

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

---

**#DOI-BLM-ID-I020-2013-0037-EA**

**September 2013**

**Morgan Bridge Acquisition Environmental Assessment  
Serial No. IDI-037510**

---



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
Idaho Falls District  
Pocatello Field Office  
4350 Cliffs Drive  
Pocatello, Idaho, 83204  
Phone: (208) 478-6340  
FAX: (208) 478-6376



*< page left intentionally blank >*

## Table of Contents

<b>CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Background .....	4
Purpose and Need for Action.....	4
Location.....	4
Figure 1. Location of Morgan Bridge Property.....	5
Conformance with the Applicable Land Use Plan.....	6
Relationship to Statutes, Regulations or Other Plans:.....	7
Scoping, Issues, and Decision to Be Made .....	7
Scoping.....	7
Scoping Comments .....	8
Issues and Concerns Raised During Scoping .....	8
Decision to Be Made .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 2 –ALTERNATIVES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Alternative A (No Action).....	9
Alternative B (Proposed Action) .....	9
<b>CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES .....</b>	<b>10</b>
General Setting .....	10
Resources Considered in the Analysis.....	10
Table 1. Resources Considered in the Impact Analysis.....	10
Access.....	13
Existing and Potential Land Uses .....	14
Range Resources .....	15
Recreation.....	16
Figure 3. Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area .....	17
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animals .....	18
Figure 2. Sage Grouse Habitat.....	19
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Fish/Fisheries.....	20
Tribal Treaty Rights and Interests .....	22
Vegetation/ Invasive, Non-Native Species.....	23
Wetlands and Riparian Zones .....	24

<b>CHAPTER 4 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Table 2. Surface Management Status within the CIAA.....	25
Figure 4. Cumulative Impact Assessment Area: Blackfoot River SRMA.....	26
<b>CUMULATIVE IMPACTS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Past and Present Actions .....	27
Agriculture .....	27
Blackfoot River Regulated Flows.....	27
Livestock Grazing .....	27
Recreation.....	28
Wildfire.....	28
Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions.....	28
Agriculture .....	28
Blackfoot River Regulated Flows.....	29
Livestock Grazing .....	29
Recreation.....	29
Wildfire.....	29
Cumulative Impacts Associated with Past and Present Actions .....	30
<b>CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Persons and Agencies Consulted .....	31
List of Preparers .....	32
<b>CHAPTER 7 – REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>32</b>

## **CHAPTER 1- INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

In November, 2012, the Conservation Fund purchased approximately 400 acres of private land along the Blackfoot River near the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Morgan Bridge Campground in the Pocatello Field Office. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes have initiated a request for funding from the Bonneville Power Administration Wildlife Mitigation Fund to purchase this property. If successful in acquiring this funding, the Tribes would purchase the private property, and donate it to the BLM to be managed as public land. The BLM is interested in pursuing this donation, as the parcel is located within the BLM Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area, is immediately adjacent to the BLM Morgan Bridge Campground, includes approximately 1.8 miles of riverfront property and provides habitat for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, and is within an area identified as priority sage grouse habitat.

### **Purpose and Need for Action**

The purpose of the proposed action is for the BLM to acquire 400 acres of land along the Blackfoot River through a willing donation of fee simple rights. The need for acquiring this property is to secure legal access to the BLM Morgan Bridge Campground, to manage these lands consistent with the surrounding public lands within the BLM Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area, protect and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, as well as enhance riparian values, and meet management objectives in the Pocatello RMP.

### **Location**

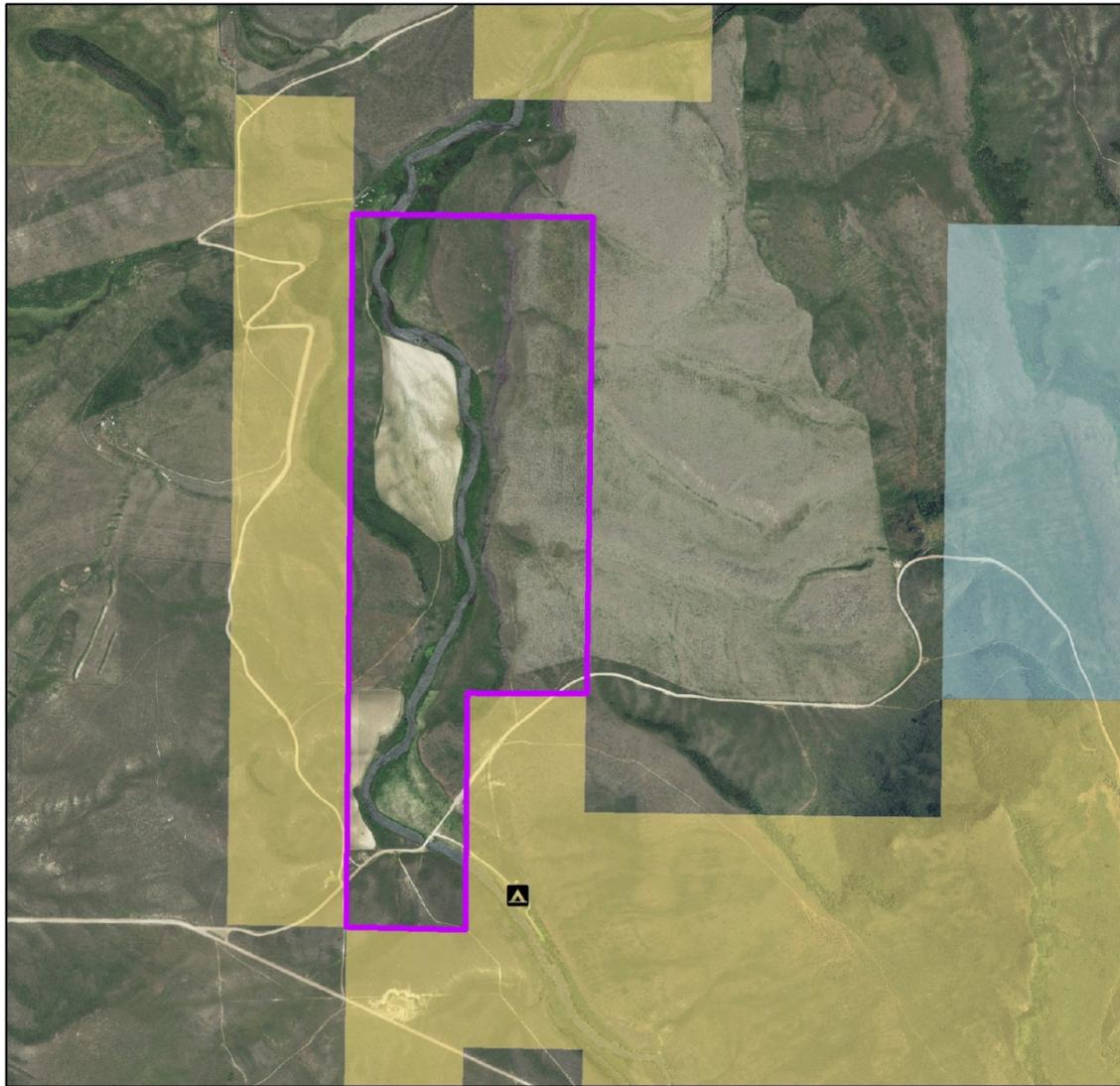
The project is located in:

T. 4. S., R. 39 E, Section 17, W2W2; Section 18, E2E2; and Section 19, E2NE.

The Morgan Bridge property includes approximately 400 acres of land immediately north of the BLM Morgan Bridge Campground. The property is approximately 1.5 miles long and is located on both sides of the Blackfoot River in Bingham County, ID, approximately four miles east of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation Boundary (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Location of Morgan Bridge Property**

## Morgan Bridge Property Acquisition



0 0.5 Miles

Map Date: 4 September 2013

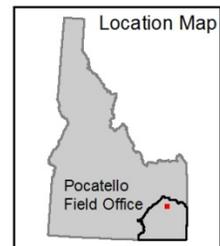
Projection: UTM Zone 12 NAD 1983

**Data Source Statement:**

Parcel - BLM Pocatello Field Office  
Campground; SMA - BLM Idaho State Office



-  Proposed Parcel Acquisition
-  BLM Morgan Bridge Campground
- Surface Management Agency**
-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private
-  State of Idaho



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

## **Conformance with the Applicable Land Use Plan**

The Proposed Action and the No Action Alternatives have been reviewed for conformance with the Approved Pocatello Resource Management Plan, April, 2012.

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the following RMP Objective and Actions:

**Objective LR-5.2** Maintain the overall public land base, acquire nonfederal lands or interest in nonfederal lands through exchange, purchase, easement or donation which enhance multiple-use, protect significant resource values and which improve the management and administration of the public lands.

**Action LR-5.2.1** A land tenure adjustment program will be implemented based upon a four zone concept where zones (areas that contain common issues or planned actions) and respective priorities are described below. Land tenure adjustments will be considered across Field Office and District boundaries.

This project is located within a Land Tenure Adjustment Zone 1, which has the following description. Public lands that contain special designation because of significant resource values. Zone 1 lands will be retained in public ownership. Examples of Zone 1 lands include Wilderness Study Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and Research Natural Areas, special status species habitat, and crucial wildlife habitat. BLM's priority for Zone 1 is to seek to acquire all private and State land inholdings. Public access will be considered in land tenure actions. Approximately 50, 800 acres (9% of the Pocatello Field Office) of public land will be identified in this zone.

**Objective SS-1.3** Maintain or improve the quality of sensitive species habitat by managing public land activities to support species recovery and the benefit of those species.

**Action SS 1.3.6** To the extent possible and to promote conservation, Greater sage-grouse habitat will be managed consistent with the Conservation Plan for Greater Sage-grouse in Idaho (IDFG 2006) or any future revisions/amendments and/or current BLM guidance. Appropriate actions, conservation measures and guidelines that may be considered include, but are not limited to:

- In areas where sage grouse habitats are fragmented by land ownership pattern, cooperate with IDFG and local working groups to identify and maintain long-term habitat by acquiring conservation easements or bringing crucial habitats into public ownership. (One of eleven items listed under Action SS-1.3.6)

## **Relationship to Statutes, Regulations or Other Plans:**

- The Proposed Action would be authorized by Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761). Section 205 (a) of FLPMA gives the BLM authority to acquire land or interests in land by purchase, exchange, donation, or eminent domain. Under Section 205 (e), lands acquired under this authority become public lands and remain public lands.
- The 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty, between the United States and the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes, reserves the Tribes right to hunt, fish, gather, and exercise other traditional uses and practices on unoccupied federal lands. In addition to these rights, the Shoshone Bannock have the right to graze tribal livestock and cut timber for tribal use on those lands of the original Fort Hall Reservation that were ceded to the federal government under the Agreement of February 5, 1898, ratified by the Act of June 6, 1900.
- Under this treaty and those agreements, the federal government has a unique trust relationship with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. BLM has a responsibility and obligation to consider and consult on potential effects to natural resources related to the Tribes treaty rights or cultural use.

## **Scoping, Issues, and Decision to Be Made**

### **Scoping**

- Staff From the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes – BPA Southern Idaho Wildlife Mitigation have presented and discussed the Morgan Bridge Acquisition proposal with the Fort Hall Business Council on several occasions over the past several years. In 2013, the proposal was discussed with the Council on February 5, March 7, and August 22. The Council supports the project, and the Tribes submitted a project proposal to the Bonneville Power Administration requesting funds to purchase the property.
- The Morgan Bridge Acquisition was initially presented to the BLM Pocatello Field Office ID Team on May 6, 2013 and has been discussed at multiple ID team meetings since the initial presentation.
- A summary of the project was posted on BLM’s E-planning web site on June 26, 2013.
- The BLM Pocatello Field Manager and staff members of the BLM interdisciplinary (ID) team met with the Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory Council (RAC) on August 28, 2013. An overview of the proposed acquisition was presented to the RAC, and was followed by a field tour of the property. The BLM staff presented their issues regarding the acquisition. The RAC supported the proposal, but provided no additional issues to be considered.

- On August, 19, 2013, the BLM issued a News Release to several local news media announcing the RAC meeting. The News Release specifically mentioned the proposed land acquisition and provided an invitation for the public to participate in the tour of the Blackfoot River however no members of the public attended the tour.

### **Scoping Comments**

No written external comments were received regarding the potential acquisition of the Morgan Bridge Parcel. The BLM ID Team raised several issues, which were presented on a site tour with the Idaho Falls RAC on August 28, 2013. The issues presented are listed below.

### **Issues and Concerns Raised During Scoping**

The BLM interdisciplinary team identified the following issues/concerns related to acquiring the Morgan Bridge property:

- Secure legal public access to the existing BLM Morgan Bridge Campground and public access and use of the 400 acres of land which includes approximately 1.8 miles of the Blackfoot River.
- Ensure management actions are implemented to support protection of the Greater Sage-grouse. The parcel would have been identified as Sage Grouse Preliminary Priority Habitat, and would be managed consistent with direction provided in BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-043, Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures, as well as any future guidance.
- Ensure management actions are implemented to support protection of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, a BLM listed sensitive species.
- Ensure the 400 acres of lands are managed consistent with the management objectives of the Blackfoot River SRMA, Mid-River Recreation Management Zone.
- Ensure future access to water for livestock trailing along the Blackfoot River Stock Driveway.
- Ensure the agreements with Prouse family to graze livestock and crop hay would be honored through November, 2018.
- Ensure livestock grazing and recreation activities are managed in a manner to improve conditions within the riparian zone for the 1.8 mile corridor of the Blackfoot River that passes through the property.

## **Decision to Be Made**

The Pocatello Field Manager is the authorized officer responsible for the decisions regarding management of public lands within the vicinity of the Morgan Bridge property. Based on the results of the NEPA analysis, the authorized officer will issue a determination of the significance of the environmental effects and whether an environmental impact statement (EIS) would be required. If the authorized officer determines that it is not necessary to prepare an EIS, the EA will provide information for the authorized officer to make an informed decision whether to acquire (via donation) the approximate 400 acres of the Morgan Bridge property, including all fee simple rights, including mineral rights, attached to this property.

## **CHAPTER 2 –ALTERNATIVES**

### **Alternative A (No Action)**

The BLM would not acquire fee simple title to the Morgan Bridge property. The property would remain in private ownership.

### **Alternative B (Proposed Action)**

The Proposed Action consists of acquiring fee simple title to approximately 400 acres of private land along the Blackfoot River in Bingham County, ID. The BLM would acquire the land and all fee simple rights, including mineral rights attached to the land via donation. The private land would be accepted by the BLM for the purposes of preserving and protecting the resources within the river corridor and providing public access and use along the Blackfoot River.

## CHAPTER 3 - AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

### General Setting

The proposed project includes 400 acres of private land in Bingham County, ID, located along the Blackfoot River, approximately 23 miles south east of Blackfoot, ID. The parcel borders the northern boundary of the BLM Morgan Bridge Campground and also borders a parcel of public land to the west. Historically, the property has primarily been used for farming and livestock grazing purposes. Approximately 240 acres of the parcel is located within the administrative boundary of the BLM Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area. The elevation is roughly between 5,700 and 5,800 feet above sea level.



### Resources Considered in the Analysis

**Table 1. Resources Considered in the Impact Analysis.**

Resource	Resource Status	Rationale
Access	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Access, Environmental Consequences.
Air Quality	Present, Not affected	The implementation of either the proposed action or the no action alternative would not result in the production of vehicle or equipment emission or particulate matter above incidental levels as required by the Clean Air Act.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC's)	Not Present	There are no ACECs located in the project area.
Cultural Resource	Present, Not Affected	Any cultural resources within the acquired lands would be managed pursuant to FLPMA, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and other applicable authorities.
Economic and Social Values	Present, Not Affected	Neither the proposed action nor the no action alternative would have a noticeable impact of economic and social values. Under the

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Resource Status</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
		Proposed Action, Bingham County would see a reduction in property taxes of approximately \$335 per year (based on the 2012 records), which would be offset by PILT payments to the county.
Environmental Justice	Present, Not Affected	There are some scattered minority and low-income populations in the rough vicinity of the project area, however, neither the Proposed Action nor the No Action Alternative would affect these populations as described under Executive Order 12898 of 2/11/1994. There would be no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to the minority and low-income populations in the area resulting from this proposal.
Existing and Potential Land Uses	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Existing and Potential Land Uses, Environmental Consequences.
Fisheries	Present, Affected	Impacts to Fisheries are disclosed under Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Fish/Fisheries, Environmental Consequences.
Floodplains	Not Present	Floodplains are not present in the project area.
Forest Resources	Not Present	There are no forest resources in the project area.
Invasive, Non-Native Species	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Vegetation/Invasive, Non-Native Species, Environmental Consequences
Mineral Resources	Not Present	There are no mineral resources known to exist in the project area.
Migratory Birds	Present, Not Affected	Migratory Birds are found within the project area, however a change in ownership would not impact migratory bird populations.
Native American Religious Concerns	Not Present	There are no known ceremonial sites or resources associated with ceremonial practices in the proposed project area.
Paleontological Resources	No Present	There are no known paleontological resources located in the area.
Prime and Unique Farmlands	Not Present	There are no prime or unique farmlands located within or near the proposed project area.
Soil Resources	Present, Not Affected	Soil resources would not be affected by a change in ownership. There are no ground disturbing activities associated with the acquisition.
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plants	Not Present	There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants or their habitat within the proposed project area.
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animals	Present, Affected	The entire project area has been identified as preliminary priority habitat for sage grouse. There are no other threatened, endangered, or sensitive animals or their habitat within the proposed project area. Impacts to sage grouse are disclosed under Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animals, Environmental Consequences.
Threatened, Endangered, and	Present, Affected	The Blackfoot River is known to have populations of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout. No other threatened, endangered, or sensitive fish

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Resource Status</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Sensitive Fish		(or their habitat) are known to exist within the proposed project area. Impacts to Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout are disclosed under Fisheries/Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Fish, Environmental Consequences.
Range Resources	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Range Resources, Environmental Consequences
Recreational Use	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Recreation, Environmental Consequences
Tribal Treaty Rights and Interests	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Environmental Consequences
Vegetation	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Vegetation/Invasive, Non-Native Species, Environmental Consequences
Visual Resources	Present, Not Affected	Neither the Proposed Action, nor the No Action Alternative would change the visual character of the landscape.
Wastes, Hazardous and Solid	Not Present	There are no solid or hazardous wastes in the project area and none would be created during the implementation of the any of the alternatives.
Water Quality (Surface and Ground)	Present, Not Affected	Neither the Proposed Action, nor the No Action Alternative would result in impacts to Water Quality.
Wetland and Riparian Zones	Present, Affected	Impacts are disclosed under Wetlands and Riparian Zones/Environmental Consequences
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Not Present	There are no wild and scenic rivers near the project area.
Wild Horse and Burro HMAs	Not Present	There are no wild horse and burro HMAs in the Pocatello Field Office.
Wilderness	Not Present	There are no wilderness areas or WSAs within or near the proposed project area.
Wildlife Resources	Present, Not Affected	Neither the Proposed Action, nor the No Action Alternative would generate impacts that would influence wildlife populations or habitat for wildlife.
Lands with Wilderness Characteristics	Not Present	There are no lands with wilderness characteristics in or near the project area.

## **Access**

### Affected Environment:

The Morgan Bridge private property is located along a 1.8 mile stretch of the Blackfoot River, immediately north of the BLM Morgan Bridge Campground. Motorized vehicles have been allowed to access the portion of the parcel that is south of Morgan Bridge. Public access to the portion of the parcel north of the bridge was allowed by foot or by boat. Although the public has been allowed to access the BLM campground and the portion of the property north of the bridge, there is currently no legal access to these areas.

There is an existing road near the north end of the parcel that has been in place for several decades. The road has historically served to provide access to private land. A gate in place on BLM that restricts motorized access to private use only. There is currently no right-of-way issued for this road or the gate.

### Environmental Consequences:

#### Alternative A (No Action)

The BLM would not secure legal public access to the Morgan Bridge Campground or the remainder of the private lands identified for acquisition. Although legal access would not be secured, it is likely that the public would continue to be allowed to drive on the existing road into the Morgan Bridge Campground and non-motorized access would likely continue to be allowed to that portion of the parcel north of the bridge.

The road at the north end of the property may or may not be available for public access with motorized vehicles. If the road is closed to the public for motorized travel, a right-of-way would need to be issued to private landowners using the BLM portion of the road to access private land. The character and nature of the road would likely remain the same as it is today. If the road is open to the public for motorized travel, no additional authorization is needed. The character of the road would likely remain the same, however the level of public use of the road would likely increase. Whether or not the road is open to the public for motorized travel, the existing gate would be removed from public land. The gate may be relocated to the entrance to private land.

If the parcel remains in private ownership, the BLM cannot maintain or repair roads when the need arises. The private landowner could choose to block public access at any time they chose to.

#### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

Public access would be secured to the Morgan Bridge parcel, including the access road leading into the BLM campground. The BLM would acquire the land and all fee simple rights attached to the lands, which would include securing legal public access to these lands.

Until travel management planning is completed in the area, motorized travel would be restricted to existing roads within that portion of the parcel north of the county road. Cross-country travel is not allowed on any public lands within the SRMA. The portion south of the county road would limit motorized travel to the county road/bridge and existing road leading to the Morgan Bridge Campground. The character of these roads would likely remain the same as the current conditions. Acquiring this parcel would allow the BLM to maintain the roads when needed. Vehicles would be allowed to park within 100 feet of the existing road. Future travel management plans may modify which roads are open to motorized travel.

The existing road at the north end of the property would be open to motorized travel to access the acquired property. The character of the road would likely remain the same, however the level of use would likely increase. A parking area may be provided at the end of the road on BLM land. The parking area would be less than one acre in size. If provided, the parking area would be leveled, maintained, and delineated with a fence.

The BLM would obtain the ability to maintain and repair roads as needed in the parcel were acquired.

### **Existing and Potential Land Uses**

#### Affected Environment:

Currently, the property is owned by The Conservation Fund (TCF). When TCF purchased the property, an agreement was signed to allow the Prouse family to continue grazing the property and crop hay for a set period six years from the time of the sale, which occurred in November 2012.

The property is adjacent to the Blackfoot River Stock Driveway which Congress designated in 1923 to provide a corridor of public land on which to move livestock to and from the eastern Snake River Plain to the Blackfoot River uplands. A portion of the property near the Morgan Bridge is also used as watering site for livestock utilizing the Blackfoot River Stock Driveway.

#### Environmental Consequences:

##### Alternative A (No Action)

There would be no changes to the current uses occurring in the area. TCF would fulfill their obligations to allow the Prouse family to graze on the property and crop hay through November, 2018. It is unknown what the future land uses would be, as the property would remain in private ownership.

##### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

If the BLM were to acquire this property, the Prouse family would be allowed to continue to graze livestock on the property, as well as crop hay for the remainder of the six year timeframe agreed to in the sale with TCF. These activities would continue through the year 2018. Once the

commitments have been met for grazing and agricultural uses, the parcel would be managed consistent with the management objectives for the public lands that surround the parcel. The BLM would continue to provide a water gap near the Morgan Bridge to provide water for livestock trailing along the Blackfoot River Stock Driveway.

### **Range Resources**

#### Affected Environment:

The Morgan Bridge private land parcel is located within the boundary of the Eastern Idaho Grazing Association (EIGA), Blackfoot River Allotment. The BLM administers the grazing on the public land within the allotment. The Morgan Bridge private land is being grazed by the Prouse family as agreed to during the sale of the land from the family to TCF. The family would be allowed to continue grazing the property for a period of six years from the time of sale.

The EIGA Blackfoot River Allotment is large, extending 15 miles north to south, 21 miles east to west and contains 6,056 acres of public land, 43,578 acres of state land and 30,000 acres of private land for a total of 79,634 acres. The Blackfoot River is on the western side of the allotment and runs 17 miles through the allotment, of which 11.6 miles flow through or along public land. The vast majority of public land lies within a ¼ mile to ½ mile strip on either side of the river, the remaining public lands are small tracts scattered throughout the allotment.

The allotment is a cattle and sheep allotment with 1 lessee and contains 6,056 acres of BLM land rated at 1,355 AUM's. 2,280 acres are in late seral (good) condition, 3,032 acres are in mid seral (fair condition), 99 acres are in early seral (poor condition), and 122 acres are designated miscellaneous. Season of use is 5/20 to 11/10. Major vegetation type is sagebrush-grass with scattered pockets of aspen and juniper. Topography varies from rolling hills to steep mountain slopes. The BLM lands are grazed concurrently with private and state lands which lie within the allotment.

The majority of the public lands in the allotment lie in the Blackfoot River Stock Driveway which Congress designated in 1923 to provide a corridor of public land on which to move livestock to and from the eastern Snake River Plain to the Blackfoot River uplands.

Range improvements within the parcel primarily include a cattle guard, barbed wire fencing, wood rail fencing, and a few water gaps. A portion of the parcel near the bridge has historically been used for to provide access to water for livestock trailing on the Blackfoot River Stock Driveway.

### Environmental Consequences:

#### Alternative A (No Action)

If the property were to remain in private ownership, TCF would fulfill their obligation to allow cattle to graze through 2018. The public land acreage within the EIGA allotment would remain the same. There would be no change to the AUM's authorized in the allotment. The existing range improvements would likely remain in place.

#### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

If the property were acquired by the BLM, grazing would be allowed to continue on the parcel through November 2018, per the terms of the sale to the Conservation Fund. Once the commitments have been obligated, the BLM would manage grazing to be consistent with management objectives for the surrounding public lands. There would be no change to the AUM's authorized in the allotment. Livestock being trailed along the Blackfoot River Stock Driveway would continue to have access to a water gap on Blackfoot River near Morgan Bridge to water livestock. Fences and the cattle guard may be relocated or removed to be consistent with management direction to protect the riparian areas and provide recreation opportunities.

## **Recreation**

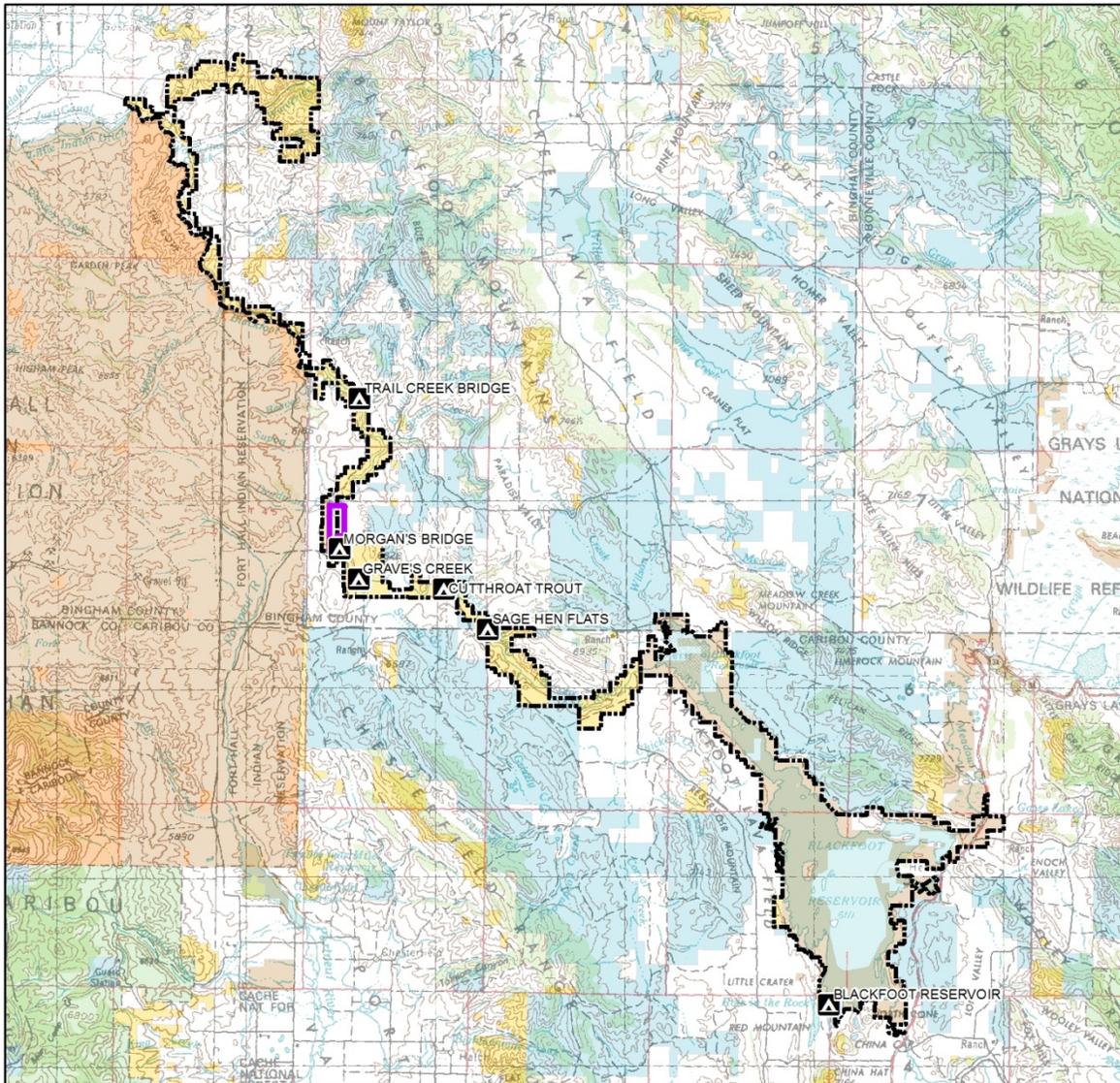
### Affected Environment:

The Morgan Bridge property is located long both shorelines of the Blackfoot River. The Morgan Bridge parcel is owned by TCF, but is within/adjacent to the management boundaries of the BLM Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). An SRMA is a BLM administrative boundary which encompasses public land and is recognized as a priority for BLM recreation funding and personnel to fulfill commitments made to specific structured recreation opportunities. The property is immediately adjacent to the BLM Morgan Bridge Campground, and a portion of the property includes the access road leading into this campground.

Recreation opportunities that exist on the property include, but are not limited to: fishing, non-motorized boating, hiking, viewing scenery, big game hunting, and waterfowl hunting. The property is currently owned by the Conservation Fund, which does not limit public use of the parcel.

**Figure 3. Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area**

**Morgan Bridge Property Acquisition - SRMA Boundary**



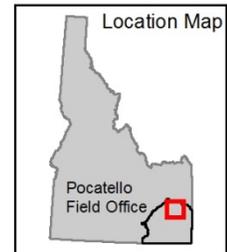
Map Date: 4 September 2013

Projection: UTM Zone 12 NAD 1983

Data Source Statement:  
 Parcel; SRMA - BLM Pocatello Field Office  
 Campground; SMA - BLM Idaho State Office



- Proposed Parcel Acquisition
- Blackfoot Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)
- BLM Campground
- Surface Management Agency**
- Bureau of Land Management
- Other Federal
- Indian Reservation
- Private
- State of Idaho
- State: Fish and Game, Parks and Rec
- US Forest Service



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

### Environmental Consequences:

#### Alternative A (No Action)

If the BLM does not acquire this property, there would likely be few immediate changes to recreational opportunities provided in the area. However, access to the existing campground and the subject property would not be secured, leaving an open risk to the possibility that some future landowner may choose to block public access to the entire parcel. Should this ever occur, recreation opportunities within the parcel, as well as public access to the BLM Morgan Bridge Campground could be lost.

#### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

If the BLM were to acquire the Morgan Bridge property, the land would be managed consistent with the surrounding public lands, which are currently within the SRMA boundary. This parcel is located within the Mid-River Recreation Management Zone. Acquiring this parcel would secure additional opportunities to recreate on public lands as described above, and would remain available for future generations. There may be additional opportunities to develop take-outs/put-ins for non-motorized boating, improve fishing access, and provide dispersed camping. Any future development of recreation facilities would be addressed in an SRMA activity plan.

The entire parcel would be available to provide recreation opportunities, however motorized travel may be restricted within the parcel. Parking areas would be available adjacent to the existing Morgan Bridge Campground, and from the north end of the parcel. Motorized access to the parcel would be limited to the county road that crosses Morgan Bridge and the road accessing the Morgan Bridge Campground until a travel management plan is completed for the area. Motorized travel within the parcel would be limited to existing roads until a travel management plan is completed. The remainder of the parcel would be available for non-motorized recreation activities.

### **Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animals**

#### Affected Environment:

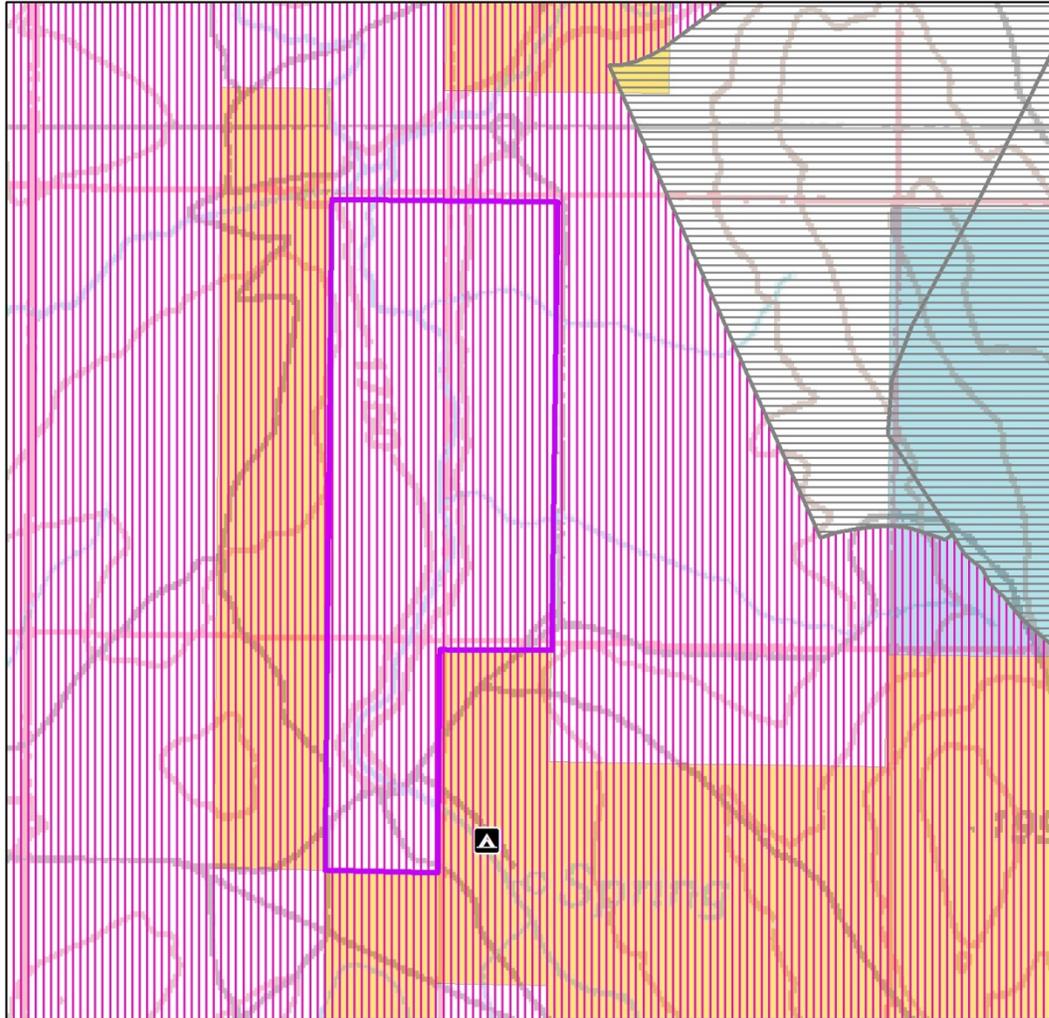
No threatened or endangered species are known to inhabit the project area. The following BLM Idaho Sensitive Species are known to inhabit the project area: Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, Greater Sage-grouse, American White Pelican, Northern Leopard frogs, and Brewer's sparrow. The two grouse species and the Brewer's sparrow use sagebrush habitats, while the pelican and frog use the river and riparian habitats along the river.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of December 2011 the BLM issued Instruction Memorandum No. 2012-043, Greater Sage-Grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedures. The memorandum directed the States that have greater sage-grouse to designate Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) and Preliminary General Habitat (PGH). PPH comprises areas that have been identified as having the highest conservation value to maintain sustainable Greater Sage-Grouse populations. PGH comprises areas of occupied seasonal or year-round habitat outside of priority habitat.

The 400 acre parcel identified in the Morgan Bridge property has been classified as Preliminary Priority habitat for sage-grouse.

**Figure 2. Sage Grouse Habitat**

**Morgan Bridge Property Acquisition - Sage Grouse Habitat**



0 0.5 Miles

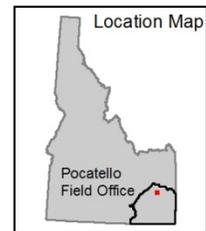
Map Date: 4 September 2013

Projection: UTM Zone 12 NAD 1983

Data Source Statement:  
Parcel - BLM Pocatello Field Office  
Campground; SMA; SG Habitat - BLM Idaho State Office



- Proposed Parcel Acquisition
  - Sage Grouse Preliminary Priority Habitat
  - Sage Grouse Preliminary General Habitat v.2
  - BLM Morgan Bridge Campground
- Surface Management Agency**
- Bureau of Land Management
  - Private
  - State of Idaho



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

### Environmental Consequences:

#### Alternative A (No Action)

There would be no change in direct impacts to threatened, endangered, and sensitive animals if the parcel were to remain in private ownership. The existing hay field would continue to provide forbs and insects for brood rearing Sage-grouse. The Conservation Fund would not likely allow any future residential development or agricultural development of these lands, however there is no long term security that they would retain ownership of the parcel.

#### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

If the parcel were to be acquired by the BLM, habitat would be managed in a manner that would preserve habitat supporting known sensitive species listed above, as well as enhance conditions for Greater Sage-grouse. The existing hay field would continue to provide forbs and insects for brood rearing Sage-grouse.

If the property were taken out of private ownership, the risk of any sage brush treatments (which has occurred on nearby private property) would be greatly reduced, if not eliminated. The BLM would treat noxious weeds and invasive weeds, which would enhance habitat for sensitive species.

If the BLM acquires the parcel, it would prevent any future residential development or agricultural development of these lands. Any future vegetation treatments would be planned, designed, and implemented consistent with current policies for procedures for protecting sensitive species, including the Greater Sage-grouse.

### **Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Fish/Fisheries**

#### Affected Environment

The Blackfoot River is occupied habitat for Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT), a BLM sensitive species. Yellowstone cutthroat have been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act but a finding of not warranted has been made on the listing petition. In addition to Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT), Blackfoot River provides habitat for the following native species; Utah sucker, Utah chub, speckled dace, red-sided shiner, mottled sculpin and long nosed dace. Rainbow trout and common carp have also been introduced to the river.

Potential threats to YCT, not listed in any particular order include genetic introgression with rainbow trout; impoundments, water diversion, road culverts, improper livestock grazing, mineral extraction, angling, and competition with nonnative species. Whirling disease has been identified as a more recent potential threat.

Continued habitat degradation is one of the major threats to the continued improvement of the YCT status. The YCT status report and conservation strategy identified poorly managed water development, water withdrawal, livestock grazing, oil and gas energy development, mining, poor timbering management, and associated road building as significant habitat threats to YCT.

In addition, natural climatic events such as drought, floods, and fires can threaten populations of YCT, especially when stream populations remain fragmented, small and isolated.

The major threats to the Blackfoot River YCT population have been genetic introgression with rainbow trout, livestock grazing and the change in timing and intensity of peak flows as a consequence of the Blackfoot Dam. The dam (managed by the Bureau of Indians Affairs) regulates flows on the Blackfoot River. Major threats to other fish species include livestock grazing and the change in timing and intensity of peak flows as a consequence of the Government Dam. Regulated flows are generally low during the spring runoff period, and then are increased to deliver irrigation water during the growing season. The flow regime does not allow water to access the flood plain and impedes the development/maintenance of a healthy riparian zone. The regulated flows interfere with the ability of the river to build sand bars and have those bars become vegetated. Increased flows during the growing season also increase the potential for erosion. After the irrigation season, a large portion of the river banks are no longer under water, and are non-vegetated. These banks do not have the opportunity to develop riparian vegetation because they are under water during the majority of the growing season. These problems/concerns are independent of the impacts of livestock grazing. The increased summer flows have also decreased the number and size of slow water velocity, backwater areas. These areas are important rearing areas for juvenile YCT and their fish prey.

Bank alteration due to livestock hoof action has led to less bank stability and increase sediment input to the river. Vegetation removal of both riparian graminoids and shrubs, due to trampling, browsing and grazing, have further compromised bank stability and the ability of the riparian vegetation to filter sediment which would contribute to bank building. This decrease in riparian vegetation has lowered the potential of the riparian area to produce terrestrial insects, an important food source for fish populations in the river.

#### Environmental Consequences:

##### Alternative A (No Action)

There would be no change in impacts to fisheries or threatened, endangered, and sensitive fish if the parcel were to remain in private ownership.

##### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

The impacts of acquiring this parcel as public land would potentially improve conditions for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and other fish populations in the river by improving riparian conditions. Improvements would occur through an increase in the amount and vigor of hydric bank vegetation which would decrease water temperatures and provide more stable bank structure by providing dense root mats. Improving riparian conditions could also provide greater filtering of suspended sediment and provide habitat for terrestrial insects, an important food source for fish populations.

Greater bank stability derived from less bank alteration and an increase in the amount and vigor of riparian vegetation could decrease sediment introduction into the river. A decrease in sediment introduction would decrease gravel embeddedness which would provide higher quality spawn

gravels and habitat for important aquatic invertebrates such as stoneflies, caddisflies and mayflies.

### **Tribal Treaty Rights and Interests**

#### Affected Environment:

The 1868 Fort Bridger Treaty, between the United States and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, reserves the right to hunt, fish, gather, and exercise other traditional uses and practices on unoccupied federal lands. In addition to those treaty rights, the Shoshone-Bannock have the right to graze tribal livestock and cut timber for personal use on those lands of the original Fort Hall Indian Reservation that were ceded to the United States under an Agreement of February 5, 1898, ratified by the Act of June 6, 1900.

The federal government has a unique trust relationship with federally-recognized American Indian Tribes, including the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The BLM has a responsibility and obligation to consider and consult on potential effects to natural resources related to the Tribes' treaty rights or cultural use. Resources issues of interest to the Tribes that could have a bearing on their traditional use and/or treaty rights include: tribal historic and archaeological sites, sacred sites and traditional cultural properties, traditional use sites, fisheries, traditional use plant and animal species, vegetation (including noxious and invasive, non-native species), air and water quality, wildlife, access to lands and continued availability of traditional resources, land status, and the visual quality of the environment.

#### Environmental Consequences:

##### Alternative A (No Action)

The parcel would not be acquired by the BLM and would remain in private ownership. The property would remain unavailable to the Tribes for exercising treaty rights.

##### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

Land status and access associated with the project area would change from private land to federal land status. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' right to exercise treaty rights and traditional uses would increase with the addition of these lands into public ownership. The proposed action would result in an increase of approximately 400 acres of public land that members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes could exercise their treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather, as well as exercise other traditional uses on these unoccupied lands.

## **Vegetation/ Invasive, Non-Native Species**

### Affected Environment:

#### Rangeland Vegetation

Approximately 233 acres of the parcel has been used as rangeland. Basin big, Wyoming, and Three-tip sagebrush are the dominant shrubs; bitterbrush, serviceberry, rabbit brush, and snowberry are also present. Bluebunch wheatgrass, needle grass species, and Idaho fescue are the dominant grasses; and bluegrass species are also common. Common forbs include yarrow, aster, Oregon grape, erigeron, eriogonum and yellow salsify. Common riparian vegetation present is water birch, current, a variety of willows, Red Osier dogwood, Juncus, Carex, Red Top, Monkey flower, Coonstail and a variety of aquatic forbs. Canada thistle and Japanese brome are present within the parcel, particularly at disturbed sites.

#### Agricultural Vegetation

According to the Bingham County Farm Service Agency, the subject property has five identified fields, which total 167 acres, according to their aerial photographs. Two of the fields, totaling 97 acres, have formerly been enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The latest contract was signed August 17, 2006 and ran through September 30, 2012. The remaining 70 acres that were not within the CRP have been planted into spring barley and have also yielded crops of hay. When TCF purchased the property from the Prouse family, an agreement was signed that would allow the Prouse family to graze the property and crop hay for six years from the time of the sale (November 2012 – November 2018).

### Environmental Consequences:

#### Alternative A (No Action)

There would be no new impacts to vegetation if the parcel were to remain in private ownership. The Prouse family would retain the opportunity to graze livestock and to crop hay on the property through the year 2018, per their agreement with TCF.

#### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

If the parcel were to be acquired by the BLM, the Prouse family would retain the opportunity to graze livestock and to crop hay on the property through the year 2018, per their agreement with TCF. Once the obligations have been met with the Prouse family, the vegetation on these lands would be managed consistent with the objectives of surrounding public lands. Upon acquisition, the BLM would monitor and treat noxious and invasive, non-native weeds consistent with the direction provided in the Noxious Weed Control Program EA # ID-075-2002-015.

## **Wetlands and Riparian Zones**

### Affected Environment:

There are no wetlands within the parcel. The Blackfoot River passes through the Morgan Bridge property for the entire length of the parcel (approximately 1.5 miles). Primary riparian zone issues within the parcel include bank soil compaction, bank shear, and riparian vegetative trampling by hooves and moderate to heavy grazing use of riparian vegetation and upland vegetation on flats along portions of the river. In addition, there are hydrologic and vegetative problems due to the fluctuating flow of the Blackfoot River. The Blackfoot Reservoir dam regulates flow on the river and retains water during high flow periods which hampers riparian vegetation from spreading and stabilizing stream banks.

### Environmental Consequences

#### Alternative A (No Action)

There would be no change to wetlands/riparian zones if the parcel were to remain in private ownership. The Prouse family would retain the opportunity to graze livestock and to crop hay on the property through the year 2018, per their agreement with TCF. There would be no guarantee that TCF would retain ownership of the property if the BLM did not acquire the parcel.

Impacts associated with the hydrologic and vegetative problems associated with the fluctuating flows of the Blackfoot River would likely continue, as this proposal does not affect the amount of water released from the dam.

#### Alternative B (Proposed Action)

If the parcel were to be acquired by the BLM, the Prouse family would retain the opportunity to graze livestock and to crop hay on the property through the year 2018, per their agreement with TCF. Once the obligations have been met with the Prouse family, the lands would be managed consistent with the objectives of surrounding public lands, which would likely include fencing livestock out of the riparian zone, similar to what has taken place on surrounding public lands along the Blackfoot River.

Impacts associated with the hydrologic and vegetative problems associated with the fluctuating flows of the Blackfoot River would likely continue, as this proposal does not affect the amount of water released from the dam.

## **CHAPTER 4 – CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES**

This section of the document discloses the likely incremental impacts of the BLM acquiring the Morgan Bridge parcel or leaving it in private ownership when considered in the context of impacts associated with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions that have occurred, or are likely to occur, in the area.

The Cumulative Impact Assessment Area (CIAA) for this analysis is the Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area. (See Figure 4 - CIAA Map).

The CIAA is 36,415 acres in size and consists of 14,194 (39%) acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management, 4,944 (14%) private acres, 302 (<1%) acres administered by the State of Idaho, and 16,975 (47%) acres administered by Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). For the resources affected by the Proposed Action and alternatives, this CIAA is the landscape unit that defines the bounds of the cumulative analysis.

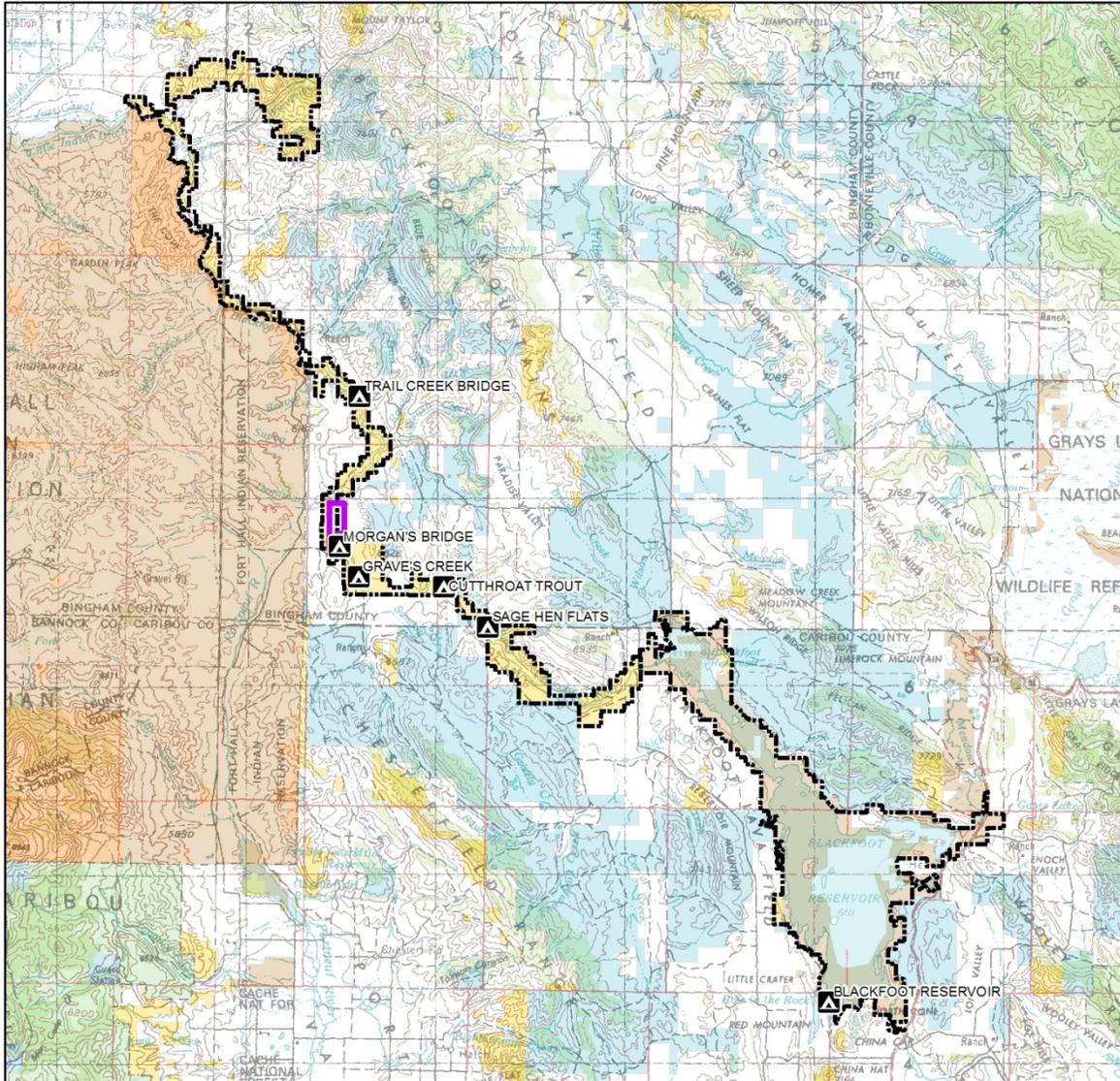
Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions that have impacted the CIAA to varying degrees include agriculture, Blackfoot River flows, livestock grazing, recreation, and wildland fire. Although these actions probably do not account for all of the actions that have or are likely to occur in the CIAA, GIS analysis, agency records, and professional judgment suggest that they have contributed to the vast majority of cumulative impacts that have occurred in the CIAA.

**Table 2. Surface Management Status within the CIAA.**

<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Bureau of Land Management	14,194
Private Property	4,944
Bureau of Indian Affairs Withdrawn Lands	16,975
Idaho Department of Lands	302
Total Acreage of CIAA	36,415

**Figure 4. Cumulative Impact Assessment Area: Blackfoot River SRMA**

**Morgan Bridge Property Acquisition - SRMA Boundary**



Map Date: 4 September 2013

Projection: UTM Zone 12 NAD 1983

Data Source Statement:  
 Parcel; SRMA - BLM Pocatello Field Office  
 Campground; SMA - BLM Idaho State Office



- Proposed Parcel Acquisition
- Blackfoot Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)
- BLM Campground
- Surface Management Agency**
- Bureau of Land Management
- Other Federal
- Indian Reservation
- Private
- State of Idaho
- State: Fish and Game, Parks and Rec
- US Forest Service



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed.

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

### **Past and Present Actions**

On the basis of aerial photographic data, agency records and GIS analysis, the following past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions, which have impacted the CIAA to varying degrees, have been identified: agriculture, Blackfoot River regulated flows, livestock grazing, and recreation. Although wildland fire is not a past or present activity per se, fire has impacted the CIAA and, therefore, is considered in this analysis.

These actions do not represent every action that may have had impacts in the CIAA, but they are the suite of actions most likely to have resulted in substantial impacts on the subject allotments based on the aerial photographic and GIS analysis.

### **Agriculture**

Agricultural development has an extensive history in south east Idaho extending back to the days of earliest settlement. Today, hay, grain, and CRP fields of various sizes are present in the CIAA.

### **Blackfoot River Regulated Flows**

The Blackfoot Reservoir is one of the major sources of irrigation water for the agricultural lands of southeast Idaho. The Blackfoot River is the main conduit of the reservoir's water and flows to the Snake River Plain where numerous diversions route the water from the river into canals to distribute waters to different irrigation zones throughout the area between Blackfoot and Pocatello, Idaho. The high flows of the Blackfoot River during the summer months required for irrigation purposes cut into the banks of the river, producing bank erosion and put high levels of sediment the river.

### **Livestock Grazing**

Livestock grazing in south eastern Idaho dates back to the settlement and agricultural development of the area in the late 1800s. Farmers brought livestock with them to raise for food and sell at the market. The Taylor Grazing Act (1934) formalized licensed AUM's on the Federal range and sought to bring management to the BLM lands of south east Idaho. As a consequence of the mountainous topography, livestock readily congregate in the canyon bottoms where shade, water and forage may be seasonally plentiful. Overuse has historically occurred in riparian's zones of the CIAA, however the BLM has initiated fencing projects along the Blackfoot River in an attempt to reduce grazing impacts within the riparian zones.

## **Recreation**

Recreation use of the area is high due its close location to the cities of Pocatello, Idaho Falls, Blackfoot, and Soda Springs, Idaho. There is easy access from these cities to 6 developed campgrounds and multiple dispersed camping areas along the Blackfoot River/Blackfoot Reservoir. There are numerous primitive roads that lead to the riverside and the shoreline of the reservoir. Common recreation activities have included: rafting, kayaking, canoeing, drift boating, float tubing, fishing, camping, picnicking, hunting, hiking, and off-highway vehicle use.

Recreational use of the area has increased in recent years and is expected to continue to increase due to the variety of recreational activities available, particularly floating the river, hunting, OHV use, fishing and camping.

## **Wildfire**

Wildfire is common in south east Idaho and varies in intensity depending upon factors such as humidity, slope, fuel type and loads and wind velocity. Because the area has frequent lightning activity during the summer and early fall, fires can occur anywhere. However, wildfire is generally more common in the south west and western portion of the PFO. The majority of wildfires are usually on upland slopes that are too steep for mechanical rehabilitation, though dozer lines are seeded and weed treatments are conducted as needed. In general, non-sprouting species such as mountain sagebrush and juniper are impacted the most by these fires and their recovery has and will remain slower than for sprouting species such as perennial grasses and snow berry. Three-tip sagebrush is common in the area and unlike other sagebrush species; it re-sprouts rapidly after being burnt.

## **Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions**

All of the past and present actions discussed above are expected to continue into the future though the relative intensity of these actions could vary depending on a variety of economic factors or changes in management direction. No actions or sets of actions beyond those discussed can be predicted to occur with certainty in the foreseeable future.

## **Agriculture**

Future levels of agricultural activity in the CIAA are tied to the availability of new tracts of land for cultivation, the availability of water, and the commodity price of grains and hay. At present,

there are no known plans to expand agricultural production on privately held lands and there are no known proposals to acquire public lands for this purpose. If the Morgan Bridge property is acquired by the BLM, the 70 acres that are currently being farmed would likely be removed from farming following the existing agreement to crop hay through 2018. Future plans may include re-seeding to perennial vegetation.

### **Blackfoot River Regulated Flows**

The Blackfoot Reservoir and the Blackfoot River will continue to be a major provider of irrigation water for croplands and pastures in south east Idaho. The high flows of the Blackfoot River during the summer months required for irrigation purposes would likely continue similar to what they have been in the past.

### **Livestock Grazing**

The intensity and character of livestock grazing is anticipated to remain consistent into the foreseeable future. The BLM has initiated, and will likely continue to fence livestock out of the riparian zones along the Blackfoot River, which will benefit riparian vegetation and recreation opportunities within the existing campgrounds and along the river corridor.

### **Recreation**

Existing campgrounds will continue to be maintained and improved to meet growing demands. Future development of recreation facilities and management of recreation activities will be addressed in the near future when the BLM develops the Blackfoot River Special Recreation Management Area Activity Plan.

Off-Highway Vehicle use continues to increase on public lands within the Pocatello Field Office. The BLM plans to develop a travel management plan for the public lands included within the CIAA. The travel management plan would identify a system of roads and trails that are open to motorized travel. Motorized travel will be limited to the system of designated routes identified in the TMP. Cross-country travel and travel off of designated routes would be prohibited, unless written authorization is provided by the BLM Authorized Officer.

### **Wildfire**

Given the area's fire history, it is reasonably foreseeable that wildfire will again burn in parts of the CIAA. However, the occurrence, frequency, and size of these incidences cannot be predicted with any certainty.

## **Cumulative Impacts Associated with Past and Present Actions**

Both Alternative A (No Action) and Alternative B (Proposed Action) would contribute very little to the collective impact associated with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Livestock use would remain at current levels, and there would be no new structural developments which would contribute no change to the collective impact relative to non-natural elements of form, line, and color within the landscape. The number of road miles within the area would not increase as a result of implementing Alternative A. The amount of suitable habitat for wildlife species that occur in the CIAA would remain about the same. The actions described in both alternatives would not substantially alter the current or expected future conditions of natural resources in the CIAA.

Past and present actions have resulted in varying degrees of impact to the resources considered in the analysis. Observable impacts are higher for agricultural development and infrastructure which have resulted in direct habitat loss and fragmentation. These actions have altered the native vegetation and introduced non-natural elements of form, line, and color that have altered and would continue to alter the characteristics of the visual landscape.

Unmanaged livestock (horses, cows, and sheep) grazing in the first half of the 1900's resulted in altered ecological conditions in many riparian areas and uplands in south eastern Idaho. As livestock grazing became more carefully managed, the ecological health of the rangelands and many riparian areas have improved. At present, the riparian health on public lands near the project area have improved from Non Functional to Functional at Risk with static to declining trend to Functional at Risk with improving trend to Proper Functioning Condition. This is due to extensive fencing of the riparian areas along Blackfoot River which prevents livestock from grazing them. Upland range lands are healthy. These riparian areas and uplands provide habitat to support a wide variety of wildlife species, including several game and nongame species, special status species and migratory birds. Acquiring the Morgan Bridge property would help will support efforts on adjacent public lands to adjust management practices in an effort to improve riparian health along the Blackfoot River.

Wildfires have repeatedly burned in the area. Some BLM land has burned in wildfires, however the majority of land burnt was on nearby private and reservation lands. The areas are recovering by natural seeding. The area is Three-tip and big sagebrush country. Three-tip sagebrush is fire resistant and sprouts readily after fire disturbance. Big sagebrush is easily killed by fire and its recovery period is longer. The sagebrush vegetation in the area recovers relatively quickly after fires. Within about 20+ years, sagebrush cover in burned areas normally matches the amount of sagebrush cover in adjacent unburned areas, with the fire scar diminishing.

There are numerous primitive roads in the area that provide access to the river. The existing roads and trails create a small amount of soil compaction and erosion, and may be vectors for the spread of noxious weeds. However, they provide access for the public for floating, fishing, hunting, OHV riding, and camping on public lands. The Blackfoot River area has been impacted by recreation use in the past. Increasing recreational use of the area will bring with it increased impacts to the riparian area vegetation and bank soils of the river due vegetation trampling and soil compaction. Development and implementation of the SRMA Plan and the Travel

Management Plan should result in a positive way to counter act negative incremental impacts from past and present actions.

## **CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The proposed action for the BLM to acquire the Morgan Bridge parcel would be in the best interest of the public for the following reasons:

Public access would be secured to the existing BLM Morgan Bridge Campground, the remainder of the 400 acres parcel and approximately 1.8 miles of the Blackfoot River.

Acquiring the parcel would bring 400 acres of Greater Sage-grouse preliminary priority habitat into BLM management, allowing for preservation as habitat.

Acquiring the parcel would allow the BLM to provide protective management for Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout that exists within the Blackfoot River.

Acquiring the parcel would provide an additional 400 acres of unoccupied public lands for members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to exercise treaty rights and participate in other traditional uses.

## **CHAPTER 6 - CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### **Persons and Agencies Consulted**

Chairman, Fort Hall Business Council, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

Aren Eddingsaas, Wildlife Biologist, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

Bonneville Power Administration

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Idaho Department of Lands

Gordon Prouse

Idaho Falls District Resource Advisory Council

Aaron Swift (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation), Ross Goddard (Permittee), Kevin Poor (Portage Engineering), Gary Vecellio (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Jim Mende (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Scott Johnson (Motorized Recreation), Matt Woodard (Trout Unlimited), Ken Estep (Permittee), Dana Olson (Idaho State University – Outdoor Recreation) , Marianne Little (Public At Large – Wild Horse Environmental), John Jakovac (Lemhi County Commissioner), Chad Colter (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes), Dave Pennock (Museum of Idaho – Archaeological/Historic Interests).

**List of Preparers**

<b>Section of EA</b>	<b>Specialist</b>
Access/ Existing and Potential Land Use	Danny Miller, Realty Specialist
Cultural Resources/ Tribal Treaty Rights	Amy Lapp, Archaeologist
Range Resources	Mike Jorgensen, Rangeland Management Specialist
Recreation	Charles Patterson, Outdoor Recreation Planner Blaine Newman, Assistant Field Manager
Botany/TES Plants	Karen Kraus, Range Technician
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animals Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Fish/Fisheries	James Kumm, Wildlife Biologist
Vegetation, Invasive, Non-native Species	Karen Kraus, Range Technician
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	Bryce Anderson, Geologist, Hazardous Materials Coordinator
Wetlands-Riparian Zones/Floodplains/Water Quality	James Kumm, Wildlife Biologist Bryce Anderson, Geologist

/s/ Blaine Newman	9/30/2013	/s/ Gloria Jakovac	9/30/2013
Preparer	Date	NEPA Reviewer	Date

**CHAPTER 7 – REFERENCES**

Record of Decision and Approved Pocatello Resource Management Plan (April 2012)  
 Greater Sage-grouse Interim Management Policies and Procedure (WO IM No. 2012-043)