



## Public Recreation on Endowment Lands

FACT SHEET | Updated August 21, 2018

- **STATE ENDOWMENT LANDS:** Under the Land Board's direction, the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) manages more than 2.4 million acres of state endowment trust lands under a constitutional mandate to maximize long-term financial returns to public schools and other state institutions. In addition to providing financial support to endowment beneficiaries, endowment lands also have traditionally benefitted Idaho citizens by providing access for recreational pursuits. Idahoans and visitors to our state currently enjoy recreational access to almost all endowment lands. Less than four percent of endowment lands are not legally accessible for recreation because they are locked in by neighboring private landowners or because they are leased under terms that do not allow public access for safety or security reasons.
- **TOP RECREATION USES:** Top recreation uses on endowment lands include hunting, fishing, and related uses, such as camping, hiking, and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use.
- **NEW LAND BOARD RECREATION POLICY:** Some western states have limited or restricted general recreation use on state trust lands, or required user or general tax funding to keep them open to public recreation. The Idaho Land Board voted on August 21, 2018, to affirm its support of public recreational access on endowment lands. The new Land Board Recreation Policy allows the general public continued recreational access to legally accessible endowment lands, as long as the recreational activities do not degrade the lands, interfere with management activities, or otherwise negatively affect the long-term financial return to the endowment beneficiaries. Revenue-generating management activities currently are taking place on endowment lands largely without interference or degradation by recreation users. Just as federal land managers close public lands on a targeted basis, closures and limitations to certain recreational activities on endowment lands already take place to protect the public or the underlying value and productivity of endowment land. The policy gives the IDL director the authority to implement such limitations. The policy directs IDL to develop internal policies and procedures to bring uniformity to how endowment land managers handle recreation-related management decisions across the state, including closures.
- **AGREEMENT WITH FISH AND GAME:** The IDL and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) created a Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Recreational Access on State Endowment Lands. The Land Board voted to approve the agreement on August 21, 2018, and the agreement is subject to Idaho Fish and Game Commission approval. Under the agreement, IDFG would pay 25 cents per acre each year to IDL for recreational access on 2,316,400 acres of endowment land. Funds will come from the IDFG share of the federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition, and from Sportsman Access Fees paid by buyers of Idaho hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses. Some of the payment will be in-kind through the services of IDFG conservation officers (equivalent to the cost of two full-time senior conservation officers). The IDL will receive approximately \$367,100 in net payment from IDFG annually, with inflationary adjustment.
- **REPAIRS:** Unlike federally-managed public lands, state endowment lands do not receive general tax funding to repair damage from recreation. The IDL currently must use funds intended for public schools and other beneficiaries to pay for damages. The funding from IDFG will join funds IDL receives from a \$1 assessment on each Idaho OHV registration that pays for repairs needed from damages directly tied to OHV use.
- **FUTURE ACCESS FOR SPORTSMEN:** The new revenue stream presents a means to help protect continued recreational access to endowment lands for hunters, anglers, and the general public by helping the Land Board meet its fiduciary obligation to the endowment beneficiaries, compensating for recreational use and offsetting the costs incurred by IDL for management of recreational uses. The new policy and agreement with IDFG will provide the Land Board with options to consider when evaluating competing recreation-related uses in the future.