Soils

Several actions were discussed in preceding sections which will help meet the objective of keeping soil erosion within tolerable levels. ORV use will be restricted in portions of the Snake River Rim SRMA (L9) and in the Cedar Fields SRMA to protect fragile soils. Fires will be given full suppression when the burning index is above 22 to help protect soils. Road maintenance will be conducted in key areas to help keep fires smaller, thus helping to protect soils. Fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance will be developed for the Cedar Fields SRMA.

In addition to the actions listed above, areas with severe erosion problems will be stabilized. At the present time, 150 acres of active sand dunes in the Lake Walcott area have been identified for a seeding project to stabilize the dunes. Other areas will be treated as they are identified, provided treatment is feasible.

Priority will be given to emergency treatment of severe erosion areas caused by wildfire.

Summary of Activity Plans Required for Implementation of the Monument RMP

Two Wilderness Management Plans (excluding Great Rift)
- One for each WSA recommended suitable.

One ORV Designation Implementation Plan
- Detailing how the ORV designations for the planning area will be implemented including public awareness, signing, and enforcement.

Three ACEC management plans
- One for each ACEC.

Three Recreation Activity Management Plans (RAMPs)
- One for each special recreation management area (SRMA)

Four Habitat Management Plans (HMPs)
- One will be a revision of the Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas HMP.
- The others will be prepared for pronghorn winter range, pronghorn summer range, and sage grouse winter habitat.

Four Cultural Resource Management Plans
- One each for Devil's Corral, Cedar Fields, Wilson Butte Cave, and the Oregon Trail.

One Cave Management Plan
- For the L12 areas (Areas of Geologic Interest).

Nine AMPs, CRMPs, or other appropriate plans
- One for each of the nine allotments specified under "Implementation."

One Limited Fire Suppression Plan

The fire management plan will include guidelines to

- limit surface disturbance in WSAs recommended suitable, Cedar Fields SRMA, the Oregon Trail, and Areas of Geologic Interest.

- protect vegetation valuable to wildlife on CWMAs, Pronghorn Winter Range HMP area, and brush protection areas.

- protect the naturalness and scenic quality of Vineyard Creek ACEC and Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC.

- protect the natural vegetation communities of the Substation Tract ACEC.

Some of the activity plans listed above may be consolidated into a single plan where two or more activities have activity plan needs in the same general area.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the Monument RMP will be accomplished over a period of several years. The BLM budgeting process will influence the exact implementation schedule for nearly all resource management activities. Activity plans will be developed as funding allows. New policy or departmental guidance may influence priorities.

The monitoring plan shown in the "Monitoring and Evaluation" section specifies a five-year interval for monitoring implementation of the RMP. If monitoring indicates the RMP is not being implemented as planned, the reasons for this will be examined and appropriate corrective actions will be taken.

Implementation will take place in full compliance with requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure environmental acceptability.

Specific facets of implementation are presented below.

Land Transfers

Transfer of land from public ownership may occur only if the requirements of law as summarized under "Standard Operating Procedures" are met. All parcels placed in a transfer category in the Monument RMP will be available for transfer. However, a proposal for a particular parcel may fail to meet the requirements for transfer. In this case, the parcel will be retained until a

suitable proposal is made. Portions of the transfer areas may never be transferred because they fail to meet the requirements upon close examination.

Wilderness

A wilderness study report will be prepared for each WSA in the Monument Planning Area. This report will be forwarded to Congress through the Secretary of the Interior along with the separate wilderness EIS. Only Congress can designate a wilderness area. Wilderness Management Plans will be prepared only for those WSAs Congress designates as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Livestock Forage

Rangeland Program Summary

A Rangeland Program Summary will be prepared following approval of the RMP. This summary will describe site-specific grazing use adjustments, range improvements, and project priorities.

Selective Management

Selective management, as applied to the rangeland program, is the categorization of grazing allotments into three management groups based upon similarities of resource characteristics, management needs, and economic and resource-based potential for rangeland improvement. All livestock grazing allotments have been categorized as "I" (Improvement Needed), "M" (Maintain), or "C" (Custodial Management) based upon the following criteria and additional criteria developed from issues specific to the Monument Planning Area. When the resource situation changes in an allotment after implementation of management decisions, the allotment may be recategorized.

1. "I" Category

   Category "I" allotments presently include unsatisfactory conditions, have the greatest potential for improvement, and may present serious resource use conflicts.

2. "M" Category

Category "M" allotments are in satisfactory range condition, are producing near their identified potential, and have no known present or anticipated serious resource use conflicts.

3. "C" Category

Category "C" allotments usually include only small acreages of public land or lands classified for transfer from Federal ownership. These allotments do not present management problems, regardless of condition. They present no significant potential for increasing production. Resource conflicts are either nonexistent or are outweighed by other considerations.

The order of these categories as discussed above represents the relative order of priority for the investment in range improvements and conducting of range monitoring studies, subject to user contributions and further consultation. Selective Management within the rangeland program will provide a framework from which prudent expenditure of rangeland investments can be made, consistent with an approved land use plan.

Management objectives for the allotment categories are (M) maintain current satisfactory condition, (I) improve current unsatisfactory condition, and (C) manage custodially while protecting existing resource values. Public investments in range improvements, AMP development, monitoring, and use supervision will have highest priority in "I" (Improve) allotments, followed by "M" (Maintain) and "C" (Custodial) allotments. Within these three categories, allotments will also be prioritized for range investments and management effort, depending upon the intensity of resource conflicts and/or the potential for improvements. The potential for improvement considers not only resource constraints, but also the ability of an allotment to produce a positive return on investment within a reasonable time.

Range improvement or other funds will be allocated to range improvements in "I" allotments in order to resolve resource-use conflicts and to increase resource productivity. Publicly-financed improvements will be implemented on allotments in the "M" and "C" categories only as needed to meet multiple use objectives or to protect existing resource values.

Livestock Use Adjustments

The need for livestock use adjustments on some allotments has been identified in the RMP. This need may result from land disposal, allocation of land to other public uses, lack of sufficient forage to support existing active preference, or availability of forage in excess of existing active preference.

Increases and reductions proposed are target levels based upon the best existing information, and will be implemented through coordination and consultation with the permittees involved.

If agreement cannot be reached with the permittees on the amount of reduction needed to balance active preference with forage productivity, needed adjustments will be implemented by decision under 43 CFR 4160. When livestock use adjustments are implemented by decision, the decision will be based upon operator consultation, range survey data, and monitoring of resource conditions. All adjustments will be made in the manner specified in current regulations.

Monitoring will be used to measure the changes due to new range management practices and to evaluate the effectiveness of management changes in meeting stated objectives. Livestock use adjustments could be modified during the implementation period based upon information provided by ongoing monitoring.

Range Improvements and Treatments

Typical range improvements and treatments and the general procedures to be followed in implementing them are described under "Standard Operating Procedures." The extent, location, and timing of these actions will be based on the allotment-specific management objectives adopted through the resource management planning process, interdisciplinary development and review of proposed actions, permittee contributions, and BLM funding capability.

All allotments in which range improvement funds are to be spent will be subjected to an economic analysis. Private contributions toward range improvements will be encouraged by assigning higher implementation priority to improvements partially or fully funded by private sources. However, improvements proposed and financed solely by private sources must be consistent with land use and management objectives for the affected allotments.

Grazing Systems

Grazing systems will be implemented under the Monument RMP. The type of system to be implemented will be based on consideration of the following factors:

1. allotment-specific management objectives;

2. resource characteristics, including vegetation, soil, and water availability;

3. operator needs; and

4. implementation costs.

Typical grazing systems, which have proven successful in the planning area are described under "Standard Operating Procedures." Grazing systems are

usually incorporated into an Allotment Management Plan (AMP) or a Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRMP). Allotments for which AMP or CRMP development is proposed include Antelope, Cedar Fields, East Minidoka, Gunnery, Kimama, Minidoka, Schodde, Shoshone, and Wildhorse.

Conversions

Livestock conversions from sheep use to cattle use will follow the Shoshone District Conversion Policy in order to maintain existing multiple use values and to reduce conflicts with other uses.

The District Conversion Policy is based upon past practice and current guidance and regulations. The general guidelines of the policy are:

1. Previous commitments to conversions made in approved AMPs will be honored.

2. Environmental Assessments will be completed to identify impacts of the conversions and mitigating measures necessary to meet multiple use objectives.

3. Concerns of other permittees in the affected allotment will be considered in analysis of the conversion proposal.

4. An allotment conversion plan will be prepared and approved.

5. The amount of conversion from sheep to cattle will be in proportion to the allotment's suitability for cattle grazing.

6. All conversions will be initially conservative (50 percent conversion for the first three years as modified by suitability and water availability).

7. Necessary fencing will be completed prior to cattle use.

8. Sufficient water will be available.

9. Results of ongoing monitoring studies will determine whether the new AMP and amount of conversion were satisfactory.

10. Final amounts converted will depend upon the desired season of use, initial balance between spring and fall sheep preference, and resource response.