

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - STEP 1
ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)

Activity
Wildlife

Objective Number
8

OBJECTIVE:

Manage the upland game bird habitat throughout the two planning units, and provide a diversity of vegetative species in order to provide a variety of habitats for the five species of upland game birds.

RATIONALE:

The upland game bird populations throughout both planning units are presently providing only marginal hunting opportunities for the recreationist. The URA assumes that the major cause for the low populations of birds is due to a lack of sufficient diversity of plant species. Four of the five species inhabit the nonirrigable native vegetation and by improving the vegetative conditions one could expect a significant increase in bird numbers. The fifth upland game bird (Ring-necked Pheasant) is dependent upon the agricultural lands for its food; however, with the increased emphasis being placed on overhead sprinkler systems and clean-farming practices, the sagebrush tracts adjacent to farms are becoming increasingly more important for winter and escape cover.

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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN
RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H. - T.H.	
Name (MFP)	
Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill	
Activity	
Wildlife	
Overlay Reference	
Step 1	Step 3

PHEASANT COVER (P)

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 8.1

Retain in public ownership and exclude livestock from areas identified as pheasant escape and winter habitat, except when grazing is shown to be beneficial to wildlife.

RATIONALE

The sagebrush tracts adjacent to private land are becoming increasingly important to upland game, such as Hungarian partridge and pheasants, for winter and escape cover. The clean farming practices, combined with overhead sprinkler systems, have reduced the habitat suitable for these birds. Therefore the birds are becoming more dependent upon the sagebrush to provide their cover needs. The exclusion of livestock will increase the understory vegetation, thus providing sufficient cover to facilitate nesting.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation conflicts with lands recommendation L-3.1, & 2 dealing with the disposal of National Resource Land and those range management recommendations dealing with intensive livestock grazing management. The lands identified for retention lie adjacent to private land and provide an integral habitat requirement to pheasants that is generally unavailable on private lands. They constitute only a very small percentage of the total National Resource Land in the unit, and the exclusion of grazing on this small an area would not produce a significant hardship on the livestock grazing users. The majority of the lands are marginal from the agricultural standpoint and retention in public ownership would prove more beneficial to the majority of the public. It appears that through a Sykes Act Cooperative Agreement with the Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game there is a possibility where these tracts could be partially farmed and still retain their wildlife habitat values.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendations as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN
RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H. - T.H.

Name (MFP)
Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hil
Activity
Wildlife
Overlay Reference
Step 1 No. 2 Step 3

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 8.2

Intensively manage grazing livestock to insure that no more than 60 percent of the herbaceous vegetation is utilized by livestock in any pasture involving upland game bird habitat.

RATIONALE

Forbs and grasses are extremely important components in the life cycles of upland game birds. Their increased availability due to the reduced utilization by livestock will significantly enhance the birds habitat.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation complements watershed recommendation W-1.3, recreation recommendation R-4.1, 2 & 3, and wildlife recommendations WL-1.1, 3.1 & 12.1. It does conflict with the range management recommendations dealing with maximizing livestock grazing.

It appears that the over-all public values, not only for wildlife but also recreation and wildlife, would be enhanced by maintaining a residual cover of herbaceous vegetation throughout upland game bird habitat. There would be no adverse social or economic impacts to any user group of the National Resource Lands.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reason

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Modify the Step 2 multiple use recommendation as follows:

Maximum allowable utilization by livestock in any pasture will be determined in the formulation of the AMP. The degree of utilization in any use pasture will not exceed the identified needs of wildlife (food and Cover) and watershed protection.

Reasons

To allow more flexibility in development of specific grazing systems and AMPs commensurate with related on-site needs.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

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B.H. - T.H. *jlh*

Name (MFP)
<u>Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hil</u>
Activity
<u>Wildlife</u>
Overlay Reference
Step 1 No. 2 Step 3

UPLAND GAME BIRDS

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 8.3

Establish livestock grazing systems in order to establish a diverse vegetative composition (15- 20 percent shrubs, 20- 25 percent forbs, and 50- 65 percent grasses) throughout the upland game bird habitat.

RATIONALE

Managing these areas for a diversity of vegetation will provide excellent nesting and escape cover, as well as providing a range of forage species that will be available throughout the entire year.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation is complementary to wildlife recommendations WL-5.1, 6.3 and 12.1 and doesn't conflict with any other resource activity recommendation. It will, however, constraint the type of AMP that is developed in upland game bird habitat, but this should not detract from the plan's primary object, which is to improve the over-all vegetative resource.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendations as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - STEP 1
ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)

Activity
Wildlife

Objective Number
9

OBJECTIVE:

Provide nesting cover for waterfowl and shorebirds along the entire 295 miles of streams and canals and around the 2,000 surface acres of reservoirs on National Resource Lands in the Timmerman and Bennett Hills Planning Units.

RATIONALE:

The URAs identify that nesting cover is the single most important factor limiting the waterfowl production throughout the planning units. If areas adjacent to streams, canals, and reservoirs, where managed to provide a dense understory of vegetative species, the resident waterfowl populations would be significantly enhanced. The increase in production would prove very beneficial to the early season duck hunters. The large influx (100,000 plus) of winter migrants which normally produce the majority of the duck hunting in Magic Valley, doesn't arrive until late November or early December. Consequently, when the resident production is low the duck hunting is poor for the first two months of the season.

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B.H. - T.H.

Name (MFP)	Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hil
Activity	Wildlife
Overlay Reference	Step 1 NO. 2 Step 3

WATERFOWL (d)

RECOMMENDATION

WL 9.1

Exclude livestock and other noncompatible uses from the areas identified for waterfowl nesting, except at times when it is deemed such uses would prove beneficial for wildlife.

RATIONALE

Livestock presently congregate along water source areas reducing the existing vegetation that provides critical escape and nesting cover for shorebirds and waterfowl.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation produces a major conflict with the range management recommendation to maximize livestock grazing. In specific areas where upland game bird habitat (pheasants) and waterfowl nesting habitat overlap the recommendation complements wildlife recommendation WL-8.1.

There is a considerable amount of National Resource Land that has the potential to provide waterfowl nesting habitat. However, any effort made to exclude livestock would create a major impact on the development of AMPs.

In addition, the exclusion of livestock and corresponding increase in vegetative cover would be detrimental to the irrigation companies that maintain the many miles of canals throughout the unit. However, by selectively excluding livestock along areas that are not maintained by canal companies (natural run-off areas), and major reservoirs and streams, the nesting potential can be significantly increased without creating a significant conflict with the range management activity.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Selectively exclude livestock from those reservoirs, streams, and canal reaches identified on the wildlife overlay except when such use is deemed beneficial for wildlife.

Reasons

This recommendation has been modified because in its present state it produces a major conflict with grazing management. As it is now written only on major nesting area will livestock be excluded and at no time will the project prevent livestock from access to adequate water.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

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Name (MFP)

Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill

Activity

Wildlife

Overlay Reference

Step 1 No. 2 Step 3

WATERFOWL (d)

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 9.2

Establish vegetation such as tall wheatgrass, crested wheatgrass, alfalfa, etc., in conjunction with existing sagebrush along the water course areas and reservoirs.

RATIONALE

The introduction of such species will increase both quality and quantity of wildlife cover, thus providing additional nesting areas and increased brood survival. In addition to improved waterfowl habitat these seedings would also have a similarly beneficial impact on shorebirds.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation complements watershed recommendation W-1.5 and wildlife recommendations WL-8.3 and 12.1 which deal with providing a diversity of vegetative species. It does not conflict with any resource activity recommendation. The initial cost of the seeding would be increased; however, the long-term effects of the project would prove significantly beneficial to all resource activities and the public in general.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendations as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)

Activity
Wildlife

Objective Number
10

OBJECTIVES:

Increase the nesting goose populations on Thorn Creek, Spring Creek, and Mormon Reservoirs by eight to ten pair on Thorn Creek and Spring Creek, and by 25 percent on Mormon Reservoir.

RATIONALE:

Geese, in addition to their aesthetic qualities, are considered by many hunters to be a trophy species. The URA recognizes the potential to increase goose production on several reservoirs throughout the planning unit. If nesting sites were developed successfully the only adverse impacts that might arise would concern itself with fishing. During late springs it is possible that conflicts would occur between fisherman and incubating geese, thus causing certain portions of reservoirs to be closed to fishing for short periods of time.

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B.H. - T.H.

Name (MFP)	Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hil
Activity	Wildlife
Overlay Reference	Step 1 No. 2 Step 3

GEESE (gee)

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 10.1

In conjunction with the Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game initiate the construction of goose nesting sites on Mormon, Thorn Creek, Spring Creek, Pioneer, and Sonners Reservoirs.

RATIONALE

Food, water, and resting areas are in adequate supply for nesting geese, but due to the lack of features such as islands, promotories, or isolated areas, good nesting sites are unavailable. The construction of nesting platforms and small islands would provide the necessary sites, thus increasing the number of geese produce on these reservoirs.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation conflicts with no other resource activity recommendation and would prove beneficial both socially and economically.

Multiple-Use Recommendation

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reason

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H. - T.H.

Name (MFP)

Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill

Activity
Wildlife

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Step 1 No. 2 Step 3

GEESE (gee)

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 10.2

Monitor the effects of public disturbance on nesting geese and other waterfowl. If such disturbance is identified as influencing the nesting behavior of these birds, steps should be undertaken to eliminate or reduce the disturbance.

RATIONALE

With the ever-increasing public use of these reservoirs there is an increased possibility that public use could adversely affect waterfowl and shorebird nesting success. The greatest potential impact involves nesting geese. Geese normally nest in the open and depend upon their size and senses to protect their nests while most other birds depend upon concealment, concealing their nests in dense vegetation. During most years it is felt that the breeding and incubation period is over prior to the opening of the fishing season. However, during extremely late springs it is possible that geese and other waterfowl would still be nesting during the opening of the fishing season.

If it is determined that nesting continues into the fishing season more than just occasionally, it should then be determined what impacts the fishing public has on nesting birds, and how these impacts should be mitigated.

Multiple-Use Analysis

The recommendation to monitor the effects of public disturbance on nesting geese will have no impact on any resource recommendation. However, if it appears that disturbance is a factor limiting the productivity of these birds, depending upon what measures are taken to eliminate the disturbance, it could conflict with the recreation resource on certain reservoirs (refer to the rationale). At this point it is unknown if human disturbance is a factor and even if it were there have been no plans formulated to mitigate it. Consequently, it is felt that under the present conditions it is premature to identify a conflict and/or change the recommendation.

Multiple-Use Recommendation

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reason

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

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WL - 10.2

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Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use
recommendation.