

Part I – Agency Profile

Agency Overview

The Governor's Office of Species Conservation was created in 2000 with passage of Senate Bill 1490, which established the agency within the Executive Office of the Governor. The Governor's Office of Species Conservation is dedicated to planning, coordinating and implementing the State's actions to preserve, protect and restore species listed as threatened and endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). This work is done in coordination with the State's natural resource agencies and with input from the citizens of Idaho, while taking into consideration the economic vitality of the State. The Office of Species Conservation is located on the first floor of the Borah building across the street from the Idaho State Capitol.

Core Functions/Idaho Code

- 1) **Coordinate** federal ESA programs with State agencies (§ 67-818).
- 2) **Solicit**, provide, and delegate funding for ESA programs (§67-819).
- 3) **Create** de-listing advisory teams (§ 36-2402, 2403, 2404).
- 4) **Serve** as the State's "one voice" on ESA policy (§ 67-818, 2(a)).
- 5) **Provide** a mechanism for Idaho citizens to voice ESA concerns (§ 67-818, 2(g)).
- 6) **Facilitate** collaboration between State, federal and private stakeholders (§ 67-818, 2(b)(c)(g)).

The Office of Species Conservation has four goals that guide the performance of its core functions:

- 1) Coordinate implementation of State policy among State agencies with regards to ESA programs.
- 2) Negotiate agreements with federal resource agencies that rely upon science and common sense, involve all parties affected by recovery decisions, and incorporate Idaho's economic vitality and values.
- 3) Coordinate the solicitation of funding resources, provide reasonable oversight and insure cost effective allocation of funding for ESA programs.
- 4) Provide excellent constituent services for State, federal and private stakeholders seeking assistance with ESA issues.

Key Challenges to fulfilling the Office's mission are changes in federal regulations, adjustments in priority due to petitions and/or litigation, unpredictable funding sources, and random environmental events with implications for ESA species.

Revenues and Expenditures

Revenue	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
General Fund	\$477,500	\$451,000	\$473,200	\$478,300
Federal Grant	\$13,347,023	\$10,147,539	\$12,743,100	\$12,749,500
Miscellaneous	\$20,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Total	\$13,844,523	\$10,613,539	\$13,231,300	\$13,242,800
Expenditure	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014
Personnel Costs	\$821,149	\$890,500	\$870,103	\$898,106
Operating	\$253,441	\$303,900	\$197,316	\$219,810
Capital Outlay	\$2,535	\$0	\$0	\$7,124
Trustee/Benefit Payments	\$8,574,245	\$5,236,200	\$8,902,772	\$6,557,419
Total	\$9,651,370	\$6,430,600	\$9,970,191	\$7,682,459

Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided

Performance Measures	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014
BPA Expenditures	\$576,870	\$755,425	\$1,949,963	\$2,111,495	\$3,398,736	\$1,627,378
PCSRF Funds Expenditures	\$2,446,394	\$3,264,299	\$2,614,016	\$2,267,378	\$1,864,980	\$2,874,123
SRBA Funds Expenditures	\$1,964,762	\$1,657,147	\$2,790,254	\$864,568	\$2,683,452	\$2,079,190
Sage Grouse Funds Expenditures	\$159,388	\$343,649	\$533,319	\$254,178	\$165,573	\$59,260
Aquatic Species Habitat Funds Expenditures	\$64,267	\$218,860	\$181,610	\$64,703	\$15,000	\$25,060
Freshwater Mollusk Funds Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,340	\$810	\$2,760
Bull Trout	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$36,181	\$1,200	\$0
Gray Wolf Funds Expenditures	\$582,336	\$879,244	\$1,170,863	\$308,367	\$1,192,637	\$480,865
Wolf depredation and compensation (claims/awarded/amount)	45/42/100K	48/38/100K	48/38/100K	84/78/196K	27/27/11K	45/44/77K
Roadless Funds Expenditures	\$4,143	\$13,486	\$6,257	\$14,569	\$17,259	\$9,834
Slickspot Peppergrass Funds Expenditures	\$13,802	\$54,685	\$0	\$0	\$8,846	\$0
Miscellaneous Funds Expenditures	\$449	\$10,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$5,812,411	\$7,196,795	\$9,246,282	\$5,926,780	\$9,348,493	\$7,158,470

Performance Highlights

- Participated in and/or led more than 50 State policy coordination meetings.
- Dispensed wolf depredation compensation funds: received 45 claims/awarded 44 claims/paid \$77,000.
- Conducted 2 proposal solicitations (RFP's) for OSC federal assistance programs.
- Received 24 project proposals for federal assistance.
- Awarded 21 projects for funding totaling \$5,889,326.
- Slickspot Peppergrass
 - In 2009, the Obama Administration listed slickspot peppergrass as threatened repudiating years of local collaborative efforts by OSC and others to conserve the species and its habitat while preserving predictable levels of land use. Governor Otter and OSC filed a civil lawsuit challenging the federal government's decision as arbitrary, capricious, and contrary to law.
 - In August of 2012, the District Court ruled in the State's favor and vacated the threatened listing determination for slickspot peppergrass. This was a significant victory for the State, as we have been fighting to keep this plant under State management for over 10 years.
 - Most recently, in 2014, The State of Idaho commented on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS or Service) joint proposals to re-list slickspot peppergrass as threatened and designate critical habitat in four counties across southwest Idaho. OSC provided comments on behalf of the State that were critical of the findings within the Service's proposals. The State's comments primarily focused on the myriad of conservation efforts that are occurring within slickspot peppergrass habitat, including the newly established rangeland fire protection associations (RFPAs), the Paradigm Project, and the ancillary benefits derived from sage grouse conservation efforts. A final decision is expected in spring 2015.

- Sage Grouse
 - In March of 2010, the USFWS designated the sage grouse as a candidate for listing under the ESA throughout the eleven-state range of the species. Consequently, the USFWS must decide by September 30, 2015 whether or not to officially list the species. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S Forest Service (USFS) are currently working to update their respective land and resource management plans to address the needs of sage grouse.
 - On March 9, 2012, Governor Otter issued an Executive Order establishing the Governor's Sage Grouse Task Force. This diverse group was charged with providing recommendations on actions to conserve sage grouse and its habitat and preclude the need to list the species under the ESA. The Task Force delivered its recommendations to the Governor on June 15, 2012.
 - From those recommendations, the Governor's Alternative was developed and incorporated into the BLM and USFS land-use planning effort.
 - The Governor's Alternative balances the needs of greater sage-grouse with land-use activities and the economic vitality of the state.
 - The Governor's Alternative has been recognized as one of two "preferred alternatives" in the federal land-use planning effort.
 - OSC continues as a cooperating agency with the BLM to finish planning efforts for sage-grouse on federal lands in Idaho.
 - OSC continues to provide funding for sage grouse conservation projects and monitoring efforts.

- Bull Trout
 - Bull trout were listed as a threatened species in 1998, for its entire region of Idaho, Montana, Washington and Oregon. Under then-Governor Batt, Idaho had developed a recovery plan, much of which is being used in the current federal recovery planning process.
 - OSC has been very involved with recovery planning and delisting efforts in Idaho.
 - The State of Idaho is waiting for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to release the draft bull trout recovery plan.
 - OSC will comment on the draft bull trout recovery plan once released by the Service this fall and will assist in the implementation of the plan.

- Salmon and Steelhead Recovery
 - OSC, in collaboration with our satellite offices in Salmon and Moscow, and partner agencies, continues to implement habitat restorative actions in watersheds with significant potential for salmon and steelhead recovery in Idaho. During FY14, OSC implemented 6.4 million dollars in habitat restoration projects in the Salmon and Clearwater basins.
 - Sockeye draft recovery plan was co-issued by OSC, IDFG and the National Marine Fisheries Service in 2014.

- Woodland Caribou
 - OSC, on behalf of the State, recently provided comments on the Service's proposal to reclassify the endangered southern Selkirk population of woodland caribou as part of the larger southern mountain population, which primarily resides in British Columbia. If the proposal is finalized, caribou in Idaho will be designated as threatened, as opposed to endangered.
 - Also in 2014, OSC, on behalf of Governor Otter, intervened as defendants in a lawsuit filed by a coalition of environmental groups. This coalition wishes to invalidate the current critical habitat designation in order to vastly expand the critical habitat in Idaho and Washington. The State, along with the Kootenai Tribe, local counties, and others was instrumental in crafting the

current habitat designation that appropriately provides for recovery of the caribou population, while still allowing for multiple land-uses.

- North American Wolverine
 - In May 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to list the N. American wolverine as threatened under the ESA. OSC, with input from sister state agencies, provided comments that questioned the Service's species classification and rationale within the proposal. Primarily, the State was concerned with the Service's determination that the wolverine qualified for protection based solely on the projected threats from climate change, especially considering that current data suggests wolverine population numbers are on the rise.
 - In August 2014, due in part to the comments received from western states, including Idaho, the Service withdrew their proposal to list the North American wolverine as threatened. The Service cited to uncertainty within their climate data as reason for withdrawing their proposed rule.
- OSC also provided comments on the following issues affecting the State:
 - Yellow-billed Cuckoo listing and critical habitat proposals
 - Amendments to federal regulations concerning critical habitat designations
 - IDFG's Idaho Wolverine Conservation Plan
 - Southern Idaho Ground Squirrels
 - Hooper Springs Transmission Line
 - Gateway West Transmission Line

Part II – Performance Measures

Performance Measures	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	Benchmark
BPA Expenditures	\$576,870	\$755,425	\$1,949,963	\$2,111,495	\$3,398,736	\$1,627,378	\$1,000,000
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State policy coordination meetings	36	24	25	40	50	50	12
Wolf depredation and compensation (claims/awarded/amount)	45/42/100K	48/38/100K	46/42/100K	84/78/196K	27/27/11K	45/44/77K	50/45/150K
Solicitations for conservation projects	3	5	3	3	2	2	2
Number of proposals received	31	36	29	23	25	24	25
Number of projects awarded funds	24	33	22	18	22	21	23
Amount of funding awarded to projects	\$9,870,098	\$4,859,427	\$6,158,301	\$7,704,631	\$4,491,175	\$5,889,326	\$6,000,000
Species/habitat/policy comments	4	6	10	7	10	8	3
Requests for ombudsman assistance	no data	180	120	60	150	150	150

For More Information Contact

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