

**United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Milner Historic Recreation Area Project

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CHAPTER 1, PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

BACKGROUND

The Milner Historic Recreation Area is located along the Snake River just upstream from the Milner Dam. The site includes camping and boating facilities and is popular for a variety of recreation purposes. The site is old and needs to be updated. This project proposes to update the recreation facilities so that they will once again meet the needs of the public.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The Milner Historic Recreation Area is a popular destination in southern Idaho for outdoor recreation. However, most of the existing recreation facilities and structures are of considerable age, inconsistent in colors and types of materials, exhibiting various stages of deterioration and not sufficient to meet the needs of the existing, and expanding uses occurring at this site.

In the Bureau of Land Management's 'Guidelines for a Quality Built Environment', it states: "In support of our responsibility to manage diverse landscapes and multiple uses, the BLM will provide safe and accessible facilities for the public and its employees that are sustainable, attractive, functional, cost-effective, and responsive to the place and settings."

The Milner Historic Recreation Area is no exception to this statement. To be consistent with the BLM's vision of sustainability, attractiveness, functionality and cost-effectiveness, a number of amenities and facilities within the Milner site need improvement.

Therefore, the purpose of this project is to renovate and improve the overall design of the Milner Historic Recreation Area to achieve sustainability, attractiveness, functionality and cost-effectiveness.

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN(S)

The proposed action and alternative are in conformance with the 1985 Cassia Resource Management Plan (RMP). All of the public lands mentioned in the Proposed Action are located in the Milner Management Area 1 of the Cassia RMP. The RMP states that "BLM may develop and maintain various recreation facilities on public lands, including campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches, etc. Those recreation facilities are provided to meet existing or anticipated demand" (Resource Management Guidelines – (p. 8) Recreation Facilities).

Also in the RMP under Management Area 1, Milner, (p. 13) states:

- A. Protect cultural and historical values and provide for their interpretation. This includes 4.5 miles of the Oregon Trail. Restrict surface disturbing activities in a 330 foot buffer along each side of the trail.

- B. Manage for diverse recreation such as hunting, wildlife viewing, picnicking and interpretation of historical values. Provide for water-based recreation. Maintain the present size of the trap and archery ranges under lease to the City of Burley.
- C. Manage to provide quality wildlife habitat for upland game, waterfowl and non-game species.

Although the Proposed Action includes surface disturbing activities within 330 feet of the Oregon National Historic Trail (NHT), the activities will be restricted to a 10 foot wide paved trail and will provide additional barriers using either natural materials or jack/rail fence (no barbed wire) which will add protections to the paved trail which do not already exist (Milner Map 1). The purpose of the paved trail is to increase efforts toward education and enhance NHT historical values. Therefore, the paved trail is in conformance with the RMP and will have no physical or visual effect on historic properties.

The remaining activities proposed are also in conformance with the RMP because they are designed to directly meet the RMP objectives.

RELATIONSHIP TO STATUTES, REGULATIONS OR OTHER PLANS

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 outlines the procedures for federal interagency cooperation to conserve federally listed species and designated habitat. Section 7(a)(2) states that each Federal agency shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Interior, ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of their habitats.

Specific guidance regarding the BLM's responsibilities to conserve ESA listed and candidate species is provided in BLM Manual 6840 – Special Status Species Management (BLM, 2008).

The Proposed Action is in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as amended. It is also in accordance with Executive Order 13186, dated January 11, 2001, which directs federal agencies to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop an agreement to conserve migrating birds.

The Proposed Action is in accordance with BLM IM 2012-043 Greater Sage Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures.

SCOPING, PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AND ISSUES

This project has been listed on the Idaho NEPA Register since June 15, 2012. A scoping package was mailed to potentially interested groups and individuals in July, 2012. Additionally, a public scoping meeting was held at the Burley BLM Fire conference room, 2630 Overland Drive, Burley, ID 83318, on July 11, 2012 from 4 – 6 pm.

With the exception of a member of the media, no members of the public attended the public scoping meeting and no comments were received through this effort. Two comment letters were received in response to the scoping package however the comment letters did not identify any issues or alternatives to be analyzed.

CHAPTER 2, PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE(S)

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action is to improve the existing site facilities and develop new facilities at the Milner Historic Recreation Area as depicted in Milner Map 1. Improvements would be made to recreation facilities, structures, site fixtures and vegetation to improve the recreation opportunities and overall experience of the site. A well would be drilled and underground pipes would be used to provide water to the individual sites as described below. Motorized vehicles would be limited to the existing access roads and camping areas and prohibited off-road, on the Oregon Trail and the interpretive trail.

Campgrounds and picnic areas would be improved or expanded using the following guidelines:

- Campsites and picnic areas would be clearly defined with concrete curbing as a boundary to reduce disturbance and erosion.
- Material with campsites and living spaces would consist of a compacted road base.
- Concrete pads would be constructed around campfire rings and cabanas.
- Tent pads would be elevated with pressure treated timbers as edges.
- Sites would have generous parking areas for a variety of vehicle sizes and to provide space to move around vehicles.
- Adequate surface and space around the site elements would be provided to accommodate accessibility.
- Sites would be gently sloped to provide drainage.
- Components would be arranged to take into account the prevailing wind direction to keep smoke out of living spaces.
- The existing access roads would be paved.

Boating Facilities would be improved or expanded using the following guidelines:

- Boat ramps would be built within a 12-15 % gradient into the water.
- Adequate parking would be provided for both standard vehicles and vehicles with trailers.
- Launch preparation areas would be provided to minimize traffic congestion.
- There would be a turnout on the exit corridor to allow a safe area for cleaning and tie down.
- Facilities would be designed to ensure access to water at high and low water levels.
- Facilities would be designed to maximize views of natural features and minimize views of boating facilities.
- The BLM would obtain all required permits before construction.

Trailheads and Trails would be designed using the following guidelines:

- There would be minimal site disturbance to preserve existing vegetation.
- Trails would use paving material for accessibility.
- Areas would be gently sloped to provide drainage without erosion.
- Kiosks and interpretive signs would be installed near parking areas to provide information.
- Man-made or natural barriers such as fences, vegetation, basalt boulders or other rocks would be used to separate vehicular and pedestrian traffic. A trough will be installed at T. 10 S., R. 21 E., Sec. 25 SE1/4 SE1/4 (Milner Map 2) on the far Eastern side of the recreation area to provide water for livestock and to better separate grazing from recreation use areas.
- A small bridge over the Oregon Trail would be constructed of natural materials and would consist of colors relative to other site furnishings and fixtures.
- Trails would meander to fit within natural elements of the site while minimally disturbing existing vegetation and geological features.
- Seating would be provided at strategic locations to maximize view and natural settings.
- Existing access roads would be upgraded to Public Roads Standards which may require resurfacing and an approximately ¼ mile re-route.

Structures (Cabanas, Pavilions and Shelters) would be designed using the following guidelines:

- A limited palette of materials, styles, colors (primarily black, browns and sage greens) and textures would be selected for consistency.
- Custom elements and materials may be used when trying to reflect a sense of place and setting, but would be consistent with other site fixtures and furnishings.
- Wind breaks would be incorporated on the prevailing wind side of cabanas, pavilions and shelters.
- Structures would be constructed of durable and long lasting materials, and would include recycled materials where appropriate.
- Cabanas, pavilions and shelters would be located to maximize views of natural features.
- Structures would use low profile, more horizontal roof lines where possible to match the natural terrain.

Signage and other site furnishings (such as benches, fire rings, picnic tables and barriers) would be designed using the following guidelines:

- A limited palette of materials, styles, colors (primarily black, browns and sage greens) and textures would be selected for consistency.
- Custom elements and material may be used to capture a sense of place and setting but would be consistent with other site fixtures and furnishings.
- Interpretive signs, kiosks and information panels would be built consistently.
- Materials used for sign construction would be durable and long lasting, including materials such as basalt rock, rustic timbers or powder coated steel.

- Materials for barriers and fencing would be reflective of the site and its character, and compliment the surrounding landscape. Barriers would also be used to separate recreation sites from livestock operations. Fencing or other barriers within 300 feet of the Oregon Trail would be constructed out of natural materials or would be jack or rail fence.
- Raptor nesting structures, bat boxes or avian nest boxes would be installed to enhance wildlife use and visitor experience.
- Barriers or fencing would be strategically placed to prohibit vehicular access or to separate vehicular traffic from pedestrian traffic.
- Boulders found on site would be used to reduce cost and provide a contextual link to the adjacent landscape.

Landscape use of vegetation for screening and shading would be designed using the following guidelines:

- A diverse mix of native or native like and other drought tolerant species would be selected that reflect the natural character of the site.
- Planting areas would be located based on the appropriate micro climate and soil conditions.
- Planting groups would mimic native plant communities by using layering, arrangement and spacing techniques.
- Trees and shrubs would be used to frame views or as windbreaks for key locations.
- Drip irrigation may be used to help establish plants.

Specific Site Plans Proposed

West and East Entrance Areas

- Two separate kiosks will replace the existing single kiosks.

Perch Point

- Perch point would be converted from an overnight campground and fishing area to a day-use area with picnicking facilities and amenities.
- The existing camp sites and cabanas would be removed and converted to picnic areas.
- New facilities would include a nine car parking lot, two RV parking spaces, one pavilion with picnic tables (to accommodate up to 20 people), and a fee tube/pay station.
- The existing boat dock would be upgraded.
- New trail segments would be created that link with the Western Oregon Trail and the Bicentennial Site.

Bicentennial Site

- The Bicentennial Site which currently serves as a mixed day and night use area is proposed to be a day-use only area with a new boat ramp and parking.
- A new boat ramp with boat docks would be added.
- Sufficient parking for vehicles and trailers would be provided.

- New interpretive signage would be placed at trailheads.
- Facilities that would be removed include the existing interpretive signage, shelter, amphitheater, road, camp units and the small boat dock.
- A new well would be developed for irrigation and culinary use.
- New Trail segments would be created that link with the Site Center and Perch Point.

Oregon National Historic Trail and other Pedestrian Trails

- To accommodate increased use and interest in the Oregon Trail, a ten-foot wide paved trail is proposed along both the west and east sections of the Oregon Trail. Similar paved trails are proposed to connect each area within Milner.
- New trailheads, interpretive shelters (cabanas) and signage would be created.
- Benches would be installed along new trails at key locations.
- Trails would be marked implementing a consistent system and would include information for the protection of NHT values.
- Trails would be only for pedestrian or other non-motorized use.

Site Center

- This will be a day use area with a reservation group site.
- A trailhead would be added to the proposed pedestrian trail located along the original Oregon Trail.
- The site would be landscaped and would include wind breaks.
- Electricity and culinary water would be provided.
- Two new large group cabanas with picnic tables would be installed.
- Sufficient parking for boat trailers and vehicles would be provided.
- Six new interpretive panels (48"x72") would be installed highlighting the Oregon Trail, local wildlife, geological formations, prehistory and local history of the Milner Dam.
- Existing cabanas, walks, grills and horseshoe pits would be removed.
- New Trail segments would be created that link with Cedar Circle, Cedar Point and Bicentennial Sites.

Cedar Point and Cedar Circle

- New RV campsites would be developed.
- Existing tent campsites would be upgraded.
- Electricity and water would be provided.
- A fee tube/pay station would be installed.
- Landscaping would be provided including trees for shade.
- A new host RV campsite would be developed.
- New site furnishings would be installed.
- New trail segments would be created that link with Trout Point and Site Center.

Trout Point

- The existing boat dock would be upgraded.
- A fee tube/pay station would be installed.
- Existing campsites would be upgraded.
- New trail segments would be created that link with Bass Bay and Bass Point, and Cedar Point and Cedar Circle.

Bass Bay and Bass Point

- Existing campsites would be upgraded.
- Group campsites with larger group cabanas would be developed.
- A fee tube/pay station would be installed.
- A trailhead would be added to Oregon Trail with an interpretive shelter and signage.
- New trail segments would be created that link with Muskrat Bend and Trout Point.

Muskrat Bend

- Existing campsites would be upgraded.
- A fee tube/pay station would be installed.
- One new campsite would be developed.
- A pedestrian trailhead would be created near the existing restroom.
- New trail segments would be created that link with Bass Bay and Bass Point.

Hobson

- The existing campsite would be upgraded to a day use only site.
- The access road would be abandoned.
- A new boat dock with public access would be provided.
- The site would be accessed by boat only.

Additional Design Features

- Construction of facilities outside existing developed areas that requires ground disturbing activities would require migratory bird nest surveys unless such activities occur outside the migratory bird nesting season to avoid harming migratory birds.
- Construction of facilities would be staggered to ensure recreation opportunities are provided on a continuous basis.

NO ACTION

Under this alternative, no improvements to the Milner Historic Recreation Area will be made. All existing sites will be maintained as in their current state.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

There were no additional alternatives proposed for this project.

CHAPTERS 3&4, AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The no-action alternative reflects the current situation within the project area and will serve as the baseline for comparing the environmental effects of the analyzed alternatives.

During the analysis process, the interdisciplinary team considered several resources and supplemental authorities. The interdisciplinary team determined that the resources discussed below would be affected by the proposed action.

In order to analyze cumulative effects, the area described as Management Area 1 (see map 2) was chosen as the cumulative effects area because it wholly contains the project area and all of the resources potentially affected by the project. Also, the area surrounding the chosen cumulative effects analysis area contains large expanses of private agricultural areas to the south, east and west and the Snake River to the north so the management area is essentially a terrestrial island of public land.

SOILS

Soils occurring in the project area include a variety of loamy types including silt and rock with some rock outcroppings. There are no known highly erodible soils occurring in the project area. Although much of the vegetation covering the soils in the project area includes an abundance of non-native annual grasses, soils remain stabilized because the cover is abundant.

No Action

There would be no new affects to soil through the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

Construction activities (including the new trough) in upland areas are expected to disturb soils through digging, moving, grading and paving. Activities would generally be concentrated within areas already having been disturbed through past projects or through recreation use. The installation of some facilities such as buildings and pavement may alter where soil is deposited, however, only small portions of the project area are expected to be affected. The new trough at T. 10 S., R. 21 E., Sec. 25 SE1/4 SE1/4 (Milner Map 2) will shift where livestock congregate and is expected to indirectly increase bare ground and soil erosion in a small area surrounding the trough.

Cumulative Impacts

Other actions affecting soil in the cumulative effects analysis area include ongoing livestock grazing, a railroad line (EIRR) and the Milner WUI project. The maintenance of existing roads would disturb soil adjacent to the existing road, livestock grazing may disturb soil through removal of vegetation which protects the soil from erosion and maintains water infiltration. Also, livestock may directly affect soils by walking around and crushing the soil surface. Grazing in the area is limited so little reduction in cover or water infiltration, or direct disturbance is expected. The EIRR passes through the cumulative effects area moving along an east-west route. The railroad right-of-way is maintained un-vegetated to prevent sparks from trains starting fires. Gravel has been applied to the soil surface to prevent soil erosion and loss. The Milner WUI project consisted of several two acre forage kochia safety zones and two miles of 100-150 foot wide forage kochia fuel breaks along existing roads. This project affected soil directly through the removal of existing vegetation and replacement of it with forage kochia and it could indirectly affect vegetation if the fuel breaks help reduce future fire size. The long-term effect of the proposed action on soil taking into account the effects of all other past, present and foreseeable future actions is likely to have little change.

VEGETATION

The existing vegetation at the Milner Historic Recreation Area consists mostly of Wyoming big sagebrush dominated sites with a mostly cheatgrass and weedy species understory. Riparian areas include some willows but also include a larger overstory of Russian olive trees.

No Action

There would be no new affects to vegetation through the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

The proposed action may affect vegetation during the removal of existing facilities, installation of new facilities (including the trough) and during the operation of the facilities both through visitor use and maintenance. Effects to vegetation through the removal of existing facilities will be generally limited to the existing project footprint and immediately surrounding areas. Some vegetation may be trampled, crushed or removed during the removal of existing facilities both within the footprint of the facilities and in the immediate vicinity. Areas where facilities are removed but not replaced would be seeded with perennial vegetation such that any damage to the vegetation would eventually be repaired. The new trough at T. 10 S., R. 21 E., Sec. 25 SE1/4 SE1/4 (Milner Map 2) will shift where livestock congregate and is expected to indirectly allow livestock to remove vegetation and increase bare ground in a small area surrounding the trough.

Similarly, vegetation may be trampled, crushed or removed during the installation of new facilities. Areas having permanent facilities and concrete pads or trails would have permanent loss of vegetation during grading and construction. Some trenching may be necessary to install water lines throughout the sites for the purpose of providing culinary and irrigation water. Site disturbances would be minimized to preserve existing vegetation. These areas are relatively

small enough that they would not alter the character of the remaining vegetation and would not measurably reduce the amount. Installation of landscaping would increase the biological and structural diversity of the vegetation without threatening existing vegetation by following the proposed landscape use guidelines.

The designs of the facilities will incorporate the use of barriers and fences to minimize the disturbance to vegetation by visitors, however some trampling and crushing may occur. Landscaped vegetation surrounding site facilities may require irrigation and care such as pruning, mowing and replanting over time such that the overall character of the site is maintained. Since these areas would be concentrated around the recreational facilities, these activities should not affect the character of the surrounding vegetation.

Cumulative Impacts

Other actions affecting vegetation in the cumulative effects analysis area include ongoing livestock grazing, a railroad line (EIRR) and the Milner WUI project. Livestock grazing involves the annual removal of primarily herbaceous grasses and in the case of the project area, primarily cheatgrass. Because cheatgrass has a propensity of massive seed production, grazing cheatgrass is not considered harmful to the vegetation. Cheatgrass productivity does widely fluctuate due to environmental variability in moisture, therefore, the amount and height of cover of cheatgrass is expected to be variable from year to year. The EIRR passes through the cumulative effects area moving along an east-west route. The railroad right of way is maintained un-vegetated to prevent sparks from trains starting fires. The Milner WUI project consisted of several two acre forage kochia safety zones and two miles of 100-150 foot wide forage kochia fuel breaks along existing roads. This project affected vegetation directly through the removal of existing vegetation and replacement of it with forage kochia and it could indirectly affect vegetation if the fuel breaks help reduce future fire size. The long-term effect of the proposed action on vegetation taking into account the effects of all other past, present and foreseeable future actions is likely to be one where there is improvement in the structure and function of the vegetation around recreation facilities with little change in other areas.

NOXIOUS WEEDS AND INVASIVE PLANTS

The project area is surrounded by private land and borders the Snake River to the north. Because of its proximity to private land, the river and high level of recreation use, the Milner Historic Recreation area is also an area susceptible to noxious weed invasion. Noxious weeds and invasive plants which have been observed in the project area include; Canada thistle, poison hemlock, houndstongue, field bindweed, musk thistle, puncture vine, white-top, scotch thistle, Russian knapweed and diffuse knapweed. Most noxious weeds in the project area occur along roads. Populations are monitored and treated on a regular basis.

No Action

There would be no new effects to noxious weeds and invasive plants as a result of the no action alternative.

Proposed Action

The proposed action includes ground disturbing activities which may influence the abundance and distribution of noxious weeds in the project area. The action of removing old facilities and clearing ground for new facilities is expected to disturb soils within these areas. Seeding and establishing desirable vegetation in areas where old facilities are not replaced may reduce the potential for noxious weeds to establish. Areas disturbed by the installation of new facilities will eventually be covered in some manner whether concrete pads or paths, or through the re-vegetation of the perimeters. Improving the recreation facilities at Milner is expected to increase recreational use which may increase the potential for spread or introduction of weeds however any new infestations would likely be concentrated in the same areas already having weeds and would be continued to be treated. The long-term effect of the proposed action on noxious weeds is expected to cause little change in distribution or abundance. Limiting motor vehicles to existing/designated roads would help ensure weed infestations resulting from vehicular travel are easily treated.

Cumulative Impacts

Other actions in the cumulative effects area which may affect the distribution of noxious weeds include livestock grazing, on-going recreation and the Milner fuel break project. Livestock grazing could affect noxious weeds in the project area if seeds were to be consumed and defecated in new areas, or if seeds were to attach to the animals and fall off in new areas. Also, the removal of vegetation through grazing could decrease the competition of these plants against weeds. The fact that most populations of noxious weeds occur along roads suggest that livestock are not an important contributor to spreading noxious weeds. On-going recreation activities may be the most likely contributor of the spread of noxious weeds since most recreation use occurs along roads and trails in the Milner area. The Milner WUI project required the clearing of vegetation to establish a new seeding of fire resistant plant material (forage kochia). Noxious weed spread and potential population increase could have occurred with such activities due to the temporary increase in bare ground. However, monitoring and treatment would prevent establishment of noxious weeds and the eventual establishment of forage kochia would resist any future weed invasions better than the vegetation prior to this treatment. Also, by potentially reducing fire size, the Milner WUI project could help reduce the future spread of noxious weeds expected after wildfire. The combined effect of the proposed action with the all other past present and foreseeable future actions is not expected to cause any long-term change in the prominence of noxious weeds in the cumulative effects area.

BLM SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES, INCLUDING THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

BLM sensitive animals that occupy or could occupy habitat in the project area include Utah valvata, Brewer's sparrow, Sage sparrow, and Loggerhead shrike (Dechant et al 2002 and Knick and Rottenberry, Woods and Cade 1996). The Utah valvata is a snail that lives in Milner reservoir. The avian species could use shrubs in the project area for nesting (specialist reports 4 and 5).

No Action

There would be no change to the habitat or populations of BLM Special Status Species that would occur as a result of the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

The habitat of BLM sensitive avian species would be directly affected through the loss of existing vegetation containing shrubs suitable for nesting where new areas are cleared for recreation facilities. Since most of the area being improved for recreation already has a high frequency of use by visitors and existing facilities, little loss of nesting habitat for these species is expected. Restricting ground disturbing and vegetation removal/replacement activities during the nesting period is expected to prevent harm to migratory birds. Utah valvata may be injured or killed during the construction of the new boat launch at Bicentennial Site. These impacts are only expected to have the potential to affect an insignificant number of individuals because very little habitat would be disturbed. Utah valvata could also suffer short term indirect effects of increased sediment disturbance. The installation of nest boxes and raptor nesting platforms may encourage some use by BLM sensitive species however the amount of use is unknown. The new trough at T. 10 S., R. 21 E., Sec. 25 SE1/4 SE1/4 (Milner Map 2) may indirectly reduce cover in a small area surrounding the trough however there is little suitable habitat in the area where the new trough will be installed. The trough may improve the distribution of water available to wildlife, however, the proximity of the site being along the river may mask any benefit of water the trough may provide.

Cumulative Impacts

Other potential actions which could affect BLM sensitive animals in the cumulative effects area include livestock grazing, recreation, the EIRR and the Milner WUI project. Grazing could affect the shrub nesting BLM sensitive birds occasionally if cattle disturb or trample nests. Recreation could have a similar effect on shrub nesting birds. The EIRR could disturb nesting birds through continual noise disturbance as trains pass and through fragmentation. Fragmentation may reduce nesting success by increasing edge habitat. The Milner WUI may have reduced shrubs available for nesting, however, the fuel breaks could reduce fire size and thus indirectly protect shrubs over a much larger area. The combined effects of the proposed action and all other past, present and foreseeably future actions is expected to improve conditions for BLM sensitive species in the long term especially after the establishment of the fuel breaks.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Migratory bird species of conservation concern (migratory birds) which occur within the Burley Field Office (which are not considered sensitive by the BLM) were analyzed for potential effects. The only species which might be affected by this project is the grasshopper sparrow which could use shrubs in the project area for nesting (Vickery 1996).

No Action

There would be no change to the habitat or populations of migratory birds that would occur as a result of the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

The habitat of grasshopper sparrow would be directly affected through the loss of existing vegetation containing shrubs suitable for nesting where new areas are cleared for recreation facilities. Since most of the area being improved for recreation already has a high frequency of use by visitors and existing facilities, little loss of nesting habitat for this species is expected. Restricting ground disturbing and vegetation removal/replacement activities during the nesting period is expected to prevent harm to migratory birds. The new trough at T. 10 S., R. 21 E., Sec. 25 SE1/4 SE1/4 (Milner Map 2) may indirectly reduce cover in a small area surrounding the trough however there is little suitable habitat in the area where the new trough will be installed. The trough may improve the distribution of water available to wildlife, however, the proximity of the site being along the river may mask any benefit of water the trough may provide.

Cumulative Impacts

Other potential actions which could affect grasshopper sparrow in the cumulative effects area include livestock grazing, recreation, the EIRR and the Milner WUI project. Grazing could affect grasshopper sparrow occasionally if cattle disturb or trample nests. Recreation could have a similar effect on grasshopper sparrow. The EIRR could disturb nesting birds through continual noise disturbance as trains pass and through fragmentation. Fragmentation may reduce nesting success by increasing edge habitat. The Milner WUI may have reduced shrubs available for nesting, however, the fuel breaks could reduce fire size and thus indirectly protect shrubs over a much larger area. The combined effects of the proposed action and all other past, present and foreseeably future actions is expected to improve conditions for grasshopper sparrow in the long term especially after the establishment of the fuel breaks.

WILDLIFE (OTHER THAN THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE)

Wildlife species potentially affected by this project include mule deer, waterfowl (ducks and geese) and upland game (ring-neck pheasant, Hungarian partridge and cottontail rabbit). Hunting is allowed for all of these species in the Milner Historic Recreation Area with the exception of geese.

No Action

There would be no change to the habitat or non-sensitive wildlife that would occur as a result of the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

The habitat of non-sensitive wildlife would be directly affected through the loss of existing vegetation containing shrubs suitable for forage or cover where new areas are cleared for recreation facilities. Since most of the area being improved for recreation already has a high frequency of use by visitors and existing facilities, little loss of nesting habitat for these species is expected. Avoidance of disturbing nesting migratory birds is also expected to prevent harm to nesting upland game birds. Increased use by visitors may occur which may increase disturbance to these species. However, visitor use will likely be concentrated along the river where most of the use already occurs

so little change is expected that may affect the upland species. Populations of waterfowl may increase in the area after the installation of irrigated landscaping where lawns occur.

The installation of nest boxes and raptor nesting platforms may encourage some use by non-sensitive wildlife however the amount of use is unknown. The new trough at T. 10 S., R. 21 E., Sec. 25 SE1/4 SE1/4 (Milner Map 2) may indirectly reduce cover in a small area surrounding the trough however there is little suitable habitat in the area where the new trough will be installed. The trough may improve the distribution of water available to wildlife, however, the proximity of the site being along the river may mask any benefit of water the trough may provide.

Cumulative Impacts

Other potential actions which could affect non-sensitive wildlife in the cumulative effects area include livestock grazing, recreation, the EIRR and the Milner WUI project. Grazing could affect the nesting birds occasionally if cattle disturb or trample nests. Recreation could have a similar effect on nesting birds. The EIRR could disturb nesting birds through continual noise disturbance as trains pass and through fragmentation. Fragmentation could continue to affect these species because it has rendered this portion of public land isolated from other larger tracts of sagebrush steppe habitat (Knick and Rotenberry 1995). The Milner WUI may have reduced shrubs available for nesting, however, the fuel breaks could reduce fire size and thus indirectly protect shrubs over a much larger area. The combined effects of the proposed action and all other past, present and foreseeably future actions is expected to improve conditions for non-sensitive species in the long term especially after the establishment of the fuel breaks.

RECREATION

The area is used primarily for fishing, camping, and OHV/ATV riders in the summer and upland bird hunting in the fall. There is some widely dispersed hiking and camping that occurs in the project area throughout the year.

No Action

There would be no change to recreation opportunities that would occur as a result of the No Action alternative.

Proposed Action

With the exception of motorized vehicle use, existing recreation opportunities in the project area would be enhanced by the proposed action. Motor vehicles would be limited to the existing access roads. Off road and interpretive travel would be prohibited. While the types of activities will likely be the same, visitors will have improved facilities and access, and an overall improved experience. New interpretive signs will also increase the awareness of visitors about the significance of the site to our nation's history.

Cumulative Impacts

Other potential actions which could affect recreation in the cumulative effects area include livestock grazing, the EIRR and the Milner WUI project. Grazing could affect recreation if cows use areas in

and around recreation facilities. The EIRR could disturb recreation activities or experiences through increased noise as a train passes. The Milner WUI may affect recreation by improving visitor safety. The combined effects of the proposed action and all other past, present and foreseeably future actions are expected to improve conditions for recreation in the long term.

CHAPTER 5, CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

TRIBES, INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, OR AGENCIES CONSULTED

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Idaho Department of Agriculture
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
Chad Coulter, Fish & Wildlife Dept. - Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
Chairman, Land Use Policy Commission - Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
Federal Land Advisory Group
Mark Hobson

LIST OF PREPARERS

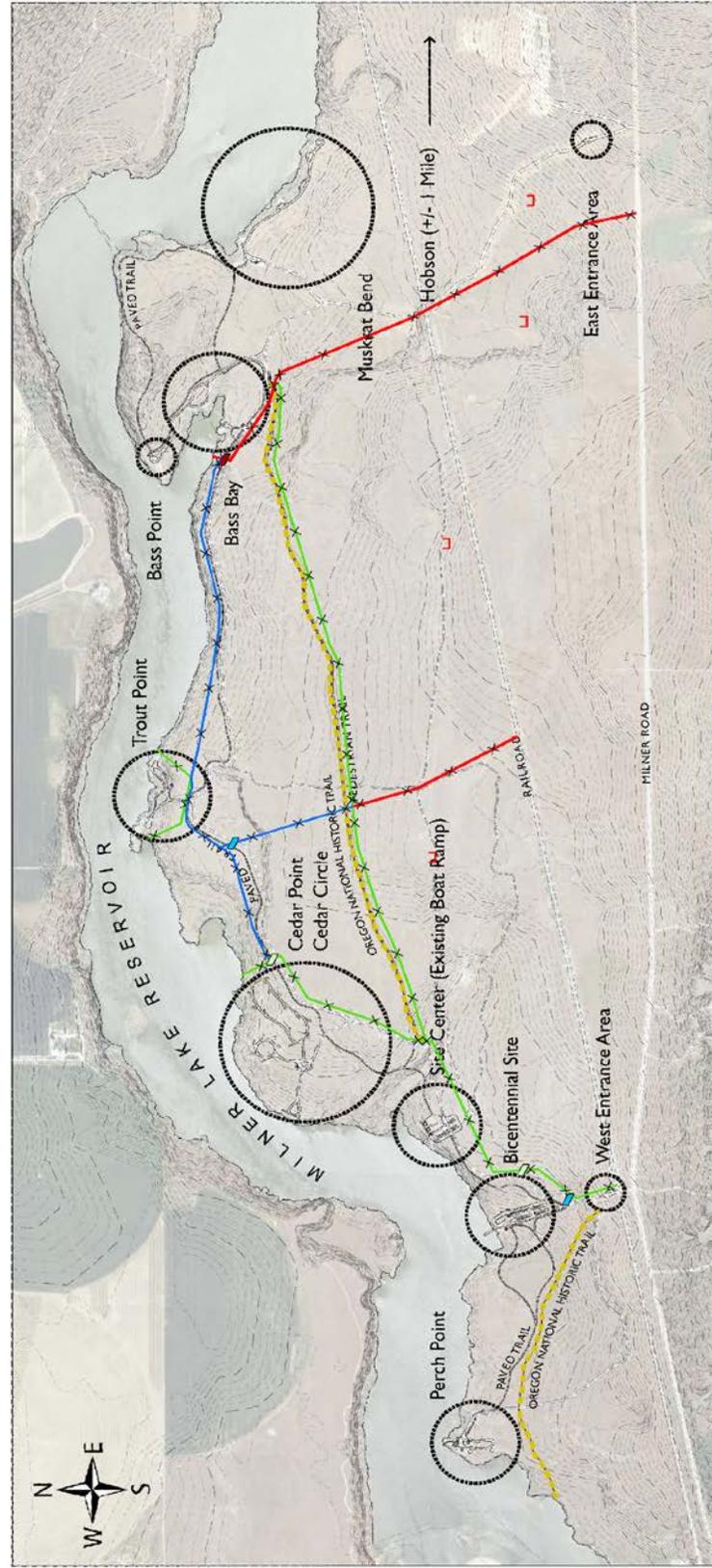
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APPENDICES

1. Milner Map 1
2. Milner Map 2



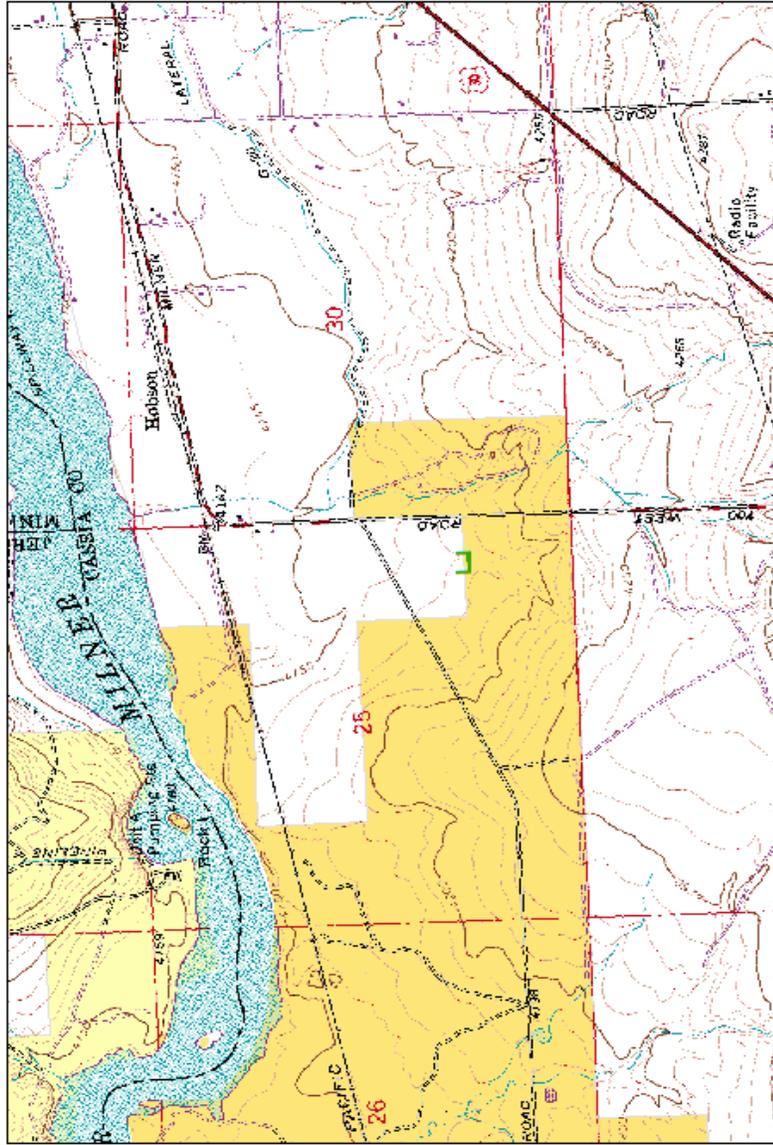
T. 10 S., R. 21 E.

- Legend for added Features**
- New
 - Existing (Keep)
 - Remove Existing
 - Remove
 - Fence
 - Trough
 - Existing
 - Remove Existing
 - Cattle Guard



Milner (Map 1)

Milner (Map 2)



Legend

- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Private; other
- State

New Trough

