

Idaho Fish & Wildlife Office Landscape Conservation

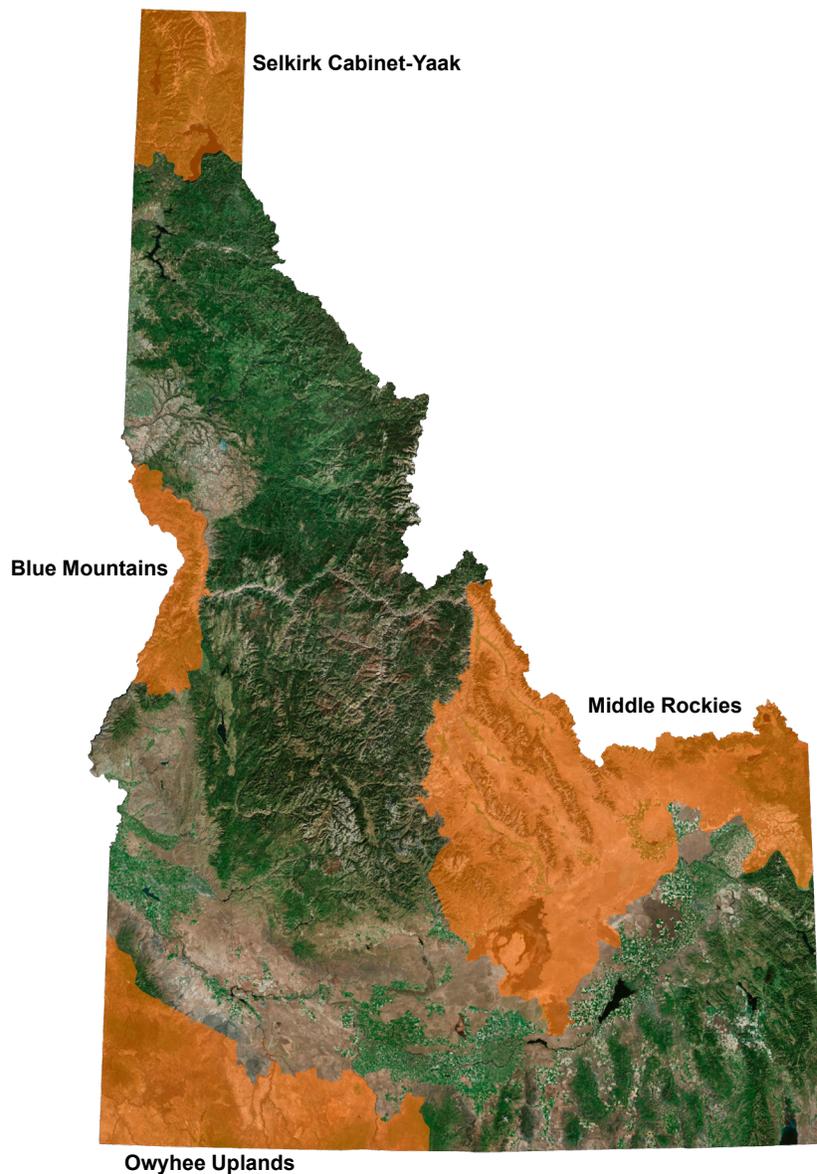
State-wide Landscape Planning

Strategically Conserving Habitat for Fish, Wildlife and Plants in Idaho

Conservation efforts conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office (IFWO; Ecological Services Program) with its many partners have resulted in important successes, but the growing human population along with changes in land use and other threats, especially climate change, require a more strategic and proactive approach in planning and implementing conservation. For example, heading off the decline of species through up-front conservation could preclude the need for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the future. In order to effectively guide our conservation efforts, we produced a Landscape Conservation Strategy (Strategy) to help ensure that work invested in by the IFWO is coordinated with partners to deliver the greatest long-term results.

Priority Landscapes, Species, and Strategies

IFWO staff identified Priority Landscapes as areas to focus our conservation efforts. Identification of these landscapes does not bestow additional legal protections upon them, but rather identifies them as having important biological or ecological qualities where we will seek willing partners to maintain or increase those qualities. Based on their ecological value and conservation potential, four landscapes were identified as priorities: the Blue Mountains, Middle Rockies, Owyhee Uplands, and Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak landscapes. Together they account for an estimated



The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office has identified four landscape areas—the Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak, Middle Rockies, Owyhee Uplands, and the Blue Mountains Landscapes—as priorities for conducting our conservation activities.

29% of the state of Idaho, where we will prioritize our efforts to implement effective conservation with partners.

The IFWO identified 38 Priority

Species that inhabit the four landscapes. These fish, wildlife, and plants may serve as habitat indicators, icons, and/or provide keystone roles

in ecosystems. The responses of these, or other species to conservation actions will provide biologists and managers with metrics to measure our effectiveness.

With specific habitats or species as conservation targets, the IFWO drafted Landscape Strategies outlining actions to be implemented with partners that will address the compelling conservation needs within these landscapes.

Focusing on Priority Landscapes requires shifting more of the IFWO's resources from a statewide ESA-oriented approach to a geographically focused approach. The shift brings greater effort to bear on areas with potential for large, long-lasting conservation gains. IFWO staff will spend more time and resources on partnering, project implementation, and monitoring within these landscapes, concentrating on work with the greatest conservation value and less emphasis outside of those landscapes.

The IFWO's strategies will not include all conservation needs, but are intended as starting points for initiating dialog and planning with resource professionals already engaged in management within identified landscapes. Ongoing strategy development will incorporate the conservation priorities of other partners and encourage collaboration to achieve their successful implementation.

Adaptive Conservation

The IFWO will apply an adaptive process to better achieve conservation objectives. As envisioned, the IFWO and its partners will monitor the response of habitat condition and Priority Species, including those of our partners, to evaluate the effectiveness of management actions, and adaptively modify them to improve success. As an engaged partner, the IFWO can further assist in achieving shared conservation objectives, by prioritizing Service actions and authorities such as species

recovery, interagency consultation, and permitting.

Ongoing Process

Many of the actions identified in the IFWO Strategy are already underway or being actively planned with willing partners. Under this new Strategy the IFWO will redouble its efforts to partner with agencies, Tribes, and other entities in an effort to fund and carry out mutually acceptable and beneficial strategies and actions.



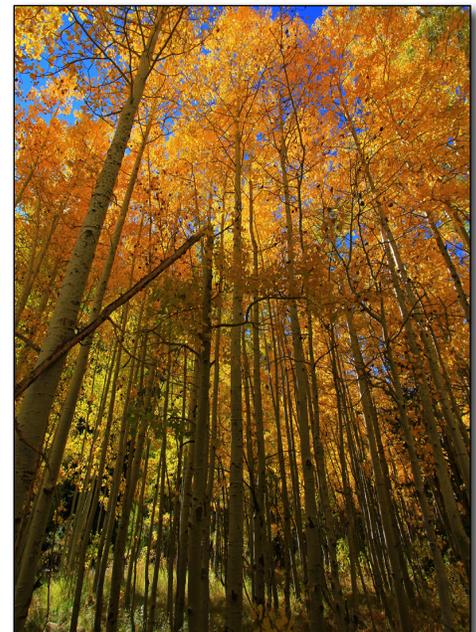
The Middle Rockies Priority Landscape is geographically and climatically complex, including montane and sagebrush-steppe valleys, extensive coniferous forests, and basalt shrublands.



The Blue Mountains Priority Landscape, located in west-central Idaho, contains habitats from canyon grasslands to alpine summits. Its major river drainages connect salmon and other important fisheries to the central Idaho Mountains along an important wilderness corridor.



The Owyhee Uplands Priority Landscape, located in southwest Idaho, is predominantly comprised of habitats such as sagebrush-steppe and aspen woodlands, and supports sagebrush-reliant species such as greater sage-grouse and pygmy rabbit.



The Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak Priority Landscape of north Idaho includes wet, old-growth forests, an ecosystem unique in the Rocky Mountains. It supports iconic species such as woodland caribou, grizzly bear, fisher, and wolverine, and connects wild lands in Canada, Montana, and Washington.

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