

Hawley Mountain Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 15,510 acres

The Hawley Mountain WSA (ID-32-3) is located in Butte County 25 miles north of Howe, Idaho. The WSA includes 15,510 acres of public land. Inholdings consist of 1,280 acres of state land (see Table 1). Boundaries are generally the Wet Creek Road to the west, Deer Creek Road to the southwest and south and an unnamed BLM road on the northeast.

The Hawley Mountain WSA's physical character is steep and mountainous with well-defined drainages fanning out in all directions toward the WSA's border. The higher peaks and ridges are dominated by rock cliffs and talus slopes. Douglas-fir and mountain mahogany blanket areas at the higher elevations. The lower slopes are covered with sagebrush, grasses and forbs. Perennial drainage bottoms support a semi-wet meadow community of grasses and sedges. Major wildlife species that occupy the area include deer, antelope, elk and sage grouse.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Eastern Idaho Management Framework Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) filed in October 1986. Three alternatives were analyzed in the EIS for the Hawley Mountain WSA: the proposed action (no wilderness) alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; a partial wilderness alternative; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

15,510 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Hawley Mountain WSA is to not designate the area as wilderness and release the area for uses other than wilderness. The environmentally preferable alternative is the all wilderness alternative. It would cause the least change from the natural environment over the long term. The recommendation would use all practical means to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. Existing regulations, BLM policy and the Little Lost/Birch Creek Management Framework Plan will guide the use of the land to mitigate impacts. The Hawley Mountain Proposal map shows the lands recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation.

All 15,510 acres of the Hawley Mountain WSA are recommended for nonwilderness designation because they do not contribute significant solitude and primitive recreation opportunities in an area of Idaho that has abundant wilderness. Also nondesignation will allow mechanical manipulation of mule deer habitat to sustain and increase deer populations, maintain motorized opportunities for hunters and other recreationists on existing roads and trails, and reserve timber resources for potential harvest. The Hawley Mountain WSA possesses the required basic wilderness characteristics that led to study of the area. However, difficulties in wilderness management and the trade-offs with other resource uses outweigh the benefits of wilderness designation. Nondesignation of the area allows mechanical manipulations of wildlife habitat, continuation of limited motorized access for hunting and possible harvest of timber resources.

Much of the WSA's lowlands and canyons are accessible to motor vehicle use and natural barriers are lacking. Even with signing, patrols and public education, vehicle trespass is expected because of the area's remote location and distance from administrative personnel.

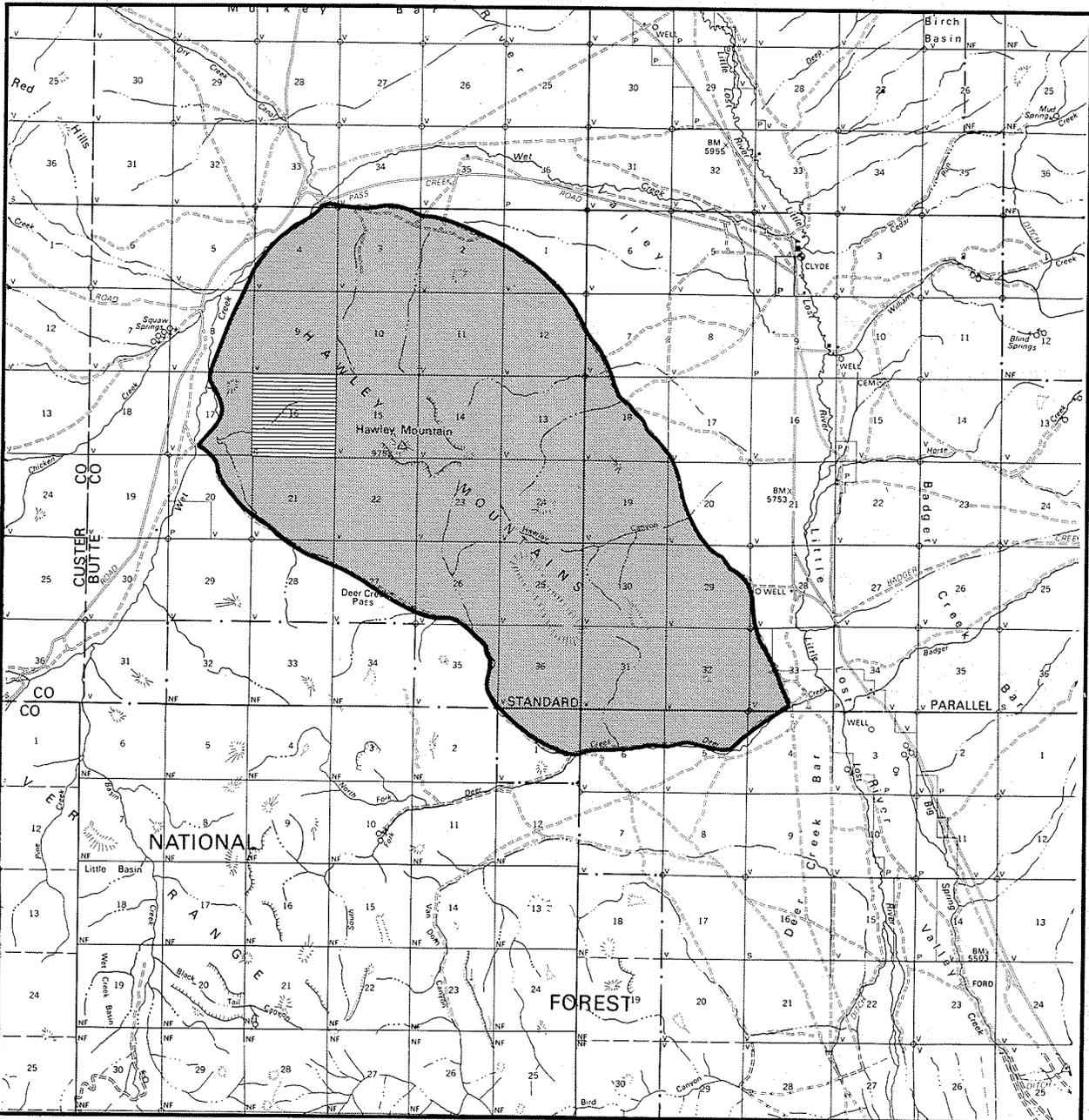
While the area could provide outstanding primitive hunting opportunities, current use is primarily by motorized vehicle. Release of this area from consideration as wilderness would allow popular, vehicle-based hunting to continue. Solitude is available but the area is relatively small in size and is near major roads on the east and north boundaries. Primitive recreation opportunities are present but the area lacks significant physical features that attract wilderness users. Other roadless areas and designated wilderness areas in the nearby mountain ranges offer similar primitive opportunities but are more attractive to recreationists. They include over four million acres of designated wilderness in six areas and more than 400,000 acres in five roadless areas. The roadless areas are located on either side of the valley, about ten miles from where the WSA is situated. These areas are on national forest lands and contain similar landscapes and wilderness-related opportunities but are available in a greater scale and abundance than found in the WSA. They also offer a greater challenge, more variety of primitive recreation activities and natural features that attract recreationists such as high peaks, basins, streams and rivers, and isolation that cannot be found on Hawley Mountain.

The recommendation allows a variety of activities to take place and are summarized as follows:

Treatment of mule deer winter range habitat with mechanized equipment will be done. Winter habitat in this area is limited, and stable and healthy populations depend on adequate forage. The mechanical treatment of forage species will help maintain healthy populations for hunting and is expected to increase herd size by 45 animals.

Motorized recreation use will continue on existing jeep trails and will occur primarily during the hunting seasons. The use amounts to be approximately 150 visitor days annually.

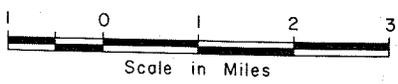
Timber totaling ten million board feet (MMBF) on 2,724 acres will be reserved for harvest and stand improvement. Much of the timber is old-age Douglas-fir and is heavily infested with mistletoe. The timber resource would increase in health and vigor with shelterwood and selection logging techniques.



T. 10 N.
T. 9 N.
T. 9 N.
T. 8 N.

R. 26 E. | R. 26 E. | R. 27 E.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--------------|
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | SPLIT ESTATE |
|  | RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS |  | STATE |
|  | LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS |  | PRIVATE |



**ID-32-3
HAWLEY MOUNTAIN
PROPOSAL**

OCTOBER 1988

**Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
HAWLEY MOUNTAIN WSA**

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	15,510
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	1,280
Total	16,790

Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary

BLM (within WSA)	0
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA)	0
Split Estate (outside WSA)	0
Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
State land (outside WSA)	0

Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness

BLM	15,510
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	15,510
Inholdings (state, private)	1,280

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Hawley Mountain WSA is essentially natural with negligible human imprints. The WSA is a small island mountain within the Little Lost River Valley and is located between the Lemhi Mountain Range to the east and the Big Lost Mountain Range to the west.

Impacts on naturalness consist of 14 vehicle trails totaling 13 miles, a small border dump, two miles of fence and a 480 acre crested wheatgrass seeding. Views outside the area include traffic on rural roads and nearby farms. All impacts have a minor affect on the overall natural appearance of the area.

B. Solitude

Within Hawley Mountain there exists outstanding opportunities for solitude. The rugged terrain and timber on the upper slopes provide topographic and vegetative screening. Views of the Little Lost Valley from within the area enhance the feeling of isolation. The valley is sparsely populated and few human activities take place. Sufficient size and good screening would allow visitors to find a secluded place.

Solitude opportunities are judged to be of somewhat lesser quality than nearby national forest lands. This is because of the WSA's relative small size and nearness to human activity. Roadless areas in the adjacent national forests are much larger and are considerably more remote.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Hunting is an outstanding recreational activity within the WSA. Deer, antelope, elk and sage grouse can be hunted. Hiking, horseback riding, rock climbing, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are other possible activities. The diversity of terrain and rugged landscape offers challenge and recreational attractions to visitors.

Other roadless areas in the nearby mountain ranges offer similar primitive opportunities but are more attractive to recreationists. They offer a greater challenge, numerous primitive recreation activities and more natural features that attract recreationists. Hawley Mountain is surrounded by designated wilderness and public lands that offer abundant opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

D. Special Features

There are no special features in the WSA.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

A. Assessing the Diversity of Natural Systems and Features as Represented by Ecosystems

The Hawley Mountain WSA is located in the Rocky Mountain Forest Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem (M3110-49). Wilderness designation of this WSA would not add a new ecosystem to the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented by four designated areas with 76,129 acres. There are eight other BLM study areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized on Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Rocky Mountain Forest Province				
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	4	76,129	23	247,843
	<u>IDAHO</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	8	162,710

**B. Expanding the Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive Recreation
Within a Day's Driving Time (Five Hours) of Major Population Centers**

The Hawley Mountain WSA is within a five-hour drive from Boise, Idaho. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population center.

Table 3

**Wilderness Opportunities for Residents
of Major Population Centers**

Population Centers	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	areas	acres	areas	acres
Boise, Idaho	16	4,741,570	141	5,374,250

C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas

Designation of Hawley Mountain would not help balance geographic distribution of wilderness.

Manageability

The Hawley Mountain WSA could be managed as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. However, the inadvertent use of motor vehicles within the area and State of Idaho inholdings could create management difficulties.

Lowland portions that surround the WSA and several canyon openings lack natural barriers to motorized vehicle use. Fourteen vehicle access points branch off from the main boundary roads and extend up to two miles into the WSA. Presently, hunters use these routes for access along with sightseers and other recreationists using motorized vehicles. Signing, patrol and public education efforts would be needed to manage vehicle use but motorized trespass would likely occur because of the isolation and distance from administrative personnel. Vehicle trespass would degrade solitude opportunities for wilderness visitors.

Acquiring the 1,280 acre of state land would be necessary to maintain the integrity of the area. The northwestern state section (640 acres) includes part of the Hawley Mountain area. The other section (640 acres) is part of the southwestern tip of the area. Acquisition of the state lands would eliminate possible conflicts with providing access and would maintain the area's wilderness character. The Idaho Department of Lands said it favors an exchange of lands if the WSA becomes wilderness.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

A Geology, Energy and Mineral (GEM) assessment report was prepared for the Hawley Mountain WSA in 1985 (Geoexplorers International, Inc., 1985). Conclusions from the report are:

The Hawley Mountain WSA has low potential for oil and gas. The majority of the WSA is covered by noncompetitive oil and gas leases; however, no exploration activities have been conducted within or near the WSA. The area is underlain by stratigraphic equivalents of some rock units present in the Utah-Wyoming-Idaho Overthrust Belt; however, the Triassic and Jurassic age sedimentary rocks which are major oil and gas producers elsewhere in the Overthrust Belt are absent.

No mining claims exist within or adjacent to the WSA. Metallic mineralization found from six to 20 miles west of the WSA occurs as isolated prospects. Although the rock units which contain this mineralization are found within the WSA, there is no indication that the units contain mineralization. Thus, the area is considered to have a low potential for the occurrence of locatable metallic minerals.

The Hawley Mountain WSA is underlain by Quaternary glacial and alluvial deposits which probably contain abundant sand and gravel resources. The deposits have little value because similar deposits are abundant and located much closer to areas of consumption.

Impacts on Resources

The following comparative impact table summarizes the effects on pertinent resources for all the alternatives considered including designation or nondesignation of the entire area as wilderness.

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-32-3 (HAWLEY MOUNTAIN)

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Naturalness and solitude would be lost on 3,024 acres from timber cutting, mule deer habitat improvement and motorized recreation use.	Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive recreation and special features would be preserved on 15,510 acres and enhanced slightly by eliminating motorized recreation use.	Wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, primitive recreation and special features would be preserved on 10,400 acres. Naturalness and solitude would be degraded slightly on 5,100 acres of the WSAs lower slopes by continued motor vehicle use.
Impacts to Energy and Mineral Development	No Impact.	Subject to valid existing rights on 3,850 acres of oil and gas leases, the WSA would be withdrawn from leasing and location. Because of low potential for occurrence of energy or mineral resources, no impacts are anticipated.	Subject to valid existing rights on 3,850 acres of oil and gas leases, the WSA would be withdrawn from location and leasing. Because of low potential for occurrence of energy or mineral resources, no impacts are anticipated.
Impacts to Motorized Recreation Use	No Impact.	Motorized recreation use, amounting to 150 visitor days, would be foregone annually.	No Impact.
Impacts to Timber Harvest and Management	No Impact.	Timber resources totaling 10 MMBF on 2,724 acres of the WSA would not be harvested.	Timber resources totaling 10 MMBF on 2,724 acres of the WSA would not be harvested.
Impacts to Mule Deer Habitat Improvement	No Impact.	Mule deer habitat on 300 acres would not be improved and the present herd's health and condition would decline. The potential of 45 more animals would be lost.	Mule deer habitat on 300 acres would not be improved and the present herd's health and condition would decline. The potential of 45 more animals would be lost.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

No significant social effects would occur as a result of wilderness designation of the Hawley Mountain WSA.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

BLM's wilderness inventory and study were conducted with extensive public participation and public involvement was an important consideration in making wilderness recommendations. BLM solicited public involvement in the study phase through scoping meetings, mailings on issue identification and alternative formulation, a 90-day public comment period and two formal hearings on the Eastern Idaho Draft Wilderness EIS. Comments received during the inventory period and EIS scoping efforts were used to develop significant study issues and various alternatives for the ultimate management of those lands found to have wilderness value.

Wilderness was not an issue in the original Big Desert MFP and was not a subject of comments. No comments received during the wilderness inventory were deferred for consideration during the study. The comments received addressed the roads and trails used for hunting, impacts on naturalness, outside influences on solitude, small size of the area and concerns that the area did not offer significant primitive recreation opportunities.

Sixty-one comments were received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearings that mentioned the Hawley Mountain WSA. Two of the commenters opposed wilderness because of the unknown mineral status and one person felt Idaho already had enough wilderness. Supporters for designation of the WSA emphasized the area's wildlife values, scenic vistas, lack of resource conflicts, important wilderness and special values and accessibility for recreationists.

Several commenters wanted the boundaries of the WSA adjusted to remove lands that are accessible to motorized vehicles. This action would enhance wilderness manageability and is addressed in the partial wilderness alternative of the Final EIS.

Two government agencies commented on the WSA. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency stated that they had no objection to the Draft EIS proposal.