

Idaho Governor’s Office of Species Conservation Strategic Plan FY 2025-2028

Brad Little, Governor
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Our Mission

The Idaho Governor’s Office of Species Conservation (OSC) is dedicated to planning, coordinating and implementing the State’s actions to preserve, protect and restore species listed as candidate, threatened and endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). This work is done in coordination with the State’s natural resource agencies and input from the citizens of Idaho, while taking into consideration the economic vitality of the State. The OSC provides constituent services for state, federal and private stakeholders seeking assistance with ESA issues.

Our Vision

OSC seeks to proactively provide leadership and guidance for constituents including state, federal, and private stakeholders, seeking assistance with the conservation of rare and declining species, and recovery and delisting of threatened, endangered and candidate species under the ESA.

Our Goals

Goal #1: Create and implement State policy among a diverse set of stakeholders to address issues related to federal ESA programs.

Objective 1: Engage in and sustain stakeholder outreach on ESA issues in order to understand impacts and help shape policy.

Assigned Party: Administrator, Aquatic Species Program, Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Number of stakeholder discussions	30	33	35	35
Explanation				
Stakeholder discussions may take form as phone calls, one-on-one meetings, virtual meetings, or in a large meeting setting				

Objective 2: Coordinate and provide comments on project proposals, plans, and policy documents that have the potential to impact ESA species and citizens of the state of Idaho.

Assigned Party: Aquatic and Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Providing comments on project proposals, plans, and policy documents – comment letters	28	30	32	34

Explanation

OSC develops the state’s viewpoint regarding ESA species by analyzing current science and feedback from constituents and other stakeholders regarding each project, plan or policy document (NEPA).

Goal #2: Negotiate agreements with federal natural resource agencies that rely upon science and common sense, involve all parties affected by ESA decisions, and incorporate Idaho’s economic vitality and values into the decision-making processes.

Objective 1: Work with USFWS and IDFG on all Species Status Assessments (SSA) and 5 Year Status Reviews for species present or impacting Idaho.

Assigned Party: Aquatic and Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Participate in the USFWS process to provide feedback for SSAs and status reviews	100%	100%	100%	100%
Explanation				
USFWS conducts SSAs and 5 Year Status Reviews on listed species to be incorporated into their recovery plans.				

Objective 2: Coordinate with the Attorney General’s Office on litigation related to threatened or endangered species to monitor status and provide assistance where possible.

Assigned Party: Legal Counsel, Administrator, Aquatic Species Program, Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Attend meetings with AG’s office	40	45	45	50
Explanation				
Federal and State agencies are frequently challenged in court for decisions effecting threatened or endangered species, and the outcomes of such litigation may impact OSC’s mission. As such, OSC will remain apprised of all Idaho ESA species litigation and aid the AG’s office in litigation to support and guide Idaho’s position whenever possible.				

Objective 3: Meet with IDFG leadership to coordinate management, recovery, and delisting efforts of threatened and endangered species.

Assigned Party: Administrator, Aquatic Species Program, Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Meet with IDFG Leadership	3 meetings	3 meetings	3 meetings	3 meetings

Explanation

Work with IDFG as the State’s wildlife manager to identify a path forward through ESA Section 4(d), a petition to delist threatened and endangered species under the ESA, or recovery efforts.

Goal #3: Solicit funding resources and allocate funds to further OSC’s mission with an emphasis on transparency and accountability.

Objective 1: Secure PCSRF Grant and Distribute PCSRF Funds

Assigned Party: Aquatic Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Complete and submit annual grant application to NOAA ¹	1	1	1	1
Accept PCSRF Award ²	\$6.0 million	\$6.25 million	\$6.5 million	\$6.75 million
Hold PCSRF Board Meeting to award funding ³	2	2	2	2
Conduct project site visits ⁴	25	25	25	25
Conduct Subrecipient Monitoring ⁵	8	8	8	8

Explanation

¹ Application is reviewed and scored for technical merit and awards are made by NOAA
² PCSRF is a competitive award process. OSC hopes to increase award amount by making Idaho more competitive by administering a successful program
³ Boards hears proposals and makes funding decisions directing OSC with any conditions and sets funding levels of projects. 2 annual meetings should be sufficient to award new grant money and any grant money left over from previous years.
⁴ Estimated site visits between Boise, Moscow, and Salmon Staff. Site visits help ensure that projects are meeting their goals and in compliance with state and federal requirements
⁵ Monitoring based on sub-recipient risk evaluation ensures program compliance

Objective 2: Idaho Fish Accord Administration

Assigned Party: Aquatic Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measures	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Renew annual intergovernmental agreements contained in the Idaho Fish Accord with BPA. ¹	20	20	20	20
Meet with IDFG on Fish Accord funding	4	4	4	4

levels of projects within the Idaho Portfolio. ²				
Receive and approve progress and annual reports from contractors. ³	45	45	45	45
Attend Salmon and Clearwater Technical Team Meetings ⁴	12	12	12	12
Project Oversight field visits	200	200	200	200
Explanation				
<p>¹ OSC co-manages a suite of approximately 20 BPA funded projects with IDFG known as the Idaho Portfolio. Each project has a contract that has a variable renewal date.</p> <p>² OSC and IDFG have the ability to move funds, reserve funds, or pre-fund projects by coordinating with BPA COTRs on their co-managed BPA funded projects.</p> <p>³ This includes technical reports and project tracking within PIECES.</p> <p>⁴ Monthly meeting of the technical teams to conceptualize, prioritize, future projects; rank proposed projects; monitor the progression of funded projects. Provides technical ranking to the PCSRF Board and BPA Staff.</p> <p>⁵ Boise, Moscow and Salmon staff conduct regular project implementation visits to ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal rules as well as ensure project deliverable are being realized and all work is conducted in a safe manner.</p>				

Objective 3: Secure US Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Funding to continue salmon recovery projects.

Assigned Party: Aquatic Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Apply or renew funding instruments with BOR. ¹	2	2	2	2
Conduct field visits and review protocols ²	6	6	6	6
Meet with relevant contractors and staff to ensure projects are meeting goals and objectives.	12	12	12	12
Contribute to and review annual reports. ³	1+	1+	1+	1+
Meet to review budget, drawdown logs, and work with BOR and contractor to ensure deliverables are produced within time	8	8	8	8

and budget limitations. ⁴				
Explanation				
¹ Application is reviewed and scored for technical merit and awards are made by BOR. OSC currently has two BPA funded projects including: Upper Salmon Integrated Rehabilitation Assessment and Multiple Reach Assessments and Radio Fish Tracking in the Upper Salmon Basin. ² Observe project data, equipment, and sites to ensure scientific integrity and workplace safety. ³ Report to BOR annual results on the timing and movement of juvenile salmonids in the Upper Salmon River. ⁴ Basic project/budget oversight and coordination.				

Objective 4: Convene the Sage-grouse Actions Team to evaluate projects and allocate funding to the most beneficial projects.

Assigned Party: Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Grant dollars awarded, obligated or spent annually by June 30. ¹	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$700,000	\$700,000
Conduct field visits and evaluate projects. ²	9	9	9	9
Provide Program Update And Federal reports. ³	2	2	2	2
Receive and approve progress and annual reports from successful applicants. ⁴	12	12	12	12
Explanation				
¹ The legislature appropriates general fund dollars for implementation of the Idaho plan and the federal government awards grant funding to OSC for sage-grouse projects. Each year these dollars will be allocated to funding of sagebrush steppe habitat restoration and rehabilitation projects and spent or obligated by June 1 of that FY. ² OSC will conduct a certain number of field visits on a subset of projects each year for program and project evaluation in meeting their goals and objectives. ³ The USFWS and the BLM require annual reports regarding the federal funds they have granted OSC. ⁴ A final and a 2-year report must be completed for each project and approved by OSC.				

Objective 5: Obtain compensation funding for livestock producers who have incurred losses due to wolves and prevention funding to aid producers in deterring wolf/livestock conflicts.

Assigned Party: Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Apply for Compensation Grant Funds. ¹	1	1	1	1
Apply for Prevention Grant Funds ²	1	1	1	1
Provide annual reports. ³	1	1	1	1
Percentage of verified wolf-livestock kills where producers participated and received funding from compensation program ⁴	75%	75%	75%	75%
Explanation				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. OSC applies annually for compensation dollars through USFWS. If funded OSC would distribute the necessary funding from USFWS to producers who have verified deprecations and that complete the compensation application. 2. FY 21 was the first year that OSC received a grant for wolf prevention funding from USFWS. OSC would like to continue to apply for and receive this funding. 3. The USFWS require annual reports regarding the federal funds they have granted OSC. 4. Not all producers with verified wolf kills choose to participate in the compensation program. 				

Goal #4: To provide unsurpassed constituent services for State, federal and private stakeholders seeking assistance with ESA issues.

Objective 1: OSC will maintain the superb efficiency of its contract administration process.

Assigned Party: Aquatic and Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
% of invoices signed and processed within 30 days of OSC receiving them.	95%	95%	95%	95%
Explanation				
OSC receives payment invoices that must be coded, signed by the administrator and processed by fiscal for ESA projects. This is an internal target to maintain high efficiency.				

Objective 2: Maintain the efficiency of the PCSRF award process.

Assigned Party: Aquatic Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Complete and send Award Letters within 7 days of PCSRF Board Meeting ¹	95%	95%	95%	95%
Enter into contracts for projects awarded by PCSRF Board within 60 days PCSRF Board meeting ²	95%	95%	95%	95%
Attend NOAA Grants Workshop ³	1	1	1	1
Explanation				
¹ Maintaining high efficiency helps ensure high quality of our overall constituent services ² Working with project managers to increase efficiency of entering into contracts will increase overall constituent service ³ Attendance ensures that OSC stays up to date on NOAA Grant requirements and developments so that we may continue to administer our PCSRF program efficiently				

Objective 3: Maintain the efficiency of Terrestrial species grant award and contract process.

Assigned Party: Terrestrial Species Program

Performance Measure, Benchmarks, and Explanations				
Performance Measure	Benchmark FY 25	Benchmark FY 26	Benchmark FY 27	Benchmark FY 28
Complete and send Award Letters within 30 days of Actions Team Ranking Meeting ¹	95%	95%	95%	95%
Enter into contracts for recommended projects within 60 days of the Actions Team Ranking meeting ²	95%	95%	95%	95%
Make Wolf Compensation payments within 30 days of the application deadline. ³	95%	95%	95%	95%
Explanation				
^{1.} Steadily increase our efficiency and improve our overall constituent services through the Sage Grouse Actions Team.				

2. Increase efficiency of entering into Sage Grouse Actions Team contracts, this will increase overall constituent service.
3. Make wolf compensation payments to livestock producers within 30 days of the application deadline, December 31st, this will increase overall constituent service.

External Factors

Endangered Species Priorities

ESA species issues tend to have fluctuating priorities. A species and/or habitat issue receiving a lot of focus at one moment may suddenly become a lesser priority depending upon the biological, social, legal, political, or cultural ramifications of current events, petitions, or litigation. State agencies must be flexible to adapt to those shifts in priorities as they occur.

Unpredictable Federal Funding

Programmatic changes in federal funding and competing programs result in significant funding uncertainties for State agencies. Priorities and action plans must have a level of flexibility built in so that State agencies can adjust their focus if the funding for a particular species and/or habitat issue dramatically changes.

Environmental Unpredictability

Unforeseen environmental events (i.e. catastrophic wildfire or major flooding events) resulting in significant impacts to either species or habitats has the potential to affect how State agencies prioritize work plans and spending.

Coronavirus

The Coronavirus pandemic created disruption in many ESA and natural resource planning efforts and projects. The long-term effects of Coronavirus on ESA planning efforts and projects is unknown.