



# LIFE IN THE **west**

PEOPLE, LAND, WATER AND WILDLIFE  
IN A CHANGING ECONOMY

## WHITE PAPER





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## Conference Report

### Life in the West

*People, Land, Water and Wildlife in a Changing Economy*

**Saturday, May 1, 2010**  
Jordan Ballroom, Student Union  
Boise State University

**Convened by:**  
The Andrus Center for Public Policy

**Sponsored by:**  
The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
&  
The Idaho Statesman

The Conference was supported by a generous grant from:  
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# Conference Schedule

**Saturday, May 1, 2010**

**8:30 am**      **Conference Opening Remarks**  
**Gov. Cecil D. Andrus**, Chairman, The Andrus Center  
*“Personal and Policy Reflections on Life in the West”*

**8:45 am**      **Bob Abbey**, Director, Bureau of Land Management  
**Tom Tidwell**, Chief, U.S. Forest Service

**10: am**      **Audience Q&A**

**10:30 am**      **Break**

**10:45 am**      **Panel Discussion: “What Works in Idaho and Why”**  
Two case studies of success collaborations-  
what they tell us and what comes next

Moderated by: **Dr. John Freemuth**, Senior Fellow, The Andrus Center

## **The Owyhee Initiative**

- **Craig Gehrke**, Regional Director, The Wilderness Society

## **Henry’s Fork Council**

- **Kim Ragotzkie**, Stewardship Director, Henry’s Fork Foundation
- **Dale Swenson**, Fremont-Madison Irrigation District

**12:15 pm**      **Lunch Address**  
**Idaho Lieutenant Governor Brad Little**

**2:00 pm**

**Panel Discussion: “Public Lands Issues- Idaho Perspectives”**

Moderated by: **Marc C. Johnson**, President, The Andrus Center

- **George Bacon**, Director, Idaho Department of Lands
- **Rep. Scott Bedke**, Idaho State Representative
- **Jack Blackwell**, VP Land and Conservation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- **Jim Caswell**, Northwest Natural Resources Group
- **Dale Goble**, Professor of Law, University of Idaho
- **Cal Groen**, Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- **Aaron Miles**, National Resources Manager, Nez Perce Tribe
- **John Robison**, Public Lands Director, Idaho Conservation League

**4:00 pm**

**What Next**

**Conference Summary and Call to Action**

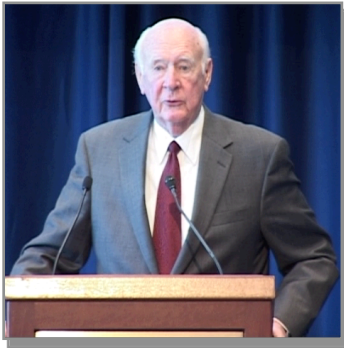
**Gov. Cecil D. Andrus**

**4:30 pm**

**Adjourn**

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*“All of us in Idaho recognize the need for jobs, there's no question about that, and the importance of a strong economy; but when the workweek is done, many of us want pursue those things that make life worthwhile on the public lands and waters like take a hike, to ride a bike, break out the fly rod, go hunting, go fishing or drift a boat.”*

**Cecil D. Andrus**  
**Former Idaho Governor**  
**and**  
**Secretary of the Interior**

*“In the Bureau of Land Management's quest to create sustainable landscapes under our multiple use mandate, it's certainly evident, to me, that a key part of our success lies in creating sustainable relationships (emphasis ours) with all of our stakeholders”.*

**Bob Abbey, Director**  
**Bureau of Land Management**



*“From 1940 to 2000, the number of housing units that were within a half a mile of national forests went from about a half a million to 1.8 million, and at the same time, the number of housing units within the national forests went from about 330,000 to 1.2 million. And everything that we see, this is going to continue.”)*

**Tom Tidwell, Chief**  
**U.S. Forest Service**



# **LIFE IN THE WEST: PEOPLE, LAND, WATER AND WILDLIFE IN A CHANGING ECONOMY**

## **Conference White Paper**

This conference originated in a conversation between former Governor and U.S. Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus and Jack Blackwell, Vice President of Lands and Conservation for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Their conversation is echoed by others throughout the state. The American West and Idaho are experiencing growing conflicts between urban/suburban growth and the wildlife resources dependent upon that impacted habitat. As noted by Governor Andrus:

Commitment to fish and wildlife led to my following closely the management of fish and game by both Federal and State agencies, because hunting and fishing is a major part of the life in Idaho and the West, and we depend upon the public lands to provide the habitat that makes these enjoyable sports possible. *And that's what Jack and I started talking about over a year ago-habitat.*

Whether it is lost habitat or wolves, or the many other conflicts stemming from people's different values, many worry that a livable and familiar Idaho could slip away in the face of relentless growth. At the local level (county commissioners, city councils, fire and irrigation districts, environmental groups etc.) a number of efforts and partnerships have been undertaken in Idaho that might teach us something about building necessary "civic capacity" the ability to build and maintain a broad social and political coalition across all sectors of the community in pursuit of a common goal. In this case we seek to balance growth and development with wildlife and habitat needs as we try and grapple with this landscape level change at the level of state governments. The Andrus Center wanted to learn from people

involved in these efforts, in order to see better what might be needed to build a sustainable political and social coalition which could work successfully around this diverse state. In this white paper, The Andrus Center reports on a set of action items designed to build on current successes and signal a commitment to follow up and implement the action items over the next several years.

### **The Necessity of Sustainable Relationships**

Sixty-one percent of Idaho is managed by federal land agencies; another 5% by the state. The two agencies of most significance are the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Hence, The Andrus Center felt it important to hear from the director of BLM, Robert (Bob) Abbey and the chief of USFS, Tom Tidwell. Quite frankly it is hard to imagine collaboration and civic capacity building happening without these federal land agencies' participation and commitment.

Federal land policy decisions affect states and also Indian nations and their citizens. Thus, collaboration is a basic requirement. Bob Abbey put it well when he said:

In the Bureau of Land Management's quest to create sustainable landscapes under our multiple use mandate, it's certainly evident, to me, that a key part of our success lies in creating *sustainable relationships* (emphasis ours) with all of our stakeholders .

Sustainable relationships certainly help build the capacity to solve problems. The core value for sustainable relationships is trust, if the comments below made by participants at this conference are any indication. It is also hard to imagine sustainable landscapes without sustainable institutions.

Energy development is one huge policy area that BLM must manage which can have large effects on habitat and therefore demands collaboration. Whether it is oil and gas, solar, wind or transmission, the impacts are immense. When one adds to this mix a threatened species like the sage grouse, and overlays it with the threat of fire, BLM's challenges become obvious. Some relevant ideas that director Abbey brought up were first, community based planning. Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (BLM's "Organic Act"

states that: “Land use plans of the Secretary under this section shall be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent he finds consistent with Federal law and the purposes of this Act.”(Sec. 202c)This is an opportunity for collaboration that has to be fully explored.

Abbey also noted the resource advisory councils (RACS) as another way for BLM to gain information and “advice and counsel” from affected citizens. Finally, he remarked on the importance of conservation easements regarding species such as the sage grouse saying, “One such agreement was signed in February for Western Idaho which encompasses an area of more than 500,000 acres. So, congratulations on the work that's already commenced.” Later, USFS Chief Tom Tidwell would draw attention to their Forest Legacy Program which assists willing landowners who wish to place a conservation easement on their property.

A word about fire and its impacts. Director Abbey, like those before him at earlier Andrus conferences on fire ([www.andruscenter.org](http://www.andruscenter.org)), said:

We're going to spend the money anyway, whether we're suppressing wildland fires, rehabbing these public lands, or taking other actions after the fact. I would much rather invest our money *up front* so that we can do some of these fuel reduction projects so that we can have a better chance of stopping wildland fires *before* they spread to do significant damage to some of these very sensitive habitats that we manage on behalf of the public.

This strikes us as an area worthy of exploring more meaningful collaboration among land management agencies.

Tom Tidwell brought similar perspectives to his talk. First, he made a bold assertion that “This may be the best opportunity for conservation in this country since TR's time -- since President Teddy Roosevelt's time -- and I want you to think about that throughout today, about us taking advantage of this time. “As for the opportunity, Tidwell echoed Bob Abbey: “If we can come together, if we can accept each other's values, we don't question each other's values, we accept those values, that we're committed to sit down and work through these issues, I'll tell you, I'm confident we can get everything done.”

This is the essence of successful collaborative efforts--that each participant comes to the table with genuine respect for other views, helping build sustainable relationships.

At the top of the Chief's concerns was the loss of open space. Discussing "homes in the woods" he noted:

From 1940 to 2000, the number of housing units that were within a half a mile of national forests went from about a half a million to 1.8 million, and at the same time, the number of housing units within the national forests went from about 330,000 to 1.2 million. And everything that we see, this is going to continue.

Increased density has real impacts on fire, open space and the restoration of ecosystems.

To the Chief, an "all lands" approach is needed:

And when I talk about that, it's *not about bringing regulation to private land*. That's not what this is about. It's about bringing people together across these landscapes -- our states, local government, the private landowners -- and to be able to think about what we need to do on these large landscapes, whether it's to do the restoration so that these systems are resilient to the changes that we're seeing in climate, or is it to be able to provide that wildlife habitat that's so essential?

Tidwell also offered up a number of specific programs helpful in achieving an all lands approach besides the Forest Legacy Program. This includes the Environmental Quality Improvement Program which assists ranchers and nonindustrial forest landowners with environmental issues, The Biomass Crop Assistance program, which advocates uses of biomass for energy, and, the "Wyden Amendment" (Public Law 109-54, Section 434), which allows the USFS to use appropriated funds to assist private land watershed issues and to support stewardship contracts which allow one contract for forest restoration instead of several.

Finally, the Chief showed his familiarity with Idaho collaborative groups, mentioning the Payette Forest Coalition, First District Congressman Walt Minnick's collaborative group in northern Idaho, Second District Congressman Mike Simpson's Boulder/White Cloud bill and the

Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act group on the Clearwater, The Clearwater Forest Collaborative, where the “peace has been deafening”

During the question and answer period, Andrus Center President Marc Johnson, asked the key question at the heart of the conference: “What are the elements that have to be in place for collaboration to be successful?” Chief Tidwell’s answer stressed “Commitment to work together .... come to the table....willingness to listen...acceptance of each other’s values.... hard work.... the right group that isn’t too large or too small”. He also suggested that the Forest Service was still working on embracing collaboration and that by embracing it the agency would find itself being asked increasingly to the table at the right time. He reminded listeners that private forest land also had to be profitable, and open space preservation and landscape conservation had to allow people to, as Governor Andrus puts it, “First make a living, but then have a living worthwhile.”

Bob Abbey echoed many of these points stressing “respect for others’ viewpoints” and agency willingness to implement decisions. Abbey also drew attention to common bureaucratic issues that needed to be addressed, such as paperwork and applications stuck on desks during annual leaves, and a too complicated process (for BLM) with Federal Register notices.

Two questions focused on issues that are important but not often at the fore of collaborative efforts. Afternoon panelist John Robison, of the Idaho Conservation League asked about the importance of ecological literacy. Chief Tidwell reminded everyone that:

That’s a challenge that I give to our scientists, to be able to find a way that we can talk about science so that it’s easily understood and to be able to talk about it in a way that folks understand why they need to be concerned, why they need to be involved, and why it makes a difference in their lives.

Science that cannot be effectively and openly communicated loses its impact.

Secondly, Mary Ann Davis, of the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, urged the two speakers to include heritage protection programs to in collaborative efforts. Both agency heads underscored their importance, Bob Abbey noted:



“There is so much information out there that needs to be protected, needs to be used so that we need not repeat the mistakes of the past. And then we need to do again a better job of making sure that the people understand the consequences of the impacts that may occur on some of these key historic and cultural resources that exist on these public lands.”

Tom Tidwell added:

And so that's one of the things we're going to continue to push is to use as another opportunity to help people connect to the outdoors and it's through history. We're doing this through the arts now and finding ways where we have a couple of artists now, Robert Bateman and Winans -- that have dedicated some of their resources from their foundations to help us to connect people to the outdoors, and we're doing it through the arts.

### **Successful Collaborations: The Owyhee Initiative and the Henry's Fork Watershed Council**

Conference participants next examined two successful Idaho collaborative efforts, with different backgrounds. The Henry's Fork Watershed Council was formed in 1993 to :

“Craft a new approach to reconciling watershed issues in the Henry's Fork Basin. The various interests recognized the importance of working together as a rural community to resolve the ecological problems in the watershed and to work towards a sustainable future for all concerned, and in 1994, the Henry's Fork Watershed Council was organized and chartered by the Idaho Legislature.”

The group's mission statement reads:

The Henry's Fork Watershed Council is a grassroots, community forum that uses a nonadversarial, consensus-based approach to problem solving and conflict resolution among citizens, scientists and agencies with varied perspectives. The Council is taking the initiative to better appreciate the complex watershed relationships in the Henry's Fork Basin, to restore and enhance watershed resources where needed, and to maintain a sustainable watershed resource base for future generations. In

addressing social, economic and environmental concerns in the basin, Council members will respectfully cooperate and coordinate with one another and abide by federal, state and local laws and regulations. (Ibid)

The Owyhee Initiative was an eight year process begun soon after President Clinton decided NOT to use the Antiquities Act to declare parts of southern Idaho a national monument and after the U. S. Air Force had considered part of the region for an expanded training range.

The process was described as:

....a consensus agreement reached by a number of national, regional, and local stakeholders to promote the ecological and economic health within Idaho's Owyhee County. The agreement was crafted by local ranchers, county representatives, conservationists, outfitters, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe and others to address longstanding public lands issues in southwestern Idaho. The agreement addresses concerns ranging from regulation of off-road vehicles, permanent protection of wilderness study areas, recognition of a traditional ranching way of life, voluntary livestock grazing retirements, and preservation of tribal culture and values. While the OI agreement provides a framework for resolving these concerns, the Owyhee Initiative Implementation Act introduced by Sen. Crapo (R-ID) [later section 1501-08 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009] provides the necessary legal vehicle for implementing and enforcing the agreement.

Kim Ragotskie of the Henry's Fork Foundation, and Dale Swenson, of the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District, represented The Henry's Fork Watershed Council; Fred Grant a consultant to the Owyhee County Commissioners and Craig Gehrke of the Wilderness Society represented the Owyhee Initiative. Dale Goble pointed out about the two efforts:

If you noticed, there were two very different types of collaboratives up here before. The Owyhee led to Federal legislation. The Henry's Fork has no legislation. It's an ongoing management kind of collaborative, which seemed, to me, to be sort of significantly [different] kinds of things.

## Summary

The following points were made regarding the elements essential to fostering and sustaining meaningful collaboration:

### **1. Patience**

Many participants stressed patience as a key to successful collaboration.

Craig Gehrke, of the Wilderness Society, said collaboration is a commitment of time, an enormous commitment of time, which is hard for volunteers. A lot of the folks in the county that worked on this were not staff members; they did this on their own time.

### **2. Collaboration is often driven by a “focusing event” or a failure of the status quo.**

Here are some comments of why some collaborative were successful:

- “From our standpoint why it worked was because certainly, up until the Owyhee Initiative started, there was a momentum for a national monument designation the Canyonlands.” (Craig Gehrke)
- “Collaboratives succeed when the status quo isn't really working for anybody and neither one has the power or the ability to solve the issue on his own.” (Gehrke)
- “Collaboration only works when the status quo, paralysis by analysis, however you want to describe it, isn't working and everyone says, Boy, I'm not getting my goals accomplished this way.”(John Robison)

### **3. Involve local officials such as county commissioners**

The involvement of local officials at the outset was deemed essential by almost all panelists.

- “I had noticed from my compatriots around the country that the wilderness discussions that were being most successful involved discussions with the county commissioners....” (Gehrke)

- “I think that the reason that the Owyhee Initiative came together was because of local government.” (Fred Grant)

#### **4. Success can lead to other opportunities.**

Participants also pointed out other doors are opened: success breeds success.

- “I think the Wilderness Society and organization came out stronger for it because they allowed me to take the risk and put the time into it. And I see us now having a lot of discretion, if you will, a lot of encouragement from the organization to participate in the Clearwater Collaborative, to participate in the Payette Forest Coalition.”(Gehrke)
- “...just a month ago, the Bureau of Reclamation came to Fremont Madison Irrigation District and then to the Henry's Fork Foundation and said, We need to, with Idaho Department of Water Resources, take another look at the water supply and water storage issues for the entire Henry's Fork Basin; not just Teton Basin, but the entire basin. They said, ‘we want to use the Watershed Council as our public scoping venue’.” (Kim Ragotzkie)

#### **5. Participation of federal agencies and Congressional support is critical**

- “The agencies should be at the table.” (Grant)
- “It's really important to have the support of the participation of the Federal agencies as well as who's going to be championing this either on the State level or on the Federal level.” (Robison)
- “You've got to have a senator that is willing to go to the wall with you, and Senator Crapo was.” (Grant)
- “I go throughout the Western states, through all the states, working with counties that would like to get the agencies to coordinate with them. FLPMA (Federal Land Policy and Management Act) requires that, the regulations that Governor Andrus oversaw in the BLM require coordination, and they spell out the seven to nine elements that the agencies should follow.” (Grant)

However, one veteran of collaboration said federal agencies sometimes get in the way:

“I find [federal agency] resistance to the point of absolute failure to respond and failure to follow the rules with regard to that local coordination.” (Grant,)

This underscores the importance of coordination which is stated unequivocally, in Section 202(b) (9) of FLPMA (Public Law 94-579)

“To the extent consistent with the laws governing the administration of the public lands, coordinate the land use inventory, planning, and management activities of or for such lands with the land use planning and management programs of other Federal departments and agencies and of the States and local governments within which the lands are located....”

A key question to fulfilling commitment to coordination depends on how one defines “consistency” with federal land laws.

## **6. Science**

All speakers underscored unbiased science as being another critical component of successful collaboration. The role of scientific information is essential but often misunderstood for federal land management. The Owyhee Initiative led to the creation of a Science Review and Conservation Center in the Omnibus Public Land Act. (Section 1502):

“(A) Establishment- the Secretary, in coordination with the Tribes, State, and County, and in consultation with the University of Idaho, Federal grazing permittees, and public, shall establish the Owyhee Science Review and Conservation Center in the County to conduct research projects to address natural resources management issues affecting public and private rangeland in the County.

(B) Purpose- The purpose of the center established under subsection (a) shall be to facilitate the collection and analysis of information to provide Federal and State agencies, the Tribes, the County, private landowners, and the public with information on improved rangeland management.”

The Initiative itself also described the reason for the Center as being “to provide for science review of certain actions by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The science review will be conducted by independent scientists.”



(<http://www.owyheeinitiative.org/agreement.htm>, July 2, 2010). Although the role of this Center has yet to be fleshed out, it is clear that refereeing conflicts over scientific information will only grow in importance.

## **7. Civility and Collaboration**

Most speakers stressed the importance of civility, trust and respect in allowing for successful collaboration. Fred Grant spoke of getting opponents to “sit together and try to be civil”. Dale Swenson said “Do not underestimate the importance of silence and building relationships of trust and mutual respect and learning to listen.” Kim Ragotskie cited “trust and respect.”

Allied with trust were the notions of defending interests but listening to interests of others, and having a “no surprises” approach, while acknowledging that groups do have goals and objectives to pursue. Scott Bedke echoed the importance of “knowing that your interests will be represented” as important.

Aaron Miles of the Nez Perce Nation said about collaboration:

Maybe collaboratives are just kind of a fad, seemed like, for right now, but they -- at the very least, they provide a forum for leaders to come together -- community leaders -- and to resolve -- not necessarily resolve issues, but provide some sort of guidance on issues. We never fully resolve our value differences, we're always -- sometimes we're ingrained in them, but it gives us a common goal of moving forward.

Finally, John Robison pointed out the importance of passing on the successes of collaboration:

I think that what we all need help with, we all have some amazing stories, and we need help telling these stories. We need help getting the word out, because success breeds success. And they're not always going to be successful, but it gives folks hope. It also builds and inspires other communities.

In 2002 the Andrus Center issued a study of six collaborative efforts underway or recently completed in Idaho, written by visiting fellow Cyd Weiland. Some of the conclusions of

that study are germane today, inform the discussion above, and are useful to those interested in collaborative processes. They are:

Idaho collaborative efforts vary as much as the issues and landscapes they address. A “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate, given the individual environmental, social and political factors that each considers. However, those who design collaborative efforts might consider ideas such as using a neutral facilitator, designating a group leader or forming subgroups to address specific issues.

Agencies should clearly articulate the challenges presented by current laws and regulations, including the timeframes and complexities involved in environmental analysis.

If collaborative efforts are to succeed, we need to find strong incentives, where possible, for bringing participants to the table and keeping them involved.

Agencies, organizations and individuals must begin collaborative efforts with a clear idea of the anticipated time and effort involved in the process. All participants should understand this commitment before the project’s launch. While delays are often unavoidable, all participants should agree to minimize them to the extent possible.

### **Lieutenant Governor Brad Little’s Luncheon Address**

Lt. Governor Brad Little’s theme was “who pays and how” for landscape protection as well as collaboration efforts. Budget woes will likely reduce federal support. Thus, finding new sources of revenue is important. Little suggested thinking about broader access charges (for energy development, commercial and residential development) as one option.

Little also lamented “biological creep”, defining it in terms of

“The best science -- you know, if you could say we're going to freeze the science at this point in time about what's suitable habitat, we're going to freeze science today, but the problem is it just keeps growing and growing.”

Perhaps it might be possible to energize a Science Center to become a leader in dealing with thorny questions of science and land management. One idea from the perspective on conflict over the sage grouse was:

Let us create a sage grouse science and public policy deliberative forum, where scientists, the public and interested decision makers might assemble to talk through the issues surrounding a possible listing of the sage grouse. Scientists known for their skills in communication could present their best science in an accessible and understandable way, while letting us know how their values and assumptions guided and informed their work.

This would mean distilling the diverse articles that make up this volume, but that can be done and scientists should be rewarded for doing it. Scientists could also debate and question each other, so the public could see science at work. The public could ask questions, could talk about the scientific information they think would be useful, but be prepared to put their own assumptions and values on the table as well, such as whether they have already decided that they are for or against listing. <http://sagemap.wr.usgs.gov/Docs/SAB/Forward.pdf>

Finally, citing all the various federal agencies that regulate uses and activities on federal land, the conflicting laws that are used to oversee those activities, and conflict between agencies, Little called for a new review, or at least a rethinking, of public land law and administration, as was done in the late 1960s. His call was echoed later in the day by George Bacon and Scott Bedke.

### **Building a Larger Vision**

The panel's goal was to use what was discussed earlier in the day to see if it might lead to a set of follow up action items from which to build a broader vision for collaborative landscape and habitat conservation in Idaho. Jack Blackwell set the stage by showing a slide of elk standing next to "trophy home" on what had been prime habitat. As he framed it:

A suggestion for follow-up would be for us to work on what are the most important habitats in Idaho to conserve and protect, and then a portion of that would be what are the most important elk habitats to protect, and we then -- the Elk Foundation -- would be

willing to work and raise money and try to protect the most important places.

More generally, he said, the key questions were:

....how can we keep the working ranches as ranches? How can we keep the big blocs of land from being subdivided? How can we keep the Wild Rose Grazing Association viable? And what are the things that we can do to keep the private land healthy and then in big blocs and from being fragmented?

Dale Goble set the table for all those interested in developing a vision by reminding everyone of:

The problem of trying to attain some level of certainty in the face of significant change. Historically, we have been very fond of equilibrium models, the balance of nature and economics itself, their equilibrium models. In the last 20 years, we've come to understand that neither of those are, in fact, equilibrium models. Ecology is a historical science....*there is no balance of nature that we can go back to*....once we get in the business of managing and even if we try to stay out of the business of managing, we are, in fact, influencing and managing.

This led him to offer a sobering assessment:

Climate change makes trying to set aside habitat a goal that is likely to fail. The maps that they're drawing into the future, habitats under climate change just dissolve because current habitats have different -- have species in them that rely upon different elements in the existing climate; and as those different elements split...the timing of precipitation, the type of precipitation, or the like, as those begin to split, the species will attempt to sort of move where that chunk of the climate is. So, the current read is that most habitats that now exist will no longer exist, and most places will have habitats that don't currently exist. So, trying to pick out spaces now to maintain elk forever is unlikely to succeed.... we've got to create corridors.... You have public lands and protected lands and private lands, and you have to manage them so that the species can move through those various chunks of the matrix in ways that will sustain them.

The bottom line is, “Species move around, peoples’ values change and are complex”; and, for some: the task is monumental.

To Jim Caswell of the Northwest Natural Resources Group, private land protection is key, because most federal land is protected in some manner. That becomes a state led responsibility, and incentives become the way to do that. One idea is a way to create a lifetime income stream for private land owners in a way that they are “incentivized” to protect habitat.

Some in the audience, however, did not wish to participate in incentive based programs, and thus all acknowledged the voluntary nature of these approaches. John Robison of the Idaho Conservation League claimed “having the private property adjacent, having those owners be included in the process and buying into it and having ownership, was a critical part of that (Lemhi County Forest Restoration Collaborative Group) success story”. Representative Scott Bedke echoed Caswell but framed his comments as a question to all:

Is it in the greater society's good that we raise your taxes, because all of this stuff that we're talking about costs money? Now, is it in the greater society's best interests that we raise your taxes and dedicate a part of that revenue to basically buying an easement -- a perpetual easement -- so that that land is never developed, that it's always going to be a spawning habitat or it's always going to be open spaces or it's always going to be whatever we collectively, as a society, at the moment decide that we want to preserve, and that's what we'll pay for?

Aaron Miles of the Nez Perce Nation supported collaborative decision making but also gave attendees another lesson in ecological history:

Well, from the Tribe's standpoint on habitat, we -- for many years in the 1850s, 1870s, the Tribe fought westward expansion. That was a losing battle, and so you see it from our perspective. And people talk about, well, preserving certain spaces, and I say, Yeah, that's pretty optimistic.

Moderator Marc Johnson noted that collaborative efforts usually began with well defined goals and asked if that was possible to do on a statewide basis.



George Bacon said yes: “Why can't we collaboratively identify what we want on the landscape, what are our desired future conditions, and let projects to accomplish that flow from those decisions?”

As often occurs, talk inevitably turned to “the money” issue as the key to moving ahead. Caswell thought the time has come for all “users” and those who enjoy wildlife to help pay their way. This, he thought, ought to be coupled with redesigning wildlife funding, (and thus “owning the issue as he put it”), for an Idaho Department Fish and Game that wasn’t primarily dependent on licenses.

Cal Groen, Director of the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game discussed the notion of a “conservation license” that had made it to the floor of legislature in 2010.

Jack Blackwell told listeners that: “The national groups are looking at changes to Pittman-Robinson funding so that the gear will get taxed and a set of binoculars for bird watchers ought to pay just like a boat or some fishing tackle or some hunting ammunition.”

Rep. Bedke reminded attendees that the politics of what he called “I paid as well and I don’t like hunting” had yet to be overcome. He also urged people to consider that dedicated funding accounts are easier to protect than monies in the general fund.

Caswell pointed the conference in a possible future direction when he stated:

I thought we heard some really good ideas on what works from a collaborative sense, and I think *we ought to capture those and lay those out*. And maybe there's a way or a mechanism or something that you could actually use those to make a statement somehow, give them more validity I guess in terms of the position of the State, position of State government, position of our political leaders; if you have an opportunity to collaborate and you're going to go down this road, these are the things that we embrace as a state and would help you put in place to make your effort successful.

This statement serves as a segue to the next section of this white paper. At end of the conference Governor Andrus tasked Joe Hinson, Jim Caswell, Aaron Mikes, John Robison, Craig Gehrke and Dale Goble, assisted by John Freemuth, to “Come up with specific recommendations and report back to me and all of us. Below are those recommendations.

### **Thoughts and Recommendations of the Andrus Task Group**

Developing recommendations and solutions to growth related wildlife conflicts requires an appreciation of the context within which everyone works. At the Andrus Center ‘Policy after Politics’ conference (2000) we said “There must be an underlying set of realistic, widely acceptable principles that allow public land management to proceed with less conflict.” Some principles discussed at that time included ecosystem and watershed health, as well as sustainability in its environmental and socioeconomic forms. We include “socioeconomic,” because a number of us argue strongly that there is a mutually dependent relationship between public and private lands, and long term incentives are key to private land protection and sustainability. At the same time, some of us also argue that private land with high habitat value comes with a social obligation to protect the “public property” in wildlife.

We do not believe we have arrived at the point of accepted principles as yet. Some of us lament that the federal land agencies can become bogged down in planning. Some also note that local federal officials (and to the tribes, sometimes state officials) are perceived as hostile to collaborative solutions, falling back on the notion that they are “in charge.” At the same time, federal agencies are underfunded, will remain so, and must depend on partners and political goodwill to be effective. Traditional resource constituencies are less powerful and less supportive. Everyone seems to believe in collaboration and collaborative solutions, yet there is no mechanism legally to enforce them. Undoubtedly, there will be disagreement on whether there should be such a legal enforcement mechanism, as well as difficulties in getting such a mechanism into law. Collaboration remains a tool, not a commitment.

## Wildlife and Habitat

There are a number of programs and policies that the state might want to consider that can allow it to continue to assert leadership in wildlife management and protection. They include:

- \* State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) is a federal program that funds state identification of species of concern and the habitat that they require. Idaho Fish and Game has completed the initial planning documents, which can form the basis of a comprehensive mapping of wildlife habitat. This will allow the state and local governments to avoid or minimize adverse impacts in wildlife. SWAPs can also play a significant role in collaborative decision-making if the federal land managing agencies rely on the plans to shape their decisions. The more detailed the SWAPs, the more significant their effect on federal decision-making.
- \* State Forestry Plans (SFPs) are a new, federally funded provision that requires state foresters to assess the conditions of forest lands and to develop a long-term forest resource strategy. The SFPs are to be coordinated with SWAPs and the statute also provides that wildlife habitat and corridors are a planning priority.
- \* The primary regional conservation planning organization is the Western Governor's Association (WGA). The WGA has recently adopted an initiative to protect key wildlife corridors with an emphasis on interstate migration and dispersal. The organization is currently developing "wildlife decision support systems" that will provide data at landscape level scales to encourage better planning based on key habitat and corridors.

The WGA has also developed a series of wildlife sensitivity maps designed to facilitate landscape-scale wildlife conservation.

## Funding Wildlife Conservation

- \* Traditionally, wildlife conservation has focused on game species. Funding has been derived primarily from fees for hunting and fishing licenses and excise taxes on hunting and fishing paraphernalia. With declining numbers of hunters, funds have also declined. Given the nationwide shift from consumptive to nonconsumptive uses of wildlife, the decline in revenue is likely to continue at a time when the costs seem likely to increase - particularly if nongame animals and their habitat are to be conserved.
- \* Game species also often have strong constituencies who provide funding for habitat conservation. Groups such as the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, and Pheasants have active, focused conservation programs. Nongame species have not attracted similar private funding.

- \* States have long claimed primacy in managing wildlife, which is often legally classified as a public resource that is owned by the state. With public ownership comes a maintenance cost. Different states have adopted at least seven different funding approaches to manage non-game wildlife:
  - \* Dedication of a portion of a state sales tax to wildlife conservation
  - \* Annual appropriation of general funds
  - \* A tax on property transfers
  - \* An excise tax on wildlife related purchases
  - \* Donations (e.g., income tax check off, license plates, etc.)
  - \* Entrance fees to state wildlife management areas, parks, etc.
  - \* Bond initiatives
  
- \* Throughout the conference, there was diverse support for a fee-based mechanism to support wildlife conservation. There was sound political advice that such an approach had the best chance of success. Efforts have already been made in this direction.

Idaho Smart Growth is working on a report, “Conserving Idaho’s Working Landscapes and Open Spaces” that we anticipate will have other options, policies and actions worth consideration, regarding wildlife and habitat.

### **Building Civic Capacity through Collaboration**

One potentially helpful step toward building the civic capacity needed to address issues such as “keeping Idaho Idaho” would be for the state to provide institutional support for collaborative efforts. The state could do so through the creation of a mechanism that might include administrative, financial and knowledge based services. Such a mechanism could go a long way towards helping collaboration become more of a state of mind in Idaho.