



Sand Mountain



Snake River Islands

MEDICINE LODGE

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

WILDERNESS



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
IDAHO FALLS DISTRICT
1988

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

MEDICINE LODGE WILDERNESS STUDY

Prepared by

Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Delmar W. Vail". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "V".

Delmar Vail
Idaho State Director

MEDICINE LODGE

WILDERNESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

() Draft EIS (X) Final EIS

1. Type of Action: () Administrative (X) Legislative

2. Responsible Agencies:

a. Lead Agency: Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management

b. Cooperating Agencies: None

3. Abstract: The Medicine Lodge Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement analyzed the environmental consequences of designating two wilderness study areas (WSA) wilderness, not designating them, and designating part of both WSA's. An All Wilderness Alternative, No Wilderness Alternative and a Partial Wilderness Alternative are analyzed for both WSA's. The two WSA's are listed below showing their size and proposed action.

<u>WSA Name/Number</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Proposed Action</u>
Sand Mountain (ID-35-3)	21,100 acres	No Wilderness
Snake River Islands (ID-34-2) (39 Islands)	770 acres	No Wilderness

4. Comments have been requested and received from the following:

See Chapter 5, Consultation, Coordination and Public Participation

5. Date Draft EIS made available to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Public:

Draft EIS: Filed September 1984

Final EIS:

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SUMMARY

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to manage two wilderness study areas (WSA) totaling 21,800 acres for multiple uses other than wilderness. This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assesses the environmental consequences of managing the two WSAs as nonwilderness, wilderness and partial wilderness. The Proposed Action is not to designate as wilderness the Sand Mountain (21,100 acres) and Snake River Islands (770 acres) WSAs, and manage both areas for other uses. The U.S. Congress will make the final decision on which WSAs will or will not be designated.

The Proposed Action is the result of land use decisions made in the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan (RMP). Alternatives analyzed for each WSA are No Wilderness/No Action, All Wilderness and Partial Wilderness.

The significant environmental issues developed during the scoping process common to both WSAs are Impacts on Wilderness Values and Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species. The specific impacts to the Sand Mountain WSA include Impacts on Recreational Off-road Vehicle (ORV) Use, Impacts on Local Economics, Impacts on Big Game Winter Range, and Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition. Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development is a specific issue addressed for the Snake River Islands WSA.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPACT CONCLUSIONS BY WSA

SAND MOUNTAIN (ID-35-3)

Proposed Action (No Wilderness Alternative)

All 21,100 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts to Wilderness Values: Naturalness would be reduced or eliminated on 410 acres in the WSA from vegetative manipulation and seeding projects, recreation facility construction, and water developments. Solitude and primitive recreation would be eliminated by ORV use of 21,100 acres during the spring, summer and fall months. Snowmobiling during winter months would eliminate primitive recreation and solitude on 5,300 acres in the eastern portion of the WSA, while the opportunities would be enhanced on the western 15,800 acres by a winter ORV closure.

Impacts to Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species: Increased ORV use could cause individual mortalities for less than 5% of the candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. There would be no change in the status of either species. Populations are anticipated to remain stable over the long-term.

Impacts on Recreational ORV Use: Visitor use of the sand dunes is estimated to increase as much as 350% by the year 2006 for an estimated total of 19,250 - 23,350 visitor use days. This is a positive impact to motorized and developed recreation opportunities.

Impacts on Local Economies: The expected influx of ORV recreationists would bring an estimated \$1,448,400 into the local economies. This projected increase in retail trade earnings would not have a significant impact on the three-county economy. However, business establishments in the immediate vicinity of the WSA are expected to benefit.

Impacts on Big Game Winter Range: Big game wintering populations would be maintained at optimum levels through mechanical treatment of forage base. A stable population of 2000 elk, 35-45 moose and 1,200-1,400 deer would result.

Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition: Range improvements would be constructed resulting in better distribution of livestock and a more stable range condition with increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses on 1800 acres.

All Wilderness Alternative

All 21,100 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts to Wilderness Values: The wilderness characteristics of naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation would be preserved on 21,100 acres. Supplemental values including big game habitat, candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose, and scenic and geologic values would be undisturbed by ORV activity.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species: There would be no significant impacts to candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. However, they would be protected from ORV use which could cause individual mortalities.

Impacts on Recreational ORV Use: Visitor use of the dunes is estimated to decrease as much as 1,100% over the long-term with 16,450 - 20,500 visitor days foregone, which is a negative impact to motorized and developed recreation opportunities. Local ORV recreationists would shift their activity to the northeastern dunes and out-of-state visitation would not occur to any great degree.

Impacts on Local Economies: The projected 0.02% decrease in retail trade earnings would not have a significant impact on the three-county economy. However, anticipated decreases in expenditures of \$375,000 would impact business establishments in the immediate vicinity of the WSA and could force their closure.

Impacts on Big Game Winter Range: Overall, a downward trend in wildlife habitat condition would result in a 10% decrease in elk, 33% decrease in moose, and 29% decrease in deer populations. This will amount to 200 elk, 10-15 moose and 400 deer and is below the optimum level desired.

Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition: Optimum forage utilization and livestock distribution would be constrained on 1800 acres by not allowing range improvements to be implemented. Forage grass vigor would decrease resulting in a downward trend in range condition.

Partial Wilderness Alternative

A portion of the active sand dunes of the Sand Mountain WSA containing 6,560 acres would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 14,540 acres, located around the sands, would be recommended nonsuitable.

Impacts on Wilderness Values: Naturalness and supplemental values on 6,560 acres would be preserved over the long-term. Solitude and primitive recreation would be degraded from nearby ORV use even with designation. Naturalness would be reduced or eliminated on 410 acres from vegetative manipulation and seeding projects, recreation facility construction and water development. Solitude and primitive recreation would be eliminated by ORV use on 14,540 acres during the spring, summer and fall months. Winter ORV closures would enhance solitude and primitive recreation on 9,260 acres.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species: Increased ORV use could cause individual mortalities for less than 1% of the candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. There would be no change in the status for either species. Partial wilderness designation would provide habitat undisturbed by ORV use, but would not have a significant beneficial impact on populations.

Impacts on Recreational ORV Use: ORV and other associated activities would be eliminated by designating wilderness on the 6,560-acre portion of the WSA. Visitor use is estimated to increase over the long-term about 141% in the area not recommended for wilderness. Local ORV recreationists would shift their activities to the northeastern dunes and out-of-state visitation would not occur to any great extent.

Impacts on Local Economies: The expected influx of ORV recreationists would bring an estimated \$583,075 into the local economies. This projected increase in retail trade earnings would not have a significant impact on the three-county economy. However, business establishments in the immediate vicinity of the WSA are expected to benefit.

Impacts on Big Game Winter Range: Big game wintering populations would be maintained at optimum levels through mechanical treatment of forage base. A stable population of 2000 elk, 35-45 moose and 1,200-1,400 deer would result.

Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition: Range improvements would be constructed resulting in better distribution of livestock and a more stable range condition with increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses on 1800 acres.

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS (ID-34-2)

Proposed Action (No Wilderness Alternative)

All 39 islands totaling 770 acres of the Snake River Islands WSA would be recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wilderness Values: Over the short-term (up to 20 years), the wilderness characteristics and supplemental values of the 39 islands would be retained. Long-term (20 years and beyond) impacts from the construction of a large reservoir would result in the loss of all wilderness values on islands 31-57. Islands 28-30 would also be lost or degraded from irregular outflows from the dam. Islands 16-27 would retain their wilderness and supplemental values for the foreseeable future.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species: There would be no impacts to bald eagle nesting territories over the short-term (up to 20 years). However, long-term (beyond 20 years) losses would result from the construction of Lynn Crandall Dam. Four nests would be lost initially. Seventy percent of eaglet births per year would be lost along with 75% of wintering populations of eagles.

Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development: There would be no impacts on powersite and reclamation project development from the No Wilderness Alternative. Land withdrawals would remain in effect and options to construct projects would be left open.

All Wilderness Alternative

All 39 islands totaling 770 acres of the Snake River Islands WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wilderness Values: Wilderness designation of the Snake River Islands WSA would protect the wilderness characteristics of naturalness and primitive recreation on 37 of the 39 islands. Protecting wilderness values would, in turn, benefit wildlife habitat (particularly bald eagle nesting areas) and scenic values. Wilderness character and supplemental values on two islands would be lost or degraded considerably from recreation homesite development. Even with homesite development estimated reproduction goals for eagles would not change.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species: There would be no impacts to bald eagles and population growth would continue undisturbed. As projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan, ten eaglets would be produced annually and 40-80 birds would winter along the river.

Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development: Powersite and reclamation withdrawals would be revoked and potential projects could not be built.

Partial Wilderness Alternative

Twelve islands totaling 155 acres of the Snake River Islands WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The remaining 27 islands totaling 615 acres would be recommended nonsuitable.

Impacts on Wilderness Values: Wilderness values of naturalness and primitive recreation would be preserved on 11 islands over the long-term (beyond 20 years), and degraded on one island. Short-term (up to 20 years) protection of the wilderness values on the remaining 27 islands would be provided through planned management, but long-term protection could not be ensured. However, the threat of flooding from a large reservoir would no longer exist, and planned management goals would be to maintain natural, recreational and wildlife values.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species: There would be no impacts to bald eagles and population growth would continue undisturbed. As projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan, ten eaglets would be produced annually and 40-80 birds would winter along the river.

Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development: Powersite and reclamation withdrawals would be revoked and potential projects could not be built.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PLANNING PROCESS

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to manage two wilderness study areas (WSA) totaling 21,870 acres of public land for multiple uses other than wilderness. This Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) assesses the environmental consequences of managing the two WSA's as wilderness and nonwilderness, and part of each WSA as wilderness.

Table 1 lists the WSA's evaluated in this EIS. The Snake River Islands WSA was originally listed in the wilderness inventory as three separate WSA's which included Table Rock Islands ID-34-2 (17 islands totaling 380 acres), Pine Creek Islands ID-34-3 (12 islands totaling 155 acres), and Conant Valley Islands ID-34-4 (10 islands totaling 235 acres). The three island WSA's have been combined into one WSA because of the similarities between them, and because they are all located in the same river system. Therefore, the three island WSA's are referred to throughout this final EIS as the Snake River Islands WSA and carry the single number of ID-34-2.

Table 1

WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS IN THE MEDICINE LODGE RESOURCE AREA

WSA NAME & NUMBER	TOTAL ISLANDS	ACREAGE	COUNTY
Sand Mountain (ID-35-3)	N/A	21,100	Fremont, Jefferson
Snake River Islands (ID-34-2)	39	770	Bonneville

The Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands WSA's are located within the administrative boundary of the Medicine Lodge Resource Area. A land use planning document, known as a Resource Management Plan (RMP), was completed November 29, 1985 for the area. The draft RMP/EIS included an analysis of both WSA's. The final RMP/EIS did not address the final wilderness recommendations and environmental analysis. The final recommendations and analysis are included in this final EIS, which will become part of the documentation for the Secretary of the Interior's suitability recommendation for the two WSA's to the President and Congress.

The final Medicine Lodge RMP calls for managing the two WSA's for multiple uses other than wilderness while protecting the important resource values and uses they offer. Both the Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands have been designated in the RMP as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA). These designations will place priority for management on protecting soil, vegetation, wildlife, recreation, scenic and natural values within the WSA's. If Congress chooses not to designate either of the WSA's as wilderness, they will be managed according to the decisions and prescriptions outlined in the RMP.

The need for this EIS analysis results from Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976. FLPMA directs the Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), to review all public land roadless areas of 5,000 acres or more and roadless islands for their wilderness suitability. The review process has three parts: inventory, study and reporting phases.

The completed inventory phase identified roadless areas and islands that possess wilderness characteristics, as defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act, and identified them as WSA's. Guidelines for conducting the inventory are given in the BLM's 1978 Wilderness Inventory Handbook and through other directives. The WSA's analyzed in this final EIS were identified in an inventory conducted between 1979 and 1980.

The study phase was included as part of the draft RMP. This study determined which WSA's would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and which would not. The BLM's Planning Regulations and Wilderness Study Policy were used to guide the study and determine the preliminary recommendations for the WSA's. These recommendations have resulted in the Proposed Action for this EIS.

The reporting phase will include preparation of a wilderness study report for each WSA that will address the results of the study and contain the preliminary suitability recommendations. The report will summarize the planning documents, final EIS and the results of public participation. The suitability recommendations will be reported through the Director of the BLM, the Secretary of the Interior and the President to Congress. Congress will make the final decision as to whether the Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands WSA's will or will not be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The BLM's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (IMP) currently serves as the principal document for managing the WSA's until Congress acts. The goal of the IMP is to ensure that the wilderness qualities inherent to each WSA are not impaired at the time Congress makes the final decision.

LOCATION

The WSA's are located in southeastern Idaho in Bonneville, Fremont and Jefferson counties. The Sand Mountain WSA is situated about 10 miles west of the city of St. Anthony. The Snake River Islands are located within a 25-mile segment of Idaho's South Fork of the Snake River, between Swan Valley and Heise. See Map 1 for WSA locations.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND SCOPING

Scoping for this EIS has been an ongoing process throughout the wilderness review. Issues have been identified through a variety of scoping efforts. They included public comment periods, meetings and hearings on the wilderness inventory and the draft RMP/EIS. Federal, State and local agencies were asked to provide information that would help identify issues. BLM staff input was also part of the scoping process.

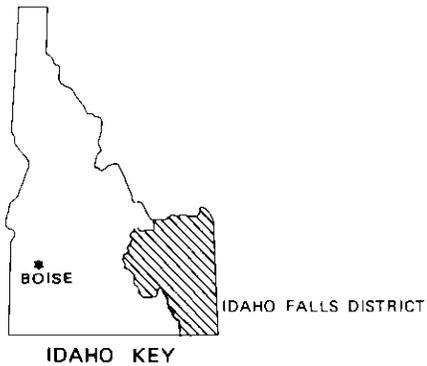
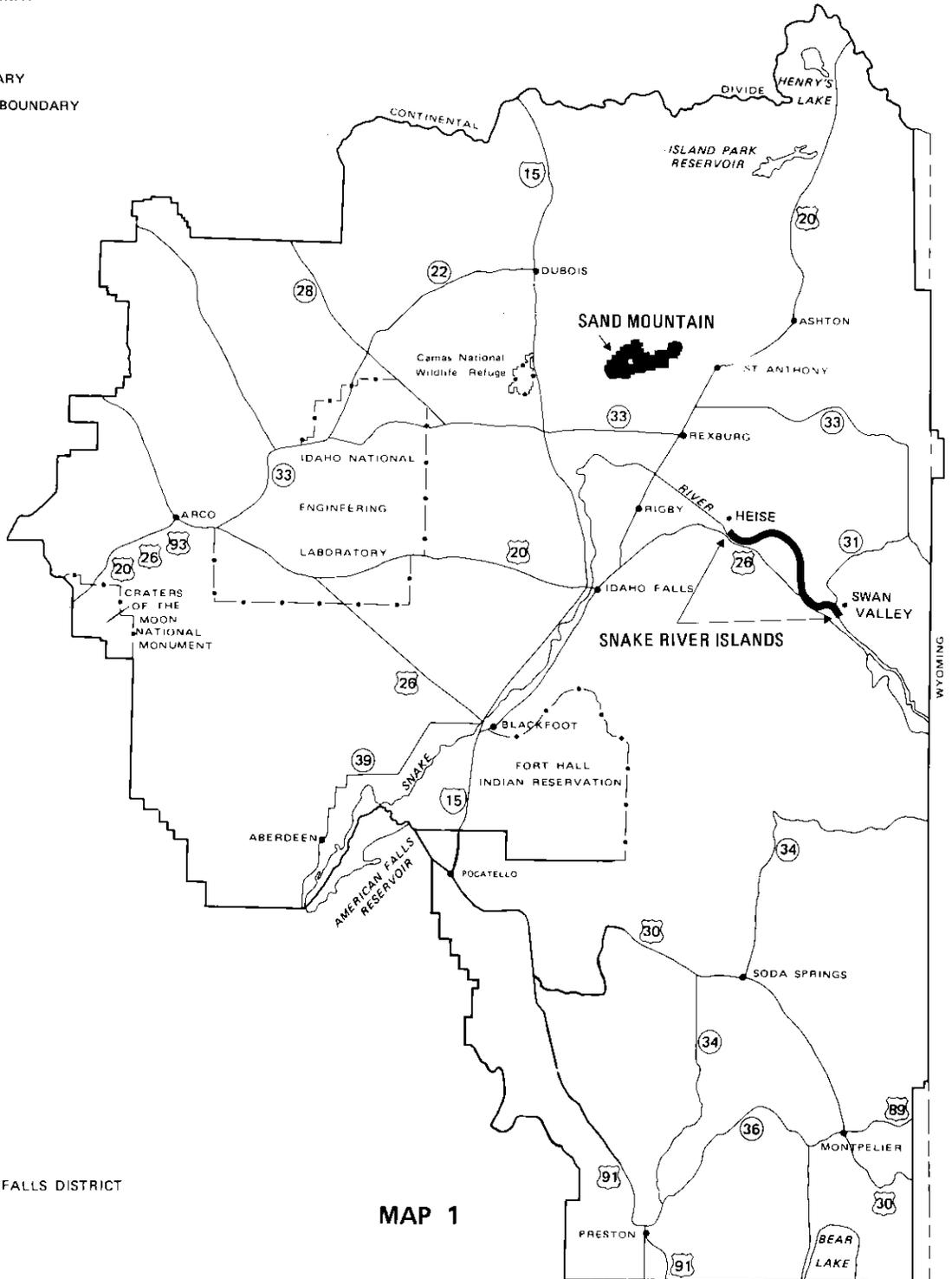
During the scoping process informal consultation occurred with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concerning threatened and endangered species and the State Historic Preservation Officer about cultural resource values.

MEDICINE LODGE WILDERNESS LOCATION MAP

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) UNITS

WSA NAME	ACRES
SAND MOUNTAIN	21,100
SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS (39)	770

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS
-  STATE CAPITOL
-  BLM DISTRICT OFFICE
-  INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
-  U.S. HIGHWAY
-  STATE HIGHWAY
-  DISTRICT BOUNDARY
-  RESOURCE AREA BOUNDARY



MAP 1

New environmental issues concerning wilderness designation were identified from testimony and letters received during the public comment period on the draft RMP/EIS. These have been included in the following discussion of issues. Those issues that are considered to be significant are analyzed throughout the document. Those that appear not to be significant are discussed under "Issues Dropped From Detailed Analysis".

The environmental issues selected for analysis follow. They are divided into those that are common to all WSA's and ones that are WSA specific.

Environmental Issues Common to All WSA's

1. Impacts on Wilderness Values – The benefits of designation to the WSA's wilderness values. These values include naturalness, solitude, primitive recreation and special wilderness features (such as, cultural and geologic resources, plants and animals of special interest, and others). The same values may be affected by uses and actions that could occur if the areas were not designated.
2. Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species – Both WSA's contain suitable habitat for threatened and endangered species. Bald eagles can be found on the Snake River Islands WSA. The Sand Mountain WSA provides habitat for a tiger beetle and desert primrose that have potential to be listed, but data is not available to date to support listing. These wildlife and plant species are dependent upon the perpetuation of their natural habitats. Wilderness designation or nondesignation could affect the amount of habitat modification or destruction which could occur in the WSA's. The significance of beneficial or adverse impacts to threatened and endangered and possible sensitive species is an issue for analysis in this EIS.

Environmental Issues – Sand Mountain WSA

1. Impacts on Recreational ORV Use – Wilderness designation of an area would prohibit the use of motorized recreational vehicles. Eliminating this use could affect the availability of recreation opportunities associated with motor vehicle travel, and shift that use to adjacent public lands.
2. Impacts on Local Economics – The primary economic outputs from lands within the Sand Mountain WSA are related to recreation and livestock grazing. Wilderness designation would change recreation use of the dunes from motorized forms to nonmotorized. This change could have a significant long-term impact on the economies of nearby communities.
3. Impacts on Big Game Winter Range – The Sand Mountain WSA contains crucial elk, deer and moose winter range habitat. Vegetation within the area could be treated mechanically to improve the habitat by providing better forage conditions. Wilderness designation and management would limit or prevent mechanical treatment.
4. Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition – Wilderness designation could affect livestock management by precluding planned range development facilities. These facilities are needed for the proper utilization of forage, and the maintenance of range in the desired condition.

Environmental Issues - Snake River Islands WSA

1. Impacts on Power Site and Reclamation Project Development - Wilderness designation would prevent development of islands and other lands withdrawn for power sites and reclamation projects. The proposed Lynn Crandall Dam would not be constructed if the Snake River Islands WSA were designated wilderness.

Issues Dropped from Detailed Analysis

1. Impacts on Energy and Mineral Development - Energy and mineral development of the Sand Mountain WSA is not expected over the long-term. Potential for oil and gas is low. Geothermal potential is low-moderate, but is not favorable for high temperature energy producing resources. No potential for locatable minerals has been identified. A high potential exists for sand, but there are numerous sources available near the WSA and within the region. A low-moderate potential exists for lava building stone, pumice and cinders, but current sources and supply outside the WSA will meet or exceed projected demand over the long-term.

The potential for energy and mineral resources in the Snake River Islands WSA is rated moderate for oil and gas, low-moderate for geothermal, low for locatable, and moderate-high for sand and gravel. However, the Medicine Lodge RMP decision has placed protective limitations on development of the South Fork of the Snake River that includes all of the islands in the WSA. These limitations are no surface occupancy for oil and gas and geothermal resources, withdrawal of locatable minerals from mining claims location, and closure to sand and gravel extraction. Wilderness designation would not have any further impacts on the development of energy and mineral resources.

For the reasons stated above, energy and mineral resource development is not anticipated over the long-term within the Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands WSA's. Therefore, this issue has been dropped from further analysis.

2. Impacts on Cultural Resources - Consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation's Officer during scoping determined that there are no known or documented cultural sites within either WSA that are eligible for nomination and listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Any archaeological sites that may exist would be protected with or without wilderness designation. Since the management of cultural resources would not differ with or without designation, the issue of impacts on cultural resources is dropped from detailed analysis.
3. Impacts on Local Grazing Practices - Questions were raised that livestock operators may have to modify their grazing practices within WSA's designated wilderness. This issue was dropped because BLM's Wilderness Management Policy provides for the continued grazing use of wilderness areas at historic authorized levels. Although the management practices of livestock operators in the WSA's would be more closely regulated, grazing and management would continue as implemented prior to designation, subject to reasonable regulation.

Where unauthorized and unallotted grazing has occurred on some of the Snake River Islands, efforts will be made to control these uses in the future to enhance wildlife habitat, recreation use and protect natural values. Such efforts could occur with or without wilderness designation and would have little affect on the grazing operator because of the insignificant amount of forage available on the islands to domestic livestock. Therefore, the issue of impacts on local grazing practices is dropped from detailed analysis.

4. Impacts on Goose Nesting Habitat - Goose nesting and brood rearing occurs within the Snake River Islands WSA. Nesting sites have been enhanced on some islands by constructing platforms near the river to provide a protected above-ground nesting structures. These sites could be maintained in designated wilderness. Wilderness designation or nondesignation of the islands would not affect goose nesting habitat. Therefore, this issue is dropped from detailed analysis.

THE PLANNING PROCESS
SELECTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION
AND
DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The Planning Process and Selection of the Proposed Action

Development of the proposed action is guided by requirements of BLM's Planning Regulations, 43 CFR, part 1600. The BLM's Wilderness Study Policy (published February 3, 1982, in the Federal Register) supplements the planning regulations by providing the specific factors to be considered during the planning sequence in developing suitability recommendations.

Alternatives to the Proposed Action Selected for Analysis

The proposed action recommends as nonsuitable for wilderness designation the Sand Mountain WSA with 21,100 acres, and the Snake River Islands WSA with 39 islands totaling 770 acres.

The BLM's Wilderness Study Policy calls for the formulation and evaluation of alternatives ranging from resource protection to resource production. The alternatives assessed for both WSA's are as follows: (1) No Wilderness Alternative (2) All Wilderness Alternative, and (3) Partial Wilderness Alternative.

In this EIS, the No Action Alternative, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, and the No Wilderness Alternative are equivalent. Both advocate a continuation of the present Medicine Lodge RMP and the recommendation of Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands WSA's as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

The All Wilderness Alternative represents the maximum possible acreage that could be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation.

The Partial Wilderness Alternative includes parts of both WSA's as suitable and the remaining portions as nonsuitable.

Alternatives Considered but Dropped from Analysis

Alternatives that would include one of the two WSA's as wilderness and not the other were suggested by commentors on the draft Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS. This approach does not change the WSA specific analysis for the all wilderness, no wilderness and partial wilderness alternatives. Analysis of impacts is done for each WSA separately under the three alternatives, and the suggested aggregate alternative would only repeat these impacts already analyzed. For this reason, aggregate alternatives as suggested are not analyzed in this EIS.

CHAPTER 2

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The pattern and extent of future actions in WSA's over the long-term cannot be predicted with certainty and accuracy. However, assumptions and estimates must be made so an analysis of impacts can be performed for the proposed action and alternatives. These assumptions and estimates of what actions will occur under different alternatives are the basis for the analysis of impacts.

The following is a discussion of actions both planned and anticipated that could occur for each WSA under the proposed action and alternatives.

SAND MOUNTAIN

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS - NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)

All 21,100 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation (See Map 2).

Special Designations

The Sand Mountain WSA would be managed as part of the Nine Mile Knoll Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and the St. Anthony Sand Dunes Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). These special designations were made in the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan (RMP). The WSA is completely contained within both the ACEC and the SRMA.

The decision to develop a coordinated management plan for the ACEC and SRMA was identified in the RMP, but has not been accomplished to date. However, management objectives for the ACEC, SRMA and other RMP decisions relating to the WSA and the wilderness issue provide the basis for what actions are anticipated. These objectives and decisions are described under the resource categories that follow.

A 1,780-acre Research Natural Area (RNA) (See Map 2) designation was made in the RMP and is within the WSA. The RNA will be managed to preserve natural vegetation for educational and scientific purposes. No human-caused changes in vegetation would be allowed in the RNA.

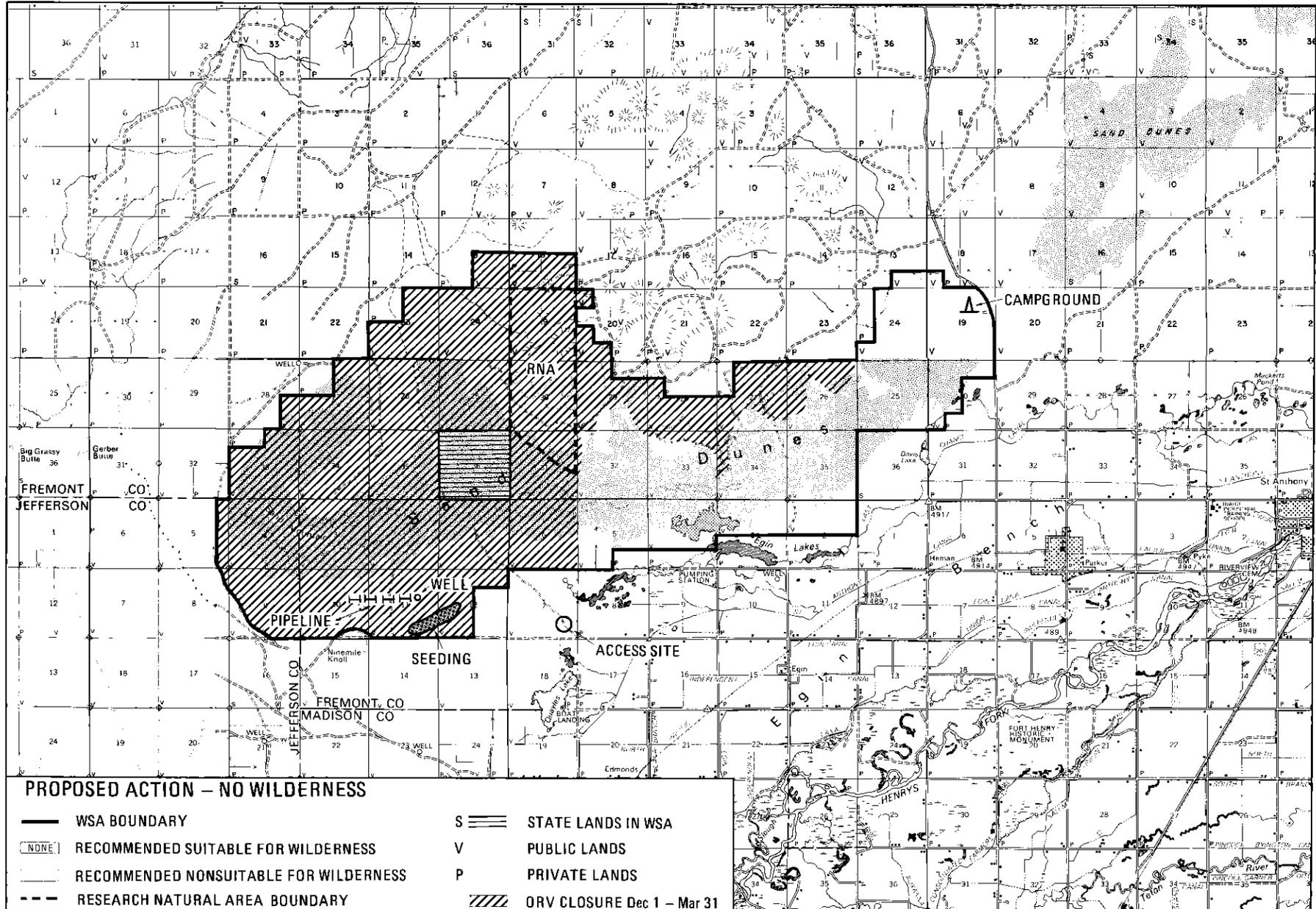
All 21,100 acres of the WSA have been proposed as a National Natural Landmark (NNLM). The decision to designate is pending the approval of the Secretary of Interior. It is anticipated that the designation will occur within the foreseeable future and the NNLM's scenic and geologic values will be maintained. Activities that would threaten the landmark's status would not be allowed.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not required for candidate species under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended. Consultation would not occur under this alternative with regard to the candidate species of tiger beetle and evening primrose. However, the BLM's policy is to manage candidate species as if they were listed.

SAND MOUNTAIN WSA ID-35-3

MAP 2



T. 8 N.

T. 7 N.

R. 38 E.

R. 39 E.

R. 40 E.



Recreation Management Actions

Off-road vehicle (ORV) designations would confine motor vehicle use to areas of open sand dunes and to designated routes through vegetated areas. Recreational ORV use is estimated to increase 10% each year over the long-term (20 years). ORV travel will continue to be closed from December 1 to March 31 on 15,800 acres in the western and northern portion of the WSA. ORV use will be allowed on the eastern 5,300 acres (see Map 2).

Two developments, a campground and a day-use facility, would be established for recreational users. The campground would contain 40-50 units for overnight camping and be located on about 10 acres of the WSA, one half mile north of the Sand Hill Resort. The day-use facility would consist of a parking area to provide access to the open sand dunes. It would be located slightly south of the WSA's southern boundary (See Map 2).

Big Game Habitat Improvement

Big game habitat would be improved by mechanically treating overmature shrub species. Treatment methods would consist of pruning shrubs to a height of 12 inches with a roto-beating device pulled with a tractor. About 200 acres in 40-acre plots of shrub species would be treated annually. The pruning would be rotated throughout the vegetation-covered area surrounding the active sand dunes to stimulate sprouting and browse production.

Alternative methods such as controlled burning are not considered an option to mechanical treatment because of the potential for uncontrolled wide-spread wildfire and long-term loss of the winter range.

Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition

Management under the proposed action would include implementation of projects and developments with the ultimate goal of improving livestock distribution, increasing vigor of key forage grasses and stabilizing range condition. No increases in forage allocation are anticipated in the WSA. Seeding of a nonactive drought tolerant grass species such as pubescent wheatgrass would occur on 200 acres of land. Seeding would be done with a rangeland drill. Other range improvements would consist of drilling one water well, installing a gas pump, 500 gallon storage tank, and construction of one mile of pipeline. The projects would be located one half mile inside the WSA's southern boundary just north of Nine Mile Knoll (See Map 2).

Management Actions to Exchange State Inholdings

The Sand Mountain WSA includes a 640-acre parcel of land owned by the State of Idaho. The BLM and the Idaho Department of Lands currently have an ongoing program to consolidate land ownership through land exchanges in order to improve surface land management. One of the management goals under this option would be to acquire the State's section of land through land exchange. By acquiring the State parcel, the BLM would gain almost total ownership of the Sand Mountain WSA. This would allow the BLM to better manage the area according to specific management objectives.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

All 21,100 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation (See Map 3).

Special Designations

Under this All Wilderness Alternative, management of the WSA portion of the ACEC and SRMA would be based on requirements of the 1964 Wilderness Act. A wilderness management plan would be prepared for the area designated.

A 1,780-acre RNA (See Map 2) designation was made in the RMP and is within the WSA. The RNA will be managed to preserve natural vegetation for educational and scientific purposes. Wilderness management would accomplish this objective.

All 21,100 acres of the WSA have been proposed as a NNLM. The decision to designate is pending the approval of the Secretary of Interior. It is anticipated that the designation will occur if the WSA becomes wilderness.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not required for candidate species under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended. Consultation would not occur under this alternative with regard to the candidate species of tiger beetle and evening primrose. However, the BLM's policy is to manage candidate species as if they were listed.

Recreation Management Actions

All 21,100 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be closed to recreational ORV use. Recreation management actions would emphasize primitive recreation uses that are permitted in designated wilderness. The proposed campground and day-use area would not be constructed. Wilderness experience opportunities would increase. Generally, recreation management objectives would focus on the protection of the natural values and wilderness characteristics. These characteristics include naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation. Also, supplemental values of crucial elk, deer and moose winter habitat, uncommon species of evening primrose and tiger beetle, and unique scenery and geologic value would be protected.

Big Game Habitat Improvement

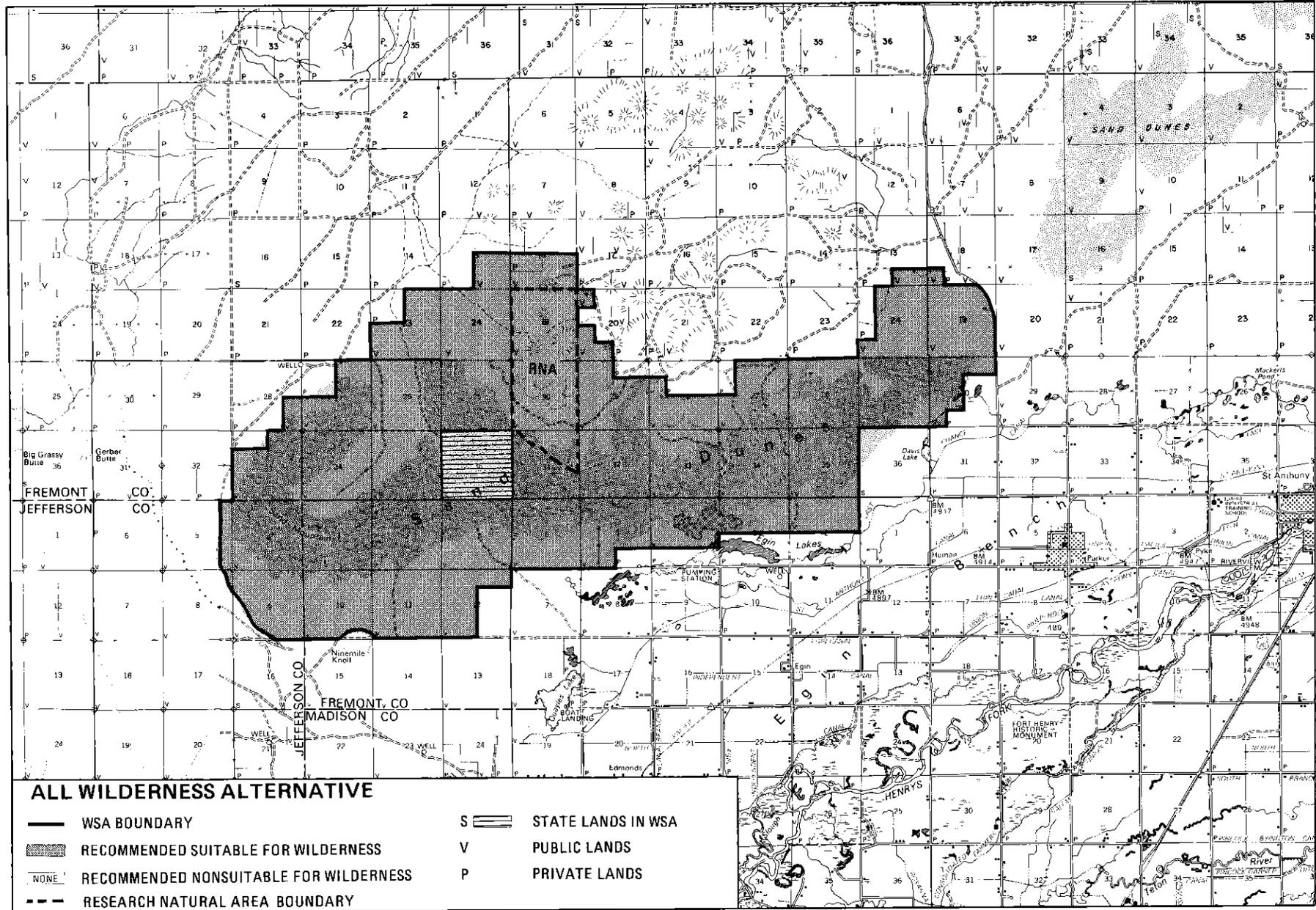
Big game habitat would not be improved by mechanically treating overmature shrub species on 200 acres annually. Alternate methods that could be allowed in designated wilderness such as controlled burning, are not considered an option to mechanical treatment because of the potential for uncontrolled wide-spread wildfire and the long-term loss of the winter range. Wildlife habitat would be allowed to naturally change with little outside influences or management.

Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition

Projects to improve livestock distribution and range condition would not be implemented. Proposals that would not be done include a grass seeding on 200 acres, one water well, storage tank, and one mile of pipeline. Domestic livestock grazing would continue to be permitted at or near current authorized levels.

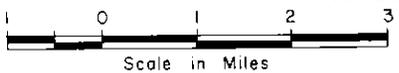
SAND MOUNTAIN WSA ID-35-3

MAP 3



ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

- WSA BOUNDARY
- RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
- RECOMMENDED UNSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
- RESEARCH NATURAL AREA BOUNDARY
- STATE LANDS IN WSA
- PUBLIC LANDS
- PRIVATE LANDS



R. 38 E.

R. 39 E.

R. 40 E.

T. 8 N.

T. 7 N.

Management Actions to Exchange State Inholdings

Acquisition of the 640-acre State-owned parcel of land located within the WSA boundary would be pursued. Acquisition of this parcel would improve the overall management of the wilderness area.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

This alternative recommends that only a portion of the Sand Mountain WSA be added to the wilderness system (see Map 4). The boundary of this alternative encompasses 6,560 acres and excludes certain lands proposed for vegetation manipulation needed to improve and sustain range and wildlife habitat. The boundary also excludes lands popular with ORV enthusiasts. The remaining 14,540 acres of the WSA would be recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Special Designations

Under this Partial Wilderness Alternative, management of 6,560-acre wilderness portion would be based on requirements of the 1964 Wilderness Act. A wilderness management plan would be prepared for the area designated. The remaining 14,500 acres of the WSA would be managed under a proposed coordinated plan for the Nine Mile Knoll ACEC and St. Anthony Sand Dunes SRMA. This plan has not been accomplished to date. However, management objectives for the ACEC, SRMA and other RMP decisions relating to the WSA and wilderness issue provide the basis for what actions are anticipated. The objectives and decisions are described under the resource categories that follow.

A 1,780-acre RNA (see Map 4) designation was made in the RMP and is within the WSA. The RNA will be managed to preserve natural vegetation for educational and scientific purposes. No human-caused changes in vegetation would be allowed in the RNA.

All 21,100 acres of the WSA have been proposed as a NNLM. The decision to designate is pending the approval of the Secretary of Interior. It is not anticipated that the designation will occur under this Partial Wilderness Alternative.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

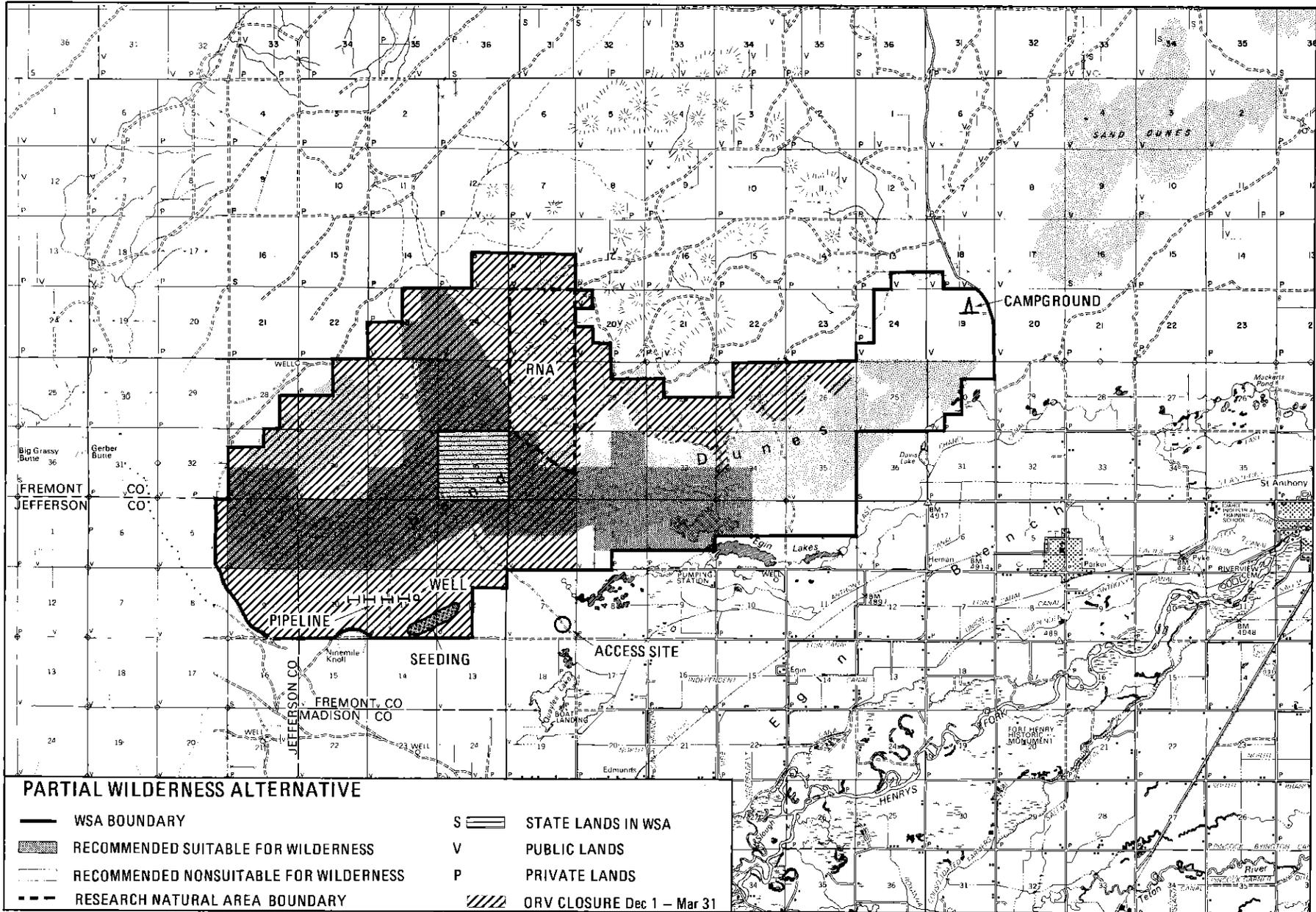
Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is not required for candidate species under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended. Consultation would not occur under this alternative with regard to the candidate species of tiger beetle and evening primrose. However, the BLM's policy is to manage candidate species as if they were listed.

Recreation Management Actions

The 6,560-acre barren sand portion of the WSA would be closed to recreational ORV use. Recreation management actions for the 6,560 acres would emphasize primitive recreation uses that are permitted in designated wilderness.

SAND MOUNTAIN WSA ID-35-3

MAP 4



T. 8 N.

T. 7 N.

R. 38 E.

R. 39 E.

R. 40 E.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

- WSA BOUNDARY
- ▨ RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
- ▤ RECOMMENDED NONSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
- - - RESEARCH NATURAL AREA BOUNDARY
- S ▨ STATE LANDS IN WSA
- V PUBLIC LANDS
- P PRIVATE LANDS
- ▧ ORV CLOSURE Dec 1 – Mar 31



ORV designations for the remaining 14,540 acres of the WSA would confine motor vehicle use to open sands in the eastern portion of the area and to designated routes in vegetated areas that surround the dunes. Recreational ORV use is estimated to increase between one and two percent over the long-term under this Partial Wilderness Alternative, which is a much slower rate than the No Wilderness Alternative. About 3,000 acres of open sands would be available for ORV use instead of an estimated 10,000 acres of the WSA lands. The higher more challenging and remote dunes in the western portion would be closed to ORV use making the area remaining less attractive to ORV enthusiasts.

ORV travel would be closed in the 6,560-acre wilderness along with an additional 9,240 acres of the western portion from December 1 to March 31. Snowmobile use would be allowed on the eastern 5,300 acres (See Map 4).

The campground on the eastern edge of the WSA would be constructed, but the day use access would not. The campground would contain 40-50 units for overnight camping and be located on about 10 acres of the WSA, one half mile north of the Sand Hills Resort (See Map 4).

Big Game Habitat Improvement

Big game habitat would be improved by mechanically treating overmature shrub species. Treatment methods would consist of pruning shrubs to a height of 12 inches with a roto-beating device pulled with a tractor. About 200 acres in 40-acre plots of shrub species would be treated annually. The pruning would be rotated throughout the vegetation-covered area surrounding the active sand dunes to stimulate sprouting and browse production. Alternative methods such as controlled burning, are not considered an option to mechanical treatment because of the potential for uncontrolled wide-spread wildfire and long-term loss of the winter range.

Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition

Management under the Partial Wilderness Alternative would include implementation of projects and developments with the ultimate goal of improving livestock distribution, increasing vigor of key forage grasses and stabilizing range condition. No increases in forage allocation are anticipated in the WSA. Seeding of a nonactive drought tolerant grass species such as pubescent wheatgrass would occur on 200 acres of land. Seeding would be done with a rangeland drill. Other range improvements would consist of drilling one water well, installing a gas pump, 500 gallon storage tank, and construction of one mile of pipeline. The projects would be located one half mile inside the WSA's southern boundary just north of Nine Mile Knoll (See Map 4).

Management Actions to Exchange State Inholdings

The Sand Mountain WSA includes a 640-acre parcel of land owned by the State of Idaho. The BLM and the Idaho Department of Lands currently have an ongoing program to consolidate land ownership through land exchanges in order to improve surface land management. One of the management goals under this option would be to acquire the State's section of land through land exchange. By acquiring the State parcel, the BLM would gain almost total ownership of the Sand Mountain WSA. This would allow the BLM to better manage the area according to specific management objectives.

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS
SAND MOUNTAIN

Environmental Issues	Proposed Action No Wilderness Alternative	All Wilderness Alternative	Partial Wilderness Alternative
Impacts on Wilderness Values	<p>Naturalness degraded on 410 acres from vegetative manipulation and seeding projects, campground construction and livestock water developments. Solitude and primitive recreation eliminated by 4000-5000 VUD's of ORV use on 21,100 acres during spring, summer and fall, and on 5,300 acres in eastern portion by 350-400 VUD's of snowmobiling. Primitive recreation and solitude maintained on western 15,800 acres by winter ORV closure. Big game winter habitat, proposed sensitive species, and scenic and geologic values maintained by ACEC/SRMA management.</p>	<p>Long-term (beyond 20 years) protection of wilderness characteristics and supplemental values on 21,100 acres. Wilderness protection would benefit stable wildlife habitats, candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose, and scenic and geologic values. Downward trend in big game habitat would stabilize populations below optimum levels.</p>	<p><u>Partial Wilderness (6,560 acres)</u> - Long-term protection of naturalness and supplemental values of candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose, and scenic and geologic values. Solitude and primitive recreation enhanced partially but degraded by nearby ORV use. <u>No Wilderness (14,540 acres)</u> Naturalness degraded on 410 acres from vegetative manipulation and seeding projects, campground construction and livestock water developments. Solitude and primitive recreation eliminated by ORV use on 14,540 acres during spring, summer and fall, but maintained during winter by ORV closure.</p>
Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species	<p>ORV use increases could cause individual mortalities for candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose, but impact would be slight. Stable populations would result and status would remain unchanged over the long-term.</p>	<p>Long-term habitat protection from ORV use for candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. Populations remain stable and listing may or may not occur.</p>	<p>Long-term habitat protection from ORV use on 6,560 acres for candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. ORV use increases on 14,540 acres could cause mortalities but impact would be slight. Stable populations would result and status would remain unchanged over long term. Partial wilderness would have little benefit to population.</p>

Impacts on
Recreational ORV
Use

ORV related recreation enhanced with a considerable positive impact to recreation use. Total recreation use could increase 350% or to 19,250-23,350 visitor use days by the year 2006.

ORV related recreation eliminated resulting in considerable impact. Visitor use would decrease as much as 1,100% with 16,450-20,500 visitor use days foregone. Local ORV recreationists would shift activity to other nearby dunes and out-of-state visitation would not occur to any great degree.

ORV related recreation enhanced with a moderate positive impact to recreation use. Total recreation use could increase 141% or to 8,050-9,400 visitor use days by the year 2006. Local ORV recreationists would shift activity away from partial wilderness to nearby dunes and out-of-state visitation would decrease.

Impacts on
Local Economics

Total recreation expenditures would equal as much as \$1,448,400. This would represent a considerable beneficial impact to local businesses.

Total recreation expenditures would decrease by \$375,000. This would represent a considerable adverse impact to local businesses. Some businesses may have to close.

Total recreation expenditures would equal as much as \$503,820. This would represent a moderate benefit to local businesses.

Impacts on
Big Game Winter
Range

Habitat manipulation would maintain elk populations at 2,000 head, moose at 35-45 head, and deer at 1,200-1,400 head. Optimum population goals could be met.

Without habitat improvement an estimated decrease of 200 elk, 10-15 moose and 400 deer would result as well as a downward trend in habitat condition. Optimum population goals could not be met.

Habitat manipulation would maintain elk populations at 2,000 head, moose at 35-45 head, and deer at 1,200-1,400 head. Optimum population goals could be met.

Impacts on
Livestock Facility
Development and Range
Conditions

Range improvements could be constructed. Better distribution of livestock and a more stable range condition with increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses will result.

Range improvements would be constrained, which would reduce capability of grazing systems to distribute livestock for optimum forage utilization. Forage grass vigor could decrease resulting in a downward trend in range condition.

Range improvements could be constructed. Better distribution of livestock and a more stable range condition with increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses will result.

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS - NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)

All three of the island groups that make up the Snake River Islands WSA would be recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The WSA contains 39 islands totaling 770 acres of public land (See Map 5, a-d).

Special Designations

The Snake River Islands WSA would be managed as part of the Snake River System ACEC and SRMA. These special designations were made in the Medicine Lodge RMP. The 39 islands are completely contained within both the ACEC and SRMA. The decision to develop a coordinated management plan for the ACEC and SRMA was identified in the RMP, but has not been accomplished to date. However, management objectives for the ACEC, SRMA and other RMP decisions relating to the WSA and the wilderness issue provide the basis for what actions are anticipated. These objectives and decisions are described under the resource categories that follow.

A 25-acre RNA (See Map 5c) was designated in the RMP and is within the Snake River Islands WSA. It includes islands 45 and 46. The RNA will be managed to preserve natural vegetation for educational and scientific purposes. As with all of the islands, human-caused changes to vegetation would not be allowed.

The management plan objectives for the Snake River System ACEC and SRMA would be to maintain the existing natural setting and resource conditions of the Snake River Islands which would include this 770-acre island complex. Existing vegetation would be maintained, and the detailed plan would address scenic quality, wildlife winter and summer range, and management of bald eagle nesting and winter habitat. Bald eagle management and other wildlife habitat would not be assured over the long-term because of the continued powersite and reclamation withdrawals and the anticipated construction of Lynn Crandall Dam.

Various types of wildlife habitat would be managed under a detailed management plan for the river system. This management would include the bald eagle nesting and wintering territories; elk, deer, and moose winter range; and nesting and winter areas for Canada geese, great blue herons, and a variety of other waterfowl. No new wildlife projects are planned for the islands (e.g. goose nesting platforms), but options would remain open if development work is needed in the future. Unauthorized and unallotted livestock grazing of islands 25, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, and 47 would be removed and grazing restrictions enforced.

Recreation management of the islands would be aimed at maintaining their natural characteristics and nonmotorized recreation uses. Adverse impacts from recreation use on natural values, wildlife and scenic resources would be minimized.

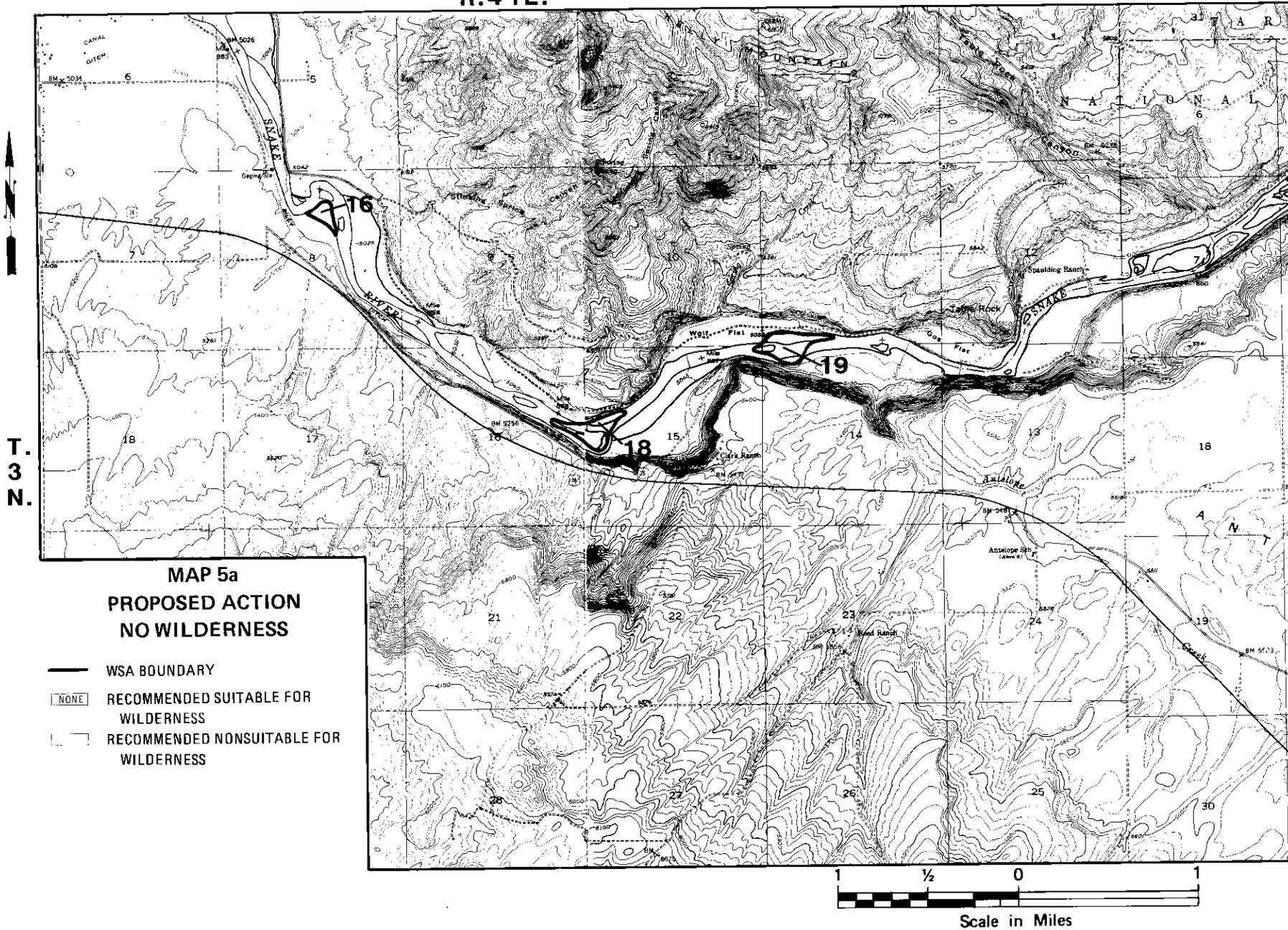
Mining and Mineral Leasing Actions

The RMP calls for restricting and/or eliminating mineral leasing, mining and material sales from the WSA islands. No surface occupancy limitations would continue on existing and new oil and gas leases. The islands would be withdrawn from location under the 1872 Mining Law and would remain closed to the sale of mineral material such as sand and gravel.

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

R.41E.

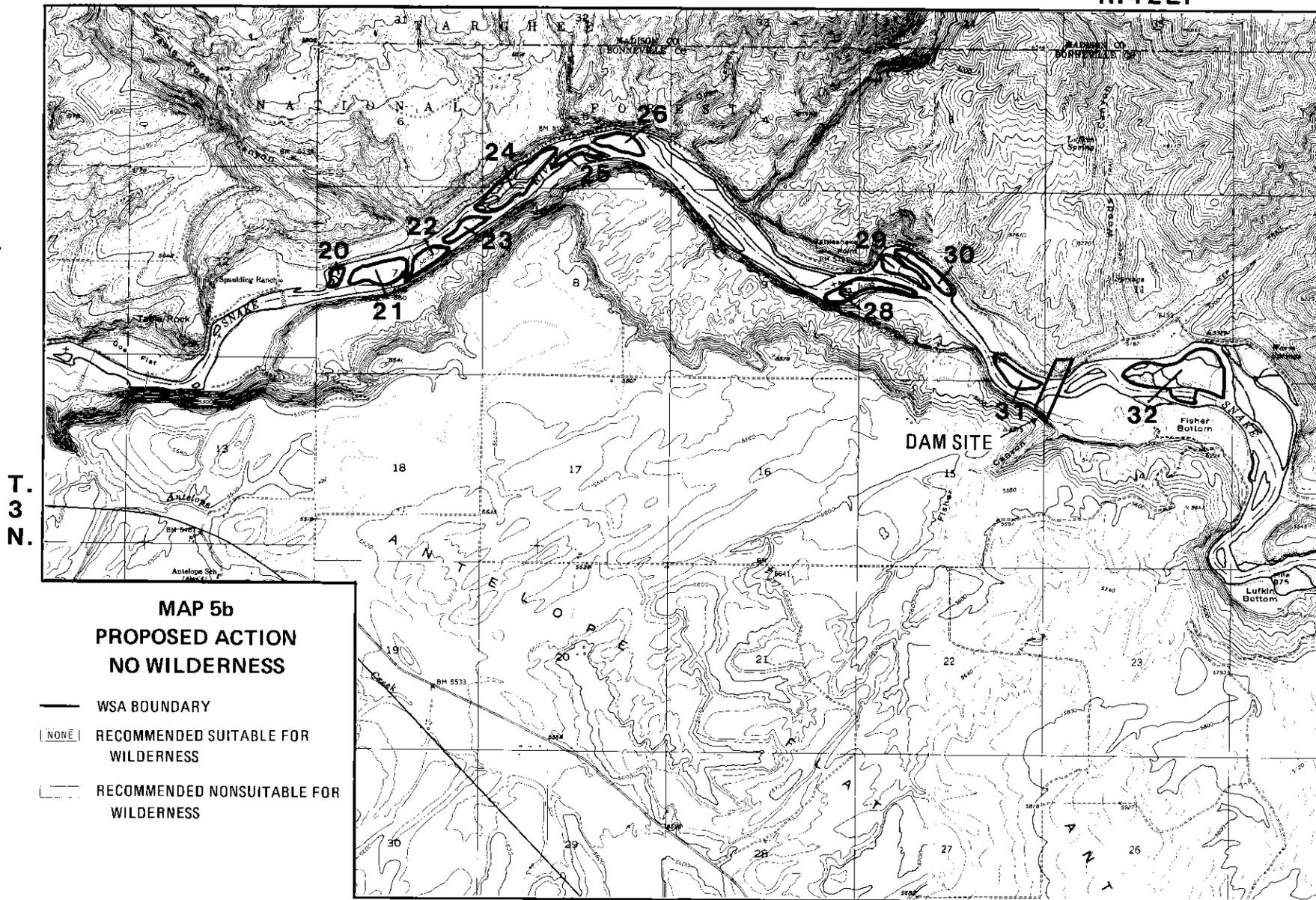
R.42E.



SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

R.41E.

R.42E.



**MAP 5b
PROPOSED ACTION
NO WILDERNESS**

-  WSA BOUNDARY
-  RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED NONSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS



Scale in Miles

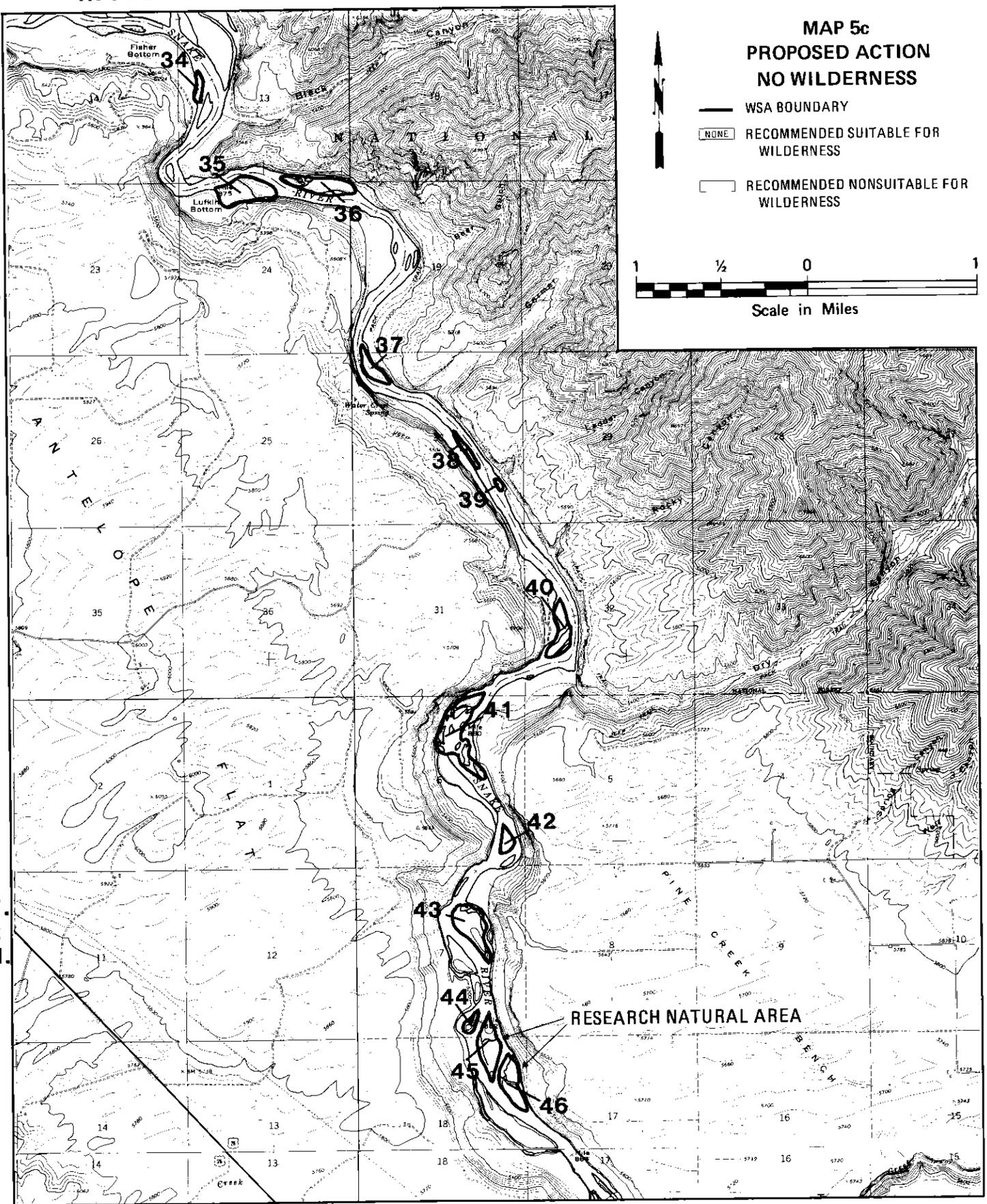
SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

R.42E.

R.43E.

T.3 N.

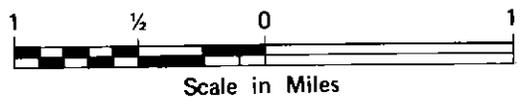
T.2 N.



MAP 5c

**PROPOSED ACTION
NO WILDERNESS**

- WSA BOUNDARY
- NONE RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
- RECOMMENDED NONSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS

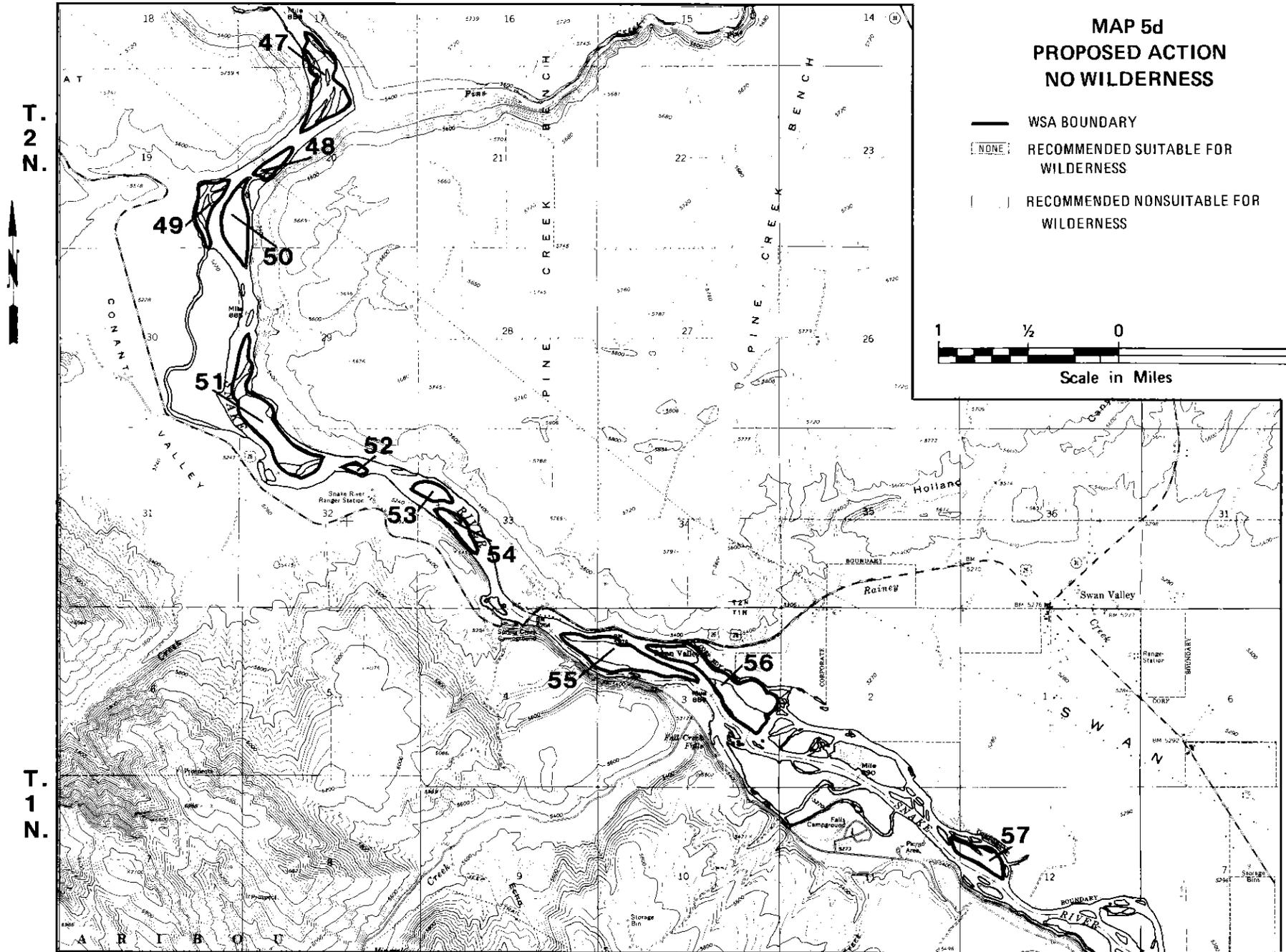
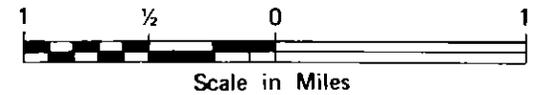


RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

Snake River Islands 34-2, 3 & 4

MAP 5d PROPOSED ACTION NO WILDERNESS

-  WSA BOUNDARY
-  NONE RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED NONSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS



R. 43 E.

R. 44 E.

Powersite and Reclamation Project Development

The powersite and reclamation withdrawals on 25 of the Snake River Islands WSA would be continued. The withdrawals would keep key powersite locations (i.e. Lynn Crandall Dam) available for use at some point in the future. It is anticipated that the dam would be constructed 20 to 50 years in the future (See Map 5-b for location).

Wild and Scenic River Study

The BLM and the Forest Service have recommended that the South Fork be studied for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. The portion of the South Fork considered for study includes all of the Snake River Islands WSA.

Management of the Snake River Islands WSA and South Fork as a Wild and Scenic River is a potential legislative alternative to wilderness. However, the BLM has no indication that a study would be authorized or that the river system would ever be designated. Also, BLM does not have the authority to study or designate a river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Therefore, the impact analysis for this No Wilderness Alternative is based on what is anticipated to occur without Wild and Scenic Rivers designation.

Recreation Homesite Development

Under the No Wilderness Alternative, the potential recreation homesite development would not be anticipated. This is because the lands currently proposed for development are within the area that would be inundated by the Lynn Crandall Dam.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) includes portions of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Bald eagle wintering and nesting populations occur along the South Fork of the Snake River below Palisades Reservoir. The Interagency Bald Eagle Working Group for the GYE is composed of members from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the fish and game departments of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. This group has been quite active in research concerning the birds and have recently launched a wide spread public relations campaign to make people aware of the bird's habits and needs.

Management emphasis for the bald eagles along the South Fork will focus on maintenance and protection of existing habitat. The cottonwood-riparian areas on the WSA islands and river bottoms provide important habitat for both nesting and wintering bald eagles. The interagency group has coordinated their efforts to identify important buffer areas for nesting territories. BLM management actions include withdrawing areas from timber harvest, restricting oil and gas leasing, closing the area to mining under the 1872 mining law, cancelling or regulating livestock grazing, restricting commercial recreation activities, retaining lands in public ownership and acquiring private lands when possible.

Under this No Wilderness Alternative, the bald eagle habitat is expected to be inundated from the proposed construction of the Lynn Crandall Dam within the next 30 years. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be required and mitigation for bald eagle losses proposed.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

All three of the island groups that make up the Snake River Islands WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The WSA contains 39 islands totaling 770 acres of public land (See Map 6, a-d)

Special Designations

The Snake River Islands WSA as designated wilderness would be managed as part of the Snake River System ACEC and SRMA. These special designations were made in the Medicine Lodge RMP. The 39 islands are completely contained within both the ACEC and SRMA. The decision to develop a coordinated management plan for the ACEC and SRMA was identified in the RMP, but has not been accomplished to date. However, management objectives for the ACEC, SRMA and other RMP decisions relating to the WSA and the wilderness issue provide the basis for what actions are anticipated. The objectives and decisions are described under the resource categories that follow.

The Snake River Islands WSA would be managed under the auspices of the 1964 Wilderness Act and a wilderness management plan. The plan would emphasize maintenance of the existing wilderness characteristics of the islands. No new facilities or developments would be allowed, such as picnic tables, fire pits or other facilities. Existing fire pits and other evidence of human occupation and use would be rehabilitated. Recreation management actions would be aimed toward maintaining existing vegetation, wildlife habitat, and scenic quality while minimizing any disturbing human-caused influences.

If Congress designates the Snake River Islands WSA, the wilderness area would be situated within the larger Snake River System ACEC and SRMA. A management plan would be developed for the Snake River, but would be consistent with the wilderness management plan.

A 25-acre RNA (See Map 6-c) was designated in the RMP and is within the Snake River Islands WSA. It includes islands 45 and 46. The RNA will be managed to preserve natural vegetation for educational and scientific purposes. As with all of the islands, human-caused changes to vegetation would not be allowed.

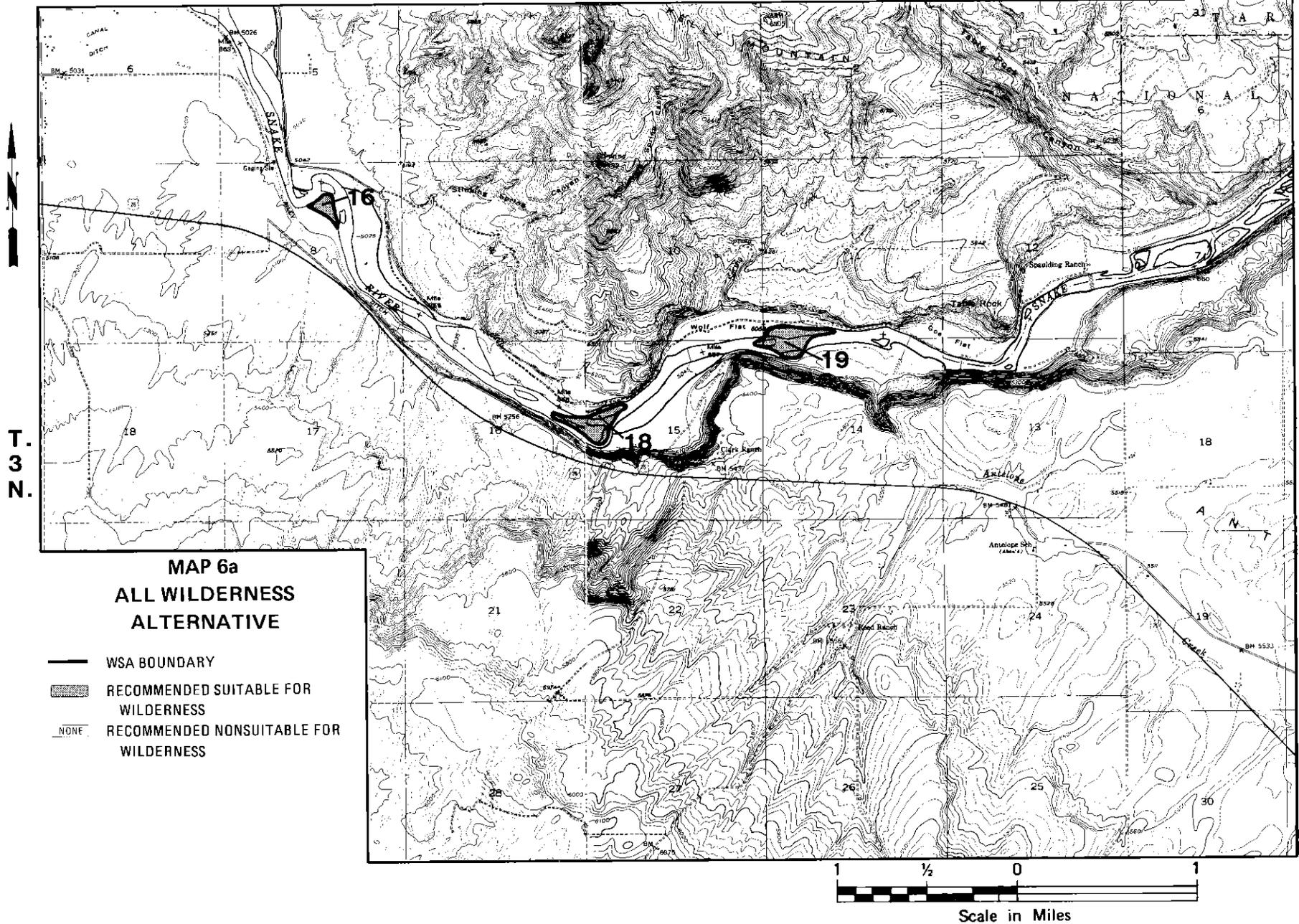
The management plan objectives for the Snake River System ACEC and SRMA would be to maintain the existing natural setting and resource conditions of the Snake River Islands which would include this 770-acre WSA. Existing vegetation would be maintained, and the detailed plan would address scenic quality, wildlife winter and summer range, and management of bald eagle nesting and winter habitat.

Various types of wildlife habitat would be managed under a detailed management plan for the river system. This management would include the bald eagle nesting and wintering territories, elk, deer, and moose winter range, and nesting and winter areas for Canada geese, great blue herons, and a variety of other waterfowl. No new wildlife projects are planned for the islands (e.g. goose nesting platforms), but options would remain open if development work is needed in the future. Unauthorized and unallotted livestock grazing of islands 25, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, and 47 would be removed and grazing restrictions enforced.

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

R.41E.

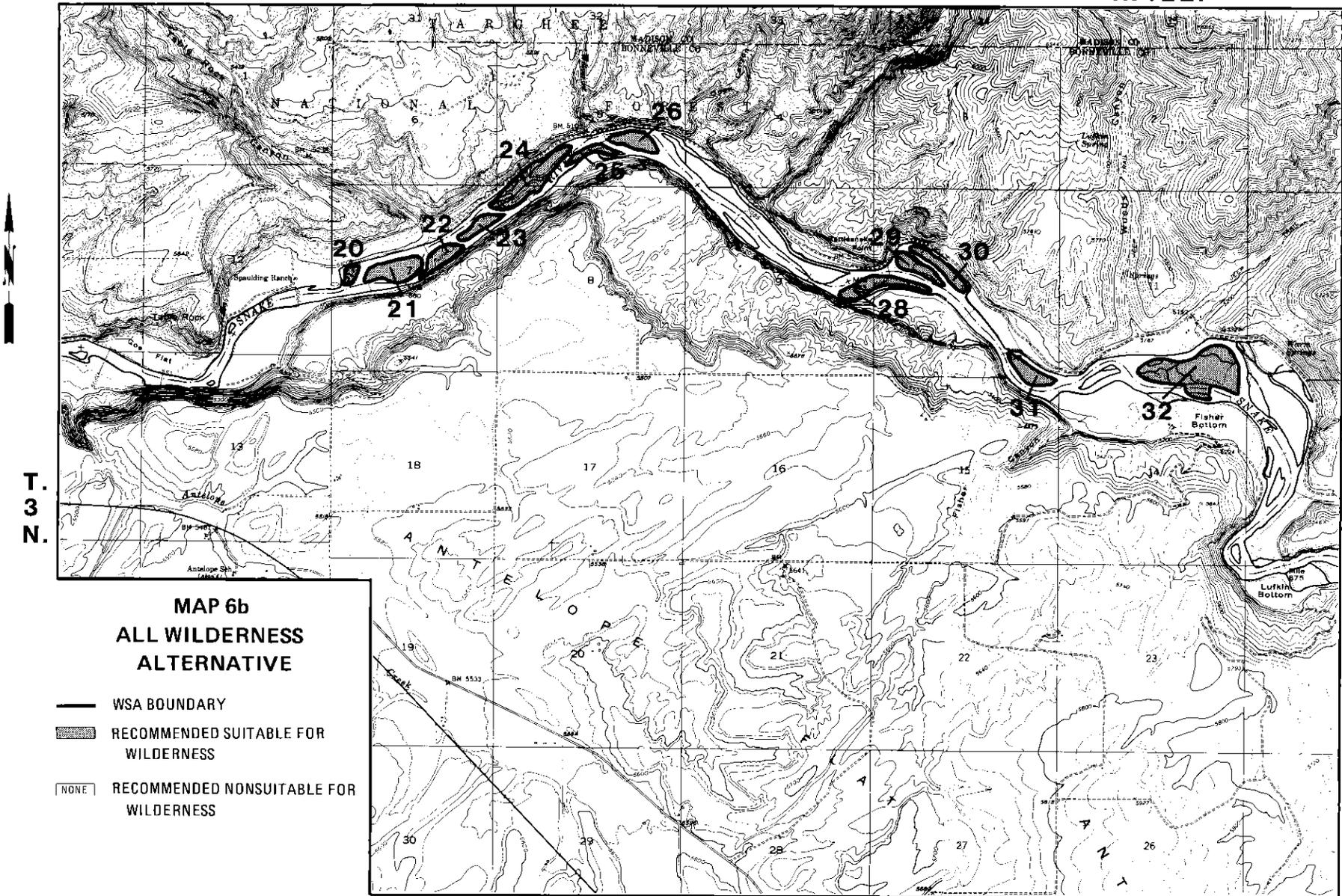
R.42E.



SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

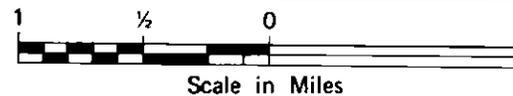
R.41E.

R.42E.



MAP 6b
ALL WILDERNESS
ALTERNATIVE

- WSA BOUNDARY
- ▨ RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
- ☐ NONE RECOMMENDED UNSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS



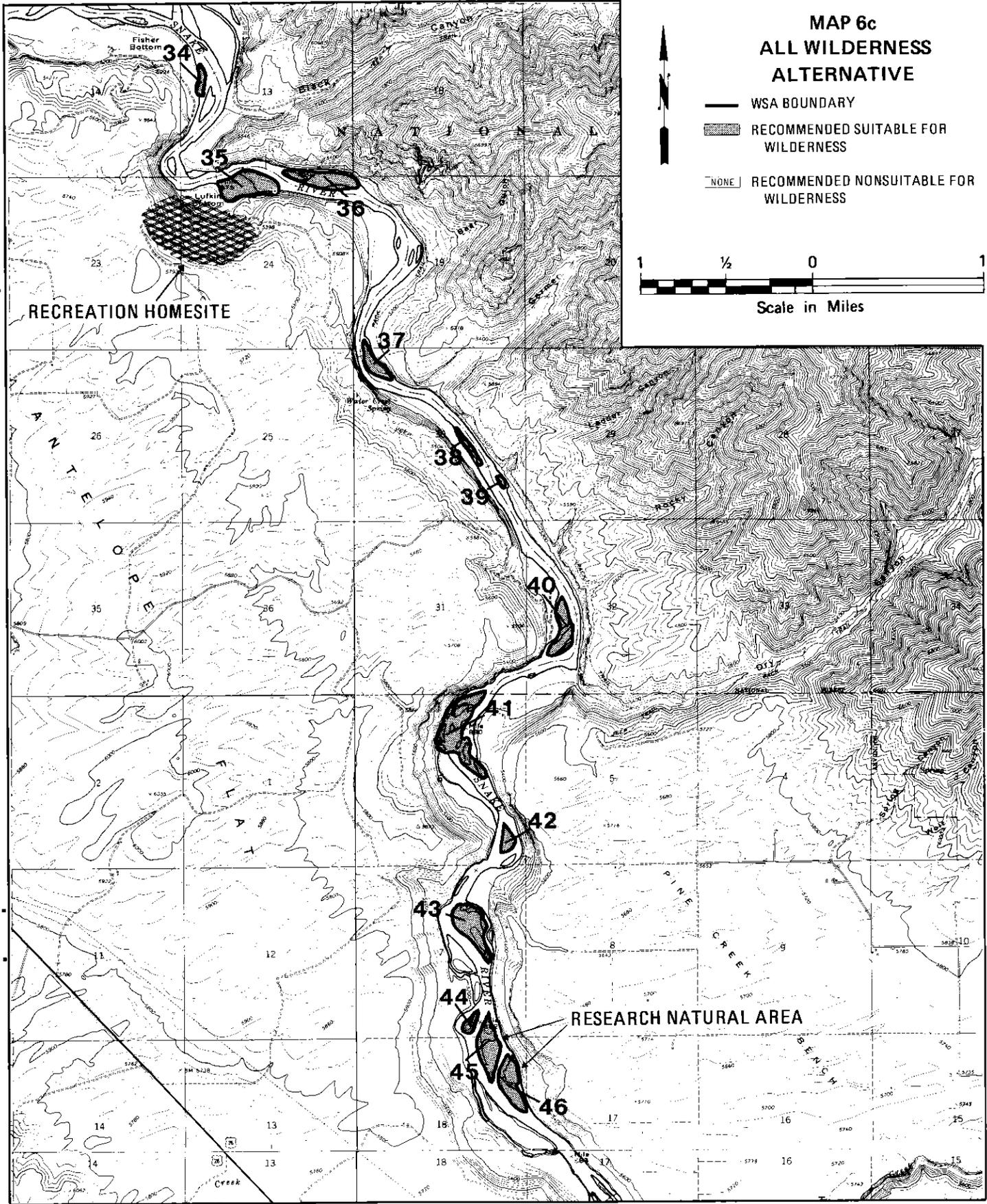
Snake River Islands 34-2, 3 & 4

R.42E.

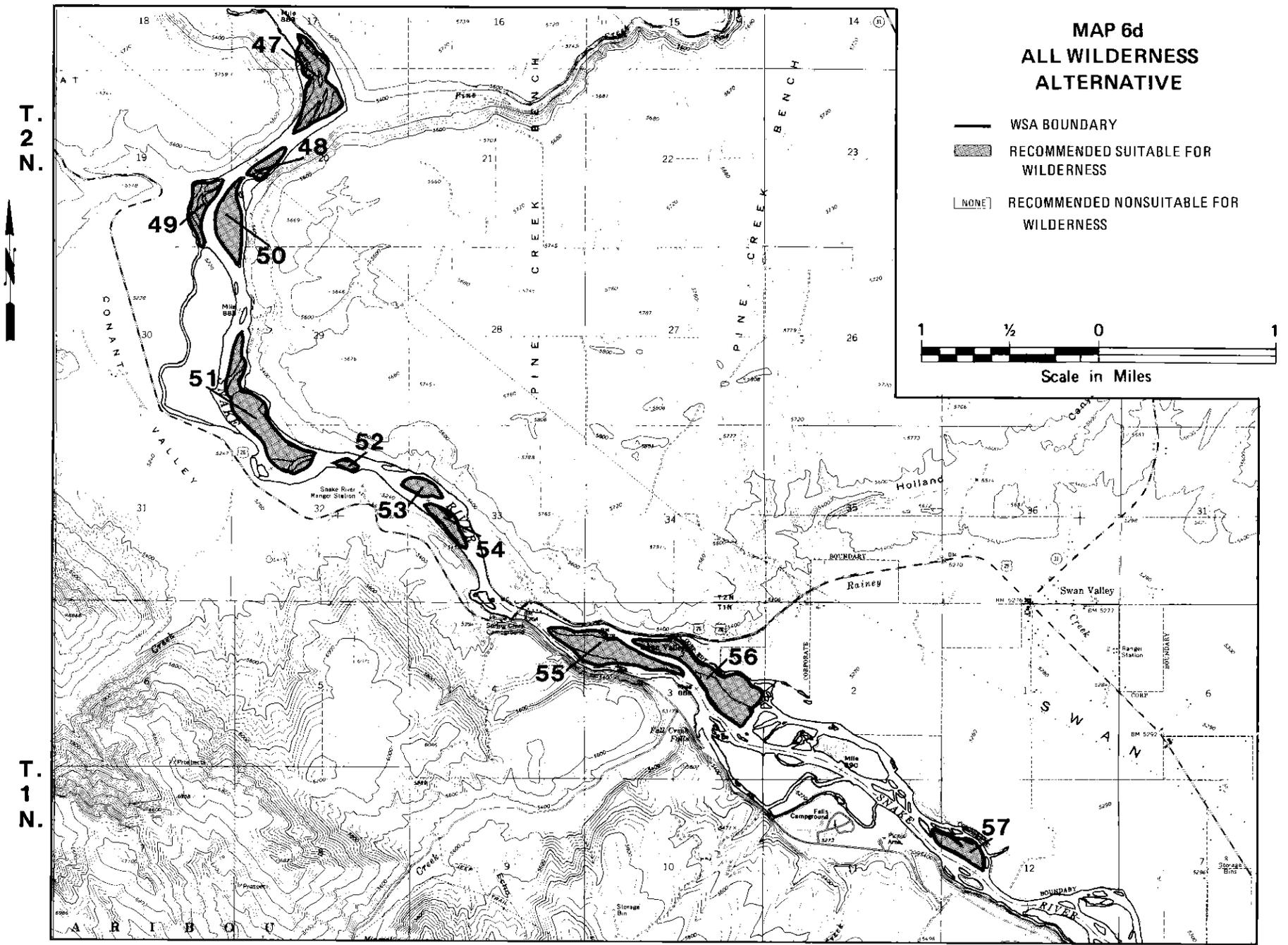
R.43E.

T.3 N.

T.2 N.



Snake River Islands 34-2, 3 & 4



R. 43 E.

R. 44 E.

Recreation management of the islands would be aimed at maintaining their natural characteristics and nonmotorized recreation uses. Adverse impacts from recreation use on natural values, wildlife and scenic resources would be minimized.

Mining and Mineral Leasing Actions

All 39 islands would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining and mineral leasing laws with wilderness designation, and sand and gravel extraction would not be allowed. Therefore, RMP actions would not be made to curtail mining and mineral leasing activities on the islands.

Powersite and Reclamation Project Development

If the Snake River WSA is recommended as suitable for wilderness and Congress designates the 39 islands as wilderness, the existing powersite and reclamations withdrawals would have to be revoked. Wilderness preservation and management in perpetuity could not be assured without revocation of existing withdrawals.

Wild and Scenic River Study

The BLM and the Forest Service have recommended that the South Fork be studied for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. The portion of the South Fork considered for study includes all of the Snake River Islands WSA.

Management of the Snake River Islands WSA and South Fork as a Wild and Scenic River is a potential legislative alternative to wilderness. However, the BLM has no indication that a study would be authorized or that the river system would ever be designated. Also, BLM does not have the authority to study or designate a river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Therefore, the impact analysis for this No Wilderness Alternative is based on what is anticipated to occur without Wild and Scenic Rivers designation.

Recreation Homesite Development

There are several bottom-land areas along the South Fork that are in private ownership. Some of these areas are being farmed and some are undeveloped. The possibility exists that one of the private areas would be developed as a recreation homesite complex, and has been proposed on a 550-acre parcel on the south bank of the South Fork at Lufkin Bottom. (See Map 6-c). This location is directly adjacent to Island #35. The development could include 66 individual residences, access roads, boat ramp and marina, and golf course with a recreation building. For analysis purposes, it is assumed that the development would be constructed within 30 years from present.

It should be noted that there are several other opportunities for similar homesite developments along the South Fork. The approval and realization of one may set a precedent for others to follow.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) includes portions of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Bald eagle wintering and nesting populations occur along the South Fork of the Snake River below Palisades Reservoir. The Interagency Bald Eagle Working Group for the GYE is composed of members from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the fish and game departments of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. This group has been quite active in research concerning the birds and have recently launched a wide spread public relations campaign to make people aware of the bird's habits and needs.

Management emphasis for the bald eagles along the South Fork will focus on maintenance and protection of existing habitat. The cottonwood-riparian areas on the WSA islands and river bottoms provide important habitat for both nesting and wintering bald eagles. The interagency group has coordinated their efforts to identify important buffer areas for nesting territories. BLM management actions include withdrawing areas from timber harvest, restricting oil and gas leasing, closing the area to mining under the 1872 mining law, cancelling or regulating livestock grazing, restricting commercial recreation activities, retaining lands in public ownership and acquiring private lands when possible.

Under this All Wilderness Alternative, habitat would not be inundated by reservoir construction. Consultation would occur with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to prevent impacts.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

This alternative would recommend 12 islands in the most remote portion of the Snake River Canyon as suitable for wilderness designation. They include islands 36 -- 47 and total 155 acres of public land (See Map 7 a-d). The remaining 27 islands, totaling 615 acres, would be recommended nonsuitable.

Special Designations

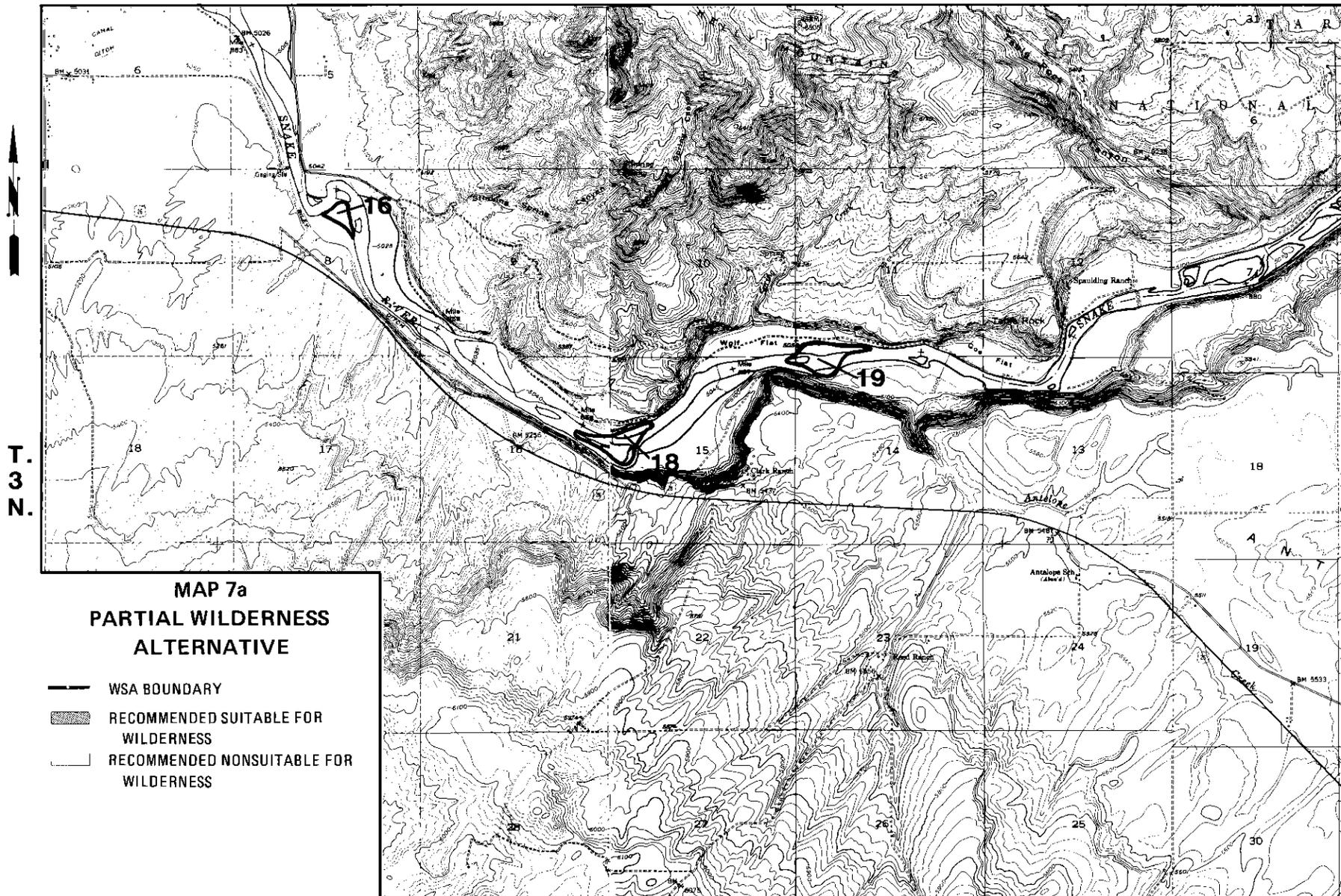
The Snake River Islands WSA would be managed as part of the Snake River System ACEC and SRMA. These special designations were made in the Medicine Lodge RMP. The 39 islands are completely contained within both the ACEC and SRMA. The decision to develop a coordinated management plan for the ACEC and SRMA was identified in the RMP, but has not been accomplished to date. However, management objectives for the ACEC, SRMA and other RMP decisions relating to the WSA and wilderness issue provide the basis for what actions are anticipated. These objectives and decisions are described under the resource categories that follow.

The 12 islands in the Snake River Canyon would be managed under the auspices of the 1964 Wilderness Act and a wilderness management plan. The plan would emphasize maintenance of the existing wilderness characteristics of the islands. No new facilities or developments would be planned, such as picnic tables, fire pits or other facilities. Existing fire pits and other evidence of human occupation and use would be rehabilitated. Recreation management actions would be aimed toward maintaining existing vegetation, wildlife habitat, and scenic quality while minimizing any disturbing influences by man.

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

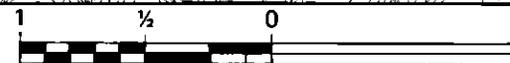
R.41E.

R.42E.



MAP 7a
PARTIAL WILDERNESS
ALTERNATIVE

-  WSA BOUNDARY
-  RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED NONSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS

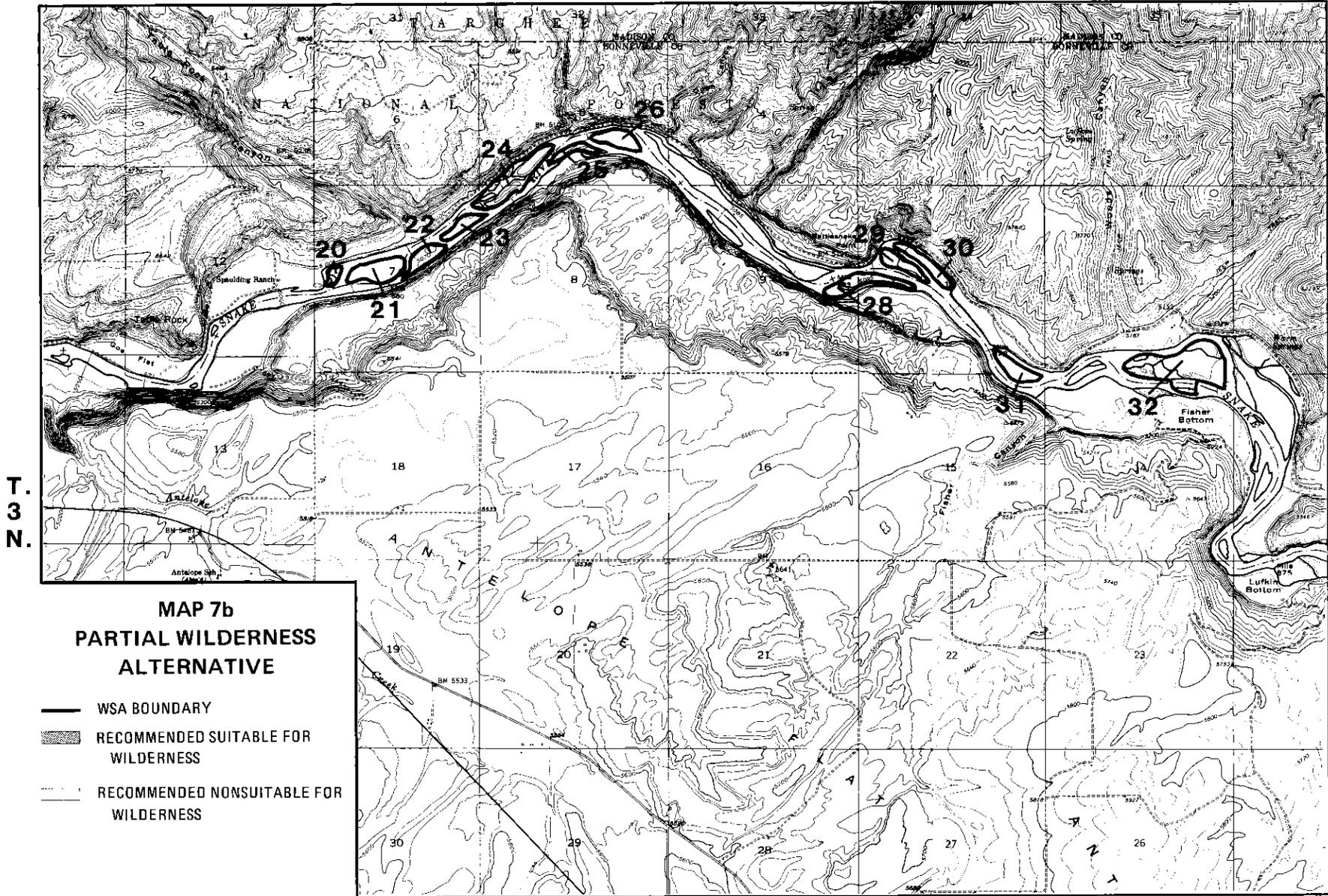


Scale in Miles

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

R. 41 E.

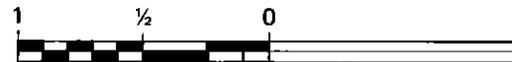
R. 42 E.



T. 3 N.

MAP 7b PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

-  WSA BOUNDARY
-  RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
-  RECOMMENDED NONSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS

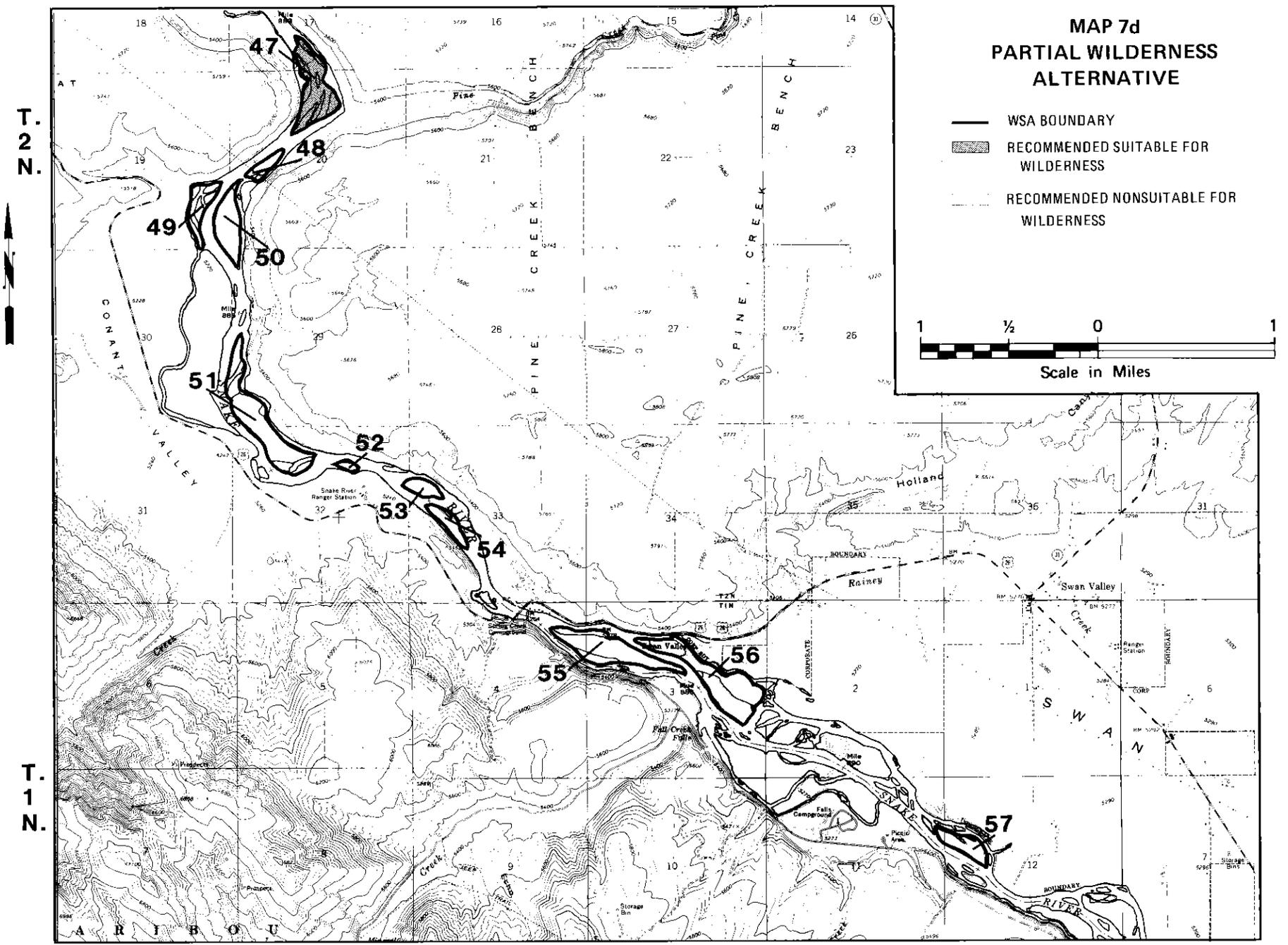
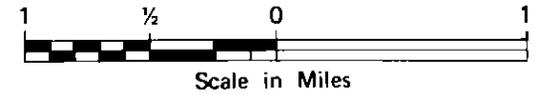


Scale in Miles

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS 34-2, 3 & 4

MAP 7d
PARTIAL WILDERNESS
ALTERNATIVE

- WSA BOUNDARY
- ▨ RECOMMENDED SUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS
- - - RECOMMENDED NONSUITABLE FOR WILDERNESS



R. 43 E.

R. 44 E.

If Congress designates the 12 islands, the wilderness area would be situated within the larger Snake River Systems ACEC and SRMA. A management plan would be developed for the Snake River, but would be consistent with the wilderness management plan.

A 25-acre RNA (See Map 7--c) was designated in the RMP and is within the Snake River Islands WSA. It includes islands 45 and 46. The RNA will be managed to preserve natural vegetation for educational and scientific purposes. As with all of the islands, human-caused changes to vegetation would not be allowed.

Recreation management of the 12 islands would be aimed at maintaining their natural characteristics and nonmotorized recreation uses. Adverse impacts from recreation use on natural values, wildlife and scenic resources would not be allowed. The same management emphasis would be placed on the remaining 27 islands but without the long-term legal restrictions of wilderness management.

Mining and Mineral Leasing Actions

The 12 islands would be withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining and mineral leasing laws with wilderness designation, and sand and gravel extraction would not be allowed. The remaining 27 islands not designated, would be subject to RMP decisions of no surface occupancy limitations on new and existing oil and gas leases, withdrawals from location under the 1872 Mining Law, and closure to the sale of mineral materials such as sand and gravel.

If islands 36 through 47 are recommended as suitable for wilderness and Congress designates them as wilderness, the existing powersite and reclamation withdrawals would have to be revoked. Wilderness management could not be assured without revoking the withdrawals.

Wild and Scenic River Study

The BLM and the Forest Service have recommended that the South Fork be studied for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System pursuant to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. The portion of the South Fork considered for study includes all of the Snake River Islands WSA.

Management of the Snake River Islands WSA and South Fork as a Wild and Scenic River is a potential legislative alternative to wilderness. However, the BLM has no indication that a study would be authorized or that the river system would ever be designated. Also, BLM does not have the authority to study or designate a river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Therefore, the impact analysis for this No Wilderness Alternative is based on what is anticipated to occur without Wild and Scenic Rivers designation.

Recreation Homesite Development

There are several bottom-land areas along the South Fork that are in private ownership. Some of these areas are being farmed and some are undeveloped. The possibility exists that one of the private areas would be developed as a recreation homesite complex, and has been proposed on a 550-acre parcel on the south bank of the South Fork at Lufkin Bottom (See Map 7--c). This location is

directly adjacent to Island #35. The development could include 66 individual residences, access roads, boat ramp and marina, and golf course with a recreation building. For analysis purposes, it is assumed that the development would be constructed within 30 years from present.

It should be noted that there are several other opportunities for similar homesite developments along the South Fork. The approval and realization of one may set a precedent for others to follow.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) includes portions of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Bald eagle wintering and nesting populations occur along the South Fork of the Snake River below Palisades Reservoir. The Interagency Bald Eagle Working Group for the GYE is composed of members from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the fish and game departments of Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. This group has been quite active in research concerning the birds and have recently launched a wide spread public relations campaign to make people aware of the bird's habits and needs.

Management emphasis for the bald eagles along the South Fork will focus on maintenance and protection of existing habitat. The cottonwood-riparian areas on the WSA islands and river bottoms provide important habitat for both nesting and wintering bald eagles. The interagency group has coordinated their efforts to identify important buffer areas for nesting territories.

BLM management actions to protect eagle habitat include withdrawing areas from timber harvest, restricting oil and gas leasing, closing the area to mining under the 1872 mining law, cancelling or regulating livestock grazing, restricting commercial recreation activities, retaining lands in public ownership and acquiring private lands when possible.

Under this Partial Wilderness Alternative, habitat would not be inundated by reservoir construction. Consultation would occur with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to prevent impacts.

**TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS
SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS**

Environmental Issues	Proposed Action No Wilderness Alternative	All Wilderness Alternative	Partial Wilderness Alternative
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Over the short term, naturalness and primitive recreation would be maintained on the 39 islands along with supplemental values of wildlife habitat including bald eagle nesting and wintering sites. Long-term impacts from construction of a large reservoir would result in a loss of all wilderness values on islands 31-57. Islands 16-27 would retain their wilderness and supplemental values for the foreseeable future.	Wilderness characteristics of naturalness and primitive recreation would be protected on 37 islands which would benefit wildlife habitat (particularly bald eagle nesting areas) and scenic values. Wilderness character and wildlife habitat would be lost or degraded on two islands from recreation homesite development with or without wilderness designation. The threat of flooding from a large reservoir would no longer exist.	Wilderness characteristics of naturalness and primitive recreation would be protected on 11 islands which would benefit wildlife habitat (particularly bald eagle nesting areas) and scenic values. One of the islands in the Partial Alternative would lose wilderness character from recreation homesite development with or without designation. The remaining 27 islands would not receive long-term protection, but without the threat of inundation from reservoir construction, values would likely remain on 26 islands. One island, adjacent to the recreation homesite development, would be degraded.
Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species	Bald eagle populations would increase as projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan over the short-term. Over the long-term, dam construction would inundate habitat and four nests would be lost. Eaglet births would decrease from 10 per year to 3 per year and annual wintering populations would decrease from 40-80 birds to 10-20.	Bald eagle populations would increase as projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan. Ten eaglets would be produced annually with 40-80 birds wintering along the river.	Bald eagle populations would increase as projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan. Ten eaglets would be produced annually with 40-80 birds wintering along the river.
Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development	No impacts would result to powersite and reclamation project development. Land withdrawals would remain in effect and options to construct projects would be left open.	Powersite and reclamation withdrawals would be revoked and potential projects would not be allowed.	Powersite and reclamation withdrawals would be revoked and potential projects would not be allowed.

CHAPTER 3
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

SAND MOUNTAIN

General Characteristics

The Sand Mountain WSA is characterized as a series of large active sand dunes. The most prominent feature is Sand Mountain, which rises about 500 feet above the adjacent plain. Sand in various degrees of stabilization occupies lands surrounding most of the shifting dunes. Two old volcanic buttes and exposed areas of more recent basaltic bedrock add to the geologic diversity.

Land Status

The Sand Mountain WSA contains 21,100 acres of public land and a 640-acre state inholding. A small 5-acre parcel of private land is located 500 feet west and inside the WSA's eastern boundary. A 33 foot right-of-way provides road access to the private land where the owner operates a resort and campground for off-road vehicle enthusiasts.

Wilderness Values

The wilderness inventory identified certain values within the WSA that meet the definition of wilderness based on the 1964 Wilderness Act. They include naturalness, solitude, primitive recreation and supplemental values. The following discussion of these values describes present impacts and to what degree they exist within the WSA.

Naturalness - Impacts on the natural character of the WSA include vehicle ways, livestock fences, a small deer trap, intermittent vehicle tracks on the sand, and litter. About 32 miles of vehicle ways enter and cross the WSA. The ways are no more than trails that are difficult to follow, lack definition and are obscured by encroaching vegetation. Off-road vehicle tracks on the dunes are temporary impressions in the sand that disappear quickly when the wind blows. The short segments of livestock fence that total 5 miles, the deer trap, and litter are all insignificant, and are absorbed easily within this large area.

Influences on naturalness outside the WSA include views of St. Anthony and the sights and sounds of rural vehicle traffic and agricultural activities. These influences are most imposing near the WSA's southeastern and eastern border and from higher vantage points where topographic screening is minimal.

Solitude - Opportunities for solitude exist throughout most of this relatively large area. The WSA measures about ten miles from east to west and five miles from north to south and has a fairly good configuration. Topographic screening is provided by the abrupt elevational changes and the many pockets and bowls in the dunes. Influences on solitude outside the WSA include sights and sounds of rural traffic, agricultural activities and views of St. Anthony. These influences are most noticeable near the WSA's southeastern border. However, views of the expansive sand dunes and Grand Teton Mountains tend to overshadow these influences. Throughout most of the WSA ample spots for seclusion are available.



Sand Mountain rises nearly 500 feet above the surrounding plain.

Dune riding - a popular recreation activity on the sands.



Middle dunes looking northwest across Egin Lakes.

Primitive Recreation – Quality, diversity and challenge combine to make primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities outstanding. Hiking, horseback riding, camping, wildlife observation, photography, and cross-country skiing are among the possible activities. The quality of the activities is enhanced by the exceptional and unusual sand features, scenic views and interesting plant and animal communities. The lack of reliable water, extreme temperatures and the rugged terrain make all the activities challenging.

Supplemental Values – The WSA provides crucial wintering habitat for large mammals, including elk, moose and deer. The elk herd in particular is dependent on the western portion of the WSA. The herd migrates from as far away as Yellowstone National Park and Montana.

An uncommon species of evening primrose is known to exist in the dunes. The barren sand also provides habitat for a species of tiger beetle that is found only in one other place in the world, the Bruneau Dunes near Mountain Home, Idaho.

The relative uniqueness of these non-coastal dunes provides uncommon scenic and geologic value. All of the lands within the WSA have been proposed for designation as a National Natural Landmark to recognize these values. The decision to designate the landmark is pending approval by the Secretary of the Interior.

Summary of Wilderness Values

The Sand Mountain WSA is natural in appearance, offers outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive recreation, and provides a diverse array of supplemental values. The only limiting factor is the minor influence from nearby human activity.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

Two candidate species for consideration under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 occupy the WSA. The first is the tiger beetle which is found on the active sands within the WSA. Their distribution is confined to dune complexes that remain moist for the longest portion of the year. The beetle is indigenous to the sand dunes within the WSA and those dunes nearby. The gene pool of the species and distribution is limited. The second is the evening primrose. This plant can be found in the bare or nearly bare sandy areas around scattered lava rock outcrops.

Recreation and ORV Use

Recreational use of the dunes occurs year round. The most intense seasons of activity are the spring, summer and fall, particularly during the major holiday weekends. Most of the activity involves off-road vehicle use of the open sand and camping near the access points. Sand play, picnicking and sightseeing also occur to a moderate degree. Winter activities include snowmobiling on the eastern open part of the area, cross-country skiing and wildlife viewing. The amount of visitor use occurring each year is not known, but is estimated to be about 5,550–6,650 visitor days for all activities. The majority of the use is associated with off-road vehicles designed and built for travel across the open sands.

At the WSA's eastern boundary there is a privately owned parcel of land and development known as the Sand Hills Resort. The resort provides overnight camping, picnicking and day use facilities for off-road vehicle enthusiasts who come to ride on the dunes. The resort depends on income derived from these recreationists who come from states throughout the region, particularly Utah.

Local Economics

The Sand Mountain WSA is located primarily within Fremont County. However, one square mile of the WSA overlaps into Jefferson County while Madison County is just two miles south of the WSA boundary. For these reasons, the three counties mentioned will be considered the region of economic analysis.

Total earnings and employment in the three-county area were \$206.1 million and 13,414 jobs in 1983 (BEA 1985). According to 1983 Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) figures, the three-county region's top six sectors in terms of earnings were services, agriculture, manufacturing, State and local government, wholesale trade and retail trade. Services provided 20.1% of the region's total earnings (\$41.3 million), agriculture added 15.8% (\$32.6 million) while manufacturing and State/local government contributed nearly equal amounts of 13.8% and 13.7% respectively (\$28.5 million and \$28.3 million). Wholesale and retail trade added 9.1% (\$18.8 million) and 8.8% (\$18.2 million). Total employment figures vary from the order of earnings as follows: State/local government (2,255), services (2,201), agriculture (1,923) manufacturing (1,816), retail trade (1,603) and wholesale trade (1,545).

When changes occur in one sector of a local economy, changes also occur in other sectors. This is due to the interrelated nature of the economy. These changes are measured through the use of multipliers. The multiplier is a single number that summarizes the total direct and indirect spending effects of a given change in the local economy. The U.S. Water Resources Council published gross output multipliers for the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) economic areas in January of 1977. The economic area that includes the Medicine Lodge RMP area is Area 152. This includes most of southeast Idaho and parts of western Wyoming.

In addition to multipliers, output must be converted to earnings in order to estimate economic impact. This is done through the use of earnings to gross output ratios. These ratios have been calculated based on U.S. Water Resources Council procedures.

The multiplier and earnings to gross output ratios of primary interest in this EIS are for the retail trade industry and are 2.208 and 0.3969 respectively. Recreational activities contribute to the local economy primarily in the retail trade and services sectors. A wide variety of recreation activities takes place in the WSA; however, expenditure data is limited. Expenditure figures recently collected in a statewide survey of hunting and fishing (Donnelly, Sorg, Loomis 1985)² shows that the average expenditures were \$62.03 per 12-hour recreation visitor day. Data for off-road vehicle users, hikers, sightseers and other users is not available. Using this value, the existing recreation use of the sand dunes area generates an estimated expenditure of \$344,000 to \$412,500.

Using the earnings to gross output ratio for retail trade would convert this level of expenditures to earnings of \$136,500 to \$163,700. This would represent approximately 1 percent of the three-county 1983 retail trade earnings. The multiplier effect would make total earnings generated by recreational use of the area as much as \$361,500 (\$163,700 direct earnings; \$197,800 indirect earnings). This would be 0.2 percent of the total 1983 three-county earnings.

Big Game Winter Range

The Sand Mountain WSA makes up a portion of an extremely important big game winter range. Elk, deer and moose are the major game species dependent on this area for winter range and migration access. The importance of this area has resulted in the development of a special management plan titled the Sands Habitat Management Plan. This plan is a cooperative agreement developed by the Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Department of Fish & Game and the Idaho Department of Lands.

The elk herd which utilizes the WSA as part of their winter range has grown from approximately 20 animals in the late 1940's to its current level of nearly 2,000 animals. In addition, about 1,400 deer and 50 moose winter in the vicinity, primarily concentrated in an area just north of the WSA known as the Juniper Mountain Area. Since the WSA is largely made up of active and dunes, the majority of the big game use occurs along the fringes and to the south of the dunes. The area is especially important as it contributes to one of the last remaining open bull elk hunting seasons in southern Idaho.

Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition

The Sand Mountain WSA includes all of the Egin Lakes and portions of the Junipers, West Ridge and Nine Mile Knoll grazing allotments. About twenty percent of the total 2,481 AUMs available is authorized for livestock grazing within the WSA. Grazing of cattle, sheep and horses is allowed from the beginning of May until the end of December. The only range improvements are 5 miles of livestock control fences. The range and ecological condition of the WSA's grazing lands is in good condition. One exception is a small area near the WSA's south-central boundary where disturbance to vegetation has occurred, and concentrated grazing pressure has lowered the condition to a fair rating.

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS

General Characteristics

The Snake River Islands WSA is made up of 39 islands totaling 770 acres located within a 25-mile segment of the South Fork of the Snake River between the communities of Swan Valley and Heise, Idaho. Dense riparian vegetation dominates all the islands. An overstory of middle-aged cottonwoods occurs on the larger islands, with an understory of forbs, grasses, scattered shrubs and an occasional park-like opening. Smaller islands that do not support cottonwood trees are covered with willows, russian olive, alder and dogwood. The surrounding river landscape varies within the 25-mile corridor and influences the character of the islands. The segment from Swan Valley to Conant Valley is characterized as a generally open flood plain and pastoral setting. From Conant Valley the river flows through the deepest, most rugged portion of the Snake River Canyon.

This gorge-like topography contributes greatly to the wild character of the river and islands. As the river approaches Heise, the canyon gives way to a flat alluvial plain flanked by farmlands.

Land Status

All of the 39 islands are public lands in federal ownership. Ownership of the adjacent river banks is a mixed pattern of private, State of Idaho and U.S. Forest Service. Twenty-five of the islands are under special management restrictions of the Bureau of Reclamation, as they are withdrawn for power site and reclamation projects.

Wilderness Values

The following discussion describes the wilderness values found in the Snake River Islands WSA. These values have been identified as naturalness, solitude, primitive recreation and supplemental values.

Naturalness - Impacts on the natural character of the islands are livestock grazing, litter and fire rings left by recreationists along with nearby human activity and development. Livestock grazing has affected islands 25, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35 and 47 (Refer to the WSA maps in Chapter 2 for the location of the islands by number). Grazing has reduced some thick island vegetation, creating open spaces more suitable for camping and spring waterfowl nesting. Litter and fire rings are found on the larger islands where camping is possible. Off-site influences appear the most dominant on islands 48-57, where Highway 26 is nearest the river and traffic can be seen and clearly heard from the islands. The use of automobiles for stream bank rip-rap is of some significance, particularly on island 54 where over 30 junk cars line the river's bank. From island 16 to island 35 a gravel road parallels the river, but has little impact because it is sporadically used and is screened well by dense vegetation.

Solitude - Opportunities for solitude vary and are affected by the size and vegetative cover of a particular island and proximity to outside influences. On fifteen of the 39 islands a combination of vegetative screening and relatively large size contribute to opportunities for solitude. The remaining 24 islands can provide some opportunities for solitude, but because of their

small size and thinner vegetative screening, visitors cannot avoid contact with others or outside influences. The major outside influences include Highway 26 and nearby developments, vehicle traffic on the gravel road between island 16 and island 35 and the presence of motorboats throughout the entire river segment.

Primitive Recreation - Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are numerous and of high quality. Fishing from and around the islands is the most popular activity and is directly related to the excellent cutthroat trout fishery in the South Fork. The river channels along the islands offer challenge for boaters to test their skills on swift flat water. Primitive camping is available on several of the larger islands where there are grassy openings in the thick vegetation. The abundance and diversity of wildlife on the islands offer good deer and waterfowl hunting and excellent chances to observe and photograph several wildlife species, particularly bald and golden eagles. All of these recreation values are enhanced by the spectacular scenery found along the river corridor.

Supplemental Values - The most important supplemental value of the islands is wildlife habitat. The islands provide bald eagle nesting and roosting sites and hunting areas for other raptors. Elk depend on the islands for forage in the winter, while deer and moose use them year-round.

Summary of Wilderness Values

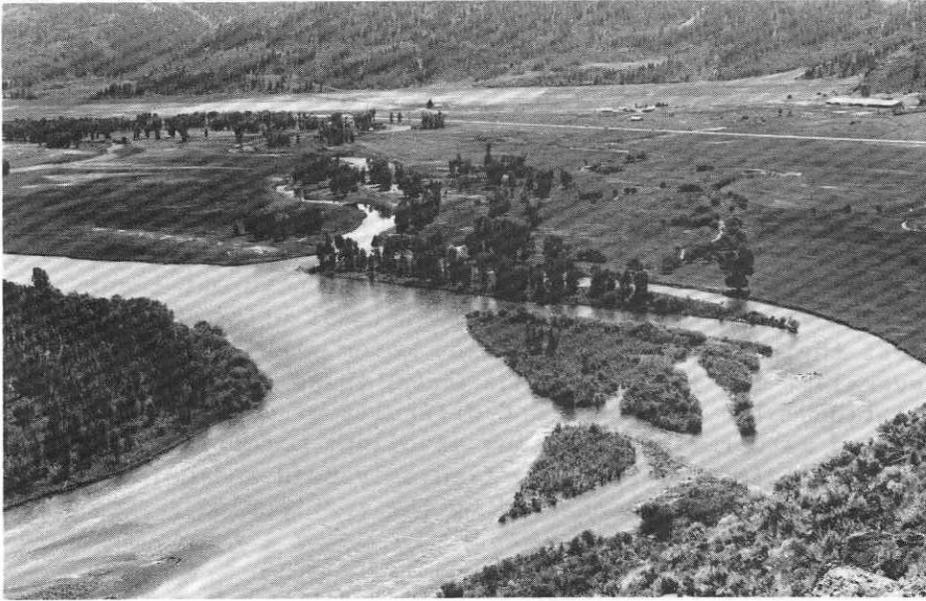
The most important wilderness values of the Snake River Islands WSA are its opportunities for primitive recreation and supplemental values. The major limiting factors are the influences from nearby human activity, motorboating, relatively low use capacity for the islands, and constantly changing boundaries due to river channeling. Islands 36-47 are located in the section of river least influenced by outside activities and are the most remote.

Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

The South Fork of the Snake River is essential for the recovery and continued existence of the greater Yellowstone bald eagle population. Eight nesting territories are known to exist on the South Fork below Palisades Dam, and potential nest sites for bald eagles are available. The majority of existing and potential nest sites are located in large cottonwood trees along sections of the river that provide little disturbance from humans during the critical incubation and early brood rearing periods. Currently, one to three nests occur on the WSA islands. Suitable habitat for nests is present though, and possibly will be used in the future. Large cottonwood trees on several of the islands presently provide key hunting, loafing and resting perches for the nesting territories. These perches are important components of each nesting territory.

Power Site and Reclamation Project Development

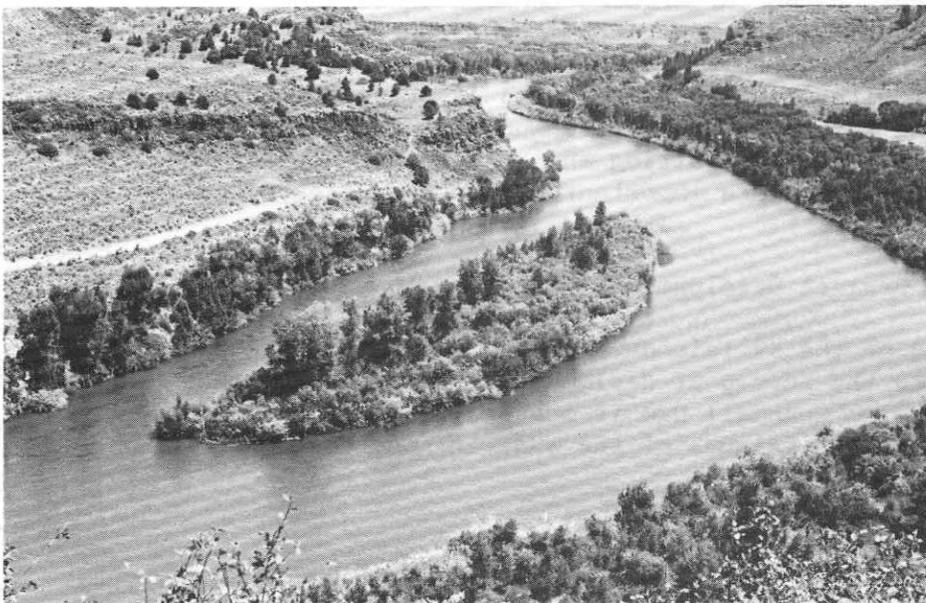
As previously mentioned, 25 of the 39 islands included in the Snake River Islands WSA are withdrawn to the Bureau of Reclamation for power site and reclamation projects. The Lynn Crandall Dam is one project proposed for the Snake River that would affect the islands of the WSA, if constructed.



Island Group #49 looking south across Conant Valley.



Island #50 with Conant Valley in the background.



Island #18 which is located east of the rest stop on U.S. Highway 26.

CHAPTER 4
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

SAND MOUNTAIN

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS - NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)

Under the No Wilderness Alternative, all 21,100 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

With the No Wilderness Alternative, the Sand Mountain WSA's wilderness characteristics would not receive special long-term legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. However, partial protection of the WSA's natural character and supplemental values of wildlife habitat, proposed sensitive species, and scenic and geologic values would be afforded under ACEC and SRMA management. The ACEC and SRMA management gives priority to maintaining the WSA's natural environment and supplemental values, but would not prevent the loss of opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation opportunities.

In the long-term (20 years), motorized recreation use of the WSA's open sands is expected to increase from the current 4,000 - 5,000 visitor days to an estimated 16,000 - 20,000 visitor days. Motor vehicle use would be allowed on designated routes and the barren sands during the spring, summer and fall months. During these seasons, both visual and audible impacts from vehicles would eliminate solitude and primitive recreation opportunities.

From December 1 through March 31 of each year, 15,800 acres of the WSA are closed to motor vehicles. This closure in the north and western portion of the WSA protects wintering elk, deer and moose, and provides a setting for solitude and nonmotorized winter recreation opportunities, particularly nordic skiing. These opportunities would not be affected by ORV use on 15,800 acres if the WSA is not designated unless or until harassment of wintering animals occurs from nonmotorized recreationists.

One of the two planned recreation facility developments would eliminate the natural character on ten acres of the WSA where a 40 - 50 unit campground would be constructed. The site is located in an undeveloped area currently used for camping. Construction of one half mile of access road and site development would cause the loss of the natural character over the long-term. Grasses and shrubs would be lost where the road and camping sites are built. The campground would be designed to leave existing juniper trees wherever possible. The second development would be a day-use access site located outside the WSA boundary and have no impact on naturalness.

Mechanical treatment of shrub areas that surround the active sand dunes would impact on the WSA's naturalness, and would be done on a rotational basis to improve wildlife and livestock forage. About 200 acres in 40-acre plots of shrub species would be pruned by roto-beating annually. This would create a mosaic appearance to native vegetation. The impact to individual treatment sites would last from 2 - 3 years until regrowth of shrubs occur. Long-term impacts would result because the treatments would continue indefinitely as needed to produce the desired forage for wildlife and livestock. Overall, the impacts on naturalness would be slight because of the small areas affected (less than one tenth of one percent of the WSA).

Further impacts to naturalness would result from planned range improvements and increases in livestock grazing within one half mile of the WSA's southern boundary and just north of Ninemile Knoll. A 200-acre area would likely be seeded with non-native grass species and reduce naturalness within the seeding for 3-4 years. Over the long-term (beyond 4 years), natural interseedings of native species would reduce the impact as the seeding blends in with the surrounding vegetation. The proposed well, pipeline and livestock watering areas would eliminate naturalness in the immediate disturbance area. Surface disturbance would result around the well and along the pipeline. Trampling and loss of vegetation would occur around the livestock watering sites.

Conclusion: Naturalness would be reduced or eliminated on 410 acres in the WSA from vegetative manipulation and seeding projects, recreation facility construction, and water developments. Solitude and primitive recreation would be eliminated by ORV use of 21,100 acres during the spring, summer and fall months. Snowmobiling during winter months would eliminate primitive recreation and solitude on 5,300 acres in the eastern portion of the WSA, while the opportunities would be enhanced on the western 15,800 acres by a winter ORV closure.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

The No Wilderness Alternative would result in a 6.5%/year increase in ORV use on existing and potentially occupied habitat for the tiger beetle. Increased mortalities could be expected from ORVs; however, status of the beetle is not expected to change. This is because the species is widely distributed throughout the WSA and other sand dune areas to the east, north and west of the area. Also, population numbers are fairly high and appear to be healthy. (Gary Shook, private consultant, pers. comm.).

The increases in ORV use, expected under this alternative, could result in incidental mortality to the evening primrose. However, the status of the species is expected to remain unchanged. The primrose occupies areas of the dunes where lava rock outcrops are located and other vegetation exists. The ORV designations for the area would prohibit ORV use through these vegetated areas. Also, driving vehicles over the rocky areas where the primrose grows is normally not done because of the potential damage that would result to the machines.

Conclusion: Increased ORV use could cause individual mortalities for less than 5% of the candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. There would be no change in the status of either species.

Impacts on Recreational ORV Use

Recreational ORV use would be allowed on designated routes and the barren sands during the spring, summer and fall months. Use is expected to increase over the long-term primarily from greater interest in ORV use, increases in population and from proposed recreation facility development.

Expressed in 12-hour visitor use days, recreation activity associated with ORV use is estimated to change over the long-term as follows:

	1986	2006
ORV (wheeled)	4,000 - 5,000	16,000 - 20,000
Snowmobile	350 - 400	450 - 500
Nonmotorized (all seasons)	300 - 350	300 - 350
Developed Camping	- 0 -	2,200
Undeveloped Camping	900	300
Totals	5,550 - 6,650	19,250 - 23,350

Conclusion: Visitor use of the sand dunes is estimated to increase as much as 350% over the long-term, which is a positive impact to motorized and developed recreation opportunities.

Impacts on Local Economics

This alternative would increase the number of 12-hour visitor days occurring by 13,700 to 16,700 visitor days. This would lead to an increase in recreation expenditures of between \$849,800 and \$1,035,900. Thus, total expenditures for recreation activity in the WSA would be \$1,198,800 to \$1,448,400. This would convert to earnings of between \$475,800 and \$574,900 which would represent approximately 3% of the 1983 three-county retail trade earnings. The multiplier effect would increase total earnings to \$1,269,400. This is 0.6% of the total 1983 three-county earnings.

Conclusion: The projected 3% increase in retail trade earnings would not have a significant impact on the three-county economy. However, business establishments in the immediate vicinity of the WSA are expected to benefit.

Impacts on Big Game Winter Range

Big game winter range would be maintained and improved throughout the shrub-covered portions of the WSA by pruning approximately 200 acres of shrub species annually. Habitat manipulation would maintain elk populations at 2,000 head, moose at 35-45 head, and deer at 1,200 - 1,400 head. Big game populations would remain constant over the long-term by providing a stable and productive forage base through vegetative manipulation projects and a winter ORV closure.

Conclusion: Big game wintering populations would be maintained at optimum levels through mechanical treatment of forage base. A stable population of 2000 elk, 35-45 moose and 1,200-1,400 deer would result.

Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition

Livestock facilities would be developed as planned. These improvements would better distribute livestock throughout the pasture and decrease concentration of grazing. A more stable range condition will result as well as increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses.

Conclusion: Range improvements would be constructed resulting in better distribution of livestock and a more stable range condition with increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses on 1800 acres.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 21,100 acres of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, wilderness characteristics and supplemental values on the 21,100 acres of public lands would receive long-term legislative protection provided by wilderness designation. The WSA's natural character would be enhanced along with opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Wilderness designation would further preserve and protect the WSA's wildlife values, proposed sensitive plants and animals, and scenic and geologic values. However, a downward trend in big game habitat will result because habitat would not be mechanically treated. Elk, moose and deer populations would stabilize below optimum levels.

The natural character of the WSA would be enhanced by eliminating ORV use. Vehicle tracks would disappear with the shifting sands and existing vehicle trails would revegetate. The visual and audible impacts of vehicle use would not disrupt opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Protecting the wilderness values would in turn benefit the WSA's supplemental values. Wildlife habitat, sensitive plant communities, and scenic and geologic values would not be disturbed from human activities over the long-term.

Conclusion: The wilderness characteristics of naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation would be preserved on 21,100 acres. Supplemental values including big game habitat, candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose, and scenic and geologic values would be undisturbed by ORV activity.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

The All Wilderness Alternative would eliminate ORV use from the WSA which would provide long-term habitat protection for the tiger beetle and evening primrose. Populations of the beetle and primrose would remain stable and listing them under the Endangered Species Act may or may not occur.

Conclusion: There would be no significant impacts to candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. However, they would be protected from ORV use which could cause individual mortalities.

Impacts on Recreational ORV Use

Wilderness designation would close the entire 21,100-acre WSA to all forms of motorized recreation use. This action would eliminate the most popular recreational activity within the area. About 4,350 - 5,400 recreation visitor days of use associated with ORV riding and camping would be lost, and a total of 16,450 - 20,500 foregone by the year 2006. Shifting of ORV recreation to other areas of public land would result and could occur in areas less suitable for motorized use. Local recreationist would likely go to sand dunes northeast of the WSA, while enthusiasts would no longer travel long distances to ride the less attractive northeast dunes.

Expressed in 12-hour visitor use days recreation activity is estimated to change over the long-term as follows:

	1986	2006
ORV (wheeled)	4,000 -- 5,000	-- 0 --
Snowmobile	350 -- 400	-- 0 --
Nonmotorized (all seasons)	300 -- 350	500
Developed Camping	-- 0 --	-- 0 --
Undeveloped Camping	900	100
Totals	5,550 -- 6,650	600

Conclusion: Visitor use of the dunes is estimated to decrease as much as 1,100% over the long-term with 16,450 -- 20,500 visitor days foregone, which is a negative impact to motorized and developed recreation opportunities. Local ORV recreationists would shift their activity to the northeastern dunes and out-of-state visitation would not occur to any great degree.

Impacts on Local Economies

This alternative would reduce the number of 12-hour recreation visitor days occurring by 4,950 -- 6,050 visitor days. This would lead to a reduction in recreation expenditures of \$307,000 to \$375,000. Thus, total expenditures for recreation activity in the sand dunes area would be approximately \$37,000. This would convert to earnings of \$14,700 which would represent 0.1% of the 1983 three-county retail trade earnings. The multiplier effect would increase total earnings to \$32,500. This is 0.02% of the total 1983 three-county earnings.

Conclusion: The projected 0.02 % decrease in retail trade earnings would not have a significant impact on the three-county economy. However, anticipated decreases in expenditures of \$375,000 would impact business establishments in the immediate vicinity of the WSA and could force their closure.

Impacts on Big Game Winter Range

Wildlife habitat management would be constrained under wilderness management. Mechanical vegetation manipulation projects designed to improve crucial big game wintering habitat would not be allowed. Without habitat improvement, maximum wildlife forage cannot be produced, and would result in a downward trend in habitat condition. This would reduce the carrying capacity of the crucial winter range. An estimated decrease of 200 elk, 10-15 moose, and 400 deer would result over the long-term from lack of mechanical treatment of winter range.

Conclusion: Overall, a downward trend in wildlife habitat condition would result in a 10% decrease in elk, 33% decrease in moose, and 29% decrease in deer populations. This will amount to 200 elk, 10-15 moose and 400 deer and is below the optimum level desired.

Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition

Livestock grazing improvements would not be implemented as planned in designated wilderness. These restrictions would reduce the capability of grazing systems to better distribute livestock for optimum forage utilization. A decreased vigor of key forage grasses could occur and a downward trend in range condition would result on 1800 acres.

Conclusion: Optimum forage utilization and livestock distribution would be constrained on 1800 acres by not allowing range improvements to be implemented. Forage grass vigor would decrease resulting in a downward trend in range condition.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 6,560 acres of the central and western active dunes of the Sand Mountain WSA would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation and 14,540 acres of the surrounding vegetated lands and eastern active sands would be recommended nonsuitable.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Including a 6,560-acre portion of the Sand Mountain WSA in the wilderness system would provide long-term legislative protection to the wilderness characteristics and supplemental values. The natural character would be enhanced, but opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be constrained because of nearby ORV use. Wilderness designation would further preserve and protect proposed sensitive plants and animals and scenic and geologic values. Big game wildlife habitat is not important on the active dunes, and would not benefit from long-term designation.

The natural character of the central and western active dune portion would be enhanced by eliminating ORV use. Vehicle tracks would disappear with shifting sands. The visual and audible impacts of vehicle use from within and around the 6,560-acre parcel would disrupt opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Vehicle use of the active dunes to the east and along designated routes around the area would cause visual and audible impacts to these opportunities. Anticipated increases in ORV use of the eastern portion over the long-term would eliminate opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

Wilderness designation would benefit the supplemental values. Sensitive plant communities and scenic and geologic values would not be disturbed from human activities over the long-term.

Wilderness values on the remaining 14,540 acres of the WSA would not receive long-term legislative protection through designation. Naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation would be degraded and likely lost. However, partial protection of the WSA's natural character and supplemental values of wildlife habitat, proposed sensitive species, and scenic and geologic values would be afforded under ACEC and SRMA management. The ACEC and SRMA management gives priority to maintaining the WSA's natural environment and supplemental values.

Over the long-term, motorized recreation use of the 14,540-acre portion, particularly on the eastern side, is expected to increase. Motor vehicle use would be allowed on designated routes and the barren sands throughout the year. Both visual and audible impacts from vehicles will eliminate solitude and primitive recreation opportunities over the long-term.

From December 1 through March 31 of each year, 9,260 additional acres would be closed to motor vehicles. This closure protects big game winter range surrounding the partial wilderness alternative area and would provide a larger setting for solitude and nonmotorized winter recreation opportunities, particularly nordic skiing.

Development of overnight facilities would eliminate the natural character of the WSA where a 40 - 50 unit campground would be constructed. The site is located in an undeveloped area currently used for camping in an unstructured manner. Construction of one half mile of access road and site development would cause the loss of the natural character over the long-term on 10 acres. Grasses and shrubs would be lost where the road and camping sites are built. The campground would be designed to leave existing juniper trees wherever possible.

Mechanical treatment of shrub areas that surround the active sand dunes would disturb the WSA's naturalness on 200 acres. The treatment would be done on a rotational basis to improve wildlife and livestock forage. About 200 acres in 40-acre plots of shrub species would be pruned by roto-beating annually. This would create a short-term mosaic appearance to native vegetation. The impact to individual treatment sites would last from 2 - 3 years until regrowth of shrubs occur. Long-term impacts would result because the treatments would continue indefinitely as needed to produce the desired forage for wildlife and livestock. Overall, the impacts on naturalness would be slight to moderate because of the small areas affected (less than one tenth of one percent) of the WSA.

Further impacts to naturalness would result from planned range improvements and increases in livestock grazing within one half mile of the WSA's southern boundary and just north of Ninemile Knoll. A 200-acre area would likely be seeded with non-native grass species and reduce naturalness within the seeding for three to four years. Over the long-term (beyond four years), natural interseedings of native species would reduce the impact to slight as the seeding blends in with the surrounding vegetation. The proposed well, pipeline and livestock watering areas would eliminate naturalness in the immediate disturbance area. Surface disturbance would result around the well and along the pipeline. Trampling and loss of vegetation would occur around the livestock watering sites.

Conclusion: Naturalness and supplemental values on 6,560 acres would be preserved over the long-term. Solitude and primitive recreation would be degraded from nearby ORV use even with designation. Naturalness would be reduced or eliminated on 410 acres from vegetative manipulation and seeding projects, recreation facility construction and water development. Solitude and primitive recreation would be eliminated by ORV use on 14,540 acres during the spring, summer and fall months. Winter ORV closures would enhance solitude and primitive recreation on 9,260 acres.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

The Partial Wilderness Alternative would eliminate ORV use from 6,560 acres of the WSA. Long-term habitat protection would be provided for the tiger beetle and evening primrose on the area designated. Populations of the beetle and primrose would remain stable and listing them under the Endangered Species Act may or may not occur.

Not designating the 14,540 would result in a 2% increase in ORV use on existing and potentially occupied habitat for the tiger beetle. Increased mortalities could be expected from ORVs; however, status of the beetle is not expected to change. This is because the species is widely distributed throughout the WSA and other sand dune areas to the east, north and west of the area. Also, the population numbers are fairly high and appear to be healthy. (Gary Shook, private consultant, pers. comm.)

The increases in ORV use, expected under this alternative, could result in incidental mortality to the evening primrose. However, the status of the species is expected to remain unchanged. The primrose occupies areas of the dunes where lava rock outcrops are located and other vegetation exists. The ORV designations for the area would prohibit ORV use through these vegetated areas. Also, driving vehicles over the rocky areas where the primrose grows is normally not done because of the potential damage that would result to the machines.

Conclusion: Increased ORV use could cause individual mortalities for less than 1% of the candidate species of tiger beetle and primrose. There would be no change in the status for either species. Partial wilderness designation would provide habitat undisturbed by ORV use, but would not have a significant beneficial impact on populations.

Impacts on Recreational ORV Use

Wilderness designation would close 6,560 acres of open sands to all forms of motorized recreation use. This action would eliminate the most challenging ORV riding in the central and western dunes. About 40% of the ORV use or 1,740 - 2,160 visitor days would be lost, and a total of 11,050 - 13,800 foregone by the year 2006. Shifting the ORV recreation to other areas of public land would result, and could occur in areas less suitable for motorized use.

Local recreationist would likely go to sand dunes northeast of the WSA, while it is anticipated that out-of-state ORV enthusiasts would no longer travel long distances to ride the less attractive northeast dunes.

Expressed in 12-hour visitor use days recreation activity is estimated to change over the long-term as follows:

	1986	2006
ORV (wheeled)	4,000 - 5,000	5,400 - 6,700
Snowmobile	350 - 400	450 - 500
Nonmotorized (all seasons)	300 - 350	500
Developed Camping	- 0 -	1,500
Undeveloped Camping	900	200
Totals	5,550 - 6,650	8,050 - 9,400

Conclusion: ORV and other associated activities would be eliminated by designating wilderness on the 6,560-acre portion of the WSA. Visitor use is estimated to increase over the long-term about 141% in the area not recommended for wilderness. Local ORV recreationists would shift their activities to the northeastern dunes and out-of-state visitation would not occur to any great extent.

Impacts on Local Economics

This alternative would increase the number of 12-hour recreation visitor days occurring by 2,500 - 2,750 visitor days. This would lead to an increase in recreation expenditures of between \$155,073 and \$170,580. Thus, total expenditures for recreation activity in the WSA would be \$499,335 - \$583,075. This would convert to earnings of between \$198,185 and \$228,176, which would represent approximately 1% of the 1983 three-county retail trade earnings. The multiplier effect would increase total earnings to \$503,820. This is 0.3 % of the total 1983 three-county earnings.

Conclusion: The expected influx of ORV recreationists would bring and estimated \$583,075 into the local economies. This projected increase in retail trade earnings would not have a significant impact on the three-county economy. However, business establishments in the immediate vicinity of the WSA are expected to benefit.

Impacts on Big Game Winter Range

Big game winter range would be maintained and improved throughout the shrub-covered portions of the WSA by pruning approximately 200 acres of shrub species annually. Habitat manipulation would maintain elk populations at 2,000 head, moose at 35 - 45 head, and deer at 1,200 - 1,400 head. Big game populations would remain constant over the long-term by providing a stable and productive forage base through vegetative manipulation projects and a winter ORV closure.

Conclusion: Less than 1% improvement is anticipated in big game winter range.

Impacts on Livestock Facility Development and Range Condition

Livestock facilities would be developed as planned. These improvements would better distribute livestock throughout the pasture and decrease concentration of grazing. A more stable range condition will result as well as increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses.

Conclusion: Range improvements would be constructed resulting in better distribution of livestock and a more stable range condition with increased quality and quantity of key forage grasses on 1800 acres.

SNAKE RIVER ISLANDS

PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS – NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE)

Under the No Wilderness Alternative, all 39 islands totaling 770 acres of public land would be recommended nonsuitable for designation as wilderness.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

With the No Wilderness Alternative, none of the 39 islands would have their wilderness characteristics of naturalness, primitive recreation and supplemental values preserved over the long-term under a Congressional designation. However, the islands would have these wilderness values partially protected over the short-term. Decisions in the Medicine Lodge RMP have been made to designate the Snake River system an ACEC and SRMA. The ACEC/SRMA management gives priority to maintaining the islands' natural environment, wildlife habitat and nonmotorized recreation uses. Regulation of all potential surface-disturbing activities such as mining and mineral leasing and wood cutting would prevent loss of natural values. Removal of unauthorized and unallotted livestock grazing activities would protect natural vegetation. Maintenance of bald eagle habitat would be emphasized to insure nesting sites are relatively undisturbed.

Over the long-term(20 years and beyond), 25 of the 39 islands could be inundated by the construction and filling of the proposed Lynn Crandall Dam and reservoir. Islands 31 – 57 would be flooded and all wilderness characteristics and supplemental values would be lost. Islands 28 – 31 would be adversely affected because of their close proximity downstream from the dam site. Irregular and sudden releases of water could alter stream channels and destroy natural and recreational values of the downstream islands. The impact of changes in size, location, and character of these islands 30 to 50 years in the future cannot be estimated with any degree of accuracy. The presence of the large earthen dam would also create a significant human-caused intrusion that would destroy natural scenic qualities associated with the islands.

Wilderness characteristics and supplemental values on islands 16–27 would be retained. Natural character of the separate riparian islands would not change. Primitive recreation opportunities such as fishing and camping would be available. Wildlife habitat would be maintained with particular attention paid to bald eagles.

Conclusion: Over the short-term (up to 20 years), the wilderness characteristics and supplemental values of the 39 islands would be retained. Long-term (20 years and beyond) impacts from the construction of a large reservoir would result in the loss of all wilderness values on islands 31–57. Islands 28–30 would also be lost or degraded from irregular outflows from the dam. Islands 16–27 would retain their wilderness and supplemental values for the foreseeable future.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

Over the short-term (up to 20 years), bald eagles and their eight territorial habitats throughout the South Fork of the Snake River would receive protection from human-caused disturbances. Bald eagle nesting populations would increase as projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan.

Over the long-term (beyond 20 years), construction of the Lynn Crandall Dam would cause flooding of the majority of the bald eagle habitats. Eagle nesting would be displaced to higher locations above the dam's reservoir, occur in habitats other than the South Fork or not occur at all. The anticipated result would be a decrease in nesting and eagle populations. Four nests would be lost initially after construction.

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be required and mitigation for bald eagle losses proposed. Expressed in young produced, eaglet births would decrease from 10 per year to 3 per year after the dam is constructed. Annual wintering populations would also decrease from 40-80 birds to 10-20. The drastic change would result because the reservoir would freeze solid and cover food sources, except below the reservoir.

Conclusion: There would be no impacts to bald eagle nesting territories over the short-term (up to 20 years). However, long-term (beyond 20 years) losses would result from the construction of Lynn Crandall Dam. Four nests would be lost initially. Seventy percent of eaglet births per year would be lost along with 75% of wintering populations of eagles.

Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development

There would be no impacts on powersite and reclamation project development from the No Wilderness Alternative. Land withdrawals would remain in effect and options to construct projects would be left open. Lynn Crandall Dam could still be considered.

Conclusion: There would be no impacts to powersite and reclamation projects.

ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, all 39 islands totaling 770 acres would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Including the 39 islands in the National Wilderness Preservation System would protect, preserve and enhance the wilderness characteristics and supplemental values on 37 of the 39 islands through legislative designation. The wilderness character on two of the 39 islands would be degraded with or without designation.

The natural appearance and wild character of the remaining 37 islands would remain unchanged. Opportunities for primitive recreation would be enhanced. The cottonwood-riparian ecosystem would continue to flourish and wildlife habitat, particularly bald eagle nesting and brood-rearing sites, would be maintained.

The construction and use of a recreation homesite complex would have adverse impacts to primitive recreation and solitude, and supplemental values of scenic quality and wildlife habitat on and near islands 35 and 36. The proposed motorboat ramp would be 50 feet from island 35, and golf course, club house and homesites within close proximity and view of islands 35 and 36. The activities of between 200 and 300 residents would create audible and visual

impacts that would degrade considerably the natural setting and primitive recreation opportunities on both islands. Primitive camping would no longer be possible. Wildlife habitat for moose, deer and elk and eagle nesting territory would be disturbed by the presence, noise and activity of residents and visitors. Wildlife populations are expected to decrease. Eagles may abandon the nesting area and relocate.

This would result in the loss of opportunities for recreationists to view wildlife in an undeveloped setting. The homesite structures and facilities would modify the present natural appearing landscape to a developed type. Degradation of adjacent scenic quality will result.

Conclusion: Wilderness designation of the Snake River Islands WSA would protect the wilderness characteristics of naturalness and primitive recreation on 37 of the 39 islands. Protecting wilderness values would, in turn, benefit wildlife habitat (particularly bald eagle nesting areas) and scenic values. Wilderness character and supplemental values on two islands would be lost or degraded considerably from recreation homesite development. Even with homesite development estimated reproduction goals for eagles would not change.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

Under the All Wilderness Alternative, bald eagles and their eight territorial habitats throughout the South Fork of the Snake River would be protected from severe human-caused disturbances and reservoir construction. Protection would continue through the long-term and bald eagle nesting populations would increase as projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan. About 10 eaglets would be produced annually with 40-80 birds wintering along the river. These population goals are expected even with the proposed recreation homesite construction.

Conclusion: There would be no impacts to bald eagles and population growth would continue undisturbed. As projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Recovery Plan, ten eaglets would be produced annually and 40-80 birds would winter along the river.

Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development

Development of powersite and reclamation projects would not be allowed. Withdrawals would be revoked and the potential for construction of Lynn Crandall Dam and other projects would be lost.

Conclusion: Powersite and reclamation withdrawals would be revoked and potential projects could not be built.

PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, 12 of the 39 islands totaling 155 acres of public land would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation.

Impacts on Wilderness Values

Including the 12 islands in the National Wilderness Preservation System would protect, preserve and enhance the wilderness characteristics and supplemental

values on 11 of the 12 islands through legislative designation. The wilderness character on one of the 12 islands would be degraded with or without designation.

The natural appearance and wild character of the remaining 11 islands would remain unchanged. Opportunities for primitive recreation on the islands would be enhanced. The cottonwood-riparian ecosystem would continue to flourish and wildlife habitat, particularly bald eagle nesting and brood-rearing sites, would be maintained.

The construction and use of a recreation homesite complex would have adverse impacts to the wilderness characteristics and supplemental values on islands 35 and 36. (Island 36 is within the Partial Wilderness Alternative). The proposed motorboat ramp would be 50 feet from island 35, and golf course, club house and homesites within close proximity and view of islands 35 and 36. The activities of between 200 and 300 residents would create audible and visual impacts that would degrade considerably the natural setting and primitive recreation opportunities on both islands. Primitive camping would no longer be possible. Wildlife habitat for moose, deer and elk and eagle nesting territory would be disturbed by the presence, noise and activity of residents and visitors. Wildlife populations are expected to decrease. Eagles may abandon the nesting area and relocate. This would result in the loss of opportunities for recreationists to view wildlife in an undeveloped setting. The homesite structures and facilities would modify the present natural appearing landscape to a developed type. Degradation of adjacent scenic quality will result.

The remaining 27 islands with 615 acres would also receive added protection. Dam and reservoir construction would be prevented under this Partial Alternative, and the threat of inundation would be removed. The ACEC/SRMA management would give priority to maintaining the 27 islands in a natural condition and placing emphasis on insuring that wildlife habitat and nonmotorized recreation use be protected and enhanced. Regulation of all potential surface-disturbing activities such as mining and mineral leasing and wood cutting would prevent loss of natural values. Removal of unauthorized and unallotted livestock grazing activities would protect natural vegetation. Maintenance of bald eagle habitat would be emphasized to insure nesting sites are relatively undisturbed.

Conclusion: Wilderness values of naturalness and primitive recreation would be preserved on 11 islands over the long-term (beyond 20 years), and degraded on one island. Short-term (up to 20 years) protection of the wilderness values on the remaining 27 islands would be provided through planned management, but long-term protection could not be ensured. However, the threat of flooding from a large reservoir would no longer exist, and planned management goals would be to maintain natural, recreational and wildlife values.

Impacts on Threatened, Endangered and Candidate Species

Under the Partial Wilderness Alternative, bald eagles and their eight territorial habitats throughout the South Fork of the Snake River would be protected from severe human-caused disturbances and reservoir construction. Protection would continue through the long-term and bald eagle nesting populations would increase as projected under the Greater Yellowstone Bald

Eagle Recovery Plan. About 10 eaglets would be produced annually with 40-80 birds wintering along the river. These population goals are expected even with the proposed recreation homesite construction.

Conclusion: There would be no impacts to bald eagles and population growth would continue undisturbed.

Impacts on Powersite and Reclamation Project Development

Development of powersite and reclamation projects would not be allowed. Withdrawals would be revoked and the potential for construction of Lynn Crandall Dam and other projects would be lost.

Conclusion: Potential for powersite and reclamation projects would be lost.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

If either WSA is not designated wilderness, short-term consumptive uses of the lands would lead to long-term degradation of wilderness values. The primary uses that would cause degradation include vehicle-oriented recreation, rangeland vegetative manipulation projects and reclamation and powersite developments. Conversely, protection of wilderness values through designation would limit or eliminate short-term consumptive uses and vehicle-oriented recreation.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Activities such as vehicle-oriented recreation, rangeland vegetative manipulation projects and reclamation and powersite developments could create and irreversible commitment of the wilderness resource in part or all of either WSAs, if not designated. This commitment could foreclose the option of wilderness in the future. Wilderness designation would not create an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources within a WSA. It would restrict or stop development activities and uses that degrade wilderness values, thus preserving the wilderness resource. If in the future, Congress decides that resources in a wilderness need to be developed in the national interest, they can modify the law to allow development and use that would not conform with wilderness.

CHAPTER 5

CONSULTATION, COORDINATION, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Development of the recommendations for the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Final Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has included an on-going coordination and public participation effort. Federal Register notices, news releases, and information letters have announced all steps of the process to date.

The RMP/EIS was prepared by an interdisciplinary team with expertise in land transactions, minerals and energy resources, forest management, range management, water quality, soils, wildlife habitat management, outdoor recreation, cultural resources, fire management, and economics. A list of the preparers of this final wilderness EIS is included at the end of this chapter in Table 4.

Throughout the study, consultation and coordination have occurred with other federal agencies, State of Idaho, county, and local governments, and the public. At this time, recommendations as to suitability or nonsuitability of WSA's for wilderness designation are not inconsistent with officially approved and adopted resource-related plans of these agencies and governments.

Additional consultation and coordination took place with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the U.S. Geologic Service (USGS), and Bureau of Mines (BM).

Public participation was accomplished throughout the wilderness inventory in 1979 and RMP development, giving those who wanted a chance to be involved. The following lists the public participation events for the RMP/EIS process.

Public Participation

March 17, 1981	Notice of Intent to prepare Resource Management Plan published in Federal Register.
April 2, 1981	Met with Yellowstone SCD to discuss planning effort and issues.
June 21, 1981	Issue identification meeting with District Advisory Council.
June 22, 1981	Issue identification meeting with U.S. Forest Service, St. Anthony, Idaho.
June 23, 1981	Public meeting, Dubois, Idaho. No one attended.
June 24, 1981	Public meeting, St. Anthony, Idaho. No one attended.
June 25, 1981	Interagency issue identification meeting.
June 25, 1981	Public meeting, Idaho Falls. Five people attended.

June 1982	Sent out 450 newsletters inviting comments on issues to be addressed in RMP. Fifty people responded, 32 addressed issues in the area.
July 21 & 28, 1982	Inventory field day. Users and other agency people invited.
October 1982	Sent out issues summary and draft planning criteria.
Winter & Spring 1983	Met with individual range users to discuss inventory results, concerns and needs within the allotments.
July 1983	Inventory field day.
January 1984	Sent out alternatives newsletter requesting comments.
February 1984	Presented alternatives and planning update to District Advisory Council.
June 26, 1984	District Advisory Board toured the planning area.
July 12, 1984	District Advisory Council toured the planning area.
Spring 1984	Met with individual range users to discuss inventory results, concerns and needs within the allotments.

EIS REVIEW

The Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS was released to the Environmental Protection Agency and the public in September 1984. During the public comment period, which ended December 27, 1984, testimony was received at two formal hearings and in fifty letters. The two hearings were held to receive formal comments on the Draft EIS. The first hearing was conducted November 7, 1984, at the Fremont County Courthouse in St. Anthony, Idaho, and the second was held November 8, 1984, at the Public Library in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Both hearings were opened at 7:30 p.m. A verbatim record of the hearings is available for public inspection at the Idaho Falls District Office. The following is a list of agencies, organizations and individuals to whom the Draft Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS was sent along with 350 individuals.

Federal Agencies

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service
- Army Corps of Engineers
- Department of Energy
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Farmers Home Administration
- Federal Aviation Administration
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Forest Service
- Soil Conservation Service
- U.S. Air Force
- U.S. Sheep Experiment Stations
- U.S. Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Indian Affairs
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Camas National Wildlife Refuge
 - Geological Survey
 - National Park Service
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Bureau of Mines

Elected Federal Officials

- Senator James McClure
- Senator Steve Synms
- Representative George Hansen

State of Idaho Agencies

- Bureau of Community Affairs
- Bureau of Mines and Geology
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Fish and Game
- Department of Health and Welfare
- Department of Lands
- Department of Parks and Recreation
- Department of Water Resources
- Harriman State Park

Idaho Air National Guard
Idaho State University
State Historic Preservation Officer
Transportation Department, Division of Highways
University of Idaho Extension Service

Elected State Officials

Governor John V. Evans
State Senators and Representatives

Indian Tribes

Shoshone-Bannock Tribe

Local Governments

Fremont County
Clark County
Jefferson County
Madison County
Teton County
Bonneville County
Planning and Zoning Commissions
Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service Offices
Soil Conservation Districts

Advisory Councils

Idaho Falls District Advisory Council
Idaho Falls District Grazing Advisory Board

Organizations

AEC Sportsmen's Club
American Mining Congress
American Wilderness Alliance
Committee for Idaho's High Desert
Earth First!
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs
Fremont County Woolgrowers
Fremont-Madison Cattlemen's Association
Greater Snake River Land Use Congress
Idaho Archaeological Society, Inc.
Idaho Association of Counties
Idaho Cattlemen's Association
Idaho Cattle Feeders Association, Inc.
Idaho Conservation League
Idaho Environmental Council
Idaho Falls Alpine Club
Idaho Falls Gem and Mineral Society
Idaho Mining Association
Idaho Motorcycle Association
Idaho Motorcycle Club

Idaho Trail Machine Association
Idaho Wildlife Federation
Independent Petroleum Association of America
Institute for High Desert Studies
Isaak Walton League
Jefferson County Sportsmen's Association
League of Women Voters of Idaho
Magic Valley Trail Machines
Mineral Exploration Coalition
Natural Resources Defense Council
Northern Rockies Chapter Sierra Club
Northwest Mining Association
Outdoors Unlimited
Portneuf Valley Audubon
Public Lands Council
Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Association
Snake River Audubon Society
Southeast Idaho Rod and Gun Club
Southeast Idaho Snowmobile Association
St. Anthony Snowmobile Club
Teton Trail Riders
The Institute of Ecology
Tri-County Cattlemen's Association
Trout Unlimited
Upper Snake River Valley Bowmen
Wilderness Society

Responses to Comment Letters

A total of 50 letters were received on the RMP/EIS during the public comment period. Nineteen letters had either wilderness related comments or were sent by a federal agency and have been reproduced in this chapter. Four of the letters contained substantive comments that related to the wilderness issues for the Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands WSA's. All 19 letters were assigned numbers and included in the Final Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS, but responses to the wilderness related comments were deferred for inclusion in this Final EIS. The four letters that contained substantive comments which require a BLM response are numbers 37, 41, 42 and 43 and are marked with a star (*). The letters and BLM responses follow:



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
WALLA WALLA DISTRICT OFFICE OF ENGINEERS
BUILDING 988 CITY COUNTY AIRPORT
WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON 99061 -9265

October 18, 1984

MPMPL-EE

Mr. O'Dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

This letter is in response to your September 14, 1984, letter concerning your Draft Environmental Impact Statement concerning the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan that you sent to our North Pacific Division office. The document was forwarded to the Walla Walla District for review.

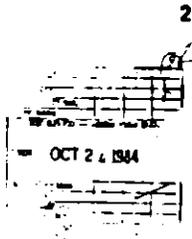
We have reviewed the DEIS for the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan for Bingham, Bonneville, Butte, Clark, Fremont, Jefferson, Madison, and Teton Counties, Idaho. Our review does not reveal any effects on navigation or hydropower development. Moreover, we have reviewed the project for flood control and hydrologic concerns and found no inadequacies.

In regard to Section 404 permits, the projects which involve the discharge of dredge or fill materials into waters of the United States including adjacent wetlands require a Department of the Army permit and you should contact this District Office ATTN: MPMOP-RF to apply for necessary permits prior to construction.

We look forward to working with you as a cooperating agency. Should you need any additional information, please contact Mr. W. E. McDonald at (509) 522-6627 or FTS 434-6627.

Sincerely,

William V. Armacost
W. V. Armacost
Chief, Planning Division



Idaho Water Resource Board

- 6 -

September 27, 1984

do a quick review of the inducement resolutions passed today at the next Board meeting and place all proposed bond resolutions on those projects in one motion.

Dave Rydalch, Member, mentioned that in reviewing the Environmental Statement on Medicine Lodge District, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) stated that the Snake River islands above the Lynn Crandall site not be included in the proposed wilderness areas under consideration by Congress. One of the proposed plans does include the Snake River islands in the wilderness area. This could impact the feasibility of the Lynn Crandall site and be in conflict with the State Water Plan. Mr. Rydalch suggested the Board support BLM's recommendation to not include the Snake River islands in the wilderness area.

F. Dave Rydalch, Member, moved the Board approve a letter under the Chairman's signature be sent to O'Dell Frandsen, BLM's Idaho Falls District Manager, for BLM's hearing records, in support of BLM's recommendations to not include the Snake River islands above the Lynn Crandall site in the proposed wilderness areas under consideration by Congress for federal legislation; inclusion of the Snake River islands would be in conflict with the State Water Plan. J. D. Williams, Member, seconded the motion.

Motion passed by voice vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 2 Absent.

J. D. Williams, Member, commented that eastern Idaho is primarily served by Utah Power & Light Company. A recent Public Utilities Commission (PUC) order on ratepaying severely affected Utah Power & Light Company's weatherization program. Because of the public's reaction to the order, PUC is reconsidering it. Since the State Energy Plan emphasizes energy conservation measures and it has been adopted as a policy in the State Water Plan, Mr. Williams suggested department staff meet with the PUC staff to review the State Water Plan's policy on the issue.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

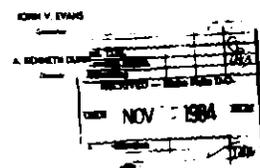
Franklin Jones
FRANKLIN JONES
Secretary

BOARD ACTIONS:

1. Adopted Inducement Resolution No. 84-69 to James Burkan for \$35,000. (Page 2)
2. Adopted Inducement Resolution No. 84-68 to Natsuura Brothers Co., Inc. for \$200,000. (Page 2)



State of Idaho
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
STATE OFFICE, 450 W. State Street, Boise, Idaho



Mailing address:
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720
(208) 334-4440

November 5, 1984

Mr. O'Dell Frandsen
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

This is to advise you of the action taken by the Idaho Water Resource Board at its meeting on September 27, 1984 in Idaho Falls, Idaho concerning the Bureau of Land Management's recommendation to not include the Snake River islands above the Lynn Crandall reservoir site in the proposed wilderness areas then under consideration by Congress for federal legislation.

The Board approved a motion at that meeting directing staff to advise you that any inclusion of the Snake River islands would be in conflict with the Idaho State Water Plan.

I was informed today you had not received a letter informing you of the action taken by the Board at the September 27, 1984 meeting. I apologize for the delay and hope this letter will suffice. A copy of the Board motion is attached.

Sincerely,
Wayne T. Haas
WAYNE T. HAAS
Administrator
Resources Analysis Division

WTH:alw
cc: Dave Rydalch
Enc.

3

5

BLM Idaho Falls District Office
Attn: RMP/EIS Team Leader
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

14.11.84.

Comments pertaining to your BLM Medicine Lodge Draft RMP/EIS. My comments are about Recreation, ORV Management and Wilderness.

Support: Alternative "B"

Oppose: I oppose the ORV closures as outlined in your BLM Preferred Alternative, especially in the Management Areas 5, 6 and 9; mainly in the St. Anthony Sand Dunes and Stirling Springs vicinity.

- 5-1 Comments: ORV Recreation does not relieve the positive planning effort in this RMP/EIS it deserves. The weakness of the RMP, as far as ORV plans go is its, negative only, planning. It is specific as what ORV closures and limitations will take place under BLM's Preferred Alternative without telling about plans where to this recreational activity will be shifted to for an equally attractive ORV experience. By your own admission (p.4-23) some closures will push out 70% of ORV recreationists from some traditionally used areas. The outdoors recreational planner plans for closures, in effect telling the majority of ORV people to "push-off" or get crowded into a small area. Nowhere is a planning effort evident exactly where the displaced ORV enthusiasts are provided with a comparable scenery and challenge. The RMP neglects to plan for substitute areas. To push out 70% of users from a traditional area without defined alternatives will lead to management problems enforcing such closure and it will create a general disrespect towards BLM rulings by such seemingly arbitrarily one-sided bureaucratic rulings in traditional use areas.
- 5-2 In the report a misleading tabulation caption is used for the areas to be closed seasonally. All areas subject to seasonal closure are put under the category "Limited-seasonal" when these should be listed as "Closed-seasonal". The BLM term "Limited" refers to an area having corridors left open inside an area described. It is my impression that no such corridors open will remain open year long, hence it becomes a "closed-seasonal" area. At times your own text contradicts your tabulation method; example your text Part I p-17 refers a certain area as 3355 acres "Seasonal closure" but as soon you tabulate it becomes "Limited-seasonal".
- 5-3 In general after reading this Draft makes one wonder how much the "hands on" ORV recreational experience and expertise your outdoors

recreation planners really have in competitive and noncompetitive off roading sport? Is it not perhaps a case where personal preferences have influenced planning to an unprofessional degree?

Recreation use/days are referred to, but without evaluating BLM management related ~~unquantified~~ factors, influencing the number of use/days. The quantity and quality of recreational information available to the public by your District is not evaluated for the different types of activities. What printed material is available to direct and inform the visitor what is available within the RA? Lack of such information affects the rate of visitation, more so for the non-local visitor of less known localities. It hinders dispersion of activities, especially on week-ends and into the localities further away from your office. Is the lack of planning in this area a planned feature for the future?

5-5

Availability of such specific information could be used as a cost effective planning and management tool. Hopefully this will be addressed in your Final RMP. Plan to establish a Recreational Resource Data Book a copy of which should be readily available to the public at your office. Current recreational information in your RA is on a primitive, pedestrian level.

5-6

In Management Area 3 there are sand dunes, yet no plans are mentioned for these. What are the ORV management plans for sand dunes in MA 5; in R3BE TSM?

WILDERNESS: Support non-wilderness status for the WSAs under consideration. Rationale is in agreement with the points raised in your report justifying such non-wilderness classification.

Sincerely,

Harry Helts
Harry Helts
P.O. Box 64
Porthill, ID 83853

4. Livestock Use: Critical wildlife winter range and staging areas should be withdrawn from livestock grazing leases. The value of recreation of all types and the economic value of wildlife should be contrasted with the deficit nature of grazing. Rather than continue to subsidize the destruction of riparian land via grazing, a fair market value should be assessed for each AUM, and stockmen should be required to pay for damage to riparian areas and springs. Wildlife use and land integrity take precedence over grazing, so current allocations need to be decreased to ensure this as well as the future demand for grazing. The number of grazing allotments should be decreased to approximately 17%.

5. Wildlife Use: Livestock use should be decreased as noted above under #4. All roosting/hunting areas should be preserved for raptors, etc. Migration routes for elk, antelope, and deer should be protected from mineral development, logging, improper fencing, and agricultural development. Private lands should be purchased where necessary for the maintenance of wildlife populations. Allowances should be made for the continuance, at present or increased levels, of Ferruginous and Swainson's Hawks, eagle and osprey, and sage grouse. Wildlife demands should take priority over grazing, mineral entry, agricultural development, or land transfer or logging. Present AUMs should be cut by approximately 60%. All livestock allocation should be immediately terminated in those areas where the grizzly bear currently, or in the future, visits or resides.

6. Recreation and ORV abuse: All currently roadless and AEEC (areas of critical environmental concern) areas should be permanently closed to ORV use. All vehicular travel should be restricted to developed roads (not "ways"), i.e. there should be no such thing as ORV travel except in cases of legitimate scientific study (and not to include mineral exploration). Ways and duplicate routes should be closed and allowed/encouraged to revert to a natural state. A two mile square sacrifice area should be designated for ORV use in the sand dunes area (but far away from the WSA). This area, and established roads, should be the only areas designated 'open' to ORV use. The South Fork of the Snake River should receive special designation as a scenic or recreational river.

7. Wilderness Designation: The Sand Mountain, Table Rock Islands, Pine Creek Islands, and Conant Valley Islands (35-3, 34-2, 34-3, and 34-4) should be recommended for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. In addition, the South Fork of the Snake River should receive special designation as a scenic river (what was this idea doing under Issue 6??). All the above areas should be recommended to ensure protection of a diversity of ecosystems types. If not recommended, all WSA should be managed as roadless with ORV, mineral exploration/entry, and logging prohibited.

8. Water and Water Quality: Riparian improvement should be restricted to fencing and other protection-oriented measures. No pipelines, or agricultural development of water should be allowed. The Willow Creek 208 project should concentrate on natural measures; livestock grazing withdrawals should be made where needed.

9. Fire Management: Fire suppression should be contingent upon critical wildlife areas (if a significant portion is threatened by fire). Prescribed burning should not occur unless native grasslands/ wildlife resources will benefit (grazing improvement is an insufficient rationale for prescribed burning).

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on your EIS. Please recommend Alternative E and the above additions.

Robert Jones
Robert Jones
1105 South 3rd
Pocatello, Idaho 83201

Bureau Of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
ATTN: RMP/EIS Team Leader

December 2, 1984

Mr. Prandson and Tess: Please include this letter in the hearing record.

I am writing in regard to the Medicine Lodge RMP and EIS. I urge you to recommend Alternative E to Congress as your preferred alternative. Management plans should be directed to protect wilderness areas, wildlife populations, and self-propelled recreation. Road building and desert land entry activities should cease. There should be substantial increase in the acreage closed to ORV use. Grazing allotments should be transferred or eliminated to more adequately protect and enhance winter range areas and protect riparian areas.

Prudent stewardship of the public lands cannot be accomplished without further restriction of livestock grazing, and an abandonment of the commodities approach to "multiple use". With the low average precipitation and general marginal nature of the agricultural development potential, the management plan should encourage more nonconsumptive uses of the public lands, e.g. wilderness, roadless, winter range, and cultural resource areas.

The following is a brief listing of issues and my recommendations:
1. Public Land Transfer: Retain all Omitted Lands in public ownership. Transfer of public lands should be made to another agency for improved management capability only, and especially if the area adjoins and completes wilderness. No land should be transferred to the BLM. None of the public lands in the Medicine Lodge area have agricultural potential. If an already subsidizing huge tracts of idle (and previously developed) private land. In addition, with the depletion of groundwater, and the over-allocation of surface water, there is no reasonable argument for development of public land. Isolated tracts of public land should not be sold, but rather transferred to an agency capable of proper stewardship (not development).

2. Mineral and Energy Exploration and Development: All currently roadless areas should be closed to mineral leasing and exploration, or withdrawn from mineral entry if currently under lease. No new roads should be allowed. Total reclamation of disturbed areas should be required (a sufficient bond should be levied to ensure this), and no exploration/entry should be permitted where there is any potential for the disruption of the ground water system.

3. Timber Resources: Currently roadless areas should be closed to timber harvesting. Restrictions on timber harvest should include a requirement that any sale should not be of a deficit nature (no allowance for so-called "recreational benefit" or credits), reforestation and administrative costs should be included in the cost of the timber, no new roads or extension of existing roads should be allowed and all ways should be permanently closed, and a careful analysis of the soil type and erosion factors made before any bids are let.

(Continued on Page 2)

COMMENT SHEET DRAFT MEDICINE LODGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Name Kathy Schuck
Address Box 25 Clatsop Id 97141

I found the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan quite well written (of course, like any government document it has some repetition but overall pretty good)

I agree with your closure of tracks in the Snake C. I have not too much objection to the No Action Alternative either.

I was very pleased to see NO WILDERNESS Recommendation on the Sand Dunes & the Islands in the South Fork. This will leave the management approach much more flexible for you as land managers. I believe that wilderness classification would only cause you great management difficulties.

I agree with Mr. Bill Dickinson that to not mention the grey wolf (Sightings in the last few years) at all would be a very good idea. Instead the grey wolf mentioned on pages 3-14, 9-24, 56-7. Did not see much value in the Recovery of the grey wolf therefore to leave out mention would be best.

I am very glad to see the program of sale of isolated pieces of BLM ongoing. I believe that management will be more or less organized with lands adjacent to one another. I also feel that each county deals as much revenue on the books as possible.

I would also like to note that I favor granting the Right of way for the Equine-Hammer Road to Fremont County to build a on farm to market Road over the next few years.



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF MINES
WESTERN FIELD OFFICE
EAST 9th AVE
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON 99201

December 14, 1984

Memorandum

To: NW/EIS Team Leader--Idaho Falls District Office, Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Falls, Idaho
From: Supervisor--Minerals Involvement Section
Subject: Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area in Eastern Idaho

The Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement adequately address the impacts the plan alternatives would have on mineral resources on BLM lands. Alternative B is the plan that we prefer with respect to mineral management. It allows the largest amount of Federal lands in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area to be available for locatable, leasable, and salable minerals. Alternative C, your preferred alternative, could adversely affect two geothermal sites and one sand and gravel deposit in management area 3. Their locations are listed below and are from our Mineral Industry Location System (MILS). Additional mineral resource sites may occur which are not in our system.

Hawley Warm Springs - NW1/4NW1/4 sec. 25, T. 4 N., R. 40 E.

Unnamed geothermal site - SE1/4SE1/4 sec. 25, T. 4 N., R. 40 E.

Gravel pit - Sec. 17, T. 4 N., R. 40 E.

Thank you for the opportunity to review your plan.

D'Arcy P. Banister
D'Arcy P. Banister



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20545

DEC 19 1984

CONFIDENTIAL DRAFT MEDICINE LODGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Name *James L. Lohy*
Address *Box 111, 1st Ave, Montpelier, Ida 83251*

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Idaho Falls District
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

In response to the letter dated September 14, 1984, we have reviewed the Draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area in eastern Idaho. Our review was directed to whether the action described in the draft EIS involved matters within our jurisdiction by law or special expertise or had any potential impact on NRC licensed facilities. No potential effects were identified; therefore, we have no specific comments on the draft EIS.

We note that the Medicine Lodge Resource Area includes part of the U.S. Department of Energy Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL). We have assumed that you are working closely with DOE to ensure that your plan adequately reflects any potential impacts associated with INEL operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft document.

Sincerely,

Richard H. Vollmer
Richard H. Vollmer, Director
Division of Engineering
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

As a general overview, your document is good. I don't think on first impression to have any argument with. I have a lot of work and thought to go through. I am a strong advocate of the multiple use plan. I really feel that any wilderness area the balance in the State. The balance in lands to tightly and can not be managed with any early withdrawal in Alternative C.

10-19-84

1950
 - UES 12 384

Mr. O'Dell A. Frandsen, District Manager
 Bureau of Land Management
 Idaho Falls District Office
 940 Lincoln Road
 Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

Thank you for this opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area. The planning analysis appears to be reasonably comprehensive, but should include a couple of areas that might affect adjoining National Forest System lands.

19-1 We do not find sufficient mention about noxious weeds in the Range section and what the Bureau of Land Management's program is for control of such plants as leafy spurge, etc.

19-2 There is no mention of specific Forest or rangeland insect programs, such as: Mountain Pine Beetle, grasshoppers, etc. The plan should discuss the integrated pest management program.

The discussion of the East Indian Creek Forest Service allotment on page B-33 is unclear. Is the intent of the discussion to manage the adjacent public land in accordance with the conclusions reached at the Cottonwood Cattle Association's March 1, 1983, meeting. For your information, those conclusions are listed below:

- 19-3
1. The Bureau of Land Management approved a 3- to 5-day period of use for the cattle to be removed from the Forest at the end of the grazing season. All agreed that opening the fence gates and allowing the cattle to drift across the Bureau of Land Management land has less impact than herding 200 to 300 pairs across during one day.
 2. The drift fence which separates the Forest and Bureau of Land Management would not be extended for the 1983 season. It was recognized that cattle will drift around the fence in September. The allotment rider will have to herd the cattle off the Bureau of Land Management land on a routine basis (every other day, excluding Sunday) after drift starts.
 3. Less cattle should be placed in the Indian Creek drainage to reduce the occurrence of drift off the Forest.

Dear B.L.M. folks,
 As a native & resident of Idaho I am
 very concerned about the Medicine Lodge Resource Area.
 I am requesting wilderness designation for the 39 islands
 on the Snake, portion for the North Junipers, & consideration
 for the elk wintering area near the 37 Anthony Dunes
 as well as consideration of the gray wolf population.
 I further endorse either the wildlife/American Alternative
 E or the Committee for Idaho's High Plateau
 suggested compromise to prevent the 21% grazing increase
 in Proposed Alternative C. And finally please see
 that the final RMP/EIS include trade off studies between
 grazing restrictions & riparian contributions & other
 cost considerations. Like keep Idaho Idaho!
 Thank you, *Nancy Young*

P.S.

I understand that ranchers, I
 used to have cattle, have a lot of respect
 on your decisions - however - they are not
 the future of this land & our descendants
 deserve to see this country as ~~is~~, for
 the most part, is still is!!

Also, anybody with any real
 freight can see that Idaho wilderness will
 be, & soon, the major new economic factor
 for the people here - please don't squander it
 on a few stated interests!

O'Dell A. Frandsen

In the interest of a coordinated approach to the delineation of wolf recovery
 habitat as discussed in the Affected Environment section of the DEIS, the
 Targhee National Forest has not chosen to delineate habitat. In response to
 occasional unverifiable sightings, the Targhee has chosen to defer any decision
 until the interagency wolf recovery plan is put forth. We believe this
 approach will ensure that any designation of lands is consistent with the wolf
 recovery team effort and the management of adjacent lands and that any decision
 is coordinated between Regional and State offices.


 Jack P. Goff
 Director, Planning and Budget



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Pacific Northwest Region
Woods Building, Room 1920
2001 South Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98121

L7619(PNR-RE)
DES 84/51

December 21, 1984

Memorandum

To: Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Falls District Office, Attention: RMP/EIS Team Leader, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
From: Acting Associate Regional Director, Recreation Resources and Professional Services, Pacific Northwest Region
Subject: Review of draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area (DES 84/51)

We have reviewed the subject document and have no objection to Alternative C, which is your preferred alternative. We support the resource area proposals described under Alternative C, especially:

- 1. Research Natural Area designation of Menan Butte.
2. Recommendation for study under the Wild and Scenic River Act for 61 miles of the South Fork Snake River.

We saw nothing under any alternative about study or special recreation designation for any portion of the Henrys Fork of the Snake River. The Henrys Fork has been designated by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture as a study river under the authority of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and we believe it should receive some mention in this report.

Frederick J. Bender

CC:
MASO-762

FREMONT-MADISON CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

BOX 128
ST. ANTHONY, IDAHO 83445

Members, cont'd.:

- L.D. Morris
James L. Byrne
Jim McGarry
Darlene Clements
Marlin Morris
J.R. Byrne
Spence Orr
Lee Sutton
Keith Morris
Steve Sutton
Stanley Sutton
Brent Grover
Max Palmer
Mr. H. Klein
C. Garth Pullmer
Ed Klein
Don P. Allread
Larry Singleton
Ken Abeggian
Bruce Bell
Dillon Brower
Rud Mortimer
Randy Blidsoe
Keith Robertson
Bruce Harris
Keith Meyers
Rodney Young
Dale Hill
Vern Dee Arnold
Oleiv Bair
Nest Siddoway
Clava Rice
Leonard Clements
Max Loveland
Terry Bair
Jim Blake
Dr. John Sharp
Bai Wilson
Terrell Perneck
Fred Blaser
Benny Stockard
Dean Zollinger
Jim Harrison
Norman Billman
Kim Palmer
Gordon Smith
Marlin Bressler
Rushburg Vet Clinic
Dean Palmer
Lynn Luak
Ken Mackay
Lynn Stewart

FREMONT-MADISON CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION

BOX 128
ST. ANTHONY, IDAHO 83445

December 19, 1984

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Attn: RMP/EIS Team Leader
Re: Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan

Dear Sirs:

At a recent meeting of the Fremont-Madison Cattlemen's Association, the membership voted to go on record strongly stating that they do not favor either an increase in the wilderness acreage or an increase in the numbers of the big game herds within the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan area.

Respectfully,

Roger J. Morris

Roger J. Morris
President
Fremont-Madison Cattlemen's Association

Members:

- John C. Stimpson
Melvin Harris
Brent Singleton
A.B. Hobbitts
Rolan Bloom
Flying R Ranch
Dean Blach
Orme Farms
Hobbitts Farms
Brown Livestock Co.
Zeph Orifl
Rudd Berwford Ranch
Robert W. Orme
E.H. Miller
N. Lee Miller
Ted W. Blake
Roy J. McGarry
Robert Howell
Theron R. McGarry
Staine Hendricks
Brett Bell
Blair Fisher
Dan Hill
Howard Clark
Richard Pooook
Lynn Zoelll
Tarl Dial
Orme Cattle Co.
Jack Somner
Greg Wood
Kris Blanchard
Laverl Singleton
Robert S. Wood
Byron Luak
Robert Bair
Mark Anderson
Rigby Brothers
D.C. Barville and Sons
Triple S Ranch
Preston Atchley



United States Department of the Interior

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
RESTON, VA. 22092

In Reply Refer To:
WES-M11 Stop 423

DEC 19 1984

Memorandum

To: RMP/EIS Team Leader, Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls, Idaho
From: Assistant Director for Engineering Geology
Subject: Review of resource management plan and draft environmental statement for Medicine Lodge Resource Area, Idaho

We have reviewed the subject document as requested in the notice of September 14 from the District Manager.

The environmental statement indicates a need for information on the ground-water resources of the Snake Plain Aquifer (p. 3-3). We suggest consulting publications of the U.S. Geological Survey, particularly the following:

- (1) Stearns, M. T., Crandall, Lynn, and Steward, W. G., 1938, Geology and ground-water resources of the Snake River Plain in southeastern Idaho: U.S. Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper 77A.
(2) Hamdoff, W. J., Crosthwaite, E. G., and Kilburn, Chabot, 1964, Ground water for irrigation in the Snake River Basin in Idaho: U.S. Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper 165A.

These reports include maps showing depth to water, water table, transmissivity, and a flow net for the Snake Plain Aquifer. Additional data on specific locations may be available from the District Chief, U.S. Geological Survey, 230 Collins Road, Boise, Idaho 83702 (FTS 554-1750) or the project office at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, P.O. Box 2230, INEL, CF 690, Room 164, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401 (FTS 583-2430).

It would be useful also to reference the annual reports of the U.S. Geological Survey entitled "Water Resources Data for Idaho" for recent water years.

Since the undeveloped recreation sites of the Medicine Lodge Resource Area have deteriorated because of visitor abuse (p. 3-21), the statement should indicate whether adverse impacts on water resources may result. If hazards to the human environment may develop as a result of the deterioration, the possibilities of mitigation should be addressed.

James F. Devine

BLM, Idaho Falls Dist.
Idaho Falls, ID.

12/19/84 26

Re: Medicine Lodge Resource Area EIS

Dear Sir:

I am an Oregon attorney, ornithologist, fisherman, birdwatcher and conservationist who spends much time enjoying the natural resources of Idaho. Following are my comments on the EIS.

1. WILDERNESS- All 39 of the Snake River Islands should be designated wilderness. No island ecosystem is represented in the NWFS. Further, any allowance of development would severely compromise the integrity of federal bald eagle recovery program.

The BLM should make a special wilderness recommendation to the Attorney Secretary (per Section 201-FLPMA) for the W. Jungler Mtns, a splendid 4000 acres removed from the Sand Mtn. WSA. The RMP all-season ORV closures not sufficiently protective to prevent increased mineral activity; also all future grazing should be

permanently stopped, to protect rare plants like *Oenothera psammophila*. This closure should affect the whole area and not just the adjacent 1420 acre RMA.

2. WILD & SCENIC RIVERS-

I wholeheartedly support the recommendation of the S. F. Snake River for Wild & Scenic River study status.

3. GREY WOLF HABITAT-

26-1 The EIS is deficient in attention paid to constraints necessary to protect the gray wolf population in Management Area 10. The area suffers greatly from extensive overgrazing, soil erosion, and vegetation zone damage. The condition of the area is declining rapidly, which will adversely affect big game, fishers, and consequently the remaining wolf population. I suggest the BLM recommendation for Semi-Primitive Non-Intervent classification of at least 5920 acres.

4. ALTERNATIVES-

I can only support Alt. E-07 C. I. H. D.'s compromise alternative to prevent the 21% grazing increase in Preferred Alt. C.

I actively disagree with the biased, but basic agrarian assumption that every commodity increase is in the

26-2 public interest. Where is any affective cost-benefit analysis to support your conclusions?

I do not approve of any tax dollars being used to subsidize an already depressed meat industry, while such activity will degrade the habitat and damage wildlife.

26-3 The final RMP/EIS must include clear and precise trade-offs studies between grazing costs/returns and sports recreation contributions to the local economy.

26-4 Also the final RMP/EIS should show by alternative the estimated budget allocations & public benefits for grazing, mineral extraction, recreation, wildlife, and watershed. Otherwise the plan is not legally sufficient, and indefensible under NEPA and FLPMA.

Sincerely,
J. Jeffrey Clark Esq.
45055 E. HANCOCK
SANDY, OR 97055

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
340 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

28

Dear Friends,

I am responding to your draft Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS.

I am an Idahoan who has learned to appreciate many of Idaho's BLM lands for their scenic and recreational values, and I have gained a perspective about range management from talking with BLM experts in the Boise Area, from talking with other desert activists in the Boise Area, and from reading the book by Denzel Ferguson called Sacred Cows at the Public Trough. Although all of my visits to BLM lands so far have been in the Boise District or in eastern Montana, I think I am as competent as anyone is likely to be to comment on an EIS for BLM lands. Perhaps the issues are a little different in eastern Idaho than they are in areas I've been to so far, but the similarities must outweigh the differences.

1) A 21 per cent grazing increase on public lands with \$1.4 million in range manipulations is irresponsible. Cattle grazing causes unacceptable levels of erosion on public lands. Large portions of Idaho are going to be reduced to bare rock eventually if cattle grazing isn't stopped. Range manipulations benefit no one except a few cattlemen and the benefit is considerable in terms of taxpayer dollars. Those range manipulations will never pay for themselves, and every taxpayer should be irate. That kind of expenditure at a time when attempts are being made to balance the federal budget goes against the trend of the times, and it's a good trend.

2) All 39 Snake River Islands might as well be wilderness. This sounds like an area I can envision and like bald eagle habitat. Wilderness for the islands and/or Wild and Scenic River status for the river there would prevent privatization

and development of the islands and would put an island ecology into the National Wilderness Preservation System.

3) Not having been to the St Anthony Dunes, I have trouble making a decision on whether anything there is what I consider wilderness. ORV closure of the North Juniper Area and wilderness should be given serious consideration. I would hate to visit the area some day, which will likely happen, and find that an area of high recreational value was excluded from wilderness consideration.

4) BLM Special Recreation Management Area/Area of Critical Environmental Concern proposals along the South Fork of the Snake and the St Anthony Dunes sound like good ideas. Seasonal vehicle closures on elk wintering habitat in the St. Anthony Dunes area sounds like a good idea also.

5) Reports of overgrazing and the well-known forms of erosion associated with cattle grazing in gray wolf habitat in Management Area 1 near the Italian Peak Roadless Area of Targhee National Forest are the sort of reports that turn people like me against cattle grazing. The BLM's recommendation for Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized classification of 5920 acres in this area sounds like a small, but nevertheless commendable step in the right direction toward sensible management of this area.

6) I endorse the Committee for Idaho's High Desert's alternative management plan for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area. An increase in grazing in any resource area is in the public interest by any stretch of the imagination. The final RMP/EIS should include trade-off studies between grazing costs/returns and sportsmen contributions to the regional economy, and it should clearly show what taxpayer dollars in the area are being spent for and who benefits by how much.

O'dell A. Frandsen
December 24, 1984
Page 2

The Draft RMP/EIS is seriously flawed in many other respects, some may be identified as follows:

- 29-2 1. Removal of all livestock from the RMP/EIS area is not practical or reasonable, therefore warrants little comment except that such a proposal and assessment is necessary to establish baseline data by and from which the preferred plan and alternatives may be judged. Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, does not serve this purpose thereby making it impossible to compare or judge the various courses of action - there is no baseline data.
- 29-3 2. No baseline data is given. Apparently a vegetative inventory was made as well as a soils inventory. However, nowhere in the RMP/EIS do these data appear (in addition to judging and comparing alternatives) as they may or may not have been utilized to determine: management area, land use classification, allotment categorization, initial or projected stocking level, allocation of forage production or other "decision" of resource capability to accommodate use(s) over time. It would seem, therefore, that the time (personnel) and monies (tax dollars) utilized to collect these data was an academic exercise. One must ask, do these data and other essential resource information really substantiate the proposed activities outlined in the RMP/EIS?
- 29-4 3. The RMP/EIS appears in noncompliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Section 102(a), (1) and (2). Although the RMP/EIS talks to "Land Ownership Adjustments," pp. 32-34, and elsewhere in the text, no definitive "fact" is established that clearly demonstrates disposal ".... will serve the national interest." This is specifically applicable as regards any disposal for further agricultural development. It seems BLM chooses to ignore its own economic analysis of further agricultural development in southern Idaho as well as other credible analysis on this matter. Facts do not support BLM's proposed disposal of public land except, perhaps, exchanges with the State of Idaho, other federal agencies, or private parties to adjust boundaries or consolidate ownership to enhance administration and management goals and objectives. Greater exposure of any land transfer proposals to public comment must be made prior to any land disposal.
- 29-5 4. As noted in prior text, allotment categorization is of concern. That is, what data promoted such decision and who made the decision? Was there any public involvement beyond the livestock industry sought and incorporated into the classification decision?
Allotment categorization and land use classification as well appears, from the data presented, an arbitrary and capricious BLM "action" absent any public exposure and comment and lacking resource data to substantiate such action.



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December 24, 1984

O'dell A. Frandsen, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Re: Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement, Idaho Falls District, Draft, 1984

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

The Idaho Wildlife Federation (IWF) appreciates the opportunity to comment upon the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). Review and consideration of the RMP/EIS, however, leads to only one conclusion -- disappointment. "The document is nothing more than a Sears Catalogue of "goodies," a potpourri of proposed "actions," an enumeration of intentions (good or bad) supposedly applicable to the 648,700 acres of public lands addressed in the RMP/EIS. Unfortunately, the RMP/EIS provides no site specific management guidance for subsequent "activity planning" as is proposed in the document. Thus, a meaningful plan does not emerge, assessment of environmental impacts is not done - it is impossible.

Compliance with applicable law as is claimed in the RMP/EIS, p 1-2, is little more than wishful thinking. Neither does the document serve ".... to satisfy the intent of the 1975 U.S. District Court approved agreement (Case 1983-73) between BLM and The Natural Resources Defense Council, et. al, in which BLM agreed to consider the various intensities of livestock grazing in its decision making process." Were the authors of the RMP/EIS to understand the Court's Decision, they would find the Court is most specific in requiring site specific attention to the matter of livestock grazing on the public land. Far more is required than the claimed agreement ".... to consider the various intensities of livestock grazing..." in the decision making process. Quite the contrary is true. Indeed, the very applicability of livestock grazing is challenged, it is to be scrutinized and assessed relative to its accommodation and impact(s) upon the public's land. This is not done in the RMP/EIS.

O'dell A. Frandsen
December 24, 1984
Page 3

- 29-5 while the public might go along with such prioritization and classification scenario, there could be significant dissent. IWF, as example, takes exception to BLM's concept of allotment categorization as not fulfilling their fiduciary responsibilities under applicable law. IWF likewise questions the "policy" as is enumerated relative to land use classification, i.e., moderate use class, as being ".... to provide for the production or use of forage, timber, minerals and energy, recreation, or other consumptive resources while maintaining or enhancing natural systems." Does this "policy" meet the intent of FLPMA, Section 103 (c) and Section 202?
- 29-6
- 29-7 5. The RMP/EIS at p. 3-19, states that: "... For the Medicine Lodge Resource Area as a whole, the present erosion situation is within normal and acceptable levels." By what criteria is this statement made? What data substantiates this contention? And, elsewhere in the text, who and what data substantiates the claim that "5 tons per acre" soil loss is an acceptable loss? Desertification is a problem in Idaho on BLM administered public lands. Further consideration and assessment of this impact must be addressed and not written off as "acceptable."
- 29-8 6. The RMP/EIS establishes beyond doubt that the Medicine Lodge Resource Area possesses significant fish, wildlife and recreation resources. BLM is to be commended in recognition of these inherent public values. Certain on-going or proposed activities are identified, but IWF questions BLM's commitment to these resources where statements as are found on pp. 40-41 are made - it would seem BLM's concern may be more rhetorical than real. A more definitive BLM commitment is required to assure continued diversity, viability, protection, and management of these resources. Where and how have the Idaho Department of Fish and Game management plans been incorporated into BLM's decision making? What, where, and how has consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service, as required by the Endangered Species Act, been sought and incorporated into BLM's decision making?
- 7. IWF questions BLM's rationale for not recommending wilderness classification of the Sand Mountain and Snake River Island Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). Such lands are unique and once lost, never can be regained. Furthermore, insufficient data or program direction is given to assure BLM can manage these lands, short of wilderness classification, in a manner to protect their unique value.

The foregoing is by no means a complete enumeration of "flaws" of the RMP/EIS as viewed by the Idaho Wildlife Federation. The evident effort to accommodate livestock, ORV, agricultural, mineral or other similar consumptive use of the RMP/EIS area places other resource values in jeopardy.

In sum, the Idaho Wildlife Federation finds the Medicine Lodge Resource Man-

O'dell A. Frandsen
December 24, 1984
Page 4

439 Styer Avenue
Moscow, Idaho 83843
December 22, 1984

agement Plan/Environmental Impact Statement unacceptable. It simply is not a plan of sufficient detail to provide the necessary guidance and/or constraint for land use allocation and/or exclusion of use(s) in accordance with land capability. The only alternative having merit, in concept at least, is Alternative E. In the final analysis, insufficient data or no data is given to substantiate the resource management plan. Hence, the environmental impact statement is meaningless - the RMP/EIS is not valid.

29-9

Sincerely,

William R. Meiners, Chairman
Natural Resources Committee

WRM:mjm

cc: Bill Leisl, President, IMF
Russ Heughins, Vice President, IMF
Ed Stockly, Executive Director, INRL
Johanna Wald, NRDC

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
ATTN: BW/EIS Team Leader
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Sir:

The following comments have to do with the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement and are concerned with Research Natural Areas (RNA's).

We are pleased that the Plan and EIS include the proposed Noman Buttes RNA (Page 20). We are very disappointed, however, that neither the proposed Game Creek or St. Anthony Sand Dunes RNA's are included in the preferred alternative. In addition to these three proposed RNA's we suggest that one of the Snake River Islands in the RNA be set aside as a RNA. My letter of 2/20/84 to Mr. Frandsen transmitting reports on recommended RNA's mentioned the need to include one of the Snake River Islands in the RNA as a RNA. Each of these proposed RNA's is discussed separately.

St. Anthony Sand Dunes

This has long been recognized as a unique area. The BLM recognized its uniqueness when it listed it as area 381 in "A Directory of Research Natural Areas on Federal Land of the United States of America" compiled by the Federal Committee on Research Natural Areas, 1968. The Sand Dunes have been proposed as a National Natural Landmark. Our Committee recommended that three sections of the area (Sections 19, 30, and 31, T. 8 S., R. 39 E.) be set aside as a RNA not only to include the unique geological situations and rare plants but also to serve as a baseline or reference area for studying the effects of OHV use on vegetation. We believe that it is very important to reserve a portion of the St. Anthony Sand Dunes in an undisturbed condition in a RNA.

32-1

Although Page 20 does not show the St. Anthony Sand Dunes RNA in Alternative C, Page F-13 shows that it has been included in Alternatives C, D, and E.

Game Creek

We suggest that Game Creek is an excellent candidate RNA because it is a domestic supply watershed in an undisturbed condition. It is not grazed and includes forest types badly needed in a RNA network. If the area contains blue spruce (the 1968 list of RNA's on Federal Land listed blue spruce in the Game Creek area).

32-2

-1-

1525 Malad
Boise, ID 83705
21 December 1984

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The following are my comments to the Medicine Lodge draft Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. I support the alternative proposal of the Committee for Idaho's High Desert for this very important area. I feel it is the only alternative which is realistic yet protects ecological parameters. I have the following specific comments:

- o I feel all 39 of the Snake River Islands need wilderness designation to protect important cottonwood riparian habitat. It would serve as representation of an island ecology in the National Wilderness Preservation System and would not compromise bald eagle recovery plans.
- o I support the BLM recommendation for congressional study of the south fork of the Snake River as a Wild and Scenic River. This ecosystem is the best area in the Idaho-Montana-Wyoming region for bald eagle recovery and Wild and Scenic designation would maintain this area.
- o I support the BLM Special Recreation Management Area/Area of Critical Environmental Concern proposals for the south fork and St. Anthony Dunes areas.
- o I think grazing should be stopped in the North Junipers and urge the BLM to make a special wilderness recommendation to the Interior Secretary for this area. The area offers the only opportunity for primitive recreation in the St. Anthony Dunes and is host to a rare and fragile plant community.
- o I support the BLM recommendation for Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Classification for 5920 acres in the Management Area 1.
- o I urge the BLM to pay proper attention to the gray wolf population in Management Area 1 near the Italian Peak Roadless Area (per the Endangered Species Act).
- o I feel the final RMP/EIS should include studies on grazing costs versus recreation economic contributions to regional economy. I would also like to see estimated budgets for grazing, mining, wildlife, recreation, and other multiple uses broken out by alternative.

In summary, I support the Committee for Idaho's High Desert proposal and I thank you very much for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Susanne Veder

this would fill need in the Idaho RNA network; no other established or proposed RNA in Idaho contains blue spruce. We also need good aspen stands and the Game Creek area contains good stands of aspen. The Douglas-Fir type in Game Creek may contain needed habitat types.

Although the Game Creek proposed RNA is included in Alternatives D and E, it is not included in the preferred Alternative C. Because Game Creek is an undisturbed watershed, we urge you to include the proposed Game Creek RNA in the preferred alternative.

Snake River Island

We suggest that one of the Snake River Islands in the RNA be designated as a RNA. We do not yet have narrowleaf cottonwood included in any established or proposed RNA. The Islands contain excellent stands of narrowleaf cottonwood. In addition, they may contain certain shrub species that are native to this part of Idaho and that are not included in a proposed RNA. Our Committee would like to work with the BLM to select a good island to represent the vegetation of this portion of the Snake River in a RNA.

32-3

All of the four proposed RNA's are located in areas where conflicts with other resources would be minimal. Three of the areas, Noman Buttes, St. Anthony Sand Dunes, and Snake River Islands, would be nominated for designation as ALR's in the preferred Alternative. The fourth proposed RNA, Game Creek, is in an ungrazed domestic water supply watershed. We hope that you will give favorable consideration to inclusion of Snake proposed RNA's in the preferred Alternative to serve the needs of research, education, and as reference or baseline areas.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this Plan and EIS.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Wallner, Chairman
Idaho Natural Areas Coordinating Committee



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ECOLOGICAL SERVICES
4620 Overland Road, Room 209
Boise, Idaho 83705

December 26, 1984

TO: District Manager, BLM, Idaho Falls, Idaho
FROM: Field Supervisor, ES, FWS, Boise, Idaho
SUBJECT: Medicine Lodge Draft RMP and EIS, Idaho (EC 84/68)

These are our comments on the Draft Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Draft EIS transmitted to us by your letter of September 14, 1984.

Under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-205, as amended), we reviewed the RMP and EIS for possible effects on Federal-listed threatened and endangered species. We agree that there will be some aspects of the plan under the "Preferred Alternative" that may affect the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, grizzly bear, and wolf.

On page 41, last paragraph, we recommend that you delete "To the extent practicable." There should be no question that your management actions will be consistent with the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Handwritten signature of John P. Wolflein

cc: FWS/EC, Washington, D.C.
FWS, AFA, R-1, Portland
FWS, SE, Boise (1-4-84-SP-236)



COMMITTEE FOR IDAHO'S HIGH DESERT

EAST IDAHO CHAPTER
392 Moonlite Drive, Idaho Falls

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

December 24, 1984

Dear Sirs:

At the Nov. 8 hearing on the Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS, I mentioned in my testimony that two particularly controversial aspects of alternative E (Sand Mountain wilderness recommendation, 19% grazing reduction) would likely disqualify it from serious consideration, despite its many other desirable, defensible features.

37-1

Accordingly, I offered to formulate a significantly different version of Alt. D--the key element of which is to hold grazing at current usage levels--and to submit it to the CIHD Board at our Nov. 17 annual meeting. My recommendation was approved with only minor revisions, thanks in no small measure to the high regard shown by the Idaho Falls District for critical fisheries and game habitat.

Details of CIHD's suggested compromise alternative are listed below in the same format as Table 2-1, the Summary of Alternatives. We strongly urge that it be formally analyzed in the final RMP/EIS. Because it does not rely on extensive vegetative manipulation (particularly by mechanical means) to prop up wildlife forage against future impacts from grazing increases (21% in Alt. C), CIHD's alternative possesses a significant advantage in overall cost effectiveness.

CIHD is also concerned that expensive, artificial programs of chaining, plowing, and seeding will destroy native plant communities. Once the natural ecologies are extensively disrupted, such programs must be maintained or non-native noxious weeds will dominate.

-2-



American Wilderness Alliance

4600 East-Gardner-Memorial-South-Corridor, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80909-1000-1000

Paul Fritz 3A
Box 1772
Boise, Idaho 83701
December 23, 1984

District Manager
Idaho Falls District
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Rd.
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Sir:

As the Idaho representative of the American Wilderness Alliance I wish to comment on the Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS.

We support alternative E Plan with the Committee for Idaho's High Desert's suggested compromise alternative to prevent the 21% grazing increase in alternative C. The final RMP/EIS should include trade off studies between grazing costs and returns and the sportsmen's gains to the regional economy.

- We also support the following:
(1) Heading the Endangered Species Act by allowing the gray wolf population to exist along the Idaho-Montana border, especially near the Helian Peaks roadless area
(2) The continued protection of the South Fork and the St. Anthony Sand Dunes areas, thus preserving the winter range for 3,000 elk.
(3) Wilderness status for the North Junipers, a 3500 acre area near the Sand Mountain WSA
(4) Wild and scenic river status for the South Fork, with wilderness status for 39 of the Snake River Islands. The BLM should have authority for direct purchase or scenic easement funding to zone the private lands from subdivisions or mineral extraction.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Fritz
Paul Fritz

CIHD SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE D FOR MEDICINE LODGE RA

Multiple Use and Transfer Areas/Land and Realty Transactions

Matches Alt. C. CIHD recognizes that substantial state and private land exchanges must occur to protect key wildlife habitat, particularly within the Sands Habitat Management Area and along the South Fork of the Snake River.

Minerals Management Close to Alt. E. CIHD considers Alt. C to be overly disposed toward mineral extraction. Closing 160,000 acres to leasing is not unreasonable in light of the ecological and recreational values thereon. We are including 3500 acres for the North Junipers in this classification, since we are recommending the North Junipers for a special wilderness designation.

Forest Management Matches Alt. E, though differences from Alt. C appear minor with the exception of 800 acres of T&E habitat.

37-2 Livestock Grazing Management Stable stocking level of 88,302 AUMs. Range improvements to mitigate existing damage zones, especially in overgrazed riparian areas, with costs approximately equal to Alt. E.

Wildlife Management Matches Alt. E, though the difference from Alt. C is merely 6000 elk AUMs. CIHD commends the attention given to threatened and endangered species throughout the RMP. However, we are concerned that the poor range condition in Management Area 1 and the related impacts on big game species will adversely affect the small resident wolf population.

Riparian and Fisheries Management Matches Alt. E. CIHD considers fencing to be the only sound solution to overgrazed riparian bottoms and damaged stream banks, provided elk and antelope migrations are not strongly impacted.

Recreation Management Matches Alt. C, with the exception that 4200 acres (North Junipers, Snake River Islands) are classified primitive.

37-3 Special Designations Matches Alt. E, since CIHD supports Research Natural Areas wherever practical. We note that the difference from Alt. C is only 2000 RNA acres, so we complement your treatment of this category. CIHD strongly supports the BLM recommendation for Congressional study of the South Fork as a scenic and recreational river.

37-4 Wilderness CIHD recommends that all 39 of the Snake River Islands (700 acres) and the North Junipers (3500 acres) be designated wilderness. The Wilderness Act recognizes islands as a special case and all islands have shifting boundaries and acreages, so we do not feel the BLM objections are valid. The key advantage of wilderness for the Snake River Islands would be permanent withdrawal from mineral entry, which is obviously necessary for this precious cottonwood riparian habitat.

Similarly, the extremely fragile soils and truly unique ecology of the North Junipers must be spared mineral exploration and extraction activities. The small size of the North Junipers poses a

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distinct problem in this regard. However, special wilderness recommendations for such deserving areas were permitted under the broad wording of withdrawals in Section 201 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, prior to the term of Interior Secretary Watt. CIHD feels that the North Junipers ecology will outlive Watt's anti-wilderness directives. In addition, we note that the North Junipers offers the only opportunity for primitive recreation within the Sands complex. As an interim measure, no-surface-occupancy stipulations should be imposed on the North Junipers to discourage active mineral exploration and new lease applications.

37-5

Fire Management Matches Alt. C. CIHD generally supports prescribed burning as an inexpensive method for controlling brush. Full fire suppression throughout the Medicine Lodge RA might well disturb wildlife more than the small fires themselves.

37-6

In closing, CIHD requests that substantive cost/benefit studies be performed by alternative for relative comparison, with estimated budget allocations for all of the above categories as well as administration.

Thank you for your attention.

Scott Ploger
Scott Ploger, President
East Idaho Chapter, CIHD

cc: Randall Morris
Kathy Stickle
Gerald Jayne

37-4

The North Junipers area was a part of the Sand Mountain Inventory Unit and was trimmed from the unit during the Intensive Wilderness Inventory. It was not identified as part of the Wilderness Study Area for further consideration. This EIS concerns only those areas that have been identified as WSAs. Addition of the 3,500 acre North Junipers is not within the scope of this EIS because the area was considered early in the process and has not been designated a WSA.

December 20, 1984

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho
83401

RE: Comment on the Medicine Lodge Draft Resource Management Plan

Dear BLM:

I greatly appreciate this opportunity for public comment on your recently released Draft Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area. The RMP will guide management direction for the next two decades on the 790,000 acres within its boundaries (including the INEL).

I strongly support the Committee for Idaho's High Desert Alternative, and am supportive of many aspects of Alternative E (the "amenities/wildlife" Alternative). Of primary significance in Alt. E is its decrease in actual grazing by 19% combined with no reduction in wildlife habitat and full wilderness designation for Sand Mountain and the Snake River Islands.

The BLM is to be commended for its proposal to designate the St. Anthony Sand Dunes and riparian area along the South Fork of the Snake River as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. I have visited the South Fork reach and was very impressed with this high quality habitat. From the description in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's "Important Fish and Wildlife Habitats in Idaho" (1980, the unique ecosystems program document), both of these sites are well deserving of ACEC status, and I am very pleased that the BLM plans to protect these sensitive sites through special management.

I have a number of concerns with the BLM's preferred Alternative (C). I strongly disagree with increasing livestock AUMs, which this Alt. proposes to raise by around 21%. This is a continuation of the old subsidized special interest racket that is now in the twilight of its time. We are living out the anachronism in the livestock industry on public lands in Idaho, and twenty years from now cattle will likely have disappeared, just as sheep, by and large, are doing today. The truth is that these ventures just can't economically compete with the other 97% of the industry which doesn't use public forage or subsidy, and I think that the RMPs should start providing the public with Alternatives that realistically face what is happening. The BLM should begin by designating AUMs to wildlife bringing it up to carrying capacity on current forage, and only then consider allocating some of the remainder to livestock. By the same token, it is ridiculous to propose \$1.4 million in "range improvements" for an industry which may not be with us much longer. This is just another aspect of the public subsidy or welfare system which no longer has a place in enlightened stewardship of the public lands. Rather than returning the relatively small payback (at \$1.37 per AUM) the public gets from livestock interests, I'd like to see it put into wilderness management, for example, or some other non-consumptive management pot. It was unclear to me whether the 1% of the land inhabited by native plant communities is being grazed or not, but if so, I urge its complete protection from non-wildlife grazing.

The proposed 14 miles of fencing are excellent, as this is the only way to enhance recovery and give adequate protection to these riparian sites. Corrective action should, however, be taken to mitigate the situation for overgrazed riparian bottoms essential to moose populations.

The BLM's recommendation for Congressional study for Wild and Scenic River

qualification of the 61 miles of the South Fork of the Snake River from Pellises Reservoir downstream to the Henry's fork confluence is excellent. This would significantly enhance protection of bald eagle habitat in an area which provides the greatest opportunity in the three-state region for recovery due to stable early season nesting temperatures.

41-1

*

I urge the BLM to reconsider its finding of non-suitability for the Snake River Islands WSA and the Sand Mountains WSA. A non-suitable recommendation for these sites greatly reduces opportunity for primitive recreation in the RA, and would mean that the RMPs would not benefit from a representation of the rare cottonwood formation in the former WSA. Management problems are not insurmountable for these sites, and the public interest would be much better served by making a positive wilderness recommendation.

As I mentioned at the outset, I support the Committee for Idaho's High Desert Alternative, and am generally supportive of Alternative E, although it doesn't go far enough in permanently designating wildlife AUMs for non-consumptive/non-commodity uses. If the Staff has not had opportunity to read Dr. George Coggins' five paper analysis of the law of public rangeland management, I urge you to do so. The papers are cited below and if you are not able to get copies in Idaho Falls, I'll send you xeroxes upon request. Coggins' interpretation of the legislative and case law surrounding public domain management is an important perspective which should be read and cited in the development of the Final E.I.S., particularly under IV analyzing the multiple use mandate.

Please include this statement in the RMP record, and please send me a copy of the Final E.I.S. when it is issued. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Peter A. Bouter
Peter A. Bouter
Star Route
Bliss, Idaho 83314

Coggins, G.C., P.B. Evans and M. Lindeberg-Johnson. 1982. The Law of Public Rangeland Management I: The Extent and Distribution of Federal Power. Environmental Law 12: 535-621.

Coggins, G.C. and M. Lindeberg-Johnson. 1982. The Law of Public Rangeland Management II: The Commons and the Taylor Act. Environmental Law 13: 1-101.

Coggins, G.C. 1983. The Law of Public Rangeland Management III: A Survey of Creeping Regulation at the Periphery, 1934-1982. Environmental Law 13: 295-305.

Coggins, G.C. 1983. The Law of Public Rangeland Management IV: FLPLMA, PRIA, and the Multiple Use Mandate. Environmental Law 14: 1-132.

Coggins, G.C. 1984. The Law of Public Rangeland Management V: Prescriptions for Reform. Environmental Law 14: 497-546.

Route 2 Box 274
Rexburg, Idaho
83440

26 December 1984

38

Dear Sir:

I am opposed to any wilderness designation and complete closure of the Sands area west of St. Anthony. The present use of the sands by dune buggies and family outings leave no mark on the ever shifting sand.

I favor maintaining the elk herd at the current level, which I believe to be 2000 head.

I generally favor the alternative C approach.

Sincerely,
Randy Swamy
Randy Swamy

The All Wilderness Alternative in this EIS considers all 39 islands as suitable for wilderness designation, which offers an opportunity for the cottonwood-riparian ecosystem to be included in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Proposed Action is to recommend the Snake River Islands WSA as nonsuitable for wilderness designation because of the problems associated with managing the islands in an unimpaired condition over the long-term. The analysis of managing the islands as wilderness is a planning consideration rather than an environmental issue, and is not included in detail in this Final EIS. However, manageability will be fully covered in the wilderness study report that will accompany the EIS as a suitability recommendation package to the President and Congress. Congress will decide which alternative will better serve the public and if the islands will be designated wilderness.



SIERRA CLUB
MIDDLE SNAKE GROUP
 Box 352 Boise, Idaho 83701

42

21 Dec 84

Manager, Idaho Falls District
 Bureau of Land Management
 940 Lincoln Rd.
 Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Subject: Medicine Lodge Draft RMP

On behalf of the Sierra Club I would like to make the following observations on the Medicine Lodge RMP.

The Snake River, particularly the South Fork, represents an extremely valuable asset for Eastern Idaho. For this reason we applaud your recommendation that that the South Fork be studied for possible Wild and Scenic River status. We support your proposal for Special Recreation Management/ACEC along the South Fork.

All 39 of the Snake River Islands could be recommended for Wilderness designation. The ecological and wildlife values of the island ecosystem are well documented. While the presence of an ecosystem type in the National Wilderness Protection System should not bar another area of the same type from Wilderness recommendation the absence of an ecosystem almost demands an aggressive effort to identify and designate as Wilderness areas of that type. We do not believe the Wilderness Preservation System currently includes the ecosystem type found in the Snake River Islands. It should.

42-1
*

We applaud your recognition of the natural and ecological value of the North Junipers. We feel, however, that an ORV closure is not adequate protection for this unique and valuable area. We ask that the area be recommended for Wilderness designation under the provisions of Sec 201 of FLPMA.

42-2
*

We support your proposal for a Semi-Primitive Non Motorized classification for a segment of Management Area 1. We question whether this alone will protect the resources of the area or will adequately provide for the wildlife population. Since prey for the Endangered Gray Wolf depend on the area we feel that the currently unacceptable range condition must be improved. Both forage and riparian zones must be managed for wildlife until their condition has improved to the point where the grazing of domestic livestock does not occur at the expense of wildlife.

We support your proposal for Special Recreation Management/ACEC for the St. Anthony Dunes. We applaud the efforts you have taken in the past to protect the elk wintering areas

... To explore, enjoy and preserve the nation's forests, waters, wildlife, and wilderness.

threatened by plowing the Egin-Banner Road and we support the road closures included in the Sande Habitat Management Plan.

The resource area consists of almost 800,000 acres. The Natural and Wildlife values of most of this land have been seriously or even hopelessly compromised by previous management and use. In the light of the history of use and abuse by man the only real multiple use alternative is the alternative that best mitigates existing damage and seeks to restore the balance between man and nature. For this reason your Wildlife/Amenities alternative (E) is the Multiple Use Alternative and the alternative we urge you to adopt.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this RMP.

Charles C. Yoder
 Charles C. Yoder
 BLM Issues Coordinator

42-1 See response to 41-1.

42-2 See response to 37-4.



THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

FOUNDED IN 1935

43

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

44



REGION X
1320 SIXTH AVENUE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98101

DEC 27 1984

December 27, 1984

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Attn: RMP/EIS Team Leader Re: Medicine Lodge RMP/EIS

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

The Wilderness Society strongly recommends the adoption of Alternative E as described in the Draft Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan EIS. We believe that this alternative best protects the diverse and productive wildlife habitat that this area is known for. In addition, it recommends wilderness classification for 2 very deserving areas one of which is totally unrepresented in the National Wilderness Preservation System. We believe that all of the Snake River Islands should be recommended as wilderness. We also request that the BLM make a special request to the Secretary of the Interior that the 3,500 acre North Juniper area be recommended.

We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan. The DEIS analyzes five alternative plans for managing 861,187 acres of land in southeast Idaho.

The DEIS indicates that there will be a minor increase in water quality due to implementation of the preferred alternative. The Final EIS should explain whether water quality standards are currently being met and how water quality standards compliance will be affected by each alternative. Also, according to Appendix G, monitoring and evaluation of sedimentation will be accomplished with an ocular technique. Other more precise techniques for measuring sediment may be needed to measure the effects of best management practices.

We support the BLM's recommendation for Congressional Study of the South Fork as a Wild and Scenic River. We also support the Special Recreation Management Area and ACEC proposals along the South Fork and over the St. Anthony Rivers.

Based on our review, we have rated this DEIS LO (Lack of Objections) in accordance with our responsibility under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act to determine whether the environmental impacts of proposed Federal actions are acceptable in terms of public health, welfare and environmental quality.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this report. Should you wish to discuss our comments, please contact Daniel I. Stainborn, Chief of the EIS and Energy Review Section, at (206) 442-1755.

Sincerely,

Robert S. Burd
Robert S. Burd
Director, Water Division

cc: 100
FWS, Boise Field Office

43-1

*

NORTHERN ROCKIES REGIONAL OFFICE
413 WEST IDAHO STREET, SUITE 102, BOISE, IDAHO 83702
(208) 343-6120

Page 2.

Commodity increases are not necessarily in the public interest. This is particularly true since wild game production on public lands is actually a much more valuable commodity than livestock production. There is great demand for the former while there is very little to no demand for the latter. We are certain that a sound and objective cost-benefit analysis would prove this.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on this EIS.

Sincerely,
Tom Robinson
Tom Robinson, Director
Northern Rockies Region

43-1 See response to 37-4.



Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208

45

DEC 31 1984

December 31, 1984

RMP/EIS Team Leader
Idaho Falls District Office
SDI Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Sir or Madam:

We have reviewed the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Our comments are listed below.

- 45-1 1. The discussion on page 26 of consistency with plans, programs, and policies of Federal, State, and local governments or agencies should point out that BLM is participating as a cooperating agency with EPA in preparing a draft EIS covering electric power line reinforcement within the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan area. The EIS will address the potential impacts of alternate 161-kV line locations between Goshen and Drummond Substations. Extensive coordination between BLM and EPA is occurring to minimize the impacts on the Medicine Lodge Resource Management area and adjoining county lands.
- 45-2 2. The EIS, in accordance with Section 503 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), should address the location of existing corridors within the study area. It would be extremely helpful if a map of existing corridors could be included. Also, a definition of "corridor" should be included in the glossary.
3. There is potential for future growth in the area covered by the resource management plan. It is highly probable that this growth will require future electric transmission support. To provide for this growth and to minimize future conflicts with utility requirements, the plan should identify possible energy corridors. Limitation of corridor options has as great an impact on private lands as on public lands.

Responses to Hearing Comments

Two substantive comments concerning wilderness were presented in oral testimony at the public hearing, and are quoted below. BLM responses follow the comments.

Idaho Falls Hearing

Scott Ploger "I would recommend a different alternative that would recommend all 700 acres of the Snake River Islands, but none of the Sand Mountain WSA". (Page 27 of transcript)

Response: See Chapter 1, Alternatives Considered but Dropped from Analysis.

"Incidentally, with respect to the Snake River Islands, I don't really think that your arguments for them is valid. The Wilderness Act recognized the islands as sort of a special case, so I am not sure the lack of a precisely fixed boundary is automatically rules them out." (Page 28 of transcript)

Response: The question of managing the Snake River Islands WSA as wilderness is not an environmental issue, but rather a planning concern. See response to 41-1.

Table 4
LIST OF PREPARERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>RTS ASSIGNMENT</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>EXPERIENCE</u>
Bruce Bash	Land & Realty	District Realty Specialist	B.S./Range Resources, University of Idaho	USFS 6 Seasons, BLM Range/Realty, 12 Years
John Butz	Team Leader	District Outdoor Recreation Planner	B.S./Forest Recreation Management, Oregon State University	BLM 12 Years
Richard Hill	Cultural Resources	District Archaeologist	B.A./Anthropology, Indiana University	BLM 10 Years
Robert Jones	Wildlife	Wildlife Biologist	B.S./Wildlife Biology W/Range Emphasis, Kansas State University. Graduate Work 2 1/2 Years Utah State	USF&W Seasonal; USFS Delta Research Stn; Canada, VTM Private Consulting Firm, 2 Years; Range Con., BLM, 6 Years; BLM, Wildlife Biologist, 9 Years
Mary Lynch	Editorial Clerk	Typist	B.A./Psychology, University of New York	National Park Service, 5 Years; USFS, 1 Year; BLM, 5 Years
Russel McFarling	Threatened/Endangered Species	District Wildlife Biologist	B.S./Wildlife Biology, Colorado State University	USFS Seasonal; USF&WS Temp.; BLM, Wildlife Biologist, 13 Years
Tom Miles	Livestock/Range	Range Conservationist	B.S./Wildlife Biology W/Range Emphasis Humbolt State Univ.	BLM, Range Technician 2 Years, Range Con., 6 Years
George Nelson	Liason	Idaho State Office Wilderness Coordinator	M.S./Outdoor Recreation Utah State University B.S./Range Management, Colorado State University	BLM, 18 Years
Deb Smith	Write/Edit	Recreation Technician	B.S./Recreation Administration, Univ. of Idaho	National Park Service State Parks and Recreation BLM Temp., 2 Years
Donald Watson	Manager's Prescriptions	Medicine Lodge Resource Area Manager	M.S./B.S./Botany/Range Management, Ft. Hays	BLM, Range Con., 6 Years Area Manager, 5 Years; Realty Specialist, 10 Years Planning/Environmental Coordinator, 5 Years
Gary Wyke	Liason	Idaho State Office Planning Coordinator	M.S./B.S. Wildland Resources Science/Forestry, Univ. of California	BLM, Range Con. and Planning/Environmental Coordinator, 14 Years

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GLOSSARY

- Allotment -- An area of land where one or more individuals graze their livestock. It generally consists of public land, but may include parcels of private or State-owned lands. An allotment may consist of several pastures.
- Animal Unit Month (AUM) -- A standardized unit of measurement of the amount of forage necessary for the complete subsistence of one animal unit (one cow or one horse or five sheep, all over six months old) for one month.
- Allotment Management Plan -- A plan that prescribes how livestock operations will be conducted in a grazing allotment.
- Candidate Species -- Species that are not listed as threatened or endangered, but are uncommon and have the potential to be listed.
- Endangered Species -- Any species in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
- Environmental Impact Statement -- A written analysis of the impacts on the environment of a proposed project or action.
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) -- Public Law 94-579, October 21, 1976. Referred to by the Bureau of Land Management as its "Organic Act", which provides most of BLM's legislated authority, direction, policy, and basic guidance.
- Forage -- Browse and herbaceous foods that are available to grazing animals.
- Geology, Energy, and Minerals (GEM) Program -- BLM initiated program intended to provide minerals information to be used in the wilderness studies.
- Inholdings -- Private or State-owned land inside the boundary of a WSA, but excluded from the WSA.
- Mechanical Treatment -- The use of mechanized equipment to change vegetative composition and vigor of plant species in an area.
- Naturalness -- Refers to an area which "generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable" (from Section 2(c), Wilderness Act of 1964).
- Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) -- Any motorized vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, snow, sand, ice, marshes, swamps, or other terrain.
- Outstanding -- Standing out among others of its own kind; conspicuous; prominent; or, superior to others of its kind; distinguished; excellent.
- Permittees -- Livestock operators who have grazing privileges on public lands.
- Primitive Recreation -- Nonmotorized and undeveloped types of outdoor recreation activities in a natural setting featuring a maximum degree of solitude and challenge.

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