

# Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers

## Final Management Plan and Environmental Assessment



**U.S. Department of the Interior**  
Bureau of Land Management  
Boise District Office & Twin Falls District Office



# **Management Plan and Environmental Assessment**

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*Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas and Wild & Scenic Rivers*

*April 2015*

## **Bureau of Land Management**

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Boise, ID 83705**

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**Cover photo, Bruneau River Canyon by Bob Wick, BLM California State Office**





**DECISION RECORD**  
**for the**  
**Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Management Plan**

Bureau of Land Management  
Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-ID-B000-2011-0001-EA

**Decision:**

It is our decision to approve and implement the Management Plan for the six Wilderness Areas (Big Jacks Creek, Little Jacks Creek, Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers, North Fork Owyhee, Owyhee River, and Pole Creek) and 16 Wild & Scenic River segments designated in Owyhee County, Idaho, by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of March 30, 2009. This Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Management Plan (Management Plan) represents the proposed action, and is in conformance with the 1983 Bruneau Management Framework Plan and the 1987 Jarbidge and 1999 Owyhee Resource Management Plans.

The Decision Record was initially signed on April 10, 2014, but is being re-issued due to a procedural error. Section 3(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) requires that a notice of completion and availability of a wild and scenic river management plan be published in the Federal Register. The notice of availability, however, was initially published only in local newspapers. As such, the notice is being published in the Federal Register as required by federal law.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) received a few comments in response to the initial newspaper publication. Additional coordination also occurred with local governments and interested publics. Therefore, additional clarifying language has been included in response to some of the comments.

The Management Plan establishes the management framework for approximately 517,000 acres of public land. About 457,000 acres are within the BLM Boise District and about 60,000 acres are within the BLM Twin Falls District. Boise District staff had the major responsibility for developing the Management Plan and Environmental Assessment with input and review from the Twin Falls District, Idaho State Office, and Washington Office.

**Summary of Final Management Plan Land Use Decisions:**

The following tables incorporate the wilderness and wild & scenic river decisions implementing the land use guidelines and restrictions and the BLM management actions being imposed to achieve BLM's mission of protecting and sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of these special public lands for the use and enjoyment of future generations.



<b>Land Use Guidelines and Restrictions within Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Legislative Requirements</b>
1.a.	Pursuant to Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act, the following uses are prohibited in wilderness: a. commercial enterprises, b. permanent and temporary roads, c. use of motor vehicles, d. use of motorized equipment or motorboats, e. landing of aircraft, f. use of other forms of mechanical transport (except for wheelchairs), and g. structures or installations.
1.b.	BLM may grant exceptions to the prohibited activities and uses listed in 1.a. above in accordance with Section 4(d) of the Wilderness Act and Appendix A of House Report 101-405, when the activities and uses are determined through the MRA process to be the minimum necessary to preserve wilderness character.
<b>2.</b>	<b>Livestock Grazing</b>
2.a.	Pursuant to OPLMA Section 1503(b)(3), livestock grazing will continue to be authorized in allotments located wholly or partially in wilderness areas. According to Section 1 of Appendix A of House Report 101-405, the number of livestock permitted to graze in wilderness will remain at the approximate levels that existed at the time the areas entered the wilderness system. Any adjustments in permitted use would be made as a result of revisions in the normal grazing and land management planning process, giving consideration to legal mandates, range condition, and the protection of the range resource from deterioration, as set out in the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and applicable land use plans.
2.b.	Livestock grazing is prohibited in burned areas until vegetative recovery objectives are met, as identified in pertinent grazing decisions and/or applicable land use or wildfire recovery plan(s).
2.c.	Domestic sheep grazing is prohibited in wilderness to reduce the potential for disease transmission to California bighorn sheep.

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3.	Hunting or Photography Blinds
3.a.	Permanent hunting or photography blinds are prohibited.
3.b.	Temporary, portable or “pop-up” blinds are allowed in wilderness without a permit if they are used only while the hunter is in the wilderness. Individuals wishing to erect a temporary blind in the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas prior to their hunt will require a BLM free-use permit, available at the BLM Marsing Field Office and the Boise and Twin Falls District Offices. Individuals wishing to use a temporary blind in wilderness for purposes other than hunting, such as photography, are subject to the same requirements as hunters. Consistent with BLM requirements for the use of temporary blinds, as described in the Idaho Department of Fish and Game regulations, a hunter’s full name and ZIP code must be permanently attached, etched, engraved or painted on the blind in an obvious location.
4.	Collection of Items
4.a.	Collection of any resource, including shed antlers, for the purpose of commercial sale is prohibited.
4.b.	Casual non-commercial surface collection for personal use of renewable and non-renewable resources is permitted (i.e., dead and down wood, fruit, vegetation, rock and mineral specimens, petrified wood, shed antlers, and common invertebrate and plant fossils). Surface disturbance from digging or excavation for personal collection is prohibited.
4.c.	Vertebrate fossils and cultural, archaeological, and historic sites and artifacts, including arrowheads, may not be damaged or removed without BLM authorization.
5.	Angling, Hunting, and Trapping
5.a.	Angling, hunting, and trapping activities are permitted in wilderness areas subject to State and Federal laws and regulations, and subject to non-motorized and non-mechanized access.
6.	Supplemental Feed / Riding and Pack Stock
6.a.	Consistent with existing Supplementary Rules, supplemental feed for riding and pack stock must be certified noxious weed-free, as defined by Idaho Department of Agriculture Administrative Rules (IDAPA 02.06.31 - Noxious Weed Free Forage & Straw Certification Rules). Weed-free supplemental feed and straw must be cubed or pelletized, or if in forage bales, must contain a weed-free certification tag or otherwise show evidence of weed-free certification.
6.b.	Goats are prohibited as pack stock.
7.	Rock Climbing
7.a.	Rock climbers may not destroy vegetation or damage rock faces to enhance a route, including chiseling or rock chipping, forcibly prying off rock, gluing, drilling, or otherwise affixing climbing bolts or other permanent artificial holds on rock. Existing climbing bolts or other artificial devices will be removed upon discovery.

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8.	General/Upland Camping
8.a.	Consistent with existing Supplementary Rules, camping is limited to 14 days in any one location. After 14 days, camps must be moved at least twenty-five (25) miles from the previous campsite. For the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas, the 14-day camping limit applies to any consecutive 28-day period.
8.b.	Upland campsites (those located outside of a wild & scenic river corridor) must be located at least 300 feet from natural springs or developed upland water sources (i.e., troughs, reservoirs, etc.) to limit potential conflicts with wildlife and livestock.
8.c.	Campers in upland sites must either: 1) use a water-tight, portable toilet, the contents of which must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip, or 2) bury human waste in cat-holes dug at least 8 inches deep and 200 feet from water, trails, and campsites.
8.d.	Campers must pack-in/pack-out all food, trash, burned material, etc.
8.e.	Campers may not cut, break, or otherwise destroy standing live and dead trees or shrubs for firewood (or clear an area for a campsite, visitor convenience, or comfort, such as cutting out poison ivy). Only dead and down woody material may be used for firewood.
9.	Wild and Scenic River Camping
9.a.	Wild & scenic river campers must contain campfires in a metal fire pan or on a fire blanket raised off the ground. All unburned contents of the fire, including ash, must be removed from the river corridor.
9.b.	Wild & scenic river campers, hikers, and floaters are strongly encouraged to urinate directly into the river (not in or around campsites) to reduce impacts to limited streamside campsites.
9.c.	Wild & scenic river campers must use biodegradable soap for personal use and dishwashing. Strain all dish and rinse water before scattering water broadly onto vegetated soil at least 200 feet from water, if possible.
10.	Boating
10.a.	All boaters, including kayakers, must carry and use a water-tight, portable toilet. Human waste must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip. Any other system of disposing of human waste must comply with current EPA regulations.
10.b.	Groups and individuals embarking on single or multi-day float trips must complete a BLM self-issue permit, which may be obtained at the river launch site, or from the BLM website. The trip leader must retain a copy of the self-issue permit throughout the trip, and must present the permit to a BLM employee upon request.
10.c.	Groups floating designated wild & scenic rivers are limited to a maximum of 15 persons.
10.d.	Boat owners must display an Idaho Invasive Species Fund sticker on their vessel(s). Inflatable vessels under 10 feet in length are exempt from this requirement. If traveling into Oregon on the Owyhee River, a State of Oregon Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention permit is required for watercraft exceeding 10 feet in length.
11.	General Access
11.a.	New access routes will not be developed and existing administrative access routes will not be maintained or repaired with mechanized equipment without BLM authorization.



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11.b.	Recreational developments may be constructed, maintained, or repaired by or on behalf of BLM along the North Fork Owyhee Wild & Scenic River outside of the Wilderness Area.
12.	<b>Emergency Access</b>
12.a.	Emergency access for search and rescue and for situations involving the health or safety of individuals, or the rescuing of sick or stranded livestock may utilize motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment (including helicopters). Individuals must notify the BLM authorized officer immediately following completion of emergency activities. The subsequent removal of downed airplanes (or other damaged vehicles) and associated equipment, parts, or debris is not considered an emergency, and will require prior BLM authorization.
13.	<b>Other Activities</b>
13.a.	Traditional geocaching and letterboxing activities are prohibited.
13.b.	Individuals may not dig, dam, or otherwise alter the natural flow and appearance of water bodies (i.e., hot springs, streams, rivers, etc.).
13.c.	Ground-based military maneuvers and associated activities are prohibited except in support of emergency actions.

<b>BLM Decisions and Actions within Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>	
1.	BLM will issue Special Recreation Permits to the following entities (including commercial enterprises), as long as they provide services deemed necessary for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas, and as long as they are wilderness-dependent and do not degrade wilderness character: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Licensed outfitters and guides,</li> <li>b. Entities whose mission includes the promotion of wilderness ethics, Tread Lightly!, Leave No Trace, or environmental education, and</li> <li>c. Entities whose primary purpose is to support individuals with disabilities.</li> </ol>
2.	BLM will issue up to ten (10) Special Recreation Permits to licensed commercial outfitters and guides for river floating, including a maximum of four (4) Special Recreation Permits for the Bruneau River system and a maximum of six (6) Special Recreation Permits for the Owyhee River system.
3.	BLM will impose or adjust visitor use restrictions if monitoring shows a substantial increase in visitor use conflicts and/or indicates visitor use is causing unacceptable impacts to resources, wilderness character, or wild & scenic river values.
4.	BLM will not place signs or structures in wilderness unless, through use of a Minimum Requirements Analysis, the authorized officer determines that they are the minimum necessary to protect or preserve wilderness character and/or address public safety hazards.

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5.	<p>The following existing routes are designated as trails for both pedestrian and equestrian use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parker Trail (east side of Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, Map 1.2 Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 1.2 mi.</li> <li>b. Tindall Trail (west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.4 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (South), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 0.5 mi.</li> <li>c. Roberson Trail - East (east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 0.7 mi.</li> <li>d. Roberson Trail - West (west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 0.7 mi.</li> <li>e. Shoofly Creek Trail (northern end of Little Jacks Creek Wilderness, Map 1.5 Little Jacks Creek Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 6.1 mi.</li> <li>f. Jarbidge River Trail (east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) (below the Forks Jarbidge River Launch Site) approximately 1.0 mi.</li> </ul>
6.	BLM will manage designated trails according to the trail design specifications in Table 1.7 - Design Specifications for Wilderness Trails.
7.	BLM will evaluate any proposals involving potential soil or vegetation disturbance in accordance with the Wilderness Act or other applicable laws and regulations.
8.	BLM will use the MRA process to evaluate motorized and mechanized access proposals to facilitate Native American traditional cultural and religious activities in wilderness.
9.	BLM managers will consider the full range of wildfire management strategies and tactics, and will implement the tactic(s) that best protect public safety and the wilderness values at risk.
10.	<p>BLM will not remove existing structures and installations when they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. associated with a valid existing right, including range projects listed in Appendix D,</li> <li>b. of historical or cultural value, or</li> <li>c. the minimum necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness.</li> </ul>
11.	BLM will authorize maintenance or repair of reservoirs within closed grazing allotments only when they are determined to be essential or critical for wildlife management through consultation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.
12.	BLM will preserve wilderness character by managing noxious weeds and non-native invasive plants, with an emphasis on treating small (<0.1 acre) infestations that have the potential to spread and displace native plants. Larger infestations will be managed separately, since they could involve several treatment applications or associated tactics.

**Rationale for Decision:**

The proposed action (Management Plan) was selected because it meets the needs and objectives outlined for the plan. The proposed action has been analyzed and determined to have no significant impacts as referenced in the Finding of No Significant Impact (Appendix H).

The Management Plan decisions outlined in the above tables are consistent with requirements of the Wilderness Act and the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. The Management Plan implements actions and guidelines designed to preserve wilderness character and protect and enhance river values, as mandated by Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act and Section 10(a) of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, by identifying conditions and opportunities that will be managed for over at least the next ten years, or as changes in wilderness character, wild & scenic river values, and/or resource conditions require. Portions of the wilderness areas are overlain by special area designations [i.e., Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Outstanding Natural Area (ONA), and Research Natural Area (RNA)]. Land use guidelines and protections provided by these designations are often redundant to those provided by wilderness designation. Since special area designations are land use allocation decisions, the designations will be reviewed during future land use planning, just as what occurred for the Bruneau-Jarbidge River ACEC during revision of the Jarbidge RMP.

A few changes were incorporated into the Final Management Plan following analysis of comments received on the Draft Management Plan. We chose to retain the current wild & scenic river group size limit of 15 persons. We also chose not to restrict the allowable daily number of floater groups. Both of these changes were based on the fact that insufficient data existed to correlate group size or numbers with either the kinds or levels of current user conflicts or resource impacts. Future limits may be imposed based on the results of resource and user monitoring.

Trapping is considered a valid activity in wilderness areas, pursuant to Section 4(d)(8) of the Wilderness Act. The Draft Management Plan, however, included a prohibition on commercial trapping in an effort to comply with the Wilderness Act's general prohibition on commercial activities. We subsequently determined through consultation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game that the State issues recreational, not commercial, trapping licenses, except for persons who are employed or contracted by Idaho Department of Fish and Game for the purpose of managing targeted wildlife species. Thus, as with hunting and fishing, the Final Management Plan allows trapping in wilderness areas subject to State and Federal regulations, as long as associated access is limited to non-motorized and non-mechanized means. If the State proposes a wildlife management program in wilderness using commercially licensed trappers, the proposal would be evaluated through the Minimum Requirements Analysis process.

Structures may be allowed in wilderness if they are associated with a valid existing right, including rights-of-way, mining claims, permits, water rights, etc. BLM Manual 6340 defines a structure as anything made by humans that is intended for human occupation and is left behind when the builder leaves the wilderness. Mobile shelters, including camping tents and "pop-up" blinds, may be used on a temporary basis while the owner remains in the wilderness, but must be removed when the owner leaves the wilderness, unless an individual acquires a BLM permit allowing the blind to be erected prior to its use. Issuance of hunting blind permits for wilderness hunts would: 1) provide for consistent administration and use of blinds across BLM-administered lands in Idaho; 2) enhance BLM's ability to monitor wilderness use; 3) help to reduce potential over-crowding and user conflicts at certain reservoirs; and 4) potentially facilitate hunter success by allowing game to acclimate to the blinds. BLM will coordinate with the IDFG to ensure that BLM requirements for



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the use of temporary blinds in wilderness are incorporated into the annual IDFG regulation publication.

The Draft Management Plan prohibited motorized herding, gathering, and monitoring, but provided for the use of a Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA) to determine the appropriateness of other uses. Section 2 of House Report 101-405 requires that the use of motorized equipment be based on a rule of practical necessity and reasonableness, and further, that the use be occasional in nature. Because each permittee's proposed use of motorized vehicles reflects their own unique operation, an objective process is needed to determine the practical necessity and reasonableness of a proposal. The Final Management Plan now requires **ALL** proposals involving potential soil or vegetation disturbance or the use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment to be evaluated through a MRA for the purpose of protecting and preserving wilderness character. The MRA will determine whether the proposal is consistent and compatible with requirements of the Wilderness Act, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, and House Report 101-405. This process will allow BLM to fairly and equitably evaluate all proposals in a manner that is neither arbitrary nor capricious.

### **Public Involvement:**

Public scoping meetings were held in 2011 in Boise, Grandview, Murphy, Nampa, and Twin Falls to inform the public of the regulations and policies associated with wilderness and wild & scenic river management. Input was solicited during these meeting and for several weeks afterward concerning wilderness-related issues and concerns, as well as the development of alternatives and management actions proposed for the Management Plan. Additionally, the BLM coordinated with all affected livestock grazing permittees on multiple occasions between 2010 and 2013, regarding details about managing livestock and maintaining existing range improvement projects in wilderness allotments. Finally, the BLM provided a public comment period for the Draft Management Plan in Spring 2013 that was extended to over 100 days in response to requests from interested and affected governments, agencies, organizations, and individuals. The BLM received 52 individual comment letters and three different mass mailings, consisting of 9,942, 289, and 6 letters, respectively.

Representatives from the following agencies, organizations, or tribes were briefed or consulted during preparation of the Final Management Plan.

Owyhee County Commissioners

The Wilderness Society

Idaho Governor's Office

Western Watersheds Project

Idaho Department of Lands

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation

U.S. Geological Survey

Shoshone-Paiute Tribe

Owyhee Initiative Inc. Board of Directors

Idaho Conservation League

The Nature Conservancy

**Appeal Opportunities:**

Parties interested in this planning process will have 30 days from the date the Management Plan Notice of Availability is published in the Federal Register to appeal the decision. The plan will be posted on the following website: [http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa\\_register/Owyhee-wilderness-WSR\\_plan.html](http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/nepa_register/Owyhee-wilderness-WSR_plan.html)

Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. A notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the authorized officer at the *Bureau of Land Management, Boise District Office, 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho, 83705*. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the *Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203* within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the authorized officer.

To file a petition for stay pursuant to 43 CFR Part 4.21(b), it must accompany your notice of appeal and must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If a petition for stay is submitted with the notice of appeal, a notice of appeal and petition for stay must be served on each adverse party named in the decision from which the appeal is taken and on the *Office of the Solicitor, Field Solicitor – U. S. Department of the Interior, University Plaza, 960 Broadway Avenue, Suite 400, Boise, Idaho, 83706*, not later than 15 days after filing the document with the authorized officer and/or IBLA.

Approved by:  /s/James M. Fincher  
James M. Fincher  
Boise District Manager

4/10/2015  
Date

Approved by:  /s/Michael C. Courtney  
Michael C. Courtney  
Twin Falls District Manager

4/10/2015  
Date





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# 1 Chapter 1: Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers Management Plan

## 1.1 Management Plan Introduction

Section 1503 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (OPLMA) of March 30, 2009 (Public Law 111-11) designated the following six wilderness areas in Owyhee County, Idaho:

- Big Jacks Creek Wilderness,
- Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness,
- Little Jacks Creek Wilderness,
- North Fork Owyhee Wilderness,
- Owyhee River Wilderness, and
- Pole Creek Wilderness

The six wilderness areas total approximately 517,000 acres and are collectively and informally known as the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas.

Section 1504 of the OPLMA designated the 16 wild and scenic river (WSR) segments listed in Table 1.2, which total approximately 325 miles<sup>1</sup> (see Map 1.1 Owyhee Wilderness Management Plan — Map Series Overview and Legend).

All but about six miles of the designated WSRs are contained within the above wilderness areas. An approximate five mile long section of the North Fork Owyhee WSR extends from the westernmost edge of the North Fork Owyhee Wilderness Area to the Idaho-Oregon border.

In addition, the entire length of the Owyhee WSR in Idaho is contained within the Owyhee River Wilderness with the exception of a 1.3 mile-long segment extending downstream from the Northwest Pipeline crossing. The map referenced in Section 1503(a)(1)(E) of the OPLMA shows the Owyhee River to be the wilderness boundary along this 1.3 mile-long stretch. The map, however, is not drawn with sufficient detail to show whether the wilderness boundary is located in the middle of the river or along one of its banks. To address situations such as this, Section 1.6D.1.a. of BLM Manual 6340 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas - Public) states in pertinent part the following:

***“Where [wilderness] boundaries are not specified in law or specific direction is not provided by Congress on setbacks, and legislative history gives no indication of the intended boundary, the following guidelines will apply...”***

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the beginning and ending points described in Section 1504 of the OPLMA, the length of the WSR segments has been revised to reflect the more accurate 1:24,000-scale geometry in the National Hydrography GIS Database.

***iii. Where the boundary follows a water course, the boundary will be assumed to be the near (the wilderness side of the water) ordinary high water mark or line of mean high tide, with no setback.”***

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Given the above direction, the Owyhee WSR and the westerly portion of the Owyhee WSR corridor lie outside of the Owyhee River Wilderness for a distance of approximately 1.3 miles downstream from the Northwest Pipeline crossing.

Each of the designated wilderness areas and many of the designated WSRs contain private and/or State-owned inholding properties within their boundaries. Wilderness and WSR designation, however, neither prohibits development on, nor gives the Federal government administrative control over private or State inholdings. Recreation, agricultural practices, residential development, and other uses may occur on these private and State lands.

Section 1503(b)(4) of the OPLMA authorizes BLM to acquire non-Federal lands within the designated wilderness areas by purchase, donation, or exchange. Acquired lands will be added to and administered as a part of the adjacent wilderness upon acquisition. Thus far, BLM has acquired 1,172 acres of private inholdings, including two properties in the Little Jacks Creek Wilderness and one property in the North Fork Owyhee Wilderness. The properties were acquired with the intent that they remain ungrazed, as will future inholding purchases.

According to OPLMA Section 1503(b)(10)(a), “The designation of a wilderness area...shall not create any protective perimeter or buffer zone around the wilderness.” Section 1503(b)(10)(b) states: “The fact that non-wilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from areas within a wilderness area...shall not preclude the conduct of those activities outside the boundary of the wilderness area.” Thus, while activities occurring outside wilderness can affect wilderness character (i.e., solitude, naturalness, etc.), they will not be restricted because of those impacts. In addition, State-owned Endowment Trust Lands and private lands located within the wilderness boundaries are not subject to the provisions of the WMP.

The OPLMA states that designated wilderness areas shall be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136). Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act sets forth BLM’s responsibilities in administering wilderness areas, with the primary mandate being the preservation of wilderness character. In relevant part, the Wilderness Act states: “Except as otherwise provided..., each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area.”

Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act describes uses that are generally prohibited in order to preserve wilderness character, as follows:

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

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Because the above-described uses are prohibited as a rule, limited (rare and occasional) exceptions to the rule must either be specifically provided for in law or meet the rigorous test of being the minimum necessary to administer the area for the purposes of the Wilderness Act, and in a manner that minimizes their impact to wilderness character.

### **1.1.1 Wilderness Background**

The National Wilderness Preservation System was established by the Wilderness Act to ensure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas of the United States. The Wilderness Act defines wilderness characteristics, the uses of wilderness, and the activities prohibited within its boundaries.

Congress designates wilderness areas to protect and preserve the lands in their natural state. As such, wilderness areas provide a contrast to lands where human activities dominate the landscape.

Wilderness areas are managed for the use and enjoyment of the American people in a manner that will:

1. leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness,
2. protect and preserve wilderness character, and
3. allow for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness.

### **1.1.2 Wild and Scenic River Background**

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR Act) of 1968 (16 U.S.C. 1271-1287) was enacted to protect some of our Nation's rivers in their free-flowing condition. Section 10(a) of the WSR Act states:

***“Each component of the national wild and scenic rivers system shall be administered in such manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its esthetic, scenic, historic, archaeological, and scientific features. Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area.”***

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









**Owyhee River Wilderness**

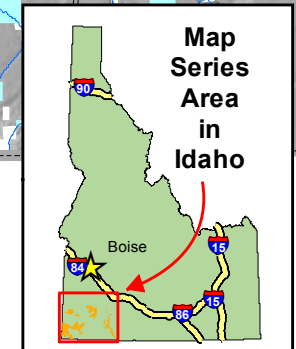
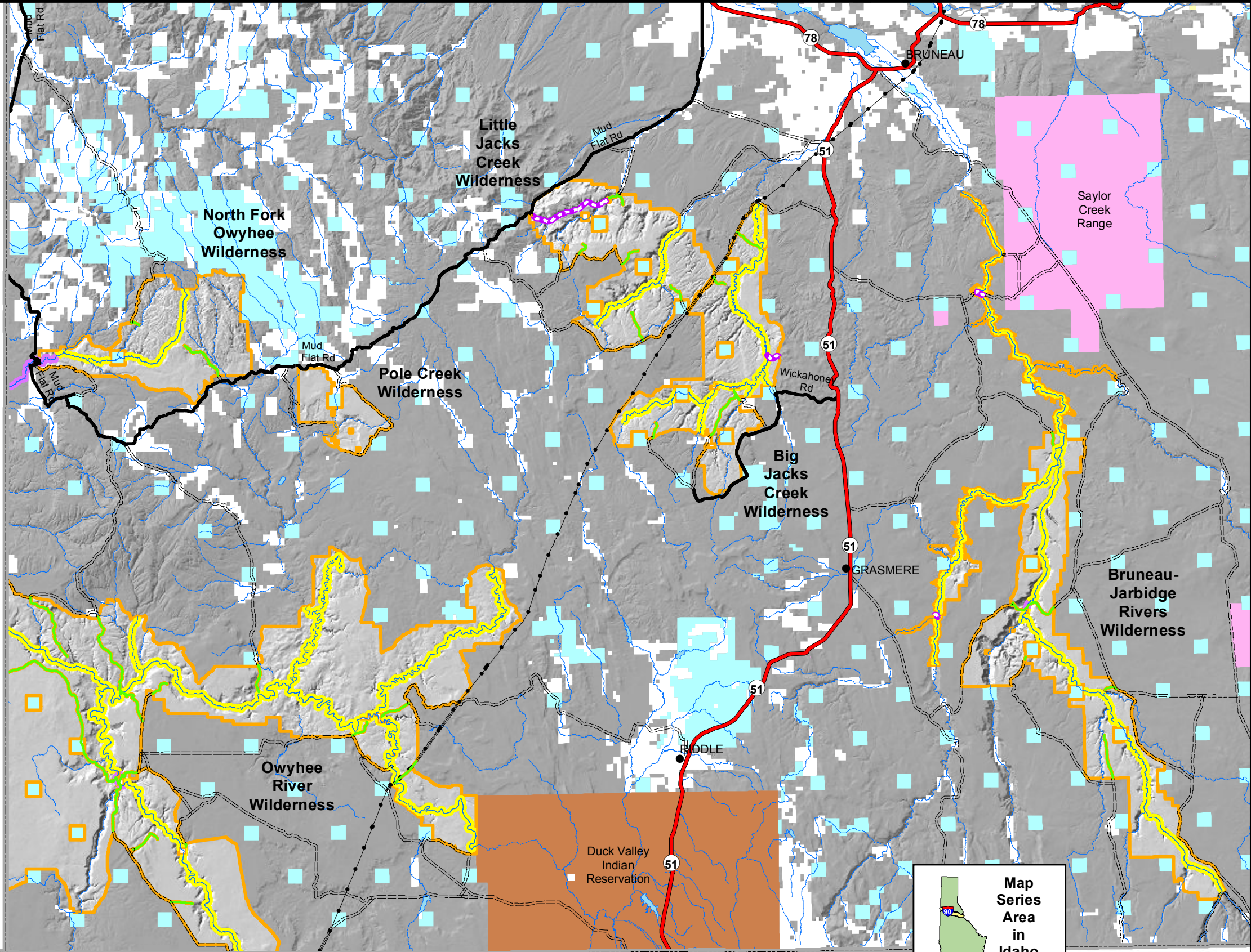


# Owyhee Wilderness Management Plan

## Map Series Overview and Legend

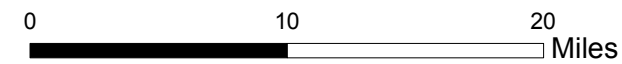
### LEGEND FOR WHOLE MAP SERIES:

-  Wilderness
-  Other Nearby Wilderness
-  Designated Recreational River
-  Designated Wild River
-  Undeveloped Campsite
-  Launch or Takeout
-  Overlook
-  Portage
-  Trailhead
-  Trail
-  Paved Road
-  Improved Route
-  Primitive Route
-  Cherry-stem Route
-  Pipeline
-  River or Stream
-  Lake or Reservoir
-  Township
-  State Boundary
-  Bureau of Land Management (all grey tones)
-  State of Idaho
-  Private (white)
-  Indian Reservation
-  Military

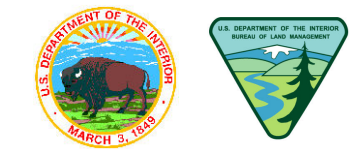


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U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District, Boise ID

Map date: September 19, 2012

## 1.2 Purpose for and Scope of the WMP

BLM Manual 8561 (Wilderness Management Plans) requires that wilderness areas be managed pursuant to a specific management plan. In addition, Section 3(d)(1) of the WSR Act requires that a Comprehensive River Management Plan be prepared to provide for the management and protection of WSR values. In fulfillment of the above requirements, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Boise and Twin Falls Districts (BDO and TFDO, respectively) have prepared this Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River Management Plan (WMP) to address future management of the six wilderness areas and 16 WSR segments. A consolidated plan was determined appropriate for the areas due to their relative proximity, comparable natural and cultural resources and values, and similar management issues.

As noted in Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976:

***“The Secretary shall manage the public lands under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield...except that where a tract of such public land has been dedicated to specific uses according to any other provisions of law it shall be managed in accordance with such law.”***

Based on the above-cited FLPMA direction, WMP decisions will be guided by requirements of the OPLMA, Wilderness Act, WSR Act, and House Report 101-405. Based on requirements of law and regulation, or by decisions reached through this planning process, some uses will be restricted or excluded on certain lands to protect and preserve wilderness character and to protect and enhance WSR values.

This WMP describes the existing environment in each of the wilderness areas and WSR segments. The plan proposes management actions to address specific management issues or concerns. The Environmental Assessment (EA) that follows the WMP describes and analyzes potential effects of imposing different levels of management to wilderness character and WSR values. This WMP is analyzed as the Proposed Action, which is usually compared to a No Action Alternative, defined as the continuation of current management. In this instance, however, a No Action Alternative would require BLM to continue managing wilderness areas and WSRs according to the multiple use requirements of FLPMA, which is contrary to the legal and regulatory requirements of the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act. Thus, the No Action Alternative will not be further analyzed or discussed. The Minimal Management Alternative incorporates what are considered to be the minimum land use restrictions necessary to preserve wilderness character and to protect and enhance WSR values. The Minimal Management Alternative includes no discretionary management actions.

### 1.2.1 Compliance with existing Laws and Regulations

The WMP complies with the Wilderness Act, the WSR Act, and the enabling OPLMA, as well as numerous other applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders, including 43 CFR Parts 6300 and 8560.

### 1.2.2 Consistency with Existing BLM Land Use Plans

The WMP conforms to applicable goals, objectives, and decisions of the Bruneau Management Framework Plan (1983), the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (1987), and the Owyhee Resource Management Plan (1999). The plan is also consistent with the goals and objectives being



proposed in the Revised Jarbidge Resource Management Plan, currently under development. Specific decisions from the above land use plans that are consistent with the wilderness and WSR management direction contained herein include the following:

**Bruneau MFP:**

- Retain in Federal ownership all public lands within wilderness areas and wild and scenic river corridors.

**Owyhee RMP:**

- Retain lands in public ownership in wilderness areas and wild and scenic river corridors,
- Manage designated wilderness in accordance with enabling legislation and other applicable Federal legislation and policies.
- Prohibit the construction of new rangeland (livestock, watershed, and wildlife) facilities within the primitive settings of the Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) associated with the Owyhee River system, except for a maximum of one linear mile of gap fences if needed to exclude livestock from river corridors. The affected SRMAs are:
  - North Fork Canyon SRMA.
  - North Fork Owyhee Backcountry SRMA.
  - Owyhee Canyonlands SRMA
  - Deep Creek SRMA.
- Protect and enhance California bighorn sheep habitat and populations within the boundaries of the Owyhee River Bighorn Sheep Habitat Area ACEC through continued implementation of the ACEC Management Plan.
- Provide appropriate management response (for wildfire), considering resource values, firefighter safety, costs, allowing natural fire to burn to meet resource objectives, in closely monitored opportunities, on all natural and human caused fires to meet established suppression standards. When prescriptive criteria are developed fires may be managed to meet resource objectives.
- Use rehabilitation techniques that are least damaging to wilderness resources, including:
  - Staggered or irregular seedings to blend with the landscape.
  - Hand or aerially-applied native seed species to restore natural vegetation.
  - Watershed reclamation to prevent soil erosion and to avoid impacts to wilderness values.
- Restrict the use of heavy equipment for wilderness fireline construction.

**Jarbidge RMP:**

- Manage wilderness areas in conformance with BLM wilderness management policy.
- Manage designated WSRs to protect their outstandingly remarkable values.
- Manage wilderness areas and WSRs as right-of-way exclusion areas.
- Retain public ownership of all Federal lands in wilderness areas and WSR corridors.

## **1.3 Wilderness Overview**

### **1.3.1 Wilderness Character**

The Wilderness Act defines wilderness and mandates that the primary management direction is to preserve wilderness character. The definition of wilderness is found in Section 2(c) of the

Wilderness Act, and the qualities of wilderness character are commonly described as follows (Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, 2011):

- **Untrammeled** - The "earth and its community of life" are essentially unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation in wilderness areas, "in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape." This quality is important because it helps insure that wilderness management respects the autonomy of nature that allows a place to be wild and free. This quality is impaired by human activities or actions that control or manipulate the components or processes of wilderness ecological systems.
- **Natural** - Wilderness ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization. Preserving this quality ensures that indigenous species, patterns and ecological processes are protected and allows us to understand and learn from natural features. This quality is impaired by intended or unintended effects of human actions or activities on ecological systems that would not otherwise exist, including roads, trails, seeded areas, non-native species, and departures from the natural fire regime.
- **Undeveloped** - Wilderness retains its "primeval character and influence," and is essentially "without permanent improvements" or modern human occupation. Preserving this quality keeps areas free from "expanding settlement and growing mechanization" and "with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable" as required by the Wilderness Act. Human developments, such as fences, water troughs, springs, etc., degrade this quality.
- **Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation** - The Wilderness Act provides individuals with opportunities to experience primitive recreation, natural sights and sounds, solitude, freedom, risk, the physical and mental challenges of self-discovery and self-reliance, and to use traditional skills free from the constraints of modern culture. This quality is impaired by the sight and sound of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment, signs of modern civilization, recreation facilities, and visitor encounters and management restrictions.
- **Unique, Supplemental, or Other Features** - The Wilderness Act states that wilderness areas "...may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value." Though these supplemental values need not be present for an area to meet the definition of wilderness, where they are present they are part of that area's wilderness character, and must be protected as rigorously as any of the four required qualities.

### ***1.3.1.1 Evaluating Impacts to Wilderness Character***

Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act describes the following activities or uses that are prohibited in wilderness "...except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area.)"

- commercial activities
- temporary and permanent roads
- use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or motorboats
- landing of aircraft
- use of other forms of mechanical transport
- structures
- installations

As defined in BLM Manual 6340, the above prohibited uses can be employed in wilderness only if they meet “minimum requirements” criteria.

Appendix B-1 of BLM Manual 6340 outlines the Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA) process. The Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center developed a Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) to aid managers in determining whether and to what extent actions proposed in wilderness areas will impact the wilderness characteristics described in Section 1.3.1. An overview of the MRDG process is included in Appendix G. BLM uses the MRDG process to answer two fundamental questions:

1. Is the proposed action necessary in wilderness (regardless of the tool or other use employed)?
  - a. Is the action necessary within wilderness or are there options available outside of wilderness?
  - b. Is the action necessary to satisfy valid existing rights or a special provision in wilderness legislation that allows or requires consideration of a Section 4(c) prohibited use?
  - c. Is the action necessary to meet the requirements of other laws, even laws that do not directly address wilderness?
  - d. Is the action necessary to preserve one or more of the qualities of wilderness character?
2. If the proposed action is necessary, describe a range of alternatives that employ the minimum amount of prohibited use(s) needed to address the issue at hand.
  - a. Fully describe the methods to be employed for each alternative.
  - b. Describe for each alternative the positive and negative effects to wilderness character, valid existing rights, the maintenance of traditional skills, economic and time constraints, and the safety of visitors and workers.
  - c. Document the decision rationale and the justification for the selected alternative.

The MRDG is not meant to be used during an emergency. However, the MRA concept should be incorporated into emergency planning so that the minimum necessary methods and tools can be used to resolve emergencies while preserving wilderness character to the greatest extent practicable.

### **1.3.2 Descriptions of the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas**

The six Wilderness Areas lie within the Northern Basin and Range, an elevated plateau with mountains separated by canyons draining into the Pacific Ocean via the Snake and Columbia rivers. The area lies within the broad regional landform and vegetative classification known as the Intermontane Sagebrush Province/Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem. The area contains diverse landforms and vegetation types, ranging from salt desert shrub communities in lower elevations to sagebrush-covered plateaus cut by rugged canyons to rolling juniper and mountain mahogany savannas in higher elevations. Wilderness Areas are managed under Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I Management Objectives, generally defined as pristine landscape with few or no human developments.

The wilderness areas are generally located within a two to four hour drive from Boise, Idaho’s largest metropolitan area. Although annual visitation is difficult to quantify across such a large area, collected traffic counter data (see Appendix F, *Traffic Counter Summary Data*) reflects low visitor numbers. Year round visitation is possible, but the wilderness areas’ remoteness and

ruggedness have historically prohibited high levels of human use and development. Visitation is also limited during winter when snow is common, and in summer when temperatures often exceed 100°F.

The areas exhibit characteristics valued for wilderness designation. Visitors experience very low levels of human impacts, abundant solitude, and enjoy several primitive recreational opportunities, including river floating, backpacking, hiking, angling, hunting, camping, rock climbing, enjoying scenery, and nature study. The remote canyons, rugged mountain areas, and WSR segments offer destinations for virtually every type of recreational user.

The wilderness areas provide opportunities to experience a sense of remoteness and isolation. Vehicular access to the wilderness areas is limited by topography, intermingled State and private land, and the primitive condition of existing access routes. In certain areas, primitive roads form portions of a wilderness boundary, and provide the most direct wilderness access. However, travel to and along some of the boundary roads necessitates crossing private land. In these cases, travelers are reminded that they need to request access from private landowners.

The numerous canyons, draws, ravines, rocky outcrops, and ridges create secluded locales that provide outstanding opportunities for solitude, when combined with the large size of the wilderness areas and the low visitor numbers. However, flat topography, sparse vegetation, and periodic sights and sounds of vehicles in adjacent lands, as well as aircraft flying overhead, may decrease experiences of solitude.

All of the wilderness areas support livestock grazing, although some allotments have been closed following voluntary grazing permit relinquishments. Table 1.5 lists the number and type of range projects located in each of the wilderness areas. Information about each project is included in Appendix D (*Wilderness Range Project Inventory Report*).

Wildlife populations that are characteristic of the Basin and Range are supported by the diverse habitat types found in these wilderness areas. Key habitats include sagebrush steppe, cliffs and canyons, riparian areas, and lower montane woodlands.

All of the wilderness areas provide Preliminary Priority and/or Preliminary General Habitats for the greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), a candidate species, as shown on Map 24 Sage-Grouse Preliminary General and Priority Habitats. Preliminary Priority Habitat (PPH) is defined as habitat having the highest conservation value to maintaining sustainable greater sage-grouse populations, and includes breeding, late brood-rearing, and winter concentration areas (BLM 2013). Preliminary General Habitat (PGH) includes areas of seasonal or year-round habitat outside of priority habitat (BLM 2013). PPH and PGH classifications are considered preliminary until an environmental impact statement and land use plan amendment are completed for the Idaho and Southwestern Montana Sub-Region, which is a component piece of the BLM and US Forest Service National Greater Sage-Grouse Planning Strategy (BLM 2013).

In Idaho, BLM manages more greater sage-grouse habitat than any other landowner, including over 10,600 square miles (65%) of the PPH and over 2,700 square miles (39%) of the PGH. The habitat in Owyhee County represents 34 percent of the total PPH and 37 percent of the total PGH managed by BLM in Idaho (BLM 2013). Most of the Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness areas are classified as PPH, with a smaller amount of PGH located in the southern half of the North Fork Owyhee Wilderness and along or within the canyons.

Each of the wilderness areas support California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis canadensis*) habitat and lambing areas, as shown on Map 21 - Bighorn Sheep Range and Lambing Areas.

The 2010 Idaho Department of Fish and Game Bighorn Sheep Management Plan (IDFG 2010) states that approximately 1,000 California bighorn sheep reside in Idaho. While the California bighorn sheep is considered to be genetically the same as the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game manages the two populations as separate species, designating those south of Interstate I-84 as California bighorns, and those north of I-84 as Rocky Mountain bighorns.

The Bighorn Sheep Management Plan identifies five California bighorn sheep Population Management Units (PMUs) in Idaho, three of which affect Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness areas. Population modeling based on the 2008 California bighorn sheep population surveys estimated population numbers for each of the PMUs. The Bruneau-Jarbidge PMU (212 animals) extends along the Sheep Creek and Bruneau and Jarbidge river drainages upstream of Indian Hot Springs. The Jacks Creek PMU (292 animals) extends across portions of the Little Jacks Creek and Big Jacks Creek wilderness areas, while the Owyhee River PMU (396 animals) covers the existing Owyhee River wilderness.

BLM is committed to conserving the three Owyhee County bighorn sheep populations, as reflected in the Owyhee River Bighorn Sheep Habitat Area ACEC Management Plan. Recent recommendations for domestic sheep and goat management in wild sheep habitat by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies conclude that the use of domestic sheep or goats for grazing or as pack animals within identified wild sheep habitat should be prohibited to reduce potential for disease transmission (IDFG 2010; Wild Sheep Working Group 2012). BLM will manage the Owyhee Canyonland Wilderness Areas consistent with these recommendations.

Big game hunting represents a major recreational activity in all of the wilderness areas. The Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness contains crucial winter habitat for mule deer and pronghorn. Since the 2007 Murphy Complex wildfire, elk use of this area has increased substantially. The wilderness areas overlap Idaho Hunt Units 40, 41, 42, and 46, and the Owyhee-South Hills Elk Zone. Trophy California bighorn sheep hunts also occur annually in the area.

The wilderness areas are located within the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Southwest Region, and recreational trapping occurs in the area subject to applicable State and Federal laws and regulations. Trapping has historically been targeted to small game and furbearers in the area, including American badger, red fox, bobcat, northern river otter, American beaver, mink, muskrat, and coyote. Nongame mammals, reptiles, and birds are diverse and provide the prey base for the areas' predators.

Federally-listed species within or near designated Wilderness Areas include the endangered Bruneau hot springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis bruneauensis*) and threatened bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), both of which are discussed in more detail in the WSR section. In addition, the greater sage-grouse and Columbia spotted frog (*Rana luteiventris*) are candidates for listing.

Table 1.1 and the following paragraphs provide brief descriptions of each wilderness area. Section 1503(a)(2) of the OPLMA, and BLM Manual 6120 require official wilderness boundary surveys that become the basis for Congressional wilderness maps and land descriptions that are approved by the BLM State Director.

The acreage of the Big Jacks Creek, Little Jacks Creek, and North Fork Owyhee Wilderness Areas differs from that showing in Section 1503 of the OPLMA. Although the legislatively-established boundaries were not changed, the acreage of the three wilderness areas was corrected following

boundary surveys approved by the BLM Idaho Chief Cadastral Surveyor, and following development of the official Congressional maps and land descriptions, approved by the BLM Idaho State Director. Acreages for the remaining wilderness areas will also be corrected as boundary surveys are completed.

Section 1503 of the OPLMA references legislative maps that show the intended boundary of each designated wilderness area. Supporters of the enabling legislation believe that GIS-based mapping errors resulted in the following wilderness boundary errors that need to be corrected:

- **Pole Creek Wilderness** - a small (4.7 acre) historic campsite located along the south side of Mud Flat Road in Section 6, T. 10 S., R. 2 W., should have been excluded from wilderness.
- **North Fork Owyhee Wilderness** – the 0.66 mile long Noon Creek cherrystem should have extended all the way to the Big Springs cow camp, which is about 0.8 miles past the current cherrystem terminus.
- **Owyhee River Wilderness** – The approximate 782 acres of wilderness lying east of the Dickshooter Road in Sections 1 and 2, T. 13 S., R. 2 W., should have been excluded from wilderness.

Unless or until the above wilderness boundary issues are legislatively resolved, the referenced areas will continue to be managed as wilderness.

**Table 1.1 - Acreage of Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas**

Wilderness Name	Acres
Big Jacks Creek Wilderness	52,684
Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness	89,996
Little Jacks Creek Wilderness	51,491
North Fork Owyhee Wilderness	44,676
Owyhee River Wilderness	267,328
Pole Creek Wilderness	12,533

Thirty cherrystem routes provide public access to or through the six wilderness areas. Cherrystems are usually defined as dead-end routes where the boundary of a wilderness area extends up one side of the route, around its terminus, and down the other side. However, some cherrystem routes cross entirely through the Big Jacks Creek, Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers, and Owyhee River Wilderness Areas, effectively splitting them into smaller subunits. Cherrystems are not designated by Congress, but rather, result from the wilderness boundaries that Congress designates. Cherrystem routes are non-wilderness, and as such, their use and management will be addressed by the Boise and Twin Falls Districts as they individually prepare Travel Management Plans for non-wilderness public lands in their respective areas, in accordance with Section 1507 of the OPLMA. To ensure that wilderness areas are not affected by vehicular use of cherrystem routes, turn-arounds at the end of cherrystems will be limited to the 60 foot total width of the cherrystem.



### **1.3.2.1 Big Jacks Creek Wilderness**

The area consists of deep canyons, cold-water streams, and uplands that provide habitat for several sensitive species, including greater sage-grouse, California bighorn sheep, and redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) (a sensitive species adapted to high desert regions of Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon).

The wilderness contains four WSR segments, including Big Jacks, Wickahoney, Duncan, and Cottonwood creeks. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the WSR segments, including their attributes, classification, and recognized Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs). Primitive roads and the Northwest Pipeline right-of-way form much of the boundary of this wilderness area. In the southern portion of the wilderness, the Hill Pasture cherrystem route crosses through and splits the wilderness (see Map 1.2 Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers). Access to the Hill Pasture and Holman cherrystems necessitates crossing private land.

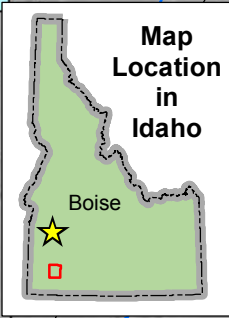
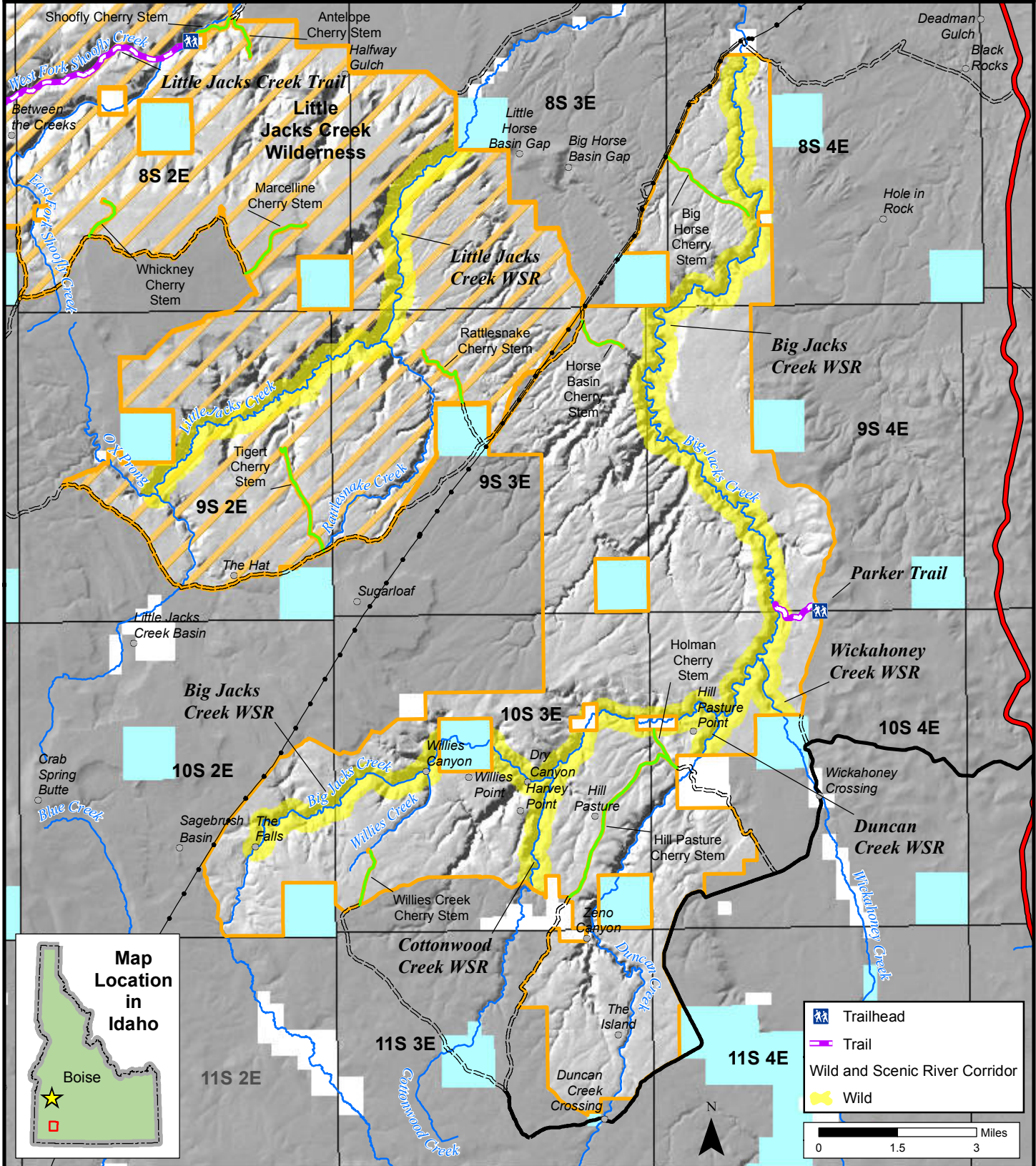
Approximately one mile of an old two-track route, the Parker Trail, provides non-motorized recreational access from the eastern wilderness boundary to the Big Jacks Creek Canyon. The route has been partially reclaimed and rehabilitated, which will improve the naturalness of the area by fostering new plant growth and enhancing vegetation communities and wildlife habitat, as well as enhancing the visitor's feeling of remoteness.



**Big Jacks Creek Wilderness**

# Big Jacks Creek Wilderness Including Wild and Scenic Rivers

Map 1.2



**Map Location in Idaho**

Boise

- Trailhead
- Trail
- Wild and Scenic River Corridor
- Wild

0 1.5 3 Miles



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District  
Map date: September 18, 2012



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### **1.3.2.2 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness**

This wilderness is principally comprised of the canyons of the main Bruneau, West Fork of the Bruneau, and Jarbidge rivers, and the lower portion of Sheep Creek. Segments of these rivers have been designated as WSRs (Table 1.2). The canyons are habitat for a population of approximately 200 California bighorn sheep (IDFG 2010). The Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers are designated critical habitat for the threatened bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*). Specific hot springs along the lower one-half mile of the Bruneau River in the wilderness area are also habitat for the endangered Bruneau hot springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis bruneauensis*). Additionally, the Bruneau River Canyon is habitat for the Bruneau River prickly phlox (*Linanthus glabrum*), an endemic sensitive plant. The WSRs and wilderness area are nationally renowned for their exceptional scenic beauty and challenging Class III and IV whitewater, which accounts for large increases of boaters during the short spring runoff period.

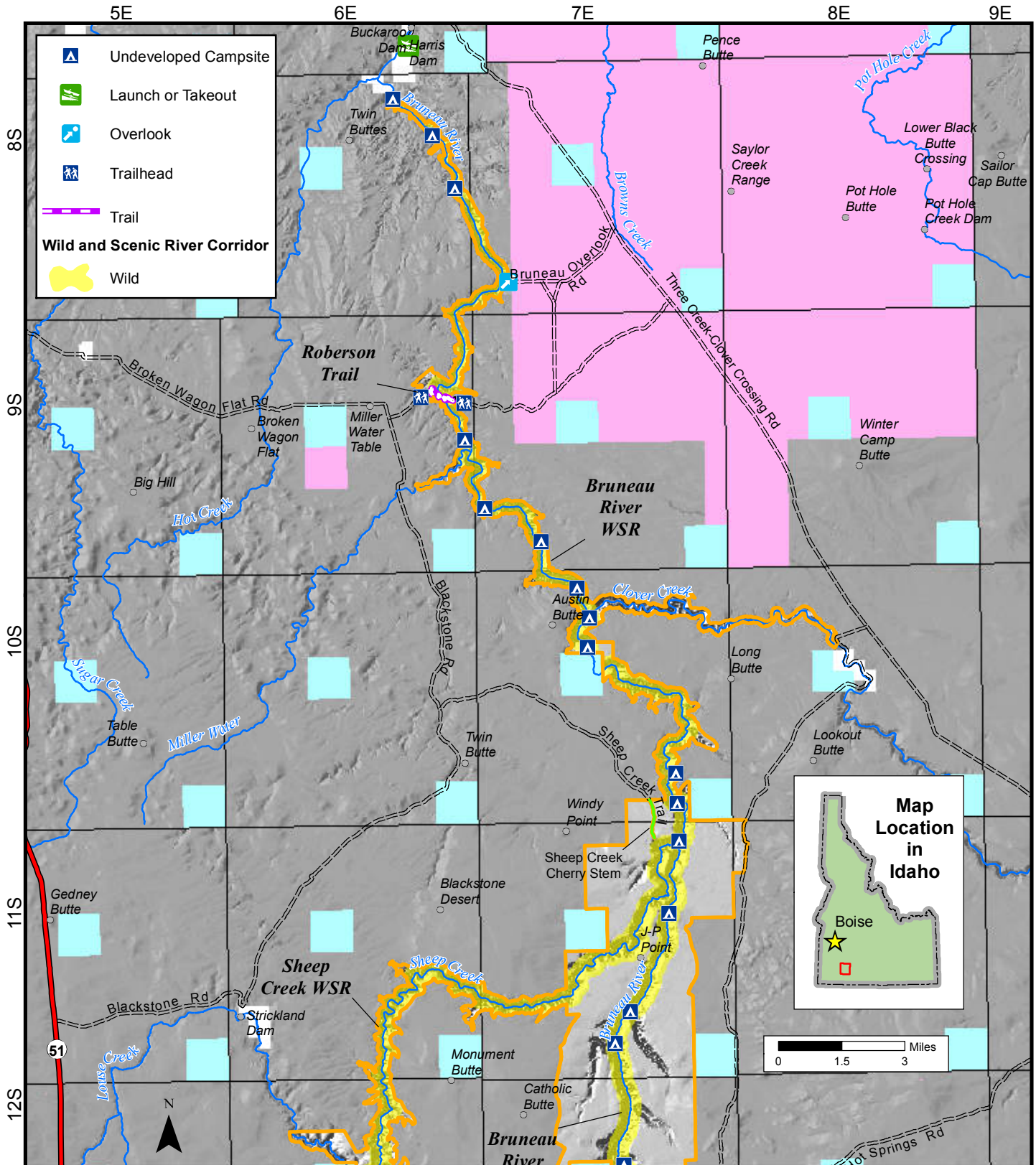
Designated cherrystem routes provide access to the Bruneau River Indian Hot Springs put-in site from the east and the west, effectively splitting the wilderness in half. Access to the Jarbidge River put-in site is via the Murphy Hot Springs road (see Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers and Map 1.4 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (South), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers).



**Bruneau River**

# Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers

Map 1.3



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District  
Map date: September 19, 2012

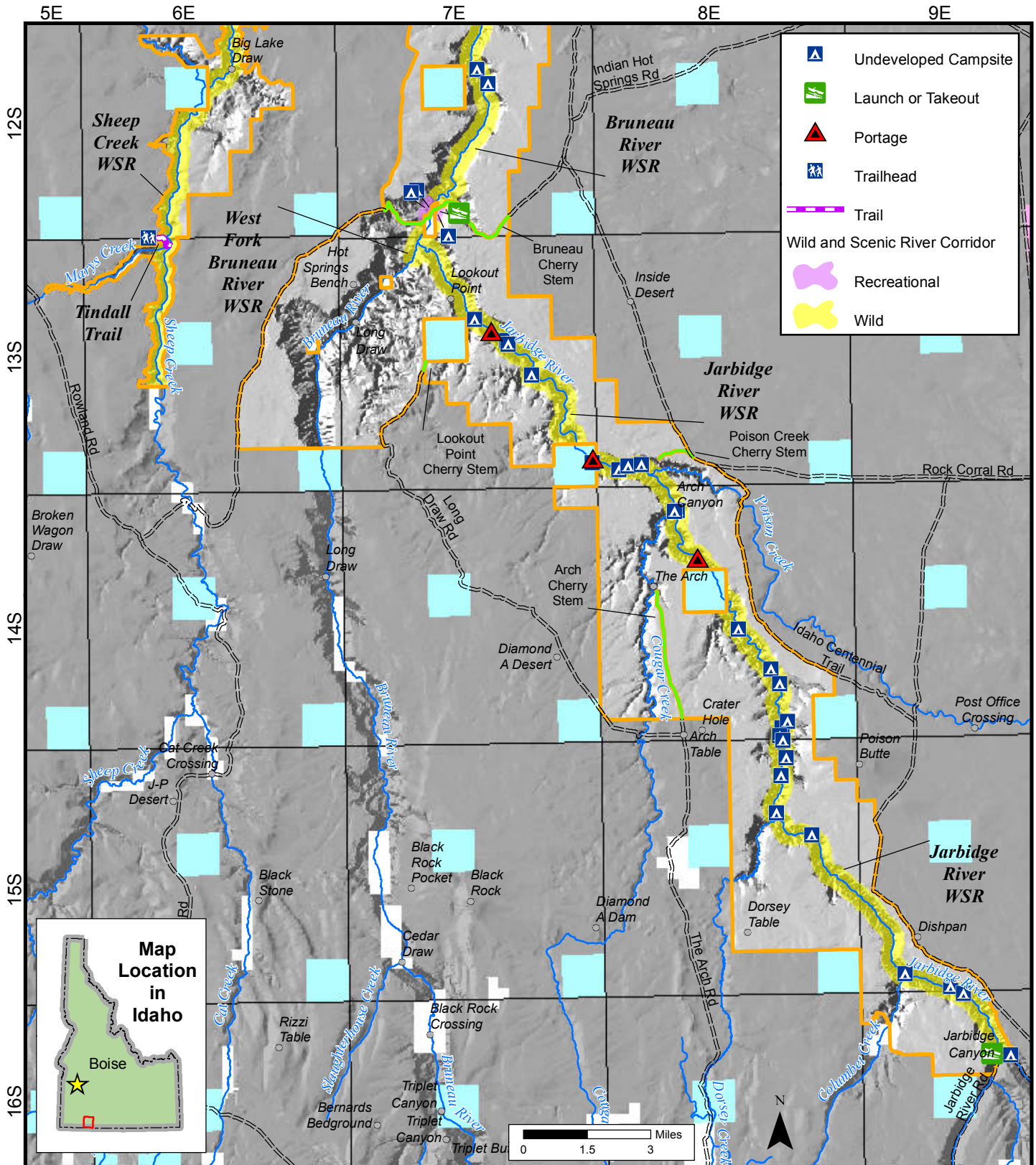


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# Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (South) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers

Map 1.4



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District  
Map date: September 19, 2012



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### ***1.3.2.3 Little Jacks Creek Wilderness***

The Little Jacks Creek area is popular for hiking, backpacking, angling and nature observation. Little Jacks Creek is the closest BLM wilderness to Boise and the urban areas of the Treasure Valley in southwest Idaho, and receives a higher volume of recreational use than the other wilderness areas (see Map 1.5 Little Jacks Creek Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers).

The Little Jacks Creek Wilderness supports a population of California bighorn sheep and contains a WSR segment of the same name (Table 1.2).

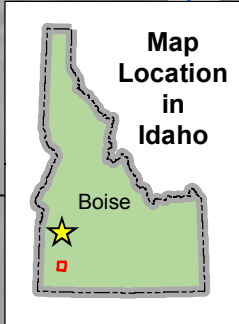
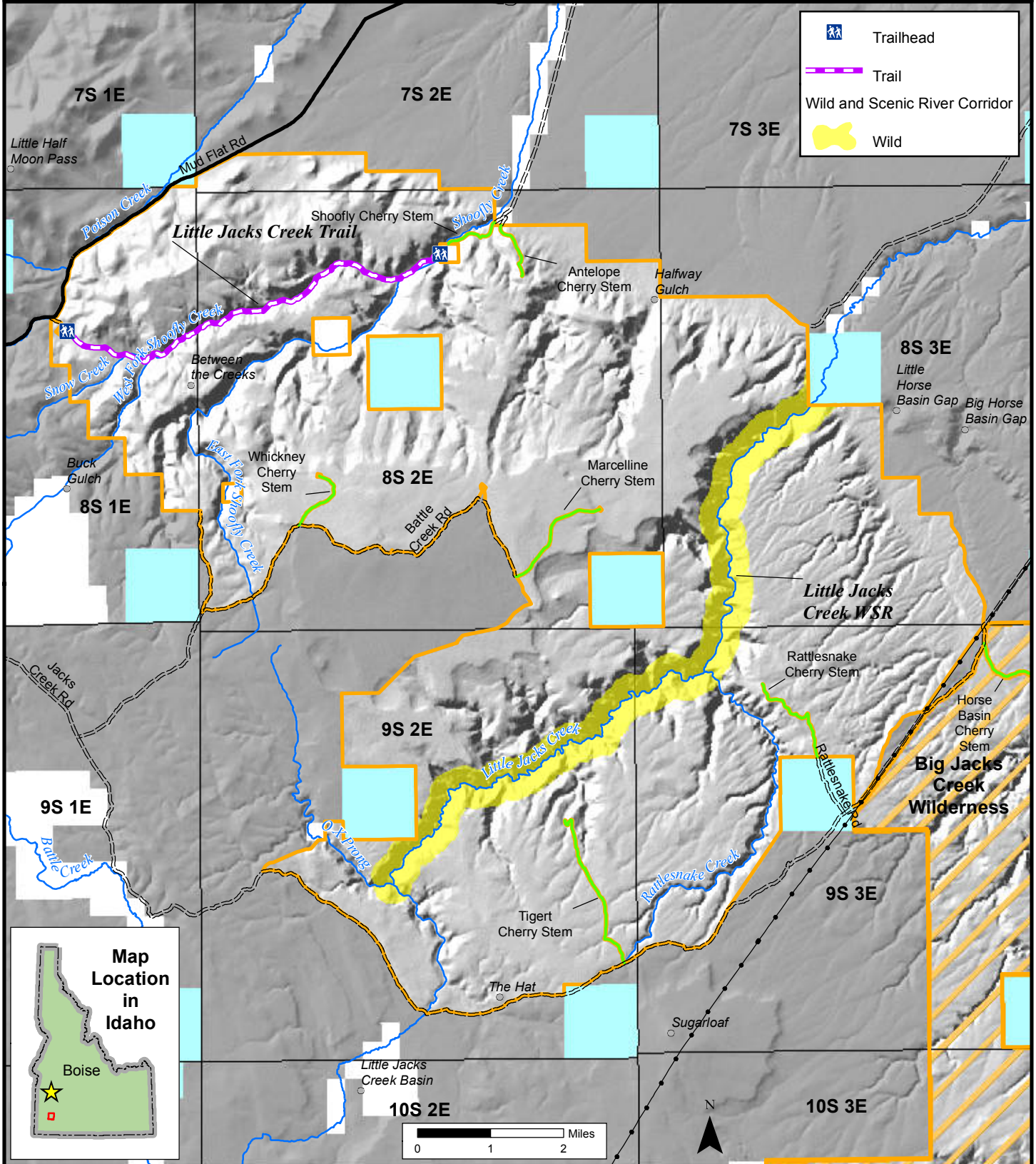


**Little Jacks Creek Wilderness**



# Little Jacks Creek Wilderness Including Wild and Scenic Rivers

Map 1.5



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District  
Map date: September 18, 2012



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#### **1.3.2.4 North Fork Owyhee Wilderness**

This wilderness exhibits some of the most diverse habitats in Southwest Idaho, including riparian areas, grassland, sagebrush uplands, and juniper woodlands. The wilderness also supports known occurrences of three BLM special status plants - short-lobed penstemon (*Penstemon seorsus*), dimeresia (*Dimeresia howellii*), and thinleaf goldenhead (*Pyrrocoma linearis*). Pleasant Valley Creek cuts a canyon northwesterly through the middle of the Pleasant Valley Table as it drains to the North Fork Owyhee River. The wilderness also contains the 300-foot deep Current Creek canyon that flows south into Deep Creek and the Owyhee River Canyon (see Map 1.6 North Fork Owyhee Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers).

The North Fork Owyhee WSR flows through and extends southwestwardly outside of this wilderness area to the Idaho–Oregon border (Table 1.2). The principal river access site is the North Fork Campground, located along Juniper Mountain Road, immediately west of the wilderness area. The Nickel Creek cherrystem accesses the eastern portion of the wilderness south of the North Fork Owyhee River, while the Noon Creek cherrystem accesses the northwest portion of the wilderness.

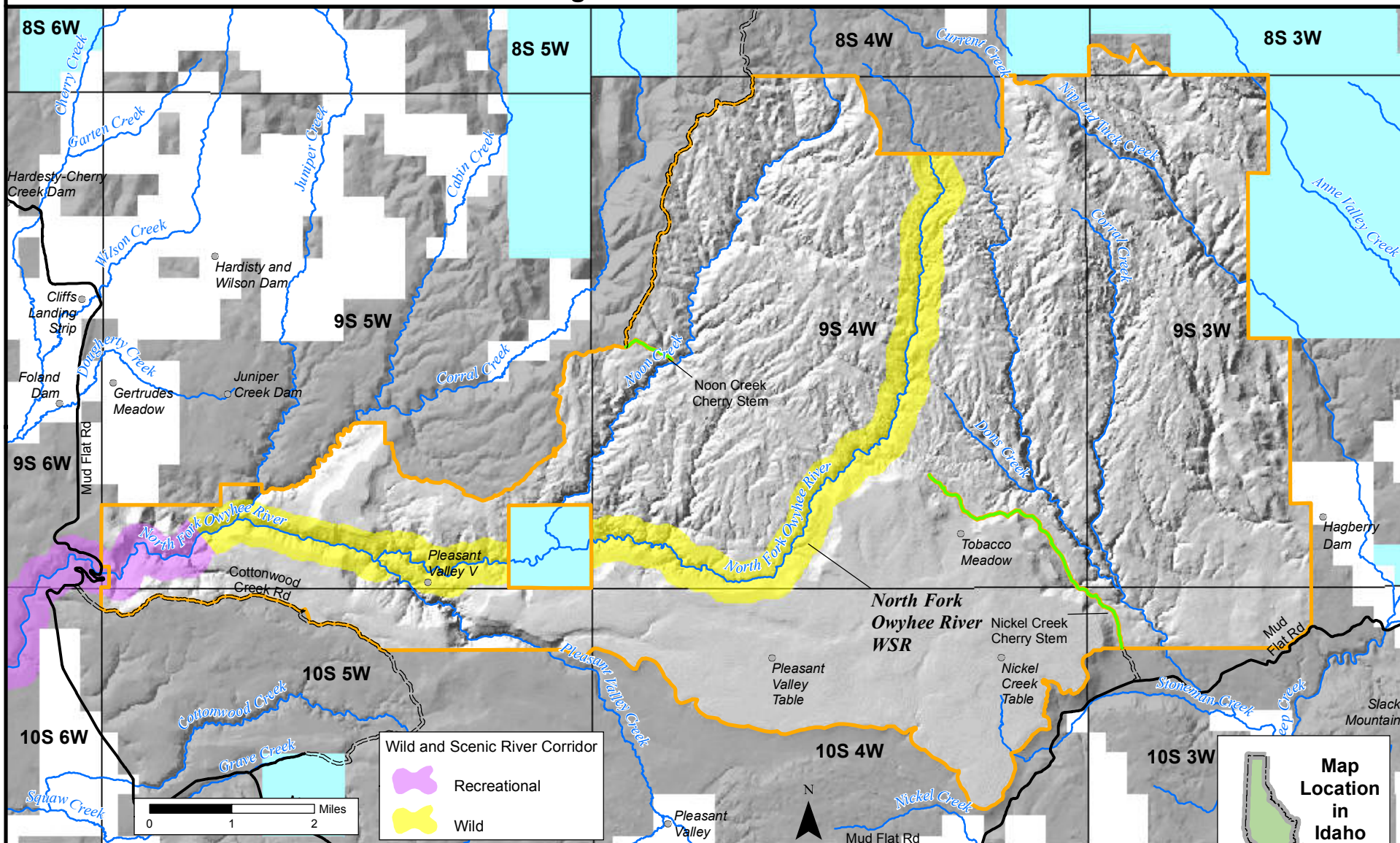


**North Fork Owyhee Wilderness**



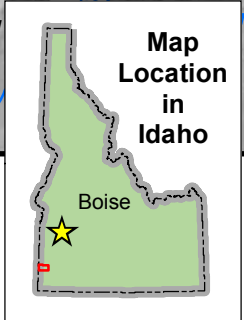
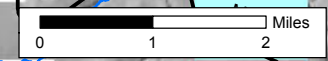
# North Fork Owyhee Wilderness Including Wild and Scenic Rivers

Map 1.6



**Wild and Scenic River Corridor**

- Recreational
- Wild



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Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District  
Map date: August 31, 2012



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### 1.3.2.5 Owyhee River Wilderness

The scenic canyons and uplands of this expansive wilderness provide good habitat for greater sage-grouse and a large herd of California bighorn sheep. The area also supports intact reference shrub communities and provides habitat for several special status plant species. One species of particular note is the Owyhee forget-me-not (*Hackelia ophiobia*), an endemic plant species restricted to deep canyons of the Owyhee River system.

The wilderness contains six WSR segments, including the Owyhee and South Fork Owyhee rivers, and Battle, Deep, Dickshooter, and Red Canyon creeks. Table 1.2 provides a summary of the recognized attributes and ORVs of these WSR segments. The wilderness has eleven cherrystem routes, five of which cross through the wilderness, splitting it into six subunits. Also unique is that the easterly edge of the Owyhee River forms the wilderness boundary for a distance of 1.3 miles downstream from the Northwest Pipeline right-of-way. Thus, the westerly portion of the WSR corridor along this 1.3 mile river stretch lies outside of the wilderness area (see Map 1.7 Owyhee River Wilderness (West), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers and Map 1.8 Owyhee River Wilderness (East), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers).

The following travel routes provide the principal access to or near the Owyhee River. It should be noted that access to some of the routes necessitates crossing private land, thus requiring the traveler to request permission from the landowner.

- 45 Ranch cherrystem provides access to the South Fork Owyhee River from both the east and the west.
- Access road to the Garat Crossing put-in on the west side of the Owyhee River downstream from the Northwest Pipeline crossing. This road currently crosses private property.
- Crutcher Crossing cherrystem provides access to the Owyhee River from both the north and south. Access from the north crosses private property.
- Dukes V cherrystem on the north side of the Owyhee River. Access to this route crosses private property.
- Rickert cherrystem on the north side of the Owyhee River. This route ends at the canyon rim above the river, with a 1/8 mile trail to the river. Access to this route crosses private property.
- Battle Creek cherrystem on the north side of the Owyhee River provides access to private land along the river, but does not provide public access to the river. Access to this route may cross private property.
- Wiley cherrystem on the south side of the Owyhee River provides access to private land along the river, but does not provide public access to the river.
- Coyote Hole cherrystem on the east side of the South Fork Owyhee River provides access to private land along the river, but does not provide public access to the river.
- Pipeline cherrystem on the east side of the Owyhee River along the Northwest Pipeline. This route ends at the canyon rim above the river.
- Little Owyhee, Walcott, and South Fork cherrystems provide access to or near the west side of the South Fork Owyhee River canyon.
- Chilly Gulch cherrystem provides access to near the south side of the Owyhee River east of Crutcher Crossing.

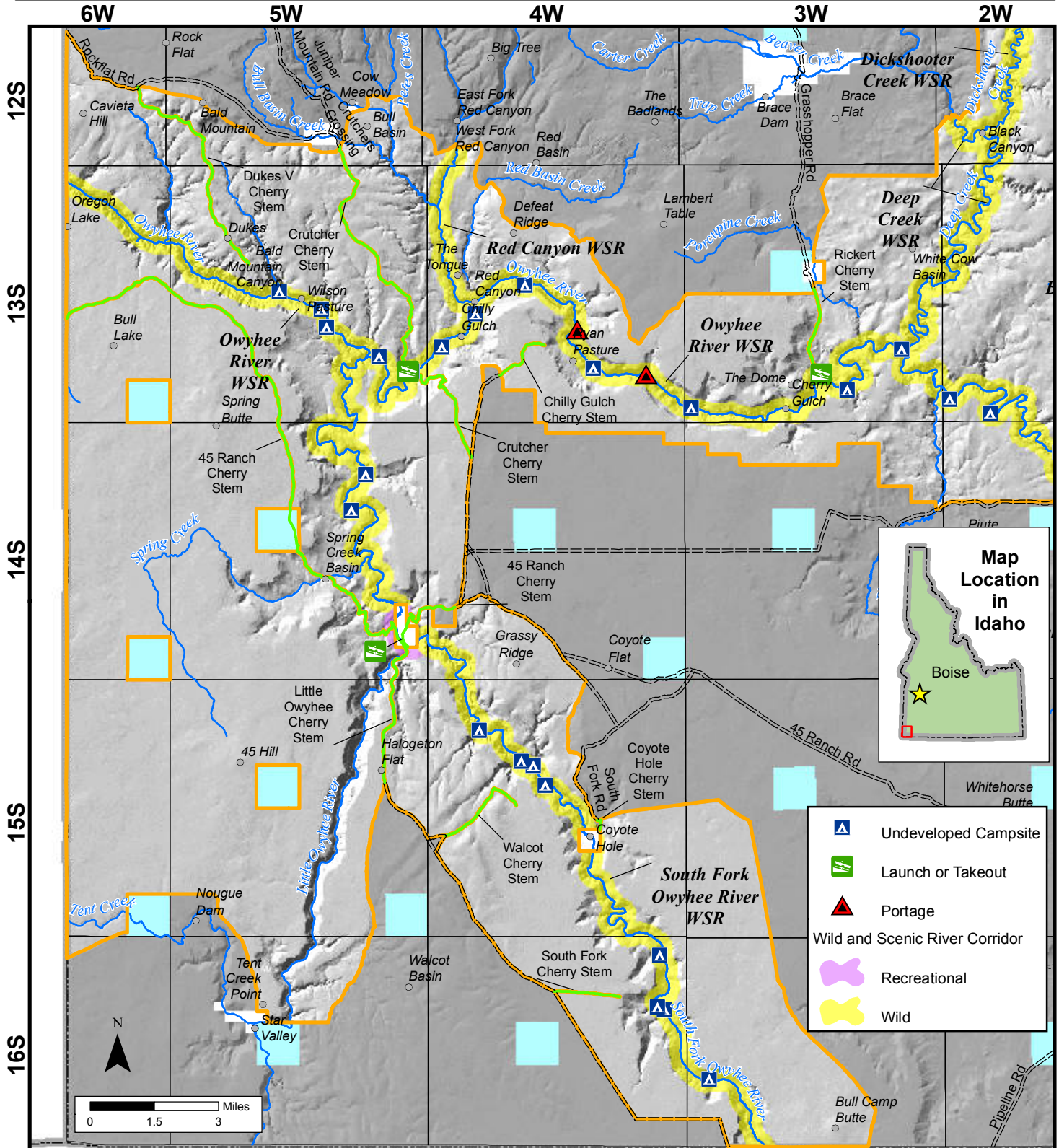


**Owyhee River Wilderness**



# Owyhee River Wilderness (West) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers

Map 1.7



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District  
Map date: August 31, 2012

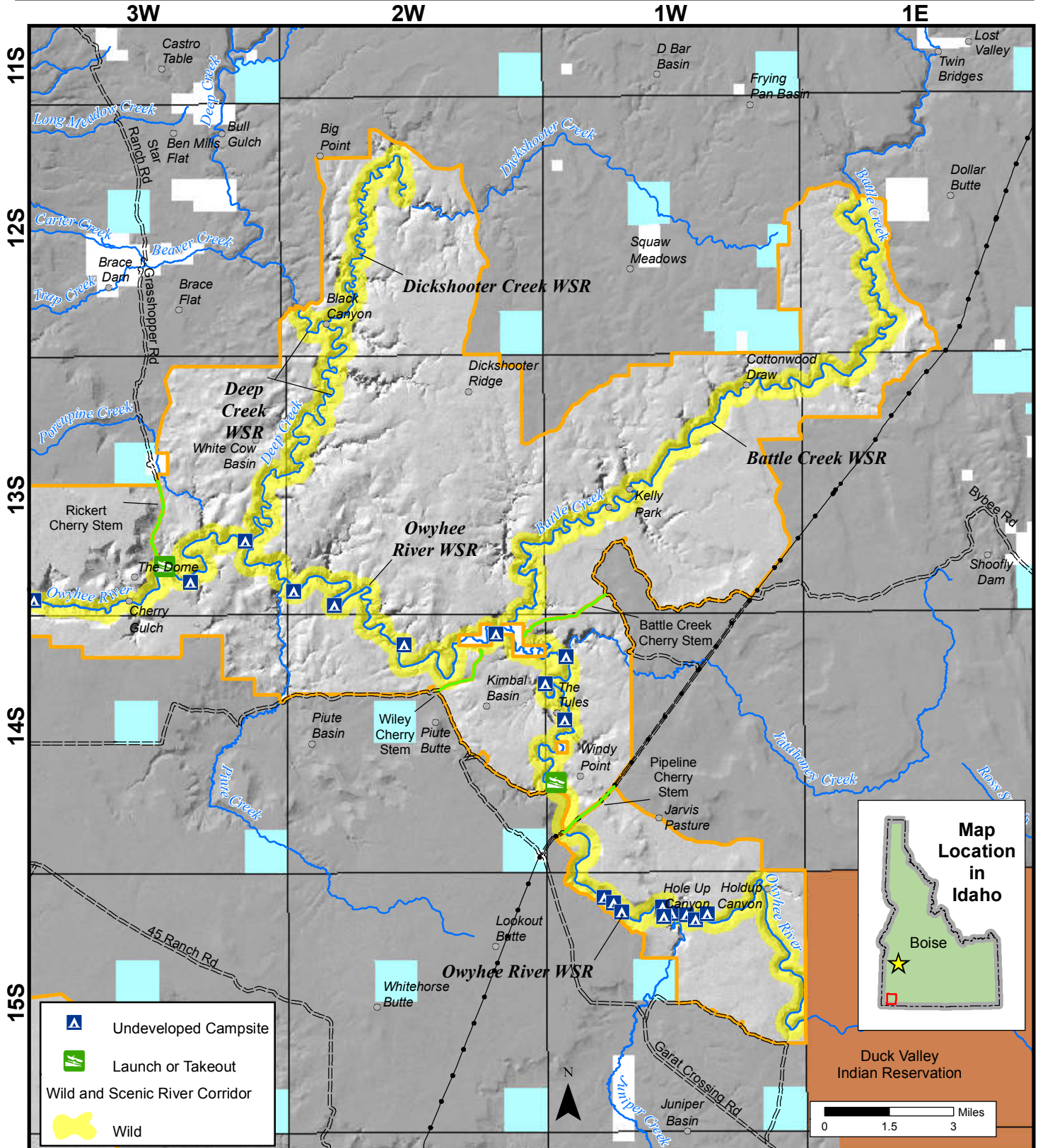


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# Owyhee River Wilderness (East) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers

Map 1.8



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Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
Boise District  
Map date: August 31, 2012



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### **1.3.2.6 Pole Creek Wilderness**

The only direct public access to the Pole Creek Wilderness is from Mud Flat Road, which forms the wilderness boundary along an approximate two mile-long section at the northwest corner of the wilderness near Bullhead Basin. Other access routes cross private land, and thus require permission from the landowner(s).

The Pole Creek Wilderness Area contains historic, cultural, scenic, and wildlife values, but no WSR segment. Many of the historic sites are associated with early homesteading and Basque settlement. The wilderness area incorporates portions of the Camas and Pole Creeks Archaeological District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The area also supports various sensitive species, including populations of Columbia spotted frog, greater sage-grouse, Mud Flat milkvetch (*Astragalus yoder-williamsii*), and Bacigalupi's downingia (*Downingia bacigalupii*). Portions of Pole Creek contain pristine riparian communities (see Map 1.9 Pole Creek Wilderness).

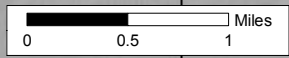
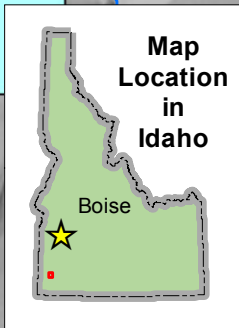
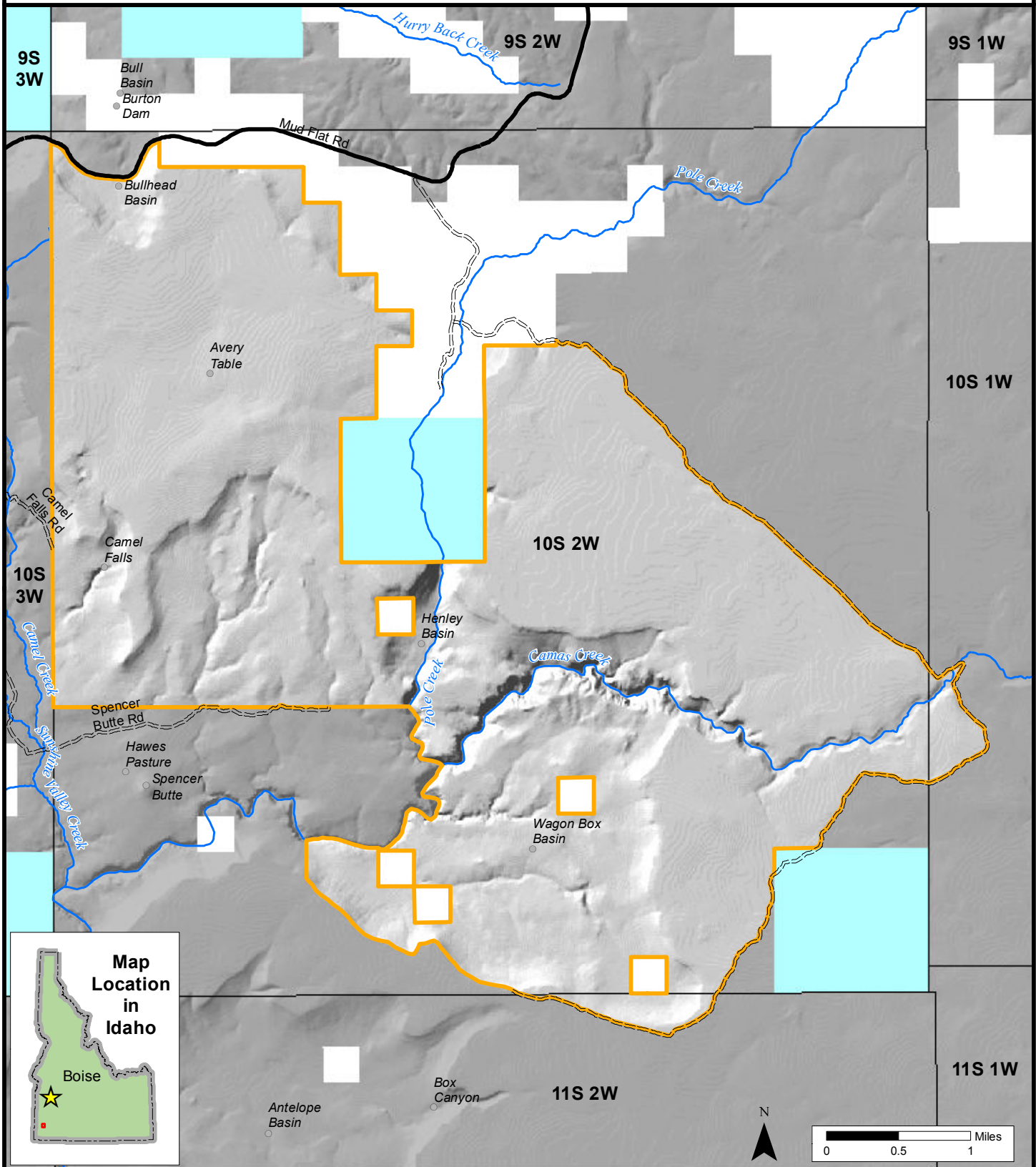


**Pole Creek Wilderness**



# Pole Creek Wilderness

Map 1.9



U.S. Department of the Interior  
 Bureau of Land Management, Idaho  
 Boise District  
 Map date: August 31, 2012



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### 1.3.3 Wilderness Issues Being Addressed

This WMP was prepared to address issues identified through internal agency and public scoping. Interested individuals were involved in this process during public meetings and through letters, e-mail, the BLM website, and personal contact. Initial public scoping meetings were held during the spring of 2011 in Boise, Grand View, Murphy, Nampa, and Twin Falls, Idaho. Issues and concerns raised during scoping were considered during development of this WMP and are described in the following sections.

#### 1.3.3.1 *Protecting and preserving the untrammelled, undeveloped, and natural appearance of wilderness areas*

- Structures associated with historic and valid existing land uses may not be conducive to or compatible with preservation of wilderness character and WSR values.
- Wildfire suppression and post-fire rehabilitation may affect the “natural” and “undeveloped” wilderness character by disturbing soil and changing vegetative composition and structure.
- The configuration of the wilderness areas resulted in unusually long perimeters compared to the area within their boundaries. Long boundary perimeters increase the amount of wilderness that may be impacted by human-influenced changes to vegetative structure and composition in areas immediately adjacent to the wilderness areas, especially following large-scale wildfires, such as the 2012 Jacks Fire.
- Human activities may increase the establishment of noxious and non-native invasive plant species; in particular, cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), whitetop (*Cardaria draba*), perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), tamarisk (*Tamarix parviflora*), spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), and rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*).
- Numbers of visitors to wilderness areas may increase, which could result in site-specific impacts to wilderness character and/or WSR values.
- The notoriety and popularity of wilderness areas resulting from their designation may increase visitation to a level that poses a risk to designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Outstanding Natural Areas (ONA), or Research Natural Areas (RNA) (Map 2 Owyhee Canyon Wilderness Areas ACECs, RNAs, and ONAs), including:
  - The Tules RNA (Owyhee River Wilderness),
  - California Bighorn Sheep Habitat ACEC (Owyhee River Wilderness),
  - North Fork Juniper Woodland ONA (North Fork Owyhee Wilderness),
  - Pleasant Valley Table RNA (North Fork Owyhee Wilderness),
  - Cottonwood Creek ACEC (Big Jacks Creek Wilderness).
  - Bruneau/Jarbidge River ACEC (Jarbidge Field Office portion of the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness)

#### 1.3.3.2 *Management of non-conforming land uses allowed by Section 4(d) of the Wilderness Act and the OPLMA*

- Continued livestock grazing-related activities, including access to and maintenance of existing structures (i.e., springs, pipelines, fences, reservoirs, etc.), may adversely affect naturalness and undeveloped wilderness character and WSR values.



- Mineral exploration and extraction activities within valid existing mining claims may adversely affect naturalness, and untrammeled and undeveloped wilderness character and WSR values.

## 1.4 Wild and Scenic River (WSR) Overview

### 1.4.1 WSR Designation

Congress established the WSR system to protect rivers (or river segments) in their free flowing condition. In addition to free flowing, a river must have one or more “outstandingly remarkable values” (ORVs), including scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values.

Rivers are classified as wild, scenic, or recreational according to the following criteria:

- **Wild**— Rivers or sections thereof that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted.
- **Scenic**— Rivers or sections thereof that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. None of the river segments in this area are designated as Scenic.
- **Recreational**— Rivers or sections thereof that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Rivers classified as Recreational do not necessarily have to possess a Recreation ORV.

The WSR Act encourages river management that crosses political boundaries and promotes public participation in developing goals for river protection. Designated river segments need not include the entire river and may include tributaries.

Specific WSR corridor widths are not reflected on the wilderness maps, since formal boundary surveys have not been completed. Until the corridor boundaries are surveyed, Section 1504(b) of the OPLMA defines interim WSR corridor boundaries that extend not more than the shorter of:

1. An average distance of ¼ mile from the high water mark on both sides of the river, or
2. The distance to the nearest confined canyon rim.

When completed, official corridor boundary surveys will result in official maps and legal descriptions for each WSR segment. These documents will be certified by the BLM Idaho Chief Cadastral Surveyor and approved by the BLM Idaho State Director, per Section 12.E.1 of BLM Manual 6120.

Streamflows are not well defined for 14 of the 16 river segments; however, high and low streamflows were calculated (and then protected through water right claims filed in December 2012) in order to ensure that WSR management decisions protect and enhance the recognized ORVs that are dependent on the various flows.

High flows maintain the habitat (channel scouring and cleaning, deposition of nutrients into riparian areas, etc.) that supports the viability of fish populations. High flows also provide recreational opportunities that support public use and enjoyment, primarily through boating. Low flows are necessary to support cold water biota during the dry, summer season by providing the habitat (i.e., pools, substrate, hiding cover) needed for the year-long survival of aquatic species.

This is particularly important for the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers, which are designated critical habitat for the threatened bull trout.

### 1.4.2 WSR Descriptions

Table 1.2 lists the WSRs designated within each of the affected wilderness areas, and identifies the outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) recognized for each segment. Thirteen of the river segments, totaling about 317 miles, are designated as wild, while three segments, totaling about eight miles, are designated as recreational.

**Table 1.2 - Wild and Scenic Rivers with identified ORVs grouped by Wilderness Area**

River Name	Length (Miles <sup>2</sup> )	Classification	Scenic	Recreational	Geologic	Fish	Wildlife	Cultural/ Historical	Other <sup>3</sup>
Big Jacks Creek Wilderness									
Wickahoney Creek	1.5	Wild	X	NA	NA	X	X	NA	NA
Big Jacks Creek	36.2	Wild	X	X	NA	X	X	NA	X
Cottonwood Creek	2.5	Wild	X	X	NA	X	X	NA	X
Duncan Creek	0.9	Wild	X	X	NA	X	X	NA	NA
Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness									
Bruneau River	38.8	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	0.6	Recreational							
West Fork Bruneau River	0.3	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	X	NA
Sheep Creek	26.2	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	X	NA
Jarbidge River	29.6	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Little Jacks Creek Wilderness									
Little Jacks Creek	12.4	Wild	X	X	NA	X	X	NA	X
North Fork Owyhee Wilderness									
North Fork Owyhee River	16.1	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
	5.8	Recreational							
Owyhee River Wilderness									
Owyhee River	69.7	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	NA	X
South Fork Owyhee River	30.6	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	X	NA
	1.2	Recreational							
Red Canyon Creek	4.7	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Deep Creek	13.6	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Battle Creek	24.3	Wild	X	X	X	X	X	NA	X
Dickshooter Creek	9.5	Wild	NA	X	X	X	X	NA	NA
Pole Creek Wilderness - contains no WSR Segments									
Total WSR miles	324.5								

<sup>2</sup> River miles are rounded to the nearest one-tenth mile.

<sup>3</sup> Bruneau River prickly phlox along the Bruneau and Jarbidge Rivers; Owyhee River forget-me-not along the Owyhee River and some tributaries

Two apparent inconsistencies appear in Section 1504 of the OPLMA, which describes the beginning and ending points of designated WSR segments.

Section 1504(a)(190)(A) of the OPLMA describes the recreational segment of the North Fork Owyhee River as:

***“The 5.7 mile segment from the Idaho-Oregon State border to the upstream boundary of the private land at the Juniper Mt. Road crossing, as a recreational river.”***

---

The only private land in Idaho crossed by the North Fork Owyhee River is the former Hanley property, which BLM acquired in 2011, at which time it became a part of the adjacent North Fork Owyhee Wilderness. The OPLMA describes the upstream boundary of this property as being at the Juniper Mountain Road crossing, when in fact the Juniper Mountain Road crossing is located near the downstream end of the property. However, since the upstream boundary of the parcel is located approximately 5.7 miles from the Oregon border, we accept that this is the endpoint of the recreational segment described in the OPLMA. As such, WSR maps (refer to Map 1.6 North Fork Owyhee Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) show the recreational river segment extending from the Idaho-Oregon border to the upstream boundary of the former Hanley property.

Section 1504(a)(194)(B) of the OPLMA describes the recreational segment of the South Fork Owyhee River as:

***“...the 1.2-mile segment of the South Fork of the Owyhee River from the point at which the river enters the southernmost boundary to the point at which the river exits the northernmost boundary of private land in sec. 25 and 26, T. 14 S., R. 5 W., Boise Meridian...”***

---

Since no private land exists in section 26, but does exist in section 36 and is contiguous to that in section 25, this description reflects a simple typographical error, and should read “...private land in sec. 25 and 36, T. 14 S., R. 5 W., Boise Meridian...” As such, WSR maps show this recreational river segment extending through the private land in sections 25 and 36.

#### **1.4.2.1 WSR Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)**

Designated WSRs possess one or more ORVs that are considered unique, rare, or exemplary at a comparative regional or national scale, including scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values. The area of consideration may vary by resource; it may be all BLM-administered lands within a state, a portion of a state, or an appropriately scaled physiographic or hydrologic unit. The following ORVs have been identified for the 16 WSR segments designated by the OPLMA:

**Scenic Values:** Landscape forms throughout the Owyhee Canyonlands vary from broad, open sagebrush steppes to narrow canyons, some exceeding 800 feet in depth. The canyons are dominated by a mixture of high, vertical lines and forms of coarse-textured, red, brown, or blackish eroded cliffs, often glazed with yellow to light green micro-flora. Intertwined with the vertical features are some very steep diagonal lines that frame triangular forms associated with talus slopes. The slopes have a mosaic of medium-textured, yellow and subdued green sagebrush-bunchgrass communities and/or dark green juniper, as well as either medium-textured, reddish

rhyolite rubble fields or coarse-textured, blackish basalt rubble fields. In some areas, colorful rhyolite spires and rock pinnacles (“hoodoos”) line the canyons and provide vivid contrast to the deep green of the dense riparian ribbons that flank the stream channels.

Spring rains result in medium-textured, rich green riparian vegetation that follows the meandering lines of fast moving streams that run brownish in high flows. Large boulders and whitewater rapids are interspersed to varying degrees between the calm reaches. During summer months, sparkling pools and slow-moving water tinted with green and brown channel colors reflect blue sky and a blend of forms, colors, and lines from surrounding cliffs and steep slopes. Receding waters also expose whitish, medium-textured stream-bottom gravel and boulders.

Although basalt and rhyolite canyon/riparian associations are widespread over southwest Idaho, the associations found along the Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge WSR segments are among the best representations of this landscape in the region. The combinations of line, form, color, and texture found amidst this close association of landforms, water, and vegetation create exceptional landscapes that possess outstandingly remarkable scenic values.

Each WSR segment is managed under Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I Management Objectives, generally defined as pristine landscape with few or no human developments, and thus represents scenic quality.

**Recreational Values:** Outstandingly remarkable recreational values along the designated river segments relate primarily to the availability of outstanding float boating and associated experiences. The Bruneau and Jarbidge River canyons have a national reputation among kayakers for offering challenging whitewater (Class III, IV, and V) affording a multi-day river trip in a remote desert canyon.

The Owyhee River and its major tributaries are generally rated as Class II whitewater, although several Class III or IV rapids exist on the South Fork, and several Class IV through Class VI sections exist in the Lambert and Garat Gorges. Despite recent drought years, the Owyhee River system has become regionally and nationally recognized for offering one of the nation’s best open canoe float opportunities.

Along many stream segments, the float boating experience is enhanced by outstanding day-hiking opportunities. It is possible to hike from canyon rims to the stream in many locations, especially during low-water periods. Due to their meandering character, diversity of landforms, and topographic screening, the canyons provide exceptional opportunities for solitude and for primitive and physically challenging activities, including hiking, wildlife viewing, photography, floating, angling, and camping.

Boating opportunities and activities are supported, only briefly, by seasonally high water flows during Spring and early Summer. High flows maintain channel diversity, riparian habitat, and streamside campsites. While some low-flow (canoe and kayak) floating opportunities are available later in the season, the majority of use occurs during peak flows in the spring.

Outstandingly remarkable recreational values in the balance of the wilderness areas are attributed to their solitude and untrammelled character.

**Geologic Values:** Designated WSR segments are located in the Owyhee Uplands sub-province of the Columbia Intermontane geologic province, informally known as the Owyhee volcanic field. The Bruneau and Jarbidge River canyons, and the canyons of the Owyhee River and its tributaries, possess predominately Miocene Era volcanic formations. Of the two exposed rock units, the Little

Jacks Creek Tuff is the older, lower unit. It is a flow-layered, ledge-forming rhyolite tuff that may have a thickness of over 1,000 feet. The tuff is overlain by a thin veneer of younger Banbury Basalt. The two units are separated by a thin section of poorly consolidated sedimentary rock and silicic ash.

The canyons have been eroded to depths of 200 to over 800 feet. If overlying basalt is present, the rhyolite formations are nestled in the rubble slopes below vertical walls of basalt. Weathering and erosion have carved immense monolithic cliffs and numerous sculptured pinnacles known as "hoodoos." The oxbow canyon of "The Tules" on the Owyhee River is a rare geologic formation in the desert environments of the western United States. The only remaining locatable mineral activity in the WSR corridors is one small-scale jasper mining claim in the vicinity of Indian Hot Springs in the Bruneau River Canyon, most of which lies within the Recreational segment of the Bruneau WSR corridor.

The Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge river systems provide the largest concentration of sheer-walled rhyolite/basalt canyons in the western United States. Though not unique to southwest Idaho, the presence of these geologic formations in such great abundance and aerial extent makes the designated river segments geologically unique from a national perspective.

**Fisheries and Aquatic Species Values:** Outstandingly remarkable fisheries values are defined as the ability of a given stream segment to support populations of endangered, threatened, or BLM sensitive fish species. The ability to support these species is reflected by their presence in the stream(s). WSRs each support sensitive redband trout populations, while the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers support populations of the threatened bull trout.

The Jarbidge River has outstandingly remarkable fisheries value because it supports the southernmost population of bull trout in North America (USFWS 2012b). The threatened bull trout is the only fish in the Owyhee Canyonlands that is Federally-listed under the Endangered Species Act. The Jarbidge River contains one of six bull trout populations identified for recovery. Genetic analysis indicates that Jarbidge River bull trout have a shared evolutionary history with populations in the upper Columbia River and Snake River, but are genetically distinct. For over 100 years, Jarbidge River bull trout have been geographically isolated from other populations by more than 150 miles (240 km) of marginally suitable habitat and several impassable hydroelectric dams on the Snake River and diversion dams on the lower Bruneau River.

Jarbidge River bull trout are important because they occupy a unique and unusual semi-arid desert ecological setting, and their loss would result in a substantial modification of the species' range. Bull trout critical habitat consisting of a Rocky Mountain juniper-dominated riparian zone is unique to the area. The majority of occupied bull trout habitat north of the Snake River Plain is in coniferous forest types (i.e. Douglas fir, Engelmann spruce, etc.). Although bull trout spawn in upstream portions of the Jarbidge River in Nevada, the Jarbidge WSR segment contains bull trout over-wintering and migratory habitat, which is maintained by bank-full flows that move the river bed materials downstream and the silts and sands to the upper channel banks between bank-full and floodplain levels. The bull trout and redband trout populations also rely on low flows that maintain hiding pools that hold water throughout dryer seasons.

In Idaho Instruction Memorandum No. ID-96-010, the BLM Idaho State Director instituted the Interim Bull Trout Habitat Conservation Strategy, which has as its foundation the PACFISH strategy for conserving anadromous fish species in the Northwest. Among other things, the strategy established a Riparian Habitat Conservation Area (RHCA) corridor along the Bruneau and Jarbidge

Rivers, which extends 300 feet from the high water mark on each side of the river. The purpose for the RHCA is to maintain or restore riparian habitat, water quality, stream channel integrity and processes, in-stream flows, and diversity and productivity of native and desirable non-native plant communities. Requirements of the Wilderness Act and the WSR Act that are incorporated in this WMP fulfill the goals and objectives of the Interim Bull Trout Habitat Conservation Strategy.

The lower (northern) approximate two miles of the Bruneau River near Hot Creek is habitat for the endangered Bruneau hot springsnail, as well as the California floater (*Anodonta californiensis*), another mollusk species of concern. The principal threat to the Bruneau hot springsnail is the reduction and/or elimination of its geothermal habitats as a result of groundwater withdrawal, primarily for agriculture (USFWS 2012a). Although the California floater may be locally common in the Snake River and its major tributaries, which includes the Bruneau River, its population status is currently unknown (Frest 1999, Frest and Johannes 2000).

Little Jacks, Big Jacks, Cottonwood, and Duncan Creeks are outstandingly remarkable, both from a fisheries population and habitat standpoint. These streams are among the 17% of desert streams in the Northern Basin and Range identified as aquatic-habitat strongholds for redband trout, a BLM sensitive species and a State of Idaho species of special concern (Thurow et al. 1997). Little Jacks Creek's good water quality, a well-shaded riparian vegetative canopy, and long-term protection from livestock grazing have produced the highest densities of redband trout of any surveyed stream in southwest Idaho (Zoellick et al. 2005).

Although redband trout are found in the Owyhee River and its tributaries, including North and South Fork Owyhee River, Battle Creek, Deep Creek, Dickshooter Creek, and Red Canyon Creek, warmer summer water temperatures are insufficient to support productive redband fisheries. Warmer temperatures in the Owyhee River are, in part, the result of upstream impoundments in the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. Likewise, warmer temperatures in the South Fork Owyhee River are, in part, the result of impoundments and irrigation diversion upstream in Nevada. No amount of wilderness management will mitigate these off-site effects to stream temperature.

The seasonal migration of smallmouth bass into the Owyhee River system over the past several decades suggests that conditions may favor the development of a cool water fishery. There is competition for food and space between smallmouth bass and trout in many Owyhee tributaries. Current habitat conditions and water quality parameters favor smallmouth bass. Habitat and water quality improvements could allow a smallmouth bass population to prosper, which will be a unique situation for local streams, and could result in an outstanding cool water fishery to the detriment of the native redband trout fishery.

The success of fisheries in these systems depends on appropriate flows during key life stages. These WSRs exhibit typical flashy, desert streamflows to which the resident fish species are adapted. In summer and early fall, low flows are sufficient to maintain standing pools for fish survival. The high flows that may occur only every few years are integral to the maintenance of channels that support pool depths and channel diversity also necessary for fish survival.

**Wildlife Values:** Deep canyon habitats are important to wildlife species in desert and semi-desert environments in the western United States, especially when the canyons possess a large diversity of plant species, such as those that exist along the streams of the Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge river systems. The Owyhee Canyonlands provide both upland and canyon riparian habitats for a number of wildlife species common to Southwest Idaho. Big game commonly found in the area include California bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, and pronghorn.

California bighorn sheep generally prefer isolation from human disturbance, conditions typically provided in the wilderness and WSR areas. Steep cliffs and alcoves along the canyons provide key critical lambing and escape habitat for bighorn sheep. The Owyhee River, in combination with Battle Creek, Deep Creek, Duncan Creek, and Wickahoney Creek, supports the majority of the bighorn sheep population in the Owyhee Canyonlands. Although California bighorn sheep are not genetically distinct from Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game bighorn management plan (IDFG 2010) manages bighorns south of Interstate-84 as a California bighorn sheep “trophy class.”

Common large and mid-sized predators in the area include cougar, bobcat, coyote, badger, and raccoon. Small mammals include rodents (mice, kangaroo rats, voles, squirrels, chipmunks), rabbits, shrews, bats, weasels, and skunks. The waters along the entire Owyhee and Bruneau River systems and their tributaries are considered outstanding habitat for river otter because of adequate year-long flows and a good prey base (fisheries).

A variety of bird species occur in the area, including songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds, and raptors. The high, well fractured and eroded canyon cliffs are considered outstanding habitat for cliff nesting raptors, a small number of which occasionally winter along the canyon walls of the upper Owyhee River system and its major tributaries. Other wildlife includes several snake and lizard species as well as a few amphibians (frogs, toads, and salamanders).

**Listed, Candidate, and BLM Sensitive Wildlife Values:** The only threatened or endangered species known to inhabit designated WSR segments are the threatened bull trout in the Bruneau and Jarbidge river systems and the endangered Bruneau hot springsnail in the Bruneau River (see Map 22 All Wilderness Other Species of Concern).

All but the North Fork Owyhee Wilderness Area is considered Preliminary Priority Habitat for greater sage-grouse, a Federal Candidate species and a BLM sensitive species (Section 1.3.2 Descriptions of the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas). Idaho BLM sensitive species are also known or expected to occur along designated river corridors, including bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), prairie falcon (*Falco mexicanus*), ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*), several neotropical migratory bird species, several bat species, Columbia spotted frog, western toad (*Bufo boreas*), and redband trout. Cliffs also support spotted and Townsend's big-eared bats, both Idaho BLM sensitive species (Doering and Keller 1998). In Idaho, although some of the WSR corridors could have once supported mountain quail (*Oreotyx pictus*) populations, the species is currently restricted in its range to areas of west-central Idaho, with remnant population strongholds in the Riggins area (Vogel and Reese 1995; Crawford 2000).

Upland habitats within the Owyhee River system, including many topographically isolated slopes nestled amid cliffs, are in good to excellent ecological condition. A canyon system of such large size, and containing good to pristine habitat, possesses outstanding wildlife values. When the Owyhee River is considered in concert with the South and North Forks, and Deep Creek, where additional riparian and upland vegetation species diversity exists, the Owyhee Canyonlands system as a whole is a wildlife habitat area of national, if not international, importance.

**Cultural Values:** The Cultural Resource Density Predictive Model (Young 1984) developed for the Boise District Class II Cultural Resource Inventory suggests that many of the designated WSR corridor segments in the Owyhee Canyonlands may contain cultural resource values. Many of the designated stream corridors were the major locations of permanent water, fuel, and varied animal and vegetable materials for early Native Americans in the harsh Southwest Idaho environment,



and as such, could have supported campsites. Few sites have yet been designated as eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Relatively few recent cultural inventories have been conducted in the area and eligibility determinations have not been made for many of the known sites.

According to representatives for the Shoshone Paiute Tribes, the canyonlands and rivers have provided essential resources, shelter and life for the Shoshone and Paiute people for countless generations. The tribes took refuge in the canyonlands during conflicts with European settlers.

Traditionally, the tribes subsisted on seasonally available game, such as antelope, deer, elk, bison (which remained in southern Idaho until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century), bighorn sheep, roots, and bulbs such as bitterroot and arrowleaf balsamroot, and on small game such as rabbits, ground squirrels, sage hens, and insects. About 150 plant species have traditionally been used, and some authors estimate that more than 50 percent of the tribes' food energy came from root crops (Hunn and French 1981). Principal vegetable foods were the camas bulb, yampa root, tobacco root, and bitterroot, all traditionally gathered mostly by women with digging sticks and boiled or steamed in pits and stored in well-designated caches for later use.

The Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge rivers were also the migration route and spawning areas for anadromous fish that were important to the tribes. A part of the Tribal culture was lost when dams blocked the salmon from migrating into the upper reaches of these rivers, but the stories and sites still remain an important part of Tribal traditions and history.

Many petroglyphs, pictographs, rock alignments, shrines, and vision quest sites are located throughout the canyonlands. Tribal members still frequent the canyonland areas to hunt, fish, pray, and conduct ceremonies, and the areas will continue to be a special place for the tribe for generations to come.

In areas where cultural inventories have been conducted, historic and prehistoric archaeological sites and/or artifacts have been discovered along rimrock areas and on surrounding plateau lands. Rock shelters have been located in canyons within which cultural deposits have accumulated over an unknown period. These shelters contain datable organic materials and other fragile remnants of the past. Although some rock shelters are associated with open sites on terraces, most are tucked away at the base of cliffs. Other sites may have existed adjacent to rivers, but frequent springtime floods and the continual realignment of meandering stream channels may have long since destroyed them. Conversely, these same processes have deposited layers of sediment that protects sites on the terraces.

Inventories in the Bruneau and Jarbidge River canyons have revealed the presence of archaeological sites on almost all river terraces large enough to camp on. Continued surveys along these river systems may reveal additional sites or resources that reflect values of regional or national significance.

**Historic Values:** River corridors with historic ORVs are generally defined as those that contain a site(s) or feature(s) (usually at least 50 years old) associated with a significant event, an important person, or a past cultural activity that was rare or one-of-a-kind in the region. Historic sites that reflect European-American settlement and development of southeast Oregon and southwest Idaho are present within the Owyhee Canyonlands area. Evidence of wagon and military roads, homesteads, and sheep and livestock driveways dating back to the 1800's exist throughout the area and provide insight into when and how the area was settled and developed.

Numerous historic sites and artifacts are scattered throughout the Owyhee Canyonlands and along designated stream segments. These include a water wheel, a historic CCC roadbed, rock cairns, stone corrals, and ruins of stone and/or log buildings that are representative of those constructed in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. These sites occupy both Federal and private land, and are typical of historic sites found throughout southwest Idaho. The sites have not been individually evaluated for their eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, when viewed collectively with other sites scattered throughout the Owyhee Canyonlands, they could possibly qualify for inclusion on the NRHP as contributing elements of a Historic Site District centered on early ranching within the various tributaries of the Owyhee, Bruneau, and Jarbidge Rivers.

Although historic sites are an important resource that contributes to the recreational experience along the various river corridors, individual sites are not of outstandingly remarkable historical value when compared to historic resources in southwest Idaho as a whole. However, these sites may still be eligible for inclusion on the NRHP.

**Other Values:** Several of the designated WSR corridors support rare plant species or unique vegetation assemblages that serve as exceptional reference areas for managers and researchers. Owyhee River forget-me-not (*Hackelia ophiobia*) is a regionally endemic plant known to exist only along the Owyhee River and several of its tributaries, including Battle Creek.

The Bruneau River prickly phlox (*Linanthus glabrum*), which colonizes vertical and overhanging rhyolite canyon walls, is an endemic plant found nearly exclusively in the Bruneau-Jarbidge river system, with one additional confirmed location in Nevada.

A dense, nearly impenetrable thicket of riparian vegetation along about two miles of Cottonwood Creek has a nearly complete complement of potential natural plant communities. These are used as a reference area by the Idaho Conservation Data Center for describing riparian and wetland communities of southwestern Idaho (Moseley 1998).

The main Little Jacks Creek Canyon and portions of upper Big Jacks Creek Canyon support riparian communities that are also sterling examples of potential natural riparian communities. Additionally, several segments of the middle portion of Big Jacks Creek Canyon support representative examples of black cottonwood communities that were much more widespread prior to European settlement.

The North Fork Owyhee River Canyon is an excellent example of the Montane Western Juniper Woodland Subtheme for the Western Juniper Woodland Theme in the Northern Basin and Range Natural Region, based upon illustrative character, condition, diversity, rarity, and value for science and education.

### 1.4.3 WSR Issues to be Addressed

The WSR Act provides Federal protection for designated free-flowing rivers, and preserves them and their immediate environment for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations (BLM Manual 6400). Designated rivers or segments thereof are classified as Wild, Scenic, or Recreational. Section 10(a) of the WSR Act states that:

***“Each component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System shall be administered in such a manner as to protect and enhance the values which caused it to be included in said system without, insofar as is consistent therewith, limiting other uses that do not substantially interfere with public use and enjoyment of these values. In such administration, primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its esthetic, scenic, historic, archeologic, and scientific features. Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area.”***

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Like the wilderness issues, the following WSR issues were identified through scoping:

- Streamflows within each of the wild and scenic rivers may be at risk from upstream developments. Upstream water rights that may be issued in the future could reduce streamflows needed to protect ORVs identified for affected river segments.
- Increased visitor use may result in resource impacts that will conflict with wilderness character and ORVs associated with river segments.
- Continued livestock grazing-related activities, including access to and maintenance of existing structures (i.e., springs, pipelines, fences, reservoirs, etc.), may adversely affect naturalness and undeveloped wilderness character and WSR values
- Mineral exploration and extraction activities within valid existing mining claims may adversely affect naturalness and undeveloped wilderness character and WSR values.

## 1.5 Wilderness and WSR Strategy

The management strategy for the designated Wilderness Areas and WSRs is to manage human use in a manner that protects and preserves the natural, untrammled, and undeveloped wilderness character, as well as the opportunities for solitude and primitive experience. Management will also serve to protect or enhance the ORVs that are recognized for each WSR. In addition, as opportunities arise, discretionary actions may be taken to address the effects of natural and human-caused disturbances.

This WMP considers existing resource and management issues within the wilderness areas and WSRs. Management actions describe resource protection to ensure conformity with wilderness and WSR management goals and objectives. WSR resources will be managed according to the WSR Act except where wilderness requirements are more stringent. One exception to this is the portion of the Recreational section of the North Fork Owyhee WSR that extends outside of the North Fork Owyhee Wilderness Area. A second exception involves the 1.3 mile long section of the Owyhee WSR that lies outside of the Owyhee River Wilderness downstream from the Northwest Pipeline. These two short sections of WSR will be managed strictly according to the WSR Act.

## **1.5.1 Wilderness Management Goals and Objectives**

This section outlines the goals and objectives that guide this WMP. The goals, along with related laws, regulations, and BLM policies, provide broad management direction and are refined into specific objectives. Objectives are statements of desired conditions stemming from current situations and assumptions about the future. Management actions proposed to meet these objectives are described in Section 1.5.3 Wilderness and WSR Management Actions.

### **1.5.1.1 Wilderness Goal 1**

Provide for the long-term protection and preservation of wilderness character.

#### **1.5.1.1.1 Objectives**

- Preserve the natural and untrammeled character and influence of wilderness areas by excluding or minimizing surface disturbing or other actions, and by allowing fire to function in its natural role of disturbance and succession, except where life, property, and/or high value resources are threatened.
- Protect and preserve wildlife habitat to support healthy, viable, and naturally distributed wildlife populations to retain the wilderness areas' natural and undeveloped character.
- Maintain the natural wilderness character by reducing or eliminating infestations of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species.
- Ensure that land use guidelines for areas affected by overlapping land use designations are consistent with wilderness and WSR requirements.

### **1.5.1.2 Wilderness Goal 2**

Manage wilderness areas for visitor use and enjoyment in a manner that leaves them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment. The protection and preservation of wilderness character must be dominant in all decisions regarding the promotion or management of visitor use.

#### **1.5.1.2.1 Objectives**

- Minimize visitor use restrictions and regulations to enhance outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, while ensuring protection of other qualities of wilderness character
- Utilize education and interpretation to proactively address agency decisions and visitor activities that may impact wilderness character.
- Prevent unauthorized use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment by managing vehicle access points, posting appropriate boundary and informational signs, and blocking and rehabilitating unauthorized routes.
- Ensure that user-created trails (those created by hikers and equestrians) that access popular areas do not degrade natural wilderness character and values.
- Close or limit access to specific areas when public health or safety is threatened, or when the natural quality of wilderness character is being impaired by visitor activities.

### **1.5.1.3 Wilderness Goal 3**

Manage non-conforming uses permitted by the Wilderness Act and subsequent laws in a manner that minimizes impacts to wilderness character.



### **1.5.1.3.1 Objectives**

- Authorize special provisions permitted by the enabling legislation in a manner that preserves wilderness character by minimizing developments, degradation of naturalness, and other impacts to wilderness character and values.
- Maintain or enhance the natural wilderness character by removing unnecessary facilities and minimizing or reclaiming human-caused surface disturbances.
- Authorize commercial services in wilderness areas that prevent negative impacts to wilderness character through education of their customers and the public.
- Ensure that current Fire Management Plans are consistent with the goals of this WMP and current Wilderness and WSR management policies.

## **1.5.2 Wild and Scenic River Management Goals and Objectives**

### **1.5.2.1 Wild and Scenic River Goal**

Manage for the protection and enhancement of river values, including free-flowing condition, ORVs, and water quality while providing river-related outdoor recreation opportunities appropriate to the level of designation (wild or recreational).

#### **1.5.2.1.1 Wild River Objectives**

- Preserve the health and function of riparian and floodplain areas while providing for visitor use by developing a required permit system when visitor use is causing unacceptable impacts to river corridors and campsites.
- Permit use of temporary minor structures, if needed for research or monitoring purposes (i.e., streamflow, water quality, bull and redband trout research, etc.) subject to a Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA).

#### **1.5.2.2 Recreational River Objectives**

- As needed, provide for visitor services outside of wilderness areas and within “recreational” WSR segments, including recreational facilities and the maintenance of access routes to a high vehicle clearance standard.

## **1.5.3 Wilderness and WSR Management Actions**

### **1.5.3.1 Fire Management**

The overall goal of wilderness fire management is to emphasize protection and preservation of wilderness character and protection and enhancement of WSR values. This goal requires BLM to facilitate the operation of natural processes and ecological change by allowing fire to function in its natural role of disturbance and succession, except where life, property, and/or high value resources are threatened. Section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act and Section 1503(b)(9) of the OPLMA allow the Secretary to take any measures deemed necessary to control fire, insects, and diseases. An integral part of this process is ensuring that Fire Management Plans (FMPs) are consistent with Wilderness and WSR legislative requirements and BLM management policies, as well as the goals and objectives of this WMP, which will be incorporated into future FMP revisions.

In addition to the Wilderness Act, fire suppression and rehabilitation activities will be consistent with current National Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations (NIFC 2011), and

FMPs and Land Use Plans. Where feasible, fire management activities within wilderness areas will utilize Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) (USDI 2010). However, in response to a wildland fire in or near wilderness, managers will consider the full range of fire management strategies and tactics to achieve multiple objectives (ranging from monitoring to full suppression). BLM staff will define the set of multiple objectives to protect and/or enhance wilderness character and WSR ORVs, while considering situational factors, such as fuel loading, fire behavior, threats to human life and property, and high value resources.

### 1.5.3.1.1 Fire Suppression Actions

Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act provides for the limited authorization of otherwise prohibited uses in wilderness areas when they are determined to be "...necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act..." While administrative activities should always be accomplished with economic efficiency, both the Wilderness Act and the agency's wilderness policy direct managers away from using either the cost or the time required for implementation as over-riding considerations when evaluating proposals for the use of otherwise prohibited activities. Table 1.3 lists the authorized officers with delegated authority (as of 2012) to approve the use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment, as well as other fire management-related "Prohibited Uses" (including ES&R) in wilderness.

An evaluation and approval template for emergency actions that functions as a MRA (Appendix B-1 of BLM Manual 6340) is included in Appendix C, *Fire Approvals*. Revisions to this approval process will be consistent across Idaho BLM District boundaries, as well as with this WMP.

- The approval process outlined in Appendix C will be used to evaluate actions such as those listed in Table 1.3 that may be considered during development of a proposed emergency fire response. A resource advisor with knowledge and experience in wilderness stewardship should be assigned to the firefighting team to assist in identifying and protecting wilderness character.
- Prevent the establishment of noxious weeds and invasive species to preserve the natural wilderness character
  - Inspect and wash all suppression equipment prior to wilderness entry, but locate wash-down sites outside of wilderness areas.
  - Locate support operations such as helispots, camps and other assembly points outside of wilderness areas and away from areas infested by noxious weeds and invasive species.
  - When practical, use WSRs as the only water source for suppressing fires in WSR corridors and wilderness areas to prevent cross-contamination and/or spread of aquatic invasive species.
- Use Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) when feasible, as long as the safety of firefighters, human life and property is protected.
- Prohibited uses, including motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment, may be utilized to protect life and property, and high value resources, including vegetative composition and structure that supports habitat for greater sage-grouse, bighorn sheep, and threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.
- Remove or rehabilitate evidence of human intervention to the maximum extent possible.
  - Repair fire suppression-related resource damage immediately
  - Plan and begin implementing actions prior to the suppression incident organization demobilization.

- Repairs to damaged sites or resources may occur with the same type of equipment that was used for suppression. For example, if motorized, earth-moving equipment was used to construct fire lines, then the same type of equipment may be used to recontour and stabilize the affected area.

The appropriate delegated authority must document their approval of otherwise prohibited uses, and the documentation must be included in periodic wilderness monitoring reports.

**Table 1.3 - Delegation of Authority to Approving Management Activities in Wilderness Areas**

Type of Prohibited Use Requested	Approval Authority in Emergency
Helicopter Bucket Work, Dip sites, and Water Delivery	Field Office Manager
Motorized Water Pumps	
Aerial Retardant Application	
Air Transport/Personnel Shuttle (landings) and Supply Drops	
Erosion Control Treatment (biodegradable material such as mulch)	
Fence (Facility) Repair or Temporary Fence Installation	
Chainsaws	
Motor Vehicles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engines</li> <li>• Transports</li> <li>• Crew Trucks</li> <li>• UTV/ATV</li> </ul>	District Manager
Helispot Construction (major ground disturbance)	
Monitoring Facility Installation (temporary ES&R)	
Erosion Control Installations (check dams, wattles, includes stakes, wire, or other semi-permanent materials)	
Other Standard Emergency Stabilization Treatments (Seeding, Planting, Weed treatments (including chemicals, other)	
Heavy Equipment (i.e. bulldozers, excavators, etc.)	State Director
Post-fire drill seeding or other major ground disturbing ES&R activities.	

**1.5.3.1.2 WSR Specific Actions**

Due to the confined spaces and the limited ingress and egress for personnel and equipment, safety of visitors and fire personnel will be of prime importance when considering potential fire management actions in WSR canyons. Based on the more stringent requirements of the WSR Act, fire suppression activities in Wild river corridors, if approved, will emphasize the use of non-motorized/non-mechanized methods to protect and enhance ORVs, even when compared with suppression methods being used in adjacent wilderness.

### **1.5.3.2 Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R)**

The overall goal of the wilderness ES&R program is to maintain the natural wilderness character by facilitating the natural recovery of burned areas, while minimizing or precluding noxious weed and non-native invasive species infestations.

Pursuant to BLM Manual 6340, ES&R activities should be conducted as part of the fire incident and in accordance with current Department of Interior policy (Departmental Manual 620 DM 3 - Wildland Fire Management Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation) and BLM ES&R policy (H-1742-1 - Burned Area Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Handbook). Stabilization, rehabilitation, and restoration activities may be intensive when post-fire processes threaten ecological integrity or wilderness character. ES&R activities within wilderness or WSR corridors must follow the guidance below:

1. Natural recovery of native plant species is preferable to all other treatments.
2. Seeding or planting will be used when objectives for natural recovery cannot otherwise be accomplished and there is a threat to wilderness character and WSR values if no action is taken. The use of native material, preferably of local or regional genetic stock, will be first priority.
3. Non-native species may be seeded or planted in combination with native species if an insufficient amount of native species are available and the non-native species are part of an assisted succession program, which promotes the rehabilitation of native vegetation. The proposed action must meet at least one of the following criteria:
  - a. the natural biological diversity of a treated area will not be diminished; or
  - b. exotic and naturalized species can be confined within a treated area, or
  - c. ecological site inventory information indicates that a site will not support reestablishment of a species that was historically a part of the natural environment.

Section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act and Section 1503(b)(9) of the OPLMA allow the Secretary to take any measures deemed necessary to control fire, insects, and diseases. As such, the authorized officer may authorize any or all of the following prohibited uses for ES&R projects on a case-by-case basis if they are demonstrated, through a MRA, to be necessary to meet the minimum requirements for administration of the area for the preservation of wilderness character (see Table 1.3). The analysis and approval process will be the same as discussed in Section 1.5.3.1 Fire Management:

- Use of motorized/mechanized vehicles or equipment similar to that used during suppression.
- Installation of temporary structures (i.e., fences or hydrologic monitoring devices) deemed essential to post-fire emergency actions.
- Application of standard erosion control techniques that prevent or minimize soil movement and loss (i.e., straw bales, wattles, mulch, etc.).
- Repair or replacement of facilities and developments burned or damaged by wildfire or suppression activities (i.e., fences, boundary signs, water control structures, corrals, water developments, trails, etc.).
- Stabilization and mitigation of post-fire related degradation to cultural resources, including archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural properties, and historic structures.



### 1.5.3.3 *Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plants*

The goal of management is to protect and preserve the natural wilderness character by sustaining native plant communities, and reducing or eliminating infestations of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species.

Noxious weeds in Idaho are classified by Title 22 – Chapter 24 of the Idaho Statutes. The following noxious weeds have been identified within one or more of the wilderness areas. Others may exist but are currently unknown.

- Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
- Perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*)
- Rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*)
- Russian knapweed (*Acroptilon repens*)
- Salt cedar (*Tamarix sp.*)
- Scotch thistle (*Onopordum acanthium*)
- Spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*)
- Whitetop (*Cardaria draba*)

In addition to the above, non-native invasive plants currently known to inhabit wilderness areas include, but are not limited to Russian olive, cheatgrass, and medusahead. The potential exists for further infestations of these and other species from surrounding areas. The Restoration and Vegetation Management section (Section 1.6.C.15.) of BLM Manual 6340 outlines the protocol and approval process for vegetation treatments in wilderness.

The Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas are located along canyons that result in unusually long perimeters compared to the area within their boundaries. These long wilderness boundaries increase the potential for the spread of noxious weeds and non-native invasive plants from surrounding areas. Wilderness areas must be managed to maintain the degree of wilderness character that existed prior to their designation. Manipulation of vegetation through any one or a combination of prescribed fire, chemical application, mechanical treatment, or introduced biological agents may be permitted in wilderness areas only to preserve wilderness character and values. While these activities may have short- or long-term effects on vegetative species or communities, the ultimate goal is to facilitate improvement in ecological condition, and thus, the natural quality and character of the affected wilderness.

Although weed prevention is the ultimate objective, three primary types of restoration may help to preserve wilderness character (BLM Manual 6340– Management of Designated Wilderness Areas):

1. **Site-specific disturbance** - Restoration normally includes site-specific treatments to restore the appearance and promote regrowth of native vegetation on disturbed site(s).
2. **Control of non-native vegetation** - Non-native vegetation that interferes with ecosystem function may be controlled using the most effective method(s) while causing the least damage to non-target species. Native species may be reseeded or replanted following weed treatment where natural seeding is inadequate and to prevent reestablishment of non-native vegetation.
3. **Large-scale landscape function** - In some areas, human disturbance has changed the vegetative composition, density, and structure, with impacts to soil stability, watershed function, and wildlife habitat. Although these areas cannot be returned to a natural state

without intervention, management should determine whether the required type, extent, and level of intervention is feasible and practical.

If, through a MRA, the BLM authorized officer determines that weed treatment is necessary, emphasis will be placed on controlling small (<0.1 acre) infestations of noxious and invasive weeds that have the potential to spread and displace native plants. Larger infestations will be managed separately, since they could involve several treatment applications or associated tactics. Post-treatment seeding and/or transplant projects will follow guidelines contained in the ES&R section of this plan. BLM Boise District and Jarbidge Field Office weed management protocols (BLM 2007) will guide the use of herbicides. Treatments will be prioritized in the following order, though it is likely that treatment combinations will be necessary in some situations:

1. Manual removal with hand tools if weeds can be controlled or eradicated without causing re-sprouting, without undue soil disturbance leading to expansion of infestations, and where infestations are of a size manageable by hand crews.
2. Herbicides applied by backpack or pack stock (horse, mules, or llamas).
3. Biological control, including targeted grazing by livestock (if practical).
4. Herbicides applied aerially or with motorized equipment: 1) where control is feasible, 2) where control impacts may be quickly and readily rehabilitated, and 3) where the infestation is of such size that herbicide(s) cannot be effectively applied without motorized equipment. Use of motorized equipment will require a MRA.

The use of herbicides will be limited to those approved for use on public land in the Record of Decision for the Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Programmatic EIS (USDI 2007) (or more current decision). The WMP will require that any chemicals be applied by (or under the supervision of) a licensed applicator according to label directions. For treatments involving herbicides, Standard Operating Procedures, the manufacturer's label, and mitigation and conservation measures listed in the above-referenced Record of Decision (or more current decision), as well as the Record of Decision for the Boise District Noxious and Invasive Weed Treatment EA (BLM 2007) (or more current decision) will be followed. Treatments will be designed to facilitate movement toward native vegetative composition and structure. Actions to address the effects from fire or other natural disasters are considered emergency actions and could be authorized in locations where natural seed sources are inadequate to compete with non-native vegetation and/or where substantial unnatural soil loss is expected. Managers will adjust the level of response by considering current ecological health and vigor against the potential for invasion by undesirable species.

Chemical treatment may be necessary to prepare habitat for the reestablishment of native species, to protect or recover habitat that supports Federally-listed threatened, endangered, or candidate species, or to correct unnatural conditions resulting from human influence. Activities normally prohibited by the Wilderness Act for the delivery of chemicals must be approved through a MRA, and according to the appropriate level of delegated authority (Table 1.3). Management actions must comply with label directions and regulatory requirements for chemical application near water bodies.

It is impossible to provide a comprehensive list of biological control agents that might be used in wilderness areas, since it is impossible to know what new weeds might become established in the future, as well as what new biological control agents might be approved for use by the Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). However, BLM uses only biological control agents that have been evaluated and approved by APHIS through

a worst case scenario during their petition process. As part of the evaluation process, all susceptible T&E species and any closely related or commercially important plant species are rigorously tested to ensure that the proposed control agents do not affect non-target species. Due to APHIS's rigorous evaluation process, site-specific environmental assessments are seldom completed for use of approved bio-control agents unless the projects also entail other potential soil and/or vegetation disturbance.

#### **1.5.3.4 Livestock Management**

Section 4(d)(4)(2) of the Wilderness Act and Section 1503(b)(3)(A) of the OPLMA provide for continued livestock grazing where it existed prior to wilderness designation, subject to reasonable regulations deemed necessary by the Secretary of Interior. The overall goal of livestock management in wilderness is to provide for continued grazing that is consistent with the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1997), and in a manner that minimizes impacts to the natural, undeveloped, and untrammelled wilderness character. Grazing within WSR corridors, however, will be held to the higher non-degradation standard of Section 10(a) of the WSR Act, which emphasizes protection and enhancement of river values, including free-flowing condition, ORVs, and water quality.

A total of 29 grazing allotments are located wholly or partially within one or more of the six wilderness areas. Forage production and availability vary greatly within and between allotments. Based on a calculated average per acre stocking rate within each of the affected allotments, approximately 27,000 Animal Unit Months<sup>4</sup> (AUMs) of livestock grazing are currently authorized within the wilderness portions of the allotments (See Table 1.4). The number of AUMs annually utilized is probably less than the number authorized.

**Table 1.4 - Grazing Allotments Located Wholly or Partially Within Wilderness Areas**

<b>Allotment Name</b>	<b>Approximate Acres<sup>5</sup> in Wilderness</b>	<b>Approximate AUMs<sup>6</sup> in Wilderness</b>	<b>Wilderness Area</b>
Battle Creek	26,030	1,987	Little Jacks Creek
Big Springs	51,986	4,493	Owyhee River, Little Jacks Creek, Pole Creek
Black FFR	290	8	Pole Creek
Blackstone	3,044	96	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
Bogus Creek FFR	306	1	North Fork Owyhee
Bruneau Canyon	2,537	306	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
Bull Basin	21,929	1,074	Owyhee River
Burghardt FFR	3	0	North Fork Owyhee
Castlehead / Lambert	8,684	598	Owyhee River

<sup>4</sup> An AUM equals the amount of forage that a cow and unweaned calf consume in one month; usually considered to be about 900 pounds (air dry).

<sup>5</sup> Approximate acreage in wilderness was calculated using GIS.

<sup>6</sup> Approximate AUMs currently authorized in wilderness were calculated based on an assumed average per acre stocking rate across each individual allotment.

<b>Allotment Name</b>	<b>Approximate Acres<sup>5</sup> in Wilderness</b>	<b>Approximate AUMs<sup>6</sup> in Wilderness</b>	<b>Wilderness Area</b>
China Creek	50	2	Big Jacks Creek
Cliffs	12,810	540	North Fork Owyhee
Diamond A	21,990	1,843	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
East Canyon View	143	36	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
East Castle Creek	6,685	558	Little Jacks Creek
Garat	49,653	4,618	Owyhee River
Indian Meadows	1,325	50	North Fork Owyhee
Miller Table Seeding	8	1	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
Nahas FFR	309	11	Pole Creek
Nickel Creek	22,173	1,535	North Fork Owyhee, Owyhee River
Nickel Creek FFR	182	2	Owyhee River
Northwest	50,436	2,740	Little Jacks Creek, Big Jacks Creek
Owens	11,006	698	Little Jacks Creek
Pleasant Valley	3,947	291	North Fork Owyhee
Poison Butte	8,678	746	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
Riddle	21,297	2,020	Owyhee River
Seventy-One Desert	10,089	924	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
Sheep Creek SE	12,616	1,143	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers
Trout Springs	1,233	140	North Fork Owyhee
Winter Camp	131	6	Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers

Over 200 range management projects were documented by BLM staff in the wilderness portion of the above grazing allotments, and are listed in Appendix D. During the project inventory, BLM staff also GPS'd all known routes within the wilderness areas and reviewed the route maps with each of the affected permittees to determine which routes might later be needed to access range projects or to deliver and stockpile salt and supplement. Staff did not document single track trails. The inventory documented several stock ponds or reservoirs that lacked apparent access. Although access routes to these reservoirs may once have existed, the routes had naturally revegetated due to little or no use. BLM will work with affected permittees during development of the MRA to identify and authorize suitable access to these projects for maintenance purposes.

The project inventory identified several reservoirs along or adjacent to wilderness boundaries. The actual location of each project in relation to the adjacent wilderness boundary will be verified as wilderness boundary surveys are completed. Permittees who must enter a wilderness to access a project(s) will be authorized access along an existing administrative route(s) following completion of a MRA. If boundary surveys later determine that a range project is located wholly outside of a wilderness, the project will be deleted from Appendix D through an addendum. Table 1.5 lists the number of range projects by general type in each wilderness area.

**Table 1.5 - Summary of Wilderness Range Management Projects**

Wilderness Area	Fences <sup>7</sup>	Corrals and other structures	Reservoirs, Ponds, Lakes and Dugouts	Water Developments (Troughs, Guzzlers Wells and Springs)	Total Projects
Big Jacks Creek	17	0	3	0	20
Bruneau – Jarbidge Rivers	17	0	2	1	20
Little Jacks Creek	10	0	5	3	18
North Fork Owyhee	24	2	10	4	40
Owyhee River	50	3	56	7	116
Pole Creek	3	0	4	0	7
Total	121	5	80	15	221

### Grazing Permit Donations

Section 1503(b)(3)(D) of the OPLMA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to accept the voluntary donation of grazing permits for allotments located wholly or partially within a wilderness area(s). The legislation requires that the AUMs affected by a donated permit (or portion thereof) be retired to ensure a permanent reduction in the authorized level of grazing on the land covered by the donated permit. Table 1.6 summarizes the grazing permit donations that have occurred since wilderness designation. The year of donation is indicated in parentheses next to the allotment name. The table also illustrates non-wilderness acres associated with each donation.

**Table 1.6 - Summary of Voluntary Grazing Permit Donations as of August 1, 2014**

Allotment	Pasture	Wilderness Acres	Non-wilderness Acres <sup>8</sup>	AUMs
Burghardt (2011)	All pastures	11,479	1,849	1,599
Big Springs (2012)	Canyon Land Riparian	3,209	0	645
45 (2013)	All pastures	47,044	13,891	1,928
Tent Creek (2013)	All pastures	35,845	23,538; 1,658 (NV)	1,433

If a permittee donates a grazing permit for an entire allotment, BLM will accept responsibility for maintaining allotment boundary fences that previously were the permittee's responsibility. However, the permittee may retain responsibility for maintaining a boundary fence(s) if they

<sup>7</sup> The "Fences" category includes 8 enclosures. Fences total approximately 120 miles.

<sup>8</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all calculated acreage is in Idaho.



continue to graze BLM, State, or private lands adjacent to the allotment or pasture from which the permit was donated.

If a permittee donates only a portion of a grazing permit, a fence may or may not be constructed to close the affected portion of the allotment to further grazing. If a new fence is required within wilderness to facilitate a donation, BLM will construct the fence, and the permittee will be responsible for fence maintenance since it will become a new allotment or pasture boundary fence. If a permit donation entails construction of a new fence along a wilderness boundary, BLM would construct and maintain the new wilderness boundary fence.

Range projects located within a closed grazing allotment or pasture will be evaluated to determine if they can be removed, or if they need to be retained due to their benefit to wilderness management. Reservoirs within closed grazing allotments will be maintained or repaired only when they are determined to be essential or critical for wildlife management through consultation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

### **Motorized and Mechanized Uses**

Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act requires activities in wilderness areas to be accomplished without motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment unless truly necessary to administer the area, or when specifically permitted by other provisions of the Wilderness Act.

Routine livestock management activities in wilderness areas, including project inspection and maintenance (i.e. minor fence repairs or small quantity salt distribution) will normally be accomplished by non-motorized, non-mechanized means. Motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment may be authorized on existing administrative access routes for project maintenance or repair when needed to transport equipment or supplies that cannot reasonably be accomplished by foot, pack stock, or other non-motorized or non-mechanized means.

At the time of wilderness designation, permittees in a few of the affected grazing allotments were actively using vehicles, including motorcycles and ATVs, to monitor, herd, and/or gather livestock. Proposals for continued use of motor vehicles for these activities will be evaluated through the MRA process to ensure the activity meets the requirements of the Wilderness Act and the Congressional Grazing Guidelines (Appendix A of House Report 101-405). Following the MRA analysis, if motorized herding, monitoring, or gathering is determined to be consistent with the Congressional Grazing Guidelines and is authorized, the authorization will be limited to the person(s) specifically named in the authorization, and will not inure to the benefit of heirs, successors, administrators, agents, licensees, or assigns of the grazing permit.

Section 2 of the Congressional Grazing Guidelines provides the following direction for maintaining livestock grazing-related facilities and the occasional use of motorized equipment in wilderness:

***“The maintenance of supporting facilities, existing in an area prior to its classification as wilderness (including fences, line cabins, water wells and lines, stock tanks, etc.) is permissible in wilderness. Where practical alternatives do not exist, maintenance or other activities may be accomplished through the occasional use of motorized equipment. This may include, for example, the use of backhoes to maintain stockponds, pickup trucks for major fence repairs, or specialized equipment to repair stock watering facilities. Such occasional use of motorized equipment should be expressly authorized in the grazing permits for the area involved. The use of motorized equipment should be based on a rule of practical necessity and reasonableness. For example, motorized equipment need not be allowed for the placement of small quantities of salt or other activities where such activities can reasonably and practically be accomplished on horseback or foot. On the other hand, it may be appropriate to permit the occasional use of motorized equipment to haul large quantities of salt to distribution points. Moreover, under the rule of reasonableness, occasional use of motorized equipment should be permitted where practical alternatives are not available and such use would not have a significant adverse impact on the natural environment. Such motorized equipment uses will normally only be permitted in those portions of a wilderness area where they had occurred prior to the area’s designation as wilderness or are established by prior agreement.”***

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Range improvements existing on the date of designation are recognized as valid existing rights. Although permittee access to these projects is guaranteed by the OPLMA, the use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment has not yet been authorized. Requests by grazing permittees for occasional use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis through a MRA to determine whether the proposed method is the minimum tool necessary to successfully accomplish the task(s) while minimizing impacts to wilderness character. As described in the Congressional Grazing Guidelines, wilderness access requirements and schedules will be included as terms and conditions in affected grazing permits. Terms and conditions will specify the timeframe during which vehicular access will be authorized, as well as the specific administrative route(s) and the type(s) of vehicles to be used.

The viability and usefulness of existing wilderness range projects will be evaluated in consultation with the permittee during the permit renewal process. If a range project or other structure is determined to be abandoned and not of historical or cultural value, it will be removed by the permittee, BLM staff, or authorized volunteers. Ground disturbing activities associated with project removal will be subject to prior Tribal and National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation.

Proposals for new livestock water or other developments will not be approved unless they are determined to be the minimum necessary to protect or preserve wilderness character. New project proposals will require both an environmental analysis and a MRA.

Administrative access routes will not be maintained or repaired except on a site-specific basis with BLM authorization. Prior to authorizing route maintenance, the affected BLM Field Office will complete a MRA to ensure that the minimum tool necessary is used to accomplish the objective. If necessary, a gate or bollard, signed as administrative access, will be installed at the entrance to administrative routes to prevent unauthorized motorized access.

Similar to other emergency situations in wilderness, a permittee will not need prior authorization for emergency vehicular access. Motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment (including helicopters) may be used in wilderness areas during emergencies involving search and rescue, the health or safety of individuals, or the rescuing of sick or stranded livestock. Individuals must notify the BLM authorized officer immediately following completion of emergency activities. The subsequent removal of downed airplanes (or other vehicle accidents) and associated equipment, parts, or debris is not considered an emergency, and will require prior BLM authorization subject to a MRA.

#### **1.5.3.5 Research and Monitoring**

One of the goals of wilderness management is to respond to the need for scientific investigation and discovery, while minimizing or precluding adverse impacts associated with the activities.

Research and monitoring activities will not be permitted in wilderness if they can be accommodated outside of wilderness. If a specific wilderness area(s) is required for research or monitoring, the activities will be conducted without motorized or mechanized vehicles or equipment, and to the extent possible, without use of installations or structures. Proposals will be subject to a MRA and environmental analysis, and if authorized, will be subject to the requirements of the Wilderness Act, WSR Act, and relevant guidelines in this WMP.

In December 2012, BLM filed claims with the State of Idaho for Federal water rights on each of the 16 designated WSR segments. The claims were filed to ensure continued streamflow of sufficient quantity to support WSR values, such as fisheries and recreation, that require differing flow levels. The maintenance of minimum flow is important to support riparian and vertebrate wildlife habitat. Riparian vegetative growth and survival depends on instream flow levels, particularly in arid environments. Increased vegetative growth results in greater riparian structure, which enhances wildlife habitat. Stromberg and Patten (1990) found that a four to five-fold increase in streamflow doubled the width of growth rings in cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*).

Only three of the 16 WSRs had existing streamflow gages either within the designated segment or within close enough proximity to allow reliable streamflow estimates. As such, BLM completed a MRA to determine that additional temporary water monitoring devices were necessary to aid in calculating streamflows on ungaged WSR segments. Water monitoring devices were determined crucial for acquiring streamflow data necessary to ensure preservation of the free-flowing condition of the WSR segments, provided that the instruments do not obstruct the “free-flowing” character of the affected WSR. Once necessary data is collected, temporary water monitoring devices will be removed.

#### **1.5.3.6 Reclamation of Surface Disturbances**

All surface-disturbing or motorized/mechanized proposals must be evaluated through a MRA for the purpose of protecting and preserving wilderness character. If deemed appropriate, surface disturbances in wilderness areas may be reclaimed or rehabilitated subject to completion of a MRA and EA, if necessary.

One active mining claim exists along the Bruneau River near Indian Hot Springs in the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness. Five additional mining claims in the same area were recently relinquished, which leaves BLM responsible for reclaiming associated soil and vegetation disturbance, most of which exists within the cherrystem access point on the east side of the Bruneau River. Necessary resource surveys and consultation will be completed to determine whether reclamation is feasible, or if the reclamation activities themselves will cause additional soil and vegetation disturbance, and simply add to the problem of noxious weeds and non-native invasive plant establishment. If reclamation is determined to be appropriate to protect and preserve wilderness character, a MRA will be conducted to decide the best and most compatible course of action.

Although none are currently known, abandoned mine adits or shafts in wilderness areas will be filled in or otherwise closed to preserve wilderness character and ensure public safety.

#### ***1.5.3.7 Wildlife and Fisheries Management***

The overall goal of wildlife and fisheries management in wilderness is to protect, preserve and, where appropriate, enhance habitat to retain the wilderness area's natural character, and to support healthy, viable, and naturally distributed wildlife populations. Fish and wildlife management activities in wilderness will be administered in conformance with the Wilderness Act's purpose of securing an "enduring resource of wilderness" for the American people through the preservation of wilderness character. It is expected that nature, not human intervention, will play the dominant role. Management activities will be guided by: 1) communication and cooperation with the State, and 2) the principle of doing only the minimum necessary to manage the area as wilderness.

For the purpose of this management plan, wildlife and fisheries management includes research, population surveys, monitoring, capture, relocation, and wildlife depredation control, as well as other activities deemed necessary by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for the proper administration of resident fish and wildlife populations.

State and Federal agencies are responsible for fostering mutual understanding and cooperation in the management of fish and wildlife in wilderness; however, States have the primary role in resident fish and wildlife population management (43 CFR 24). Section 4(d)(8) of the Wilderness Act and Section 1503(b)(8)(A) of the OPLMA state that nothing in either of the Acts shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the State with respect to the management of wildlife and fish. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game is the agency entrusted with statutory authority to preserve, protect, perpetuate, and manage fish and wildlife resources in the State of Idaho [Idaho Code Section 36-103(a)]. Based on the above authorities, nothing in this management plan shall be construed as affecting the authority, jurisdiction, or responsibility of the State to manage, control, or regulate fish and resident wildlife populations under State law or regulations, including the regulation of hunting, angling, trapping, and recreational shooting on public land, as long as those activities are carried out via non-motorized and non-mechanized means, and in a manner that preserves wilderness character and protects and enhances WSR values.

The BLM will manage wilderness areas to protect known populations of Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, and Sensitive wildlife species, and to aid their recovery in previously occupied habitat. Over the life of this WMP, some or all of the following wildlife management activities may be implemented:

- Facility development and habitat alteration needed to address adverse impacts of human activities on fish or wildlife populations.
- Research on fish and wildlife, their habitats, and the effect(s) of recreational use and livestock grazing on these resources.
- Wildlife population surveys, including the use of motorized equipment, landing of aircraft (including dropping material from aircraft), or the temporary use of a structure(s).
- Wildlife and fish population management.

Use of motorized and mechanized equipment and installations will be occasional and temporary, and will be the minimum tool necessary to preserve wilderness character. As provided for in Section 1503(b)(8) of the OPLMA, the State may use aircraft (including helicopters) in wilderness areas to survey, capture, transplant, monitor, and provide water for wildlife populations. The BLM and Idaho Department of Fish and Game will make every effort to coordinate wildlife management and research activities so that overflights minimize disturbance to both wildlife and visitors.

Wildlife and fish transplants (i.e., removal, augmentation, or reintroduction) may be necessary to perpetuate or recover fish and wildlife populations, particularly a Threatened, Endangered, Candidate, or Sensitive species eliminated or reduced by human disturbance. Wildlife transplants will occur first outside of wilderness boundaries, if reasonable. If suitable transplant sites are unavailable outside of wilderness, transplants may occur in wilderness.

Wildlife damage control activities in wilderness areas may be considered a necessary component of fish and wildlife management as determined by the State and appropriate Federal agencies. Activities necessary to remove or otherwise control a native wildlife species to reduce conflicts with other native species will be conducted in a manner consistent with preservation of wilderness character. In wilderness, agencies will use the minimum control necessary to conduct wildlife damage control activities. To the extent possible, the control of wildlife causing undue livestock loss will be limited to the individual(s) causing the damage.

The effects of non-ground disturbing activities for wildlife and fisheries management in wilderness areas are analyzed in the accompanying EA for this WMP. An annual report will document any aircraft landings or other motorized and mechanized incursions for maintenance and repairs, and will be incorporated into wilderness monitoring reports.

To facilitate inter-agency coordination, BLM and Idaho Department of Fish and Game propose to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to guide cooperative efforts to facilitate and enhance wilderness wildlife and fish management.

#### **1.5.3.7.1 Wildlife-Related Facilities**

Requests by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or other State or Federal agency for administrative wilderness access for wildlife or fisheries management purposes will be subject to a MRA. According to OPLMA Section 1503(b)(8)(B)(ii), wildlife management activities "...may include the occasional and temporary use of motorized vehicles if the use, as determined by the Secretary, will promote healthy, viable, and more naturally



distributed wildlife populations that will enhance wilderness values while causing the minimum impact necessary to accomplish the tasks.”

Requests for ground-based motorized access will include the following information:

- Name of the wilderness area
- Reason for the requested access
- Type of motorized and mechanized equipment required
- Proposed access location(s) and date(s)
- Estimated number of persons involved
- Potential landing sites, if helicopters are proposed

The BLM Field Manager will work with the requesting agency to complete the MRA within an acceptable timeframe. In most cases, the MRA and a letter of authorization with associated terms and conditions will suffice as approval for requests involving only the management of a wildlife population and/or that involve no ground disturbance. An environmental analysis, MRA, and associated decision document will be needed for proposals involving ground disturbance.

Existing wildlife guzzlers in the Little Jacks Creek Wilderness will be maintained by Idaho Department of Fish and Game or BLM using non-motorized/non-mechanized methods. If repair, reconstruction, or removal is proposed, the authorized officer will complete a MRA to determine the minimum necessary tool(s) for the project. New wildlife water developments will not be authorized.

### **1.5.3.8 Recreation Management**

Solitude and primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities exist in all six wilderness areas. One of the main goals of wilderness management is to provide for visitor use and enjoyment in a manner that leaves wilderness areas unimpaired for future use and enjoyment. Thus, the protection and preservation of wilderness character, and the protection and enhancement of WSR values will be dominant in all decisions regarding the promotion or management of visitor use.

Permits are not required for the general public to visit the Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness areas. While BLM aims to minimize limitations or controls on visitor use in wilderness areas, the following general visitor use standards are designed to minimize effects to resources and maintain compliance with wilderness and WSR policy. Supplemental rules will be published in the Federal Register for all visitor use requirements established in the WMP, as specified in 43 CFR 8365.1-6. BLM will use public outreach and education about *Tread Lightly!* and *Leave No Trace* land use ethics to encourage minimum impact land use practices and accomplish wilderness recreation goals.

#### **1.5.3.8.1 Camping in Wilderness or WSR Corridors**

Campgrounds and campsites will not be developed or improved in wilderness areas. Therefore, the following restrictions will be imposed on dispersed and unmanaged camping to preclude effects to health and safety, and to minimize potential effects to wilderness character and WSR values, including impacts to soils, vegetation, and water quality, and conflicts with wildlife and livestock.

- Upland camping will be allowed at any one location for up to 14 days. Visitors camping longer than 14 days within any of the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas must relocate their camp a minimum of twenty-five (25) miles from the previous site.

- Upland campsites (outside of a WSR corridor) must be located at least 300 feet from natural springs or developed upland water sources (i.e., troughs, reservoirs, etc.) to limit potential conflicts with wildlife and livestock.
- Campers in upland sites must either: 1) use a water-tight, portable toilet, the contents of which must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip, or 2) bury human waste in catholes dug at least 8" deep and 200 feet from water, trails, and campsites. Proper disposal of human waste will minimize pollution of water sources, and minimize the potential to spread disease.
- Campers must use pack-in/pack-out land use ethics to reduce noxious odors, insects, and/or unwanted animal encounters.
- To protect and sustain the primitive experience of wilderness for future generations, individuals may not dig, dam, or otherwise alter the natural flow and appearance of water bodies (i.e., hot springs, streams, rivers, etc.).
- To reduce or prevent damage to soils and native vegetation, WSR campers must contain campfires in a metal fire pan or on a fire blanket raised off the ground. All unburned contents of the fire, including ash, must be removed from the river corridor.
- Hikers, campers, and floaters are strongly encouraged to urinate directly into the river (not in or around limited streamside campsites) to reduce impacts from odors and unwanted animal encounters, and impacts to vegetation.
- To minimize water pollution and protect fish habitat, WSR campers must use biodegradable soap for personal use and dishwashing. Strain all dish and rinse water before scattering water broadly onto vegetated soil at least 200 feet from water, if possible.

#### **1.5.3.8.2 Boating**

WSR boaters must adhere to the following requirements:

- To enhance river management and visitor safety, groups and individuals embarking on single or multi-day river trips must complete a BLM self-issue permit form located at the put-in site, or from the BLM website. The trip leader must retain a copy of the permit form throughout the trip, and must present the form to a BLM employee upon request.
- Owners of non-motorized boats in Idaho (i.e., canoe, kayak, raft, driftboat, etc.) must display an Idaho Invasive Species Fund sticker on their vessel(s). Inflatable vessels under 10 feet in length are exempt from this requirement. If traveling into Oregon on the Owyhee River, a State of Oregon Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention permit is required for watercraft exceeding 10 feet in length.
- All boaters, including kayakers, must carry and use a water-tight, portable toilet. Human waste must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip. Any other system of disposing of human waste must comply with the most current EPA regulations. Proper disposal of human waste protects water quality and minimizes potential to spread disease.

#### **1.5.3.8.3 Angling, Hunting and Trapping**

Pursuant to Section 4(d)(8) of the Wilderness Act, Section 1503(b)(8)(a) of the OPLMA, and Section 5 of Appendix B of House Report 101-405, angling, hunting, and trapping are legitimate wilderness activities subject to applicable State and Federal laws and regulations. Refer to Table 1.8 for a list of prohibited uses within wilderness, including prohibited use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment.

Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act precludes structures and installations in wilderness areas.

- Permanent blinds for hunting, photography, or other purposes are prohibited.
- Temporary, portable or “pop-up” blinds are permitted for hunting, photography, wildlife observation or similar purposes as long as the individual remains in the wilderness.

Ownership of blinds will be identified per Idaho Department of Fish and Game requirements. Hunters wishing to locate a temporary blind in the Owyhee Canyonland Wilderness Areas prior to their hunt will require a BLM free-use permit, available at the BLM Marsing Field Office and the Boise and Twin Falls District Offices. The permitting process will improve BLM’s ability to monitor use of the wilderness areas, and help to reduce potential over-crowding and user conflicts at more popular reservoirs.

#### 1.5.3.8.4 Special Recreation Permits

Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act precludes most commercial enterprises in wilderness areas other than valid rights that existed prior to wilderness designation. Section 4(d)(6) of the Wilderness Act, however, provides an exception for commercial services that are deemed “...proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas.” Commercial enterprises that are wilderness-dependent, contribute to *Leave No Trace* land use ethics or environmental education, and that do not degrade wilderness character are considered proper for realizing the recreational purposes of the areas, including licensed outfitting and guide services, and riding and pack stock rentals.

Section 06.A.1. of BLM Manual 2930 (Recreation Permits and Fees) states the following regarding management of recreation permits:

***“Recreation permits are managed consistent with the management objectives determined in Resource Management Plans (RMPs), Recreation Area Management Plans (RAMPs), or in their absence, through the recreation management objectives resulting from analysis of resources and visitor use for each area. Recreation permits are a tool for managing recreation use; reducing user conflicts; protecting natural and cultural resources; informing users; gathering use information; and obtaining a fair return for commercial and certain other uses of public land.”***

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Outfitters and guides are integral for big game hunting and recreational river floating in the wilderness areas due to the physical limitations imposed on vehicles accessing the wilderness areas and river put-in and take-out sites, and the need for long distance vehicle shuttles around canyons. To be issued a BLM Special Recreation Permit (SRP), outfitters are required to hold a current outfitter and guide license issued by the Idaho Outfitter and Guides Licensing Board (IOGLB). Currently, six licensed outfitters and guides hold BLM SRPs for river floating in the Owyhee River system, and four licensed outfitters and guides hold SRPs for river floating in the Bruneau River system.

Historically, about four SRPs have been issued annually for commercially guided big game hunts in areas affecting most of the wilderness areas, including deer, elk, pronghorn, and trophy bighorn sheep hunts. Applications for commercial activity in a wilderness area(s) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if the applicant meets the requirements for a permitted commercial activity. In other words, is the applicant involved in an activity that provides a

service(s) deemed necessary for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136). BLM will continue to issue SRPs to licensed outfitters and guides for the following activities when they meet this requirement and continue to operate within the terms and conditions of their SRP:

- Hunting,
- Angling,
- Pack trips,
- Hiking,
- Camping,
- Nature viewing, and
- Photography.

SRPs will also be issued to the following on an as needed basis as long as they meet the same requirements:

- Entities whose principal message includes an emphasis on wilderness ethics, *Tread Lightly!*, *Leave No Trace*, and/or environmental education, and
- Entities whose primary purpose is to support individuals with disabilities.

SRPs will not be issued to individuals or groups that have the ability to provide the requested service(s) outside of wilderness areas. The number of outfitter and guide licenses issued by the IOGLB will not exceed the number of SRPs permitted under this WMP.

#### **1.5.3.8.5 Visitor Use**

Due to their remoteness and primitive access routes, the six wilderness areas support relatively few visitors and as such, exhibit outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreational experiences. Visitor use is not expected to increase substantially, and thus, should not adversely affect wilderness character. Wilderness access permits will not be required, and limits on the frequency of recreational use and group size will not be imposed in upland wilderness areas. If monitoring shows that solitude, primitive recreational experiences, or other wilderness characters are being adversely affected by increased visitor numbers or encounters, visitor use limits will be re-evaluated.

A WSR visitor use capacity analysis was completed in 2012 by students from the Boise State University Recreation Department. The purpose for the study was to ascertain visitor use expectations and to better understand visitor-related impacts along WSR corridors. Collected data revealed relatively little change in WSR visitor use over the past 30 years, and the use level is not expected to increase substantially due to the difficulty in accessing the rivers. Current visitor use levels along WSRs have resulted in few known user conflicts, although impacts to some higher-use campsites are apparent and include trampled vegetation, scattered trash and litter, human waste, trees and shrubs with cut or broken branches (presumably used for firewood), partially burned wood and ash, fire-scarred soil, etc. While these impacts are certainly caused by WSR floaters and campers, the impacts do not correlate to the number of groups floating a river on any given day. As such, daily limits on the number of floating groups will not be imposed on WSR segments until future monitoring reveals unacceptable user conflicts or resource impacts that can be correlated to group numbers.

Non-motorized (float) boating is permitted along all WSR segments, even though some of the smaller tributary WSRs are deemed unfloatable. The Bruneau, Jarbidge, and Owyhee rivers (and

some of their tributaries) provide multi-day canoe, kayak, and raft float trip opportunities predominately in spring, when flows are of sufficient volume. Visitor use of these WSR segments is often described as self-managing due to their highly variable annual flow regimes, unpredictable and often cold weather during the typical spring use season, remote and primitive river access routes, and the lack of suitable campsites along some river sections. These factors should maintain visitor use indefinitely at or near current levels.

WSRs will be managed as pristine natural environments with outstanding opportunities for solitude. Visitors to the Owyhee River or its tributaries will not likely observe other groups while on the river or at riverside campsites during their trip. Visitors to the Bruneau River may encounter one or more individuals or groups while on the river or at campsites. More encounters will no doubt occur on the Bruneau River during three-day weekend holidays, like Memorial Day. Encounters with individuals or groups along other WSR segments will be rare due to inherent limitations imposed by a river's difficulty rating, and by the ruggedness and remoteness of the canyonlands and access routes.

BLM may temporarily close campsites along floatable WSR segments on a rotating basis to prevent or mitigate damage to river values or wilderness character; however, a sufficient number of campsites will remain open to accommodate visitor use.

The goal of management is to maintain current recreational expectations as the designated capacity. BLM will strive to retain current recreational experiences for the life of the plan by: 1) tracking the number of self-issue permits completed by river floaters, 2) performing periodic visitor counts and interviews at put-in and take-out sites, 3) performing river and campsite patrols, and 4) providing education related to the impacts of river use. Groups floating designated WSRs will continue to be limited to a maximum of 15 persons. Short-term visitor use conflicts and resource impacts are expected to periodically occur due to higher use levels that correspond to warmer weather, higher flows, and holiday weekends. When and if this becomes a repeated problem, BLM will work with affected users to implement measures to address the issue(s).

Smaller WSR segments were not evaluated as part of the capacity analysis because they either have streamflows insufficient to support floating in most years, or have topography and/or dense riparian vegetation that inhibit floating on all but a very few days a year. Dispersed use of these WSR segments occurs primarily in the Spring by individuals seeking hiking, photography, and backpacking opportunities. Hunting is common in the Fall throughout the wilderness areas for big game and upland birds.

Current and foreseeable recreational use levels along floatable WSR segments do not warrant facility construction. Installation of restroom facilities and informational and educational kiosks may be appropriate at certain staging areas, including river put-in and take-out sites, canyon overlooks, and cherrystem routes, all of which are outside of wilderness boundaries.

River access routes may need to be maintained or repaired to reduce ongoing erosion and safety hazards. Maintenance of cherrystem and other river access routes will be addressed in the Owyhee Travel Management Plan or affected resource management plan. Cherrystem routes located within WSR corridors conflict with the "wild" WSR classification [Section 2(b)(1) WSR Act; and Ch. 7, Section 7.5(B)(1) BLM Manual 6400]. Therefore, maintenance or repair activities on these routes will be limited to the minimum necessary to remain compatible with the "wild" classification and the associated ORVs.



#### 1.5.3.8.6 Other Visitor Use

- Traditional geocaching and letterboxing are prohibited according to the Wilderness Act's prohibition on structures within wilderness areas.
- Goats are not permitted as pack stock and domestic sheep grazing is prohibited in the wilderness areas to reduce the potential for disease transmission to bighorn sheep populations.
- To reduce weed transport and infestation within the wilderness areas, supplemental feed for riding and pack stock must be certified noxious weed-free, as defined by Idaho Department of Agriculture Administrative Rules (IDAPA 02.06.31.250. - Noxious Weed Free Forage & Straw Certification Rules). Supplemental feed must be cubed or pelletized, or if in forage bales, must contain a weed-free certification tag or otherwise show evidence of weed-free certification.
- Pursuant to Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act, the collection of any resource in wilderness, including shed antlers, for the purpose of commercial sale is prohibited.
- Casual non-commercial surface collection for personal use of renewable and non-renewable resources is permitted (i.e., dead and down wood, fruit, vegetation, rock and mineral specimens, petrified wood, shed antlers, and common invertebrate and plant fossils). Surface disturbance as a result of digging or excavation for personal collection is prohibited.
- To reduce impacts to the natural wilderness character, individuals may not cut, break, or otherwise destroy standing live and dead trees or shrubs for firewood (or clear an area for a campsite, visitor convenience, or comfort, such as cutting out poison ivy). Only dead and down woody material may be used for firewood.
- To preserve the area's history, vertebrate fossils and cultural, archaeological, and historic sites and artifacts, including arrowheads, may not be damaged or removed without BLM authorization. Removal of archaeological resources, such as arrowheads, is prohibited by 43 CFR 8365.1-5(a)(1), is a violation of FLPMA [43 U.S.C. 1733(a)] and the Antiquities Act (16 U.S.C. 432, 433), and is subject to criminal penalties provided by those acts.
- To maintain natural conditions, rock climbers may not destroy vegetation or damage rock faces to enhance a route, including chiseling or rock chipping, forcibly prying off rock, gluing, drilling, or otherwise affixing climbing bolts or other permanent artificial holds on rock.

#### 1.5.3.8.7 Trail Designation and Management

Pedestrian or equestrian trails may be constructed within the six wilderness areas when they are needed to preserve and protect wilderness character. A few existing trails or two-track roads will be designated as trails to facilitate visitor use and reduce impacts to wilderness character and resources. Designated trails will be marked at trailheads and/or staging areas outside of wilderness and will be displayed on BLM wilderness and recreation maps. Signs and structures related to recreational use will not be placed in wilderness unless a MRA determines that they are the minimum necessary to provide public safety and/or protect and preserve wilderness character. In other words, new signs, structures, or trails may be justified due to an extraordinary hazard or to protect naturalness where it is being impacted from visitor use, but not for visitor convenience.

Remnant two-track roads and user-created trails are considered part of the wilderness experience and will not be marked or signed, will not receive routine maintenance, and will not be displayed

on BLM recreation maps or brochures. As time and funding allow, BLM may take action to rehabilitate surface disturbances with actions similar to those discussed in the fire rehabilitation and weed control sections of this document. Otherwise, trails and two-track roads will be allowed to revegetate naturally unless their continued use causes excessive soil erosion, poses an unacceptable public safety hazard, or adversely affects wilderness character.

Trailheads and staging areas that provide access into wilderness areas will be managed in accordance with the pending Owyhee Travel Management Plan that will designate travel management objectives for non-wilderness public lands in Owyhee County.

The following trails will be designated for both pedestrian and equestrian use:

1. Parker Trail (east side of Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, Map 1.2, "Big Jacks Creek Wilderness Including Wild and Scenic Rivers" ) 1.2 mi
2. Tindall Trail (west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.4, "Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (South) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers" ) 0.5 mi
3. Roberson Trail - East (east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3, "Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers" ) 0.7 mi
4. Roberson Trail - West (west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3, "Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers" ) 0.7 mi
5. Shoofly Creek Trail (northern end of Little Jacks Creek Wilderness), Map 1.5, "Little Jacks Creek Wilderness Including Wild and Scenic Rivers") 6.1 mi
6. Jarbidge River Trail (east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3, "Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North) Including Wild and Scenic Rivers" ) (below the Forks Jarbidge River Launch Site) approx. 1.0 mi.

Designated trails will have a continuous, discernible tread that is narrow and usually rough, and will be managed according to the design specifications listed in Table 1.7. Trails will consist of native materials with common obstacles intended to maintain a primitive experience. Vegetation will be allowed to encroach into a trail, but rock-fall or tree-fall will be removed if needed to facilitate public safety, to define the route, or to protect resources. Bridges or water crossings will not be constructed, but erosion control structures will be installed at the minimum design level if they are determined to be necessary for public safety or to administer the area for the preservation of wilderness character. Route signing or markers will exist only at the trail entrance.

Subject to appropriate environmental analysis, designated trails may be rehabilitated, rerouted, improved, or maintained according to the trail design specifications in Table 1.7. An environmental analysis will be necessary to designate new wilderness trails. New trails will be subject to the design parameters in Table 1.7.

**Table 1.7 - Design Specifications for Wilderness Trails**

<b>Design Parameter</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>Trail Tread</b>	Width	18 inches
<b>Surface Type</b>	Description	Native, ungraded, and continuously rough
<b>Surface Protrusions</b>	Height	24 inches
<b>Surface Protrusions</b>	Description	May be common and continuous
<b>Surface Obstacles</b>	Max. Height allowable	24 inches
<b>Grade (Target)</b>	Percent	18%
<b>Grade (Short Pitch Maximum)</b>	Percent	40%
<b>Grade (Maximum Pitch Density)</b>	Percent of total length of trail	up to 40% of trail
<b>Cross Slope (Target)</b>	Hillslope as a percent	Natural (no maximum)
<b>Clearing (Height)</b>	Height of cleared vegetation	7 feet
<b>Clearing (Width)</b>	Width of cleared vegetation	48 inches
<b>Clearing</b>	Description	Some light vegetation may encroach into clearing area
<b>Clearing (Trail Shoulder)</b>	Distance from edge of trail	12 inches
<b>Turns (Switchbacks)</b>	Radius of turn	6 feet
<b>Signage</b>	Location	Beginning (trailhead)
<b>Off-trail Paths</b>	Other paths parallel or tributary to main trail	Exist only when other destinations exist

Three portage trails exist along the Jarbidge River and two exist along the Owyhee River (see Map 1.4 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (South), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers and Map 1.7 Owyhee River Wilderness (West), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers. Portage trails are considered part of the “wild” river experience, and will not be maintained. However, BLM may take action to address or mitigate significant safety hazards or threats to human life.

New trail construction will not be permitted within WSR corridors that are within wilderness areas. Within Recreational WSR corridors located outside of wilderness areas, roads, trails, bridges and crossings may be maintained, repaired, or replaced as needed to meet public access needs.

### **1.5.3.9 Education and Interpretation**

General interpretive information regarding natural and cultural resources and recreation opportunities in wilderness will be located on kiosks outside of wilderness, in brochures, on BLM recreation maps, and on the BLM Idaho State Office, and the Boise, Twin Falls, Vale and possibly Elko and Winnemucca District websites. Wilderness maps will include area descriptions, designated trails, interpretive information, and information on wilderness land use ethics and *Leave No Trace* principles. *Leave No Trace* ethics will also be emphasized in classes and workshops presented at local schools and in the field. Interpretive trails will not exist in wilderness areas. The following guidelines will be used when developing education and interpretation products:

- In all publications, visitors to wilderness areas and WSRs will be advised to pack in/pack out, and to respect private property rights.

- Interpretive and informational materials will be developed in consultation with affected Indian Tribes, and where feasible, in collaboration with other agencies, non-governmental organizations, and interested individuals.
- Wilderness boundary signs will be simple installations (i.e., carsonite or metal posts) used to distinguish wilderness from adjacent non-wilderness, and will be located in accordance with BLM Manual 6220, Section 1.6.D.6.
- Key entrance signs will identify the name of the wilderness and/or WSR corridor, and will be placed where visitors are likely to contact the wilderness or WSR boundary. Entrance signs will be larger than the boundary markers. Designated trails will not be signed except at the trailhead outside of the wilderness.
- Kiosks containing one or two-paneled informational and interpretive signs will exist at access points, river put-ins and take-outs, along major roads, or at future staging areas. These signs will provide local and regional information about wilderness, WSR corridors, natural and cultural resources, regulatory information, and interpretation. Some of the kiosks may also include updated information and announcements, as well as visitor surveys with collection boxes. Additional signs will be designed and installed as visitor needs warrant and as funding permits.

**1.5.3.10 Military Operations**

According to Section 1503(b)(11) of the OPLMA, military overflights of wilderness areas, including low-level overflights, are not precluded or restricted. Ground-based military maneuvers and associated activities will not be permitted in wilderness areas except in support of emergency actions.

**1.5.3.11 Management Action Overview**

One of BLM’s goals for wilderness management is to provide opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation by limiting the number and type of land use restrictions that visitors must follow, while still maintaining compliance with wilderness and WSR policy. To that end, and pursuant to the discussions in the WMP, below is a consolidated list of legislatively required actions and visitor use requirements.

**Table 1.8 - Land Use Guidelines & Restrictions within Wilderness Areas and Wild & Scenic Rivers**

1	Legislative Requirements
1.a.	Pursuant to Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act, the following uses are prohibited in wilderness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. commercial enterprises,</li> <li>b. permanent and temporary roads,</li> <li>c. use of motor vehicles,</li> <li>d. use of motorized equipment or motorboats,</li> <li>e. landing of aircraft,</li> <li>f. use of other forms of mechanical transport (except for wheelchairs), and</li> <li>g. structures or installations.</li> </ul>
1.b.	BLM may grant exceptions to any of the prohibited activities and uses listed in 1.a. above in accordance with Section 4(d) of the Wilderness Act and Appendix A of House Report 101-405, when the activities and uses are determined through the MRA process to be the minimum necessary to preserve wilderness character.

2	Livestock Grazing
2.a.	Pursuant to OPLMA Section 1503(b)(3), livestock grazing will continue to be authorized in allotments located wholly or partially in wilderness areas. According to Section 1 of Appendix A of House Report 101-405, the number of livestock permitted to graze in wilderness will remain at the approximate levels that existed at the time the areas entered the wilderness system. Further, any adjustments in permitted use would be made as a result of revisions in the normal grazing and land management planning process, giving consideration to legal mandates, range condition, and the protection of the range resource from deterioration, as set out in the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and applicable land use plans.
2.b.	Livestock grazing is prohibited in burned areas until vegetative recovery objectives are met, as identified in pertinent grazing decisions and/or applicable land use or wildfire recovery plan(s).
2.c.	Domestic sheep grazing is prohibited in wilderness to reduce the potential for disease transmission to California bighorn sheep.
3	Hunting or Photography Blinds
3.a.	Permanent hunting or photography blinds are prohibited.
3.b.	Temporary, portable or “pop-up” blinds are allowed in wilderness without a permit if they are used only while the hunter is in the wilderness. Individuals wishing to erect a temporary blind in the Owyhee Canyonland Wilderness Areas prior to their hunt will require a BLM free-use permit, available at the BLM Marsing Field Office and the Boise and Twin Falls District Offices. Individuals wishing to use a temporary blind in wilderness for purposes other than hunting, such as photography, are subject to the same requirements as hunters. Consistent with BLM requirements for the use of temporary blinds, as described in the Idaho Department of Fish and Game regulations, a hunter’s full name and ZIP code must be permanently attached, etched, engraved or painted on the blind in an obvious location.
4	Collection of Items
4.a.	Collection of any resource, including shed antlers, for the purpose of commercial sale is prohibited.
4.b.	Casual non-commercial surface collection for personal use of renewable and non-renewable resources is permitted (i.e., dead and down wood, fruit, vegetation, rock and mineral specimens, petrified wood, shed antlers, and common invertebrate and plant fossils). Surface disturbance from digging or excavation for personal collection is prohibited.
4.c.	Vertebrate fossils and cultural, archaeological, and historic sites and artifacts, including arrowheads, may not be damaged or removed without BLM authorization.
5	Angling, Hunting, and Trapping
5.a.	Angling, hunting, and trapping activities are permitted in wilderness areas subject to State and Federal laws and regulations, and subject to non-motorized and non-mechanized access.
6	Supplemental Feed
6.a.	Consistent with existing Supplementary Rules, supplemental feed for riding and pack stock must be certified noxious weed-free, as defined by Idaho Department of Agriculture Administrative Rules (IDAPA 02.06.31 - Noxious Weed Free Forage & Straw Certification Rules). Weed-free supplemental feed and straw must be cubed or pelletized, or if in forage bales, must contain a weed-free certification tag or otherwise show evidence of weed-free certification.
6.b.	Goats are prohibited as pack stock.



7	Rock Climbing
7.a.	Rock climbers may not destroy vegetation or damage rock faces to enhance a route, including chiseling or rock chipping, forcibly prying off rock, gluing, drilling, or otherwise affixing climbing bolts or other permanent artificial holds on rock. Existing bolts or other artificial devices will be removed upon discovery.
8	General/Upland Camping
8.a.	Consistent with existing Supplementary Rules, camping is limited to 14 days in any one location. After 14 days, camps must be moved at least twenty-five (25) miles from the previous campsite. For the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas, the 14-day camping limit applies to any consecutive 28-day period.
8.b.	Upland campsites (those located outside of a WSR corridor) must be located at least 300 feet from natural springs or developed upland water sources (i.e., troughs, reservoirs, etc.) to limit potential conflicts with wildlife and livestock.
8.c.	Campers in upland sites must either: 1) use a water-tight, portable toilet, the contents of which must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip, or 2) bury human waste in catholes dug at least 8 inches deep and 200 feet from water, trails, and campsites.
8.d.	Campers must pack-in/pack-out all food, trash, burned material, etc.
8.e.	Campers may not cut, break, or otherwise destroy standing live and dead trees or shrubs for firewood (or clear an area for a campsite, visitor convenience, or comfort, such as cutting out poison ivy). Only dead and down woody material may be used for firewood.
9	Wild and Scenic River Camping
9.a.	WSR campers must contain campfires in a metal fire pan or on a fire blanket raised off the ground. All unburned contents of the fire, including ash, must be removed from the river corridor.
9.b.	WSR campers, hikers, and floaters are strongly encouraged to urinate directly into the river (not in or around campsites) to reduce impacts to limited streamside campsites.
9.c.	WSR campers must use biodegradable soap for personal use and dishwashing. Strain all dish and rinse water before scattering water broadly onto vegetated soil at least 200 feet from water, if possible.
10	Boating
10.a.	All boaters, including kayakers, must carry and use a water-tight, portable toilet. Human waste must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip. Any other system of disposing of human waste must comply with current EPA regulations.
10.b.	Groups and individuals embarking on single or multi-day float trips must complete a BLM self-issue permit, which may be obtained at the river launch site, or from the BLM website. The trip leader must retain a copy of the self-issue permit throughout the trip, and must present the permit to a BLM employee upon request.
10.c.	Groups floating designated WSRs are limited to a maximum of 15 persons.
10.d.	Boat owners must display an Idaho Invasive Species Fund sticker on their vessel(s). Inflatable vessels under 10 feet in length are exempt from this requirement. If traveling into Oregon on the Owyhee River, a State of Oregon Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention permit is required for watercraft exceeding 10 feet in length.

11	General Access
11.a.	New access routes will not be developed and existing administrative access routes will not be maintained or repaired with mechanized equipment without BLM authorization.
11.b.	Recreational developments may be constructed, maintained, or repaired by or on behalf of BLM along the North Fork Owyhee WSR outside of the Wilderness Area.
12	Emergency Access
12.a.	Emergency access for search and rescue and for situations involving the health or safety of individuals, or the rescuing of sick or stranded livestock may utilize motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment (including helicopters). Individuals must notify the BLM authorized officer immediately following completion of emergency activities. The subsequent removal of downed airplanes (or other damaged vehicles) and associated equipment, parts, or debris is not considered an emergency, and will require prior BLM authorization.
13	Other Activities
13.a.	Traditional geocaching and letterboxing activities are prohibited.
13.b.	Individuals may not dig, dam, or otherwise alter the natural flow and appearance of water bodies (i.e., hot springs, streams, rivers, etc.).
13.c.	Ground-based military maneuvers and associated activities are prohibited except in support of emergency actions.

**Table 1.9 - BLM Decisions and Actions within Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers**

1.	BLM will issue Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) to the following entities (including commercial enterprises), as long as they provide services deemed necessary for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas, and as long as they are wilderness-dependent and do not degrade wilderness character: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Licensed outfitters and guides,</li> <li>b. Entities whose mission includes the promotion of wilderness ethics, <i>Tread Lightly!</i>, <i>Leave No Trace</i>, or environmental education, and</li> <li>c. Entities whose primary purpose is to support individuals with disabilities.</li> </ul>
2.	BLM will issue up to ten (10) SRPs to licensed commercial outfitters and guides for river floating, including a maximum of four (4) SRPs for the Bruneau River system and a maximum of six (6) SRPs for the Owyhee River system.
3.	BLM will impose or adjust visitor use restrictions if monitoring shows a substantial increase in visitor use conflicts and/or indicates visitor use is causing unacceptable impacts to resources, wilderness character, or WSR values.
4.	BLM will not place signs or structures in wilderness unless, through use of a MRA, the authorized officer determines that they are the minimum necessary protect or preserve wilderness character and/or address public safety hazards.

5.	<p>The following existing routes are designated as trails for both pedestrian and equestrian use:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Parker Trail (east side of Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, Map 1.2 Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 1.2 mi.</li> <li>b. Tindall Trail (west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.4 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (South), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 0.5 mi.</li> <li>c. Roberson Trail - East (east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 0.7 mi.</li> <li>d. Roberson Trail - West (west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 0.7 mi.</li> <li>e. Shoofly Creek Trail (northern end of Little Jacks Creek Wilderness, Map 1.5 Little Jacks Creek Wilderness, Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) approximately 6.1 mi.</li> <li>f. Jarbidge River Trail (east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers) (below the Forks Jarbidge River Launch Site) approximately 1.0 mi.</li> </ol>
6.	BLM will manage designated trails according to the trail design specifications in Table 1.7 - Design Specifications for Wilderness Trails.
7.	BLM will evaluate any proposals involving potential soil or vegetation disturbance in accordance with the Wilderness Act or other applicable laws and regulations.
8.	BLM will use the MRA process to evaluate motorized and mechanized access proposals to facilitate Native American traditional cultural and religious activities in wilderness.
9.	BLM managers will consider the full range of wildfire management strategies and tactics, and will implement the tactic(s) that best protect public safety and the wilderness values at risk.
10.	<p>BLM will not remove existing structures and installations when they are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. associated with a valid existing right, including range projects listed in Appendix D,</li> <li>b. of historical or cultural value, or</li> <li>c. the minimum necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness.</li> </ol>
11.	BLM will authorize maintenance or repair of reservoirs within closed grazing allotments only when they are determined to be essential or critical for wildlife management through consultation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.
12.	BLM will preserve wilderness character by managing noxious weeds and non-native invasive plants, with an emphasis on treating small (<0.1 acre) infestations that have the potential to spread and displace native plants. Larger infestations will be managed separately, since they could involve several treatment applications or associated tactics.

## 1.6 Monitoring Program

Permitted livestock grazing in wilderness is administered under the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (BLM 1997). Field offices will continue to monitor rangeland health as a process separate and apart from wilderness character monitoring; however, the results of rangeland health monitoring will be included in the periodic (every five year) wilderness character monitoring report. Rangeland health monitoring measures and tracks actual livestock use, as well as ecological condition and trend. BLM resource monitoring staff will be restricted to non-motorized and non-mechanized access in wilderness, unless otherwise authorized following a MRA. The effects to wilderness character from activities associated with range project maintenance and related access will be evaluated as part of the wilderness monitoring process.

Current BLM policy requires a wilderness character monitoring report for each wilderness area every five years to assess trend(s) in wilderness character. Wilderness character is monitored under protocols described in "Keeping It Wild: an Interagency Strategy to Monitor Trends in Wilderness Character" (Landres et al 2008). During wilderness character monitoring, fourteen indicators are measured. The techniques used to generate data for each measure are contained in "Measuring Attributes of Wilderness Character: BLM Implementation Guide" (BLM 2012).

Wilderness monitoring activities assess the effects to wilderness character and WSR values from visitor use, activities conducted under valid existing rights, activities conducted under BLM authorization, natural disasters (i.e., wildfire, flood, insects, etc.), and management decisions. A single activity may affect several wilderness qualities or WSR values. For example, an activity such as weed control is intended to restore natural conditions over the long-term, but may diminish the untrammeled condition of the wilderness in the short-term. These two separate outcomes, the improvement of "naturalness" and decreased "untrammeled nature," will be monitored separately.

Separate activities undertaken for different purposes may cumulatively diminish the same qualities of wilderness character. For example, a designated trail may control visitor impacts on vegetation. In the same vicinity, a barrier may be constructed to protect sensitive resources from undue erosion or recreational impacts. Though the two activities are unrelated, both activities may adversely affect the "undeveloped" quality of wilderness character. Monitoring the effects of activities to multiple qualities of wilderness character will improve understanding of the overall effects on wilderness character.

The monitoring program will provide a greater understanding of the condition of each wilderness area. Effects of intentional, unintentional, and unauthorized activities will be captured.

Information generated during wilderness monitoring will help managers determine:

- the current state of wilderness character;
- if and how wilderness character is changing over time;
- if and how stewardship actions are affecting wilderness character; and
- which stewardship priorities and decisions will best protect and preserve wilderness character.

Monitoring will provide wilderness managers with information that will improve their evaluation of ongoing activities, as well as future proposals. However, monitoring will not be used to compare conditions and changes in these six wilderness areas with other wilderness areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System or with each other. While the enabling legislation is the same for all six wilderness areas, trends for a specific wilderness can only be evaluated relative to its unique character, as well as its unique natural and cultural resources.

At a minimum, the following items will be monitored to ensure that wilderness management decisions and authorized use are not adversely affecting wilderness character or WSR values, and that undue impacts to other resources are not occurring:

- designated and user-created trails,
- weed infestations and treatments,
- wildfire effects,
- fire suppression and associated ES&R,
- authorized use of administrative routes for range project maintenance and salt delivery,
- reclamation of surface disturbances, including mining claims,
- recreational use of river portages,
- unauthorized use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment,
- the effectiveness of existing signage and education, and
- recreational activities.

Quantitative monitoring protocols have not been developed for campsites and other areas along WSRs.

Due to the remoteness of the six wilderness areas, and the fact that surrounding areas are predominately public land, are sparsely inhabited, and are managed principally for agricultural purposes, air quality will not be monitored.

If monitoring reveals that visitor use is damaging cultural resources, BLM staff, with Tribal and SHPO consultation, will develop a management strategy to minimize further damage, including, but not limited to education, signage, and natural barriers.

Field reports, photographs, and monitoring data will be maintained in the official file for each wilderness at the BLM Boise and Twin Falls District Offices.

### **1.6.1 WSR Monitoring**

Since each of the 16 WSR segments flow through designated wilderness areas, the WSR corridors will be monitored as part of the overall wilderness monitoring process. Monitoring of WSR corridors will include monitoring of free-flowing condition, ORVs, and water quality, as well as resource and recreation impacts and visitor conflicts. Water quality will be monitored at points



upstream of and within designated corridors. Baseline water quality data was collected for all WSR segments in 2011 (Appendix E, *Water Quality*). This data is compared to Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) water quality standards, and reveals no need for water quality mitigation actions.

Baseline streamflow monitoring began in 2012, and collected data was used to develop Federal water right claims. Streamflow monitoring will continue in an effort to refine streamflow calculations, and to provide information needed to guide management decisions about the protection and enhancement of WSR values. The additional data may be needed to ensure that flow levels adequately support WSR values. It should be noted that Owyhee River streamflow is regulated by a reservoir on the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, and South Fork Owyhee River streamflow is regulated upstream in Nevada by reservoirs and irrigation diversions.

Visitor use monitoring is integral to the protection and enhancement of the WSR values. Monitoring will be designed to indicate whether visitor use is impacting ORVs and to guide actions that may be taken to mitigate the effect(s). Periodic surveys of river user experiences, counts of actual visitor use, and monitoring conditions within the corridors, especially in congregation areas (campsites, launches, and takeouts) will be designed to inform decisions to implement management changes. If monitoring shows that visitor use is causing adverse effects to a WSR corridor(s), BLM could increase visitor use management, including but not limited to: 1) expanded outreach and education programs, 2) increased river patrol frequency, and 3) a mandatory permit system for all boaters.

## **1.6.2 Law Enforcement**

BLM law enforcement rangers will enforce Federal laws and regulations in wilderness areas. State and local law enforcement, BLM staff, contractors, and volunteers may assist by providing information regarding wilderness-related violations. As part of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe's Cultural Resources Protection Plan, tribal members and employees will also patrol the area. As part of this program, the Shoshone-Paiute Chief Tribal Ranger will coordinate directly with the Boise and Twin Falls Districts' Law Enforcement staff to report potential incidents and possible violations of Federal law and BLM regulations and policies.

Law enforcement rangers, BLM staff, Tribal representatives, and other interested volunteers will patrol wilderness perimeters with motorized vehicles, and will conduct wilderness patrols on foot, horseback, or with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. Motorized vehicles and equipment, including helicopters and fixed wing aircraft, may be used for temporary emergencies involving search and rescue operations, to address violations of law, and/or to pursue fugitives, and will be immediately followed up with notification to the appropriate BLM Field Manager.

## **1.7 Plan Evaluation**

The WMP is a working document that will be reviewed periodically. The plan uses an adaptive management strategy that allows for plan revision when prescribed management actions or a change in the existing situation no longer meets wilderness management objectives. A proposed revision of the WMP will be accomplished with public review and input. Minor corrections of typographic or cartographic errors will be made without public input by inserting an errata sheet. To the extent possible, affected land use plans will be amended as needed to conform to the legislative, regulatory, and policy requirements contained herein. Where it does not conflict with

the enabling legislation or other pertinent laws and regulations, the WMP may be revised if necessary to conform to future land use planning documents.

## **1.8 Activities Associated with Plan Implementation**

The following list reflects the implementation priority for management actions identified in this WMP. Actual implementation is subject to staff and funding availability outside the control of this plan.

### **Ongoing Activities**

- Maintenance of boundary and road closure signs
- Visitor information and education
- Wilderness and WSR monitoring:
  - Visitor use
  - Resource condition
  - Trail condition
  - Wilderness character and WSR values

### **Future Activities**

The following list of activities must be part of the plan implementation; however, project-specific environmental analysis may not be required because they are analyzed in the EA associated with this WMP:

- Reclamation:
  - Vehicle routes not used for authorized administrative access
  - Undesirable or highly impacted campsites
  - Mining claim-related disturbance
  - Unauthorized vehicular impacts
- Signs:
  - Trailheads
  - Vehicle access points
  - Off-site information signs
- Consider implementing non-ground disturbing wildlife management activities where they are determined necessary to preserve wilderness character.
- In accordance with 43 CFR 4120.3-6, maintain, modify, or remove unused or unnecessary livestock developments or other structures.
- Control infestations of noxious weeds and non-native invasive plants through the use of monitoring and treating small infestations to prevent large-scale landscape changes.
- Publish supplemental rules for visitor use standards established in the WMP.
- Issue Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) to licensed outfitters and guides for river floating, hunting, angling, and other commercial and group activities on an as-needed basis. SRPs will be issued according to established limits by the Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board.

### **Subsequent Environmental Analysis**

If current conditions change sufficiently to warrant actions not already addressed in this WMP, additional environmental analysis may be required.

## **2 Chapter 2: Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan Environmental Assessment - DOI-BLM-ID-B0000-2011-0001-EA**

### **2.1 Introduction and Background**

Section 1503 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act (OPLMA) of 2009 designated approximately 517,000 acres of wilderness in Owyhee County, Idaho, including the Big Jacks Creek, Little Jacks Creek, Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers, North Fork Owyhee, Owyhee River, and Pole Creek Wilderness Areas. In addition, Section 1504 of the OPLMA designated 16 wild & scenic river (WSR) segments, totaling about 325 miles, all but about six miles of which flow through the designated wilderness areas. The OPLMA requires the wilderness areas to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 7202).

Wilderness and WSR management actions described in the Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) form the Proposed Action analyzed herein. The Proposed Action is being analyzed against an alternative that would normally be considered a continuation of current management; however, that is not the case in this instance. Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act requires administering agencies to preserve wilderness character. Likewise, Section 10(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSR Act) requires agencies to administer designated WSR corridors in a manner that protects and enhances the outstandingly remarkable values that resulted in their designation. Land uses and activities that are inconsistent with this legislative guidance are prohibited within the designated areas.

BLM is required to manage the wilderness areas and WSRs according to standards that were not in effect when the lands were previously managed for multiple use under FLPMA. As such, a No Action Alternative (continuation of current management) is not analyzed, since new and overriding requirements were legislatively imposed through wilderness and WSR designation. Alternative A is being termed the Minimal Management Alternative because it provides for the most restrictive management to protect and preserve wilderness character and WSR values, and to comply with applicable laws and regulations. Most of the management actions contained in the Minimal Management Alternative are also contained in the Proposed Action Alternative. The greatest difference between the two alternatives is that the Proposed Action allows BLM management flexibility by prescribing discretionary actions to address the effects of past and ongoing human activities.

The analysis in this EA will focus mainly on the Proposed Action's discretionary management actions to determine: 1) whether the actions individually and cumulatively fulfill legislative requirements to protect and preserve wilderness character, and to protect and enhance WSR values, and 2) whether the actions individually or cumulatively involve significant environmental effects.

#### **2.1.1 Purpose of and Need for the Proposed Action**

The purpose of the WMP is to implement actions and guidelines designed to preserve wilderness character and protect and enhance river values, as mandated by Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act and Section 10(a) of the WSR ACT, by identifying conditions and opportunities that will be managed for at least the next ten years, or as changes in wilderness character, WSR values, and/or resource conditions require.

In furtherance of these mandates, Section 1.4.C. of BLM Manual 6340 requires BLM District and Field Managers, among other things, to develop and implement land use and activity-level plans addressing wilderness areas that conform to the Wilderness Act, the establishing legislation, and BLM wilderness policies and guidance. In addition, Section 3(d)(1) of the WSR Act requires administering agencies to prepare a comprehensive management plan to protect WSR values. The WSR Act requires the management plan to address resource protection, development of lands and facilities, user capacities, and any other necessary or desirable management practices.

### **2.1.2 Decision to be Made**

The WMP implements legislative and regulatory direction from the Wilderness Act, the WSR Act, and the OPLMA. Management actions common to both alternatives consist of restrictions on activities that could potentially affect wilderness character and/or WSR values. Use restrictions common to both alternatives implement legislative and regulatory direction to preserve wilderness character and to protect and enhance WSR values, and as such, will not be analyzed herein.

The Proposed Action Alternative discusses discretionary management actions to address issues identified during scoping in the following management categories:

- Wildfire management,
- Emergency stabilization and rehabilitation,
- Noxious weed and non-native invasive plant management,
- Livestock grazing-related activities,
- Research and monitoring,
- Reclamation of surface disturbance,
- Wildlife and fisheries management,
- Recreation management,
- Education and interpretation, and
- Military operations.

The EA will focus on the potential environmental effects of proposed discretionary management actions, as well as their effect on wilderness character and WSR values. Based on their potential effects, the authorized officer will decide whether to implement all, some, or none of the proposed discretionary actions.

Based on the analysis herein, the BLM authorized officer will decide whether to manage the wilderness areas and WSR corridors strictly according to legislative and regulatory requirements, or whether to implement a management plan that provides for more flexible management and discretionary opportunities to ensure adequate protection and preservation of resources and values, as well as mitigation for existing and future impacts to those resources and values.

### **2.1.3 Compliance with Laws, Regulations, Executive Orders, and State Statutes**

Management actions contained in the WMP comply with requirements of the Wilderness Act, the WSR Act, and the enabling OPLMA, as well as other applicable laws, regulations, and executive orders.

### 2.1.4 Consistency with Existing BLM Land Use Plans

As discussed in Section 1.2.3 of the WMP, the Proposed Action conforms to the goals, objectives, and decisions of the Bruneau Management Framework Plan (1983), the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan (1987), and the Owyhee Resource Management Plan (1999). The plan is also consistent with the goals and objectives being proposed in the Revised Jarbidge Resource Management Plan, currently under development.

### 2.1.5 Scoping and Alternative Development

In June 2011, public meetings were held in Boise, Grandview, Murphy, Nampa, and Twin Falls, Idaho, to present Wilderness and WSR policy and BLM management objectives for these areas. The meetings provided a forum for public input regarding specific wilderness and WSR issues. The BLM published several newsletters discussing Wilderness and WSR policy and the development of the WMP. BLM also posted information on multiple websites about the planning process, which provided the public with another venue for submitting comments or information regarding their use of and interest in these areas. Additionally, BLM staff consulted directly with affected livestock operators and other individuals and organizations interested in wilderness and WSR issues. The proposed action addresses relevant internal and public issues and concerns raised during the scoping process. See Section 1.3.3 and Section 1.4.3 of the WMP for a detailed description of the identified issues.

Based on an analysis of the issues raised during public and internal scoping, the BLM Interdisciplinary Team identified nine significant issues that are summarized in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 - Issues Discussed in the Wilderness and WSR Management Plan**

Issue Statement	Resolution
Structures associated with historic and valid existing land uses may not preserve wilderness character or WSR ORVs.	Authorized in Proposed Action and includes mining claim reclamation and the removal of unneeded range improvements and an existing metal granary.
Management actions associated with wildfire may affect wilderness character.	Management guidelines included in Proposed Action.
Long boundary perimeters increase the amount of wilderness that may be impacted by human-influenced changes to vegetative structure and composition in areas immediately adjacent to the wilderness areas, especially following large-scale wildfires.	Management guidelines included in Proposed Action.
Human activities may increase noxious weed and invasive plant infestation and spread.	Management guidelines included in Proposed Action.
Numbers of wilderness visitors may increase, resulting in site-specific impacts to wilderness character and/or WSR values.	Management guidelines included in Proposed Action.
The notoriety and popularity of wilderness areas resulting from their designation may increase visitation to a level that poses a risk to designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Outstanding Natural	Management guidelines included in Proposed Action. Guidelines within wilderness and WSRs are usually more stringent than those in ACECs or other

Issue Statement	Resolution
Areas (ONA), or Research Natural Areas (RNA).	area designations.
Upstream water rights that may be issued in the future could reduce streamflows needed to protect ORVs identified for affected river segments.	Management guidelines included in the Proposed Action. Claims for instream WSR flow were filed with the State of Idaho in December 2012.
Continued livestock grazing-related activities, including access to and maintenance of existing projects (i.e., springs, pipelines, fences, reservoirs, etc.), may adversely affect naturalness and undeveloped wilderness character and WSR values.	Management guidelines included in Proposed Action and provided for in the OPLMA.
Mineral exploration and extraction activities within valid existing mining claims may adversely affect naturalness and undeveloped wilderness character and WSR values.	Management guidelines provided for in 43 CFR 3809 and included in Proposed Action.

## 2.2 Description of Alternatives

Wilderness areas and WSRs are designated by Congress for the purpose of protecting and preserving wilderness character and protecting and enhancing WSR values. BLM must manage various land uses and activities consistent with the purposes for which the Wilderness Areas and WSRs were designated. Land uses and activities that are inconsistent with guidance provided by the Wilderness Act, the WSR Act, the OPLMA, and House Report No. 101-405 are prohibited within the affected areas.

Based on the above guidance, a true No Action Alternative does not exist, since BLM is required to manage designated wilderness areas and WSRs according to standards that were not in effect prior to their designation. Alternative A is being termed the Minimal Management Alternative because it provides for the most restrictive management to protect and preserve wilderness character and WSR values, and to comply with applicable laws and regulations. Alternative A contains no discretionary management actions. Most of the land use restrictions are also incorporated in the Proposed Action Alternative. The difference between the two alternatives is that the Proposed Action includes discretionary management actions designed to preserve wilderness character and protect and enhance WSR values, including: 1) addressing the effects of past human activities, 2) managing or responding to natural processes, such as wildfire, and their effects on wilderness character, and 3) providing limited authorizations for otherwise prohibited activities.

### 2.2.1 Management Actions Common to Both Alternatives

The following management actions are either expressly authorized by the enabling legislation or are baseline land use authorizations and/or restrictions deemed necessary for the proper management of the designated wilderness areas and WSRs. As such, the actions are incorporated in both alternatives.



1. Pursuant to Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act, the following uses are prohibited in wilderness:
  - a. commercial enterprises,
  - b. permanent and temporary roads,
  - c. use of motor vehicles,
  - d. use of motorized equipment or motorboats,
  - e. landing of aircraft,
  - f. use of other forms of mechanical transport, and
  - g. structures or installations.
2. Pursuant to OPLMA Section 1503(b)(3), livestock grazing will continue to be authorized in allotments located wholly or partially in wilderness areas. According to Section 1 of Appendix A of House Report 101-405, the number of livestock permitted to graze in wilderness will remain at the approximate levels that existed at the time the areas entered the wilderness system. Further, any adjustments in permitted use would be made as a result of revisions in the normal grazing and land management planning process, giving consideration to legal mandates, range condition, and the protection of the range resource from deterioration, as set out in the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management and applicable land use plans.
3. Emergency access for search and rescue and for situations involving the health or safety of individuals, or the rescuing of sick or stranded livestock may utilize motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment (including helicopters). Individuals must notify the BLM authorized officer immediately following completion of emergency activities. The subsequent removal of downed airplanes (or other damaged vehicles) and associated equipment, parts, or debris is not considered an emergency, and will require prior BLM authorization.
4. Livestock grazing is prohibited in burned areas until vegetative recovery objectives are met, as identified in pertinent grazing decisions and/or applicable land use or wildfire recovery plan(s).
5. Existing structures and developments will be removed if they: 1) are not associated with a valid existing right, including range projects listed in Appendix D; 2) are not of historical or cultural value; or 3) are not the minimum necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness.
6. Temporary, portable or “pop-up” blinds are permitted while the owner remains in the wilderness. Ownership of blinds will be identified per Idaho Department of Fish and Game requirements.
7. Traditional geocaching and letterboxing are prohibited.
8. Supplemental feed for riding and pack stock must be certified noxious weed-free, as defined by Idaho Department of Agriculture Administrative Rules (IDAPA 02.06.31 - Noxious Weed Free Forage & Straw Certification Rules). Weed-free supplemental feed and straw must be cubed or pelletized, or if in forage bales, must contain a weed-free certification tag or otherwise show evidence of weed-free certification.
9. Goats are prohibited as pack stock and domestic sheep grazing is prohibited in wilderness to reduce the potential for disease transmission to California bighorn sheep.
10. Collection of any resource, including shed antlers, for the purpose of commercial sale is prohibited.

11. Casual non-commercial surface collection for personal use of renewable and non-renewable resources is permitted (i.e., dead and down wood, fruit, vegetation, rock and mineral specimens, petrified wood, shed antlers, and common invertebrate and plant fossils). Surface disturbance from digging or excavation for personal collection is prohibited.
12. Vertebrate fossils and cultural, archaeological, and historic sites and artifacts, including arrowheads, may not be damaged or removed without BLM authorization.
13. Campers may not cut, break, or otherwise destroy standing live and dead trees or shrubs for firewood (or clear an area for a campsite, visitor convenience, or comfort, such as cutting out poison ivy). Only dead and down woody material may be used for firewood.
14. Campers in upland sites must either: 1) use a water-tight, portable toilet, the contents of which must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip, or 2) bury human waste in cat holes dug at least 8" deep and 200 feet from water, trails, and campsites.
15. Rock climbers may not destroy vegetation or damage rock faces to enhance a route, including chiseling or rock chipping, forcibly prying off rock, gluing, drilling, or otherwise affixing climbing bolts or other permanent artificial holds on rock. Existing bolts or other artificial devices will be removed upon discovery.
16. Permanent hunting or photography blinds are prohibited.
17. Recreational developments may be permitted, maintained, repaired, or replaced by or on behalf of BLM (as needed) along the North Fork Owyhee WSR outside of the Wilderness Area.
18. BLM will continue to issue SRPs to the following entities, as long as they provide services deemed necessary for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas, and as long as they operate within the terms and conditions of their SRP:
  - a. Licensed commercial outfitters and guides,
  - b. Entities whose mission includes the promotion of wilderness ethics, *Tread Lightly!*, *Leave No Trace*, or environmental education, and
  - c. Entities whose primary purpose is to support individuals with disabilities.
19. Up to ten (10) Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) will be issued to licensed commercial outfitters and guides for river floating, including a maximum of four (4) for the Bruneau River system and a maximum of six (6) for the Owyhee River system.
20. Ground-based military maneuvers and associated activities are prohibited except in support of emergency actions.
21. Groups and individuals embarking on single or multi-day float trips must complete a BLM self-issue permit form. Self-issue permits may be obtained at the river launch site, or from the BLM website. The trip leader must retain a copy of the self-issue permit throughout the trip, and must present the permit to a BLM employee upon request. Groups floating designated WSRs are limited to a maximum of 15 persons.
22. Boat owners must display an Idaho Invasive Species Fund sticker on their vessel(s). Inflatable vessels under 10 feet in length are exempt from this requirement. If traveling into Oregon on the Owyhee River, a State of Oregon Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention permit is required for watercraft exceeding 10 feet in length.
23. All boaters, including kayakers, must carry and use a water-tight, portable toilet. Human waste must be deposited in an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved dump station at the end of the trip. Any other system of disposing of human waste must comply with the most current EPA regulations.

24. Individuals may not dig, dam, or otherwise alter the natural flow and appearance of water bodies (i.e., hot springs, streams, rivers, etc.).
25. WSR campers, hikers, and floaters are strongly encouraged to urinate directly into the river (not in or around campsites) to reduce impacts to limited streamside campsites.
26. WSR campers must use biodegradable soap for personal use and dishwashing. Strain all dish and rinse water before scattering water broadly onto vegetated soil at least 200 feet from water, if possible.
27. Upland campsites (those located outside of a WSR corridor) must be located at least 300 feet from natural springs or developed upland water sources (i.e. troughs, reservoirs, etc.) to limit potential conflicts with wildlife and livestock.
28. Consistent with existing Supplemental Rules, camping is limited to 14 days in any one location. After 14 days, camps must be moved at least twenty-five (25) miles from the previous campsite. For the Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness Areas, the 14 day camping limit applies to any consecutive 28-day period. Campers must pack-in/pack-out all food, trash, waste, burned material, etc.
29. WSR campers must contain campfires in a metal fire pan or on a fire blanket raised off the ground to protect the soil from scarring and ash. All unburned contents of the fire, including ash, must be removed from the river corridor.
30. New access routes will not be developed and existing administrative access routes will not be maintained or repaired with mechanized equipment without BLM authorization.
31. When practical, WSRs will be used as the only water source for suppressing fires in WSR corridors and wilderness areas to prevent cross-contamination and/or spread of aquatic invasive species.
32. BLM will impose or adjust visitor use restrictions if monitoring shows a substantial increase in visitor use conflicts and/or indicates visitor use is causing unacceptable impacts to resources, wilderness character, or WSR values.
33. Angling, hunting, and trapping are permitted in wilderness areas subject to State and Federal laws and regulations, and subject to non-motorized and non-mechanized access.

### **2.2.2 Alternative A – Minimal Management**

The Minimal Management Alternative represents the most restrictive nondiscretionary baseline condition of managing wilderness areas and WSRs. Requirements or restrictions imposed in this alternative are those that either: 1) are specifically mandated by legislation, or 2) are designed to preclude or minimize, but not treat, the impacts of human use on wilderness areas and WSRs.

Alternative A includes the following management actions in addition to the common management actions identified in Section 2.2.1, above:

1. Motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment will not be authorized for anything other than emergency actions, as previously defined.
2. Pedestrian or equestrian trails will not be designated, maintained, or repaired.
3. No new installations or structures will be authorized.

## **2.2.3 Alternative B – Proposed Action**

The Wilderness Management Plan (WMP) is the Proposed Action and incorporates the common management actions identified in Section 2.2.1. In addition, the Proposed Action incorporates discretionary management actions, discussed in Section 2.2.3.1 through Section 2.2.3.8, to address proposals involving otherwise prohibited uses, particularly related to the use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment, in a manner that best preserves wilderness character and protects and enhances WSR values. Future unforeseen activities and proposals will be evaluated through a MRA to ensure they utilize the minimum tools needed to protect or enhance wilderness character and WSR values.

### **2.2.3.1 Fire Management**

In response to wildland fire, managers will consider the full range of wildfire management strategies and tactics, and will implement the tactic(s) that best protect public safety and the wilderness values at risk. Strategies and tactics will be based on factors such as fuel loading and fire behavior, the safety of human life, affects to private property and high value resources, and protection and/or enhancement of wilderness character and WSR ORVs.

Fire management activities will be implemented according to BLM Manual 6340, Section 1.6.C.7.b.i-iii, which provides for management flexibility according to the applicable RMP and Fire Management Plan, but limits the goals of those activities to the protection of wilderness character and the maintenance or reestablishment of the natural role of fire. Wildfire will be managed to meet fire management objectives using minimum impact suppression techniques (MIST) wherever possible, while providing for the safety of firefighters and the public. Where feasible, fire will be managed without motorized or mechanized vehicles or equipment.

Prescribed fire could be used to reestablish the natural role of fire in the ecosystem, as described in BLM Manual 6340, Section 1.6.C.7.c. It might also be authorized, where warranted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to enhance habitat for threatened, endangered, and candidate species. Both of the following conditions must be met prior to approving prescribed fire in a wilderness area:

- The natural role of fire cannot be returned solely by reliance on wildfire, or reliance on wildfires might create unacceptable risks to life, property, or natural resources outside the wilderness; and
- The use of fire or other fuel reduction treatments outside of wilderness is insufficient to reduce the risks from wildfire within the wilderness to life, property, or natural resources outside the wilderness.

Motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment may be authorized to meet fire management objectives following the approval process outlined in Section 1.5.3.1.1. The authorized officer's approval must be documented in wilderness monitoring reports. Support operations, such as helibases, helispots, and staging areas will normally be located outside of wilderness, unless BLM grants specific authorization following a MRA.

Due to the WSR Act requirement to protect or enhance WSR ORVs, fire suppression in WSRs will only be used to minimize impacts to human life and property, and will stress non-motorized/non-mechanized methods, even when compared with suppression methods being used in adjacent wilderness.

### **2.2.3.2 Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R)**

ES&R activities in burned areas will be conducted as part of the fire incident, where possible. If authorized fire suppression activities result in resource damage, repair of the damage will generally be planned and implemented by the suppression incident organization prior to demobilization. Stabilization of damaged sites or resources may occur with the same or similar type of equipment that was used for suppression. For example, if motorized, earth-moving equipment was used to construct fire lines, then similar equipment may be authorized to recontour and stabilize the area.

ES&R activities in wilderness will follow the guidance below, and may be more intensive when post-fire processes threaten ecological integrity or wilderness character.

1. While natural recovery of native plant species is preferable, planting or seeding will be used when objectives to protect wilderness character or WSR values cannot be successfully accomplished through natural recovery.
2. The first priority when seeding or planting will be to use native species that match site potential as described by ecological site descriptions or complementary reference sites. When native material of local or regional genetic stock is unavailable, is of insufficient quantity, or will not accomplish objectives, then other options may be evaluated.
3. If native species are unavailable, non-natives will be considered for emergency stabilization if the site was previously dominated by invasive species and an assisted succession pathway towards natives is planned and implemented, which promotes the rehabilitation of native vegetation and meets at least one of the following three criteria:
  - a. the natural biological diversity of the treated area will not be diminished; or
  - b. exotic and naturalized species can be confined within the treated area; or
  - c. ecological site inventory information, if available, indicates that a site will not support reestablishment of a species that was historically a part of the natural environment.

The authorized officer may approve the following otherwise prohibited activities on a case-by-case basis where they have been demonstrated through use of a MRA to be necessary to administer the area as wilderness:

- The use of motorized/mechanized equipment similar to that used during suppression.
- Installation of temporary post-fire emergency structures (i.e., fences, hydrologic monitoring devices, etc.).
- Erosion control techniques that prevent or minimize soil movement and loss (i.e., straw bales, wattles, mulch, etc.).
- Repair or replacement of facilities or structures that were burned or damaged by wildfire or suppression activities (i.e., fences, boundary signs, water control structures, corrals, water developments, trails, etc.).
- Stabilization and mitigation of post-fire related degradation to cultural resources including archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, traditional cultural properties, and historic structures.

### **2.2.3.3 Noxious Weeds and Non-Native Invasive Plant Management**

When a vegetation treatment is deemed appropriate following an environmental analysis and a MRA, management activities will emphasize protection and enhancement of wilderness character.

According to Section 1.6.C.15.f. of BLM Manual 6340, BLM will implement management actions designed to move toward natural vegetative composition and processes that reflect what would likely have developed with minimal human influence, including manipulation of vegetation through prescribed fire, chemical or mechanical treatments, or introduced biological agents. Actions considered will include those needed to: 1) recover a federally-listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species, 2) control non-native species, and 3) restore degraded areas where natural processes alone will not recover the area from the effects of past human intervention.

The least impacting, but effective, method will be used when noxious and invasive weed treatments are needed to preserve wilderness character. Treatments will emphasize the control of small (<0.1 acre) infestations that have the potential to spread and displace native plants. Small infestations will be treated predominately with hand tools or a backpack sprayer. Larger infestations will be managed separately, since they could involve several treatment applications or tactics considered to have a greater impact. While many noxious weeds and non-native invasive plants cannot effectively be treated without specific herbicides and/or biological agents, to the extent possible, treatment methods will be prioritized as follows, though it is likely that treatment combinations will be necessary in some situations:

1. Manual removal with hand tools.
2. Herbicides applied by backpack and/or pack stock (horse, mules, or llamas).
3. Biological control, including targeted grazing by livestock (if practical).
4. Herbicides applied aerially or with motorized equipment, where control is feasible, where control impacts may be quickly and readily rehabilitated, and where the infestation is of such size that herbicide(s) cannot be effectively applied without motorized equipment. Use of motorized equipment will require a MRA.

#### ***2.2.3.4 Livestock Management-Related Activities***

In addition to emergency situations, the authorized officer may authorize the occasional use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment where they have been demonstrated through use of a MRA to be necessary to protect and preserve wilderness character. Routine livestock management activities (including, but not limited to salt and supplement distribution and range project inspection, maintenance and repair) may continue within wilderness subject to BLM authorization. As required by Section 2 of Appendix A of House Report 101-405, those activities requiring the occasional use of motorized equipment would be expressly authorized in the grazing permits for the affected areas. Grazing permits will specify the timeframe during which vehicular access will be permitted, as well as the specific administrative route(s) and the type(s) of vehicles and/or equipment to be used. Where authorized, vehicles will be restricted to existing routes.

No new water or other developments will be permitted for livestock management purposes unless they are determined (through an environmental analysis and a MRA) to be the minimum necessary to protect or preserve wilderness character.

#### ***2.2.3.5 Research and Monitoring***

Research and monitoring activities may be authorized in wilderness if: 1) the required information cannot be collected outside of wilderness, and 2) the associated activities do not involve uses otherwise prohibited by the Wilderness Act. Proposed projects that involve prohibited uses, including, but not limited to ground disturbance, installation of devices or structures, and use of



motorized or mechanized vehicles or equipment will require an environmental analysis in addition to a MRA.

Water monitoring devices were previously determined through a MRA to be necessary on ungaged WSR stream segments to calculate and describe minimum flows that are critical to the support of WSR values, such as fisheries and recreation. Streamflow monitoring devices will be authorized if they do not obstruct the “free-flowing” condition of the affected WSR. The devices will be installed for the purpose of providing data to help refine previously-filed Federal water right claims. Once necessary data has been collected, authorized monitoring devices will be removed.

#### ***2.2.3.6 Reclamation of Surface Disturbances***

Surface disturbances related to the one remaining mining claim in the Bruneau Canyon near Indian Hot Springs will be addressed subject to the requirements of 43 CFR 3809 (Surface Management), which regulates the types and amounts of surface disturbance and reclamation that occur within mining claims. Pursuant to 43 CFR 3809.11(c), mining claimants must file a Plan of Operations prior to conducting surface disturbing operations. BLM resource specialists will review the Plan of Operations to ensure that it incorporates appropriate measures to minimize and treat the effects to wilderness character and WSR values.

Soil and vegetation disturbance associated with prior human uses and activities throughout the wilderness areas may be addressed pursuant to requirements in the above ES&R and weed management sections. Resource surveys and Tribal and SHPO consultation will first be completed to determine whether reclamation is feasible, or if the reclamation activities themselves will simply cause additional soil and vegetation disturbance and thus exacerbate ongoing noxious weed and non-native invasive plant problems. If reclamation is determined to be appropriate, a MRA will be conducted to decide the most compatible course of action. All necessary care will be taken to ensure the least impacts to wilderness character and WSR values.

#### ***2.2.3.7 Wildlife and Fisheries Management***

Wildlife management proposals will be evaluated through a MRA to determine if they are necessary for the administration of the area(s) for the purpose of the Wilderness Act. The following activities will be permitted: 1) when they cannot be completed outside of wilderness, 2) when they are needed to correct unnatural conditions resulting from human influence, and 3) when they contribute to the preservation of wilderness character.

- Facility maintenance or repairs
- Habitat mitigation or enhancement
- Research on fish and wildlife populations and habitats
- Wildlife population surveys
- Wildlife transplants (i.e., removal, augmentation, or reintroduction)
- Wildlife damage control needed to address:
  - impacts to Federally-listed endangered, threatened, or candidate species,
  - transmission of diseases or parasites that affect wildlife and humans, or
  - unacceptable livestock losses

According to BLM Policy Manual 6830 (Wildlife Damage Management), control activities will be directed at individual animals causing damage, and only the minimum amount of control necessary will be used to resolve the problem.

- Authorized activities will be conducted on foot or with riding and pack stock, unless BLM determines through a MRA that the use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment is the minimum tool necessary for the preservation of wilderness character. An environmental analysis and associated decision document will be needed for proposals involving potential soil or vegetation disturbance or the temporary use of a structure.
- BLM will authorize maintenance or repair of reservoirs within closed grazing allotments only when they are determined to be essential or critical for wildlife management through consultation with Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

### **2.2.3.8 Recreation**

#### **2.2.3.8.1 Access**

Groups floating any of the WSRs will be limited to a maximum of 15 persons. Proposals to maintain or repair access routes within “wild” WSR corridors utilizing motorized and/or mechanized vehicles or equipment will be subject to a MRA. BLM will not place signs or structures in wilderness unless, through use of a MRA, the authorized officer determines they are the minimum necessary to preserve and protect wilderness character.

Hunters wishing to locate a temporary blind in the Owyhee Canyonland Wilderness Areas prior to their hunt will require a BLM free-use permit, available at the BLM Marsing Field Office and the Boise and Twin Falls District Offices. The requirement for a free-use permit would take effect at the beginning of the first antelope hunting season after the Wilderness Management Plan becomes final following the resolution of any protests, appeals, or litigation on the Decision Record.

#### **2.2.3.8.2 Trail Designation and Management**

The following trails will be designated for both pedestrian and equestrian use to enhance visitor use and experience:

1. Parker Trail - east side of Big Jacks Creek Wilderness, Map 1.2 Big Jacks Creek Wilderness Including Wild and Scenic Rivers, 1.2 miles
2. Tindall Trail - west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.4 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (South), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers, 0.5 miles
3. Roberson Trail East - east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers, 0.7 miles
4. Roberson Trail West - west side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers, 0.7 miles
5. Shoofly Creek Trail - northern end of Little Jacks Creek Wilderness, Map 1.5 Little Jacks Creek Wilderness Including Wild and Scenic Rivers, 6.1 miles
6. Jarbidge River Trail - east side of Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, Map 1.3 Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness (North), Including Wild and Scenic Rivers, (below the Forks Campground) approx. 1.0 miles

Trail blockages from rock-fall or tree-fall may be cleared if they pose a public safety hazard. Structures, such as waterbars, will be installed at the minimum necessary design level if, through a MRA, the field manager determines they are necessary to protect public health or safety, or to administer the area for the preservation of wilderness character. Bridges or water crossings will not be constructed. Route signs or markers will exist only at trailheads outside of wilderness boundaries.

## 2.3 Affected Environment

The affected environments in the six wilderness areas and 16 WSR segments are described in Section 1.3.2 and Section 1.4.2 of the WMP.

## 2.4 Environmental Consequences

### 2.4.1 Resources/Concerns Considered for Analysis

Table 2.2 identifies issues that have been evaluated for potential direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts due to implementation of the Proposed Action. Some of these items are being considered to ensure compliance with laws, Executive Orders, or regulations that impose requirements on all Federal actions. Other items are relevant to the management of public lands in general, and to the BLM Boise and Twin Falls Districts in particular.

**Table 2.2 - Resources/Concerns Considered for Analysis**

<b>Resource or Concern</b>	<b>Analyzed (Y/N)</b>	<b>Rationale for Inclusion or Dismissal from Detailed Analysis</b>
<b>Air Quality</b>	N	Proposed action will not increase air pollutant concentrations.
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	N	Proposed ground-disturbing projects will undergo a MRA, as well as a NEPA analysis, and will also be subject to requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 review, and other applicable Federal mandates, including Tribal and SHPO consultation. Affected areas will be surveyed to identify possible cultural resources, and if approved, activities must avoid or mitigate adverse effects to NRHP eligible cultural resources.
<b>Environmental Justice</b>	N	No minority or low-income groups will be affected by disproportionately high and adverse health or environmental effects.
<b>Fire Management</b>	Y	Fire suppression and management actions may affect wilderness.
<b>Fish and Wildlife</b>	Y	Proposed Action may affect fish and wildlife populations or habitat.
<b>Rangeland Health</b>	N	The three Idaho Resource Advisory Councils developed the 1997 Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management. The Range program is responsible for ensuring that authorized livestock grazing is administered consistent with the approved standards, including determination of appropriate stocking rates and seasons of use.

<b>Resource or Concern</b>	<b>Analyzed (Y/N)</b>	<b>Rationale for Inclusion or Dismissal from Detailed Analysis</b>
<b>Livestock Grazing-related Activities</b>	Y	The OPLMA provides for continued livestock grazing in wilderness areas. Appendix A of House Report 101-405 describes allowable uses and maintenance of range developments in wilderness.
<b>Noxious Weeds and Non-native Invasive Plants</b>	Y	Actions incorporated in the Proposed Action will allow noxious and invasive weeds to be treated to reduce their potential for spread.
<b>Land Uses</b>	N	Land uses are affected by Wilderness and WSR designation, not the WMP.
<b>Migratory Birds</b>	N	Following BLM's management guidance for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will prevent or diminish impacts.
<b>Mineral Resources</b>	Y	Five mining claims were recently relinquished in the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness, leaving BLM liable for potential reclamation. Activities within the one remaining mining claim are subject to 43 CFR 3809 regulations.
<b>Native American Religious Concerns</b>	N	No specific concerns have been expressed.
<b>Paleontologic Resources</b>	N	No sites of high scientific value are known.
<b>Recreation</b>	Y	Proposed user restrictions and trail designations may affect recreational use of the areas.
<b>Special Designations Other Than Wilderness</b>	Y	The Camas and Pole Creeks Archaeological District affects a portion of the Pole Creek Wilderness. Other wilderness areas are affected by ACEC, ONA, and WSR designations.
<b>Special Status Animals</b>	Y	The endangered Bruneau hot springsnail and the threatened bull trout exist within the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness. State-listed sensitive species and their habitats also exist in one or more of the six wilderness areas, including greater sage-grouse, California bighorn sheep, Columbia spotted frog, and pygmy rabbit.
<b>Special Status Plants</b>	Y	A number of BLM and State-listed special status plants exist in the wilderness areas.
<b>Vegetation/Soils/Watershed</b>	Y	Fire management, ES&R, weed management, reclamation, and recreational activities may affect soils and vegetation.
<b>Vegetative Resources (Forest or Seed Products)</b>	N	The Wilderness Act does not allow forest or seed products to be sold. It is not possible to track or measure individual gathering impacts.

<b>Resource or Concern</b>	<b>Analyzed (Y/N)</b>	<b>Rationale for Inclusion or Dismissal from Detailed Analysis</b>
<b>VRM</b>	N	The proposed action is consistent with VRM Class I management objectives for wilderness. The proposed action will not result in a level of change to the landscape that would be noticeable from access roads.
<b>Hazardous or Solid Wastes</b>	N	No hazardous or solid wastes are known or anticipated, other than those that may be left behind in the future by campers and other users.
<b>Water Quality (Drinking Water)</b>	N	No effect. Herbicides potentially used for tamarisk control along streams are approved for use in aquatic areas.
<b>Water Resources (Water Rights)</b>	N	BLM is subject to State of Idaho water right laws.

The Wilderness Act requires land managers to preserve wilderness character. Likewise, the WSR Act requires managers to protect and enhance WSR values. As such, both alternatives contain basic and requisite land use restrictions designed to carry out this legislative direction by precluding or minimizing, but not treating, the effects of human use on wilderness areas and WSRs. The Proposed Action includes discretionary measures designed to address the effects of natural and human-caused impacts on these areas.

This environmental analysis focuses on the environmental effects of the discretionary actions described in the Proposed Action (Alternative B), while also describing their effect on wilderness character and WSR values. Since wilderness character and WSR values reflect the natural and undeveloped nature of designated areas, they are representative of the resources that would normally be considered in the effects analysis section of an environmental document.

The cumulative effects analysis considers the past, current, and potential future conditions of resources affected by a given action as the result of past, ongoing, and future foreseeable actions. The enabling legislation limits the management of wilderness character and WSR values to the specific areas located within the designated boundaries. Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) associated with BLM's wilderness suitability recommendations include detailed environmental effects analyses that have been incorporated into this analysis. The referenced EIS analyses include: Owyhee Wilderness Plan Amendment, 1983; Owyhee Proposed MFP Amendment – Wilderness, 1986; Jarbidge Wilderness, 1987; and Jacks Creek Wilderness, 1989.

The effects analysis is presented in a question and answer format to better focus on the potential effects of proposed actions on wilderness character and WSR values. Specifically, the analysis will determine if discretionary actions proposed in the WMP will affect WSR values or the natural, untrammeled, and undeveloped wilderness character, including associated opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

## 2.5 Fire Management

### **What are the potential effects of managing wildfire in wilderness areas and WSRs?**

Impacts that result from managing wildfire within wilderness areas or WSR corridors are complex. If approved, wildfire management will be based on situational factors and will begin with activities that are the minimum necessary to accomplish objectives. As such, MIST will be used whenever possible to minimize impacts to wilderness character, WSR values, and environmental/social resources. If more aggressive actions are deemed necessary (including prohibited uses) (see Table 1.3 of WMP), there will be an expected increase in disturbance to soils, vegetation, and wildlife. Localized impacts to vegetation and soils will occur from motorized suppression activities. Dozers or other heavy equipment will normally be used only when there is an immediate threat to life, property, and high value resources. It is expected that retardant will be used more frequently. Retardant will impact aesthetics in the short-term, but will reduce the need for surface disturbance and the long-term effects from fireline construction.

The Minimal Management Alternative (Alternative A) will not allow prohibited uses within a wilderness area or WSR, which will preclude impacts associated with normal suppression tactics. However, limiting suppression to the use of MIST will substantially increase fire size, which will increase the spread of invasive species or noxious weeds. As seen in Map 3 Fire Frequency 1957–2012, multiple fires have occurred in the northern most portions of the Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers and Big Jacks Creek wilderness areas. This fire history correlates to Map 12 Owyhee Wilderness Areas National Vegetation Classification System (NVCS) Macrogroups that illustrates the presence of exotic annual grasses (cheatgrass) in similar locations.

**Natural:** Fire suppression detracts from the natural role of fire as an ecological process. Suppression activities impact soils, vegetation, wildlife, and possibly cultural resources. Fireline construction, even using MIST, will disturb soils and displace vegetation, and will change the natural course of a wildfire. Although, fire suppression and fireline construction degrade the natural character, the activity will reduce the infestation and spread of noxious weeds and non-native invasive plants. The degree of effect will depend on the current ecological condition of the affected area(s). The use of MIST will limit suppression-related impacts to soil and vegetation, and thus better balance the degradation to naturalness by minimizing the spread and density of noxious or invasive weeds and maintaining native plant diversity.

**Untrammelled:** Activities associated with fire suppression cause trammeling, including road blading to facilitate access. When compared to the range of possible trammeling actions, the use of MIST will be the minimum requirement once a decision to suppress a fire to preserve other wilderness characteristics is made. A reduction in ground-disturbing actions that aggressively manipulate ecological processes will minimize trammeling effects.

**Undeveloped:** Using MIST will minimize or eliminate the use of equipment that would modify the environment. MIST will specifically eliminate the use of motorized vehicles and mechanized equipment within wilderness. The undeveloped character will not be substantially affected by managing fire using MIST. The use of fire suppression equipment and activities will degrade this character.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** The presence of fire suppression resources, even those using MIST, will reduce solitude in the short-term. Area closures that may be instituted during and following a wildfire will adversely affect unconfined recreation.

**What are the potential effects of implementing actions considered prohibited uses (i.e., motorized and mechanized equipment, landing of aircraft, etc.) to manage wildfire in wilderness areas and WSRs?**

Wildfire management effects are complex, and will be approved based on situational factors. Management will begin with activities that are the minimum necessary to accomplish objectives. If more aggressive actions are deemed necessary (including prohibited uses) (Table 1.3 of WMP), there will be an expected increase in effects to resources such as soils, vegetation, and wildlife. The use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment for suppression will cause localized and long-term impacts to soils and vegetation. Table 1.3 of the WMP identifies possible suppression-related activities with increasing impacts. Fire retardant will impact aesthetics, but will reduce surface disturbance, thus improving vegetative recovery.

The Minimal Management Alternative will not authorize actions considered a prohibited use, thus precluding impacts associated with motorized suppression tactics. The tradeoff will be an expected increase in burned acreage both within and outside wilderness. The consequence of increased fire size is a higher risk for the spread of invasive species and noxious weeds. As seen in Map 3, the fire history illustrates that multiple fires have occurred in the northern portions of the Bruneau-Jarbridge Rivers and Big Jacks wilderness areas. This fire history correlates to Map 12 that illustrates the presence of exotic annual grasses (cheatgrass) in similar locations.

**Natural:** Fire suppression detracts from the natural role of fire as an ecological process. Motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment will have localized, short-term impacts to naturalness. However, the use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment will reduce fire size and intensity, thereby reducing effects to native vegetation, and reducing the infestation and spread of noxious weeds and invasive plants. The suppression of natural fire to preserve other important natural characteristics provides a balance that will minimize impacts to vegetation community composition and structure and hasten recovery of affected vegetation communities that support special status species' habitats.

**Untrammled:** Fire suppression activities cause trammeling. Prohibited uses, including vehicles and equipment, are more efficient, but aggressively manipulate ecological processes that cause longer-term trammeling effects.

**Undeveloped:** Preserving this quality keeps areas free from growing mechanization and prevents a noticeable imprint from "man's work". The use of prohibited motorized or mechanized activity degrades this wilderness character even though other characters may benefit.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** The use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment adversely affects solitude and primitive experiences in the short-term, and would be a movement away from the use of traditional skills. Prohibited uses (specialized equipment) would be more efficient at minimizing the intensity and size of a wildfire, which in turn, would minimize the exposure of visitors to an interruption in their solitude and primitive wilderness experiences.



## 2.6 Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R)

### What are the potential effects of implementing ES&R actions following wildfire?

The Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan (NFRP) and associated Environmental Assessment (EA) describe the goal of ES&R, which is to emulate pre-fire ecosystem structure, function (including the re-establishment of the natural fire cycle), diversity, resiliency, and dynamics consistent with approved management plans, or to establish a stable ecosystem in which native species are well represented. The purpose for the NFRP is to streamline development and implementation of ES&R plans, actions, and procedures to facilitate orderly and timely treatments that are consistent with the urgent nature of wildland fire protection priorities. Potential environmental effects of implementing standard ES&R actions are fully described in the NFRP and associated EA (or subsequent documents), which encompass the Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness areas.

The Proposed Action provides guidance for implementing ES&R treatments in wilderness that potentially include the use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment. Where proposed, ES&R actions will be expected to:

1. reduce erosion and soil loss,
2. minimize the spread of noxious weed and non-native invasive plant infestations,
3. enhance vegetative recovery to support special status species,
4. protect resources from the effects of livestock grazing during recovery,
5. repair, replace, or construct facilities that are essential to public health and safety, livestock management, or cultural site protection, and
6. minimize threats to downstream WSR values.

The Minimal Management Alternative will not allow ES&R treatments in wilderness areas unless needed to reduce threats to human life or property. Vegetation will be allowed to recover naturally. The Proposed Action will potentially minimize the spread of noxious weeds and invasive plant infestations, while the Minimal Management Alternative will result in an increase in weed populations, with associated effects to vegetation and wildlife habitat. The Minimal Management Alternative will protect the untrammelled and undeveloped wilderness character, and the outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation, but will result in the degradation of soils, vegetation, and other natural and social resources usually associated with the natural wilderness character.

**Natural:** The Proposed Action will degrade the natural character by imposing actions (some of which will be motorized or mechanized) to stabilize or improve ecological conditions. The desert-like conditions in the wilderness areas will result in a slower ecological response. Depending on the current ecological health of affected areas, some qualities of the natural character will be degraded, while other qualities could be improved. For example, protecting soil productivity will preserve vegetative health, protect against weed infestations, and hasten native plant and animal recovery.

The Minimal Management Alternative will prohibit most ES&R activities, which will result in greater degradation to the natural wilderness character through loss of soil productivity, increased risk of noxious weed and invasive species infestation and spread, and damage to cultural sites.

**Untrammelled:** Because ES&R projects manipulate the ecosystem, the Proposed Action will degrade the untrammelled wilderness character. The greatest and longest-lasting trammeling

effects will occur from ground disturbance, such as blading, drill seeding, planting, fence construction, motorized herbicide application, etc. Aerial seeding and herbicide application will have few trammeling effects. The Minimal Management Alternative will prohibit most ES&R activities and thus have few or no trammeling effects.

**Undeveloped:** ES&R actions will temporarily degrade the undeveloped character. Specific actions may include applying ground cover or seed, installing or repairing fences to preclude human and livestock use of treated areas, and constructing erosion control devices.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** ES&R actions will include multiple temporary impacts to solitude during work activities. Construction of temporary fences to close treated areas to humans and livestock to enhance rehabilitation will cause short-term impacts to primitive and unconfined recreational experiences.

## 2.7 Noxious Weeds and Non-native Invasive Plants

### **What are the potential effects of managing noxious weeds and non-native invasive plants in wilderness areas and WSRs?**

In general, management actions will use standard operating procedures (BLM 2007) that focus on preventing the spread of weeds by vehicles and equipment. Noxious weed and invasive plant detection will be enhanced over the Minimal Management Alternative through both a greater emphasis on regular monitoring and the allowance of greater flexibility in using a variety of tools for treatment. The Proposed Action incorporates decisions and methods to treat noxious or invasive weeds through an increasingly aggressive situation-dependent step-down procedure.

The Proposed Action will enhance BLM's ability to contain, control, or eliminate certain invasive grasses and prevent an annual grass fire cycle that could further harm native vegetation. If post-fire ES&R activities fail, then noxious and invasive weeds may increase in burned areas. However, successful projects will minimize post-fire weed establishment and expansion.

The ongoing and anticipated increase in recreational activities may contribute to the spread of noxious and invasive species. Allowing campsite stays in any one location for up to 14 days could result in increased soil and vegetation disturbance in dry upland sites that leads to weed infestation and spread. Limiting the supplemental feeding of riding and pack stock to certified noxious weed-free feed will decrease their contribution to weed infestation.

Rehabilitating small-scale surface disturbances will include methods such as soil de-compaction, scarification, and pitting that could stimulate the growth of noxious and invasive weeds. Vegetation restoration projects may cause small, local disturbances that increase noxious and invasive weed populations. Where it has been determined to be necessary, motorized access could be authorized for ES&R, wildlife management, range project maintenance, or fire-management, all of which could exacerbate weed establishment and spread.

Although healthy rangelands are less vulnerable to weed infestations, livestock can carry and disseminate noxious and invasive weed seeds. Monitoring of high risk areas, including salt licks and watering sites, will help to identify possible infestations and allow for timely actions to minimize their effects. Livestock will normally be excluded from burned and reseeded areas to prevent trampling and grazing of young plants until recovery objectives have been met (BLM 2008b).

The adaptive management provided for in the Proposed Action for managing weeds and invasive plants, combined with proper grazing management, will optimize the protection and restoration of wildlife habitat. Vegetation treatments and proper grazing management will help re-establish and maintain a balanced mixture of vegetation age classes and types essential for the habitat needs of wilderness wildlife species.

**Natural:** The Proposed Action incorporates guidelines to minimize or prevent the spread of noxious weeds and invasive species in wilderness areas. Successful implementation of these guidelines should substantially minimize the effects of modern civilization, thus preserving the natural wilderness character and protecting the WSR values.

The Minimal Management Alternative will neither prevent nor treat the infestation and spread of weeds and invasive species, and therefore, will neither preserve the natural wilderness character nor protect the WSR values.

**Untrammled:** Noxious and invasive weed control activities will cause trammeling. The greatest and longest-lasting trammeling effects will occur from projects that include ground disturbance, such as blading, drill seeding, planting, motorized herbicide application, etc. Aerial seeding and herbicide application will have a smaller trammeling effect.

The Minimal Management Alternative will cause few or no trammeling effects because prohibited uses identified in the Wilderness Act will be precluded.

**Undeveloped:** The Proposed Action will allow for larger treatment areas, thus having a greater positive effect on controlling weed and invasive plant populations. Motorized or mechanized activities, including motorized aerial and ground-based herbicide delivery, and mechanized equipment, will degrade the undeveloped character. Weed treatments that use backpack or horseback delivery will not degrade this character.

While the Minimal Management Alternative will not adversely affect the undeveloped character, it will severely limit the number of acres that could be treated. This will likely result in a greater influx of noxious and invasive weeds, thus requiring more aggressive actions at a later date, including prohibited uses that degrade the undeveloped character.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** Noxious weed and invasive species treatments will temporarily impair opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. The use of any detect and destroy methods will include employees or contractors and/or equipment in the wilderness, which will degrade this character.

The Minimal Management Alternative will not impair this character as frequently; however, non-motorized and non-mechanized treatments of larger infestations may reflect a more obvious human intervention that has a longer-lasting effect. The Minimal Management Alternative will include employees or contractors and/or equipment in the wilderness every five years for extended periods as opposed to the Proposed Action that is expected to include detect and destroy activities annually for short periods.

## 2.8 Livestock Grazing-related Activities

### **What are the potential effects of authorizing continued livestock grazing in wilderness areas and WSRs?**

Section 1503(b)(3) of the OPLMA provides for continued livestock grazing “...subject to such reasonable regulations, policies, and practices as the Secretary considers necessary...”

Since the WMP requires that livestock grazing be administered consistent with the 1997 Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, the Proposed Action should not cause an adverse change in the condition of the vegetative resources. While ecological conditions in some areas could be improved, adherence to the Idaho Rangeland Health Standards will include periodic monitoring to ensure that livestock are not adversely affecting the ecosystem. The Minimal Management Alternative would prohibit the use of motorized or mechanized vehicles and equipment for project maintenance and for livestock monitoring, herding, and gathering. The Proposed Action will provide for case-specific authorization following a MRA. As such, livestock grazing that meets Idaho Rangeland Health Standards is consistent and compatible with the protection and preservation of wilderness character. Grazing within WSR corridors will be held to the higher WSR Act standard to ensure that grazing does not adversely affect river values, including free-flowing condition, ORVs, and water quality.

Though constraints on vehicles and equipment will not prohibit maintenance of existing facilities or response to emergency situations, it will hinder livestock monitoring and management by both operators and BLM staff. Both alternatives will inhibit the trend toward mechanization and efficiency in livestock monitoring and management. The Proposed Action will allow for the minimum motorized access needed for livestock grazing-related purposes, but the Minimal Management Alternative will provide no allowance except in emergencies.

The lack of motorized access for project maintenance or salt delivery under the Minimal Management Alternative will increase timeframes needed for livestock management activities, and will make it difficult for permittees to support the same number of AUMs without impacts to the vegetative resources within their allotments, both of which will impact the economic viability of their operations.

**Natural:** Livestock grazing conducted in a manner that meets rangeland health standards should have minimal effects to naturalness, except for the long-term effects around livestock concentration areas, such as salt licks and water sources.

Under either alternative, livestock grazing that occurs within constrained river canyon areas, limited though it may be, could result in overgrazing of riparian vegetation, incised “cow paths” along the banks, manure-strewn streamside campsites, and streambank trampling and shearing, all of which degrade WSR values, including water quality, recreation, fish, and scenic values. Due to lack of motorized access for livestock monitoring, vegetation may tend to be locally overgrazed, especially around riparian and wetland areas.

There is a potential for livestock to transport weed seeds into wilderness. Because of the “edge effect” discussed in the WMP, this potential is likely to increase over time. The only difference between the two alternatives is that the Proposed Action will seek to treat weed infestations.

**Untrammelled:** Livestock grazing, salt delivery, and project maintenance manipulate the environment and cause trammeling effects, especially along administrative travel routes and at livestock concentration sites. Since grazing occurred long before wilderness designation,

trammeling should not increase substantially, but the trammeling effect will be greater in the Proposed Action due to authorized vehicular use.

**Undeveloped:** Grazing should not affect the undeveloped wilderness character under either alternative; however, the presence of authorized grazing-related structures and improvements (i.e., fences, springs, reservoirs, pipelines, water troughs, etc.) detracts from the undeveloped wilderness character. Permanent structures and projects will have the same adverse effect in both alternatives.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** Livestock are regarded by some individuals as being unnatural intruders on the native ecosystem, and thus, an impact to their solitude. The effect is exacerbated at livestock concentration sites. The effects will be similar in both alternatives and are considered localized, temporary, and recurring effects specific to the grazing season and to the affected pasture(s). Temporary effects will include livestock-related impacts within WSR corridors that detract from both solitude and unconfined primitive recreation, while also degrading recreation, fish, and scenic WSR ORVs.

#### **What are the potential effects of authorizing occasional and limited use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment for livestock grazing-related activities in wilderness areas?**

The Proposed Action provides specific guidance for the maintenance and repair of livestock grazing-related facilities. Recurring maintenance of range improvements and facilities is distinguished from emergency operations. The Proposed Action is a result of efforts to work with wilderness grazing permittees under the guidance of Section 2 of Appendix A of the Congressional Grazing Guidelines to define the “occasional” use of motor vehicles that is considered the minimum necessary to support the livestock grazing activities provided for by the OPLMA.

Constraints on the use of vehicles and equipment under both alternatives will hinder livestock management and monitoring by both permittees and BLM staff, and will inhibit the trend toward mechanization and efficiency in livestock management. The Proposed Action will allow for the minimum required motorized access for livestock grazing-related purposes, but the Minimal Management Alternative will provide no allowance except in emergencies. This will potentially reduce the number of AUMs that could be supported in affected allotments without adverse effects to vegetative resources, which will adversely affect the economic viability of some operations.

**Natural:** The use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment on existing administrative routes for salt delivery and range project maintenance will cause short-term, localized, and minor impacts to the natural character by leaving tire tracks and ruts, and by suppressing vegetative establishment in the tracks. Vehicles will introduce non-native and weedy species into the wilderness, which could aggravate ongoing long-term and region-wide ecological impacts to native plant communities and habitat. Although the Minimal Management Alternative will provide an avenue for weed infestation and spread through the use of horses, the level of influence on natural vegetation will be less (possibly much less) than the Proposed Action. Horses will also cause less soil compaction than vehicles.

**Untrammeled:** The use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment for salt delivery and range project maintenance on existing routes will be a continued and long-term, but minor trammeling effect. Although legislatively protected, livestock management reflects man’s

influence on the landscape. The Minimal Management Alternative's greater restriction on vehicles and equipment will have fewer trammeling effects.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** The Proposed Action's allowance for authorized motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment will result in localized short-term and recurring effects to wilderness solitude. Limiting the use of motorized and mechanized vehicles and equipment to the minimum necessary will increase the reliance on primitive skills, including the use of riding and pack stock. The Minimal Management Alternative will protect this character more than the Proposed Action, although the use of motorized and mechanized equipment may still occasionally influence these values.

## 2.9 Recreation Management

### **What are the potential effects of authorizing commercial uses in the wilderness areas?**

Authorized commercial uses will be limited to: 1) licensed outfitters and guides for the purposes outlined in Section 1.5.3.8.4 of the WMP, 2) entities whose principal message includes an emphasis on wilderness ethics, *Tread Lightly!*, *Leave No Trace*, or environmental education, and 3) entities whose primary purpose is to support individuals with disabilities.

Because the WMP requires entities issued Special Recreation Use Permits (SRPs) to meet the same requirements imposed on other visitors, additional environmental or socio-economic effects are not expected.

### **What are the potential effects of designating, maintaining, and repairing trails?**

Designated trails minimize environmental impacts and safety hazards, but reduce primitive and unconfined recreational experiences and outstanding opportunities for solitude by creating focused areas of concentrated public use. The six upland trails designated in the Proposed Action are currently used at levels high enough to warrant maintenance to protect resources and enhance visitor safety. The Parker and Roberson East trails each currently have erosion-based issues that warrant repair, which will be addressed pursuant to design criteria contained in the Proposed Action, and subject to available funding. The Minimal Management Alternative will leave the trails undesignated and in their current degraded state, thus continuing and possibly exacerbating ongoing resource damage and safety concerns.

Data collected for two of the upland trails reflect the expectations for the system. The Tindall Trail has an estimated 73 visits per year based on 859 days of data collection. The Roberson East Trail has an estimated 183 visits per year based on 1,087 days of data collection. The other trails receive estimated use levels similar to or less than these two trails, with the exception of Parker Trail, which is expected to have the highest amount of visitor use. Maintenance and repair of the trails supports this level of use in a sustainable and safe way.

The Minimal Management Alternative does not designate trails. As such, visitors will continue to use their preferred routes. However, unmanaged trail use will create braided trails in response to eroded and muddy conditions, resulting in increased impacts to vegetation, water quality, riparian health, and potentially, cultural resources.

**Natural:** Trail designation does not affect broader ecological processes within wilderness areas. Site-specific emergency repairs, including construction of water bars, will have a long-term, localized and minor effect to the natural character. Trail maintenance will protect and preserve WSR recreation and fisheries ORVs by reducing erosion and resulting effects to off-site areas and

water quality. The Minimal Management Alternative could exacerbate erosion problems along trails, since it will not allow managers to address excessive soil erosion caused by a poorly located trail or insufficient drainage.

**Untrammelled:** Trail maintenance that is limited to removal of fallen trees or rocks that pose safety hazards will not cause trammeling. Site-specific repairs, including construction of water bars, will impose a trammeling effect. The effect(s), however, will be negligible, and repairs will protect and preserve WSR recreation and fisheries ORVs by reducing erosion and resulting effects to off-site areas and water quality. Both alternatives will negatively affect this character because of the ongoing human influences on the environment. The effects of the Proposed Action will result from trail maintenance and repairs, while effects of the Minimal Management Alternative will result from eroding trails caused by excessive use and trail braiding.

**Undeveloped:** Construction of waterbars will cause negligible to minor effects to the undeveloped wilderness character. The Minimal Management Alternative will have no effect on the undeveloped character.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** Designated trails reduce primitive recreational experiences for visitors. They may also reduce opportunities for solitude by focusing visitor use into smaller areas.

#### **What are the potential effects of allowing hunters to erect temporary “pop-up” blinds in wilderness up to ten days prior to their hunt?**

BLM Manual 6340 defines temporary blinds as structures, since they are erected or constructed for the purpose of human habitation, if only for a short time. Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act, however, prohibits structures in wilderness. The Wilderness Management Plan provides for a permitting system for those wishing to locate temporary blinds in wilderness prior to their hunt. Permits would allow BLM to better monitor the amount and location of use to reduce overcrowding at popular reservoirs and to minimize user conflicts that occur to the detriment of the users' experience. Temporary blinds would be camouflaged to reduce their visibility, thus, reducing impacts to the natural wilderness character. The use of temporary “pop-up” blinds would reduce hunters' development of and reliance on primitive hunting skills.

## **2.10 Research and Monitoring**

#### **What are the potential effects of authorizing research or monitoring?**

Authorized research and monitoring activities could have short-term effects to wilderness character or WSR values, while at the same time, providing information critical to the long-term protection and preservation of those same characters and values.

Watersheds upstream from the designated WSR segments lie in three states (Idaho, Nevada, and Oregon) and consist of multiple jurisdictions, including private, State, and Federal land. Future upstream water developments will impair streamflows that support identified WSR values. High flows maintain the habitat (channel scouring and cleaning, deposition of nutrients into riparian areas, etc.) on which viable fish populations depend. High flows also support recreational opportunities, primarily related to boating. Low flows are necessary to support cold water biota during the dry, summer season by providing the habitat (i.e., pools, substrate, hiding cover, etc.) needed for the year-long survival of aquatic species. This is particularly important for the Bruneau and Jarbidge rivers, which are designated critical habitat for the threatened bull trout.



Biological requirements for sufficient in-stream flow extend beyond the needs of fish. Other aquatic life and terrestrial wildlife depend on adequate in-stream flow to meet their biological requirements. Tennant (1976) found that maintaining 10% of the average streamflow provides for short-term survival of most aquatic life forms; maintaining 30% base flow provides good survival conditions for most aquatic life forms; and maintaining 60% base flow provides excellent to outstanding habitat for most aquatic life forms while they grow.

Aquatic macroinvertebrate survival is dependent on the extent, persistence, and quality of habitat (Waddle and Holmquist 2011). The extent, persistence, and quality of habitat are dependent on the volume of water in a stream. In their modeling effort, Waddle and Holmquist (2011) showed a loss of 26% of the wetted area as the discharge decreased from 3.00 to 0.49 cubic feet per second. They also found small decreases in percent of fauna represented by mayflies, stoneflies, and caddis flies and stonefly abundance with decreasing discharge and velocity, but change rates were greatest at low discharge.

**Natural:** Information gained from research and monitoring could enhance decision-making regarding the effects of recreation and livestock grazing to naturalness to protect and preserve ecological patterns and processes. For instance, collecting additional streamflow data in the 16 WSR segments could potentially allow BLM to further protect fish populations and aquatic habitat by revising previously-filed water right claims to the waters of the State of Idaho that would prevent future water developments (at least in Idaho) from diminishing required streamflows. This will protect wildlife populations and habitats that rely on existing aquatic systems, including the endangered Bruneau hot springsnail and the threatened bull trout.

**Untrammelled:** Installation of research or monitoring devices will impose a short-term trammeling effect. Information gained from water monitoring will aid in revising previously-filed water right claims that will preserve minimum flows needed to support WSR values, and indirectly keep wilderness areas free from the effects of modern human control and manipulation from upstream water developments.

**Undeveloped:** The installation of monitoring devices will temporarily disturb the undeveloped wilderness character. The effect will be mitigated by the requirement that the devices be installed in a manner that is unobtrusive. Information gained from additional streamflow monitoring will aid BLM in protecting and preserving other wilderness and WSR values.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** The Proposed Action allows research and monitoring activities when they cannot be conducted outside of wilderness, and when they can be conducted in a manner that minimizes their impacts to wilderness character. Research and monitoring activities may temporarily impact solitude and primitive recreation. However, information gained from the activities will be used to improve overall wilderness and WSR management.

## 2.11 Reclamation of Surface Disturbances

### What are the potential effects of reclamation activities in wilderness?

**Natural:** Soils and vegetation disturbed by past human activities, structures and discarded equipment, and infestations of noxious weeds or invasive plants detract from the natural character. Soil and vegetation disturbance associated with potential reclamation activities will continue adverse effects to the natural character, at least in the short-term. Successful restoration will improve naturalness in the long-term. Improvement to the natural character will be minor and

localized due to the potential for additional weed establishment and spread associated with the restoration activities.

**Untrammled:** Treatments aimed at removing abandoned structures and equipment, closing access routes, and rehabilitating soil and vegetation disturbance will impose trammeling effects in the short-term, but will serve to restore the untrammled character in the long-term by removing or minimizing the effects of man dominating the landscape. Positive effects will take years to realize.

**Undeveloped:** Closing and rehabilitating access routes and removing abandoned structures and equipment will help to restore the undeveloped character. The equipment necessary to restore the natural topography and condition of the landscape, however, will temporarily degrade the undeveloped quality during the work.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** Reclamation activities will temporarily degrade wilderness solitude; however, a fully reclaimed site will improve visitor safety and increase opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreational experiences.

## 2.12 Wildlife and Fisheries Management

### What are the potential effects of authorizing wildlife management activities in wilderness areas?

**Natural:** In general, wildlife management activities, including transplants (i.e., removal, augmentation, or reintroduction), will have a short-term effect on the natural wilderness character. Wildlife management actions will be designed to preserve the diversity of wildlife and the resilience of special status species, and as such, will serve to protect and preserve the natural character in the long-term.

**Untrammled:** Habitat alteration needed to address adverse impacts of human activities on fish or wildlife populations will cause trammeling effects. The time period will vary based on the type of alteration and how quickly the affected area responds to the treatment. The use of motorized equipment and landing of aircraft will also cause short-term trammeling.

**Undeveloped:** The use of motorized equipment, the landing of aircraft, and the development of facilities will degrade the undeveloped character in the short- or long-term, depending on the type of facility or structure.

**Outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation:** The use of motorized equipment, landing of aircraft, and the temporary use of a structure will adversely affect wilderness solitude in the short-term. Installations will degrade the primitive wilderness experience.

## 2.13 Cumulative Effects

The purpose of the cumulative effects analysis for the Proposed Action is to evaluate the combined, incremental effects of human activity within the scope of the project. The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations define scope and state that connected actions, cumulative actions, and similar actions should be included in the effects analysis (40 CFR 1508.25). With the exception of wildfire suppression, noxious weed and invasive species management, and emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, the scope of the cumulative effects analysis will be restricted to an area that includes a one-mile buffer around each of the wilderness areas. The one-mile distance equates to the proximity of human activities that may affect wilderness character, and represents a maximum distance at which visual and sound intrusion could be reasonably experienced by wilderness visitors. This distance also reasonably accommodates the heightened risk of wildfire, weed invasion, and non-native seedings that are currently in close proximity to the wilderness.

Actions related to wildfire suppression, noxious weed and invasive species management, and emergency stabilization and rehabilitation will include a scope that encompasses lands within the Lower Snake River region that pose a threat to wilderness character.

The 1997 CEQ Handbook Guidelines for Assessing and Documenting Cumulative Impacts states that the cumulative effects analysis can be focused on issues and resource values identified during scoping that are of major importance. Relevant issues identified for this project include the following:

Past actions (includes activities that have occurred since designation in 2009):

- Jacks Fire Suppression and ESR (Big and Little Jacks Creek Wilderness Areas)
- East Rock Fire Suppression and ESR (Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness)
- Kinyon Road Fire Suppression and ESR (Bruneau-Jarbidge Rivers Wilderness)
- Grasshopper Fire Suppression and ESR (North Fork Owyhee Wilderness)
- Fence construction and repair
- Livestock grazing-related activities
- Sign installation adjacent to wilderness
- Streamflow monitoring device installation
- Whickney Tree Communication Site removal
- Commercial outfitting and guiding
- River floating and camping
- Hunting, angling, and trapping
- Military overflights
- Wildlife survey flights

Current and ongoing activities:

- Livestock grazing-related activities
- Streamflow monitoring (USGS and BLM)
- Commercial outfitting and guiding
- River floating and camping
- Hunting, angling, and trapping
- Military overflights
- Wildlife survey flights

Future actions (includes those that are reasonably foreseeable within the project area):

- Wildfires that threaten wilderness and non-wilderness values
- Inholding acquisitions
- Upstream water development
- Development of a parking area along Mud Flat Road near Little Jacks Creek Wilderness
- Fuel treatments and fire breaks
- Travel Management Plan for Owyhee County
- Maintenance, repair, or closure of river access routes and administrative routes.

The following activities, when combined with other activities, may result in a cumulative effect:

- Actions that include motorized incursions.
- Actions that disturb soils, vegetation, or other natural or cultural resources.
- Actions pertaining to land acquisition, and private and state land access and development.

Any number of motorized wilderness incursions will cause direct and indirect effects usually associated with noise and/or visitor experience, and may affect untrammled, undeveloped, solitude, and primitive wilderness character. Such operations pertain to grazing, mining, emergency access situations, wildfire suppression, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, weed treatments, and vegetation manipulation. An example of a direct effect is a permittee entering a pasture to repair a fence or to deliver and stockpile a large amount of salt. The impact will be localized or limited in scope to the affected pasture(s) and area adjacent to the pasture. In other words, effects will not be realized outside of an estimated one-mile radius from the motorized activity, and no more than one mile from the wilderness boundary.

Authorized actions in wilderness may involve disturbance to soils, vegetation, or other resources. Actions considered for their contribution to cumulative impacts to natural resources include wildfire suppression, emergency stabilization and rehabilitation, large weed treatments, and livestock concentration areas. An example of a direct effect is the application of sagebrush seed to 200 acres of wilderness to improve habitat for greater sage-grouse.

A cumulative impact may occur when two activities overlap in both time and space, or even when separated by space (up to one mile). The potential impact is considered negligible and is related mostly to livestock operations or authorized vegetation treatment projects. An example of a cumulative impact could include a hunter traveling in a motor vehicle outside wilderness within a mile of a grazing permittee who is authorized to use a motor vehicle to maintain a range improvement within wilderness. Another example might include a livestock concentration area located within a larger vegetation treatment project area. The combined actions would result in an annual cumulative effect within a localized portion of a wilderness.

Other actions within wilderness that may have a direct effect include land acquisition, and private and state land access and development. An example of a direct effect is the acquisition of land that contains a tributary stream to one of the WSR segments. BLM's acquisition of this property will reduce or eliminate the likelihood of future upstream water development(s) that could reduce streamflow within the downstream WSR segment.

The proposed action will have no adverse effect on the physical integrity of cultural and sacred sites. Ceremonial use of sacred sites is not affected by the proposed action. Access to sacred sites will not be prevented, but requests will be evaluated through the MRA process to ensure that the access is conducted in a manner that minimizes impacts to wilderness character.

In conclusion, cumulative effects of the Proposed Action, combined with the associated past, present, or reasonably foreseeable actions within the analysis area will be negligible, and often positive. When added to other foreseeable actions in the analysis area, management actions included in the Proposed Action Alternative will preclude, minimize, or mitigate natural and human-caused impacts to natural resources, wilderness character, and WSR values.

## 2.14 Consultation and Coordination

Public meetings were hosted by the BLM in the summer of 2011 to inform the public of the policies and regulations associated with Wilderness and Wild & Scenic River management. Input was solicited during these meetings and for several weeks afterward concerning wilderness-related issues and concerns, as well as the development of alternatives and management actions proposed in the WMP.

The BLM consulted with affected livestock grazing permittees regarding their needs for access to manage livestock and maintain currently-authorized range improvement projects in wilderness allotments. These meetings resulted in the proposed actions associated with Livestock Management (WMP Section 2.2.3.4). The permittees were individually consulted during development of the Wilderness Range Project Inventory Report (Appendix D). Finally, the BLM provided a public comment period for the Draft WMP in Spring 2013 that was extended to over 100 days in response to requests from interested and affected governments, agencies, organizations, and individuals. The BLM received 52 individual comment letters and three different mass mailings, consisting of 9,942, 289, and 6 letters, respectively.

Representatives from the following agencies, organizations, or tribes were briefed or consulted with during review of the Draft WMP and/or during preparation of the Final WMP:

Owyhee County Commissioners	Owyhee Initiative Inc. Board of Directors
Idaho Governor's Office	Idaho Conservation League
Idaho Department of Lands	The Nature Conservancy
Idaho Department of Fish and Game	The Wilderness Society
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation	Western Watersheds Project
U.S. Geological Survey	
Shoshone-Paiute Tribe	