



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Appendix Volume 5

IDAHO WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT



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APPENDIX I

Instant Study Area Summary

March 1992

Idaho's Three Instant Study Areas

In 1976, Congress passed the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). A portion of the act states that lands formally identified as primitive or natural areas before November 1, 1975, should be included in BLM's wilderness review.

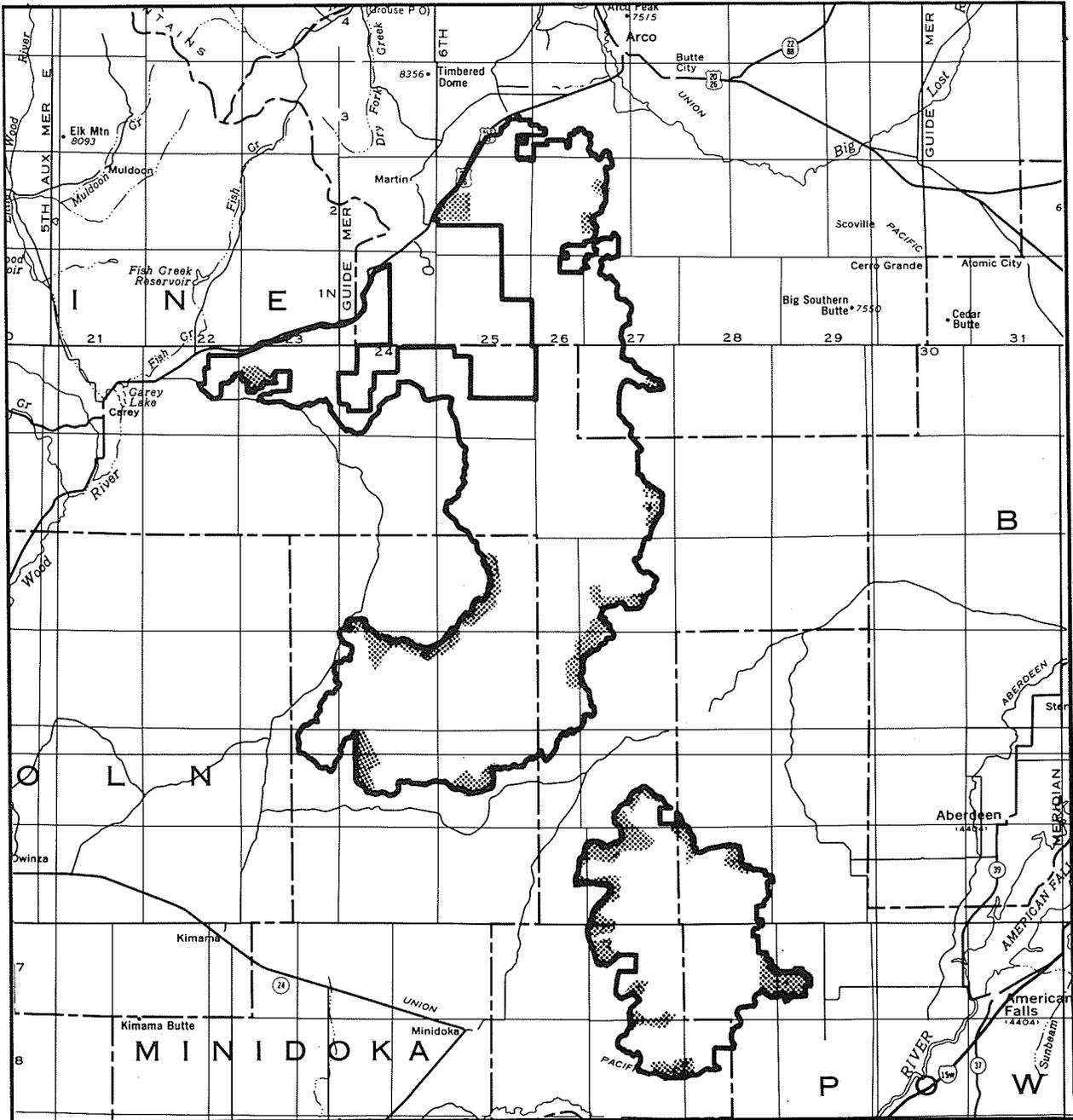
These lands became known as "Instant Study Areas" (ISAs). Three of them exist in Idaho — the Birds of Prey ISA, the China Cup ISA and the Great Rift ISA. The wilderness review for them was completed well ahead of the remainder of BLM lands in Idaho. Recommendations to Congress regarding their wilderness suitability were made in 1985. The Birds of Prey ISA and the China Cup ISA were recommended as non-suitable, while a portion of the Great Rift ISA was recommended for wilderness designation (See Table 1).

TABLE 1

ISA	Suitable Acres	Non-Suitable	Total
Great Rift	346,800	33,400	380,200
Birds of Prey	0	26,713	26,713
China Cup	0	160	160

Congress has taken no action on the three Idaho ISAs. They are now considered to be a part of the overall statewide wilderness recommendations. The three ISAs eventually will be acted on by Congress as part of the total BLM Idaho wilderness package.

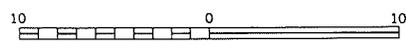
A summary follows of the three Idaho ISAs, with the rationale for BLM's recommendation.



R. 21 E. | R. 22 E.

R. 30 E. | R. 31 E.

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



Scale in Miles

ISA

**GREAT RIFT
PROPOSAL**

MARCH 1992

T. 1 N.

T. 1 S.

T. 7 S.

T. 8 S.

Great Rift Instant Study Area

General Description

The Great Rift ISA is located in south-central Idaho, covering portions of Blaine, Butte, Minidoka and Power counties. It is roughly 45 miles east of Idaho Falls, Idaho, and adjoins Craters of the Moon National Monument or Craters of the Moon Wilderness Area on all sides except the northwest tip.

The proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area is characterized by thousands of acres of lava dotted with occasional buttes and "kipukas," islands of vegetation surrounded by lava flows. The harsh, barren landscape is interrupted by sparse vegetation and fissures in the earth's surface. The Great Rift itself is believed to be the longest formation of its kind in the United States, stretching 65 miles and reaching depths of 800 feet in places.

The climate is hot and dry in the summer and very cold in the winter. Annual precipitation is 10 to 14 inches. Winds are from the southwest year-round, and usually most intense in the spring.

Water is scarce in the area. Some intermittent water can be found at times in the depressions in lava and crevices.

More than 300 plant species occur in the area. The type and density of vegetation varies widely depending on the availability of soil. No threatened or endangered species are known to occur within the area.

More than 450 kipukas are within the proposed wilderness boundaries. They range from less than an acre to 2,200 acres and usually feature climax vegetation communities. Other volcanic features include craters, cinder and spatter cones, spires and lava tubes.

Mule deer, antelope, coyotes and rabbits are the most common mammals in the area, although populations are not abundant. Sage grouse, mourning doves and about 140 species of non-game birds are found in the area.

Recreation use is generally light in the proposed wilderness area.

Recommendation and Rationale

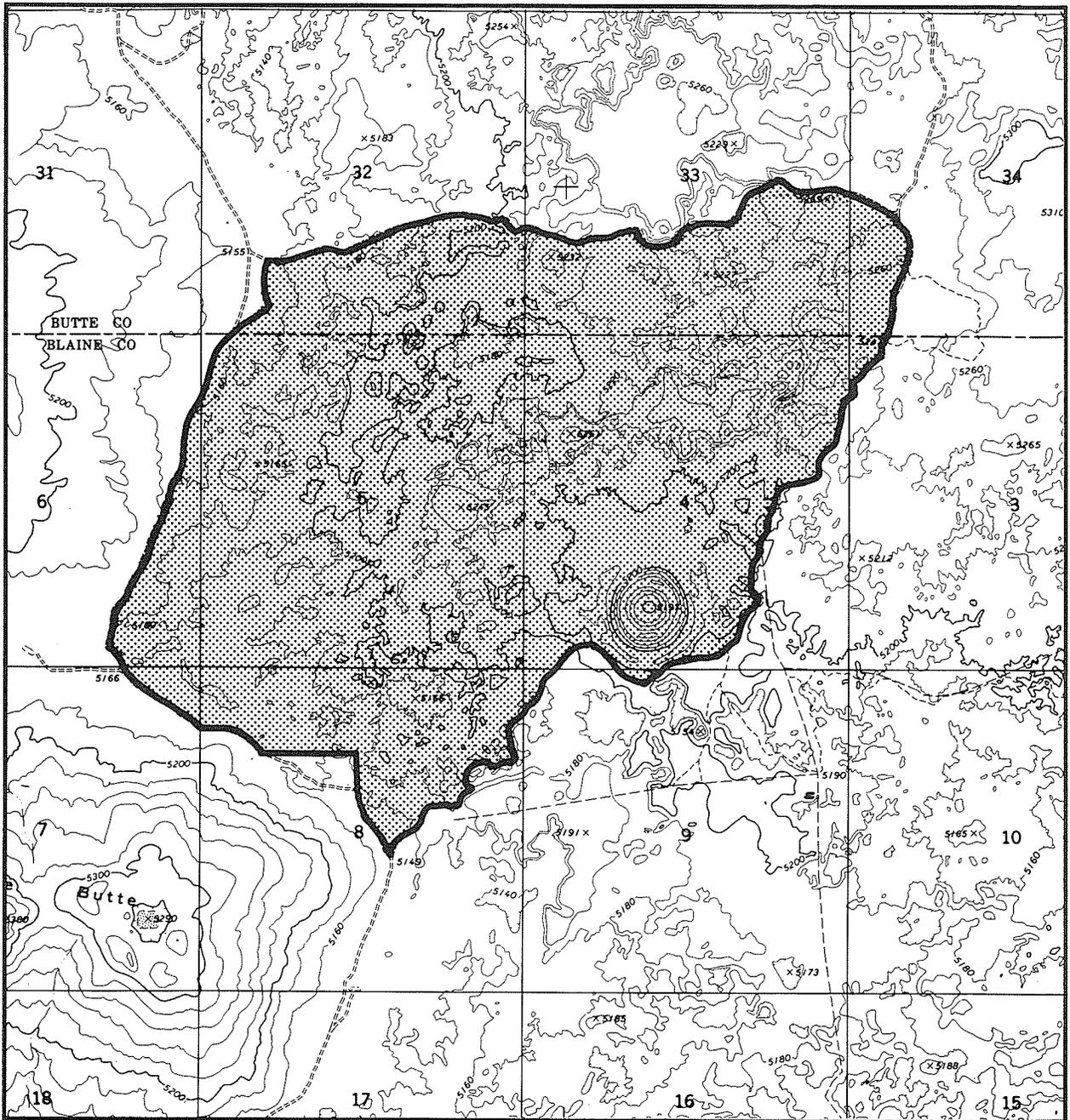
BLM recommended that the 346,800 acres of the Great Rift ISA be designated by Congress as wilderness and 33,400 acres be released for other uses.

The primary benefit of designating the 346,800 acres as wilderness is that the area's wilderness characteristics and naturalness would be preserved. In addition, outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be protected. The ecosystems associated with the 450 kipukas would be maintained.

Livestock grazing would be allowed under the designation. None of the wells or approximately 100 miles of road used for hauling water to livestock are within the boundary of the proposed wilderness.

Geothermal leasing would be allowed within the proposed boundary with a "no surface occupancy" lease stipulation. A small amount of lava rubble used for building stone could not be sold under the proposal.

The 33,400 acres recommended as nonsuitable include desert rangelands that are crossed by roads. Wilderness boundaries would be hard to define, making it difficult to protect from vehicle use.

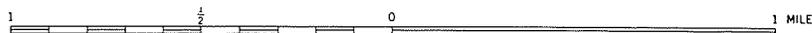


T. 1 S.

T. 2 S.

R. 29 E.

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



Scale in Miles



ISA
CHINA CUP BUTTE
PROPOSAL

MARCH 1992

China Cup ISA

General Description

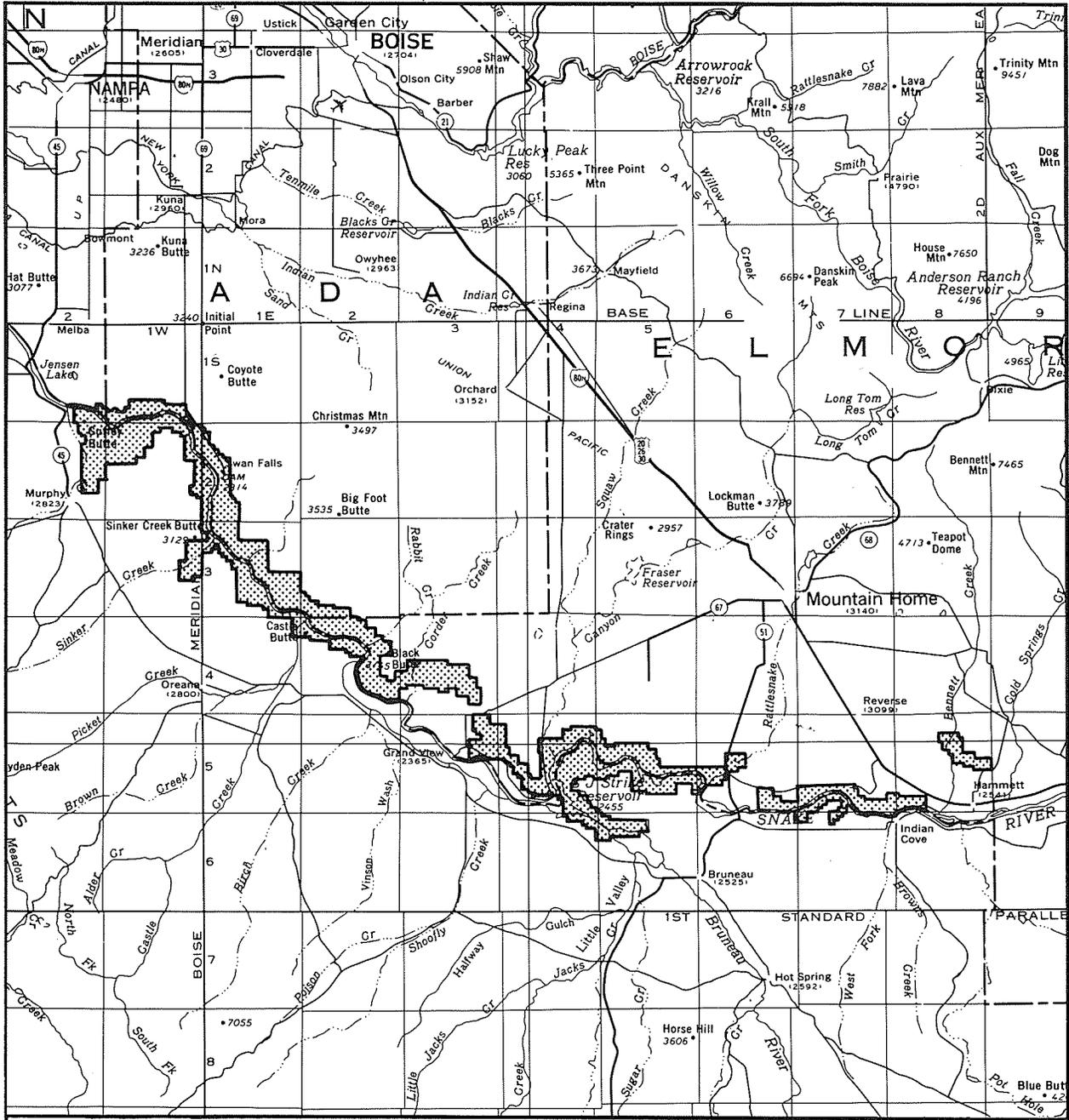
China Cup Butte is a small volcanic cone that is about nine miles southwest of Big Southern Butte in the south-central Snake River Plain. The almost perfectly circular cone is 1,260 feet in diameter and has a crater that is 100 feet deep. Basalt lava flows have encroached the flanks of China Cup, creating a moat-like depression.

In recognition of the importance of this feature, China Cup Butte became a Research Natural Area (RNA) in 1965. A withdrawal from mineral and agriculture entry, public sale or state selection and exchange of the 160 acres of public land around China Cup Butte was completed.

Recommendation and Rationale

BLM recommends that China Cup ISA not be designated as a wilderness area. The area does not possess the wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness Act of 1964.

A road divides the RNA into two areas; both were disqualified from further consideration. The smaller unit, which contains the circular cone, does not meet the size requirement for wilderness and livestock improvements, trails and other human features prevent the larger area from qualifying as wilderness.



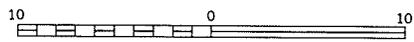
T. 1 N.
T. 5 S.

T. 5 S.
T. 6 S.

R. 1 W. | R. 1 E.

R. 4 E. | R. 5 E.

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



Scale in Miles



ISA
BIRDS OF PREY
PROPOSAL

MARCH 1992

Snake River Birds of Prey

General Description

The Snake River Birds of Prey Area is roughly 30 miles south of Boise. It includes 26,714 acres of public land along 33 miles of river canyon and basaltic cliffs which cut through a high desert plateau. The area long has been recognized as prime habitat for birds of prey, and in 1971, the Secretary of the Interior designated it as a Natural Area. It is believed to have the highest density of nesting raptors in North America. Each year, more than 600 pairs of birds representing 15 species return to the area to breed and rear their young.

Since it was classified as a natural area, the Snake River Birds of Prey Area qualified as an ISA. An inventory identified 11 units within the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area to study for wilderness characteristics. That study occurred in 1979.

Recommendation and Rationale

The recommendation by BLM is that the area not be designated as wilderness. The inventory found the natural character of the area and its contiguous public lands to be lacking in wilderness characteristics. A long history of power site development, powerline rights-of-way, ORV use, military training activities, road development, irrigation pipelines and pump stations, and agricultural development detracted from the wilderness qualities. Impacts are so concentrated and substantial that most of the units clearly lacked wilderness characteristics.

Summary

Sixty-seven "Wilderness Study Areas" (WSAs) totaling 1.8 million acres were studied by BLM for their wilderness suitability. Three of the WSAs were "Instant Study Areas," because of their status as natural or primitive areas. Recommendations about their wilderness suitability were made to Congress in 1985. Two ISAs, the Snake River Birds of Prey and China Cup, were recommended as non-suitable. Most (346,000 acres) of the third ISA, the Great Rift, was recommended as suitable.

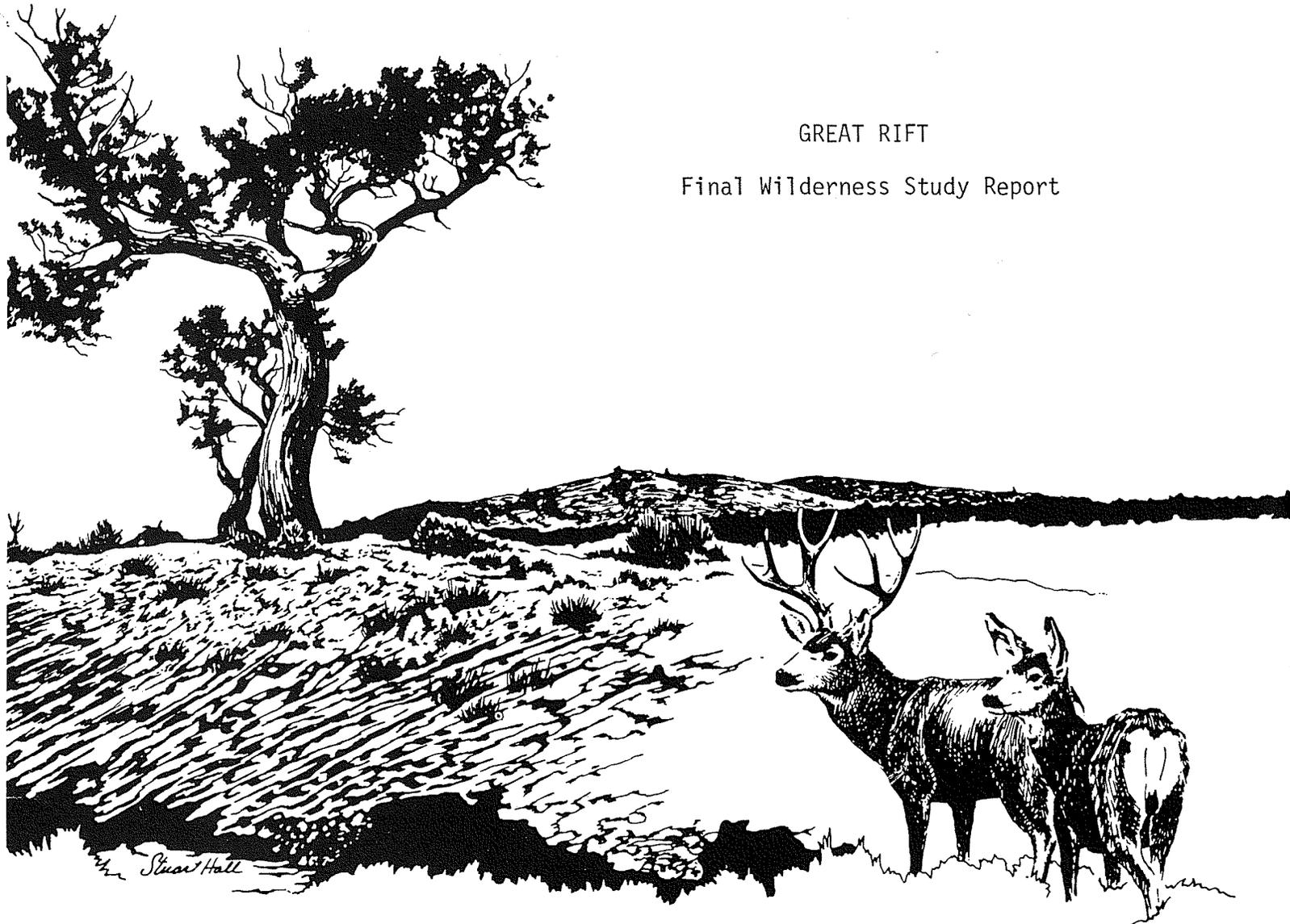
Congress has not acted on the three ISAs. They are now considered part of the total Idaho BLM wilderness recommendation and will be acted upon at some future date by Congress.

For further information on the three Idaho ISAs, you may write to Wilderness Coordinator, BLM Idaho State Office, 3380 Americana Terrace, Boise, ID 83706.

APPENDIX II

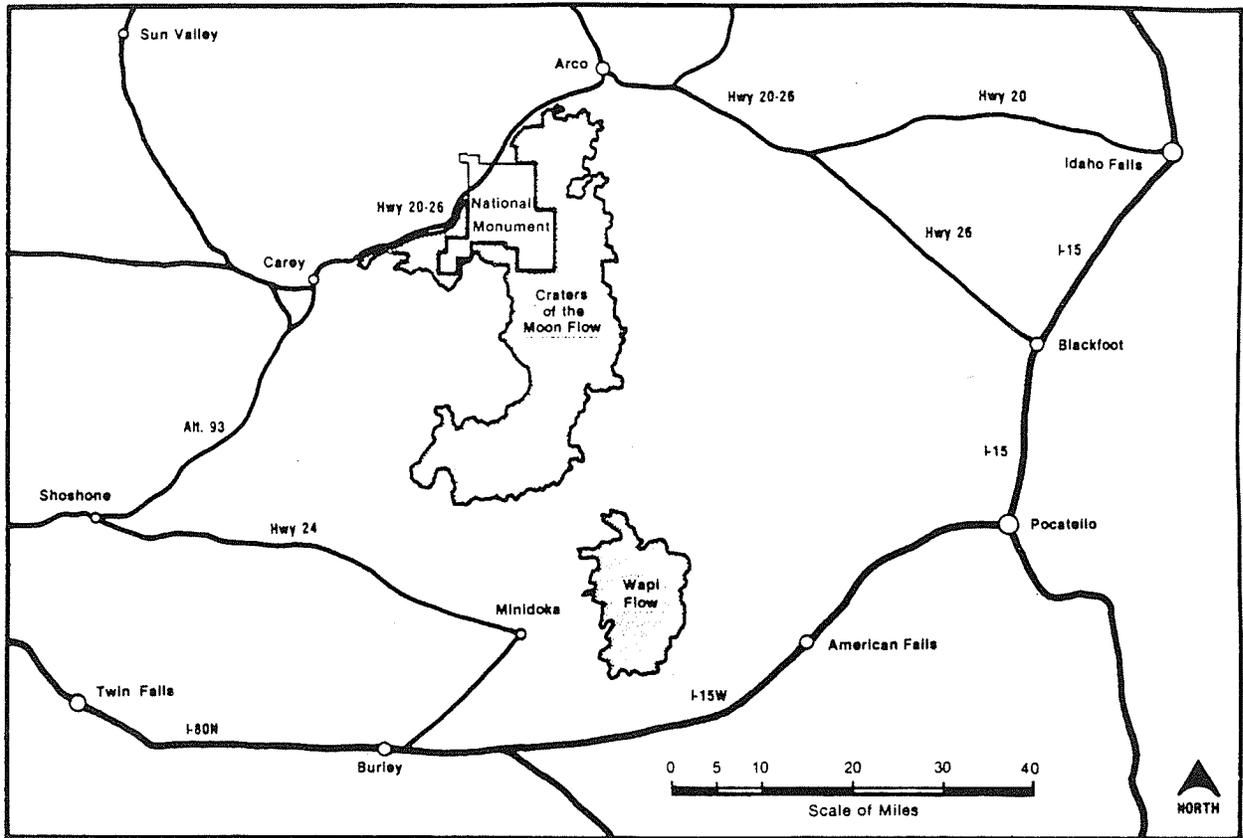
Great Rift Final Wilderness Study Report

GREAT RIFT
Final Wilderness Study Report



Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho
May 1980

Location of Proposed Great Rift Wilderness



 Proposed Wilderness Area



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Wilderness Suitability Recommendation

The Bureau of Land Management recommends that Congress incorporate the Great Rift into the National Wilderness Preservation System. The area includes most of the Craters of the Moon and Wapi lava flows and contiguous suitable public lands having wilderness characteristics. The Great Rift has outstanding wilderness values which meet the criteria of Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The area's vastness, naturalness, and ecologic, geologic, scenic and historic features enhance truly outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Scientific and educational values are equally outstanding. The lava flows demonstrate a desert-lava ecosystem found in only one other, much smaller designated wilderness area, the contiguous Craters of the Moon National Monument Wilderness.

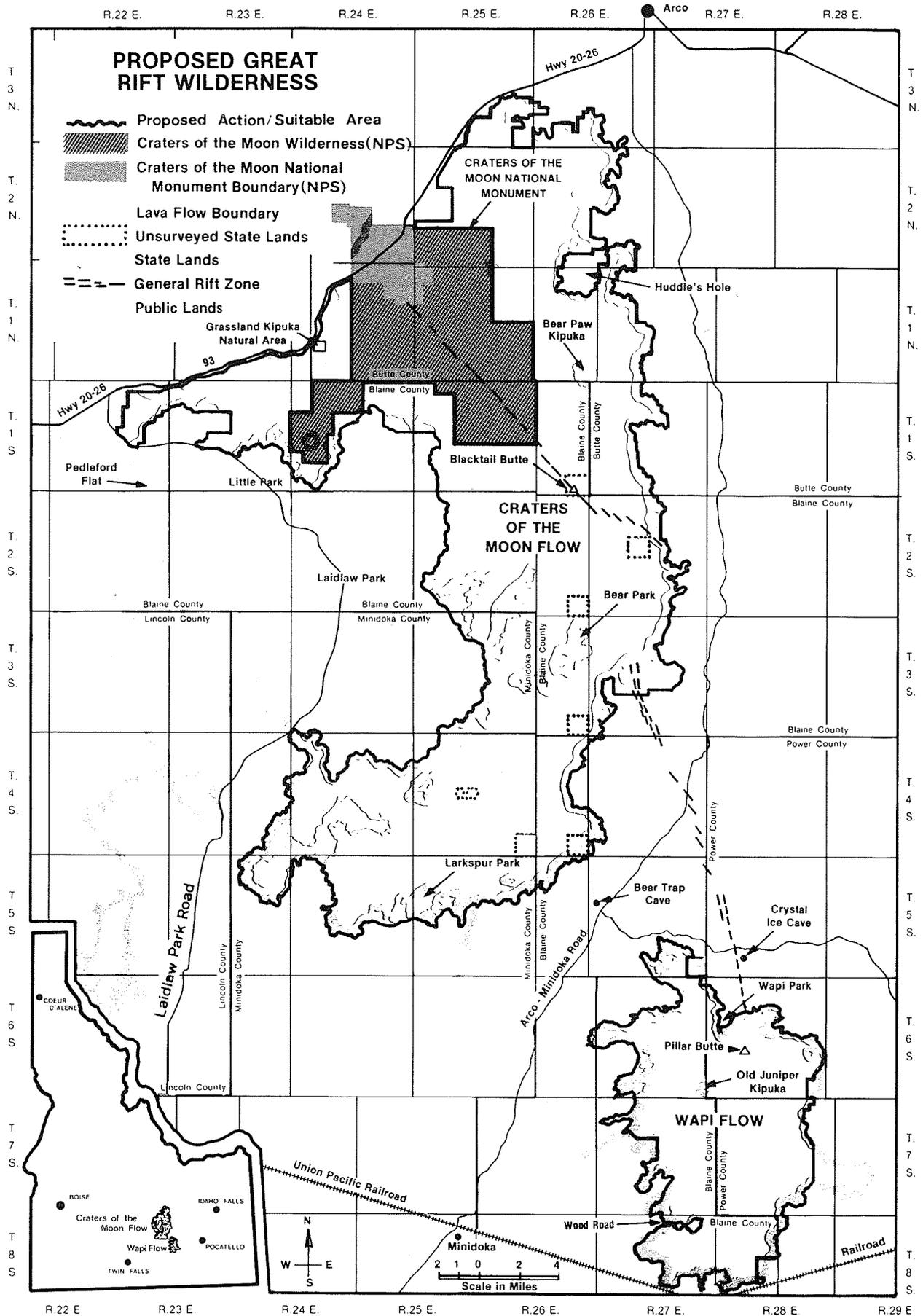
Analysis of the resources revealed that no significant resource conflicts would occur if Congress designated the area. The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on wilderness status for the Great Rift analyzed the proposed action and two alternatives: (1) Proposed Action--designate 322,450 acres of public lands as wilderness, (2) Wilderness Study Area (WSA)--designate 355,850 acres of public lands as wilderness, and (3) No Action--no wilderness designation. The draft and final statements identified no significant adverse impacts for any alternative at this time. They concluded that wilderness designation of 322,450 acres would offer the best alternative for protection of the wilderness values of the Great Rift.

Recommendation /s/O'dell A. Frandsen Date 5/21/80
Idaho Falls District Manager

Recommendation /s/Charles Haszier Date 5/28/80
Shoshone District Manager

Approved /s/B. Buffington Date 6/2/80
Idaho State Director

Approved /s/Robert F. Burford Date 9/3/81
Director



GREAT RIFT WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT

Previous Designation

Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 1976) states:

That the Secretary shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations on those areas which the Secretary has prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas. The review required by this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure specified in Section 3(d) of the Wilderness Act.

The Secretary identified the Grassland Kipuka (160 acres of public land located 1.5 miles west of Craters of the Moon National Monument) as a Natural Area in 1965. It therefore falls under the purview of the 1980 reporting requirements. The BLM's Organic Act Directive (OAD) #79-40 requires simultaneous review and reporting on roadless lands contiguous to previously designated Natural Areas. The Craters of the Moon lava flow is contiguous to the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area and is therefore included.

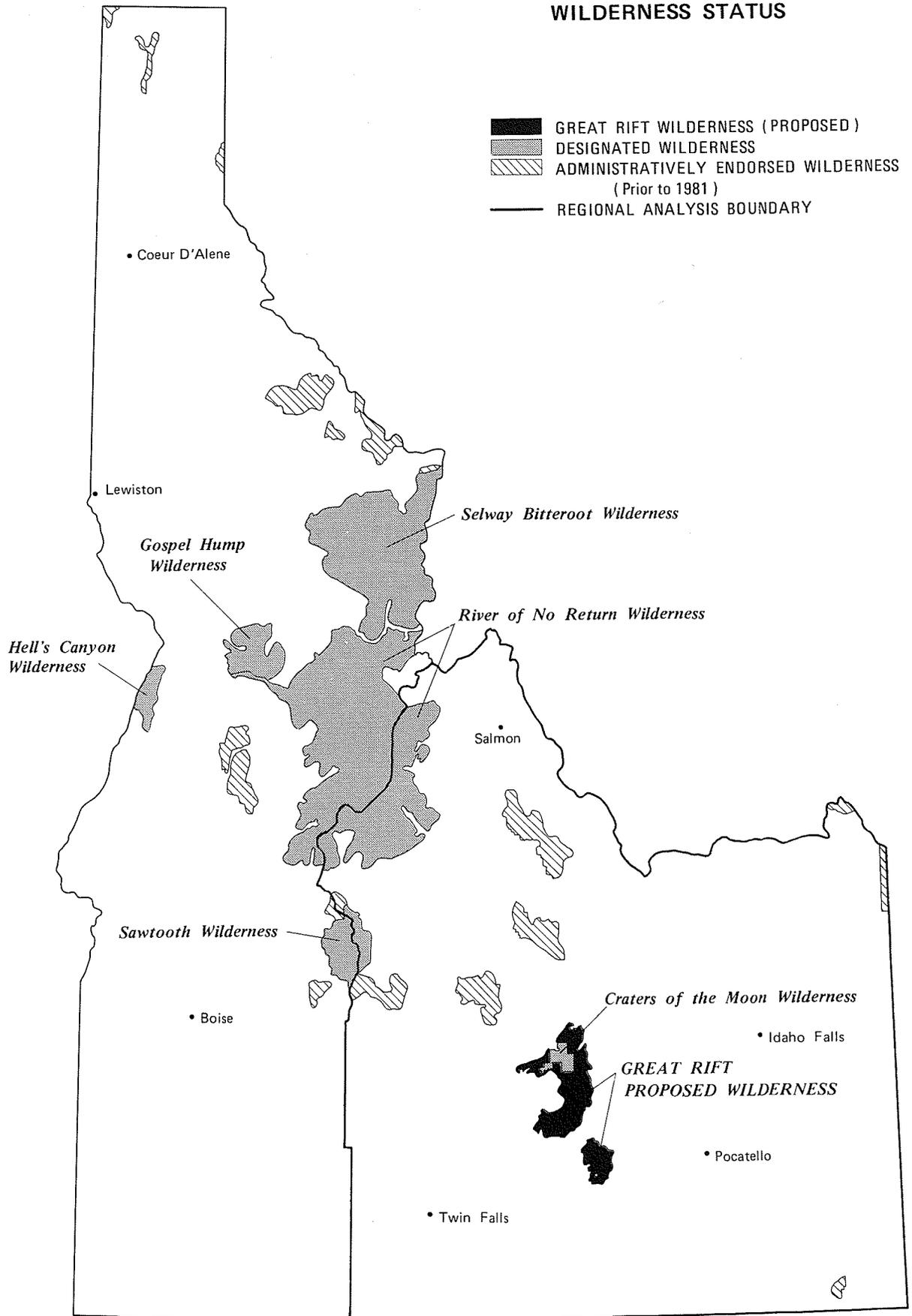
Both the Craters of the Moon flow (252,760 acres) and the Wapi flow (69,690 acres) were recommended for primitive area designation when the Big Desert Management Framework Plan was developed (1974). That recommendation led to a contracted study of primitive area values in 1975-76. The study called for designation for both lava flows. However, when Section 603 of FLPMA mandated a wilderness review of all BLM lands, primitive area designation work halted.

Regional Analysis

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for Idaho divides the State into six regions. The Great Rift is located in regions IV, V and VI and includes southeastern Idaho. The divisions of these areas are based on county lines and economic planning considerations (see map page 5) and form the boundaries for the regional analysis.

Within the region are three designated wilderness areas and seven study areas that were endorsed for wilderness by the Carter Administration in 1979. The three designated areas are the River of No Return, Sawtooth and Craters of the Moon. The proposed Great Rift Wilderness surrounds the Craters of the Moon Wilderness, which is part of Craters of the Moon National Monument. The designated and endorsed areas and the proposed Great Rift Wilderness are shown on the map on page 5 for the region and State of Idaho. A listing of these designated and potential wilderness areas follows on page 6.

WILDERNESS STATUS



DESIGNATED WILDERNESS

Area Number	Area Name	Acreage	Managing Agency
NF034	Hells Canyon	83,800	USFS
*NF072	Sawtooth	217,088	USFS
NF074	Selway-Bitterroot	1,089,017	USFS
NF095	Gospel Hump	205,900	USFS
*NF913	River of No Return	2,230,149	USFS
*NP-005	Craters of the Moon National Monument	43,243	NPS

FOREST SERVICE TOTAL:		5 AREAS	3,825,954 ACRES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TOTAL:		1 AREA	43,243 ACRES

TOTAL DESIGNATED WILDERNESS:		6 AREAS	3,869,197 ACRES

ADMINISTRATIVELY ENDORSED WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

Area Number	Area Name	Acreage	Managing Agency
A1125	Selkirks	24,276	USFS
A1300	Mallard Larkins	13,975	USFS
A1981	Salmo Priest	14,678	USFS
*A4503	Lemhi (Addition)	168,465	USFS
B1300	Mallard Larkins	51,187	USFS
B1305	Moose Mountain	18,373	USFS
B1662	Scotchman Peaks	10,164	USFS
C1300	Mallard Larkins	13,120	USFS
C1309	Lakes	3,971	USFS
D1300	Mallard Larkins	67,910	USFS
E4061	Ten Mile (East)	32,135	USFS
E4451	Needles (East)	92,048	USFS
*I4179	Worm Creek	15,770	USFS
*I4210	Borah Peak	119,675	USFS
*I4553	Smoky Mountain	87,720	USFS
L4BAA	Steel Mountain	22,848	USFS
M4455	Lick Creek (Middle)	61,470	USFS
*N4201	Pioneer Mountains	104,689	USFS
Q1301	Great Burn	98,760	USFS
*O4963	Lionhead	14,440	USFS
*NP-92	Yellowstone National Park	22,217	NPS

FOREST SERVICE TOTAL:		20 AREAS	1,035,674 ACRES

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TOTAL:		1 AREA	22,217 ACRES

TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVELY ENDORSED WILDERNESS:		21 UNITS	1,057,891 ACRES

* Areas included in the regional analysis.

Approximately 350,000 people, or 40% of Idaho's population, reside in the region. The population is expected to grow about 14% over the next decade (Idaho Outdoor Recreation Plan, 1977, page 3.29). Most of the population is concentrated along the Snake River, due to agricultural development there.

The two largest cities in the region, Idaho Falls and Pocatello, are less than 100 miles from Craters of the Moon Wilderness and from the Great Rift. The Sawtooth Wilderness is about 200 miles from these cities; the River of No Return is farther. A small part of Yellowstone National Park lies in the northeast corner of Idaho about 100 miles from Idaho Falls and 160 miles from Pocatello. Most of Yellowstone and the neighboring Grand Teton National Park are currently recommended for wilderness designation.

All of the designated and proposed wilderness areas (except for Craters of the Moon Wilderness) are mountainous with numerous rivers and lakes. The proposed Great Rift Wilderness would significantly enlarge the size of designated wilderness on the Craters of the Moon flow, preserve the wilderness values of both the Craters and Wapi flows, and add many geologic and ecologic features not presently found in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Description of the Report Area

The Great Rift lies in the Snake River Plain in south-central Idaho. Nearby country known as the Big Desert is semi-arid land, receiving 10-14 inches of precipitation per year. Vegetation in the desert and in the kipukas of the lava flows is mostly sagebrush and grasses. The lava flows are sparsely vegetated. Wildlife species include antelope, mule deer, coyotes, rabbits, and 22 other types of mammals. Sage grouse, mourning doves, and a variety of raptors are among 140 bird species in the lava plain area.

The area surrounding the Great Rift is rural and sparsely populated by ranch and farm families living in small communities such as Arco, Carey, Minidoka, American Falls, and Aberdeen. Ranching is the primary land use in the desert, with a concentration of agricultural developments east of the Wapi flow. The Idaho National Engineering Laboratory, a nuclear research facility, occupies a large area of the desert about 8 miles east of the Craters of the Moon flow and employs 9,600 persons.

Access to the Great Rift is provided primarily by U.S. Highway 93 (20-26) on the northwest, which crosses Craters of the Moon National Monument; the Arco-Minidoka Road, which parallels the east side of the Craters flow then swings west of the Wapi flow; the Laidlaw Park Road, which provides access to the west side of the Craters of the Moon flow; and the Crystal Ice Cave Road, which passes near Wapi Park on the Wapi flow. U.S. Highway 93 (20-26) is the only paved road in the area. The Arco-Minidoka Road, Laidlaw Park Road, and Crystal Ice Cave Road are the most frequently used of the many roads and trails in the desert, but they are not well-maintained.

Summary of Inventory

The BLM has completed a wilderness inventory and study of the Great Rift as directed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Procedures for this inventory are contained in the BLM's Wilderness Inventory Handbook.

The original Great Rift inventory unit included 452,700 acres. After the intensive inventory was finished, the BLM recommended that 351,450 acres met the wilderness criteria. That proposed decision was announced in the Federal Register on March 27, 1979, and followed by a 60-day comment period. Nine public meetings and open houses were held, and 29 written comments were received. Another 11 comments came in after the comment period, and were considered in the final boundary decision.

Public comment was generally supportive, however, several people disagreed with the proposed decision on lands bordering the lava flows. Some people commented that these lands should be dropped from wilderness consideration while others felt they should be retained.

After analyzing public comments and further field work, BLM re-evaluated the proposed boundary for the Wilderness Study Area (WSA). Lands were deleted where the imprint of man's work affected their naturalness, and where opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation were not outstanding. An increased acreage on the fringe of the lava flows was retained where naturalness was not impaired and where outstanding solitude and recreation opportunities existed. The final Wilderness Study Area, as announced in the Federal Register on July 12, 1979, included 374,400 acres. Not included were 78,300 acres lacking wilderness characteristics. On August 10, 1979, the WSA boundary decision became final.

Organic Act Directive No. 79-40 requires that a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) be submitted to the President by July 1980, along with a suitability report, on those natural areas that the BLM recommends for wilderness designation. Although the actual writing of the statement did not begin until after the August 10, 1979 decision, BLM held a scoping meeting on May 23, 1979, to determine what significant issues needed to be included in the DEIS. The Great Rift Proposed Wilderness Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released for public review on February 29, 1980. The Final EIS is expected to be released in June 1980.

Summary of Study Process

The BLM used its planning system to analyze data gathered in the intensive inventory and study. Specialists described study area resources such as wilderness, recreation, visual, cultural, wildlife, soil, vegetative, geologic, and mineral resources and identified the potential of each.

Actions that could increase wilderness qualities include: closing some vehicle ways in the study area, removing grazing from the few kipukas where it exists and from the border areas, prohibiting mineral and geothermal development, acquiring State Highway Department material sites, and increasing educational information. After evaluating present and future demands for wilderness-related uses only some of these actions were determined to be necessary. These are discussed under "Management Considerations."

Designating the Great Rift as wilderness would not significantly conflict with other resources such as grazing and minerals. However, the recommended wilderness boundary reflects some adjustments based on public comment and manageability. The recommended wilderness area is the Proposed Action in the DEIS and does not include 33,400 acres of the Wilderness Study Area which occur in small parcels around the borders of both flows.

The largest parcels deleted from the wilderness recommendation are the lava peninsula on the Wapi flow's east side, desert lands along the northwest border of the Wapi flow, and desert lands near Mule Butte on the Craters flow. The lava peninsula showed some signs of lava rock removal and its configuration could cause management problems. The two desert areas mentioned and many of the small excluded parcels are located near roads and are open enough to drive through. Excluding vehicles as required in the Wilderness Act would be a difficult management problem.

Wood Road on the southwest side of the Wapi flow was excluded from the WSA boundary up to the first lava crossing. The road provides access to four kipukas used as recreation sites. The Proposed Action excludes the entire road and four kipukas for two reasons: vehicle use to the area for recreation pursuits has been established, and the area would be difficult to manage as wilderness.

Participants in the scoping session on May 23, 1979, were asked to identify significant issues and resource conflicts. Identified issues considered for the draft environmental impact statement included: the need for wilderness designation, economic and social impacts, predator control, cultural and primitive recreation values, State land exchanges, mineral potential, range impacts, and educational and aesthetic values. Two public hearings on the Draft EIS were held on March 25 and March 26, 1980, in Rupert and Idaho Falls, Idaho. Transcripts are included as an appendix to this report, but are separate documents.

During the preparation of the final EIS, the issues were further refined into three broad categories and listed as questions. These questions have been addressed in the Final EIS and are as follows:

1. Is a wilderness designation needed for the Great Rift Area? Some people believe that such a designation is clearly needed to protect wilderness, outdoor recreation, esthetic, and other values while other people believe the rugged topography adequately protects the area and no further action is needed.

2. Would a wilderness designation result in adverse impacts to economic users such as farm and ranch or tourist enterprises?
Some people are concerned that water hauling for livestock and predator control would be prohibited, no grazing would be allowed, and that more attention needs to be directed to economic uses rather than wilderness uses. Management of State owned lands could be complicated, and no rights of way would be allowed.
3. Would a wilderness designation degrade resources and create a safety hazard? Some people are concerned that such a designation would increase recreation use resulting in degradation of archaeological and recreation values. Other people believe such a designation would pose safety problems since the area is rough with a hostile climate.

Significant Resource Data

Wilderness Values

The Great Rift meets all the criteria for wilderness areas in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The land is unaffected by man except for historic artifacts. The desert rangeland near the lava's edge and within the proposed boundary shows a few signs of grazing, but these do not disqualify it from meeting the naturalness criteria.

Although access points in the form of roads and trails near the lava's edge are numerous, they are not well defined. Few people are aware of beginning or ending points for trips into the lava's interior. The unit's large size, remoteness, harsh environment, and access problems allow visitors outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities are numerous and outstanding. Activities focus on the area's volcanic features and biotic communities and include hiking, camping, spelunking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, hunting, and photography. The study of natural features includes the discovery and exploration of fissures, cinder and spatter cones, craters, lava tubes, lava cascades, and kipukas. The harsh, rugged environment offers a challenge and a risk to every visitor.

Supplemental values listed in the Wilderness Act are "ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value." The lava surface, kipukas, and desert rangeland include examples of plant and animal communities in all stages of succession. The ecotone where limber pine makes the transition to junipers is normally found only in montane regions, but also occurs on the Craters flow. The largest juniper in the State of Idaho is located on the Wapi flow.

The Wapi flow of the Great Rift contains geological features not found in the Craters flow, such as hornitoes, driblet spires, and the youngest and best preserved example of a shield cone on the Snake River Plain. The

Craters flow outside the National Monument provides further examples of volcanic cones, spatter ramparts, tree molds, the two largest federally-managed kipukas on the flow, and other lava features.

Many of the 450 kipukas are isolated and untouched, providing scientific and educational study sites. The Soil Conservation Service studied three kipukas for 10 years, and a study of the flora and fauna of a select group of kipukas was conducted by Idaho State University in 1979-80. The U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines have published geologic and mineral survey results. The National Monument has been used for studies of wildlife and invertebrates, and the Great Rift offers an expanded opportunity for these activities.

The scenic qualities of the lava flows are rated Class I under BLM's Visual Resource Management System. This ranking identifies important and significant visual resources and implies that careful consideration be given to actions which could affect the appearance of the landscape.

Historically, the lava flows of the Great Rift have received attention and merit continued study. At least three legends of the flow's origin were created and passed down by area Indians. Archaeologists found 15 cultural sites including many waste flakes, broken stone tools, projectile points, pottery fragments, grinding stones, caves, rock shelters, and rock structures. The State Historic Preservation Officer and State Archaeologist have reviewed all inventory reports. Individual sites or a group of sites may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Remnants of animals no longer found in the lavas, including grizzlies, elk, wolverines, and wolves, were discovered in a lava tube cave; horns of bison and bighorn sheep have also been found. Early explorers such as Captain Bonneville mentioned the flows in their journals, and travelers on the Oregon Trail used at least one lava feature as a landmark. The Craters flow achieved some notoriety in 1924 in a National Geographic article featuring the lava area. Southeast Idaho newspapers have carried several feature stories on the flows during the 1970's. Several environmental and recreation organizations printed articles in their newsletters discussing the Great Rift wilderness proposal during 1979-80.

Threatened or Endangered Species

No threatened or endangered plant or animal species are known to occur in the study area. However, the blind beetle (blacicaucicola bathyscioides) is found at the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Crystal Ice Cave and is assumed to live in the study area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently reviewing the status for the beetle to determine whether it should be included on the endangered species list.

Livestock Grazing

Livestock grazing is an allowed use of a wilderness area and will continue where it presently exists. About 6,000 acres of land, in small parcels, are suitable for grazing within the boundary of the Proposed Action. Only

three kipukas, Bear Park, Larkspur Park and Grassland Kipuka in the Craters of the Moon flow, are known to be intermittently grazed. These kipukas are large and somewhat accessible, although two of them require trailing livestock over lava. Grazing will not be allowed in any kipukas where it does not presently exist. The small size and difficult access to most kipukas make them inappropriate grazing lands.

Lava Rock Collection

Several small areas on the Wapi flow and a few scattered areas on the Craters of the Moon flow contain lava rock like that used in the building industry. Difficult access to these areas make most rock collection uneconomical. Many other sources of rock are located in nearby flows and include developed access routes to the sites.

Economic and Social Impacts

Livestock grazing and recreational use within the Great Rift are the only known economic activities. Grazing occurs on about 6,000 acres of land in the Proposed Action; the acreage is divided into many small parcels. There are no range improvements, road or driveable trails within the areas. Livestock numbers would be unaffected by a wilderness designation.

The total recreational use of the Great Rift is not known, but is thought to be small, judging from letters and personal contacts. The nearby Craters of the Moon National Monument reported 132 overnight stays in the designated wilderness area in 1978, and 252 in 1979. If the Great Rift were designated wilderness, increased public awareness could result in a small increase in recreational use. The National Monument's designation has not significantly increased use in the past 10 years.

The lifestyles of local people would not be affected by a designation. Unless visitation to the area increases significantly, the small communities near the Great Rift would not experience an influx of non-residents. No roads near the edge of the lavas would be closed or even affected, unless they were improved at some future date. The two areas now receiving the most local use, Wapi Park and Wood Road on the Wapi flow, will continue being open to vehicle use if designation occurs.

Over half of the written comments received after the intensive inventory were supportive of the proposal. About three-fourths of the written and oral comments on the draft EIS were also supportive of either the Proposed Action or the Wilderness Study Area alternative. Opposing comments from both review periods centered on either needing no more wilderness in Idaho or needing no wilderness designation for the Great Rift because of its inhospitable nature.

In October, 1979, County Commissioners in Blaine, Butte, and Power Counties had no objection to a wilderness designation if no adverse effects on local income occurred. Commissioners in Minidoka County were opposed to wilderness designation.

Options Foregone

Effective January 1, 1984, subject to existing rights, the minerals in land designated as wilderness will be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing. The U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Bureau of Mines mineral report of 1980 mentions no mineral resources on the Great Rift except about a half million tons of building stone. The stone is saleable but no sales have been authorized and very little stone has been removed for construction. Access is poor, markets are distant, and other lava rock sources are readily available. The mineral report is available at the Idaho Falls and Shoshone District Offices, at the Idaho State Office in Boise, and at the USGS office in Reston, Virginia 22070.

No known deposits of natural gas or oil exist in the area.

If Congress designates the Great Rift as wilderness, a wilderness management plan would be developed and implemented. Until such a plan could be developed, the following activities would be specifically prohibited:

Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and, except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area (Wilderness Act, Section 4(c)).

The above subsection would be qualified by Section 4(d) of the Wilderness Act which allows "use of aircraft...where these uses have already become established." The present aerial predator program controlled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be allowed to continue under this section. Cultural resources would be protected from intentional or inadvertent loss or damage in accordance with the American Historical Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 469 et. seq.

Long-term and Short-term Effects

Designation of the Great Rift as wilderness would preserve existing wilderness values and ensure the long-term productivity of the lava and desert ecosystem. Natural succession would continue on the lava and in the kipukas, and the opportunity for comparative studies of the kipukas would be preserved.

Cultural resources would be preserved. Primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities would be enhanced. Off-road vehicles would not be allowed, but very little known use occurs.

Since there are no known locatable or leasable minerals or geothermal resources, they would not be adversely affected. There would be both minor short-term and long-term effects on the building stone industry due to the unavailability of some saleable stone. However, Congress could rescind a wilderness designation if the national need for these building stone resources became critical, or if other unknown resources are discovered.

Management Considerations

If Congress designates the Great Rift as a wilderness area, the following goals would guide the development of the management plan:

Goal #1: Wilderness Qualities - Protect, enhance, and maintain the natural beauty and wilderness character of the land; preserve the unique wildlife and vegetative communities in the isolated kipukas; and allow natural succession for scientific and other study.

Goal #2: Primitive Recreation - Provide meaningful and high quality primitive recreation through interpretation and information programs, and provide adequate staging areas and other needed visitor services.

Goal #3: Other Uses - Continue to allow those uses mentioned in Section 4 of the Wilderness Act of 1964, subject to the reasonable regulations deemed necessary by the Secretary of Interior.

To achieve these goals, the Great Rift Wilderness Management Plan would incorporate the specific restrictions in "Options Foregone" and would provide the following objectives:

Goal #1 - Wilderness Qualities

1. Monitor and evaluate the condition of each resource such as geologic features, cultural features, vegetation, and wildlife. Prevent damage to these resources through visitor education. Enhance resource conditions where it would not impair wilderness values.
2. Provide fire protection without the use of on-the-ground motorized vehicles. Develop a natural fire policy within the wilderness boundaries with provisions for emergency exceptions.
3. Monitor and restrict unauthorized uses on lava edges within the wilderness such as lava rock and artifact collecting, vehicle use, and damage to vegetation.
4. Allow collection of rocks, plants, and animals for scientific or other purposes only when consistent with maintaining the wilderness resource and

when approved by the BLM, Idaho State Department of Fish and Game, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Goal #2 - Primitive Recreation

1. Monitor and record visitor use and needs by observation of parking areas and by personal contacts with known user groups.
2. Determine the facilities needed to meet visitor use and safety, yet protect wilderness values. Conduct a complete inventory of access routes and signs.
3. Develop visitor carrying capacity data to determine whether visitation levels are consistent with protecting wilderness values, yet maximize recreation enjoyment.
4. Develop projects and programs to educate visitors and help them enjoy and benefit from the area without damaging the resources. Programs would include an access map, surface feature map, hiking trip information, and a brochure describing the major features and geological processes. An introductory slide program would be available in both the Idaho Falls and Shoshone District Offices.
5. Coordinate interpretive publications and programs with personnel at Craters of the Moon National Monument. Make literature available at the National Park Service visitor center as well as at the Idaho Falls and Shoshone district offices.
6. Encourage scientific studies and educational use of the area by local schools and nearby universities.
7. Allow hunting within the boundaries, subject to rules and regulations of the Idaho State Department of Fish and Game.

Goal #3 - Other Uses

1. Continue domestic livestock grazing under the Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA at a level consistent with range grazing capacity. Allow for continued grazing in all existing allotments. Do not allow grazing within kipukas where it was not an established use as of October 21, 1976.
2. Allotment Management Plans around the lava's perimeter should include programs for minimizing changes in plant composition and for monitoring grazing impacts.
3. Continue to coordinate the aerial predator control program with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
4. Continue to coordinate relevant management plans with personnel at Craters of the Moon National Monument.

Successful development and implementation of the management plan would require coordination with other BLM resource activities, federal, State, and local governments, and the public. Managing the area would require one permanent employee who would also serve as recreation planner or district wilderness coordinator and one or two summer employees.

Time Frame for Designation

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act requires that wilderness recommendations on all public land areas formally designated as natural or primitive areas prior to November 1, 1975, be reported to the President by July 1, 1980. The President must report his final recommendations within 2 years to Congress. Congress can then decide which areas become wilderness.

The Great Rift is one of the first and largest BLM wilderness study areas to be recommended for designation. The recommendation offers Congress the opportunity to preserve the wilderness values of an unusual and scientifically important area. Quick action will insure that management plans are written and put into effect while personnel most familiar with the area are still available.

Special Legislative Needs

The BLM and Idaho State Department of Lands would have to work out an exchange for 18,550 acres of State land within the proposed boundary if desingation occurs. Legislation designating the wilderness should include language which allows the State land to automatically become part of the wilderness when the exchange is finalized.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY
PROPOSED GREAT RIFT WILDERNESS

Idaho Falls District BLM
Blain, Butte, Minidoka, and Power Counties, Idaho

	<u>Total¹</u>	<u>Grassland Kipuka Natural Area</u>	<u>Contiguous Lands²</u>	<u>Associated Lands³</u>
Acres in Inventory Unit	452,700	160	364,840	87,700
Acres without Characteristics	78,300	-	77,200	1,100
Acres with Characteristics ⁴	374,400	160	287,640	86,600
Acres Recommended Suitable for Designation ⁵	341,000	160	267,950	72,890

	<u>Total</u> ¹	<u>Grassland Kipuka Natural Area</u>	<u>Contiguous Lands</u> ²	<u>Associated Lands</u> ³
Acres Recommended Not Suitable for Designation	33,400	-	19,690	13,710

Note: All acreage figures include State lands.

Ownership of Lands in
Draft Environmental Impact Statement Alternatives⁶

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Public Lands</u>	<u>State Lands</u>	<u>Private Lands</u>
Acres in Proposed Action	341,000	322,450	18,550	0
Acres in Wilderness Study Area	374,400	355,850	18,550	0

¹The Great Rift includes the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area, the Craters of the Moon flow, and the Wapi flow.

²The Craters of the Moon flow is contiguous to the previously designated Natural Area.

³The Wapi flow is separated from the Craters flow by five miles, but is considered in the same proposal.

⁴Wilderness Study Area

⁵Proposed Action

⁶The "No Action" alternative does not include any acres.

State Sections Inside the Proposed
Boundary of the Great Rift Wilderness

Craters of the Moon Flow Surveyed Sections

<u>Township</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Acres</u>
2N	25E	16	640
2N	25E	36	640
2N	26E	16	640
1N	23E	36	640
1N	24E	16	640
1N	26E	36	640
1S	24E	16	640
1S	25E	36	640

<u>Township</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Acres</u>
1S	27E	16	380
2S	25E	16	640
2S	25E	36	640
3S	25E	36	640
3S	27E	16	640
4S	23E	36	640
4S	24E	16	640
4S	24E	36	640
4S	25E	16	250
4S	25E	36	640
5S	24E	16	640
5S	25E	16	640
TOTAL			12,150

Craters of the Moon Flow Unsurveyed Sections

<u>Township</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Acres</u>
1S	26E	36	640
2S	27E	16	640
2S	26E	36	640
3S	26E	36	640
4S	26E	36	640
TOTAL			3,200

Wapi Flow Surveyed Sections

<u>Township</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Acres</u>
6S	27E	16	640
6S	28E	16	640
6S	27E	36	640
7S	28E	16	640
7S	27E	36	640
TOTAL			3,200

TOTAL Craters of the Moon Flow	15,350
TOTAL Wapi Flow	3,200
Total State sections in the Craters and Wapi flows	<u>18,550 acres</u>

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following table displays the alternative preference of the people who commented on the draft EIS and during the public hearing.

Comment Letters

From	Alternative Preference			
	None	Proposed Action	WSA Alt.	No Action
Blaine Conty Zoning and Planning Commission		X		
Idaho Transportation Dept., Division of Highways, District 2	X			
Region IV Development Association, Inc.				X
Environmental Protection Agency, Region X	X			
John and Meri Kuehn			X	
Jeffrey S. Green		X		
R. B. Anderson				X
Eric Schulz			X	
Peter Bowler			X	
Ethel W. Thorniley			X	
Marguerita Christoph			X	
Idaho Environmental Council		X		
Randall B. Vance		X		
Toni Hill				X
David J. Epstein			X	
Idaho Transportation Dept. Div. of Highways, Dist. 6	X			
Jeffrey A. Crook		X		
Gary Vesperman			X	
Ron Guenther			X	
National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region			X	

From	Alternative Preference			
	None	Proposed Action	WSA Alt.	No Action
Wilderness Society			X	
Clarence F. Bellem		X		
Idaho Farm Bureau				X
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, Northwest Region			X	
Timothy Byrnes		X		
Idaho Attorney General	X			
Jay E. Anderson	X			
J. R. Simplot Company				X
Idaho State Historical Society		X		
Committee for Idaho's High Desert			X	
Dept. of Energy, Idaho Operations Office	X			
Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game		X		
Idaho State Clearinghouse	X			
U.S. Soil Conservation Service		X		
Dennis Baird		X		
PU Cattle Ranch		X		
Institute of the American West		X		
E. Fred Birdsall				X
Bernice Walker		X		
League of Women Voters of Idaho Falls			X	
Thomas J. Dale			X	
Harry F. Lemoyne			X	

From	Alternative Preference		
	None	Proposed Action	WSA Alt. No Action
Tim Johnson		X	
Wilia Carraway		X	
Henry Lemoyne		X	
Nancy L. Savage		X	
Don L. Crawford		X	
Fred Ralo		X	
Mary Rosczyk		X	
Danny Simon		X	
Willis L. Tarbet			X
Charles A. Wellner		X	
Jerry L. Dixon			X
Glenn Ray Downing			X
Randall R. Rogers			X
Ruth Bull		X	
Harold Smith			X
Sam Crace		X	
Henry Deck			X
Douglas J. Hellie			X
American Wilderness Alliance		X	
Dave Foreman			X
C. Jay Dorr		X	
Tim Heffron			X
Marjorie B. Kernick			X
John R. Swanson			X

From	Alternative Preference		
	None	Proposed Action	WSA Alt. No Action
Charles M. Bagley			X
Friends of the Earth			X
Katie Holmes			X
Michael Burwell			X
John Unwin			X
Steve D. Johnson			X
Richard Spotts			X
Albert E. Honican			X
Ron Watters		X	
Gary Stone			X
Sam A. Monger		X	
Dona E. Gasdict			X
Atlantic Richfield Co.			X
Dick Wilson			X
Tharnyne Betsch			X
Richard D. Tenney			X
M. Frank Ireton		X	
Karen Larson		X	
Steven E. Payne			X
Marjorie Hayes			X
Tim Resinge			X
Idaho Cattlemen's Assoc.		X	
Robert G. Zahary			X
Morton R. Brigham		X	

From	Alternative Preference			
	None	Proposed Action	WSA Alt.	No Action
Fritz and Janet Ward		X		
State of Idaho Dept. of Lands	X			
Subtotal	8	34	40	10

Public Hearings

From	Alternative Preference			
	None	Proposed Action	WSA Alt	No Action
Jay Anderson		X		
Pat O'Donnel				X
Elwood Rich, Rich Livestock Company				X
Ned Horner, Minidoka Planning & Zoning Board				X
Lyle Barton, Minidoka County Commissioners				X
Pete Cole, Portneuf Valley Audubon Society			X	
John Remsberg				X
G. F. Irwin				X
Henry Etcheverry, Minidoka Grazing Association				X
William P. Rogers, Idaho Conservation League			X	
Gerald A. Jayne		X		
Ralph Maughan, Sierra Club, Northern Rockies Chapter		X		
Cyril Slasky, Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs			X	
Robert J. Hentges, National Park Service, Craters of the Moon Nat. Monument			X	
Tom Stroschein		X		
Bill Schroeder, Idaho Cattlemen's Association		X		
Subtotal		5	4	7
TOTAL (Letters and Hearings)	8	39	44	17

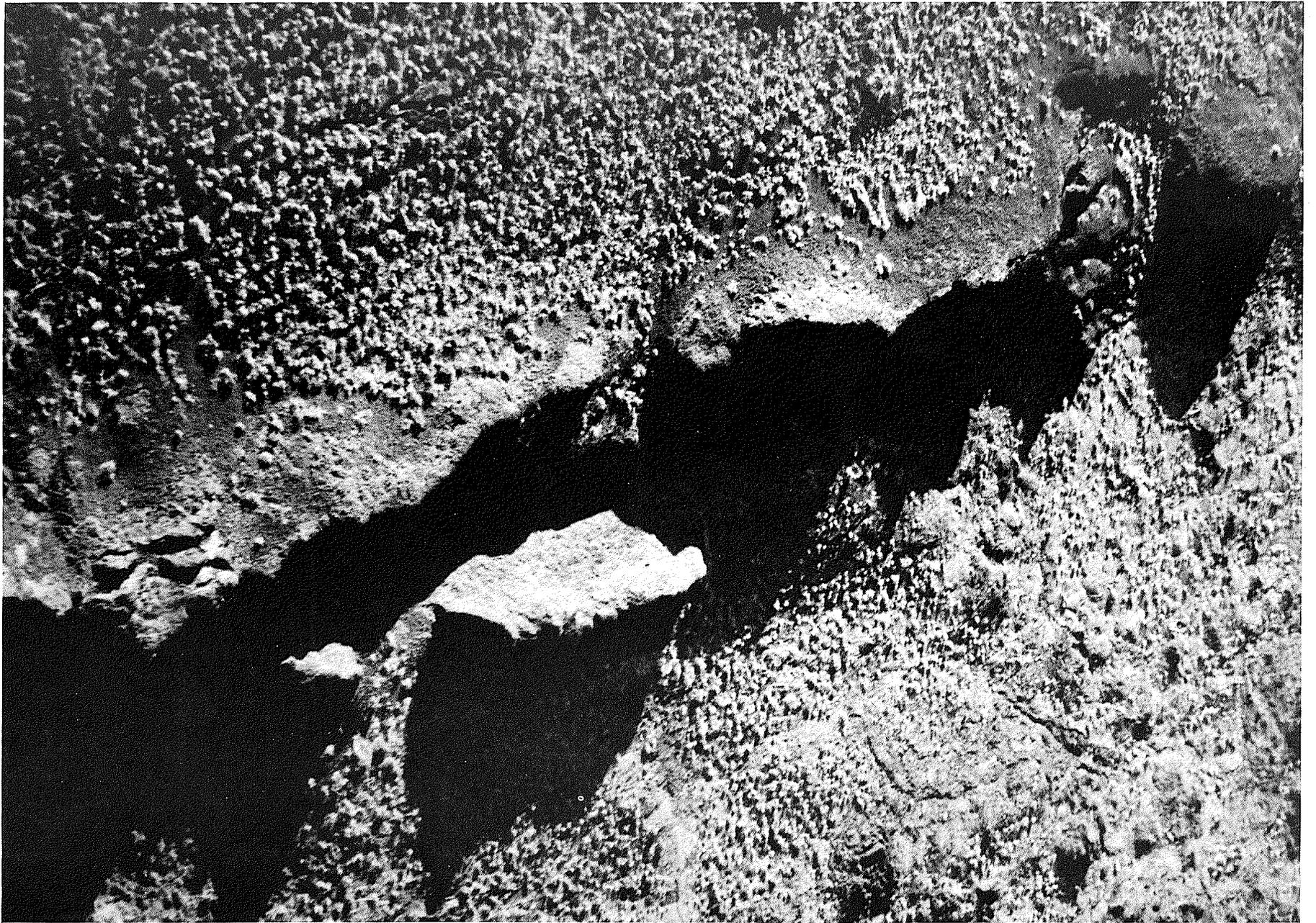
APPENDIX 1



Raven's Eye Butte on Craters of the Moon Lava Flow



Surface channel near Pillar Butte on the Wapi Lava Flow



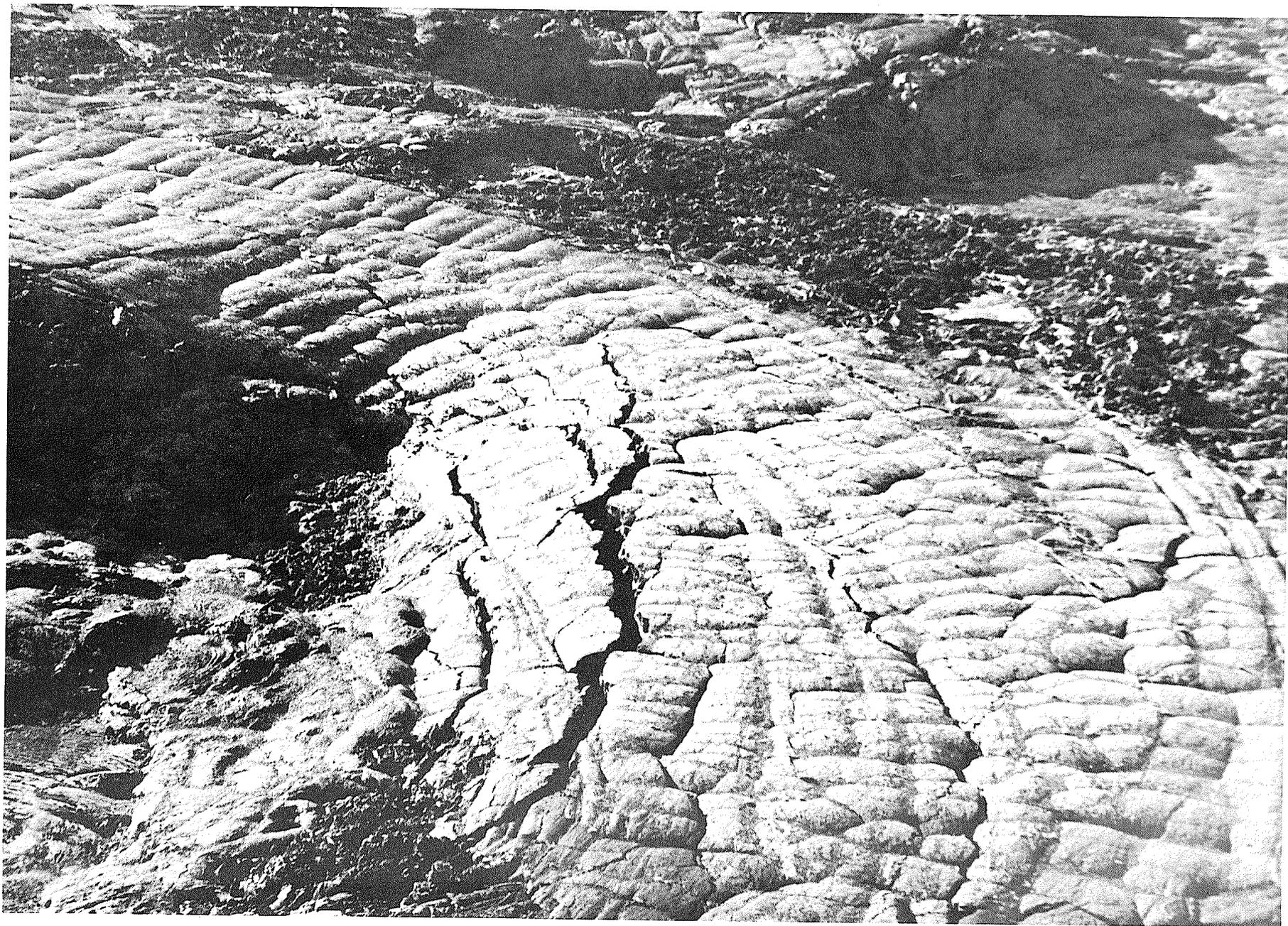
Spatter ramparts along the main fissure of the Great Rift



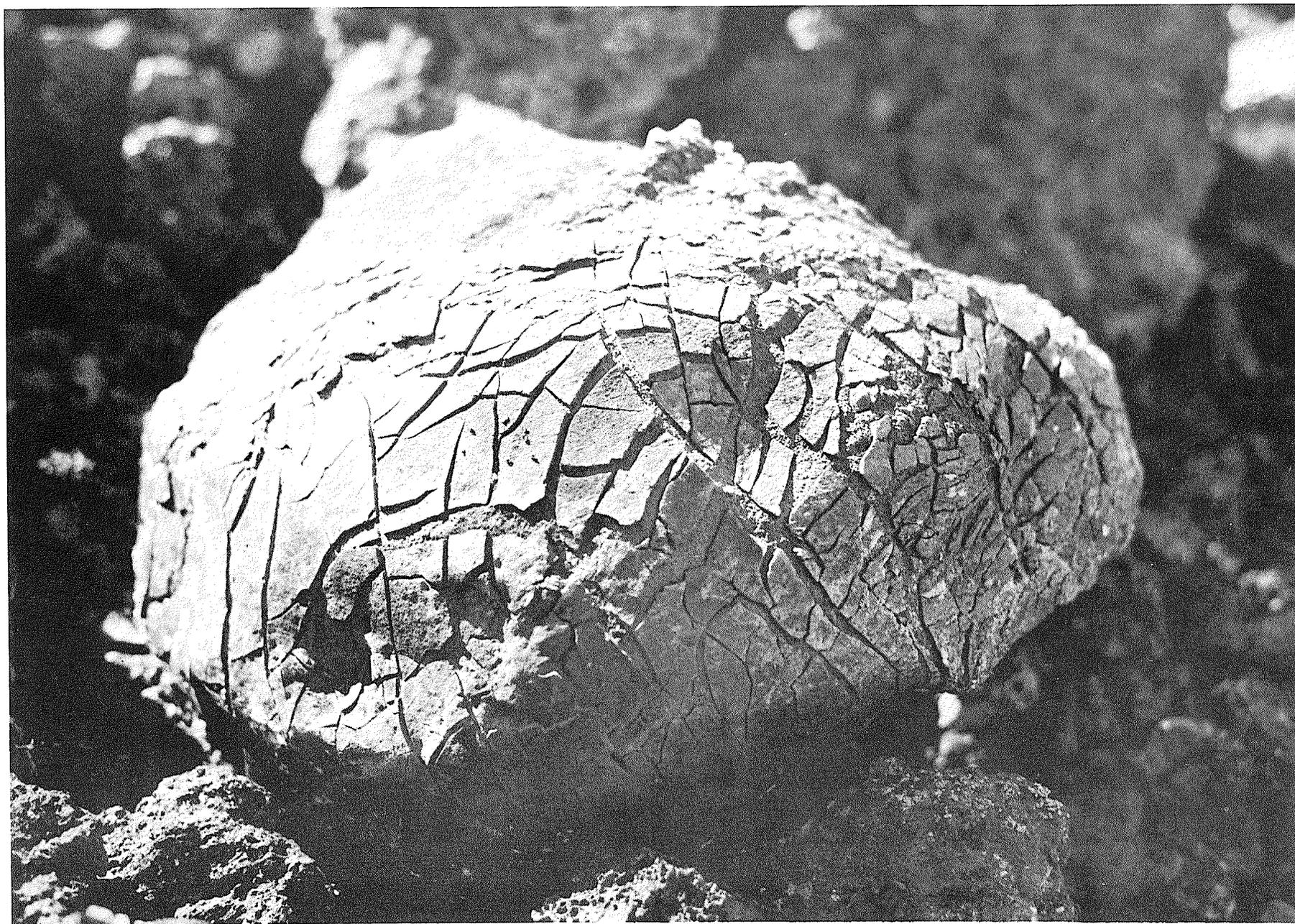
Blacktail Butte and Devil's Cauldron on Craters of the Moon Lava Flow



General Rift Zone and Blacktail Butte on Craters of the Moon Lava Flow



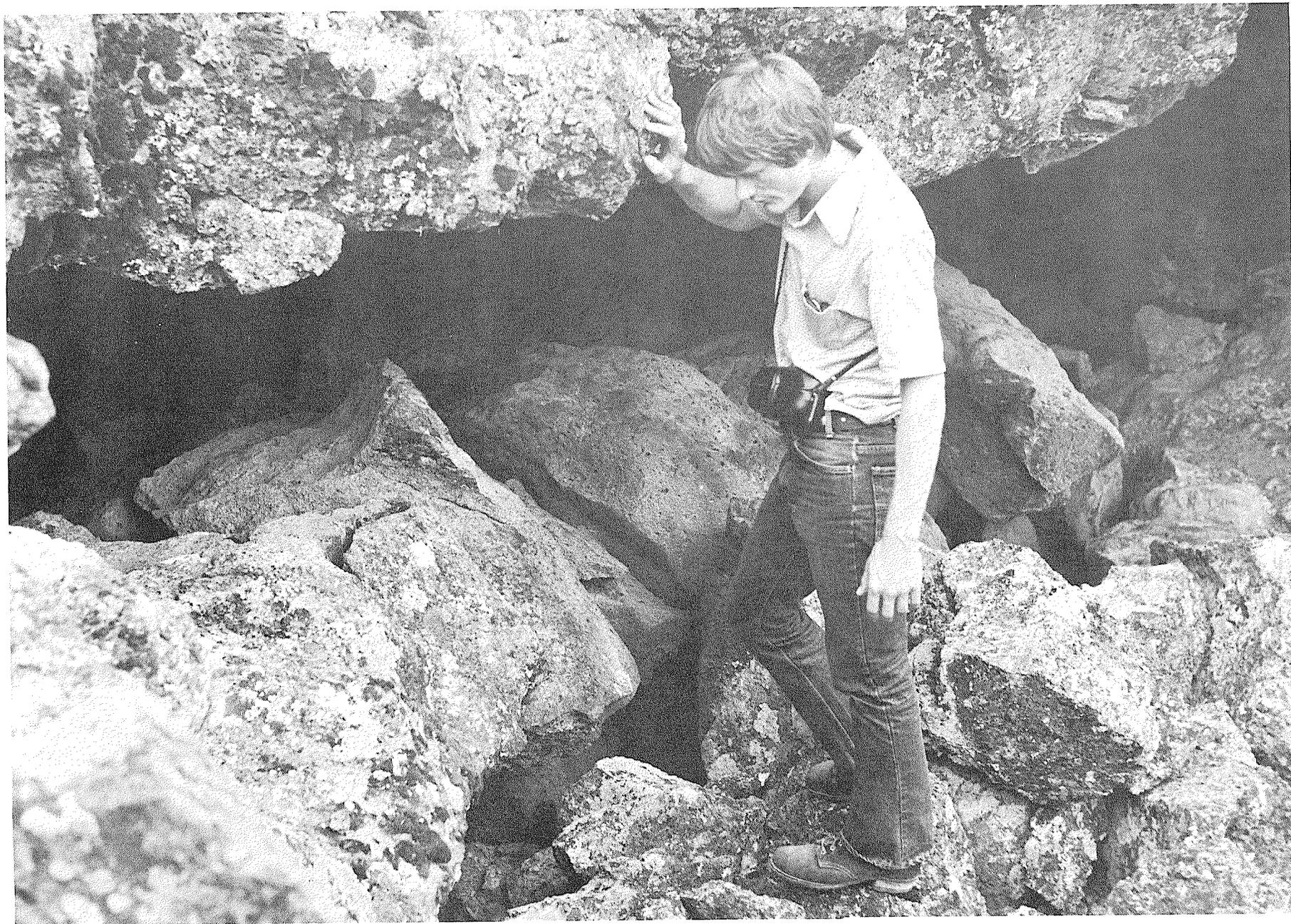
"Lunar walkway" on a pahoehoe lava flow



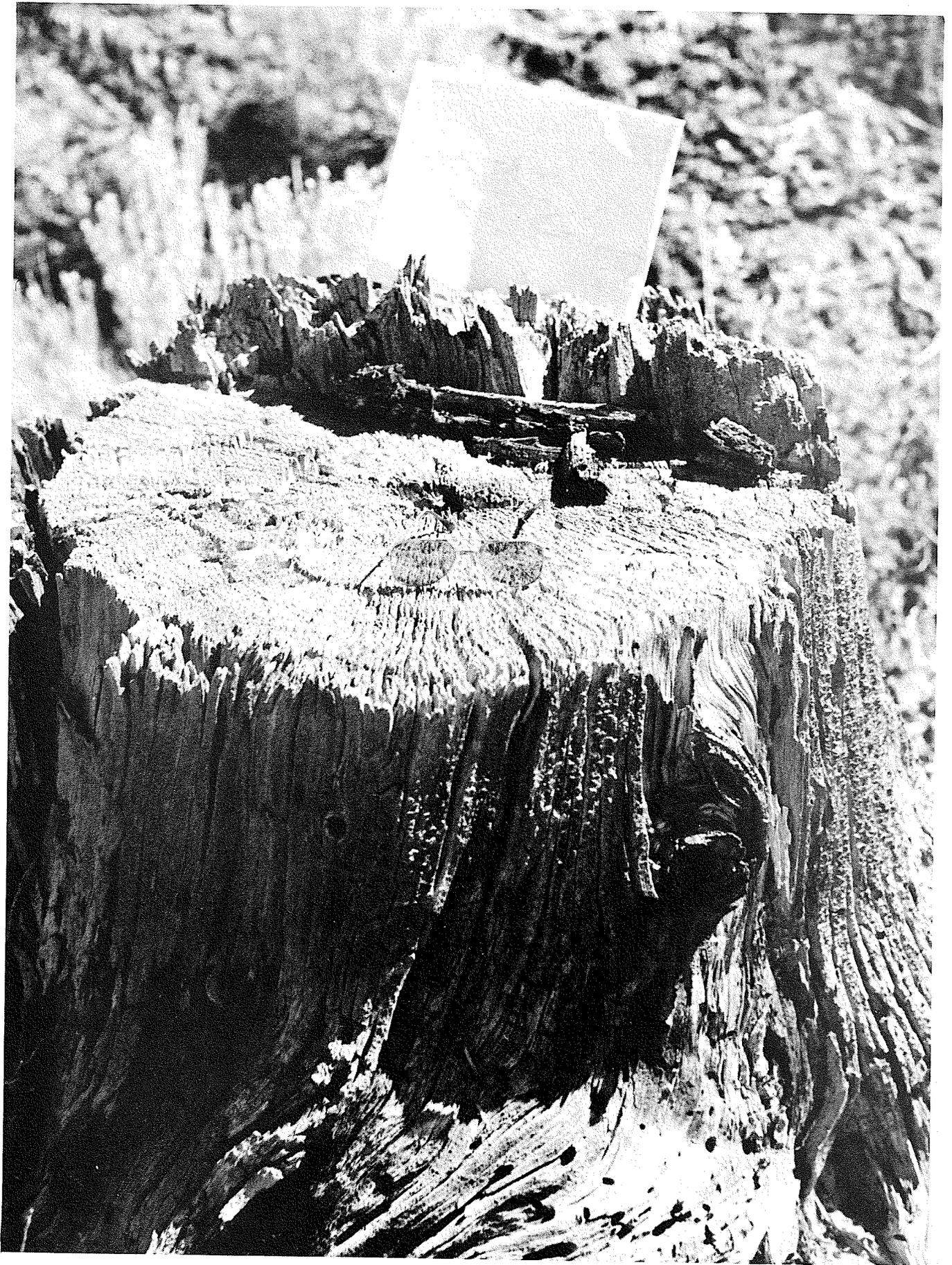
Breadcrust bomb found on Blacktail Butte on Craters of the Moon Lava Flow



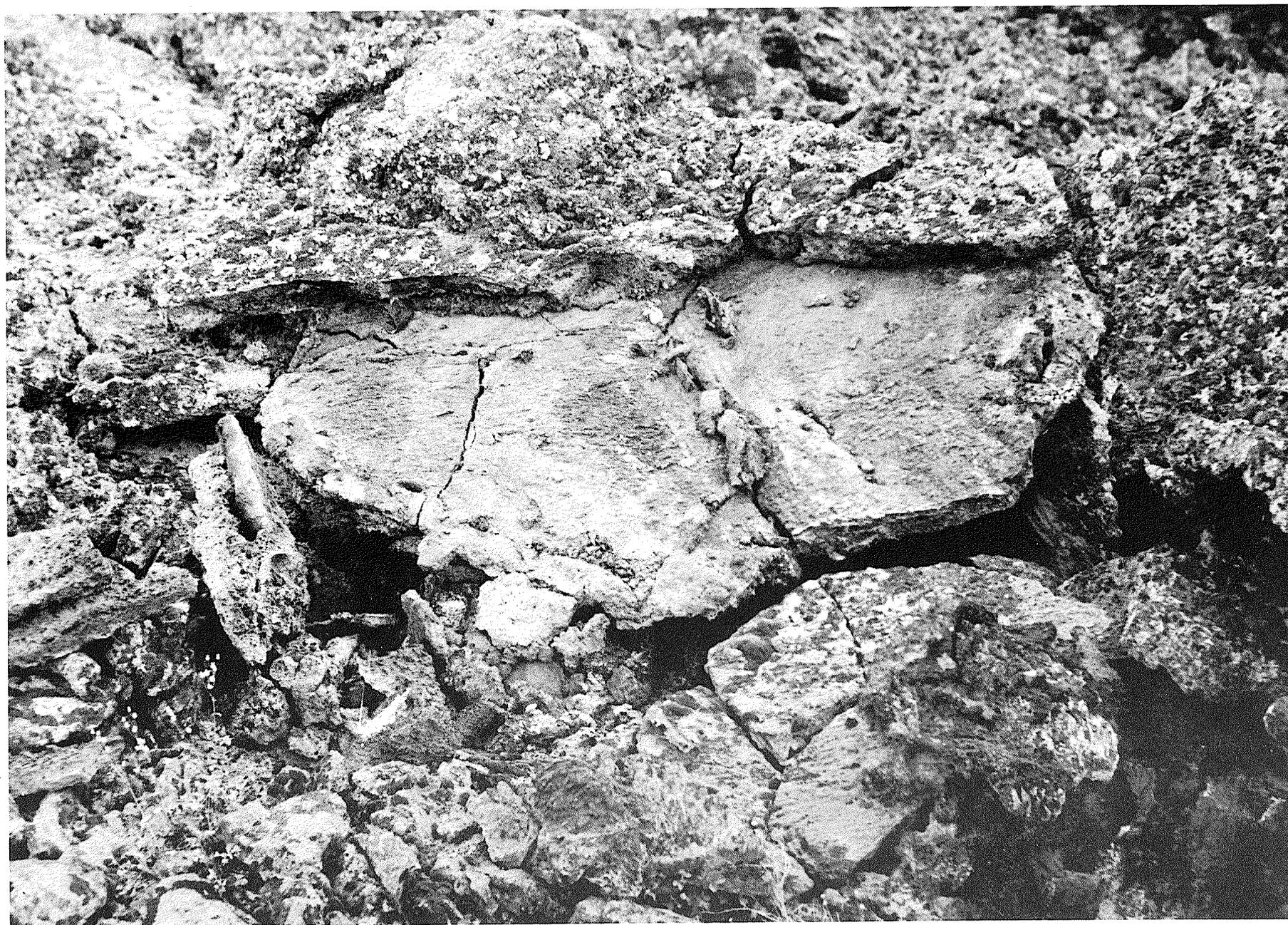
Recreationist exploring collapsed depression on Wapi Lava Flow



Backpackers traversing pahoehoe lava on Craters of the Moon Lava Flow



Evidence of historical tree removal on lava's edge



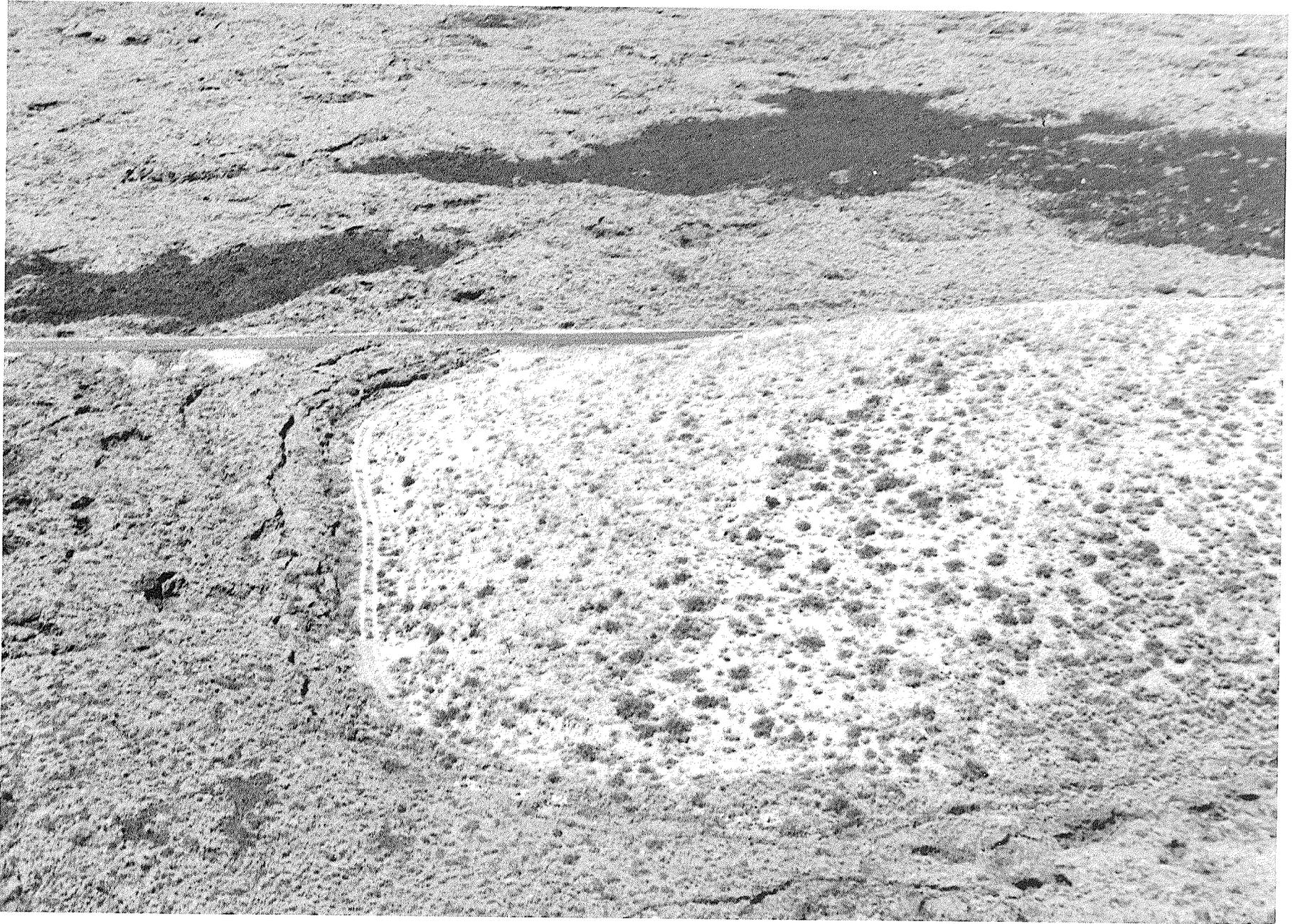
Evidence of recent lava rock removal on Wapi Lava Flow



Vehicular trail on margin of Wapi Lava Flow



Grassland Kipuka Natural Area along Highway 20-26



Grassland Kipuka Natural Area showing short jeep trail



View from Grassland Kipuka Natural Area looking south

APPENDIX 2

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The proposed Great Rift Wilderness is located in parts of Blaine, Butte, Minidoka, and Power Counties in Idaho. The border basically follows the edges of the Wapi and Craters of the Moon lava flows, excluding the Craters of the Moon National Monument. About 6,000 acres of desert rangeland are included in small parcels on the edges of both flows. State lands within the boundaries are listed separately, and can be considered part of the proposal only with a land exchange agreement. The described border is for the Proposed Action of the Draft EIS.

Parts of the following townships and ranges are included in the proposals:

Craters of the Moon Lava Flow

T. 3 N., R. 25 E.; T. 3 N., R. 26 E.; T. 2 N., R. 25 E.; T. 2 N., R. 26 E;
T. 1 N., R. 23 E.; T. 1 N., R. 24 E.; T. 1 N., R. 25 E.; T. 1 N., R. 26 E;
T. 1 N., R. 27 E.; T. 1 S., R. 22 E.; T. 1 S., R. 23 E.; T. 1 S., R. 24 E;
T. 1 S., R. 25 E.; T. 1 S., R. 26 E.; T. 1 S., R. 27 E.; T. 2 S., R. 25 E;
T. 2 S., R. 26 E.; R. 2 S., R. 27 E.; T. 3 S., R. 24 E.; T. 3 S., R. 25 E;
T. 3 S.; R. 26 E.; T. 3 S., R. 27 E.; T. 4 S., R. 23 E.; T. 4 S., R. 24 E;
T. 4 S., R. 25 E.; T. 4 S., R. 26 E.; T. 4 S., R. 27 E.; T. 5 S., R. 23 E;
T. 5 S., R. 24 E.; T. 5 S., R. 25 E.; T. 5 S., R. 26 E.

Wapi Lava Flow

T. 5 S., R. 27 E.; T. 6 S., R. 26 E.; T. 6 S., R. 27 E.; T. 6 S., R. 28 E;
T. 7 S., R. 27 E.; T. 7 S., R. 28 E.; T. 8 S., R. 27 E.; T. 8 S., R. 28 E.

The following detailed boundary description should be correlated with USGS topographic maps located at the Idaho Falls and Shoshone District Offices, the Idaho State Office, and available from the U.S. Geological Survey at Reston, Virginia 22070.

Key to USGS Map Numbers

<u>USGS Map #</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>USGS Map #</u>	<u>Name</u>
1	Nichols Reservoir	20	Bear Park West
2	Arco South	21	Fissure Butte
3	Fingers Butte	22	N. Laidlaw Butte
6	Pratt Butte	23	Little Park
8	Bear Park East	24	Crooks Planimetric
10	Mule Butte	25	Blizzard Mtn. South
11	Bear Trap Cave	26	Inferno Cone
12	Brigham Point	27	The Watchman
13	Larkspur Park	28	Grouse
14	Community Lake	A	Pillar Butte
15	Bear Park SW	B	Schodde Well
16	Bottleneck Lake	C	Rattlesnake Butte
17	Laidlaw Lake	D	Pillar Butte SE
18	Laidlaw Butte	E	Lake Walcott
19	Bear Den Butte	F	Yale

- 26, 28 Beginning at the National Park Service boundary in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24, T. 2 N., R. 24 E.; follow Highway 20-26 (excluding a 200 foot right-of-way and material sites) northeast to private land in Section 27, T. 3 N., R. 25E.;
- 1 follow the private land boundary to the lava's edge; proceed along lava's edge to private land in Section 24; follow private land boundary to lava's edge in mid-Section 25; follow lava's edge to private land in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 25;
- 2 continue south to State Section 36; circumvent Section 36; follow private boundaries to lava's edge in Section 28, T. 3 N., R. 26 E; proceed along lava's edge to private land in Section 34; follow private boundary to lava's edge; proceed along lava's edge to southernmost point of lava peninsula in Section 11, T. 2 N., R. 26 E. Follow a direct line of sight approximately 1/3 mile to the northernmost tip of lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 11; proceed along the lava's
- 3 edge to a prominent ridge of older lava near the center of Section 22, T. 2 N., R. 26 E; follow the prominent ridge south to the new lava's edge, continue west, then south across base of lava peninsula to Huddles Hole road;
- 27 proceed to private land; follow private boundary around Huddles Hole to Huddles Hole road; proceed along road to
- 3 lava's edge; follow lava's edge to state Section 36; continue along western boundary of Section 36 to lava's edge. Follow lava's edge to state Section 16, circumvent state section to lava's edge in Section 21, T. 1 N., R. 27 E.;
- 6 follow lava's edge to road in Section 14, T. 1 S., R. 27 E.; continue along road to lava's edge; follow lava's edge to southernmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 16; continue along a direct line of sight approximately 3/8 mile to the easternmost lava in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 16; proceed along lava's edge to southernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 3 T. 2 S., R. 27 E. Continue along a direct line of sight approximately 1.2 miles to the easternmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 10; proceed along
- 8 lava's edge to easternmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 14; follow a direct line of sight to the northernmost lava in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 23.

USGS Map # Craters of the Moon Flow (Continued)

Follow the lava's edge to the southeasternmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24; continue along a direct line of sight approximately .4 mile to easternmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24; follow a direct line of sight approximately .8 mile to easternmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 25; proceed along a direct line of sight approximately 1.25 miles to easternmost lava in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 35; continue along a direct line of sight approximately .4 mile to easternmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 2, T. 3 S., R. 27 E. Follow lava's edge to road in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 10; continue along road to junction in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 14; follow road which continues southwesterly to crossing of a fissure in the center of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 27, T. 3 S., R. 27 E.; proceed along a direct line of sight approximately 1 mile west to the road where a fissure crosses it in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 28; continue along road to junction in the center of Section 29 (excluding Bear Park access road corridor from junction to its terminus in Section 19). Follow road south to its junction with Mule Butte road in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 4, T. 4 S., R. 27 E.; continue along Mule Butte road past Mule Butte, then southeast to easternmost lava in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 30; proceed along lava's edge to the northernmost lava in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 21, T. 5 S., R. 25 E.; follow a direct line of sight approximately .6 mile to road in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 21; continue along road to eastern border of Section 19; proceed north along section line to SE $\frac{1}{4}$ lava's edge; follow lava's edge to southernmost lava in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24, T. 5 S., R. 24 E.; proceed along a direct line of sight approximately .7 mile to the easternmost lava in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24; continue along lava's edge to southernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24; follow a direct line of sight approximately 1 mile to the southernmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 23; proceed along lava's edge to westernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 20, continue along a direct line of sight approximately 1 mile to a junction near the corner of Sections 17, 18, 19, and 20, T. 5 S., R. 24 E.; follow adjoining road north around its northernmost point in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 6; continue south along same road to the center of Section 13, T. 5 S., R. 23 E. where the road meets old lava. Continue along the old lava's edge to the new lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 11, T. 5 S., R. 23 E., proceed along western edge of new lava to road in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 31, T. 3 S., R. 24 E.; follow road to junction with east-bound road of southern Laidlaw Park in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 31;

USGS Map # Craters of the Moon Flow (Continued)

- 16 continue along the eastbound road to junction in NW $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 4, T. 4 S., R. 24 E.; proceed south on road to and around Bottleneck Lake; follow same road north to and around Three Forks Lake; continue northeast on Three Forks Lake road to junction in SW $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 4; proceed east along road to Lower Thumb Reservoir (excluding .3 mile long road to lava's edge in SW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 3); continue (excluding South End Lake and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile road to it) along road following eastern perimeter of Thumb to junction north of Lava Butte in NW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 32, T. 2 S., R. 25 E.;
- 15 & 20
19 continue northwest on road to lava's edge near the center of Section 30. Proceed along lava's edge to private land in SE $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 5, T. 2 S., R. 25 E.; follow private land boundary to lava's edge; continue along lava's edge to private land in SE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 30, T. 1 S., R. 25 E.; proceed along private land boundary to fenceline in SE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 19; continue along fenceline to its northernmost point in NW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 19; proceed due west along a direct line of sight approximately 1.2 miles to road in SW $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 24, T. 1 S., R. 24 E.; follow road northwest to Northside Reservoir access road in SE $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 15; continue along access road around Northside Reservoir and back to main road; proceed to Hollow Top Landing Strip; follow northern edge of landing strip to its western terminus; continue on a direct line of sight approximately .9 mile to the easternmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 28; proceed along lava's edge to road in SE $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 32;
- 20, 21 & 22
- 23 follow road across lava to a point 1/3 mile west of lava's edge; continue on a direct line of sight approximately 1.3 miles to westernmost lava in NE $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 25, T. 1 S., R. 23 E. Proceed on a direct line of sight approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to westernmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 25; follow a direct line of sight approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to southernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 24; continue on a direct line of sight approximately 1 mile to southernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 23; proceed along a direct line of sight approximately .8 mile to southernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{2}$ Section 22; follow along a direct line of sight approximately .4 mile to road where lava crossing begins; continue along road to private land boundary on line between Sections 19 and 20;

USGS MAP #

Craters of the Moon Flow (Continued)

24
23
24
23 & 25
26
23,22,21,27
26, 28

proceed along private and state land boundaries around Section 16 to Pedleford Flat road in Section 23, T. 1 S., R. 22 E.; follow road to private land boundary in Section 15; continue along private land boundaries to the corner post of Sections 2, 3, 10, and 11; proceed east along section line to private land; follow private land boundaries to highway; proceed northeast along Highway 20-26 (excluding 200 foot right-of-way, material sites, and private land in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 33, T. 1 N., R. 23 E.) to National Monument boundary; continue along Monument boundary completely around western, southern, and eastern perimeters and back to the point of origin.

USGS Map # Wapi Flow

- 11 Beginning on Crystal Ice Cave - Bear Trap Cave Road in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 22, T. 5 S., R. 27 E.; follow road southeast to junction in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 23, continue on southernmost road southeast to junction in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 6, T. 6 S., R. 28 E.; proceed on southernmost road south to junction in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 8 (excluding all of Wapi Park Road); continue east along road to Section 11; follow a line of sight approximately 1.1 miles south to the road in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 14; proceed along road to private land in Section 13; continue along private land boundary to the center point of NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 25, T. 6 S., R. 28 E.; follow a
- C direct line of sight approximately 1/8 mile to the northernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 25; proceed along Kipuka's western edge to state Section 36; circumvent western, northwestern, southwestern edges of Section 36 to private land
- D boundaries; continue along private land boundaries around the eastern peninsula of Wapi Flow to the lava's edge in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 30, T. 7 S., R. 29 E.; follow lava's edge south to private land along Section 31 boundary; proceed west along section line to lava's edge; continue north along lava's edge to private land; proceed west to Section 25 then south to lava's
- C edge to follow lava's edge to private land in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 3, T. 8 S., R. 28 E., continue south along private boundary to lava's edge; proceed along lava's edge to state Section 16;
- F Circumvent Section 16 to lava's edge in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 21, follow lava's edge to east-west half section line in Section 19; continue west along half section line to lava in center of
- E Section 24, T. 8 S., R. 27 E.; proceed on a direct line of sight approximately 1.3 miles to the southernmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 23; follow lava's edge to road junction in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$
- B Section 4; continue north along road (excluding Wapi woodroad corridor to its terminus in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 3) to point where road leaves lava's edge in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 34, T. 7 S., R. 27 E., follow lava's edge to westernmost lava in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 27; proceed on a direct line of sight approximately .6 mile to easternmost edge of Kipuka in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 28; follow Kipuka's edge southwesterly to southernmost edge of Kipuka in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 28; continue on a direct line of sight approximately .3 mile to southernmost lava in SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 29; follow lava's edge to road in northern end of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 29; proceed along road to corral in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 21; continue around corral to state Section 16; circumvent boundary around to lava's edge approximately .2 mile south of corner for Sections 8, 9, 16, and 17; continue southwest along lava's edge to road in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 17; proceed along road to junction in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 18; follow road northwest to junction in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 12, T. 7 S., R. 26 E.;

11

continue along road north to junction near Schodde Well in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 6, T. 7 S., R. 27 E., proceed to southernmost lava in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 6; follow lava's edge (excluding entire road corridor in Sections 5 and 6) to westernmost lava in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 32, T. 6 S., R. 27 E.; continue on a direct line of sight approximately .4 mile to easternmost point along road in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 31; proceed along road to junction in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24, T. 6 S., R. 26 E.; follow road northwest to junction in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 24; continue northeast following road east of Split Butte to junction with road in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 6, T. 6 S., R. 27 E., proceed east along road, then north to junction in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 33, T. 5 S., R. 27 E.; follow road northeast to junction in NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 28; continue northeast on same road (excluding crossroad from junction to its terminus in SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 27) to junction with Bear Trap Cave - Crystal Ice Cave Road; follow Crystal Ice Cave road to point of origin in NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ Section 22.

APPENDIX 3

WILDERNESS INTENSIVE INVENTORY

UNIT NO. 33-1

NAME OF AREA Great Rift

(Grassland Kipuka ISA)

Explain by a concise narrative the following essential wilderness characteristics (for guidance see text in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook):

1. SIZE

Narrative:

The unit contains two separate parcels located in the Snake River Plain between Arco and the Snake River. The 160-acre Grassland Kipuka Natural Area and its contiguous roadless land occupy the majority of the Craters flow. The southernmost parcel is the Wapi flow. Both of these large lava fields are approximately 2000 years old and erupted from a series of large fissures in the earth's crust. They are known collectively as the Great Rift.

The Craters of the Moon flow is bounded on the northwest by U.S. Highway 93-20-26 and by Craters of the Moon National Monument and Wilderness. Other boundaries of the Craters of the Moon and Wapi flows are roads across public land and private and State lands.

The unit contains a total of 435,700 acres of public land and 15,100 acres of State land. Each flow contains lands in both the Idaho Falls and Shoshone BLM Districts. 348,000 acres are associated with the Craters of the Moon flow and 87,700 acres are associated with the Wapi flow.

(con't.)

Summary: 1. Does the area have at least 5,000 acres of contiguous land and is it of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

YES NO

2. Does the island have sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition?

YES NO

SIGNATURE: *J. A. Butz* DATE: 6-20-79

(SIZE con't.)

The final acreage which is recommended as a Wilderness Study Area includes 359,300 acres of public lands and 15,100 acres of State land.

<u>Craters of the Moon</u>	<u>Public Land</u>	<u>State Land</u>
Idaho Falls	136,700	2,940
Shoshone	139,200	8,960
<u>Wapi Flow</u>		
Idaho Falls	22,900	640
Shoshone	<u>60,500</u>	<u>2,560</u>
TOTAL	359,300	15,100

The area represents most of the Craters of the Moon and Wapi lava flows and some desert lands along the lava margins. The desert lands are remote, unroaded and free from range improvements and other signs of man's influence. The desert lands also provide variety to this lava landscape and enhance wilderness values throughout the Great Rift area. The physical boundaries for the recommended WSA are as follows:

Craters of the Moon Flow - The northeastern boundary generally follows the lava's edge. Some desert lands have been deleted due to trails, agricultural developments and other impacts on naturalness. Pratt Butte and Mule Butte have been excluded because of the adverse impact of several ways, trails, and associated stock developments. Small pockets of nearby desert lands were added because of their primitive character.

On the south, Larkspur Park and several other desert pockets to the west have been included in the WSA, otherwise the boundary closely follows the lava margin after deleting vast areas of heavily impacted desert land. The southwestern boundary limits the WSA to the lava and a few pockets of desert. The western boundary is formed by the southern and eastern perimeters of Laidlaw Park, generally following the lava flow edge while excluding reservoirs and roads. The western "finger" near Craters of the Moon National Monument includes Snowdrift and Bowl Craters and several sections of desert land. The boundary south of Carey Kipuka excludes large portions of Little Park and Laidlaw Park because of the presence of ways, trails, and impacts on naturalness. The northern boundary lies along the 200-foot right-of-way on U.S. Highway 93-20-26.

Wapi Flow - Much of the eastern boundary follows the lava's edge which often coincides with private land and agricultural developments. The southern boundary excludes seedings, vehicle tracks, and other impacts on naturalness. However, it does include several pockets of untrammled desert land. The southern boundary also excludes railroad tracks and powerline corridors which adversely affect opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

The south half of the western boundary remains close to the lava's edge, with some desert lands included. The Wood Road, up to the first lava crossing, is excluded from the study boundary. The north half of the western boundary follows a road, which includes remote areas of unaltered desert land.

The northern boundary closely follows a road located a short distance from the lava's edge. Wapi Park road is excluded from the study boundary.

2. NATURALNESS

Narrative:

Most of the unit meets the naturalness criteria and includes the majority of the Craters of the Moon lava flow and the entire Wapi flow. Some desert lands along the lava margins are included. They are remote, unroaded and free from range improvements and other signs of man's influence.

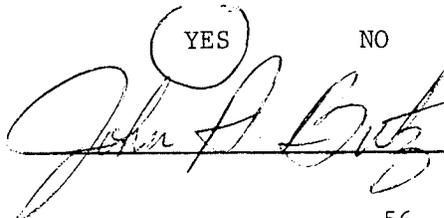
Generally, the ruggedness of the lava has impeded vehicular travel and prevented development within most of the lava flow boundaries. Internal impacts to naturalness are virtually non-existent.

Much of the marginal desert land within the unit and fringe portions of the lava flows have been impacted by substantial vehicle access routes that lead to the lava's edge. Range developments are evident and have been excluded from some desert areas. These areas show evidence of man's work to the extent they do not meet the naturalness criteria.

Summary: Does the area or island generally appear to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable?

 YES NO

SIGNATURE: _____



DATE: _____

6-20-79

3. OUTSTANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR SOLITUDE OR PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION ANALYSIS

A. SOLITUDE

Narrative:

Solitude within the area can be considered truly outstanding. Its large size, remoteness, and lack of defined trails or access routes combines to allow a visitor to become completely removed from man's activities. The absence of man-made features both in and for the most part around the area enhances its primitive character.

The lava's edge is a well-defined physical boundary which, once crossed, provides a visitor with a sense of being alone and removed from civilization. The low probability of meeting other visitors also enhances opportunities for solitude.

Summary: Does the area have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

YES

NO

SIGNATURE: _____

John A. Butz

DATE: _____

6-20-79

B. PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION

Narrative:

Primitive recreation opportunities within the area are considered outstanding and generally focus on the area's volcanic features and associated biotic community. Activities could include hiking, camping, photography, cross-country skiing, showshoeing, hunting and spelunking. Discovery and exploration of the area's many fissures, cinder cones, lava cascades, craters, kipukas and lava tubes add to the primitive recreation opportunity. In addition, the unit offers a challenge and risk with all recreation activities, which to many recreationists, enhances the primitive experience. The factors of challenge and risk are emphasized by the area's rugged terrain, lack of reliable water sources, extreme temperatures and lack of natural shelter.

Summary: Does the area have outstanding opportunities for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

 YES NOSIGNATURE: John A. BurtDATE: 6-20-79

4. SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES

Narrative:

The many volcanic features and the wide variety of natural ecological communities, especially the 65 major kipukas, offer values of scientific and educational importance. The vast volcanic landscape provides a dramatic and scenic feature within the Snake River Plain. Previous studies have indicated that the lava flows, parks, kipukas and buttes were inhabited by early man. Paleontological remains have also been uncovered in caves, which indicates the historical importance of the Great Rift area.

Summary: Does the area contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value?

 YES NOSIGNATURE: John A. BotsDATE: 6-20-79

5. POSSIBILITY OF CERTAIN AREAS RETURNING TO A NATURAL CONDITION

Narrative:

Signs of historic and present vehicle use are evident within the recommended WSA boundary. They are located and identified as follows:

2 mile north-south trail from Highway 93-20-26 across the lavas into Pedleford Flat; 1/2 mile jeep trail leading to the rim of Bowl Crater; 5 mile faint jeep trail leading from Lake Bottleneck to edge of old lava; 1 1/4 mile faint jeep trail within Larkspur Park; faint vehicle scars on the east side of Saddle Butte; 3/4 mile jeep trail leading into Wapi Park (Section 18, T. 4 S., R. 27 E.); and an "old wood road" at the first lava ridge in Section 3, T. 8 S., R. 27 E. to trails end within the Wapi flow. Several juniper stumps are present within the Wapi flow which represent timber removal during the depression era. Natural processes will eventually decay these signs of man's influence.

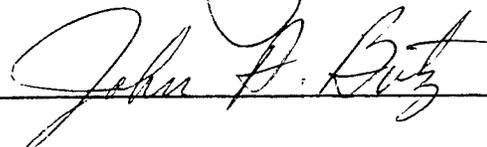
The signs of vehicle use would return to a substantially unnoticeable condition through natural processes and could eventually provide an excellent foot trail for visitors.

Summary: If the area or island were to become a wilderness area, could the imprint of man's work be reduced by either natural processes or by hand labor to a level judged to be substantially unnoticeable?

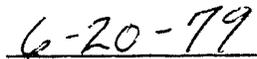
YES

NO

SIGNATURE:



DATE:



APPENDIX III

Great Rift Proposed Wilderness Final Environmental Impact Statement



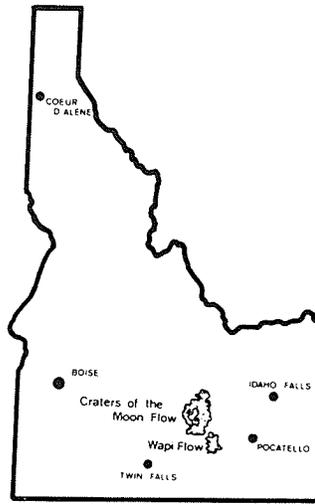
Great Rift

Proposed Wilderness

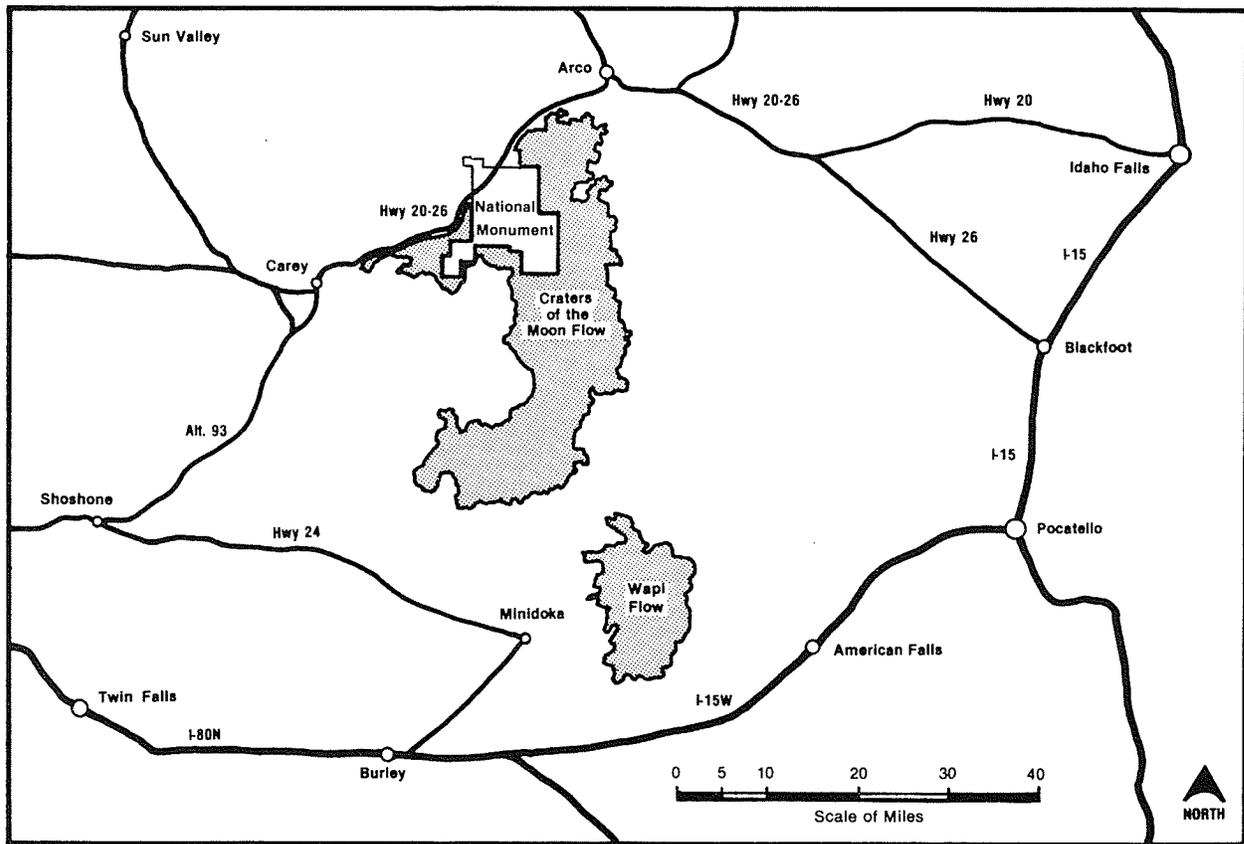
Final Environmental Impact Statement

Prepared by Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho
1980





Location of Proposed Great Rift Wilderness



 Study Area

All photos in this publication provided by BLM.

Front Cover Photo: Upper Photo – Blacktail Butte
 Center Photo – Rabbit brush on lava
 Lower Photo – Pillar Butte

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

GREAT RIFT

WILDERNESS

Prepared by

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clair M. Whitlock", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Clair M Whitlock
Idaho State Director

GREAT RIFT WILDERNESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
BLAINE, BUTTE, MINIDOKA, AND POWER COUNTIES, IDAHO

() DRAFT (X) FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

1. TYPE OF ACTION: () Administrative (X) Legislative

2. RESPONSIBLE AGENCIES:

Lead Agency: Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Cooperating Agencies: None

3. ABSTRACT: The BLM recommends that the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area be designated as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The proposed boundary includes 341,000 acres, 18,550 acres of which are State land.

Alternatives to the proposed action include:

. Wilderness Study Area Alternatives - Designate an additional 33,400 acres of public lands as wilderness.

. No Action Alternative - Continue the administration of the Grassland Kipuka as a natural area and continue managing the Craters of the Moon and Wapi lava flows for multiple use without wilderness designation.

4. STATEMENT MADE AVAILABLE TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY & THE PUBLIC:

Draft - March 1980

Final -

5. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401
(208) 529-1020 FTS 554-6322

SUMMARY

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

1. PROPOSED ACTION

The BLM recommends that the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness be designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The proposed boundary includes 322,450 acres of public land in Butte, Blaine, Power, and Minidoka Counties (Idaho). Included in the proposed wilderness boundary is 18,550 acres of State land. If the area was designated wilderness the BLM would work with the State to exchange the State lands for public lands. The area includes the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area (160 acres) and portions of the Craters of the Moon (267,950 acres) and Wapi (72,890 acres) lava flows. This area is being considered for wilderness as a result of Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 1976) which requires the Secretary of Interior to conduct a study of all primitive and natural areas for their wilderness potential. The secretary must report his recommendations to the President on the wilderness suitability of these areas by July 1980.

This proposed action would preserve wilderness characteristics on about 341,000 acres. It also would preserve many unique features of this lava flow ecosystem. Commercial enterprises, motor vehicles, and motorized equipment, roads, structures and installations would be prohibited.

Impact Summary

The primary benefits of designating the Great Rift area (341,000 acres) as wilderness would be to preserve the wilderness characteristics and the naturalness of the area from man's imprint. In addition, an outstanding opportunity for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be preserved. Secondary benefits associated with the proposed action would be to preserve a total ecosystem, including unique geologic, wildlife, soil, and vegetative interrelationships. The ecosystems of some 450 kipukas also would be preserved. A kipuka is an island of old lava surrounded, but not covered by, a lava flow.

The adverse impacts would be the loss of the opportunity to mine lava rubble for building stone, and subject to existing rights, the withdrawal of all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing. In addition, geothermal exploration within the area would only be allowed subject to a "no surface occupancy" stipulation. Off-road (ORV) use would be prohibited along with rights-of-way for powerlines, roads, etc.

2. WILDERNESS STUDY AREA ALTERNATIVES

When the inventory for the Great Rift was conducted, about 374,000 acres were determined to have wilderness characteristics (Wilderness Study Area). However, 33,400 of the total acres were recommended unsuitable for wilderness designation because of management difficulties. This WSA alternative proposes to include these 33,400 acres for wilderness designation. This alternative is the same as the Proposed Action, except that 33,400 more acres would be devoted to wilderness purposes and would be subject to the same prohibited uses as the Proposed Action.

Impact Summary

Impacts would be the same as for the Proposed Action but would apply to the additional 33,400 acres.

In addition, motorized vehicle use on the Wood Road beyond the first kipuka would be prohibited.

3. NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

No action would be taken to include the Great Rift area (341,000 acres) into the National Wilderness Preservation System. The area would be managed according to multiple use and sustained yield concepts as prescribed in FLPMA, except on the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area.

Impact Summary

Beneficial impacts from this alternative would be that lava rubble could be sold for use as building stone, and geothermal exploration on the lava flows could occur. The 322,450 acres of public land also would be open for the exploration and development of locatable, leasable and saleable minerals. Rights-of-ways could be granted to cross the lava flows, and off-road vehicle use could be permitted under existing guidelines.

The principal adverse impacts would be that existing wilderness characteristics could be impacted by lava rubble mining, vehicle use, geothermal activity, right-of-way establishment or other human activities.

MAJOR AREAS OF CONTROVERSY

1. Question of the Need for Wilderness

Some Idahoans feel that the state already has enough wilderness (1.5 million acres presently designated and 3.4 million acres under presidential recommendation for wilderness from RARE II, the second

roadless area review and evaluation). Some other persons feel that additional wilderness is needed in the state. These opinions for and against increased wilderness in Idaho were brought out quite strongly in the BLM scoping process.

2. Need for Protection

Because of the low visitation and minimal activities on the lava, many persons question whether wilderness protection is necessary. However, other persons say that the area needs to be protected against any possible future impacts to wilderness values.

3. Mining

Until December 31, 1983, the United States mining and mineral leasing laws apply to wildernesses to the same extent as they applied to the area prior to its classification.

Effective January 1, 1984, subject to existing rights, the minerals in land designated as wilderness are withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing.

4. Geothermal Energy

Geothermal leasing would be allowed within the Proposed Wilderness Area but would be subject to a "no surface occupancy" lease stipulation.

REMAINING ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

STATE LANDS

If Congress designates the area as wilderness, BLM would promptly explore action to acquire these lands as allowed under section 5(a) of the Wilderness Act. Section 5(a) also stipulates that access to these inholdings be allowed pending possible acquisition.

The Idaho Department of Lands has expressed interest in participating in any exchange or acquisition program as a result of wilderness designation. Their views and recommendations would be considered during the development of any such program. There are 18,550 acres of State lands within the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area.

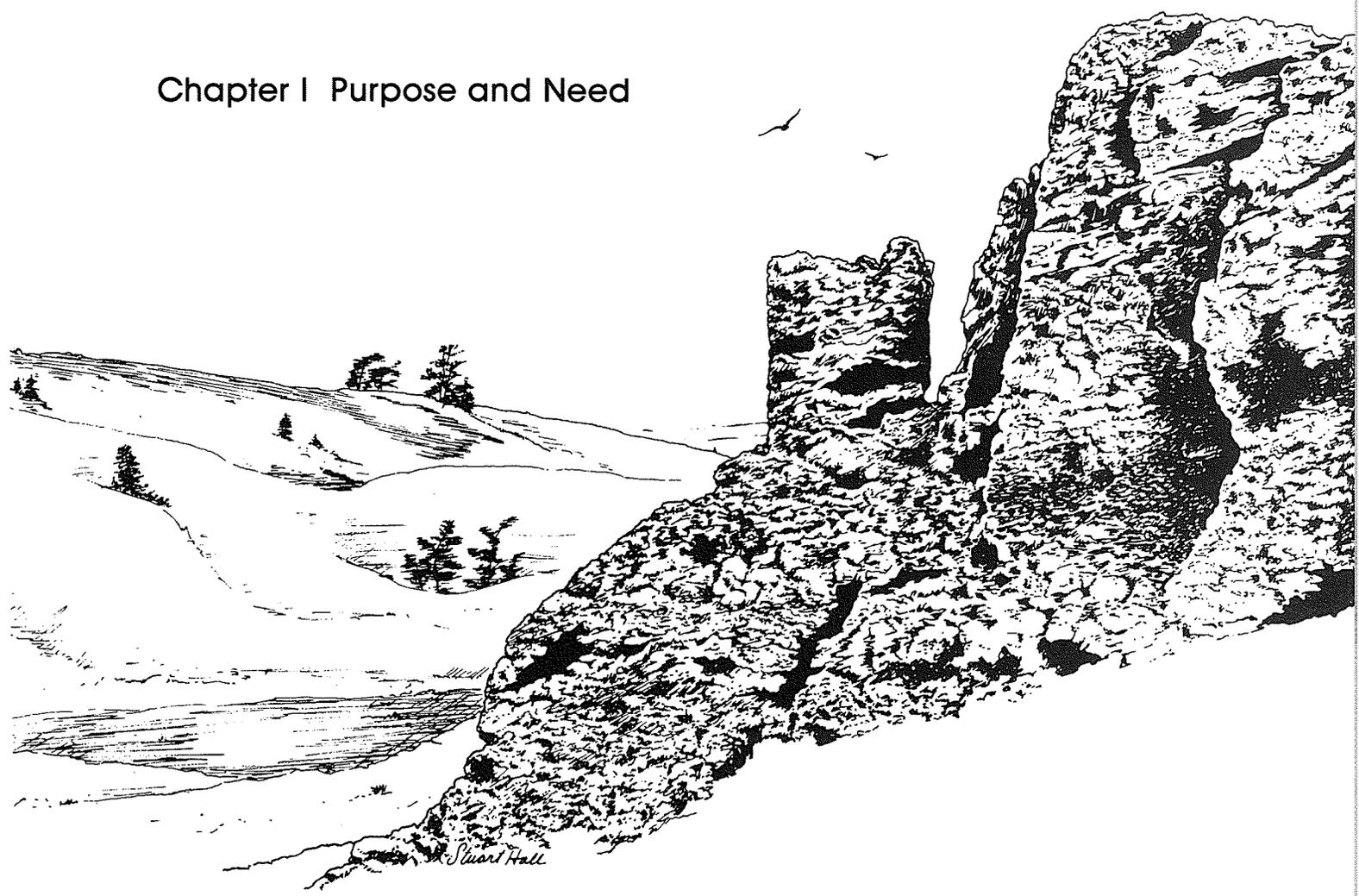
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Chapter I Purpose and Need



CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND NEED

Section 603 (Appendix 2) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, 1976), states

"That the Secretary shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations (for wilderness designation) on those areas which the Secretary has prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas. The review required by this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure specified in Section 3(d) of the Wilderness Act."

The Grassland Kipuka (160 acres of Public Land located 1.5 miles west of Craters of the Moon National Monument) was designated as a Natural Area in 1965. It therefore falls under the purview of the 1980 reporting requirements. BLM's Organic Act Directive (OAD) #79-40 requires simultaneous review and reporting on roadless lands that are contiguous to such previously designated Natural Areas. The Craters of the Moon lava flow is contiguous to the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area and is thus included in this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Both the Craters of the Moon flow (253,010 acres) and the Wapi flow (69,690 acres) were recommended for possible Primitive Area designation when the Big Desert Management Framework Plan was developed (1974). That recommendation led to a contracted study of Primitive Area values which was conducted in 1975-76. Results of the study called for official Primitive Area designation for both flows. However, such designation was halted by Section 603 of FLPMA which mandated a wilderness inventory of all BLM lands. The Wapi flow is also included in this EIS because: it is an integral part of the Great Rift system as studied for Primitive Area designation; it contains the same outstanding wilderness characteristics as the Craters of the Moon flow; ultimately, it would undergo the same wilderness study process of the Craters flow, so including it in this EIS analysis simply accelerates the review and reporting process; and inclusion of the Wapi flow adds several unique features to the proposed Wilderness Area that are not found on the Craters flow.

Therefore, this EIS discusses the wilderness characteristics of the Grassland Kipuka, Craters of the Moon lava flow and the Wapi lava flow collectively as the Great Rift Proposed Wilderness Area. It analyzes the benefits and impacts that would occur if Congress should designate the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. It also analyzes the impacts of two alternatives to that proposal.

BLM conducted an intensive wilderness inventory of the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area and associated roadless lands (Craters of the Moon and Wapi lava flows); solicited public comments on that intensive inventory, and incorporated the inventory data and public comments into the BLM

planning system. Through those processes, considerable wilderness values were identified and few resource conflicts were identified.

Scope

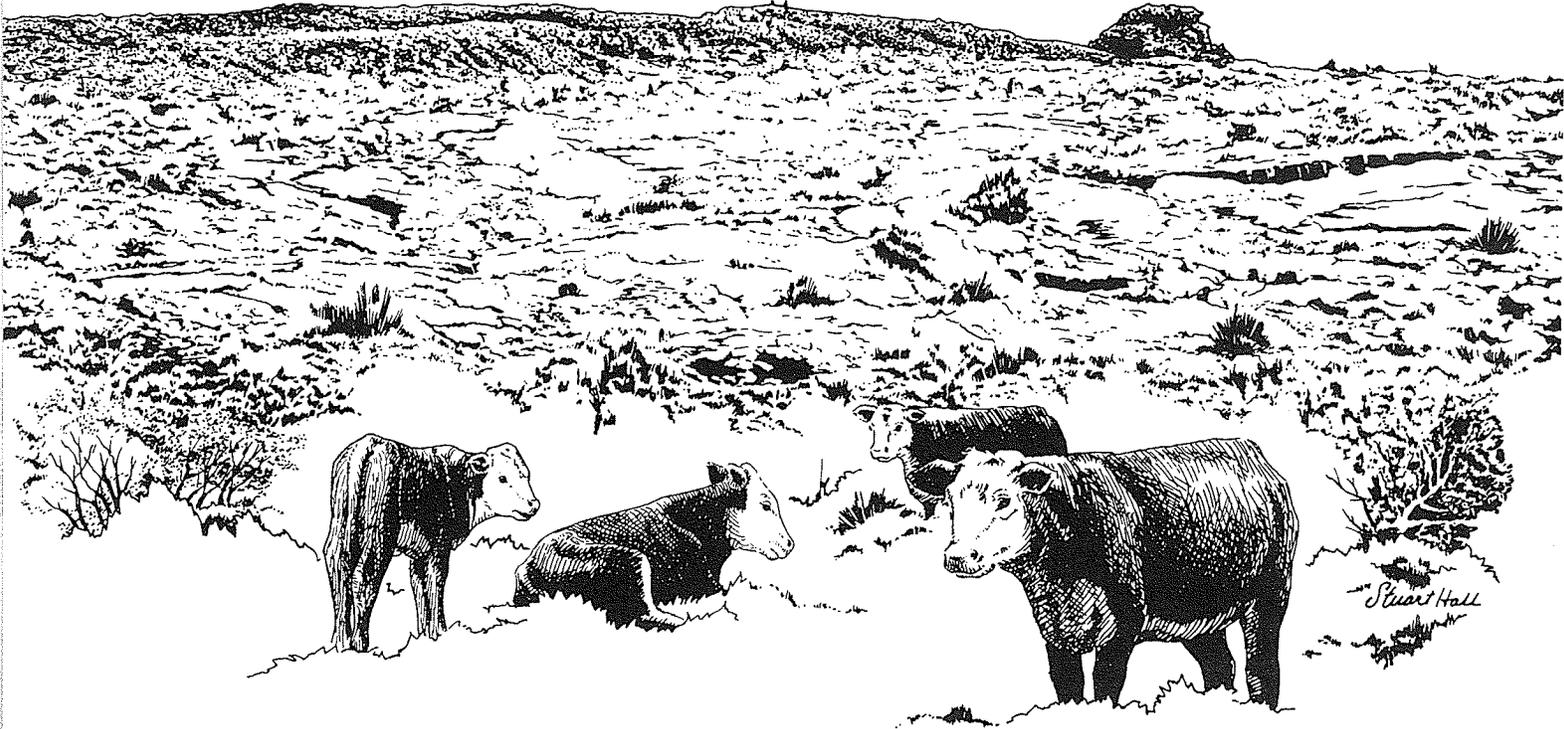
Part of the solicitation of public comments included a scoping session held May 23, 1979. The purpose of that session was to identify significant issues and alternatives for possible wilderness designation of the Great Rift. Individuals who represented a broad cross section of economic, political, environmental and wilderness interests were invited to the scoping session. Participants were asked to identify issues and alternatives that they felt were significant. They were then asked to rank the significance of each alternative on a scale of 0 to 3: 0 = not significant; 1 = cursory treatment; 2 = significant; 3 = highly significant. The significance rankings for each issue were averaged; those issues averaging 2.0 or higher were considered significant enough to warrant treatment in the EIS.

Issues

As a result of the scoping process and other existing data, the controversial areas and items of concern were listed in the draft environmental impact statement as 9 separate issues. The concerns fall into 3 broad categories of issues listed below. The issues are listed in this final environmental impact statement as questions. The proposed action and alternatives included in this EIS were designed to address the issues. The environmental consequences and responses to letters and comments received at the hearing also address the issues.

1. Is a wilderness designation needed for the Great Rift Area?
Some people believe that such a designation is clearly needed to protect wilderness, outdoor recreation, esthetic, and other values while other people believe the rugged topography adequately protects the area and no further action is needed.
2. Would a wilderness designation result in adverse impacts to economic users such as farm and ranch or tourist enterprises?
Some people are concerned that water hauling for livestock and predator control would be prohibited, no grazing would be allowed, and that more attention needs to be directed to economic uses rather than wilderness uses. Management of state owned lands could be complicated, and no rights of way would be allowed.
3. Would a wilderness designation degrade resources and create a safety hazard? Some people are concerned that such a designation would increase recreation use, resulting in degradation of archaeological and recreation values. Other people believe such a designation would pose safety problems since the area is rough with a hostile climate.

Chapter II Proposed Action and
Alternatives



CHAPTER II

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

PROPOSED ACTION

The BLM recommends that the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area be designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. This area includes that part of the lava flows determined to be suitable for wilderness designation (341,000 acres covering portions of Blaine, Butte, Minidoka and Power Counties, Idaho).

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires the Secretary of the Interior to manage all public lands determined to have wilderness characters so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness, until such time as Congress acts on the recommendations for those lands. The Great Rift Wilderness Study Area will be managed under this provision of FLPMA. Details of this management policy, known as Interim Management, are in the Dec. 12, 1979 report, entitled "Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review."

If Congress designates the Great Rift as a wilderness, a comprehensive wilderness management plan would be developed and implemented. Until such a plan could be developed, the following activities would be specifically prohibited:

"Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and, except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area. Wilderness Act, Section 4(c)."

In addition, effective January, 1984, subject to existing rights, the minerals in land designated as wilderness are withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing (Appendix 1).

Geothermal exploration would be allowed in the proposed wilderness area under a stipulation of "no surface occupancy."

The above prescriptions would be tempered by Sec. 4 (d) (1) of the Wilderness Act which allows "use of aircraft ... where these uses have already become established." The present aerial predator program is controlled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and would be allowed to continue under this section. Cultural resources would be protected from intentional or inadvertent loss or damage in accordance with the American Antiquities Act, 16 U.S.C. 431 et. seq. and the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act, 16 U.S.C. 469 et seq.

Objectives

If Congress designates the Great Rift as a Wilderness Area, the following management objectives would guide the development of the comprehensive management plan:

- Protect, enhance and maintain the natural beauty and wilderness character of the land; preserve the unique wildlife and vegetative communities in the isolated kipukas; and allow natural ecological succession for scientific and other study.
- Provide a meaningful and high quality primitive recreation experience through interpretation and information programs, provisions for adequate staging areas and provisions for other important visitor requirements.
- Continue domestic livestock grazing under the Taylor Grazing Act and FLPMA at a level that is consistent with the grazing capacity of the range.

Boundary Proposal

Figure 2-1 depicts the boundary of the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area. This boundary includes 322,450 acres of Public Land and 18,550 acres of State Land. Basically, this boundary follows the edge of the two lava flows but excludes the Craters of the Moon National Monument and all private lands. Some areas of desert rangeland which are remote and relatively inaccessible to vehicles, and which pose few management problems, also are included. This boundary includes Public Lands which have the essential qualities of wilderness and have been determined to be suitable for management as wilderness. BLM did not evaluate wilderness qualities of State Lands included in the boundary.

Administration and Management

To achieve the foregoing management objectives, the Comprehensive Wilderness Management Plan would incorporate the specific restrictions described on page 5 and would also provide for the following:

- Resource study and research to monitor and evaluate the condition of each natural element, supplemented with visitor carrying capacity studies to determine a visitor use level that is consistent with protecting wilderness values while maximizing recreation enjoyment;
- Information and interpretation programs to educate visitors and assist them in achieving the maximum enjoyment and benefit from the area without inflicting undue or unnecessary damage to the resource base;
- Minimum support facilities necessary to meet visitor needs and protect the resources of the wilderness area.
- Provision for fire protection with stipulations precluding use of on-the-ground motorized vehicles.

-If any of the sites within the proposed wilderness boundary are designated as National Register sites, they will be inspected annually. The purpose of the inspection would be to assess the condition of the sites and to make recommendations concerning mitigation if any sites are deteriorating.

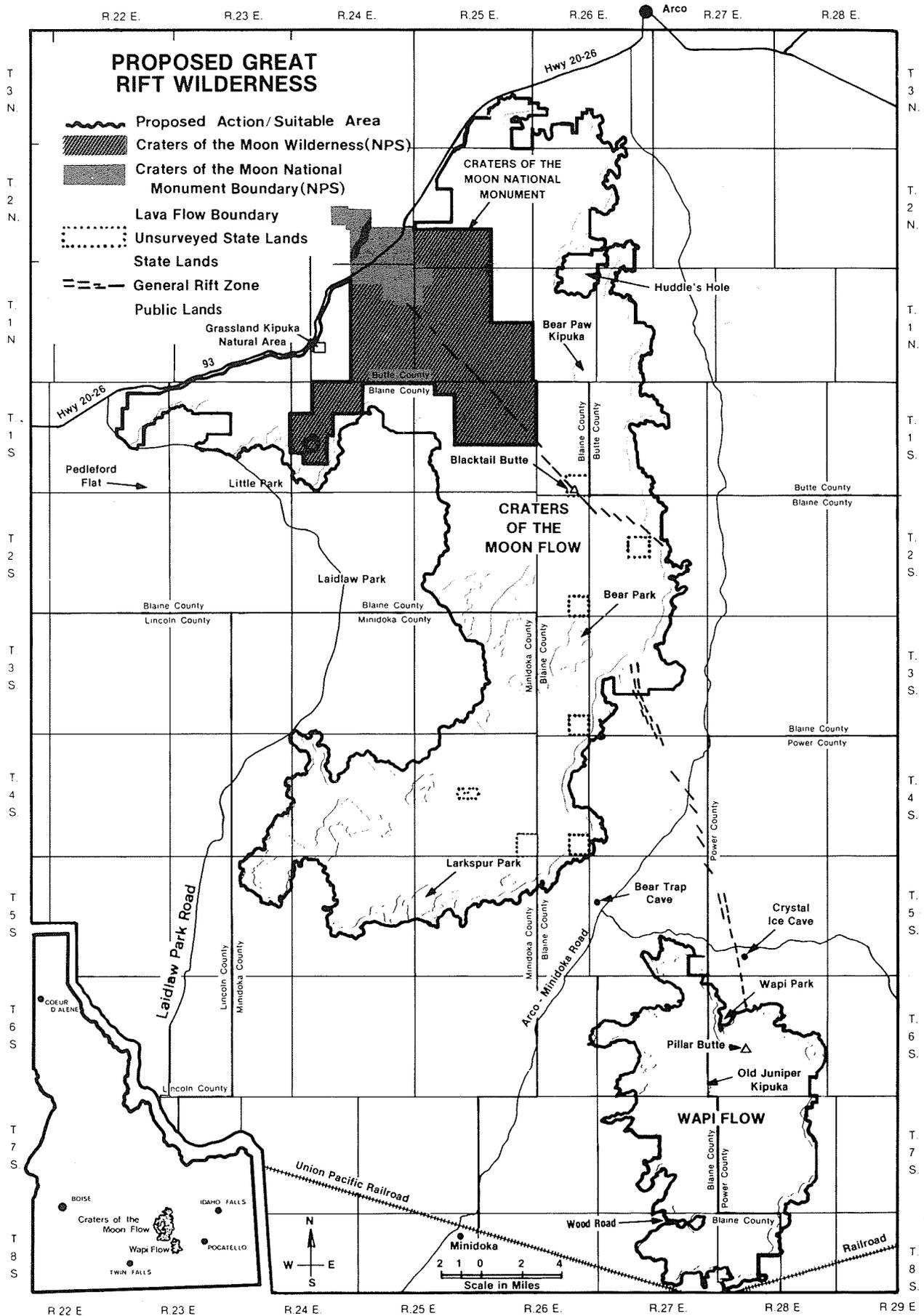


FIGURE 2-1

Successful development and implementation of the management plan would require thorough coordination with other BLM resource activities, federal, state and local governments, and the general public.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA (WSA) ALTERNATIVE

This alternative would be the same as the Proposed Action except for the addition of 33,400 acres of Public Land. The WSA includes all those lands determined to have wilderness characteristics.

Wilderness Interim Management Policy does apply to the WSA until Congress acts. If Congress were to designate the WSA as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, a comprehensive Wilderness Management Plan would be developed. Until such a plan could be developed and implemented, the specific prescriptions identified on page 5 would apply.

Objectives

Management objectives would be the same as for the Proposed Action.

Boundary Proposal

Figure 2-2 depicts the boundary of the WSA. This boundary includes 355,850 acres of Public Land and 18,550 acres of State Land. This boundary is the same as for the proposed action, but includes about 33,400 additional acres primarily around the southern portion of the Craters flow and the west side of the Wapi flow.

Administration and Management

To achieve the management objectives, the specific restrictions outlined on page 5 would apply as well as the broad management procedures identified for the Proposed Action. In addition to these provisions, this WSA alternative would require provision for a strong enforcement policy due to the identified difficulty of managing the WSA peripheral areas as wilderness.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under this alternative, the Grassland Kipuka would continue to be managed as a Natural Area. Such management would allow most multiple use activities to continue but would prohibit any mineral activity because of the mineral withdrawal on the natural area.

The remainder of the area, 322,290 acres (minus State Lands), would be managed in accordance with the Big Desert Management Framework Plan which calls for managing the volcanic features for their special recreation values. The rest of the proposed wilderness area could be open to other multiple uses because no specific management restrictions have been developed.

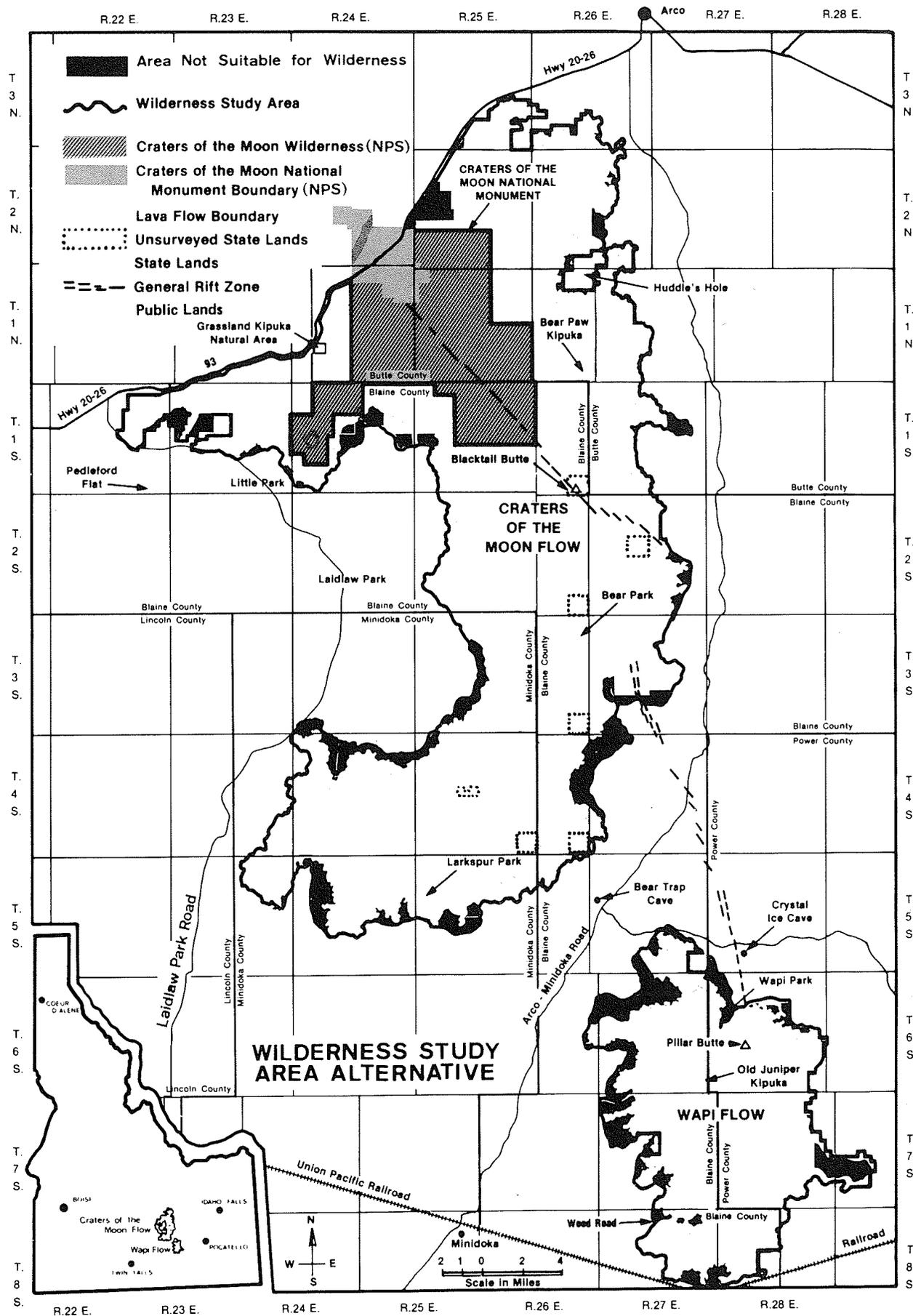


FIGURE 2-2

Idaho Department of Lands would continue to have management authority over State Lands. State Lands on adjacent desert rangeland are leased for livestock grazing. No private lands are involved.

Objectives

Management objectives under this alternative would be to promote multiple use of the land with emphasis on the highest and best uses. Present multiple use management recommendations call for protection of the geologic features and the kipukas. The same protective mandates for cultural resources would apply as under the proposed action.

Boundary Proposal

The Management Framework Plan recommendations would apply to those lands included in the Wilderness Study Area boundary proposal (Figure 2-2, 374,400 acres).

Administration and Management

To achieve the foregoing management objectives, the broad management procedures identified for the proposed action still would apply. However, the specific restrictions listed on page 5 would not apply. Applications for specific uses such as powerline rights of way, mineral patents or leases, etc. would be approved or disapproved based on site-specific environmental assessments.

Table 2-1 presents a comparative analysis of impacts of the Proposed Action and alternative.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM DETAILED STUDY

The possibility of excluding the Wapi flow was considered, but was not included as an alternative in the final analysis. Although these flows are physically separated by 5 miles of desert rangeland, they are both a result of the Great Rift System. They are about the same age but have many important differences which increase the value of retaining both units in the proposed wilderness.

The Wapi flow includes a low shield volcanic cone and vent system that is the youngest and best preserved example of its kind in the Snake River plain. The Craters of the Moon flow extruded from the Great Rift fissures in a very eruptive and fluid fashion, creating lavas that differ significantly from the Wapi lavas in silica, iron, and titanium content. Thus, the Craters flow includes "blue dragon" lavas which are coated with a shiny blue surface (a function of electron exchanges in titanium and iron atoms). Part of the Wapi flow has an iridescent surface but does not have the blue sheen of the Craters flow. The Wapi flow contains several geologic features not found in the Craters flow such as driblet spires, hornitoes and Pillar Butte (the vertical remnant found in the top part of the shield cone). The Wapi flow includes at least one outstanding lava tube cave and many undisturbed kipukas.

TABLE 2-1

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

RESOURCE	PROPOSED ACTION	WILDERNESS STUDY AREA ALTERNATIVE	NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE
VEGETATION	Natural ecological succession would continue on the lava flows (325,000 acres) and some 440 kipukas.	Natural ecological succession would continue on the lava flows (325,000 acres) and some 440 kipukas.	Some 440 kipukas would probably not be grazed because of small size and inaccessibility.
SOILS	Soil development would continue under natural process in the kipukas.	Soil development would continue under natural conditions in the kipukas.	Undisturbed soils in the kipukas would still remain for future studies.
GEOLOGY	Geologic features on the lava flows would remain in an unimpaired condition for scientific and recreational use.	Geologic features on the lava flows would remain in an unimpaired condition for scientific and recreational use.	The geologic features would not receive any more impacts than presently occurring and this is insignificant.
CULTURAL RESOURCES	Enhance protection and promote management of cultural resources.	Enhance protection and promote management of cultural resources.	Recreationists could remove some artifacts but this has not occurred in the past. Cultural remains would still be protected by law.
WILDERNESS RESOURCES	Enhancement, protection, and preservation of wilderness characteristics on some 341,000 acres.	Enhancement, protection, and preservation of wilderness characteristics on some 374,400 acres.	Area would not be specifically managed for wilderness values or for their preservation. Present wilderness values would probably not change.
LIVESTOCK GRAZING	Ensure continued grazing for 60 livestock permittees.	Ensure continued grazing for 105 livestock permittees.	None
MINERALS	Lava rubble would not be sold on 680 acres, geothermal exploration under no surface occupancy. ORV use would be prohibited.	Lava rubble would not be sold on 840 acres, geothermal exploration under no surface occupancy. ORV use would be prohibited and also the use of the Wood Road for access to kipukas.	Wilderness values could be lost by lava rubble collection and geothermal activity. Collection of lava rubble and geothermal exploration could occur.
RECREATION	Opportunities for solitude and a primitive or unconfined type of recreation would be optimized.	Opportunities for solitude and a primitive or unconfined type of recreation would be optimized.	Opportunities for solitude and a primitive or unconfined type of recreation could be lost. ORV use, although small could be allowed.
RIGHTS OF WAY	Transmission lines across the proposed wilderness boundary would be prohibited.	Transmission lines across the proposed wilderness boundary would be prohibited.	Transmission lines could be constructed on the lava flows which could leave man's imprint. Access to a kipuka, via the Wood Road, would continue.
SOCIAL ATTITUDES	The attitude of people who favor or oppose wilderness designation would not change.	The attitude of people who favor or oppose wilderness designation would not change.	The attitude of those who favor or oppose wilderness would not change.
ECONOMICS	Livestock operations would continue at present levels.	Livestock operations would continue at present levels.	None

Cultural artifacts found in several kipukas add to the cultural information available in the Craters flow as well as for the Snake River Plains. The Wapi flow adds vegetative diversity to the wilderness unit.

Because the inclusion of both flows allows a more complete geologic, cultural and ecologic wilderness unit, this alternative was not considered. Also, as mentioned under "Purpose and Need," the Wapi flow ultimately would have to undergo the same study and reporting process; including it in this EIS analysis simply accelerates that process and eliminates possible delays and duplication of efforts.

INTERRELATIONSHIPS

National Park Service (NPS) - The NPS has jurisdiction of the Craters of the Moon National Monument adjacent to the Great Rift Wilderness proposal (see Figure 2-1). BLM exercises continuous coordination of information and management policies with the NPS.

Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) - No endangered species are known to occur in the proposed wilderness area. Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act requires consultation with the FWS whenever any action could affect an endangered species or its habitat. This consultation was initiated September 28, 1979 so that FWS would be notified of BLM's proposal. According to the FWS, no threatened, endangered, or sensitive species are known to exist on the lava flows. However, one species of beetle is under review as a candidate species for the endangered status.

FWS also has predator control responsibility in the area under agreement with the BLM. Aerial predator control by FWS would continue to be allowed in accordance with Sec. 4 (d) (1) of the Wilderness Act.

Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) - The IDL has requested that if Congress designates the Great Rift as a Wilderness Area, State Lands included in the boundary "be scheduled for exchange at the earliest opportunity" (IDL, 1979). In accordance with this IDL policy, BLM recommends that State Lands included in the boundary be acquired, through exchange or otherwise, at the earliest opportunity, should Congress designate the Great Rift as a Wilderness Area.

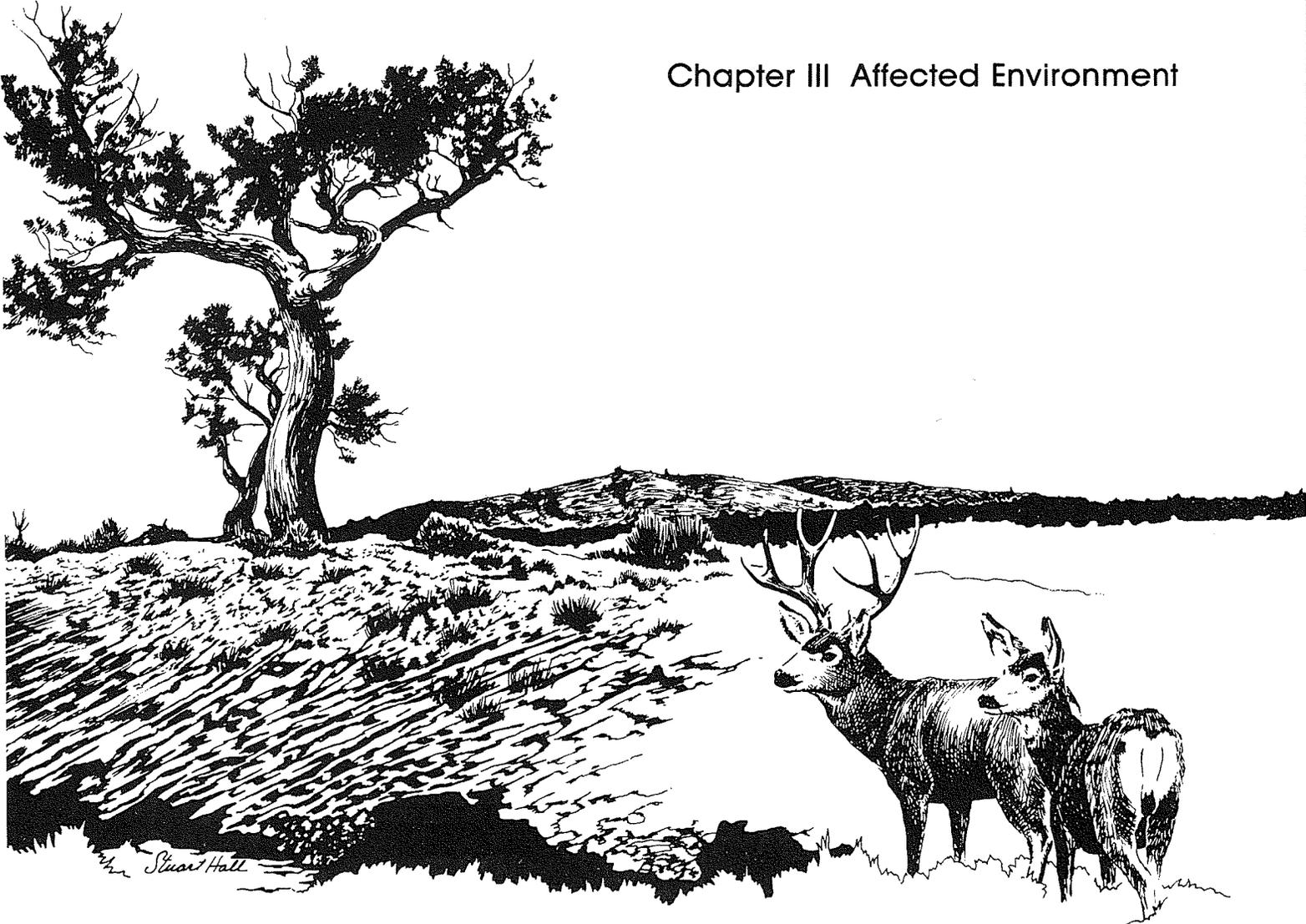
Butte, Blaine, Power and Minidoka Counties - County commissioners for these counties were contacted in October, 1979 to discuss the proposal. The county commissioners in Blaine, Butte, and Power County have no objection to a wilderness designation as long as it does not have an adverse affect on local income. The commissioners in Minidoka County are opposed to wilderness designation.

State Historic Preservation Officer and State Archaeologist - The SHPO and State Archeologist both were contacted on September 28, and November 11, 1979. BLM advised them that 14 cultural sites had been identified within the Proposed Action boundary but that none of those sites were included in the National Register of Historic Places. BLM furnished them with maps depicting those 14 sites during December, 1979.

Idaho Power Company - At one time, Idaho Power was considering a transmission line route for the Borah to Midpoint 500 kv ac line that would cross over the southern part of the Wapi lava flow. This segment would be 14 miles long with 7 miles crossing the lava. After working with BLM personnel from the Shoshone District, Idaho Power decided to propose another route that would not cross the lava because of the proposed wilderness classification. The new proposed route would be 16 miles long and would not be within the proposed wilderness boundary.

U.S. Bureau of Mines and Geological Survey - As required by FLPMA (Appendix 2) the Geological Survey conducted a mineral survey of the lava flows during 1979. In addition, during 1979, the Bureau of Mines determined the value of minerals on the lava flows.

Chapter III Affected Environment



CHAPTER III

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The description of the effected environment in this chapter is for the WSA or 374,400 acres. In this way the proposed action, (341,000 acres) and the two alternatives will be described.

General Description

The Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area is characterized by thousands of acres of lava dotted with occasional buttes and kipukas. The harsh, barren landscape is interrupted by sparse vegetation and fissures in the earth's surface (Greeley and King, 1977). The fissures, a series of aligned vents and discontinuous fractures extending from the Craters of the Moon National Monument southeast to the Wapi flow, are commonly called the Great Rift (Figure 3-1).

The semi-arid climate is hot and dry in the summer and very cold in the winter. Annual precipitation is about 10 to 14 inches and falls mainly in the winter and spring. Wind blows out of the southwest throughout the year but is usually more intense in the spring. Air quality of the area has never been measured, but appears to be good. The prevailing southwest air currents provide good air drainage. The area was designated Class II (see Glossary) as a result of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1977.

Few water sources exist in the area, but some water can be found during certain times of the year in crevices and depressions in the lava where precipitation collects. These intermittent pools are used by birds and animals.

Most noises in the proposed wilderness area are natural...winds, insects, wildlife, etc. Sporadic interruptions occur from aircraft and from a railroad south of the Wapi flow.

Roads circumventing the area are mostly unimproved dirt roads. Highway 20-26, which forms most of the northwest boundary of the proposed wilderness, is paved. The road to Crystal Ice Caves (just outside the northeast boundary of the Wapi flow) is not paved but receives more maintenance than other dirt roads.

The proposed Great Rift wilderness area encompasses pristine lands within Butte, Blaine, Power and Minidoka Counties. County comprehensive land-use plans, for Blaine, Power and Minidoka Counties favor such uses as grazing, farming, and open space. Butte County does not have a comprehensive plan.

Vegetation - The lava flows and kipukas show a full range of ecological

succession from the pioneer plants such as lichens and mosses to the highly diversified plant communities on the kipukas, most of which are in climax (or highest) stage (Figure 3-2, Crawford, 1978). Over 300 plant species occur in the area. The type and density of vegetation varies widely depending on the availability of soil (Anderson and Lovejoy, 1979).

The kipukas are one of the most unique features of the lava formations (Figure 3-3). Over 450 kipukas are found on the lava flows varying in size from less than one acre to over 2,200. These kipukas offer the visitor a unique opportunity to observe climax vegetative communities and to compare them with nearby desert rangeland vegetation. No more than 10 of the kipukas have been grazed by domestic livestock. Although some of the kipukas have been visited by recreationists, the visitation levels are so low that the vegetation has not been affected.

Sagebrush and grasses are abundant on the older lava flows and the surrounding desert rangeland where the soils are deep and well developed. Rabbitbrush, bitterbrush, certain buckwheats, and phlox also occur in this association. Native grasses include bluegrass, wheatgrass, squirreltail, and needlegrass. Juniper occurs in several locations: in older lava flows; on the southern Craters flow; and on much of the Wapi flow (Figure 3-4). Limber pine grows on the northern Craters flow. The ecotone (a transition strip of vegetation between two communities) between limber pine and juniper occurs between Blacktail Butte and the National Monument. This ecotone normally occurs only in montane regions and is thus an unusual feature for the lava flows (Urban, 1979). Quaking aspen occurs along the lava's edge in several locations on both flows.

No threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species are known to occur within the proposed boundary (FWS, 1983).

Soils - Bare lava rock dominates most of the landscape (Figure 3-5). Soil deposits vary widely over the area. Where basalt rock occurs, soil is found only in the crevices. Where decomposed cinders provide parent material, vegetation growth occurs. Only the kipukas and surrounding desert rangelands have deep, well formed soils.

The U.S. Soil Conservation Service has conducted 10 years of research (1958-1967) on three kipukas located on the northeast corner of the Wapi flow. That research focused on soil-vegetal relationships on these so-called "relict areas". This research included a soil inventory on each of the kipukas (SCS, 1979).

Geology - Prinz (1970) redesignated the Great Rift as the Idaho Rift System and divided the system into several rift sets (Greeley and King, 1977). One of those rift sets retains the name Great Rift, which has been used to label the Proposed Wilderness Area. The Great Rift is thought to be the longest and deepest rift system in the United States (approximately

65 miles long and at least 800 feet deep in some locations).

The lava flows include two types of lava referred to as pahoehoe (pa-hoy-hoy) and aa (ah ah). The pahoehoe flows have wrinkled surfaces which formed when the lava's cool crust was dragged into rope-like folds by the hot liquid mass moving beneath (Figure 3-5). In contrast, aa lava is a rough mass of lava blocks which have either been floated along on a pasty lava mass or pushed along the edges (Figure 3-6).

The lava surface evidences: hundreds of craters and lava bombs; one major and numerous minor lava tubes; six spatter and cinder cones; at least three driblet spires and two hornitoes; and various other lava features (Figures 3-7 to 3-10). Coloration of the rock and cinders varies from black to gray and red, to shiny blue ("blue dragon" lava); lichens add yellow, orange, and green to the lava colors; trees and shrubs add greenery; and from May to October, flowering shrubs and forbs create a wide color contrast (Figure 3-11).

Animal Life - Mule deer, antelope, coyotes, and rabbits are the most frequently sighted mammals of the 26 species that occur in the area. Mule deer and antelope populations are low.

Sage grouse and mourning doves frequent the area (Figure 3-12). The doves are present only during spring and summer seasons. The exact population of sage grouse on the lavas is not known, but sage grouse droppings are very common both in the kipukas and on the lava surface. About 140 species of non-game birds are found in the plain area (Anderson and Lovejoy, 1979). Raptors are often seen over high points on the lava such as Pillar and Blacktail Butte.

Presently, wildlife populations are not significantly affected by human activities. Some sage grouse hunting occurs but is very limited.

No known threatened, endangered, or sensitive animals occur in the proposed wilderness boundary. However, a sub-species of blind beetles (Glacicavicola bathyscioides) is known to occur on the lava flows. This sub-species is under review by the FWS for recognition as a "candidate species" for endangered listing (FWS, 1983).

Cultural Resources - Intensive surveys of selected areas within the Great Rift Wilderness were performed by contract (Franzen, 1979) and BLM personnel in 1979. Fifteen prehistoric sites were recorded within the wilderness area. Another sixteen prehistoric sites were recorded in the study area outside the wilderness area. Most of these sites are surface lithic scatters consisting of numerous, small obsidian waste flakes and projectile points. Pottery shards, small hand-sized grindstones and quartzite scrapers were found in some scatters. Caves, rockshelters and rock structures (hunting blinds) also were recorded.

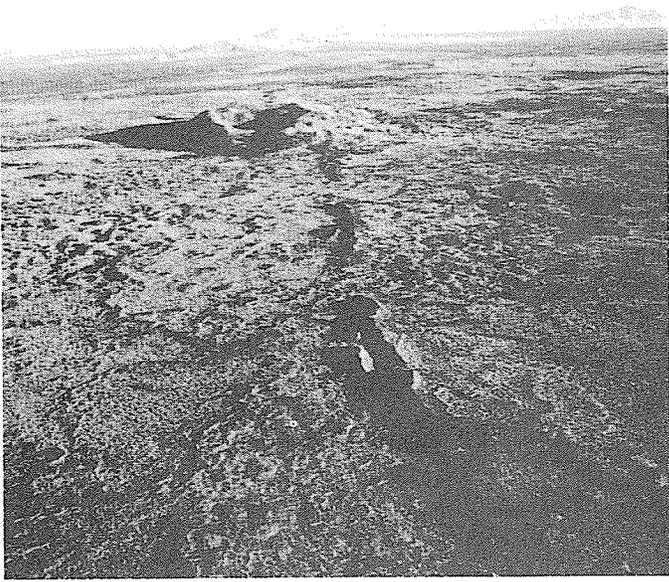


Fig. 3-1 Blacktail Butte and vents and fractures lie along the main rift zone. The Pioneer Mountains are to the northwest.

Fig. 3-3 Kipukas, Hawaiian for "windows", are vegetated islands of older lava surrounded by younger lava.



Fig. 3-2 Climax vegetation in Bear Paw Kipuka shows flowering balsam root.





Fig. 3-4 Old Juniper Kipuka on the Wapi flow has many large trees, some as old as 750 years.

Fig. 3-5 Ropy pahoehoe lava with blue dragon surface supports vegetation in shallow cracks where soil collects.



Fig. 3-6 Aa lava wears down hiker's boots as well as ankles.



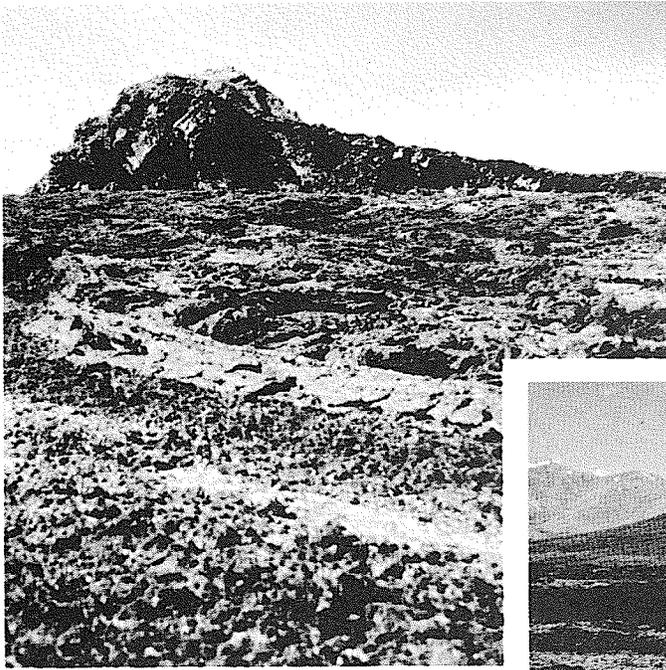


Fig. 3-8 North Laidlaw Butte lies near the edge of the Craters of the Moon flow and is surrounded by light gray pahoehoe lava and black aa lava.

Fig. 3-7 Pillar Butte, a low shield cone, is the source of the most recent lava on the Wapi flow.



Fig. 3-9 A hiker studies a hornito from the edge of a collapsed lava tube.



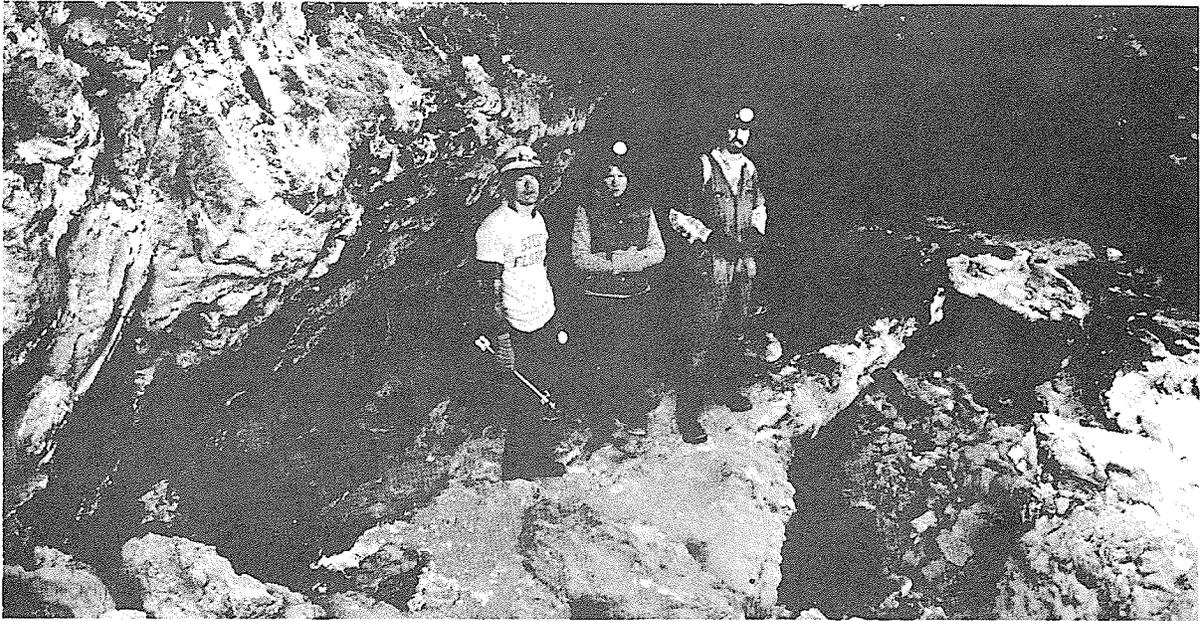


Fig. 3-10 Recreationists stand at the entrance to a lava tube cave.

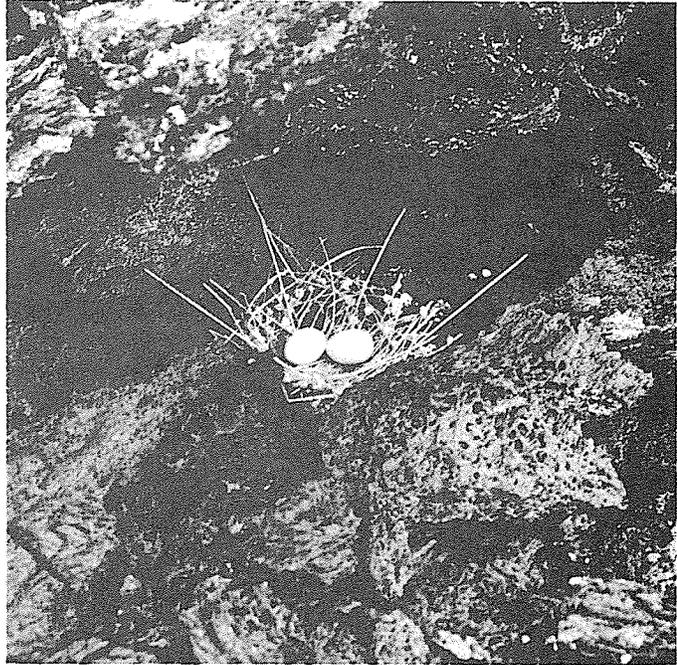


Fig. 3-11 Penstemon blooms among blue dragon lava.



Fig. 3-12 Mourning doves nest on the lava near a water source.

None of the undisturbed 15 sites found in the wilderness area appears to be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

However, it is possible that these sites could be combined with the 16 sites recorded in the study area for nomination to the National Register as an archaeological district.

All of the sites in the wilderness area are in good condition. A few sites have been damaged by unauthorized surface collecting, but diagnostic artifacts were present at most of the sites. None of the documented caves or rockshelters within the wilderness have been vandalized. The condition of these sites makes them valuable for comparison to sites in other areas outside the wilderness area which have been damaged by livestock trampling, surface collecting and ORV use.

Wilderness Values - BLM personnel inventoried the Great Rift Wilderness Study Area using procedures outlined in Step 4 of BLM's Wilderness Inventory Handbook (BLM, 1978). That intensive inventory revealed that these lands meet the criteria established in Section 2 (c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964:

"A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

The area presently is being managed so as not to impair its wilderness suitability until Congress designates it as wilderness or removes it from consideration as wilderness.

Livestock Grazing - Approximately 6,000 acres within the Proposed Wilderness Area are grazed by domestic livestock. These acres support about 380 sheep animal unit months (AUMs) and 600 cattle AUMs used by 60 ranchers. The grazed lands are located mainly at the edge of the lavas on the desert rangeland and used primarily as spring and fall range for cattle and sheep. At present, aerial predator control on the lava edges is done by the FWS. Water for livestock must be hauled from six existing wells over some 100 miles of dirt roads. The range survey for this area,

completed in September, 1979, indicated that these desert rangelands have not been impacted significantly by livestock use. Subsequent grazing EIS's on the area around the proposed Great Rift wilderness area will address wilderness characteristics.

Minerals - During 1979, the U.S. Geological Survey (Kuntz, 1979) conducted a mineral survey and the U.S. Bureau of Mines (Ridenour, 1979) determined the mineral values on the lava flows. Approximately 840 acres of lava rubble, which is popular for use as building stone, occur on the two lava flows (Ridenour, 1979; Figure 3-1). This lava is classified as a saleable mineral, but very little of it has been removed for building construction because of poor access and distance from markets. Other lava flows such as Hells Half Acre, Cedar Butte and the Black Butte flow have been used more extensively for material extraction.

No known natural gas, oil or mineral deposits occur in the area (Ridenour; Kuntz, et.al., 1979). The draft environmental impact statement listed 13,600 acres as being under application for geothermal lease. A lease was subsequently issued for 4,000 acres. The lease has since been relinquished by the leasee and no geothermal leases or lease applications exist as of September 1983.

Recreation - Some trail bike and four wheel drive use occurs within the proposed boundary on the lava edges, but the full extent of such use is not known. In the southwest area of the Wapi flow, the Wood Road provides access to four kipukas and is utilized by recreationists. Visitor use around the Wood Road has not been monitored.

No general visitor use information is available for the area either. At Craters of the Moon National Monument, which has 43,243 acres under wilderness designation, use figures have been recorded. This data indicates that "use figures from 1971 to 1979 are felt to be too small to indicate an appreciable increase in use due to wilderness classification" (NPS, 1979). In 1978, the monument had 349,000 visitors and only 132 of them stayed overnight in the wilderness area. Contacts with people who have visited the Great Rift outside the National Monument boundaries indicate that visitor use is light. Several factors could account for the light visitor use; remoteness, poor accessibility, lack of awareness of the area, hostile environmental conditions, and lack of exposure to the existing wilderness values.

In relation to the visitor use on the wilderness area in the Monument, the Park Service has indicated that, "It is not felt that there had been any noticeable increase in damage to the resource or the environment due to wilderness classification" (NPS, 1979).

Rights-of-Way - Idaho Power is planning to construct a 500 kv transmission line from Borah to Midpoint (66 miles). One of the proposed alternative routes would cross the southern part of the Wapi flow. This route would

involve about 14 miles of transmission line, seven miles of which would be on the lava flow and in the proposed wilderness boundary.

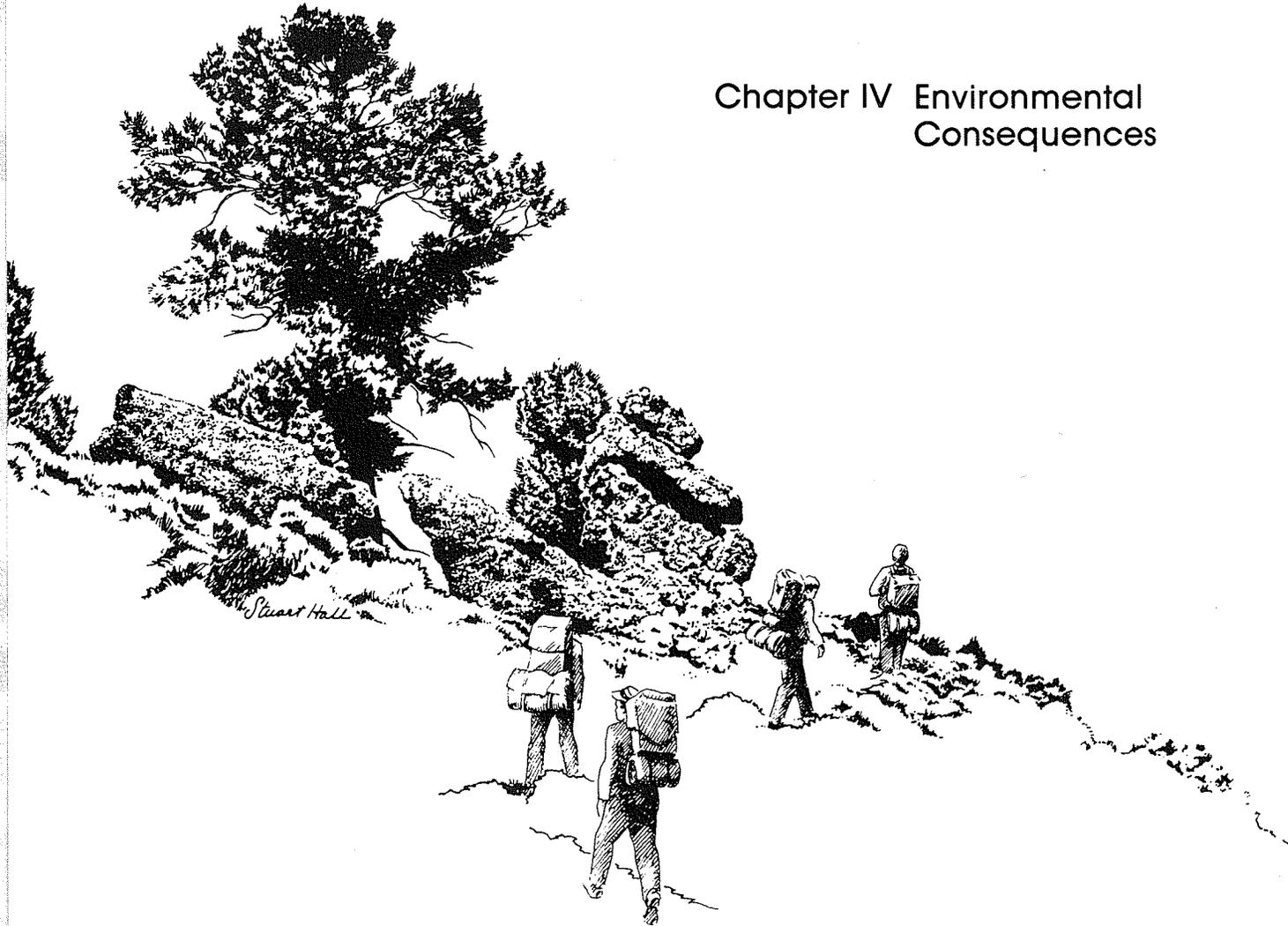
Social Attitudes - Local and regional attitudes on designation for this area vary widely. Many persons are polarized in either a pro- or anti-wilderness position in general. Wilderness proponents say that wilderness designation is the only way the area will be protected from other uses which would degrade the natural conditions. Wilderness opponents say that the area is a de facto wilderness already because of the hostile environment.

Livestock operators question the need for including any non-lava areas in the proposal. They are concerned that livestock grazing would be curtailed because of the need to use vehicles for water hauling.

Mineral industry representatives questioned the need for a wilderness designation but did not comment that minerals would be affected by the designation.

Economics - The area immediately surrounding the Great Rift is rural and sparsely populated including ranches, farms and small communities (less than 2,500 people). No industries are located in the Proposed Wilderness Area. The grazing permittees are the only user group that has an economic dependence on the effected Public Land.

Chapter IV Environmental Consequences



CHAPTER IV
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter analyzes the significant environmental impacts that could result from the proposed Great Rift wilderness area and two alternatives. No significant impacts to climate, air quality, topography, water resources, access, animal life, land use plans, controls and constraints would occur.

PROPOSED ACTION
(Preferred Alternative)

The proposed action recommends designation of the Great Rift as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Lands within the proposed boundary would be devoted to educational, historical, recreational, scenic and scientific uses for future generations.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following assumptions were made to facilitate the impact analysis and to adhere to BLM policy for measuring the effects of the proposed action.

1. The BLM will have the funding and personnel to manage the Proposed Wilderness Area.
2. A very minimal increase in visitor use would occur as a result of the proposed action (based on the experience at Craters of the Moon National Monument).

Impact Summary

The primary benefits of designating the Great Rift area as wilderness would be to preserve the wilderness characteristics and the naturalness of the area from man's work. In addition, an outstanding opportunity for solitude and for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation would be preserved. Secondary impacts associated with the proposed action would be to preserve a total ecosystem, including unique geologic, soil, vegetative interrelationships. Also the ecosystems of some 450 kipukas would be preserved. A kipuka is an island of old lava surrounded, but not covered by a lava flow.

The adverse impacts would be the loss of the opportunity to mine lava rubble for building stone, and, subject to existing rights, the withdrawal of all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing. In addition, geothermal exploration within the area would only be allowed subject to a "no surface occupancy" stipulation. Off-road vehicle use would be prohibited along with rights-of-way for powerlines, roads, etc.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Vegetation - The existing vegetation pattern on about 325,000 acres of lava -- having a full range of ecological succession from pioneer plants to highly diversified plant communities -- would be maintained. Undisturbed, climax plant communities in over 440 kipukas (10,000 acres) would be maintained. These kipukas are representative of native range plant associations, and because of their relative inaccessibility and small size, they have not been affected by domestic grazing or fire control. They are thus ideal comparative study areas. Thus, the kipukas would be preserved for scientific study in the future.

About ten kipukas have been grazed by domestic livestock. This grazing has not had any significant impacts on the vegetation, but these kipukas do offer the opportunity for comparative study with the ungrazed kipukas. Livestock grazing would continue to be allowed on 6,000 acres within the proposed boundary.

In conclusion, impacts to vegetation would be minimal and would be consistent with protection and enhancement of recreation, educational and scientific values.

Soils - The undisturbed soils in the 440 pristine kipukas offer an opportunity for comparison with the soils that have been disturbed by human influences. As discussed in Chapter III, three of those undisturbed kipukas have been inventoried by the SCS. The soil description resulting from that inventory can be used for comparison with other soils. Wilderness designation would ensure that present soil processes could continue undisturbed.

In conclusion, impacts to soils would be preservation of the soils in the kipukas under natural conditions for future study.

Geology - The dramatic Great Rift System and its associated unique lava features would be preserved in an unimpaired condition for scientific and recreational uses.

Recent planetary exploration has demonstrated that volcanism has played and continues to play an important role in the topography of other planets. At this time, "Studies of terrestrial volcanoes are the only means of gaining some insight into extraterrestrial volcanology until more complete exploration is feasible" (Greeley and King, 1977). The volcanic features of the Great Rift would be preserved for comparative planetary studies in the future.

Cultural Resources - Fifteen cultural sites have been identified within the proposed boundary. Surface lithic scatters, caves, rockshelters and wind breaks have been identified. Although they are protected under the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, wilderness designation would ensure the identification and preservation of these sites. The prohibition against motorized vehicles would add an extra layer of protection for cultural sites.

In conclusion, wilderness designation would have positive effects on cultural sites by prohibiting motorized vehicle use.

Wilderness Resources - The wilderness characteristics of size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and a variety of supplemental values would be preserved in the long term.

In conclusion, wilderness values would be preserved.

Livestock Grazing - The proposed action would allow domestic grazing to continue and would not affect present grazing privileges (980 AUMs). None of the six wells or 100 miles of road used for hauling water to livestock are within the boundary for the proposed Great Rift wilderness area. As a result, no present livestock operations based on water hauling to livestock would be affected. Aerial predator control by the FWS along the lava's edge would continue as at present.

In conclusion, the proposed action would continue the existing situation for domestic livestock.

Minerals - Geothermal leasing would be allowed within the proposed boundary with lease stipulation for "no surface occupancy". No geothermal leases or lease applications currently exist.

Lava rubble which is used as building stone would not be sold on some 680 acres within the wilderness boundary. The loss of this acreage for lava rubble collection would not affect the building stone industry because about 20,000 acres of lava flows would still be available for lava rubble outside the boundary.

No known oil and gas reserves or other mineral deposits occur on the lava flows (Ridenour, 1979 and Kuntz, 1979). Effective January 1, 1984, subject to existing rights, the minerals in land designated as wilderness are withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing.

In conclusion, wilderness designation probably would mean that no geothermal exploration would occur and that lava rubble would not be collected.

Recreation - As discussed previously, the Park Service is experiencing little visitor use in the Craters of the Moon wilderness area adjacent to the proposed Great Rift wilderness area. As a result of the Park Service

experience, the increase in visitor use on the Great Rift probably would not be measurable. Unique geologic, ecologic and scenic values associated with the lava flows would be protected, enhancing primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities. Minimal ORV use is occurring on the lava flows. Wilderness designation would prohibit this ORV use.

In conclusion, primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities would be optimized. Any ORV use in the area would be prohibited.

Rights-of-Way - Wilderness designation would render the Idaho Power alternative route over the Wapi flow as an unviable alternative for their project. Other subsequent rights of way applications also would be denied.

Social Attitudes - Persons who feel that the Area needs to be designated as wilderness to preserve the natural conditions would be pleased by a wilderness designation.

Those persons who feel that Idaho already has enough wilderness or who feel that a "wilderness acreage cap" should be placed on the federal agencies studying wilderness areas would be displeased by designation. Many persons question the need for designation because the area is a de facto wilderness due to its hostile environment. These persons would feel that wilderness designation would be a waste of time and money.

In conclusion, wilderness designation probably would not alter any of these social attitudes.

Economics - As discussed earlier, livestock grazing is the only known economic use of the Public Lands within the proposed boundary. Because stocking levels and ranch operations would not be affected by the proposed action, no economic impacts would occur. Because the increase in visitor use would be small, the income generated from recreation would not be significant.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Exploration for geothermal resources on areas presently under lease application could occur only without surface occupancy. Lava rubble collection on 680 acres would not be permitted. Effective January 1, 1984, subject to existing rights, the minerals in the lands designated as wilderness will be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing. ORV use would be prohibited. The attitude of people who oppose wilderness designation for the area would remain the same. The opportunity for right-of-way across the Proposed Wilderness Area would be prohibited.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE OF LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Designation of the Great Rift as wilderness would ensure the long term productivity of ecosystems on the lava flows and in the kipukas and would maintain the present wilderness values.

Effective January 1, 1984, subject to existing rights, the minerals in land designated as wilderness will be withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing. Geothermal leasing probably would not occur and lava rubble would not be collected within the proposed wilderness area.

Over the long term: natural ecological succession on the lava flows and in the kipukas would continue; opportunities for solitude or a primitive or unconfined type of recreation would be preserved; unique geologic formations associated with lava formations would be protected and preserved; the opportunity for comparative study in kipukas would be preserved for future generations.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Wilderness designation would mandate that existing wilderness values on 341,000 acres would be preserved. No irretrievable loss of resources would occur.

WILDERNESS STUDY AREA ALTERNATIVE

This alternative calls for wilderness designation of the entire 374,400 acres determined to have wilderness characteristics including 33,400 acres of Public Land that were determined to be unsuitable for management as wilderness.

ASSUMPTIONS

Same as for the Proposed Action.

IMPACT SUMMARY

Same as for the Proposed Action.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

The only difference between the Proposed Action and this Alternative is the addition of 33,400 acres. This section will discuss the additional impacts that would occur by designating the 33,400 acres as wilderness.

Access - The 33,400 acres includes primarily adjacent desert rangelands (Figure 2-2). Several existing roads either approach or border these

areas. Proximity of the roads and lack of a defined boundary would make these areas extremely difficult to protect from inadvertent or intentional vehicle use.

Livestock Grazing - Domestic livestock grazing occurs on about 32,500 acres of the additional 33,400 acres. This acreage supports 2,390 sheep AUMs and 2,484 cattle AUMs used by 105 permittees. This alternative would not affect this present level of use nor modes of operation.

Minerals - Lava rubble would not be sold on 160 acres located within the additional (USBM, 1979) 33,400 acres after 1984. However, this action would not affect the building stone industry because adequate supply sources are available elsewhere.

There are no known oil and gas reserves or other minerals in this additional acreage (USBM, 1979).

Recreation - The Wood Road, which provides access to four kipukas, is located on the southwestern part of the Wapi flow which is within the additional 33,400 acre area. A few persons use this road to get to the kipukas for recreational purposes. If the area is designated as wilderness, the road would be closed at the first lava crossing, allowing motorized access to only one of the four kipukas.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Opportunities for lava rubble collection on 160 acres located within the additional 33,400 acres would be lost. Inadvertent and intentional motorized vehicle use could occur on the additional acreage because of its proximity to existing roads.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE OF LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Same as for the proposed action.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Same as for the proposed action.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under this alternative, no action would occur to designate the Great Rift Area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The area would be managed according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield concept as prescribed in FLPMA except on the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area.

ASSUMPTIONS

None

IMPACT SUMMARY

Benefits resulting from this alternative would be that lava rubble could be sold for use as building stone and geothermal exploration on the lava flows, particularly on the 4,000 acres presently under lease application. In addition, the 322,450 acres of Public Land would be open for exploration and development of locatable, leaseable and saleable minerals. Also, rights-of-way could be granted to cross the lava flows and ORV use would be permitted under existing guidelines.

The principal adverse impacts would be that existing wilderness characteristics could be impacted by lava rubble, mining, ORV use, geothermal activity, right-of-way establishment or other human activities.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

The 440 kipukas which are not currently grazed, would not be grazed in the future under this alternative because of their small size and inaccessibility. Livestock grazing still would occur on those kipukas presently grazed, and recreation use still would occur on several kipukas via access by the Wood Road. The undisturbed soils in the kipukas would remain undisturbed and would be available for comparison studies.

The unique geologic features of the lava flows would not experience significant impacts. Some of these features could be removed by recreationists, but to date, this has not occurred. Cultural remains at 14 sites still would be protected under current laws. Although recreationists could remove some remains at these sites, such removal has not occurred to any significant degree in the past and would not be expected to change.

Under the multiple use management, the Great Rift area would not be specifically managed to preserve wilderness characteristics for these values. However, the Great Rift has been managed under multiple use for a number of years, and wilderness values have not been damaged, nor have human imprints become noticeable. At this time, making reliable predictions about possible impacts to wilderness values is impossible.

Geothermal leasing could occur on 341,000 acres. If exploration were to occur, human imprints would be left on the area which could reduce or eliminate wilderness values. However, the possibility of geothermal exploration is highly speculative at this time. Future multiple use management plans could exclude the area from geothermal activities by

constraints to protect resource values. Lava rubble could be sold for building stone on 680 acres of the lava flows. However, because of the small acreage involved compared to other available sources, use of these acres for lava rubble collection is highly unlikely.

Opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation still would be available on most of the area. ORV use could reduce the opportunity for solitude. Any geothermal activity also would reduce the opportunity for solitude. At present, the number of acres that could be impacted by these activities and the subsequent loss of opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation is not known. However, in the past the area has retained its solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation resources. Transmission lines could be constructed on the lava flows which would leave human imprints on the landscape.

The social attitudes of those who favor and those who oppose wilderness designation would remain basically the same.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

The unavoidable impacts associated with this alternative would be the potential loss of existing wilderness values associated with ORV use and mineral activity. The degree to which the wilderness values would be impacted is not known, nor is it known how much of the 340,992 acres classed as having wilderness suitability would be affected. Geothermal exploration and lava rubble collection could occur, but it is impossible to predict if these activities would or would not occur.

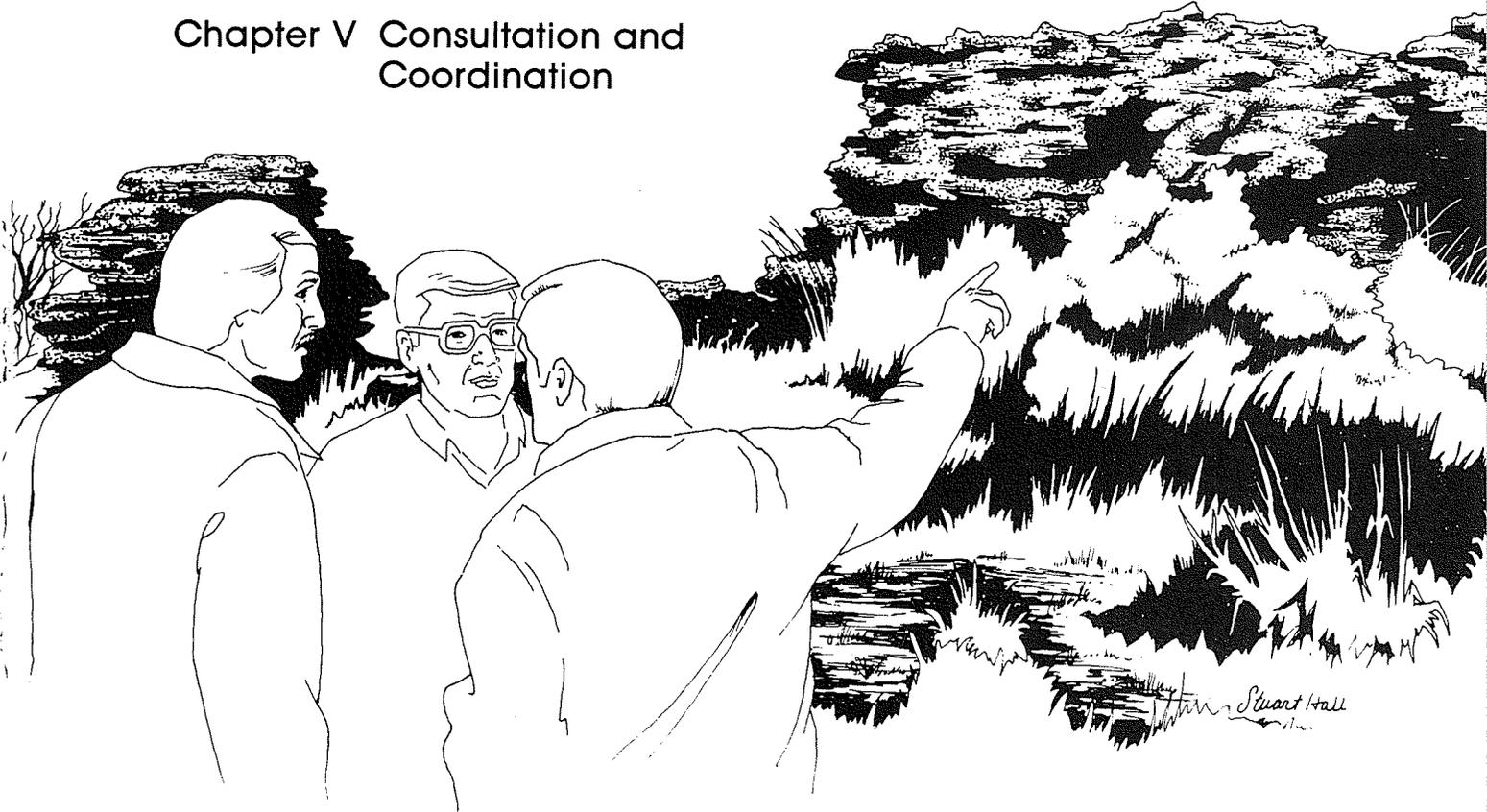
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL SHORT TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE OF LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

ORV use and possible geothermal exploration and lava rubble collection could reduce the wilderness values over the long term.

IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Geothermal exploration and lava rubble collection, if they occurred, would represent an irretrievable commitment of wilderness values. This loss would occur because human imprints would remain and would thus reduce wilderness values.

Chapter V Consultation and
Coordination



CHAPTER V

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

October, 1973 - Idaho Mining Association expressed no interest in the mineral values of either lava flow.

1974 Big Desert Management Framework Plan (MFP) recommended Primitive Area classification for both lava flows to "protect the scenic, scientific and wilderness values of the volcanic landscape". Public meetings were held to discuss the MFP.

1975/1976 Wilderness Institute studied the area under contract with BLM for Primitive Area designation. Five public meetings were held to present the proposal and obtain public comments.

October 23 and 24, 1978 - BLM personnel took the Washington Office Wilderness Society Representative on a field tour of the Great Rift.

April, 1979 - BLM personnel informally consulted with Idaho Department of Fish and Game to identify wildlife values and problems within the study area boundary.

January 9, 1979 - BLM presented slide show on Great Rift to Idaho Falls Exchange Club.

January 11, 1979 - BLM presented slide show on Great Rift to Idaho Farm Bureau.

February 15, 1979 - BLM presented slide show on Great Rift to Federal Executive Council.

March 15 - May 15, 1979 - Public comment period to gather input on the BLM State Director's decision to continue study on the Great Rift as a Wilderness Study Area. Several public meetings were held.

April, 1979 - Dept. of Energy was contacted about the geothermal potential of lands within the study boundary. BLM periodically checks on the information coming from a deep drill test site on the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory grounds.

April, 1979 - Letters and explanatory material were sent to various interest groups and individuals, federal agencies, state and local agencies, and congressional delegations inviting them to the Scoping Session to assist in identifying issues to be addressed in the EIS.

May 3, 1979 - Federal Register notice of BLM's intent to prepare an environmental impact statement on the Great Rift proposed wilderness area and announcement of the Scoping Meeting.

May, 1979 - News release distributed announcing intent to prepare the Great Rift EIS.

May 23, 1979 - District personnel conducted a Scoping Meeting on the Great Rift EIS to identify significant issues and problems.

June 9-10, 1979 - BLM personnel conducted a field tour of the Great Rift for representatives from the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Idaho Environmental Council and Idaho Conservation League.

Throughout 1979 - BLM personnel have kept Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) informed of wilderness program.

June 14, 1979 - IDL communicated its wilderness policy to BLM.

Summer, 1979 - Idaho State University prepared a study of the kipukas in the Great Rift to fulfill a contract with the BLM (preliminary report submitted in August, 1979; final report due August, 1980).

September 13, 1979 - BLM presented slide show on the Great Rift to the Idaho Falls Chapter of Idaho Conservation League.

October, 1979 - County commissioners for Blaine, Butte, Minidoka, and Power counties were contacted to discuss any problems with the Great Rift Wilderness proposal.

October 28 and November 9, 1979 - BLM personnel conducted informal consultations with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on threatened and endangered plants and animals. No threatened or endangered species were identified, but a candidate for the "sensitive" list is known to be located in the study area.

October 28 and November 9, 1979 - BLM personnel met with the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. After reviewing cultural site reports, the SHPO and archaeologist indicated that they had no concerns over negative impacts of the proposed action.

October, 1979 - District Wilderness Coordinators served as consultants for an article featuring the Great Rift, which appeared in the Federation of Western Outdoor Club's publication in November, 1979.

October 1978 to November 1979 - BLM personnel have consulted informally with Craters of the Moon National Monument personnel on a continuing basis.

COORDINATION IN THE REVIEW OF THE DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Copies of the draft EIS were sent to the following:

Federal Agencies

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service
Geological Survey
Bonneville Power Administration
Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service
National Park Service
Natural Resource Library

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Soil Conservation Service

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

State Agencies

State Clearinghouse
Dept. of Health, Welfare and Environmental Services
Idaho Bureau of Mines and Geology
Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
Idaho Dept. of Highways
Idaho Dept. of Public Lands
Idaho Dept. of Water Resources
Idaho Div. of Tourism and Industrial Development
Idaho Office of Energy
Idaho Parks and Recreation Dept.
State Historic Preservation Officer
University of Idaho Extension Service

Local Agencies

Blaine County Commissioners
Blaine County Planning Commission
Butte County Commissioners
Butte County Planning Commission
Minidoka County Commissioners
Minidoka County Planning Commission
Power County Commissioners
Power County Planning Commission
East Central Idaho Planning and Development Association
Arco Mayor
Burley Mayor
Idaho Falls Mayor
Rupert Mayor

PUBLIC COMMENT AND REVIEW

The draft environmental impact statement for the Great Rift Proposed Wilderness was released to the Environmental Protection Agency and the public in March, 1980. About 450 draft statements were distributed for review. The comment letters received required some minor changes in the final statement. Most letters preferred either the proposed action or the larger wilderness study alternative.

All letters received are listed in the following table. Only a portion of the letters contained substantive comments requiring response. The table shows whether or not a response was prepared.

Letter #	From	Substantive Comments	Response Prepared	Letter Printed
1	Blaine County Zoning and Planning Commission	X	X	X
2	Idaho Transportation Dept., Division of Highways, District 2	X	X	X
3	Region IV Development Association, Inc.	X	X	X
4	Environmental Protection Agency, Region X			X
5	John and Meri Kuehn	X	X	X
6	Jeffrey S. Green	X	X	X
7	R. B. Anderson	X	X	X
8	Eric Schulz	X	X	X
9	Peter Bowler	X	X	X
10	Ethel W. Thorniley	X	X	X
11	Marguerita Christoph	X	X	X
12	Idaho Environmental Council	X	X	X
13	Randall B. Vance	X	X	X

Letter #	From	Substantive Comments	Response Prepared	Letter Printed
14	Toni Hill	X	X	X
15	David J. Epstein	X	X	X
16	Idaho Transportation Dept. Div. of Highways, Dist.6	X	X	X
17	Jeffrey A. Crook	X	X	X
18	Gary Vesperman	X	X	X
19	Ron Guenther	X	X	X
20	National Park Service, Pacific Northwest Region	X	X	X
21	Wilderness Society	X	X	X
22	Clarence F. Bellem	X	X	X
23	Idaho Farm Bureau	X	X	X
24	Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service, Northwest Region	X	X	X
25	Timothy Byrnes	X	X	X
26	Idaho Attorney General	X	X	X
27	Jay E. Anderson	X	X	X
28	J. R. Simplot Company	X	X	X
29	Idaho State Historical Society	X	X	X
30	Committee for Idaho's High Desert	X	X	X
31	Dept. of Energy, Idaho Operations Office			X
32	Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game			X

Letter #	From	Substantive Comments	Response Prepared	Letter Printed
33	Idaho State Clearing- house			X
34	U.S. Soil Conservation Service			X
35	State of Idaho, Dept. of Lands	X	X	X
36	Dennis Baird			
37	PU Cattle Ranch			
38	Institute of the American West			
39	E. Fred Birdsall			
40	Bernice Walker			
41	League of Women Voters of Idaho Falls			
42	Thomas J. Dale			
43	Harry F. Lemoyne			
44	Tim Johnson			
45	Wilia Carraway			
46	Henri Lemoyne			
47	Nancy L. Savage			
48	Don L. Crawford			
49	Fred Ralo			
50	Mary Rosczyk			
51	Danny Simon			
52	Willis L. Tarbet			

<u>Letter #</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Substantive Comments</u>	<u>Response Prepared</u>	<u>Letter Printed</u>
53	Charles A. Wellner			
54	Jerry L. Dixon			
55	Glenn Ray Downing			
56	Randall R. Rogers			
57	Ruth Bull			
58	Harold Smith			
59	Sam Crace			
60	Henry Deck			
61	Douglas J. Hellie			
62	American Wilderness Alliance			
63	Dave Foreman			
64	C. Jay Dorr			
65	Tim Heffron			
66	Marjorie B. Kernick			
67	John R. Swanson			
68	Charles M. Bagley			
69	Friends of the Earth			
70	Katie Holmes			
71	Michael Burwell			
72	John Unwin			
73	Steve D. Johnson			
74	Richard Spotts			
75	Albert E. Honican			

Letter #	From	Substantive Comments	Response Prepared	Letter Printed
76	Ron Watters			
77	Gary Stone			
78	Sam A. Monger			
79	Dona E. Gasdict			
80	Atlantic Richfield Co.			
81	Dick Wilson			
82	Tharnyne Betsch			
83	Richard D. Tenney			
84	M. Frank Ireton			
85	Karen Larson			
86	Steven E. Payne			
87	Marjorie Hayes			
88	Tim Resinge			
89	Idaho Cattlemen's Assn.			
90	Robert G. Zahary			
91	Morton R. Brigham			
92	Fritz and Janet Ward			

BLAINE COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

POST OFFICE BOX 149 HAILEY, IDAHO 83333 TELEPHONE 208 788-4665

February 28, 1980

1

Harold E. Isaacson
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

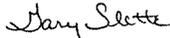
Dear Mr. Isaacson,

After reading the proposed Great Rift Wilderness Draft E.I.S. I became personally interested in the fourteen cultural sites which had been identified by the Bureau of Land Management. If possible, would you please send me a map depicting those sites and any further written information about them.

Additionally, the aspect of geothermal resources is one of concern. In this energy short period is there any alternative to the total exclusion of any surface occupancy in a wilderness area. I support the wilderness concept but see a possible hardship. Perhaps that is like having my cake and eating it too.

Thank you in advance for the information.

Yours truly,



Gary Slette
Administrator

GS:sm

Response: No geothermal leases or lease applications currently exist -- the lease application was relinquished. Beginning January 1, 1984, public lands in the WSA will not be open for appropriation under the mining laws, nor open for mineral leasing.

STATE OF IDAHO

IDAHO TRANSPORTATION BOARD
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GOVERNOR

KEITH GREEN, P.E. - ADMINISTRATOR
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

DISTRICT 2 / PO BOX 2-A / SHOSHONE, IDAHO 83352
PHONE (208) 886-2411

2

March 11, 1980

District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

RE: Draft Environmental Impact of Statement,
Great Rift Wilderness Area

Dear Sir:

We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area and generally find no conflicts with regard to our operation.

Specifically however, we are concerned with both the existing highway corridors and possible future corridors which form the boundaries for a considerable portion of the area.

We definitely feel that the boundary should be no closer than the existing right-of-way, preferably 200 feet. This will permit us to continue our current roadside maintenance practices without conflicting with regulations of a wilderness area designation.

Sincerely,



H. L. JOHNSON, P.E.
DISTRICT ENGINEER

AB

SAFE TRANSPORTATION MEANS PROGRESS
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Response: The Wilderness Study Area and proposed wilderness boundaries were drawn along the 200-foot right-of-way and would continue to provide for the highway corridor.



REGION IV DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION, INC.

725 SHOSHONE STREET SOUTH
TWIN FALLS, IDAHO 83301
PHONE (208) 734-8588

3

April 1, 1980

District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

RE: Great Rift Proposed Wilderness
Draft Environmental Impact
Statement

Dear Sirs:

Region IV Development Association, Inc. is a non-profit economic development corporation, representing eight counties in south central Idaho, and governed by a Board of elected public officials.

The Association has reviewed and discussed the Proposed Wilderness Designation for the Great Rift. The position has been taken by the Board of Directors to support the No Action Alternative for the following reason.

The elimination of approximately 6,000 acres of available grazing land, as proposed in the wilderness designation, would have a negative economic effect on the livestock industry in southern Idaho. This negative economic impact is contrary to goals and policies established by Region IV Development Association for the development of the south central Idaho economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our comment.

Sincerely,

John Yeates
John Yeates
Economic Planner

JY:rj

Serving South Central Idaho

Response: As discussed on page 30 of the draft EIS under economics, livestock grazing on the 6,000 acres would not be eliminated if the area were designated wilderness. Congress specifically allowed in the 1964 Wilderness Act for continued livestock grazing in wilderness areas.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION X

1200 SIXTH AVENUE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98101



REPLY TO
ATTN OF: M/S 443

4

MAR 18 1980

O'dell A. Frandsen, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed its review of your draft environmental impact statement for the proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area in the Big Desert Planning Area in south-eastern Idaho. We have no specific comments.

From the standpoint of the Environmental Protection Agency's areas of concern and expertise, we are rating this statement LO-1 (LO - Lack of Objections; 1 - Adequate Information). This rating will be published in the Federal Register in accordance with our responsibility to inform the public of our views on proposed Federal actions under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, as amended.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this draft environmental impact statement.

Sincerely,

Roger K. Mochnick

Roger K. Mochnick, Acting Chief
Environmental Evaluation Branch

Dear State Director:

We are writing to show our support for a 374,000 acre Great Rift wilderness in Idaho. The 341,000 acres proposed by the BLM leaves out the grasslands which have never been grazed. This is an important criteria in letting them be included. There are not many of those lands left & they would make an important contribution to this lava flow wilderness area.

Thank you

John & Meri Kuehn
John & Meri Kuehn
4347 Fondwac Dr.
Slingshot, WI. 53056

Response: See response to letter #10.

45

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SCIENCE AND EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
WESTERN REGION

U.S. Sheep Experiment Station
Dubois, Idaho 83423

April 9, 1980

O'dell A. Frandsen, Dist. Manager
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear O'dell:

Thank you for the invitation to comment on the draft EIS for the Great Rift Wilderness Area. Following a review of the draft, my only comment deals with the economic considerations associated with the proposed action. On page 30 under Social Attitudes, the statement is made that some feel a "wilderness designation would be a waste of time and money." I was unable to find any indication in the draft as to what the cost of selecting the proposed action would be vs the cost of the no action alternative.

In this case where economic use of the area is not a critical factor, I generally favor the proposed action, thus insuring that the area will retain its wilderness values despite future human events. However, I would be better able to defend that position knowing the costs to the people in tax dollars for implementation of the proposed action.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey S. Green
Research Wildlife Biologist

Response: Existing staff would manage the proposed wilderness. If visitor use increases significantly, one or two temporary employees would be hired as needed for 3 months to supervise visitor use.

District Manager
BLM
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

⑦

Great Rift Wilderness E.I.

After reviewing your wilderness proposal for the Great Rift area I am apposed to wilderness classification.

I believe the BLM should maintain their management options that will be lost by classification. I have no complaint with management as a natural area under existing laws.

I can not support the no action alternative as it is worded. The grassland kipuka area I looked at on the southwest corner of the Monument was an old sheep bed ground and in no way was pristine.

I support multiple use management with controls for proper grazing use, recreation, ORV, wildlife, etc.

R. B. Anderson
St. Rt. H 24
Ririe, Idaho 83443

Response: The Grassland Kipuka has been grazed in the past. Grazing, however, has not affected the area's wilderness characteristics. Wilderness characteristics are not totally based upon the area being pristine (see page 22 of the draft EIS).

Department of Electrical Engineering
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843
March 20, 1980

8

Mr. O'dell Frandsen, District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen,

I would like to make a few short comments on the proposed Great Rift Wilderness and the draft EIS that I was sent recently. In addition, I have a request to make of you for some information unrelated to the comment process and so I have included it on the attached sheet. My comments follow:

1. Congratulations on an excellent document. You and your staff are to be commended for a fair and easily digested statement of the facts.
2. I am surprised to see that you apparently did not contact the Gem State Grotto of the National Speleological Society for comment and assistance. There is probably no group in the state whose experience and interest in features such as the rift area exceed theirs. I would contact Mr. Randy Vance, c/o Department of Geology, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83843. Randy has spent many hours studying and exploring the various volcanic features (particularly lava tubes) in this area. I know because I've been out there with him!
3. The word "effected" is improperly used on page 15--should be "affected."
4. I have spent many hours hiking over and exploring parts of this area--especially near the Wapi flow. This activity has been centered around finding and surveying lava tube systems, but has extended much further. I realize that there are very few people interested in country like this or its development (hence, an EIS of only 50 pages!). However, its timely protection as wilderness is of no less importance--the short time that I've been able to spend in this area has, if nothing else, impressed me with its incredible fragility. There are very few tubes whose features have not already been destroyed by even the sparse visitation they've seen, for instance.
5. I favor the designation of these lands as wilderness. Further, I favor the WSA alternative. The unique features of this area do not end at the lava flow boundary--in fact, in my opinion, the really interesting geologic features lie in the lands adjacent to the flows. This is especially true in my experience for the area to the northeast of the Wapi flow (T5S/R28E). The flows may boast some rather "easy-to-see" and easily protected volcanic features, but near the Wapi flow, the flow itself is not "where it's at." This area should not be neglected simply

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because it has been "trammeled by man" or because it would be difficult to manage with regard to grazing or ORV use. I would consult Randy Vance on some of the details of the area. As far as ". . . geological, or other features of scientific, educational. . . ." value, I believe that you've missed these here.

Thank-you for your consideration of these comments. Your effort in this task are appreciated.

Sincerely,
Eric Schulz
Eric Schulz
Research Associate

Response: A copy of the draft EIS was sent to Randy Vance. The area you mention (Wilderness Inventory Unit 33-14) was intensively inventoried for wilderness characteristics. The proposed inventory decision states the area "does not qualify as a Wilderness Study Area because it fails to meet the naturalness criteria." The Crystal Ice Cave area did not qualify as a wilderness inventory unit because it was less than 5,000 acres.

March 31, 1980

District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

9

RE: Comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area in the Big Desert Planning Area in southeastern Idaho; Please include this statement in the record

Dear District Manager:

I would like to commend the Bureau of Land Management on the preparation of an excellently done document and what indeed can be called a "major effort".

I am strongly supportive of designating in its entirety (341,000 acres) the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. I have visited the area and am excited by the prospect of the preservation of wilderness values in the Great Rift region. The cited loss of opportunity (or "adverse impacts" - a poor choice of wording) to "mine lava rubble for building stone, the withdrawal of all forms of appropriations under the mining laws, the addition of a "no surface occupancy" stipulation for geothermal exploration, and prohibition of off-road vehicles along the rights of way for powerline corridors, roads, etc. are of much less consequence than the preservation of the wilderness qualities of this remarkable area. I concur that there is a definite need for protection against any possible future impacts of wilderness values.

In addition to the proposed action's 341,000 acres to receive Wilderness designation, I feel protection of the additional 33,400 acres excluded due to difficult management suitability is also necessary. You have evaluated this large area and found it to be qualified for wilderness recognition under your criteria, therefore it deserves special management and an assurance of the maintenance of its wilderness qualities. Frankly, I cannot accept management difficulties as a valid reason for not protecting an area, nor should the BLM abdicate its responsibility toward this large wilderness segment. I have attached information concerning some of the other strategies for protection aside from direct wilderness designation. These are strategies utilized by the Bureau of Land Management in its management of the California Desert Conservation Area, and include designation of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (which I here propose be done on Wilderness qualities if you choose to go the ACEC route; in California native American values, archeological values, and ecological values have been used to justify ACEC designation - see attached), Wilderness Study Area, Habitat Management Plan area, Special Habitat area, Special Attention Areas, Wilderness Management Plan areas, and Road Designation Restrictions. An innovative solution can surely be developed so that protection of the wilderness character of the site can survive. It is my belief that when your study identified wilderness qualities in that 33 thousand acres, it became your mandate to manage accordingly.

I would have liked to have seen more dramatic aerial photographs of the Great Rift area along the lines of Greeley and King (1977). This area is photogenic and easily catches the imagination when seen from above.

On page 40 of your Draft, I note that the Committee for Idaho's High Desert and the Native Plant Society were not served with copies of the Draft. I am certain that they would appreciate being added to your service list.

Committee for Idaho's High Desert 1815 Annette Boise, Idaho 83702	Native Plant Society The Herbarium The College of Idaho Caldwell, Idaho 83605
---	--

While I appreciate your only citing references directly mentioned in the text (see "References"), I think the public would benefit from having a brief, yet more complete, literature listing - especially of studies dealing directly with the study area (see below).

Finally, for your enjoyment, I am attaching a xerox of Vardis Fisher's description of the Great Rift area in his 1937 Federal Writer's Project "Idaho: A Guide in Word and Picture". I think you should cite this early work which touts the Great Rift area and could well have served to make it much better known.

I congratulate you on a fine job, and hope that your proposed action can be rapidly implemented and that special management plans or other protective designation can be accomplished for the 33,100 acres excluded by your proposed action. Thank you.

Suggestions for additional citations:

Bullard, F.M. 1971. Volcanic history of the Great Rift, Craters of the Moon National Monument, south-central Idaho: Geol. Soc. Amer. Abs. with Programs, Vol. 3, no. 3, p. 234.

Bullard, F.M. and D. Rylander. 1970. Holocene volcanism in Craters of the Moon National Monument and adjacent areas, south-central Idaho: Geol. Soc. Abs. with Programs, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 234.

Murtaugh, J.G. 1961 Geology of Craters of the Moon National Monument: M.S. Thesis, University of Idaho, Moscow.

Stearns, H.T. 1926. Craters of the Moon National Monument: U.S. Geol. Survey open-file report.

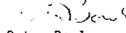
Stearns, H.T. 1928. Craters of the Moon National Monument, Idaho: Idaho Bur. Mines and Geology Bull., No. 13, 57pp.

Urban, K.A. 1971. Common plants of Craters of the Moon National Monument: Craters of the Moon Natural History Association, Inc., 30 pp.

Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration. 1937. Idaho: A Guide in Word and Picture. Caxton Printers, Ltd. Caldwell, Idaho. (Written by Vardis Fisher although his name is not listed.)

Stearns (1928) and Urban (1971) should at least be cited. You should cite your endangered plant search as well.

Respectfully,


Peter Bowler
Star Route
Bliss, Idaho
83314

Response: Because there are no defined boundaries in these grassland areas (33,400 acres) it would be impossible to keep off-road and other motorized vehicles out of the wilderness. Although there are roads close to the lava edges, they are so fragmented and intermittent they do not form a well defined boundary. The lava edges form the most logical and manageable boundary. For these reasons, the 33,400 acres were recommended as unsuitable for wilderness preservation, but were analyzed as an alternative to the proposed action. A copy of the DEIS was sent to the Committee for Idaho's High Desert and will be sent to the Native Plant Society.

April 10, 1980
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 042
Boise, ID 83724

10

Dear Sir:

While we support the Great Rift wilderness proposal we consider it inadequate.

Because the isolated areas of grassland partially or wholly surrounded by the ancient lava flows have never been grazed we see no need to start grazing them now.

INSTEAD we strongly support a 374,000 acre Great Rift Wilderness to properly protect this place.

Yours truly
Eric H. Stumley

Dr. & Mrs. R. Polard, Dr. & Mrs. J. Pugar, Dr. J. Kern, Mr. & Mrs. R. Anst, W. A. W. P
Fountain, Dr. & Mrs. E. Hart, Mrs. J. Frost, Dr. & Mrs. C. Wilkins, M. S. S. L. L. L.

MS. ETHEL W. THORNTON
10653 SCHOLMERR
DETROIT, MI 48205

67
Response: As discussed in the draft EIS, not more than 10 of the kipukas have been grazed by domestic livestock. These kipukas would continue to be grazed, but the remaining 440 would not be grazed (pages 28, 31, 33). There are no kipukas in the additional 33,400 acres under the Wilderness Study Area alternative. About 32,500 acres out of 33,400 have been and are presently grazed and would continue to be grazed under the alternative.

4435 Bunker St

San Diego, CA 92107

April 18, 1980

Dear Mr. Director

Bureau of Land Management

P.O. Box 042, Boise, ID 83724

11

Dear Sir,

I have just learned that the proposed Great Rift Wilderness of 341,000 acres does not include the grasslands adjacent to the lava flow. I hope that these never grazed lands be added to the Great Rift Wilderness proposal making it a 374,000 acre wilderness rather than one of the proposed usage.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Christoph

Response: See response to letter #10.

Idaho Environmental Council

P.O. Box 1708
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

March 30, 1980

Great Rift Wilderness

12

O'dell Frandsen, District Manager
BLM, Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear O'dell;

The IEC supports the BLM proposal for a 341,000 acre Great Rift Wilderness, consisting of the Craters of the Moon lava flow and the Mapi lava flow. This Wilderness would protect a complete and unusual ecosystem, including the volcanic phenomena and related flora and fauna.

We would prefer the Wilderness Study Alternative, with the additional 33,400 acres of adjacent grassland included, but do recognize the difficulty in managing this as Wilderness.

Although there are no imminent threats to the naturalness of the area, it is difficult to foresee what the future may bring. Twenty or 30 years ago, for example, who foresaw the problem of road vehicles are now creating on the roadside public lands?

In Idaho, we tend to take our natural wonders for granted. The Great Rift is the longest rift in the United State, 65 miles long. At depths of up to 800 feet, it is also probably the deepest. There are many different types of volcanic features. In 1971, with the aid of then-Congressman Craval Hansen, the Great Rift was designated a National Landmark. By 1973 or so, you began considering an administrative designation of Primitive Area for the Great Rift.

The lava flows encompass about 450 kipukas, ungrazed pockets of vegetation evolving without manmade influence. These are invaluable for nature study and enjoyment, as well as for research. In the flows are roughly 300 plant species, about 140 bird species, 26 mammal species, and 6 reptile species. Fourteen cultural sites, mostly lithic scatters, are known.

The draft FIS is well done and easy to read. I would suggest more emphasis be placed on wildlife in the final FIS. It should be included in the impacts table on page 11, and also as a component of the ecosystem in the sentence starting "Secondary benefits...." in the middle of page 11.

I commend you and others in the BLM for this proposal, and for the work leading up to it. Hopefully, Congress will follow your recommendation and designate the Great Rift Wilderness.

Sincerely,

Jerry Payne
Jerry Payne
Board of Directors

Response: Wildlife species are discussed in Chapter III. Because impacts would not occur to wildlife under the proposed action or alternatives, wildlife was not included in Table 2-1. There are no known species of birds or wildlife on the lava flows that are not also in the surrounding areas. The word "wildlife" will be included in the sentence on "secondary benefits."

327 Lauder # 1504
Moscow, Idaho 83843

April 2, 1980

District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

13

Dear District Manager:

I am currently studying geology at the University of Idaho and am nearing completion of my M.S. degree. My interests include exploration (economic) geology and volcanic geology. I lived in eastern Idaho for over five years and visited many of the areas included in the Great Rift wilderness proposal. Although my interests at that time were primarily of exploring lava tubes, the time spent in these areas has given me an appreciation of the unique geological volcanic landforms and features present there.

The Craters of the Moon flow and Mapi flow are both worthy of wilderness protection. Building stone, the only realistic mineral resource at this time, can be obtained in other areas under the BLM's jurisdiction. I support your proposed action for the Great Rift wilderness. The wilderness study area alternative that adds 33,400 acres is not necessary. The rugged nature of the flows act as a strong enough buffer to outside impacts. A border buffer zone is not necessary to protect the proposed wilderness areas.

Your recognition of lava tubes as unique geologic features is to be commended. Some of the other well known lava tubes on open BLM lands in eastern Idaho that I have visited have been vandalized with spray paint and garbage. This senseless vandalism indicates to me that the general public has no appreciation of the value of lava tubes. Additional protection for the existing lava tubes will hopefully prevent any irreversible vandalism.

I also urge you to realize the scientific value of lava tubes and related volcanic features as printed out by Crowley and King (1977). Not only do lava tubes serve as recreational use, but the scientific value also makes them worthy of protection. From my studies and searches in the proposed areas, I believe there are more lava tubes present than what your current inventory indicates. It may be years before all of the lava tubes are found, explored, and studied, but at least they will be in a wilderness state when they are discovered.

Sincerely,
Randall B. Vance
Randall B. Vance

Response: As discussed in Chapter IV, Environmental Consequences, page 28 the "unique lava features would be preserved in an unimpaired condition for scientific and recreational uses." The unique lava features, including lava tubes, are described in Chapter III, Affected Environment.

Bureau of Land Management
and To Whom It Might Concern,

14

Concerning the Great Rift Proposed Wilderness plan, I am opposed to the plan because:

With all due respect to our college students and their studies, I question the wisdom of basing such an important decision on studies conducted by students who were not familiar with the area and who have had very little, if any, practical experience in that area. Maturity in this decision appears to be limited to one person on your list of preparers.

The acreage is far greater than necessary for such a plan.

The closure to motorized vehicles not only is ridiculous, it is extremely dangerous and discriminates against the young, the elderly and the handicapped. The Great Rift is not a backpacker's paradise.

A wilderness classification, as we have seen in other areas, would no longer make the area feasible for grazing.

As a nature lover who considers herself also an environmentalist, I resent this infringement on my rights as a United States citizen by a government agency.

Idaho's land should be managed for the benefit of the majority by Idaho and county governments who are familiar with the problems, the people and the financial concerns....not someone in Washington D. C. who is eastern oriented and indebted to the Sierra Club or other special interest group for political reasons

There is no need for such a designation and the resulting expense to taxpayers. The Great Rift remains a natural wilderness (as it has always been) and, if left alone, will continue as such by its own peculiarities that are not conducive to frequent visitation by people.

In the future there may be a need, because of the so-called energy crisis, a need for water, mineral and geothermal exploration.

The removal of lava rock for commercial purposes can and should be monitored and controlled, but there is no need for complete withdrawal.

There can be no opportunity for primitive recreation if one is barred from the primitive area.

Your definition of solitude is a farce. You're creating havoc....not solitude.

I am in favor of the No Action Alternative. Thanks for listening.

Toni Hill
Rt. 1
Keyburn, Idaho 83336

Response: The draft EIS was written by an interdisciplinary team. The team members and their qualifications are listed on page 41 of the draft EIS. The area is being considered for wilderness as result of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. There are other areas available for commercial collection of lava rubble (page 29, draft EIS). The area would be designated as a wilderness, not a primitive area, and no one would be "barred" from using it for primitive recreation activities.

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Dear State Director, BLM,

APRIL 10, 1980

I would like to thank you heartily for the BLM's decision to create a Great Rift Wilderness in Idaho. This rugged, unspoiled area is one of the many components of the American landscape which needs to be protected for its scenic and wildlife values as well as our national heritage for future generations.

My only complaint about the proposal is that it does not include the 33 acre grassland adjacent to the lava flow. I would hope that this untouched area could also be included in a 374,000 acre Great Rift Wilderness. Thank you for your time.

Yours Sincerely,

David J. Epstein

5214 N. CHAMPAIN ST.
BURLINGTON, VT 05401

Response: See response to letter #10.

STATE OF IDAHO

IDAHO TRANSPORTATION BOARD

CARL C. MOORE - CHAIRMAN
LLOYD F. BARRON - VICE CHAIRMAN
ROY I. STROSCHEIN - MEMBER
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DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

DISTRICT 6 / P.O. BOX 97 / RIGBY, IDAHO 83442
PHONE (208) 745-7781

April 4, 1980

16

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Subject: Great Rift Wilderness Area

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

Personnel from the Idaho Division of Highways have made an on-site review of material source withdrawals near the proposed "Great Rift Wilderness Area." Our recommendations are as follows:

1. SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 20, T. 1 N., R. 24 E.B.M. - This area has a small portion that extends to the east side of U.S. 26. This portion appears to be within the 500' from centerline setback requested by the Administrator of Highways, Dean Tisdale, in his June 8, 1979 letter to Mr. William Mathews. This source would be needed when any realignment of U.S. 26 in this vicinity is constructed. Future plans do call for realignment of Tom Cat Hill. This was addressed in our previous comments on other proposed wilderness areas. State retention and continued use is recommended.
2. NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 17, T. 1 N., R. 24 E.B.M. - This source is entirely out of the Great Rift Area. Its closest part being approximately 1/2 mile west of U.S. 26. State retention and continued use is recommended.
3. NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 8, T. 1 N., R. 24 E.B.M. - This source is all on the east side of U.S. 26, except the SW corner. The portion in the proposed wilderness area is lava flows and cinders. We would be willing to work on an exchange of this area for an area outside the wilderness boundaries.

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
April 4, 1980
Page 2

4. Portion of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 24, T. 2 N., R. 24 E.B.M. - This small source is located entirely west of U.S. 26. No effect on wilderness area is anticipated. State retention and continued use is recommended.
5. Portion of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 24, T. 2 N., R. 24 E.B.M. and a portion of SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 24, T. 2 N., R. 24 E.B.M. and a portion of Lot 1 and 2, Sec. 19, T. 2 N., R. 25 E.B.M. - This source is east of U.S. 26 and suitable for borrow. It is located just North of the National Monument boundary and is not included in the proposed wilderness area. It is included in the Wilderness Area Alternative. We would prefer to retain this area unless an equal quality parcel could be traded for it.
6. Portion of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 23, T. 3 N., R. 25 E.B.M. - this area is west of U.S. 26 and, therefore, would have no effect on the wilderness area. State retention and continued use is recommended.
7. Portion of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 23, T. 3 N., R. 25 E.B.M. - this small source adjoins the highway on the east side. It appears to be outside the wilderness area on the map in the E.I.S. State retention and continued use is recommended.
8. Portion of NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 27, T. 3 N., R. 25 E.B.M. - same comments as Item No. 7.
9. Portion of Lot 1, Sec. 5, T. 3 N., R. 25 E.B.M. - this source is west of U.S. 26 and outside the wilderness area. State retention and continued use is recommended.

We hope these specific comments coupled with Mr. Tisdale's earlier letter, help you in your study.

Sincerely,

J.R. Dick
J. R. DICK, P.E.
DISTRICT ENGINEER

dlh

Attachment

Response: The Wilderness Study Area boundary excludes all material sites. However, the BLM would be working towards exchanging the areas on the east side of U. s. Hwy 26, including lands mentioned in #1, #3, #5, and #8. The Wilderness Study Area boundary were drawn along the present 200-foot right-of-way.

SAFE TRANSPORTATION MEANS PROGRESS
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

52

RICHARDS & CROOK
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
P.O. BOX 427
SANDY, OREGON 97055

March 28, 1980

17

District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83410

RE: Great Rift proposed wilderness impact statement

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft environmental impact statement concerning the Great Rift wilderness area in the Big Desert planning area in Southeastern Oregon. After reading the EIS I have arrived at the following conclusion, that the final environmental impact statement should allocate the wilderness study area alternative as the preferred alternative. This would designate the 341,000 acre wilderness area for preservation. I felt that the EIS was balanced and well written, however, I feel that some areas needed more information supplied. I feel a better inventory of the species of wildlife and particularly the species of non-game birds could have been included. Certainly many of the raptors that may inhabit the area are at least unique, if not threatened species and should have been dealt with at greater length in the EIS.

I do have a question with regard to page 12, where the Fish and wildlife service was consulted with regard to the EIS. The report states that the FWS also has predator control responsibility in the area under agreement with the BLM. And that area predator control by FWS would continue to be allowed in accordance with section 4D1 of the wilderness act. What type of predator control is now ongoing in the area? I assume this is probably a coyote reduction type program. Please advise me as to what type of program and what methods are being used in the area. I am deeply concerned with the past predator control programs, in that their methods have seriously affected, and in some cases depleted, populations of other species who came in contact with the predator control methods. I am speaking specifically of bird species, but also badgers, foxes, and other species are sometimes affected by the poison or other methods used to kill coyotes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your EIS, and I hope to be kept on the mailing list to hear of the final decision in this area.

Very truly yours,

Jeffrey A. Crook
Attorney at Law

JAC/mec

Response: For the first comment above, see response to letter #12. Aerial control for coyotes is being done along the lava edges. This control is now limited to the Big Desert sheep allotment.

April 13, 1980

Gary Vesnerman
1712 Herschel St.
San Mateo, CA 94403

Idaho State Director
Bureau of Land Management
PO Box 042
Boise, ID 83724

Gentlepersons:

Please include the following comments in the record of the environmental impact statement for the Great Rift Wilderness:

I have visited Craters of the Moon National Monument twice. So I know of the terrain. I have visited well over national parks, monuments, and wilderness areas in the US and Canada. It compares well with similar lava flows in Calif., New Mexico, and Oregon.

I can't believe the BLM would be so short-sighted and stupid as to exclude a few hills of grassland from the proposed wilderness. About half the land area in the contiguous US states is devoted to grazing. That a few hills have been left ungrazed is remarkable. Has the BLM lost its marbles and sense of proportion to suggest that a few hills feeding a couple cows is essential to the national economic welfare? Such ungrazed areas are valuable benchmarks in the ecological study of grasslands and associated biota.

I strongly favor the full 371,000 acres of Great Rift Wilderness.

Very truly yours,

Gary Vesnerman

Response: See response to letter #10.

54

April 12, 1980
29900 Highway 20
Fort Bragg, California 95437

Idaho State Director
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 042
Boise, Idaho 83724

For the Public Review Record

19

RE: Great Rift Wilderness.

Dear Sir:

Please include these comments as part of the public review record for the proposed Great Rift Wilderness.

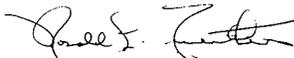
I would, first of all, congratulate BLM for its recognition of the wilderness potential in the Great Rift Area. This relatively young lava flow adjacent to Craters of the Moon National Park in south central Idaho contains outstanding wilderness qualities, and would make a splendid wilderness adjunct to this park.

However, I must take exception to BLM's deletion of the isolated, scattered hills of grassland around which the Great Rift lava flowed, from its wilderness proposal.

These grasslands constitute important parts of the wilderness grassland-lava ecosystem, and their deletion would bring with it wilderness management problems.

I urge addition of these grasslands to the BLM Great Rift Wilderness proposal, for a total wilderness area of 374,000 acres.

Thank you for your consideration.


Ron Guenther

Response: See response to letter #9.



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Pacific Northwest Region
Fourth and Pike Building
Seattle, Washington 98101

April 9, 1980

20

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L7619(PNR)PCC

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

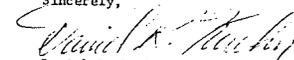
Dear Mr. Frandsen:

We have reviewed the draft environmental statement for the proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area, Big Desert Planning Area, Idaho, and have the following comments.

We favor the Wilderness Study Area alternative because of the buffer zone the additional 33,400 acres would add to the southwest and northern sections of Craters of the Moon National Monument. We are concerned, however, with the fact that geothermal leasing would continue to be allowed, especially near the western boundary of Craters of the Moon. We feel this could cause adverse impacts to the monument.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this statement.

Sincerely,


Daniel R. Kuehn
Acting Associate Regional Director
Planning and Resource Preservation

Response: See response to letter #1.

The
Wilderness
Society

107 West Lawrence, Helena, Montana 59601 (406) 443-7350
Mail to: P.O. Box 1184

April 7, 1980

21

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

I have carefully reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Great Rift Wilderness, visited portions of the area on two occasions and after consultation with local conservationists I am pleased to indicate the strong support of The Wilderness Society for the Wilderness Study Alternative for a 374,400 acre Great Rift Wilderness.

At the same time, we commend the BLM for recommending a 341,000 acre Great Rift Wilderness which includes the Grassland Kipuka Natural Area, and significant portions of the Craters of the Moon and Wapi lava flows.

The draft EIS states that the 33,400 acre difference between the Wilderness Study Alternative and the proposed alternative is unsuitable for wilderness designation even though the Great Rift wilderness inventory determined that the area possesses wilderness characteristics. Beyond this mere statement of unsuitability there is no documentation in the draft EIS that the 33,400 acre area is actually unsuitable for wilderness designation. In fact, these peripheral areas do meet the minimum criteria for wilderness as defined by the 1964 Wilderness Act. The only justification given for excluding these 33,400 acres is that the "proximity of the roads and lack of a defined boundary would make these areas extremely difficult to protect from inadvertent or intentional vehicle use" (p.32, DEIS). It is our feeling that cultural features, such as roads, would make a well defined boundary for the Great Rift Wilderness. These roads would actually make a more logical and manageable boundary than the edge of the lava flows as presently proposed by BLM.

The statement that a boundary around these peripheral areas would be difficult to enforce is in itself an admission that the 33,400 acre area needs protection from indiscriminate ORV use.

It is important to recognize that under the WSA Alternative the 105 grazing permittees are assured that their grazing leases will continue unimpaired. This is only proper since the Wilderness Act explicitly states that existing livestock grazing shall continue in wilderness. Since livestock grazing is the only commercial use now occurring in the Great Rift, and since the area has little commodity development potential there are no economic barriers to wilderness designation.

Wilderness classification of the Great Rift would preserve the area's outstanding wilderness values as well as a unique and complete ecosystem. The scientific, educational and ecological values of this lava rock ecosystem include climax vegetative communities, some 450 kipukas with relict Kipuka soil types, 14 prehistoric cultural sites and recent volcanic formations.

The Wilderness Society urges the BLM to adopt the full Wilderness Study Alternative for a magnificent 374,400 acre Great Rift Wilderness. We've appreciated this opportunity to comment on this important proposal and we stand ready to assist with its implementation in the future.

Sincerely,

Bill Cunningham
Bill Cunningham
Regional Representative

Response: The wilderness inventory is designed only to determine what part of a roadless area has wilderness characteristics and should be studied. The study considers the feasibility of managing all or part of the area as wilderness, and ways to minimize resource conflicts with wilderness. Since conflicts were not identified during the study, managing the area was the major criteria in determining boundaries.

A large percentage of the Wilderness Study Area boundary follows lines of human-caused impact on and where opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are less than outstanding. Roads and vehicle ways form a smaller percentage of the boundary. The lava flow edge was chosen as a suitable boundary because it could be clearly defined, mapped and identified by visitors. It forms the most feasible and practical boundary for wilderness preservation and management. The lava boundary (or proposed action) would require less signing, enforcement and personnel to maintain the area's wilderness characteristics.

From: Name *Charles F. Beckett*
Street Address *RT 41*
City, State *Kapapa, Idaho* Zip Code *83350*

22

Wilderness; with the exception: any roads through the rift area or below area shall remain for multiple use purposes. Federal government shall assume all liability or expense in regards to people lost in any attempt made to enter or view the proposed wilderness. These expenses could become prohibitive and Fremont County would be the great beneficiary of this state with no recovery if this wilderness area should occur. The U.S. Government should be compelled to respond or occur at F.H.R. office. Money to be used primarily by Fremont County.

Response: There are no existing roads in the proposed wilderness boundary. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 authorizes the BLM to assist in search and rescue operations under the direction of local officials. Provisions exist for providing workpower and equipment at no cost.

55

Idaho Farm Bureau Federation



April 23, 1980

23

Mr. O'Dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Re: Draft EIS - Great Rift Wilderness Area

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

In reviewing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area, the same conclusion seems to come up again and again in all three of the alternatives. That conclusion is, it will make little or no difference to the resources of the area, which of the proposals are adopted. In reading the EIS I can agree, in part, that no damage will be done to the land. However I do have some questions as to the amount of damage done to those presently using this land.

On Page 11, Table 2-1, under "Livestock Grazing." In Proposal No. 1 it states that 60 livestock permittees will be allowed to continue their operations. However in Proposal No. 2 it states that 105 will be allowed to continue. There is no explanation for this 45 permittee difference. Are these extra 45 on the additional 33,900 acres or are some being dropped in Proposal No. 1? In light of these questions I feel that more information, or better breakdown on existing resource use, is needed.

It states that the roads used for water hauling are outside the proposed area. However there is some hauling being done in the proposed area. At the public meetings, the ranchers were told that the roads they used didn't qualify as roads even though they were used as such. Consequently some of the water hauling will be curtailed which will hurt the permittees. There are some other effects of this proposal that should be taken into consideration, namely having management tools taken away, such as being able to fence, develop water systems or do any seeding projects. When all of these things are considered together it seems that quite a bit of damage will be done to the permittees in this area.

845 WEST CENTER - P.O. BOX 4848 - POCATELLO, IDAHO 83201 - (208) 232-7914

BRANCH OFFICE: 600 WASHINGTON STREET - P.O. BOX 107 - BOISE, IDAHO 83701 - (208) 342-2688

Mr. O'Dell A. Frandsen

Page - 2 -

April 23, 1980

23

You also stated, on Page 29, under "Livestock Grazing", that predator control will continue. The permittees in the area have expressed concern over this as past experience with areas that have been given a wilderness designation shows that it continues status quo for a short while, then predator control is curtailed sharply. This causes them to wonder what assurance they have that the Fish & Wildlife Service will be allowed to continue their program of predator control.

It seems that the geothermal possibilities in the area are yet to be determined and that in these times of energy shortages, to remove a possible alternate source of clean energy generation from further development, is very unwise.

In reading this draft I find by your own statement, that under non-wilderness status the geologic impact would be insignificant, soils would remain undisturbed for further study, 440 kipukas would remain ungrazed, cultural artifacts have not, and would not, be removed, and desert wilderness values would not change. The biggest fear seems to be that some lava rubble would be removed or that some geothermal exploration might take place. However, on Page #23, it states that very little lava rubble collection has taken place as there are more suitable sites that are more readily accessible and, as I have previously stated, geothermal exploration may be needed in the very near future. In light of these things it seems that to create a wilderness area just for the sake of creating a wilderness area when little, if any, benefit will result to the natural resources of the area, doesn't make any sense.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this proposal. I would like to conclude by urging, on behalf of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, that more attention be given to the fears and wishes of those people who are presently using the ground for a productive purpose. I would also like to reiterate our opposition to this proposal.

Sincerely,

Andrew G. Anderson
Assistant Director, Public Affairs

AGA/aw

Response: The reason for the difference in the permittee numbers is that the larger Wilderness Study Area involves more allotments and more operators. As stated in the draft EIS on page 29, "None of the six wells or miles of road used for hauling water to livestock are within the boundary for the proposed Great Rift Wilderness." There are no proposed livestock projects within the area. On page 12 of the draft EIS it states that, "Areal predator control by the Fish and Wildlife Service would continue to be allowed in accordance with Sec. 4 (d) (1) of the Wilderness Act."



(206) 442-4706
1202-03
BLM-Great Rift

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NORTHWEST REGION
915 SECOND AVENUE, RM. 990
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98174

APR 11 1980

24

Memorandum

To: District Manager, Bureau of Land Management,
Idaho Falls, Idaho

From: Regional Director, Northwest Regional Office,
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

Subject: Review of draft environmental statement for the proposed
Great Rift Wilderness Area

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the subject DES. We offer the following comments for your consideration when preparing the final environmental statement.

Pages 12, 13; Interrelationships. The DES should acknowledge the status of the Great Rift as a registered National Natural Landmark (NNL). In April 1968, the Secretary of the Interior designated the Great Rift area as a NNL. The national significance of the 40-mile volcanic rift, which is one of the largest in the conterminous United States and one of the deepest in the world, was thereby officially recognized. The designated area encompasses 1000 acres and includes the Crystal Ice Caves. In May 1970, on request from the Bureau of Land Management, the area was included in the National Registry of Natural Landmarks as a registered NNL.

HCRS is proposing that the area originally designated as a NNL be expanded to include 169,880 acres. This enlarged area would include the Open Crack Set, the King's Bowl Set and Wapi Lava Field. A draft brief and map describing the proposed enlargement are enclosed.

HCRS' Washington D.C. office has requested comments on the Great Rift NNL proposal from BLM's headquarters office. Also, in a letter dated February 14, 1980, this regional office notified BLM's Idaho State Director of all proposed NNL designations in Idaho that involved BLM administered lands. To date, no comments from BLM have been received on the proposed designation of the Great Rift System as an NNL.

We expect that within the next few weeks the Director of HCRS will decide whether or not to nominate the Great Rift NNL proposal to the Secretary of the Interior for designation. For additional information about that proposal, proposed landmark boundaries, or about the NNL program in general please contact Gordon Atkins of this office at FTS 399-4720.

Pages 17-22; Cultural Resources. The DES speaks of 14 prehistoric sites identified within the proposed wilderness area but is unclear relative to conformance with 36 C.F.R. 800 procedures for determining the eligibility of these sites for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. The final statement should reflect compliance or intended compliance with these requirements, including those for consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer on the adequacy of surveys and application of National Register eligibility criteria.

Maurice H. Lundy
Maurice H. Lundy
Regional Director

Enclosure

Response: The part of the Great Rift designated as a National Natural Landmark is outside the boundaries of the proposed wilderness area, and therefore not discussed in the draft EIS. The uniqueness of the Great Rift is noted on pages 16 and 17 of the draft EIS. Regarding compliance with 36 C.F.R. 800 requirements, BLM personnel met with the State Historic Preservation Officer and State Archaeologist in November, 1979. BLM informed them about the proposed action and gave them site record forms for 15 sites, not 14 which was a typographical error. Another 16 sites are located in the Wilderness Study Area, but outside the boundary of the proposed action. The State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist have reviewed the draft EIS.

Recent conversations with the State Archaeologist confirmed that the proposed action should have no adverse effects on cultural resources, and the 15 sites in the wilderness area, are potentially eligible for the National Register on either an individual or group basis. When written comments are received from the Preservation Officer, the district will send a letter of mutual agreement along with a statement of eligibility from the Preservation Officer to the Keeper of the National Register, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., 20240 (36 C.F.R. 63.3).

40 Fowler Ave
Kenmore, NY 14217
April 24, 1988

(25)

District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
9740 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Sir:

I would like to thank you for sending me a copy of the DEIS on the proposed Great Rift Wilderness. Unfortunately, my copy which came today, April 24th, was a bit late as an accompanying letter indicated I had only until April 14th to comment. Since my request for a copy was mailed March 22nd, I can understand the delay. I hope my comments, although after your deadline, will be included and addressed in the FEIS.

I support the proposal to designate 341,000 acres of Idaho as the Great Rift Wilderness. I do however, propose that a more in-depth study of the impacts of wilderness withdrawal on mineral and geothermal uses be undertaken. If impacts prove to be detrimental, an alternative with acres under lease application, etc. removed, should be developed and considered.

I question your statement "The attitude of people who favor or oppose wilderness designation would not change" identifying an impact under social attitudes in Table 2-1. Is this to say everyone is stubborn. I think that something better could be done on the sociological impacts of the three alternatives. were questioning whether people would rather have wilderness, multi-use land, power lines, cattle grazing or what have you in their back yards. what about the idea of outsiders coming into their area? what about the effects on the areas for base and potential development possibilities. what impact will it have on the people's livelihoods? Social Impact need to be quantified or qualified further.

Thank you for allowing me to comment.

(25)

APR 29 1988

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
IDAHO FALLS DISTRICT
940 LINCOLN ROAD
IDAHO FALLS, ID. 83401
rect

Sincerely
Jimmy E. Byrnes

40 Fowler Ave
Kenmore, NY 14217

Response: The draft mineral survey report by the U.S. Bureau of Mines and Geological Survey was used as a reference document for the area's mineral potential. The impacts on minerals resulting from a wilderness designation are analyzed on page 29 of the draft EIS. The subject of attitudes relating to wilderness designation was discussed on pages iii, 11, 25, and 30 of the draft EIS. As discussed on pages 23 and 30, the increased use of the area as a result of wilderness designation would be small. The grazing permittees are the only user group that has an economic dependence on the affected public land, and they would not be impacted by the proposal (pages 25 and 29 of the draft EIS).

26



STATE OF IDAHO
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
BOISE 83720

DAVID H. LEROY
ATTORNEY GENERAL

April 18, 1980

TELEPHONE
12081 384-2400

26

Harold E. Isaacson
Acting District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Re: Comments on the Great Rift Proposed Wilderness DEIS

Dear Director Isaacson:

After having reviewed the Great Rift Proposed Wilderness DEIS, we would like to offer the following observations upon the proposal:

1. On March 10, 1979, the State Land Board unanimously approved and forwarded to you a Resolution which expressed our concern about school endowment lands included within the proposed boundaries and the affects that a unilateral wilderness designation by the Department of Interior might have on our constitutional ability to manage and produce income from those lands. The Resolution and cover letter were basically an invitation to the federal government to consult with and cooperate with the State of Idaho in exploring the feasibilities and impacts of this proposal in appropriate detail well before the Draft Environmental Impact Statement stage of direction was reached. To my knowledge we have not had a response to that request for consultation and cooperation despite the federal statutes which require the same.

2. On page 12 of the draft EIS you make reference to a request previously submitted to you by the Idaho Department of Lands that if Congress designates the Great Rift as a wilderness area, then state lands included in the boundary "be scheduled for exchange at the earliest opportunity." In your covering letter which accompanied the draft EIS, you state that there are 18,550 acres of state land included in the proposed wilderness area. Because of our past experience in attempting to effect an exchange of land with the federal authorities, we have reconsidered our respective positions on this problem and herewith suggest to you the following: The proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area not be submitted to the Congress unless and until a written agreement between the Idaho Department of Lands and the U. S. Department of Interior has been executed which will designate therein the legal description of both the land to be given to the federal authorities by the State of Idaho and those lands to be exchanged therefor from the federally held public lands within this state.
3. We formally request that this letter be made a part of the record of those hearings to be conducted on March 25 and 26, 1980, and that you acknowledge receipt hereof by return mail.

Sincerely,

David H. Leroy
DAVID H. LEROY
Attorney General

JOHN V. EVANS
Governor and President of the
Land Board

Pete T. Cenarrusa
PETE T. CENARRUSA
Secretary of State

Jerry L. Evans
JERRY L. EVANS
Superintendent of Public
Instruction

Joe R. Williams
JOE R. WILLIAMS
Auditor

59

Response: The following letter was sent
in response to letter #26. Also see
response to letter #35.

GRW/1792

Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

May 2, 1980

David H. LeRoy
Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
Statehouse
Boise, ID 83720

Dear Mr. LeRoy:

The Idaho Falls District Office has received a copy of the State Land Boards comments on the Great Rift Proposed Wilderness Draft EIS. These comments will become part of the public record and appear in the final EIS, but not as part of the transcript. Only comments from those present at the hearings are included in the hearing transcripts. Public hearing comments and written comments will receive the same consideration in the decision process.

We appreciate your comments on the proposal.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ O'dell A. Frandsen

O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager



Idaho State University
Pocatello, Idaho
83209

Department of Biology

13 May 1980

O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Idaho Falls District
Bureau of Land Management
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

27

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

I am writing in support of the proposal to designate the Proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. I have previously testified in support of the proposal; however, we have just completed the analysis of the results of an intensive field study in a portion of the area, and I think it is important to further emphasize its uniqueness and importance.

Our study examined the distributions of plants and animals on kipukas, isolated islands of vegetation surrounded by lava, primarily in the northeastern portion of the Craters of the Moon lava flow. The area obviously meets the criteria for Wilderness designation; these values are adequately documented in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. However, the kipukas offer unparalleled opportunities for scientific study. These opportunities are a consequence of the wilderness character of the region, and wilderness designation would insure that such values would be preserved. I will discuss a couple of practical examples that serve to emphasize the importance that such undisturbed sites can have for resource management.

The kipukas represent a range of environmental conditions with associated species distributions and plant "communities". Some kipukas are heavily dominated by big sagebrush, others by grasses such as needle-and-thread or bluebunch wheatgrass. Some stands were dominated by rabbitbrush, despite the facts that they were never grazed and there was no evidence of past fires. These differences can be explained by differences in environmental factors, such as aspect or soil texture.

The kipukas serve as important references for grazed areas having similar environmental conditions, but uncertain disturbance histories. For example, SCS personnel have apparently told members of your staff (Richard Maggio, personal communication) that much of the area adjacent to the lava flows would be dominated by Wyoming big sagebrush if it were not for its past grazing history. Our data clearly show that the presence of three-tipped sagebrush on those sites is probably related to differences in soil moisture conditions rather than differential grazing pressures. Without the kipukas to provide baseline data, such conclusions might not have been apparent.

ISU is An Equal Opportunity Employer

O'dell A. Frandsen
13 May 1980
Page 2

27

Rabbitbrush is often considered to be a seral species which will be dominant only on sites that have been disturbed. Our study suggests that there are unique combinations of environmental factors that produce stable communities (that would be considered "climax" in the classical sense) which are dominated by rabbitbrush. It is interesting to note that the non-forest habitat type scheme for southern Idaho, developed by Mironaka and Fosberg, does not include any rabbitbrush habitat types. The presence of such stands on kipukas suggests that such habitat types should be recognized.

These are but two examples of the practical implications that scientific studies in a wilderness area can have. Additional details and information will be found in the final report of our project. Our studies have only scratched the surface of the useful biological research that could be conducted in the area.

I have two minor points concerning the draft EIS. On page 17, Franzen (1979) is cited but no such name appears in the bibliography. On that same page, Anderson and Lovejoy are (by implication) credited with sighting 140 species of non-game birds. We did not inventory birds, and I do not know the basis of the citation.

Your staff is to be complimented on the draft EIS. It is refreshingly concise, but complete. It is well written and attractive. I certainly urge the Bureau of Land Management to submit the proposed action to Congress.

Sincerely,

Jay E. Anderson
Jay E. Anderson
Associate Professor

Response: Franzen completed the Class II Cultural Inventory on the Big Desert, and his name will be added to the references. Concur, the sentence will now read: "About 140 species of non-game birds are found in the lava plain area."

Simplot

MINERALS & CHEMICAL DIVISION
CONDA MINE / P.O. BOX 67 / CONDA, IDAHO 83230

May 22, 1980

28

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District Office
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

I wish to comment on the proposed Great Rift wilderness area. I just finished reading the minerals evaluation report on the Great Rift area and several items concern me. I have listed them below:

1. There are locatable minerals around the edges of the lava flows which indicate there probably are minerals of economic value under the lava flows.
2. The close proximity of the Idaho Batholith indicates a very real potential for mineralization under the lava flows.
3. Creating a wilderness would exclude any exploration for minerals in the future.
4. The proposed Great Rift wilderness area is not what one would consider a wilderness area. The lava fields and desert-like climate are not conducive to a wilderness experience. The Craters of the Moon National Monument provides a large enough area for a wilderness experience if one chooses to explore a lava field. The low visitor day attendance at the Craters of the Moon indicates that people do not use this type of environment for a wilderness adventure.
5. The low visitation rate experienced at the Craters of the Moon National Monument shows that people do not use this area extensively. The additional personnel and equipment expense necessary to maintain another wilderness area are not justified.
6. The marketing of slab lava from the Wapi lava field should be continued.

To summarize my comments: This area does not have wilderness characteristics. The low visitor day attendance at the Craters of the Moon National Monument shows that people do not use this type of environment for a wilderness experience. The potential for locating minerals beneath the lava flows should be explored before creating a wilderness area.

Sincerely,

Willis L. Tarbet
Willis L. Tarbet,
Environmental Geologist
P.O. Box 62
Conda, Idaho 83230

Response: The environmental consequences of designating the area as wilderness and the subsequent effects on the mineral resources has been analyzed in the draft EIS. Pages ii, 5, 12, 13, 23, 29 and 32 discuss mineral resources and the impact on them. The information for the impact analysis was obtained from the mineral report provided by the U. S. Bureau of Mines and Geological Survey. The environmental consequences on the mineral resource by not designating the area as wilderness was also discussed on Page 33 and of the draft EIS. Impact on the marketing of lava rubble are also discussed on pages 29 and 32.

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
610 NORTH JULIA DAVIS DRIVE BOISE, IDAHO 83706



STATE MUSEUM

29

May 14, 1980

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
ELN District Manager
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

Thank you for sending a copy of the draft EIS for the Great Rift proposed wilderness area. Please excuse our delay in responding.

Designating this area wilderness would have no effect on the archaeological and historic sites in the area as long as certain monitoring activities are included in the management plan. The effect of National Register properties is considered an adverse effect on such properties and requires the Federal agency to obtain the comments of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (36CFR600). To avoid this, a program of inspecting the archaeological sites in the wilderness area every year or every other year should be included in the management plan for the area. The purpose would be to assess the condition of the sites and to make any recommendations concerning mitigation if any sites are deteriorating. To believe this would solve your obligations under Federal regulations.

Sincerely,

Tom J. Green
Tom J. Green
State Archaeologist
State Historic Preservation Office

Response: Concur. Page 6, Administration and Management will now read: "If any of the sites within the proposed wilderness boundary are designated as National register sites, they will be inspected annually. The purpose of the inspection would be to assess the condition of the sites and to make recommendations concerning mitigation if any sites are deteriorating."

Committee for Idaho High Desert
1815 Annett Street
Boise, Idaho 83705
April 25, 1980

Mr. O'dell Frandsen
District Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho Falls District
940 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

30

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

The Committee for Idaho's High Desert would like to express its support of Wilderness designation for the Great Rift Wilderness Area. This is wild and beautiful country, and exemplifies the values and opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude which are the cornerstones of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The BLM is to be commended for its efforts to protect this outstanding area.

The Committee strongly supports the Wilderness Study Alternative proposing a 374,000 acre Great Rift Wilderness. The entire WSA qualifies for wilderness protection under the criteria set by Congress in the 1964 Wilderness Act; we strongly disagree with the concept that the final boundary be determined by ease of management rather than the wilderness attributes of the site. This is not a valid criteria in the federal law, and we believe it should not be a determining factor in drawing the final boundaries of the Great Rift Wilderness. Because there would be no reduction in the grazing AUM's within the 33,400 acre periphery, there would be no adverse economic impacts from protecting this wilderness. The fact that this border area meets the criteria for wilderness but is recommended for exclusion due to possible management difficulties indicates all the more that the 33,400 acres need protection.

At the present time, the recreational use of the Great Rift wilderness is low, and it will probably grow slowly. However, as the population of Idaho and the nation continues to grow and as more and more defacto wilderness areas are destroyed, the opportunities for recreation and solitude provided by the Great Rift will become increasingly important. To exclude areas now because of potential management problems would be short-sighted, and could impair future management options for the wilderness. Existing roads would make a more logical boundary than the edge of the lava flow, and would better protect the lava rock on the perimeter of the flow from clandestine mining operations. We also believe it would be valuable to ensure the protection of grassland areas as part of the Great Rift ecosystem. Again, since protection of this wilderness along the edge of the lava flow would not affect grazing operations, there should be no objection from cattle and sheep operators.

The Committee for Idaho's High Desert urges the BLM to adopt the Wilderness Study Alternative for a 374,000 acre Great Rift Wilderness. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and to offer our support for protection of this outstanding wilderness.

Sincerely,

Bruce R. Boccard

Bruce R. Boccard
Chairman

cc: Senator Frank Church
Governor John Evans
Senator James McClure
Bill Cunningham
Buck Parker
Pat Ford
Jerry Jayne

Response: The alternative referenced in this letter of designating 374,400 acres as wilderness has been analyzed in the draft EIS along with associated impacts. Congress will make the final decision on the total acreage to be included as wilderness. The impacts of existing roads on the WSA alternative have been analyzed on pages 31 and 32 of the draft EIS.



Department of Energy
 Idaho Operations Office
 550 Second Street
 Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

31

MAR 25 1980

Mr. O'dell Frandsen
 District Manager
 Bureau of Land Management
 940 Lincoln Road
 Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

We have reviewed the draft environmental impact statement of the Great Rift

Proposed Wilderness. We have no comments to contribute on this document.

We appreciated the opportunity to meet last week with you and your staff
 to discuss mutual interests.

Sincerely,

R. J. Beers, Assistant Manager
 Environmental, Safety and Health
 Programs



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

600 SO. WALNUT ST. — P.O. BOX 25
 BOISE, IDAHO 83707

32

April 3, 1980

Mr. O'dell A. Frandsen
 District Manager
 Bureau of Land Management
 940 Lincoln Road
 Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game anticipates no problem
 with wilderness classification for the Great Rift. The area
 is quite inaccessible and very unlikely to change. Such
 classification would have little effect on wildlife.

Sincerely,

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Robert L. Salter
 Acting Director

cc: Clearinghouse
 00303914



State Of Idaho
DIVISION OF BUDGET, POLICY PLANNING AND COORDINATION
 EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

JOHN V. EVANS
 Governor

April 7, 1980

Statehouse
 Boise, Idaho 83720

33

District Manager
 Bureau of Land Management
 940 Lincoln Road
 Idaho Falls, ID 83401

Dear Sir or Madame:

The Idaho State Clearinghouse has completed its review on your Draft Environmental Impact Statement: GREAT RIFT PROPOSED WILDERNESS (our SAI# 00303914). We distributed copies of your DEIS to the following agencies for their review and comment.

Idaho Department of Lands
 Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
 Idaho Department of Fish and Game
 Region IV Development Association
 Southeast Idaho Council of Governments
 Idaho Division of Budget, Policy Planning and Coordination, Natural Resources Bureau

The Southeast Idaho Council of Governments supports your Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The Region IV Development Association supports the No Action Alternative for the reasons discussed in their attached letter. Also, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game anticipates no problem with wilderness classification for the Great Rift. Please see their attached letter. None of the other agencies listed above returned comments to the Clearinghouse.

Thank you for including us in your review process. We would appreciate receiving a copy of the Final Environmental Impact Statement when it is published. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Holly Holmes or myself at 334-3412.

Sincerely,

 Gloria Mabbutt, Coordinator
 Idaho State Clearinghouse

GM:hh

Enclosures

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



United States
 Department of
 Agriculture

Soil
 Conservation
 Service

Room 345
 304 North 8th Street
 Boise, Idaho 83702

May 6, 1980

34

O'dell A. Frandsen
 District Manager
 Bureau of Land Management
 940 Lincoln Road
 Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

Dear Mr. Frandsen:

My staff has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area in the Big Desert Planning Area in southeastern Idaho and have no objection to a wilderness designation for the area described in this statement.

Soils, vegetation and livestock grazing are the main fields mentioned in the draft in which the SCS has expertise. The proposals made concerning these fields do not differ significantly from any the SCS would make.

We wish to thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this draft environmental impact statement.

Sincerely,

 Amos I. Garrison, Jr.
 State Conservationist



The Soil Conservation Service
 is an agency of the
 Department of Agriculture

SCS-AS-10-79

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STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS

STATEHOUSE, BOISE, IDAHO 83720
GORDON C. TROMBLEY
DIRECTOR

STATE BOARD OF LAND COMMISSIONERS

JOHN V. EVANS
GOVERNOR AND PRESIDENT
PETE T. CENARRUSA
SECRETARY OF STATE
DAVID H. LEROY
ATTORNEY GENERAL
JOE R. WILLIAMS
STATE AUDITOR
JERRY L. EVANS
SUPT. OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE DIRECTOR
BLM - IDAHO

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June 13, 1980

JUN 16 1980

910	LD
911	ASD
912	ESD
913	PAC
914	PLS
915	BKS
916	TS
917	MC
918	ADM
919	IS
920	IS
921	IS
922	IS
923	IS
924	IS
925	IS
926	IS
927	IS
928	IS
929	IS
930	IS

Mr. Robert O. Buffington
Idaho State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Room 334, Federal Building
550 West Fort Street
Boise, Idaho 83724

Dear Mr. Buffington:

By unanimous vote, the State Board of Land Commissioners adopted as formal policy the following information which is submitted to you in letter form.

- On March 10, 1979, the State Land Board unanimously approved and forwarded to you a Resolution which expressed our concern about school endowment lands included within the proposed boundaries and the effects that a unilateral wilderness designation by the Department of Interior might have on our constitutional ability to manage and produce income from those lands. The Resolution and cover letter were basically an invitation to the federal government to consult with and cooperate with the State of Idaho in exploring the feasibilities and impacts of this proposal in appropriate detail well before the Draft Environmental Impact Statement stage of direction was reached. To our knowledge we have not had a response to that request for consultation and cooperation despite the federal statutes which require the same.
- On page 12 of the draft EIS you make reference to a request previously submitted to you by the Idaho Department of Lands that if Congress designates the Great Rift as a wilderness area, then state lands included in the boundary "be scheduled for exchange at the earliest opportunity." In your covering letter which accompanied the draft EIS, you state that there are 18,550 acres of

Robert O. Buffington
June 13, 1980
Page 2

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state land included in the proposed wilderness area. Because of our past experience in attempting to affect an exchange of land with the federal authorities, we have reconsidered our respective positions on this problem and herewith suggest to you the following: The proposed Great Rift Wilderness Area not be submitted to the Congress unless and until a written agreement between the Idaho Department of Lands and the U.S. Department of Interior has been executed which will designate therein the legal description of both the land to be given to the federal authorities by the State of Idaho and those lands to be exchanged therefor from the federally held public lands within this state.

- We formally request that this letter be made a part of the record of those hearings and that you acknowledge receipt hereof by return mail.

Sincerely,
Gordon C. Trombley
GORDON C. TROMBLEY,
Director

GCT/cg
cc: Mr. O'Dell A. Frandsen

Response: The following letter was sent in response to letter #35.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

8500 (910)

Idaho State Office
Federal Building
550 W. Fort Street
P.O. Box 042
Boise, Idaho 83724

June 24, 1980

Mr. Gordon C. Trombley, Director
State of Idaho
Department of Lands
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Mr. Trombley:

We have received your letter of June 13, 1980 and are somewhat disappointed by its implications.

POINT # 1 - You indicated we have not responded to requests for consultation and cooperation prior to the Great Rift Draft EIS. We did in fact, initiate such consultation and cooperation when we first considered the Great Rift for Primitive designation (1975-1976). We listed specific State sections involved in that proposal and sent that list to the Department of Lands. Public meetings were held, and exchanges were proposed.

You refer to the Land Board Resolution of March 10, 1979, which states that wilderness designation could restrict the income producing ability of State Lands by blocking access. We were apprised of this policy on March 20, 1979, (letter to State Director Mathews from you), April 17, 1979, (letter from Area Supervisor L. S. Benedick to the Idaho Falls District), and June 15, 1979 (letter from Area Supervisor H. K. Kestie to Idaho Falls District). The letters from Benedick and Kestie also stated that, "If an equitable solution cannot be agreed to within three years of the date of the Wilderness Classification, the subject State Lands may be subject to sale at public auction."

An early and equitable exchange would be as much to our advantage as to yours. If a wilderness designation were to materialize, we would prefer to consummate an exchange in less than three years if possible.

Second, the State Lands within the Great Rift Proposal are not now nor have they been in the past used for any income producing purpose (with the possible exception of some minimal livestock grazing on the extreme periphery of the unit). Livestock grazing is, of course, considered a compatible use with wilderness designation and would therefore not be affected.

Third, we cannot block access to State Lands and thereby impair their income producing abilities (State of Utah vs. Andrus, C-79-0037 and United States vs. Cotter Corp., C-79-0307). We can only regulate method and route to prevent impairment of wilderness characteristics.

In summary, cooperation and consultation with your Department have been and will continue to be integral elements of our wilderness process. Our policy has been to make such efforts at the field level where they can usually be most effective. No steps have been or will be taken to limit the income producing potential of the State Lands involved.

POINT # 2 - On May 23, 1979, we held a scoping workshop on the Great Rift to identify significant issues that should be addressed in the EIS. Benedick participated in that workshop and followed up with a letter dated May 25, 1979, which spelled out several specific problems and proposals. Besides Benedick's concerns as the Land Department representative, many other workshop participants identified State Land exchange as a significant issue. Benedick's involvement, the Land Department letter, concerns of the general public, and our own concern over consolidated land status in the event of wilderness designation prompted us to include the paragraph on State Land (p. 12) in the Draft EIS. You will also note that in the Draft EIS Summary, page iv, State Lands are listed as the key remaining issue to be resolved pending designation, which certainly emphasizes the priority we place on that issue. We have, in fact, already had some preliminary correspondence and discussion at the field level regarding a potential exchange.

On November 30, 1979 we sent Benedick a letter and a map identifying State Lands within the Great Rift proposed boundary. W. J. Michell of your Department responded to that letter pointing out a few discrepancies between our information and yours. As a result, we amended some of the acreage figures in the Draft EIS before it went to print.

We received no formal comments from your Department during the comment period on the Draft EIS. However, we did receive a letter from the State Land Board dated April 18, 1980 which became part of the public record and will be printed in the final EIS. We responded to that letter on May 2, 1980.

In addition to the Great Rift scoping workshop and Draft EIS public comment period; we have held many other meetings and open houses on the various steps in our wilderness process. Department of Lands is always included in our notices for such meetings, and any specific comments received from the Department are carefully considered in developing our recommendations. Also, our Area Manager and Realty Specialist at Idaho Falls have met with representatives of your Area Office on several occasions to discuss a potential exchange.

You suggest a written agreement be consummated regarding a possible exchange. We agree, but we feel that at this point in the process, such an agreement should be quite general. Given the complexity of the exchange process and resultant costs coupled with the uncertainty of an eventual wilderness designation, the investment of substantial time or money in an exchange proposal is not yet realistic or desirable. However, we have made some preliminary efforts at identifying tentative selected and offered lands as well as "ball park" value estimates. Some of these preliminary efforts were discussed with three of the Governor's aides and a representative from the Attorney General's

office on May 2, 1980. We concur wholeheartedly with your recommendation for a written agreement if its purpose would be to formalize these efforts.

Because a formal exchange proposal would be premature and because we are working under a Congressionally mandated deadline (FLPMA established a July 1, 1980, reporting date for areas such as the Great Rift), postponing our report to the President is not an option. You request that we postpone submission to Congress pending such a written agreement, but BLM makes no such submission to Congress. The President will submit his recommendation to Congress, but we have no indication of when he will do so or what he will recommend. Since any exchange must be based on land values prior to wilderness desingation, your Department would not necessarily gain anything by requesting further delays.

POINT # 3 - Your June 13, 1980 letter cannot be made part of the public hearing record because the deadline was May 27, 1980. However, your letter of April 18, 1980 (which was almost exactly the same as the June 13 letter) was incorporated as part of that hearing process.

In conclusion, we feel that we have been consulting and coordinating with your Department on the Great Rift for several years now. We hope these efforts will be effective, and we look forward to any suggestions you might have for improving our working relationship or negotiation process.

We appreciate your comments and hope you will let us know if we can be of further help.

Sincerely,

/S/ Robert O. Buffington

Robert O. Buffington
State Director

cc: Idaho Falls
WO (430)

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Name	Representing	Oral Testimony	Response Prepared
Jay Anderson	Self	X	
Pat O'Donnell	Self	X	X
Elwood M. Rich	Rich Livestock Company	X	
Ned Horner	Minidoka Planning and Zoning Board	X	
Lyle Barton	Minidoka County Commissioners	X	
Pete Cole	Portneuf Valley Audubon Society	X	
John Remsbery	Self	X	
G. F. Irwin	Self	X	
Henry Etcheverry	Minidoka Grazing Association	X	
William P. Rogers	Idaho Conservation League	X	
Gerald A. Jayne	Self	X	X
Ralph Maughan	Sierra Club, Northern Rockies Chapter	X	X
Cyril Slansky	Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs	X	X
Robert J. Hentges	National Park Service, Craters of the Moon National Monument	X	
Tom Stroschein	Self		
Bill Schroeder	Idaho Cattlemen's Association	X	

Gerald Jayne

Comment: I'd like to make a couple of recommendations for improvement of the EIS: I think more emphasis should be given to the wildlife. Many EISs list species; I don't know if that's necessary. It's a suggestion.

Response: The general wildlife species occurring within the wilderness boundary are described on page 17 of the draft EIS. Also see response to letter #12. There is a list of species within the area in the Idaho Falls District Office.

Comment: I definitely would think that on page 11, where the table lists the comparative analysis of the impacts of the alternatives, wildlife should be listed. It isn't even listed there.

Response: See response to letter #12.

Comment: On page ii in the front under the Impact Summary, under the Proposed Action in the center of the page it says: "The primary benefit of wilderness designation would be to preserve wilderness characteristics...and provide an opportunity for solitude..." and then it says: "Secondary benefits associated with the Proposed Action would be to preserve a total ecosystem, including unique geologic, soil, and vegetative inter-relationships." There's no word "wildlife" in there, and obviously wildlife is part of the ecosystem. It should be in there.

Response: See response to letter #12.

Comment: I also question the use of the term "secondary benefits." I realize if you look at a strict interpretation of the Wilderness Act, that's probably true, but I think more and more people are coming to realize that wildlife is a primary benefit of wilderness. I would at least rank it on an equal par with recreation.

Response: A strict interpretation of the Wilderness Act was used in the draft EIS. This interpretation considers wildlife protection or enhancement a "secondary benefit."

Comment: On the very first page--well, the second page, really, where it lists "Responsible Agencies," it lists two alternatives that were considered, and under the "No Action Alternative," it says: Continue the administration of the grassland kipuka as a natural area and continue managing the Craters of the Moon and Wapi lava flows for multiple use." I think the impression may be given there that wilderness is not multiple use when it is in fact multiple use for recreation and wildlife.

Response: Concur. The sentence will now read: "...for multiple use without a wilderness designation."

Comment: On page ii under one of the "Major Areas of Controversy," which keeps popping up is the question of the need for wilderness. The figure of 3.9 million acres under presidential recommendation for wilderness from RARE II is a little high. It is about 3.4 million. That paragraph might be rewritten to clarify the difference between established, designated wilderness with a capital "W", and defacto wilderness with a small "w".

Response: The sentence on page iii will be changed to read:
"...3.4 million acres under presidential recommendation..." Concerning the use of the word "wilderness," the sentence intends to place equal emphasis on both words.

Ralph Maughn
Sierra Club, Northern Rockies Chapter

Comment: The Environmental Impact Statement indicates there will be no impact on the grazing; however, I think a perception remains among many. I suggest in the final statement you include a map of the grazing allotments and the developed livestock facilities such as watering troughs, salting areas, and so forth so people can see for themselves what the relationship is of the existing grazing activities to the wilderness proposal.

Response: In order to keep the document short and consise, resources that are not impacted were not discussed in detail.

Comments: Finally, I'd like to see a little more discussion on how the exchange of approximately 18,000 acres of state lands which are in the proposed wilderness area, how that will take place. How the state will - and the Federal Government, both -- will receive a fair value for their lands, and of course not more than a fair value.

Response: Correspondence has already occured between the State of Idaho and the BLM on the exchange of State lands. Since this is a proposed action, it would be premature to work out the details on an exchange. Details of the exchange will not be worked out unless Congress designates the area wilderness.

Cyril Slansky
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs

Comment: Now, let me make a few specific comments: On page 23, the tone of a future use of wilderness in terms of man-years is very pessimistic. I think too pessimistic.

Response: The only data base available for visitor use on the lava fields was that from Craters of the Moon National Monument. This data is summarized on page 23 of the draft EIS, and it indicates no "appreciable increase in use due to wilderness classification."

Comment: On pages 22 and 32 we have reference to the impact of the proposed wilderness status on grazing. I think this area is incompletely described. This is one of the places where an uninitiated person who has never been out there who has little feeling for cattle and sheep might conclude some queer things. The 6,000 acres that the BLM option and the nine--with its 980 animal unit months and the 60 ranchers is similar to the WSA Alternative of 38,500 acres for 4,807 of animal unit months for about 105 ranchers.

Now, what is the impact of having this land as part of the wilderness? Well, I think we should look at the overall picture. Remember this is only part of a number of allotments that circumnavigate the whole area. I am sad to say I don't have the complete data, but I was able to get an area that is adjacent to the wilderness from the Idaho Falls District side, and this amounts to 371,000 acres.

Now, if you look at the map, the Idaho Falls District is approximately equal in area and nature to the Shoshone District, and you can almost double this, and you end up with something like 700,000 acres of lands that is being used by permittees.

Now, I don't know exactly how many this amounts to in terms of ranchers, but I can tell you that the 6,000 acres of the BLM Proposal is about .85 percent of this overall area that's being grazed, and if you went to the other Proposal, it's 38,000 acres additional. It would amount to something like five and a half years.

Now, I didn't have the data for the animal unit months. It might be a more valid comparison, but -- so you double or triple these figures I just gave you, it's still a pretty small factor, a fraction of the area that is used in total.

I don't think it's fair to ignore this overall picture. I'm not criticizing the general tenor of the report. I'm simply pointing out when it comes to the impact, that we have to see a little more data.

Response: The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FPLMA) states the following in relation to live-stock grazing in wilderness areas: "(c) During the period of review of such areas and until Congress has determined otherwise, the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness, subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on the date of approval of this Act..." Grazing uses are allowed to continue on 6,000 acres under the proposed action and on 32,500 acres under the Wilderness Study Area alternative would not affect the wilderness characteristics of the area. Although the acreage grazed is small, it still represents use by some ranchers who depend on public lands for part of their income. Under FLPMA this use will continue.

Comment: The predator control on page 22 might have been expanded a bit. If the Fish and Wildlife would have revealed from their data how many coyotes are killed in this interface and so on, I think this would be interesting information when it comes to discussing wildlife.

Response: As discussed on page 12 of the draft EIS, predator control would continue. Also, see response to Letter #17.

Comments: Finally, I think the uniqueness of this area should have been discussed in more detail.

Response: The area's unique characteristics, such as geologic formations and relic vegetation areas, have been described in Chapter III, Affected Environment. However, the major reason for describing this area is for wilderness characteristics and naturalness from man's imprint.

Pat O'Donnell

Comment: Who is going to get the benefit out of this if it's closed out of that (motorized vehicles) -- some of the best sage hen country. (Note: if designated wilderness, the area would be closed to motorized vehicles.

Response: The proposed wilderness boundary is the lava edges, except in a few cases, and does not include any significant sage-hen habitat.

LIST OF PREPARERS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Qualifications</u>
Vicki Collins	Recreation and Wilderness Specialist 1/2 year Forest Service 1/2 year Park Service 1 year BLM B.S. - Parks and Recreation Resources Graduate Work - Park Administration
Hal Isaacson	Assistant District Manager EIS Project Manager and Team Leader - 4 years experience M.S. Range Management
Dee Williamson	Team Leader - 1 year experience Three years experience EIS Team member on five statements B.S. Geography M.S. Biogeography
James Ridenour	U.S. Bureau of Mines B.S. Geology M.S. Geology
Trudie Olson	Public Information Specialist 2 Years BLM EIS Experience - Grazing Statement B.S. Political Science
Andy Gibbs	Recreation Technician Summer Employee B.S. Resource Conservation
Rob Hellie	Wilderness Coordinator 4 Years Park Planner 2 Years - BLM B.S. Outdoor Recreation B.S. Political Science
Julia Corbett	Writer-Editor 2 Years Park Service B.S. Magazine Photojournalism and Environmental Studies

APPENDIX I

MINERAL LEASES AND CLAIMS IN RELATION TO THE FEDERAL
LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976
(P.L. 94-579)
AND THE WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964
(P.L. 88-577)

Until December 31, 1983, the United States mining laws and all laws pertaining to mineral leasing apply to wildernesses to the same extent as they applied to the area prior to its classification.

Effective January 1, 1984, subject to existing rights, the minerals in land designated as wilderness are withdrawn from all forms of appropriations under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing.

The Wilderness Act recognizes the rights of minerals claimant under existing mining laws and allows for prospecting and mining in wildernesses while still recognizing the wilderness resource.

The authority to permit prospecting or mining for minerals not subject to location and entry within a wilderness area is discretionary with the Secretary of the Interior. Authority to give a favorable recommendation to lease in wilderness is reserved to the Secretary of Interior. The Secretary will not normally recommend mineral leases or permits in wildernesses or primitive areas unless directional drilling or other methods can be used which will avoid any invasion of the surface.

SECTION 603(c) FEDERAL LAND POLICY
AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976
(P.L. 94-579)

During the period of review of such area and until Congress has determined otherwise, the Secretary shall continue to manage such lands according to his authority under this Act and other applicable law in a manner so as not to impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness, subject, however, to the continuation of existing mining and grazing uses and mineral leasing in the manner and degree in which the same was being conducted on the date of approval of this Act: Provided , That, in managing the public lands the Secretary shall by regulation or otherwise take any action required to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of the lands and their resources or to afford environmental protection. Unless previously withdrawn from appropriation under the mining laws, such lands shall continue to be subject to such appropriation during the period of review unless withdrawn by the Secretary under the procedures of section 204 of this Act for reasons other than preservation of their wilderness character. Once an area has been designated for preservation as wilderness, the provisions of the Wilderness Act which

apply to national forest wilderness areas shall apply with respect to the administration and use of such designated area, including mineral surveys required by section 4(d) (2) of the Wilderness Act, and mineral development, access exchange of lands, and ingress and egress for mining claimants and occupants.

SECTION 4(d) (2) OF THE
WILDERNESS ACT OF 1964
(P.L. 88-577)

Nothing in this Act shall prevent within national forest wilderness areas any activity, including prospecting, for the purpose of gathering information about mineral or other resources, if such activity is carried on in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment. Furthermore, in accordance with such program as the Secretary of Agriculture, such areas shall be surveyed on a planned, recurring basis consistent with the concept of wilderness preservation by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines to determine the mineral values, if any, available to the public and submitted to the President and Congress.

Mineral leases, claims, etc. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act, until midnight December 31, 1983, the United States mining laws and all laws pertaining to mineral leasing shall, to the same extent as applicable prior to the effective date of this Act, extend to those national forest lands designated by this Act as "wilderness areas"; subject, however, to such reasonable regulations governing ingress and egress as may be prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture consistent with the use of the land for mineral location and development and exploration, drilling, and production, and use of land for transmission lines, waterlines, telephone lines, or facilities necessary in exploring, drilling, producing, mining, and processing operations, including where essential the use of mechanized ground or air equipment and restoration as near as practicable of the surface of the land disturbed in performing prospecting, location, and, in oil and gas leasing, discovery work, exploration, drilling, and production, as soon as they have served their purpose. Mining locations lying within the boundaries of said wilderness areas shall be held and used solely for mining or processing operations and uses reasonably incident thereto; and hereafter, subject to valid existing rights, all patents issued under the mining laws of the United States affecting national forest lands designated by this Act as wilderness areas shall convey title to the mineral deposits within the claim, together with the right to cut and use so much of the mature timber therefrom as may be needed in the extraction, removal, and beneficiation of the mineral deposits, if the timber is not otherwise reasonably available, and if the timber is cut under sound principles of forest management as defined by the national forest rules and regulations, but each such patent shall reserve to the United States all title in or to the surface of the lands and products thereof, and no use of the surface of

the claim or the resources therefrom not reasonably required for carrying on mining or prospecting shall be allowed except as otherwise expressly provided in this Act: Provided , That, unless hereafter specifically authorized, no patent within wilderness areas designated by this Act shall issue after December 31, 1983, except for the valid claims existing on or before December 31, 1983. Mining claims located after the effective date of this Act within the boundaries of wilderness areas designated by this Act shall create no rights in excess of those rights which may be patented under the provisions of this subsection. Mineral leases, permits, and licenses covering lands within national forest wilderness areas designated by this Act shall contain such reasonable stipulations as may be prescribed by the Secretary of Agriculture for the protection of the wilderness character of the land consistent with the use of the land for the purpose for which they are leased, permitted, or licensed. Subject to valid rights then existing, effective January 1, 1984, the minerals in lands designated by this Act as wilderness areas are withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing and all amendments thereto.

APPENDIX 2

THE FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976 (P.L. 94-579)

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT WILDERNESS STUDY

Within fifteen years after the date of approval of this Act, the Secretary shall review those roadless areas of five thousand acres or more and roadless islands of the public lands, identified during the inventory required by section 201(a) of this Act as having wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1131 et seq.) and shall from time to time report to the President his recommendation as to the suitability or nonsuitability of each such area or island for preservation as wilderness: Provided , That prior to any recommendations for the designation of an area as wilderness the Secretary shall cause mineral surveys to be conducted by the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines to determine the mineral values, if any, that may be present in such areas: Provided further , That the Secretary shall report to the President by July 1, 1980, his recommendations on those areas which the Secretary has prior to November 1, 1975, formally identified as natural or primitive areas. The review required by this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the procedure specified in section 3(d) of the Wilderness Act.

GLOSSARY

Aa - a lava flow with a rough clinkery or loose blocky surface. The rock contains deflated and stretched vesicles. Hawaiian word for "hard on the feet."

Air Quality Classes - classes established by the Environmental Protection Agency that define the amount of pollution considered significant within an area. Class I applies to areas where almost any change in air quality would be considered significant; Class II applies to areas where the deterioration normally accompanying moderate well-controlled growth would be considered insignificant; and Class III applies to areas where deterioration up to the national standards would be considered insignificant.

Animal Unit Month (AUM) - the amount of forage necessary for the sustenance of one cow or five sheep for a period of 1 month.

Ash - sand- or dust-size volcanic ejected matter.

Basalt - a dark lava rich in iron and magnesium and comparatively poor in silicon; the common lava in the Craters of the Moon and Wapi flows.

Blue Dragon Lava - lava with a sky-blue to cobalt-blue surface caused by electron exchanges in titanium and iron atoms.

Bombs - volcanic ejecta molten when thrown out and having particular forms, such as ribbon, bread-crust, spindle, etc.

Cinder Cone - a mound built by small ejecta around a vent, with most of the fragments larger than 1/2-inch across, very vesicular, and mostly loose.

Climax Vegetation - the final vegetative community that emerges after a series of successive vegetational stages. The climax community perpetuates itself indefinitely unless disturbed by outside forces.

Crater - a depression at a volcanic vent.

Cultural Resources - those fragile and nonrenewable remains of human activities, occupations and endeavors as reflected in sites, buildings, structures, or objects, including works of art, architecture and engineering. Cultural resources are commonly discussed as prehistoric and historic values, but each period represents a part of the full continuum of cultural values from the earliest to the most recent.

Dribblet Spire - a hornito which is more vertical in nature, with a rise to run ratio approaching 1:1 or steeper. Formed by the accretion of lava globs as they are projected from gas vents or blowholes and fall on one spot.

Ecosystem - complex self-sustaining natural system which includes living and non-living components of the environment and the interactions that bind them together. Its functioning involves the circulation of matter and energy between organisms and their environment.

Endangered Species - a species of fish, wildlife or plants found by the Secretary of Interior to be threatened with extinction because its habitat is threatened with destruction, drastic modification or severe curtailment, or because of over-exploitation, disease, predation or other factors. Its survival requires assistance.

Fault - a fracture in the earth's crust along which movement has occurred.

Hornito - a low oven-shaped mound of lava with a rise to run ratio from 1:5 to 1:3. Formed by the accretion of lava globs as they are issued from gas vents or blowholes.

Kipuka - an island of old lava surrounded, but not covered by, a lava flow. It can be higher or lower than the lava flow. Hawaiian word for "window."

Obsidian - volcanic glass formed by lava chilling too quickly to crystallize. Tachylyte is the technical name of basaltic glass.

Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) - any motorized vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland or other terrain.

Pahoehoe - lava with a smooth or ropey surface spread chiefly through tubes and characterized by round vesicles. Hawaiian word for "ropey coils."

Pressure Ridges - dome like ridges which are usually cracked open at the top throughout their length, formed by lateral pressure in the surface of a lava flow.

Public Land - formal name for lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management.

Rift - a lengthy fissure in the earth's crust.

Scoping Session - an early and open public process for determining the scope of the issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.

Sensitive Species - animals classified by the BLM and Idaho Fish and Game Department are those: 1) not yet officially listed but which are undergoing a status review or are proposed for listing, 2) whose populations are consistently small and widely dispersed, or whose ranges are restricted to a few localities, and 3) whose numbers are declining so rapidly that official listing may become necessary as a conservation measure.

Shield Volcano - a broad, fairly flat lava cone having the shape of a shield. An example is the Pillar Butte area of the Wapi flow.

Site - (archaeological) a physical location where human activities or events occurred.

Spatter Cone - a cone built by spatter around a vent. The clots stuck together when they fell.

Succession - the orderly process by which plant communities develop toward the climax plant association.

Threatened Species - any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range, and which has been designated in the Federal Register by the Secretary of Interior as a threatened species.

Tree Mold - a hole in a lava flow caused by lava making a cast of a tree trunk.

Tube - a lava cavern through which pahoehoe lava flowed.

Wilderness Study Area - an area of Public Land which has undergone BLM's initial and intensive wilderness inventories, including public involvement, and has been determined to have wilderness characteristics and to warrant further wilderness study.

Wilderness Suitability - BLM's judgment of the suitability of a wilderness study area to be managed as wilderness. The judgment process includes a conflict analysis with other resource values.

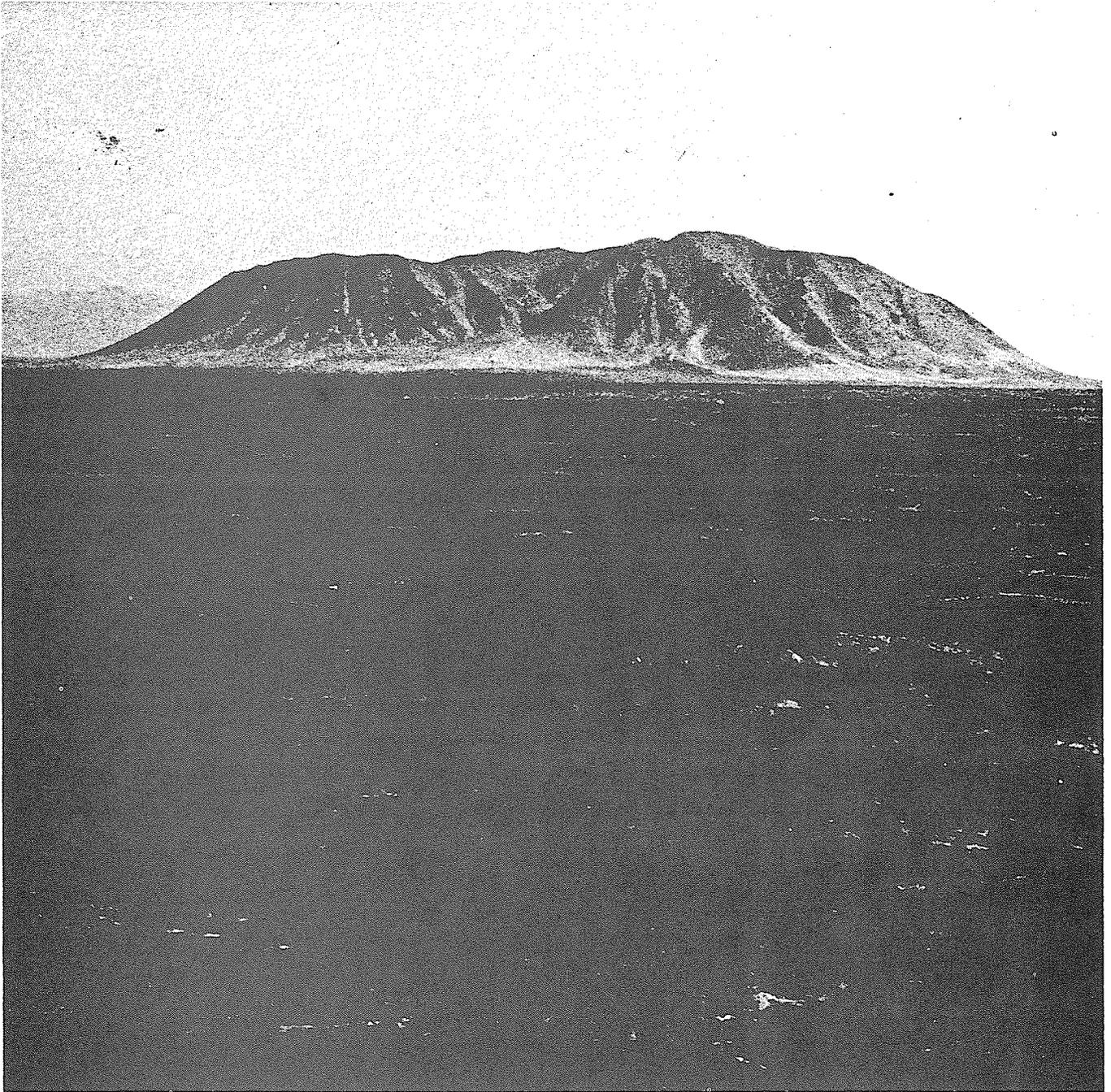
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APPENDIX IV

China Cup Butte Research Natural Area Final Wilderness Study Report

CHINA CUP BUTTE
RESEARCH NATURAL AREA
FINAL WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT



Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho

May 1980

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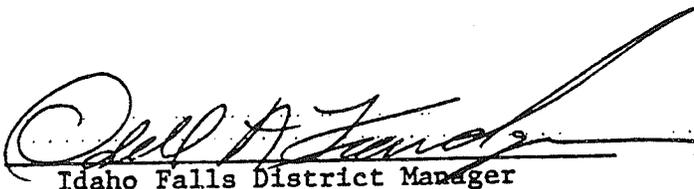
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Wilderness Suitability Recommendation	1
China Cup Butte Maps	2
Previous Designation	4
Summary of Inventory	4
Photograph of China Cup Butte	5
Inventory Forms	Appendix A

Wilderness Suitability Recommendation

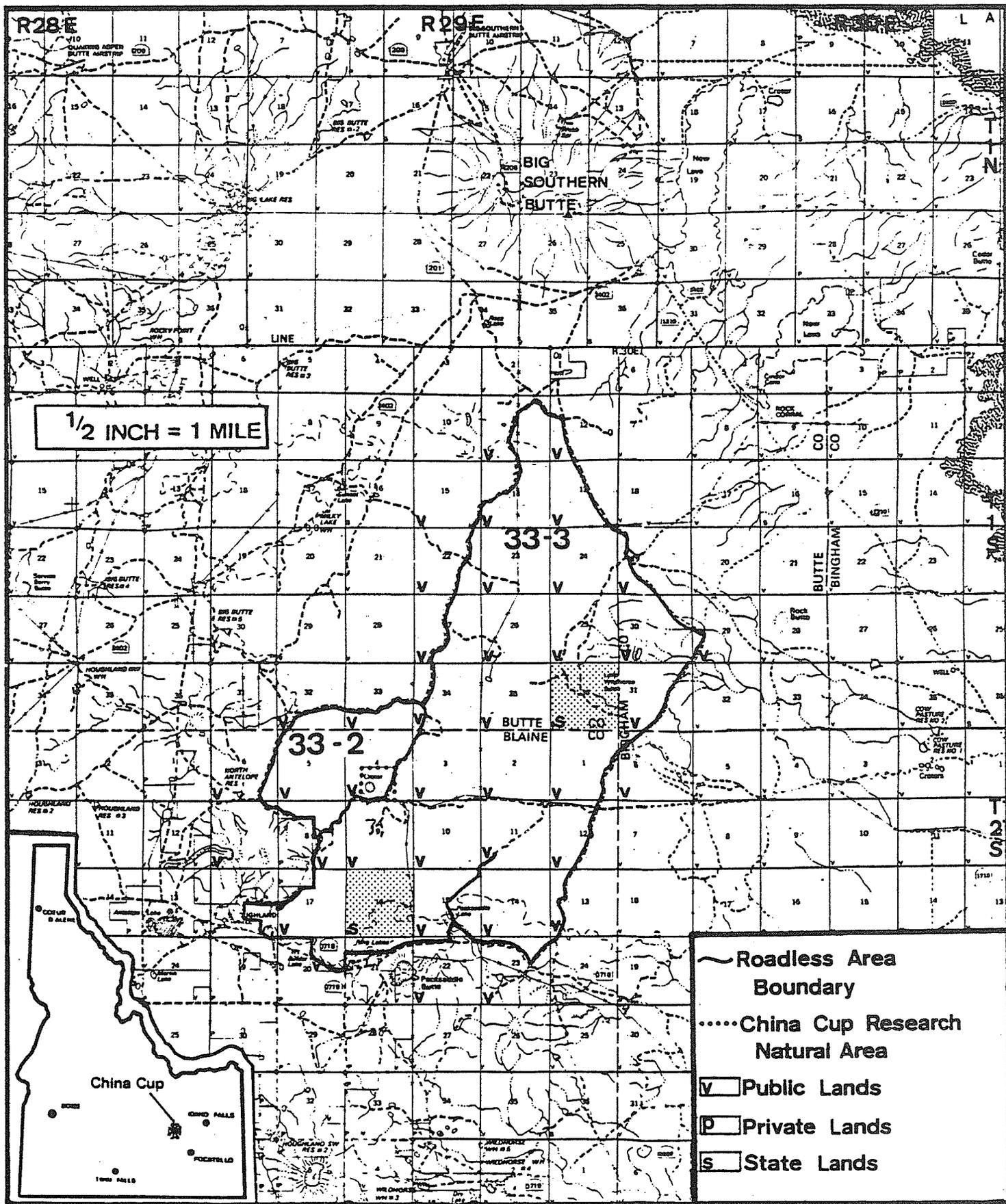
The Bureau of Land Management recommends that Congress take no action regarding wilderness designation for China Cup Butte Research Natural Area and contiguous roadless lands. The area does not possess the wilderness characteristics described in the Wilderness Act of 1964.

A road divides the Research Natural Area into two inventory units; both were disqualified from further study. The smaller unit, which contains the China Cup feature, does not meet the size requirement for wilderness and the larger unit does not appear to be natural.

The Bureau of Land Management recommends that China Cup Butte continue to be managed as a Research Natural Area without further consideration for wilderness designation. No public comments were received on the Idaho State Director's decision to drop the two units from the wilderness inventory.

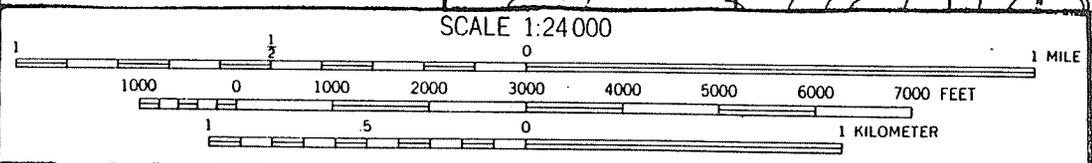
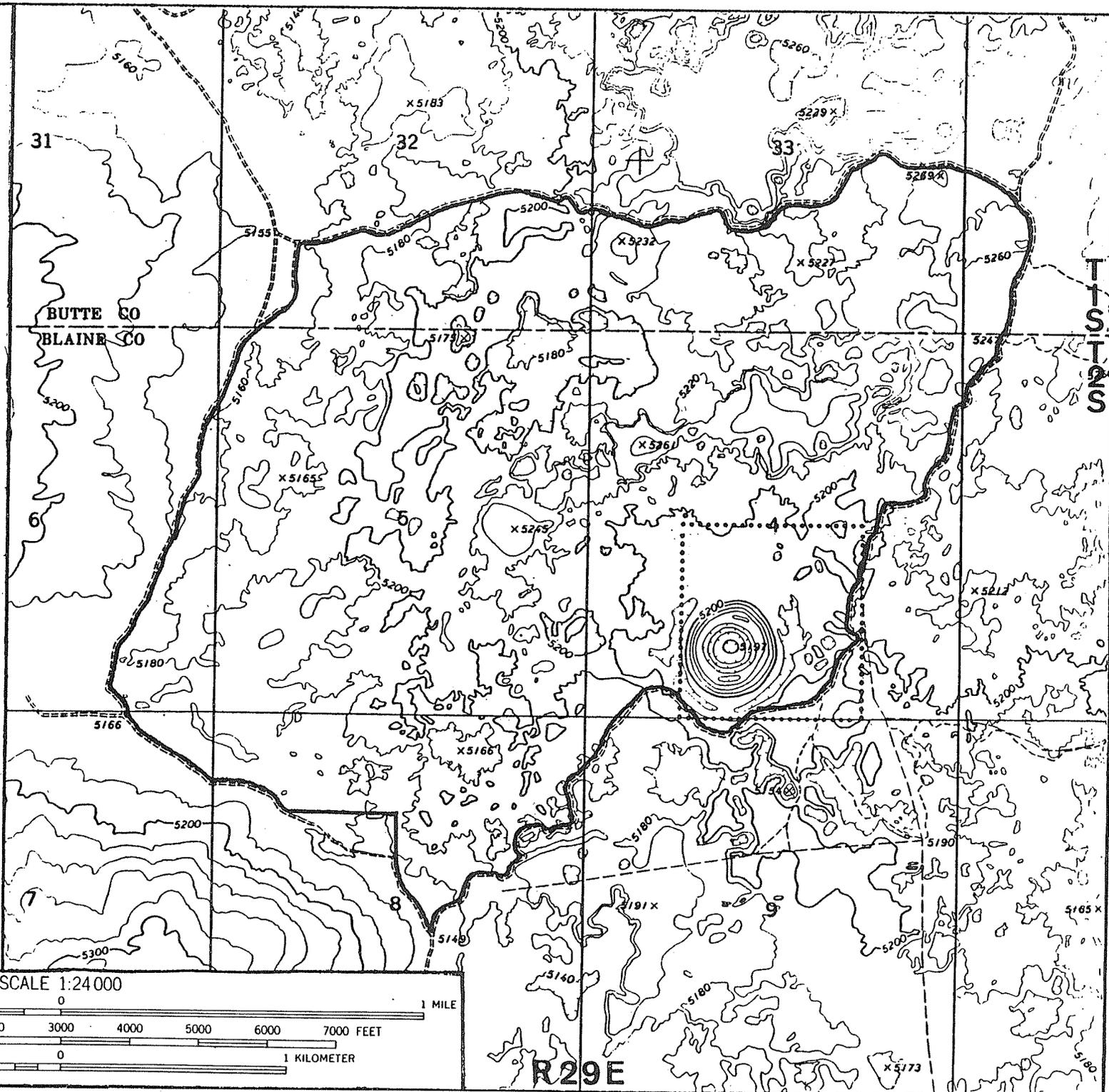
Recommendation	 _____ Idaho Falls District Manager	5/21/80 _____ Date
Approved	 _____ Idaho State Director	5/27/80 _____ Date
Approved	/s/Frank Gregg _____ Director	6/27/80 _____ Date

CHINA CUP BUTTE INSTANT STUDY AREAS



**CHINA CUP BUTTE
INSTANT STUDY
AREA 33-2**

-  Roadless Area Boundary
-  China Cup Research Natural Area
-  Public Lands



3

T15S

R29E

Previous Designation

China Cup Butte is a small tephra or scoria cone that is about nine miles southwest of Big Southern Butte in the south-central Snake River Plain of Idaho. The almost perfectly circular cone is 1,260 feet in diameter and has a crater that is 100 feet deep. Basalt lava flows have encroached the flanks of China Cup, creating a moat-like depression.

In recognition of the geologic importance of this feature, China Cup Butte became a Research Natural Area on January 29, 1965. The Secretary of Interior withdrew 160 acres of public land in Blaine County, Idaho, from mineral and agricultural entry, public sale, State exchange, or State selection.

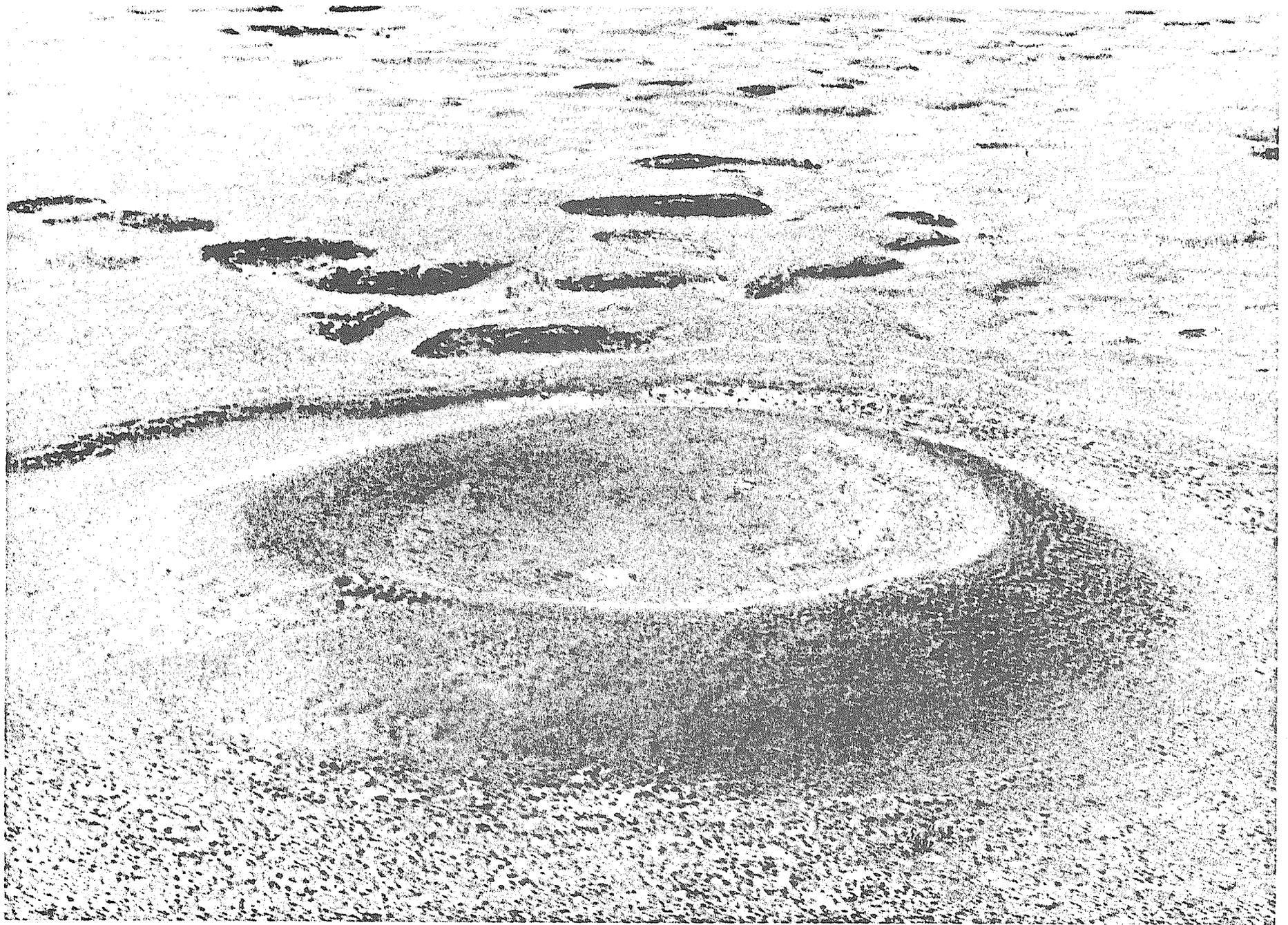
Summary of Inventory

The Bureau of Land Management has completed a wilderness inventory of China Cup Butte Research Natural Area along with its contiguous roadless lands as directed by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Procedures for this inventory are contained in the BLM's Wilderness Inventory Handbook.

A road through the southeast corner of the 160-acre Research Natural Area is the boundary between two wilderness inventory units. The unit containing the geologic feature and its contiguous roadless lands is only 1,940 acres. This unit was disqualified from further study because it did not meet the size criteria of the Wilderness Act.

The unit containing the southeast corner of the Research Natural Area and the contiguous roadless lands is 14,170 acres of public lands and 1,280 acres of State lands. Numerous livestock improvements including fences, reservoirs, and many ways and trails prevented the unit from meeting the naturalness criteria of the Wilderness Act.

The public comment period on the inventory was from March 15 to June 15, 1979. The BLM held nine public meetings and openhouses during that time, but received no oral or written comments on China Cup Butte.



China Cup Butte with adjacent road

APPENDIX A

INVENTORY FORMS

WILDERNESS INVENTORY SITUATION EVALUATION

I. WILDERNESS UNIT IDENTIFICATION

Area/Island Name	<u>China Cup ISA-I</u>
Inventory Unit Number	<u>33-2</u>
State	<u>Idaho</u>
District	<u>Idaho Falls</u>
Planning Unit	<u>Big Desert</u>

II. UNIT ANALYSIS

- A. Ownership
The entire unit is public land.
- B. Size - The unit contains 1,940 acres.
- C. Easements
- D. Leases
- E. Mining Claims
- F. Permanent Improvements
- G. Existing Uses
- H. Human Activity
- I. Land Treatment/Manipulations
- J. General vegetation and topographic features
- K. Contiguous Lands

III. UNIT EVALUATION

A. Select one of the following:

1. The area appears to have potential for further wilderness consideration.
2. The area obviously and clearly does not have potential for wilderness.

Explain your rationale for selection.

The unit is less than 5,000 acres and is not considered of sufficient size to be managed as a wilderness.

B. Is the area or island of sufficient size?
NO

C. Is there enough public support for intensive wilderness inventory of the area or island or any part?

IV. UNIT RECOMMENDATION (Check appropriate block)

- A. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended for intensive wilderness inventory.
- B. Area is recommended as not qualifying for further inventory and should be dropped from the wilderness review process.

John A. Breh
STAFF SIGNATURE

3/15/79
DATE

V. AREA MANAGER REVIEW

Brent D. Jensen
AREA MANAGER

4/17/79
DATE

VI. APPROVAL

Bill A. Fawcett
DISTRICT MANAGER

4/17/79
DATE

WILDERNESS INVENTORY SITUATION EVALUATION

I. WILDERNESS UNIT IDENTIFICATION

Area/Island Name	<u>China Cup ISA-II</u>
Inventory Unit Number	<u>33-3</u>
State	<u>Idaho</u>
District	<u>Idaho Falls</u>
Planning Unit	<u>Big Desert</u>

II. UNIT ANALYSIS

- A. Ownership
Public land and 1,280 acres of State land.
- B. Size - The unit contains 14,170 acres of public land.
- C. Easements
- D. Leases
- E. Mining Claims
- F. Permanent Improvements
12 miles of livestock fence
2 livestock reservoirs
11 miles of jeep trails and vehicle access routes. One access route was constructed in the early 40's and runs east from China Cup Butte along a fence line and bisects the unit.
- G. Existing Uses
Livestock grazing, upland game bird and big game hunting. ORV travel associated with hunting and sightseeing.
- H. Human Activity
- I. Land Treatment/Manipulations
- J. General vegetation and topographic features
The unit is generally flat open desert land. Some ancient lava features are present. The principle vegetative species are sagebrush and grasses typical of this high desert ecosystem.
- K. Contiguous Lands
Public land, State and private lands. The boundaries of the unit are formed by private lands, BLM roads 9718 and an improved and maintained road. Approximately 10 acres of the China Cup ISA are within the unit.

III. UNIT EVALUATION

A. Select one of the following:

1. The area appears to have potential for further wilderness consideration.
- ②. The area obviously and clearly does not have potential for wilderness.

Explain your rationale for selection.

The unit is relatively small and irregularly shaped - being only 3 miles wide and nearly 8 miles long. Vehicle access routes criss-cross the area. Livestock grazing activities and improvements are noticeably present. These factors have a combined adverse affect on naturalness and opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

B. Is the area or island of sufficient size?
YES

C. Is there enough public support for intensive wilderness inventory of the area or island or any part?

IV. UNIT RECOMMENDATION (Check appropriate block)

- A. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended for intensive wilderness inventory.
- X B. Area is recommended as not qualifying for further inventory and should be dropped from the wilderness review process.

John A. Bits
STAFF SIGNATURE

3/15/79
DATE

V. AREA MANAGER REVIEW

Brent D. Jensen
AREA MANAGER

4/17/79
DATE

VI. APPROVAL

Edell A. Frank
DISTRICT MANAGER

4/17/79
DATE

APPENDIX V

Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area Final Wilderness Study Report

**SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY
NATURAL AREA
FINAL WILDERNESS STUDY REPORT**

**Prepared by
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Idaho**

May 1980

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PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report discusses wilderness inventory findings and makes wilderness recommendations for roadless public lands within and contiguous to the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area in Idaho. The lands within the Natural Area were mandated for wilderness review in Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

Under Section 603 of FLPMA, the BLM is responsible for ensuring that all public lands are inventoried for wilderness characteristics as described in the Wilderness Act of 1964. In addition, Section 603 identified the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area as an "instant" wilderness study area (ISA) along with 54 other areas formally identified as primitive or natural areas prior to November 1, 1975. Section 603 of FLPMA requires that roadless lands within ISA's be inventoried, studied, and reported to the President by July 1, 1980, as to their suitability or non-suitability for preservation as wilderness.

The wilderness review process for the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area (BPNA) was conducted in accordance with policies and procedures set forth in the BLM's Wilderness Inventory Handbook and in subsequent related guidance. The basic wilderness review process included:

- (1) The completion of a wilderness characteristics inventory through the intensive inventory phase for all roadless public lands in the ISA.
- (2) The completion of a wilderness characteristics inventory through the intensive inventory phase for all roadless public lands contiguous with public lands in the ISA.
- (3) The completion of a detailed study of the ISA and/or contiguous public lands if wilderness characteristics are present. The study is to determine the suitability or non-suitability of the affected public lands for preservation as wilderness.

The wilderness characteristics inventory of the BPNA was conducted in conjunction with the statewide initial wilderness inventory in Idaho. However, unlike the statewide initial inventory which relied on existing office records and aerial photography, the wilderness characteristics inventory of the BPNA also incorporated extensive field work. Those areas which were judged in the field not to be clearly and obviously lacking wilderness characteristics were carried immediately into an intensive wilderness characteristics inventory. The proposed findings of the wilderness characteristics inventory for the BPNA were released for public review March 15, 1979. Following a 90-day comment period, the final inventory decision was issued on August 10, 1979.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The wilderness characteristics inventory identified 11 inventory units encompassing 26,710 acres of public land within the BPNA. Each unit is contiguous to roadless public lands lying outside the BPNA boundary. In addition, one roadless public island of 4 acres was identified within the BPNA. The boundaries of the inventory units were determined by the region's existing gravel or dirt road network, powerline rights-of-way and accompanying service routes, pipelines and canals, and the distribution of private and state lands (Maps 1 and 2). With the addition of contiguous public lands, the area affected by the BPNA wilderness characteristics inventory totals 161,736 acres of public land (Table A).

The BPNA includes most of the Snake River canyon from Jackass Butte downstream to Guffey Butte. However, the bulk of the inventory area affected by this report consists of flat to lightly dissected plateau lands lying on either side of the BPNA.

The inventory area is dominated by northern desert and salt desert shrub vegetation. Riparian vegetation is common in the immediate vicinity of surface water.

Each of the inventory units was examined in the field to determine if existing individual imprints of man are substantially noticeable or if the cumulative effect of many imprints influences the unit's apparent naturalness. In most instances, the significance of imprints is related to the topographic or vegetative setting. In general, imprints are more highly concentrated in the more gentle topography. Despite low vegetation, the flat terrain often makes it difficult to see ground-level imprints from any distance. As a result, imprints on the flat plateaus are not considered substantially noticeable unless they are highly concentrated, which is often the case. Within the canyon and surrounding breaks, the imprints of man are more frequently visible from great distances, making individual imprints as well as concentrations of imprints relatively more noticeable.

The wilderness inventory found the natural character of the BPNA and contiguous public lands to be significantly impacted by a long history of power site development, powerline rights-of-way, extensive ORV use, military training activities by the Idaho National Guard, dirt and gravel road development, irrigation pipelines and pump stations, and agricultural development. Impacts are so concentrated and of such a substantial nature that most of the inventory units were judged to be clearly and obviously lacking wilderness characteristics during the initial inventory.

The major impact upon naturalness within most of the inventory area consists of an extensive network of vehicle routes crisscrossing the region. These routes are so numerous and so substantially noticeable that only a limited attempt was made to determine whether ~~or~~ not each route qualifies as a road or as a way. Such a route classification effort would have been extremely time consuming and would not have affected the evaluation of naturalness within individual inventory units.

Therefore, for the purpose of this report, all vehicle routes within established inventory units are treated as ways.

Only one inventory unit, Wild Horse Butte (Unit 16-22), was found to warrant an intensive wilderness characteristics inventory. However, the intensive inventory found this unit also to be lacking wilderness characteristics. The initial and intensive inventory forms for each of the twelve inventory units are contained in the Permanent Documentation File. A summary of the wilderness inventory findings specific to each unit follows:

Coyote Butte (14-2): Map 3

The unit encompasses 53,094 acres of public land in the northern flat plateau region. Only 115 acres of this unit lie within the BPNA boundary.

The unit is crisscrossed with numerous ways, especially in the eastern portion where National Guard maneuvers have created many tank and jeep trails. Bladed section lines are common in the south-central portion of the unit. There are clearly and obviously not 5,000 contiguous acres of public land where the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable.

Swan Falls (14-3): Map 4A and 4B

The unit consists of 13 small subunits totaling 5,402 acres of public land clustered within the Snake River canyon. Of this acreage, 4,157 acres lie within the BPNA boundary.

The subunits vary in size from 20 acres to less than 1,300 acres and are delineated by a network of powerlines and by private lands. None of the roadless subunits meet the minimum size criteria for wilderness.

Big Foot Butte (14-4): Map 5

The unit contains 35,712 acres of public land in the northern flat plateau region. Only 20 acres of the unit lie within the BPNA boundary.

The unit is crisscrossed with numerous ways, especially in the eastern portion where National Guard maneuvers have created many tank and jeep trails. Bladed section lines are common in the northern portion of the unit. There are clearly and obviously not 5,000 contiguous acres of public land where the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable.

White Sage (14-5): Map 6

The unit contains 8,243 acres of public land in the northern flat plateau region. Only 232 acres of the unit lie within the BPNA boundary.

The naturalness of the unit is seriously impaired by substantial ways, especially in the eastern portion where National Guard maneuvers have created numerous tank and jeep trails. Because of the extremely narrow configuration of the unit and the lack of topographic and vegetation screening, powerlines forming the boundaries are visible from

virtually every point in the unit. There are clearly and obviously not 5,000 contiguous acres of public land where the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable.

Jackass Butte (14-6): Map 7

The unit encompasses 2,176 acres of public land in the eastern portion of the Snake River canyon. Of this acreage, 1,776 acres lie within the BPNA boundary.

The unit does not meet the minimum size requirements for wilderness. In addition, the small size and narrow configuration of the unit, combined with minimal vegetative and topographic screening and the proximity of agricultural development on adjacent private lands render the opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation clearly and obviously less than outstanding.

Black Butte (14-10): Map 8

The unit contains 14,925 acres of public land in the eastern portion of the Snake River canyon. Of this acreage, 6,920 acres lie within the BPNA boundary.

The northeastern half of the unit contains numerous tank and jeep trails created by past National Guard maneuvers and ORV use. The imprint of man's work in this portion of the unit is substantially noticeable. In the remainder of the unit, the landscape is less affected by National Guard activity. However, the small size, narrow configuration and lack of adequate topographic and vegetative screening in the unit render the opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation clearly and obviously less than outstanding.

Guffey Butte (16-11): Map 9

The unit encompasses 4,480 acres of public land in the Snake River canyon and on the southern plateau. Only 430 acres of the unit lie within the BPNA boundary.

The unit does not meet the minimum size requirements for wilderness. In addition, the unit's small size and narrow configuration, combined with minimal topographic and vegetative screening and significant external influences in the form of roads and agricultural development on adjacent lands, render the opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation clearly and obviously less than outstanding.

Priest Ranch (16-12): Map 10

The unit encompasses 13,445 acres of public land within the Snake River canyon and on the southern plateau. Only 4,815 acres of the unit lie within the BPNA boundary.

The eastern half of the unit is crisscrossed with numerous ways, bladed section lines and fences and contains the abandoned ruins of the Priest Ranch. Several ways were also identified in the western portion. An area of about 6,000 acres in the western half of the unit appears to

be essentially natural in character. However, the relatively small size of this natural area combined with the minimal vegetative and topographic screening, and the lack of any exceptional or unusual natural features render the opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation clearly and obviously less than outstanding.

Sinker Butte (16-13): Map 11A and 11B

The unit consists of 8 small subunits totaling 4,045 acres of public land clustered within the Snake River canyon. Of this acreage, 1,945 acres are located within the BPNA boundary.

The subunits vary in size from 80 acres to 1,400 acres and are delineated by a network of powerlines, roads, irrigation pipelines and canals, and by private and state lands. None of the roadless subunits meet the minimum size requirements for wilderness.

Wild Horse Butte (16-22): Map 12

The unit encompasses 19,570 acres of public land within the Snake River canyon and on the southern and northern plateaus. Only 6,105 acres of the unit lie within the BPNA boundary.

This unit was carried through a formal intensive inventory because the results of the initial inventory indicated possible wilderness characteristics. During the initial inventory, the naturalness of only 4,975 acres of public land within the unit was found to be clearly and obviously impaired by ORV activity, a gravel pit, and by numerous tank and jeep trails created by past National Guard maneuvers. The fluctuating reservoir behind Swan Falls Dam was also found to affect the naturalness of the area.

An intensive inventory of the remaining 14,595 acres of public land identified a number of additional ways scattered throughout the unit. Due to the small (approximately 5,000 acres) portion of the unit which was identified as natural, the minimal topographic and vegetative screening available in the natural portion, the presence of significant external influences in the form of agricultural development, and the lack of any exceptional or unusual natural features or recreational attractions in the small natural portion, the opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation were judged to be less than outstanding.

Henderson Flat (16-23): Map 13

The unit occupies only 640 acres of public land in the Snake River canyon. Approximately 195 acres of the unit are contained within the BPNA boundary. The unit is bounded almost entirely by an irrigation canal and private land.

The unit does not meet the minimum size requirement for wilderness.

Island (14-101): Map 14

The unit is an island in the Snake River within the BPNA containing

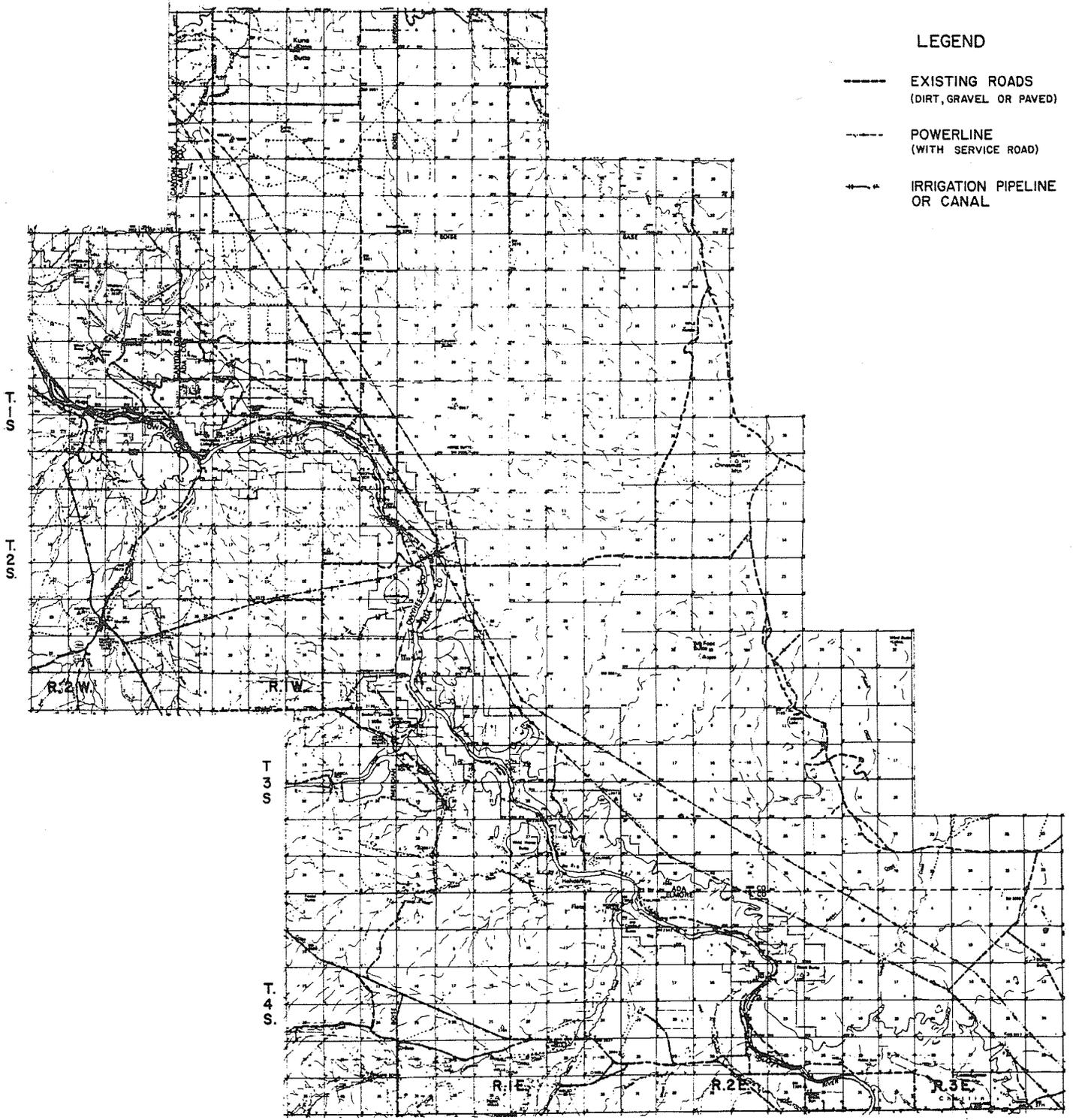
4.10 acres of public land.

Motorized traffic is common on the Snake River and on a nearby way. Though the island is natural in character, the northern shore of the river has been affected by mining activity, and the southern shore includes extensive agricultural development. Because of the small size of the island and its minimal screening, combined with the close proximity of significant external influences, the opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation are clearly and obviously less than outstanding.

MAP 1

LEGEND

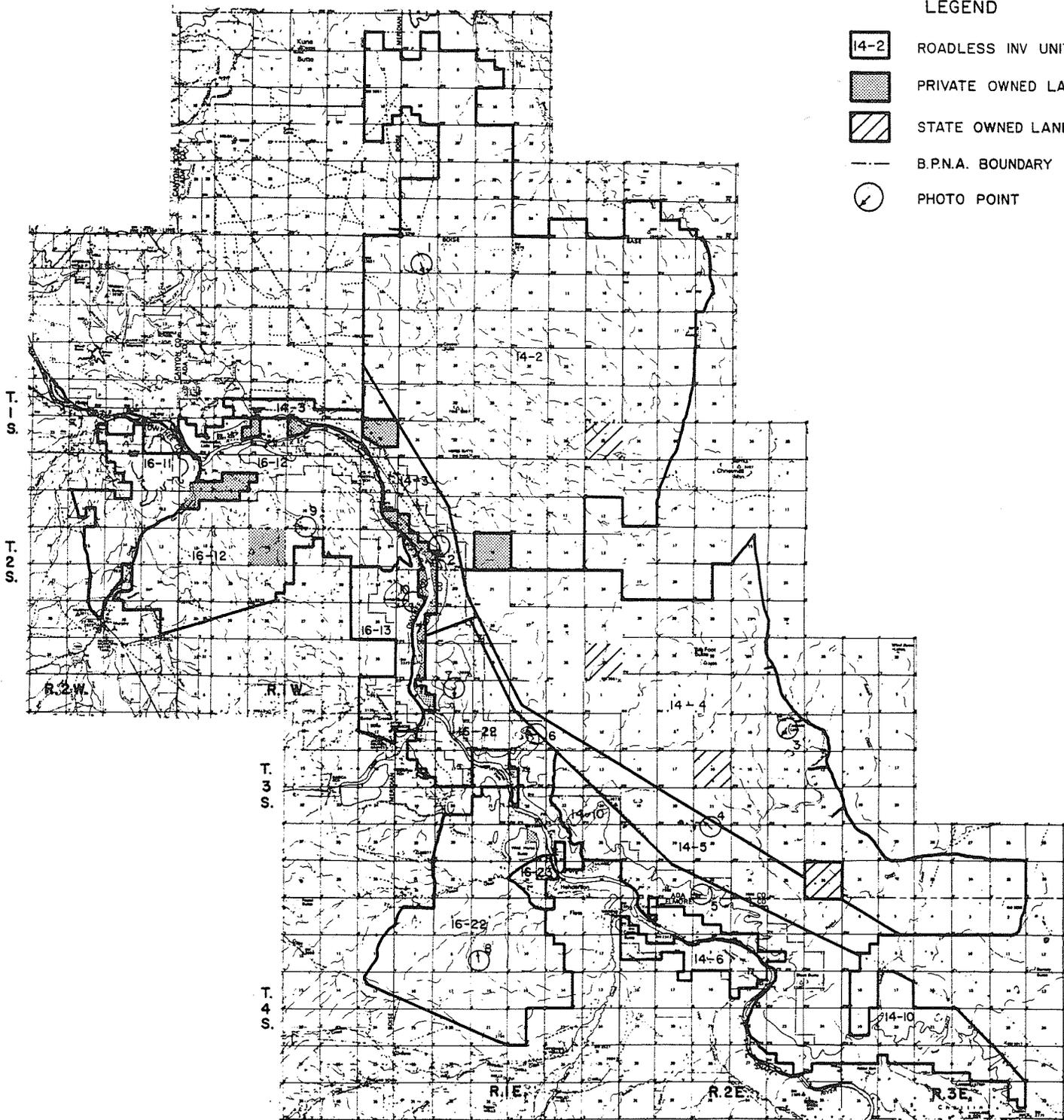
- EXISTING ROADS
(DIRT, GRAVEL OR PAVED)
- POWERLINE
(WITH SERVICE ROAD)
- IRRIGATION PIPELINE
OR CANAL

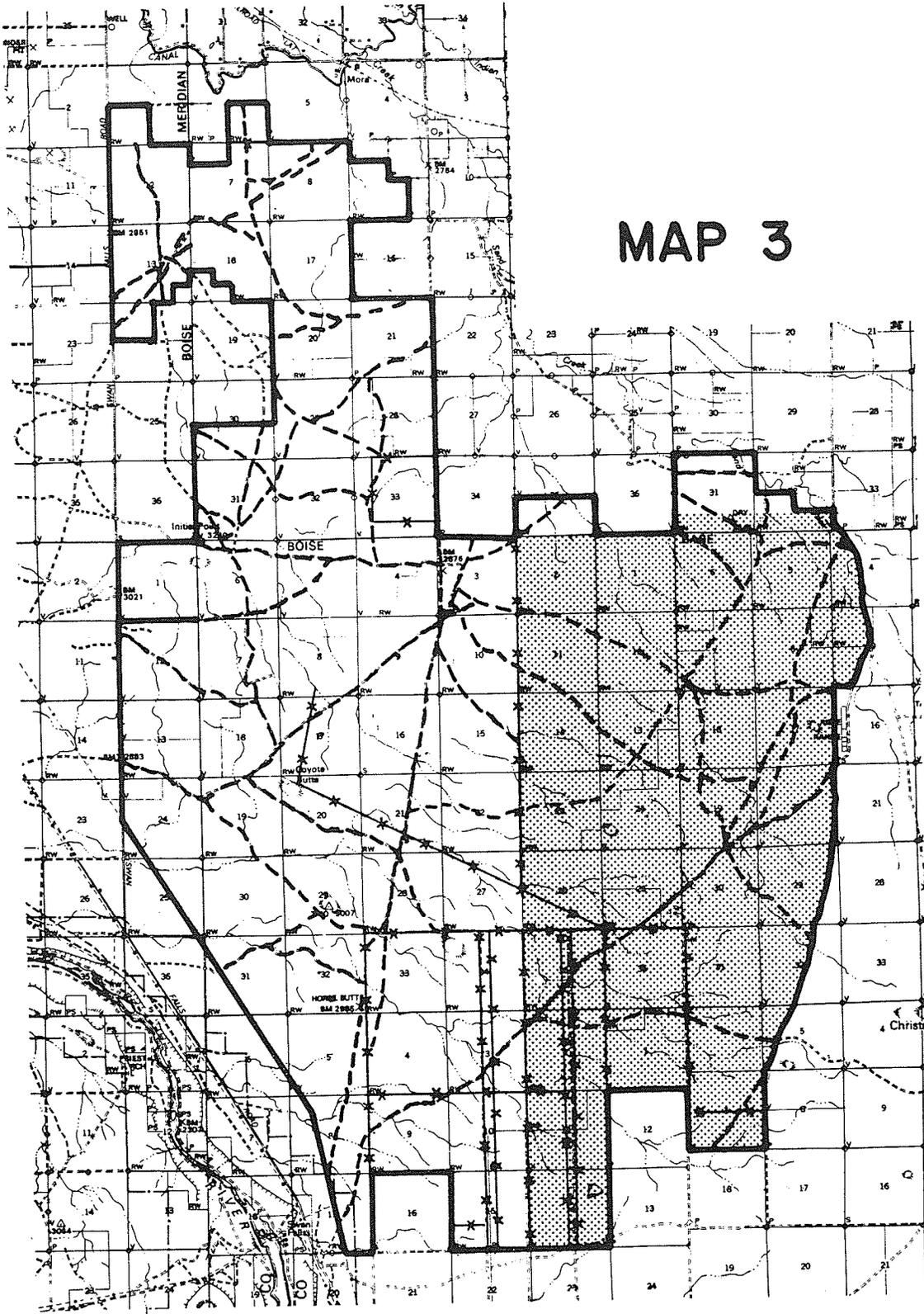


MAP 2

LEGEND

-  ROADLESS INV UNIT
-  PRIVATE OWNED LAND
-  STATE OWNED LAND
-  B.P.N.A. BOUNDARY
-  PHOTO POINT



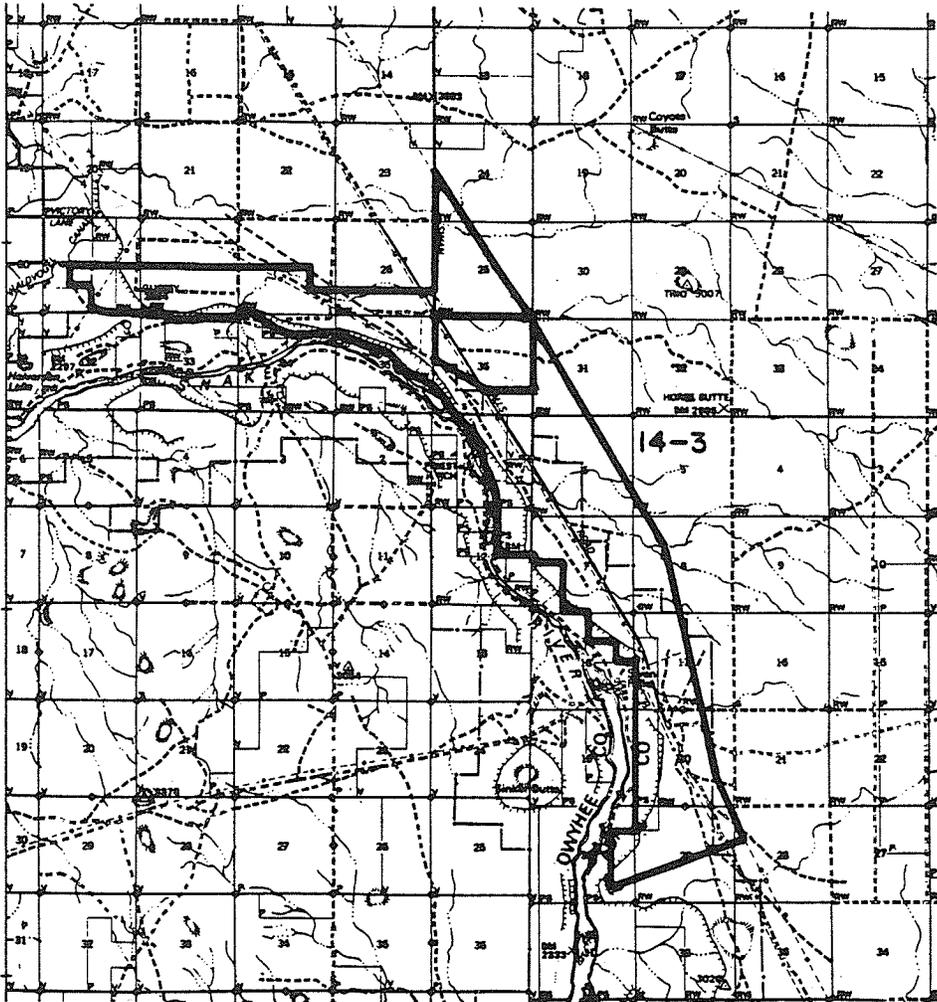


MAP 3

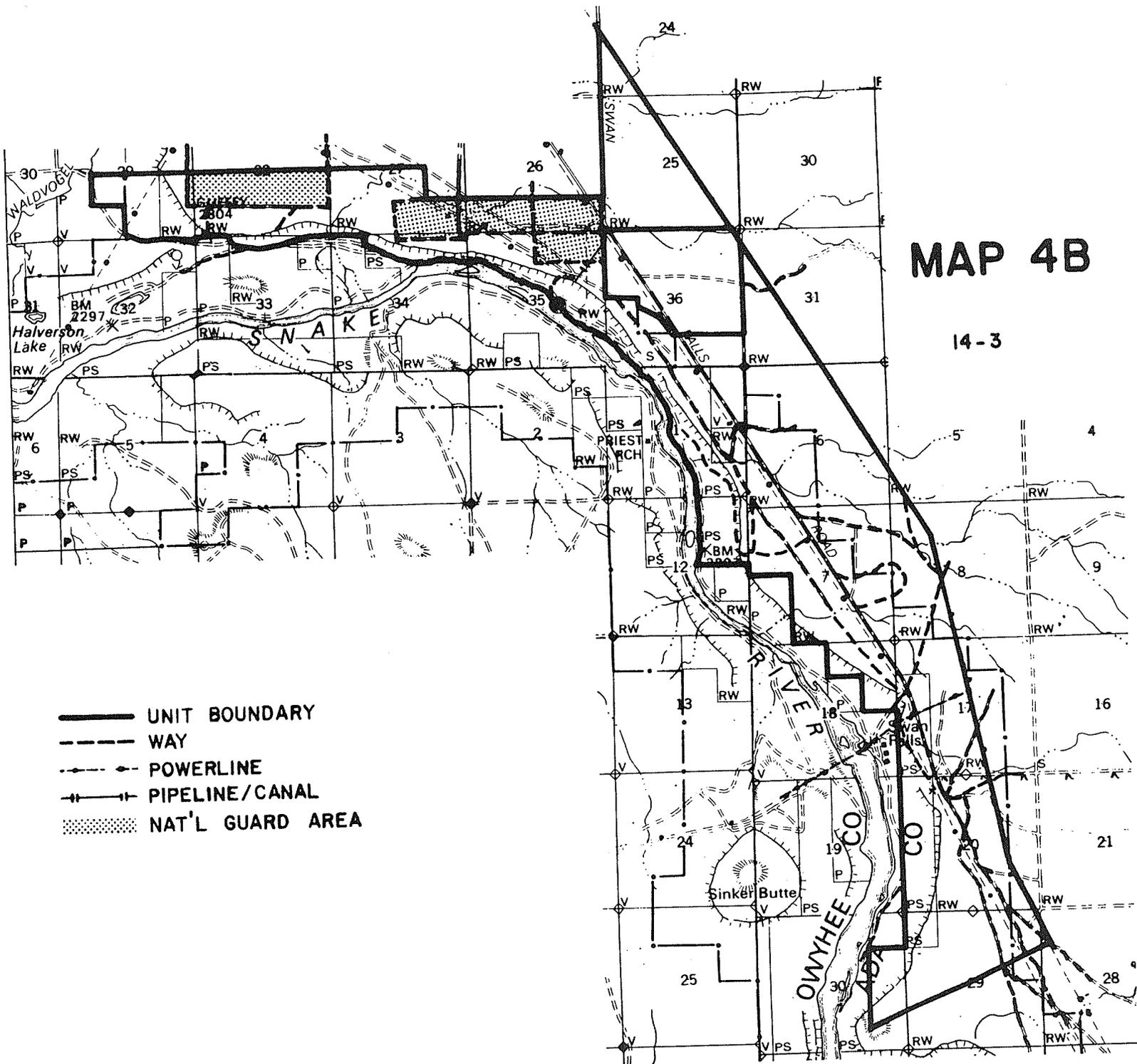
14-2

- UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - WAY
- x - FENCE OR BLADED SEC. LINE
- NAT'L GUARD AREA

MAP 4A



— UNIT BOUNDARY



MAP 4B

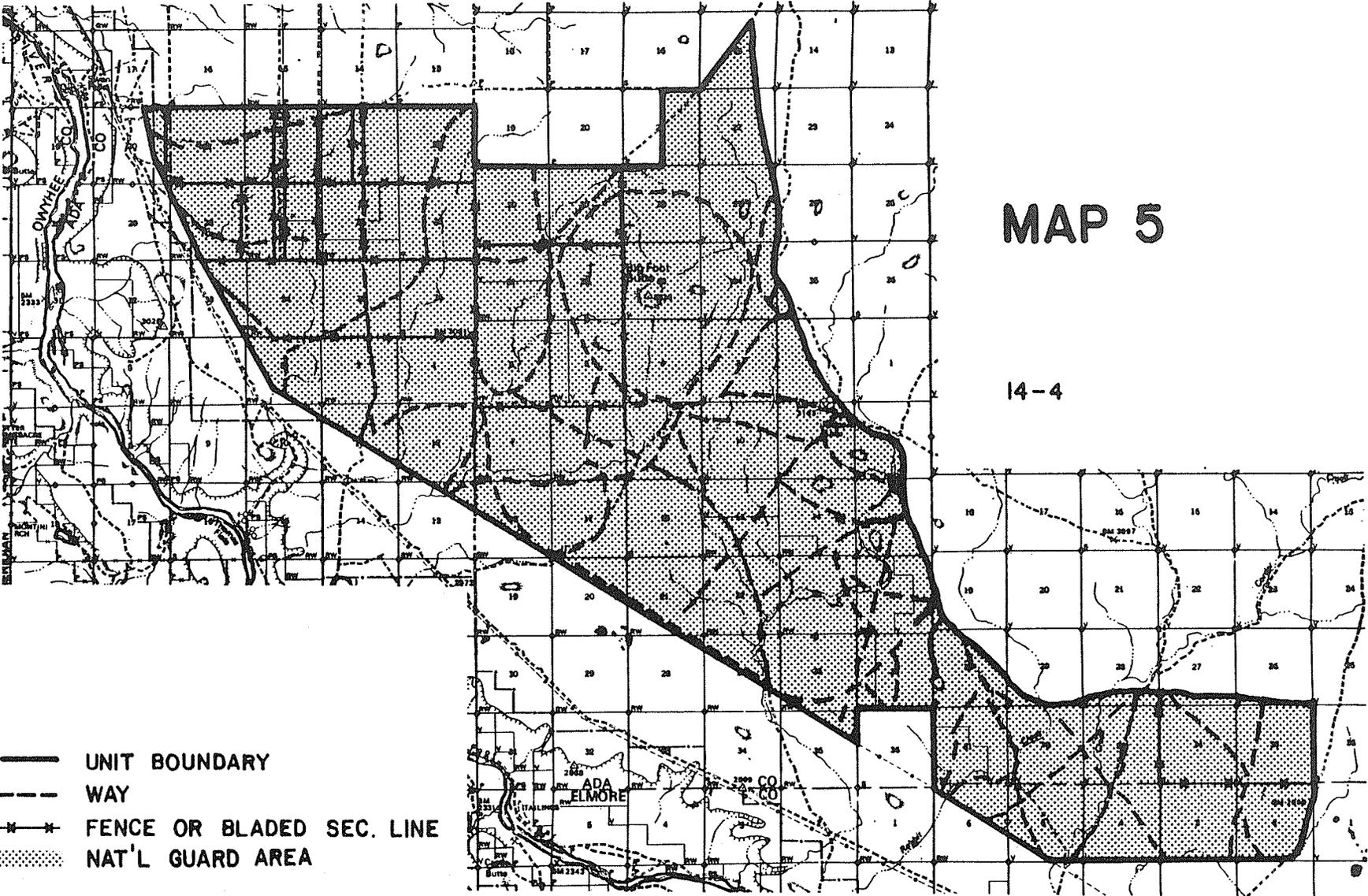
14-3

- UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - -** WAY
- · - · -** POWERLINE
- | - | -** PIPELINE/CANAL
- · · · ·** NAT'L GUARD AREA

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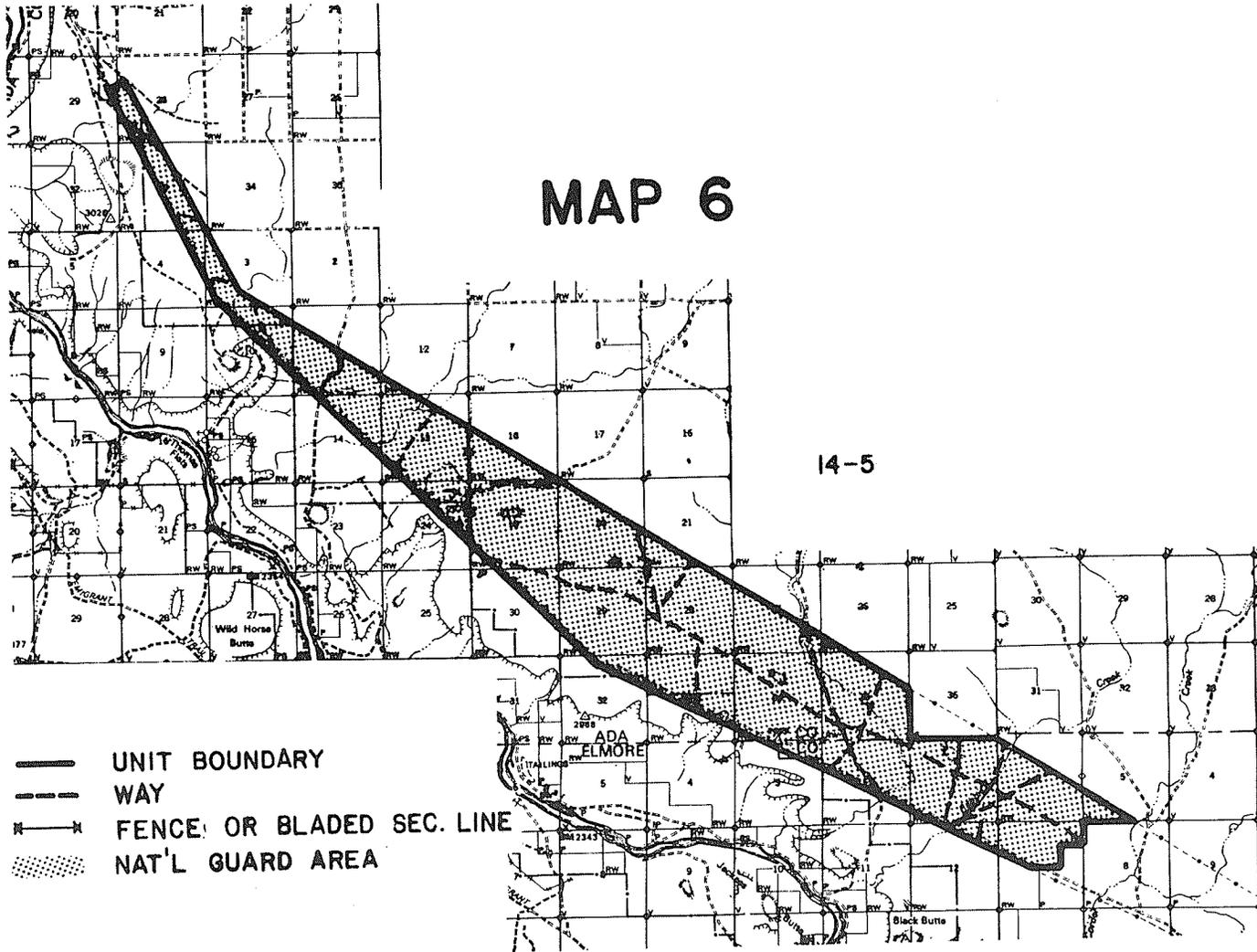
MAP 5

14-4



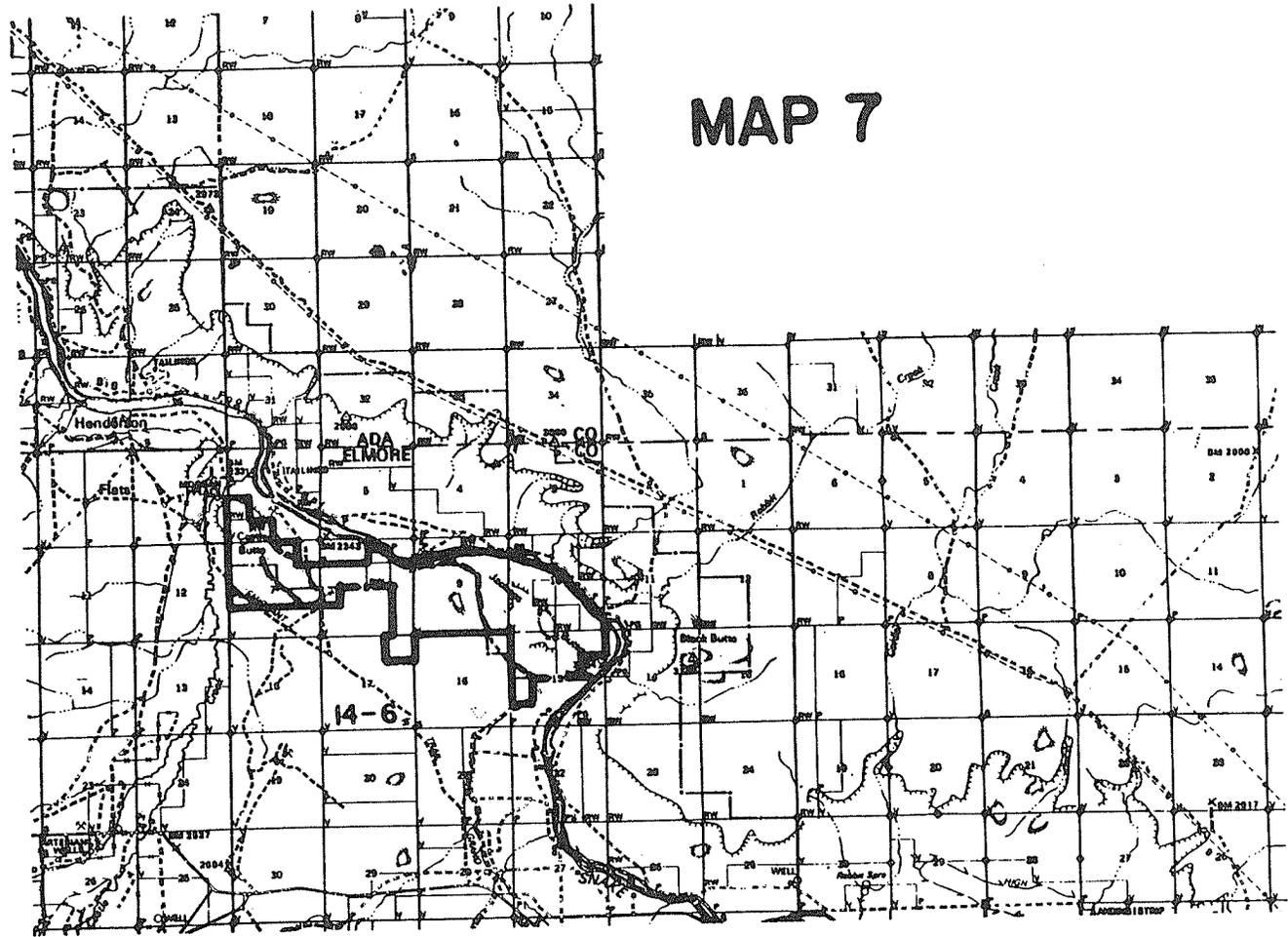
MAP 6

14-5



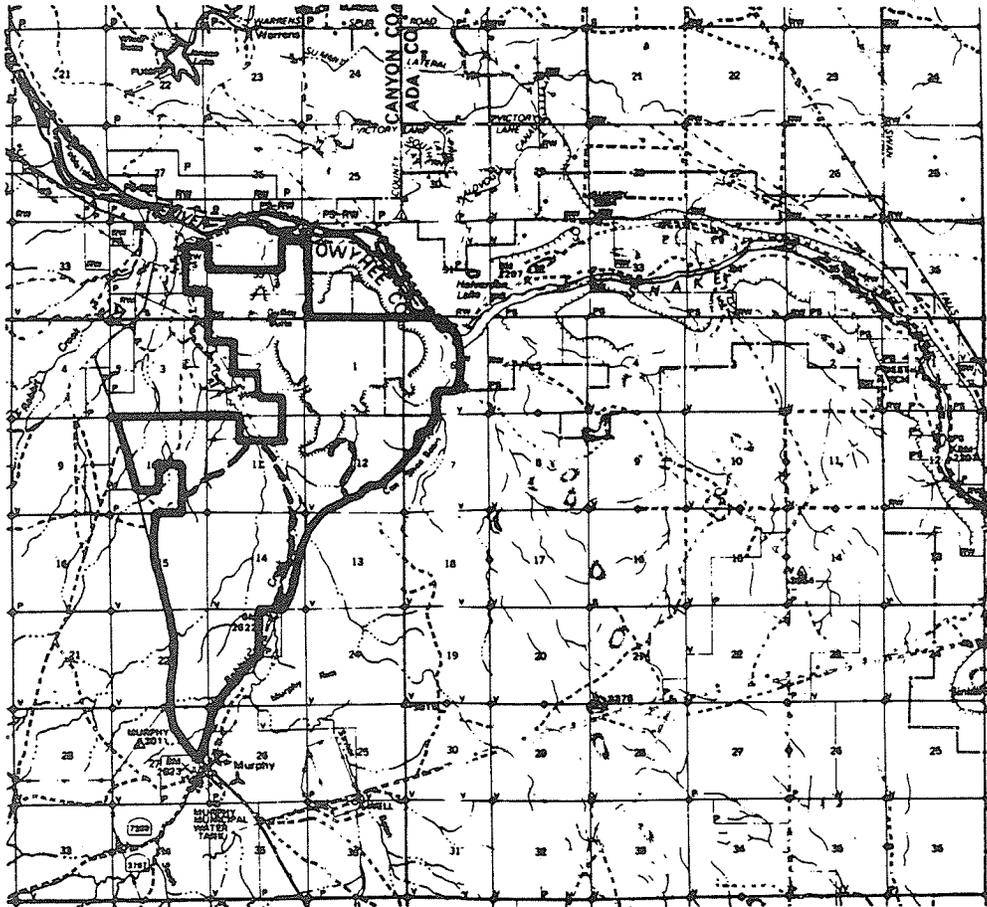
- UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - WAY
- |— FENCE OR BLADED SEC. LINE
- NAT'L GUARD AREA

MAP 7



—— UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - WAY

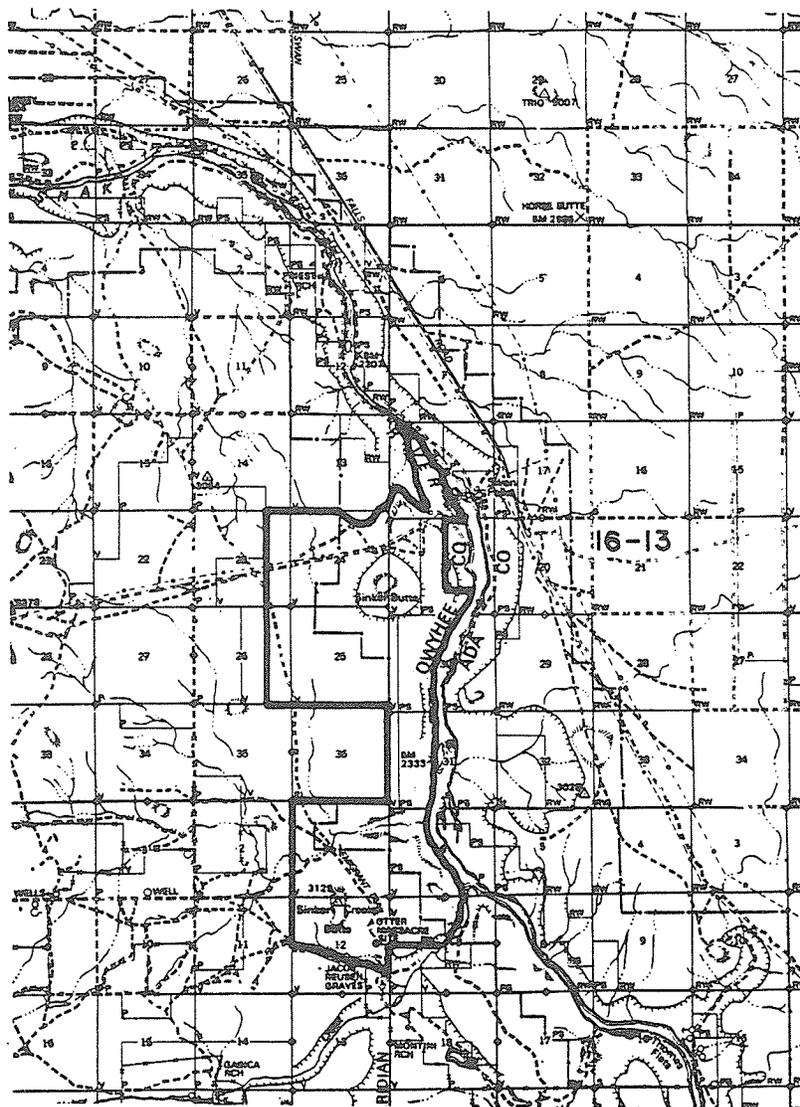
MAP 9



16-11

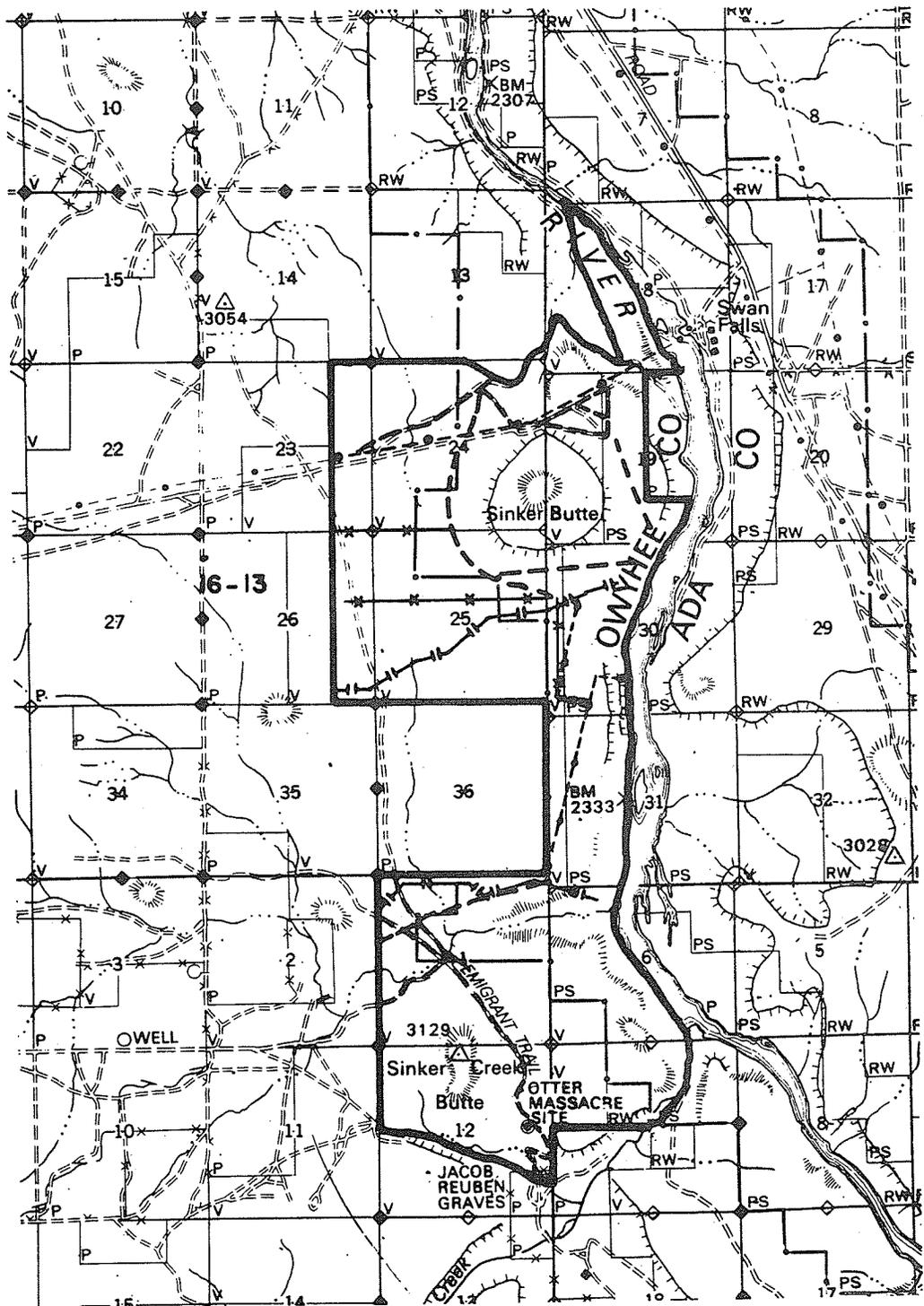
—— UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - WAY

MAP IIA



— UNIT BOUNDARY

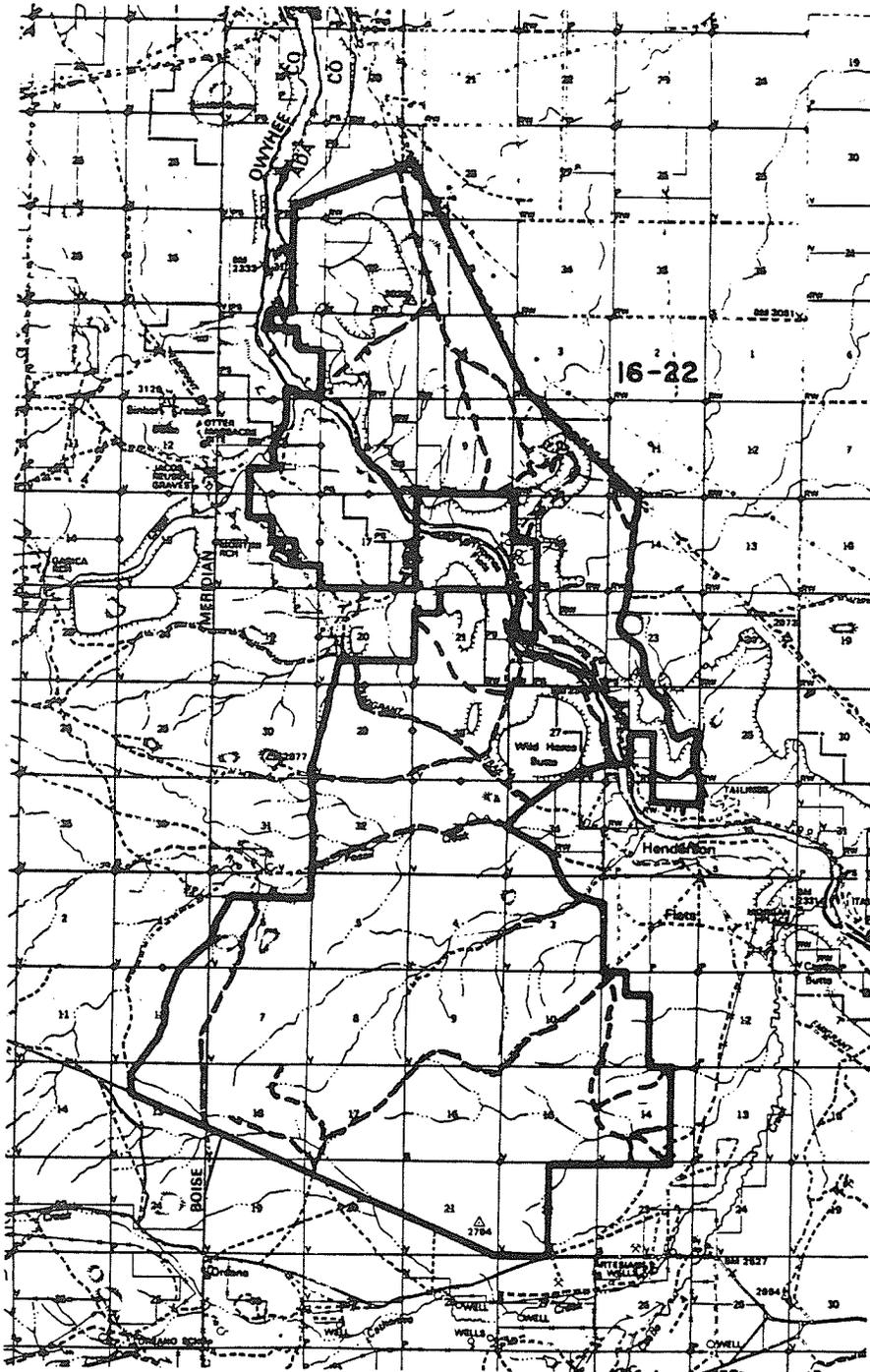
MAP IIB



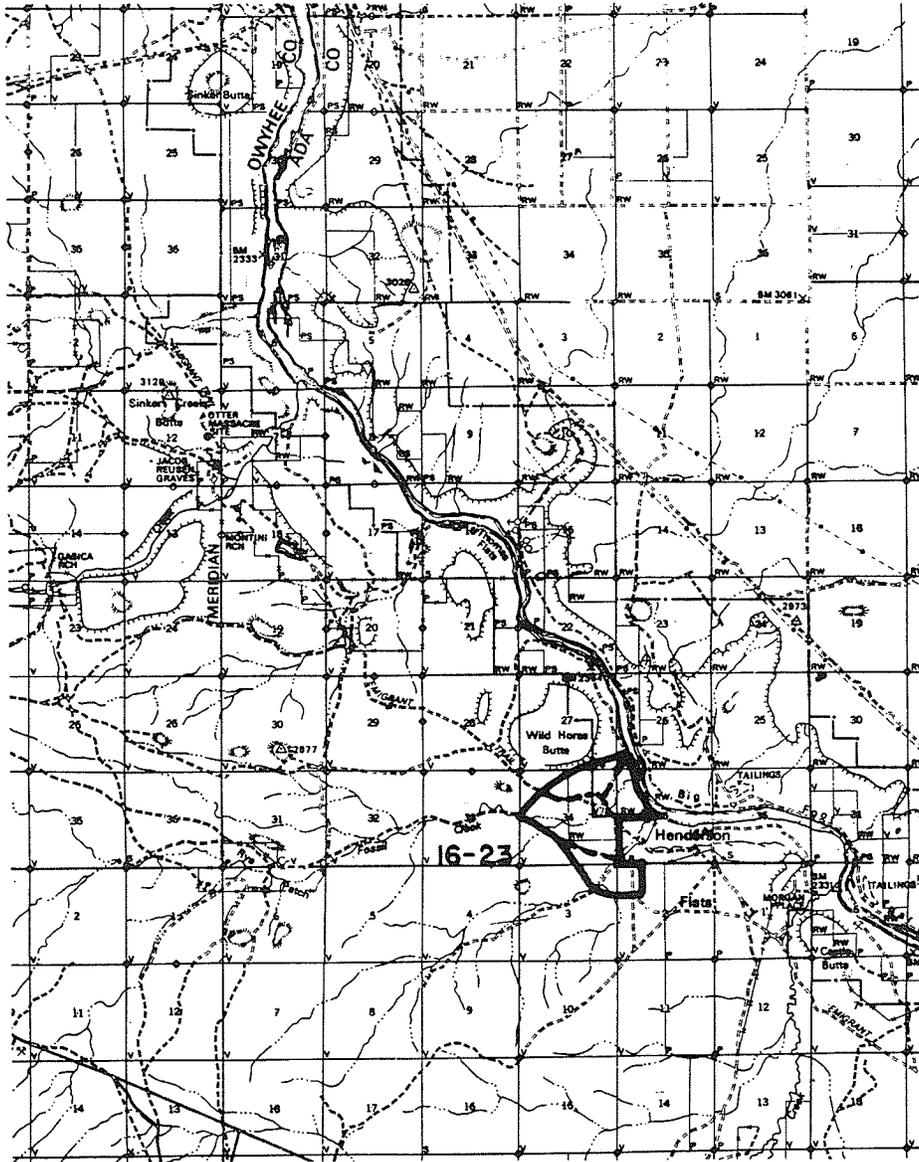
- UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - WAY
- *— FENCE OR BLADED SEC. LINE
- ◆— POWERLINE
- |— PIPELINE

MAP 12

— UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - WAY

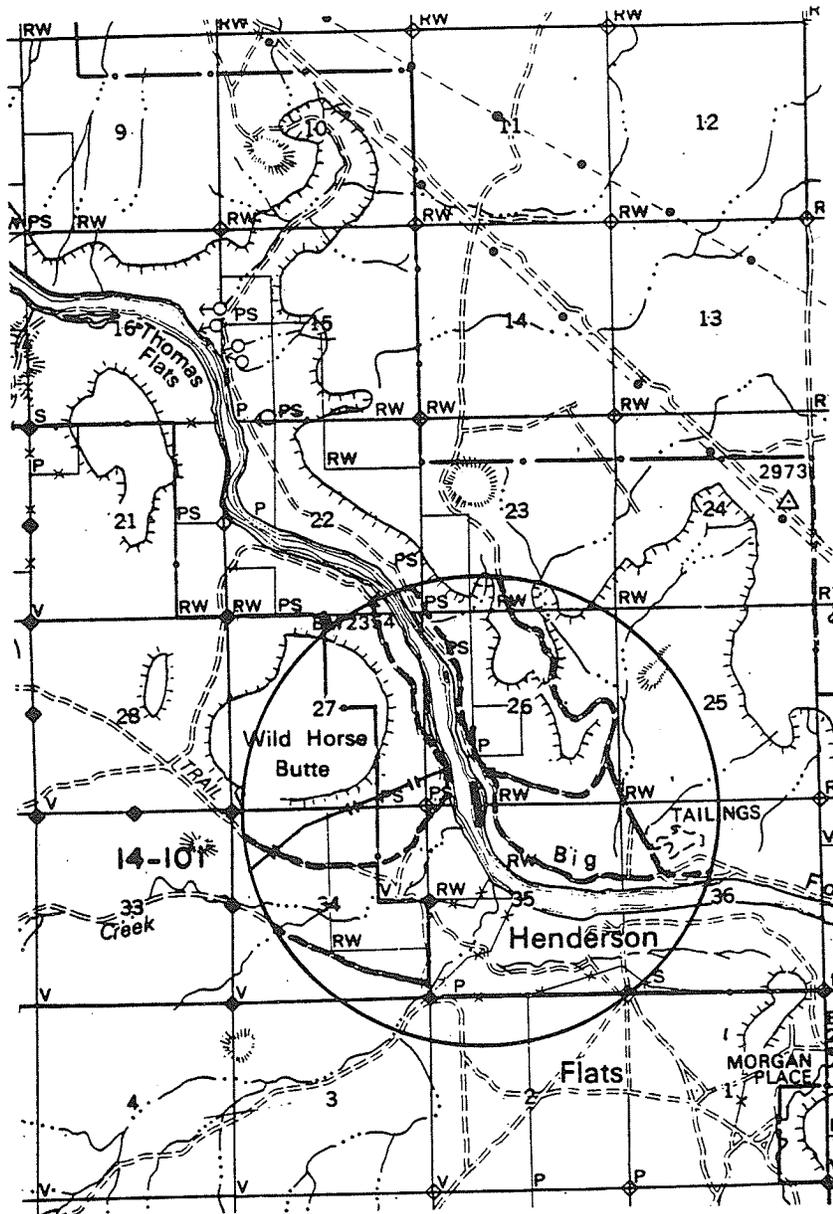


MAP 13



—— UNIT BOUNDARY
--- WAY

MAP 14



- UNIT BOUNDARY
- - - WAY
- |-| PIPELINE/CANAL

PHOTO LOG
Snake River Birds of Prey Wilderness Report

PHOTO#	DESCRIPTION
1.	View of the plateau north of the BPNA. The vehicle route shown in the foreground is typical of those crisscrossing much of the northern plateau.
2.	View of the Swan Falls Dam and power plant facility located within the BPNA; note the roads along both sides of the river.
3.	One of many jeep and tank trails located in the National Guard maneuvers area on the northern plateau.
4.	Powerline with accompanying service road on the plateau north of the BPNA. These powerline systems commonly form boundaries between inventory units and can be seen from great distances.
5.	View of the canyon breaks and bottomland along the Snake River in the eastern end of the BPNA. The bottomland in this portion of the BPNA is under cultivation.
6.	View of a side canyon on the north side of Snake River within the BPNA; note the road constructed in the drainage bottom.
7.	View of the northern plateau region and the Snake River Canyon breaks within the BPNA.
8.	View of the badlands area to the south of the BPNA. The buttes in the distance on the right are within the BPNA.
9.	View of the plateau south of the BPNA. The ways and fencelines shown in the photo are common throughout much of this plateau region.
10.	View of the Snake River Canyon and reservoir behind Swan Falls Dam within the BPNA; note the pump station and pipeline in the foreground. Several of these facilities are found within the canyon.



PHOTO 1

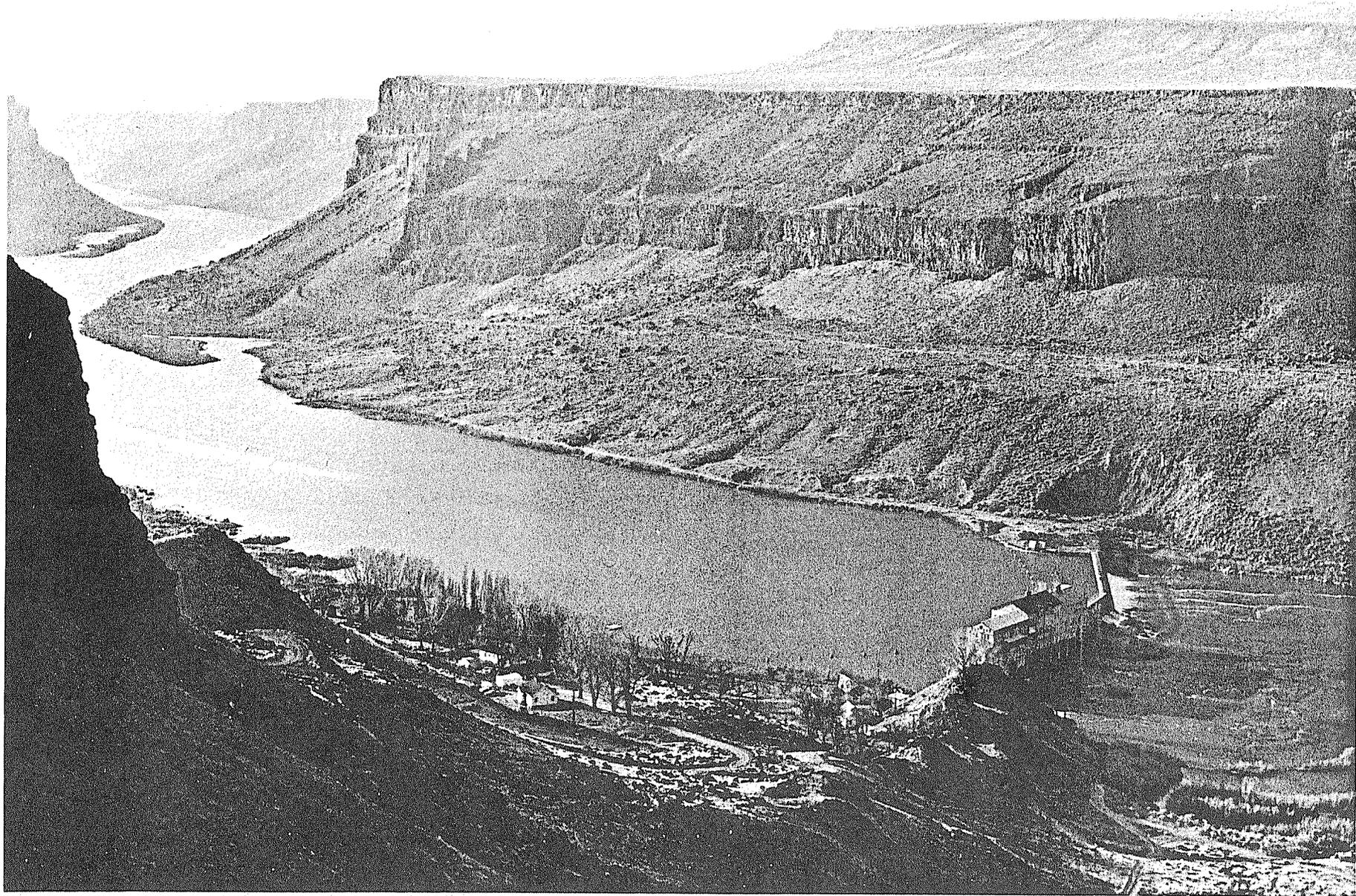


PHOTO 2



PHOTO 3

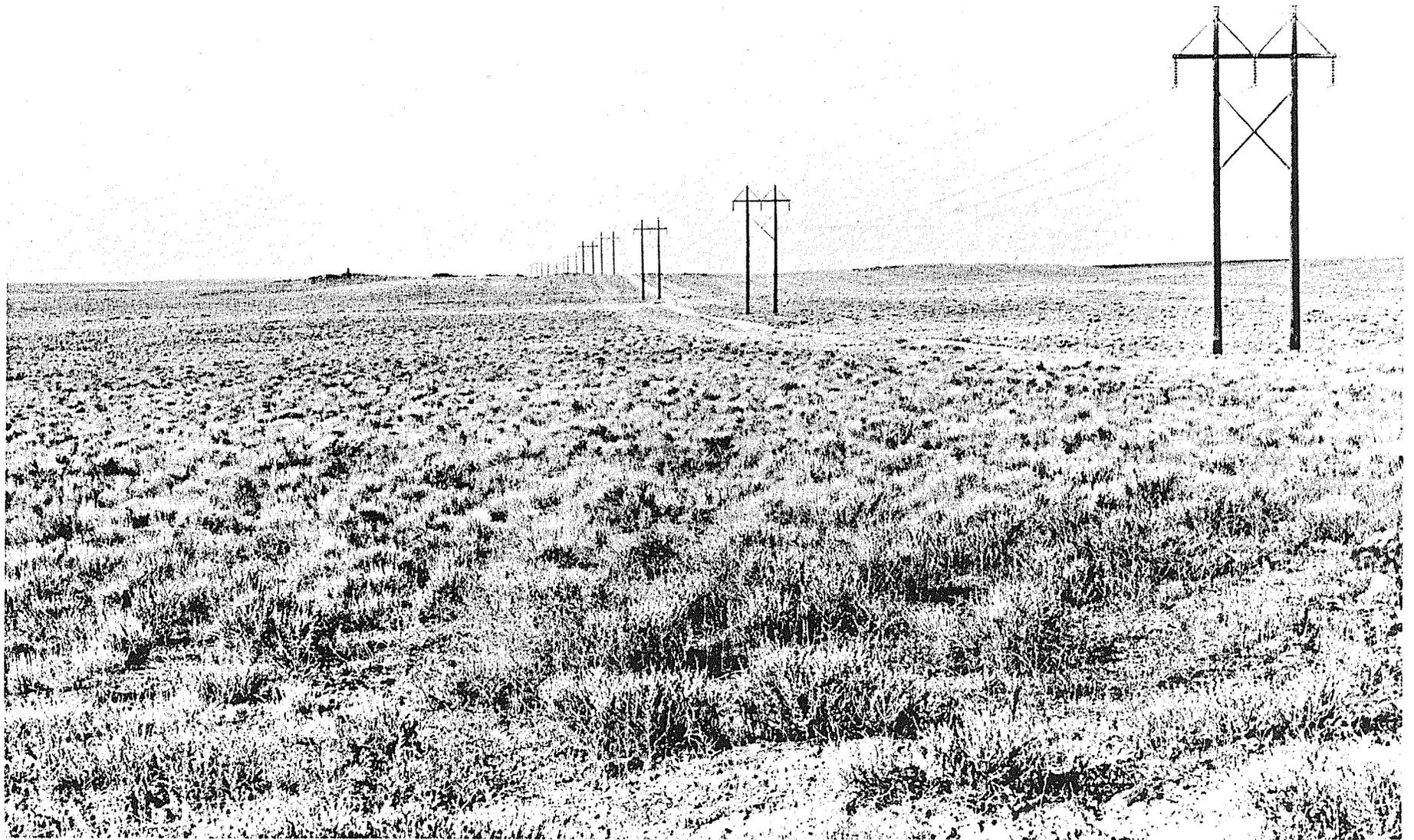


PHOTO 4



PHOTO 5

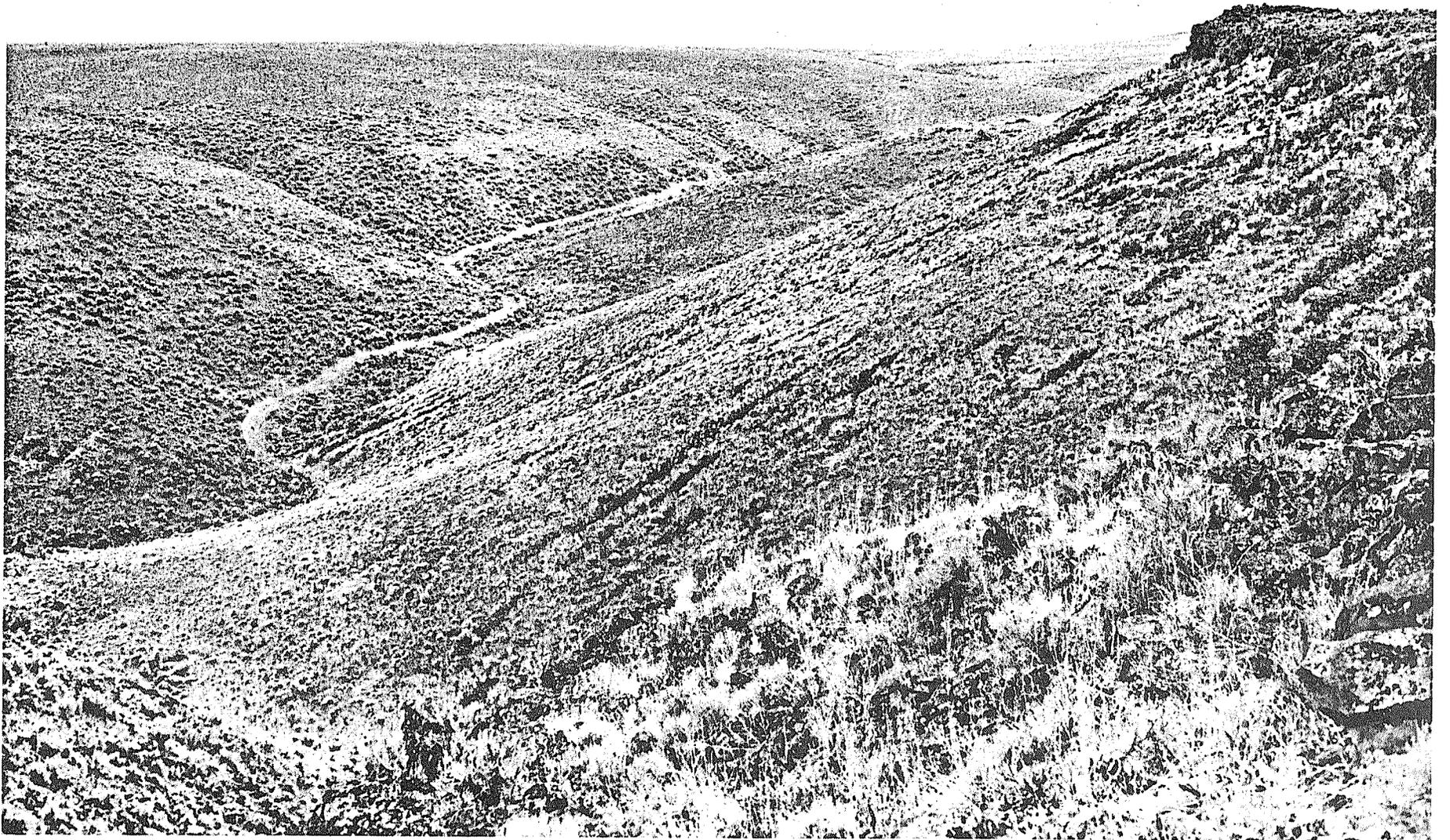


PHOTO 6

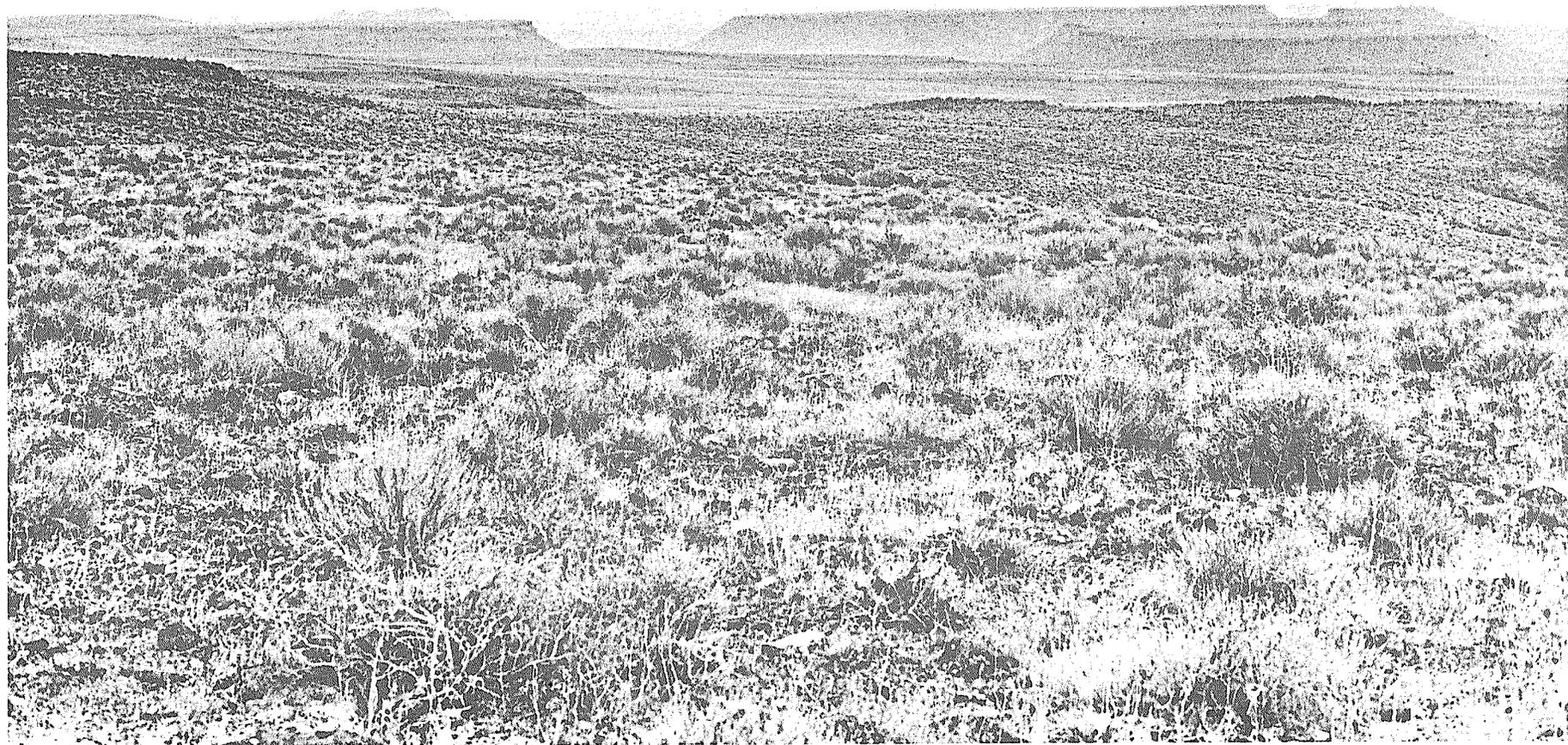


PHOTO 7



PHOTO 8

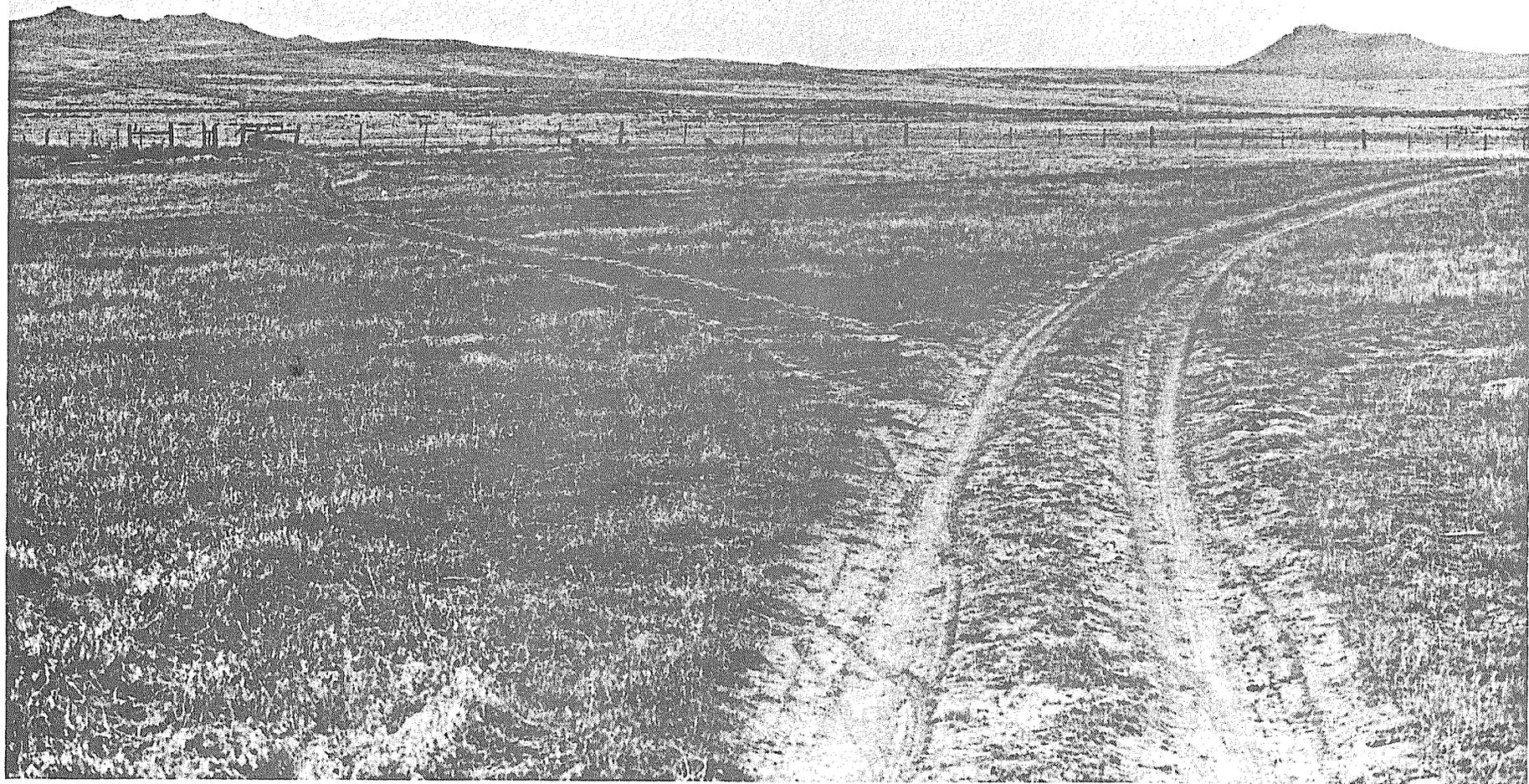


PHOTO 9



PHOTO 10

Table A
 Statistical Summary
 Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area, Boise District, Idaho

Unit Name	No.	BPNA Acres		Contiguous Acres		Total Unit Acres		
		BLM	Other	BLM	Other	BLM	Other	Total
Coyote Butte	14-2	115	0	52,979	640	53,094	640	53,734
Swan Falls	14-3	4,157	0	1,245	0	5,402	0	5,402
Big Foot Butte	14-4	20	0	35,692	1,280	35,712	1,280	36,992
White Sage	14-5	232	0	8,011	0	8,243	0	8,243
Jackass Butte	14-6	1,776	0	400	0	2,176	0	2,176
Black Butte	14-10	6,920	0	8,005	0	14,925	0	14,925
Guffey Butte	16-11	430	0	4,050	0	4,480	0	4,480
Priest Ranch	16-12	4,815	0	8,630	640	13,445	640	14,085
Sinker Butte	16-13	1,945	0	2,100	0	4,045	0	4,045
Wild Horse Butte	16-22	6,105	40	13,465	640	19,570	680	20,250
Henderson Flat	16-23	195	0	445	0	640	0	640
Unnamed Island	14-101	4	0	0	0	4	0	4
Total Acres within Inventory Units		26,714	40	135,022	3,200	161,736	3,240	164,976
BPNA Acres not Inventoried		0	5,474					
BPNA Total Acres		32,228						

RECOMMENDATION

It is hereby recommended that all public lands located within the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area as established on October 12, 1971, by Public Land Order No. 5133, and administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Boise District, be considered unsuitable for classification as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-577).

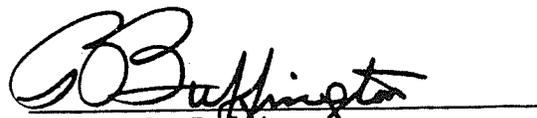
It is further recommended that all roadless public lands contiguous with the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area as delineated on Map 2 of this report, be considered unsuitable for classification as wilderness under the Wilderness Act.

These recommendations, which affect a total of 161,736 acres of public land, are based on the finding that the affected public land does not possess the requisite characteristics of wilderness as defined by the Wilderness Act. Such a finding has been confirmed by public review and is considered accurate and final.

Adoption of these recommendations will cause no significant economic or social impacts, nor will it have any effect on the current use and management of the public lands, except insofar as the affected lands will be released from the interim wilderness management requirements mandated by Section 603(c) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

No options for the future use and management of the affected public lands will be foregone if these recommendations are adopted.


D. Dean Bibles
District Manager


Robert O. Buffington
Idaho State Director

/S/Frank Gregg

JUN 27 1980

Director

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On October 12, 1971, Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton signed Public Land Order Number 5133 establishing the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area for the protection of raptor nesting and wintering habitat. The Natural Area, 30 miles south of Boise, Idaho, encompasses 26,714 acres of public land along 33 miles of river canyon and basaltic cliffs which cut through a high desert tableland region.

Since the late 1940's, when the quality of the birds of prey resource was first recognized, this area has gained national and international prominence. The Natural Area and an adjacent canyon 42 miles upstream host the densest known nesting population of raptors in North America and perhaps the world. Each year over 600 pairs representing 15 species of birds of prey return to the area to breed and rear their young. Included in this annual nesting population are prairie falcons, burrowing owls, and ferruginous hawks. In addition to the breeding raptors, 10 species of birds of prey use the area during the fall and winter months. Two of these, the bald eagle and the peregrine falcon are classified as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The high raptor nesting densities are due largely to an abundance of nest sites in the canyon walls and an abundance of prey in the loess soils on the vast surrounding plateau. In 1972, a year-round comprehensive study of all raptors in the Natural Area was initiated to gather information for the management of raptor populations and habitats. Initial findings showed that the Natural Area encompassed only a portion of the major nesting habitat and very little of the hunting habitat. As a result of these findings, in 1975 the BLM established the Birds of Prey Study Area encompassing 278,227 acres of public land adjacent to the Natural Area and an additional 40 miles of river canyon upstream from the Natural Area. Continued research resulted in enlarging the Study Area to 538,966 acres of public land in 1977 (Table B).

The BLM recommended on June 29, 1979, that 515,257 acres of the Study Area be designated by an Act of Congress as the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area. The twelve wilderness inventory units affected by this report are entirely within the proposed Conservation Area except for 3,213 acres of public land in the southernmost portion of one unit, Wild Horse Butte (Unit 16-22.)

TABLE B

Land Status in the Birds of Prey Study Area

<u>Action</u>	<u>Public</u>	<u>Private</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Total</u>
1971 Birds of Prey Natural Area Withdrawal	26,714	4,683	831	32,228
1975 BLM Administrative Moratorium	278,227	156,842	17,357	452,426
1977 Expansion by the Secretary of the Interior	234,025	76,589	37,747	348,361
<hr/>				
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>538,966</u>	<u>238,114</u>	<u>55,935</u>	<u>833,015</u>

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE WILDERNESS INVENTORY PROCESS

The public involvement portion of the BPNA wilderness inventory process was conducted in accordance with the public involvement plan for the statewide initial wilderness inventory. The process involved four steps:

- (1) The gathering of site specific information from the public during field trips conducted prior to the release of the proposed decision on March 15, 1979. This step included four meetings with small groups of grazing permittees who, with an intimate knowledge of the land, furnished needed information about the location and extent of developments and who also expressed opinions about the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics.
- (2) The release of the proposed BPNA wilderness inventory decision in conjunction with the proposed statewide initial inventory decision on March 15, 1979.
- (3) A 90-day public review of the proposed decision running from March 15, 1979 to June 15, 1979. This step included public workshops in Murphy and Boise, Idaho, at which members of the public commented on the findings of the inventory and furnished additional information relevant to the wilderness inventory criteria. In addition, the Boise District office maintained large scale maps and narrative reports which were available for public review throughout the 90-day review period.
- (4) The review and analysis of comments received during the public comment period. This step primarily involved the documentation of public input, and the field checking of all site specific information and general comments received on wilderness characteristics.

Comments received during the public review period which were specific to the BPNA were few and limited to four of the roadless inventory units, 16-11, 16-12, 16-22 and 14-101. A summary of the analysis of comments on these units follows:

Guffey Butte (16-11):

A limited number of public comments questioned the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation. The unit's size and other physical characteristics were reconsidered in the field and no new information was brought to light which warranted changing the proposed decision. The unit does not meet the minimum size requirement for wilderness.

Priest Ranch (16-12):

The conclusions of impaired naturalness and the lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation were questioned by limited public comment. Re-evaluation of the area confirmed the original conclusion that the northern and eastern portions

do not appear to be affected primarily by natural processes due to the frequency of substantial ways, fences, bladed section lines, and water developments. Re-evaluation also confirmed that the southern and western portions clearly and obviously lack outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation due to inadequate screening, significant external influences, and the lack of any exceptional or unusual natural features or scenic attractions.

Wild Horse Butte (16-22):

Public comment included a proposal to modify the unit boundaries to an area slightly over 5,000 acres in which the imprint of man's work was considered substantially unnoticeable. A re-evaluation of the unit concluded that this smaller area lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive and unconfined recreation. The terrain and vegetation fail to adequately screen visitors from others within the unit and from significant external influences. Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities were judged to be less than outstanding because of the lack of any exceptional or unusual natural features or recreation attractions in the proposed smaller area.

Island (14-101):

No public comments specifically addressed the island in the BPNA. However, one general comment pertinent to all islands in the statewide inventory asserted that existing inventory guidance was not adequate to make final decisions regarding wilderness characteristics for islands. A re-evaluation of the existing guidance found that it is adequate for purposes of inventorying wilderness characteristics on roadless islands.

All comments received regarding the BPNA wilderness inventory are available in the Permanent Documentation File in the Boise District Office.

APPENDIX A
PUBLIC COMMENTS

YOUR COMMENTS

AREA NO.

COMMENTS

I am writing to inform you
that I feel the following areas
should be included in the intensive
review

Boise District

Boise District: Juniper mountain,
Wild Horse Butte, Browns Creek

Burley District

Salmon Falls Creek units
contiguous to Cache

Shoshone District

Forgotten Hill - contiguous to Black Butte
It is important that all

BLM roadless lands contiguous to
Forest Service Race II lands be
included in the intensive inventory
regardless of the Race II recommendations
for those forest lands

I feel the BLM must remain
flexible on its road interpretation
and designation policy. A road must
serve a clear and obvious purpose.

Boise District

365

AREA NO.

COMMENTS

KF

If we ever let it be on the
side of wilderness. It is important
in this initial inventory that
the BLM be certain that
inappropriate criteria were not
used as the rational for dropping
an area from additional study and
consideration. Such criteria as low
scenic quality, flat terrain, seeding of
non-native plant species, sounds and
smells or potential resources conflicts
are inappropriate criteria for
dropping areas for further study!!

I support the areas chosen
for intensive wilderness inventory
and urge you to include the above
mentioned areas.

The BLM must be open-minded
and fair in assessing all lands in
this initial wilderness inventory.

IMPORTANT DATES

Public Comment Period For:

Initial Inventory -- March 15-June 15, 1979
Great Rift (33-1) -- March 15-May 15, 1979



NAME: Charlotte Icardi

ADDRESS 2021 Malibu, Idaho Falls, Idaho
83401



RECORD of PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
IDAHO WILDERNESS REVIEW

AREA NO 1 ISLANDS (in general)

DATA: OFFICE Boise Dist I-1 DATE 1-23-79
 NAME Debbie Sease
 REPRESENTING The Wilderness Society
 MAIL ADDRESS 1901 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC ZIP 20006

PARTICIPATION: TYPE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
 (CHECK MOST APPROPRIATE ONE)

PERSONAL CONTACT TELEPHONE CALL
 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS WRITTEN COMMENT
 PUBLIC MEETING OTHER

SUMMARY: SUMMARIZE PUBLIC INPUT BRIEFLY
 (Use additional sheets if necessary, attach other appropriate data, documents and information)

Suggests that we defer passing judgement on islands until WO provides detailed guidance. Emphasizes that T.W.S. and other environmental groups generally believe that all islands meeting the "naturalness test" should be designated WSA's.

SIGNATURE
 COMMENT RECORDED DATE 1-23-79 BY Jan Leche-forney
 COMMENT ACKNOWLEDGED DATE _____ BY _____

Bo, BURT Sho.

R. R. 3 Box 115
Carrollton, Illinois 62016
June 11, 1979

State Director of the Bureau of Land Management
Idaho State Office
Bureau of Land Management
P. O. Box 042
Boise, Idaho 83724

#421 ✓

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
IDAHO STATE OFFICE
BOISE, IDAHO

RECEIVED
10:00 A.M.
JUN 15 1979

Dear Sir:

I support the areas recommended for wilderness protection in your wilderness inventory. I am requesting that you please also include in your wilderness inventory the following areas which I feel were overlooked: in the Boise District - Juniper Mountain, Wild Horse Butte, and Browns Creek; in the Burley District - Salmon Falls Creek and units contiguous to Cache Peak; and in the Shoshone District - Forgotten Hills (contiguous to Black Butte).

Please go over the initial inventory carefully and ensure that inappropriate criteria were not used as rationale for dropping certain areas from further consideration. Inappropriate criteria would be such things as external sights, sounds, and smells, low scenic quality, flat topography, and seedings of non-native plants.

Also, I would like to request that you please include in the inventory all BLM roadless lands contiguous to Forest Service RARE II lands regardless of the RARE II recommendations for those forest lands.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Pan Martin

Bo, Bur + Sho.

RECEIVED
10:00 A.M.

JUN 18 1979

#436 ✓

State Director,
Bureau of Land Management
Federal Building, Room 398
550 West Fort Street
Boise, Idaho

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
FEDERAL BUREAU OF SURVEY
BOISE, IDAHO

Dear Sir:

This letter is written to support the Bureau's decision regarding the areas selected for intensive inventory as potential wilderness areas. I am especially in agreement with the decisions in regard to areas 17-11, 17-19, 111-36, 16-16, 16-36 and 16-38.

I am also in favor of your giving special consideration to BLM lands that are adjacent to National Forest lands that possess wilderness potential. As you are undoubtedly aware, the combined acreage would greatly enhance the wilderness potential and an individual's wilderness experience.

Another of my concerns is with the interpretation and designation of what is a "road". It seems incredulous that two ruts on the ground may be classed as a road and thus eliminate an area for consideration just because at one time it was used and maintained with a minimal amount of mechanical effort. I feel that a road must serve a clear and obvious purpose at the present time before it is so designated.

I would also like to ask that the following areas be included for intensive review.

Boise District: Brown's Creek, 16-31 and 16-64
Wild Horse Butte, 106-22
Juniper Mountain

Burley District: Salmon Falls, Creek
BLM lands adjacent to Cache Peak

Shoshone District. Forgottent Hills Area

Finally, I realize that you and your staff are making commenable efforts to perform a "no win task" and I would like to thank you for these efforts. Thank you also for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Stephen Goddard
Stephen Goddard

Bo, Bury Sho

KF



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH

15 June 1979

472

Mr. William L. Mathews
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Federal Building
Boise, ID 83724

RECEIVED
1900 AM
JUN 19 1979
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
FEDERAL BUILDING
BOISE, IDAHO

Dear Mr. Mathews:

We have obtained a copy of the Idaho BLM's Wilderness Inventory Program and your initial wilderness inventory recommendations. The following are the comments of the N.W. office, Friends of the Earth:

GENERAL COMMENTS:

State Reference Map - The map issued to indicate the proposed wilderness inventory was remarkable useless. Adequate maps are indispensable when citizen input is desired and should include current BLM boundaries, other Federal agency boundaries and areas considered and deleted.

Deletion Criteria - We are concerned that BLM in many cases has excluded areas from the wilderness inventory based on the existence of "substantial ways". This is disturbing since the Wilderness Inventory Handbook (27 Sept. 1978) clearly states that the language from the legislative FLPMA history, "A way maintained solely be the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road", would be used as the basic criteria. Thus, we fail to see how one way or many ways would of itself exclude an area from the inventory.

Likewise we object to the use of fences as an exclusion device since fences in areas can be returned to a "substantially unnoticeable level" by hand labor. Therefore we would ask that you reconsider all areas which have been excluded only due to "substantial ways" or "fences".

More specific comments are as follows:

Area 16-49. Three years ago I accompanied a joint field trip with the Boise District BLM and the Oregon High Desert Study Group to the Owyhee River area to examine the tributaries, Deep Creek and Battle Creek for possible inclusion in the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River proposal. After a week in this area I would like to confirm that this area has outstanding opportunities for solitude and a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Both Battle Creek and Deep Creek provide outstanding opportunity for hiking, photography and wildlife viewing. The creeks are accesible either by way of the Owyhee River or overland. Our trip took place in July and though high temperatures were experienced, there was ample water in both creeks to provide drinking

water and swimming opportunities. We strongly concur in your inclusion of Area 16-49 in the inventory and in light of possible designation of the Owyhee River as a Wild and Scenic River, other contiguous areas to the Owyhee also merit inclusion.

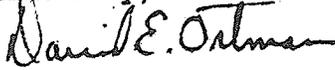
We would also recommend the following areas be included in the inventory review:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| } | Boise District: | Juniper Mountain
Wild Horse Butte
Browns Creek |
| | Burley District: | Salmon Falls Creek
Units contiguous to Cache Peak |
| | Shoshone District: | Forgotten Hills |

In conclusion we ask that all BLM roadless lands contiguous to Forest Service RARE II lands be included in the intensive inventory and that BLM carefully reassess each area to insure that inappropriate criteria have not been used as rationale for dropping areas from further consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Sincerely,



David E. Ortman
Conservation Representative
N.W. Friends of the Earth

DEO/tim

cc: Senator Church

Bo. +SA

1910 Manitou
Boise, Idaho 83706
June 15, 1979

#4671

William L. Mathews
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Federal Building, Box 042
550 W. Fort Street
Boise, Idaho 83724

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
IDAHO STATE OFFICE
BOISE, IDAHO

RECEIVED
10:00 A.M.
JUN 15 1979

Dear Mr. Mathews,

This initial inventory is an ambitious undertaking. For the most part the recommendations for the intensive inventory and wilderness study area (v.SA) status seem reasonable and fair.

However, I do have a few reservations. The main stumbling block in this entire process has been the definition of a road. BLM's Wilderness Inventory Handbook indicates roads "have been improved or maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use." This definition has been interpreted to include what is clearly and obviously a road useable by passenger cars and some obscure rut bladed in 15 years ago to install a stock watering tank and which has since grown over with waist-high sage. Both the NF of the Owyhee unit 16-40 and Little Jack's Creek unit 111-06 have such questionable "roads" listed.

An even more confusing situation exists in the Cold Springs Creek unit 19-1. There a track goes up Ryegrass creek. A spur was once bladed across the creek to install a stock watering tank and build a wildlife enclosure. The watering tank has since become a charming pond, full of cattails, snails, and other pond life. Both these "roads" were obviously "put to rest" for they have erosion control ridges across them. These ridges are characteristic of forest service logging roads closed to motorized travel and allowed to revegetate. Since the clear intent was to close these "roads" and rehabilitate the land, then I feel these sage-covered tracks should not be considered roads as some have claimed. In fact, the track up Ryegrass creek seems maintained mostly by the passage of cattle. As Fritz and I hiked this unit June 1, the cows moved right up along the track ahead of us. Even though these minor impacts exist, this unit is worthy of USA status for it has beautiful mountain terrain and its vegetation varies from desert sage to high mountain aspen. Our hike was especially delightful for we found wild roses blooming in every seepage. We agree with the intensive inventory analysis "the natural features NATURALNESS are so prominent and of such high interest that the casual observer would tend to overlook the imprints of man's work."

Obviously some clarification of the road definition is needed. Those who oppose wilderness on philosophical grounds (often as a knee-jerk reflex action) have during this comment period fractured the proposed intensive inventory areas into smaller and unsuitable units by claiming every rut and track as a genuine road. Fritz and I noticed

many such roads were drawn in on the maps of proposed WSA's during the two workshops we attended, April 16 in Boise, and April 24 in Murphy. I was curious about the number of these "roads", so on May 5, I spent three hours in the Boise District Office drawing in all the alleged roads on my initial inventory map. I was appalled at the results. Almost Every proposed WSA in the Boise District is littered with alleged roads. If each one is accepted at face value, there will be little left. This would be unfortunate for some of the finest "de facto" wilderness in the country is within the Boise District. The Bennett's Mountain Front, the breaks and canyons associated with the Owyhee and Bruneau Rivers, Big and Little Jack's Creeks, and Salmon Falls Creek are truly magnificent. To lose these at the initial inventory stage seems unfair. Certainly, in these areas rehabilitation of these alleged "roads" should be considered.

Unfortunately even ways are used to eliminate areas from further consideration. The inventory includes page after page of areas dropped for "numerous or substantial ways." Dan Lechefsky of the Boise District BLM, Steve Payne, and I visited one such area, Wildhorse Butte unit 16-22 May 12. We hiked across the colorful badlands in the southern part of the unit looking for the ways identified from aerial photos. They were unnoticeable. We did walk one track we could find down Fossil Creek. Knee to waist-high greasewood was between the two ruts. We concluded the area was natural enough, but disagreed on the "outstanding" qualities. I feel it deserves WSA status for it would be an example of the salt-scrub desert plant association. I would like Idaho's WSA's to include examples of the various desert ecosystems. These undisturbed areas would have immense scientific value for future generations.

In some instances crested wheat grass seedings have been the criterion used to eliminate an area from further consideration. I really question this practice for on many sites the seedings appear "natural" to the casual observer. As the years pass, sage returns and the resulting sage-grassland mix appears as this desert once was, even though crested wheat grass is an introduced species. I understand that the Vale District did not "trim" crested wheat grass seedings from its initial inventory proposals.

A few areas worthy of WSA status have been overlooked. The 32 mile stretch of Salmon Falls Creek from the dam downstream to Balanced Rock was considered as a natural area several years ago. There was a lot of public support of this proposal, especially from Twin Falls. Dr. C.H. Trost's study of the area done in 1975 states "it is an amazing wild area" and "it is pristine and free of human disturbances." According to Dr. Trost, the wildlife values are immense. The canyon has beaver, mink, bobcat, cougar and lynx. Nesting sites along the canyon walls include 9 for golden eagles, 19 for red-tailed hawks, 10 for prairie falcons, and about 30 for kestrels. It is a wintering area for bald eagles, and ferruginous hawks have been sited. I feel that entire stretch of canyon should be an extension of unit 17-10. The canyon itself provides the seclusion necessary for solitude even if the WSA boundaries extend just rim to rim. The unit should also include about 2 miles of Cedar Creek, 2 miles of Devil's Creek, and 1 mile of Whiskey Creek to protect the scenic values.

It was difficult to analyse this inventory for the units dropped from the initial inventory were not on the map. It was almost impossible to locate them.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this inventory. The wilderness study team headed by Dan Lechefsky from the Boise District Office was exceptionally helpful in answering any questions and providing use of their maps.

Sincerely,

Janet D. Ward

Janet D. Ward

copies to:

D. Dean Bibles
Boise District Manager
230 Collins Road
Boise, Idaho 83702

Steve Payne
The Wilderness Society
Idaho Regional Office
Box 1661
Boise, Idaho 83701

Bo, Bunt Shw

7440 Manorwood Drive
Boise, Idaho 83704
June 15, 1979

KF

Bureau of Land Management
Idaho State Office
Federal Building, Box 042
550 West Fort Street
Boise, Idaho 83724

Regarding Idaho Initial Wilderness
Inventory

441

I have been (deeply immersed in the River of No Return Wilderness hearings and the Desert and Carey Act hearings) and have not had the time to devote to the study of this inventory in the depth that it deserves... However, I have respect for the quality of the people who have been doing the study and I have questioned people who have had time to study it in depth. Also, because (I believe in the concept of Wilderness to preserve values that are fast vanishing from our over-crowded world... not only for our spiritual renewal, but also for future generations to be able to have experiences that were valuable to us in our developing years...) For these reasons I am endorsing this inventory at this time... with the following recommendations:

(1) That all BLM roadless lands contiguous to Forest Service Rare II lands be included in the intensive inventory, regardless of the Rare II recommendations for those forest lands. Congress, not the Forest Service, will make the ultimate decisions on whether areas should be designated as wilderness.

(2) That the BLM assess the initial inventory carefully to insure that minor constraints, such as external sights, sounds, and smells, low scenic quality, flat topography, seedings or non-native plants or resource conflicts were not used as reasons for dropping areas from consideration.

(3) I would hope that the BLM will remain flexible on road interpretation as many off-road vehicles and motor cyclists are improvising roads, that with time, can heal. It would be pointless to give up a whole wilderness complex because of the bad practices of a minority of the population.

(4) I regret that the portion that was being considered that contained Trail Creek was dropped, probably because of size... I feel that this was an error and wish to protest this deletion.

I would like the following areas included in the intensive review:

Boise District: Juniper Mountain
Wild Horse Butte
Browns Creek

Burley District: Salmon Falls Creek
Units contiguous to Cache Peak
Browns Creek

Shoshone District: Forgotten Hills

William S. & Marjorie G. Hayes
William S. & Marjorie G. Hayes

Bo, Burt + Sho.

PANHANDLE ENVIRONMENTAL LEAGUE

P.O. BOX 963
Sandpoint, ID 83864

#464

June 13, 1979

Coeur D'Alene District Office
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 428
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

RECEIVED
JUN 13 1979
BLM
COEUR D'ALENE DISTRICT OFFICE
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Panhandle Environmental League, I am writing to support the areas recommended for intensive inventory throughout the state. I would like to request that all (BLM roadless lands contiguous to Forest Service RARE III lands be included in the intensive inventory regardless of the RARE II recommendations) for those forest lands.

I urge the BLM to assess the initial inventory carefully to ensure that inappropriate criteria such as external sights, sounds and smells, low scenic quality, flat topography, seedings of non-native plants, or potential resource conflicts are not used as rationale for dropping areas from further consideration.

I would like the BLM to remain flexible on its interpretation and designation of wilderness areas. There are many areas where old, unused roads can be found, which, if left to deteriorate, would rapidly become wilderness areas. (Roads must serve a clear and obvious purpose in order to determine the classification of an area.)

I would like to request that the following areas be included in the statewide intensive review:

- Boise District: Juniper Mountain
Wild Horse Butte
Browns Creek
- Burley District: Salmom Falls Creek
Units contiguous to Cache Peak
- Shoshone District: Forgotten Hills (contiguous to Black Butte)

Our membership is highly interested in the BLM's wilderness inventory and urge you to carefully consider our opinions.

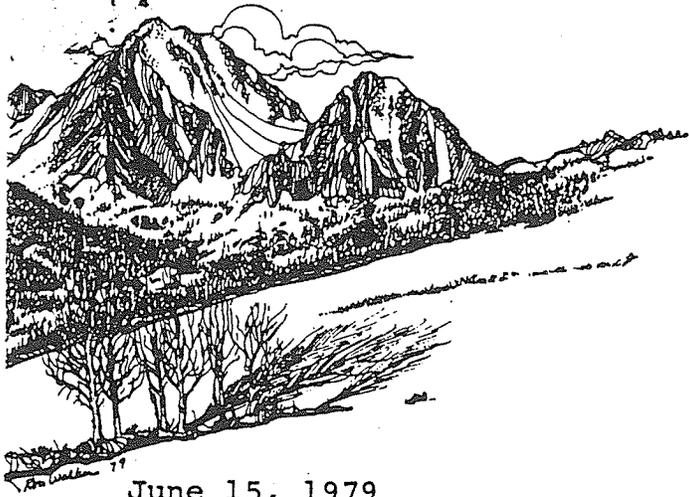
Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

Ilene Shell

Ilene Shell
Panhandle Environmental League, Inc.
Secretary

cc: Steve Payne



Bo, BURT SA + IF

#185 ✓

The Wilderness Society

Idaho Regional Office
Box 1661 / Boise, Idaho 83701 / (208) 342-8635

June 15, 1979

Mr. William L. Mathews
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Federal Building, Box 042
Boise, Idaho 83724

BUREAU OF LAND MGMT
IDAHO STATE OFFICE
BOISE, IDAHO

JUN 15 1979

RECEIVED
10:00 A.M.

Dear Mr. Mathews

We welcome this opportunity to offer our comments on the BLM's Wilderness Inventory Program and its initial inventory recommendation as it affects Idaho.

Over eight million acres of public land administered by the bureau has been recommended for release from any further wilderness consideration. This land area, according to your agency, clearly and obviously does not satisfy the minimum wilderness criteria. Needless to say, conservationists had an overwhelming job. The best that could be accomplished, in the limited time frame, was to take a representative sample of those units dropped. This was performed to insure that:

1. units were not being improperly omitted;
2. interpretation of mandated criteria was consistent within a district and among all districts;
3. anti-wilderness biases and pressures did not influence the first cut.

Following personal review of the state inventory, input from state conservationists and concerned individuals, as well as discussions and meetings with respective wilderness specialists and district managers, we have the following comments, concerns, and suggestions. We trust that you will take them to heart and convey them to the district level so that appropriate inventory adjustments can be made.

State Reference Map

The map provided to the public was totally inadequate, confusing, and biased. The public comment period should have been delayed until such time as a more useful map was drafted. The map should have, at minimum, contained the following, delineated by color code:

- all BLM administered lands;
- national forest boundaries;

"IN WILDNESS IS THE PRESERVATION OF THE WORLD" — Thoreau

- BLM lands considered but eventually cut from the inventory;
- BLM lands recommended for intensive and instant study;
- other federal and non-federal land units.

The present map is difficult to read and to evaluate. Wilderness opponents could rivet their attention on the lands maintained in the inventory because there was no visible correlation between the huge acreage dropped and the small fraction recommended for continued study. Conservationists could not distinguish between those lands dropped and the intermingling state and private lands.

For a good portion of the review period, this was the only map available to interested citizens in the Boise District. The promised $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to the mile maps were terribly late. We will not stand for a reduction in inventory quality or unsatisfactory material availability in the name of preserving a predetermined timetable. Prior to the next public comment period, the bureau should insure that all materials are available as promised, and that they meet the guidelines offered above.

Road Interpretation

Probably more than any other criteria, this was recognized by anti-wilderness interests as being the easiest means of disqualifying an area. Attempts were made at public sessions to identify anything and everything as a road. Without question, a road must serve a clear and obvious purpose. Where is it going? Who/what is it serving? Is use presently limited to convenience traffic? Has it been clearly maintained by means other than the passage of vehicles?

The question was raised in districts visited as to whether jeep trails formed by sheep grazers qualified as a road. The argument presented was that periodic shovel maintenance occurred. We contend that this would be a way. The trail was developed and maintained merely by the passage of vehicles. Periodic use of the shovel, primarily to dig out a stuck vehicle, cannot nor should not constitute a road according to a proper interpretation of the definition. Trails forged across wilderness country for the sake of convenience cannot be accepted. The Wilderness Inventory Handbook on page five makes quite clear: "Relatively regular and continuous use - access roads for equipment to maintain stock water tanks or other established water sources; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities; or access roads to mining claims".

Another argument I heard was that sheep grazers would be impacted by wilderness designation, therefore their trails should either be acknowledged as roads or that area in question omitted from the inventory. This interpretation, if applied, would overstep the bounds of the established criteria. One, all established ways and roads will remain open during the entire review process.

Two, economic impacts will be fully evaluated once an area achieves the wilderness study phase. Bowing to such political and special interest pressure is premature and unwarranted.

The bureau is stretching the road definition at times. For example, an obvious way should not be called a road just because at a wash there is some visible evidence of being maintained. If the majority of a way is rough, overgrown, and in disrepair, then a single improvement, such as at a wash or a bladed cut, should not elevate its status.

Except for the canyon lands, a tremendous percentage of the desert country has been intruded upon by ways, trails, roads, and range developments. Naturally, we'll want to identify those lands which have not been severely impacted by the hands of man. But in an effort to gain representation of desert country in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and not just canyon lands, we may have to accept some minor impacts or intrusions. If I stand on a way or road, of course the intrusion is substantially noticeable. The intent of the 1964 Wilderness Act, however, is to determine if an impact is substantially noticeable when the entire area is taken into account.

We have trouble with one criterion developed outside the perceivable parameters of the Wilderness Inventory Handbook. The high frequency of way occurrence is an attempt to evaluate the impact on a person's primitive recreational experience and an area's naturalness. We have found that there is a substantial difference between evaluating a way from the air or on-the-ground. We found that ways, in almost any frequency, had little or no impact on the values or attributes an area had to offer. After all, these are ways, not roads. The impacts on the area are often minimal if not imperceptible. Many of these ways are being invaded by pioneer plant species and gradually converting a trail or way to a natural appearance. Remember, the Wilderness Inventory Handbook allows for impacts to return to a natural condition. Unfortunately, the bureau has permitted only hand labor to assist nature's conversion efforts. If an impact has been caused by machinery, why can't machinery alleviate that impact?

We urge extreme caution in applying the road definition. As conservationists proceed to conduct more field reviews, we will monitor closely the application of this definition. We will not look favorably on a puristic interpretation in this process.

We believe that an area should be given the benefit of any doubt. The public should be provided every opportunity to study any one area without undue time constraints. Therefore, we advise against continued use of non-mandated criteria, such as frequency of occurrence, which eliminates the opportunity for the public to judge for themselves whether this is a valid concern and impact on the area and on a person's recreational experience.

We stress that we will be absolutely adamant that any defined road be proven that it serves a clear and obvious function.

Crested Wheat Grass

No area should be omitted simply because it contains non-native plant species. Some old crested wheat grass seedings, for instance, are now being invaded by sage brush. Some seedings have been conducted to offer watershed protection following a range fire. Where mechanical scarification or grazing developments have not followed suit, these areas should be considered for the inventory.

Sight and Sound

We do not accept exclusions or boundary adjustments as a result of sight or sound impacts outside of a given unit. This is a totally arbitrary criteria with no basis for support by the Congress or the Wilderness Inventory Handbook. We contend that wilderness is its own best buffer. An individual is not likely, for example, to camp next to a road because it's a designated Wilderness, but that person has an "opportunity to avoid the sights... (page 13, WIH)" and sounds of that road by entering deeper into the unit.

Unit Recommendations

The Wilderness Society supports those areas which the BLM has recommended for intensive and instant study. Further, we believe that additional acreage should be included. However, because we only conducted a relative small sample, we can name just a few specific areas. But, being as these areas were sample units, we should assume that like-areas with like-problems should be re-evaluated by the bureau and redesignated for intensive or instant study, as the case may be.

Wild Horse Butte (106-22):

This unit was originally deleted from the Inventory under the Ag. ES. After a field visit, we believe that this was an incorrect decision.

The ways within the unit are marginal at best. The number had no effect on our enjoyment of the area's attributes. The unit is dominated by a salt desert shrub plant community. This is not very common in the Idaho inventory.

Our proposed boundary differs from that considered earlier by the bureau. As depicted on the attached map, we propose a more uniform boundary which remains on the southwest side of the Snake River. We do not regard the way along the river as being a significant impact to merit exclusion of this unit.

This unit, in every way, satisfies the minimum wilderness criteria. It offers solitude within the badlands country. It offers vegetative diversity, from the desert shrub community to the riparian vegetation found along Fossil Creek and the Snake River. Although it is a small area, a person can enjoy a primitive recreational experience. Historical features of note includes the emigrant trail.

We recommend inclusion of this unit as an instant study area. If there are units similar to this sample in the Ag ES area or this district, then we urge the BLM to reconsider its earlier decision.

Boise District: Browns Creek (16-64, 16-31): contains topographic relief affording opportunities for solitude. Ash deposits present provide interesting flora possibilities.

Salmon Falls Creek: (this is an extension north of the area presently inventoried. This portion was once considered for designation as a research natural area.

Miscellaneous:

We request that all BLM lands which are contiguous to RARE II areas be maintained in the review program, regardless of the final declaration made for the RARE II lands. Remember, the Congress will make the final determination, not the respective agency. Our particular concern is directed to those units under RARE II which were recommended for non-wilderness but which conservationists advocated for wilderness under their Alternative W. The following are some of those units:

Salmon District:

41-3 - Contiguous to West Big Hole (4-943)
 45-7 - " to Pahsimeroi (4-209)
 31-88 - " to King Mountain (4-211)
 31-10 - " to "

The following are contiguous to Diamond Peak:

32-6a,b,c,d,e; 32-7a,b,c; 32-8; 32-9a,b,c; 32-10a,b,c,d;
 32-11a,b; 32-12; 43-11.

36-15 - Contiguous to Garfield Mountain (4-961)
 44-14 - " to West Lemhi Range (W4-503)

Burley District:

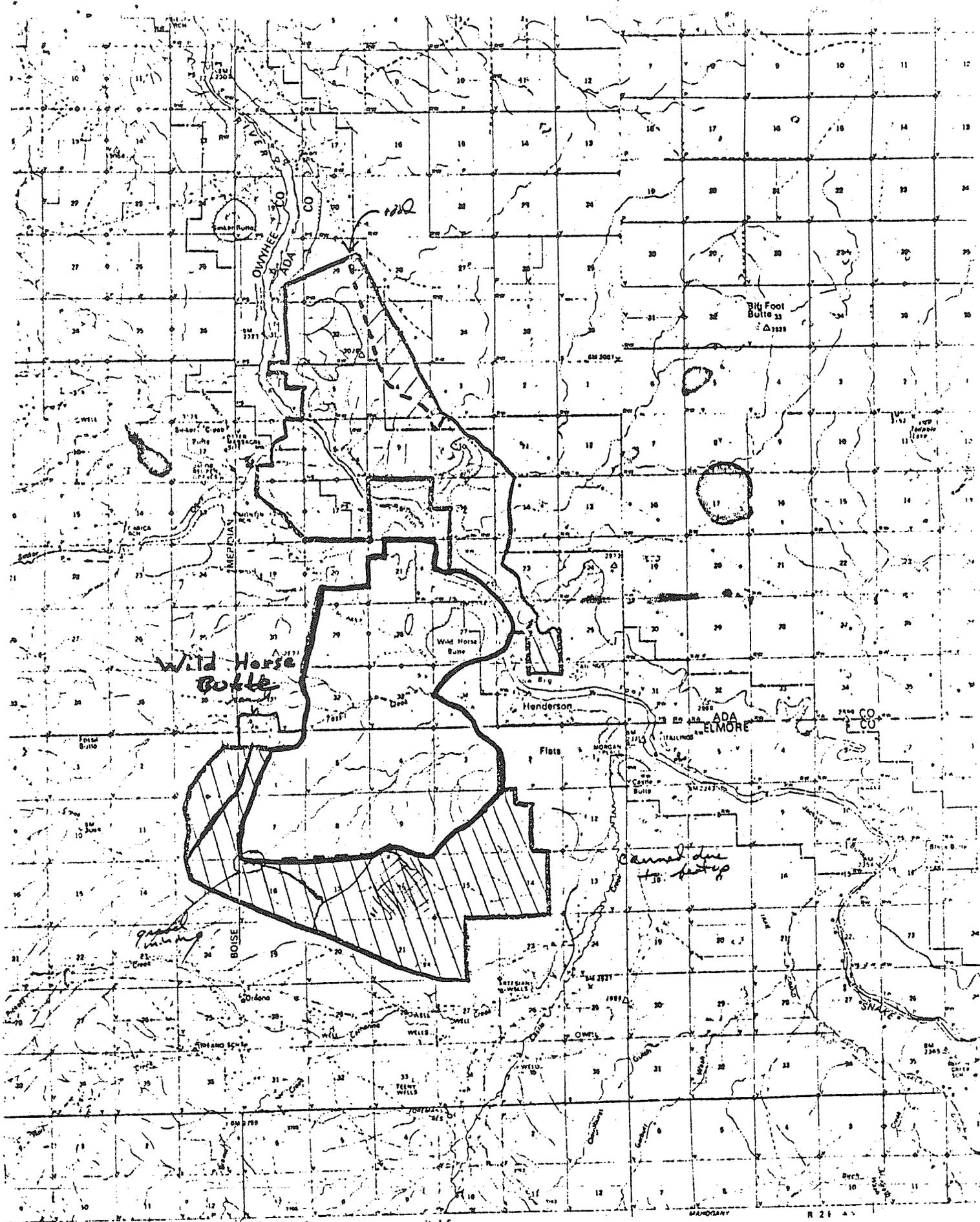
203-3 - Contiguous to Cache Peak (4-582)

Finally, we wish to extend our appreciation to the bureau's staff responsible for this major program. They have proven to be most cooperative and helpful.

Sincerely,



Steven E. Payne
 Idaho Representative



1/2" = 1 MILE

R 1 W

MONMOUTH

R 2 E

617 Krall Street #3
Boise, Idaho 83702
14 June 1979

Boyer

Mr. William Matthews, State Director
Bureau of Land Management
Federal Building
Box 042
Boise, Idaho 83724

#475 ✓

RECEIVED
~~10:00 A.M.~~
JUN 15 1979
4:15 p.m.
BUREAU OF LAND MGMT
IDAHO STATE OFFICE
BOISE, IDAHO

Dear Mr. Matthews:

I would like to comment on the BLM roadless area review currently being undertaken in Idaho. The effort which is being put into this process is appreciated, although there are some major questions which I feel need to be addressed in the evaluation process.

I have recently had the opportunity to make a field investigation of some of the roadless areas being considered in the review process. These areas, near Big Jacks Creek in Owyhee County, were units 111-07A; 111-14; and 111-07. Specific comments on each of these areas follow.

Unit 111-07A This unit has currently been recommended for intensive wilderness inventory, although Boise District staff have indicated the area may be excluded because of the number of ways in the unit. During our visit we were unable to find any evidence of ways in the southern portion of the unit (with the possible exception of a disturbed area at the junction of Highway 51 and the Battle Creek road), and none were visible during a brief excursion into the area. Based on this field check, I believe this area, or at least the southern part of the unit, ought to be retained for intensive inventory with the possible exception of the disturbed area immediately adjacent to the highway.

Unit 111-14 This area was originally included in the intensive wilderness area inventory, but has since been excluded (for unknown reasons). We hiked more than a mile into the unit, to the top of the tallest hill in the area, and were unable to find any evidence of roads or ways (except for those dividing inventory units) within the line of sight. We drove all along the northern and western boundary of the unit, and could see no ways (although we did see a stock watering tank toward the southern border of the unit, which presumably had road access from the south). I question why the entire unit was excluded from intensive inventory; the vegetation, although badly overgrazed, is more natural than other areas still included in wilderness inventory, and it is topographically more diverse than some other areas we visited. Even if the southern and eastern portions of the unit (which we were unable to visit) have significant numbers of ways, it appears that there should be sufficient area to create a separate inventory unit out of the unroaded portion of this unit which should undergo intensive wilderness inventory.

Unit 111-07 The field check of a road identified by the BLM in this unit was the most disturbing part of our visit to this area. The Boise District had identified, by helicopter reconnaissance, a 9 - mile road in this unit from a homestead along Duncan Creek to the Battle Creek road. After travelling the entire length of the "road", we were unable to find any evidence of construction (grading, boulder removal, drainage channels, or other mechanical or hand improvement) or maintenance other than vehicles periodically driving on it. It was very slow going in a 4-wheel drive vehicle, and the slopes, creek bottom, boulder fields, and other areas which would normally have some improvement were particularly hazardous, with no improvement or construction evident at all.

If helicopter observation is going to be used to determine what is a road and what is a way, and this is an example of what is classified as a road by aerial observation, then I feel there may be significant deficiencies in the roadless area review process. What we observed in unit 111-07 we felt clearly was a way, and I feel that ground observation, rather than helicopter observation, would have classified it as such. ~~In the desert,~~ perhaps more than any other ecosystem, roads and ways are highly visible from the air because of the distinctive influence they have on vegetation patterns. On the ground, however, these patterns are not readily apparent. Ground observation allows close inspection of possible road cuts, boulder removal, and other construction which is not as clearly visible from the air. I strongly question the validity of using helicopter observation as the sole means of determining whether a ground trail is a road or a way. I would urge a mix of ground observation and aerial survey in as many cases as possible, particularly in questionable cases.

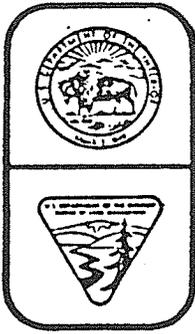
In addition to these comments, I would urge you to include Wildhorse Butte, Brown's Creek, Salmon Falls Creek, Juniper Mountain, and any unit contiguous to a Forest Service RARE II area (regardless of the area's final recommendation) be considered in the final intensive wilderness inventory.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Bruce R. Boccard

Bruce R. Boccard



SA, Bo, IF

Page 2.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
~~Sandy, Blaine~~, Idaho

#455

Public Response Sheet
For
Initial Wilderness Inventory

Inventory Unit No.(s) 43-2, 44-10, 44-13, 45-4, 45-6, 45-9, 46-5

PARTIAL INPUT:

~~Units:~~ 47-1, 16-11, 16-12, 16-24, 16-29, 16-33, 16-34
16-17, 16-18, 17-16, 17-23, 11-3, 4, 8, 28, 29, 31-9, 33-8
33-10, 36-1 THROUGH 9, 36-12. DISTRICT ISOLATED
PARCELS SHOW NO BARRIER DOWN FOR AREAS EXCLUDED
FOR LOW OR SCREENING, 44-10, 45-4, 45-6, 45-9, 46-5
47-1,

Naturalness DORV TRACKS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT
TO WARRANT EXCLUSION FROM FURTHER STUDY CATEGORY
(2) TRAILS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT TO EXCLUDE AREAS
FROM FURTHER STUDY AS THEY CAN BE REMOVED.

Solitude or Primitive Recreation: UNITS LISTED ABOVE HAVE
BEEN EXCLUDED FOR FAILURE TO MEET SOLITUDE
OR PRIMITIVE RECREATION, ACCORDING TO SECTION
2C OF THE WILDERNESS ACT SOLITUDE OR PRIMITIVE
RECREATION IS A CONDITIONAL REQUIREMENT; ONE
OR THE OTHER IS REQUIRED NOT BOTH
(over)

~~_____~~ IN ORDER TO EXCLUDE AN AREA
BOTH SOLITUDE AND PRIMITIVE RECREATION MUST
BE MISSING. WITH RESPECT TO THE SOLITUDE
REQUIREMENT, BLM IS EXCLUDING ALL VALLEY
LAND FOR LACK OF SOLITUDE. SINCE SOLITUDE
IS RELATIVE, LANDS WITH OUT STANDING WILDERNESS
CHARACTERISTICS ARE BEING EXCLUDED. ↓ PROTEST.
THE SOLWAY DISTRICT IS PARTICULARLY GUILTY OF
USING THIS SCHEME TO EXCLUDE AREAS FROM
INTENSIVE STUDY

Name PETE COLE Date JUNE 14, 1977

Representing _____

Mail Address 520 SKYLING
POCAHELLO ID. ZIP 83201

Phone 233-6744

Do you wish to be placed on BLM's wilderness mailing list for Idaho?

YES
 NO

