United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BOISE DISTRICT OFFICE
3948 DEVELOPMENT ROAD
BOISE, IDAHO 83705

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Dear Public Land User:

This document is the Record of Decision for the Cascade Resource Management Plan. The Cascade Resource Management Plan has been approved by the Idaho State Director. This land use plan will guide management of the resource values and uses within the Cascade Resource Area over the next ten to twenty years.

The approved plan is the same as the proposed plan which was published in August, 1987. Since no changes were made in the approved plan, it is summarized here rather than reproduced in detail and is incorporated by reference.

This plan will be maintained or updated as necessary to reflect minor changes in data. It will also be periodically reviewed to determine if land use objectives are being met and if required actions are being implemented. If necessary, it will be amended to modify resource objectives or management actions. Any such amendment would include public involvement and notification will be provided if we propose to amend any portion of the plan.

I appreciate the time and ideas that you have shared with us during this land use planning effort. With your help, I feel that we have prepared a workable and realistic land use plan to guide our actions in the Cascade Resource Area during the coming decade and beyond. Your input was very helpful and allowed us to prepare a plan which protects and enhances important resource values while providing for an appropriate level of resource use to occur.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as we develop specific activity plans and project proposals to implement the plan. If you have any questions concerning this plan, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff. Again, thank you for your participation in the land use planning process for the public lands in the Cascade Resource Area.

Sincerely yours,

J. David Brunner
District Manager

CASCADE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

RECORD OF DECISION

Prepared by

Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Boise District Office

Approved by

Idaho State Director, Bureau of Land Management

July 1, 1988
Date

RECORD OF DECISION

INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents approval of the Cascade Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Cascade RMP is a land use plan that will guide resource management in the Cascade Resource Area for the next 15 to 20 years. The RMP was prepared under regulations (43 CFR 1600) for implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). An environmental impact statement was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA).

The Cascade Resource Area encompasses approximately 2.77 million acres in south-central Idaho. It is bounded by the Snake River on the south and west, the Payette National Forest on the north, the Boise National Forest on the east, the Boise River/Mora Canal on the southeast, and the Ada-Canyon county line from the Mora Canal to the Snake River on the south. Within this area, approximately 18% (487,466 acres) is public land administered by BLM, 7% (183,000 acres) is state land, and 75% (2,100,000 acres) is private. The public lands are located in Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Gem, Payette, Valley, and Washington counties.

The final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Cascade RMP was released to the public and filed with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on August 13, 1987. This Record of Decision meets the requirements of 40 CFR 1505.2 pursuant to NEPA.

DECISION

The decision is to implement Alternative E, as described in the Cascade Proposed RMP/Final EIS. This alternative is the approved Resource Management Plan for the Cascade Resource Area.

This decision is based on the analysis of all input received including issues identified, proposals and alternatives, environmental consequences, public comments, and consistency with other federal, state, and local plans.

Plan Summary

At the end of five years, livestock forage will be provided for 68,000 animal unit months (AUMs), a 2% increase over current levels, with a 20 year objective of 70,108 AUMs, a 5% increase over current use. Proposed range improvements over 20 years include 15 miles of pipeline, 60 miles of fence, and 66 water developments. Vegetative treatments are planned for 24,279 acres. Vegetative treatments will be conducted with methods and seed mixtures of grasses, forbs, and shrubs that benefit both livestock and wildlife. Full fire suppression management will be applied to the entire resource area. The 4-Mile wild horse herd will be managed over 15,500 acres to support 20 wild horses at the end of 20 years.

Habitat improvement projects will be done on 23,912 acres to benefit wildlife and allow for population increases. Over 20 years, habitat will be managed so that mule deer populations could increase 33%, elk could increase 22%, antelope could increase to 175 animals from the current population of 50, and sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse populations could increase sightly. Long-billed curlew populations will likely remain the same.

Riparian habitat improvement projects will be initiated along 7 miles and aquatic habitat improvement projects will be initiated along 11 miles of streams.

For land tenure adjustment, 17,604 acres will be made available for transfer from federal ownership. Of this, 560 acres will be available for potential agricultural development under the Desert Land Act, 563 acres will be for sale, 10,107 acres will be for sale or exchange, and 6,374 acres will be available for exchange only. Utility rights-of-way (ROWs) will be restricted on 6,696 acres, mostly small scattered sites, to protect cultural and recreation values and sensitive plants.

Off-road-vehicle (ORV) use is designated as open on 244,118 acres, limited (to designated routes) on 241,215 acres, and closed on 2,113 acres. Six areas totaling 4,368 acres are designated as ORV play areas or cycle parks.

Eight cultural resource sites totaling 2,012 acres will be managed to protect identified cultural values and will be studied for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). One 40 acre site currently listed on the NRHP will continue to be managed to protect cultural values.

Thirteen sites totaling 2,535 acres will be managed to protect sensitive plant species by restricting surface disturbing activities. Five of these sites totaling 1,355 acres are designated as Research Natural Areas (RNAs).

Three areas will be managed as areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs). The Boise Front, encompassing 12,000 acres in the Boise foothills, will be managed to protect watershed, wildlife, recreation, and scenic values. The 4,200 acre Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat Area north of Weiser will be managed to protect one of the last remaining populations of Columbian Sharp-tailed grouse in western Idaho. The Long-billed Curlew Habitat Area, encompassing 61,000 acres between Emmett and Parma, will be managed to protect the largest nesting population in the western United States of long-billed curlew, a federally protected migratory species.

Eight miles of the South Fork of the Payette River is recommended for study for possible inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (as a recreation river). Approximately 19,000 acres in the Payette River system is designated as a Special Recreation Management Area.

Approximately 94% of the resource area will be open to leasable mineral (oil and gas and geothermal) exploration and development and locatable mineral (gold, silver, etc.,) entry. The existing 31,177-acre withdrawal will remain in effect for leasable and locatable minerals. An additional eight acres will be withdrawn from locatable mineral entry.

Timber harvest plans identify an allowable cut level of approximately 1.7 million board feet annually. Timber management practices will be applied on 26,663 acres of commercial forest land. Limited firewood cutting will continue.

The 440 acre Box Creek wilderness study area (WSA) will be managed so as not to impair its suitability for preservation as wilderness under the provisions of the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review pending a final wilderness decision. The preliminary recommendation in a separate study effort and EIS is that all 440 acres of the Box Creek WSA are nonsuitable for designation as wilderness.

Additional details concerning the land use plan are contained in the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement released in August 1987.

ALTERNATIVES

Five alternatives were developed and considered in detail during the planning process. One of these, Alternative E, was identified as the draft plan (preferred alternative) in the draft EIS. Based on comments received during the public review period, minor changes were incorporated into this alternative which was identified as the proposed plan (preferred alternative) in the final EIS. The proposed plan is now the approved plan as discussed in detail above. The five alternatives are summarized below.

Alternative A

This alternative reflects the continuation of present management practices and programs now occurring on the public lands in the Cascade Resource Area. Changes in livestock management, land transfers, and other programs would be handled as the need arises. This is the "no action" alternative.

Alternative B

The emphasis in this alternative is on an intermediate level of development and a higher intensity of management that the current management level. The objective of the alternative is to emphasize the use and development of public land resources, especially commodity resources such as livestock grazing, timber harvest and mineral and energy development. Management would favor higher livestock use levels, more range improvements, more timber harvest and other forest product offerings, increased land disposal for agricultural development, and increased transfer of isolated or difficult to manage parcels out of federal ownership.

Alternative C

The objective of this alternative is to emphasize the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Preservation of natural systems and nonconsumptive resource uses would be favored. Management would comply with more stringent environmental protection standards. Wildlife values and dispersed and nonmotorized recreation use would be emphasized.

Alternative D

This alternative is based on a high investment management option. It would increase the intensity of management of both commodity and noncommodity resources. Grazing opportunities, timber production and developed recreation would receive major investments. Higher investments would also be made for improvement of wildlife habitat (terrestrial and riparian) and recreation opportunities of a dispersed nature.

Alternative E (Preferred Alternative)

The objective of this alternative is to provide an optimum mixture of protection and enhancement of the natural environment with commodity resource utilization (renewable and nonrenewable). Preservation of significant natural resource features is provided for along with moderate increases in commodity resource uses.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE ALTERNATIVE

In terms of effects on the biological and physical components of the environment, Alternative C would be preferable. It would result in the greatest increase in wildlife populations and would have the least impact on soils and watershed. It would result in the most vegetation in good ecological condition and the greatest improvement in riparian and aquatic habitat conditions.

In terms of economic benefits, Alternative D would be preferable. It would generate the greatest increase in income and jobs for the Cascade planning area and would make the most land available for transfer to private ownership. The average soil erosion rate would be highest and wildlife populations would show the least overall improvement.

In terms of social benefits, no alternative is clearly preferable. Alternative C would protect the most high-density cultural resource occurrence areas from surface disturbance. Alternative D would have the highest level of grazing.

Alternative E is the approved Cascade Resource Management Plan. In comparison with the other alternatives considered, it would attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment while preserving important historic, cultural and natural values. The effects on the various resource uses and values would generally be between those of the other alternatives. Considering the overall effects of the alternative, including effects on biological and physical components on the environment, economic effects, and social effects, Alternative E is the environmentally preferable alternative in terms of the overall human environment.

MITIGATION

Appropriate mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design specifications of individual management actions and resource management guidelines for the resource management plan. All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental impacts from implementation of the plan have been adopted.

MONITORING

The decisions outlined in the Cascade RMP will be implemented over a period of ten to twenty years or more, depending on the availability of funding and workforce. The effects of implementation will be monitored and evaluated on a periodic basis over the life of the plan. The general purposes of this monitoring and evaluation will be:

(1) To determine if plan objectives are being met.

(2) To determine if an action is fulfilling the purpose and need for which it was designed, or if there is a need for modification or termination of an action.

(3) To discover unanticipated and/or unpredicted impacts.

(4) To determine if mitigation measures are working as prescribed.

(5) To ensure that decisions are being implemented as scheduled and in conformance with the RMP.

(6) To provide continuing evaluation of consistency with other federal, state, and local plans and programs

(7) To provide for continuing comparison of plan benefits versus costs, including social, economic, and environmental costs.

The data collected from the monitoring and evaluation process will be analyzed and fed back into the decision making process. This will provide information regarding the effects of the land use decisions and the adequacy of mitigation measures. If monitoring indicates that significant unexpected adverse impacts are occurring or the mitigating measures are not working as predicted, it may be necessary to amend or revise the RMP.

Specific monitoring plans will be prepared for the range, wildlife, and watershed programs. These plans will identify the study methods that will provide the information needed to issue and implement specific management decisions which effect range, wildlife, and watershed resources. For the range program, study types and priorities for monitoring grazing will be identified by allotment. The type of monitoring study for each allotment will be determined by the nature and severity of the resource conflicts that are present in the allotment. The majority of the monitoring efforts will generally focus on allotments in the Improve category. Methodologies will be used for monitoring actual use (livestock numbers and periods of grazing), forage utilization (herbaceous and browse), vegetative trend, and climate. The data collected from these studies will be used to evaluate stocking rates, schedule pasture moves for livestock, determine levels of forage competition, detect changes in plant communities, and identify patterns of forage use. If monitoring studies indicate that objectives are not being met, management actions will be taken accordingly. This may include adjusting seasons of use, stocking levels, or the grazing system being used.

Minimum monitoring standards have been adopted by the State of Idaho, Bureau of Land Management. They are included in the Minimum Monitoring Standards For BLM-Administered Rangelands in Idaho. Any new studies that may be conducted will be consistent with these minimum monitoring standards. More intensive or specialized studies may be used if a management need exists and funding is available.

For the wildlife program, monitoring will focus on forage use, cover, and wildlife use. The findings from these studies will be used to evaluate changes in habitat condition and trend; changes in forage availability, composition, and vigor; changes in cover and habitat effectiveness; and accomplishment of management objectives.

Monitoring for the watershed program will mainly involve monitoring soil erosion, although trend in streambank stability and water quality will be monitored for mining, forestry, and grazing activities. Water quality constituents to be monitored will be determined at the activity planning level on a site-specific basis.

Additional monitoring plans for other programs will be developed as the need arises.

CONSISTENCY

BLM's resource management plans must be consistent with officially approved or adopted resource related plans (or in their absence, policies or programs) of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes, so long as BLM's plans are also consistent with the purposes, programs and policies of federal law and regulations applicable to public lands. A special effort has been made to ensure that the Cascade Resource Management Plan is consistent with applicable approved plans. No inconsistencies have been identified by the Governor of the State of Idaho, other agencies, governments or Indian tribes.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The planning process began in November 1983 with publication of a Notice of Intent. Consultation and coordination with agencies, organizations and individuals occurred in a variety of ways throughout the planning process. The following summarizes the public participation which occurred during preparation of the Cascade RMP/EIS.

On November 25, 1983, a Notice of Intent to prepare a Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register. On January 26, 1984, mailouts were sent to over 400 agencies, organizations and individuals announcing the beginning of the planning process and soliciting the identification of issues and planning criteria. Approximately 90 responses were received in that effort. Public meetings were held during February 1984 in Cambridge, Emmett, Payette, Weiser, Boise and Caldwell for issue identification. Mailouts and news releases were issued on September 17, 1984, to announce the results of public input. The draft RPM/EIS was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and released to the public for a 90-day review and comment period on August 22, 1986. Nearly 1,000 copies of the document were mailed out and a total of 42 commentors responded during the review and comment period. All comments received during the comment period were considered during preparation of the final document. Minor revisions were incorporated into the final document as a result of public comment. On August 12, 1987, the Proposed RMP and Final EIS was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and released to the public for a 30-day protest period (and 60-day Governor's consistency review). One protest was received. Resolution of that protest did not result in any changes in the plan.

ALTERNATIVE E

(PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)

The objective of this alternative is to provide an optimum mixture of protection and enhancement of the natural environment with commodity resource utilization (renewable and nonrenewable). Preservation of significant natural resource features is provided for along with moderate increases in commodity resource use. This is the preferred alternative.

A portion of the Payette River would be recommended for study for possible addition to the National Wild and Scenic River System.

Areas of special interest or fragile environments would be given special designation such as Research Natural Areas and ACEC.

The 487,466 acres of public lands would be placed into one of four multiple use or transfer categories as follows:

328,453 acres Moderate, 3,004 acres Intensive
138,405 acres Limited, 17,604 acres Transfer

Livestock Resources

Objectives

Manage 449,059 acres of rangeland to provide forage for livestock and wild horses.

Livestock-AUMs: 72,571 Active Pref., 66,424 Licensed
66,257 Initial, 68,000 5 yr., 70,536 20 yr.

Wild Horses-Numbers: 4 Mile 10 Initial, 20 20 yr.
West Crane Creek 12 Initial, 0 20 yr.
Wild Horses-AUMs: 20 yrs.: 4 Mile 240 ; West Crane 0

Actions

Stock Driveways: 40,763 existing maintained, 22,237 existing eliminated
(acres) 627 new added, 41,390 total available

Vegetative Manipulation:
5 yrs - 5,000 acres burn, spray and/or seed; 2,000 acres disc'd & seed
20 yrs - 18,279 acres burn, spray and/or seed; 6,000 acres disc'd & seed

Projects: 60 mi. fence, 66 water developments, 15 mi. pipelines

Activity Plans: 7 existing AMPs/CRMPs to be reviewed and updated.
12 AMPs will be prepared.

Livestock grazing will continue and may be adjusted on currently grazed public lands classified for transfer until these lands are transferred.

Special Considerations

Seed mixtures on vegetative manipulations will include grass, forb and shrub species that will benefit both livestock and wildlife.

Note: For analysis purposes for livestock use levels (AUMs), it was assumed that only the current land transfer applications being processed would be completed within the next 5 years and that no other land transfers would occur within the next 5 years. Consequently the 5-year forage level for livestock in the preferred alternative is not comparable with the 5-year forage level for livestock in Alternatives A, B, C, and D since it was assumed that all land transfers in those alternatives would be completed at the end of 5 years. See Appendix G for further information.

Watershed Resources

Objectives

Provide special designation and management for the Boise Front area (12,000 acres).

Actions

Designate 12,000 acres of the Boise Front as an ACEC and prepare/update the following activity plans - HMP, RAMP.

Vegetative Resources

Objectives

Protect candidate or sensitive plants.

Protect and manage 13 specific sites containing candidate, sensitive, or uncommon plants or valuable plant communities.

Improve general condition on 32% of all fair and 11% of all good condition rangeland.

Change or improve condition on 31% of the poor condition rangeland and maintain condition on remaining.

Actions

Develop and implement management actions for areas found containing candidate or sensitive plants. Fence selected areas where harmful disturbance is likely. Monitor suspected areas.

Exclude surface and subsurface ROWs in those areas known to contain candidate or sensitive plants. Include no surface occupancy stipulations in all mineral leases.

Adjust livestock grazing practices and reduce livestock preferences in allotments in poor and fair condition.

Mechanically treat (through range and wildlife projects) areas of poor and fair condition rangeland that possess a high return potential.

Designate and/or manage 13 areas as follows:

Special Management Area	Designations	Acres	Minerals (acres) Locatables Withdrawal	Leasables Closed	Leasables No Surf.	ROW Avoidance (acres) 1/ O	Surf	Sub	ORV Use (acres) 2/ O	L	C
1. Lost Basin Grassland 3/	RNA	65	0	0	65	0	65	65	0	0	65
2. Rebecca Sandhill 3/	RNA	410	0	0	410	0	410	410	0	0	410
3. Sand Hollow 4/	None	500	0	0	500	0	500	500	0	500	0
4. Summer Creek 4/	RNA	240	0	0	240	0	240	240	0	0	240
5. Peraphyllum Rock	None	40	0	0	40	0	40	40	0	0	40
6. Beacon Hill	None	20	0	0	20	0	20	20	0	20	0
7. Sagebrush Hill	None	10	0	0	10	0	10	10	0	0	10
8. Buckwheat Flats	RNA	200	0	0	200	0	200	200	0	0	200
9. 4th July Meadow	None	100	0	0	100	0	100	100	0	0	100
10. Sand Capped Knob	None	40	0	0	40	0	40	40	0	0	40
11. Goodrich Creek 3/	RNA	440	0	0	440	0	440	440	0	0	440
12. Pearl	None	400	0	0	400	0	400	400	0	400	0
13. Prostrate Ceanothus	None	80	0	0	80	0	80	80	0	80	0

1/ O = Overhead; Surf = Surface; Sub = Subsurface.
2/ O = Open; L = Limited; C = Closed.
3/ Exclude or limit livestock grazing.
4/ No water or salt blocks in area or on ridgeline.

Projects: 6 mi. fencing
5 acres for interpretive signing

Activity Plans: Incorporate management needs for candidate and sensitive plant species in all activity plans where plants are known.
Prepare five Research Natural Area Management Plans.

Wildlife Resources

Objectives

Manage 181,640 acres of elk habitat, 275,250 acres of deer habitat and 4,400 acres of antelope crucial winter habitat and provide forage to support proposed populations of these animals.

Manage 185,860 acres of sage grouse habitat to improve brooding and nesting habitat.

Improve 23,912 acres of wildlife habitat through new seeding and interseeding existing areas and shrub plantings.

Provide special management on 61,000 acres of curlew and 32,960 acres of Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitats to improve populations of these sensitive species.

Maintain existing habitats for other wildlife species.

Wildlife Unit Months:	7,124 Elk,	44,612 Deer,	1,800 Antelope
Expected Population:	191 yrlong Elk,	961 yrlong Deer,	175 yrlong Antelope
	1,208 winter Elk,	8,270 winter Deer,	

Actions

Vegetative Manipulation: 10,387 acres Shrub, Grass & Forb Seeding,
8,295 acres Burn, Disc & Seed,
2,230 acres Interseed,
3,000 acres Special Project Seeding

Projects: 30 mi. fence, 2 Guzzler

Activity Plans: HMP for Curlew, Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse; and deer (Boise Front).

Designate 61,000 acres of curlew habitat and 4,200 acres of sharp-tailed grouse habitat as ACECs.

Special Considerations (rehabilitation, seed mixture, seasonal restrictions, ORV restrictions)

Riparian and Aquatic Resources

Objectives

Improve the condition of 16 stream miles of riparian habitat. Continue present management on 102 stream miles of riparian habitat.

Improve the condition of 14 miles of aquatic habitat and continue present management on 66 miles of aquatic habitat.

Actions

Adjust livestock grazing practices on riparian areas in allotments where riparian/aquatic projects are proposed.

Incorporate riparian pastures, grazing systems, and/or special measures in AMPs to improve all riparian and aquatic habitat.

Projects: 11 mi. fencing, 11 mi. instream work
7 mi. of stream bank planting

Lands and Realty

Objectives

Identify for transfer from federal ownership 17,604 acres of public lands (563 acres through sale (T1) and 10,107 acres through sale or exchange (T2) and 6,374 acres through exchange (T3), and 560 acres through DLE (T4)). Retain 469,862 acres of public lands in federal ownership.

Actions

Initiate clearance actions (cultural, wildlife, paleontologic, etc.) on lands to be transferred. Provide 2-year notifications to livestock permittees once the final decision to transfer has been made.

Recreation Resources

Objectives

Provide or enhance recreation at 21 areas.

Provide for ORV recreation activity on public lands.

Manage 2,600 acres of public lands along the Payette River as a Wild and Scenic River (recreation river category).

Actions

Designate ORV recreation activity as open on 244,118 acres, limited (to existing or designated roads and trails) on 241,215 acres and closed on 2,133 acres.

Manage 11,084 acres of public lands recommended for transfer as limited to designated or existing roads and trails and 6,160 acres as open for ORV recreation, until lands are transferred.

Recommend the study of 8 miles of Payette River (South Fork) for possible inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System as a recreation river.

Obtain recreational access through easement and acquisition of lands.

Description of Alternatives

Designate and manage 21 areas as follows:

Sites	Special Designations		Minerals (acres)			ROW 1/ Avoidance (acres)			ORV (acres) 2/		
			Locatables	Leasables							
	Type	Acres	Withdrawal	Closed	No Surf	O	Surf	Sub.	O	L	C
1. Cascade Uplands 3/	ERMA	334,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	241,498	88,039	5
2. Weiser River	Boat Launch	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
3. Clay Peak	Cycle Park	948	0	0	948	0	948	0	436	0	512
4. Oxbow 4/ Brownlee	SRMA	40,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	39,779	0
5. Steck	Campground 5/	11	0	0	11	11	11	0	0	0	11
6. Weiser Dunes	Play Area	200	0	0	0	0	200	0	200	0	0
7. Snake River	Boat Launch	10	0	0	10	10	10	0	0	10	0
8. Payette River 6/ Corridor	SRMA/WSR	19,000/ (2,600/ 8 mi)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18,984	0
9. North Fork	Campground 5/	10	0	0	10	10	10	0	0	0	10
10. Garden Valley	Boat Launch	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0
11. South Fork	Campground 5/	3	0	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	3
12. Chief Parrish	Picnic Site	2	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	2
13. Boise Front 7/	SRMA/ACEC	12,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,995	0
14. Hulls Gulch	Interpret. Trail	5	0	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	5
15. Treasure Valley 8/	ERMA	72,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	68,780	0
16. Little Gem	Cycle Park	3,000	0	0	0	0	3,000 9/	0	2,100	900	0
17. Dewey	Play Area	30	0	0	0	0	30	0	30	0	0
18. Parma	Play Area	10	0	0	0	0	10	0	10	0	0
19. Pickles Butte	Play Area	180	0	0	0	0	180	0	180	0	0
20. Paddock Reservoir	Campground 5/	5	0	0	5	5	5	0	0	0	5
21. Birds of Prey	Natural Area	640	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	640	0

1/ O = Overhead; Surf = Surface; Sub = Subsurface.
2/ O = Open; L = Limited; C = Closed.
3/ Specific constraints covered under Weiser River, Clay Peak, and Paddock Reservoir.
4/ Specific constraints covered under Steck, Weiser Dunes and Snake River.
5/ Exclude or limit livestock grazing.
6/ Specific constraints covered under North Fork, Garden Valley, South Fork and Chief Parrish.
7/ Specific constraints covered under Hulls Gulch.
8/ Specific constraints covered under Little Gem, Pickles Butte, Dewey and Parma.
9/ Except for electrical transmission towers in existing right-of-way.

Projects: Water and/or sanitary facilities - 8, launch ramp - 3, access - 8

Activity Plans: RAMPs for Oxbow-Brownlee, Payette River Corridor, and Boise Front.

Cultural Resources

Objectives

Protect, through special designation and management, areas with significant cultural values.

Actions

Nominate eight sites to the National Register of Historic Places and manage as shown below.

Surface and subsurface ROWs will be routed to avoid cultural sites.

Sites	NR 1/ Acres	Minerals (acres) Locatables: Withdrawal	Minerals (acres) Leasables: Closed	Minerals (acres) Leasables: No Surf	ROW Avoidance (acres) 5/: O	ROW Avoidance (acres) 5/: S	ROW Avoidance (acres) 5/: Sub	ORV Use (acres) 3/: O	ORV Use (acres) 3/: L	ORV Use (acres) 3/: C
1. Placerville Townsite 4/	8	8	0	8	0	8	8	0	8	0
2. Grays Creek	40	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	40	0
3. Indian Creek	20	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	20	0
4. Milk Creek	20	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	20	0
5. Cabin Creek	20	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	20	0
6. Quartzburg	386	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	386	0
7. Centerville	516	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	516	0
8. Pioneerville	581	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	581	0
9. Mineral	429	2/	0	2/	0	2/	2/	0	429	0

1/ National Register of Historic Places.
2/ Acreage to be determined by National Register nomination process.
3/ O = Open, L = Limited, C = Closed.
4/ National Register of Historic Places (existing).
5/ O = Overhead; S = Surface; Sub = Subsurface.

Projects: 5 mi. fencing
Activity Plans: CRMP (9)

Forest Resources

Objectives

Manage 26,663 acres of suitable commercial forest land for timber management and harvest.

Description of Alternatives

Allow firewood harvesting (commercial and noncommercial) on forest lands.

Manage 5,232 acres of forest lands under CFL set asides. This includes 5,139 acres for TPCC withdrawal, 70 acres for seed orchard withdrawal and 23 acres for campground withdrawal.

Provide an annual harvest of approximately 1.7 MMBF.

Obtain access to suitable commercial forest lands through acquisition when necessary for program management.

Actions

Projects: Build 68 mi. of forest access road (3.4 miles annually)
Acquire access on one to two areas

Activity Plans: Timber Management Plans

Special Considerations

Harvesting of suitable commercial forest land will generally be through selective cutting practices. Any clearcutting will be limited to a size of 40 acres or less. Timber harvest would occur on approximately 150-700 acres annually.

Mineral Resources

Objectives

Make 456,281 acres (94% of area) available for locatable exploration and development and 456,289 acres (94% of area) for leasable mineral exploration and development.

Continue making available salable minerals from three material sale sites and 16 free-use sites as needed.

Actions

Leasables (acres)			Locatables (acres)		Salables (acres)	
Open	Closed	No Surface Occ.	Open	Withdrawn	Available	Unavailable
456,289	31,177	3,549	456,281	31,185	95	0

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

This plan recommends ACEC designation for three areas which met the criteria (of relevance and importance) to be considered for ACEC designations (Boise Front Area; Columbian Sharp-tail Grouse Habitat Area; and the Black Canyon Long-billed Curlew Management Area). The ACECs are shown on Map 2-3. The following summarizes the description and special requirements for the three ACECs recommended in the RMP. Additional information is available at the Boise District Office, BLM.

Name: Boise Front Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Purpose

The purpose for designating 12,000 acres of the Boise Front as an ACEC is to focus attention and identify management direction on this important natural resource. Management objectives are to protect and enhance the watershed resource, quality of wildlife habitat, variety of recreation opportunities, and scenic values.

Site Description

The Boise Front ACEC would encompass 12,000 acres in the hills and mountains lying immediately north and east of Boise, Idaho. The 12,000 acres are situated in a land ownership pattern with adjacent Forest Service, Idaho Fish and Game, State Department of Public Lands, and private lands. Elevations range from 3,200 feet at Lucky Peak reservoir to 5,680 feet near Lucky Peak. Topography is generally steep. A major portion of the land area contains slopes of 20 to 60 percent.

Soils in the area are formed in deeply weathered granite of the Idaho Batholith and are highly erosive and easily disturbed when dry or saturated.

Present vegetation includes cheatgrass and other annuals at the lower elevations, sagebrush and bitterbrush at mid elevations, and scattered stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine at higher elevations. Five major drainages usually provide streamflows throughout the year. Other stream courses are generally dry during the summer months with spring snowmelt and rainstorms contributing to seasonal streamflows. The major drainages and many smaller ones support riparian vegetation. Livestock use includes approximately 325 cattle in a rest/rotation grazing system managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Several bands of sheep trail across the area in spring and fall.

In 1959 after a fire eliminated much of the vegetative cover, two separate storms caused serious flooding and sediment damage to the northeast portion of the City of Boise. Following a costly cleanup, extensive watershed rehabilitation work was done by several agencies in a joint effort to stabilize the vulnerable resource. The terraces constructed as part of that effort are still visible from the City of Boise and vicinity as a reminder of the areas sensitivity to disturbance and forces of nature.

Resource Values

The Boise Front functions as an important groundwater recharge area. Snow melt and rain waters enter the soil and percolate down through the granitic soils, faults and fractures and eventually create groundwater reservoirs. These subsurface reservoirs release water at numerous springs and support the perennial streams and riparian vegetation. Much of the subsurface flows accumulate in groundwater reservoirs which are available for Boise Valley users. The City of Boise is a major user of this groundwater and operates several groundwater wells for municipal use including geothermal heating.

The Boise Front is a crucial winter range for approximately 4,000 mule deer. The Highland Valley and Shaw Mountain roads are currently closed to vehicles from December 15 to April 1 to protect this herd. Upland game birds (quail, dove, chukar and Gray partridge), numerous small mammals, reptiles and non game birds are also found in the area. Two candidate (Federal Category II) plants, Aaseae's onion (*Allium aaseae*) and Mulford milkvetch (*Astragalus mulfordea*) have been identified in the area.

Recreation use on the Boise Front includes ORV activities, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and interpretive uses along the Hulls Gulch National Recreation Trail.

The Boise Front is a scenic backdrop for the City of Boise and surrounding area. Although there are several powerlines traversing the area, they are generally not noticeable from a distance. More noticeable are the roads and trails, many of which have been established through unrestricted ORV use. It is currently managed as a Class II visual resource.

Cause for Concern

The combination of steep slopes and highly erodible granitic soils make the area extremely sensitive to changes in the vegetative community through surface disturbing activities. Disturbance of the vegetative community can lead to rill and gully erosion which are now evident on the Boise Front. Much of the serious rill and gully erosion has been attributed to disturbance caused by off road vehicle use. This erosion can reduce the function and value of the area as a watershed and groundwater recharge area. Springs and riparian vegetation may also be reduced. The current erosion problems are increasing and the ability of the area to fully function in its capacity as a watershed is threatened.

Surface disturbing activities which can lead to undesireable vegetative changes and erosion include unrestricted motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use, road construction and maintenance, mineral excavation, certain rights-of-way, fire occurrence, and suppression activities.

The scars from severe erosion can also reduce the attractiveness of the area as a scenic backdrop for viewers from the Boise vicinity and can reduce the quality of recreation activities.

Vehicle use and human disturbance during the winter months can reduce the effectiveness of winter habitat for deer populations by adding stress during a critical time.

Management Guidelines

Resource Use Limitations

The following resource use limitations will apply to the Boise Front ACEC to protect resource values:

1. Motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails.

2. The Highland Valley and Shaw Mountain roads will be closed to motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use from December 15 to April 1.

3. The upper portion of the 8th Street Road will be closed to 4-wheeled vehicles during the wet winter months.

4. The area will be closed to disposal of mineral materials under the Materials Act of 1947, as amended (Alternative B only).

5. The area will be managed to conform to Class II Visual Resource Management Guidelines.

6. All lands within the ACEC will be retained in Federal ownership.

Management Emphasis

The following activities will receive management emphasis to further protect resource values:

1. Closure and rehabilitation of certain roads and trails.

2. Maintenance and reconstruction of existing roads and trails.

3. Restriction of future rights-of-way to insure minimal erosion and visual intrusion.

4. Full fire suppression.

5. Rehabilitation of burned areas.

6. Installation of water control structures to reduce erosion where needed.

Name: Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Purpose

The purpose for designating 4,200 acres as an ACEC is to intensify habitat management for one of the last remaining populations of Columbian

sharp-tailed grouse in western Idaho. The basic management objectives will be to improve, protect and enhance the quality of the habitat for this sensitive species.

Site Description

This ACEC would be located approximately 16 miles north of Weiser, Idaho on the south side of Hitt Mountain with USFS land, State land and private lands on the north, east and south.

It is bordered on the west by Mann Creek while Sage Creek and Deer Creek transect the area.

Topography is mostly rolling hills with some steep slopes adjacent to Mann and Sage Creeks. Elevation varies from 3,200 feet to 4,000 feet. Soils are mixed and it is not uncommon to find pockets of loamy soil interspersed in shallow rocky soils.

The area presents a mosaic of vegetation types corresponding to the various soils. Vegetation associations include big sagebrush/grasses and mountain shrub patches with aspen, serviceberry, chokecherry, bittercherry and snowbrush shrubs, riparian zones with willow, rose and hawthorne shrubs with the northern areas of ponderosa pine with some Douglas-fir.

Resource Values

In addition to Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus*), the area contains important spring, fall and summer habitat for mule deer which are common in the area. Concentrations of migrating mule deer use the area during the spring and fall. It is also important spring and fall elk range. The area has a rich diversity of wildlife. It supports a variety of mammals from coyotes to deer mice. Approximately 180 different species of birds have been observed on the area.

Causes for Concern

Columbian sharp-tailed grouse were once abundant and widespread throughout the northwest. This species has disappeared from most of its former range and is now extinct in California, Oregon and Nevada and reduced to remnant populations over the remainder of its range.

Currently, remaining populations in Idaho are small and disjunct. In western Idaho, populations are extremely rare and are limited to Washington and Adams Counties. The largest known population in western Idaho is found in the vicinity of this ACEC. There are four known dancing grounds in the area and the fluctuating population numbers approximately 200 birds.

The Columbian sharp-tailed grouse has been designated as a "Species of Special Concern" by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDF&G) and as a "Sensitive Species" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM policy is to maintain or increase current population levels of sensitive species through habitat protection and enhancement.

Management Guidelines

Resource Use Limitations

1. Motorized vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails.

2. Livestock grazing will be adjusted to allow the range to reach and maintain optimal habitat condition.

3. Surface occupancy for all oil and gas, and geothermal leases will be determined on a site specific basis.

4. Seasonal occupancy stipulations will be applied on all oil and gas and geothermal leases.

5. Rights-of-ways construction activities for transmission lines, pipelines and other major projects will not be allowed during the nesting and brood-rearing periods.

6. No permanent new roads will be allowed in the area.

7. All lands within the ACEC will be retained in Federal ownership.

Management Emphasis

1. Develop a fully comprehensive habitat management plan for the area.

2. Fire rehabilitation and vegetative manipulation will be conducted with native species emphasized.

3. Maintenance of the bordering fences to manage livestock movement will be conducted annually.

4. Pursue acquisition of key habitat areas on State and private lands.

5. Place high fire suppression priority on the area.

Name: Long-Billed Curlew Habitat Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Purpose

The purpose for designating approximately 61,000 acres as an ACEC is to identify the area as crucial nesting habitat for Long-Billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*), a federally protected migratory species. The main management objective will be to maintain nesting habitat for the 1,000 curlew pairs that nest and raise their young in the area.

Site Description

The area is a low, rolling upland lying between the Boise, Payette and Snake River valleys. The area is characterized by choppy rolling topography which supports a semi-desert type vegetative community. Average rainfall is approximately 11 inches per year with most of the moisture falling from November to June.

The native habitat has been highly modified over the years. Historically, the area was a sagebrush/bunchgrass vegetation community. Livestock grazing, frequent wildfire and the invasion of exotic annual grasses have largely eliminated the shrubs and reduced perennial grasses.

In general, there are four cover types: 1) annual rangeland, 2) sagebrush, 3) crested wheatgrass, and 4) irrigated agriculture. The annual rangeland type is the key habitat for nesting curlews.

Resource Values

There are eight livestock operators that utilize the rangelands in the area. They graze both cattle and sheep on approximately 80,000 acres of state, private, and public lands. Grazing periods occur throughout the year with some operators grazing at various seasons of the year.

Recreation use on the area is divided into four areas. The area east of Little Freezeout is used by horse enthusiasts. In the past, some endurance rides have been held in this area. The area is also used by upland bird hunters in the fall. Limited ORV use also takes place. The area from Little Freezeout west to Sand Hollow is used by ORV enthusiasts. The Dewey ORV Park is located in this area. There is also some use by equestrians and upland bird hunters in the fall. The area west of Sand Hollow is heavily used by upland game hunters. There has also been some dog trials held in this area. Equestrians use the area while ORV use is heavy in the southwest corner of the area and a motorcross track is located in the northwest corner of the area. The areas north of the Black Canyon and west of the Sand Hollow freeway exits have dense populations of ground squirrels and are used by squirrel hunters in the spring.

Cause for Concern

Each year, Long-billed Curlew migrate into the area arriving about the third week in March. This large shore bird nests and raises its young in the annual grass habitat. The area supports about 1,000-nesting pairs, the largest nesting population in the western United States. Research on the population and habitat relationships was conducted in this area from 1977 to 1979. This research provided the base line information to manage this significant population.

A substantial decline in population and distribution of this species in the United States prompted its classification as a "Sensitive Species," by the BLM and a "Candidate Species," by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has designated this bird as a "Species of Special Concern." These classifications are an "early warning" that a species may be in trouble and if declines continue that official listing with maximum protection under the Endangered Species Act may be necessary. A habitat management plan was developed to assist in the conservation of crucial curlew habitat.

Management Guidelines

Resource Use Limitations

1. Motor vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails.

2. Seasonal occupancy stipulations will apply on all oil and gas and geothermal leases.

3. Rights-of-way construction activities for transmission lines, pipelines and other major projects will not be allowed during the nesting and brood-rearing periods.

4. Road construction will be limited and evaluated on a site specific basis.

5. All lands within the ACEC will be retained in Federal ownership.

Management Emphasis

1. Maintain sufficient good curlew habitat to support 1,000 nesting pairs during the breeding season.

2. Pursue the acquisition of key habitat on state and private lands through land exchange.

3. Enforce the ORV use limitations during the curlew nesting and brood-rearing periods.

4. Encourage intensive grazing systems that would improve curlew habitat in areas where vegetation is too high and too dense.

5. Use controlled burns as a management tool to maintain and improve curlew habitat.

6. Give curlew habitat priority consideration in all range improvement projects.

7. Encourage domestic sheep use on the area.