

Goldburg Wilderness Study Area

1. The Study Area -- 3,290 acres

The Goldburg WSA (ID-45-1) is located in Custer County 29 miles southeast of Challis, Idaho. The WSA includes 3,290 acres of BLM lands. There are no inholdings in the WSA. The WSA is bounded on the north by public lands .5 mile south of Big Creek, on the east by the North Lemhi Mountains in the Challis National Forest .25 mile north of the Hillside Creek Jeep Trail, and on the west by private and public lands 1.5 miles east of the townsite of Goldburg. The WSA consists of westward sloping alluvial foothills ranging from 6,100 feet of elevation on the west side to 8,800 feet on the eastern side. The dominant vegetation is sagebrush-grass with fingers and patches of Douglas-fir extending downslope from U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Mackay Management Framework Plan Amendment/Small Wilderness Study Area Environmental Impact Statement finalized in September 1989. Two alternatives were analyzed in the EIS: an all wilderness alternative; and a no wilderness alternative, which is the recommendation of this report.

2. Recommendation and Rationale

0 acres recommended for wilderness

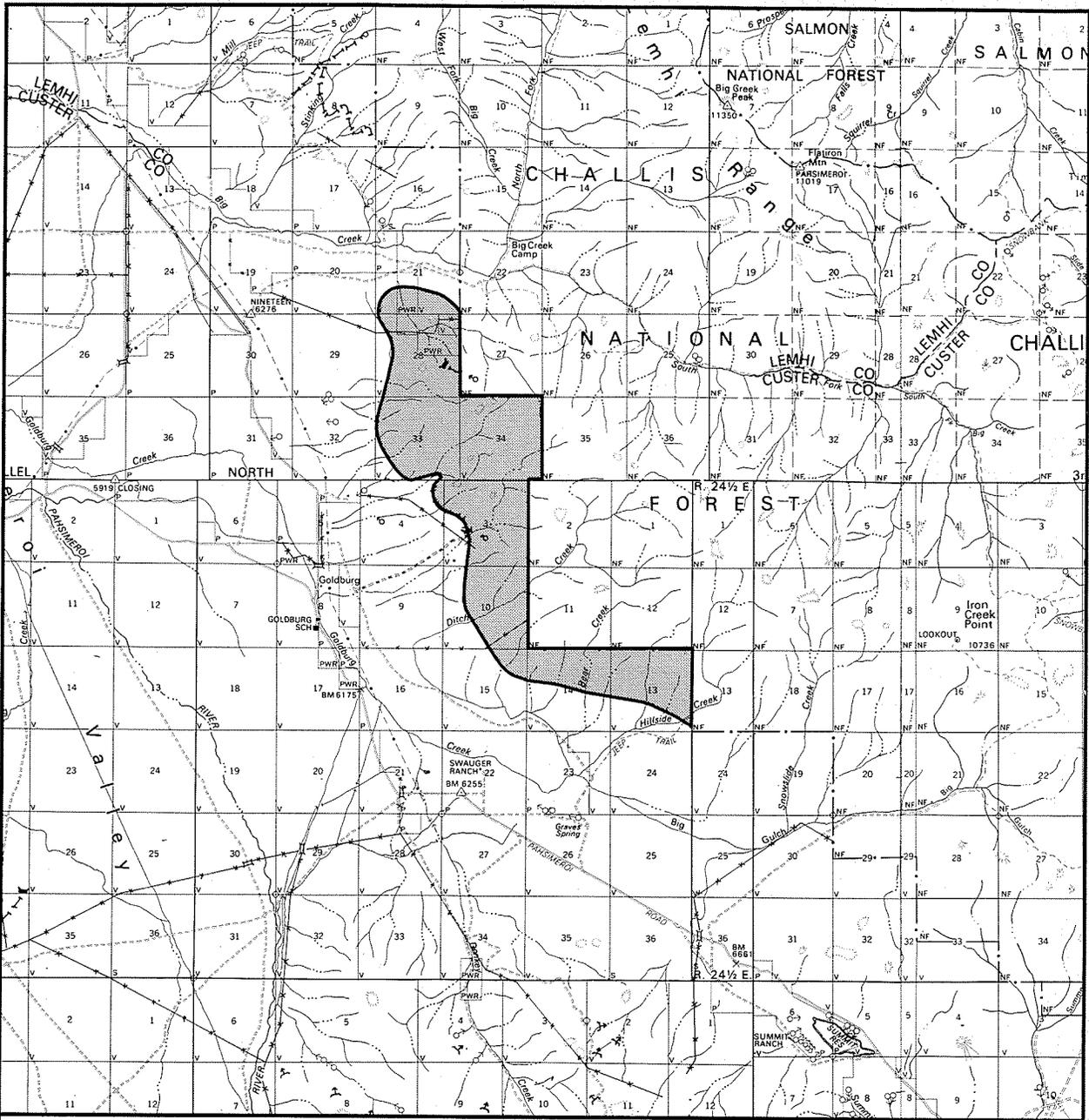
3,290 acres recommended for nonwilderness

The recommendation for the Goldberg WSA is to 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. The entire 3,290 acres of public land are shown as the Goldberg Proposal map.

The WSA was studied for wilderness in conjunction with the contiguous 340,416 acre U.S. Forest Service RARE II North Lemhi Area, which was completed in 1987. The U.S. Forest Service determined that the RARE II Area was not suitable for wilderness designation. Since the RARE II Area is not recommended suitable, BLM has determined that the Goldberg WSA cannot stand on its own merit and lacks the necessary characteristics to qualify for designation.

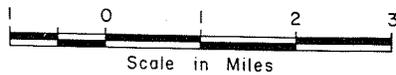
The quality of the wilderness values was the key consideration in the recommendation. These values were considered outstanding when combined with the adjacent RARE II Area. On their own, however, they were not considered to merit inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The WSA generally appears natural but there are several site-specific signs of man, primarily rangeland developments which impact naturalness. Solitude opportunities are similar to those afforded by the thousands of acres of land adjacent to the WSA. The perception of these values is lessened by the area's small size and long, narrow configuration and lack of vegetative screening, especially on the WSA's western edge, which allows outside sights and sounds to be perceived throughout the WSA. The WSA does offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation when combined with the adjacent RARE II Area. However, these qualities are diminished by the area's small size, long narrow configuration and lack of vegetative screening. The values that are present are similar to thousands of acres of adjacent lands.

Of the WSA's 3,290 acres, 1,196 are forested. Of these, 930 acres are classified as commercial forest lands suitable for management. The potential harvestable timber yield on the commercial stands is estimated at 124 MBF per year. Although there is no projected demand for the next ten to twenty years, wilderness designation would remove this timber from potential harvest.



R. 23 E. | R. 24 E. | R. 24 E. | R. 25 E.

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



**ID-45-1
GOLDBURG
PROPOSAL**

JANUARY 1989

T. 13 N.

T. 12 N.

T. 12 N.

T. 11 N.

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

Within Wilderness Study Area

BLM (surface and subsurface)	3,290
Split Estate (BLM surface only)	0
Inholdings (state, private)	0
Total	3,290

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	3,290
Split Estate	0
Total BLM Land Not Recommended for Wilderness	3,290
Inholdings (state, private)	0

3. Criteria Considered in Developing the Wilderness Recommendations

Wilderness Characteristics

A. Naturalness

The Goldberg WSA is essentially natural with few human imprints. The WSA consists of westward-facing sloping alluvial foothills ranging in elevation from 6,100 feet on the west side to 8,800 feet on the east side. The dominant vegetation is sagebrush-grass with fingers and patches of Douglas-fir. The majority of the timber exists on the upper elevation east side, generally 7,600 feet, and is adjacent to the national forest lands.

The perception of naturalness is lessened because of the WSA's proximity to the Pahsimeroi Valley Road. The closeness, narrow configuration, small size and general lack of lower elevation vegetation screening and topographic relief allow the sights and sounds of road usage in approximately 80 percent of the WSA.

B. Solitude

The WSA contains outstanding opportunities for solitude when combined with the adjacent RARE II Unit. However, due to the lack of lower elevation vegetative screening and topographic relief and the small size and narrow configuration (which allow the outside sights and sounds to be evident), the feeling of solitude is lessened.

C. Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Goldberg WSA contains outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation when combined with the adjacent RARE II Study Area. Opportunities exist for hiking, camping, backpacking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hunting, photography, bird watching and sightseeing. However, the long, narrow shape of the WSA and proximity to the Pahsimeroi Road does lessen these opportunities.

Backpackers and campers would feel confined in this small area. Sightseers would be able to view outside sights and sounds from approximately 80 percent of the unit.

D. Special Features

The WSA lacks any special features which could be called a focal or destination point for visitors.

Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

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

Wilderness designation of the Goldberg 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 Golburg 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

Idaho has the largest wilderness area in the contiguous 48 states, the 2.2 million acre Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Wilderness designation of this WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographical distribution of areas within the NWPS but would further concentrate wilderness areas in Idaho.

Manageability

The WSA could be managed as wilderness in terms of existing imprints. However, its small size (3,290 acres) and long, narrow configuration could restrict the ability to retain wilderness value in the area. The private lands and the public road near the west side degrade the solitude and the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation by bringing in the sights and sounds of farm/ranch activities and motorized use of the road.

Energy and Minerals Resource Values

WGM, Inc., mining and geological consultants, prepared a Geology, Energy and Mineral assessment for the Goldberg WSA in 1983.

The Goldberg WSA is classified as moderately favorable for the accumulation of metallic mineral deposits based on indirect evidence. Tungsten-copper-molybdenum-silver mineralization related to small intrusive bodies occurs at the Ima mine about eight miles northwest of the WSA and at Bid Creek, just north of the WSA. In addition, cobalt is present in the same strike belt about two miles north of the WSA.

All of the Goldberg WSA is classified as unfavorable for uranium and thorium, based on limited direct evidence. The classification is based on the discouraging results obtained from the WSA during mineral evaluation. The Goldberg WSA is classified as unfavorable for the occurrence of locatable nonmetal minerals based on limited direct evidence. The geologic setting of the WSA is generally unfavorable and no occurrences are reported.

The Goldberg WSA is classified as moderately favorable for oil and gas based on indirect evidence. The regional geological setting is favorable and, although the Goldberg WSA is almost entirely underlain by unfavorable Precambrian rocks, both potential source and reservoir rocks probably occur in underlying thrust blocks.

The southwestern edge of the Goldberg WSA is classified as having low favorableness for low to high (40°C to over 150°C) geothermal resources based on indirect evidence. The area comprises the lower elevations in the WSA which might lie along major lineaments or possible range-bounding faults. The remainder of the WSA is classified as unfavorable for low to high (40°C to 150°C) geothermal resources based on indirect evidence.

The Goldberg WSA is classified as unfavorable for sodium and potassium on limited direct evidence. The Precambrian quartzites underlying the WSA are not favorable host rocks.

The Goldberg WSA is classified as unfavorable for leasable commodities based on limited direct evidence. No rocks known to contain these commodities underlie the WSA.

The Goldberg WSA is classified as having low favorability for saleable resources based on limited direct evidence. The WSA is almost entirely underlain by Precambrian quartzites and no large alluvial deposits are mapped in the WSA.

Impacts on Resources

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

Table 4
Comparative Summary of the Impacts by Alternative
WSA ID-45-1 (GOLDBURG)

ISSUE TOPICS	PROPOSED ACTION (NO WILDERNESS)	ALL WILDERNESS ALTERNATIVE
Impacts on USFS North Lemhi Roadless Area	No Impact.	No impact.
Impacts on Wilderness Values	Values lost on 930 acres.	Values would be maintained.
Impacts on Water Quality of Goldberg Creek	No Impact.	No Impact.
Impacts on Antelope	No Impact.	No Impact.
Impacts on Motorized Recreation	No Impact.	WSA closed to motorized use. None occurs now.
Impacts on Forest Product Sales	No Impact.	Product sales foregone including potential of 124 MBF per year.

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. During formal public review of the Draft EIS, 27 written comments were received of which ten specifically addressed the Goldberg WSA. Public hearings were held at Idaho Falls, Boise and Challis, Idaho. Seventeen persons testified.

Of the ten specific written comments received, eight comments favored wilderness for the WSA. Two commenters opposed wilderness designation for the WSA. Of the 17 persons who testified, seven supported wilderness designation for the Goldberg WSA. No one opposed wilderness designation for the Goldberg WSA specifically but one opposed wilderness designation of any kind.

Those favoring wilderness commented on the beauty of the area, its logical extension of the North Lemhi RARE II Area which has not been recommended for wilderness designation, and the fact that the area was in the headwaters of the Pahsimeroi, an anadromous fishery that needs more protection.

Those opposed to wilderness designation were concerned with a general "lock-up" of the land.

The Bureau of Reclamation, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, the Idaho State Historical Society, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service all commented on the Draft EIS. The Bureau of Indian Affairs commented on the impact of nondesignation on anadromous fisheries. The Idaho State Historical Society voiced its concern that archaeological and historical inventories had not been completed. The other agencies did not identify a specific conflict with any of the alternatives.