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IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

POSITION PAPER

HEARING ON INEL LAND RETENTION

Lands within the boundaries of the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL) are critical winter range for antelope and sage grouse that summer in the Little Lost, Birch Creek, Crooked Creek, and Medicine Lodge drainages. Over half of Idaho's antelope depend on this range during winters of greater than average snowfall. Without the continued availability of INEL lands for unrestricted antelope use, a population decline is certain. Agricultural development and fencing in the Little Lost, Crooked Creek, and Medicine Lodge areas have reduced winter range, restricted migration corridors, and made the INEL a last chance range. Any reduction or development of INEL lands will be detrimental.

In addition to importance as winter range, the area receives year-round use by sage grouse and summers antelope near the Big Southern Butte and many of the reactor facilities.

This sagebrush desert is also home for mourning doves, cottontail rabbits, raptors, and many non-game species.

Hearing Date: March 19, 1981

Place: Idaho Falls, Idaho