



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

SOUTHWEST REGION

15950 N. Gate Blvd.

Nampa, Idaho 83687

Brad Little / Governor

Ed Schriever / Director

August 27, 2021

New Meadows Ranger District
Attn: Lost Ant Recreation Management Project
P.O. Box J
New Meadows, ID 83645

RE: Lost Ant Recreation Management Project

Dear District Ranger Erin Phelps,

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has reviewed the Scoping Categorical Exclusion Review (SCE), for the Lost Ant Recreation Management Project (Project). The Project aims to carry out trail and recreational infrastructure maintenance work originally proposes under the 2014 Lost Creek-Boulder Creek Project. IDFG appreciates the importance of maintaining a balance of public land recreational opportunities, and providing safe access to these opportunities.

The purpose of these comments is to assist the Payette National Forest (Forest) and the New Meadows Ranger District by providing technical information addressing potential effects on wildlife and wildlife habitat and how any adverse effects might be mitigated. 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.

The project area includes land within IDFG Game Management Unit 22. This unit offers a variety of hunting and angling opportunities, including upland game, small game, waterfowl, and big game hunting. Over-the-counter hunts are available for black bear, mountain lion, deer, and elk within the unit. In 2020, IDFG estimated that 1519 deer hunters and 2599 elk hunters hunted in unit 22. The proposed actions will improve existing access options for non-motorized sportsmen in unit 22. In addition, new motorized opportunities will be provided through a road to OHV trail conversion on approximately 15 miles of existing road. While the addition of roads can have negative impacts to wildlife in some situations, the proposed activities appropriately take advantage of existing disturbed areas to create new opportunities in such a way that will minimize the impact to wildlife.

Keeping Idaho's Wildlife Heritage

IDFG appreciates the opportunity to provide information pertinent to the proposed projects. The proposals strike an appropriate balance between 1) providing safe and responsible multi-use recreational opportunities, and 2) protecting important habitat and wildlife resources. Please contact Casey Pozzanghera in the Southwest Region office at (208)854-8947 if you have any additional questions concerning this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Rachael". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jon" and last name "Rachael" clearly distinguishable.

Jon Rachael
Southwest Regional Supervisor

JR/CBP