

Friedman Creek Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 9,773 acres

The Friedman Creek WSA (ID-53-5) is located in Blaine County, Idaho. The WSA includes 9,773 acres of BLM-administered lands. There is a 40 acre state inholding and eight private inholdings totaling 320 acres within the WSA (see Table 1). The WSA is bounded on the north by the Sawtooth National Forest and Challis National Forest and on the east, south and west mostly by state and private lands. BLM Road 703, the West Fork Fish Creek Road, forms a small portion of the western boundary along with an unnamed, nonsystem jeep trail.

The Friedman Creek WSA is characterized by steep mountainous terrain cut by numerous steep drainages. Drainages include Friedman Creek, Argosy Creek, Rough Creek and Trail Creek. At lower elevations, vegetation is dominated by big sagebrush interspersed with grasses. As elevation increases, Douglas-fir stands and quaking aspen groves become common.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and included in the Shoshone/Sun Valley Final Environmental Impact Statement, Wilderness, filed in April 1986. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report; and an all wilderness alternative.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

9,773 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendations for the Friedman Creek WSA is to release all 9,773 acres for nonwilderness uses. 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. All 9,773 acres of federal land within the WSA are recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation and shown as the Friedman Creek WSA on the Friedman Creek Proposal map.

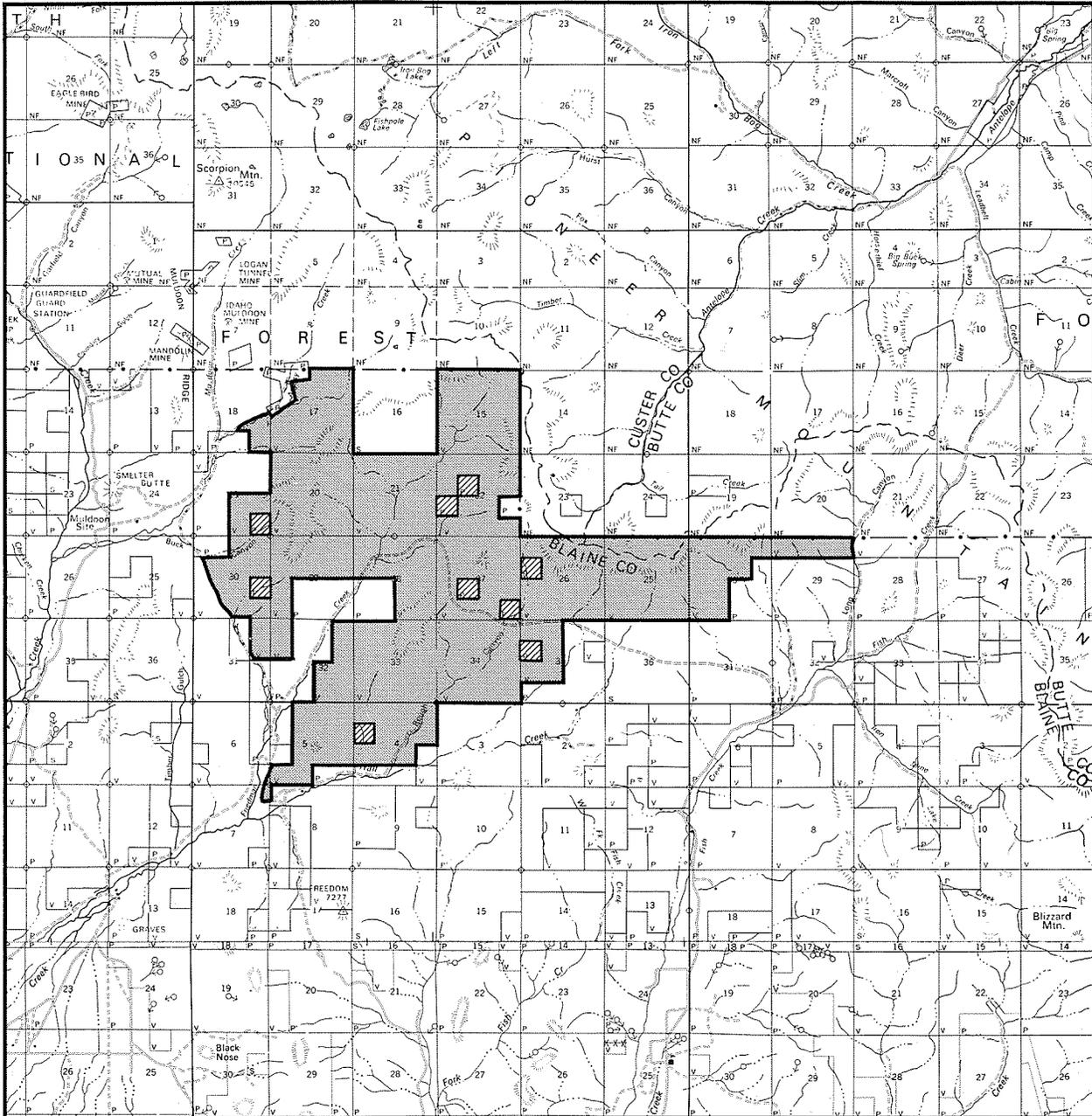
The key considerations in the recommendation were the area's high potential for mineral development, numerous inholdings which would require access if minerals were developed and the nonwilderness recommendation for the much larger, adjacent U.S. Forest Service roadless area.

The Friedman Creek WSA is located along the southern end of the Pioneer Mountains. The WSA is bounded on the north by the U.S. Forest Service Pioneer Mountains roadless area (#06-921/#14-921). The southeast part of the Pioneer Mountains area is contiguous to the Friedman Creek WSA and recommended nonsuitable for wilderness designation in the Challis National Forest Land Use Plan. According to the U.S. Forest Service evaluation, the nonsuitable part of the Pioneer Mountains roadless area contiguous to the Friedman Creek WSA includes a number of intrusions and private land in T. 3 N., R. 22 E., Sections 23 and 24; and T. 3 N., R. 23 E., Section 19. The U.S. Forest Service also recommended the southeast part of the roadless area nonsuitable to exclude areas with high and moderate mineral potential and to improve the manageability of the area recommended suitable. The same two factors were a major consideration in the recommendation for the Friedman Creek WSA.

Wilderness management for the Friedman Creek WSA would not be compatible with the nonwilderness management proposed for adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands. The Friedman Creek WSA cannot be managed to preserve existing wilderness values unless adjacent U.S. Forest Service lands are also managed as wilderness. Neither the current WSA boundary nor any conceivable proposal for a separate BLM wilderness would allow the area to stand on its own as designated wilderness.

The wilderness values of the area are further compromised by the convoluted WSA boundary and the nine separate inholdings. While the area offers opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation and appears to be natural, these values are actually a result of undeveloped private land within and adjacent to the WSA.

In addition, there are no significant wildlife species or habitats, geologic features or scientific and educational values in the area that would benefit from wilderness designation.



T. 4 N.
T. 3 N.

T. 3 N.
T. 2 N.

R. 21 E. | R. 22 E.

R. 22 E. | R. 23 E.

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



**ID-53-5
FRIEDMAN CREEK
PROPOSAL**

MARCH 1988

**Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area
FRIEDMAN CREEK WSA**

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	9,773
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	360
Total	10,133

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	9,773
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	9,773
Inholdings (state, private)	360

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Friedman Creek WSA is natural in appearance. Two vehicle trails (total length of one mile) and one mile of fence are the primary human imprints in the WSA. Two abandoned log cabins, at least 50 years old, are located within the Friedman Creek drainage. The cabins are not habitable and brush has partially obscured them. Near the cabins and in other widely scattered areas, abandoned mine tailing piles can be found. The impact of the mine tailings on naturalness is localized because of vegetative screening.

B. Solitude

The WSA provides opportunities for solitude. Steep slopes and the drainages within the WSA provide good visual screening. However, the steep slopes also tend to concentrate use along the creek bottoms in the drainages. With low-to-moderate use, the area provides outstanding opportunities for solitude. The area currently receives a low recreational use with the majority occurring during deer hunting season.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The Friedman Creek WSA offers a diversity of primitive recreation opportunities. Friedman Creek supports a small trout fishery. The diverse terrain within the WSA enhances opportunities for camping and hiking. However, most of the camping opportunities within or adjacent to the WSA are located on private land.

D. Special Features

The WSA has no significant special features.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

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

Wilderness designation of the Friedman Creek WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) by three areas with 76,699 acres. There are 35 other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Ecosystem Representation

Bailey-Kuchler Classification	NWPS Areas		Other BLM Studies areas	Other BLM Studies acres
	areas	acres		
Dry Domain/Intermountain Sagebrush Province				
	<u>NATIONWIDE</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	3	76,699	136	4,359,340
	<u>IDAHO</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	12,997	35	949,916
	<u>NEVADA</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	1	32,407	29	1,273,919
	<u>CALIFORNIA</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	5	152,431
	<u>OREGON</u>			
Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem	0	0	67	1,983,074

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

The Friedman Creek 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

The Friedman Creek WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the NWPS.

Manageability

The Friedman Creek WSA could not be reasonably managed as wilderness. Several factors affect the area's manageability: WSA boundary configuration, nonwilderness management of adjacent non-BLM lands, potential for resource conflicts and nonfederal inholdings.

The WSA boundary is convoluted. An area of 2,040 acres in the eastern part of the WSA consists of a four-mile long finger .25 mile to .75 mile wide. A 720 acre parcel of private land protrudes into the center of the WSA creating similar WSA fingers on the east and south. The WSA is surrounded by lands proposed for or currently under nonwilderness management: U.S. Forest Service lands on the north and private and state lands on the east, west and south. Nonconforming uses on adjacent lands would degrade wilderness values in the Friedman Creek WSA.

Potential mining conflicts also affect the manageability of the Friedman Creek WSA. The WSA's mineral analysis indicates high favorability for metallic minerals (lead, zinc, silver and copper). The WSA is adjacent to the Muldoon Mining District and patented claims form the area's northwest boundary. Mining operations along the area's boundaries would degrade wilderness values in the WSA.

Nine 40 acre parcels of private and state land are scattered throughout the WSA. The parcels are currently used solely for grazing. Considering the potential for the occurrence of metallic minerals in the WSA, development could possibly occur on the private parcels, complicating wilderness management of adjacent WSA lands.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

Except for state and private land inholdings, all surface and mineral estates in the WSA are in federal ownership and are open to mineral entry.

The Friedman Creek WSA has been classified as having moderate favorability for oil and gas (Fernette and Stratman 1983). The basis of this classification is the structural setting of the WSA including potential for development structural traps, indications of subsurface structures and the presence of hydrocarbon source and reservoir beds in the stratigraphic section. Potential for geothermal energy development is unfavorable based on analogy with similar areas in the Idaho Basin and Range Province as well as a lack of surface indications such as hot springs.

The WSA is considered to have low favorability for other leasable minerals because of its unfavorable geologic environment and lack of known occurrences (Fernette and Stratman 1983). No mineral leases are currently held on lands within the WSA.

Portions of two lode mining claims are present in the WSA and at least 50 claims exist adjacent to the WSA on the north and west. The Idaho Muldoon Mine lies about a mile northwest of the northern boundary of the WSA. The Lucky Boy Group lies outside the WSA on its edge. A mine site is present within the WSA in T. 3 N., R. 22 E., Sections 21 and 22, consisting of an adit and prospect pit. The Idaho Muldoon Mines and others in the District were moderate producers of lead, zinc and silver as well as barite as late as the 1970s.

The Friedman Creek WSA is classified as having high favorability for the metallic minerals lead, zinc, silver and copper (Fernette and Stratman 1983). This classification is based on direct evidence including mineralized outcrops, prospects and the results of geochemical analyses. The WSA is geologically similar to the adjacent Muldoon Mining District and shows a pronounced trend of mineralized structures throughout the western portion.

The WSA is classified as having a moderate favorability for barite based on the proximity to the Muldoon barite-producing district, similar geology and barium geochemical anomalies adjacent to the WSA. The WSA has low favorability for occurrence of other locatable resources.

Gravels are abundant in the WSA and local limestone and quartzite have potential both as building stone and in aggregate production. The distance to market precludes these minerals from having commercial value.

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-53-5 (FRIEDMAN CREEK)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS/NO ACTION)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	The area's wilderness values of size, naturalness and opportunities for solitude would be lost.	All wilderness values would receive long-term Congressional protection. Wilderness values would be slightly enhanced on all 9,733 acres of the Friedman Creek WSA.
Impacts on Recreational ORV Use	Although the area would be more accessible, recreational ORV use would remain below 1,000 visitor days annually. There would be no significant impact on recreational ORV use.	Recreational ORV use of 100 visitor days would be forgone annually. The impacts of shifting this use to other public lands would be negligible.
Impacts on Development of Mineral Resources	Potential mineral resources would be available for development. This includes high favorability for metallic minerals and moderate favorability for oil and gas and barite. There would be no impact on development of mineral resources.	Development of potential mineral resources would be forgone. This includes high favorability for metallic minerals and moderate favorability for oil and gas and barite.
Impacts on Grazing Facility Maintenance and Construction	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.	There would be no impact on grazing facility maintenance and construction.

Local Social and Economic Considerations

Social and economic factors were not considered significant issues in the study.

Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. During public review of the Draft EIS four comments supporting wilderness designation of the Friedman Creek WSA were received. These comments contained no supporting reasons for their position. One comment was received opposing wilderness designation of this WSA. The comment contained no supporting reasons for the position.

The Board of Camas County Commissioners opposed any more wilderness in Idaho. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Department of Water Quality, Office of Attorney General, the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, National Park Service, Bureau of Reclamation and the Environmental Protection Agency commented on the Draft EIS. None of their comments specifically addressed the Friedman Creek WSA.