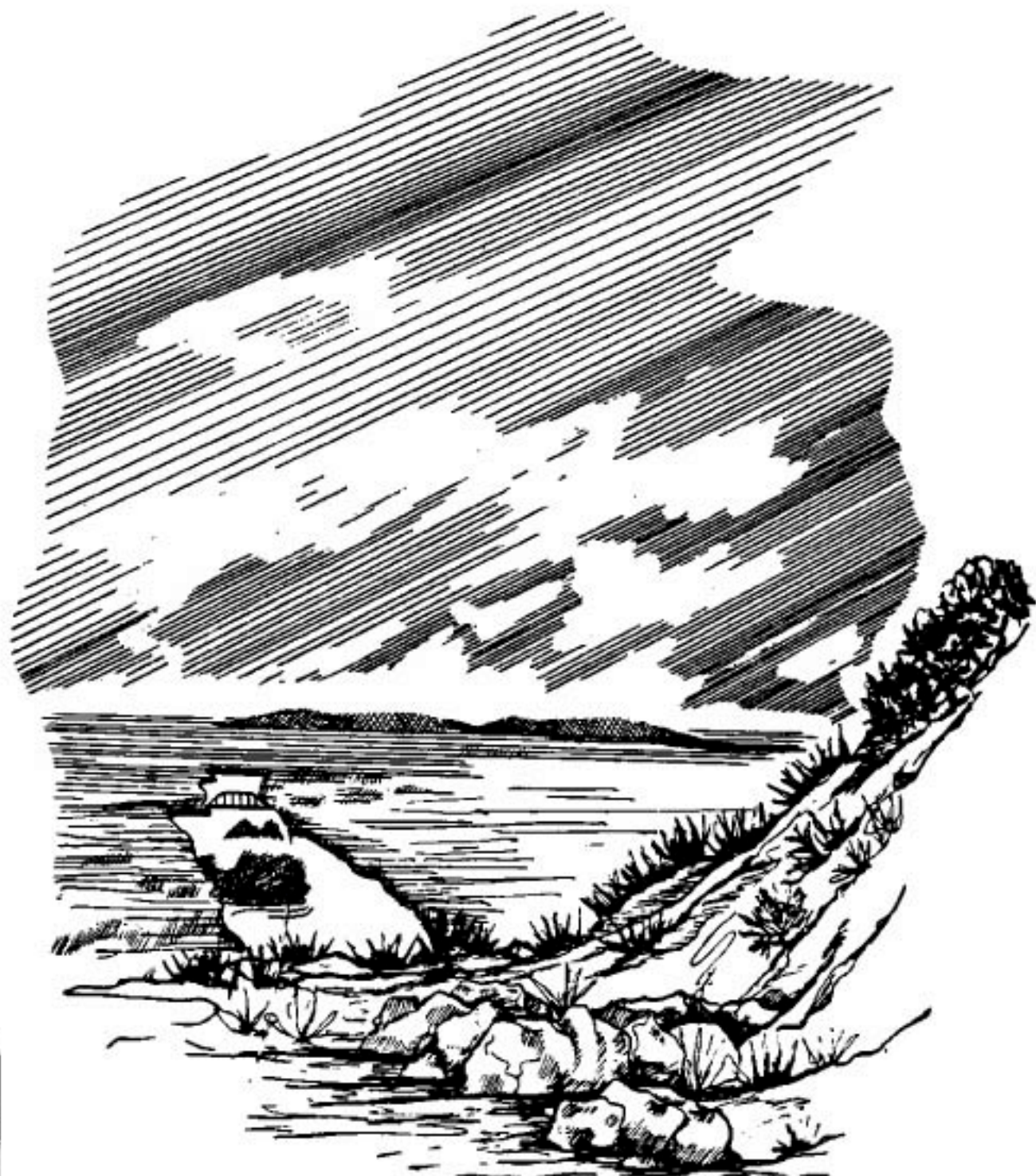


# MEDICINE LODGE

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
Idaho Falls District, Idaho  
December 1985



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Idaho Falls District

940 Lincoln Road

Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

IN REPLY  
REFER TO:

1610

December 24, 1985

Dear Reader:

The enclosed Record of Decision (ROD) is the last step in completing a land use plan for the public lands that are managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area. During the planning process, we received a number of helpful comments and suggestions. We used those comments in refining a plan for the area.

The plan chosen for the area is "Alternative C" that was discussed in the draft and final environmental impact statement (EIS). Your copy of the Proposed Resource Management Plan and Final EIS, pages 25 through 40, describes this plan. In the near future, we will have copies of the final plan available on request - primarily for people who did not receive a copy of the Final EIS.

The final plan does not address wilderness. We must prepare a separate final wilderness EIS and a wilderness study report for the Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands wilderness study areas. All individuals and organizations that receive a copy of this ROD will also receive a copy of the final wilderness EIS. However, it will take 1-3 years before the wilderness EIS is ready for public distribution. This is because of the extensive reviews necessary to finalize the Secretary of the Interior's wilderness recommendations to the President.

We will begin to implement the plan this year. I want to thank all of you for your interest and help in developing this plan for Medicine Lodge. If we can further explain any item of concern you may have, please contact me or Don Watson.

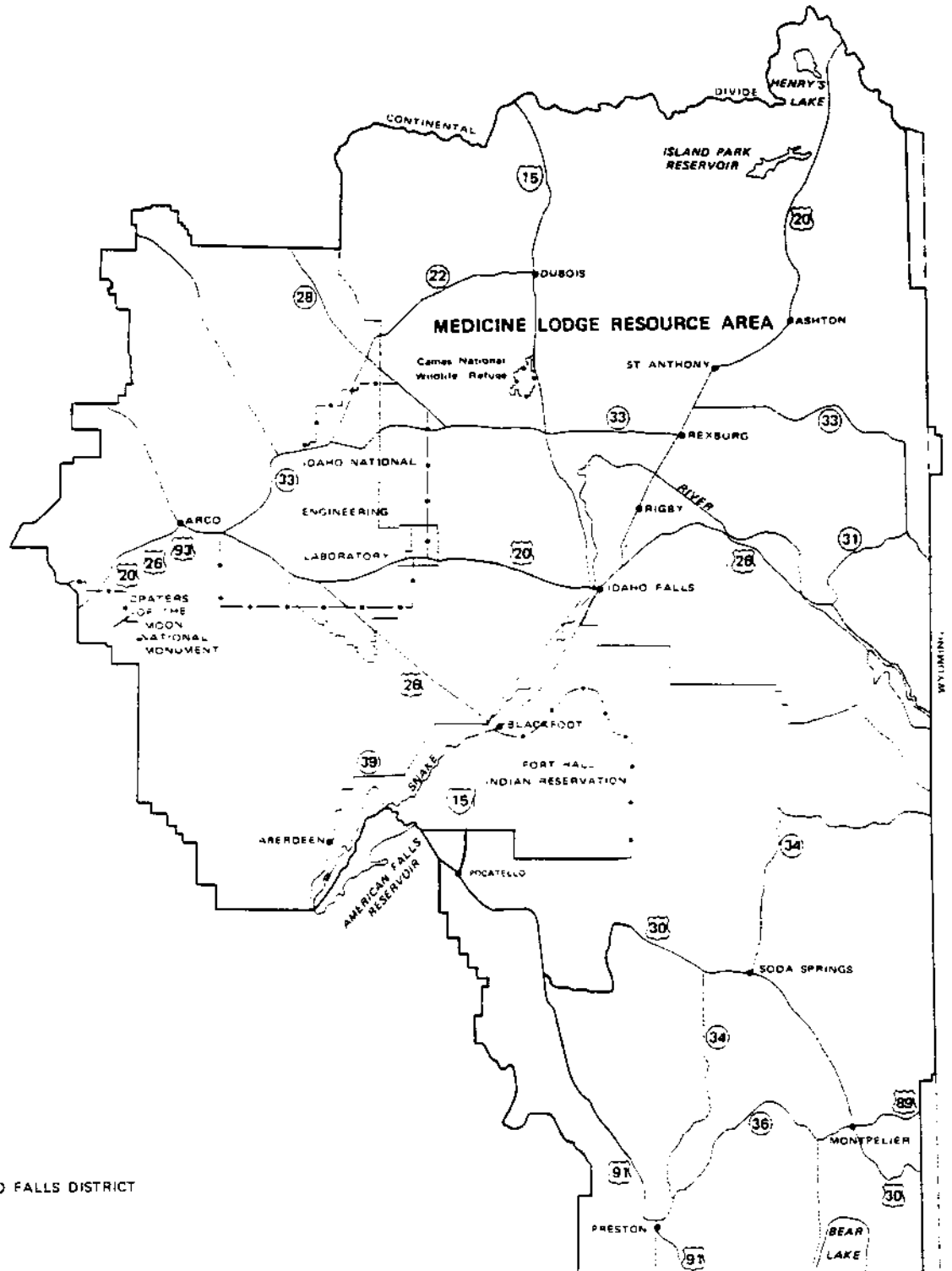
Sincerely,

  
O'dell A. Frandsen  
District Manager

Enclosure

# MEDICINE LODGE RESOURCE AREA GENERAL LOCATION MAP

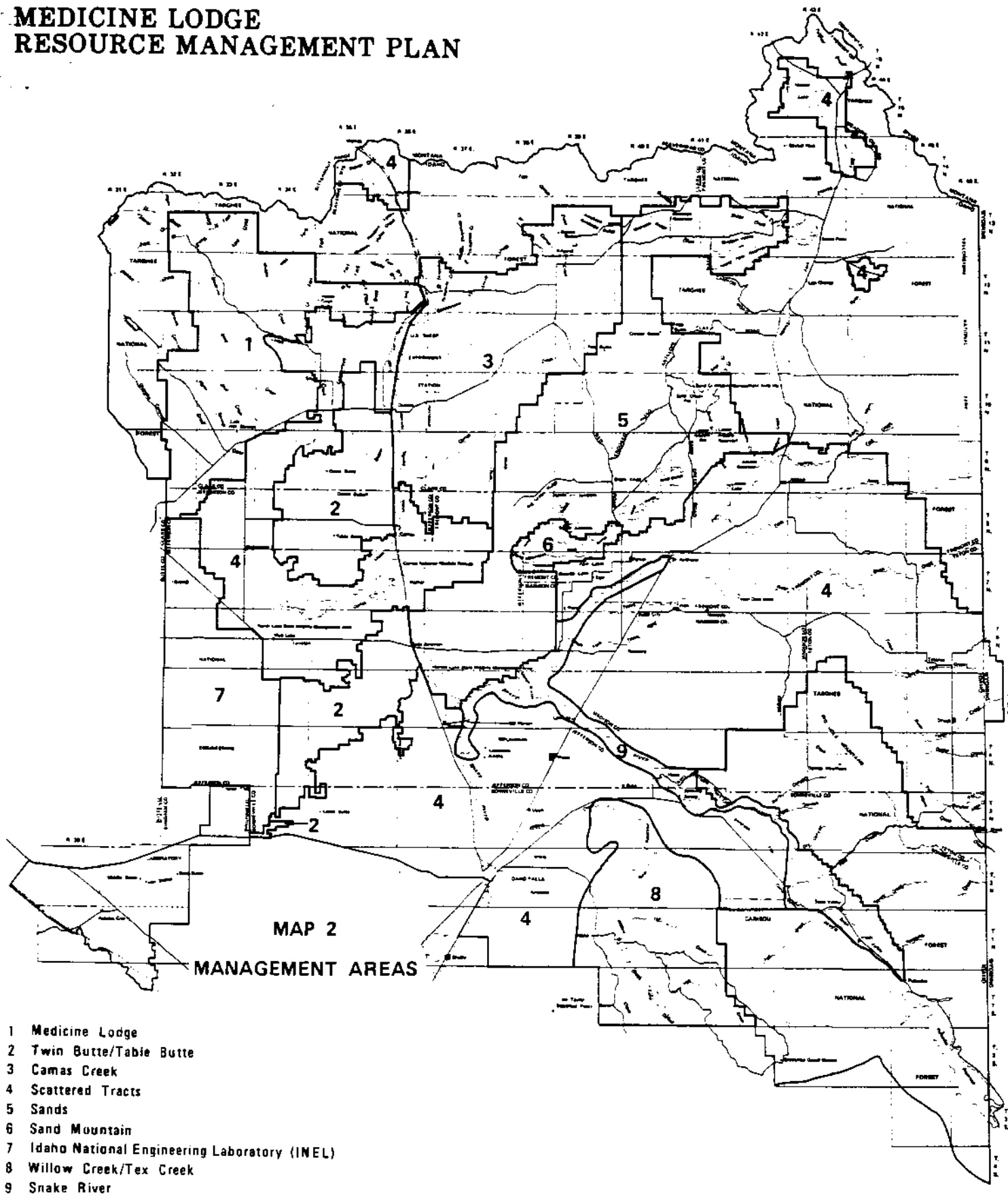
## MAP 1



IDAHO KEY

IDAHO FALLS DISTRICT

# MEDICINE LODGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN



- 1 Medicine Lodge
- 2 Twin Butte/Table Butte
- 3 Camas Creek
- 4 Scattered Tracts
- 5 Sands
- 6 Sand Mountain
- 7 Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL)
- 8 Willow Creek/Tex Creek
- 9 Snake River

RECORD OF DECISION FOR THE  
MEDICINE LODGE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT  
PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

Introduction

This record of decision (ROD) documents the approval of the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Medicine Lodge RMP is a land use plan that will guide resource management in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area for the next 10 to 15 years.

The Medicine Lodge Resource Area contains 647,719 acres of public land in Southeastern Idaho administered by the Bureau of Land Management, Idaho Falls District Office. The Resource Area was divided into 9 management units for purposes of organizing and presenting decisions. These management units generally contain lands having similar resource features and characteristics. The Management units are covered in detail in the proposed Medicine Lodge RMP published June, 1985.

The final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Medicine Lodge RMP was filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on June 7, 1985. This ROD meets the requirements of 40 CFR Part 1505.2 pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Decision

Alternative C of the Medicine Lodge Final EIS Proposed Medicine Lodge RMP is the approved Medicine Lodge RMP.

Protests

One protest letter was received concerning the proposed Medicine Lodge RMP. Upon review of this letter of protest and planning records, it was concluded the Bureau of Land Management's Idaho State Director and Idaho Falls District Manager followed the applicable planning procedures, laws, regulations, policies and resource considerations in developing the Medicine Lodge RMP. It is believed that the protest did not warrant any change in the proposed Medicine Lodge RMP and as such the Idaho State Director's decision was upheld.

Alternatives

Five alternatives were developed for consideration in the selection of an RMP for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area. Each alternative addressed the planning issues in a different way and was developed to cover a range of possible resource uses. The environmental consequences of various management options were available for consideration in selecting an RMP.

### Alternative A

The "No Action" alternative would continue present management direction. Resource use levels would generally remain the same as present levels. Minor changes from the present could occur and management actions required to implement existing activity plans could be accomplished. New uses could occur subject to environmental review.

### Alternative B

This alternative would favor production and use of commodity resources and commercial use authorizations. Management direction would favor higher livestock stocking levels, more range improvements, land disposal for agricultural development, and transfer of isolated or difficult to manage parcels out of federal ownership. Restrictions on mining, mineral leasing, mineral material removal, and off-road vehicle use would be minimized.

### Alternative C

This alternative is now the approved Medicine Lodge RMP. In this alternative a variety of resource uses will be allowed. Production and use of commodity resources and commercial use authorization will occur, while protecting fragile resources and wildlife habitat, preserving natural systems and cultural values, and allowing for nonconsumptive resource uses. Resource use levels in Alternative C will be within the range set by Alternatives B, D and E.

Approximately 8,249 acres of public land is available for transfer from federal ownership by sale, exchange or agricultural entry.

A total of 515,040 acres is open to fluid mineral leasing with standard stipulations, 341,820 acres with seasonal occupancy restrictions and 44,870 acres under no surface occupancy restrictions. Only 28,300 acres will be closed to mineral leasing and 857 acres closed to solid mineral leasing. This alternative includes opening about 106,840 acres of the INEL to mineral leasing. Areas open to locatable mineral entry total 786,673 acres and there will be 143,357 acres closed. A total of 869,960 acres are open to sale of mineral materials and 60,070 acres will be closed to protect other resource values.

There are 11,330 acres of public land open to commercial timber harvest under existing regulations, restrictions and stipulations. Deferred from harvest will be 1,966 acres, predominately in the Box Canyon Area north of Ashton, which are uneconomical or not feasible to cut at this time. There will be 296 acres withdrawn from timber harvest because of slope, soils or inability of the site to reproduce timber. An additional 818 acres will be withdrawn from harvest because of protection of other resource values or the acreage would be lost through transfer actions. There will be 2,925 acres of woodland along the South-Fork of the Snake River withdrawn from harvesting.

A total of 100,449 AUMs of livestock forage will be provided. Approximately 620,539 acres of public land and 180,419 acres within the INEL boundary are included in grazing allotments.

The Sands Habitat Management Plan will continue to be used and updated as needed. A total of 49,163 AUMs of forage will be provided. This should provide forage for expected herd numbers over the next 20 years. The Tex Creek Cooperative Agreement and the South Fork of the Snake River Memorandum of Understanding with the Idaho Fish and Game will continue to be followed. A management plan for the South Fork of the Snake River will be developed. Wildlife values will be one of the key resources planned for in that area.

A total of 30.5 miles of stream will be managed to improve riparian systems, fisheries and/or water quality. This will require 13.6 miles of fence to be built to protect 6.8 miles of stream. Another 53 miles of stream will be managed to maintain existing fisheries, water quality and riparian habitat in current satisfactory condition. Public lands within the SCS Willow Creek 208 Watershed Project area will be managed in cooperation with other land owners and agencies to implement the watershed protection plan.

Off-road vehicle closures will be made on 18,907 acres. An additional 69,400 acres will have seasonal closures to ORV use and 27,889 acres will have vehicle restrictions to existing roads and trails. The remaining 601,923 acres will be open to off-road vehicle use. The National Natural Landmark designation will be maintained on 1,120 acres on North Menan Butte and recommended on 27,350 acres of the St. Anthony Sand Dunes. Three areas are designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern: Nine Mile Knoll, North Menan Butte, and the Snake River. A Special Recreation Management Area designation will be applied to the Sand Dunes complex and also the Snake River. Research Natural Areas are designated for North Menan Butte, Game Creek, the North Junipers and three islands of the Snake River. The Cress Creek Trail will be nominated as a National Recreation Trail.

The 21,870 acres in the two Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) will be recommended as nonsuitable. These areas will be managed under the Interim Management Policy until Congress makes final determination.

Approximately 429,301 acres will be provided full fire suppression. The remaining 217,196 acres will be included in a limited suppression plan. Included are the 51,505 acres that are being considered for prescribed burning over the next 20 years.

#### Alternative D

The partial Wilderness alternative considers part of the Sand Mountain and Snake River Island WSAs as potential Wilderness. All use levels, except for Wilderness, Energy and Minerals and Lands, would remain the same as for Alternative C, the selected alternative.

## Alternative E

In this alternative, protection of fragile resources and wildlife habitat, preservation of natural systems and nonconsumptive resources use would be favored. Management direction would favor habitat management to increase wildlife populations, protection of wilderness qualities and opportunities for general dispersed recreation.

## Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The alternatives considered in the EIS would all achieve the requirements of sections 101 and 102(1) of NEPA and other environmental laws and policies. Each alternative is environmentally acceptable. Each of the alternatives is designed to use practicable means to create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, but the emphasis is different in each alternative.

In terms of effects on biological and physical components of the environment, Alternatives D and E would be the environmentally preferable alternatives. Alternative E would preserve the most wilderness values, natural history values, and special values in ACECs. Alternative E would result in the greatest increase in wildlife populations. Both would result in the most vegetation in good ecological condition, the least in downward trend, the most in upward trend, the lowest average erosion rate, and the least area in a severe erosion category.

In terms of economic benefits, Alternative B would be the preferable alternative. It would generate the greatest increase in income and jobs for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area. It would make the most land available for transfer to private ownership and development for agriculture. It would also have the highest management cost. The average erosion rate would be highest and wildlife populations would decrease.

In terms of social benefits, no alternative is clearly preferable to another. Alternative D would protect the most high-density cultural resource occurrence areas from surface disturbance. Alternative B would have the highest level of grazing, but would also adversely affect the largest number of permittees by allowing transfer of significant portions of grazing allotments to private ownership for agricultural development. Alternative A would have the lowest management cost.

Alternative C, the proposed Medicine Lodge RMP is the approved alternative. In comparison with the other alternatives considered in the EIS, it should attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment while preserving important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage. The effects on the various resource uses and values would be between those of the other alternatives. Considering the effects of the alternatives, including effects on biological and physical components of the environment, economic effects, and social effects, Alternative C is the environmentally preferable alternative in terms of the overall human environment.



## Consultation and Coordination

BLM's Resource Management Plans must agree with and support officially approved and adopted resource-related plans (or in their absence, policies or programs) of other Federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes, so long as BLM's plans also agree with and support Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands. A special effort has been made to ensure that the proposed RMP is consistent with approved plans. No inconsistencies have been identified by the Governor of the State of Idaho, other agencies, governments, or Indian tribes.

## Monitoring, Evaluation, and Mitigation

The results of implementing the selected RMP will be examined periodically to inform the resource managers and public of the progress of the plan. The results being achieved under the plan will be compared with the plan objectives.

Monitoring and evaluation help the resource managers:

- to determine whether an action is accomplishing the intended purpose,
- to determine whether mitigating measures are satisfactory,
- to determine if the related plans of other agencies, governments or Indian tribes have changed, resulting in an inconsistency with the RMP,
- to identify any unanticipated or unpredictable effects, and
- to identify new data of significance to the plan.

The proposed monitoring and evaluation plan for the Medicine Lodge Resource Area RMP was shown in Appendix G of the Medicine Lodge Draft RMP/EIS. The plan specifies resource components to be monitored, how they will be monitored, where they will be monitored and when they will be monitored. Monitoring intensity (the number of studies and the frequency of studies) will vary among allotments according to the amount of information that is needed to determine if the plan objectives are being met. If future monitoring shows a variation from RMP objectives warranting management concern, the reasons for the variation will be examined closely. Modification of an RMP decision may be needed, or the variation may be due to factors beyond BLM's control, such as climatic or economic fluctuations.


The selected Resource Management Plan incorporates measures for mitigating undesirable environmental effects. These measures are identified in the draft and final RMP/EIS documents and will be applied during implementation of the RMP. In some cases, additional mitigating measures will be developed and applied during activity planning.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Submitted By:

 11/21/85  
District Manager, Idaho Falls

Approval

 11-29-85  
State Director, Idaho

For further information, contact Donald L. Watson, Medicine Lodge Resource Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 940 Lincoln Road, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401.

# Management Decision

## Management Area 1 Medicine Lodge

The Medicine Lodge Management Area contains 168,678 acres of public land, of which the majority is well-blocked. The area rises to the north and west and peaks at the Continental Divide on the Montana/Idaho state line. The highest elevation in the resource area occurs on Red Conglomerate Peak at 10,106 feet. There is considerable perennial water in the area and the major resource uses are livestock forage and wildlife habitat. The area has higher precipitation and more production potential than public lands that lie to the south and southeast at lower elevations.

The area contains industrial grade limestone, travertine building stone and bentonite clays.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: 162,289 acres.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: 5,920 acres in the northwest corner of the area classed as a Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized. About 187 acres are withdrawn from the timber base because of site capability.
  - c. Classified for Transfer: 280 acres of isolated tracts.
2. Retain a public land base of 168,398 acres for long term management in federal ownership.
3. Manage 176,900 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral and energy exploration and development with consideration being given for wildlife, water and water quality and riparian use.
4. Manage 1,184 acres of commercial forest land for timber production according to current silvicultural practices. Manage 1,347 acres of woodland while maintaining or improving wildlife habitat.
5. Manage 162,939 acres for grazing. Improve 26,225 acres of fair condition range to good. Increase stocking levels in the long term by 5,318 AUMs over existing use levels through range improvement and better distribution.
6. Provide forage and cover for existing and projected wildlife numbers. Maintain or improve at least 75% of all terrestrial wildlife habitat in satisfactory condition.
7. Improve water quality from poor to fair on approximately 11 miles of stream in the area.
8. Continue to manage for dispersed recreation opportunities in the area.

9. Manage 22,700 acres as limited fire suppression and the remaining 145,978 acres as full suppression.
10. Manage cultural resources for sociocultural, management and potential scientific uses.

#### Management Decisions

1. Examine 280 acres of public land, applying the standard operating procedures, for sale, state or private exchange (Map 3b). Utilities will be limited to existing corridors where possible.
2. None of the lands will be closed to mineral leasing and only 160 acres closed to mining claim location. A total of 31,900 acres are open to leasing under seasonal occupancy restrictions and 12,500 acres under no surface occupancy. The majority of the area, 132,500 acres, is open to mineral leasing and exploration with standard stipulations. The majority is available for sale of mineral materials with only 14,900 acres closed to protect other values.
3. Timber sales can be held on 1,184 acres with 189 acres withdrawn from sales to protect elk winter range and calving areas, predominately in the West Fork of Irving Creek and Patetzick Creek areas. An additional 1,347 acres of woodland will be managed for production of forest products with measures to maintain or improve mountain mahogany for wildlife uses.
4. Of the 25 grazing allotments, reductions will be made in four of the allotments and in increase on one allotment. For the management area as a whole, the initial stocking rate of 28,763 is above the 5 year average, but less than active preference. Long term stocking is essentially the same as active grazing preference.

Proposed improvements include 18,200 acres brush control, 1,500 acres seeding, 12 springs, 2 wells, 14.5 miles of pipeline, 18 reservoirs, and 51.5 miles of fence.

5. An HMP will be developed for the Edie Creek Bench for about 168,700 acres. Objectives of the HMP will be to improve deer, antelope, sage grouse, and moose habitat. Vegetation manipulation will be accomplished through controlled burning and as a result of livestock grazing adjustments.
6. A Water Quality Management Plan will be developed for Indian Creek and one for Edie and Irving Creeks. Actions will likely include fencing of some riparian areas, drift or trail fencing and some improved livestock distribution measures.
7. There will be 5,920 acres closed to ORV use and an additional 6,720 acres with a seasonal restriction on ORV use. Two campgrounds will be developed.
8. A fire management plan for about 22,700 acres will be developed for limited fire suppression.

# Management Area 2

## Table Butte/Twin Buttes

This management area is composed of two well-blocked areas of public land totaling 156,561 acres west of Interstate 15. One block is north of Mud Lake and the other is south. The areas are both important for livestock grazing and wildlife habitat. Farming in the area has increased the demand for lands with agricultural potential and several Desert Land Applications have been filed in the District Office.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: 153,366 acres.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: No acres were placed in this class.
  - c. Classified as Transfer: 680 acres classed as transfer by sale or exchange, 1,395 acres having DLE applications and 1,120 acres having soils potential for agricultural development. A total of 3,195 acres will be considered for transfer out of federal ownership.
2. Retain 153,366 acres of land in public ownership for long term multiple use management.
3. Manage 161,100 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral and energy exploration and development.
4. Manage 154,664 acres of public land for grazing purposes. Manage 27,436 acres which lie within the Big Butte Resource Area for grazing purposes. Improve 15,880 acres of range land from poor or fair range condition to good range condition. Increase stocking levels in the long term by 3,167 AUMs over existing use levels.
5. Provide forage and cover for existing and projected wildlife numbers. Improve 10 percent or 4,000 acres of unsatisfactory antelope and sage grouse habitat. Maintain a suitable prey base for 35 bald eagles and 75 golden eagles. Provide foraging habitat adjoining a peregrine falcon reintroduction site in the Buck Springs area.
6. Manage fire on a limited suppression basis on 101,076 acres and full suppression on 55,489 acres.
7. Reduce archaeological site vandalism and manage cultural resources for sociocultural, management and scientific uses.

### Management Decisions

1. Examine 680 acres of public land for sale, private or state exchange, act on 1,395 acres under DLE application, and examine 1,120 acres of public land where soil is suitable for farming. Land disposals will meet the criteria outlined in the standard operating procedures.

2. None of the lands will be closed to mineral leasing. About 400 acres will be open to leasing under no surface occupancy restrictions and 39,100 acres will be open under seasonal restrictions. Only 80 acres will be closed to mining and 1,300 closed to sales of mineral materials.
3. Reductions in grazing use will be made in four allotments, with increases in three allotments. The initial stocking rate of 18,613 is below active preference but more than the 5 year average active use. Long term grazing available is expected to exceed the active preference. About 27,436 acres of the Twin Buttes allotment is located in the Big Butte Resource Area but managed along with this area. Proposed improvements include 12,800 acres of brush control, 2,880 acres seeding, 1 spring, 9 wells, 2.5 miles of pipeline, 1 reservoir, and 4.75 miles of fence.
4. Develop a monitoring plan that will ensure maintenance of a suitable prey base for bald eagles, golden eagles and peregrine falcons. Monitoring is also needed to ensure maintenance of antelope fawning and winter range and sage grouse habitat.
5. Most of the area will be managed for limited fire suppression and a fire management plan will be completed. About 55,489 acres would be managed under full suppression.

## Management Area 3 Camas Creek

This management area presents a fragmented and scattered pattern of 59,480 acres of public land in the area east of Dubois north to the Targhee Forest boundary. The majority of the area consists of private and state lands with public lands in the minority. There are important range resources and key elk calving, riparian, big game winter range and upland game habitat.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: 58,680 acres.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: No acres were placed in this class.
  - c. Classified as Transfer: 800 acres classed as transfer by sale or exchange. Area has potential for state exchange actions.
2. Retain 58,680 acres of land in public ownership for long term multiple use management.
3. Manage 74,700 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral exploration and development, primarily oil and gas and sand and gravel.
4. Intensively manage 1,788 acres for timber production and 1,242 acres of woodland.
5. Manage 50,017 acres for livestock grazing, improve distribution, improve 2,875 acres from fair to good range condition, and increase livestock forage by 310 AUMs in 20 years.

6. Maintain satisfactory habitat in key elk calving areas (especially in the Antelope Ridge area), antelope fawning areas and big game winter range. Provide suitable habitat for upland game on the scattered tracts.
7. Improve 1.5 miles of riparian vegetation on 3 Mile Creek.
8. Continue to manage for dispersed recreation opportunities and manage 1,540 acres as semi-primitive motorized.
9. Manage 58,680 acres as full fire suppression.
10. Manage cultural resources for sociocultural, management and potential scientific uses.

#### Management Decisions

1. Examine 800 acres of public land for sale or private or state exchanges. Where possible and feasible, improvement in management will be a key factor in disposal of public lands in this management area.
2. No areas will be closed to mineral leasing or mining claim location and only 1,800 acres will be closed to sale of mineral materials. Seasonal restrictions apply to 8,200 acres in the unit and 800 acres are restricted to no surface occupancy for mineral leasing and exploration.
3. Timber sales can be held on 1,788 acres of public land near the Targhee National Forest boundary, predominately in the Antelope Valley area and Kilgore area. Most of the sales will use select cut methods with only 124 acres clear cut in small blocks.
4. Reductions in grazing use will be made in 5 allotments and an increase in one allotment. Most of these actions will be in the smaller individual allotments. For the management area as a whole, the initial level of 9,066 AUMs is below the active preference of 9,285 AUMs, but more than the 5 year average of 8,422 AUMs. In the long term, the grazing level for active use is expected to be about the same as total grazing preference. Proposed improvements include 2,875 acres of brush control, 1 spring, 5 wells, 5.5 miles of pipeline, 5 reservoirs, and 11.5 miles of fence.
5. Develop a monitoring plan to ensure that habitat is satisfactory in key elk calving areas (predominately in Antelope Ridge), antelope fawning areas and big game winter range.
6. The 1.5 miles on 3 Mile Creek will be monitored to ensure improvements in water quality and riparian habitat.
7. The 1,540 acres designated for semi-primitive motorized use will be monitored periodically to ensure maintenance of outdoor recreation values.
8. Develop and implement a cultural resource management plan to protect and manage the areas prehistoric and historic sites.

# Management Area 4 Scattered Tracts

Management Area 4 consists of a variety of isolated tracts totaling 28,627 acres of public land. These tracts of land are scattered throughout the resource area. This management area provides livestock forage, wildlife habitat, timber production, and contains the Victor municipal watershed.

## Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: 23,879 acres.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: 1,380 acres on the Idaho-Wyoming state line, which is the Victor municipal watershed.
  - c. Classified as Transfer: 3,328 acres for transfer by sale or exchange.
2. Retain 25,259 acres of public land in public ownership to be managed for long term multiple use.
3. Manage 95,570 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral and energy exploration and development.
4. Manage 3,623 acres of commercial forest land for timber production according to current silvicultural practices. Manage 3,203 acres of woodland to meet local demand with consideration being given to wildlife and watershed needs where these are important.
5. Manage 18,880 acres for grazing purposes. Continue to keep 1,380 acres on the Victor watershed closed to livestock grazing. Improve 600 acres of fair condition range to good. Increase stocking levels in the long term by 90 AUMs over existing use levels.
6. Provide forage and cover for existing numbers of wildlife and maintain or enhance upland game habitat.
7. Continue to manage the area for dispersed recreation with 945 acres closed to winter and early spring ORV use and 375 acres in the Game Creek area completely closed to ORVs.
8. Improve or maintain water quality, fisheries and riparian habitat on 7.4 miles of stream.
9. Manage 28,627 acres of public lands under full fire suppression.

## Management Decisions

1. Examine 3,288 acres for transfer from BLM jurisdiction through sale, private exchange or state exchange. Examine 200 acres for public purposes or exchange and examine 80 acres for their suitability for agricultural entry. Transfer of public lands will meet the criteria listed in the standard operating procedures.



2. Mining, mineral leasing and mining claim locations will essentially continue as they are being handled at present with no changes.
3. About 466 acres is withdrawn from the commercial forest land base for T&E species and other multiple uses. About 1,750 acres can be clear cut in small blocks and an additional 1,873 acres select cut. The timber is principally in the "Donut Hole" and areas adjacent to the Targhee National Forest. An additional 3,203 acres of woodland can be made available for sales of forest products to meet local and regional demand.
4. Reductions in the level of grazing use will be made in 6 allotments. All of the reductions are in small allotments of less than 100 AUMs with one exception: the Victor allotment. The initial stocking rate of 405 AUMs is quite similar to the 5 year average use of 425 AUMs, but less than the preference of 816 AUMs. For this management area as a whole, initial levels of grazing use total 3,813 AUMs, which is somewhat more than the 5 year average but less than active preference. Proposed improvements include 1,360 acres of brush control, 25 acres seeding, 2 springs, 2 wells, 3 reservoirs, and 4.75 miles of fence.
5. Manage 1.2 miles of Game Creek to improve riparian habitat and improve water quality. Monitor 6.2 miles of stream to ensure maintenance of existing satisfactory riparian habitat and water quality.
6. About 350 acres will be closed to ORV use near Henry's Lake and seasonal restrictions on ORV use will be enforced in the area near Monida Pass.
7. Designate 375 acres in Game Creek as a Research Natural Area. No changes in vegetation will be allowed in the RNA.

## Management Area 5      Sands

This management area includes 187,431 acres of the Sands Habitat Management Area. The 21,100 acres in Area 6 is also included in the Sands HMP area which totals 208,531 acres. A primary consideration for the area is maintenance of critical elk winter range with important winter range for deer and moose as well. The Sands HMP includes multiresource planning objectives and these objectives carry over into this RMP. Livestock grazing and recreation are important in the area.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: 176,973 acres.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: 10,500 acres within the Nine Mile Knoll ACEC.
  - c. Classified as Transfer: Area has potential for state exchange actions. There are 80 acres with soil potential for agriculture classed as potentially suitable for transfer.
2. Retain 187,431 acres of public land in federal ownership and manage for multiple use values.

3. Manage 215,560 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral exploration and development.
4. Intensively manage 4,253 acres for timber production.
5. Manage 169,910 acres for grazing and improve livestock distribution. Improve 27,000 acres in poor or fair condition to good condition, and increase available livestock forage by 1,042 AUMs over the next 20 years.
6. Manage wildlife habitat for elk, deer and moose in accordance with the Sands HMP.
7. Reduce archaeological site vandalism and manage cultural resources for management and potential scientific uses.
8. Intensively manage the sand dunes for ORV use as a Special Recreation Management Area in conjunction with Management Area 6. Manage remainder of area for dispersed recreation opportunities.
9. Improve 2 miles of Sand Creek from very poor to good condition.
10. Manage 90,000 acres as limited fire suppression and 97,000 acres as full suppression.

#### Management Decisions

1. Both state and private exchanges will be encouraged in order to improve the pattern of private, state and public land in the management area. Land examinations would be needed for all feasible exchange opportunities and transfers under agricultural entry.
2. Mineral leasing, material sales and locatable minerals actions will be the same as the present situation. For maintenance of important wildlife habitat areas, most of the area will have continued seasonal occupancy restrictions for mineral leasing, 4,340 acres can be leased under no surface occupancy and 2,160 acres will be closed to leasing. About 1,140 acres are closed to mining claim location and 11,000 acres closed to sale of mineral materials.
3. Timber sales can be conducted on 3,623 acres, predominately in areas adjacent to the Yale-Kilgore road and in the Pine Creek-July Creek areas. Only 78 acres are withdrawn from the commercial forest base for bald eagle nesting and other multiple uses. The majority can be clear cut in small blocks with about 1,524 acres by selective cut methods. About 3,203 acres of woodland will be managed for production of forest products on demand with stipulations to maintain wildlife habitat and watershed conditions.
4. For this management area as a whole, the initial stocking level for livestock is slightly more than active preference and also above the 5 year average. However, reductions in livestock grazing will be made in 4 allotments and increases in 7 allotments. Proposed improvements include 24,670 acres of brush control, 80 acres seeding, 2 springs, 15 wells, 5 reservoirs, and 27.25 miles of fence.

5. Continue to manage and monitor wildlife habitat under terms of the Sands Habitat Management Plan. If the Sands HMP is revised, the area will continue to be managed to maintain wildlife habitat as specified in the revised HMP.
6. Improve 1 mile of Sand Creek through fencing and 1 mile through livestock management. Maintain existing satisfactory riparian habitat and water quality on 12.8 miles. Periodic monitoring will be needed to ensure improvement and maintenance.
7. A management plan will be developed for the St. Anthony Sand Dunes Special Recreation Management Area, a portion of which is in Management Area 6. The dunes will be managed for ORV use. A total of 2,560 acres are closed to ORVs and a seasonal closure on ORVs on 15,800 acres will be enforced.
8. This resource management plan designates the Nine Mile Knoll Area of Critical Environmental concern (see Map 3b) which will be managed according to an ACEC management plan. Constraints in use of the Nine Mile Knoll ACEC include no disposal of public land, no new roads or major R/Ws, a winter vehicle closure, and seasonal occupancy for O&G exploration and development. The St. Anthony Sand Dunes Special Recreation Management Area will also be managed under a specific management plan consistent with the objectives for this management area and the Nine Mile Knoll ACEC management plan. (Refer to Management Area 6). There are 1,780 acres designated in the North Junipers as a Research Natural area. No changes in vegetation will be allowed in this RNA.
9. Develop a Cultural Resources Management Plan. The plan will include detailed management and provide for monitoring of site conditions. The plan will be implemented upon completion.

## Management Area 6 Sand Mountain

The 21,100 acre area is located in the middle of the Sands Habitat Management Area. This area west of St. Anthony consists of the Sand Mountain Wilderness Study Area. The most important considerations in the area are recreational use, wilderness and wildlife winter range. It is a separate management unit because of its status as a WSA.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: No acres were placed in this class.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: 21,100 acres.
  - c. Classified as Transfer: No acres were classified for transfer.
2. Retain 21,100 acres of public land in federal ownership for long term multiple use management.
3. Manage 21,100 acres for mineral and energy exploration and development.
4. Manage 16,366 acres for livestock grazing to improve 1,800 acres from fair to good condition, improve livestock distribution and increase livestock forage by 126 AUMs over existing levels after 20 years. Management will be consistent with the Sands HMP.

5. Manage critical elk winter range consistent with the objectives of the Sands HMP, including deer and moose winter range. Provide winter vehicle closures to protect wintering elk under an ACEC management plan.
6. Manage the Sand Mountain area to promote the most appropriate designation, management and use of the area for recreation consistent with the objectives of the Sands HMP.
7. Manage 21,100 acres as full fire suppression.

#### Proposed Management Decisions

1. All of this area would be open to sales of mineral materials, mining claim location and also open to mineral leasing with seasonal restrictions provided that Congress and the President accept the recommendation as non-suitable for this WSA. Until Congress acts, the area will be managed under the Bureau's Interim Management Policy, essentially closed to new mineral leases or developments. No new mineral actions can be allowed until Congress acts.
2. Of the three grazing allotments in this management area, a reduction will be made in one allotment. The area will be monitored periodically to ensure proper use of the range resource. Proposed improvements include 1,600 acres of brush control, 200 acres seeding, 2 wells, 1 mile of pipeline, and 3 miles of fence.
3. Since this management area is included in the Sands Habitat Management Plan already completed, wildlife habitat will be managed and monitored under terms of that plan as described for Management Area 5.
4. A management plan will be developed for the St. Anthony Sand Dunes Special Recreation Management Area, a portion of which is located in Area 5. The dunes will be managed for ORV use, consistent with the Sands HMP. If part of the dunes are designated a National Natural Landmark, this factor will be considered in the management plan. Two campgrounds will be developed to accommodate ORV use. About 21,100 acres are closed to ORV use during the winter in connection with the Nine Mile Knoll ACEC. There are about 31,600 acres in the Nine Mile Knoll ACEC, of which 21,100 acres are located in Management Area 6.
5. This resource management plan designates the Nine Mile Knoll ACEC which will be managed according to an ACEC management plan (refer to Area 5, Management Decisions). The St. Anthony Sand Dunes SRMA will be designated and managed consistent with that ACEC management plan.
6. Recommend the Sand Mountain WSA as nonsuitable for addition to the National Wilderness Preservation System. If the Sand Mountain WSA is not designated wilderness, it will be managed as part of an ACEC and SRMA. Detailed management plans will be developed for both areas. Other management prescriptions are listed in items 1-5 above.

If the WSA is designated wilderness, it would be managed under BLM's Wilderness Management Policy. Specific management provisions would be formulated in a wilderness management plan developed for the Sand Mountain Area.

# Management Area 7

## Idaho National Engineering Laboratory

This management area includes 140,415 acres of the eastern portion of the INEL (125,036 acres are withdrawn public land and 15,379 acres acquired by DOE). Grazing occurs on 135,802 acres in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area and on 44,617 acres of INEL within the Big Butte Resource Area. Dominant resource uses are livestock grazing and wildlife habitat.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: No acres were classified as moderate use, because the area is under a withdrawal and BLM has limited management authority.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: 140,415 acres, all within the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL).
  - c. Classified for Transfer: No acres were classified for transfer.
2. Manage 125,040 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral and energy exploration and development in coordination with DOE.
3. Manage 180,419 acres of the INEL in Medicine Lodge and Big Butte Resource Areas for livestock grazing. Improve livestock distribution and improve range condition from poor and fair to good on 13,000 acres. Increase livestock forage by 4,177 AUMs over existing levels after 20 years.
4. Maintain satisfactory habitat for antelope and sage grouse, including strutting and nesting areas and winter range.
5. Manage cultural resources for potential scientific uses.

### Management Decisions

1. At the present time, about 125,040 acres in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area portion of the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL) are closed to mineral leasing and mining claim location, and 56,520 acres are closed to sale of mineral materials. Following the review of the INEL withdrawal, 106,840 acres will be opened for mineral leasing and the 125,040 acres opened for sales of mineral materials.
2. No reductions are needed in the Twin Buttes allotment, which includes part of the INEL in the Big Butte Resource Area. Proposed improvements include 8,000 acres of brush control, 5,000 acres seeding, 2 wells, and 2 reservoirs.

# Management Area 8

## Willow Creek/ Tex Creek

The Tex Creek/Willow Creek area contains 11,490 acres of public land. This management area follows the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) Willow Creek 208 Project boundary and includes the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area. Public lands consist of relatively small blocks and parcels with most of the land in private ownership and being farmed. Much of the Willow Creek Canyon is public land. The soil erosion taking place is a result of farming practices and the area has been rated as one of the top ten areas needing soil and water protection in the United States. BLM is a cooperator in the SCS 208 Project as well as the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: 11,490 acres.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: No acres were classified as limited use.
  - c. Classified as Transfer: No acres were classified for transfer.
2. Retain 11,490 acres of public land for long term multiple use management.
3. Manage about 38,120 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral exploration and development, primarily oil and gas.
4. Manage about 10,676 acres for livestock grazing to maintain present 92% good range condition and to support Tex Creek wildlife program.
5. Maintain or improve high quality big game winter range in support of Tex Creek agreement. Provide rehabilitation on about 700 acres disturbed by farming operations.
6. Maintain good to excellent riparian vegetation on 8 miles and improve 1 mile of Willow Creek. Maintain good to excellent condition on 7 miles Gray's Lake Outlet, 1.6 miles on Tex Creek and 1.8 miles on Hell Creek in support of the 208 project.
7. Manage recreation resources to provide 8,290 acres for ORV use, seasonal ORV closures on 3,355 acres and close 3,200 acres to ORV use. A total of 6,485 acres is designated as semi-primitive non-motorized in this resource management plan.
8. Manage 11,490 acres as full fire suppression.
9. Manage cultural resources for management and potential scientific uses.

### Management Decisions

1. Land examinations will be made on private and state exchange proposals as they arise to support the Willow Creek 208 Project.
2. Management of the mineral estate in this management area will continue as under the present situation. No new management decisions are needed.

3. Timber sales can be conducted on 118 acres adjacent to the Caribou NF, by the select cut method and 91 acres of woodland are available for timber management. Sales will be scheduled to meet local and regional demand.
4. Reductions in the level of grazing use will be made in 6 of the 13 allotments in this management area. The initial level of grazing will total 1,790 AUMs, which is less than both the preference (1,935) and the 5 year average (1,833 AUMs). There are two miles of fence proposed in the area.
5. Management of the wildlife habitat will be in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding for the Tex Creek wildlife program. About 700 acres of land disturbed by farming operations will be rehabilitated, 20 acres seeded to bitterbrush and 10 acres of aspen treatment.
6. Two miles of fence are needed to improve 1 mile of stream for riparian and water quality values. An additional 15 miles of stream will be managed to improve riparian habitat and water quality while 3.4 miles of stream will be managed to maintain existing riparian, fisheries and water quality in satisfactory condition. Management decisions will complement the Willow Creek 208 Watershed Project.
7. About 3,200 acres of public land will be closed to ORV use and an additional 3,355 acres closed during winter and spring to protect wildlife and watershed values. About 6,485 acres are designated as semi-primitive non-motorized. One campground can be developed at Kepps Crossing.

## Management Area 9 Snake River

This management area contains 15,352 acres of public land along the South Fork, main stem and Henry's Fork of the Snake River. This is a complex area with demands from many resource users. Recreation, wildlife, fisheries, water, and grazing are some of the important uses which occur in the area.

### Management Objectives

1. Multiple Use and Transfer Classes
  - a. Classified as Moderate Use: No acres were classified as moderate use.
  - b. Classified as Limited Use: 14,866 acres, all public lands within the Snake River corridor.
  - c. Classified for Transfer: 486 acres classified for sale or exchange.
2. Maintain a public land base of 14,866 acres for long term management in federal ownership.
3. Manage 20,800 acres of federal mineral estate for mineral exploration and development in a manner consistent with recreation and wildlife uses.
4. Intensively manage 364 acres for timber production.

5. Manage 10,333 acres for livestock grazing in support of wildlife and recreation, improve livestock distribution along the river and improve range condition in the Kelly Canyon/Stinking Springs area from fair to good on 400 acres.
6. Maintain high quality riparian habitat, provide critical nesting and wintering areas for bald eagles, maintain high quality big game winter range and improve about 70 acres of unsatisfactory big game habitat.
7. Manage the recreation values and uses of the area as a Special Recreation Management Area with a comprehensive management plan that recognizes other resource values and uses.
8. Manage one mile of Kelly Canyon to improve water quality from poor to good. Reduce man-caused erosion to not more than 2 1/2 tons per acre.
9. All of the management area would be handled as a restricted fire suppression area. No heavy equipment and no fire retardant will be used. Fire control will be done in a manner to protect natural systems, erodible soils and scenic quality.
10. Manage cultural resources for sociocultural, management and potential scientific uses.

#### Management Decisions

1. Land examinations will be completed for 486 acres for sale or exchange. Land examinations will be completed for feasible state or private exchanges as these opportunities arise.
2. Mineral management decisions are designed to complement important wildlife and recreation uses in this management area. About 10,400 acres will be closed to mining claim location where 3,000 acres are currently closed. No change in management of salable minerals is needed. About 13,600 acres remain available for material sales and 7,200 acres remain closed to sales.
3. Timber sales can be designed on 364 acres in the Conant Valley and Kelley Canyon areas using select cut methods. About 352 acres are withdrawn from the commercial forest base for bald eagle nesting and wintering and other multiple uses. The 2,925 acres of cottonwood along the river are withdrawn from timber management because of high values for bald eagle nesting and wintering, wildlife and recreation. Periodic monitoring will be needed to prevent unauthorized cutting of firewood.
4. Of the 48 allotments under Section 15 lease, reductions in the level of grazing use will be made in four. Most of the allotments are small, isolated parcels of less than 50 acres. About 400 acres of seeding are proposed, 2 springs, 1 mile of pipeline, and 10 miles of fence.



5. Wildlife habitat will be managed in accordance with the South Fork of the Snake River Memorandum of Understanding and the Pacific States Bald Eagle Recovery Plan. A management plan for the Snake River ACEC (see below) will be in accordance with these and will be implemented on completion. About 20 goose nesting platforms, 200 acres of bitterbrush seeding and 10 acres of aspen treatment are proposed.
6. One mile on the lower end of Kelly Canyon will be managed to improve water quality and 1 mile managed to maintain existing satisfactory riparian habitat and water quality. The improvement will be through grazing management and reseedling of eroded areas. ORV use will be controlled to further improve water quality.
7. Man-caused soil erosion will be reduced to not more than 2 1/2 tons/acre/year through seeding, ORV management and grazing management.
8. About 1,191 acres will be managed for general ORV use while the balance of the area will be either closed to ORVs (6,020 acres) or restricted to existing roads and trails. About 8,320 acres of the area will be managed as semi-primitive non-motorized. A management plan for the Snake River Special Recreation Management Area will be developed to manage the recreation values and uses. If feasible, a single management plan including both the Snake River SRMA and Snake River ACEC will be completed rather than separate plans for the same area. This plan will provide for more detailed management of all public land resources including cultural and historical values.
9. Public lands along the South Fork of the Snake River from Palisades Dam to the confluence with the Henry's Fork, will be given special management consideration. Presidential and other directives have given land managing agencies instructions to avoid or mitigate adverse effects on potential additions to the National Rivers System. Management attention along the South Fork will focus on this objective.
10. Special designations for this management area include the following:
  - a. North Menan Butte ACEC, 1,120 acres
  - b. Snake River ACEC, 11,120 acres
  - c. Snake River SRMA, 14,759 acres
  - d. North Menan Butte Research Natural Area
  - e. Menan Butte National Natural Landmark, 1,120 acres (currently in effect)
  - f. Cress Creek National Recreation Trail, 1 mile
  - g. South Fork of the Snake River recommended for further study as a recreation or scenic river, 61 miles

Constraints that apply to the North Menan Butte ACEC include no surface occupancy for oil and gas operations, the area will be closed to grazing, ORV, and mining under the 1872 law. No changes in the vegetation will be allowed in the North Menan Butte RNA, or in the 3 Snake River islands.

Constraints on uses of the Snake River ACEC and Snake River SRMA are itemized in these management decisions for the management area.

11. Cultural and historic resources and values will be managed under the ACEC management plan.
12. Fire suppression activities will be conducted using no fire retardant or heavy equipment unless management decides natural systems and values could be adequately protected.
13. If the Snake River Islands WSA is not designated wilderness, the islands will be managed as part of an ACEC and a SRMA. Detailed management plans will be developed for areas within the Snake River System. Other management prescriptions are listed in items 1-11 above.

If the islands are designated wilderness they will be managed under BLM's Wilderness Management Policy. Specific management provisions will be formulated in a wilderness management plan developed for the islands.

# Standard Operating Procedure

The following management guidance will be used by BLM in implementing the plan. The standard operating procedures will be used in all of the day to day BLM operations as well as in carrying out the management decisions in the resource management plan.

## Air Quality

Under the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977), BLM-administered lands were given Class II air quality classification, which allows moderate deterioration associated with moderate, well-controlled industrial and population growth. BLM will manage all public lands as Class II unless they are reclassified by the state as a result of the procedures prescribed in the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977). Administrative actions on the public lands will comply with the air quality classification for that specific area.

## Allowable Uses

The public lands will be managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield as required by FLPMA. Any valid use, occupancy and development of the public lands, including but not limited to those requiring rights-of-way, leases and licenses will be considered, subject to applicable environmental review procedures, unless specifically excluded in the plan. In some areas, however, environmental values, hazards or manageability considerations may require limitations on either the type or intensity of use, or both. Those limitations are identified in the plan's land use allocations and management objectives for specific areas within the public lands. BLM will include stipulations and special conditions as necessary in leases, license and permits to ensure the protection and preservation of resources.

## Lands

### Land Ownership Adjustments

The following criteria will be applied to site-specific determinations for lands that are within transfer areas. The criteria to be used include:

- public resource values, including but not limited to:
  - Threatened and Endangered and sensitive species habitat,
  - riparian areas,
  - fisheries,
  - nesting/breeding habitat for game animals,
  - key big game seasonal habitat,
  - developed recreation and recreation access sites,

class A scenery,  
municipal watersheds,  
energy and mineral potential,  
sites eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic  
Places,  
wilderness and areas being studied for wilderness, and  
other statutorily authorized designations,

- accessibility of the land for public uses;
- amount of public investments in facilities or improvements and the potential for recovering those investments;
- difficulty or cost of administration (manageability);
- suitability of the land for management by another federal agency;
- significance of the decision in stabilizing business, social and economic conditions, and/or lifestyles;
- encumbrances, including but not limited to:
  - R&PP and small tract leases,
  - withdrawals, or
  - other leases or permits
- consistency of the decision with cooperative agreements and plans or policies of other agencies; and
- suitability and need for change in land ownership or use for purposes including but not limited to: community expansion or economic development such as industrial, residential or agricultural (other than grazing) development.

The land ownership adjustment criteria identified above will be considered in land reports and environmental analyses prepared for specific adjustment proposals.

Public land within retention areas generally will remain in public ownership and be managed by the BLM. Transfers to other public agencies will be considered where improved management efficiency would result. Recreation and Public Purpose Applications will be considered on all public lands except those lands of national significance. Land exchange proposals will be considered on all public lands. However, these proposals must be in the public interest which will be determined by site-specific application of the land ownership adjustment criteria.

Public land within disposal areas generally will be made available for disposal through sales or exchanges or both. Some land may be retained in public ownership based on site-specific application of the land ownership adjustment criteria. Agricultural enteries (DLA and Carey Act) will only be considered on lands with identified agricultural potential (T2).

Land to be acquired by the BLM through exchanges generally should be located in the retention areas. In addition, acquisition of such land should:

- facilitate access to public lands and resources,
- maintain or enhance important public values and uses,
- maintain or enhance local social and economic values,
- improve management efficiency through the elimination of isolated tracts and the blocking up of public lands, and
- facilitate implementation of other aspects of the Medicine Lodge RMP.

Public land to be sold must meet the following criteria derived from the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976:

- the land must be difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public lands, and must not be suitable for management by another federal department or agency;
- the land must have been acquired for a specific purpose and must no longer be required for that or any other federal purpose; or
- disposal of the land will serve important public objectives that can only be achieved prudently or feasibly if the land is removed from public ownership, and if these objectives outweigh other public objectives and values that would be served by maintaining such land in federal ownership.

Sale will be the preferred method of disposal when:

- required by national policy;
- the level of interest in a specific tract indicates that competitive bidding is desirable for reasons of fairness; or
- disposal through exchange is not feasible.

The preferred method of selling public land will be by competitive bidding at public auction to qualifying purchasers. However, modified competitive bidding procedures may be used when there is not legal public access to a tract, when necessary to avoid jeopardizing an existing use on adjacent land, or to avoid dislocation of existing public land users.

Public land may be sold by direct sale at fair market value when:

- the land is needed by state or local governments;
- direct sale is needed to protect equities arising from authorized use;
- direct sale is needed to protect equities resulting from inadvertent, unauthorized use that was caused by surveying errors or title defects; or

-there is only one adjacent land owner and no legal public access.

### Trespass Abatement

Existing unauthorized uses of public land will be resolved either through termination, temporary authorization by short term permit, Sike's Act agreements, sale, or exchange. Decisions will be based on consideration of the following criteria:

- the type and significance of improvements involved;
- conflicts with other resource values and uses, including potential values and uses; and
- whether the unauthorized use is intentional or unintentional.

New cases of unauthorized use generally will be terminated immediately. Temporary permits may be issued to provide short-term authorization, unless the situation warrants immediate cessation of the use and restoration of the land. Highest priority will be given to abatement of the following unauthorized uses:

- new unauthorized activities or uses where prompt action can minimize damage to public resources and associated costs;
- cases where delay may be detrimental to authorized users;
- cases involving special areas, sensitive ecosystems, and resources of national significance; and
- cases involving malicious or criminal activities.

### Utility and Transportation Corridors

Utility and transportation corridor development may be permitted based on consideration of the following criteria:

- type of and need for facility proposed;
- conflicts with other resource values and uses, including potential values and uses; and
- availability of alternatives and/or mitigation measures.

Applicants will be encouraged to locate new facilities within existing corridors to the extent possible.

## Energy and Minerals Program

### Oil and Gas Leasing

As a general rule, public land is available for oil and gas leasing. In most areas, oil and gas leases will be issued with only standard stipulations attached. In other areas, leases will have special stipulations attached to them at the time of issuance to protect seasonal wildlife habitat and/or other sensitive resource values. In highly sensitive areas, where special stipulations are not sufficient to protect important surface resource values, "no surface occupancy" stipulations will be attached to the lease. This analysis assumes that for horizontal deviations of up to 1,500 feet, directional drilling exploration operations are feasible. However, because directional drilling is far more costly than conventional drilling, such operations would not take place unless there is very strong evidence that a discovery would be made. The general areas where standard, special and "no surface occupancy" stipulations will impact minerals are shown on Map 3b.

### Geothermal Leasing

Lease applications will continue to be processed as received. Stipulations will be attached based on interdisciplinary review of each proposal. At the present time, the BLM is not processing lease applications for geothermal resources in the Island Park area. An environmental impact statement completed in 1980 by the U.S. Forest Service and the BLM assesses the impacts of geothermal leasing and development in that area. Based on this assessment, the USFS has recommended that leasing not be allowed unless it can be shown that a valuable geothermal resource exists and that its development would not adversely affect the thermal features of Yellowstone National Park. About 95 percent of the federal geothermal estate affected by this action involves national forest lands. Of the affected mineral estate acres administered by the BLM, about 3,000 are under geothermal lease applications. The future of geothermal leasing within the Island Park area will depend on Congressional legislation.

### Locatable Minerals

Mineral exploration and development on public land will be regulated under 43 CFR 3800 to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the land. Validity examinations may be conducted under the following conditions:

- where a mineral patent application has been filed and a field examination is required to verify the validity of the claim(s);
- where there is a conflict with a disposal application, and it is deemed in the public interest to do so, or where the statute authorizing the disposal requires clearance of any encumbrance;
- where the land is needed for a federal program; or
- where a mining claim is located under the guise of the mining law and flagrant unauthorized use of the land or mineral resource is occurring.

Public land will be opened to mineral entry where mineral withdrawals are revoked through the withdrawal review process.

### Common Variety Mineral Materials

Applications for the removal of common variety mineral materials, including sand and gravel, will be processed using the standards developed in this RMP. Standards vary where different levels of restrictions are imposed on mineral materials disposals to protect important surface values.

## Forestry

### General

Public lands within Intensive Forest Management Areas will be available for a full range of forest management activities. Areas classified as woodland will also be available for limited forest management activities. Forest activity plans generally will be required prior to initiating forest management activities in all areas. Exceptions will be allowed for small sawlog, post and pole and commercial thinning sales. Exceptions will also be made for emergency salvage sales of less than 250 MBF. These sales will be covered by an environmental assessment and a checklist of contract stipulations that conform with the guidelines developed in the Eastern Idaho Sustained Yield Unit (SYU) Environmental Assessment.

Public land within set aside or withdrawn areas will not be available for the harvest of forest products.

Firewood gathering by individuals for home use will be permitted in designated areas and in some cases undesignated areas by special request. Occasional firewood use may be authorized to accommodate government agencies, nonprofit groups and private individuals, but only when such disposal serves a management goal.

### Silvicultural Guidelines and Harvesting Techniques

Merchantable timber or tracts identified as intensive management areas are to be systematically harvested using appropriate methods.

Silvicultural prescriptions will be consistent with accepted methods related to site, species, habitat types, and the individual requirements of the forest stand. Tractor logging will be limited to slopes with gradients of less than 40%, and the season of logging will be limited to avoid soil compaction and rutting.

Salvage operations will have priority when trees are destroyed by fire, disease, insects, or other forest pests. Salvage operations as well as other timber harvest activities will be coordinated with wildlife, archaeological and watershed personnel.



Road locations will be determined on the basis of topography, drainage, soils, and other natural features to minimize erosion. All roads and skid trails to be closed will be seeded to grass, legumes and shrubs. Species will be selected for the forest community and elevation to be seeded.

Slash disposal will be done in a manner conducive to revegetation and advantageous to the passage of big game. Slash will be lopped and scattered where possible with some accumulation in or near openings for escape cover. Slash will be burned when necessary. Such burning will be in conformance with state air pollution regulations.

Logging units will be laid out in a manner that will mitigate the risk of windthrow, and the selection of trees in shelterwoods will be made in a manner that will improve the genetic composition of the regenerated stand. Disturbed areas will be artificially revegetated when natural forest regeneration cannot be reasonably expected in five years.

These are general guidelines. More detailed discussions of measures that can be applied are found in the environmental assessments for the Eastern Idaho SYU EA.

Additional guidelines for Management Areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 9 are listed below.

Old Growth - Is defined as 140 years old through to 240 years old mixed conifer stands. Minimum acreage managed for would be 10% (5% existing, 5% replacement) of the management area's timber base with a minimum of 100 acres. Acreage will be met out of CFL and harvest will be allowed after the stand goes past 240 years old. Harvest will include the first entry taking 50% of volume as a seed cut and overstory removal in stages thereafter.

Elk Summer Range - Will provide a 40-60% cover-forage ratio minimum. Cover will not be below the 40%.

Elk Calving/Nursery Range - 40% of the stand will be maintained with 45-60% canopy coverage and clear cuts will not be larger than 25 acres.

Snag Management - Existing and future management will provide for the following snags/acre.

2 15-20" DBH

4 10-15" DBH

8 5-10" DBH

More may be needed along riparian areas.

Thinning projects - will maintain a uniform distribution of 350 stems/acre at least 7' tall.

Raptor nests - Especially accipiters, a 5 acre buffer zone will be left around nesting area.

Clear cuts - Maximum size of 40 acres with a minimum of 600 feet leave strips between cuts.

Roads - Will not be constructed along riparian areas. Roads will be closed and rehabilitated at end of sale.

## Range

### Allotment Categorization

All grazing allotments in the resource area have been assigned to one of three management categories based on present resource conditions, the potential for improvement and management objectives. The M allotments generally will be managed to maintain current satisfactory resource conditions; I allotments generally will be managed to improve resource conditions; and C allotments will receive custodial management while protecting existing resource values.

### Allotment-Specific Objectives for the Improvement Category

Multiple use management objectives have been developed for each allotment in the I category. Future management actions, including approval of allotment management plans, will be tailored to meet these objectives.

### Implementing Changes in Allotment Management

Activity plans are commonly used to present, in detail, the types of changes required in an allotment, and to establish a schedule for implementation. Actions set forth under the plan that affect the environment will be closely analyzed. During the analysis, the proposal may be altered or completely revamped to mitigate adverse impacts. The following sections contain discussions of the types of change likely to be recommended in an activity plan and the guidance that applies to these administrative actions.

### Livestock Use Adjustments

Livestock use adjustments are made by changing one or more of the following: the season of use, the number of head, or the pattern of grazing. Target stocking rates have been set for each allotment. While most livestock use adjustments will occur in the I allotments, use adjustments may be needed for allotments in categories C and M.

In reviewing the target stocking rate figures and other recommended changes, it is emphasized that the target AUM figures are not final stocking rates. Rather, all livestock use adjustments will be implemented through documented mutual agreement or by decision. When adjustments are made through mutual agreement, they may be implemented once the Rangeland Program Summary has been through a public review period. When livestock use adjustments are implemented by decision, the decision will be based on operator consultation, range survey data, and monitoring of resource conditions. Current BLM policy emphasizes the use of a systematic monitoring program to verify the need for livestock adjustments proposed on the basis of one-time inventory data.

Monitoring will also be used to measure the changes brought about by new livestock management practices and to evaluate the effectiveness of management changes in meeting stated objectives. Detailed guidance for rangeland monitoring is available in current BLM policy and guidance.

The federal regulations that govern changes in allocation of livestock forage provide specific direction for livestock use adjustments implemented by decision. The regulations specify that permanent increases in livestock forage or suspensions of preference "shall be implemented over a five year period..." The regulations do provide for adjustments to be implemented in less than five years when: (1) an agreement is reached to implement the adjustment in less than five years; or (2) a shorter implementation period is needed to sustain resource productivity.

#### Temporary Suspensions and Closures

Temporary suspensions of grazing use or closures of all or portions of allotments may be implemented to protect the public lands because of conditions of drought, fire, flood, or insect infestation. When conditions such as fire, flood or insect infestation create a significant impact on the normal operation of a grazing operator, efforts to mitigate the impact may be taken by the BLM. These mitigating efforts may consist of relocation of grazing use, modification of grazing systems and temporary nonrenewable grazing use in other allotments under permit or lease. No action will be taken by the BLM prior to consultation and coordination with affected permittees or lessees and other affected parties.

#### Range Improvements and Treatments

The extent, location and timing of range improvements will be based on the allotment-specific management objectives adopted through the resource management planning process, interdisciplinary development and review of proposed actions, operator contributions, and BLM funding capability. Since some of the soils in the resource area may be unsuitable for range improvement projects, proposed projects will be investigated for soil feasibility prior to approving location and design plans.

All allotments in which range improvement funds are to be spent will be subjected to an economic analysis. The analysis will be used to develop a final priority ranking of allotments for the commitment of the range improvement funds that are needed to implement activity plans. The highest priority for implementation generally will be assigned to those improvements for which the total anticipated benefits exceed costs. Generally, all structural range improvements will be maintained by the benefitting party(s). All nonstructural range improvements will be maintained by the BLM.

#### Grazing Systems

The type of system to be implemented will be based on consideration of the following factors:

- allotment-specific management objectives;
- resource characteristics, including vegetation potential and water availability;
- operator needs; and
- implementation costs.

Typical grazing systems available for consideration are described in Appendix B, page B-6 of the Medicine Lodge Draft RMP/EIS.

#### Unleased or Unpermitted Tracts

Unleased or unpermitted tracts generally will remain available for further consideration for authorized grazing, as provided for in the current BLM grazing regulations. However, certain tracts currently closed or restricted to grazing use will remain so.

### Wildlife and Fisheries Program

#### General

Fish and wildlife habitat will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of fish and wildlife habitat in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with management objectives for fish and wildlife habitat. Habitat improvement projects will be implemented where necessary to stabilize and/or improve unsatisfactory or declining wildlife habitat condition. Such projects will be identified through habitat management plans or multiple resource management activity plans.

#### Seasonal Restrictions

Seasonal restrictions will continue to be applied where they are needed to mitigate the impacts of human activities on important seasonal wildlife habitat. The major types of seasonal wildlife habitat and the time periods in which restrictions may be needed are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
Seasonal Wildlife Restrictions

| Habitat  | Restricted Period                            |
|--|--|
| Big Game Winter Range                                    | 12/01 - 04/30                                |
| Elk Calving Areas  | 04/30 - 06/30                                |
| Raptor Nest Sites  | Dates vary by species                        |
| Sage Grouse/Sharp-tailed Grouse Strutting Grounds        | 03/01 - 04/30                                |
| Sage Grouse/Sharp-tailed Grouse Nesting and Broodrearing | 04/30 - 06/30                                |
| Antelope Fawning Grounds                                 | 05/01 - 06/30                                |
| Antelope Winter Ranges                                   | 12/01 - 04/01                                |
| Endangered Species                                       | No surface occupancy, size is site-specific. |

### Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species Habitat

Whenever possible, management activities in habitat for threatened, endangered or sensitive species will be designed to benefit those species through habitat improvement.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be consulted prior to implementing projects that may affect habitat for threatened and endangered species. If a "may affect" situation is determined through the BLM biological assessment process, consultation with the USFWS will be initiated as per section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

To the extent practicable, management actions within occupied grizzly bear habitat will be consistent with the goals and objectives contained in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (USDI, FWS 1982) and the guidelines developed through the Interagency Wildlife Monitoring Program for mineral exploration and development.

### Terrestrial Wildlife Habitat

Sufficient forage and cover will be provided for wildlife on seasonal habitat. Forage and cover requirements will be incorporated into allotment management plans and will be specific to areas of primary wildlife use.

Range improvements generally will be designed to achieve both wildlife and range objectives. Existing fences may be modified and new fences will be built so as to allow wildlife passage. Water developments generally will not be established for livestock where significant conflicts over vegetation would result.

Vegetative manipulation projects will be designed to minimize impact on wildlife habitat and to improve it whenever possible. These projects will comply with sage grouse, antelope and mule deer management guidelines. The ID F&G will be consulted one year in advance on all vegetative manipulation projects. Animal control programs will be coordinated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Management actions within floodplains and wetlands will include measures to preserve, protect and, if necessary, restore, their natural functions (as required by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 and BLM Manual 6740). Management techniques will be used to minimize the degradation of stream banks and the loss of riparian vegetation. Bridges and culverts will be designed and installed to maintain adequate fish passage.

Riparian habitat needs will be taken into consideration in developing livestock grazing systems and pasture designs. Some of the techniques that can be used to maintain riparian areas:

- changing class of stock from cow/calf pairs to herded sheep or yearlings;
- either eliminating summer grazing or scheduling summer grazing for only one year out of every three;
- locating salt away from riparian zones;
- laying out pasture fences so that each pasture has as much riparian habitat as possible;
- locating fences so that they do not confine or concentrate livestock near the riparian zone;
- developing alternative sources of water to lessen the grazing pressure on the riparian habitat; and
- excluding livestock completely from riparian habitat by protective fencing if other measures do not work.

Where applicable, the elk management guidelines contained in the Elk Habitat Relations for Central Idaho and Eastern Idaho will be followed. These include:

- managing public vehicle access to maintain the habitat effectiveness of security cover and key seasonal habitat (such as winter range and calving/nursery areas) for deer and elk;
- maintaining adequate untreated peripheral zones around important moist sites (i.e. wet sedge meadows, springs, riparian zones);
- maintaining adequate thermal and security cover on deer and elk habitat, particularly within timber stands adjacent to primary winter foraging areas;

-ensuring that slash depth inside clear cuts does not exceed one and one-half feet; and

-generally discouraging thinning immediately adjacent to clear cuts.

Wildlife reintroductions and fish stocking proposals will be evaluated and recommendations will be made to the Department of Fish and Game. BLM policy requires that a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) be prepared prior to any wildlife reintroduction.

## Soil, Water and Air

### General

Soil, water and air resources will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such an evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed projects and the sensitivity of soil as defined in the National Cooperative Soil Survey Standards. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to ensure compatibility of projects with soil, water, and air resource management.

### Soils

Soils will be managed to maintain productivity and to minimize long-term erosion to not exceed more than 5 tons/acre, except for some areas of local sand dunes.

### Water

Water quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with State and Federal standards, including consultation with state agencies on proposed projects that may significantly affect water quality. Management actions on public land within municipal watersheds will be designed to protect water quality and quantity.

Management activities in riparian zones will be designed to maintain, or, where possible, improve riparian conditions.

Roads and utility corridors will avoid riparian zones to the extent practicable.

## Recreation

### General

A broad range of outdoor recreation opportunities will continue to be provided for all segments of the public, commensurate with demand. Trails and other means of public access will continue to be maintained and developed where necessary to enhance recreation opportunities and allow public use. Developed recreation facilities receiving the heaviest use will receive first priority for operation and maintenance funds. Sites that cannot be maintained to acceptable health and safety standards will be closed until deficiencies are corrected. Investment of public funds for new recreation developments will be permitted only on land identified for retention in public ownership.

Recreation resources will continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as a part of project level planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the sensitivity of recreation resources in the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to assure compatibility of projects with recreation management objectives.

### Motorized Vehicle Use

Travel planning, including the designation of areas open, restricted and closed to motorized vehicle access, will remain a high priority for public land. Public land within areas identified as open to motorized vehicle use generally will remain available for such use without restrictions. Exceptions to this general rule may be authorized after consideration of the following criteria:

- the need to promote user enjoyment and minimize use conflicts;
- the need to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resource values;
- the need to minimize harrassment of wildlife or significant degradation of wildlife habitats; and
- the need to promote user safety.

Public land within areas identified as restricted to motorized vehicle use generally will receive priority attention during travel planning. Specific roads, trails or portions of such areas may be closed seasonally or yearlong to all or specified types of motorized vehicle use.

Public land within areas identified as closed to motorized vehicle use will be closed yearlong to all forms of motorized vehicle use except emergency or authorized vehicles. Exceptions may be allowed in Wilderness Study Areas based on application of the Interim Management Policy.

Restrictions and closures will be established for specific roads, trails or areas only where problems have been identified. Areas not designated as restricted or closed will remain open for motorized vehicle use.

### Visual Resources

Visual Resources will continue to be evaluated as a part of activity and project planning. Such evaluation will consider the significance of the proposed project and the visual sensitivity of the affected area. Stipulations will be attached as appropriate to maintain existing visual resource management classes.



## Wilderness Resources

Wilderness Study Areas will continue to be managed in compliance with the Interim Management Policy until they are reviewed and acted upon by Congress. Other areas being studied for wilderness will be managed to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the land, and when it does not conflict with valid existing rights they will be managed to meet the nonimpairment standard as well.

Public land within areas added by Congress to the National Wilderness Preservation System will be managed in compliance with the Wilderness Management Policy. Site-specific wilderness management plans will be developed for such areas.

Areas reviewed by Congress but not added to the National Wilderness Preservation System will be managed in accordance with other applicable guidance provided by this Resource Management Plan.

## Cultural Resources

BLM is required to identify, evaluate and protect cultural resources on public lands, and to ensure that BLM-initiated actions and projects do not inadvertently damage or destroy non-federal cultural resources. The Antiquities Act of 1906, the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960, as amended by P.L. 933-191, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Executive Order 11593 (1971), the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 mandate BLM's cultural resource protection policy.

This policy requires BLM to conduct or cause to be conducted an intensive (Class III) inventory before any Bureau initiated or authorized surface disturbing activities and land sales or transfers from federal management are allowed. Inventories are conducted according to BLM Manual Section 8111.4 specifications. They supplement other inventories which may have previously located, identified and evaluated an affected area's cultural resources.

When cultural resource values are discovered in a proposed project or authorized action area they will be protected by the following methods:

1. Avoidance. Cultural resources are protected by redesigning or relocating projects, or excluding significant cultural resource areas from authorized use agreements, and land sales or transfers.
2. Salvage. If a project cannot be redesigned or relocated, cultural resource values will be salvaged through controlled, scientific methods (i.e. complete surface collection and/or excavation).
3. Project/Action Abandonment. If a site has significant cultural resource values which cannot adequately be protected by avoidance or salvage, then project or action would be abandoned.

4. Consultation. If properties which may be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places are discovered, BLM will consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Site documentation will be forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register to obtain an eligibility determination, in accordance with 36 CFR Part 63.

In a stewardship role, BLM manages documented cultural resource sites and values for public benefit.

The Department of the Interior has issued instructions setting forth this management structure through a use evaluation system. The purposes of the system are to analyze the scientific and sociocultural values of cultural resources, to provide a basis for allocation of cultural resources, to make cultural resources an important part of the planning system, and to identify information needed when existing documentation is inadequate to support a reasonable cultural resource-based land use allocation.

The evaluation of cultural resources requires the consideration of actual or potential use of individual sites or properties within the following categories:

1. Sociocultural Use. This category refers to the use of an object (including flora and fauna), structure or place based on a social or cultural group's perception that the item has utility in maintaining the group's heritage or existence.
2. Current Scientific Use. This category refers to a study or project in progress at the time of evaluation for which scientists or historians are using a cultural resource as a source of information that will contribute to the understanding of human behavior.
3. Management Use. This category refers to the use of a cultural resource by the BLM, or other entities interested in the management of cultural resources, to obtain specific information that is needed for the reasonable allocation of cultural resources or for the development of effective preservation measures.
4. Conservation for Future Use. This category refers to the management of cultural resources by segregating them from other forms of appropriation until specific conditions are met in the future. Such conditions may include the development of research techniques that are presently not available or the exhaustion of all other resources similar to those represented in the protected sample. The category is intended to provide long-term, onsite preservation and protection of select cultural resources.
5. Potential Scientific Use. This category refers to the potential use (utilizing research techniques currently available) of a cultural resource as a source of information that will contribute to the understanding of human behavior.

## Cadastral Survey

Cadastral Surveys will continue to be conducted in support of resource management programs. Survey requirements and priorities will be determined on a yearly basis as a part of the annual work planning process.

## Fire

Until the Normal Year Fire Plan is updated, the primary fire protection objective will continue to be the control, during the first burning period, of all wildfires on or threatening public land.

Limited suppression areas will be established following the selection of the Resource Management Plan.

Prescribed burning will continue to be used in support of resource management objectives.

## Road and Trail Construction and Maintenance

Road and trail construction and maintenance will continue to be conducted in support of resource management objectives. Construction and maintenance requirements and priorities will be determined on a yearly basis as a part of the annual work planning process.

Investment of public funds for road and trail construction generally will be permitted only on land identified for retention in public ownership. Exceptions may be allowed where investment costs can be recovered as a part of land disposal actions.

Specific road and trail construction standards will be determined based on consideration of the following criteria:

- resource management needs;
- user safety;
- impacts to environmental values, including but not limited to wildlife and fisheries habitat, soil stability, recreation, and scenery; and
- construction and maintenance costs.

## Detailed Management Plans

The RMP provides general guidance for the resource area. More detailed management plans called activity plans will, however, be prepared to deal with areas where a greater level of detail is required. Activity plans will indicate specific management practices, improvements, allocations, and other information for a particular site or area. They will be prepared for most major BLM programs such as range (allotment management plans), recreation (recreation area management plans), wildlife (habitat management plans), and

cultural resources (cultural resources activity plans). Where two or more activities have activity plan needs in the same general area, a single consolidated activity plan may be prepared. Coordination, consultation and public involvement are integral parts in the formulation of activity plans.

#### Economic and Social Considerations

BLM will ensure that any management action undertaken in connection with this plan is cost-effective and takes into account local social and economic factors. Cost-effectiveness may be determined by any method deemed appropriate by the Bureau for the specific management action involved.

#### Environmental Review

An environmental analysis will be undertaken prior to approval of any project involving public lands. If no significant impact is identified, the analysis will be documented as an Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact. If the analysis suggests a major federal action which would significantly affect the human environment, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared upon State Director direction.