U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0015-EA

Jump Creek Recreation Site Road Improvement

March 2013

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Owyhee Field Office
20 1st Ave West
Marsing, ID 83639

BLM

NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BLM, BOISE DISTRICT-OWYHEE FIELD OFFICE

EA #DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0015-EA

Applicant (if any): **BLM Action**	Proposed Action: **Jump Creek Recreation Site Road Improvement**		EA No. **DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0015-EA**
State: **Idaho**	County: **Owyhee**	District: **Boise**	
Prepared By: **OFO ID Team**	Title: **Jump Creek Recreation Site Road Improvement**		Report Date: **3-15-13**

LANDS INVOLVED

Meridian	Township	Range	Sections	Acres
Boise	T2N	R5W	27	0.25

Consideration of Critical Elements	N/A or Not Present	Applicable or Present, No Impact	Discussed in EA
Air Quality	X		
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X		
Cultural Resources		X	X
Environmental Justice (E.O. 12898)	X		
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	X		
Fish Habitat		X	X
Floodplains	X		
Forests and Rangelands	X		
Migratory Birds		X	
Upland Vegetation		X	
Native American Religious Concerns	X		
Invasive, Nonnative Species	X		
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	X		
Threatened or Endangered Species		X	X
Social and Economic		X	
Water Quality (Drinking/Ground)		X	X
Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X	X
Wild and Scenic Rivers (Eligible)	X		
Wilderness Study Areas	X		

**Because the proposed project is a reconstruction of an existing roadbed in a developed recreation site many of the critical elements listed above would not be impacted.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Need for and Purpose of Action

The Jump Creek recreation site (See attached Map 1 – Jump Creek Recreation Site Location) is a popular area that receives approximately 20,000 visitors per year and is open to the public year-round. The uses within the immediate area consist of camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, picnicking, gold panning, and rock climbing. The recreation site also serves as a staging area for activities such as Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) riding, horseback riding, and hunting. The proposed project would add additional drainage structures, repair/reconstruct, and surface/pave a small section (685ft) of road that leads down a hill into the main (lower) parking area at the Jump Creek Recreation site (See attached aerial photo – Jump Creek Recreation Site Road Reconstruct/Paving). The road currently receives annual maintenance; however, this maintenance only occurs when funding is available. Maintenance typically only includes blading; however, on occasion magnesium chloride is applied to the road surface to bind the materials. Due to the increased use, improper drainage, and steep grade, the road quickly washboards, ruts, and erodes, at times making it unsafe and unusable to two-wheel drive vehicles, and potentially stranding visitors at the recreation site.

The proposed project would eliminate safety concerns of visitors rolling their vehicle off of the road as they make multiple attempts to drive up and out of the recreation site on the treacherous road, as well as visitors being stranded overnight at the site. In 2012, Owyhee County Law Enforcement officials towed multiple two wheel drive vehicles out of the lower parking area that were stranded due to poor road conditions. Ruts, loose gravel, and wash boarding made the road impassable to two wheel drive vehicles.

The project would also ensure disabled visitors access to the restroom facilities. Without the project, as road conditions deteriorate throughout the season making it inaccessible to two- wheel drive traffic, some disabled visitors would not be able to access the facilities and day use areas. Abled visitors would still be able to park in the upper parking areas and hike down to the facilities. The proposed project would ensure year-round access to the main parking area for all visitors.

Resource concerns, such as impacts to water quality and fisheries (Redband trout) as a direct result of erosion from the roadbed, due to the current graveled surface, insufficient drainage, and steep grades, would be eliminated. The project would also help minimize the creation of new trails from the upper parking areas leading into the canyon, as visitors would have access to the main parking site, which is the preferred access point into the canyon. The project would increase the longevity of the restroom and day use facilities within the recreation site by eliminating the erosion and sediment from the roadbed that is washed into these facilities during spring rains. Heavy rains such as those received the past two or three spring seasons bury concrete walkways and fire-rings and fill restrooms with several inches of sediment, as well as wash out the main trail leading into the canyon.

Overall, the project is a much needed upgrade that will resolve resource issues, extend the lifespan of the facilities in the area, and ensure all recreationists access to the restroom facilities and day use area year-round.

1.2 Summary of Proposed Action

The BLM Owyhee Field Office is proposing to reconstruct/repair approximately 685 feet of road that leads into the main/lower parking area of the Jump Creek Recreation Site (See attached aerial photo – Jump Creek Recreation Site Road Reconstruct/Paving). The work would consist of the reconstruction of the existing road bed, the addition of multiple drainage structures, and surfacing/paving of the newly constructed roadbed.

There is an existing survey for the recreation site and conceptual level construction drawings. Future work for the proposed project includes design and construction staking of the roadway to bring grades down from a current maximum of 17% to an estimated grade of 10-12% throughout. Additional drainage structures would be added and existing culverts would be cleaned to ensure water is being diverted from the road surface. Engineered fill materials would be placed and compacted prior to asphalt paving. Design and layout would be performed using BLM engineers or Idaho BLM Architecture and Engineering (A&E) contractors JUB Engineers and CTA Architects. Construction will be via the Boise District Heavy Equipment Shop and/or BLM administered contracts. Re-establishment of existing survey, design, and layout is anticipated to take three months. Procurement actions to award contracts are estimated to take 2-3 months. Actual physical work is estimated to take one month or less. Final product will include a 685 foot segment of road that is less steep, provides more suitable drainage, and is composed of a hard durable asphalted surface.

A temporary closure of the recreation site would be implemented during project construction. The closure would be for an estimated period of three weeks. The closure dates would be advertised prior to project implementation via newspaper, internet, etc…

1.3 Location and Setting

The Jump Creek Recreation Site lies within the Jump Creek Special Recreation Management Area of the Owyhee Field Office. This management area is approximately 8,500 acres in size and encompasses the desert plateau and canyon lands along the Owyhee Front Country adjoining the Snake River Plain near Homedale, Idaho. Two streams, Jump Creek on the east and Poison Creek on the West, have cut deep, parallel canyons northward through the plateau. Waterfalls exist in each of the lower canyons. The most well-known and frequented by recreationists is the 60 foot high Jump Creek Falls. The falls provide a physical barrier to the upper Jump Creek canyon, which contains one of the best examples of pristine riparian habitat in southwestern Idaho. Jump Creek Canyon, including 90 acres below the falls, has been identified as the Jump Creek Recreation site (a total of 465 acres).

The site itself includes three parking areas, two upper lots, which simply provide parking and hiking trail access, and one main/lower parking area that contains a restroom, trash receptacles, information kiosks, access into the canyon falls, fire rings, picnic tables, and access to Jump Creek. Most visitors utilize the main/lower parking area while at the recreation site. The uses

within the recreation site consist of camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, panning, and rock climbing. The site also serves as a staging area for activities such as Off Highway Vehicle riding, horseback riding, and hunting.

1.4 Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plan

The proposed project is in conformance with the Owyhee Field Office Resource Management Plan (1999) which directs the Field Office to: "Provide for high quality recreational opportunities and experiences at developed and undeveloped recreation sites by maintaining existing amenities."

The project is also consistent with the Bureau's "Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services" (2003) work plan where objectives are to: "Ensure public health and safety, and improve the condition and accessibility of recreation sites and facilities." As well as to: "Manage and maintain recreation sites and facilities to acceptable operational standards."

1.5 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Requirements

Federal Land Policy and Management Act

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) mandates that the BLM manage for multiple uses of Federal public lands. FLPMA requires the BLM to execute its management powers under a land use planning process that is based on multiple use and sustained yield principles. FLPMA provides for, but is not limited to, grazing on public lands, land sales, withdrawals, acquisitions, and exchanges.

Endangered Species Act

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) requires all Federal agencies to ensure their actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitat.

Cultural Resource Laws and Executive Orders

BLM is required to consult with Native American tribes to "help assure (1) that federally recognized tribal governments and Native American individuals, whose traditional uses of public land might be affected by a proposed action, will have sufficient opportunity to contribute to the decision, and (2) that the decision maker will give tribal concerns proper consideration" (U.S. Department of the Interior, BLM Manual Handbook H-8120-1). Tribal coordination and consultation responsibilities are implemented under laws and executive orders that are specific to cultural resources, which are referred to as "cultural resource authorities," and under regulations that are not specific, which are termed "general authorities." Cultural resource authorities include: the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA); the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (ARPA); and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990. General authorities include: the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1979; the NEPA Act of 1969; the FLPMA; and Executive

Order 13007-Indian Sacred Sites. The proposed action is in compliance with the aforementioned authorities.

Southwest Idaho is the homeland of two culturally and linguistically related tribes: the Northern Shoshone and the Northern Paiute. In the latter half of the 19th century, a reservation was established at Duck Valley on the Nevada/Idaho border west of the Bruneau River. The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes residing on the Duck Valley Reservation today actively practice their culture and retain aboriginal rights and/or interests in this area. The Shoshone-Paiute Tribes assert aboriginal rights to their traditional homelands as their treaties with the United States, the Boise Valley Treaty of 1864 and the Bruneau Valley Treaty of 1866, which would have extinguished aboriginal title to the lands now federally administered, were never ratified.

Other tribes that have ties to southwest Idaho include the Bannock Tribe and the Nez Perce Tribe. Southeast Idaho is the homeland of the Northern Shoshone Tribe and the Bannock Tribe. In 1867 a reservation was established at Fort Hall in southeastern Idaho. The Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868 applies to the BLM's relationship with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The northern part of the BLM's Boise District was also inhabited by the Nez Perce Tribe. The Nez Perce signed treaties in 1855, 1863 and 1868. BLM considers off-reservation treaty-reserved fishing, hunting, gathering, and similar rights of access and resource use on the public lands it administers for all tribes that may be affected by a proposed action.

Paleontological Resources

Paleontological remains are protected under Public Law 111-11, Title VI, Subtitle D of 2009, and the act requires the protection of fossil resources on Federal land. No paleontological resources were identified during a literature review for the project using Idaho State Historical Society and the BLM records or during field survey in December 2012. Paleontological resources will not be affected by any alternative discussed within this document and thus will not be discussed further.

Section 313 of the Clean Water Act

Section 313 of the Clean Water Act of 1972 requires that "each department, agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Government having jurisdiction over any property or facility, or engaged in any activity resulting, or which may result, in the discharge or runoff of pollutants shall be subject to, and comply with, all federal, state, interstate, and local requirements, administrative authority, and process and sanctions in a like manner as any non-governmental entity." The BLM is therefore required to comply with all federal, state, interstate, and local requirements, administrative authority, and processes and sanctions with respect to the control and abatement of water pollution. The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) is responsible for implementing the Clean Water Act in Idaho and has promulgated State water quality rules to meet this responsibility in IDAPA 58.01.02—Water Quality Standards and Wastewater Treatment Requirements (IDEQ 1996). Waters are designated as impaired when there is a violation of water quality criteria and are placed on the §303(d) list. Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires states to develop water quality improvement plans, referred to as total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), for water bodies that are not meeting their beneficial uses.

A TMDL is only required when a pollutant can be identified and in some way quantified. The purpose of a TMDL is to set limits on pollutant levels, correct water quality impairments, and achieve beneficial uses of water bodies through attainment of water quality standards.

1.6 Scoping and Development of Issues

This project was scoped via the BLM website from November 22nd, 2011 through January 10th, 2012. Information displayed on the website contained a description of the area, the need for the proposed project, details of the project, and solicited public comments. The project was very well received by the public, as comments from users were all very positive.

OFO staff identified potential issues with cultural resources and water quality as described below:

- The ground disturbance associated with altering road grade, improving drainage, and paving may expose sites and/or materials that are of cultural significance. This exposure may lead to damage of the materials, inadvertent discovery, or loss of the site's context. However, recent cultural surveys and shovel probes conducted on the ground by BLM staff revealed that no affect to significant cultural resources would occur during project implementation. Additionally, monitoring for cultural resources during project construction would occur during and after implementation of the proposed project on an as-needed basis to mitigate any further subsurface concerns.
- Ground disturbance and installation of appropriate drainage mechanisms may cause short-term adverse impacts to localized water quality.

Support for the proposed project has also been demonstrated by numerous office visits and phone calls from frustrated members of the public, as well as on site contacts with people recreating within the area expressing their concerns. A variety of user groups that were contacted also expressed their support of the proposed project, several of which provided a letter of support.

Supporting Groups

-Bureau of Land Management
-Owyhee County
-Shoshone-Paiute Tribes
-Idaho Parks and Recreation
-Treasure Valley Trail Machine Association
-Idaho Trails Council
-Idaho ATV Association
-Southwest Idaho Desert Racing Association
-Idaho Brittany Club
-Idaho 4x4 Association
-Rough Riders Equestrian Group

2.0 Description of the Alternatives

2.1 Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives

2.1.1 Alternative A - No Action/Continue Present Management

Under this alternative the road leading to the main/lower Jump Creek Recreation site would be left in its current state and public safety and natural resource issues would persist. Current management would continue on the existing roadway, which has a graveled surface and steep pitch with slopes as high as 17% is some areas. The roadway typically receives annual maintenance in the spring, depending upon funding, and conditions slowly deteriorate throughout the remainder of the year. As road conditions deteriorate, BLM officials are forced to close the road leading down into the main/lower parking area to motorized vehicles.

2.1.2 Alternative B - Proposed Action

This alternative would consist of project work to reconstruct and repair approximately 685 feet of an existing road leading to the main/lower parking area of the Jump Creek Recreation Site. Work for the proposed project includes design and construction staking of the roadway to bring grades down from a maximum of 17% to an estimated grade of 10-12% throughout. Additional drainage structures (culverts) would be added and existing structures would be cleaned to ensure water is being diverted from the road surface. Engineered fill materials would be placed and compacted, and lastly the reconstructed roadbed would be paved.

Design and layout will be performed using BLM engineers or A&E contractors JUB Engineers and CTA Architects. Construction will be via the Boise District Heavy Equipment Shop and/or BLM administered contracts. Final product will include a 685 foot segment of road that is less steep, provides more suitable drainage, and is composed of a hard durable asphalted surface.

3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

3.1 Riparian Habitat/Water Quality/Fisheries

3.1.1 Affected Environment – Riparian Habitat/Water Quality/Fisheries

Jump Creek is a 25.6-mile long stream that drains a 170 square mile watershed. The elevation change in the watershed is 2,040 feet. Jump Creek flows in a northeasterly direction through the Sands Basin, Jump Creek passes through a narrow canyon of sheer rhyolite cliffs. Near the end of the canyon the 60-foot Jump Creek Falls occur. The falls effectively isolate the upper stream segment from the lower segment. As the stream enters the Snake River Plain it begins to mix with a series of agricultural drains and small tributaries until it enters the Snake River. For this project, the riparian area of interest starts at the falls to approximately 0.75 miles downstream (Figure 1).

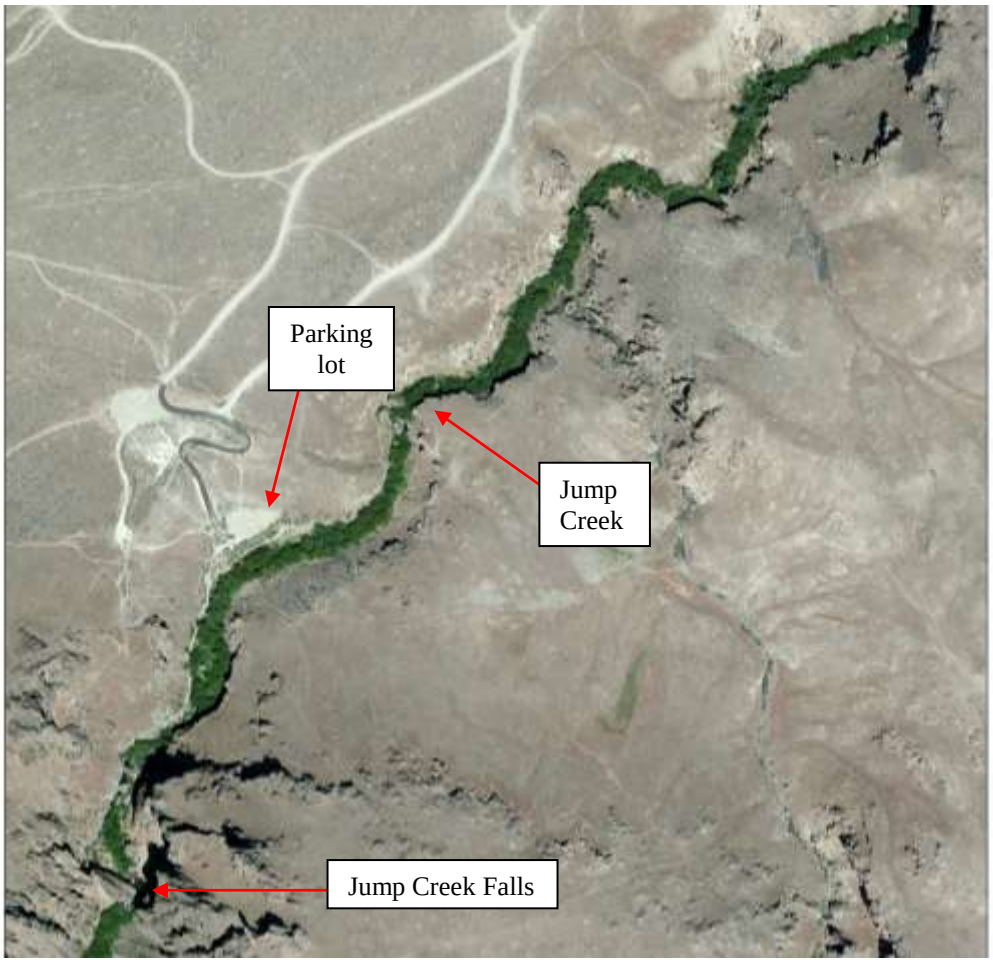


Figure 1: Areal view of Jump Creek recreational site.

Jump Creek supports a diverse riparian plant community dominated by woody shrubs that adequately protects banks and dissipates the energy of high stream flows (Figure 2). In 2007, a lotic functioning condition assessment was conducted and identified that this reach of Jump Creek was properly functioning.

Figure 2: Up and down stream pictures of Jump Creek vegetation and streambank composition.

Sinuosity, width-to-depth ratio, and stream gradient were in balance with what is expected from the landscape setting. However, recreation use adjacent to Jump Creek Falls was impacting a small area of the riparian zone by trampling and soil compaction in the floodplain and on the streambank.

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) identified cold water aquatic life and primary contact recreation as beneficial uses for Jump Creek. Jump Creek from the headwaters to the confluence of the Snake River is water quality limited, due to sediment/siltation and for an altered flow regime. The reach from Mule Creek to the Snake River is on IDEQ's 303d List for impaired streams and has a sediment allocation to meet its TMDL. This specific reach is further downstream and is not in the analysis area. Jump Creek water temperatures were monitored near the parking lot recreation site during 1996. At that time, the stream fully supported the cold water biota beneficial use. Maximum water temperatures did not exceed 21.6^{o}C and daily maximum temperatures averaged 19.7^{o}C. Bacteria concentrations were sampled at the same location on September 1996, August 2008, and September 2012 and State of Idaho criteria for secondary and primary contact recreation were met.

Idaho Fish and Game (IDFG) collected data at two locations directly above and below the Jump Creek Falls in 1994. Above the falls, IDFG estimated the density of redband trout to be 17 fish per 100 meter^2. Of the 27 fish located, two were young of the year, suggesting that the fish are spawning in the stream. Below the falls, IDFG estimated the density of redband trout to be 58 fish per 100 meter^2. A total of 86 fish were located, with 23 being young-of the-year, again indicating that the fish are successfully spawning in the stream. A comparison of the 1994 IDFG fish data to unpublished BLM data collected in 1977 indicates similar fish densities below the falls. IDFG suggests that due to the unmanaged and isolated nature of these sampling locations, it is unlikely that the fish populations have changed in recent time.

3.1.2 Riparian Habitat/Water Quality/Fisheries

3.1.2.1 Alternative A

Continuation of the current situation would have little effect on the Riparian Habitat/Water Quality/Fisheries in the short and long terms (2 and 10 years, respectively). The riparian area, water quality, and fish habitat would persist in their current condition because of the strong riparian plant community and fluvial morphology buffers dust and sediment from the uplands. Some dust from the gravel road that parallels a lower reach of Jump Creek would likely continue to contribute a small portion of sediment into the creek. Also, high intensity rain events, if large enough, could increase localized sediment input into the creek from overland erosion, decreasing water quality and fisheries habitat. However, buffer capacity of the riparian area and stream morphology would continue to maintain good fish habitat as indicated by the current resident redband trout population, so overall effects would be negligible.

3.1.2.2 Alternative B

Short and long-term effects from this alternative would be similar to Alternative A. The only difference is the paved road segment would likely reduce surface erosion from the road and surrounding uplands (as described in pervious section) by paving bare soil and improving drainage with culverts. These sediment reductions would be minor due to the nature of the

storm events necessary to cause the erosion and not likely to affect overall water quality status of Jump Creek or the fisheries habitat. Like Alternative A, the riparian area, water quality, and fish habitat would persist in their current condition and overall effects to these resources would be negligible.

Construction activities would provide some opportunity for increased erosion until the project is completed. However, due to the short term (less than two weeks) duration of the construction and standard operating procedures would limit effects to the extend they would be immeasurable.

3.2 Recreation and Visual Resources

3.2.1 Affected Environment – Recreation

The Jump Creek Recreation Site lies within the Jump Creek Special Recreation Management Area of the Owyhee Field Office. This management area is approximately 8,500 acres in size and encompasses the desert plateau and canyon lands along the Owyhee Front Country adjoining the Snake River Plain near Homedale. Two streams, Jump Creek on the east and Poison Creek on the West, have cut deep, parallel canyons northward through the plateau. Waterfalls exist in each of the lower canyons. The most well-known and frequented by recreationists is the 60ft high Jump Creek Falls. Jump Creek Canyon, including 90 acres below the falls, has been identified as the Jump Creek Recreation site (a total of 465 acres).

The Jump Creek recreation site is a popular area that receives approximately 20,000 visitors per year and is open to the public year-round. The site itself includes three parking areas, two upper lots which simply provide parking and hiking trail access, and one main/lower parking area that contains a restroom, trash receptacles, information kiosks, access into the canyon falls, fire rings, picnic tables, and access to Jump Creek. Most visitors utilize the main/lower parking area while at the recreation site. The uses within the immediate area consist of camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, picnicking, panning, and rock climbing. The rec site also serves as a staging area for activities such as Off Highway Vehicle riding, horseback riding, and hunting.

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classification is used to characterize the type of recreational opportunity settings, activities, and experience opportunities that can be expected in different areas of public land (RMP). The area within Jump Creek Recreation site is categorized as roaded natural. The roaded natural classification is an area that is characterized by a generally natural environment with only moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of man. Resource modifications and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment (USDI-BLM, July 1999).

The visual resource classifications for the recreation site are class II and III. The VRM class II objective is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic of the landscape should be low.

The VRM class III objective is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape and the level of change to the characteristic of the landscape should be moderate.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences – Recreation and Visual Resources

3.2.2.1 Alternative A

Under this alternative current management of the recreation site would continue, and the existing impacts to recreationists would remain. Under current management public safety becomes a growing concern as the road conditions into the main/lower parking area deteriorate. Currently, due to the excessive amount of use, improper drainage, and steep pitch, the road quickly wash boards, ruts, and erodes making it unsafe and unusable for two-wheel drive vehicles. Vehicles utilizing the road under these conditions are more susceptible to rollovers as they attempt to exit the site. Currently, visitors attempt to navigate the deteriorated road at a high speed, hoping their momentum will carry them up and out of the site, these attempts are usually unsuccessful and visitors are left stuck or stranded within the site.

Additionally, under current management, for a portion of the year (up to 4 months) disabled visitors would not have access to the day use areas or facilities within the recreation site. As road conditions deteriorate throughout the season making it inaccessible to two-wheel drive traffic, some disabled visitors would not be able to access the facilities and day use areas. Abled visitors however would still be able to park in the upper parking areas and hike down to the facilities.

New trails would continue to be created as visitors make new routes from the upper parking areas as they navigate their way into the canyon. This could also be a potential safety concern, due to the fact that the area within the recreation site is steep and rocky, and hiking cross country within a canyon setting can be a dangerous activity. The creation of new trails within the recreation site would also negatively impact visual quality of the area.

Improper drainage and erosion of the existing graveled roadbed also has a direct effect on the facilities, day use sites, and the canyon hiking trail. Spring rains cause a substantial amount of erosion, which flows directly down the gravel road which then fills up the restroom facilities, sidewalks, and fire-rings with sediment. Furthermore, the rains and sediment washout/erode the main hiking trail leading into the canyon, which again becomes a safety concern as visitors try to navigate the eroded trail or travel cross country to avoid the damaged trail system. The deterioration of the roads, trails, and facilities within the recreation site also negatively impact the visual qualities of the area, which in turn affect the overall recreation experience.

3.2.2.2 Alternative B

Reconstruction and surfacing of the Jump Creek Recreation Site road would have an overall positive affect on recreation and visual resources. The proposed project would eliminate safety concerns of visitors rolling their vehicle off of the road as they make multiple attempts to drive up and out of the recreation site on the treacherous road, as well as, visitors being stuck/stranded overnight at the site. With a reconstructed roadbed that contains a lesser grade, increased drainage structures, and a hardened surface, visitors will be able to navigate out of the main/lower parking area effortlessly. The proposed project would also ensure disabled visitors year round access to the restroom facilities and day use area.

The proposed project would help eliminate the creation of new trails that occur under current management as the road deteriorates and visitors navigate their way into the canyon from the upper parking lots. This would also eliminate the associated safety concerns with visitors hiking cross country through steep rocky terrain as they make their way into the canyon. Visual quality within the area would improve, due to the reduction or elimination of newly created trails from the upper parking lots.

Additionally, the proposed project would prolong the lifespan of the existing restroom facilities and day use areas within the recreation site as erosion is eliminated from the roadway and restrooms, fire rings, and sidewalks are no longer buried in sediment after heavy rains. This has a positive effect not only on the facilities, but recreationists as well. Typically after heavy rains when these areas become buried in sediment they are inaccessible/unusable to the public until maintenance occurs.

In the short-term recreationists would incur some impacts during project implementation, as visitors may encounter temporary closures and/or delays to the recreation site. However, project construction is expected to occur in the spring months before peak season, which would help reduce impacts to the number of visitors. Notices would also be posted via internet, newspapers, etc… prior to implementation notifying visitors of project construction dates and closures to help mitigate these potential impacts.

Visual resources would also be impacted during project implementation and immediately following construction as the grade of the roadway is reduced. These impacts would be considered negligible due to the fact the project is a reconstruction of the existing roadway in a developed recreation site, and not a new development. Any impacts associated with project construction would also be short-term and are considered acceptable for the VRM classifications within the area.

Overall, the project is a much needed upgrade that will mitigate resource issues, extend the lifespan of the facilities in the area, and ensure all recreationists (abled and disabled) access to the restroom facilities and day use area year-round

3.3 Cultural Resources

3.3.1 Affected Environment – Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are physical remnants of human activities or traditional lifeway values that are identifiable through field inventory (surveys), document research, and ethnography. Traditional lifeway values are important to group religions or practices and can include landscape features or other natural resources such as culturally important plants. Prehistoric lithic scatters are the most common type of known cultural resources found in the general vicinity around Jump Creek, and some sites may contain stratified subsurface components with perishable materials such as pollen and faunal remains that can yield data on prehistoric subsistence and environments. Although there are several criteria for recommending eligibility of sites to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the most commonly cited is the potential to yield data important to our understanding of prehistory. Possible impacts to eligible, or potentially eligible, sites must be taken under consideration prior to federally funded or

authorized undertakings under the NHPA, NEPA, and other laws and regulations. Those authorities also protect other classes of cultural resources such as Traditional Cultural Properties and traditional and cultural use areas that may or may not meet NRHP criteria. Following standard protocol, in the process of analyzing and evaluating potential effects from this undertaking, the BLM performed a record search of previous cultural resource surveys and recorded sites based on State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) records, submitted reports of findings and recommendations to the SHPO for comment, and consulted with the Shoshone-Paiute of the Duck Valley Reservation. A wide buffer around the project area was surveyed. No NRHP eligible sites are present within the area that could be directly impacted by the project, and no specific concerns regarding cultural resources were raised by the tribes. Although collection of surface artifacts has been illegal since the Antiquities Act of 1906, looting is still a serious threat to heritage resources. Based on the extremely high level of pedestrian traffic the area has witnessed over decades of recreational use, the likelihood of finding any surface artifacts worthy of recommending a site as eligible within the recreation area is low. One area adjacent to the road was considered to have some potential for subsurface cultural deposits after surface survey. Although the potential was slight, the area would be disturbed by the road project. Shovel probes subsequently placed near the road showed that there was no potential for intact cultural deposits below the surface in that location.

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences – Cultural Resources

3.3.2.1 Alternative A

Because no action would be taken to pave the road, there would be no direct impacts from the project. Indirect impacts would be minor, if any. Use of the upper parking area could increase with more foot traffic from the upper to lower terrace. Foot paths cross cut the upper terraces and subject the area to increased devegetation and artifact exposure. However, artifact surface density is sparse and buried sites in the vicinity are unlikely based on limited shovel probes and erosional cuts observed in the area. Therefore, the alternative would be unlikely to cause a change in eligibility in any NRHP eligible or potentially eligible archaeological site and no historic properties would be affected. Access to and benefits of any other culturally valued resources that may exist within the canyon will continue as they have in the past, with temporary closures of the lower parking area likely after intense storms.

3.3.2.2 Alternative B

Heavy disturbance from road construction has already occurred within and immediately adjacent to the road. No artifacts were found within the area expected to be directly impacted by the project during thorough survey on three separate visits. Shovel probes indicate a lack of potential for stratified subsurface cultural deposits in the only geomorphically suitable area for a site in along the road segment. Significant sites nearby would not be affected by road construction, and might actually benefit by decreased off-trail foot traffic and associated vegetation changes. The project would help minimize the creation of new trails from the upper parking areas leading into the canyon, as visitors would have access to the main parking site, which is the preferred access point into the canyon.

If cultural resources were encountered during construction, all work would cease and the field office archaeologist would be immediately notified. If human remains, funerary objects, sacred

objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered, all work would cease and the field office manager would be notified immediately by telephone with a written follow-up. Any such remains or cultural resources would be secured from further disturbance until the appropriate authority arrived on site. A visit to the area after project implementation and the first heavy storm event, (and occasionally thereafter), will be used to monitor for any potential effects from possible changes water run-off patterns. Mitigation strategies would be developed in response to negative findings on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the Idaho SHPO and any affected Tribes in the unlikely event that cultural resources might be affected. The alternative is not expected to cause a change in eligibility in any NRHP eligible or potentially eligible archaeological site thus no historic properties would be affected. Reliable access to the Jump Creek Recreation Area will be improved, with possible minor detriments to the solitude and aesthetic of the immediate area.

3.4 Cumulative Impacts

3.4.1 Riparian Habitat/Water Quality/Fisheries – Cumulative Impacts

"Cumulative Effect" is defined as the "impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions" (40 CFR 1508.7). The CEQ interprets this regulation as referring only to the cumulative impact of the direct and indirect effects of the proposed action and its alternatives when added to the aggregate effects of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Direct and indirect effects to riparian, water quality, and fisheries were identified in Section 3.2.1 and stated that the short and long-term effects from the current situation and from conducting the project were overall negligible. Therefore, there are no cumulative effects for these resources.

3.4.2 Recreation and Visual Resources – Cumulative Impacts

3.4.2.1 Scope of Analysis

Cumulative effects to recreation and visual resources within the Jump Creek Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) would primarily be the result of grazing activities, fire, utilities, and current and future actions that stem from Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 (OPLMA). The passing of the Act designated roughly 517,000 acres of wilderness and 316 miles of wild and scenic rivers within Owyhee County. In addition, the Act also mandates the BLM to complete a transportation plan for all of Owyhee County.

The area of analysis for cumulative effects is the entire Jump Creek SRMA (8,500 acres). This management area is approximately 8,500 acres in size and encompasses the desert plateau and canyon lands along the Owyhee Front Country adjoining the Snake River Plain near Homedale, Idaho. Two streams, Jump Creek on the east and Poison Creek on the West, have cut deep, parallel canyons northward through the plateau. The timeframe considered is activities since OPLMA for current conditions and activities planned within the next three years, and the expected duration of effects from those activities (generally 5 years).

3.4.2.2 Current Conditions

Presently the main recreational activities within the analysis area include: backpacking, horseback riding, camping (Jump Creek Recreation site and dispersed camping), OHV use, hunting, and sightseeing. Off-highway motor vehicle designations within much of the SRMA are limited to existing roads and trails, and closed within the Jump Creek Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The analysis area also contains the Jump Creek Recreation Site; this site receives approximately 20,000 visitors annually.

Impacts associated with past, present, and future activities would consist of grazing activities and associated range improvements, such as fences. The projects that have been identified throughout the analysis area have reduced some opportunities for non-motorized cross country travel (i.e. hiking and equestrian travel). During periods of livestock use, there would be an increase in potential human/livestock interactions. Additionally, fire has been a regular occurrence within the analysis area, because of the relatively high use within the area, these fires are predominately human caused. Fires can have a negative effect, though short-term, on both recreation and visual resources as areas become blackened, inaccessible, and temporarily diminish hunting opportunities. Much of these impacts are short term and considered negligible.

Utilities such as FM towers and power lines currently exist throughout the analysis area and an additional 500kv power line corridor is also being proposed within the SRMA. The power lines have an obvious negative effect on visual resources throughout the area, which can also negatively impact recreational experiences.

Travel management planning throughout the area as mandated by OPLMA could have both positive and negative effects on recreationists. It is possible that motorized route mileages would be reduced through planning thus decreasing the amount of OHV opportunities available to the public. However, travel management can also create more sustainable routes, maintenance schedules for routes, trailheads, parking areas, signing, and maps of the area that allow for easier navigation.

3.4.2.3 Environmental Consequences – Cumulative Impacts

Alternative A

Cumulative analysis of Alternative A, when added to past, present, and future actions, within the cumulative analysis area that is described above, would have some negative effects to recreation and visual resources similar to those described in Section 3.3.2.1. However, because we are analyzing a much larger area, these impacts may not be as damaging or even magnified as those discussed in Section 3.3.2.1 which focuses on a much smaller area.

Overall, the combined effects of Alternative A, combined with grazing, fire, utility corridors, and travel management would have a slightly negative impact to recreation and visual resources. Many of the impacts discussed are negligible and short term, however impacts such utility corridors, frequent human caused fires, and current management practices within the Jump Creek Recreation site would not improve the overall health and scenic quality of the area, nor would it result in an improved recreation experience.

Alternative B
This alternative would be similar to Alternative A in that past, present, and future actions would have some negative effects to recreation and visual resources, as described above. However, the difference being that the proposed project under this alternative would reduce some of the negative impacts to the analysis area overall, as safety issues are eliminated, visual resources improve, and the overall recreation experience enhanced. While impacts still exist throughout the analysis area, predominately from fire and utilities, the proposed Jump Creek Recreation site project would improve the overall health, visual quality, and recreational experience within a portion of the analysis area where most of the recreational visits occurs.

3.4.3 Cultural Resources – Cumulative Impacts

3.4.3.1 Scope of Analysis

The scope of cultural resources analysis for this project is all areas in and within a quarter mile of the Jump Creek Recreation Area ACEC. Surveys in the area have been conducted for:

- a mining claim,
- fence and road rehabilitations,
- a trail survey,
- and for an emergency helicopter landing site.

A total of 253 acres within the area have been surveyed to modern standards. Heavy use of the area and the irreparable nature of the archaeological record means that sites can almost never be returned to their original condition after impacts have occurred. Because of this, the baseline for comparison of site condition is the early 1980s, when the most significant resources were documented in the area.

3.4.3.2 Current Conditions

Site density is low in the area considering the presence of permanent water and shelter within the canyon and drainage system. However, this scarcity of sites may reflect illicit surface collection of artifacts (and trash) over time more than prehistoric and historic land use. In addition to artifact and "rock" collecting that may have destroyed prehistoric sites, the continual removal of trash through time has probably resulted in the lack of historic sites other than scattered rock rings that are difficult to date and have likely been reused more recently. Surface collection of artifacts (both before, and likely since the 1980s) appears to have affected the scientific value and ability to identify sites from surface remains, as well as having affected possible cultural values of resources. Geocaching has occurred in the area, and the practice does have the potential to harm cultural resources if, for example rock piles are constructed or disturbed, or holes are dug into sites that may not be visible from the surface.

No known impacts have been caused to sites in the area due to roads, the relatively dense cattle trails, or the 2012 fire on the east side of the drainage. If unrecorded sites exist in the area, they are probably lithic or historic trash scatters that either have already been burned over in the past, or would be unlikely to lose any significant attributes as a result of a wildfire. One site has been disturbed by construction activities, though its scientific and possibly cultural, significance is probably retained, due to the limited area of the site affected. Due to legal constraints on public release of certain site data (43 CFR 7.8; NHPA 1966, as amended; and ARPA 1979; Idaho Code

9-403e), the details of the analysis are not presented here, but have been provided to the Idaho SHPO (Idaho BLM Archaeological and Historical Inventory Record 13-O-16).

No significant impacts are known to have occurred to eligible or potentially NRHP eligible sites monitored in the area in 2012.

3.4.3.3 Environmental Consequences – Cumulative Impacts

Alternative A
The alternative would not contribute to cumulative effects, due to lack of any significant direct or indirect effects.

Alternative B
This alternative is unlikely to contribute any cumulative effects. Shovel testing has indicated a lack of potential for subsurface sites in the immediate project area, and monitoring will be done to ensure that indirect effects from erosion do not lead to impacts that could contribute to changes in the significance of any cultural resources.

4.0 Consultation and Coordination

4.1 List of Preparers

Name	Specialty
Ryan Homan	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Richard Jackson	Hydrologist/Natural Resource Specialist
Kelli Barnes	Archaeologist, Cultural and Paleontological
Gabriella Bermudez-Koch	Writer/Editor
Seth Flanigan	NEPA Specialist

4.2 List of Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals Consulted

Supporting Groups
-Owyhee County
-Shoshone-Paiute Tribes
-Treasure Valley Trail Machine Association
-Idaho Trails Council
-Idaho ATV Association
-Southwest Idaho Desert Racing Association
-Idaho Brittany Club
-Idaho 4x4 Association
-Rough Riders Equestrian Group
-100% of individuals utilizing the main parking area

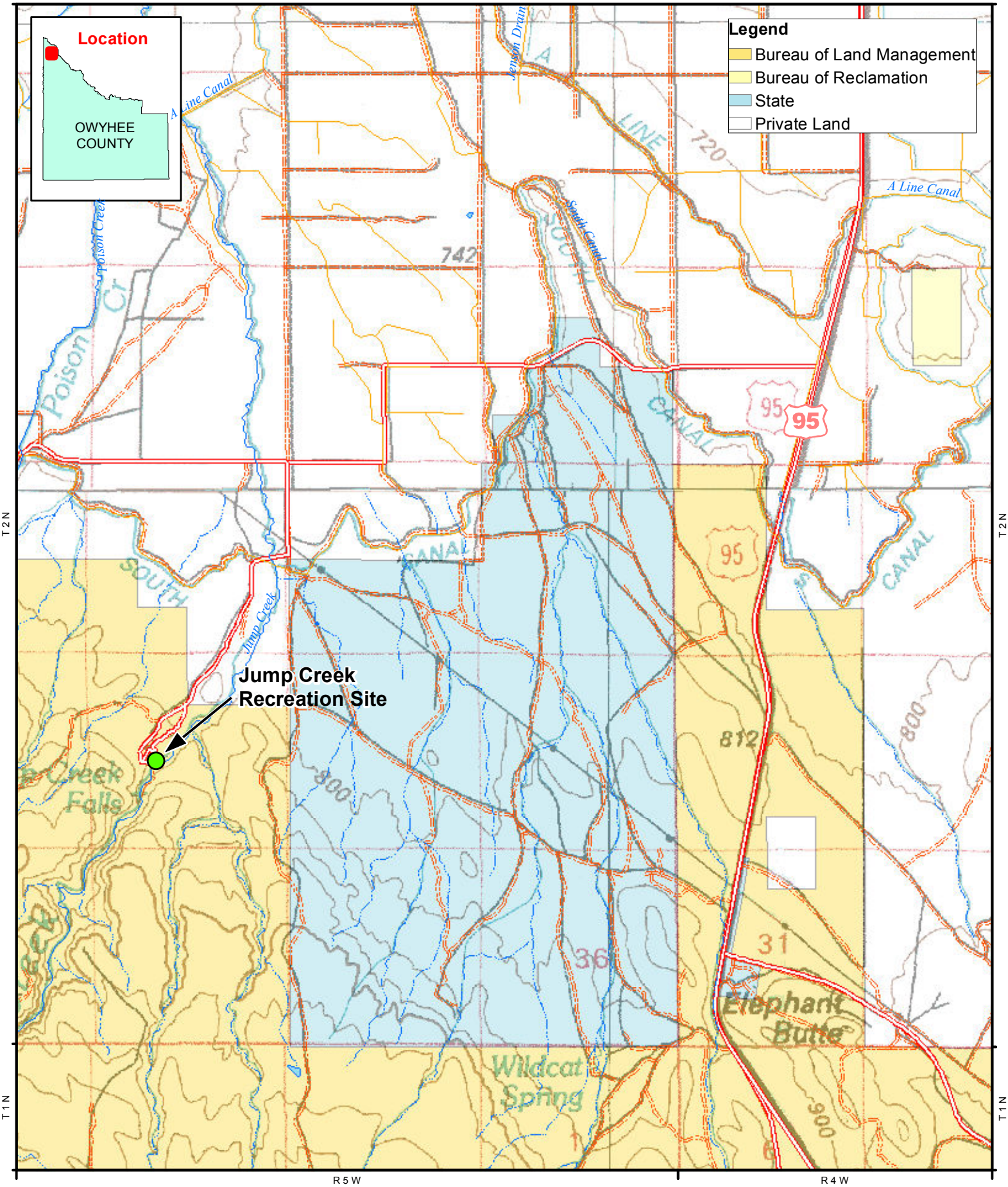
5.0 Literature Cited

USDI-BLM. 1999. Proposed Owyhee Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement. USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Lower Snake River District, Boise, ID.

6.0 Maps

Map 1: Jump Creek Location Map
Map 2: Jump Creek Road Reconstruct/Paving Project

Map 1 - Jump Creek Recreation Site Location



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0 0.5 1 1.5 Miles

N W E S

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Map Date: 4/1/2013

Jump Creek Recreation Site Road Reconstruct/Paving

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