East Fork Allotment

Grazing Permit Renewal Environmental Assessment

EA Number: ID-040-9039 Date of Preparation: 01/00

INTRODUCTION

Background:

The Challis Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) (1999) describes management for the East Fork Allotment as a three pasture rest rotation grazing system in accordance with the 1982 Allotment Management Plan (AMP). Grazing within this allotment and the adjacent Forest Service Lower East Fork C & H Allotment are coordinated with the Salmon-Challis National Forest (NF) and the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) through two memorandums of understanding (MOUs). The BLM portion of the system outlines early use and complete rest rotated through three pastures. Two pastures are used early each year while the third is rested. After early use (ending 6/22) is made on the BLM allotment (East Fork Allotment) livestock are moved to the contiguous Forest allotment (Lower East Fork C & H Allotment) for summer use under a separate three pasture rest rotation system. Livestock are then trailed back through BLM in the fall to the appropriate home ranch. The pastures were designed to minimize and facilitate livestock handling such that two of the three pastures are defined use areas contiguous to the home ranches while the third is a combined use area. This arrangement is displayed as follows:

Big Boulder/Baker Basin Pasture	E. & E. Baker
Ziegler Basin/BLM Marco Pasture	R.L. Baker and W & M Baker
Big Lake/Corral Cr Pasture	Combined use

Requirements of the Endangered Species Act have necessitated changes to management on the allotment to comply with the law and to protect critical fishery habitat. In addition, grazing regulations affecting public lands administered by the BLM require meeting the fundamentals of rangeland health and standards and guidelines for grazing administration (43CFR subpart 4180). In July, 1999 the field assessment portion of this process was completed on the allotment. The upland plant communities were assessed using protocols described in the 1997 Rangeland Health Assessment Handbook. However, the compilation and analysis of this assessment and the final determination of achieving or making progress towards achieving the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health has not been completed. A preliminary review indicates the uplands to be functioning and healthy while some stream reaches are functioning-at-risk and not fully meeting the standards.

East Fork Allotment incorporates approximately 21,765 acres, of which 14,761 are managed by BLM, 3,264 acres are managed by the Salmon-Challis National Forest, and 3,740 acres managed

by the SNRA. State lands managed by the Idaho Department of Lands comprise 1520 acres within the allotment, of which 1280 acres are under an Exchange of Use by E. and E. Baker. Also included are minimal amounts of private lands. Historically, 532 AUMs have been permitted on the BLM administered land among three permittees. During development of the AMP in 1982, the season of use was changed to spring only, allotment boundaries were modified through transfer of grazing privileges, the big horn sheep pasture was developed to exclude livestock, and a 46% reduction in grazing preference was imposed. The BLM issues separate permits for use of BLM lands, and the Forest Service does the same for use on NF and SNRA lands. Two (E&E and W&M) of the three BLM grazing permits are expiring in 1999, however all permits are being proposed for renewal to allow the BLM to consider management of the entire BLM administered portion of the allotment.

Applicants: Wayne & Melodie Baker, Eddie E. and Eddie (Junior) Baker, Richard L. Baker.

Type of Action: Livestock Grazing Permit renewal for three permittees on the East Fork Allotment.

Purpose and Need: To authorize appropriate livestock grazing management on the East Fork Allotment located in Custer County, Idaho, consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

Location of Proposed Action: T. 9 & 10 N., R. 17, 18 E. Boise Meridian (see attached Map A). East Fork Allotment is bordered on the south and west by the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, on the north by the National Forest Lands administered by the Yankee Fork Ranger District, and on the east by the East Fork of the Salmon River. The allotment is approximately four miles south of Clayton, Idaho.

Conformance with Applicable LUP: The proposed action is in conformance with the Challis RMP (July, 1999) under Livestock Grazing, Goal 1, Decision #1 (manage livestock grazing activities to ensure achievement, maintenance, or progress towards achieving the fundamentals of rangeland health) and Decision #2 (continue existing livestock grazing preference allocations for the short term).

Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans: The proposed action is in conformance with the 1982 AMP developed in coordination with the Salmon-Challis National Forest. Permitting requirements for the Clean Water Act have been met and appropriate water rights claims have been filed with the State of Idaho. Consultation in accordance with the Endangered Species Act has been completed with a "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" concurrence from the National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) has been conducted in accordance with BLM's National Programmatic Agreement and the implementing Protocol agreement between Idaho BLM and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office. Management within the Wilderness Study Areas is in compliance with the Bureau's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (BLM Handbook H-8550, USDI

1995).

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES:

Alternative 1: Continuation of Existing Permit Authorization in Accordance with the 1982 AMP

Livestock grazing would be permitted from May 23 extending into June and from 10/15 through 10/16 for an active grazing preference of 288 AUMs, distributed among three permittees. With the loss of the licensed fall use in 1982, in order to authorize a two day fall trailing period a two day delay in spring turnout is indicated. The fall trailing is shown as occurring in mid October but may occur anytime from late September into November depending upon the scheduled use on the adjacent forest allotment. Grazing would follow the rest rotation grazing system outlined in the 1982 AMP and consolidate forest and BLM administered lands into three grazing pastures. Rotation of spring use would continue on two pastures while complete rest is applied to the third. Individual permits would be issued for use as follows:

Permittee	Livestock Number/Kind	Season of Use	%PL	Active AUMs	Suspended AUMs	Total AUMs
Eddie & Eddie Jr. Baker	188 cattle	5/23 to 6/10	100	118	157	275
	2 horse	5/23 to 6/10	100	3	—	3
	188 cattle	10/15 to 10/16	100	13		13
Richard L. Baker	30 cattle	5/23 to 6/22	50*	16	8	24
	30 cattle	10/15 to 10/16	50*	1		1
Wayne & Melodie Baker	256 cattle	5/23 to 6/22	50*	131	79	210
	256 cattle	10/15 to 10/16	50*	9	—	9
		total		291^	244	535^

* The percent public land is shown at 50% for R.L Baker and W & M Baker due to permitted grazing on the adjacent Marco Forest permit and Spud Forest permit grazed consecutively with East Fork Allotment.
^ Totals differ due to rounding.

Grazing use terms and conditions from the 1982 AMP include an upland spring utilization standard of 30%. No additional grazing use standards would apply under this alternative.

The big horn sheep range would remain closed to livestock grazing until an assessment of habitat conditions and Herd Management Plan (HMP) objectives is completed.

Alternative 2: Continuation of Existing Permit in Accordance with the 1982 AMP with Terms and Conditions Added

This alternative would authorize livestock grazing in accordance with the 1982 AMP outlining a three pasture rest rotation system that consolidates the forest and BLM administered lands.

Rotation of spring use would continue on two pastures while complete rest is applied to the third. Permit information describing season of use, livestock numbers, AUMs, etc. would duplicate that shown in Alternative 1. The big horn sheep range would remain closed to livestock grazing until an assessment of habitat conditions and Herd Management Plan (HMP) objectives is completed. Grazing use standards and guidelines would be applied through incorporation of the following terms and conditions into the grazing permits. Failure to comply could result in the cancellation of the grazing permits in whole or in part.

1. Upland utilization on bluebunch wheatgrass during the critical growth period (boot to flower) would be limited to 40% of current growth. Grazing outside the critical period (usually ending June 20) would not exceed 60% utilization. *(Challis RMP, July 1999, Livestock Grazing, Goal 1 #7)*

2. Manage livestock use to maintain a minimum 4" to 6" median stubble height during the scheduled grazing period along BLM administered streams. Specific riparian stubble height standards would be considered on the basis of current riparian conditions, stream function, and season of use. Livestock will be managed to maintain a minimum 4" herbaceous stubble height along Marco Creek, Jimmy Smith Creek, Corral Creek, Big Lake Creek, Bluett Creek, Little Boulder Creek, Big Boulder Creek, Wickiup Creek, East Fork Salmon River, and Baker Creek when grazed prior to July 10. Grazing along these streams after July 10 will be subject to a 6" herbaceous stubble height *(Challis RMP, July, 1999, Riparian Areas, Goal 1 #5 (a)(b)(c).*

3. Livestock use will not be scheduled after September 15 along the East Fork Salmon River and along Big Boulder, Little Boulder, and Wickiup Creeks (Big Boulder/Baker Basin Pasture) to avoid conflicts with spawning bull trout. A two day supervised trailing would be allowed after September 15, when necessary, however access to streams and adjacent riparian areas would be minimized.

4. Manage livestock use on known or suspected sensitive fish bearing streams (East Fork Salmon River, lower Big Lake, Big Boulder, Little Boulder, Wickiup Creeks) so that no more than 10% of the streambank is sheared by livestock hoof action. Manage livestock on known or suspected non-sensitive fish bearing and non-fish bearing streams (Corral, Jimmy Smith, Marco, Bluett, and Baker Creeks) so that no more than 20% of the streambank is sheared by livestock hoof action. *(Challis RMP, July, 1999, Riparian Areas, Goal 1 #6).*

5. Manage livestock use so that no more than 50% frequency of nipping on current year leaders on woody species occurs along BLM administered portions of perennial streams (see Affected Environment for stream list).

6. As provided in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4130.3-2(d), the submission of an actual use report within 15 days after completion of the scheduled grazing use is required.

7. The East Fork Allotment shall meet the requirements as described in 43 CFR 4180--Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and the Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration. This permit or lease shall be modified, if necessary, to meet or make significant progress towards meeting these requirements.

Proposed Action Alternative 3: Livestock Controlled Timed Grazing

This alternative describes a combination of systems designed around the individual permittee's overall grazing operation.

E & E Baker would continue the 1982 rest rotation grazing system on two pastures (Big Boulder/Baker Basin and Big Lake/Corral Cr) rotating early use and complete rest every other year. The grazing use standards described in Alternative 2 would be applied as terms and conditions to the grazing permit. Permit information describing season of use, livestock numbers, AUMs, etc. would duplicate that shown in Alternative 1.

R.L. Baker and W & M Baker would be authorized a use area ("timed grazing") deferment system coordinated with the adjacent Lower East Fork C & H forest allotment. This coordinated grazing program would allow for spring and fall use as warranted. The BLM administered portions of their two pastures (Ziegler Basin/BLM Marco and Big Lake/Corral Cr) would be divided into several (approximately 5) BLM use areas (paddocks) based on topographic features ranging in size from 1000 to 3500 acres. These paddocks would be grazed with their entire herd for a period of 5 to 20 days depending upon the size of the paddock, productivity, season of use, and in consideration with other resource issues and concerns. The following year individual paddocks or groups of paddocks may be grazed at the same time as the previous year, at different times than the previous year, or totally rested. Paddock rotations are not cycled in a defined system but rather are developed through an annual operating plan in response to site specific resource conditions or needs. Site specific concerns may include avoiding areas at specified times (e.g. wet or erodible soils, weed infestations, or special status plant populations) or avoiding areas for extended periods to promote site improvement (e.g. cultural sites or fragile riparian areas). Annual operating plan development is through inter-agency, grazing association, and interested public coordination. The permitted use on the Marco Forest and Spud Forest allotments would be included in the rotation as additional paddocks. The short duration grazing provides for extensive rest each year (350+days) with additional rest (either seasonal, growing season or yearlong) the following year. It provides maximum flexibility for livestock grazing but necessitates absolute livestock control within and between paddocks through modifying livestock behavior and intensive herding practices. This alternative generally reflects R.L. and W & M Bakers current grazing program employed on the allotment since 1997.

Permits for R.L. and W & M Baker would be issued as follows:

Permittee	Livestock Number/Kind	Season of Use	%PL	Active AUMs	Suspended AUMs	Total AUMs
Richard L. Baker	30 cattle	5/21 to 6/5	50*	8	8	16
		10/15-10/31	50*	8	-	8
Wayne & Melodie Baker	256 cattle	5/21 to 6/5	50*	69	79	148
		10/15-10/31	50*	70	-	70
	286 cattle			155	87	242

* The percent public land is shown at 50% for R.L Baker and W & M Baker due to permitted grazing on the adjacent Marco Forest permit and Spud Forest permit grazed consecutively with East Fork Allotment.

AUMs can be utilized entirely in the spring (ending 6/22) or split between the spring and fall periods (as shown) if so determined during annual operating plan development. The scheduled fall use can be flexible extending into November to accommodate the coordinated grazing plan. If full use is made in the spring a fall trailing permit would have to be applied for separately and authorized prior to trailing across public land. The 155 active AUMs can not be exceeded which equates to a maximum of 33 days with 286 cow/calf pairs or "dry" cows. Fall use would be made only with "dry" cows. Paddocks grazed in the fall would not be re-grazed the following spring. The Big Lake/Corral Cr Pasture would remain a combined use pasture and available for use by all permittees during its scheduled use period. It would continue to be scheduled for complete rest every other year, however, fall trailing would be allowed to accommodate the grazing sequence on the adjacent Forest allotment.

The same terms and conditions indicated as grazing use standards and guidelines, as shown in Alternative 2, would apply. Actual use reports submitted by each permittee in a timely manner would continue as a requirement of the permit. However, these reports must state, at a minimum, the number and type of livestock and the on/off dates for each paddock comprising the BLM administered public lands. The big horn sheep range would remain closed to livestock grazing until an assessment of habitat conditions and Herd Management Plan (HMP) objectives is completed.

Alternatives considered but not analyzed in detail:

A no grazing alternative was considered but not analyzed in this environmental assessment. Resolution of any present issues or resource conflicts would continue to be obtained through properly managed livestock grazing in accordance with direction given in the Challis RMP without total livestock exclusion.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

General Description

The allotment generally faces south and east, sloping towards the East Fork of the Salmon River with drainages flowing south and east creating dissected upland foothills with a variety of aspects. The public lands occupy the lower elevation sagebrush steppe foothills from approximately 6000 feet to 7800 feet above sea level. Slopes range from nearly flat on river terraces and benches to very steep (over 60%) on mountain hillsides and canyons. Precipitation follows topography with the higher elevations ranging from 12 to 16 inches per year to the lower foothills where yearly precipitation ranges from 8 to 10 inches.

Occurrences of experimental transplanted populations of gray wolf are possible on the BLM managed areas of the allotment, however livestock grazing will have no impact on their habitat or movements.

The allotment lies within Visual Resource Management Class 1 (associated with the two wilderness study areas) and Class 2. Livestock grazing, as described in each of the alternatives, has been greatly reduced from pre AMP (1982) historic levels and will not exceed the manner or degree described in the initial 1976 baseline criteria for livestock grazing and therefore will not be analyzed further.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Some of the following elements of the human environment are subject to requirements specified in statute, regulation, executive order, or policy and must be considered in all environmental assessments. Others have been added to the following list because of their importance in assessing impacts. All the following elements have been analyzed. However, elements denoted by an "X" are not affected by the proposed action and will receive no further consideration.

X	Air Quality	X	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
___	Cultural Resources	X	Farm Lands (prime or unique)
___	Floodplains	X	Native American Religious Concerns
X	Threatened/Endangered Animals	___	T/E and Sensitive Plants
___	Threatened/Endangered Fish	X	Wastes, Hazardous or Solid
___	Water Quality	___	Wetlands/Riparian Zones (including upland sites)
___	Wild & Scenic Rivers	___	Wilderness
X	Availability of Access/ Need to Reserve Access	___	Soils
X	Wild Horse and Burro Designated Herd Management Areas	X	Mineral Resources

___	Vegetation types, communities; vegetative permits and sales; Rangeland resources	___	Invasive/Non-native Species
___	Wildlife	X	Forest Resources
X	Economic Feasibility of Agricultural Entry	X	Paleontological Resources
X	Indian Trust Resources	X	Tribal Treaty Rights
___	Recreation Use, Existing and Potential	X	Visual Resources
X	Existing and Potential Land Uses	___	Economic & Social Values
X	Environmental Justice (EO 12989) (minority and low-income populations)	___	Fisheries

X No chemical or chemicals from the EPA's Consolidated List of Chemicals Subject to Reporting Under Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) of 1986, (10,000 pounds or more), will be used, produced, stored, transported, or disposed of in implementing the proposed action. No extremely hazardous substances, as defined in 40 CFR 355, will be used, produced, stored, transported, or disposed of in implementing the proposed action. *If this element is not checked, see EA document for further details concerning these chemicals and/or hazardous substances.*

Affected Resources: Elements which are present and are likely to be affected are discussed below.

Threatened/Endangered Fish-Fisheries: The East Fork Salmon River watershed is designated critical habitat for chinook salmon and steelhead trout with occupation generally being confined to the East Fork Salmon River. Occupation has been observed in the lower reaches of Big Boulder and Little Boulder Creeks as spawning and rearing habitat and is suspected in the lower reaches of Big Lake Creek. The threatened bull trout and sensitive westslope cutthroat trout occupy the main East Fork, Big Boulder, Little Boulder, and Wickiup Creeks. Rainbow trout occupy the main East Fork Salmon River, Big Boulder, Little Boulder, Big Lake, and Jimmy Smith Creeks. Jimmy Smith Lake also contains rainbow trout. The remaining perennial streams within the allotment (Bluett, Baker, Corral, and Marco Creeks) are non-fish bearing. The East Fork Salmon River Biological Assessments for Steelhead and Bull Trout (1998) described the aquatic habitat conditions as generally good with cool water temperatures and good in-stream features (pools, woody debris).

Vegetation Types and Rangeland Resources: The dominant vegetation types on the allotment are sagebrush/grass communities commonly comprised of Wyoming big sagebrush with bluebunch wheatgrass, bluegrasses, needlegrasses, indian ricegrass, and squirreltail grass. Communities of low sagebrush and three-tip sagebrush are also common with similar grass compositions. Mountain sagebrush with Idaho fescue and bluebunch wheatgrass are present on

the higher elevation mountain slopes. Range conditions (1978 survey) are generally fair to good. During the summer of 1999, the field assessment for Idaho's Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing was completed on the allotment. Although the formal determination has not as yet been made, a cursory review indicates the uplands are biotically healthy and physically functioning. Observations indicate the uplands are generally in late seral based on species composition. Upland long term trend is static to upward. There are six permanent study plots located within the allotment; four are photo plots, two of which are on the big horn sheep pasture. The remaining two (EF-4 and EF-6) are nested frequency plots, both of which were re-read in 1999. EF-4 was erroneously re-read from its original reading of 1981 rather than its modified baseline character established in 1984. Therefore, comparison to the 1981 plot is not possible. EF-6 is located in the 1980 prescribed burn area that was last read in 1983. This plot shows a slow increase in Idaho fescue (from zero in 1983) and a slight increase of the dominant bluebunch wheatgrass (from 93% to 96% frequency). Mountain sagebrush also shows a steady increase (from zero in 1983 to co-dominant in 1999). Overall trend in this study area is upward even with the increase of wild and domestic ungulate grazing use normally expected on burned sites.

Invasive/Non-native Species: A variety of state listed noxious weeds occupy the allotment. Principle species include spotted knapweed, leafy spurge, and black henbane. Occupation and establishment has been limited to areas along roadways. Introduced exotic (invasive) species (cheatgrass) are present but have also been limited to established roadways. Avenues of weed and exotic species expansion have been linked to birds, rodents, grazing animals (i.e. elk, deer, livestock), and human activities.

Threatened/Endangered/Sensitive Plants: Special status plants known to occur on the allotment include wavy-leaf thelypodium and Challis milkvetch. Potential habitat also exists for the sensitive Lemhi penstemon, and Lemhi milkvetch, and the federally listed Ute ladies'-tresses although no populations of these species have been found.

Soils: Soil Groups are described as follows (derived from the Custer/Lemhi Soil Survey General Soils Map, NRCS): Zeebar-Friedman-Donkeyhill; gravelly loamy and gravelly clayey, shallow to very deep, well drained soils on mountains and foothills derived from extrusive igneous rocks. Water erosion hazard is moderate; Orthids-Dawtonia-Cronks; gravelly loamy, hilly to extremely steep, shallow to very deep, well drained soils on mountains and foothills derived dominantly from extrusive igneous rocks and quartzite. Water erosion hazard is slight to moderate. Soils associated with larger water courses with active floodplains are fluvial deposits of fine to coarse textured silts, sands, gravels, and cobbles.

Water Quality: Of the numerous perennial streams located on the allotment, none are identified on the DEQ 303(d) water quality impairment list as water quality limited due to not meeting designated or identified beneficial uses. Those streams with BLM "identified" beneficial uses include: Big Boulder Creek for primary contact recreation, secondary contact recreation, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, and agricultural water supply; Big Lake, Jimmy Smith, Little

Boulder, and Wickiup Creeks for secondary contact recreation, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, and agricultural water supply; Corral, Bluett, and Baker Creeks for cold water biota and agricultural water supply; and Marco Creek for agricultural water supply. Water quality on the perennial streams is generally good.

Wildlife: Elk, mule deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, chukar partridge, sage grouse and blue grouse are some of the more common wildlife species found yearlong on this allotment. A variety of non-game and predatory birds and mammals, and a small number of reptile and amphibian species are also present. Riparian zones along perennial and intermittent streams are the most important habitats for nongame wildlife. Lower elevation foothill habitats provide winter range for big game animals.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: The East Fork of the Salmon River is eligible for further study to determine potential for inclusion in a National rivers system, with a suitability finding deferred until further coordination with other agencies is completed. Outstandingly remarkable (OR) values on the East Fork of the Salmon River are recreation, fisheries, and scenic with a tentative classification of recreational.

Recreation Use: Diverse recreational activities are provided on the allotment in the form of hunting, hiking, fishing, scenic travel, wildlife viewing, backpacking and dispersed camping. A BLM campground,with two pit toilets is located adjacent to the East Fork Road at Big Boulder Creek, which provides 5 semi-primitive campsites. The Jimmy Smith Lake trail originates at a parking area (supplied with one pit toilet) off the Big Lake Creek road and extends part way around the north shore of Jimmy Smith Lake providing access to the lake and surrounding creeks. The lake is a popular ice fishing location. Licensed outfitter activities occur within the allotment and adjacent National Forest and SNRA lands specifically in the upper Corral Creek drainage during big game hunting seasons.

Cultural Resources: Approximately 28 % of the BLM lands with the allotment have been inventoried for cultural resources. Many areas exist within the allotment that have not been inventoried for cultural resources but appear to have a high probability for containing sites. As a result of the inventories many cultural sites have been recorded on the allotment. In general, lithic scatter sites represent the most frequent known site type found within the allotment. Most sites appear to be situated near riparian areas (including seeps and spring sources) and in areas which may have supported water and riparian vegetation at one time.

Economic/Social Values: Each of the three permittees operate full time livestock/agriculture businesses and employ permanent and seasonal workers which support local economies on the East Fork Salmon River and at Clayton and Challis, Idaho. The livestock operations are dependent upon both public and NF lands for their overall operation.

Floodplains/Wetlands/Riparian Zones: The allotment contains approximately 12.9 miles of riparian stream habitat on BLM. Principal streams are briefly described in the table below. This

information is summarized from data obtained through contracted riparian inventories in 1994, 1998 and 1999.

Stream	Reach	Length (miles)	Functionality/ Trend	Vegetation Types	Comments
East Fork Salmon River	EFR-003	.2	PFC	Cottonwood/mixed willow Mixed grass	No livestock access
	EFR-004	.4	PFC	Alder/mixed grass Cottonwood/mixed willow	No livestock access
	EFR-005	.3	PFC	Cottonwood/alder Cottonwood/alluvial bar Mixed grass	
	EFR-006	.5	PFC	Cottonwood/mixed willow Alder/mixed grass	
Marco Creek	MARC-01	1.1	FAR-NT	Upland shrub/grass Rose/grass	Intermittent-subs in middle reach
	MARC-02	.8	FAR-NT	Rose/upland grass Aspen/grass	
Jimmy Smith Cr	JSC-001	.5	PFC	Aspen/dogwood Geyers willow	Well wooded
	JSC-002	.5	FAR/NT	Doug fir/rose Geyers willow/mixed grass	
	JSC-003	.4	PFC	Aspen/mixed willows	
Corral Creek	CC-001	.5	FAR-DT	Geyers willow/mixed grass	
	CC-002	.5	FAR-NT	Geyers willow/mixed grass	
	CC-003	1.0	FAR/NT	Aspen/mixed willow	
Big Lake Creek	BLC-001	.5	FAR-NT	Mixed willows/mixed grass Cottonwood/rose	
	BLC-002	.8	PFC	Aspen/rose Cottonwood/dogwood	Well wooded
Bluett Creek	BLUE-01	.4	PFC	Aspen/mixed willow Aspen/dogwood/grass	Limited livestock access
Big Boulder Cr	BBC-001	.2	PFC	Alder/mixed grass	No livestock access
	BBC-002	.3	PFC	Aspen/alder Cottonwood/alder	No livestock access
	BBC-003	.6	PFC	Cottonwood/alder Alder/dogwood Doug fir/alder	No livestock access

Stream	Reach	Length (miles)	Functionality/ Trend	Vegetation Types	Comments
Little Boulder C	LBC-001	.4	PFC	Aspen/alder/mixed grass Alder/mixed grass Doug fir/alder	Limited livestock access
	LBC-002	.5	PFC	Alder/dogwood	Limited livestock access
	LBC-003	.7	PFC	Spruce/dogwood	Limited livestock access
Wickiup Creek	WC-001	.4	PFC	Aspen/alder Cottonwood/alder	No livestock access
Baker Creek	BAKE-01	.8	PFC	Aspen/willow/grass	Limited livestock access
	BAKE-02	.6	FAR-NT	Upland shrub/grass Mixed willow/grass Doug fir/Aspen	

PFC = Proper Functioning Condition; FAR = Functional-at-Risk; NF = Non-functional
DN = Downward trend; NT = No trend; UP = Upward trend

There are also numerous springs and seeps scattered throughout the BLM administered public land within the allotment. Many of the springs that supported reliable water were developed into ponded waterholes or piped into stockwater troughs under authorization through project development permits. These sites support a variety of hydric and upland shrubs with mixed herbaceous grasses dominated by bluegrass species. Site disturbance from project maintenance activities and concentrated wild ungulate and/or livestock grazing is common.

Wilderness Study Areas (WSA): The Boulder Creek WSA lies entirely within the Big Boulder/Baker Basin Pasture. The Jerry Peak West WSA also extends into the Big Boulder/Baker Basin Pasture east of the East Fork Salmon River. Both these WSAs are recommended non-suitable to Congress as stated in the 1983 Challis Wilderness EIS. Under the Bureau's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (BLM Handbook H-8550, USDI 1995), it is required that these areas be managed so that their wilderness values will not be impaired. Grazing management in all alternatives would be consistent with this policy.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Environmental impacts to each affected resource are presented in the following table for each alternative and the proposed action. Direct, indirect and cumulative impacts are discussed.

Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Continuation of Existing Permit Authorization in Accordance with the 1982 AMP	Alternative 2 Continuation of Existing Permit Authorization in Accordance with the 1982 AMP with Terms and Conditions Included	Alternative 3 Proposed Action Livestock Controlled Timed Grazing
T/E/S Fish;Fisheries	Limiting livestock grazing to 33 days in the early spring would result in an overall improvement to current fish habitat. Although heavy use would be expected in those scheduled pastures with accessible riparian and aquatic systems, extensive rest periods would be provided during the rest cycle and after the livestock were removed from the grazed pasture to re-vegetate and stabilize impacted streambanks and revitalize grazed plant communities. Fall trailing would impact some localized fishery systems through bank trampling, grazing and browsing. However, due to the limited time frame, livestock would not gain access to many stream systems resulting in an extensive rest period for the majority of stream reaches supporting fish habitat.	TES fish and other fish species and their habitats would be improved from current conditions under this alternative. Livestock would have access to all fish bearing streams within the scheduled use area. However, grazing use would be restricted through grazing standards to avoid heavy grazing, browsing or excessive bank shearing. The application of complete rest from grazing coupled with the grazing use standards would ensure herbaceous communities are allowed enough stubble for regrowth and vigor enhancement, woody vegetation is left in tact to allow for stream shading, normal growth characteristics and age structure, and streambanks are left in tact to avoid excessive sedimentation to the stream.	TES fish and other fish species and their habitat would improve from current conditions under this alternative. Livestock grazing on accessible streams is permissible but, due to the very short time frames followed by extensive rest periods would provide for vegetative regrowth and streambank stabilization. The applied terms and conditions would prevent excessive livestock grazing impacts from occurring on the grazed paddocks. Specific sub-watersheds or drainages with critical fish habitat or unacceptable conditions can be avoided for extended periods through improved livestock control practices providing additional opportunities for rapid, site specific improvement.

Affected Resource	Alternative 1 Continuation of Existing Permit Authorization in Accordance with the 1982 AMP	Alternative 2 Continuation of Existing Permit Authorization in Accordance with the 1982 AMP with Terms and Conditions Included	Alternative 3 Proposed Action Livestock Controlled Timed Grazing
Vegetation Types and Rangeland Resources	Upland vegetation types would be maintained under this alternative due to the limited scheduled grazing use during the growing season coupled with the non-use rest cycle. Utilization on key upland forage species would be slight to light (less than 30%). With the very early growing season grazing, regrowth of key species would be assured resulting in maintained or improved plant vigor. Fall grazing would be limited to trailing with minimal impacts.	Upland vegetation types would be maintained with this alternative. Utilization standards would limit livestock grazing to light (up to 40%). This restriction, coupled with complete rest would result in maintaining the current upland conditions and trends.	Upland vegetation types would be maintained or improved under this alternative. Utilization is expected to be light to moderate with this type of grazing system since the livestock are encouraged to move rapidly through the scheduled paddock avoiding opportunities to re-graze individual plants or to concentrate for extended periods of time. The relatively light grazing use applied on the spring use paddocks and extended rest periods would ensure regrowth opportunities for improved plant vigor and seed production. Paddocks scheduled for fall use would be limited to moderate (<60%) use which would not impact dormant bunchgrass health or vigor. The added flexibility allows opportunities to avoid areas of low production, fragile soils, or historical concentration areas for extended rest periods, if necessary.
Invasive/Non-native Species	The potential for weed expansion and establishment would be minimal under this alternative due to the short grazing period, the grazing utilization standard, and the extended rest cycle all of which result in low impacts to the upland plant communities and encourage plant vigor, seedling establishment, and reduced opportunities for weed encroachment. Localized concentration areas may still exist which encourage weed establishment.	Same as Alternative 1 except the threat of weed distribution and establishment is slightly higher under this alternative due to the slightly higher early grazing utilization standards applied under this alternative. Localized concentration areas may still exist which encourage weed encroachment.	Livestock concentration areas where soils are left bare and susceptible to weed invasion are minimized under this alternative. The threat of increased weed distribution and establishment may be slightly higher under this alternative due to the allowed fall use which may spread viable weed seeds. However, localized disturbed areas and weed infestations can be avoided through controlled livestock herding. Individual paddocks or drainages can be totally avoided for extended periods to allow weed treatment activities to succeed.

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Threatened/ Endangered/ Sensitive Plants	Impacts to TES plants is expected to be minimal under this alternative due to the limited scheduled grazing use and applied rest cycle. The identified plants are not palatable to livestock and are not readily grazed, even during the scheduled early spring grazing period. Some random trampling of individual plants is possible but likely to be minimal and non-fatal if it should occur. Any affects from fall grazing (trailing) would be minimal since these plant species of concern are dormant.	Same as Alternative 1.	Same as Alternative 1. In addition, the added livestock control required under this alternative provides opportunities to avoid areas of concentrated or isolated TES plants for further protection if so warranted. Any affects from scheduled fall grazing would be minimal since these plant species of concern are dormant and not desirable as forage species.
Soils	Soil cover and stability is expected to be maintained under this alternative due to the limited scheduled grazing and applied rest cycle. With light grazing early in the growing season, soil cover from litter would increase overall. Some compaction may occur from livestock grazing while the upland soils are moist. This situation would be a localized event (i.e. north slopes) and minimal in extent. With the resulting improved soil cover accelerated soil erosion is not expected.	Same as Alternative 1. Although a slightly higher utilization level is allowed with this alternative strict conformance to no more than 40% utilization levels coupled with a complete rest cycle would provide adequate soil cover and protection from accelerated soil erosion.	Soil plant and litter cover and soil stability are likely to be maintained or improved under this alternative due to the limited grazing utilization, improved regrowth potential, and the extended rest periods being provided. Paddocks grazed in the fall would not be re-grazed the following spring to allow for plant vigor and full production of plant material for soil cover. Soil compaction is possible on the early grazed paddocks with large numbers of livestock in areas where soils are still moist. This situation is likely to be localized (north slopes) and minimal in extent. Areas with exposed soils (low production areas) and fragile soil sites can be avoided with improved livestock control practices reducing the threat of accelerated soil erosion from these locations. Livestock concentration areas where soils are left bare and highly susceptible to accelerated erosion would also be minimized under this alternative.

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Water Quality	Water quality would be maintained under this alternative due to the limited access the livestock would have to the perennial stream channels and stable uplands. Livestock impacts to streambank vegetation and stream stability would be minimal. Growing season rest combined with the non-use rest cycle would allow ample time for vegetative regrowth and bank stabilization processes to provide shading for reduced temperatures and bank stability for reduced sediment. Fall grazing would be limited to trailing only with minimal impacts expected.	Water quality would likely improve from current conditions under this alternative. Limiting livestock use and presence through the application of the grazing use standards would improve woody and herbaceous plant communities and stabilize streambanks. Stream shading would likely increase through reduced browsing and sediment yield would be reduced through stabilizing streambanks and reduced livestock hoof shearing all of which would result in improved water quality.	Same as Alternative 2. Although livestock use would occur on most stream segments under this alternative, the short duration, extended rest periods, and applied terms and conditions (for both spring and fall use periods) would improve water quality through improved streambank stability and improved woody and herbaceous plant communities. In addition, areas of concern can be avoided for extended periods through improved livestock control practices, if warranted.
Wildlife	It is expected that viable and productive wildlife populations would continue to be supported on this allotment as a result of requirements to maintain soil, water, vegetative resources and ecological processes. However, permitted livestock grazing would reduce the availability of herbaceous vegetative cover on some sites in the allotment. Herbaceous vegetation provides wildlife with cover and forage and is particularly important during spring when calving, fawning, nesting and rearing of young occurs. Herbaceous cover would be reduced primarily on sites that are close to water sources and on sites that are easily accessible to livestock (e.g. areas of gentle terrain). Removal of herbaceous cover would be minimal or nonexistent on ridgetops, steeper slopes	Same as Alternative 1, except: The utilization standards for bluebunch wheatgrass and other key forage species under Alternative 2 would help ensure that herbaceous cover and forage would remain for wildlife. Compliance with utilization standards is expected to improve the availability of herbaceous cover and forage on some sites. The grazing standards and stipulations for woody species in riparian areas, along with riparian stubble-height and bank-shearing criteria, are expected to maintain and improve habitat for wildlife species dependent on riparian habitats.	Same as Alternative 2, except: It is expected that grazing of smaller paddocks would result in higher density of livestock per unit area of land during the period of use. Higher livestock densities in birthing/nesting areas or other preferred habitats (e.g. wildlife fawning/calving areas or sage grouse nesting areas) would increase the potential for disturbance and displacement of wildlife and limitation of productivity and reproductive success. The potential for adverse effects of higher livestock densities on some wildlife species may be partially offset by the availability of undisturbed habitats in adjacent ungrazed paddocks.

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Wildlife (cont.)	and sites where livestock use is light or otherwise limited by terrain or distance from water. Ungrazed herbaceous cover in rested pastures would remain available for wildlife use. In general, sufficient herbaceous forage and cover would remain on the allotment to support viable wildlife populations, but grazing of herbaceous vegetation would have potential to limit the productivity and reproductive success of some wildlife populations or groups of species. The presence of livestock and the trailing of livestock between areas of use would displace some wild animals from preferred habitats, nesting/birthing sites, or water sources. However, many wildlife species are habituated to the presence of livestock and adverse effects of disturbance and displacement (e.g., displacement into less suitable habitats, or abandonment of nesting/birthing sites, etc.) would be limited. Deferred and rested pastures and other areas where livestock use is limited would continue to provide areas of undisturbed habitat for wildlife when livestock are not present.		
Wild and Scenic Rivers	The outstandingly remarkable values associated with the eligible East Fork Salmon River segment would be maintained under this alternative. Any conflicts with these values and livestock grazing would be minimized with the limited authorized grazing schedule.	The outstandingly remarkable values associated with the eligible East Fork Salmon River segment would be maintained or improved under this alternative. Any conflicts with these values and livestock grazing would be minimized with the applied grazing standards, limited grazing season, and the scheduled rest cycles.	Same as Alternative 2.

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Recreation	Recreational values would be maintained under this alternative. Conflicts between recreationists and livestock would be minimal due to the limited and well defined (scheduled) season of use, including complete rest, that provide opportunities to avoid livestock interactions.	Recreational values would be maintained or improved under this alternative. Conflicts between recreationists and livestock would be minimal due to the limited and well defined (scheduled) season of use, including rest, that provide opportunities to avoid livestock interactions. Recreational experiences would also likely benefit from the overall improvement of the biotic and physical environment that is expected as a result of applying the grazing use standards coupled with the non-use rest cycle.	Recreational values would be maintained or slightly decreased under this alternative. Although upland, riparian, and aquatic habitat conditions are likely to be improved under this alternative, recreational values may be hindered due to the lack of a structured livestock grazing schedule. Recreationists desiring a "livestock free" recreational experience would be forced to coordinate their activities around the annual operating plan. Although potential impacts may exist, they are not considered significant.
Cultural Resources	Cultural resources located near floodplains, wetlands, and riparian zones (including seeps and springs) have been and would continue to be vulnerable to impacts from livestock trampling and associated erosion. However, the condition of cultural resource sites would continue to be maintained as a result of working to meet the fundamentals of rangeland health to maintain soil, water, and vegetative resources and ecological processes. Therefore, the re-issuance of this grazing permit is not expected to affect the National Register eligibility of sites within the allotment.	Same as Alternative 1. In addition, the application of the terms and conditions incorporated in the permit to improve upland and riparian vegetative cover, are expected reduce the effects livestock grazing to cultural resources.	Same as Alternative 2, except cultural sites associated with upland wetland spring areas are expected to be maintained or possibly improved under this alternative due to the short duration of livestock presence resulting in reduced soil compaction and site disturbance. In addition, sites of special concern can be avoided altogether through controlled livestock herding.

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Economic/Social Values	This alternative would maintain the existing active AUMs of the three permittees and stabilize (through issuance of term permits) their livestock operation. The upland utilization standard of 30% may force early pasture rotations or early removal off the allotment in years where forage is limited (drought).	This alternative would maintain the existing active AUMs of the three permittees and stabilize (through issuance of term permits) their livestock operation. Individual ranch economies would likely be adversely affected by this alternative due to the additional livestock handling requirements needed to successfully meet the grazing standards. Hiring additional riders or re-distributing the ranch personnel would likely be needed. If livestock are required to leave a scheduled area or the entire allotment early due to meeting the grazing use standards, other pasturing accommodations would have to be obtained contributing to the operator's expense.	Same as Alternative 2. In addition, livestock control measures may need to be enhanced when paddocks or other areas are closed to grazing either seasonally or yearlong for other resource concerns. This requirement may necessitate hiring additional handlers or further redistribution of ranch personnel at additional expense.
Floodplains/ Wetlands/ Riparian Zones	These resources would be maintained or improved under this alternative due to limited livestock access, distribution, and scheduled grazing season. Floodplain and riparian community types would be allowed to regrow after the early spring grazing period providing opportunities for herbaceous and woody plants to regain vigor, proper growth form, and age class distribution. Undesirable plant communities (i.e. bluegrass) would gradually succumb to desirable hydric plant communities. Stream systems currently in functional-at-risk would eventually become properly functioning with improved plant compositions and balanced sediment/energy dissipating stream systems.	Under this alternative floodplains and riparian zones would be improved from current conditions due to the application of the grazing use and bank shearing standards coupled with the rested grazing schedule. These standards would ensure riparian vegetation is not excessively grazed or browsed and is provided the opportunity to improve vigor, growth form and age distribution. Undesirable plant communities (i.e. bluegrass) would gradually succumb to desirable hydric plant communities at a faster rate than in Alternative 1. Stream systems currently in functional-at-risk would become properly functioning with improved plant compositions and balanced sediment/energy dissipating stream systems. Wetlands associated with upland springs and seeps would be maintained under this	Under this alternative floodplains and riparian zones would be improved from current conditions due to the application of the grazing use and bank shearing standards coupled with extended grazing rest periods. These standards would ensure riparian vegetation is not excessively grazed or browsed and is provided the opportunity to improve vigor, growth form and age distribution. Undesirable plant communities (i.e. bluegrass) would succumb to desirable hydric plant communities faster than in Alternatives 1 or 2. Stream systems currently in functional-at-risk would become properly functioning with improved plant compositions and balanced sediment/energy dissipating stream systems. With the added livestock control and flexibility, areas of concern can be removed from grazing for extended periods

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Floodplains/ Wetlands/ Riparian Zones (cont.)	Wetlands associated with upland springs and seeps would also improve due to the 30% upland utilization standard which would limit livestock access and possibly the scheduled grazing period on pastures. Foraging and trampling would be reduced providing opportunities for hydric plant communities to dominate and water flow and storage to balance.	alternative with grazing standards only applied to upland utilization levels and not specifically to wetland sites.	until conditions indicate grazing can resume. Wetlands associated with upland springs and seeps would be maintained or slightly improved under this alternative through opportunities to reduce livestock concentration and soil compaction resulting in reduced site disturbance.
Indirect Impacts	Strict conformance to the applied grazing use standard could force livestock off the allotment earlier than scheduled thus disrupting the coordinated summer grazing plan associated with the adjacent Lower East Fork C & H forest allotment. Earlier than scheduled access to these pastures may or may not be allowed due to lack of early forage. The only alternative remaining for the authorized permittees would be to return their livestock to the home ranch which could disrupt irrigation schedules and necessitate obtaining additional winter feed. Impacts to vegetative resources and soils from additional trailing activities would also likely result.	Same as Alternative 1, except there are many more grazing use standards in affect under this alternative that may be difficult to meet using typical livestock handling techniques. The risk of not meeting these standards thus necessitating an early move off the allotment is higher under this alternative.	Same as Alternative 2 except there is somewhat more flexibility under this alternative due to the improved livestock control mechanisms which provide for opportunities to graze areas more efficiently and seek areas that are normally not used. By controlling livestock the risk of not meeting the imposed grazing use standards is greatly reduced.

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Cumulative Impacts	Cumulative impacts to fisheries, riparian zones, water quality, wetlands, and wild and scenic river OR values may result from sediment delivery into streams and vegetation disturbances from ongoing recreational, big game, and livestock grazing activities. These impacts would be minimal under this alternative due to the dispersed nature of most recreational activities, big game concentrations, and the limited season of use provided to livestock grazing. Cumulative impacts from non-BLM ongoing actions are expected to be minimal.	Cumulative impacts to fisheries, riparian zones, water quality, wetlands, and wild and scenic river OR values may result from sediment delivery into streams and vegetation disturbances from ongoing recreational, big game, and livestock grazing activities. These impacts would be less than Alternative 1 due to the expanded application of grazing use standards on upland and riparian habitats which would reduce sediment loads, stabilize streambanks, and provide watershed protection to reduce the threat of accelerated erosion. Cumulative impacts from non-BLM ongoing actions are expected to be minimal.	Cumulative impacts to fisheries, riparian zones, water quality, wetlands, and wild and scenic river OR values may result from sediment delivery into streams and vegetation disturbances from ongoing recreational, big game, and livestock grazing activities. These impacts would be the least of all the alternatives due to the application of grazing use standards on uplands and riparian areas throughout the allotment and the option to avoid grazing areas of concern through improved livestock control measures and expanded opportunities to move livestock throughout the allotment. Cumulative impacts from non-BLM ongoing actions are expected to be minimal.
Summary	No significant individual or cumulative adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of this alternative.	No significant individual or cumulative adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of this alternative.	No significant individual or cumulative adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of this alternative.

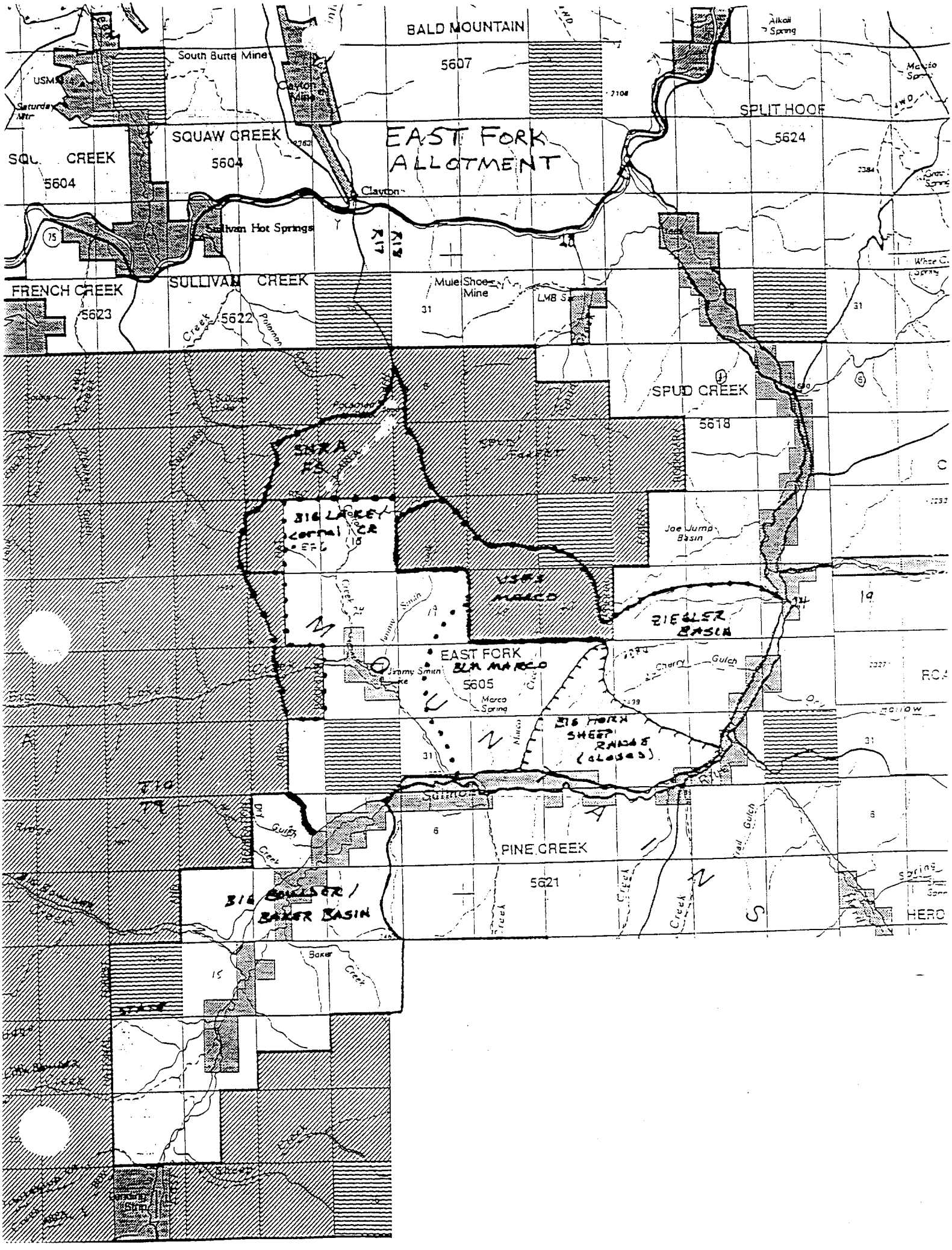
CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Persons and Agencies: Idaho Watersheds Project; Glenn Hockett, interested public; Alliance for the Wild Rockies, interested public; James Lukens, Idaho Department of Fish and Game; East Fork Allotment grazing permittees; Dale Brege, NMFS; Kaz Thea, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

List of Preparers: Russ Riebe, Mike Courtney, Diana Miller, Rangeland Management Specialists; Jerry Gregson, Wildlife Biologist; Pete Sozzi, Outdoor Rec Planner/Wilderness Coordinator; Linda Clark, Archaeologist; Bill Diage, Ecologist; Kate Forster, Fish Biologist.

Environmental Coordinator Review Kristin Rhodes Date 1-31-00

.Attach Map A


EAST FORK ALLOTMENT
BALD MOUNTAIN
5607
SQUAW CREEK
5604
SPLIT HOOF
5624
Clayton
Sullivan Hot Springs
FRENCH CREEK
5623
SULLIVAN CREEK
5622
Mule Shoe Mine
SPUD CREEK
5618
SNRA
BIG LAKEY
Corral
Joe Jump Basin
USFS
MARCO
ZIEGLER BASIN
EAST FORK
BLM MARCO
5605
Marco Spring
BIG HORN SHEEP RANGE (CLOSED)
T10 T9
PINE CREEK
5621
BIG BOULDER / BAKER BASIN
Baker Creek
HERO