

Pronghorn. A net gain of 137 animals could be expected. Positive effects would result from greatly improved range condition, especially an increased forb component, under no grazing pressure. Lack of direct disturbance by livestock and associated behavior of man would also be a substantial positive effect. Gains from seedings and brush protection on Isolated Tracts would be substantial as well. Development and implementation of a HMP for pronghorn winter habitat would help increase winter survival. Development and implementation of a summer range HMP would also benefit pronghorn. However, many of the benefits would likely be offset by an increase in wildfire which would destroy brush more often and may cause damage to winter range beyond that expected under other alternatives.

Mule Deer. No change would be expected in the resident deer population because gains in habitat quality due to a lack of grazing would be offset by loss of brush to increased wildfire. A loss of 200 animals from the wintering herd would be expected due to a loss of brush to increased wildfire on the winter range. Implementation of a HMP for pronghorn winter habitat would also benefit some wintering deer.

Hybrid Cutthroat/Rainbow Trout. Under ACEC designation, the spawning habitat of this unique population would receive greater attention than without such designation.

Non-Game Species. A net loss of 3,000 pairs of breeding birds could be expected. The great positive effects of improved habitat quality under no grazing, removal of direct disturbance by livestock and associated activities of man, Isolated Tracts, and brush protection areas would be offset by increased wildfire. More brush would be lost to fire more often. This would result in more acres being dominated by the species-poor cheatgrass habitat.

Livestock Forage

Grazing Management. This sub-alternative would result in a loss of 100 percent (149,135 AUMs) of active preference.

Vegetation. The removal of livestock from public lands would have a significant positive effect on trend and condition. However, the annual acreage burned is predicted to double without grazing because of increased loading and continuity of fuels. Fire is a major cause of disturbance that

has enhanced the establishment and spread of cheatgrass (Daubenmire 1940; Stewart and Hull 1949). The presence of cheatgrass helps increase burning until perennials are killed by repeated burning at short intervals. The demise of perennials is partly a result of burning four to six weeks earlier in the summer (Stewart and Hull 1949). Due to the predicted increase of annual acreage burned, trends are expected to remain as under Alternative D at:

Upward	24 percent
Stable	75 percent
Downward	1 percent

Areas with low fire frequencies are not expected to have a large increase in fires and without grazing, considerable improvement could occur. A 1 percent rise in good condition and a 5 percent rise in fair condition should result. The predicted condition class breakdown is:

Good	3 percent
Fair	13 percent
Poor	64 percent
Seeded	20 percent

Refer to Appendix D, "Projecting Ecological Condition and Trend" for an explanation of how the projections above were derived.

Increased wildfire may be detrimental to the proposed Endangered species, the Picabo milkvetch (Astragalus oniciformis). The lack of grazing proposed in this alternative should offset any detrimental effects, leaving a net positive effect for this alternative.

Lands

No change from Alternative D.

Wilderness

No change from Alternative D.

Natural History

No change from Alternative D.

Cultural Resources

No change from Alternative D.

Recreation

No change from Alternative D.

Soils

Erosion would be reduced by 4 percent to 4.6 tons/acre/year. Of the 1,178,989 acres in the planning area, 43,355 acres would have a severe erosion problem by the end of 20 years. This decrease from present conditions would be primarily due to no livestock grazing, ORV closures and limitations on 2,777 acres, and seeding 150 acres of sand dunes. However, erosion would increase on 34,000 acres because of increased fire, offsetting most of the benefits. Soil productivity could be reduced on 837 acres adjacent to and downwind from land transfers developed for agriculture. Appendix I contains a discussion about changes in erosion rates and the equations used to estimate erosion rates.

Minerals and Energy

No change from Alternative D.

Economic Conditions

Appendix J contains a detailed comparison of the economic effects of each alternative.

Grazing-Related Economic Effects. This sub-alternative would have drastic effects on the local livestock industry. Annual income losses would be \$1.1 million or 86 percent of current livestock income. This would be a 1

percent reduction in the agriculture sector income. Grazing-related employment would be reduced by 63 jobs, which would be roughly 1.5 percent of the agriculture sector employment.

The secondary (multiplier) effect of this alternative would cause additional income and employment losses of \$712,000 and 39 jobs.

There would be no range improvements with this sub-alternative.

Grazing fee collections would be reduced by the following amounts:

Range Improvement Fund	- \$ 97,892
Federal Treasury	- \$ 73,419
State of Idaho	- \$ 24,473
Total	- \$195,784

The total capital value of AUMs lost would be between \$5.4 million and \$24.5 million. Permittees in groups 1, 2, and 3 would have trouble meeting cash costs, thus placing the viability of 138 ranches in jeopardy.

Recreation-Related Economic Effects. Same as Alternative D.

Crop-Related Economic Effects. Same as Alternative D.

Land Transfers. Same as Alterantive D.

Fire Suppression. The annual fire suppression costs would be \$461,200 with an additional \$14,000 for road maintenance.

Summary. Total earnings (direct and secondary) would be increased by \$1.9 million, and employment (direct and secondary) would be increased by 194 jobs. The fire suppression costs (there are no range improvements) would amount to \$475,200 annually. This sub-alternative would have severe impacts on permittees in the planning area while providing little additional benefit to the economy in other areas (recreation, crop agriculture, land transfers).

ADVERSE EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Mitigating measures as presented in the description of alternatives, resource management guidelines, and the standard operating procedures in the appendices, would apply to the actions proposed in each alternative. Therefore, environmental consequences described in this chapter are "unavoidable" under the goals and objectives of each alternative.

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) would result in the following adverse effects if implemented.

Wildlife

- Pronghorn populations would decrease by 3 percent or 17 animals from present numbers in the long term.
- Mule deer populations would decrease by 2 percent or 6 animals from present numbers in the long term.
- Non-game bird populations would decrease by 4 percent or 3,600 pairs from present numbers in the long term.
- Although populations of burrowing owls would increase under the Preferred Alternative, the increase would be slightly less than under present management, as reflected in projections for Alternative A.

Livestock Forage

Grazing Management

- Nine thousand seven hundred eighty-one AUMs would be lost to transfer of lands from Federal ownership and conversion of the land to other uses. This would significantly affect (greater than 10 percent of active preference) 34 allotments and 56 permittees. Twenty-one allotments would be completely lost to land transfer.
- Active preference would be reduced on seven allotments to bring grazing levels within carrying capacity for a total 8,427 AUM reduction. This would affect 37 permittees.

- An average of 5,667 AUMs would be lost annually for at least a year due to wildfire.

Vegetation

- The Silver Sage Playa would be transferred from Federal ownership and developed for agriculture. The value of the relict vegetation on the tract for research and reference would be lost.

Lands

- DLE applications would not be considered for transfer on 3,070 acres.
- Carey Act applications would not be considered for transfer on 13,965 acres.
- Land uses would be restricted to those not involving vehicle use on 90,103 acres closed to ORVs.
- Utility developments would be prohibited on 87,902 acres recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

Wilderness

- The wilderness resource may be adversely affected on 66,113 acres recommended nonsuitable including the Shale Butte, Little Deer, Bear Den Butte, and Shoshone WSAs.

Recreation

- Although visitor use days for mule deer hunting, pheasant and partridge hunting, and ORV use would increase under the Preferred Alternative, the increase would be slightly less than under present management as reflected in projections for Alternative A.

Soils

- Average erosion rate for the planning area would increase 8 percent from present levels to 5.2 tons/acre/year in the long term.
- The number of acres with a severe erosion problem would increase from the present number of 37,463 acres to 39,248 acres, a 5 percent increase.

Minerals

- Mineral entry and mineral material sale and free use would be prohibited on 87,902 acres recommended suitable for wilderness designation. Stipulations to protect wilderness resources could severely restrict mineral lease development. These areas are considered to have low potential for leasable mineral resources.
- Future mineral development would be somewhat restricted by ORV limitations on 2,240 acres of land considered mineral in character.
- Future mineral lease development would be somewhat restricted by surface occupancy restrictions in Vineyard Creek ACEC, Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC, Substation Tract ACEC, and Areas of Geologic Interest.
- Mineral material sale and free use would be prohibited on 1,264 acres within the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. Most of the area has potential for mineral material deposits.
- Land transfer would include 540 acres of existing mineral material sites and 2,580 acres of possible mineral material sources. This could cause considerable hardship and higher costs to highway departments and the public.
- Split estate ownership resulting from land transfers (totalling 56,578 acres) could make mineral exploration more complicated, time consuming, and expensive.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES OF MAN'S ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The short-term uses of man's environment are described for each alternative in Chapter 2. The relationship of these short-term uses to long-term

productivity for various resources is discussed in Chapter 4. The environmental consequences presented in Chapter 4 show that a difference in long-term productivity would be expected from one alternative to another. A comparative summary of the environmental consequences for each alternative is presented in Table 2-3.

IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Implementation of any of the alternatives would limit potential future uses of the land and resources to some extent. Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources occur when a range of future options are foreclosed.

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative C) would result in the following irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources.

Wildlife

Wildlife habitat would be modified on transferred lands converted to other uses. This would benefit some species and adversely affect others. These areas would be committed for the foreseeable future.

Livestock Forage

Grazing preference lost from conversion of transferred lands to other uses would be lost for the foreseeable future. Forage on lands retained in Federal ownership would be totally committed, with no potential to mitigate losses of forage due to disposal. In areas of nonstructural range improvements (vegetation manipulation), land and vegetation would be committed for the lives of the projects.

Lands

Transfer of lands from Federal ownership would result in a loss of administrative control for all resource values except mineral values and rights-of-way on those parcels.

Wilderness

Nondesignation of the Shale Butte, Little Deer, Bear Den Butte, and Shoshone WSAs and subsequent human developments, such as range improvements, road construction, ORV use, and utility development, could result in a loss of wilderness values in those areas for the foreseeable future.

Recreation

Designation of the Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs would result in a loss of motorized recreation opportunities in these areas for the foreseeable future. Changes in recreation opportunity spectrum classes toward the more facility-dependent classes, such as from primitive to semi-primitive motorized, would result in a loss of the opportunities associated with the less facility-dependent classes in the affected area for the foreseeable future.

Soils

Soil losses associated with the various management actions would be irreversible and irretrievable. However, new soil would develop naturally at a very slow rate.

Minerals

Designation of the Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs would result in a loss of opportunities to develop new mining claims and leases for the foreseeable future.