# MULDOON ANALYSIS UNIT

## DESCRIPTION

The Muldoon Analysis Unit contains the Little Wood River, Fish Creek, Lava Creek, Huff Creek, and Cottonwood Creek drainages. It is bounded on the north by the Sawtooth and Challis National Forests, on the east by the Little Lost River Divide and Craters of the Moon National Monument, on the south by U.S. Highways 93 and 20, and on the west by the Big Wood-Little Wood River drainage divide.

This unit is generally mountainous with rolling to steep terrain. Vegetation is sagebrush-grass with aspen and Douglas-fir in some of the more moist areas and north slopes. Numerous streams are in the unit ranging from very small to the Little Wood River, which is the largest.

The land ownership is very broken. Numerous parcels of private, state, and public land extend across the unit.

Major existing uses consist of livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, recreation, water production, and some minerals.

## GENERAL MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

This area will be managed for multiple use with livestock grazing, watershed protection, recreation, and wildlife habitat being the major uses.

## SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

### Lands

#### Decision Number 1

Public lands having cultural resource values of National Register significance will be retained in federal or state ownership.

All other lands within this unit will be retained under BLM management except as follows:

a. Lands may be disposed of under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act.

b. Lands within the designated disposal areas (see MFP overlay) may be disposed of.

c. Lands may be exchanged with the State of Idaho provided they include no crucial wildlife habitat. Priority areas to obtain State land are: (1) Dry Creek-Muldoon Canyon area, (2) Elk Mountain area, and (3) Friedman Creek area.

d. E2SE4SE4SE4, Section 1, T. 1 S., R. 21 E. (see Map M-1) is suitable for disposal through public sale.

e. Land exchange proposals by private landowners will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Priority will be given to obtaining areas that would improve manageability of public lands, protect or expand crucial wildlife habitat, or provide legal and/or physical access to streams, reservoirs, or tracts of public land.

Rationale

The major portions of the public lands in this unit contain many valuable public resources. These include crucial wildlife habitat, water production, recreation values, livestock forage, and many others.

The lands that are to be disposed of are generally isolated tracts that have lower public values and are difficult to administer.

The flexibility for exchange is built in to allow exchanging lands that would enhance the management of the public lands. It will allow for a more detailed look at each exchange proposal and an evaluation of the detailed resource data, which are not available at this time.

Lands described in section 1.d. are physically isolated below an irrigation canal and adjoin private land.

Decision Number 2

Allow rights-of-way for utility and transportation purposes (both public and private), provided the uses comply with all requirements of this plan. Rights-of-way applications will be examined on a case-by-case basis to determine routes, impacts, and mitigating measures.

Rationale

The Muldoon Analysis unit is not a fast-growing area. The need for utility and transportation rights-of-way will be small for the immediate future. However, this decision allows for meeting foreseeable public and private needs.

Maintenance Change No. M-2-1

RMP MAINTENANCE SHEET

Plan Name Sun Valley MFP Area Monument RA

LOCATION OF CHANGE

Page No. M-2 Paragraph No. 1 Line No. 1

CHANGE

(Describe exactly what is to be deleted, added, rewritten, etc.)

Delete:

Insert:

REASON

(Describe exact rationale for above change to include reference material; i.e., EA, MFP, IM.)

T 1 N., R 22 E Sec 27; SWSW comprising 40 acres was sold at public sale (case no. IDI 20397).

SIGNATURE AS APPROPRIATE:

Program Leader _____ Date _____

Area Plan/Environmental Coordinator William R. [illegible] Date 1/2/90

Area Manager _____ Date _____

Decision Number 3

Communication sites may be allowed if consistent with other provisions of this plan, except within Wilderness Study Areas. Each site will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Rationale

The need for communication sites is increasing. However, the locations needed to serve these needs are not known. Each proposed site will be evaluated on its own merits.

Decision Number 4

All withdrawals except the one on Bell Mountain (PLO 3543) will be removed from public lands administered by BLM. BLM will obtain water rights on all public water reserves prior to revocation. All classifications made under the authority of the Classification and Multiple Use Act will be removed.

Rationale

FLPMA provides adequate protection for the retention of these lands in federal ownership. The 3809 Surface Protection Regulations provide for protection of water resources.

## Minerals

Decision Number 1

All areas within the unit will be open to mineral entry except:

a. The Bell Mountain withdrawal area in T. 1 N., R. 20 E., Section 7, NE4NE4.

b. Mining in the Friedman Creek Wilderness Study Area will be subject to the Interim Management Policy Guidelines until Congress makes a decision on whether or not to designate it as wilderness. The Little Wood River Wilderness Study Area, identified under the authority of Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, is not subject to the non-impairment policy for mining claims.

Rationale

Bell Mountain contains a fire lookout with public values and capital values of $35,000. In addition, the Blaine County Sheriff's department has a vital communication link on the site with capital values in excess of $20,000.

This area has some known mineral values and should remain open to exploration. The existing withdrawal, the Interim Management Policy, and the 3809 and 3802 Regulations will provide sufficient environmental protection to these areas.

Decision Number 2

All areas are open for mineral leasing with appropriate stipulations that are consistent with this plan.

Rationale

The area has potential value for geothermal resource but needs to be explored more to better define the value. A portion of the area is in the Overthrust Belt and is potentially valuable for oil and gas.

Decision Number 3

Mineral material sales and free use permits will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. They may be allowed if consistent with this plan.

Rationale

The need of local and state governments for materials has been steady over the past few years, and is expected to continue. The location and quality of material sites are not known in detail and must be evaluated.

## Forest Products

Decision Number 1

Intensively manage areas that are capable of timber production. Use the following guidelines for all timber harvesting except sanitation cuts to

control disease or insect damage to trees and salvage sales in case of fire, disease, insect or other major tree kills.

Timber Harvest Guidelines

a. No clear cut will exceed 45 acres.

b. Maximum clear cut widths will be 1600 feet on big game winter range and 1000 feet on summer range.

c. No timber harvest on crucial elk or deer winter range except in case of significant damage by disease, insects, fire, etc., or unless the harvest would be beneficial to the big game involved.

d. Cut in a mosaic or mottled pattern.

e. Strive for a ratio of 60 percent forage to 40 percent cover in harvested timber stands.

f. Maintain snags for wildlife. Each timber stand to be harvested will be evaluated and guidelines will be developed for maintaining sufficient snags.

g. Comply with the provisions of the Idaho Forest Protection Act.

h. A 200-foot radius will be left around nests of sensitive bird species. All raptor nests will be protected to the extent practicable.

Rationale

Although there is a limited amount of timber and no ready market at the present time, these stands are capable of providing wood products, including saw timber. Some of these stands are stagnant, and thinning will increase production.

Decision Number 2

Firewood, Christmas trees, posts, poles, and other woodland products will be sold by vegetative permits. These sales will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Rationale

The availability and demand for forest products has been small. It will probably increase, especially for firewood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees. The timber products can be used on a managed basis and can meet

some of these public needs. These needs will be local in nature because of the distance to the larger population areas and the limited quantities of products available.

## Livestock Forage

### Decision Number 1

Stock and manage the grazing allotments according to the proposed action in the Sun Valley Grazing Environmental Impact Statement, as summarized and updated in the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS). Tables from the current RPS are enclosed as Appendix 3, summarizing the stocking rates and other management. Changes in grazing management may be made based on monitoring and/or findings of environmental assessments, consistent with other provisions of this land use plan. Changes will be documented in revisions of the RPS.

Rationale

Livestock grazing is the major use within this analysis unit. It is a very important segment of the local economy, and can be managed for sustained yield and multiple use. The selected grazing management has been subjected to comprehensive analysis in an environmental impact statement, and is consistent with the public comments received.

### Decision Number 2

Brush control, seeding, water developments, fencing, and other range improvements will be implemented as described in Table C in Appendix 3, contingent on sufficient funding levels. These improvements, and any others proposed, will be subject to an environmental assessment and cost-benefit analysis prior to final approval.

Rationale

Range improvements of all types are needed to improve range condition in some areas. These include livestock management facilities such as fences, water developments, and cattleguards, as well as land treatment.

### Decision Number 3

Allotments may be divided or combined to meet the needs of the livestock industry and/or to improve livestock management.

Rationale

Changing requirements for livestock operators may require combining or splitting allotments for improved management of the range or to meet management objectives.

Decision Number 4

Conversions from sheep to cattle and from cattle to sheep will be allowed within the inventoried carrying capacity and will take into account range suitability, manageability, wildlife habitat, and other factors. An environmental assessment will be completed to evaluate the details of each specific proposal.

Rationale

There is a continuing trend to change livestock operations from sheep to cattle. Care must be taken to ensure the change from sheep to cattle will not damage the range or wildlife habitat. The range inventory takes into account suitability, palatability, and diet.

Decision Number 5

Increased forage will be allocated to livestock on a nonrenewable basis for a minimum of five years, during which monitoring must confirm the permanent nature of the forage before increasing the active preference.

Rationale

This procedure will allow monitoring of the increased stocking rate through utilization and trend studies. It will allow increased use with much more flexibility to evaluate the effects of the use.

Decision Number 6

Vegetation manipulation may be done under the following guidelines:

a. Brush may not be removed in crucial elk or deer winter range unless an analysis indicates it will not adversely affect the elk or deer.

b. In sage grouse areas, the Western States Sage Grouse Committee's guidelines will be used (see Appendix 1). Guidelines may be modified by local area, e.g., mosaic patterns within a two-mile radius of strutting grounds.

c. Proposed treatments will be designed to have as little adverse impact on the visual resources as practical (see VRM for classes).

d. Proposals to use chemical sprays will be cleared through the applicable BLM requirements and reviewed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Rationale

Much of the vegetation manipulation will be accomplished with controlled burns or modified suppression plans. However, all other techniques of brush control are available to meet particular needs. The guidelines will minimize adverse impacts on other resources.

Decision Number 7

That portion of the NE 1/4, Section 28, T. 2 N., R. 24 E., draining into the Craters of the Moon National Monument, will be closed to grazing (see Map M-2).

Rationale

This drainage supplies water to the Craters of the Moon National Monument domestic water supply. It is difficult to control grazing in this area. No adjustment in AUMs will be needed because the area is small. Closing the area to grazing will help protect the water quality.

## Watershed

Decision Number 1

Maintain sufficient vegetative cover to protect public lands from accelerated erosion. Minimize soil compaction and disturbance due to livestock grazing, timber harvest, and construction and maintenance of all facilities. Consider time of year for the use, select techniques that are less disturbing, etc.

Rationale

Most of this unit is hilly to mountainous. Because of the steep slopes, extreme care must be taken not to increase erosion and reduce productivity.

Decision Number 2

Minimize stream sedimentation by stabilizing deteriorating streambanks. Improve to at least fair condition all riparian areas, and reduce sediment from high source areas such as mine tailings, poorly located or designed roads, areas of active channelling, etc.

Rationale

There are several streams in the unit. Water quality is generally good. Most of the streams drain into irrigation reservoirs, and any increase in sedimentation will shorten the life span of the reservoirs. Many of the streams are also good fisheries, which would be adversely effected by sedimentation.

Decision Number 3

Protect all ground water recharge areas. Uses that would adversely affect ground water quality or quantity, or reduce artesian pressure, should be restricted.

Rationale

Ground water quality and quantity are important for irrigation and domestic use within and outside the unit.

Decision Number 4

Protect all developed springs from livestock use at the water source.

Rationale

These water sources are important for all of the public land uses. The protection of the source areas will make a more dependable water supply, protect important wildlife habitat, and reduce the likelihood of spreading disease in livestock.