

# Henrys Lake Wilderness Study Area

## 1. The Study Area -- 350 acres

The Henrys Lake WSA (ID-35-77) is located in Fremont County 13 miles north and east of Macks Inn near the junction of Highways 287 and 20. The WSA includes 350 acres of public land. There are no private or state inholdings in the tract (see Table 1). A small ten acre parcel at the WSA's southeastern corner has been identified in planning efforts for disposal through sale or exchange. The parcel is adjacent to other developed private home sites. Boundaries of the WSA are generally the U.S. Forest Service Lion's Head Wilderness proposal on the north and east of Section 32 and private lands on the west and south remainder of the section. The WSA could not stand as wilderness on its own because of its small size. Therefore, it is dependent on the designation of the Lion's Head Wilderness.

Vegetation in the WSA is varied. Lush riparian vegetation follows the creek courses and includes species such as rose, aspen, willow, serviceberry and snowberry. The slopes and drainages have scattered stands of Douglas- fir, lodgepole pine and aspen. Also growing on the slopes are sagebrush, bitterbrush and grasses such as needlegrass, mountain brome, fescue and prairie junegrass. Throughout much of the late spring and summer, wildflowers cover the slopes: lupine, paintbrush, cinquefoil, buckwheat, arrowleaf balsamroot, common yarrow, geranium, gilia, monkeyflower, Oregon grape, pearly everlasting and asters.

Wildlife species found in the WSA include black bear, elk, moose, deer and a variety of birds. The area lies within "Situation I" habitat where management for grizzly bear is given priority over other uses.

The WSA was studied under Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and was included in the Draft Proposed Plan Amendments and Environmental Impact Statement for Small Wilderness Study Areas Statewide filed in September 1989. Three alternatives were analyzed in the FEIS for the Henrys Lake WSA: the proposed action (partial wilderness) alternative (340 acres), which is the recommendation of this report; an all wilderness alternative (350 acres); and a no wilderness alternative.

## **2. Recommendation and Rationale**

**340 acres recommended for wilderness**

**10 acres recommended for nonwilderness**

The recommendation is to designate 340 acres as wilderness and to release ten 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 is shown on the Henrys Lake Proposal map.

The Henrys Lake WSA could not stand on its own as wilderness because of its small size. It is recommended for wilderness only in conjunction with the adjacent 16,800 acre U.S. Forest Service Lion's Head Wilderness Proposal (USDA, 1985, Targhee National Forest).

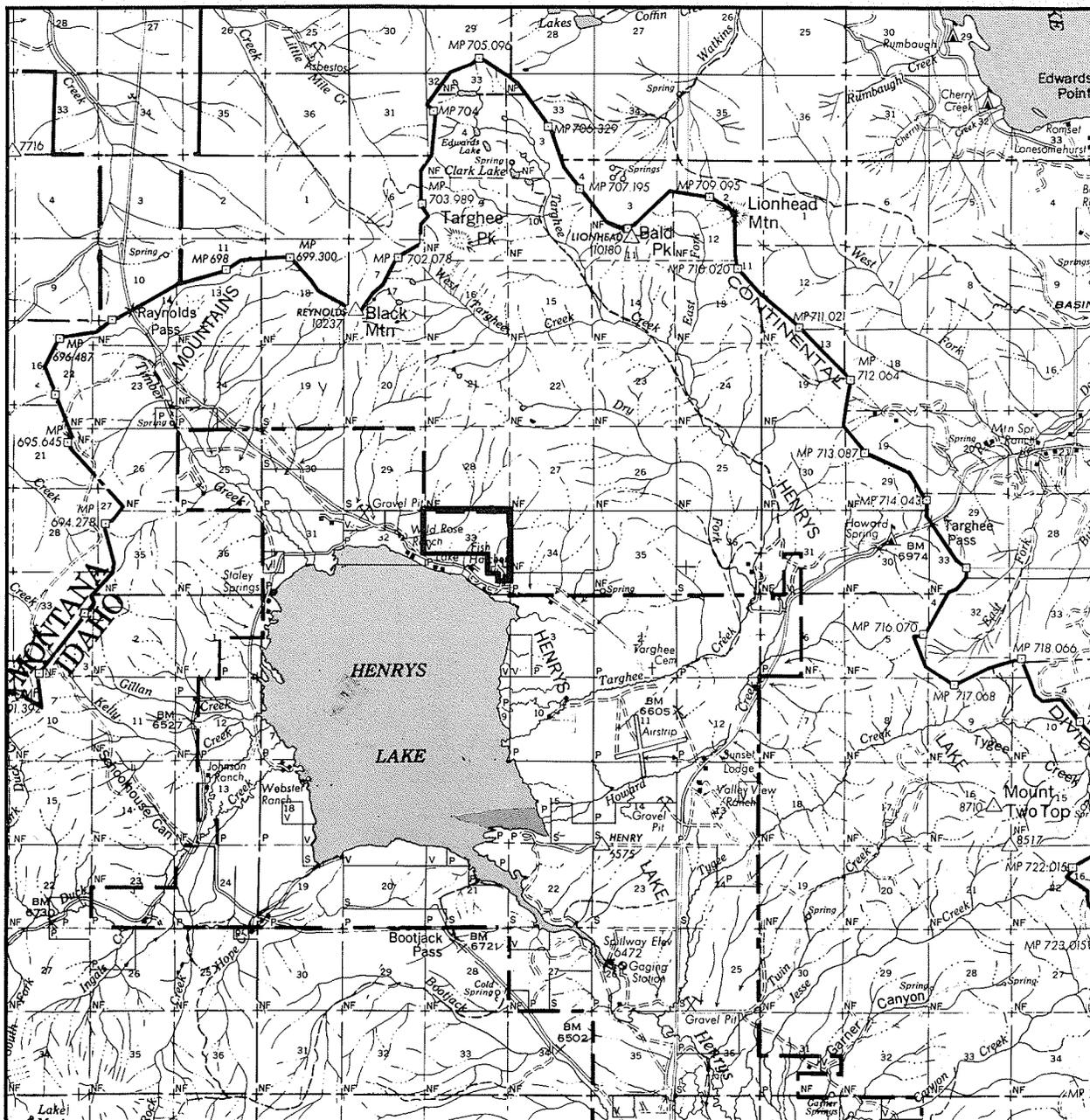
The wilderness values of naturalness, solitude and primitive recreation would be available on the recommended portion of the WSA and enhanced on the adjacent U.S. Forest Service proposal.

The recommended portion also is an excellent transition zone, giving the traveler a feeling of gradual entrance into more and more remote territory. The steep brushy slopes and drainages wooded with Douglas-fir trees provide additional opportunities for solitude as one gains altitude and enters the adjacent Lion's Head proposal.

Opportunities for primitive recreation include horse packing, camping, photography and hunting. Combined with the amenities of the available solitude, naturalness and opportunities to continue into the Lion's Head proposal, primitive recreation potential is outstanding.

Manageability of the Henrys Lake WSA as wilderness would be possible. The configuration of the area complements the adjacent boundary of the proposed Lion's Head Wilderness and would make a logical, manageable boundary. Wilderness management would not conflict with other present or anticipated future uses. Communications between BLM's Idaho Falls District and the Targhee National Forest indicate that adding 340 acres of the Henrys Lake WSA to the Lion's Head would not conflict with plans of the U.S. Forest Service and would be consistent with future management of the area.

The ten acre parcel recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation is composed of a cluster of small land parcels surrounding developed recreation homesites. Conflicts with wilderness management and the private development would be anticipated. By deleting the ten acres and moving the recommended wilderness boundary to the north, manageability is greatly enhanced. The ten acres would be available for disposal as proposed in the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan.



T. 17 N.

T. 16 N.

T. 16 N.

T. 15 N.

R. 42 E.

R. 43 E.

R. 43 E.

R. 44 E.



RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



SPLIT ESTATE



RECOMMENDED FOR NONWILDERNESS



STATE



LAND OUTSIDE WSA RECOMMENDED FOR WILDERNESS



PRIVATE



Scale in Miles

**ID-35-77  
HENRYS LAKE  
PROPOSAL**

JANUARY 1989



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

**Within Wilderness Study Area**

|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| BLM (surface and subsurface)    | 350        |
| Split Estate (BLM surface only) | 0          |
| Inholdings (state, private)     | 0          |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>350</b> |

**Within the Recommended Wilderness Boundary**

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| BLM (within WSA)                                     | 340        |
| BLM (outside WSA)                                    | 0          |
| Split Estate (within WSA)                            | 0          |
| Split Estate (outside WSA)                           | 0          |
| <b>Total BLM Land Recommended<br/>for Wilderness</b> | <b>340</b> |
| Inholdings (state, private)                          | 0          |
| State land (outside WSA)                             | 0          |

**Within the Area Not Recommended for Wilderness**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| BLM  | 10        |
| Split Estate   | 0         |
| <b>Total BLM Land Not Recommended<br/>for Wilderness</b> | <b>10</b> |
| Inholdings (state, private)                              | 0         |

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

#### **Wilderness Characteristics**

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

The Henrys Lake WSA is essentially natural with few human imprints. Imprints consist of the remnants of a small diversion structure from an abandoned fish hatchery and the evidence from sheep grazing which is localized and negligible. Wildlife species found in the WSA include black bear, elk, moose, deer and a variety of birds. Impacts outside the WSA are the sights and sounds of Highway 287 and rural recreational developments along the shore of Henrys Lake. These impacts are relatively unnoticeable except near the WSA's southern border and from higher vantage points. Designation of this tract as wilderness would complement the U.S. Forest Service designation of wilderness adjacent to the tract.

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

Opportunities for solitude in this small 350-acre parcel are dependent on the adjacent Lion's Head Wilderness proposal. The U.S. Forest Service analysis of solitude for the wilderness proposal is "topographic screening enhances the opportunity for solitude which is rated as high."

Throughout the WSA, opportunities for solitude are outstanding. Traveling north into the canyons, vegetative screening is excellent. Topographic features also play an important role as the visitor moves deeper into the area's secluded canyons.

From the tops of the steeper hillsides, the homes on the lakeshore are apparent but their presence does not affect the visitor's opportunity for solitude. The predominant feeling is rather that of entrance into a wilderness setting -- an unconfined and natural space.

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

Opportunities for primitive recreation in this small WSA are outstanding and include hiking, camping, horse packing and wildlife photography. These activities are dependent upon the adjacent Lion's Head Wilderness proposal. The U.S. Forest Service analysis of primitive recreation opportunities is "the opportunities for primitive recreation are high but there are few opportunities for challenging experiences."

## **D. Special Features**

The Henrys Lake WSA supports a variety of wildlife species and is part of "Situation I" grizzly bear habitat. The area is also an important element in the scenery that backdrops Henrys Lake and the mountain range that rises abruptly from the lake's northern shore.

# Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

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

Wilderness designation of the Henrys Lake WSA would add an ecosystem presently represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS). This ecosystem is represented by 18 designated areas with 1,349,971 acres. There are four other BLM areas in the state under study with this ecosystem. This information is summarized in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**

### Ecosystem Representation

| Bailey-Kuchler<br>Classification  | NWPS Areas        |           | Other BLM Studies |         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|---------|
|                                   | areas             | acres     | areas             | acres   |
| Rocky Mountain Forest<br>Province |                   |           |                   |         |
|                                   | <u>NATIONWIDE</u> |           |                   |         |
| Douglas-Fir Forest<br>Ecosystem   | 18                | 1,349,971 | 4                 | 26,152  |
|                                   | <u>IDAHO</u>      |           |                   |         |
| Douglas-Fir Forest<br>Ecosystem   | 0                 | 0         | 19                | 173,228 |

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

The Henrys Lake WSA is within a five-hour drive of two major population centers. Table 3 summarizes the number and acreage of designated areas and other BLM study areas within a five-hour drive of the population centers.

**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/Salt Lake City,<br>Utah <sup>1</sup> | 16                | 4,741,570 | 141                      | 5,374,250 |

<sup>1</sup>Salt Lake City, Utah, and vicinity includes other cities of Provo, Orem and Ogden, Utah.

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

The Henrys Lake WSA would not contribute to balancing the geographic distribution of areas within the National Wilderness Preservation System. It could only make a small contribution if the adjacent U.S. Forest Service Lion's Head Wilderness proposal was designated and the 340-acre tract was part of the designated wilderness.

### **Manageability**

The portion of the WSA recommended for wilderness designation can reasonably be managed as wilderness to preserve values now present in the area. Conflicts with present and future uses and wilderness management are absent. Excluding motor vehicles from the area is not a potential problem because the area is steep and brushy. Travel is presently limited to foot and horse traffic.

The ten acre parcel recommended as nonsuitable for wilderness designation consists of a cluster of small land parcels surrounding developed recreation home sites. Conflicts with wilderness management and the private development would be anticipated.

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

Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines prepared a mineral assessment for the Henrys Lake WSA in 1983. The following is a summary from these reports:

The Henrys Lake WSA contains no oil and gas leases or mining claims. The potential is low for oil and gas and mineral resources.

Since the WSA is in the Central Idaho Basin and Range geothermal province, a moderate potential for geothermal resources exists. There is no surface indication of the presence of geothermal energy.

The potential for sand and gravel is high. No metallic or nonmetallic mineral deposits are known within the WSA although gravel and stone have been removed in the vicinity.

### **Impacts on Resources**

The following attached 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-35-77 (HENRYS LAKE)**

| <b>RESOURCE TOPICS</b>                           | <b>PROPOSED ACTION<br/>(PARTIAL WILDERNESS)</b>                            | <b>ALL WILDERNESS<br/>ALTERNATIVE</b>       | <b>NO WILDERNESS<br/>ALTERNATIVE</b>      |
|--|--|---|---|
| Impacts on USFS Lion's Head Roadless Area        | Roadless area's wilderness values enhanced.                                | Roadless area's wilderness values enhanced. | No Impact.                                |
| Impacts on Wilderness Values                     | Maintained (no impact) on suitable portion. Lost on non-suitable 10 acres. | Maintained (no impact).                     | Unchanged on 340 acres; lost on 10 acres. |
| Impacts on Motorized Recreation                  | No Impact.   | No Impact.                                  | No Impact.                                |
| Impacts on "Situation I" Grizzly Bear Management | No Impact.   | No Impact.                                  | No Impact.                                |

## **Local Social and Economic Considerations**

Social and economic impacts were not considered a significant issue in the Henrys Lake Study.

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

Public involvement has occurred throughout the wilderness review process. Certain comments received during the inventory period and early stages of EIS preparation were considered in developing issues and various alternatives for the ultimate management of those lands found to have wilderness value.

In the inventory stage, those opposing intensive inventory were concerned with mineral development of the area.

Those favoring intensive inventory were homesite owners living near the area and others who felt the area should be inventoried since it was adjacent to a U.S. Forest Service proposal.