

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BLM, BOISE DISTRICT  
Four Rivers Field Office**

**EA # ID-110-2005-EA-011**

<i>Applicant (if any):</i> BLM Action	<i>Proposed Action:</i> Administrative modifications of 37 Grazing Permits covering 34 Allotments within the Blocked Unit of Goodrich Management Area			<i>EA No.</i> ID-110-2005-EA-011
<i>State:</i> Idaho	<i>County:</i> Washington and Adams	<i>District:</i> Boise	<i>Field Office:</i> Four Rivers	<i>Authority:</i> NEPA, FLPMA, Taylor Grazing Act, Cascade RMP
<i>Prepared By:</i> Goodrich ID Team	<i>Title:</i> See list of IDT members in Consultation and Coordination Section of EA			<i>Report Date:</i> August 2008

**LANDS INVOLVED**

<b>Allotment</b>	<b>Meridian</b>	<b>Township</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Section(s)</b>	<b>Acres (per RMP)</b>
Goodrich Common #16	Boise	15N	2W	2, 3, 4, 5	5,261
		16N	2W	21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 33, 34, 35	
Camp Creek #33	Boise	15N	3W	19	203
		16N	3W	31	
Cow Creek #46	Boise	15N	2W	7, 8, 9, 17, 18	465
Glasscock Draw #47	Boise	15N	2W	21, 28, 29, 32	840
Busch Individual #56	Boise	14N	4W	2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15	1,701
Clelland #72	Boise	17N	1W	24	200
Fruitvale #76	Boise	17N	1W	3, 10, 11, 13, 14	1,000
Horse Flat #95	Boise	15N	3W	5, 8, 9, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 29, 30	4,147
		16N	3W	32	
Frasier Individual #110	Boise	15N	1E	5	303
		16N	1E	30	
Uhlmann #111	Boise	15N	2W	14, 15	160
Greenwood Individual#123	Boise	17N	2W	4	160
Home Ranch #132	Boise	17N	1W	5	1,138
		18N	1W	30, 31, 32	
		18N	2W	25	

Lake Ranch #133	Boise	17N	2W	2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 24	980
J Harrington #134	Boise	17N	1W	31	200
		17N	2W	25	
Higgins Individual #144	Boise	15N	2W	28, 32, 33	280
Hopper Creek #150	Boise	14N	4W	23	382
Hornet Creek #152	Boise	17N	2W	2, 15	880
		18N	2W	26, 35	
Cambridge #154	Boise	14N	3W	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 17	1,622
		15N	3W	31, 32, 33	
Little Pine Creek #156	Boise	16N	4W	28, 33	200
Jackson Creek #158	Boise	16N	1W	21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32	1,514
		16N	2W	23, 25, 26	
Isom #159	Boise	16N	1W	7	1,000
		16N	2W	13, 14	
Goodrich Individual #161	Boise	16N	2W	22, 23	240
Keithley Individual #164	Boise	14N	4W	17, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29	1,507
J Keithley #165	Boise	14N	4W	9, 10, 15	920
Peterson Individual #219	Boise	15N	1W	5, 6	555
		16N	1W	31, 32	
Potter Individual #220	Boise	13N	4W	3	158
Hopper Creek #233	Boise	14N	4W	7, 9, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28	3,084
		15N	6W	1	
		16N	6W	36	
Mrs Seid Individual #234	Boise	14N	4W	14, 15, 22, 23	775
Pine #235	Boise	14N	3W	6, 7, 8, 17, 18	2,029
		14N	4W	1, 12, 13	
Middle Fork #236	Boise	15N	1E	5, 8	480
School Creek #247	Boise	15N	1W	2, 11	159
Thompson #258	Boise	14N	3W	15	280
North Hornet #290	Boise	17N	2W	11, 14	230
Thorn Creek #292	Boise	15N	1E	18	120
<b>34 Allotments</b>	<b>Boise</b>	<b>13N to 18N</b>	<b>1E to 6W</b>	<b>Several</b>	<b>33,173</b>

<b>Consideration of Critical Elements</b>	<b>N/A or Not Present</b>	<b>Applicable or Present, No Impact</b>	<b>Discussed in EA</b>
Air Quality	X		
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	X		
Cultural Resources			X
Environmental Justice (E.O. 12898)	X		
Farm Lands (prime or unique)	X		
Floodplains	X		
Migratory Birds	X		
Native American Religious Concerns			X
Invasive, Nonnative Species			X
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid	X		
Threatened or Endangered Species			X
Social and Economic		X	
Water Quality (Drinking/Ground)	X		
Wetlands/Riparian Zones			X
Wild and Scenic Rivers (Eligible)	X		
Wilderness Study Areas	X		

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management were approved by the Secretary of the Interior on August 12, 1997. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Idaho State Office subsequently issued instructions for implementing 43 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) 4100 – Grazing Administration (exclusive of Alaska) in May 1998. These actions initiated the process in which BLM proposed to assess all public lands to determine their conformance with Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (standard and guidelines).

Due to the large number of allotments and grazing permits that Four Rivers Field Office (FRFO) administers, ten management areas were established, each of which (to the extent practical) contained similar land types and resource issues. A management area assessment includes an interdisciplinary team review of the 1988 Cascade Resource Management Plan (RMP), field assessments, written Rangeland Health Assessment (health assessment), an Evaluation and Determination for each allotment, and an environmental analysis of the management actions that are being proposed (as part of the 10-year grazing permit renewal process) to ensure allotments are continuing to meet rangeland health standards, or will be making progress towards meeting those standards that are currently not being met, as directed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The environmental analysis incorporates a decisional process (43 CFR 4160), with the final step being the issuance of new 10-year grazing permits.

This environmental assessment discusses 37 grazing permits and the management of livestock grazing on 34 grazing allotments in the Blocked Unit of the Goodrich Management Area, which is composed of approximately 33,173 acres of public land, 38,468 acres of private land, and approximately 7,588 acres of lands administered by Idaho Department of Lands (IDL). The 37 grazing permits authorize 4,163 AUMs of active grazing preference; there are also agreements for 652 AUMs of Exchange-of-use.

### **1.1 Need for and Purpose of Action**

Rangeland health determinations found that some allotments were meeting all applicable standards, while several allotment were not meeting one or more applicable rangeland health standards with livestock being a significant factor (Table 1). Thus, as part of the grazing permit renewal process, BLM needs to evaluate how and to what extent current livestock grazing management will be modified to:

1. Ensure continued compliance with rangeland health standards, and
2. Ensure that those allotments not currently meeting one or more standard begin making progress towards meeting those standards.

Table 1. Summary of Rangeland Health Evaluations and Determinations for 34 allotments in the Blocked Unit of the Goodrich Management Area.

Allotments	Rangeland Health Standards *										Guidelines <sup>1</sup>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 <sup>2</sup>			
								P	W	F	
Goodrich #16	M <sup>3</sup>	M	M	M	na	na	M	na	M	M	Yes
Camp Ck #33	L	SP	SP	L	na	na	M	na	L	Na	No
Cow Ck #46	L	na	na	L	na	na	na	na	L	na	No
Glascok Drw47	M	na	na	L	na	na	na	na	L	na	No
Busch Ind #56	M	M	M	M	na	na	M	na	M	Na	Yes
Clelland #72	L	na	na	L	na	na	na	na	L	na	No
Fruitvale #76	M	M	M	M	na	na	M	na	M	M	Yes
Horse Flat #95	O	O	O	O	na	na	M	na	O	O	Yes
Frasier Ind #110	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	M	na	Yes
Uhlmann #111	M	Na	na	O	na	na	na	na	O	na	Yes
Greenwood 123	L	na	na	L	na	na	na	na	L	na	No
Home Rnch 132	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	na	na	Yes
Lake Ranch 133	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	na	na	Yes
JHarrington 134	O	na	na	O	na	na	na	M	O	na	Yes
Higgins Ind 144	O	na	na	O	na	na	na	na	O	na	Yes
Hopper Ck #150	M	na	na	O	na	na	na	na	O	na	Yes
Hornet Ck #152											
Robison Gch Pas	M	O	O	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	Yes
Traction Gch Pas											
Hornet Ck Past	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	M	na	Yes
N Hornet Ck Past											
Timber Ck Past											
Cambridge154	M	na	na	O	na	na	na	na	M	na	Yes
L. Pine Ck #156	L	M	O	L	na	na	M	na	O	O	No
Jackson Ck 158	L	na	na	L	na	na	na	na	L	na	No
Isom #159	L	L	L	L	na	na	M	na	L	na	No
Goodrich #161	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	M	M	Yes
Keithley#164	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	M	na	Yes
J Keithley 165	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	na	na	Yes
Peterson#219	M	na	na	O	na	na	na	na		na	Yes
Potter #220	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	na	na	Yes

<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management:  
 Yes = compliance with all applicable guidelines is being achieved  
 No = compliance with all applicable guidelines is not being achieved

<sup>2</sup> For Standard 8: P = Plants; W = Wildlife; F = Fish

<sup>3</sup> Rangeland Health Standards:  
 M = Meeting the Standard  
 SP = not meeting the standard, but making significant progress  
 L = not meeting the standard, current livestock management practices are significant factors  
 O = not meeting the standard, current livestock management practices are not significant factors (examples of factors contributing to non-conformance: invasive/exotic plants, annual vegetation, fire, off road vehicles, historic use)  
 U = not meeting the standard, cause is not determined  
 NA = not applicable

Allotments	Rangeland Health Standards *										Guidelines <sup>1</sup>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 <sup>2</sup>			
								P	W	F	
Hopper Ck #233	M	M	M	M	na	na	M	na	M	na	Yes
Mrs. Seid #234	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	na	na	Yes
Pine #235	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	na	na	Yes
Mid. Fork #236	L	M	M	M	na	na	M	na	M	M	No
School Ck #247	L	na	na	L	na	na	na	na	na	na	No
Thompson #258	M	O	O	M	na	na	O	na	O	O	Yes
N Hornet #290	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	M	na	Yes
Thorn Ck #292	M	na	na	M	na	na	na	na	M	na	Yes

Common issues in those allotments not meeting standards included accelerated erosion from disturbed and trampled or compacted soils and degraded native vegetation communities (and associated wildlife habitat). Both conditions of which were caused predominately by grazing too early in the Spring during moist soil conditions and during the critical growth period of perennial species.

Wildfires are one of the primary influences affecting the conversion of a sagebrush-steppe to flammable annual grass and forb dominated habitat. Allotments containing areas dominated by flammable invasive annuals are at-risk to wildland fire that would further reduce the diversity of native plant species. These areas would benefit from restoration of vegetation that would maintain or improve native species.

Current grazing regulations indicate “the authorized officer shall take appropriate action as soon as practicable, but not later than the start of the next grazing year upon determining that existing grazing management practices or levels of grazing use on public lands are significant factors in failing to achieve the standards and conform with the guidelines . . .” (43 CFR 4180.2(c)). In addition to the implementation of appropriate management actions, some grazing permits will soon be expiring, others are in need of administrative updates, and some permittees have applied to make changes to their grazing authorization. Therefore, current grazing permits need to be renewed; some with modifications. Permits would be renewed in compliance with 43 CFR 4180 – Fundamentals of Rangeland Health and Standards and Guidelines for Grazing Administration, which would ensure resource protection while continuing the multiple use management of public lands.

Corrective actions would be proposed if an allotment was in non-conformance with a particular rangeland health standard, and the non-conformance was determined to have been caused by current livestock grazing practices. However, if non-conformance is due to causes other than current livestock grazing practices, corrective actions will not be addressed at this time. If the cause of the non-conformance is undetermined, appropriate monitoring practices will be proposed to determine the cause so appropriate corrective actions can be implemented.

Allotment boundary lines identified in the RMP have been checked against existing fences that were verified on the ground. This field work was documented through the use of global positioning system (GPS) equipment and incorporating the data into BLM’s geographic

information system (GIS)<sup>4</sup>. Allotment acreages will be administratively adjusted in those instances where the RMP allotment boundaries differ from more accurate allotment boundaries, as determined from on-the-ground and GPSed fence locations.

## **1.2 Summary of Proposed Action**

The Four Rivers Field Manager proposes to renew 37 ten-year grazing permits, authorizing use on 34 allotments, found in the Block Unit area of Goodrich Management Area. Proposals include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Renewing grazing permits with modifications to terms and conditions
- Realigning allotment boundaries and renaming allotments
- Authorizing range improvements

Allotment specific proposals and administrative modifications can be found in Appendix A.

All actions are proposed as a means to move those allotments found to be in non-conformance with appropriate Standards for Rangeland Health into conformance with the health standards and to bring livestock management that is not conforming to appropriated Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management into conformance.

## **1.3 Location and Setting**

Goodrich Management Area is approximately 27 miles from south to north and approximately 27 miles from east to west within Washington and Adams counties (Map 1). The southern boundary is approximately five miles south of Cambridge, Idaho, approximately two miles north of Midvale, Idaho, roughly following Keithley Creek (southwest), Weiser River (south central), and North Fork Grays Creek (southeast). The northern (approximately eight to eleven miles north of Council), eastern (approximately two miles east of Council, three miles northeast of Indian Valley), and western (approximately ten miles west of Cambridge) boundaries follow the Payette National Forest boundary. Allotment specific maps are located in Appendix A.

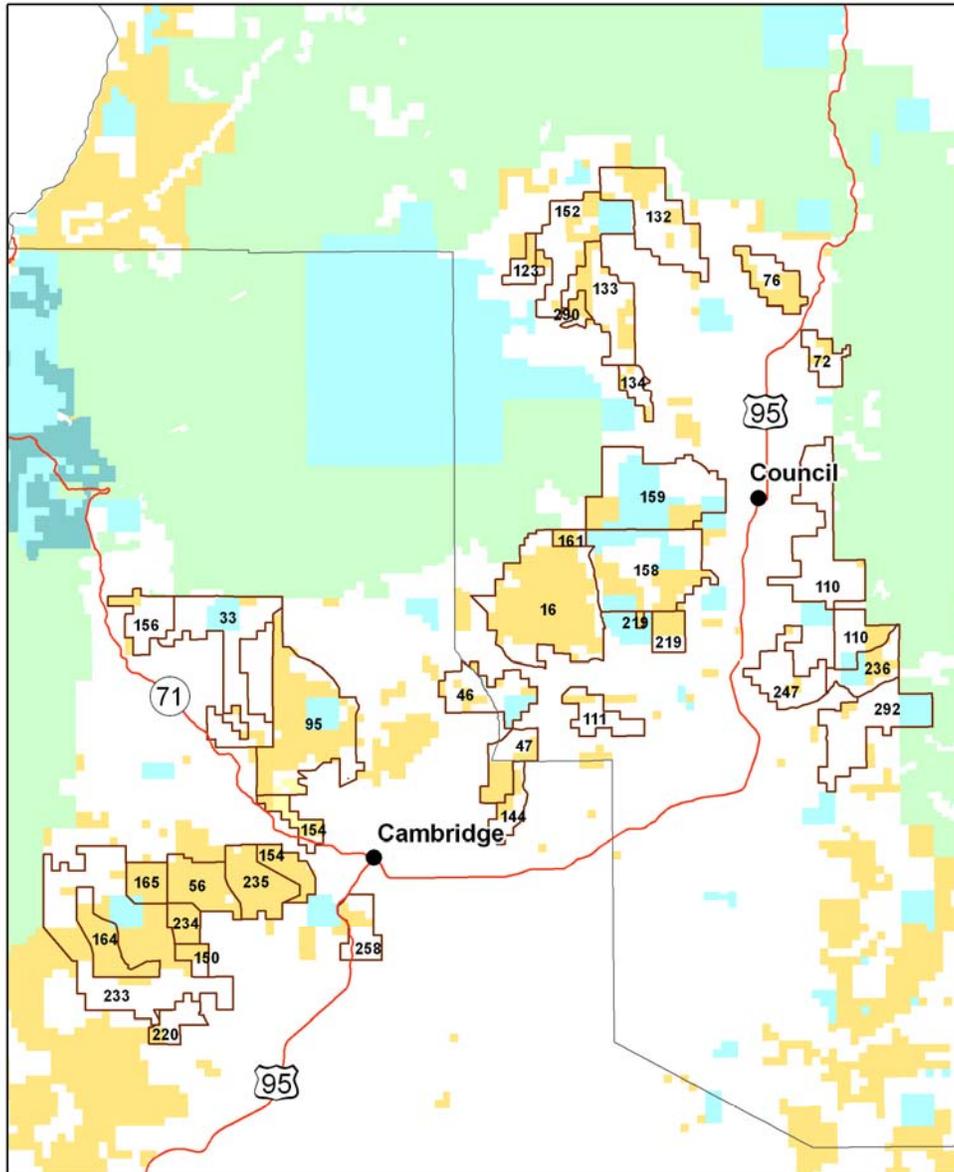
The Goodrich Management Area has gently rolling terrain with a small ridge in the south central portion and along the east boundary. Columbia River basalts are the main soil parent material. There are two distinct climatic regions within the management area - precipitation for the south half of the management area is in the 12 to 16 inch zone and the north half of the management area is in the 16 to 22 inch zone.

Fourteen perennial streams flow through the Goodrich Management Area. Stream segments which cross public lands include: Weiser River, Little Weiser River, Camp Creek, Spring Creek, Robinson Gulch, Long Gulch, North Hornet Creek, Little Pine Creek, Jackson Creek, Hopper Creek, Keithley Creek, East Fork Keithley Creek, Deer Creek and North Gray's Creek.

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<sup>4</sup> After fences were field mapped, information was downloaded into a Geographic Information System (GIS). Based on the field mapping and land status data, this computer system is able to calculate acreage within a given area – in this case an allotment boundary. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management for use of the data for purposes not intended by BLM. No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet the National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

**Map 1. Goodrich Management Area  
Allotments with Blocked Units  
of Public Land**



**Map Legend**

- Highway
- Allotment Boundary
- County Boundary
- BLM
- BOR
- USFS
- State
- Other State
- Private

1:280,000

0 5 10 Miles

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

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

The proposed action is covered by the 1988 Cascade RMP and conforms to resource management guidelines and the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) objectives.

An objective identified in the livestock resources description of the proposed action (page 26 of the RMP) states “manage 449,059 acres of rangeland [within the area covered by the RMP] to provide forage for livestock and wild horses.”

Objectives in the RPS indicate “forage production will be balanced with forage consumption to allow scheduled livestock use to occur in a manner that will maintain and/or improve vegetative condition” and “there will be 70,108 AUMs of forage provided for livestock use at the end of 20 years [within the area covered by the RMP] . . .”.

## **1.5 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Requirements**

Grazing regulations provide that “applicants for the renewal . . . of new permits . . . must be determined by the authorized officer to have a satisfactory record of performance. The applicant for renewal of a grazing permit . . ., shall be deemed to have a satisfactory record of performance if the authorized officer determines the applicant . . . to be in substantial compliance with the terms and conditions of the existing Federal grazing permit . . . for which renewal is sought, and with the rules and regulations applicable to the permit. . .” (43 CFR 4110.1(b)).

Federal regulations authorize BLM to issue grazing permits to qualified applicants (43 CFR 4110 and 4130). Permittees may graze livestock on public lands that are designated as available for livestock grazing through the RMP. In addition, the following laws, acts, manuals, policies, and regulations provide the foundation for livestock use and management of public lands:

- The Taylor Grazing Act, 1934 (TGA)
- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976 (FLPMA), Title IV, Section 402
- The Public Rangelands Improvement Act, 1978
- BLM Special Status Species Management Manual, 6840
- Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, 1997
- Title 43 - Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR), Subpart 4100 – Grazing Administration, exclusive of Alaska

## **1.6 Scoping and Development of Issues**

Since work started on the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, livestock grazing permittees, Tribal delegations, congressional delegations, interested public, neighboring agencies, and interested individuals and organizations have been kept updated through letters, phone calls, and/or meetings.

On June 30, 1998, an introduction to the Standards and Guidelines process, along with a map showing the proposed management area boundaries and priority for assessment work, an invitation to become involved in the process, and a list of allotments included in the upcoming

assessments was sent to the livestock grazing permittees, interested public, state agencies, local government, and others.

Various correspondences since 1998 were sent referencing the Goodrich Management Area assessment that would be conducted during 2002. Many of these correspondences related to grazing permit renewals or transfers. In addition, when discussing the transfer of a grazing permit, the Standards and Guidelines process was discussed at length with the applicant. All references to the Standards and Guidelines process indicated that changes may occur based on assessments and determinations.

A Standards and Guideline Meeting was held May 22, 2002, at the Cambridge High School in Cambridge, Idaho. This meeting was open to livestock grazing permittees, agencies, interested publics, and all other interested parties. Participants included 15 permittees, two representatives from other agencies, three individuals, and four BLM representatives. During this meeting, BLM introduced the Standard and Guideline process, and discussed grazing regulations, field assessments, determinations, and the NEPA process. Discussions were general in nature, and were designed to help participants understand what would be happening over the next few years to the allotments within the Goodrich Management Area. It was emphasized that specific discussions would be held on a one-on-one basis, if and when individuals requested such meetings.

Following completion of the field assessments, a change in BLM management emphasis rendered FRFO staff unable to maintain the proposed schedule for preparing written rangeland health assessments, determinations, NEPA documents, and renewing grazing permits as originally presented in letters and meetings. Initial Allotment and Permit Review and Rangeland Health Assessments were completed for 29 allotments. These assessments were mailed to affected permittees, interested publics, local government, state agencies, and others along with a cover letter requesting input and explaining new direction for completing Standard and Guidelines assessment work. One phone call from a permittee was received in response to this letter.

Between December 2004 and February 2005, following completion of the Cascade Land Exchange, letters were sent to individuals involved with lands that had been transferred out of public ownership, explaining how their grazing permits would be adjusted. The letter was also provided to new permittees following transfers of grazing privileges. During the processing of transfer applications, BLM staff explained to new permittees the Standard and Guideline and permit renewal process.

No specific issues were identified when the 2005 Goodrich Management Area Assessment was sent for public review or through the other public comment periods.

## **2.0 Description of the Alternatives**

In this chapter, alternatives or potential actions will be described and compared in terms of their impacts and potential to provide continued multiple use of the public lands.

## **2.1 Alternatives Considered But Not Analyzed in Detail**

A “no grazing” alternative would not comply with the RMP (page 45 and the RPS) or the regulations and laws identified above. These two documents, along with other letters and a public meeting, discussed above in Section 1.6, have been offered as avenues for the public to provide comments about the proposed action. Since no comments were offered and no resource issues were identified, the “no grazing” alternative will not be further analyzed.

## **2.2 Description of Proposed Action and Alternatives**

A description of the current authorization is identified in each of the allotment specific discussions in Appendix A.

### **2.2.1 Alternative 1 – No Action**

Livestock grazing management would continue as currently authorized. Upon expiration, permits would be renewed with existing terms and conditions, as well as any new terms and conditions required by new laws, regulations, or policies. Allotment boundaries would remain as designated in the RMP. If a permittee applies for renewal, but a new permit is not issued prior to expiration of the current permit, grazing would continue as provided through Chapter 558 of the Administrative Procedures Act.<sup>5</sup>

### **2.2.2 Alternative 2 – Proposed Action**

Evaluate the proper administrative procedure for 37 grazing permits. Proposals for each allotment are presented in allotment specific discussions found in Appendix A. Renewed grazing permits would be issued for a new 10-year term of March 01, 2009 to February 28, 2019.

- A. Renew grazing permits for a new 10-year term of March 01, 2009 through February 28, 2019. Allotment specific proposals are presented in Appendix A, but are summarized below:
  - Current terms and conditions that no longer apply would be removed from the permit.
  - New terms and conditions would be added to address specific allotment needs.
  - Allotment boundaries would be adjusted to conform to existing fence locations.
  - Allotment boundaries would be adjusted to reflect management changes and public lands not currently being grazed.
  - Allotment names could be changed to reflect the surrounding area or a geographic feature (if possible and/or to address duplicate allotment names).
  - Flexible management of livestock numbers and season-of-use would be initiated to allow public land managers the opportunity to make annual adjustments if needed.
  - The use of Annual Indicators would be initiated to aid public land managers in allotment management.
- B. Range improvements, consisting of approximately five water developments and three miles of fence would be authorized for construction or reconstruction.
- C. Incorporate fuels treatments on an as needed basis to reduce wildfire potential and improve watershed conditions:

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<sup>5</sup> When the licensee has made timely and sufficient application for a renewal or a new license in accordance with agency rules, a license with reference to an activity of a continuing nature does not expire until the application has been finally determined by the agency.

Numerous opportunities exist to improve rangeland health through vegetation management, specifically fuel treatments. Treatments would be developed to meet specific objectives for rangeland health, including plant communities that are resistant and resilient to the effects of wildland fire. In addition, where appropriate, treatments would be designed to reduce fire hazard in the wildland urban interface.

Treatments may include mechanical seeding or planting, use of herbicides or biological controls to reduce competition from invasive annuals and noxious weeds, and reduction of hazardous fuels using mechanical equipment (e.g. fuel breaks).

In areas dominated by invasive annuals, prescribed fire may be used to reduce the dense mats formed by these plants. The mats prevent perennial plants from establishing, and are also highly flammable, thus perpetuating the cycle of invasive annuals-fire-invasive annuals. Wildland fires that reduce invasive annuals would be used as opportunities for preparing the area for subsequent restoration treatments, such as seeding and herbicides.

Table 6: Proposed Actions

Current Allotment Name and Number (from)	Proposed Actions (to)	Public Land Acreage		Proposed Range Improvement (new and reconstruction of existing projects)	Appendix
		RMP (from)	GIS (to)		
Goodrich Common #16	Adjust grazing preference Continue the two pastures under deferred rotation grazing New allotment name: Goodrich #16	5,261	5,140	Reconstruct approximately 3 miles of pasture division fence	A1
Camp Creek #33	Adding two isolated 40 acre parcels of public land already fenced in the allotment boundary Convert to a common use allotment allowing cattle and/or horse grazing Initiate a three pasture rotation grazing system	203	275		A2
Cow Creek #46	Convert to a common use allotment allowing cattle or sheep use Adjust grazing preference Initiate rotational grazing with private pastures	465	470	Construct Cow Creek water development	A3
Glasscock Draw #47	Adjust season of use	840	825		A4
Busch Individual #56	Consolidated into Reeds Grove Allotment #1365	1,701			A28
Clelland #72	Split into two allotments; new allotment names: Big Ridge Allotment #1356 North Hill Allotment #1359 Adjust season of use and grazing preference	200	119 80		A5
Fruitvale #76	Realign allotment boundary	1,000	994		A6
Horse Flat #95	Adjust terms and conditions of grazing Eliminate exchange-of-use agreements	4,147	4,203		A7
Frasier Individual #110	Transfer 287 acres of public land into Middle Fork Allotment #236 Remaining 40 acres of public land would be unallocated	303	40		A8
Uhlmann #111	Convert grazing permit from a cattle and horse authorization to a cattle only Adjust allotment boundary New allotment name: Butte Allotment #111	160	153		A9

Current Allotment Name and Number (from)	Proposed Actions (to)	Public Land Acreage		Proposed Range Improvement (new and reconstruction of existing projects)	Appendix
		RMP (from)	GIS (to)		
Greenwood Individual #123	Add the unallocated 120 acres of public land lying east of the allotment Initiate rotational grazing New allotment name: Greenwood Allot. #123	160	278	Develop two ponds; if the proposed location is determined feasible for construction	A10
Home Ranch #132	Consolidate into Pleasant Ridge Allotment #1364	1,138			A27
Lake Ranch #133	Consolidate into Pleasant Ridge Allotment #1364	980			A27
J Harrington #134	Split into two allotments; new Allotment names: Snip's Allotment #1357 Pole Creek Allotment #1358 Adjust grazing preference	200	43 118		A11
Higgins Individual #144	Adjust allotment boundary Initiate rotational grazing New allotment name: Lacey Allotment #144	280	280		A12
Hopper Creek #150	Consolidate into Reeds Grove Allotment #1365	382	449		A13
Hornet Creek #152	Split along existing fencelines into three separate allotments	(880*)			A14
North Hornet Creek Pasture Hornet Creek Pasture	Consolidate two pastures to form one allotment Convert to a common use allotment allowing cattle or horse grazing Initiate rotational grazing with private pastures New allotment name: Council-Cuprum Road #152	40 40	40 80		
Robinson Gulch Pasture Traction Gulch Pasture	Consolidated into Pleasant Ridge Allot #1364	560 80			
Timber Canyon Pasture	Split out into a separate allotment New Allotment Name: Timber Gulch Allot #1360	160	160		
Cambridge #154	Continue with two pasture rotational grazing	1,622	1,484	Develop an existing spring source; if the proposed location is determined feasible for construction and if the site is accessible for the equipment	A15
Little Pine Creek #156	Split the public land along existing fencelines into two separate allotments	200			A16

Current Allotment Name and Number (from)	Proposed Actions (to)	Public Land Acreage		Proposed Range Improvement (new and reconstruction of existing projects)	Appendix
		RMP (from)	GIS (to)		
West Pasture	Continue rotational grazing with private pastures New Allotment Name: Little Pine Creek - West #1361	120	120		
East Pasture	Use range rider to manage rotational grazing New Allotment Name: Little Pine Creek - East #1362	80	79		
Jackson Creek #158	Adjust livestock numbers and active grazing preference Realign allotment boundary Incorporate 545 acres of public land from Isom Allotment Initiate a four pasture rotational grazing	1,514	2,080		A17
Isom #159	Spit allotment along existing fenceline; west half (545 acres) to be transferred to Jackson Creek Allotment Adjust livestock numbers and grazing preference Eliminate fall grazing New Allotment name: Little Jackson Creek #159	1,000	474		A18
Goodrich Individual #161	Eliminate fall grazing New allotment name: Little Johnson Creek #161	240	257		A19
Keithley Individual #164	Realign allotment boundary Manage under a three pasture rotational system New allotment name: Keithley Creek #164	1,507	1,537		A20
J Keithley #165	Consolidate into Reeds Grove Allotment #1365	920			A28
Peterson Individual #219	Realign allotment boundary New allotment name: Mesa Siding Allot. #219	555	545		A21
Potter Individual #220	Consolidate into Reeds Grove Allotment #1365	158			A28
Hopper Creek #233	Consolidate 2,533 acres into Reeds Grove Allotment #1365 Isolated 434 acres of public land west of the	3,084			A28

Current Allotment Name and Number (from)	Proposed Actions (to)	Public Land Acreage		Proposed Range Improvement (new and reconstruction of existing projects)	Appendix
		RMP (from)	GIS (to)		
	National Forest (parcel acquired from Sturgill Gulch Allotment) would become a separate allotment. New Name: Limestone Allotment #1363		434		
Mrs. Seid Individual #234	Consolidate into Reeds Grove Allotment #1365	775			A28
Pine #235	Consolidate into Reeds Grove Allotment #1365	2,029			A28
Middle Fork #236	Consolidate approximately 287 acres of public land from Frasier Individual Allotment #110 Adjust livestock numbers and active grazing preference; cancel exchange-of-use agreement	480	747	Develop one pond (Barber Gulch Pond); if the proposed location is determined feasible for construction and if the site is accessible for the equipment	A22
School Creek #247	Initiate rotational grazing with private pastures	159	160		A23
Thompson #258	New allotment name: Weiser River #258	280	260		A24
North Hornet #290	Update terms and conditions s	230	221		A25
Thorn Creek #292	Consolidate with public land from North Fork #293 Initiate rotational grazing with private pastures	120	565		A26
Pleasant Ridge Group	Consolidate two allotments and two pastures from a third allotment; Initiate seven pasture rotation grazing New Allotment Number: #1364		3,305		A27
Reeds Grove Group	Consolidate six allotments Allow flexible management to be managed by using range riders New Allotment Number: #1365		8,394		A28

## 2.3 Comparison of Alternatives

## 3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

### Introduction - Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Affected environment is a written description of the natural resources, management, and/or land uses that could be affected by the proposed action and/or other alternatives. BLM manages under the multiple use concept, therefore one type of land use has the potential to impact other land uses and/or the resources. Permit renewal for livestock grazing is being analyzed through this assessment which has the potential to impact natural resources such as vegetation, noxious and invasive weeds, soils, special status plants wildlife, riparian areas, fisheries, water quality and cultural resources; management of wildfires and any follow-up rehabilitation; and various uses of the public lands such as grazing administration and recreation.

Environmental consequences describe the significance of effects in terms of context and intensity as a basis for comparing alternatives. Alternatives are similar, therefore in some cases, discussions may not make a distinction between the alternative.

Generally, resources and land uses are introduced below for all 34 allotments in the Blocked Unit. Details can be found in the appropriate allotment specific appendix for those resources or land uses that may have a more direct impact from livestock grazing. If a resource or land use does not apply to an allotment, there would not be discussion in the allotment specific appendix. Below are the resources or management or land uses that apply to all allotments, with noted exceptions:

- Noxious and Invasive Weeds
- Special Status Plants, except for:
  - J Harrington Allotment #134 (Appendix A11)
- Riparian Area, Water Quality and Fisheries, except for:
- Goodrich Common Allotment #16 (Appendix A1)
- Camp Creek Allotment #33 (Appendix A2)
- Fruitvale Allotment #76 (Appendix A6)
- Horse Flat Allotment #95 (Appendix A7)
- Hornet Creek Allotment #152 – Robinson Gulch Pasture (Appendix A27)
- Little Pine Creek Allotment #156 (Appendix A16)
- Isom Allotment #159 (Appendix A18)
- Middle Fork Allotment #236 (Appendix A22)
- Thompson #258 (Appendix 24)
- Pleasant Ridge Group (Appendix 27)
- Reeds Grove Group (Appendix 28)
- Cultural Resources, except for:
  - Goodrich Common Allotment #16 (Appendix A1)
  - Cow Creek Allotment #46 (Appendix A3)
  - Greenwood Individual #123 (Appendix A10)
  - Cambridge Allotment #154 (Appendix A15)
  - Middle Fork Allotment #236 (Appendix A22)

- Fire
- Cumulative Effects

Environmental consequences of the following resources and land use are specific to an individual allotment and could vary by alternative; therefore, are discussed in Appendix A:

- Vegetation
- Soils
- Wildlife
- Grazing Administration

### 3.1 Upland Vegetation

#### 3.1.1 Affected Environment – Upland Vegetation

Plant community composition for a given site is determined by several factors including soil type and depth, precipitation, and elevation. Listed below are the common soils within the Goodrich Management Area and the associated plant communities.

*Riggins soils*, found on summits, shoulders, and south facing slopes, are shallow. The soil surface is very stony or rocky. Plant communities include a moderate canopy cover of xeric sagebrush or mountain sagebrush, bitterbrush, and possibly snowberry, and rabbitbrush. The understory components include bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, Sandberg bluegrass, and bottlebrush squirreltail with a perennial forb mixture of arrowleaf balsamroot, lupine, yarrow, phlox, and tapertip hawksbeard. The ecological sites for this soil are Shallow Stony Loam 16 to 22 inch precipitation zone with slopes of 30 percent or less. Shallow South Stony Loam 14 to 18 inch precipitation zone on lands with a slope of 31 percent or more.

*Meland soils*, found on summits, shoulders and south slopes, are moderately deep and well drained. They are a silt loam with few rock fragments in the surface soil. Plant communities would have a sparse canopy cover of xeric sagebrush, bitterbrush, and Wyeth's buckwheat. The understory is dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass, with a small amount of Sandberg bluegrass. Forbs are very diverse and abundant and include tapertip hawksbeard, penstemon, lupine, and yarrow and arrowleaf balsamroot which is the most prevalent. With fire, Wyeth's buckwheat, gray rabbitbrush, and annual grasses would increase. Associated ecological sites are Loamy 16 to 22 inch precipitation zone on slopes less than 20 percent and South slope Loamy 16 to 22 inch precipitation zone on 21 percent slope or greater.

*DeMasters soils*, are deep well drained soils that occur on north or east facing side slopes in the 18 to 22 inch precipitation zone. Plant communities have a moderate canopy cover of mountain sagebrush, bitterbrush, serviceberry, chokecherry, bittercherry, and Wyeth's buckwheat. The understory is dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, prairie June grass, Kentucky bluegrass, and elk sedge. Forbs include such species as woolly hawkweed, arrowleaf balsamroot, tapertip hawksbeard, Indian paintbrush, penstemon, lupine, and stoneseed.

*Deschler silty clay loam*, are moderately deep, well drained soils that occur on side slopes, summits, and footslopes. Plant communities include a moderate canopy cover of xeric or basin

big sagebrush and bitterbrush, with an understory dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass, Thurber needlegrass, Sandberg bluegrass, and bottlebrush squirreltail. The forb layer is diverse and abundant with arrowleaf balsamroot, tapertip hawksbeard, lupine, peavine, lomatiums, yarrow, and penstemon. The associated ecological sites are Loamy 12 to 16 inch precipitation zone on slopes less than 30 percent and South Slope Loamy 12 to 16 inch precipitation zone on slopes greater than 31 percent.

*Brownlee sandy loam*, is a very deep, well drained soil that occurs on side slopes, summits, and footslopes. Plant communities are the same as Deschler soils (described above), with more needlegrass and Great Basin wild rye in the composition. Associated ecological sites are Loamy 12 to 16 inch precipitation zone on slopes less than 30 percent and South Slope Loamy 12 to 16 percent precipitation zone on slopes greater than 31 percent.

*Crane Creek loam*, is a moderately deep, well drained soil that occurs on summits, side slopes, and shoulders. Plant communities are the same as described for the Deschler soil type. The associated ecological site is Loamy 12 to 16 inch precipitation zone.

*Gem soils*, are moderately deep and are found on summits, shoulders, and sideslopes. Plant communities include an overstory of xeric or basin big sagebrush and bitterbrush, with an understory of bluebunch wheatgrass and a rich mixture of perennial forbs, including arrowleaf balsamroot, tapertip hawksbeard, peavine, and yarrow. With fire disturbance the shrub canopy becomes absent for a number of years. Invasive grass species can greatly increase if drought conditions, and/or excessive grazing, follow the disturbance prior to recovery. The associated ecological site is Loamy 12 to 16 inch precipitation zone.

*Reywat soils*, are shallow stony soils found on crests, summits, and south and west facing sideslopes. The soil surface is very stony or rocky. Plant communities have an overstory of xeric sagebrush and bitterbrush with bluebunch wheatgrass and Sandberg bluegrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, and Thurber's needlegrass as the understory with a rich mixture of perennial forbs including arrowleaf balsamroot, desert parsley, and other lomatiums, death camas, hot rock penstemon, phlox, lupine, and yarrow are also present. With fire, shrubs would be absent for some time, but gray rabbitbrush may replace sagebrush and bitterbrush. The same scenario would apply as the loamy sites described above, except the shallower soils would be easily damaged because they are more fragile.

*Bakeoven soils*, are very shallow in depth, no more than 8 to 10 inches to bedrock, making rooting depth very limited. These soils occur on summits, crests, sideslopes, and shoulders and are covered with a stony or gravelly surface. Plant communities are composed of a moderate canopy cover of rigid sagebrush with an understory of Sandberg bluegrass, and sparse bottlebrush squirreltail. Perennial forbs, such as bighead clover, wild onion, bitterroot, Hooker's balsamroot, phlox, death camas, and biscuitroot are prevalent in early spring. As in many of the soils in this region, microbiotic crusts are critical in the interspaces to protect the soil surface.

### **3.1.2 Environmental Consequences – Upland Vegetation**

See Appendix A

## 3.2 Noxious and Invasive Weeds

### 3.2.1 Affected Environment – Noxious and Invasive Weeds

Noxious and invasive weeds prefer highly disturbed sites such as river and stream banks, trailheads, roadsides, building sites, trails, wildlife bed grounds, overgrazed areas, and campgrounds. Most noxious and invasive weeds are non-indigenous and have evolved under grazing practices that cause soil disturbance and erosion (Sheley and Petroff, 1999<sup>6</sup>).

Current inventories show noxious weed populations occur on 13 allotments within the Blocked Unit in varying degrees of density. Of the eight species of weeds known to occur, rush skeletonweed and Scotch thistle are the most widely distributed. One of the most aggressive weeds found within this area is leafy spurge which is currently spreading throughout Washington and Adams counties.

Table 7. Known occurrences of noxious weeds in the Blocked Unit of the Goodrich Management Area.

Allotment	NOXIOUS WEEDS							
	Canada Thistle	Rush Skeltonweed	Leafy Spurge	Scotch Thistle	Yellow Starthistle	Field Bindweed	Dalmatian Toadflax	Diffuse Knapweed
Goodrich	X	X	X	X	X			
Glasscock Draw		X	X	X				
Busch	X	X	X	X				
Horse Flat	X	X	X	X				
Uhlmann		X	X					
Higgins		X	X	X		X		
Cambridge		X	X	X		X	X	
Jackson Crk				X				
Keithley		X		X				
Peterson		X						
Hopper Crk	X	X	X	X				X
Pine		X	X	X				
Thompson	X	X	X	X				

One of the more successful efforts to treat these weeds has been the formation of Adams and Lower Weiser River Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs). These CWMAs are formal groups of interested and concerned parties that combine their expertise, energy, and resources to deal with common weed problems within specific weed management areas. Participants include representatives from County weed departments, US Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands and Agriculture, Soil Conservation Districts, State Highway Departments, The Nature Conservancy, Idaho Fish and Game, BLM, Idaho Power, and private landowners. These groups facilitate cooperative working relationships and promote resource sharing between

<sup>6</sup> *Biology and Management of Noxious Rangeland Weeds*, edited by Roger L. Sheley and Janet K. Petroff, Oregon State University press, Corvallis 1999, 438 pages.

all participants in an effort to prevent, contain, control and/or eradicate noxious and invasive plants within the weed management area boundaries, on all lands regardless of ownership or management responsibilities, using all available strategies, techniques, and resources.

### **3.2.2 Environmental Consequences – Noxious and Invasive Weeds**

#### **3.2.2.1 Alternative A**

Negative impacts to plant communities caused from noxious and invasive weed invasion would be reduced to some degree by CWMA efforts. However, areas that are not meeting upland and riparian vegetation standards would remain susceptible to weed establishment and expansion and weeds would be expected to increase in these areas over the short and long terms.

#### **3.2.2.2 Alternative B**

Negative impacts from noxious and invasive weed invasion would be reduced through improved management by adjusting grazing preference, adding new terms and conditions that address specific allotment needs, and initiating annual indicator criteria for each allotment. The potential for establishment and spread of noxious weeds would be reduced over the long-term in areas where the condition and cover of desirable vegetation increases. Positive effects would result from the continuation of weed control efforts.

### **3.3 Soils**

#### **3.3.1 Affected Environment – Soils**

The primary parent material of the soils within the Goodrich Management Area is Columbia River basalt. These basalt-derived soils have a xeric soil moisture regime and a mesic or frigid soil temperature regime, depending on elevation and aspect. They are characteristically shallow to moderately deep with inclusions of deeper soils and are generally well-drained. Precipitation ranges are generally from 12 to 22 inches.

Soils often occur as moderately deep soil hummocks surrounded by very shallow stony ground. Due to the variations in soil depth, vegetation is strikingly different on the hummocks than on the surrounding stony rings. Soil textures are typically loams to clay loams with varying amounts of surface rock fragments. These soils formed in residuum and alluvium derived from Columbia River basalt. Deep soils with loamy textures are the most productive sites and occur throughout 31 percent of the watershed. The shallow stony sites occur on 34 percent of the watershed. These sites afford low forage production; however, they do provide more than the very shallow sites. The very shallow soils occur on 24 percent of the watershed. These sites provide minimal production for forage and are very fragile.

Common soil series within the management unit include; Bakeoven, Crane Creek, DeMasters, Deschler, Devnot, Gem, Gross, Klicker, Langrell, Meland, Reywat, Riggins, and Rocky. These soils are often mapped as associations when two or more soils occur together in a predictable pattern, or complexes when two or more occur repeatedly in an intricate pattern.

*Riggins-Meland-Demasters Association* - This association is composed of shallow to deep, well drained soils that formed in colluvium and residuum derived from basalt. These soils are found in foothills and mountains at an elevation of 3,200 to 5,000 feet with an average annual

precipitation of 16 to 22 inches. This, by far, is the major soils association of Goodrich Management Area.

*Deschler-Brownlee-Crane Creek Association* - This association is composed of moderately deep to very deep, well-drained soils that formed in residuum derived from volcanic tuff and in alluvium derived from acid igneous rock and basalt. These soils are found on foothills and lacustrine terraces in elevations from 2,500 to 4,500 feet with an average annual precipitation of 12 to 17 inches. These associations are generally found on a small area just northeast of Cambridge and small patches south of Mesa.

*Gem-Reywatt-Bakeoven Association* - This association is composed of very shallow to moderately deep, well-drained soils that formed in residuum derived from basalt. These soils are found on the foothills in elevation from 2,300 feet to 4,800 feet. Average annual precipitation is 12 to 16 inches. These soil associations are found in the lower portions of public lands around the Midvale area.

### **3.3.2 Environmental Consequences – Soils**

See Appendix A

## **3.4 Special Status Plants**

### **3.4.1 Affected Environment – Special Status Plants**

No federally listed threatened or endangered plants are known to occur in Goodrich Management Area. Marginal habitat for Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), a federally threatened<sup>7</sup> orchid, could exist in some allotments, although this species is not known within 200 miles of the assessment area, and inventories have located no populations. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) considers all of Idaho to be within the potential range of this species; therefore, it is included for discussion. Ute ladies'-tresses is found from 1,500 to 7,000 feet in elevation and is presently known from Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and eastern Idaho along the South Fork of the Snake River between Swan Valley and the confluence with Henry's Fork. It occurs in spring, seep, and stream habitats.

One special status plant species has been found in the Blocked Unit of the Goodrich Management Area. Mahala mat (*Ceanothus prostratus*) is known from the southern portion of J Harrington Allotment #134, found in Section 31, T17N, R1W. Additional species could be present, but systematic inventories have not been conducted.

Mahala mat, also called prostrate ceanothus, is a low mat forming shrub. This sub-shrub, disjunct from the eastern slopes of the Cascades where it is known from Washington south to the Sierra Nevada, has a prostrate growth form. It is currently known only from two locations in Idaho. The population on this allotment has been estimated at approximately 300 to 400 individuals. Livestock trailing does occur within the population area; however, cattle do not appear to graze on prostrate ceanothus, possibly because of its prickly leaves. Under current

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<sup>7</sup> *Threatened Taxa are likely to be classified as Endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.*

management, livestock grazing does not appear to be causing a decline in the species. However, use level changes and/or salting in the vicinity of the population, or increases of rush skeltonweed which is already in the area, could potentially be adverse.

### **3.4.2 Environmental Consequences – Special Status Plants**

Mahala mat (*Ceanothus prostrates*), also called prostrate ceanothus, is a low mat forming subshrub that represents the only special status plant species found in the Goodrich Management Area Blocked Unit. This plant is found on the J Harrington Allotment #134; specific environmental consequences to the plant are discussed in Appendix A11.

There are no special status plants, or their habitat, known to occur within the boundaries of the other 33 allotments. Therefore, there are no expected direct or indirect environmental consequences expected to occur with implementation of either alternative.

## **3.5 Wildlife (including Special Status Animal species)**

### **3.5.1 Affected Environment – Wildlife (including Special Status Animal species)**

Determinations indicated that much of Goodrich Assessment Area was in suitable condition, meeting the habitat needs of most wildlife including special status animal species. The Goodrich Management Area provides habitat for game species and a variety of non-game birds, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals. Big game species include elk, mule deer, and to a limited extent, pronghorn. Mink, raccoon, skunk, bobcat, and coyote are common predators found throughout the general area. Mountain lion, North American wolverine, and perhaps gray wolves are less common predators within Goodrich Management Area. Upland game birds, including gray partridge, California quail, blue grouse, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, and chukar, are found scattered throughout the management unit. The northern harrier, red-tailed hawk, American kestrel, and golden eagle are common raptors. Other bird species common to the general area include common nighthawk, common raven, Brewer's blackbird, vesper sparrow, and lark sparrow.

Big sagebrush and bitterbrush are the major shrub communities providing foraging habitat for wintering big game. Uplands that are in close proximity to riparian areas are extremely important in providing escape cover for upland game birds. Annual grassland areas provide habitat for open ground nesting birds including western meadowlark, horned lark, and long-billed curlew, a sensitive species.

Upland areas that are lightly disturbed provide high, or good, quality habitat for most wildlife species. Upland and riparian areas in fair or better ecological condition are representative of a more diverse habitat type and correspondingly support a greater number and variety of wildlife species. Moderately and highly disturbed areas generally provide marginal to unsuitable habitat for most wildlife. Loss of native bunchgrasses, and subsequent increase in bulbous bluegrass and annual grasses, is the primary factor affecting upland wildlife habitats. Past livestock grazing practices, introduction of exotic annuals, and wildfires are the primary influences affecting the conversion of a sagebrush-steppe to an annual grass and forb dominated habitat. Restoration of annual dominated habitats can only be achieved through mechanical and/or chemical treatments, drill and aerial seeding in conjunction with herbicide spraying.

Areas lacking in shrubs may still have a dominance and diversity of perennial grasses and forbs. These areas have a diversity of herbaceous species, but are lacking the structure necessary to support diverse and abundant wildlife population. A shrub-steppe area in poor condition would not provide large or continuous stands of sagebrush that are necessary to attract and support sagebrush obligate species (e.g., sage sparrow, Brewer's sparrow and sage grouse). A riparian area in poor condition does not possess the plant diversity or structure necessary to support an abundance and variety of wildlife species.

Even though an area may be rated in poor condition, such as an area that has been heavily disturbed, some value may still exist for wildlife. For example, in southwestern Idaho, long-billed curlews select heavily disturbed areas for nesting with low ground cover that provides good visibility for predator detection.

In general the needs of big game species are being provided for in Goodrich Area; however, big game numbers have increased in recent years and wintering areas are exhibiting signs of stress and over use. Portions of the management area are within elk crucial winter range and the eastern extent of the area provides non-crucial winter habitat for mule deer. Elk numbers in the area have increased well above management objectives in recent years despite efforts by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Fish and Game) to control them through more liberal hunting seasons. Likewise, mule deer seem to have increased in the last few years, allowing Fish and Game to open a doe season. The value of an area, in terms of providing habitat for wintering big game, is influenced to a large extent by elevation, aspect, and condition. The capacity of some areas to provide winter forage and cover for big game has decreased with the removal of shrubs by wildfire. Although portions of the management area have a diminished capacity to support wintering elk and mule deer, they still are of paramount importance in terms of providing big game winter range. The occurrence of big sagebrush and bitterbrush varies from small scattered patches to larger intermingled stands. These areas generally support a perennial and annual grass/forb understory. Riparian areas in association with adjoining uplands provide forage and cover for wintering mule deer. Large portions of the elk crucial winter range area are dominated by bulbous bluegrass and correspondingly provide only marginal habitat. Proposals under Alternative B are taking measures to reduce wildlife/livestock conflicts by limiting livestock use during the fall/winter season in big game wintering areas.

Riparian areas provide important big game winter habitat. Riparian areas and their adjacent uplands provide habitat for small mammals, game birds, and a multitude of migrant songbirds. More than 75 percent of the area's terrestrial wildlife species are dependent on or use riparian habitats. Riparian areas, including all perennial streams and some intermittent channels, provide important habitat for mourning dove, California quail, ruffed grouse, and gray partridge; and important late brood-rearing habitat for sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Rufous-sided towhee can be common in dense shrub patches and riparian areas.

Riparian areas that are in proper functioning condition typically provide good quality wildlife habitat. Riparian areas rates as functioning-at-risk with upward or no apparent trend usually provide fair condition wildlife habitat. Areas rated as Functioning-at-Risk with downward trend or Non-Functioning condition provide poor quality habitat for terrestrial wildlife species.

Uplands that are in close proximity to riparian areas are extremely important in providing escape cover for upland game birds. Mountain quail, a BLM sensitive species, occurred in the management unit until at least 1988 and is dependent on healthy riparian and mountain shrub habitats. Shrub-steppe provides breeding and nesting habitat for sensitive species like the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and greater sage-grouse.

Habitats of several sensitive species are known to occur within the management unit. Loggerhead shrike is a sensitive species that migrates into the area to breed and can be found in many different habitats.

Most of the southern portion of the assessment area is within designated sage grouse habitat and where sagebrush is present, serves as at least marginal sage grouse nesting habitat. Most of the northern portion of the assessment area is potential Columbian sharp-tailed grouse habitat and is meeting the nesting, brood-rearing, and wintering needs of the species. Numbers today are reduced, but much of the management area still provides habitat for both species. Patterned soils in the management unit create a mosaic of suitable and unsuitable nesting habitat for sage grouse. Deeper soiled areas support big sagebrush, important for nesting habitat, while shallower soils do not.

The *Guidelines to Manage Sage Grouse Populations and Their Habitats*<sup>8</sup> prescribes a 15 to 25 percent canopy cover of big sagebrush for nesting sage grouse throughout their range. In the management unit, and other northern portions of sage grouse range, birds can successfully nest in areas of lesser sagebrush cover provided a robust stand of perennial bunchgrasses and forbs are present. As little as ten percent big sagebrush cover may still provide suitable sage grouse nesting habitat. Additionally, sage grouse in the management unit appear to be using stiff sagebrush (*Artemisia rigida*) to some degree for nesting habitat. Forbs in sage grouse diets have recently been shown to be more important than previously believed. Generally, in good condition range, forbs are adequately abundant to support sage grouse. Moderately disturbed areas within the management unit have reduced stands of perennial bunchgrasses and increased amounts of bulbous bluegrass. Although bulbous bluegrass supplies ground cover, it does not grow as tall as bluebunch wheatgrass and offers less visual screening for nest cover protection from ground predators.

Requirements for nesting sharp-tailed grouse are similar to those of sage grouse. Currently there are no known active sharp-tailed grouse leks and only two active sage grouse leks in Goodrich Management Area. A majority of the area is considered within the distribution for sage grouse, while sharp-tailed grouse are restricted to isolated occurrences within the unit.

Northern Idaho ground squirrel is a listed threatened species that once occurred in small scattered populations within the northwestern portion of the management unit. Several allotments northwest of Council are within this historic range and are meeting standards or are now considered degraded habitat due to a high proportion of brush with an herbaceous layer that is depleted or replaced by invasive and/or noxious weeds. Surveys in the area as recently as 2004

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<sup>8</sup> Connelly, J.W., Schroeder, M.A., Sands, A.R. and Braun, C.E. 2000. *Guidelines to Manage Sage Grouse Populations and Their Habitats*. Wildlife Society Bulletin 28: 967 to 985.

have found a couple populations of a few individuals. The greatest threat to the species throughout its range appears to be conversion of wet and dry meadows to evergreen encroachment and agriculture. On public lands near Council, Idaho, the primary threat is overgrowth of shrubs and loss of native perennial bunchgrasses. On the few allotments that are not meeting standards within ground squirrel habitat, the major problems cannot be repaired through grazing management; but instead, require some form of treatment to reduce shrub cover and rejuvenate native perennial herbaceous cover.

### **3.5.2 Environmental Consequences – Wildlife (including Special Status Animal species)**

Determinations indicated there were no notable changes to the health of wildlife habitat. With the exception of Greenwood Allotment #123, North Hornet #290, and Lake Ranch #133 there are no populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive animal species, or their habitat, known to occur on any of the allotments in the assessment area. Greenwood Allotment #123 provided habitat for historic populations of Northern Idaho ground squirrel; however, no current populations are known to exist in the allotment. Therefore, implementation of either alternative is not expected to result in significant direct or indirect environmental consequences to wildlife habitat, provided maximum livestock numbers, seasons of use, and total allocated AUMs are not exceeded. For allotment specific environmental consequences see Appendix A.

## **3.6 Riparian Areas**

### **3.6.1 Affected Environment – Riparian Areas**

Weiser River is the main waterway through the Goodrich Management Area. The main stem of the Weiser River, with headwaters on National Forest Systems Lands (NFS), flows southwesterly across private land and enters the Snake River 53 stream-miles upstream from Brownlee Dam (River Mile 352). Other major waterways include the Little Weiser, Middle Fork Weiser, and East Fork Weiser rivers on the east side of the watershed. Hornet, Rush, and Pine creeks are on the west side of the watershed. Within the watershed, there are approximately 1,251 miles of intermittent streams. Elevations of the Weiser River basin range from 8,000 feet in the mountains to 2,090 feet near the town of Weiser.

Fourteen perennial streams flow through the Goodrich Management Area. Streams with segments occurring on public lands include: Weiser River, Little Weiser River, Camp Creek, Spring Creek, Robinson Gulch, Long Gulch, North Hornet Creek, Little Pine Creek, Jackson Creek, Hopper Creek, Keithley Creek, East Fork Keithley Creek, Deer Creek, and North Gray's Creek.

Healthy streams with potential natural plant communities were dominated by deciduous shrub and tree species including a vigorous mixed stands of white alder, black cottonwood, willow species, hawthorn, elderberry, bittercherry, chokecherry, serviceberry, spirea, snowberry, redosier dogwood, rocky mountain maple, currant, syringa, and mountain ash. At elevations above 4,000 feet, species present may also include quaking aspen, Schoulers's willow, Douglas fir and ponderosa pine. With few exceptions, canopy cover was sufficient to protect salmonid bearing streams from excessive solar heating.

Of the perennial streams examined for the Goodrich Management Area assessment, 91 percent were in proper functioning condition, eight percent were functioning-at-risk with static trends, and one percent was in functioning-at-risk with strong upward trend condition.

Camp Creek (CAMP-010.9) was reported in non-functioning condition in the original assessment. However, following a June 19, 2008 field inspection and functioning condition assessment, this segment was re-rated functioning-at-risk with a strong upward trend for Standard 2 and Standard 3.

A one-quarter mile segment of Robinson Gulch (Robin-000.9) was originally rated in functional-at-risk with static trend condition due to mechanical disturbance caused by unauthorized dozer work. Based on a subsequent assessment on July 8, 2008, the segment was re-rated as functioning-at-risk with strong upward trend for Standard 2, and functioning-at-risk with moderate downward trend for Standard 3.

The lower elevation segments of Spring Creek and Hopper Creek have noxious weeds present along the stream terraces.

### **3.6.2 Environmental Consequences – Riparian Areas**

#### **3.6.2.1 Alternative A**

Streams currently in proper functioning condition would remain in that condition through the short and long terms.

It is expected that the segments of Camp Creek would continue to improve under current management through the short and long terms

Robinson Gulch would maintain in an upward trend for Standard 2 over the short through long terms. Trend for Standard 3 would remain downward over the short term. Over the long term the stream would eventually adjust to the disturbance caused by the addition of soil and brush to the channel.

Spring Creek and Hopper Creek are compromised by noxious weed infestations, and would probably remain in functioning-at-risk condition through the long term.

#### **3.6.2.2 Alternative B**

Impacts for streams not discussed in the appendices would be the same as for Alternative A.

### **3.7 Fisheries**

#### **3.7.1 Affected Environment – Fisheries**

Fisheries resources in the assessment area are very diverse, consisting of a mixture of warm water and cold water species, fluvial and resident fish species. Weiser River, downstream from the confluence of Little Weiser River, supports a limited fishery of redband trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss gairdneri*), mountain whitefish, and smallmouth bass. This reach is considered a “mixed fishery” or a cool/warm water fishery. Upstream from the confluence with Little Weiser River, Weiser River is considered a cool water fishery, with rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), mountain whitefish (*Prosopium williamsoni*), and nongame fish dominating the fish community.

Tributaries to the Weiser River in this assessment area support a coldwater fishery with rainbow trout, redband trout, brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), and mountain whitefish. Fish distribution throughout the Weiser River watershed is influenced by intermittent stream flow regimes and the cumulative effects of persistent drought, livestock grazing, roads, agriculture, and timber harvest.

Redband trout is considered a sensitive species by BLM, USFS, and IDFG, primarily due to declining historical population numbers and lack of suitable habitat. Redband trout, a subspecies of rainbow trout, are uniquely adapted to streams with extreme water fluctuations and higher summer water temperatures, and lower dissolved oxygen levels. Current management of redband trout consists of racial preservation by limiting hatchery rainbow trout introductions to redband bearing streams. Redband populations have remained genetically isolated in areas of extreme environmental conditions where other non-native rainbow trout populations have been unable to survive.

Other cool water species are sculpin (*Cottus spp.*), suckers (*Catostomus spp.*), and dace (*Rhinichthys spp.*). Historically, Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*) migrated to larger Weiser River tributaries. Construction of large dams across the Snake River (Hells Canyon Complex) extirpated anadromous fish runs in this basin.

Streams in the Goodrich Management Area which support healthy and viable redband trout fisheries include: Left Fork, Goodrich, Johnson, North Hornet, Keithley, East Fork Keithley, and North Fork Gray's creeks. The segments of Weiser River and Little Weiser River support a small seasonal salmonid fishery, but water temperatures in summer months are too high for redband trout reproduction. Water quality standards for cold water biota and salmonid spawning were not being met in these segments.

### Bull Trout

Columbia River bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) were listed as a Threatened species under the Endangered Species Act in 1998. No resident bull trout populations are known to exist in BLM managed stream segments in the Goodrich Management Area. On very rare occasions migratory bull trout may occur in Little Weiser River and N. Hornet Creek. However, bull trout require clean, cold, and well oxygenated water, and most commonly occur in Idaho at elevations above 5,000 feet asl. Water temperatures in BLM managed segments exceed the ideal range for bull trout, but are adequate for redband trout which are better adapted to the warmer water temperatures found at lower elevations.

Historically, there were no barriers between the Payette, Boise, and Weiser subbasins in the Southwest Idaho Bull Trout Recovery Unit. Today, bull trout in this recovery unit occupy suitable habitat in headwater tributaries generally in isolated local populations and upstream of the unsuitable habitat lower in the subbasins. Therefore, these subbasins were combined as a recovery unit since they probably functioned as a population unit historically. The reasons for population declines include habitat fragmentation and degradation (USFWS draft 2002).

On November 14, 2002, the USFWS announced proposed critical habitat in Southwest Idaho for Columbia River bull trout. All activities on BLM managed lands and within the range of the bull

trout proposed critical habitat will comply with the Decision Record for the *Inland Native Fish Strategies Environmental Analysis* (USDA, United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. 1995). The referenced EA was developed for managing inland fish-producing watersheds in order to protect habitat and populations of resident native fish habitat in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of California, commonly referred to as INFISH.

USFWS published the final rule on designation of critical habitat for Klamath River and Columbia River bull trout populations in the Federal Register (Vol. 69 No. 193, 50 CFR Part17). The October 6, 2004, final ruling designated portions of Wildhorse River, Indian Creek, and Crooked River as critical habitat and dropped other streams that were previously proposed, including all stream segments falling within the Goodrich assessment area. However, BLM policy directs that streams or segments of streams which were proposed for listing as critical habitat will continue to have important status, and will be managed as if they were listed to avoid jeopardizing the species. “Critical habitat designations do not signal that habitat outside the designation area is unimportant to bull trout. Areas outside the critical habitat designation will continue to be subject to conservation actions that may be implemented under section 7(a) (1), and regulatory protections afforded by the section 7(b) jeopardy standard, and the section 9 take prohibition, as determined on the basis of the best available information at the time of the action” (Federal Register, Vol. 69 No. 193 pp.60022).

### **3.7.2 Environmental Consequences – Fisheries**

#### **3.7.2.1 Alternative A**

Streams with existing salmonid fisheries would continue to provide good quality aquatic habitat for support of viable populations of redband trout over the short through long terms. No bull trout populations are known to exist in BLM managed stream segments in the Goodrich Management Area.

#### **3.7.2.2 Alternative B**

Impacts for streams not discussed in the appendices would be the same as for Alternative A.

### **3.8 Water Quality**

#### **3.8.1 Affected Environment – Water Quality**

Water quality standards were met in all streams in the assessment area except Weiser River and Little Weiser River. In 2006, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) finalized the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for the *Upper Weiser River Subbasin Assessment Final* (June 2006). The findings below were copied in part from the final TMDL document.

“The biological assessment determined that sediment is impairing designated beneficial uses in lower Weiser River and middle Weiser River.

Water temperature in the lower Weiser River exceeds the state water quality standards for the protection of cold water aquatic life.

Four 1998 §303(d) listed water bodies have been determined to be in full support of the designated or existing uses. It is recommended that the upper Weiser River (West Fork

Weiser River to Little Weiser River), Johnson Creek, and West Fork Weiser River be removed from the 303(d) list (IDEQ 2006).”

### **3.8.2 Environmental Consequences – Water Quality**

#### **3.8.2.1 Alternative A**

IDEQ water quality standards would continue to not be met in Weiser River and the lower portion of Little Weiser rivers over the short through long terms. Poor water quality in these rivers is a direct consequence of historic and current land management practices occurring on agricultural lands upstream of BLM managed stream segments. All other streams would continue to meet applicable water quality standards over the short through long terms.

#### **3.8.2.2 Alternative B**

Water quality conditions for streams not discussed in the appendices would be the same as for Alternative A.

### **3.9 Cultural Resources**

#### **3.9.1 Affected Environment – Cultural Resources**

BLM is responsible for managing public lands in a manner that preserves and protects cultural and historic resources. In furtherance of those responsibilities, BLM ensures that authorizations, including grazing permits, comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the American Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, Executive Orders 11593 and 13007, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990.

While surveys found no traditional cultural properties, the Goodrich area may have significance to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe. Without further information, BLM makes no judgment as to the significance of current or historical tribal uses of this area.

Goodrich Management Area has not been systematically or extensively inventoried for cultural resources. A review of cultural resource site records, on file at the Boise District Office, revealed that the Idaho State University Museum conducted limited surveys in 1964 and the Smithsonian Institution conducted the River Basin Survey in 1965. BLM Archaeologists conducted a random sample of tracts throughout the Boise District to create baseline data about cultural resources in 1987<sup>9</sup>. BLM records also indicate that Idaho Transportation Department surveyed a portion of the Highway 95 corridor in 1978. Over the years, several small surveys were completed by BLM archaeologists prior to project implementation. A few archaeological excavations have been performed in the area, but none are within the Goodrich Management Area. Prehistoric quarries were studied at excavation sites near Mesa Hill and Midvale Hill where stone tool making workshops were found.

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<sup>9</sup> Young, John. Class II Cultural Resource Inventory of the Owyhee, Bruneau, Jarbidge, and Cascade Resource Areas, Boise District BLM.

Limited test excavations were performed by Idaho Power Company's Cultural Resources Consultant in 2003 and 2004. The excavations were on a lithic scatter site and quarry area along the proposed electrical transmission line corridor. Rock and flake samples were collected to provide baseline trace element analysis and sourcing information about the local basaltic andesite that was used to make stone tools.

Goodrich Management Area contains a variety of prehistoric and historic cultural sites. Known prehistoric sites include lithic scatters, open campsites, isolated artifacts, quarries for stone tool manufacturing, stone tool workshops, burials, and other sites. Native Americans using this area included Nez Perce, Shoshone, Bannock, and Paiute Tribes. Historic sites recorded include historic trash scatters of cans and bottles, a livestock driveway, aspen tree carvings by sheep herders, log cabin ruins, and granaries interpreted to be from the Civilian Conservation Corps. The river systems provided travel routes for Native Americans, explorers, fur trappers, miners and homesteaders who inhabited the area. Goodale's Cutoff, an Immigrant Trail, was used as an alternate route off the Oregon Trail and passed through several allotments. Goodale's Cutoff led settlers west to the Oregon Territory, and in 1863, led settlers east to the Boise Basin gold fields. A railroad passed through the area and while the line has been abandoned, the grade still exists.

A review of BLM land records revealed land settling actions such as a Timber Entry dating back to 1880. A series of Homestead Entries, Stock Raising Homestead Entries, and Land Patents were filed from 1902 through 1941. A telephone right-of-way dates back to 1913, while other more modern land use authorizations continue to the present day.

Present day cultural resources in the area on lands administered by BLM and Forest Service, and on private lands include Highway 95, the railroad, roads, trails, bridges, and cemeteries. Fences, corrals, spring developments, water pipelines, troughs, and reservoirs are features of sheep and cattle grazing. Modern homes and farms are a continuation of the long history of ranching in the area. Irrigation features are prominent. Several communities thrive within the watershed such as Cambridge, Council, Fruitvale, Goodrich, and Mesa.

### **3.9.2 Environmental Consequences – Cultural Resources**

Livestock grazing has the potential to directly impact the cultural resources that may be found in the allotment pastures. Livestock trampling and trailing could adversely impact cultural resource sites. Range improvements such as fences, ponds, spring developments and troughs could impact cultural resources when they are constructed and maintained. Also access roads, portable water troughs and salting locations could impact cultural resource sites.

Livestock grazing also may cause indirect impacts to cultural resources. Indirect impacts may be consuming and trampling vegetation that in turn exposes cultural resource sites to increased erosion and makes the sites more vulnerable to vandalism and unauthorized excavating and unauthorized artifact collecting.

The cultural site records do not indicate that grazing activities are presently causing any adverse impacts to the recorded cultural resources; therefore, continuing current grazing practices would not be expected to adversely affect cultural resources over the long term.

See Appendix A for allotment specific discussions of Alternative A and Alternative B where range improvement projects are proposed.

### **3.10 Fire**

#### **3.10.1 Affected Environment – Fire**

A fire management unit is a management area definable by objectives, management constraints, topographic features, access, values to be protected, political boundaries, fuel types, and fire regime groups that distinguish it from management characteristics of adjacent fire management units. To facilitate fire management planning, Boise District delineated 27 fire management units in a manner consistent with LUP direction via the District Fire Management Plan (August 2004). A fire management unit does not cross field office or planning unit boundaries, and follows distinct geographic features (roads, streams, ridgetops and fencelines) whenever possible.

Goodrich Fire Management Unit is approximately 1,004,128 acres in size. Goodrich Management Area comprises approximately four percent of the entire fire management unit. Approximately 75 percent of fire starts within Goodrich Fire Management Unit are caused by lightning. They are predominantly high elevation starts in smaller size classes (about 10 acres or smaller). Percentages of fire starts, by cause, on public land are similar to that on private land; however, a disproportionate number of larger fires occur on public land, including an arson fire in 1988.

To demonstrate this point, over the last 48 years:

- Nearly 90 percent of fire starts on all lands within the fire management unit have burned less than 100 acres.
- Nearly 50 percent of public lands within the Goodrich Fire Management Unit have burned at least once.
- Only 20 percent of all lands (public, private and State) within the Goodrich Fire Management Unit have burned.

Over the past 20 years, wildfires have burned approximately 24,000 acres within Goodrich Management Area, with larger fires in 1986, 2000, and 2007. As a result, some areas can become dominated by annual grasses and forbs intermixed with perennial bunchgrasses that predispose ecosystems to larger fires. In addition, much of the remaining shrub habitat, particularly bitterbrush, has become decadent, with very little age or structural diversity. This is partly due to lack of low-intensity fire and interruption of the natural fire regime. Stands of decadent bitterbrush are currently vulnerable to a lethal fire.

There are several Communities at Risk that are listed in the Federal Register within the Goodrich FMU. These include Starkey, Fruitvale, Council, Mesa, Cambridge, Indian Valley, and Midvale. In addition, there are numerous private homes, ranches, and outbuildings throughout the area. Wildland fires regularly threaten these structures and communities, putting public, livestock, and private property at risk.

Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) describes the amount of departure from the historic condition of an area or landscape as compared to present conditions (Southwestern Idaho FPU Fire Management Plan 2005). This departure from the natural state may be due to changes in one or more ecosystem components such as fuel composition, fire frequency, or other ecological disturbances. FRCC is used in this FMP to classify existing ecosystem conditions and to determine priority areas for treatment as mandated by national direction.

**Condition Class 1 (CC1):** “Fire regimes in this condition class are within historical ranges. Thus, the risk of losing key ecosystem components from the occurrence of fire remains relatively low. Maintenance management such as prescribed fire, mechanical treatments, or preventing the invasion of non-native species, is required to prevent these lands from becoming degraded.” A miniscule fraction (0.1 percent) of BLM-managed lands within the Goodrich FMU is classified as FRCC1.

**Condition Class 2 (CC2):** “Fire regimes on these lands have been moderately altered from their historical range by either increased or decreased fire frequency. A moderate risk of losing key ecosystem components has been identified in these lands. To restore their historical fire regimes, these lands may require some level of restoration as through prescribed fire, mechanical or chemical treatments, and the subsequent reintroduction of native plants.” Approximately 37 percent of BLM-managed lands within the Goodrich FMU are classified as FRCC2.

**Condition Class 3 (CC3):** “These lands have been significantly altered from their historical range. Because fire regimes have been extensively altered, the risk of losing key ecosystem components from fire is high. Consequently, these lands verge on the greatest risk of ecological collapse. To restore their historical fire regimes - before prescribed fire can be utilized to manage fuel or obtain other desired benefits - these lands may require multiple mechanical or chemical restoration treatments, or reseeded.” Approximately 63 percent of BLM-managed lands within the FPU are classified as FRCC3.

Goodrich Fire Management Unit has the following Fire Management Objectives:

Appropriate Management Response would be implemented with the goal of suppressing fires to less than 2,000 acres 90 percent of the time to protect private lands and sage grouse habitat.

In the event of multiple ignitions, wildland fires in this fire management unit should receive moderate priority for initial attack based on resources at risk. No more than 20,000 acres of the entire Goodrich Fire Management Unit (1,004,128 acres) would be allowed to burn (prescribed fire and unplanned wildland fire) over a 5-year period, of which 17,550 are projected wildland fire acres.

Goodrich Fire Management Unit is not a potential Wildland Fire Use area. Wildland Fire Use implies that natural fires would be permitted to burn to meet resource management objectives. However, restoration and hazardous fuels treatments are allowed to meet the following objectives:

- Maintain and restore mountain shrub, dry conifer, and aspen communities;
- Maintain and restore sage-grouse habitat;
- Reduce fine fuels and invasive non-native species infestations; and
- Improve the bitterbrush component of shrublands.

Goodrich Fire Management Unit is ranked in moderate priority for Emergency Stabilization and Restoration (post-fire rehabilitation). Efforts should focus on IDEQ 303(d) listed streams, reducing sedimentation from highly erodible soils, and the threat of invasive non-native species establishment on recently burned areas to:

- Maintain watershed values and stabilize areas at high risk for erosion.
- Prevent post-wildfire spread of invasive non-native species.

All treatment efforts are coordinated with local Cooperative Weed Management Area partners, US Forest Service, and surrounding private landowners.

### **3.10.2 Environmental Consequences – Fire**

The environmental consequences of fire suppression and fuels treatments, including prescribed fire, would be the same under both Alternatives A and B, and would be similar to those described in the Normal Fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation Plan Environmental Assessment (ESR Plan) for the Boise District Office (2004). An additional effect of fire not described in the ESR Plan would be the removal of heavy infestations of invasive annuals that prevent successful restoration and establishment of desirable perennial plant species.

Fuel treatments would have the long-term effects of helping to meet Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities) and Standard 8 (Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals), by helping to maintain or improve continued productivity and diversity of native plant species), and decrease the infestation of noxious weeds.

Fuel treatments would also have the long-term effects of protecting communities at risk and wildland-urban and rural interface areas, by reducing hazardous fuels around these areas, and replacing flammable vegetation with plants that have higher fuel moisture throughout much of the fire season.

## **3.11 Social and Economic**

### **3.11.1 Affected Environment – Social and Economic**

The BLM does not have specific social and economic information on permittees; therefore, information and analyses are based on county data from the period 1970 through 2005. The following data were derived from the Economic Profile System (EPS) developed by the Sonoran Institute. The EPS uses data from the Economic Analysis, Labor Statistics, and Census Bureau. Ranch related data is contained in the farm/agricultural datasets and is not presented separately. Data, in part, are presented for farm proprietors. “Proprietors” refers to employment and income from sole proprietorships, partnerships, and tax-except cooperatives and probably most closely describes permittees. Many permittee households may have income from wages and salaries, a separate category in the EPS which is not reported here except where proprietors are reported as a percent of the total.

Adams and Washington counties have a combined 2005 population of 13,656 (Table 8). Approximately 54 percent of the population is employed and unemployment rates are near the national average, but above Idaho's. Median incomes in both counties increased between 1989 and 1999 to approximately \$29,000. The employment diversity is similar to the national average.

Table 8. Social and Economic indicators for Adams and Washington counties

Social and Economic Indicators		County	
		Adams	Washington
Population (2005)		3,542	10,114
Number Employed (2005) (Percent proprietors)		2,357 (50.9%)	4,971 (30.1%)
Percent unemployed (2005)		6.5%	4.4%
Median Household Income (1999)		\$28,423	\$30,625
County diversity of employment		average	average
Farm Proprietors	Number in 1995	288	479
	Number in 2005 (Percent of Total)	314 (13.3%)	531 (10.7%)
	New Employment (1995 to 2005) (Percent of new employment)	26 (5.6%)	52 (11.7%)
Farming and Ranching income and expenses	Gross farming and ranching income 2005 (percent change from 1995)	\$12,174,000 (-6.5%)	\$58,424,000 (1%)
	Cash receipts from marketing livestock & products (not crops) change 1995-2005	-10%	5%
	Feed purchase 2004 (percent gross income)	1,837,000 (12.7%)	3,508,000 (6.9%)
	Realized net income 2005	-4,049,000	-887,000

Farm proprietors accounted for approximately 11 to 13 percent of the employment in the counties, but their income accounted for less than 1 percent. Gross farming and ranching income declined in both counties between 1970 and 2005. Between 1995 and 2005, cash receipts for marketing livestock and non-crop products declined by 10 percent in Adams County and increased by 5 percent in Washington County. Production expenses were greater than income in both counties during 2005 and feed purchases required 7 to 13 percent of gross income.

### 3.11.2 Environmental Consequences – Social and Economic

#### 3.11.2.1 Alternative A

In areas where increases in invasive and noxious weeds would result in lowered range productivity, there could be a slight adverse effect to county economies over the long term. Realized net income for ranchers could decrease as expenses for supplemental feed increase. In areas that are meeting upland standards, other market forces (e.g., increased fuel costs) would

have the greatest potential adverse impact on the ranching sector of the economy. The number of farm proprietors and associated employment could drop slightly over the long term as productivity costs increase. The overall diversity of employment and income sources in the counties would minimize the impacts to social and economic aspects from changes in the livestock production sector.

### **3.11.2.2 Alternative B**

The overall impact to county economies from changes in grazing management would be negligible over the long term. In areas where standards are not being met and livestock grazing management is being changed, long-term improvements in range conditions would reduce expenses related to supplemental feed. This would be offset to some degree when reductions in actual use reduce revenue from marketing livestock. In areas where standards are not being met and livestock are not the cause, long term impacts related to increased productivity costs would be as described in Alternative A.

## **3.12 Recreation**

### **3.12.1 Affected Environment – Recreation**

Most recreation use in the Goodrich Management Area is dispersed in nature and does not require major developed facilities. BLM's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum suggests the area be classified as a combination of Roded Natural and Semi-Primitive Motorized. Roded Natural areas are characterized by a generally natural environment with moderate evidence of the sights and sounds of man. Resource modifications and utilization practices are evident, but harmonize with the natural environment. Concentration of users is moderate to high with facilities sometimes provided for group activity. On-site controls and restrictions offer a sense of security. Facilities may be provided for user convenience, education, safety, and resource protection. Management actions are not taken to discourage group interaction.

Semi-primitive motorized areas are characterized by a predominantly unmodified natural environment, usually of moderate to large size. Concentration of visitors is low, but there is often evidence of other users. On-site controls and restrictions may be present, but are subtle. Facilities are provided for the protection of resource values and safety of visitors only. Visitor use is dispersed and management actions encourage limited contacts between groups. Motorized use is permitted.

Because the parcels under consideration are scattered and discontinuous, and public land access is limited in some cases, current recreation use is in the light to moderate category compared to other larger blocks of public land managed by Four Rivers Field Office. Primary recreation activities vary, depending on the season of the year. Fishing and trail riding (horse, all-terrain vehicles, and motorcycle) are most common in spring and early summer, slacking off in the fall. Hunting is the major fall activity. Although it occurs mainly from September through November, hunters often scout the area in late summer and early fall, often using off-highway vehicles as part of their hunting method. The area is not a primary destination for camping, but dispersed camping does occur and is often associated with other primary activities.

Over the past ten years, off-highway vehicle use has tremendously increased. In Southwest Idaho, ATV and motorbike registration increased 70 percent between 2000 and 2004 (IDPR, 2005)<sup>10</sup>. This trend holds true for the assessment area with off-highway vehicle use primarily increasing in southern portions of the assessment area. This use is expected to increase throughout the unit as interest in off-highway vehicle use grows.

Some areas of farm, ranch, or undeveloped private lands that are adjacent to public lands have potential for future subdivision development. If this occurs, use on the adjacent public lands could receive significant increases in recreation uses and the associated impacts. Some possible impacts from uses could include development of new trails from cross-country OHV use, increases in trash dumping, increases in conflicts between different user groups (i.e. motorized vs. non-motorized), loss of vegetative cover from increased motorized and non-motorized uses, and negative impacts to wildlife from increased human use of the area.

As Idaho's rural population increases and as Idaho's urban population travels further from home to recreate, there would be an associated increase in recreation use of public lands in more remote locations. Additionally, new recreation activities are becoming more popular and are likely to increase throughout the assessment area. Increased activities may include mountain bicycling, free riding, geocaching, paragliding and power paragliding, and all terrain skateboarding (mountain boarding).

### **3.12.2 Environmental Consequences – Recreation**

#### **3.12.2.1 Alternative A**

Public land parcels are mostly isolated and access to these parcels ranges is limited, with light to moderate recreational use occurring on the 29 allotments. Implementation of the no action alternative would result in no additional direct or indirect environmental consequences to current or future recreational activities.

#### **3.12.2.2 Alternative B**

Construction of up to three miles of additional fencing could slightly affect motorized or non-motorized recreational access in areas where fences bisect customary travel routes. Restoration of degraded areas through use of prescribed fire, mechanical treatment, or treatment with herbicides could have localized, short term (three to five year) negative effects on visual and aesthetic values for recreational users in treated areas, but could result in slight long term improvements in visual quality as perennial vegetation is reestablished, and could also result in slight increases in hunting opportunities and success over the long term as wildlife habitat improves.

## **4.0 Cumulative Impacts**

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<sup>10</sup> Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation; Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan, 2005.

## **4.1 Vegetation**

The BLM administered public lands are managed for multiple public uses. The BLM has been assessing and evaluating the effects of livestock grazing management on BLM administered public land grazing allotments across the watershed and in adjoining watersheds. Modifications to grazing permits are being implemented to make progress towards achieving the standards, and to maintain areas where the standards are being achieved. In addition to livestock grazing, activities affecting the vegetation on public lands as well as state and private lands, in this area include; wildfire, and wildfire emergency stabilization and burned area rehabilitation treatments, mining, timber harvest, residential and commercial development on adjoining private lands, and increased recreational use, including OHVs, hunting, horseback riding, and hiking. All of these activities increase the potential for negative impacts to the native vegetation through disturbance, increased weed dispersal, and habitat fragmentation.

The effects of livestock grazing under Alternative A, considered cumulatively with impacts from the activities presented above, would be an increased loss of sagebrush and a continued decline in native perennial grasses which opens niches for invasive plant species to invade and become established. Under Alternative B, impacts from livestock grazing would be mitigated, and in areas where livestock grazing was identified as a factor in the failure to achieve the standards for rangeland health, improvement to the overall health and diversity of the native plant community would be expected, which in turn would help reduce the spread of some noxious and invasive weeds and provide for improved recreational opportunities. In areas where the standards were not being achieved, for reasons other than livestock grazing, the current situation of the native plant communities would be expected to continue in the present state or lose productivity over the long-term.

## **4.2 Noxious and Invasive Weeds**

The analysis period covered by the cumulative effects analysis includes the past 20 years to 10 years in the future. The scope for past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities is primarily the Goodrich Management Area. However, effects to resources could occur outside of this project area. This project area is comprised of public land with varying degrees of state and private lands. Although the BLM does not have authority to regulate activities on lands that it does not administer, actions occurring on public lands can cause direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on non-federal lands. Actions on non-federal lands may also affect adjacent public lands as well. Current inventories show noxious weed populations occur on 13 allotments within the Goodrich Management Unit in varying degrees of density.

Over the years, Idaho has enacted statutes and created programs designed to prevent and manage a wide variety of invasive species. Often, these programs are administered in cooperation with various partners and range from monitoring site-specific populations to landscape-wide trends. The agencies involved include: local county weed departments; Idaho Department of Lands; Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Idaho Department of Transportation; Idaho Department of Agriculture; Idaho Power Company; private landowners; USDA's Animal, Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Forest Service (USFS); and the Lower Weiser River and Adams Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs).

Past and present cumulative impacts within the project area have occurred from livestock grazing, wild fires, mining, timber harvests, construction and maintenance of roads, residential, commercial, and industrial development, and recreational activities including OHV use. All of these impacts have the potential to remove vegetation and create disturbed areas for weeds to become established.

Adjustments to livestock grazing are currently being made through the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management process. Wildland fires are evaluated for long-term post-fire impacts to critical natural resources. Those areas unlikely to recover naturally from severe wildland fire damage are identified and, where feasible, stabilization plans are developed to restore or establish healthy, stable ecosystems. Mining plans include reclamation, rehabilitation, and monitoring plans to mitigate impacts. Timber harvests are currently designed to create and maintain vegetative mosaics on the landscape to provide diverse ecological stages and associated habitats for wildlife species and to reduce the potential for soil erosion. The BLM is currently designating specific routes for OHV use, to limit the amount of off-road use and damage. Weed treatments, which are occurring throughout the Project Area in varying degrees, would have minimal adverse short-term and slight to moderate beneficial impacts long term, to these activities.

Although adverse impacts from weed infestations would continue under both alternatives, impacts would be less under the Proposed Action. Under this alternative, livestock management would improve by adjusting grazing preference, adding new terms and conditions that address specific allotment needs, and initiating annual indicator criteria for each allotment. These actions are expected to restore or improve native plant communities and watersheds, provide protection of occupied special status plant habitat, reduce erosion, and reduce the ability of non-native species from establishing and spreading. The impact on noxious and invasive weeds from these activities would be relatively minor over the long term relative to impacts from other activities in the analysis area.

### **4.3 Soils**

Livestock grazing could result in minimal impacts to vegetation and soils in Blocked Unit of Goodrich Management Area. Livestock grazing occurs on public, State, and private lands throughout the Goodrich Management Area and with the expected impacts to be similar over all lands. Grazing permits on public lands in the remainder of the watershed are in the process of being renewed under the Standards and Guidelines process. Where public land grazing is not meeting Standards and Guidelines, permits would be modified so that progress would be made towards conforming to them which should result in the long-term maintenance or improvement of rangeland health.

### **4.4 Special Status Plants**

Mahala mat, also called prostrate ceanothus, is a low mat forming shrub that is known from the southern portion of J Harrington Allotment. This sub-shrub, a disjunct from the eastern slopes of the Cascades in Washington south to the Sierra Nevada, has a prostrate growth form. It is currently known only from two locations in Idaho. The population on this allotment has been estimated at approximately 300 to 400 individuals. Therefore any potential impacts to this population will not have a significant impact to the survival of the plant over its entire range.

#### **4.5 Wildlife**

Although there are no current populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species known from the subject grazing allotments, it is expected that both short- and long-term improvement in soils and vegetative conditions across the management area will beneficially effect existing habitat conditions, and thus, provide a potential for re-establishing populations. However, without improvement in soil and vegetative conditions on adjacent and surrounding private lands, the potential for re-establishing locally extirpated populations will probably never be realized, since surrounding and intermingled private land greatly affects the overall amount, quality, and viability of suitable habitat.

#### **4.6 Riparian Areas**

The proposed action would assure that proper functioning condition would be maintained on all streams currently in proper functioning condition, and that streams capable of achieving proper functioning condition would eventually achieve that state. Maintaining good quality riparian areas maintains and/or improves water quality, fisheries habitat, and wildlife habitat.

#### **4.7 Fisheries**

Redband trout are considered a sensitive species by BLM and IDFG. The proposed action would help assure that existing population's of redband trout would be maintained over the long term. This would help prevent the possibility of extirpation, and a subsequent USFWS listing of the species.

#### **4.8 Water Quality**

Because each stream is connected to another, maintaining good water quality in each BLM stream segment would assure that downstream water quality would not be impaired by BLM actions. However, the proposed action would have little cumulative impact on improving water quality in Weiser and Little Weiser rivers. Poor water quality in these rivers is a direct consequence of historic and current land management practices occurring on agricultural lands.

#### **4.9 Cultural Resources**

Cumulative effects on the cultural resources can be evaluated spatially and temporally. The analysis needs to consider past, present and future impacts. Temporally, the area has been grazed by livestock since about 1880; it currently is being grazed and future grazing is being predicted with this document.

Spatially the analysis needs to be performed on an allotment basis. The Goodrich allotments vary widely by the percentage of land that is managed by the BLM. This ownership pattern has been in place for some time and it is expected to remain the same because the Cascade Land Exchange made some adjustments recently. But, some isolated parcels may be offered for sale or exchange in the future as BLM policy dictates. Many allotments are adjacent to National Forest System Land; the US Forest Service is predicted to continue livestock grazing within Forest boundaries.

Although few cultural resource sites have been recorded in the past and currently, it is predicted that additional sites exist to be recorded on private and public lands. The fate of those sites depends on land ownership.

The cultural resource sites on public land parcels, which are administered by BLM, will continue to be protected and preserved with federal laws, regulations and policies. If the sites cannot be protected, then the adverse impacts will be mitigated. Cultural resources found on private lands are owned by the landowner except for human burials that are protected by Idaho State law.

The two proposed alternatives will impact the cultural resource sites differently. The actual grazing livestock will impact the sites about the same, but Alternative B would also propose some range improvements that will cause ground disturbances. These disturbances will be avoided, minimized or mitigated if significant cultural resources are being impacted on BLM parcels. Water sources in the area are limited to a finite number, therefore future water projects will be also be limited.

The trend is to continue preservation and protection for sites on public lands, but sites on private land may be impacted by projects that cause more destruction than the proposed range improvements such as access roads, house construction and farming.

#### **4.10 Fire**

Improved fire suppression activities and fuels treatments, including prescribed fire, would aid in improving ecological conditions across the affected region over the long-term. When combined with other actions that are occurring or are proposed across the region, including weed treatments, improved livestock management, etc., fire suppression and fuels management activities that disturb soils and vegetation would have short-term negative effects, but would have additive long-term beneficial effects to soils and vegetation communities.

#### **4.11 Social and Economic**

Reductions in the region's livestock production sector would result in minimal impacts to the social and economic aspects of the affected counties. It is expected that an increased overall diversity of employment and income sources in the region will counteract the effects of decreased numbers of farm proprietors and associated employment.

#### **4.12 Recreation**

As Idaho's rural population increases and as Idaho's growing urban population travels further from home to recreate, there would be an associated increase in recreation use of public lands in more remote locations. Under both alternatives, when monitoring indicates that public land grazing is not meeting Standards and Guidelines, permits would be modified so that progress would be made towards the long-term maintenance or improvement of rangeland health. These modifications, when implemented, should result in slight, localized improvements to visual and aesthetic conditions, and slight improvements over time in hunting opportunities and success for recreational users of the watershed.

### **5.0 Consultation and Coordination**

The scoping and issues development process is discussed in Section 1.6.

On August 20, 2008, a team of resource specialists from the BLM and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed the potential effects of permit renewals in allotments containing habitat or potential habitat for special status species. A consensus decision was reached that actions proposed in the affected allotments would not result in jeopardy to any affected species, and that, since no threatened, endangered, or candidate species were involved, formal consultation was not required.

On July 17, 2008, during the regularly scheduled Wings and Roots Native American Consultation Meeting, the pre-decisional EA for grazing permit renewals in the Blocked Unit of the Goodrich Management Area was presented to the Shoshone Paiute Tribe and the Owyhee County Commissioners for their review. On August 21, 2008, the Tribe provided their comments to the pre-decisional EA, which included general consensus with the recommended actions, with recognition that the “Consultation and Coordination” section had not been completed. They also provided some additional recommendations for improving the Cultural Resources section, which have been incorporated herein. The Owyhee County Commissioners provided no formal comments.

Copies of the pre-decisional EA and draft decisions were also sent to the following for their review and comment, but no comments were received:

- Shoshone-Bannock Tribe
- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Senator Larry Craig
- Senator Mike Crapo
- Congressman Bill Sali
- Adams County Commissioners
- Washington County Commissioners
- Idaho Dept. of Agriculture
- Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game
- Idaho Dept. of Lands
- U.S. Forest Service, Council Ranger District

Verbal and written comments on the pre-decisional EA were received from a number of individuals. Based on these comments, clarifying language was added to the Wildlife, Recreation and Cultural Resources sections. This additional information, however, did not result in a need for further analysis

## 5.1 List of Preparers

Table 10: Team Members:

Interdisciplinary Team Members	Contribution
Tim Carrigan	Wildlife and Special Status Animal Species
Mary Clark	Grazing Administration
Frank Jenks	Recreation
Pat Kane	Noxious and Invasive Weeds

Interdisciplinary Team Members	Contribution
Kathi Kershaw	Vegetation
Matt McCoy	NEPA Coordination
Jeff Mork	GIS
Irene Saphra	Fire
Kim Schultsmeier	Range improvement mapping
Dean Shaw	Cultural Resources
Mark Steiger	Special Status Plants
Allen Tarter	Riparian Areas and Fisheries

## 5.2 List of Agencies, Organizations, and Individuals Consulted

### Permittees

Gary Brown	CHE Enterprise	Charles Edwards
Charles Edwards (Lease)	Ford Ranch, Inc	Fred Gallant
Gary Gallant	Artith Gibson Estate	Rodney Greenwood
Harrington and Son	Harrington Land, LLC	Doris Harrington
Harrington/Rubelt, LLC	Earl Henderson	Paul Hughes
Howard Keithley, Jr.	James Kranz	Lacey Ranch
Carolyn Menichettee	Jake Merrill	Mink Land and Livestock
Randy Noah	Monty Pearce	Ellis Pearson
Edith Schwartz	Douglas M. Scism	Kenneth Seid
Kenneth Seid (Lease)	Tom and Kelly Seid	Monte Speiring
Stippich Ranch	James Warren	Nick and Debra Weibe
Robert and Merlin Wolfe	Alvin and Nancy Yantis	Jack and Donna Yantis
Yates Ranch		

### 5.2.1 Agencies

Idaho Department of Agriculture  
Idaho Department of Lands, McCall  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
USDA Forest Service, Payette National Forest, Council Ranger District

### 5.2.2 Interested Public and Others

Tom Barry Living Trust	Marvin Dotson	Clifford Hopper
Ronald Howland	Stanley Boyd	Weldon Branch
Phil Soulen		
Burns Paiute Tribe	Shoshone-Paiute Tribe	Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
Doug McConnaughey		
Senator Larry Craig	Senator Mike Crapo	Congressman Bill Sali
Adams County Commissioners	Washington County Commissioners	
Western Watersheds Project		

## 6.0 APPENDICES

### 6.1 Appendix A – Allotment Specific and Proposed Actions