith Lannom, Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest
500 N Mission Street Building 2
McCall, ID 83638

RE: Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project DEIS

Dear Mr. Lannom,

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Department) has reviewed the DEIS for the proposed Huckleberry Landscape Restoration Project. This project is based, in part, on recommendations provided by the Payette Forest Coalition (PFC) to the Payette National Forest (PNF). The Department is a member of the PFC and participated in the PFC process.

The purpose of these comments is to assist the PNF by providing technical information in addition to the PFC's recommendations. It is not the purpose of Idaho Department of Fish and Game to support or oppose this proposal. Resident species of fish and wildlife are property of all Idaho citizens, and IDFG and the Idaho Fish and Game Commission are expressly charged with statutory responsibility to preserve, protect, perpetuate and manage all fish and wildlife in Idaho (Idaho Code § 36-103(a)). In fulfillment of our statutory charge and direction as provided by the Idaho Legislature, we offer the following comments and suggestions.

PFC's recommendations generally are consistent with the Idaho Fish and Game Commission's and Department's management goals for wildlife and wildlife habitat. PFC recommended that management of white-headed woodpecker (WHWO) habitat in PVGs 1, 2 and 5 be done in a manner consistent with monitoring data (Saab et al 2018). White-headed woodpeckers are identified as a Tier 3 Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan (IDFG 2015). The retention of large-diameter snags is important for WHWO nesting habitat, and the placement of those snags within a forested stand determines their suitability as nest sites (V. Saab pers. comm.). Snags located in open-canopy microsites rather than within clumps of trees are more suitable for nesting. We recommend reviewing marking guidelines developed jointly by the PFC and PNF foresters and silviculturalists for landscape restoration projects to ensure that WHWO nesting habitat requirements are accommodated as part of overall snag retention and recruitment.

PFC also supported the use of shaded fuel breaks as proposed in Alternative 2, as well as strategic use of additional shaded fuel breaks within the project area, as long as doing so does not compromise other project objectives. If additional shaded fuel breaks are proposed along the Huntley Gulch Road (FS Rd 145), flammulated owl (FLOW) habitat could be affected. FLOW is not a Department Species of Greatest Conservation Need and therefore we have no management objectives for them. However, the Department has partnered with PNF to conduct surveys in the past. The Bear–Cuprum area consistently had greater detections of FLOW than other areas on PNF that we surveyed. We would be willing to work with the PNF to reduce potential negative impacts to FLOW habitat should that be desired.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide information pertinent to the proposed project. Please contact Regan Berkley in the Southwest Region at (208)634-8137 if you have any additional questions concerning this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Compton", written in a cursive style.

Bradley B. Compton
Southwest Regional Supervisor

BBC/DEM
e-file: M:/Region 3/