



Our Year in Review

Dec. 29, 2015

The year 2015 was marked by one of the biggest fire seasons on record as well as significant accomplishments in endowment land management for the Idaho Department of Lands.

A summary of some of our highlights from fiscal year and calendar year 2015 is included below.

You also can [view a short video of our 2015 highlights](#).

We wish you a safe and happy new year!



FIRE

Huge fire year: Ten IDL fire districts and two timber protective associations put out 321 fires, several of which grew to be the most difficult Idaho fires to fight this year. We protect approximately 6.3 million acres of mostly timbered State and private lands. The five-month fire season on lands protected by the State of Idaho burned 60 homes and 78 other structures and cost nearly \$80 million - three-quarters of which will be paid

by the Idaho General Fund. [Read more.](#)

Rangeland Fire Protection Associations: 230 ranchers are now members of six different RFPAs, and there are four additional areas where ranchers have begun conversations about starting new associations. The RFPAs contributed to fighting 30 fires in 2015.

FORESTRY

Timber sales: 277 million board feet of timber valued at \$68.2 million were harvested by private contractors on endowment lands in FY15. Timber harvest still makes the most money for the endowments - nearly 83 percent of the total revenue from endowment lands in FY15. The harvesting activities support thousands of jobs and more than \$1 billion in the sale of goods and services in Idaho.



Fire salvage sales: We will salvage 83.5 million board feet of timber killed by 2015 wildfires across 6,000 acres of endowment lands. New tree seedlings will be planted and natural regeneration will occur so the forests can continue to provide sustainable, renewable forest products for future generations. Responsible timber harvests also improve long-term forest health. [Read more.](#)

Selway Salvage Sale: An environmental group and neighboring landowner brought a legal challenge that restricted ground access to a fire salvage sale on endowment lands that burned in 2014 in Idaho County. However, IDL completed the timber sale through helicopter logging, resulting in money for public schools and an opportunity to regenerate a healthy forest. [Read more.](#)

Keeping working forests working: We administer the federally funded Forest Legacy Program, providing funds to purchase conservation easements on private lands that might otherwise be developed and lost as productive forests. The program closed on four landowner conservation easements containing more than 1,400 acres in northern Idaho.



COTTAGE SITES

Auctions: In calendar year 2015, we auctioned 94 state owned lots at Priest Lake and Payette Lake for \$39.4 million. Since 2011, we have sold more than one-third of all leased lots, and additional auctions for lots at both lakes are slated for 2016 and 2017. In a few months, we will ask the Land Board to approve a plan for the auction of even more lots after 2017. We're carrying out the Land Board's direction to divest the lots over time and

reinvest the sales proceeds in other assets that produce greater financial returns for public schools and other endowment beneficiaries.

SAGE GROUSE

Land Board Sage-grouse Plan: The Land Board and Oil and Gas Conservation Commission approved a plan IDL put together that lays out sage-grouse conservation measures for activities on endowment lands and activities that are overseen by other IDL programs, such as oil and gas and wildfire prevention and suppression. [Read more.](#)





GRAZING

Program Review: We finished a yearlong public process to create a business plan for the IDL grazing program, and a new Land Board subcommittee was established to work with the public over the next year in reviewing the rate ranchers pay to graze livestock on endowment lands. [Read more.](#)

STRATEGY

The Land Board approved a contract for a new commercial real estate advisor. The contractor is developing plans for each commercial property owned by the endowment trust and a plan for the whole portfolio of commercial assets. The focus is on eventual sale of commercial office/retail properties and parking lots. The Land Board also approved a pool of available land advisors to serve them in future acquisitions of lands such as timber land and agricultural land. IDL hired a strategic planning manager to shepherd the processes.

LAND & FUND PERFORMANCE

Performance: IDL generated \$124 million from the use and sale of endowment lands in FY15. Endowment lands earned a 3.85-percent cash return in FY15. The endowment fund earned a 3.0-percent total return in FY15 and grew by \$100 million. Together, the lands and fund earned a 3.4-percent total return in FY15. [Read more.](#)

Distributions: Strong land and fund performance allowed the Land Board to commit to higher future distributions to beneficiaries - \$56.5 million will be distributed to public schools and other beneficiaries in FY16, up 8.6 percent overall from FY15. Distributions to beneficiaries will grow again in FY17, up 11.8 percent from the year before. [Read more.](#)



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