

# Jerry Peak Wilderness Study Area

## 1. The Study Area -- 46,150 acres

The Jerry Peak WSA (ID-46-14) is located in Custer County 20 miles south of Challis, Idaho. The WSA includes 46,150 acres of BLM lands and 640 acres of state land inholdings (see Table 1). The WSA is roughly bounded on the west by the East Fork Road, on the north by Road Creek Road, on the east by Pecks Canyon Road and on the south by the Challis National Forest. The WSA lies adjacent to the Jerry Peak West WSA and the Corral-Horse Basin WSA.

The WSA is composed of rolling hills with sagebrush and grass the dominant vegetation on the northern half. The southern half of the WSA consists of steeper terrain of a more mountainous nature culminating with 10,010-foot Jerry Peak. The sagebrush and grass on the lower elevations give way to lodgepole and limber pine on the upper elevations. Large areas of timber occur in the upper reaches of Bear, Mosquito, Sage and Lake Creeks. Herd Lake, located in the southwestern portion of the WSA, is popular for both fishing and sightseeing.

The WSA was studied under Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Challis Management Framework Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement finalized in September 1986. Five alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative, a no wilderness alternative and three partial wilderness alternatives. The partial alternatives considered wilderness designations of 41,690, 36,650 and 26,750 acres, respectively. The partial wilderness alternative recommending wilderness designation of 26,750 acres and nonwilderness for 19,400 acres was the proposed action in the Final EIS and is the recommendation of this report.

## 2. Recommendation and Rationale

**26,750 acres recommended for wilderness**

**19,400 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The recommendation for the Jerry Peak WSA is to designate 26,750 acres as wilderness and to release 19,400 acres for other 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. The 26,750 acres of federal land within the WSA recommended for wilderness and the 19,400 acres recommended for nonwilderness are shown on the Jerry Peak Proposal map.

The 26,750 acres recommended for wilderness designation contains excellent scenery, outstanding recreation and solitude opportunities. This WSA is located in the Rocky Mountain Forest Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem which is not presently represented in Idaho wilderness. The steeper canyons and the vegetation provide excellent screening, offering outstanding naturalness and providing the visitor with a unique opportunity to experience a natural environment minimally imprinted by humans.

The steepness of the terrain and lack of vehicular access points will effectively control ORVs which will aid in retaining the naturalness and provide more opportunities for solitude. Also, the boundaries are easily identifiable. The recommended area does contain timber resources which would be foregone but the high wilderness values are considered more important for preservation. Mineral resources are minimal and are not considered a major conflict with designation.

A special feature is Herd Lake which, with its interesting geologic beginnings, is a focal point for visitors and offers an outstanding opportunity for fishing, hiking, sightseeing, backpacking, photography and interpretation.

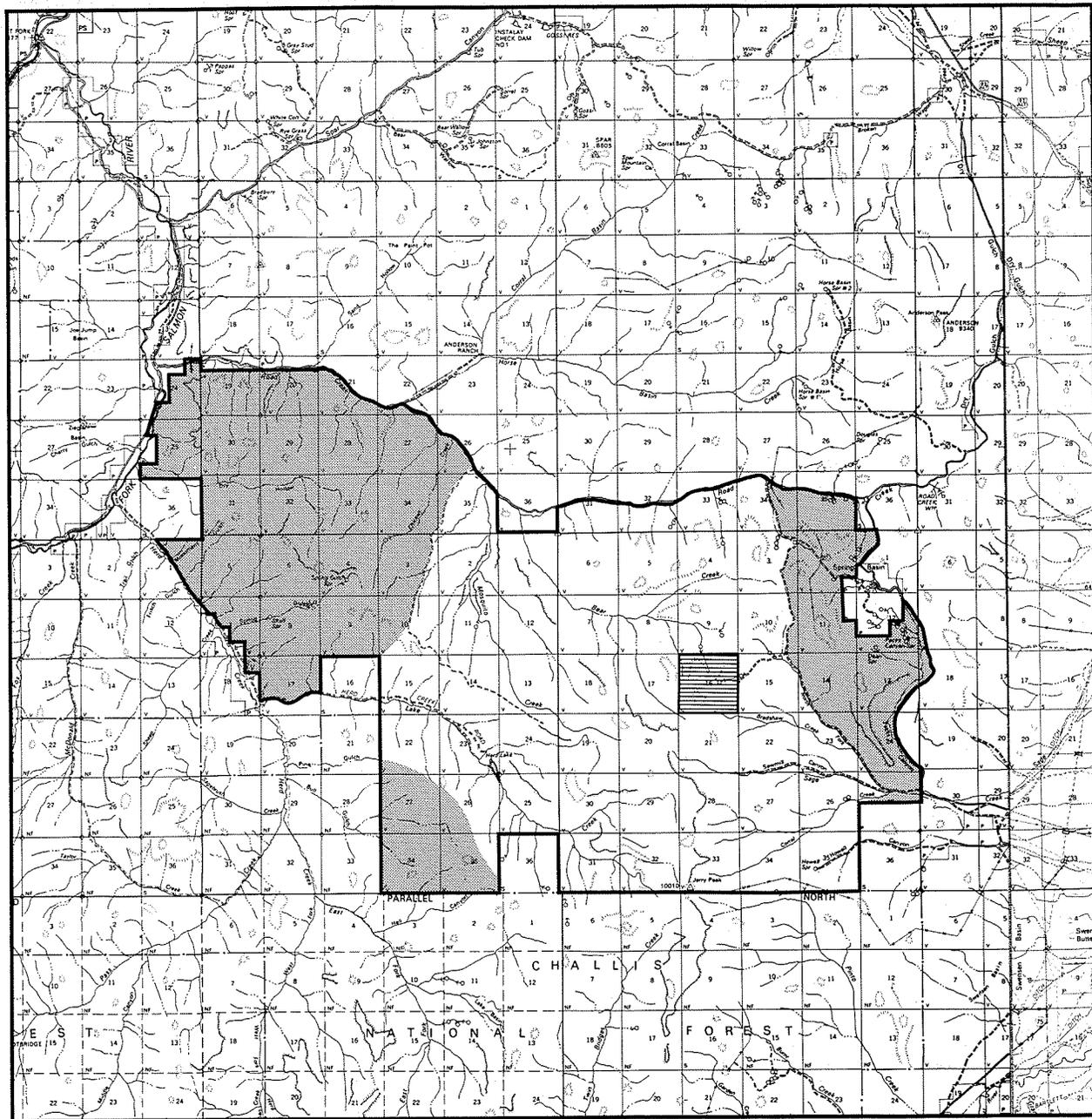
Three areas shown as the shaded areas on the Jerry Peak Proposal map are not recommended for designation because of resource conflicts. The portions of the area not recommended suitable for wilderness designation would be more difficult to manage. Area A is located in the northwestern portion of the WSA. This portion is recommended as nonsuitable because it is surrounded by the East Fork, Herd Creek, Road Creek and Mosquito Creek Roads. These roads parallel the WSA for approximately 17 miles and their use can be seen and heard throughout this portion of the WSA. These roads are used by visitors for access into large tracts adjacent to public lands.

In the southwest corner of the WSA, 2,140 acres (Area B) are located outside of the WSA's main drainage (Lake Creek) and are recommended for nonwilderness because the ridgeline between Lake and Herd Creek drainages would be a more natural and manageable boundary.

The portion of the WSA (Area C) east of the North Fork of Sage Creek Road is recommended as nonsuitable for several reasons. First, the area is easily accessible by ORVs and could continue to provide a vehicle-based recreation opportunity. Next, it already has several vehicle ways that are increasing in use. Third, it is surrounded by the North Fork of Sage Creek Road, Road Creek Road and the heavily used Pecks Canyon Road. Finally, the area is underlain by thick sediments that could contain oil and gas.

A treaty signed with the Shoshone-Bannock Indian Tribe allows the tribe members ". . . the right, without any charge therefore to cut timber for their own use, but not for sale, and pasture their livestock on said public lands, and to hunt thereon and fish in the streams thereof." Although the Tribe has not claimed this right to date, any request would be honored. Cutting timber is not compatible with wilderness designation and would degrade the area's naturalness and impact opportunities for solitude. These rights continue to exist on the entire Jerry Peak WSA. To date, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe has not opted to exercise this right.

There are 640 acres of state land inholdings. Acquisition of additional state lands bordering the WSA may be necessary to establish more logical and controllable boundaries.

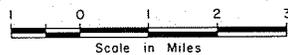


R. 18 E. | R. 19 E.

R. 19 E. | R. 20 E.

R. 20 E. | R. 21 E.

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



**ID-46-14  
JERRY PEAK  
PROPOSAL**

FEBRUARY 1988

T. 7 N.

T. 8 N.

T. 8 N.

T. 9 N.

T. 9 N.

T. 10 N.



**Table 1 -- Land Status and Acreage Summary of the Study Area  
JERRY PEAK WSA**

**Within Wilderness Study Area**

BLM (surface and subsurface)	46,150
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	640
<b>Total</b>	<b>46,790</b>

**Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary**

BLM (within WSA)	26,750
BLM (outside WSA)	0
Split Estate (within WSA) <sup>1</sup>	0
Split Estate (outside WSA) <sup>1</sup>	0
<b>Total BLM Land Recommended for Wilderness</b>	<b>26,750</b>
<b>Inholdings (state, private)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>640</b>
<b>State land (outside WSA)</b>	<b>0</b>

**Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness**

BLM	19,400
Split Estate <sup>1</sup>	0
<b>Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness</b>	<b>19,400</b>
<b>Inholdings (state, private)<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>0</b>

<sup>1</sup>Appendix I is a detailed description of inholdings and split estate tracts included within the study. For purposes of this report, split estate lands are defined only as those lands with federal surface and nonfederal subsurface (minerals). Lands that have federal minerals but nonfederal surface should be classified in this report by the owner of the surface estate.

### **3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations**

#### **Wilderness Characteristics**

##### **A. Naturalness**

The Jerry Peak WSA presents visitors with the general appearance of naturalness. The WSA represents a transition from low-elevation sagebrush and grass to higher elevation conifer forests. The recommended portion of this WSA has steep sagebrush- and forest-covered canyons offering outstanding naturalness. The overall influence of human imprints on the naturalness of the area, as perceived by the visitor, is minimal due to the wide dispersal of low impact developments.

Imprints exist from fences and spring developments associated with range management activities, access roads and jeep trails. The range improvements tend to be small scale, blending into the natural landscape. The four roads which dead end in the WSA (the Herd Lake, Mosquito Creek, Sage Creek and Bradshaw Creek Roads), while technically not a part of the WSA, do influence the perception of naturalness of the WSA immediately adjacent to the roads, especially in the nonrecommended portions (A, B and C).

No particular area in the WSA contains a concentration of imprints. The center of the WSA between the North Fork of Sage Creek and Mosquito Creek Roads contains fewer imprints than do the eastern and western edges of the unit. On these lower rolling hills, ORV access is easier and would be more difficult to prevent.

##### **B. Solitude**

The Jerry Peak WSA contains an outstanding opportunity for solitude, especially in the Bear Creek and Lake Creek drainages. Topography of these areas is characterized by numerous steep canyons and creek drainages. Vegetative screening, especially in the east half of the WSA, further enhances the opportunities for solitude. Other than the boundary gravel roads and one small ranch, outside sights and sounds are not evident.

Large tracts of undeveloped BLM lands to the north and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands to the south enhance the feeling of solitude by creating a sense of vastness.

##### **C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation**

Jerry Peak WSA, in combination with its relatively large size, lack of man-made or natural barriers and absence of developments in or near the eastern portion, contains outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

The rolling sagebrush-covered hills ascending into steeper terrain with large areas of timber provide opportunities for hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, bird-watching and sightseeing. Herd Lake in the southwestern part of the Jerry Peak WSA is a destination point for many visitors.

#### **D. Special Features**

Jerry Peak WSA is within the Challis Wild Horse Range and offers excellent wild horse viewing. The wild horses are an introduced element in the WSA. The large landslide which created Herd Lake is an unusual geologic feature which could add to the visitor's appreciation of the area. It is the focal point of the WSA.

# Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

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

Wilderness designation of the Jerry Peak WSA would add an ecosystem not presently represented in Idaho. However, this ecosystem is represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) 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	<u>NWPS Areas</u>		<u>Other BLM Studies</u>	
	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 Jerry Peak 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**

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

## **C. Balancing the Geographic Distribution of Wilderness Areas**

Idaho has the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

### **Manageability**

The Jerry Peak WSA could be managed as a wilderness area. Some fence, signing and patrolling would be necessary to effectively eliminate vehicle use. While present vehicle use is not a management problem in a nonwilderness environment, it would be a significant administrative problem to a designated wilderness. The suitable portion would be easier to manage because of its steepness and inaccessibility to vehicles. However, fencing would be necessary along portions of the Mosquito Creek, Lake Creek and Sawmill Canyon Roads.

Acquisition of 1,560 acres of state lands bordering or included in the WSA would be required to effectively manage the area and establish more logical boundary lines. Access disputes concerning included lands would be avoided.

The part of the WSA (Areas A and C) not recommended for wilderness occur on the periphery of the recommended portion. Both areas are almost surrounded by cherry-stem roads allowing access into large tracts of public lands. These roads have a combined length of 32-plus miles and are used regularly. This accessibility allows vehicular entry to most of the WSA. To maintain the WSA's naturalness and solitude opportunities, many more miles of fencing would be necessary as well as constant patrolling. The core of the WSA naturally eliminates potential ORV use.

The southwest corner (Area B) located outside the main WSA drainage was eliminated because the ridgeline between Lake Creek and Herd Creek is a more logical and identifiable boundary.

### **Energy and Minerals Resource Values**

The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines made a geological and mineral survey of the Jerry Peak WSA from 1980 through 1983.

Evidence of metallic mineralization is lacking in the WSA. A low to moderate resource potential for barite is assigned to the eastern boundary of the WSA.

The WSA has low to no potential for geothermal energy resources.

Most of the Jerry Peak WSA has been leased for oil and gas exploration; however, significant oil and gas occurrences are unlikely.

There is no record of mineral production or development.

### **Impacts on Resources**

The following comparative 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-46-14 (JERRY PEAK)**

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (PARTIAL PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE)	NO WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL PROTECTION ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL BALANCE ALTERNATIVE	PARTIAL PRODUCTION ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Loss of wilderness values on 450 acres (1%). Retention of wilderness values on 26,750 acres (55%). Wilderness values subject to loss on 18,950 acres (41%) but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.	Loss of wilderness values on 12,000 acres.	Wilderness values on all 46,150 acres would be retained.	Wilderness values retained on 41,690 acres. Wilderness values subject to loss on 4,460 acres but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.	Loss of wilderness values on 450 acres (1%). Retention of wilderness values on 28,890 acres (63%). Wilderness values subject to loss on 16,810 acres (31%) but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.	Loss of wilderness values on 8,010 acres (17%). Retention of wilderness values on 21,190 acres (62%) but no adverse activities anticipated in next 10 years.
Impacts on Development of Mineral and Energy Resources	19,400 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 26,750 closed to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.	46,150 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.	46,150 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. No surface acres disturbed due to formal withdrawal from entry.	4,460 acres open to mineral entry. 41,690 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. No surface disturbance anticipated.	17,260 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 28,890 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.	36,650 acres open to mineral entry and leasing. 9,500 acres closed to mineral entry and leasing. 10 acres of surface disturbance due to oil and gas lease development.
Impacts on Timber Harvest	Harvest of 11.5 MMBF would be foregone. No surface disturbance. Heavier utilization of other lands would be required to meet allowable cut.	Harvest of 11.5 MMBF could occur. 1,550 acres of surface disturbance. 15 miles of new road.	Harvest of 11.5 MMBF would be foregone. No surface disturbance. Heavier utilization of other lands would be required to meet allowable cut.	See Proposed Action.	See Proposed Action.	Harvest of 4 MMBF would be foregone. Harvest of 7.5 MMBF could occur. 1,000 acres of surface disturbance. 11 miles of new road.
Impacts on Water Quality in the East Fork of the Salmon River	Minimal benefit (less than 1%) through revegetation of jeep trails.	Increase in sediment load of 10% of less during active logging operations.	Sediment load in the East Fork could be reduced 4% due to reduced road usage; 10% increase would not occur.	Minimal benefit (less than 2%) through revegetation of jeep trails.	See Proposed Action.	Increase in sediment load of 10% or less during active logging operations.
Impacts on East Fork of the Salmon River Anadromous Fishery	Slight improvement (less than 1%) due to better water quality.	10% reduction in number of salmon and steelhead fry during logging operations.	4% improvement due to water quality; 10% loss of fry would not occur.	Slight improvement (less than 2%) due to better water quality.	See Proposed Action.	10% reduction in number of salmon and steelhead fry during logging operations.
Impacts on Recreational Off-Road Vehicle Use	25% potential in use. Displacement of 50 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.	No displacement of use.	100% reduction in use. Displacement of 150 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.	82.5% reduction potential in use. Displacement of 175 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.	See Proposed Action.	5% reduction potential in use. Displacement of 10 visitor days annually. Use can be absorbed by other areas with negligible impact.

## **Local Social and Economic Considerations**

The social and economic factors were not considered a significant issue in the study.

## **Summary of WSA-Specific Public Comments**

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process.

Wilderness was not an issue in the original Challis MFP and was not a subject of comments. No comments received during the wilderness inventory were deferred for consideration during the study.

Twenty-four of the comments received during the Draft EIS comment period or at the public hearing specifically mentioned the Jerry Peak WSA. The Draft EIS recommended all of the WSA as suitable while the PFEIS now recommends 26,750 acres as suitable and 19,400 acres as nonsuitable. Sixteen comments supported the suitable recommendation. Five commenters were opposed to a suitable wilderness recommendation. Four of these comments stated that Idaho had enough existing wilderness and one comment noted the potential for energy and mineral resources. Three other comments recommended a "no action" alternative or a new study since they felt the mineral resource values quality standard cannot be met. These are considered as additional no wilderness comments.

Three government agency comments mentioned the WSA. The Soil Conservation Service disagreed with the suitable recommendation stating that it appeared to be a vehicle restriction designation in the form of wilderness. The Idaho Department of Lands expressed a desire to exchange state land that would be affected by a wilderness designation. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare concurred with the recommendation on the basis of water quality benefits to tributaries of a special resource water.

**APPENDIX I -- JERRY PEAK**  
**Estimated Costs of Acquisition of Nonfederal Holdings**  
**Within Areas Recommended for Designation(1)**

Legal Description	Total Acreage	Number of Owners	Type of Ownership by Estate	Type of Ownership by Estate	Presently Proposed for Acquisition	Preferred Method of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition	Estimated Cost of Acquisition
			Surface Estate	Subsurface Estate			Land Costs (in \$)	Processing Costs (in \$)
Parcel No. 1 T. 9 N., R. 20 E. Sec. 16	640	1	State	State		Exchange	N/A	25,000

(1)The estimated costs listed in this appendix in no way represent a formal appraised value of the land or mineral estate but are rough estimates based on sales or exchanges of lands or mineral estates with similar characteristics to those included in the WSA. The estimates are for purposes of establishing a range of potential costs to the government of acquiring nonfederal holdings and in no way represent an offer to purchase or exchange at the cost estimate included in this appendix.