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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNITED PAYETTE

**Broad coalition organizes to conserve endowment lands in
the NorthFork Payette River basin**



View of Payette Lake from Parcel H

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(MCCALL, ID) – United Payette, a coalition of local and regional stakeholders, has formed to spearhead a transparent and inclusive process to conserve Idaho’s endowment lands in the North Fork Payette watershed.

Community opposition to recent proposals seeking to privatize state endowment lands surrounding Payette Lakes has been strong. Currently, United Payette is focusing on proactive, community-based conservation solutions to protect habitat, water quality and ensure continued recreational access to lands in Valley County.

The Idaho Constitution mandates that the state Land Board manage endowment lands to maximize long-term returns. United Payette is coordinating with federal, state, county, and city government officials to help the Land Board fulfill this constitutional mandate while conserving the landscape and maintaining traditional uses for Idahoans.

“Idahoans love this landscape. State lands across the region provide equal and equitable public access for hunters, anglers, hikers, bikers, skiers, and more. The forests, streams, wetlands and meadows provide intact habitat for big game and nongame wildlife species and protect the water quality for the Payette Lakes and Lake Cascade. United Payette is seeking solutions now that will prevent poorly planned development tomorrow. Ultimately, we want to protect the outstanding quality of life and public lands that make this region so special,” said Brian Brooks, Executive Director of the Idaho Wildlife Federation.

“These lands provide for ‘a way of life’ for many Idahoans. All my life I have lived with the forested backdrop of Payette Lake and am committed to ensure that future generations can enjoy the beauty and tranquility of our region. I can’t imagine looking out on this beautiful lake seeing luxury housing developments dotting the hillsides and lakeshores,” said Debbie Fereday, President of the Payette Endowment Lands Alliance.

“Working together, we must acknowledge the reason why this region is special. The health of our economy is tied to the public lands of Valley County and we need to provide balance between development and conservation,” said Valley County Commissioner Dave Bingaman.

United Payette is currently working with local, regional, state and federal decision makers to implement conservation strategies and funding mechanisms that can satisfy the Idaho Land Board, Idaho Department of Lands and other partners, while protecting the region’s quality of life. Opportunities for future public involvement will be announced. For more information contact United Payette at: unitedpayette@gmail.com.

UNITED PAYETTE

Vision: United Payette envisions the permanent conservation of Idaho's Payette endowment lands in the North Fork Payette River watershed to protect water quality, public access, recreation, wildlife, and natural resources for the benefit of local communities and visitors, the environment, and present and future generations of Idahoans.

Mission: We are a broad coalition of citizens and organizations collaborating with government and private partners to identify and secure paths to permanently conserve the Payette endowment lands for the public and the health of the ecosystem for generations to come. We are committed to identifying creative and sustainable solutions to support the Governor and the Idaho Land Board's constitutional and fiduciary responsibilities to the endowment beneficiaries and citizens of Idaho.

Current members of United Payette include:

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Big Payette Lake Water Quality
CouncilBrightwater Homeowners
Association Brundage Mountain
Burgdorf Hot Springs
Central Idaho Mountain Bike
AssociationFriends of Lake Cascade
Idaho Business for the
OutdoorsIdaho Conservation
League Idaho Wildlife
Federation
Payette Endowment Lands
AlliancePayette Land Trust
Pilgrim's Cove Homeowners
AssociationPrivate Citizens
Trust for Public Land

To add your name, business or organization as a supporter, contact United Payette at unitedpayette@gmail.com