MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS FOR MULTIPLE USE AND TRANSFER AREAS

M1-Moderate Use - 826,577 acres

No special limitations or restrictions on the type or intensity of resource use will be applied in this area. Valid uses will be allowed subject to environmental review and stipulations or special conditions to protect resources. This area will be open to ORV use.

NOTE: Six wilderness study areas (WSAs) covering a total of 154,015 acres were considered for suitability recommendations in the environmental impact statement for the Monument RMP. Two WSAs covering 87,902 acres were preliminarily recommended suitable for designation by Congress as a part of the Wilderness Preservation System. The other four WSAs totalling 66,113 acres were preliminarily recommended nonsuitable for designation.

Only Congress can add an area to the National Wilderness Preservation System. BLM and the Secretary of the Interior make suitability recommendations to the President, who in turn makes recommendations to Congress. Therefore, the wilderness suitability recommendations in the Monument RMP are not final.

Until Congress acts on the President's suitability recommendations, BLM will manage all WSAs in accordance with the Interim Wilderness Management Policy.

L1-WSA Recommended Suitable - 87,902 acres

These areas are preliminarily recommended suitable for designation by Congress as a part of the Wilderness Preservation System. This includes the Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs.

If designated wilderness by Congress, the areas would be closed to ORV use. New mining claims would be prohibited. Mineral leasing would not be prohibited by wilderness designation, but wilderness character would be considered in making mineral leasing decisions. Land uses would be restricted to those compatible with BLM's Wilderness Management Policy. Utility developments would be effectively prohibited. A wilderness management plan would be prepared for each WSA designated. The wilderness management plans would include fire suppression guidelines designed to protect or enhance wilderness character.

If not designated wilderness by Congress, the areas would generally be managed as M1 areas as described above. The exception is 3,258 acres of areas of geologic interest within the Raven's Eye and Sand Butte WSAs which would be managed as L12 areas as described below. Sand Butte (the volcanic cone, not the entire WSA) would be closed to ORV use to protect its naturalness (approximately 220 acres). No other special designations or developments would be proposed. The other restrictions on ORVs, minerals, land uses, and fire described in the preceding paragraph would not apply.

L2-Great Rift WSA Recommended Suitable - 179,990 acres

This WSA was recommended suitable for wilderness designation in a previous study. Objectives for management of the area are outlined in the Great Rift Proposed Wilderness Final Environmental Impact Statement. The 179,990-acre figure represents that portion of the Great Rift WSA lying within the Monument Planning Area on BLM-administered public lands. Another 142,460 acres of public land lies within the Idaho Falls BLM District.

L3-Sand Butte ORV Closure - 1,751 acres

This area is closed to ORV use. Otherwise, management will be the same as described for M1 areas. The ORV closure will make a more easily managed, definite boundary along a road for exclusion of ORVs from the Sand Butte WSA. If the Sand Butte WSA is not designated wilderness by Congress, this area would no longer be closed to ORV use.

L4-ACEC-Substation Tract Relict Vegetation Area - 440 acres

This area is designated an ACEC to focus management attention on special values. The area contains a natural vegetation community representative of a range site that occurred commonly in the planning area prior to human caused disturbances. It is the only known remaining relict of this condition and size in the Shoshone District, and is therefore highly valuable for research and reference. Carey Act applications have been filed on all 440 acres.

Management to protect the relict vegetation community will entail retention in Federal ownership and aggressive fire control efforts. Other opportunities to reduce the risk of loss to fire will be pursued, including cooperative agreements with adjacent landowners. ORV use is limited to designated roads and trails to protect the vegetation while allowing movement of local farm traffic. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development will be allowed. Livestock grazing is prohibited to protect the vegetation.

An activity plan will be prepared to guide management and protection of the relict vegetation community.

L6-ACEC-Vineyard Creek Natural Area - 105 acres

This area is designated an ACEC to focus management attention on special values. Vineyard Creek is the only known spawning habitat for a unique cutthroat/ rainbow hybrid trout. The habitat is threatened by sedimentation from irrigation return flow from private land. Management to protect this habitat will entail coordinating with private landowners to reduce or eliminate sedimentation caused by the irrigation return flow entering Vineyard Creek. The objective is to lower the sediment load of the return flow below 100 ppm or to stop the return flow from entering the stream.

Vineyard Creek contains habitat that may be suitable for the Bliss Rapids snail, a candidate endangered species. The habitat in Vineyard Creek is similar to that of Box Canyon which supports a population of the snail. Future resource uses and proposals will be closely examined to ensure that snail habitat is not adversely affected or that adverse effects can be mitigated.

This area lies within the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. Geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood, including alluvial gravel deposits, will be protected from human disturbances that would degrade their naturalness. Mineral material sales and free use are prohibited.

The Vineyard Creek area is a very scenic and unique area. Future resource uses and proposals will be closely examined to prevent degradation of scenic quality and naturalness. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development will be allowed.

An activity plan will be prepared to guide management of the unique resources of the area. This plan will specify measures to reduce sedimentation of Vineyard Creek.

The area is closed to ORV use to protect scenic quality and promote visitor safety. The area is near an area heavily used by ORVs.

L7-ACEC-Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs Sensitive Area - 128 acres

This area is designated an ACEC to focus management attention on special values. Box Canyon and Blueheart Springs contain the largest populations of Shoshone sculpin (Cottus greenei), a federal candidate threatened species, known to exist on public land.

Since approval of the Monument RMP on April 22, 1985, additional studies have been conducted in the Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs Sensitive Area ACEC. These studies have determined that populations of two other federal candidate threatened species exist on public land in Box Canyon. These are the Bliss Rapids snail (no formal name) and the snail Valvata utahensis (no common name). The ACEC may also contain populations of the giant Columbia River limpet (Fisherola nuttalii), another federal candidate threatened species.

Box Canyon is very scenic and is a unique natural area. It has been evaluated for eligibility for national natural landmark designation.

Future resource uses and proposals will be closely examined to prevent degradation of habitat for the four federal candidate threatened species, scenic quality and naturalness. No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development will be allowed. An activity plan will be prepared to guide management of the unique resources of the area.

The area is open to ORV use. ORV use in the general area is light and is not expected to be a problem in Box Canyon.

L8-Little Wood River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) - 2,787 acres

The riparian habitat and fishery of this area will be maintained or improved to support quality sport fishing opportunities. This will be done by excluding livestock from most of the streamside area. Most of the fencing to accomplish this has already been completed. Management emphasis will be placed on ensuring the fencing is maintained to protect the streambank. A recreation activity management plan will be prepared for the area. The area is open to ORV use.

L9-Snake River Rim Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) - 5,102 acres

This area will be managed to provide for a wide variety of recreation activities including rifle shooting, archery, motorcycle riding/racing, picnicking, sightseeing, and floatboating, while resolving conflicts among various uses and protecting cultural resources and fragile soils. The demand for these activities is expected to increase as is the potential for user conflicts.

Sub-area L9a, 345 acres in Devil's Corral, is closed to ORV use to protect cultural resources and soils. The remaining 4,757 acres is open to ORV use.

Sub-areas L9a and L9d, totalling 1,159 acres, lie within the proposed Dry Cataracts National Natural Landmark. Geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood, including alluvial gravel deposits, will be protected from human disturbances that would degrade their naturalness. Mineral material sales or free use is prohibited.

Sub-area L9e, 374 acres, will be managed for protection, maintenance, and enhancement of wildlife habitat. These tracts are included in the existing Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas Habitat Management Plan (HMP) and will be covered by the revised HMP prepared for L11 areas.

Recreation oriented management will not restrict livestock grazing in L9.

The existing Snake River Rim Recreation Area Management Plan will be revised to reflect changes from existing ORV designations, acreage within the Snake River Rim SRMA, transfer area designations, float-boating management, protection of geologic formations associated with the Bonneville Flood in sub-areas L9a and L9d, and wildlife management on sub-area L9e.

A cultural resource management plan will be prepared for Devil's Corral (L9a). This plan will specify the degree of protection and the interpretation measures appropriate for the area. Fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance will be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

L10-Cedar Fields Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) - 2,240 acres

This area will be managed to provide a variety of recreation activities including ORV use, sport fishing, and river floating; to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat; and to protect scenic quality, fragile soils, and cultural resources.

ORV use is limited. Restrictions will be applied only where significant damage to high quality and highly visible scenic areas, fragile soils, significant wildlife values, and significant cultural resources is occurring. ORV use in sub-area L10a (395 acres) is limited to designated trails consistent with Bureau of Reclamation limitations on adjacent lands.

Livestock grazing and minerals activities will not be restricted by recreation oriented management in the area.

A recreation activity management plan and a cultural resources management plan specifying the degree of protection and interpretation appropriate for the area will be prepared. These plans will include fire suppression guidelines designed to protect fragile soils and cultural resources by limiting surface disturbance.

L11-Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas - 10,551 acres

The L11 areas were called Isolated Tracts in the approved Monument RMP. These areas are now known as Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas (CWMAs).

CWMAs will be managed for protection, maintenance, and enhancement of wildlife habitat, primarily for upland game birds.

The existing CWMAs Habitat Management Plan (HMP) will be revised to reflect changes in the number of tracts. Subarea L9e, will also be covered by the revised HMP. The modified HMP will include fire suppression guidelines for protection of wildlife habitat on CWMAs.

Livestock will be excluded from 821 acres of CWMAs by fencing.

CWMAs are open to ORV use.

L12-Areas of Geologic Interest - 6,996 acres

These areas will be managed to preserve fragile geologic formations associated with caves. Proposed projects will be examined to ensure the formations are not adversely affected.

No surface occupancy associated with mineral lease development will be allowed within 250 feet of fragile geologic formations or caves. To avoid possible adverse effects from increased public exposure, such as vandalism and removal of speleothems, access to caves will not be improved. The areas will remain open to ORV use.

A cave management plan will be prepared for these areas. This will include fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance near the geologic formations.

T1-Transfer - 20,538 acres

These areas are available for transfer from Federal ownership by sale, exchange, agricultural entry or other means determined appropriate under current regulations. Detailed examinations will be conducted prior to the final decision about transfer or type of transfer. The examinations will consider threatened and endangered species, cultural resources, and other resource values. Agricultural entry applications and other transfer proposals for these areas will be considered in the order received.

T2-Transfer-Agricultural Entry - 29,873 acres

These areas are available for transfer from Federal ownership under the agricultural land laws or for local and State government needs or exchange. Other types of transfers may occur only if agricultural entry transfers leave Federal parcels that are difficult to manage because of odd configuration, access problems, or lack of adequate facilities (fences, cattleguards, water, etc.). These resulting difficult-to-manage tracts could be transferred from Federal ownership by sale, exchange, or other means determined appropriate as discussed under T1. T2 areas found to be unsuitable for transfer under agricultural land laws and not falling into the T1 category as described in the preceding sentence will remain in public ownership and be managed as described for M1 areas.

Studies to determine suitability under the agricultural land laws include economic feasibility, physical suitability for agriculture, water availability, threatened and endangered species clearance, and cultural resources clearance.

Up to 25 percent of the T2 areas could be retained in public ownership and managed as L11 areas under the Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas Habitat Management Plan. The criteria for selecting these areas are listed under "Standard Operating Procedures" in the Monument RMP. The areas will be selected on a case-by-case basis as T2 lands are considered for transfer.

T3-Jerome County Canyon Rim Transfer - 258 acres

This area is available for transfer from Federal ownership as described for T1, but only if zoning regulations are changed to allow commercial or residential development.

T4-Bureau of Reclamation Transfer - 3,751 acres

These lands will be withdrawn for the Minidoka North Side Pumping Division Extension Project and developed for irrigated farmland by the Bureau of Reclamation. Developed lands will be transferred from Federal ownership by the Bureau of Reclamation. Approximately half of the area will be retained by the Bureau of Reclamation for wildlife and recreation management. Existing agricultural entry applications will be processed prior to withdrawal.

OTHER RESOURCE DECISIONS

Fire Management

A total of 182,598 acres in the planning area will be under full fire suppression. This includes the Vineyard Creek ACEC (L6), Box Canyon ACEC (L7), Substation Tract ACEC (L4), and the Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas (L11 & L9e). The Pronghorn Winter Range HMP area (discussed below under Wildlife Habitat) will also be under full suppression. The areas designated for full fire suppression will be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan.

To efficiently utilize fire suppression funds, the remainder of the planning area will be covered by a limited suppression plan. However, since the planning area is subject to large, repeated fires that degrade wildlife habitat and aggravate soil erosion, limited suppression will only take place when the burning index is below 22. This will typically require full suppression during July and August.

One hundred miles of roads will be maintained annually to improve access for fire suppression. The maintenance will improve access for fire suppression forces and provide secure fuel breaks that could be used for firelines. This will help suppression crews keep fires smaller which will benefit wildlife habitat and prevent soil erosion.

Prescribed fire could be used for accomplishing the 19,000 acres of brush control proposed under Livestock Forage or in other areas for projects such as noxious weed control or habitat management.

Prescribed fire will not be used in Substation Tract ACEC (L4), Vineyard Creek ACEC (L6), or Box Canyon/Blueheart Springs ACEC (L7).

Although other management practices to reduce wildfire size and occurrence are not proposed, they could be considered in the future as availability and effectiveness are demonstrated. Such practices might include seeding of fire resistant plant species in strips.

Wildlife Habitat

Several wildlife habitat objectives were covered in preceding discussions of multiple use areas. Following is a discussion of other wildlife habitat objectives for the Monument RMP.

Brush areas valuable to wildlife will be given priority for fire suppression in the fire management plan. Specific areas of importance will be identified in detailed examinations and development of HMPs discussed below. Protection of brush pockets will be important in maintaining or enhancing habitat for sage grouse, pronghorn, mule deer, and non-game wildlife. It should be noted that areas of brush valuable to wildlife will likely change over time as some brush stands are burned by wildfire while others recover.

Artificial nest structures will be constructed for the ferruginous hawk, Swainson's hawk, and burrowing owl to increase populations. Specific numbers and locations of these structures will be determined in detailed examination of habitat suitable for each species. Ferruginous hawk nest structures will be placed in remote areas. Swainson's hawk nest structures will be placed on Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas (L11). Burrowing owl nest boxes will be placed primarily on CWMAs, but also throughout the breeding range.

A Sage Grouse Habitat Management Plan will be prepared to guide management in the sage grouse winter habitat area covering about 67,000 acres in Laidlaw Park, Little Park, and Paddleford Flat west of Carey. Objectives of this HMP will be to maintain and enhance sage grouse habitat by maintaining adequate, suitable areas of brush and providing additional forbs for brood rearing. Suitable forbs will be included in range seedings in this area.

A Pronghorn Winter Range Habitat Management Plan will be prepared for approximately 171,000 acres south of Gooding and Shoshone and north of Kimama and Minidoka. Objectives of this HMP will be to improve winter habitat for pronghorn by protecting valuable brush stands and increasing the brush component of the areas. Detailed examination will be required to determine the specific areas most important to the wintering animals. The possibility of seeding brush or fire resistant plant species will be examined for feasibility.

A Pronghorn Summer Range Habitat Management Plan will be prepared for 60,000 acres in the Wildhorse Allotment. Objectives of this HMP will be to improve summer habitat for pronghorn by maintaining adequate areas of brush, providing additional forbs, and providing new water sources. Suitable forbs will be included in range seedings in this area. Guidelines for providing additional water sources will be developed.

Guidelines for fire suppression to protect brush will be developed for the areas discussed in the preceding four paragraphs. These will be incorporated into the fire management plan.

Livestock Forage

Provide 142,879 AUMs of livestock forage. Approximately 858,043 acres of public land will be included in grazing allotments. The average stocking rate will be 6.0 acres per AUM.

The objectives will be to maintain existing perennial forage plants, maintain soil stability, stabilize areas currently in downward trend, and increase availability of perennial forage plants.

The following range improvements will be accomplished in support of achieving the objectives stated above.

25,500 acres of reseeding
19,000 acres of brush control
54 miles of fencing
74 miles of pipeline
110 water troughs
9 wells
24 cattleguards
4 miles of road construction

Total cost of improvements = $1,602,800
20-year maintenance and replacement cost = $669,200

The initial stocking level will be 149,135 AUMs (present active preference). Adjustments toward the proposed preference, 142,879 AUMs, will occur based on monitoring data. Increases dependent on range improvements will occur only as funding for the necessary improvements is available and the projects are completed. Decreases in livestock stocking resulting from land transfers will occur only as the identified tracts are transferred from Federal ownership.

No changes in season of livestock use are proposed. This is because no resource conflicts were identified that would be resolved by such changes. However, changes in season of livestock use could be made in the future after considering environmental effects in the NEPA process if supported by monitoring.

New allotment management plans (AMPs) or cooperative resource management plans (CRMPs) will be developed for nine allotments. This will bring the total area covered to 97 percent of the allotted acres.

It is estimated that 21,910 sheep AUMs will be converted to cattle AUMs. Actual conversion will be consistent with the Shoshone District Conversion Policy.

Cultural Resources

In addition to the Cultural Resource Management Plans discussed for Devil's Corral (L9a) and the Cedar Fields SRMA (L10), two other plans will be prepared; one for the Oregon Trail and one for Wilson Butte Cave. These plans will specify the degree of protection and the interpretation measures appropriate for the areas. In the case of the Oregon Trail, fire suppression guidelines to limit surface disturbance will be developed and incorporated into the fire management plan.

Soils

Several actions have been discussed in previous 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.