

Consensus Statement on the Payette Endowment Lands Strategy
Focus Group Members
March 15, 2021

Preamble:

We represent the Focus Group that the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) and Idaho Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) convened to provide input on the draft Payette Endowment Lands Strategy (PELS). We thank IDL for seeking our input. In further support of IDL and our responsibilities as members of this Focus Group we present this summary consensus statement.

We recognize and support the Land Board's constitutional responsibilities with respect to endowment lands and its fiduciary duty to manage these lands "to secure the maximum long term financial returns" to the endowment beneficiaries. The endowment lands in the greater Payette Lake area are fundamental to the social, recreational, ecological, economic and communal values of the citizens of Valley County and its visitors. We believe endowment lands can be managed to maximize the long-term return to the endowments, while recognizing the needs of the local community, including watershed protection, recreational opportunities, and resource management.

We also recognize that, as trustees, the Land Board and the Governor have a duty to comply with federal and state environmental laws, including statutory and constitutional provisions that protect public trust interests, including Payette Lake.

In support of IDL, we offer the following three recommendations:

1) These endowment lands contribute to long-term returns of the overall trust through appreciation. **We recommend that IDL develop new protocols to incorporate and consider this appreciation and identify opportunities to increase revenue in ways that protect the lands and Payette Lake, including protocols for conservation easements, recreation leases, and recreation districts.**

These new protocols would also provide a framework to support IDL's consistent evaluation of proposals and could improve public understanding of the process.

Conservation and recreation activities could be supported through city or county-led efforts , possible acquisition of certain parcels by the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, public/private initiatives, and/or other local, county, state or federal partnerships. We have seen support building for this in the community.

2) **We support IDL taking time to further develop the PELS** by considering and incorporating comments, focus group discussions, and other input, along with consideration of the existing City of McCall and Valley County Comprehensive Plan.

While this work is being done, **we recommend maintaining the moratorium on disposal of lands within the McCall Area of Impact until sufficient guidance can be developed on the use of conservation easements and other revenue diversification strategies.** If warranted, lifting the moratorium on typical and traditional leases (i.e. grazing, cottage sites, mineral and recreational) may be appropriate, while retaining the moratorium on any permanent dispositions (i.e. sales or exchanges) until the PELS is finalized.

3) Finally, we encourage continued commitment to working with stakeholders, including the City of McCall and Valley County, through final draft development and implementation of the PELS. Should IDL need additional support or involvement of the Focus Group, we stand ready to offer our assistance.

Signed:

Bradley B. Compton, Idaho Sportsmen

Dave Bingaman, Valley County Commissioner, on behalf of the Valley County Commission

Robert S. Giles, Mayor of McCall, on behalf of the McCall City Council

Diane Plastino Graves, McCall community member

Nick Harris, Burgdorf Hot Springs

Tera King, Idaho Forest Group

Robert Looper, Brundage Mountain

Julie Manning, Payette Endowment Lands Alliance

Jonathan Oppenheimer, Idaho Conservation League

Brian Scott, Boise community member

Kristin Hoff Sinclair, McCall community member, Brightwater Homeowners Association

Clive Strong, Boise community member

David Simmonds, Big Payette Lake Water Quality Council, Inc.

Craig Utter, Payette Land Trust

(Community, business, city and county stakeholders - Members of the Payette Endowment Lands Strategy - Focus Group)