

# HUNTING AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY WORKING GROUP CHARTER

## 1) Purpose:

Nationwide, state agencies are wrestling with balancing technology, hunter success, and wildlife management objectives, and Idaho is no different. If technological advances (both in capability and affordability) result in increased hunter success rates, agencies have few tools to ensure hunters do not overharvest game species and jeopardize their long-term sustainability. Tools include:

- 1) Equipment restrictions
- 2) Changes to season timing and shortening of length
- 3) Reduction in number of tags

Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has traditionally managed game species with a focus on providing greater hunter opportunity, including a higher number of available tags and longer seasons. Some members of Idaho's outdoor sporting community have begun to express concerns related to the advancement of hunting technology and the potential erosion of fair chase ethic. However, IDFG also acknowledges that other members of Idaho's outdoor sporting community do not share those same sentiments.

Recognizing the widely varying opinions on the matter amongst Idaho's outdoor sporting community, the Idaho Fish and Game Commission (Commission) directed IDFG to organize and facilitate a working group to delve into this complex issue. The purpose of the Hunting and Advanced Technology (HAT) Working Group is to assess public perspectives on what is and is not considered "fair" technology to use in the pursuit of game and develop recommendations to the Commission that strike an appropriate balance between the use of hunting technology and fair chase ethic. Those recommendations will then be reviewed by the Commission and considered for implementation through the Ch. 8 – Rules Governing the Taking of Big Game rules process.

## 2) Authority:

- a) Working under the guidance of the Commission, IDFG manages the fish and wildlife of the State of Idaho. Idaho Code (Section 36-103) states "All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping."
- b) One of the major goals of IDFG's Strategic Plan is to improve public understanding of and involvement in fish and wildlife management. One of the objectives to accomplish this is to improve citizen involvement in the decision-making process.
- c) IDFG holds the following Core Values with relevance to the HAT Working Group:
  - i) Public Service – IDFG believes in having open, two-way communication with the public, facilitating understanding and participation in management decisions, and providing diverse hunting-based recreational opportunities.
  - ii) Science – IDFG believes that scientifically developed knowledge and information are the foundation of wildlife management, and that the Department is obligated to develop, use, and share such knowledge and information.
  - iii) Sustainability – IDFG believes our management responsibility is to foster solutions to wildlife issues that are ecologically viable, economically feasible, and socially acceptable.
- d) The authority of the HAT Working Group is limited to developing recommendations for the Commission on whether and how to restrict technologically advanced equipment in the pursuit and harvest of elk,

deer, moose, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, and/or mountain goat, and developing a framework to assist the Commission with assessing emerging hunting technology. Recommendations developed by the HAT Working Group can include the rationale behind their decisions.

### **3) HAT Working Group Sideboards**

- a) There are 5 requirements identified by IDFG that the HAT Working Group must either acknowledge or address with any future recommendations:
  - i) Recommendations must be within the authority of the Commission.
  - ii) The scope of work will be limited to deer, elk, pronghorn, moose, mountain goat, and bighorn sheep.
  - iii) Recommendations must align with management objectives as identified in species management plans.
  - iv) Recommendations must be enforceable.
  - v) The Commission will make the ultimate decision on the recommendations brought forth by the Working Group.

### **4) Expectations and Time Frame:**

The HAT Working Group is expected to meet up to 8 times between November 2, 2024, and the end of March 2025 to provide recommendations for review by the Commission in time to conduct rulemaking. Meetings will be either in-person or virtual, with opportunities for the public viewing. The HAT Working Group will need to reach full consensus before any recommendations are able to move forward to the Commission for consideration. The HAT Working Group should be available to respond to comments and questions that IDFG staff and the Commission may have until the purpose of the Hunting and Advanced Technology Working Group is achieved and the HAT Working Group is disbanded.

### **5) Roles and Responsibilities:**

- a) Members of the Hunting and Advanced Technology Working Group are expected to:
  - i) Read and become familiar with information provided to them throughout this process.
  - ii) Regularly attend scheduled meetings.
  - iii) Articulate interests, concerns, and perspectives on issues pertaining to the hunting, technology, and fair chase.
  - iv) Complete HAT Working Group assignments as needed.
  - v) Maintain an open mind regarding the views and/or concerns of other group members.
  - vi) Work as a team member to address the responsibilities of this working group.
  - vii) Participate collaboratively in group decision-making.
  - viii) Be respectful of other opinions, and constructively manage conflict between group members.
  - ix) Not actively seek to undermine group decisions.
  - x) Commit to participate in the HAT Working Group until the purpose of the HAT Working Group is fulfilled, and the group is disbanded.
- b) IDFG personnel are expected to:
  - i) Post information on IDFG's website about the HAT Working Group including but not limited to its purpose, membership, public comment opportunities, meeting minutes, meeting schedule, and Zoom link.
  - ii) Provide draft agendas for meetings.
  - iii) Organize facilities where meetings will occur.
  - iv) Facilitate meetings fairly and without bias.
  - v) Take notes and capture decisions by the group.
  - vi) Be available to answer questions honestly and without bias.
  - vii) Provide the best information available.
  - viii) Provide IDFG press releases of recommendations the HAT Working Group may make.
  - ix) Review broad public input on recommendations that the HAT Working Group develops.

**6) Funding and Support:**

The Hunting and Advanced Technology Working Group operating expenses (meeting facilities/equipment/ etc.) will be funded by IDFG. Meals, snacks, and/ or drinks will be provided at the discretion of IDFG during in-person meetings. All travel costs are reimbursable, either in part or in full, by IDFG, including but not limited to airfare, parking, meals, mileage (\$0.67/mile), car rental, and lodging (\$110/night).

I have read and understand the Hunting and Advanced Technology Working Group Charter. I desire to be a participant, and I agree to make every effort to fulfill the roles and responsibilities as outlined in this charter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_