

Part I – Agency Profile

Agency Overview

The Governor's Office of Species Conservation was created in 2000 with passage of Senate Bill 1490, which set up 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 will be done in coordination with the State's natural resource agencies and with input of the citizen 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.

Revenue and Expenditures

Revenue	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
General Fund	\$451,000	\$473,200	\$478,300	\$693,800
Federal Grant	\$10,140,600	\$6,830,500	\$4,979,500	\$5,857,400
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$72,000	\$0
Total	\$10,591,600	\$7,303,700	\$5,529,800	\$6,551,200
Expenditure	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Personnel Costs	\$890,500	\$870,100	\$898,100	\$944,900
Operating Expenditures	\$229,300	\$211,400	\$210,810	\$345,300
Capital Outlay	\$0	\$0	\$34,200	\$1,900
Trustee/Benefit Payments	\$5,236,200	\$8,902,800	\$6,557,400	\$10,303,800
Total	\$6,356,000	\$9,984,300	\$7,700,500	\$11,597,900

Profile of Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided *

Cases Managed and/or Key Services Provided	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery	\$2,231,718	\$1,836,856	\$2,804,425	\$3,030,762
Fish Habitat	\$64,188	\$15,000	\$25,060	\$1,439
Bull Trout	\$36,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Snake River Basin Adjudication	\$794,202	\$2,683,452	\$2,080,174	\$5,010,337
Bonneville Power Fish Accords	\$1,617,379	\$3,051,862	\$1,083,274	\$1,700,220
Wolf Management	\$303,442	\$1,191,564	\$511,292	\$458,060
Wolf Depredation Claims / Awards	84/78	27/27	45/44	16/16
Freshwater Mollusk	\$1,350	\$810	\$0	\$1,090
Sage Grouse Conservation	\$187,875	\$123,229	\$53,194	\$101,793
Total	\$5,236,154	\$8,902,772	\$6,557,420	\$10,303,702

*Values in table represent T&B expenditures as a proxy for key services provided.

Performance Highlights:

- Participated in and/or led at least 200 State policy coordination meetings.
- Provided comment and coordination on multiple ESA and land-use planning matters.
- Dispensed wolf depredation compensation funds: received 16 claims/awarded 16 claims/paid \$36,000.
- Conducted 2 proposal solicitations (RFP's) for OSC federal assistance programs.
- Received 22 project proposals for federal assistance.
- Awarded 20 projects for funding totaling \$9,778,532.
- Sage Grouse
 - Concerns about long-term declines in sage grouse populations have prompted efforts to conserve the species while maintaining predictable levels of land use activity. In January 2005, the USFWS determined that sage grouse was not warranted for listing under the ESA. Each state is undertaking actions to preserve the species and its habitat, in an effort to preclude a listing under the ESA.
 - In March of 2010, the USFWS designated the greater 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 list the species. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management is currently undertaking a process to update their Resource Management Plans to address the needs of the sage grouse.
 - On March 9, 2012, Governor Otter issued an Executive Order establishing the Governor's Sage Grouse Task Force. This was a diverse group of stake holders that included representatives from local sage grouse working groups, conservation interests, and state and local officials and industry. This group was charged with providing recommendations on actions for developing a state wide regulatory mechanism to preclude the need to list the species under the ESA. The group met eight times between March and May with each meeting open to the public. The Task Force delivered its recommendations to the Governor on June 15, 2012. The Governor then developed a set of guiding principles to help evaluate the strength of the Task Force's recommendations.
 - The Governor's Alternative, which was published on September 5, 2012, adopted the designation of a Sage Grouse Management Area with three distinct management zones: Core Habitat (CHZ), Important Habitat (IHZ), and General Habitat (GHZ). This allows for focusing the most protection on the best habitat, or the CHZ and providing greater flexibility on the IHZ. The Governor's Alternative builds on the 2006 Sage Grouse Management Plan and focuses on the most urgent threats to the bird's habitat, which is fragmentation due to fire and invasive species. This plan was included as one of six alternatives in the land-use planning process conducted by the Bureau of Land Management for amending 88 Resource Management Plans in Sage Grouse Habitat. The draft EIS was released for public comment in the fall of 2013.

- Over the past two years, OSC has been at the table with Idaho BLM, USFWS and the USFS to ensure that the full intent of the Governor's Alternative was captured within the federal planning effort.
- We had come to agreement with our local federal partners on a path forward that appropriately blended the Governor's Alternative and the local federal plan.
- Recently however, the Interior Department proposed additional top-down guidance, including a new habitat zone and a more restrictive rule set, for insertion into the federal planning effort. The Final EIS for the Idaho and Southwest Montana sub-region was released in late May 2015, and included the top-down direction.
- This was a stark deviation from the direction we were headed with the local federal agencies and represented a violation of agreements made with the federal government.
- As a result, OSC participated in filing protest points on the final EIS as well as completing a mandated Governor's Consistency review in July 2015.
- The Idaho legislature appropriated funding in FY2016 for on the ground sage grouse conservation and habitat improvement projects. OSC staff have been working with a sage grouse actions team to prioritize and fund sage grouse conservation projects.
- A new staff member at OSC has been providing on-the-ground coordination for sage-grouse conservation actions.
- Canada Lynx
 - OSC is assisting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) in a lawsuit regarding incidental trapping of this species.
- North American Wolverine
 - Governor Otter, via OSC, intervened as a defendant in a lawsuit challenging the USFWS's decision to list the wolverine as a threatened species.
 - Idaho has been joined by the State of Montana and the State of Wyoming in the lawsuit.
- 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.
 - Recently, the State of Idaho in conjunction with Montana provided comments on the 5-year status review of bull trout, noting that its abundance and range show the fish should be de-listed from the ESA.
 - The State of Idaho provided comments on the USFWS Recovery Plan and Recovery Unit Implementation.
- Salmon and Steelhead Recovery
 - The Office of Species Conservation, 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 10.0 million dollars in habitat restoration projects in the Salmon and Clearwater watersheds.
- Lemhi/Upper Salmon Biological Opinions
 - In 2012, The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued two Biological Opinions addressing the use and operation of in-stream diversions located on U.S. Forest Service land in the Lemhi and Upper Salmon watersheds. These opinions concluded that the continued operation of these diversions would jeopardize threatened and endangered fish species and would also adversely modify their habitat. OSC has contracted with a consultant to model water quantities that fish restoration projects have saved. Those water savings will be evaluated by NMFS to offset the water diversions on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands the Lemhi watershed.
- Idaho Roadless Rule Commission
 - OSC continues to serve as liaison between the Governor's Office and the Idaho Roadless Commission.
- Woodland Caribou
 - OSC continues to advocate for the current federal rule designating a reasonable amount of critical habitat for woodland caribou.
- Yellowstone Grizzly Bears
 - Participated in the winter Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee meeting
 - Working with IDFG and other states on delisting Yellowstone grizzly bears.

Part II – Performance Measures

Performance Measure	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	Benchmark
State policy coordination meetings	40	50	50	200	12
Wolf depredation and compensation (claims/awarded/amount)	84/78/196K	27/27/11K	45/44/77K	16/16/36K	50/45/150K
Solicitations for conservation projects	3	2	2	2	2
Number of proposals received	23	25	24	22	25
Number of projects awarded funds	18	22	21	20	23
Amount of funding awarded to projects	\$7,704,631	\$4,491,175	\$5,889,326	\$9,778,532	\$6,000,000
Species/habitat/policy comments	7	10	8	6	3
Requests for ombudsman assistance	60	150	150	150	150

For More Information Contact

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