Recreation

With this alternative there would be roughly 5,000 motorized recreation visitor days in the long term. The annual expenditures associated with this level of use would be $63,800. This would convert to earnings and employment of $25,300 and 3 jobs. Big game hunting would generate annual expenditures of $2,524,000. This would convert to earnings and employment of $1,001,800 and 101 jobs. Sagegrouse hunting would generate annual expenditures of $6,900. This would be earnings of $2,700. No jobs would be generated from this activity. The total direct income and employment generated by these recreation activities would be $1,029,800 and 104 jobs. This would be 6 percent of the RMP area's retain trade income. The secondary income and employment would be $1,244,000 and 126 jobs. This would be 7 percent of the area's retail trade income. Total income (direct and secondary) would be $2,273,800 (13% of retail trade income) while employment would be 230.

Livestock

The initial livestock stocking level would be 100,449 AUMs. This would go up to 107,249 AUMs in the long term. This long-term stocking level would represent direct income and employment of $591,800 and 48 jobs. This would represent 7 percent of the RMP area livestock income and 1 percent of farm income. Secondary income and employment would amount to $915,400 and 92 jobs. This would be 5 percent of the retail trade income.

In order to attain this long-term level of grazing use, approximately $1,425,700 in range improvements would be required.

Grazing fee collections would be distributed in the following manner:

Range Improvement Fund	$107,249
Federal Treasury	$ 80,437
State of Idaho	$ 26,812
TOTAL	$214,498

This level of AUM use would represent capital value of between $6,050,400 and $26,811,000 (Boly 1980, Fowler and Gray 1980).

Summary

Total direct and secondary income of $4,176,800 would be generated by this alternative. This would be 1.9 percent of the total Medicine Lodge RMP area current income. Employment generated by this alternative would be 407 jobs or 2.3 percent of total RMP area employment.

ALTERNATIVE D

Lands

Lands totalling 1120 acres with agricultural potential would not be made available for development. Existing desert land applications totaling 1,457 acres would be processed and analyzed to determine their merits.

Minerals

As compared to Alternative A, this alternative has 26 percent more acres under standard stipulations, 3 percent more under seasonal occupancy restrictions and 25 percent less acres with the no surface occupancy restriction open to fluid mineral leasing. About 13 percent more acres are open to solid mineral leasing under standard stipulations; 74 percent less acres are closed to solid and fluid mineral leasing. About 2 percent less lands are open to locatable mineral entry and 8 percent more are open to mineral materials disposals. In this alternative, 96 percent of the area is open to solid and fluid mineral leasing, 83 percent is open to mining claims and 92 percent is open to salable minerals use.

The seasonal occupancy restrictions do not significantly affect the availability of lands for mineral exploration and development. However, under the NSO restriction up to 4,000 acres are beyond the reach of directional drilling operations. These acres and the acres closed to leasing total 38,999 acres or 4 percent of the resource area unavailable for the development of fluid leasable minerals in management areas 4,5,6,7, and 9. All of these lands are prospectively valuable for oil and gas and about 3,200 of the acres are in the Wyoming-Utah-Idaho portion of the Overthrust Belt Oil and Gas Province within which are producing fields. Sixteen percent of these lands are also prospectively valuable for geothermal resources. The NSO leasing and no-lease restrictions significantly limit the availability of lands for the development of potential oil, gas and geothermal resources.

The potential for the development of locatable minerals in 92 percent of the lands closed to mining claims is low. However, about 8,000 acres that contain potential sources of placer gold in management area 9 are closed to locatable mineral entry. The summary for Alternative C assesses the impacts involved. Closed to mining claims and having potential for the development of locatable minerals are about 4,000 acres in management area 1. These are sensitive big game winter range lands that contain limestone deposits of potential industrial grade. Over $1 million worth of limestone production is estimated and about 10,000 tons per year are currently mined from lands in the area under mining claims not included in this withdrawal proposal. These closures significantly reduce the availability of lands for the development of potential placer gold and industrial grade limestone resources.

The salable mineral closures in this alternative have no significant impact on the development of mineral materials.

Forestry

Same as Alternative C.

Livestock

The initial and long term stocking rates would be the same as Alternative C. There would be 68,000 acres of brush control, The acres of seeding and water developments would be the same as Alternative C.

Both the long term ecological range condition and long term trend would be the same as Alternative C.

Wildlife

Impacts of this alternative are similar to Alternative C except for the following. To protect big game wintering ranges in management area 1, 4,160 acres of locatable mineral acreage was withdrawn. A total of 41,630 acres of salable minerals were withdrawn to protect sage grouse strutting grounds and antelope winter range. In management area 2, 1,120 acres were removed from the land transfer program. This would protect an important bald eagle foraging area from agricultural entry. In management area 5, 3,540 acres would be assured to stay unroaded. This would help protect a big game winter range. In management area 9, 10,400 acres were withdrawn from locatable mineral entry. The impact of this would be to protect and preserve the integrity of a unique ecosystem that provides bald eagle nesting habitat, blue ribbon trout fishing and big game winter ranges.

Water and Water Quality

Same as Alternative C.

Soils

Same as Alternative C.

Recreation and ORV Management

Impacts on recreation in this alternative are similar to those in Alternative C. The major difference is that 6,715 acres of the resource area would be designated wilderness. Opportunities for primitive recreation would be protected and part of the sand dunes would be available for ORV recreation. The part that would be available is the most accessible and heavily used and accounts for an estimated 65 percent of all motorized use on the dunes.

Wilderness designation of the 6,560 acre western portion of the Sand Mountain WSA would cause a shifting of all motorized recreation to the eastern part. Concentrating use into this smaller area could degrade the opportunities present within the remaining 4,840 acres of semi-primitive motorized setting and move it towards the roaded natural setting.

Under this alternative, nonmotorized types of recreation and scenic quality would receive additional protection from surface disturbing activities. Areas of high recreation and scenic value are protected either with closures or standard stipulations on mineral activities.

Wilderness

Under Alternative D, 6,560 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended suitable for designation and 14,540 acres would be recommended nonsuitable.

Long term benefits to the area's wilderness values would result through designation. Wilderness management would permit the natural ecological processes to continue and prevent degredation of geologic, scenic and wildlife values.

The diversity of the NWPS would be enhanced through designation. One inland sand dune wilderness is currently represented in the NWPS. It is the Great

Sand Dunes, totatling 33,450 acres, located in Colorado. Designation of part of the Sand Mountain WSA would increase the total area represented by this unique land form type and ecosystem.

Part of the Sand Mountain WSA is recommended for designation as wilderness. Wilderness management would best protect the area's wilderness values over both the short and long term. The diversity of the NWPS would be enhanced by having 6,560 acres of an inland sand dune ecosystem designated as wilderness.

Including the Snake River Islands WSA in the NWPS would protect, preserve and enhance the wilderness values on 12 islands totaling 155 acres of public land. Power site and reclamation withdrawals would be relinquished, removing the threat of flooding.

The diversity in the NWPS would be enhanced through designation. Even though the islands are small in comparison to other designated wilderness, they contain an ecosystem that is not currently represented in the NWPS.

Impacts to the wilderness values by not designating 14,540 acres would be the same as Alternative A except that restrictions on ORV travel would protect vegetated lands and the naturalness of the area. Designated routes would be identified for motorized access to the barren sands where motorized use would remain open.

Cultural Resources

Same as Alternative C.

Economics

Lands

Impacts are the same as Alternative C.

Forestry

Impacts are the same as Alternative C.

Recreation

With this alternative there would be roughly 1,800 motorized recreation visitor days in the long term. The annual expenditures associated with the level of use would be $23,000. This would convert to earnings and employment of $9,100 and 1 job. All other recreation activities would be impacted the same as Alternative C. This would make total direct income and employment $1,013,600 and 102 jobs. This would be 6 percent of the RMP area's retail trade income. The secondary income and employment would be $1,224,400 and 124 jobs. This would be 7 percent of the area's retail trade income. Total income (direct and secondary) would be $2,238,000 (13% of retail trade income) while employment would be 226.

Livestock

Impacts would be the same as Alternative C.

Total direct and secondary income of $4,141,000 would be generated with this alternative. This would be 1.9 percent of the total Medicine Lodge RMP area current income. Employment generated by this alternative would be 403 jobs or 2.2 percent of total RMP area employment.

ALTERNATIVE E

Lands

This alternative would eliminate the benefits to be gained from a land tenure adjustment program described in Alternative C. It would ensure that no resource values would be lost. However, the opportunity to acquire key resource values through land exchanges would not be available, except in Management Area 5 (Sands HMP).

Minerals

As compared to Alternative A, this alternative has 5 percent less acres under standard stipulations, 0.4 percent less acres under seasonal occupancy restriction and 4 percent less acres with the no surface occupancy restrictions open to fluid mineral leasing. Three percent fewer acres are open to solid mineral leasing under standard stipulations; 17 percent more acres are closed to solid and fluid mineral leasing. Five percent fewer lands are open to both locatable mineral entry and mineral material disposals. In this alternative, 83 percent of the area is open to solid and fluid mineral leasing, 81 percent is open to mining claims and 82 percent is open to salable minerals use.

The seasonal occupancy restrictions do not significantly affect the availability of lands for mineral exploration and development. However, under the NSO restriction, up to 10,900 acres are beyond the reach of directional drilling operations. These acres and the acres closed to leasing total 169,040 acres or 18 percent of the resource area unavailable for the development of fluid leasable minerals in all management areas but 2,3 and 8. Over 99.9 percent of these lands are prospectively valuable for oil and gas and about 3,900 of the acres are in the Wyoming-Utah-Idaho portion of the Overthrust Belt Oil and Gas Province within which are producing fields. Eight percent of these lands are also prospectively valuable for geothermal resources. The NSO leasing and no-lease restrictions significantly limit the availability of lands for the development of potential oil, gas and geothermal resources.

The potential for the development of locatable minerals in 92 percent of the lands closed to mining claims is low. However, about 10,000 acres that contain potential sources of placer gold in management area 9 are closed to locatable mineral entry. These are federal mineral estate lands along the Main, South and Henry's Fork of the Snake River. The summary for Alternative C assesses the impacts involved. Also closed to mining claims and having the potential for the production of industrial grade limestone are about 4,000 acres in management area 1. The impacts from this proposed withdrawal are addressed in the summary for Alternative D.

About 33 percent of the lands closed to mineral materials disposals are in the INEL (management area 7) and are potential sources of sand, gravel and

volcanic cinders. The closing of these lands has a significant impact on the availability of lands for the development of mineral materials. The rest of the lands closed have a low potential for the development of salable minerals.

Forestry

Under this alternative, 1,981 acres of the 14,410 acres of commercial forest land would be set aside from the harvestable base due to wildlife and watershed reasons and because of the TPCC inventory. The amount of commercial forest land deferred for economic reasons would be the same as in Alternative C. In addition, a partial loss of timber production would occur on 1,259 acres due to wildlife restrictions. The above would have a moderate impact on the availability of sawtimber, fuelwood and other forest products.

Managing 9,204 acres of commercial forest land in the harvestable base for the production of forest products would result in a potential sustainable allowable cut of approximately 3.0 MMBF/decade.

Under this alternative, 2,925 acres of woodland, primarily riparian cottonwood, would be unavailable for the harvest of forest products. Managing the remaining 9,847 acres of woodland would make additional forested acreage available for the harvest of sawtimber, fuelwood and minor forest products.

Harvest practices including clearcutting, shelterwood and selective cutting would influence vegetative cover on approximately 100 acres per year.

Forest development practices such as thinning, planting and the use of herbicides and rodentcides would improve stocking and growth potential of forest stands and decrease pest and disease problems in these stands.

Grazing will influence forest management primarily by endangering the establishment of regeneration. This influence can be partially mitigated through control of season of use and livestock distribution.

Loss of timber production in response to wildlife needs and restrictions, watershed and lands and realty needs amounts to an average reduction in yield of 130 MBF/year.

Livestock

Under this alternative, the stocking rate would be 84,638 AUMs. This is a 4 percent reduction from the current 5 year average use and an 18 percent reduction from the current active preference. The long term stocking rate would be 71,930 AUMs. This is a 15 percent reduction from the initial stocking rate. A total of 254 out of 269 allotments would receive reductions from the current active preference.

There would be 25,700 acres of brush control, 780 acres of seeding, 50 water developments and 60 miles of fencing. The brush control would change 25,700 acres of fair ecological condition range to good. The seeding would change 780 acres fair and poor ecological condition range to good. The long term ecological range condition is expected to be 1 percent excellent, 48 percent good, 37 percent fair, 4 percent poor, 9 percent disturbed, and 1 percent unclassified (see Appendix B, page 14).

The long term trend would be 85 percent static and 15 percent downward.

Wildlife

Under this alternative, 767,123 acres would be retained under BLM jurisdiction and managed to provide wildlife habitat. All conflicting uses would be restricted to be compatible with wildlife forage and cover needs.

The forage and cover requirements needed by ID F&G for the wildlife would be met by:

- -19% reduction in livestock grazing (Under the scope of this plan, any further reductions in livestock grazing use would be in excess of the needs of projected wildlife numbers).
- -319,720 acres of seasonal occupancy restrictions on leasable minerals
- -158,140 acres closed to leasing
- -62,770 acres with no surface occupancy restriction
- -179,377 acres closed to locatable mineral entry
- -170,290 acres closed to salable mineral material
- -2,925 acres of woodland withdrawn
- -maintaining 52.9 miles of streams in good condition
- -improving 19.9 miles of riparian habitat

Recreational developments would be compatible with wildlife, ORV use would be limited or restricted on 118,879 acres.

An active habitat management program would be implemented. Projects would include 26,365 acres of brush control, 1,785 acres of seeding, development of 25 springs, installation of 34 wildlife guzzlers and 20 goose nesting platforms, and 245 acres of bitterbrush planting.

Water and Water Quality

Under the protection alternative, the 52.9 miles of stream presently in good or excellent condition would remain in that condition or improve slightly due to water development on upland areas. A total of 12.3 miles of stream on Edie, Irving or Indian Creek in management area 1 would be managed, primarily using fencing, to improve fishery and riparian quality. This would require 23.3 miles of fencing for management. About 19.9 miles of Willow Creek, Grays Lake Outlet and Sand Creek would be managed to improve or protect these streams with sensitive soils. About 5 miles of fencing would be required. Sediment production is the major impact on these streams.

Soils

This alternative would provide the greatest soil erosion protection. As stocking rates decrease, overall sediment to water sources would decrease. Five allotments on loamy soils could have erosion rates greater than 5 tons per acre. Grazing on one allotment on sandy soils could remove enough vegetation by combined livestock and wildlife use to exceed erosion rates of 5 to 8 tons per acre.

Erosion levels would generally be less than 5 tons per acre. Damaged areas from former ORV use would be restored and protected. Small project developments will generally only have a small short term erosion except where stock may trample out the vegetation cover.

Recreation and ORV Management

The widest range of recreation opportunity settings are offered under this alternative. Nonmotorized classes would make up about 5 percent of the Resource Area, while motorized settings would remain on 95 percent. Primitive and semi-primitive nonmotorized settings would be protected by ORV closures and limitations that would prevent conflicts between nonmotorized and motorized activities. Restrictions on mineral activities would further protect ROS settings and wilderness designation of 21,870 acres in the Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands WSAs would insure that primitive opportunities are maintained.

The 14,759 acre Snake River System and the 36,900 acre St. Anthony Sand Dunes complex would be designated special recreation management areas. The remaining lands in the Resource Area would be identified as an extensive recreation management area. Management plans would be prepared that focus on maintaining the ROS classes and developing recreation sites where the heaviest use occurs. Special attention will be necessary in preparing a plan for the Snake River System to insure that all land and resource managing agencies are fully involved throughout the process.

Six of the existing undeveloped and unmaintained recreation sites would be developed, maintained and managed to accomodate day and overnight use. Impacts from litter, inadequate sanitation and uncontrolled motorized use would be minimized. One mile of trail would be constructed on North Menan Butte to provide additional opportunities for nature study. These developments would help to some degree meet the current needs and projections (both short and long-term) for recreation facilities shown in the 1983 Idaho Outdoor Recreation Plan. Developed recreation use and quality would increase on sites that are developed.

Dispersed ORV recreation would be eliminated on 43,007 acres. The most severe impacts would occur on the St. Anthony Sand Dunes (26,660 acres) and in the Stinking Springs area (4,900 acres). It is estimated that about 70 percent of all ORV recreation in the Resource Area occurs in these areas and closure would cause a shifting of this activity to other lands less suitable for motorized recreation. This is particularly true for the sand dune areas.

Under this alternative, more areas would be zoned for more restrictive minerals management. This will give added protection to nonmotorized types of recreation and help preserve the natural appearance of the landscape, which is generally important to all recreationists.

The impacts on recreation from forest management would be similar to those in Alternative A. However, added restrictions on timber harvesting would benefit nonmotorized forms of recreation.

Wildlife and fisheries management, under this alternative, would increase populations of big game and fish, which could improve the success ratio for

sportsmen. However, the effect cannot be accurately quantified since success is only one of several factors that affect the hunting experience.

Wilderness

Including the Sand Mountain WSA in the NWPS would protect, preserve and enhance the wilderness values on 21,100 acres of public land. The WSA's natural appearance and wilderness character would remain unchanged. Opportunities for people seeking solitude or primitive recreation activities would be maintained and enhanced.

Long term benefits to the area's wilderness values would result through designation. Wilderness management would permit the natural ecological processes to continue and prevent degredation of geologic, scenic and wildlife values.

The diversity of the NWPS would be enhanced through designation. One inland sand dune wilderness is currently represented in the NWPS. It is the Great Sand Dunes, totaling 33,450 acres, located in Colorado. Designation of the Sand Mountain WSA would increase the total area represented by this unique land form type and ecosystem.

The Sand Mountain WSA is recommended for designation as wilderness. Wilderness management would best protect the area's wilderness values over both the short and long term. The diversity of the NWPS would be enhanced by having 21,100 acres of an inland sand dune ecosystem designated as wilderness.

Including the Snake River Islands WSA in the NWPS would protect, preserve and enhance the wilderness values on 39 islands totaling 770 acres of public land. Power site and reclamation withdrawals would be relinquished, removing the threat of flooding.

The diversity in the NWPS would be enhanced through designation. Even though the islands are small in comparison to other designated wilderness, they contain an ecosystem that is not currently represented in the NWPS.

Cultural Resources

This is the preferred alternative for cultural resource management. Long term livestock grazing levels would decrease by 19 percent. This would reduce livestock trampling at 95 cultural sites on the affected allotments. Protection from mining claim and mineral material sale closures would protect 20 sites. Soil erosion would be reduced with subsequent artifact exposure, breakage and displacement reductions. Available ORV use acreage would also be reduced by 35 percent. This would prevent or reduce direct vehicle impacts and indirect impacts (soil erosion, increased access). Activity plans would be developed under this alternative to provide cultural resource site surveillance, monitoring and other protective measures.

Economics

Lands

There would be no land sales or agricultural entry with this alternative.

Forestry

With this alternative there would be 0.31 MMBF of timber cut each year (3.1 MMBF per decade). This would generate revenue of $6,200 (310,000 board feet x $20/MBF). Direct earnings and employment generated would be 41,200 and 3 jobs. This would be less than 1 percent of the manufacturing income in the RMP area. Secondary earnings and employment would be $39,700 and 4 jobs. This would be less than 1 percent of the RMP area's retail trade income.

Recreation

This alternative would eliminate the motorized vehicle recreation on the Sand Dunes. Big game hunting would generate annual expenditures of $2,599,500. This would convert to earnings and employment of $1,031,800 and 104 jobs. Sagegrouse hunting would generate annual expenditures of $7,300. This would be earnings of $2,900. No jobs would result from this activity. The total direct income and employment resulting from these recreational activities would be $1,034,700 and 104 jobs. This would be 6 percent of the RMP area retail trade income. The secondary income and employment would be $1,249,900 and 126 jobs. This would be 7 percent of the area's retail trade income. Total income (direct and secondary) would be $2,284,600 (13% of retail trade income) while employment would be 230.

Livestock

The initial livestock stocking level would be 84,638 AUMs. Over the long term this would drop to 71,930 AUMs. This long-term stocking level would represent direct income and employment of $396,900 and 33 jobs. This would represent 5 percent of the RMP area livestock income and 1 percent of farm income. Secondary income and employment would amount to $613,900 and 62 jobs. This would be 4 percent of the retail trade income.

This alternative would require installation of range improvements costing a total of $398,700.

Grazing fee collections would be distributed in the following manner:

Range Improvement Fund	$ 71,930
Federal Treasury	$ 53,948
State of Idaho	$ 17,982
TOTAL	$143,860

This level of AUM use would represent capital value of between $4,057,900 and $17.982,000 (Boly 1980, Fowler and Gray 1980).

Total direct and secondary income of $3,376,300 would be generated by this alternative. This would be 1.6 percent of the total Medicine Lodge RMP area current income. Employment resulting from this alternative would be 332 jobs or 1.9 percent of total RMP area employment.

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 Part II, chapter 2. The relationship of these short-term uses to long-term productivity is discussed for various resources in Part II, chapter 4. The appendix data in Part III also includes long-term productivity as opposed to short-term uses. A comparison between alternatives and summary of environmental consequences is presented in Table 2-1 and Table 2-2.

IRREVERSIBLE OR IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

The implementation of any of the alternatives would limit some potential future uses of the land and resources. Irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources are those that occur when future options are foreclosed.

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

Lands

Transfer of lands out of federal ownership would result in a loss of administrative control for all resource values except mineral values and rights-of-way in existence.

Livestock Grazing

Grazing preference would be lost on lands transferred from federal ownership. Completion of nonstructural range improvements would represent an irretrievable and irreversible commitment of land and resources for the lives of the projects.

Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife habitat would be modified or lost on those lands transferred out of federal ownership by sale or exchange. Issuance of mineral patents would result in an irretrievable loss of wildlife habitat. Completion of nonstructural habitat improvements such as prescribed burning would represent an irreversible commitment of resources during the life of the project.

Soils

Soil losses associated with the required management actions would be irreversible and irretrievable. Development of new soil would occur at a very slow rate.

Recreation

Recreation opportunity spectrum classes which shift from semi-primitive motorized to modern urban or rural would likely never return to semi-primitive motorized, even with rehabilitation. Structural improvements such as campgrounds or boat ramps would represent irreversible and irretrievable commitments of land and resources.

Wilderness

The development of other resources such as wildlife habitat or livestock grazing vegetation manipulations in portions of the Sand Mountain WSA would result in an irreversible and irretrievable loss of wilderness values in those areas. If existing powersite and reclamation withdrawals were used for their intended purposes, the Snake River Islands WSA would disappear. This, of course, represents an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.

Cultural Resources

By their very nature, cultural resources are irretrievable once lost or damaged. The standard operating procedures protect most cultural resources. However, it is likely that some sites would be damaged, an irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.