



# Idaho lands – and recreation access – lost to the **HIGHEST BIDDER**

New research shows Idaho has sold 1.7 million acres of state land for development — 41% of all lands it owns — painting a clear picture of what would happen should the state take control of national public lands.

Idaho's heritage and culture is built around our majestic outdoors. Specifically, residents in the Gem State appreciate the freedom to access places for hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating and other recreational activities. With very few exceptions, Idaho's national forests and public lands are wide open to these opportunities.

The Sawtooth Range. Redfish Lake. Hells Canyon. High deserts of the Owyhee, Lost River, and Pahsimeroi. These are lands that are important to all Idahoans and belong to all Americans. They also support everything from ski resorts to snowmobile play areas, as well as "multiple uses" including timber harvest and livestock grazing, making these places not only important for recreation, but also as economic engines.



“ There is no intent to sell off this land. Accessible public land is what makes Idaho, Idaho. ”

Idaho State Rep. Judy Boyle, one of the lead proponents of seizing public lands and giving it to the state

*Former state land parcel that is now privately owned.*

Despite the overwhelming public value our shared lands have, a handful of well-positioned politicians and their out-of-state backers want to change the course of Idaho's future. Under the banner of "state control" these special interest groups, including the American Lands Council, are behind an effort to usurp ownership of lands that belong to all Americans. Their tactic is to peddle copycat anti-federal government bills in legislatures around the West and several Idaho legislators have been caught up in this trend.

When those who are pushing to undermine our public lands system attempt to explain themselves, they insist that they do not intend to privatize or sell-off public lands. However, history shows this is an empty promise — **IDAHO LANDS AND RECREATION ACCESS ARE OFTEN LOST TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.**



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The history of how Idaho has managed state lands shows the access provided by public lands will likely be lost as these lands are sold, privatized or developed, threatening Idaho's outdoor way of life.

At statehood, Idaho was granted roughly four million acres from the federal government. Over the course the state's history, the Idaho Land Board has consistently sold off state lands, a trend that continues today.

**Access to more than 1.7 million acres of state land has been lost forever after these lands were liquidated to corporations and other private interests** — an area approaching the size of the Sawtooth National Forest.

*Former state land parcel that is now privately owned.*



**41.4%  
SOLD**

AT STATEHOOD  
Idaho had  
**4,254,448** acres of  
state land

Since statehood,  
Idaho had sold off  
**1,760,783** acres of  
state land

- Land deals often put state lands in the hands of an elite few and Idaho's biggest industries: the Simplot Corp., Potlatch, Boise-Cascade, cattle companies and law firms. Under these private ownerships, the new owners can lock out the public altogether or charge a trespass fee.

- A review of what happens to these lands once sold shows natural areas are being industrialized. Some become gravel pits, strip malls or plowed into agricultural production.

- By acreage, the two most typical buyers of state lands are timber companies and livestock interests. Other prime lands have become exclusive fishing retreats or lakeshore hideaways for the ultra-wealthy. In one example near Yellowstone National Park, a parcel of state land was sold to become an exclusive, members-only fishing resort on one of Idaho's best trout streams.

# WHY ACCESS MATTERS:

Access to open public lands is a major economic driver. Hunting alone in Idaho's national forests, Bureau of Land Management lands and national wildlife refuges is worth \$478 million annually to the state's economy, according to the Idaho Department of Fish & Game. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation and other

activities generate \$6.3 billion for Idaho annually in consumer spending, as well as contributing \$461 million to Idaho's state and local tax coffers. This economic engine depends on our ability to access these lands, a freedom sure to erode if these lands slip from public ownership. According the National Shooting Sports Foundation, the number one reason people quit hunting is lack of access to habitat. As America grows and develops, wild habitat for hunting and fishing becomes increasingly scarce.



The state of Idaho has a long history of selling its lands, including lakeside property around Priest and Payette Lakes in 2015. Idaho's iconic landscapes should not be for sale. Will your favorite spot end up on the auction block?



Panhandle National Forest



Selway River



Sawtooth National Forest



Craters of the Moon National Monument



Owyhee Canyonlands

*"Unlike national public lands, which all citizens own and have access to, state lands are managed for maximum revenue generation, which allows Idaho to sell state land at its leisure."*

Brad Brooks, Idaho Deputy Regional Director, The Wilderness Society

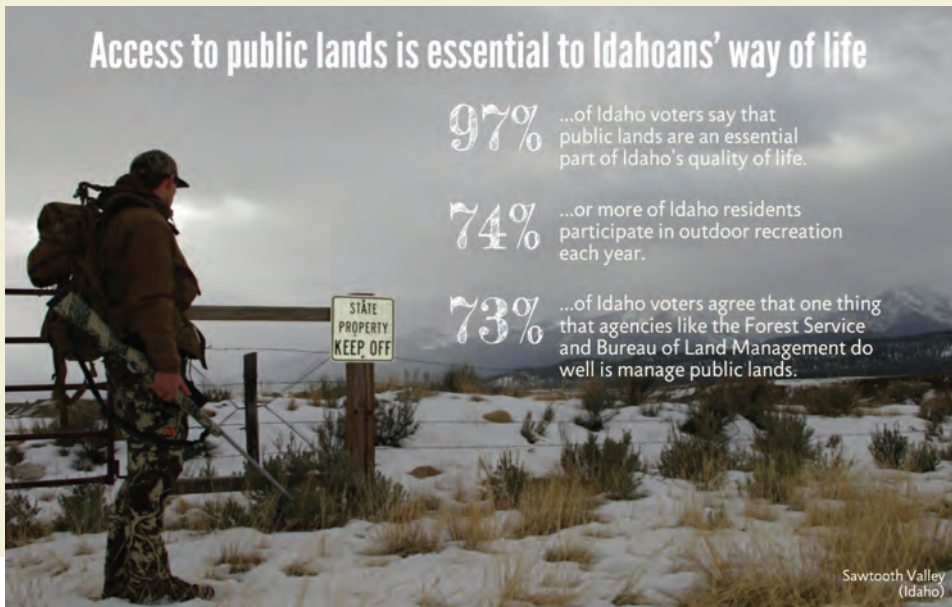
Former state land parcel that is now privately owned.

**IDAHO AVERAGES 13,500 ACRES SOLD** off per year and since the year 2000, the state has sold 100,434 acres of land.

There is reason for concern about what would happen to our treasured lands once the state acquires them. Here are some examples of who has purchased state land in the past, and who could likely be the purchasers of future state land sales:

► **Bunker Hill Mining**, the mining company with a long history and lead pollution legacy in the Silver Valley, purchased 715 acres of state land. The Bunker Hill mine area has been a Superfund cleanup site since 1983, when toxic levels of lead were discovered, including on school playgrounds.

- **The Flat Rock Club**, a private fly fishing club that sits on 150 acres of beautiful forested land in Macks, Idaho, along the banks of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River, purchased 41 acres of state land, denying public access to fishermen.
- **ASARCO Inc.**, an Arizona based mining company infamous for nearly succeeding in putting a massive open pit molybdenum mine in the heart of the Boulder-White Cloud mountains, purchased 321 acres of state land in 1991.
- In 1967, **Blue Lakes Country Club** in Twin Falls purchased 87 acres of state land along the Snake River to develop an exclusive golf course.
- **Potlatch Corp.**, purchased 17, 889 acres of state land between 1986 and 1997. To use this land now, recreationists must pay an annual fee, and access can be shut-off at any time by Potlatch Corp.



“ The only way you have access to 98 percent of Texas is if you are wealthy enough to buy your access for hunting, fishing and camping. In Idaho, you don't need to be wealthy to have rights to access land, and that's the way we like it. ”

—Jerry Bullock, Blackfoot, Idaho

**A**S HISTORY SHOWS, the state of Idaho is more than willing to dispose of land for short sighted economic gain without considering long term impacts or the legal implications. Despite the Supreme Court consistently upholding federal management of public land since the 19th century, the political rhetoric is firing up extremists. In early 2016, one prominent national political candidate went so far as to say that Idaho should be more like Texas, where only two percent of the land is public.

What land-grab politicians aren't telling you is hiking, biking, fishing and all other recreational activities on Idaho's public lands, and the legacy that has been handed down for generations, would be gone forever.

Idaho's public lands and rural communities face very real challenges. But undermining our public lands system will increasingly leave families on the wrong side of locked gates and no-trespassing signs. Idaho's elected leaders should focus on real-world solutions to manage wildfire, restore and protect clean water and provide healthy lands for wildlife to flourish by rejecting out of state efforts fueling the public land grab. Keep public lands in public hands.