

Z E R O E D

Newsletter of the
Idaho Chapter
of the
Wildlife Society

Number 35, November 1976

Date Set for Annual Meeting

The annual winter meeting of the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society has been scheduled for January 20-21, 1977. The meeting will begin at 1:00 pm on the 20th and end at noon on the 21st at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game headquarters office in Boise (600 South Walnut). Jerry Thiessen has agreed to be the arrangements chairman and to lead a field trip to the Boise River deer winter range on the afternoon of January 21 for those that are interested. Jerry will try to get a block of rooms in a nearby motel for the night of the 20th. More information on that in the next newsletter.

Call for Papers (First and Last)

If you would like to give a paper at the meeting, please send a title to program chairman Tom Leege, P.O. Box 398, Kamiah, Idaho 83536 by December 1, 1976. Papers can be a maximum of 20 minutes in duration plus 5 minutes for questions and discussion. The papers will not be published so they need not be reports of completed research of projects--progress reports are perfectly satisfactory. Remember, December 1 is the deadline for volunteering your paper so give it some thought now and send your letter to Tom.

Awards

Your officers have decided to recognize a wildlife professional in Idaho this year who has done outstanding work and is a credit to the profession. Dr. Jim Peek has accepted the chairmanship of an Awards Committee and he will accept nominations from the membership until December 1, 1976. All of us know of worthy individuals who deserve to be officially recognized. Take a minute to write down 3 or 4 paragraphs about his or her accomplishments and send them to Dr. Peek, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83843. The awards chairman and your executive board will evaluate the nominations and present an award at the annual meeting in January.

Resolutions & Position Statements

Attached for your information are positions that your chapter has taken on two important issues during this past summer. There are many more issues around which deserve our input. If you know of one, and wish to propose a resolution or position statement for our chapter's consideration, please send it to the Resolution and Position Statement Chairman, Dean Carrier, Route 1, Box 249E, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814. Please get your proposals to Dean before January 1 if you wish them to be considered by the membership at the annual meeting.

Other Committees

Royce Williams has accepted the chairmanship of the Publicity Committee. The primary duty of this committee is to inform the public of Chapter and Society activities and interests.

Mailing List Update

The mailing list for our newsletter is extremely outdated. Many new wildlifers have moved into Idaho or entered the profession in the last 2 or 3 years and are not on our list. If you know of any prospects for Chapter membership, please send their name and address to: Sam McNeill, 3511 7th Street E., Lewiston, Idaho 83501, and we will mail them a copy of the next newsletter which will contain the agenda for the annual meeting.

Your officers for 1976 and 1977 are:

President: Tom Leege
Vice President: Jerry Thiessen
Secretary-Treasurer: Gary (Sam) McNeill

IDAHO CHAPTER
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Box 398
Kamiah, ID 83536

September 30, 1976

Dr. V. E. McKlevey
U.S. Geological Survey Bureau
National Center
Reston, VA 22092

Dear Dr. McKlevey:

The Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society has reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared on the proposed, "Development of Phosphate Resources in Southeastern Idaho."

It is our contention that this draft is inadequate and deficient in: 1) Addressing the total impacts that the proposed mining and related activities will have on fish and wildlife resources, 2) providing suitable alternatives to the proposed action and 3) promoting adequate measures to mitigate impacts.

We find a general lack of commitment by the responsible agencies in stipulating safeguards to protect fish and wildlife resources. No mention is made in the Statement as to what extent those agencies, both state and federal, will guarantee compliance with existing laws and regulations. Violations of existing environmental regulations have and are occurring, leaving us with the assumption that these actions may continue.

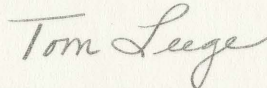
As used in the draft Statement, we feel the word "reclamation" is used improperly. Reclamation programs should be geared to the restoration of native vegetation. In many cases, exotic species have been planted on dump sites. These "exotics" do provide ground cover for aesthetics and soil stability, but do little to replace the winter wildlife forage plants that were eliminated by the mining.

Although it is recognized in the Statement that severe wildlife impacts will occur, no mitigative measures, except for compliance with existing laws and regulations, are proposed. The Statement fails to explore more desirable alternatives which would require changes in antiquated mining laws. The mitigation proposals fall short of protecting and maintaining existing quantity and quality of fish and wildlife habitat. Measures used to prevent losses and to replace land and habitat should be described along with the assurance they will be carried out should the proposed action be approved. The question of financial responsibility for these measures must also be explored.

That portion of the Statement pertaining to the transportation system is inadequate because it does not address the impacts on fish and wildlife created by new construction or expansion of existing routes. No analyses are included of impacts created by the storage of empty ore cars during the off season. Migration routes could be blocked or other wildlife problems could result. Where will the sites be and what will be the length of stored train segments?

We are opposed to any new mines opening up until all wildlife impacts are adequately addressed and complete mitigation guaranteed. We are also opposed to the construction of any processing plants within the Blackfoot River drainage unless adequate measures in construction and operation can be provided to preserve the present high level of water quality and fish habitat in the watershed.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Leege
President
Idaho Chapter
The Wildlife Society

TAL/cae

bcc: Mike Zacata - Wildlife Soc.
Dr. Dick Mackie - Bozeman
Governor Andrus
Dick Schwarz - IWF
R. Brown - IEC
Student Chap. - TWS
Senator Frank Church
Senator James McClure

8/5/76

Position Statement

THE IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
on the

Draft E.I.S. entitled, "Proposed Domestic Livestock Grazing
Program for the Challis Planning Unit"

The Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society, an organization composed of professional wildlife workers in Idaho, offers the following position statement with regard to the Bureau of Land Management's proposal to graze livestock on the Challis Planning Unit.

We oppose the proposed grazing plan for the Challis Planning Unit because of the following reasons:

1. The plan is based on inadequate baseline range trend information and speculative assumptions about long term effects of the specified grazing system. In our view, wildlife habitat for elk, antelope, mule deer and sage grouse will decline under the proposed plan.

2. Not enough recognition is given to the bighorn sheep, the large populations that formerly existed there, and the potential of the area to support greater numbers in the future.

We recommend:

1. That livestock be allowed to graze on big game winter ranges only when there is documented evidence that surplus forage exists, or that livestock grazing will improve the range condition for big game.

2. That range rehabilitation techniques such as prescribed burning and seeding be experimented with to improve the critical bighorn sheep ranges, and that management be aimed at increasing bighorn sheep numbers substantially.

3. That because of the poor condition of the range, the apparent reduction in productivity caused by overgrazing in some areas, and the slow rate of vegetal recovery because of low rainfall, that livestock grazing be substantially reduced from the existing situation. Reliable range trend transects should be established to document changes that result from any grazing action to facilitate the decision-making in the future.