



## GREAT NORTHERN LCC IDAHO FISH AND GAME PROJECT PROPOSAL

**Project Title:** Communicating and involving the public and stakeholders in the use of fish and wildlife data and information for purposes of landscape level management and decision support.

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**Partners:** Western Governors' Association (WGA), 1600 Broadway, Suite 1700, Denver, CO 80202, 303-623-9378, [mwest@westgov.org](mailto:mwest@westgov.org); NatureServe, 4001 Discovery Drive, Suite 2110, Boulder, CO 80303, 703-908-1800; Wildlife Conservation Society, 301 North Willson Avenue, Bozeman, MT 59715, 406 522-9333; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Bureau of Land Management; U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey

**Project Summary:** This project is part of an ongoing effort to develop and implement a landscape level decision support system (DSS) across the boundaries of Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Montana. The project will strengthen public understanding in the use of objective and scientific fish and wildlife data and predictive modeling for purposes of developing geospatially-based landscape science to inform conservation and development actions. The project will inform, educate, and garner public and user support of the DSS upon its public release, aid in the development and use of the DSS web interface based on customer input and preferences, and provide communications strategies, tools, messages, forums, and feedback for improving public understanding of landscape science and conservation in the Columbia Plateau and Idaho – Montana WGA pilot areas.

**Need:** As fish and wildlife management agencies move ahead to implement landscape level conservation using the latest in scientific information made available via technology and web interface, it is essential that the public be kept informed of this new business model and that interest groups, stakeholders and customers help determine how geospatially based information is best accepted, accessed, displayed, and used for both conservation benefit and economic and efficient development decisions. Such approaches to address growing energy, land, and transportation development as well as wildlife connectivity and climate change using the best and most consistent technical and scientific information on fish and wildlife resources are increasingly in demand. In particular, in 2007 the WGA unanimously approved policy resolution 07-01, *Protecting Wildlife Migration Corridors and Crucial Wildlife Habitat in the West*. As a result, the Western Wildlife Habitat Council (WWHC) was established to implement the *WGA Wildlife Corridors Initiative Report*, coordinate needed policy options and tools for preserving wildlife corridors and habitats at the landscape level, and to help establish state-based management tools for decision making within each state. The WGA has funded eight DSS pilot projects, two of which (Idaho – Montana Divide, Columbia Plateau) have been funded in part by the GNLCC and are the focus of this proposal. Ongoing cooperative efforts with the Wildlife Conservation Society, Nature Serve, and State Wildlife Grants seek to leverage the WGA initiative of these two pilots to best achieve a fully developed regional DSS in the northwest based on fish and wildlife data and information tied to state wildlife action plans and state fish and wildlife data bases. Given that that WGA, at its annual meeting in Kalispell in 2010, called for completion of regionally compatible DSSs by 2013 and that they seek to implement a national

communications and outreach strategy, it is both timely and efficient to implement a connected communications and outreach strategy at the regional/local level to best advance public understanding, involvement, and support of landscape science, conservation, and efficient and economic decision making.

The geography of this Communication and Outreach project is the state of Idaho and its partner states of Montana, Washington, and Oregon as encompassed by the Columbia Plateau and Idaho – Montana divide pilot projects.

**Objectives:**

1. Communicate how the WGA wildlife corridors initiative has initiated pilot projects and how the ID, MT, WA, and OR state fish and wildlife agencies are implementing development of regional DSSs using the best scientific data and information available to them.
2. Strengthen and broaden the range of persons and groups who are informed about landscape science, wildlife connectivity, and infrastructure development.
3. Identify and engage stakeholders in providing input in development of the DSS and its use, access, and interface using geospatial and web-based technology.
4. Develop public and stakeholder support for release of the DSS based on conservation benefit and an economic and efficient business model.
5. Coordinate development and release of state DSS among Idaho's pilot partners (MT, WA and OR) to insure positive and coordinated messaging concerning its objectives, its development, its use, and how customers were involved in its development.

**Methods:** All relevant federal and state agencies as well as conservation NGOs were contacted at the initiation of the two pilot projects and are participating based on expertise, data and information, and interest in helping to formulate the DSS. This list includes the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Idaho state agencies, and the Nature Conservancy, American Wildlands, and Nature Serve. Briefing papers on the two pilot projects have been developed and information provided via the Department's web site. In addition, an introductory video has been released internally within the Department to introduce employees to the effort and how they may participate in and help form the final product.

Beginning in the first half of 2011, the Department will issue a request for proposal for a contract to develop and implement a communications and outreach strategy in cooperation with the WGA, the Western Governors Wildlife Council (WGWC), and the WGWC Stakeholder Advisory Group. This communications and outreach strategy will include the following messaging, goals, audiences, and activities to best enable public understanding of landscape conservation and implementation of the DSS projects.

**Messaging Categories:**

- Connection between the WGA and its Wildlife Corridors Initiative and the Idaho DSS pilot projects.
- State and regional focus of the DSS project.
- Scientific foundations and basis for landscape science and the DSS.
- Getting stakeholders involved in development, roll out, use, and feedback on DSSs.
- How the DSS helps good decision making.

**Audiences and Goals:**

- Department staff and leadership – enable internal systems, communications, and processes for support, development, use, and acceptance of DSS
- Idaho Fish and Game Commission – message scientific foundations of DSS and potential budget, policy and business implications to Department for policy support of Commission
- State elected officials and their staff - message landscape science, scientific foundations of DSS, and use of DSS in fish and wildlife, efficiencies, economies and business terms
- Idaho sportsmen – message use of scientific data on Idaho’s fish and wildlife, landscape conservation and science, and benefits of the development and use of DSS
- Idaho citizens – message the purpose and use of DSS and stakeholder involvement in its development and refinement
- Industry and business – build trust and support in the DSS as an objective and useful tool, provide avenues for support and involvement
- Federal government and land management agencies – support for use of DSS and its outcomes in federal land management decisions and resource assessments concerning fish and wildlife
- Tribal governments – seek to inform and involve in DSS development and facilitate incorporation of Tribal fish and wildlife data into the DSS
- Local and county governments – provide background and foundations on DSS, and its potential as an objective and useful tool in land use decision making
- Conservation groups – provide background and foundations on DSS, its uses and its potential to help with land use decision making

**Tasks/Activities:**

- Hold focus groups to help direct messaging and audiences.
- Develop key talking points for consistent messaging.
- Develop marketing and communication strategy.
- Build contact lists and constituencies for distribution of updates and feedback.
- Build internal Department contact lists and constituencies for updates and feedback.
- Establish representative advisory groups to help with development, roll out, and feedback.
- Provide avenues of communications and involvement on DSS project.
- Give presentations at key meetings including Commission, WGA, WAFWA, IAC, NACO, and transportation and energy groups and conferences.
- Provide congressional updates, briefing papers, and contacts with key staff.
- Coordinate efforts with communications and key staff in partner state fish and wildlife agencies, WGA, and WGWC.

**Deliverables:**

- Key messaging and talking points for Department leadership, Commissioners, WGA staff, and other key stakeholders.
- Communication tools and messages for use with all audiences and technology.
- Speakers who are willing and able to travel and provide presentations.
- Social media messages and updates.
- Webinars on DSS development, stakeholder involvement, and use.
- Responses to requests for information, feedback, and development of web interface.
- Power point presentations for presentation to different audiences and messages.
- Customer sensitive design, look, and tone of DSS interface

**Schedule:**

Tasks	Initiation Date	Milestones	Completion Date	Deliverables	Outyear Work
Develop rfp and select contractor.	7/1/11	Request for proposal, list of candidate contractors, selection of contractor	12/30/12	Contract	Collect feedback on DSS, updates
Hold focus groups to form messaging and audiences.	8/1/11	List of representative groups, list of group questions	9/1/11	Messages and language strategy for DSS	Feedback on effectiveness of strategies
Develop communications strategy.	9/1/11	Messages, schedule, talking points, tools,	continuous	Communications strategy	Updates to DSS strategy
Implement communication strategies using social, electronic, print, and spoken media.	6/1/10	Twitter, face book, web page, and RSS presence and accounts	continuous	# of communication updates on DSS project, stakeholder involvement, roll out, and updates	Updates to DSS messages
Build contact lists and constituencies for distribution of updates and feedback.	8/1/10	List of external stakeholders	10/1/11 and continuous	Stakeholder group contact lists and involvement in DSS development	Updates to stakeholder contact lists
Build internal Department contact lists and constituencies for updates and feedback.	8/1/11	List of internal stakeholders	9/1/11	Internal web page, posting of video, PowerPoint, and briefing paper updates	Updates to internal stakeholder contacts
Establish representative advisory groups for development, design, roll out and update feedback.	10/1/11	Stakeholder lists, ID stakeholder reps, stakeholder meetings, design recommendations	continuous	Advisory group recommendations on communication and outreach. Support for DSS project	Ongoing
Provide briefings, news releases, quarterly updates, and newsletter articles.	7/1/10	Issue identification, DSS project steps	12/30/12	# hits on news releases, interviews, # of tweets, news videos, newsletters	Ongoing
Give presentations at key meetings including Commission, WGA, WAFWA, IAC, NACO, and transportation and	10/1/11	Presentation schedules, requests and completion.	12/30/12	# of groups and people presented to	Ongoing

energy groups and conferences.					
Provide congressional updates, briefing papers, and contacts with key staff.	10/1/11	Congressional staff contacts, briefing papers	12/30/12	# of congressional briefings, contacts, and presentations	Ongoing
Coordinate with communications and key staff in partner state fish and wildlife agencies, WGWC, and WGA.	7/1/11	Collaborative meetings on project implementation	12/30/12	Coordinated communications and outreach strategy	Ongoing

**Budget:** See separate file.