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3.1 INTRODUCTION TO ALTERNATIVES

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) identified four alternatives (including current management) for management of the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) through tribal consultation and using public input as well as input from the Resource Advisory Council (RAC), Intergovernmental Coordination Group (ICG), staff, and cooperators (Idaho Army National Guard [IDARNG] and Owyhee County). Ada, Elmore and Canyon Counties were also kept informed of the planning process.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and BLM resource management planning regulations require the formulation of a reasonable range of alternatives (different combinations of resource emphasis and management actions) that seek to address identified issues and management concerns.

Each alternative must be evaluated to ensure consistency with:

- The purpose and need for developing the land use plan (Chapter 1).
- Current laws, regulations, and policies; (Planning Criteria, Appendix 2).
- Achieving, or making progress toward achieving the Desired Future Conditions (DFC) (Chapter 1).

Each alternative addresses the DFC to some degree and in varying amounts of time; however, not all will meet the goals equally. In addition, each alternative meets criteria outlined in BLM land use planning regulations, which requires that each alternative be a complete Resource Management Plan (RMP). Alternatives must be reasonable (i.e., those that may be feasibly carried out based on technical, environmental, and other factors.). Alternatives must meet the project purpose and need (See Chapter 1); and each alternative must:

- be compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established;

- provide for a mix of resource protection, management use, and development;
- be responsive to the issues (each issue must be addressed in at least one alternative);
- meet BLM specific program requirements for the range of alternatives; and
- be consistent with the planning criteria.

A range of objectives and management actions was developed for resources related to the issues identified. The combination of these objectives and management actions form the alternatives. Decisions from the existing land use plans that are still valid have been carried forward.

The objectives and management actions may vary across the alternatives, but as mentioned earlier, all have the ultimate goal of meeting the DFC. Objectives are generally measurable and are intended to be the “pathway” to achieving the DFC. Objectives form the basis for monitoring effectiveness in making progress toward the DFC.

Chapter 5 describes the implementation and monitoring program that would be used to determine if the management needs to be changed to make progress toward achieving the DFC.

3.1.1 Implementation through Adaptive Management

Although the following alternatives were developed with the best available information, they were also developed with the understanding that resources in the NCA, and our understanding of them, are dynamic. As the resources and our knowledge about them change, there may be a need to modify what and how the plan is implemented with the appropriate level of planning and NEPA as described in Chapter 1, Section 1.9 Overview of the BLM Planning Process. These modifications would be carried out through an adaptive management process described in Chapter 5.



3.1.2 Alternatives

3.1.2.1 Profile of the Four Alternatives

The Proposed RMP and Final EIS analyzes the current situation (no action alternative) and three alternatives that address the range of management options identified to meet or make significant progress toward achieving the DFC. Each alternative consists of three key elements.

- The first is the theme, ranging from an emphasis on habitat restoration being the highest priority to an emphasis on maintaining traditional uses with a lower rate of habitat restoration. All alternative themes include management actions that are consistent with the purposes for which the NCA was established and still focus on achieving the DFC.
- The second element is the objectives, which are generally measurable intermediate steps used to determine progress toward achieving the DFC. Many of the objectives are fully integrated and address multiple resource programs.
- The third element is the management actions, which are resource or activity specific, and in total, represent the integrated actions to be taken to achieve the objective(s).

The three elements may vary between the alternatives. The overall themes determine objectives and subsequently the type of management actions to be used in each alternative.

The no action alternative (Alternative A) may not achieve the DFC because it is based on the current management carried forward into the future and was not developed specifically to achieve the DFC. Alternatives B, C and D generally achieve the DFC. However, there are differences in the rates at which the DFC and objectives would be met, the priorities within the objectives, and the emphasis placed on different activities. DFC and objectives would not be met within the same timeframe for each alternative; however, it is anticipated that significant progress would be made toward achieving the DFC within a 20-year pe-

riod. Funding and staff levels, changes in technology, and changes in natural conditions such as drought would affect rates of improvement or change.

The alternatives are presented in two formats. The first, the narrative organized by resource program, discusses each of the alternatives based on that program. This discussion provides the rationale for the objectives and management actions. The second format is a side-by-side comparison summary table of the management actions. Unless otherwise indicated, acre figures represent only public land.

3.1.2.2 Alternatives Considered in Detail

Alternative A – Current Management (No Action)

Theme: The habitat restoration program would be driven primarily by emergency fire rehabilitation processes, resulting in a minimal increase in the acreage of shrub communities. Current uses, consistent with the 1996 NCA Management Plan, would be accommodated, but could be moderated based on new laws, regulations, or policies.

Key elements include:

- Protecting remaining shrub communities through continued wildfire suppression; however, approximately 50,000 acres of remnant shrub habitat could be lost to wildfire in the next 20 years.
- Restoring of up to 10,000 acres of shrub habitat.
- Reducing hazardous fuels on up to 10,000 acres.
- Continuing IDARNG military training activities at current levels and in current locations in the OTA.
- Managing livestock grazing through the Standards and Guidelines (S&G) process (Appendix 3) while accommodating restoration and fuels management projects.

Alternative B

Theme: Emphasis is on restoring a moderate amount of raptor and raptor prey habitat in



addition to those areas affected by emergency fire rehabilitation and fuels management projects. This alternative would accommodate recreation, military and commodity uses that are compatible with the purposes of the NCA.

Key elements include:

- Protecting remaining shrub communities through wildfire suppression; however approximately 30,000 acres of remnant shrub habitat could be lost to wildfire.
- Extensive use of wildfire pre-suppression activities such as fire breaks, prescribed fire, and grazing to maintain firebreaks.
- Restoring 50,000 acres of shrub habitat.
- Completing 70,000 acres of fuels management projects.
- Restricting or modifying IDARNG training activities including the restriction of off-road vehicle maneuver training on 22,300 acres in the OTA to protect existing shrub communities and providing 20,400 additional acres outside of the OTA to enhance military maneuver training.
- Managing livestock grazing through the S&G process (Appendix 3) with priority placed on protecting existing shrub communities and enhancing the success of restoration efforts.

Alternative C

Theme: This alternative emphasizes the restoration and rehabilitation of all non-shrub areas outside the OTA to improve raptor and raptor prey habitat. To support this level of habitat restoration, recreation and military training would be substantially restricted, and livestock grazing preference would be eliminated.

Key elements include:

- Protecting remaining shrub communities through aggressive wildfire suppression; however, it is anticipated that about 15,000 acres of remnant shrub habitat could be lost to wildfire.
- Restoring 130,000 acres of shrub habitat

- Completing 100,000 acres of fuels management projects.
- Restricting or modifying IDARNG training activities including the restriction of off-road vehicle maneuver training on 18,400 acres and removing 3,900 acres of special status plant (SSP) habitat from the OTA.
- Except for fuel reduction projects, there would be no livestock grazing allowed on public land.

Alternative D – Proposed Alternative

Theme: This alternative emphasizes the restoration and rehabilitation of all non-shrub areas outside the OTA to improve raptor and raptor prey habitat, while imposing only moderate restrictions on recreation, military training, and commercial uses.

Key elements include:

- Protection of remaining shrub communities through aggressive wildfire suppression; however, it is anticipated that about 30,000 additional acres of remnant shrub habitat could be lost to wildfire.
- Restoration of 130,000 acres of shrub habitat.
- Completing 100,000 acres of fuels management projects.
- Restricting or modifying IDARNG training activities including the restriction of off-road vehicle maneuver training on 22,300 acres in the OTA to protect existing shrub communities and providing 4,100 additional acres outside of the OTA to enhance military maneuvers.
- Managing livestock grazing through the S&G process (Appendix 3) with priority placed on protecting existing shrub communities and enhancing the success of restoration efforts.

This alternative was selected as the proposed alternative based on an examination of the following:

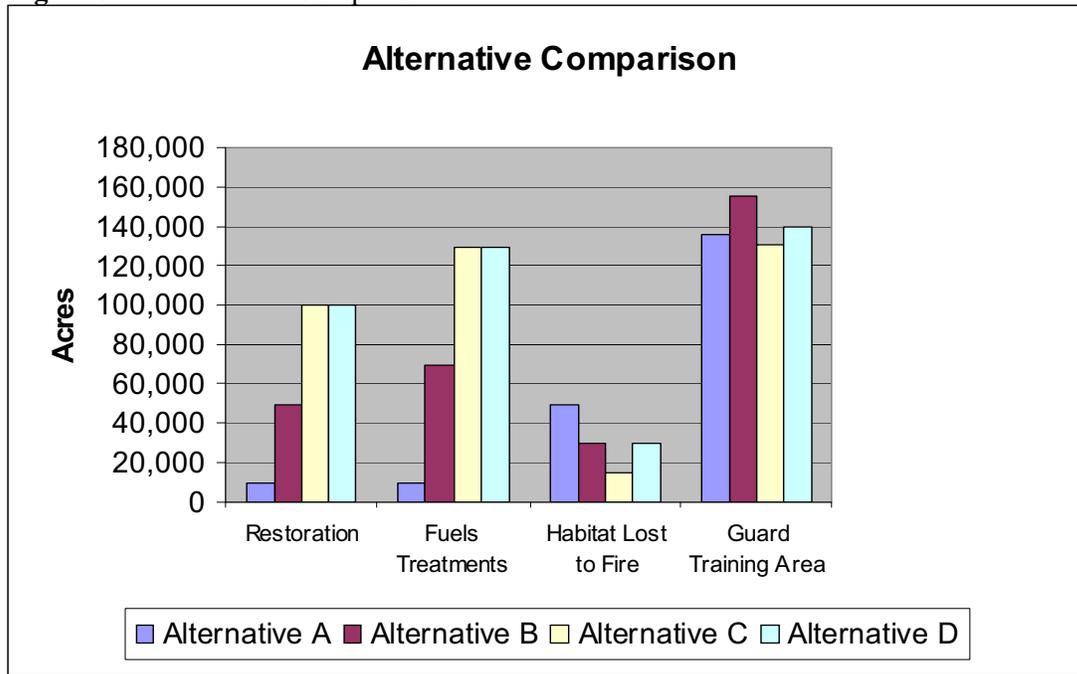
- NCA-enabling legislation;
- Environmental impacts;



- Issues raised throughout the planning process;
- Specific social and environment values, resources, and resource uses;
- Conflict resolution;
- Laws and regulations.

Figure 3.1 below displays the difference between the alternatives based on the differences in the acreages for the key management actions.

Figure 3.1. Alternative Comparison.



3.1.2.3 Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail

No Military Training within the NCA

Section 4(e) of the NCA enabling legislation specifically provides for continued military training in the NCA, pending a determination of whether such use is compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established. The legislation further requires the National Guard to conduct their activities in a manner that protects the raptor populations and habitats and the scientific, cultural, and recreational resources and values of the NCA. To obtain an objective analysis, BLM contracted with Argonne National Laboratory (Argonne) to help determine if ongoing military and non-military activities in the Orchard Training Area (OTA) were consistent with the purposes of the NCA (Argonne National Laboratory 2004). Argonne evaluated the effects of all

activities except for livestock grazing. The resulting report, “Characterization of the Effects of Use Authorizations on Soil, Vegetation, Prey and Raptors at the Orchard Training Area, Idaho” did not identify wholesale conflicts with military training in the NCA. Information in the report did, however, allow BLM to identify potentially incompatible issues related to two areas of training: 1) the accumulation of munitions-related chemicals and unexploded ordnance in the soils of the OTA Impact Area, and 2) the adverse effects of off-road vehicle activity (both military and non-military) on shrub communities. BLM determined that nothing could be done to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate munitions-related chemicals and unexploded ordnance that had been accumulating for over 50 years in the Impact Area. Instead, BLM is proposing, under all RMP alternatives, that the Im-



pact Area be withdrawn to the Department of Defense (DoD) to ensure that the agency responsible for the accumulations is also responsible for any liability for associated clean-up activities that might be required in the future. The other potentially incompatible activity was military and non-military off-road vehicle activity, and the associated adverse effects on soils and vegetation, especially shrub communities. These impacts are being addressed through management actions that restrict off-road vehicle use throughout the NCA. Based on the above considerations, a wholesale determination of incompatibility is currently unsupported, and a “no military training” alternative will not be analyzed. In addition, military presence in the area provides increased fire suppression capability, expanded law enforcement, and staff and funding for enhanced resource management.

Complete Withdrawal of the OTA

Some have asked why BLM is not analyzing an alternative that proposes a withdrawal of the entire OTA to the DoD. The NCA-enabling legislation authorizes the Secretary of Interior, acting through the BLM, to manage the public lands in the NCA. The NCA-enabling legislation underscores BLM management authority and responsibility by mandating that BLM manage the lands, including the OTA, in a fashion that ensures the long-term viability of the raptor populations and habitats for which the NCA was established. Complete withdrawal of the OTA is inconsistent with the Congressional intent of this legislation. The only purpose for withdrawing all or a portion of the OTA to the DoD would be to mitigate health or safety hazards associated with military training, and to minimize BLM liability for remediation of unexploded ordnance and munitions-related chemical soil contamination. Since public health or safety hazards related to unexploded ordnance and munitions-related chemicals do not exist outside of the Impact Area, no public interest would be served by withdrawing the entire OTA. As such, BLM would recommend to Congress that only the Impact Area be withdrawn to the DoD.

Wildland Fire Use

The objective of a wildland fire use project is to obtain a resource benefit(s), while reducing suppression costs. In the NCA, however, the landscape scale change to a cheatgrass-dominated ecosystem has modified the way we approach wildfire management. There is a potential benefit to allowing a wildfire to burn through a cheatgrass area, because it removes this undesirable vegetation and allows an opportunity to initiate habitat restoration treatments without having competition from cheatgrass cover for a short time after the fire has occurred (or until cheatgrass can re-occupy the site). While we recognize the potential benefits of allowing a wildfire to burn through a cheatgrass area as a step in habitat restoration, the risk of having a fire expand beyond the area anticipated during the fire season is too great in the NCA. Therefore, wildland fire use is not appropriate in the NCA. Prescribed fire is a tool that may play a role in habitat restoration and fuels management, and may be used on a limited basis. The invasion of non-native plants has changed the natural fire regime from infrequent fires (50-125 years) to frequent fires (3-5 years). By adding more fire to the already damaged ecosystem, we would only further alter the historic fire regime and the native plant communities adapted to that regime. By suppressing fires, we hope to retard the rate at which the ecosystem is being altered, and to begin to restore it to one more characteristic of the Great Basin Sagebrush Steppe. Though wildland fire use certainly has positive applications in some instances, we believe its use in the NCA would further jeopardize resource values that we are mandated to conserve and protect. Thus, wildland fire use would not allow BLM to meet DFC. As a result, wildland fire use will be dropped from further consideration, and when wildfires threaten the NCA, we would continue to use an Appropriate Management Response (AMR) that is consistent and compatible with the affected resource values and other priorities (i.e., human life and property). The practice of using wildland fire to achieve specific resource objectives or benefits would not be used in the NCA.



Wind Energy

The problem of avian mortalities at wind energy developments is a recent phenomenon compared to power lines and communication towers (Olendorff *et al.* 1981, APLIC 1994). Wind energy development projects in a number of locations worldwide have affected raptors and other wildlife species to various degrees. Some wind energy developments have been shown to adversely impact wildlife, especially birds and bats and their habitats (USFWS, 2003).

The effects of wind energy developments on birds have raised important legal, sociological, and ecological issues in the permitting and operation of wind energy plants (Anderson *et al.* 1999; USFWS 2003). The compatibility of these developments in the NCA is related to their potential impacts to nesting, migrating, and wintering raptor populations, as well as other wildlife species. The NCA supports the highest density of nesting raptors in North America (over 700 nesting pairs representing 15 species), as well as tens of thousands of migrating raptors (representing eight species). Because the NCA was established for the purpose of conserving, protecting, and enhancing raptor populations and habitats, BLM needs to ensure that potential wind energy developments are compatible with the enabling legislation. The compatibility determination needs to take into account the associated infrastructure and overall footprint of the proposed development(s), including new roads and powerlines.

Erickson *et al.* (2002) concluded that the amount and extent of raptor use may be a predictor of raptor risk. In other words, the greatest risk of harm to raptors from wind developments occurs in areas supporting the greatest numbers of raptors. Erickson *et al.* (2002) also provided information on waterfowl, passerine, and bat mortality at wind energy sites. Sites with year-round waterfowl use have generally shown the greatest mortality; both resident and migrant passerine species are killed at sites; and bat mortalities at sites most likely involve migrant or dispersing bats.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2003), the effects on avian and bat species are variable and can be species-, season-, and site-specific. Even low collision mortality rates at these sites may be significant for populations of some birds, especially large, long-lived species with low annual productivity (like raptors). Wind developments may also affect avian and bat behavior by acting as barriers to movement. Instead of flying between turbines, birds may fly around the outside of a turbine string or cluster. The cumulative effects of large wind developments may be considerable if bird movements are displaced as a consequence.

Many of the newer, larger, wind turbine designs now require aviation warning lights (FAA requirement), with towers up to 400 ft high, and blade lengths up to 160 ft. In North America, many avian species (including passerines and owls), and probably all bat species, migrate at night and can be attracted to lights, especially during inclement weather. During these situations, nocturnal migrants can become disoriented and strike tall lighted structures.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (2003), among other recommendations and guidance, suggests the following:

- Wind project developers should be discouraged from using or degrading high value habitat areas.
- Avoid high bird concentration areas, especially concentration areas of sensitive status species, and breeding sites.
- Encourage wind energy development in agricultural and already disturbed lands, including using existing transmission corridors and roads where possible.

Based on the above information, many geographic areas and habitat types in the NCA are probably not suitable for wind energy development in the context of the avian and bat use.



In addition to avian and bat collision risk and mortality issues, habitat alteration, destruction, and fragmentation are also major concerns.

The entire Snake River Canyon, including the rim area and a possible set back buffer distance (e.g., 400 meters), is probably inappropriate for any type of wind development due to the high degree of use by raptor species, such as golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and prairie falcons (*Falco mexicanus*). In addition, many or all of the buttes in the NCA should be excluded from wind development due to the thermal lift and soaring environment they provide many bird species, including many raptor species. Some buttes also provide important raptor nesting habitat.

Much of the sagebrush habitat in the NCA is probably also inappropriate for wind development due to the important foraging, nesting, and wintering habitat it provides to many avian species. Sagebrush is important foraging habitat for raptor species such as golden eagles, ferruginous hawks (*Buteo regalis*), western burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*), northern harriers (*Circus cyaneus*), short-eared owls (*Asio flammeus*), and rough-legged hawks (*Buteo lagopus*). In addition to sage obligate species, such as Brewer's sparrows (*Spizella breweri*) and sage sparrows (*Amphispiza belli*), sagebrush is also important nesting and/or wintering habitat for raptor species, including ferruginous hawks, rough-legged hawks, northern harriers, western burrowing owls, and short-eared owls.

Based on the above information, we must recognize that the NCA supports the densest concentration of nesting raptors in North America, as well as incredible numbers of migrating raptors. The NCA also provides important habitat for passerine birds, upland birds, bats, and waterfowl. Wind energy development projects located in almost any location in the NCA could pose potentially unacceptable hazards for one or several of these species during certain seasons. As such, wind energy developments would be incompatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established, and

thus, wind energy development will not be discussed further.

3.2 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

3.2.1 Air Quality

Rationale

The “Interim Air Quality Policy on Wildland and Prescribed Fires” issued by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on April 23, 1998 directs public land managers to protect public health and welfare by mitigating the impacts of air pollutant emissions on air quality and visibility for all wildland and prescribed fires managed to achieve resource values.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Emissions from point and non-point sources would be limited by requiring and implementing mitigation measures and/or Standard Operating Practices (SOPs).
- An approved burn plan that includes information and techniques to reduce or alter smoke emission levels would be in place prior to implementing any prescribed burn.
- All prescribed fire actions would be coordinated with other affected agencies through the Montana/Idaho Smoke Management Program certified by EPA and Idaho Division of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Description of Alternatives for Air Quality

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

The air resource program would be managed in the same general manner in all alternatives in accordance with laws, regulations and policies, with the goal of meeting current standards. Consequently, the management of air resources will not be addressed again in other alternatives. In accordance with the planning criteria and the Clean Air Act, all authorized actions would meet or exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and the Prevention of Significant Deterioration regulations.



Prior to the actual ignition of any prescribed fire, an approved prescribed burn plan would be in place and adhered to throughout the project. The majority of fuel types do not allow for opportunities to reduce emissions; therefore, emissions would be managed primarily by timing and atmospheric dispersal. All prescribed fire actions would be coordinated with other affected agencies.

Emissions from point and non-point sources would be limited by requiring and implementing mitigation measures and SOPs. An example of a point source would be emissions from a smoke stack. Many point sources are specifically regulated by State agencies. Examples of non-point sources are the dust from a haul road and a SOP for that scenario could be to apply water or chemical dust suppressant or limit the number of runs per day or the speed limit.

Air Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Air Quality.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Objectives:			
Meet or exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and the Prevention of Significant Deterioration regulations with all authorized actions.			
Management Actions:			
Management actions are derived from the legislation and are covered under Standard Operating Procedures.			

3.2.2 Cultural and Tribal Resources

Rationale

Management of cultural resources by BLM is guided by laws, executive orders (EO), regulations, and policies. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, directs Federal agencies to provide leadership in the protection and preservation of prehistoric and historic cultural properties that have been determined eligible for listing or are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Section 106 of the NHPA directs Federal agencies to consider the effects of agency and agency-approved actions that could affect significant archaeological and historic properties through a process of inventory, evaluation and effects analysis, and consultation with the American Indian Tribes, State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and interested publics. Section 110 directs agencies to establish programs to inventory, evaluate and nominate sites to the NRHP and to protect, preserve, manage, and maintain cultural properties.

The alternatives are differentiated by varying levels of proactive cultural resource manage-

ment, site impact monitoring, site stabilization, protection or salvage of threatened or at-risk sites, research, and interpretive projects that would extend beyond the minimum Section 106 compliance actions.

As part of the BLM cultural resource management program, the IDARNG protects and monitors cultural and historic sites within the OTA under the requirements of a Cultural Resources Memorandum of Agreement, which is an addendum to the OTA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). IDARNG annually monitors 15 to 20 known cultural sites in the OTA.

Standard Operating Procedures

- American Indians would continue to have access to the NCA for hunting, fishing and gathering and to practice their religion and culture. Sites and traditional cultural properties deemed to be at risk from natural or human caused factors would be protected.
- Section 110 surveys would continue to be conducted. Based on historic numbers, it is estimated that 80 to 240 acres would be surveyed for cultural resources per year.



- Outreach through interpretation and education; data recovery and recordation; and site stabilization activities would continue.
- Adverse impacts to cultural resources would be mitigated with specific management actions chosen for each project. Management actions could be chosen from a menu of solutions that include, but are not limited to the following:
 - o Physical avoidance of the site by moving the proposed project.
 - o Fencing of the site to protect the cultural properties.
 - o More complete documentation of the site with additional site recordings such as photographs, site maps, sketches, or other data recovery techniques implemented.
 - o Preservation of the site by limiting surface collection of artifacts.
 - o Archaeological testing.
 - o Data recovery through salvage excavations.
 - o Full data recovery through scientific excavations.
 - o Site-specific mitigation of potential adverse impacts.

Description of Alternatives for Cultural and Tribal Resources

Cultural and Tribal Resources – Alternative A

Cultural resources would continue to be managed in a way that meets legal and regulatory requirements and policy mandates. Some proactive measures would be implemented, including limited environmental education and interpretive programs to heighten public awareness of the value of cultural resources.

Approximately 3,900 acres in Priest Ranch, Trueblood Wildlife Management Area (TWMA), Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment would continue to be closed to livestock grazing.

The 26,300-acre Guffey Butte-Black Butte (GBBB) Archaeological District (Cultural Map 1) would continue to be managed under

the protection of its Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation.

The 3,300-acre Oregon Trail Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) would continue to be managed according to the 1984 Oregon Trail Management Plan. Highlights of the plan call for the protection, interpretation, marking and proper use of the components of the Oregon National Historic Trail and associated historic routes. The goal of the plan is to protect cultural resources and the scenic resources along the Trail, while providing the public with appropriate recreational and educational opportunities. The Oregon Trail SRMA would be managed as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Classes I and II (VRM Map 1).

Cultural and Tribal Resources – Alternative B

Cultural resources would be managed as described in Alternative A, but with increased cultural resource surveys, cultural resource site monitoring, and cultural resource interpretation and outreach projects.

To reduce grazing-related impacts to cultural resources, livestock grazing would be eliminated or seasonally restricted on 8,600 acres (Grazing Map 5).

As in Alternative A, the GBBB Archaeological District (Cultural Map 1) would continue to be managed under the protection of the ACEC designation.

The Oregon Trail SRMA would be enlarged to 7,900 acres to incorporate those portions of the Trail that are currently not managed under an SRMA designation and would be managed as VRM Class III (Recreation Map 2, VRM Map 2). Heightened emphasis would include restrictions on surface disturbing activities and potentially increased site monitoring and law enforcement patrols.



Cultural and Tribal Resources – Alternative C

Cultural resource protection would not include site-specific interpretation except at existing locations. Generic public education programs would continue to underscore the importance and sensitivity of cultural resources, but they would not be highlighted by site-specific interpretation or public outreach. Every effort would be made to protect cultural resources in place without actions such as site excavations or removal of objects. This alternative would emphasize changes to other uses as opposed to disturbing the cultural resource site.

There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.

Under this alternative, the GBBB Archaeological District and the Oregon Trail SRMA would be managed as discussed in Alternative B; however, a wider and more extensive buffer around the Oregon Trail would be designated VRM Class II to protect a wider viewshed (VRM Map 3).

Cultural and Tribal Resources – Alternative D – Proposed Alternative

Alternative D would be similar to Alternative B; however, in order to remove redundant layers of protection, the ACEC designation would be removed from the GBBB Archaeological District. The area would continue to be protected from acquisition or mineral entry under the withdrawal language provided in the NCA-enabling legislation. The Oregon Trail SRMA would be enlarged as described in Alternative B; however, it would be protected as VRM Class II (VRM Map 4).

To protect cultural and tribal values, livestock grazing would continue to be restricted from 3,900 acres as described in Alternative A. In addition, 3,400 acres on Kuna Butte would be classified as chiefly valuable for purposes other than grazing, including recreation, special status plants (SSP), and cultural resources. As such, the area would be deleted from the Sunnyside Spring/Fall Allotment, and the area would only be grazed for fuels and weeds reduction purposes on an as-needed basis (Grazing Map 6). Every effort would be made to protect cultural resources in place without actions such as site excavations or removal of objects.

Cultural and Tribal Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Cultural and Tribal Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objective:			
Protect cultural resources from adverse impacts or mitigate the adverse impacts.	Manage cultural resources by emphasizing mitigation and public interpretation.	Protect (in place) cultural resources from adverse impacts or through mitigation.	Same as Alternative B.
Management Actions:			
American Indians would continue to have access to the NCA for hunting, fishing and gathering and to practice their religion and culture.			
Vehicles would be restricted to designated routes in the GBBB Archaeological District.			
As opportunities arise, lands would be acquired that contain significant natural or cultural resources.			
The GBBB Archaeological District would continue to be managed as an ACEC.			The GBBB ACEC designation would be revoked.



Cultural and Tribal Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Cultural and Tribal Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
The 3,300-acre Oregon Trail SRMA would continue to be managed as such (Recreation Map 1).	The Oregon Trail SRMA would be enlarged to approximately 7,900 acres (Recreation Map 2).		
The Oregon Trail would be protected as VRM Classes I and II (VRM Map 1).	The Oregon Trail would be managed as VRM Class III (VRM Map 2).	The Oregon Trail would be protected as VRM Class II (VRM Maps 3 and 4).	
Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would not be grazed (Grazing Map 4).	Same as Alternative A and grazing would be eliminated or seasonally restricted on an additional 4,700 acres (Grazing Map 5).	There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A and Kuna Butte (3,400 acres) would be grazed intermittently for fuels and weeds reduction (Grazing Map 6).
Limited cultural resource public education and interpretation would be accomplished.	Cultural resource protection would be emphasized through both public education and site-specific interpretation.	Cultural resources would be emphasized through public education, but not through site-specific interpretation.	Same as Alternative A.

3.2.3 Fish and Wildlife Rationale

Pursuant to Section 3(a)(2) of the NCA-enabling legislation, BLM is required to manage the NCA to “...provide for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats and the natural and environmental resources and values associated therewith...” Section 2 (4) of the Act defines the term “raptor habitat” to include the habitat of the raptor prey base as well as the nesting and hunting habitat of raptors within the conservation area.

Over 300,000 acres of native shrub communities have been lost in the past 30 years due, in large part, to repeated wildfires. Upland shrub and riparian communities constitute important habitat for small mammals that are the principal prey for the 25 raptor species that spend all or a portion of their year in the NCA. These communities also support a myriad of other

wildlife species. Shrub communities degraded by wildfire, soil erosion, and exotic plant invasion cannot support relatively stable small mammal populations that are found in less degraded communities. Anything that compromises the population dynamics of raptors and their prey is of special concern. Therefore, a prime consideration for wildlife management is to improve existing habitat conditions, especially for small mammal populations. Management actions for the fish and wildlife program are tied closely to the vegetation and riparian resource programs.

Description of Alternatives for Fish and Wildlife

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

Raptors and Raptor Prey: The greatest benefit to raptors would be the stabilization of raptor prey populations, most notably the Piute ground squirrel. To stabilize and increase the



small mammal prey base, remnant upland native shrub habitat must be preserved, interconnected, and expanded. Degraded areas would be restored to shrub/bunchgrass habitat with a forb component and biological soil crust to provide additional habitat for small mammals, invertebrates, lizards, snakes, and birds.

Waterfowl: Riparian and wetland habitat improvement would provide additional food for waterfowl and migrant shorebirds, and would provide feeding and resting sites for many other bird species.

Upland Game: Pheasants, quail, doves, and partridge would have additional nesting and escape cover if shrub/bunchgrass habitat were improved adjacent to agricultural sites. Additional water sources would also expand the amount of usable range for upland birds. Nuttall's cottontails would find increased cover and food in improved riparian and upland areas.

Big Game: Although mule deer and pronghorn have historically used most of the NCA (at least seasonally), their range is currently limited by a lack of surface water. Additional surface water would make more of the NCA available to these species.

Non-Game: Improving and expanding existing riparian and woodland habitat would provide nest, perch, feed, and cover sites for many non-game birds, breeding areas for amphibians, and temporary food and cover for mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. Additional cover and feeding areas would especially benefit migratory songbirds in the spring.

Special Status Species (SSS): See Special Status Animals Section 3.2.6.1

Alternatives A through D provide ways of achieving varying levels of the above-discussed habitat improvements. Although the following statements are not common to all management actions, they represent a range of

actions that would be incorporated across various alternatives to improve wildlife habitat.

- One to 40 miles of riparian habitat would be improved by planting native trees and 60shrubs which would provide raptor roosting and nesting areas.
- Wildlife watering sites would be developed
- From 20,000 to over 230,000 acres of upland shrub habitat would be improved.
- Livestock grazing would be managed to enhance perennial forage species, provide additional wildlife food and cover, and reduce competition with small mammal prey species.

Fish and Wildlife – Alternative A

The existing wildlife management program would continue with habitat improvement projects tied almost exclusively to emergency fire rehabilitation. Up to 10,000 acres of shrub habitat would be restored, with an additional 10,000 acres of grasslands that are considered to have a high wildfire risk (hazardous fuels) treated through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.

Areas restored with perennial species would not be grazed by livestock until the plants are successfully established and can withstand grazing. In addition, areas restored with perennial vegetation would be grazed during the dormant season or grazed under a deferred rotation system to maintain the perennial species. Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would remain closed to livestock grazing.

Russian olive and tamarisk have dominated some riparian areas. Neither of these tree species supports the insects and other small prey used by migrant and resident birds during the spring and summer. By replacing these plants with native trees and shrubs, riparian habitat would again be utilized by native species. Up to one mile of riparian/wetland habitat would



be improved for raptor perching, roosting, and nesting, and songbird nesting, feeding and cover by replacing Russian olive and tamarisk with cottonwoods, willows, and other desirable trees.

When natural sites are not available, artificial nest structures are utilized by several raptor species (e.g., osprey, red-tailed, ferruginous, and Swainson's hawks, and western burrowing owls). An average of four (4) artificial nest structures would be installed annually for these species.

Up to nine water sites (guzzlers) would be constructed in the west and south portions of the NCA, north of the Snake River, to make habitat more accessible for big game and upland game species. Trees planted at these sites would also provide additional perching and nest sites across the desert.

Noxious weeds replace native plants, creating monocultures and destroying the diverse assemblage of native plants and the animals that depend on them. Approximately 600 acres would be treated annually for noxious weeds.

The current Canyon and Plateau shooting restrictions (61,200 acres) would be retained. Although the restrictions would limit human caused small mammal predation (Recreation Map 4), the closures are based on safety concerns. Use of firearms within these areas for animal damage control and law enforcement are exempt from the shooting closure.

Fish and Wildlife – Alternative B

Approximately 50,000 acres of upland shrub habitat would be restored. Habitat would be restored where it would most benefit small mammal raptor prey populations and where there would be the greatest likelihood of success, rather than being limited to currently burned areas. As such, the overall benefit to raptors and their prey would be enhanced. Up to 70,000 acres of additional degraded shrub habitat would be treated over the long-term through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects in

order to reduce the fire hazard to adjacent high-value areas.

Areas restored with perennial species would not be grazed by livestock until the plants are successfully established and can withstand grazing. In addition, areas restored with perennial vegetation would be grazed during the dormant season or grazed under a deferred rotation system to maintain the perennial species. Livestock grazing would be authorized so that it enhances, or at least does not adversely affect habitat supporting raptors and their prey populations. Stocking levels, and seasons and duration of use would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3), and would be based on resource objectives, such as fuels management and habitat restoration. Additional forage would be allocated for small mammal raptor prey species and big game. Forage competition between Piute ground squirrels and livestock would be minimized. Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment would remain closed to livestock grazing. In addition, livestock grazing would be eliminated or seasonally restricted on an additional 4,700 acres on Kuna Butte and along the Snake River downstream from Swan Falls Dam (Grazing Map 5).

Woodlands provide nesting habitat, cover, and feed for a number of birds and mammals. In particular, yellow-billed cuckoos, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS) Candidate species, need about 25 acres of good woodland habitat per breeding pair. To address this need, BLM would plant about 100 acres of woodland in blocks of about 25 acres over the long-term.

Approximately 20 miles of riparian/wetland habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic species like Russian olive and tamarisk and planting cottonwoods, willows, and other desirable trees and shrubs to provide roosting, perching, nesting and cover for raptors and other birds, mammals, and reptiles. In addition, habitat for migrant shorebirds would



be improved by constructing an additional 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.

To increase populations of nesting raptors as discussed in Alternative A, an average of five artificial nest structures would be installed each year.

As discussed in Alternative A, approximately nine guzzlers would be constructed in the southwestern portion of the NCA north of the Snake River to improve habitat accessibility for mule deer, pronghorn, and upland game birds.

An average of approximately 2,500 acres would be treated each year for noxious weeds by physical, chemical, or biological means.

The existing Canyon shooting restriction would be unchanged. The Plateau shooting restrictions would be expanded to include the northern portion of the OTA and the area north of Moore Road (Recreation Map 5). Although the expanded shooting restriction would limit small mammal mortality, the expansion is predicted on the increasing numbers of recreational shooters that are causing safety conflicts with military training activities in the portion of the OTA located north of the Impact Area. Use of firearms for animal damage control and law enforcement would be exempt from the shooting closure.

Fish and Wildlife – Alternative C

Alternative C would provide the most aggressive habitat protection and restoration actions. Up to 130,000 acres of degraded shrub habitat would be restored. As with Alternative B, the habitat would be restored where it would be most beneficial to raptor prey populations, rather than being limited to currently burned areas. As such, the overall benefit to raptors and their prey would be maximized. Additional shrub habitat could be realized by treating up to 100,000 acres of hazardous fuels in order to reduce the fire hazard to adjacent high-value areas over the long-term.

There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.

Up to 100 acres of woodland would be planted in 25-acre blocks over the long-term, as discussed in Alternative B.

Artificial nest structures would be built as described in Alternative A.

Up to 40 miles of riparian/wetland habitat would be improved by removing exotic species, such as Russian olive and tamarisk, and planting desirable trees, like cottonwoods and willows. In addition, habitat for migrant shorebirds would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.

Up to 11 guzzlers would be constructed throughout the NCA, including the east end of the NCA and on the south side of the river. As discussed above, trees would be planted at the guzzler sites to provide additional nest sites for raptors and song birds.

Up to 4,000 acres would be treated annually for noxious weeds.

Shooting restrictions would be the same as described in Alternative B.

Fish and Wildlife – Alternative D – Proposed

Habitat restoration and hazardous fuels management would be conducted as described in Alternative C. Areas restored with perennial species would not be grazed by livestock until the plants are successfully established and can withstand grazing. In addition, where practicable, areas restored with perennial vegetation would be grazed during the dormant season or grazed under a deferred rotation system to maintain the perennial species. Livestock stocking levels and utilization would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3). Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would continue to be closed to livestock grazing, and Kuna Butte (3,400 acres) would



be grazed only intermittently for fuels and weeds reduction purposes (Grazing Map 6).

Up to 100 acres of woodland would be planted in 25-acre blocks over the long-term, as discussed in Alternative B.

Artificial nest structures would be built as described in Alternative A.

Improving up to 40 miles of riparian/wetland habitat would be the same as described in Alternative C, and constructing a 20-acre pond at in Alternative B.

Up to nine guzzlers would be constructed in the southwest portion of the NCA, north of the river. Trees would be planted at the guzzler sites to provide additional nest sites for raptors and song birds.

Up to 4,000 acres would be treated each year for noxious weeds.

Shooting restrictions would be the same as described in Alternative A.

Fish and Wildlife Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Fish and Wildlife.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Emphasize maintenance and protection of raptor prey and other wildlife populations and habitats.	Emphasize protection and enhancement of raptor prey and other wildlife populations and habitats and expand areas useable by raptor prey and big game.		
Management Actions:			
Quality habitat for wildlife, particularly species dependent on riparian and wetland habitats, would be provided by restoring or maintaining plant species diversity and hydrologic functioning of springs, seeps, where possible or appropriate.			
Increase raptor populations by increasing raptor nesting, perching, feeding and roosting opportunities.			
All river, stream, and reservoir shorelines (approximately 101 miles) would be managed to maintain fisheries and aquatic-riparian habitat.			
Additional surface water would be provided to benefit big game, upland game, and non-game species.			
Habitat restoration projects would include shrub varieties that are suitable for raptor prey (small mammals) and big game where appropriate.			
Non-native trees providing little roosting or nesting habitat would be removed and would be replaced with native trees and shrubs.			
No woodland areas would be developed.	100 acres of woodland would be planted in blocks of 25 acres.		
Approximately 10,000 acres of degraded habitats would be restored.	Approximately 50,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat would be restored.	Approximately 130,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat would be restored.	



Fish and Wildlife Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Fish and Wildlife.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
In addition to habitat restoration projects, 10,000 acres of annual grasslands would be converted to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 70,000 acres of annual grasslands would be converted to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 100,000 acres of annual grasslands would be converted to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	
In annual grass pastures, livestock grazing would leave sufficient residual litter for watershed protection.		There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A
Appropriate levels of Livestock grazing would be determined through the S&G process.		There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.
Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would not be grazed (Grazing Map 4).	Same as Alternative A and grazing would be eliminated or seasonally restricted on an additional 4,700 acres (Grazing Map 5).	There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A and Kuna Butte (3,400 acres) would be grazed only intermittently for fuels reduction (Grazing Map 6).
Livestock grazing would be managed in accordance with S&Gs.	Livestock grazing in perennial pastures would be managed to minimize impacts to Piute ground squirrels	There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative B.
One mile of riparian habitat would be improved for wildlife by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	Up to 20 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	Up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	



Fish and Wildlife Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Fish and Wildlife.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
No pond at the TWMA would be constructed.	Habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.		
Treat approx 600 acres for noxious weeds annually.	Treat approx 2,500 acres for noxious weeds annually.	Treat approximately 4,000 acres for noxious weeds annually.	
Current Plateau and Canyon recreational shooting restriction areas would be retained (Recreation Map 4).	The Canyon shooting restriction area would be retained, and the Plateau shooting restriction area would be enlarged to 99,400 acres (Recreation Map 5).		Same as Alternative A.

3.2.4 Geology

Geologic resources will not be affected by any of the RMP alternatives and as such no alternatives were developed. See Section 2.2.4 in the Affected Environment Chapter 2.

3.2.5 Paleontology

Paleontological resources will not be affected by any of the RMP alternatives and as such, no alternatives were developed. See Section 2.2.5 in the Affected Environment Chapter 2.

3.2.6 Special Status Species

3.2.6.1 Special Status Animals

Rationale

Idaho springsnail (Endangered), bald eagle (Threatened), and yellow-billed cuckoo (Candidate) are listed by the Federal government as species that need immediate attention (USF&WS 2002 p1). Management actions authorized or funded by BLM would be implemented in a manner that does not jeopardize the continued existence of these species or result in the destruction or modification of their critical habitat. Once a species is listed, it is the mission of BLM, through law enforcement, research, and land management, to enhance the species’ chance for recovery and survival. State sensitive species and species proposed for Federal listing (candidate species) would be given the same consideration as listed species.

BLM through consultation with the FWS has developed conservation measures to promote the protection and conservation of listed, proposed and candidate species. These conservation measures are included as Appendix 21 and are considered land use plan management actions specific to the protection of the above listed and candidate species. These measures will remain in effect for the protection of the above species unless or until they are amended or replaced through subsequent consultation.

The BLM and Idaho Fish and Game (IDF&G) agree to “Ensure, to the best of their abilities, that critical habitats and populations of sensitive species occurring on lands administrated by the BLM will be managed and/or conserved to minimize the need for listing these animals as threatened or endangered by either Federal or State governments in the future” (IDF&G and BLM Master MOU 2003 cover sheet).

BLM and IDF&G consider seven species “range wide/globally imperiled”; twenty-one species “regional and State imperiled”; and seventeen species are on the Idaho watch list (Appendix 5). All of these species are important; but in the NCA, there would be a special emphasis on the prairie falcon, which is a regional and State imperiled species. Restoration of upland shrub/bunchgrass habitat would help stabilize ground squirrel populations, which in



turn, would help to stabilize the prairie falcon population.

In 2006, the giant fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta raptor*) was identified as a new species, and was found in two locations in the NCA, one inside the OTA and one outside (but near its boundary).

Little is yet known about the species.

No data exists to suggest that the giant fairy shrimp or its habitat is in jeopardy. However, as needs are identified BLM will take measures to protect playas from user impacts. Once more is known about the giant fairy shrimp's population biology and ecological requirements, if warranted, BLM will implement specific management actions to protect the species from user impacts.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Recreation permits that adversely affect critical wildlife habitat would not be issued.

Management Common to All Alternatives

In order to protect the giant fairy shrimp, occupied habitat (Wildlife Map 2) would be managed with protection of the fairy shrimp as the highest priority. As the needs for the fairy shrimp are better understood management actions will be developed.

Increase raptor populations by increasing raptor nesting, perching, feeding and roosting opportunities.

All river, stream, and reservoir shorelines (approximately 101 miles) would be managed to maintain fisheries and aquatic-riparian habitat.

Habitat restoration projects would include shrub varieties that are suitable for raptor prey (Piute ground squirrels) where appropriate.

Non-native trees providing little roosting or nesting habitat would be removed and would be replaced with native trees and shrubs.

BLM would not permit livestock grazing that negatively affects the Idaho springsnail or its habitat.

Land exchanges would enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat

Description of Alternatives for Special Status Animals

Alternatives A through D provide ways of achieving varying levels of habitat improvements. Planting fast growing trees along the Snake River would provide bald eagles more choices for perches and roosts. Upland and riparian areas would be improved and managed to reduce erosion and sedimentation effects on the Idaho springsnail.

Special Status Animals – Alternative A

The existing wildlife management program would continue with habitat improvement projects tied almost exclusively to emergency stabilization and rehabilitation (ESR). This alternative would restore 10,000 acres of shrub habitat, with an additional 10,000 acres of hazardous fuels treated in order to reduce highly flammable fuels.

Russian olive and tamarisk have dominated some riparian areas. Neither of these tree species supports the insects and other small prey used by migrant and resident birds including wintering bald eagles. By replacing these plants with native trees and shrubs, riparian habitat would again be utilized by native species. A total of one mile of riparian/wetland habitat would be improved for raptor perching, roosting, and nesting, and songbird nesting, feeding and cover by replacing Russian olive and tamarisk with cottonwoods, willows, and other desirable trees.

When natural sites are not available, artificial nest structures would be developed for sensitive species (e.g., osprey, ferruginous, and Swainson's hawks, and western burrowing owls). An average of four (4) artificial nest structures would be installed annually for these species.



Livestock grazing would be authorized only to the extent that it either enhances, or at least does not adversely affect habitat supporting raptors and their prey populations. Stocking levels, and seasons and duration of use would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3), and would be based on resource objectives, such as fuels management and habitat restoration. Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment would remain closed to livestock grazing.

The IDARNG would voluntarily avoid maneuver training activities in areas with more than 10% shrub canopy cover. Administrative assembly areas would be located as needed in non-shrub areas and frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.

The current Canyon and Plateau shooting restrictions would be retained (Recreation Map 4). Use of firearms within these areas for animal damage control and law enforcement is exempt from the shooting closure.

Special Status Animals – Alternative B

Approximately 50,000 acres of upland shrub habitat would be restored. Habitat would be restored where it would most benefit small mammal raptor prey populations, rather than being limited to currently burned areas. As such, the overall benefit to raptors and their prey would be enhanced. Up to 70,000 acres of additional degraded shrub habitat would be treated over the long-term through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.

Livestock grazing would be managed as identified in Alternative A. In addition, livestock grazing would be eliminated or seasonally restricted on 4,700 acres (Grazing Map 5).

Woodlands provide nesting habitat, cover, and feed for yellow-billed cuckoos. BLM would plant about 100 acres of woodland in blocks of about 25 acres over the long-term for this species.

In addition to riparian/wetland habitat improvements discussed in Alternative A, habitat for migrant shorebirds would be improved by constructing an additional 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.

To increase populations of nesting raptors as discussed in Alternative A, an average of five artificial nest structures would be installed each year.

The IDARNG would be authorized to conduct off-road vehicle maneuver training activities only in areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover. In addition, to protect SSS habitat, off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres, and IDARNG would be provided an additional 20,400 acre maneuver training area (IDARNG Map 3). Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the area in non-shrub sites. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.

The existing Canyon shooting restriction would be unchanged. The Plateau shooting restriction would be expanded (99,400 acres) to include the northern portion of the OTA and the area north of Moore Road (Recreation Map 5). Although the expanded shooting restriction would limit small mammal mortality, the expansion is predicated on the increasing numbers of recreational shooters that are causing safety conflicts with military training, grazing, and recreational activities in the portion of the OTA Maneuver Area, located north of the Impact. Use of firearms within the area for animal damage control and law enforcement would be exempt from the shooting closure.

Special Status Animals – Alternative C

Alternative C would provide the most aggressive habitat protection and restoration actions, under which 130,000 acres of degraded shrub habitat would be restored. As with Alternative B, habitat would be restored where it would be most beneficial to raptor prey populations,



rather than being limited to currently burned areas. As such, the overall benefit to raptors and their prey would be maximized. Additional perennial habitat could be realized by treating up to 100,000 acres over the long-term through a combination of mechanical, chemical, and biological fuels reduction projects. There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.

Up to 100 acres of woodland would be planted in 25-acre blocks over the long-term, as discussed in Alternative B.

Artificial nest structures would be built as described in Alternative A.

Up to 40 miles of riparian/wetland habitat would be improved by removing exotic species, such as Russian olive and tamarisk, and planting desirable trees, like cottonwoods and willows. In addition, habitat for migrant shorebirds would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.

In order to protect special status animal habitat, IDARNG would be authorized to conduct off-road vehicle maneuver training activities only in areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover. Vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated roads on 18,400 acres as identified on IDARNG Map 4. The OTA boundary would be modified to remove approximately 3,900 acres of occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat from the OTA (IDARNG Map 4). Suitable and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat would still exist in other Maneuver Areas of the OTA and IDARNG would continue to monitor and protect those areas. There would be no new training acreage provided.

Existing hardened administrative assembly and bivouac areas in the Bravo Area for IDARNG training would continue to be used. Other administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located in areas outside the Bravo Area when needed and frequently used

sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.

Shooting restrictions would be the same as described in Alternative B.

Special Status Animals – Alternative D – Proposed

Habitat restoration and fuels management would be managed as described in Alternative C.

Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would continue to be closed to livestock grazing and 3,400 acres would be classified as chiefly valuable for purposes other than grazing, including recreation, SSPs, and cultural resources. As such, the area would be grazed only intermittently for fuels and weeds reduction purposes on an as-needed basis (Grazing Map 6).

Up to 100 acres of woodland would be planted in 25-acre blocks over the long-term, as discussed in Alternative B.

Artificial nest structures would be built as described in Alternative A.

As described in Alternative C, up to two miles of riparian/wetland habitat would be improved annually and a 20-acre (approximate) pond would be constructed at the TWMA.

In order to protect SSS habitat, IDARNG off-road vehicle maneuver training in the 22,300 acre Bravo Area (IDARNG Map 1) would be the same as identified in Alternative B. An additional 4,100 acres identified on IDARNG Map 5 would be added to the OTA for maneuver training. In the remainder of the OTA, current types, seasons and locations of military training operations would continue. Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the area in non-shrub sites. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM. In addition, maneuver train-



ing would be authorized only in areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover.

Shooting restrictions would be the same as described in Alternative A.

Special Status Animals Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Special Status Animals.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Emphasize maintenance, protection, and enhancement of raptors and other sensitive wildlife populations and habitats.			
Management Actions:			
Increase raptor populations by increasing raptor nesting, perching, feeding and roosting opportunities.			
All river, stream, and reservoir shorelines (approximately 101 miles) would be managed to maintain fisheries and aquatic-riparian habitat.			
Habitat restoration projects would include shrub varieties that are suitable for raptor prey (Piute ground squirrels) where appropriate.			
Non-native trees providing little roosting or nesting habitat would be removed and would be replaced with native trees and shrubs.			
BLM would not permit livestock grazing that negatively affects the Idaho springsnail or its habitat.			
Land exchanges would enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat.			
Giant fairy shrimp habitat (Wildlife Map 2) would be managed with protection of the fairy shrimp as the priority. As more is learned about the fairy shrimp’s biological and ecological requirements, BLM will incorporate appropriate protection measures.			
Military training activities would avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.	Military training activities would avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.		
Approximately 10,000 acres of degraded habitats would be restored.	Approximately 50,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 130,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	
In addition to habitat restoration projects, 10,000 acres of annual grasslands would be converted to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 70,000 acres of annual grasslands would be converted to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 100,000 acres of annual grasslands would be converted to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	



Special Status Animals Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Special Status Animals.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
One mile of riparian habitat would be improved for wildlife by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	Up to 20 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	Up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	
No pond at the TWMA would be constructed.	Habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.		
Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would not be grazed (Grazing Map 4).	Same as Alternative A, and grazing would be eliminated or seasonally restricted on an additional 4,700 acres (Grazing Map 5).	There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A and Kuna Butte (3,400 acres) would be grazed only intermittently for fuels and weeds reduction (Grazing Map 6).
Current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military maneuver training would continue (IDARNG Map 2).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres, and an additional 20,400 acre maneuver training area would be made available (IDARNG Map 3).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 18,400 acres and 3,900 acres would be removed from the OTA (IDARNG Map 4).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres and an additional 4,100 acres would be made available for training (IDARNG Map 5).
Administrative assembly areas would be located as needed in non-shrub areas. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.	Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the area in non-shrub sites. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.	Existing hardened administrative assembly and bivouac areas in the Bravo Area would continue to be used, and administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located as needed in non-shrub areas outside of the Bravo Area. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.	Same as Alternative B.



Special Status Animals Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Special Status Animals.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Current Plateau and Canyon recreational shooting restriction areas would be retained (Recreation Map 4).	The Canyon shooting restriction area would be retained, and the Plateau shooting restriction area would be enlarged to 99,400 acres (Recreation Map 5).		Same as Alternative A.

3.2.6.2 Special Status Plants

Rationale

BLM Manual Section 6840 (SSS Management) provides overall policy direction to conserve listed, threatened, or endangered species on BLM administered land, and to ensure authorized actions do not contribute to the need to list Federal, candidate, State-listed, or BLM sensitive species. In addition, the management of Idaho rangelands is outlined in the Idaho S&Gs (Appendix 3). Standard 8 (Sensitive Species) represents the standards against which the NCA SSS are measured.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Federal actions shall not contribute to the need to federally list Candidate species or BLM Sensitive species. Populations and habitats of BLM sensitive plant species should be maintained, protected, and enhanced to prevent the listing of these species under the ESA.
- Inventories would be conducted prior to BLM authorized actions to determine the presence or absence of BLM Sensitive plants (Types 1-4).
- Heightened efforts would be taken to protect slickspot peppergrass through the implementation of conservation measures contained in the 2006 Conservation Agreement (CA).

Description of Alternatives for Special Status Plants (SSP)

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

SSP species would generally receive the same emphasis and management in all alternatives. The goal is to maintain the areas where SSP species (Type 1-4) are currently found at a level sufficient to prevent these plants from requiring Federal listing. Management actions would focus on minimizing or eliminating the threats associated with wildland fire, competition from exotic species, grazing, and off-road vehicle activity. Wildland fire would be suppressed using AMR, which in most cases in slickspot peppergrass habitat, would consist of aggressive tactics to keep fires as small as possible and meet management goals stated in the CA. Known occurrences of SSP species would be avoided in ESR efforts. Restoration efforts that help maintain SSP habitats would be conducted. Nonnative invasive species within or adjacent to SSP sites would be treated to minimize competition with invasive species. Implementation of appropriate grazing management practices would be implemented in SSP habitats. Off highway vehicle (OHV) use would avoid SSP habitats when possible and routes would have an appropriate buffer to protect these habitats.

Slickspot peppergrass would receive special management consideration. The CA conservation measures would be implemented, with an emphasis on protecting known occurrences using aggressive fire prevention and suppression methods. Ninety percent of the wildfires occurring within slickspot peppergrass man-



agement areas (SSP Map 1) would be kept to 100 acres or less. The IDARNG would not train in occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat.

Special Status Plants – Alternative A

The IDARNG would continue to inventory and monitor SSP locations. The IDARNG would also minimize impacts in SSP areas resulting from training activities and/or restore habitat around SSP areas.

Fuel breaks would be maintained to aid wildfire suppression and protect SSPs.

Focus would be on maintaining SSPs and their habitat. Specific habitat improvement would occur through habitat restoration, fuels management projects, and weeds treatments in limited areas.

Special Status Plants – Alternative B

IDARNG would continue to inventory and monitor as described in Alternative A. In addition, off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in the 22,300 acre Bravo Area (IDARNG Map 1 and 3) to protect an extensive Wyoming big sagebrush community and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat. An expanded maneuver training area of approximately 20,400 acres (IDARNG Map 3) would be authorized; however, this area has been impacted by repeated wildfires and has limited capability for future restoration projects.

Fuel breaks would be maintained and 8 miles of new fuel breaks would be constructed to aid wildfire suppression and protect SSPs.

A greater emphasis (50,000 acres restoration, 50,000 acres of weed treatments, and 70,000 acres fuels management) would be placed on protecting remnant shrub communities from wildfire and restoring annual grass habitats to perennial communities. Restoration and pro-

tection of areas near sensitive species would be a priority.

Special Status Plants – Alternative C

Vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to graveled roads on 18,400 acres as identified on IDARNG Map 4 with the Snake River Support Facility and existing hardened administrative assembly and bivouac areas still available for military training. The OTA boundary would be modified to remove approximately 3,900 acres of occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat from the OTA (IDARNG Map 4). Suitable and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat would still exist in other Maneuver Areas of the OTA and IDARNG would continue to monitor and protect those areas.

Fuel breaks would be maintained and 12 miles of new fuel breaks would be constructed to aid wildfire suppression and protect SSPs.

The greatest emphasis would be placed on protecting remnant shrub communities and restoring or rehabilitating 230,000 acres of degraded shrub habitat.

Special Status Plants – Alternative D – Proposed

To protect an extensive Wyoming big sagebrush community and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat off-road vehicle maneuver training in the Bravo training area would be the same as identified in Alternative B. An additional 4,100 acres identified on IDARNG Map 5 would be added to the OTA for maneuver training. In the remainder of the OTA, current types, seasons, and locations of military training operations would continue; however, the levels of military training would be adjusted to compensate for increased maneuver restrictions. The IDARNG would avoid maneuver training activities in areas with shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.



Special Status Plants Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Special Status Plants.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objective:			
The distribution, abundance, and vigor of SSPs would be maintained or improved.			
Management Actions:			
Management actions would be implemented as outlined in the slickspot peppergrass CA by: (1) protection of known slickspot peppergrass would be a priority over the surrounding management area; (2) BLM would evaluate, create, and maintain fuel breaks around areas where frequent fires threaten occupied and suitable slickspot peppergrass habitats; and (3) aggressive fire suppression tactics would be used when occupied slickspot peppergrass habitats are threatened.			
Ninety percent of the wildfires occurring within slickspot peppergrass management areas (Fire Map 1) would be kept to 100 acres or less. Ninety percent of the wildfires in the rest of the NCA would be kept to 200 acres or less.			
The IDARNG would protect slickspot peppergrass and other sensitive plant habitat by excluding training activities, enhancing fire prevention programs, and by emphasizing non-soil disturbing fire suppression techniques in and around identified areas.			
Where actions of permit holders (non-grazing) result in ground disturbance or resource damage in SSP habitat, the permit holder would be responsible for restoring the affected area in conformance with applicable conservation measures from the slickspot peppergrass CA (Appendix 12).			
Recreation permits would not be issued in occupied sensitive plant habitat.			
Activities to prevent the introduction of new and reduction of existing non-native species would continue with priority management in areas adjacent to occupied SSP sites.			
Surface disturbing activities would be located $\geq 1/2$ mile away from occupied sensitive plant habitat.			
Prescribed buffers around known occurrences of SSP species would be a criterion in the route designation process.			
Land exchanges would enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat, and public lands containing sensitive plant habitat would be retained unless they can be exchanged for lands containing better habitat and/or more important resource values.			
Treat approximately 600 acres for noxious weeds annually.	Treat approximately 2,500 acres for noxious weeds annually.	Treat approximately 4,000 acres for noxious weeds annually.	
Military training activities would avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.	Military training activities would avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.		
Current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military maneuver training would continue (IDARNG Map 2).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres, and an additional 20,400 acre maneuver training area would be made available (IDARNG Map 3).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 18,400 acres and 3,900 acres would be removed from the OTA (IDARNG Map 4).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres and an additional 4,100 acres would be made available for training. (IDARNG Map 5).



Special Status Plants Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Special Status Plants.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
136 miles of existing fuel breaks would be maintained or improved.	Maintain existing fuel breaks and construct 8 miles of new fuel breaks (Vegetation Map 7).	Maintain existing fuel breaks and construct approximately 12 miles of new fuel breaks (Vegetation Map 7).	
Approximately 10,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 50,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 130,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	
In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 10,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 70,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 100,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	

3.2.7 Soil Resources

Rationale

The BLM is required to comply with the Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA), the Clean Water Act (CWA), Idaho S&Gs (Appendix 3), and other related Federal and State laws and regulations regarding watershed health, soil stability, and water quality. Improving and maintaining healthy and properly functioning watersheds benefit wildlife, fisheries, water quality, recreation, and livestock grazing.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Adapted perennial grasses, forbs, and shrubs would be seeded when possible to (1) stabilize the soil, (2) prevent weed invasion, (3) restore wildlife habitat, and (4) reduce the likelihood of future fires.
- Grazing management actions would provide for adequate amounts of vegetative ground cover and litter (determined on an ecological site basis) to support infiltration and soil stability, to protect resources, and to maintain site productivity.

- Where livestock grazing is permitted it would be managed through the S&G process (Appendix 3).

Description of Alternatives for Soil Resources

Soil Resources – Alternative A

Watersheds and soils would continue to be managed for improved productivity, health and function.

Grazing management actions, consistent with current regulations and policies, would be implemented to maintain or make significant progress toward meeting the S&Gs (Appendix 3). Where these standards are not being met and current livestock management is found to be a significant factor, changes in management would be implemented through allotment specific grazing decisions in order to make significant progress toward meeting the standard. Livestock grazing would be managed to provide periodic rest and/or deferment during critical growth stages to meet the phenological needs of key plant species. Grazing and other land management actions would also be man-



aged to provide for adequate amounts of vegetative ground cover and litter (determined on an ecological site basis) to support infiltration, soil stability, and to maintain site productivity.

Mechanical impacts to soil surfaces and biological crusts would be minimized through proper timing with regard to soil type, soil moisture content and type and duration of use. Undue erosion from surface disturbing activities would be prevented or minimized by applying appropriate SOPs in conjunction with site specific monitoring.

Soil Resources – Alternative B

Watersheds and soils would continue to be managed for improved productivity, health and function. Improvements would result from better management controls (i.e., implementation of grazing systems, route designation); vegetative habitat restoration (seeding of desirable grasses, forbs, and shrubs); and vegetative control measures (use of herbicides, and other methods to control undesirable species).

Undue erosion from surface disturbing activities would be prevented or minimized by applying appropriate Best Management Practices (BMP) and/or SOPs in conjunction with site specific monitoring. Mechanical impacts to the soil surface and biological soil crusts would be minimized through proper timing and duration for the type of use with regard to soil type, soil moisture content, and biological soil crust vulnerability.

Areas being actively eroded would be documented, prioritized, and stabilization procedures would be implemented. These procedures may range from changes in management (i.e., grazing, recreation) to allow for natural stabilization, or more active measures, such as seeding, physical structures, and mechanical alterations.

Soil Resources – Alternative C

Watersheds and soils would be managed as described in Alternative B.

There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.

Undue erosion from surface-disturbing activities would be the same as identified in Alternative B.

Stabilization procedures for actively eroding areas would be the same as described in Alternative B.

Soil Resources – Alternative D - Proposed

Watersheds and soils would be managed as described in Alternative B.

Habitat restoration activities would be the same as that described for Alternative C.

Undue erosion from surface disturbing activities would be the same in Alternatives B, C and D.



Soil Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Soil Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Watersheds would have stable vegetative communities that provide for proper hydrologic function, nutrient cycling, energy flow, and soil stability.			
Soil productivity would be maintained and enhanced. Accelerated soil erosion caused by human activities would be minimal.			
Minimize the potential for future localized soil erosion processes on all soils with a moderate to very high soil erosion potential (Soil Map 1).	Stabilize the current and minimize the potential for future localized soil erosion processes on all soils with a moderate to very high soil erosion potential (Soil Map 1).		Same as Alternative A.
Management Actions:			
Mechanical impacts to the soil surface would be minimized through proper timing and duration for the type of use authorized with regard to soil type and soil moisture content and biological crust vulnerability.			
Allocation of AUMs would be determined through the S&G process		There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.
The existing 43,000-acre avoidance area in Owyhee County (Lands Map 3) would continue to be managed as such.	To provide additional resource protection along the Snake River Canyon, the existing avoidance area would be enlarged to 105,000 acres (Lands Map 4).	A 159,000-acre avoidance area would extend from Guffey Bridge to Hammett to protect the scenic values of the Snake River Canyon and the nearby Oregon Trail (Lands Map 5).	Same as Alternative A.
Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 2) Open – 0 acres Limited – 431,200 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 1,600 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 3) Open – 0 acres Limited – 426,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 6,400 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 4) Open – 0 acres Limited – 419,600 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 13,200 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 5) Open – 0 acres Limited – 428,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 4,400 acres



3.2.8 Upland Vegetation

Rationale

Public Law 103-64 established the NCA to “...provide for the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats and the natural and environmental resources and values associated therewith...” Section 2(4) of the NCA-enabling legislation defines “raptor habitat” as including the habitat of the raptor prey base as well as the nesting and hunting habitat of raptors within the conservation area.

The management of Idaho rangelands is outlined in BLM S&Gs (Appendix 3). Standard 4 (Native Plant Communities), Standard 5 (Seedings), Standard 6 (Exotic Plant Communities Other than Seedings), and Standard 8 (Sensitive Species) represent the standards against which the NCA rangelands are measured.

Standard Operating Procedures

- All wildfires would be evaluated for possible ESR. Objectives would include the establishment of shrub and perennial herbaceous species to minimize soil erosion and invasion by annual plant species, and to maintain and improve raptor prey habitat.

Description of Alternatives for Vegetation Resources

Assumptions

- 50% of ESR efforts would be successful, 25% would be partially successful and 25% would fail (if these are in priority areas they would be addressed through habitat restoration efforts).
- The objectives for ESR may not be the same as for restoration.
- Restoration efforts would eventually achieve the desired perennial plant community.

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

The alternatives for upland vegetation were developed with the intent of implementing

S&Gs (Appendix 3), and represent a range of management actions designed to restore severely degraded habitat to a condition more in line with the standards for rangeland health.

Overall – The priorities for vegetation management are to:

- maintain remnant native shrub and perennial grass cover;
- expand shrub communities; and
- protect watershed health.

IDARNG – Maneuver training and other soil disturbing activities would occur primarily in non-shrub areas.

Lands and Realty – Avoidance areas proposed in the different alternatives either carry forward areas that were designated in the Owyhee RMP to protect a variety of resources (Alternatives A and D), or are proposed to primarily protect visual resources along the Snake River.

Transportation – Route designation would allow continued public access; however, protection of native vegetation and soils resources and reducing fragmentation would be critical factors in determining which routes would be designated as open and the location of these routes. Relatively small areas, ranging from 1,600 (Alternative A) to 13,200 acres (Alternative C), would be closed to motorized vehicles

Vegetation – Fuels Management – Prescribed fire, biological, chemical or mechanical fuels management treatments would be emphasized in priority areas depending on funding or perceived hazards. Priorities may include the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and protection of existing resources, including wildlife habitat and SSP populations.

ESR efforts would be conducted on burned areas as needed. These efforts would continue for up to three years after an area burns. The goals for ESR would include stabilizing soils, controlling invasive and noxious weeds, and



returning vegetation to pre-fire conditions or better. In those instances where desired vegetation would reestablish naturally without re-seeding, fuels management efforts would be limited to excluding competing uses until reestablishment is complete.

Vegetation – Noxious Weeds Management – To keep noxious weeds from becoming widespread in the NCA, it is important to aggressively limit their expansion and eliminate new outbreaks. In order to reduce invasion of noxious and other weeds, individuals/organizations (non-grazing), that are being issued new, renewed, or amended land use authorizations (rights-of-way (ROW), permits, leases, etc.) would be required to reseed the affected area with a perennial vegetative cover following completion of ground disturbing activities. Permit holders in suitable and/or occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat would be required to conform to applicable conservation measures from the slickspot peppergrass CA (Appendix 12).

Vegetation – Research Areas – Research areas would be set aside to develop new approaches to habitat restoration.

Vegetation – Restoration – Efforts would be made to restore native and/or desirable non-native vegetation in degraded habitats (i.e., exotic plant or seeded communities) in an effort to help create mosaics of native vegetation that are resistant and resilient to disturbance. Given funding limitations and variables such as weather, restoration efforts would be prioritized using a variety of criteria including proximity to existing shrub communities, proximity to sensitive species habitat, proximity to the priority raptor nesting sites, proximity to major roads, proximity to fences, soils and ecological types, and precipitation zone. Management Area 1 would have the highest probability for success. Because of ongoing ground disturbance associated with live firing and off-road maneuver training activities, the BLM would not conduct restoration activities in the OTA; however, the IDARNG would continue their rehabilitation efforts in the OTA, primar-

ily in remnant shrub communities outside the Impact Area.

Vegetation – Wildland Fire Ecology and Management – After the protection of life and property, emphasis for fire suppression efforts would be on minimizing fire sizes in slickspot peppergrass habitat and remnant shrub communities. These priorities would help protect scarce resources that are difficult or impossible to restore. In alternatives B, C, and D, campfires would be restricted to designated areas.

Upland Vegetation – Alternative A

Overall – The focus would be on maintaining the cover and productivity of existing native plant communities. Landscape level habitat improvement would occur predominantly through changes in livestock grazing practices and restrictions in OHV activity. Site-specific habitat improvements would occur through habitat restoration and fuels management projects. While wildfire suppression would be a priority, because relatively limited actions would be taken to change fire regime condition classes, the rate of habitat loss is expected to exceed the rate of habitat improvement and about 50,000 additional acres of remnant shrub habitat would be lost to wildfires.

IDARNG – Current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military maneuver training would continue. The IDARNG would voluntarily avoid maneuver training activities in areas with 10% or greater shrub canopy cover. Administrative assembly areas would be located as needed in non-shrub areas and when authorized by BLM, frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered.

Livestock Grazing – Relatively few areas would be closed to livestock grazing (approximately 3,900 acres). Idaho S&Gs (Appendix 3) would be implemented on the remaining areas to address unsatisfactory vegetative conditions related to current livestock grazing practices. In annual dominated areas, sufficient residual litter would remain after grazing to provide watershed protection.



Vegetation – Fuels Management – Approximately 10,000 acres would be treated with the specific objective of reducing hazardous fuels. Fuels treatments would be limited to isolated areas primarily within the wildland urban interface (WUI), areas adjacent to restoration efforts, and fence lines. In addition, about 136 miles of existing fuel breaks would be maintained or improved to aid wildfire suppression efforts and protect slickspot peppergrass habitat.

Vegetation – Restoration – Approximately 10,000 acres would be restored over the next 20+ years. These efforts would be restricted to those sites having the highest probability of success (Wyoming big sagebrush areas), not necessarily those that would have the greatest benefit to raptor populations. Restoration efforts would primarily occur in proximity to existing shrub communities in Management Areas 1 and 2 with the goal of expanding those communities and protecting them from wildfire by improving the fire regime condition class in restored areas.

Vegetation – Research Areas – No areas would be set aside for scientific investigation.

Vegetation – Noxious Weeds Management – Up to 600 acres would be treated annually for noxious weeds, with an emphasis on SSP habitat and restored areas.

Recreation – Campfires – Emergency closures on campfires would be implemented as fuels and climatic conditions warrant.

Visual Resources – The more restrictive VRM classifications (classes I and II) would be associated with the Snake River Canyon, buffers adjacent to the canyon, and portions of the Oregon Trail. The remaining 93% of the NCA would have the less restrictive Class III or IV ratings.

Upland Vegetation – Alternative B

Overall – A greater emphasis would be placed on protecting remnant shrub communities from wildfire. It is expected that 120,000 acres

of habitat would be treated through a combination of restoration and fuels management projects. It is anticipated that 30,000 acres of remnant shrub communities would be lost to wildfire.

IDARNG – The IDARNG would restrict off-road maneuver training activities to areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover. In addition, off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes on 22,300 acres of the Bravo Area where large stands of remnant shrubs exist (IDARNG Map 3). An expanded maneuver training area of approximately 20,400 acres would be authorized. Although much of this proposed area has burned between 1980 and 2004, maneuver training would avoid remnant shrub communities (approximately 23% of the area). Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the area in non-shrub sites. When authorized by BLM, frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered.

Livestock Grazing – Grazing management would be as described in Alternative A; however, Sandberg bluegrass dominated areas would receive additional management attention in order to reduce, where needed, livestock impacts to Piute ground squirrels.

Vegetation – Fuels Management – Approximately 70,000 additional acres of highly flammable hazardous fuels would be treated through a combination of biological, chemical, or mechanical fuels management projects. Existing fuel breaks would be maintained or improved, and about 8 miles of new fuel breaks would be constructed to aid fire suppression and protect habitat restoration projects.

Vegetation – Noxious Weeds Management – Up to 2,500 acres would be treated for noxious weeds annually. Restored areas and SSP habitat would have priority for treatment.

Vegetation – Research Areas – Up to 1,000 acres would be set aside from most human



activities for research related to improving techniques for habitat restoration in arid upland sites.

Vegetation – Restoration – Restore 50,000 acres of degraded small mammal habitat in targeted areas deemed most beneficial to raptor populations. All high priority areas outside the OTA and other areas, primarily in Management Areas 1 and 2, would be treated. Where unplanned events such as wildfires occur, restoration projects may be used to supplement ESR efforts that are either unsuccessful or require long-term restoration to attain or maintain the desired perennial plant community.

Visual Resources – The entire NCA would have the less restrictive Class III or IV ratings.

Upland Vegetation – Alternative C

Overall – The greatest emphasis would be placed on protecting remnant shrub communities from wildfire, treating 230,000 acres of degraded habitat, and reducing impacts from resource uses such as livestock grazing. This alternative would allow the treatment (restoration, fuels) of essentially all acres outside of the OTA currently identified as non-shrub habitat. However, over the long-term, it is anticipated that an additional 15,000 acres of remnant shrub communities would be lost to wildfire.

IDARNG – The IDARNG would restrict off-road maneuver training activities to areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover. Vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to graveled roads on 18,400 acres (IDARNG Map 4). Existing hardened administrative assembly and bivouac sites in the Bravo Area would continue to be used. Other administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located in areas outside the Bravo Area when needed, and frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM. The OTA boundary would be modified to remove approximately 3,900 acres of occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat from the OTA. Suitable and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat

would still exist in other Maneuver Areas of the OTA and IDARNG would continue to monitor and protect these areas. No new training acreage would be provided.

Livestock Grazing – Livestock would be used to help reduce fuels and weeds in limited areas and on an as-needed basis, primarily in the WUI, and the remainder of the NCA would be closed to grazing.

Vegetation – Fuels Management – Approximately 100,000 acres would be treated. Areas adjacent to remnant shrub stands, restoration projects, and areas that are susceptible to human-caused fires would have the highest priority. Existing fuel breaks would be maintained or improved, and about 12 miles of new fuel breaks would be constructed to aid wildfire suppression in and around habitat restoration projects and slickspot peppergrass habitat.

Vegetation – Noxious Weeds Management – Approximately 4,000 acres would be treated for noxious weed infestations annually. Priorities for treatment would be the same as Alternative B.

Vegetation – Research Areas – Up to 5,000 acres would be set aside from most human activities for research purposes.

Vegetation – Restoration – Approximately 130,000 acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored in areas deemed most beneficial to raptor populations. Where unplanned events such as wildfires occur, restoration projects may be used to supplement ESR efforts that are either unsuccessful or require long-term restoration to attain or maintain the desired perennial plant community.

Visual Resources – A more restrictive VRM classification (Class II) would be associated with the Snake River Canyon, buffers adjacent to the canyon, the Oregon Trail, and the majority of Management Area 1 outside the OTA. The remaining 61% of the NCA would have the less restrictive Class III or IV ratings.



Upland Vegetation – Alternative D – Proposed

Overall – An emphasis would be placed on protecting remnant shrub communities from wildfire with the same level of vegetative treatments as identified in Alternative C. However, over the long-term, because of the increased recreation and other uses, it is anticipated that 30,000 acres of remnant shrub communities would be lost to wildfire.

IDARNG – The IDARNG would restrict off-road maneuver training activities to areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover. To protect an extensive Wyoming big sagebrush community and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat, vehicle maneuver training in the Bravo Area would be the same as identified in Alternative B. An additional 4,100 acres dominated by exotic annual communities (IDARNG Map 5) would be added to the OTA for maneuver training. In the remainder of the OTA, current types, seasons and locations of military training operations would continue; however, the levels of military training would be adjusted to compensate for increased maneuver restrictions. Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located in existing hardened sites adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo

Area and as needed throughout the rest of the area in non-shrub sites. When authorized by BLM, frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered.

Livestock Grazing – Livestock grazing would be as described in Alternative B.

Vegetation – Fuels Management – Fuels management efforts would be as described in Alternative C.

Vegetation – Noxious Weeds Management – Treatment of noxious weeds would be as described in Alternative C.

Vegetation – Research Areas – Research set-aside areas would be as described in Alternative C.

Vegetation – Restoration – Restoration efforts would be as described in Alternative C.

Visual Resources – A more restrictive VRM classification (Class II) would be associated with the Oregon Trail, occurring primarily in Management Area 2. The remaining 89% of the NCA would have the less restrictive Class III or IV ratings.

Upland Vegetation Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Upland Vegetation Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Limit further loss of existing native shrub habitat to no more than 50,000 acres and restore degraded habitat as opportunities allow.	Limit further loss of existing native shrub habitat to no more than 30,000 acres and increase the acres of restored shrub habitat.	Limit further loss of existing native shrub habitat to no more than 15,000 acres and maximize the acres of restored shrub habitat.	Same as Alternative B.
Minimize human impacts to SSS.	SSP and animal habitat would be in good ecological condition where potential allows and human uses would be compatible.		
Management Actions:			
Where actions of permit holders (non-grazing) result in ground disturbance or resource damage in slickspot peppergrass habitat, the permit holder would be responsible for restoring the affected area in conformance with applicable conservation measures from the slickspot peppergrass CA (Appendix 12).			
Nonnative invasive species within or adjacent to SSP sites would be treated.			



Upland Vegetation Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Upland Vegetation Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Surface disturbing activities and/or human developments would be located $\geq \frac{1}{2}$ mile away from occupied sensitive plant habitat.			
Recreation permits would not be issued in occupied sensitive plant habitat.			
Prescribed buffers around known occurrences of SSP species would be a criterion in the route designation process.			
To protect slickspot peppergrass and its habitat from wildfires, BLM would implement the following actions consistent with the slickspot peppergrass CA: (1) protection of known slickspot peppergrass habitats would be a priority over the surrounding management area, (2) BLM would evaluate, create, and maintain fuel breaks around areas where frequent fires threaten occupied and suitable slickspot peppergrass habitats, and (3) aggressive fire suppression tactics would be used when occupied slickspot peppergrass habitats are threatened.			
Approximately 10,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 50,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 130,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	
In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 10,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 70,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 100,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	
Allocation of animal unit months (AUM) would be determined through the S&G process		There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.
Livestock grazing in annual vegetation would be managed to leave sufficient residual litter for watershed protection.		There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.



Upland Vegetation Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Upland Vegetation Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations: (Transportation Map 2) Open – 0 acres Limited – 431,200 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 1,600 acres.	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations: (Transportation Map 3) Open – 0 acres Limited – 426,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 6,400 acres.	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations: (Transportation Map 4) Open – 0 acres Limited – 419,600 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 13,200 acres.	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations: (Transportation Map 5) Open – 0 acres Limited – 428,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 4,400 acres.
No areas would be set aside for scientific investigation.	Up to 1,000 acres would be set aside from most human activities for research purposes.	Up to 5,000 acres would be set aside from most human activities for research purposes.	
Maintain 136 miles of existing fuel breaks (Vegetation Map 7).	Maintain existing fuel breaks and construct approximately 8 miles of new fuel breaks (Vegetation Map 7).	Maintain existing fuel breaks and construct approximately 12 miles of new fuels breaks (Vegetation Map 7).	
Current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military maneuver training would continue (IDARNG Map 2).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres and an additional 20,400 acre maneuver training area would be made available (IDARNG Map 3).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 18,400 acres and 3,900 acres would be removed from the OTA (IDARNG Map 4).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres and an additional 4,100 acres would be made available for training (IDARNG Map 5).
Military training activities would avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.	Military training activities would avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.		
Treat up to 600 acres for noxious weeds annually.	Treat up to 2,500 acres for noxious weeds annually.	Treat up to 4,000 acres for noxious weeds annually.	
No restrictions on campfires except for emergency fire closure.	Campfires would be restricted to improved campsites.		



3.2.9 Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands

Rationale

Water quality is important for human uses and proper ecosystem functioning. Management practices, such as grazing, mineral material extraction, recreation, and vegetation management should be designed to maintain healthy sustainable and functioning ecosystems, as described in the Idaho S&Gs (Appendix 3).

The Clean Water Act of 1977, as amended, requires the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. Under the Act, State-developed Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) and State-approved water quality management plans are required for water bodies containing water quality limited segments. Sinker Creek and Rabbit Creek were the only streams that were originally identified in the Sub-basin assessment as 303(d) listed streams. Sinker Creek was listed for temperature, sediment, and flow alteration, and Rabbit Creek was listed only for sediment. However, the approved TMDL established standards for temperature, but de-listed standards for sediment and flow alteration. Therefore, Rabbit Creek was de-listed, and Sinker Creek is now only listed for temperature.

Standard Operating Procedures

- BLM continuing management mandate would be to authorize only those uses and activities that further compliance with State water quality standards. Uses and activities would be emphasized that address water resource objectives, such as reduction of erosion and sedimentation. Uses and activities would be managed to meet water quality standards on water quality limited stream segments.
- Implementation of water resource objectives and maintenance or improvement of existing water quality would continue. Public lands adjacent to stream segments that are not meeting State water quality standards and/or Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) would be managed to pro-

duce an upward trend in the structure and composition of key riparian/wetland vegetation, as well as the desired physical characteristics of the stream channel.

- Aggressive weed suppression activities would continue at the TWMA. Other riparian areas infested with noxious weeds would also be treated as weeds are identified. Use of biological controls, such as golden loosestrife beetle, would be emphasized wherever feasible.
- To comply with State water quality standards, BLM would take the following actions to address Sinker Creek, the only Section 303(d) listed stream segment in the NCA:
 - o Assess the effect of management actions on the Section 303(d) listed temperature regime of Sinker Creek, or for water quality parameters which may be identified in the future for other water bodies. This would be done at the site-specific scale during evaluations of Groundwater Management Areas. BLM would document where sufficient measures have been implemented to bring listed segments into compliance with water quality standards within a two-year period, as required by current EPA standards.
 - o For water bodies that remain on the 303(d) list and are affected by BLM management activities, BLM would develop or adjust management actions necessary to restore water quality and meet Idaho water quality standards. BLM would work with State agencies and local Tribes to set priorities and timelines for addressing listed water bodies. BLM would also develop Water Quality Restoration Plans to address the water quality parameter at issue.

Description of Alternatives for Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

- BLM would not permit grazing that adversely affects the Idaho springsnail or its



habitat on BLM-managed lands along the Snake River and C.J. Strike Reservoir.

- Grazing practices would be implemented that provide sufficient residual vegetation to improve, restore, and/or maintain hydrologic functioning, and to provide plant species diversity and structure for quality habitat.
- Prescribed fire would be introduced to the wetland; up to 20 acres of decadent wetland vegetation would be burned each year for five years. Fire would be selectively used thereafter on an as-needed site-specific basis.

Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands – Alternative A

Because BLM is required to meet State and Federal water quality standards in all its activities, there would be no difference between alternatives in the way water quality issues are managed. Riparian and wetland areas, including springs and seeps, would be managed to either maintain or improve their proper functioning condition, including the restoration or maintenance of plant species diversity and hydrologic functioning. In addition, noxious and invasive weeds would be reduced through a combination of biological, physical, chemical, and prescribed fire treatments, with biological measures being the preferred method, if feasible.

In addition to meeting the minimum requirements of laws, regulations, and policy mandates that apply to livestock grazing on public lands, additional proactive grazing management actions would be implemented consistent with the intent of the NCA enabling legislation. The Idaho S&Gs (Appendix 3) would continue to be the standard by which progress is evaluated.

Approximately 3,900 acres including Priest Ranch, located downstream from Swan Falls Dam, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment would continue to be closed to livestock grazing to protect wildlife habitat, reduce impacts to Snake River

snail species, and protect cultural and recreational values (Grazing Map 4).

One mile of riparian habitat would be improved for wildlife by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.

Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands – Alternative B

Up to 20 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.

Habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.

Stocking levels, seasons and duration of use would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3), as well as other NCA resource objectives, such as fuels management and habitat restoration. Stocking levels in annual grass pastures and/or allotments would be based on available forage. Perennial pastures, as well as areas having been treated under restoration or rehabilitation projects would be rested from livestock grazing until they achieve the desired resource objective.

Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands – Alternatives C

Up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.

As in Alternative B, habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.

There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.



Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands – Alternative D – Proposed

Up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.

As in Alternative B, habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.

Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would remain closed to livestock grazing, and Kuna Butte (3,400 acres) would be classified as chiefly valuable for purposes other than grazing, including recreation, special status plants, and cultural resources, and would be grazed only intermittently for fuels and weeds reduction purposes (Grazing Map 6). Carrying capacity and utilization would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3).

Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Water Quality, Riparian, and Wetlands.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Maintain or improve the current functioning condition of riparian areas along 101 miles of reservoir, river, or stream shoreline.			
Management Actions:			
Up to 20 acres of decadent wetland vegetation at TWMA would be treated with prescribed fire each year for five years to maintain plant vigor, nutrient cycling, and wildlife habitat value.			
All river, stream, and reservoir shorelines (approximately 101 miles) would be managed to maintain fisheries and aquatic-riparian habitat.			
Eighty (80) acres of the TWMA wetlands would be restored within five (5) years to achieve good ecological condition.			
Biological weed control measures would be initiated whenever feasible. When biological methods are not feasible, BLM would use approved herbicides, tillage, and prescribed fire as appropriate.			
Allocation of AUMs would be determined through the S&G process		There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.
One mile of riparian habitat would be improved for wildlife by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	Up to 20 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	Up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat would be improved by removing unwanted exotic trees and shrubs and planting cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs.	
No pond would be constructed at TWMA.	Habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl would be improved by constructing a 20-acre (approximate) pond at the TWMA.		



Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Water Quality, Riparian, and Wetlands.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 2) Open – 0 acres Limited – 431,200 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 1,600 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 3) Open – 0 acres Limited – 426,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 6,400 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 4) Open – 0 acres Limited – 419,600 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 13,200 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 5) Open – 0 acres Limited – 428,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 4,400 acres

3.2.10 Visual Resources

Rationale

Section 102(8) of FLPMA states that public land would be managed to protect the quality of scenic values and, where appropriate, to preserve and protect certain public land in its natural condition. NEPA Section 101(b) requires Federal agencies to “assure for all Americans...aesthetically pleasing surroundings”. Guidelines for the identification of VRM classes on public land are contained in BLM Manual Handbook 8410-1, *Visual Resource Inventory*. The establishment of VRM classes is based on an evaluation of the scenic qualities of the landscape, public sensitivity toward certain areas (such as certain special management areas, travel corridors, and landscape settings), and the location of affected land from primary travel corridors (distance zoning).

Approved VRM objectives (classes) provide the visual management standards for the approval, design and development of future projects and for rehabilitation of existing projects.

Visual design considerations are incorporated into all surface disturbing projects regardless of size or potential impacts. Emphasis is placed on providing these inputs during the initial planning and design phase so as to minimize costly redesign and mitigation at later phases of project design and develop-

ment. Every effort is made to inform potential applicants of the visual management objectives so visual design considerations can be incorporated into initial planning and design efforts.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Visual Resources are managed according to BLM Manual 8400.
- Future proposals to develop public land or construct improvements would be evaluated to ensure compliance with VRM classifications.

Description of Alternatives

Visual Resources – Alternative A

The narrowest portion of the Snake River Canyon (the Swan Falls area) and 0.5-mile buffer zones associated with certain portions of the Oregon National Historic Trail would continue to be managed to preserve the existing character of the landscape under VRM Class I objectives. Remaining portions of the Snake River Canyon and the area around C.J. Strike Reservoir would continue to be managed as VRM Class II to minimize the level of change to the existing landscape (VRM Map 1).

Visual corridors along Simco Road, State Highways 51, 67, and 78, Interstate 84, and the portion of the NCA located west of the OTA would continue to be managed as a



travel influence zone (VRM Class III), where activities would be managed to partially retain the scenic quality for the benefit of those passing through the area on the major road networks. The remaining areas, accounting for about half of the NCA, would be managed as VRM Class IV to allow for major modifications to the existing landscape (VRM Map 1).

Visual Resources – Alternative B

The most restrictive Class would be VRM Class III (VRM Map 2). To provide for the greatest flexibility in management, the OTA and the area immediately east of the OTA would be Class IV.

Visual Resources – Alternative C

The Snake River Canyon, areas associated with the canyon, and the travel corridor in the western portion of the NCA would be managed under VRM Class II objectives to retain the existing character of the landscape and to minimize the level of change to the landscape (VRM Map 3). The area between the OTA and

the Snake River would be managed to partially retain the characteristic landscape. (VRM Map 3). These areas support the highest recreation use in the NCA. As much as possible, the major part of the Oregon Trail experience is being able to have views unencumbered by modern developments.

The OTA Light Maneuver Area and the remaining upland plateau areas would be managed to partially retain the existing visual values of the area as VRM Class III. The OTA heavy maneuver and Impact Areas would be managed under VRM Class IV.

Visual Resources – Alternative D – Proposed

This alternative would manage areas along the Oregon Trail and the Snake River Canyon as Class II, the OTA as Class IV and remaining areas as Class III (VRM Map 4). This would provide reasonable protection of the Oregon Trail and more flexibility in managing the remainder of the NCA.

Visual Resources Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Visual Resource Management.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Minimize additional impacts to the current visual resources.	Protect the visual resources in important cultural, historic, scenic, and recreation areas.	Emphasize protecting the visual resources of the Snake River Canyon, cultural, historic, and recreation areas.	Emphasize protecting the visual resources of historic areas with a secondary emphasis on the Snake River Canyon.
Management Actions:			
VRM I – 10,300 ac VRM II – 21,400 ac VRM III – 205,700 ac VRM IV – 246,300 ac	VRM I – 0 ac VRM II – 0 ac VRM III – 308,000 ac VRM IV – 175,700 ac	VRM I – 0 ac VRM II – 187,200 ac VRM III – 219,800 ac VRM IV – 76,700 ac	VRM I – 0 ac VRM II – 54,100 ac VRM III – 298,600 ac VRM IV – 131,000 ac

3.2.11 Wild Horses and Burros

The amount of the Black Mountain HMA within the NCA is relatively small (7%) and receives minimal use by wild horses; therefore no change in management is proposed in any of the alternatives. The HMA would be managed in conformance with the Owyhee RMP.

**3.2.12 Idaho Army National Guard
Rationale**

The IDARNG conducts military training activities in the 138,500-acre OTA (all ownerships) under the authority of a MOU, which was last amended in 2002. Among other



things, the 2002 amendment extended the term of the MOU to 30 years, and provided for additional amendments at the conclusion of the RMP process to incorporate decisions that affect operational aspects of the OTA.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Military training activities would be restricted from sensitive resource areas and cultural resources.
- The Impact Area would remain closed to public access for safety purposes. The closure is incorporated as an Ada County ordinance, the purpose of which is to protect the public from the potential safety and health hazards related to unexploded ordnance and munitions-related chemical soil contamination.
- Existing firing ranges, support and maintenance facilities, and utilities, which have been authorized under BLM ROW, would continue to be operated, maintained, and upgraded by IDARNG as authorized.
- The IDARNG would continue OTA road improvements and maintenance, fence repair, sign maintenance, and public notification of training activities as authorized or required in the OTA MOU.

Description of Alternatives for Idaho Army National Guard

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

- For liability reasons, BLM would recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of Interior, that the OTA Impact Area be withdrawn to the Department of Defense (DoD), with the IDARNG having administrative authority for all uses in the area, including livestock grazing.
- In accordance with requirements in the MOU, BLM and the IDARNG would develop Standard Operating Procedures to address and monitor recreational and/or other uses in the OTA.

Idaho Army National Guard – Alternative A

The IDARNG would be authorized to continue current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military training within the current OTA boundary. Soldiers would continue to train on heavy armored and light armored vehicles by conducting live-fire weapons training on ranges established for that purpose (IDARNG Map 1). Helicopter gunnery training, artillery weapons training, individual and special weapons firing, and demolition training would continue within the Impact Area.

Maneuver training would continue in designated maneuver sectors (IDARNG Maps 1 and 2). Vehicle and troop movements would be conducted both on and off-road throughout the entire Maneuver Area. Administrative (non-tactical) travel through maneuver sectors would be restricted to established roads and trails. Heavy maneuver training, which involves movement by multiple tracked vehicles operating in teams, would continue in grassland areas, and would voluntarily avoid areas with heavy shrub cover. These open grassland areas would be designated for off-road tracked and wheeled vehicle tactical maneuvers. Tracked vehicle activity would also occur on established roads and trails. Light maneuver training, which includes wheeled vehicles and infantry operations on-foot, would continue in areas where vegetation includes both grasslands and shrub cover; however, the IDARNG would avoid off-road maneuver training in areas with heavy shrub cover.

Assembly and bivouac areas and logistical and training support activities would occur in non-shrub areas of sufficient size to accommodate the training. This activity consists of heavy vehicle maintenance, large-scale food preparation, refueling of vehicles, communication centers, medical treatment, and other logistical activity. Existing cindered areas in the OTA would be maintained to support many of these operations.

Excavation and engineer dig training would occur in one five-acre site (IDARNG Map 2).



All excavation sites would be filled and smoothed once training is completed.

Temporary short-term drop zones would be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case incidental basis. Training consists of parachute dropping of equipment and/or personnel from cargo aircraft flying at elevations from 800 feet (ft.) to 25,000 ft. above ground level.

Grazing activities within the OTA Maneuver Areas would be coordinated between livestock permittees, the BLM, and the IDARNG.

Recreation activities including, but not limited to, recreational shooting, on road motorized vehicle activities (four wheelers, ATVs, dirt bikes), horseback riding, hiking, and bird watching, could occur in the OTA.

Idaho Army National Guard – Alternative B

Under this alternative, the MOU would be revised to authorize IDARNG to continue military training operations in the OTA, but vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in the 22,300 acre Bravo Area to protect an extensive Wyoming big sagebrush community and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat. This restriction would become effective only after the authorization for expanded Maneuver Area goes into effect on land adjacent to the existing OTA boundary. Off-road vehicle maneuver training in the remainder of the OTA would be restricted to areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover.

This alternative would authorize an expanded maneuver training area of approximately 20,400 acres located adjacent to the southeast corner of the OTA (IDARNG Map 3). This area has been impacted by repeated wildfires, and has limited capability for future restoration projects. This additional maneuver space would enable the IDARNG to rotate its training activities to minimize soil disturbance and better facilitate restoration efforts in other areas. Since most of the area is located east of Simco Road, access across this heavily traveled road causes potential safety concerns. As

such, IDARNG would be required to restrict their crossing of tanks and other heavy equipment to one location near the southern end of proposed expansion area.

Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the NCA in non-shrub areas defined as areas with less than 10% shrub cover. Non-vehicle (foot) training would be authorized throughout the OTA. When authorized by BLM, frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered.

To enhance the ability of the IDARNG to conduct more realistic battlefield excavation and earth moving training, excavation training would occur in the current five-acre Excavation Site with two additional excavation sites of approximately 50 acres each authorized as shown in IDARNG Map 3. The additional sites are located in previously disturbed non-shrub areas.

Temporary or permanent drop zones as described in Alternative A would be authorized by the BLM on a case-by-case basis.

Current recreation activities within the OTA would continue, with the exception of recreational shooting. The Plateau shooting restriction would be expanded to include the northern portion of the OTA and the area north of Moore Road (approximately 99,400 acres). This expansion is predicated on the increasing numbers of recreational shooters that are causing safety hazards with military training, grazing, and recreational activities in the portion of the OTA located north of the Impact Area. Use of firearms within the area for animal damage control and law enforcement would be exempt from the shooting closure. The existing Canyon shooting restriction would be unchanged (Recreation Map 5).

Idaho Army National Guard – Alternative C

Vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to three graveled roads on 18,400 acres as



identified on IDARNG Map 4, with the Snake River Support Facility and existing hardened administrative assembly and bivouac areas still available for military training. Also, the OTA boundary would be modified to remove approximately 3,900 acres of occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat (IDARNG Map 4). Suitable and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat would still exist in other Maneuver Areas of the OTA, and IDARNG would continue to monitor and protect those areas.

As in Alternative B, the IDARNG would be restricted from conducting off-road maneuver training activities in areas with 10% or greater shrub canopy cover.

Existing hardened assembly and bivouac areas in the Bravo Area (IDARNG Map 1) would continue to be used, and assembly and bivouac areas throughout the remaining areas would continue to be operated in non-shrub areas.

Excavation and engineer dig training would continue in only one historically used five acre site as in Alternative A (IDARNG Map 4)

No permanent military drop zones would be authorized in this alternative.

There would be no BLM administered livestock grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes. As a part of the withdrawal of the Impact Area to DoD, the IDARNG would assume the administrative authority for livestock grazing management.

Shooting restrictions would be the same as Alternative B.

Idaho Army National Guard – Alternative D – Proposed

To protect an extensive Wyoming big sagebrush community and occupied slickspot peppergrass habitat vehicle maneuver training in the Bravo Area would be the same as identified in Alternative B. An additional 4,100 acres identified on IDARNG Map 5 would be added to the OTA for maneuver training. In the remainder of the OTA, levels of military training would be adjusted to compensate for increased maneuver restrictions. In the remainder of the OTA, off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to areas with less than 10% shrub canopy cover. Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and where authorized by BLM throughout the rest of the area. When authorized, frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered.

Within the OTA, temporary or permanent drop zones, administrative assembly and bivouac areas and excavation training would be managed as described in Alternative B.

To enhance the ability of the IDARNG to conduct more realistic battlefield excavation and earth moving training, excavation training would continue to be authorized in the current five-acre Excavation Site with one additional excavation site of approximately 50 acres authorized as shown in IDARNG Map 5.

Recreation activities including, but not limited to, on-road motorized vehicle activities, horseback riding, hiking, bird watching, etc. could occur in the OTA. The Canyon and Plateau shooting restriction areas would be the same as Alternative A.



Idaho Army National Guard Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for the IDARNG.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military training would be authorized within the existing OTA boundary.	Authorize military training in a manner that reduces impacts to existing shrub habitats, supports BLM habitat restoration projects, and provides modified and/or new training areas to enhance military training opportunities.	Authorize military training within the existing OTA boundary only to the extent that it accommodates BLM restoration and protection programs.	Same as Alternative B.
Management Actions:			
The IDARNG would continue to have initial attack responsibility for fires within the OTA when training is being conducted. The IDARNG would continue to maintain a BLM authorized firebreak system, and pre-burn fuel concentrations around live-fire target areas as authorized by BLM. Strict controls of ignition sources (pyrotechnics and tracer ammunition) in times of high fire danger would continue.			
Preventing introduction and control of noxious and invasive plant species into the OTA would continue. Enforcement of the IDARNG policy requiring all vehicles from outside the Treasure Valley area to be washed prior to entering the OTA would continue.			
Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of Interior, that the Impact Area of the OTA be withdrawn to the DoD, with the IDARNG having administrative authority for all uses in the area including livestock grazing in the Impact Area.			
Military training activities would voluntarily avoid heavy shrub stands.	Military training activities would avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover.		
Current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military maneuver training would continue (IDARNG Map 2).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres, and an additional 20,400 acre maneuver training area would be made available (IDARNG Map 3).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to three graveled roads in 18,400 acres and 3,900 acres would be removed from the OTA (IDARNG Map 4).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres and an additional 4,100 acres would be made available for training (IDARNG Map 5).



Idaho Army National Guard Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for the IDARNG.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Administrative assembly areas would be located as needed in non-shrub areas. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.	Administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the area in non-shrub sites. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.	Existing hardened administrative assembly and bivouac areas in the Bravo Area would continue to be used, and administrative assembly and bivouac areas would be located as needed in non-shrub areas outside of the Bravo Area. Frequently used sites would be graveled or cindered when authorized by BLM.	Same as Alternative B.
Excavation training would continue in one historically used site (IDARNG Map 2).	Excavation training would continue in the current site and would be authorized in two additional 50-acre sites (IDARNG Map 3).	Same as Alternative A. (IDARNG Map 2 and 4)	Excavation training would continue in the current site and would be authorized in one additional 50-acre site (IDARNG Map 5).
The authorization of short-term/temporary military drop zones would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.	Temporary or permanent military drop zones would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.	No military drop zones would be authorized.	Same as Alternative B.
Current Plateau (37,800 acres) and Canyon (23,500 acres) recreational shooting restriction areas would be retained (Recreation Map 4).	The Canyon shooting restriction area would be retained, and the Plateau shooting restriction area would be enlarged to 99,400 acres (Recreation Map 5).		Same as Alternative A.
Grazing levels would be determined through the S&G process.		There would be no public land grazing administered by BLM except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.



3.2.13 Lands and Realty

Rationale

The NCA Lands and Realty program is composed of discretionary and non-discretionary cases. Non-discretionary cases are application-generated proposals, which BLM is required to process, such as rights-of-way (ROW), land use permits, and various leases. Congress has delegated BLM wide discretionary authority to determine if specific proposals merit authorization, and if so, where and under what terms and conditions an authorization should be granted.

Discretionary cases consist largely of land adjustment proposals that BLM proactively generates, as well as proposals that are filed by outside sources. BLM has full discretion to determine whether to act on specific land adjustment proposals. In its evaluation process, BLM determines whether a proposal is feasible, whether it is in the public interest, and whether sufficient personnel and funding are available to process the case. Land adjustment proposals mainly involve the acquisition of inholdings and the blocking up of Federal ownership to facilitate management and to reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners.

Designation of utility corridors and avoidance areas are non-discretionary actions (also see Utility and Communication Corridors Section 3.2.19). The designation of areas as either suited or unsuited for a specific use is a landscape-scale RMP decision that bears heavily on future ROW applications. An existing utility corridor crosses the extreme eastern corner of the NCA. Although not needed in the near term, the utility industry has requested that an additional corridor be designated. Related to this issue, the NCA possesses certain resources and other values that could be impacted by utility or other types of development. As such, the designation of an avoidance area(s) would be appropriate to protect these sensitive resources.

An issue related to land adjustment is the potential realignment of the NCA boundary. The original NCA boundary was located largely

through negotiations with individual landowners following a general determination of the foraging needs of prairie falcons. The boundary was located on property lines and other administrative boundaries, and does not conform to easily identifiable landmarks, such as roads, railroads, pipelines, transmission lines, etc. Because of this, both land managers and users have difficulty determining the exact boundary in many locations.

Standard Operating Procedures

- All lands and realty proposals undergo site-specific NEPA analysis, and must be compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established. As such, these individual site-specific actions are not RMP decisions, and will not be discussed further.
- Tribal and public access needs would be considered in all land tenure adjustments.
- Important sensitive species and other wildlife habitat would be retained in public ownership, unless a proposed exchange would result in acquisition of higher quality habitat.
- Land containing significant cultural resources would be retained in Federal ownership.
- Lands that are acquired for or that otherwise become a part of the NCA will be managed under the requirements of the NCA-enabling legislation and the management will be consistent with the adjacent NCA public lands as described in the RMP.
- Public lands that are removed from the NCA by virtue of a boundary adjustment will be managed consistent with the BLM land use plan for the adjacent Field Office.

Description of Alternatives for Lands and Realty

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

- Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of Interior, that the Impact Area of the OTA be withdrawn to the DoD, with the IDARNG having administrative au-



thority for all uses in the area including livestock grazing.

Lands and Realty – Alternative A

The existing 43,000-acre avoidance area in Owyhee County (Lands Map 3) would be retained.

Land tenure adjustments (exchanges, purchases, donations, etc.) would continue to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and would be completed only when they are in the public interest and are consistent with the NCA-enabling legislation and the slickspot peppergrass CA.

Lands and Realty – Alternative B

A 105,000-acre avoidance area would be designated along both sides of the canyon from approximately Guffey Bridge to C.J. Strike Dam (Lands Map 4) to protect the visual corridor along the canyon and the Oregon Trail.

BLM would continue with the land tenure adjustment program discussed in Alternative A, and would also seek to complete a land exchange with the State of Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) to consolidate BLM and State lands. State lands are not affected by the NCA-enabling legislation; however, both agencies are signatories to the slickspot peppergrass CA. Thus, no change to slickspot peppergrass management would occur from the exchange, and both BLM and State land management would be enhanced by blocking up their respective ownerships. In general, the land exchange would be on an acre-for-acre

basis and as such existing permittees would continue to graze in their current locations.

Lands and Realty – Alternative C

BLM would establish a 159,000-acre avoidance area (Lands Map 5). BLM would continue with land exchanges and acquisitions as discussed in Alternative A, and with the State land exchange discussed in Alternative B.

The current NCA boundary is difficult to identify on the ground. As such, the public often cannot tell where NCA-related land use restrictions apply. To improve management and facilitate public use, BLM would recommend that Congress realign the NCA boundary onto more easily identifiable boundaries, such as roads, railroads, etc. (Lands Map 6).

Lands and Realty – Alternative D – Proposed

The State land exchange would be completed as discussed in Alternative B and a recommendation to realign the boundary (Lands Map 7) would be made to Congress.

Compatible energy-related ROW would be encouraged in cooperation with and in support of the National Energy Policy, with the exception of wind energy developments. (Also see the Utility and Communication Corridor Section 3.2.19).

An avoidance area would be maintained on the east side of Highway 78, as shown on Lands Map 6, to protect the visual corridor along the Historic Oregon Trail and the visual resources along the Snake River canyon.



Lands and Realty Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Lands and Realty.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
As opportunities arise, public land ownership would be consolidated within the existing NCA boundary to facilitate administration.		Consolidate public land ownership and realign portions of the NCA boundary to enhance administration and improve resource management.	
Management Actions:			
Complete a land exchange with the Idaho Department of Lands to acquire scattered State lands within the NCA to block up State and Federal ownership.			
As opportunities arise, acquire private lands containing significant resources values that enhance overall management within the NCA.			
Land exchanges would enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat, and public lands containing sensitive plant habitat would be retained unless they can be exchanged for lands containing better habitat and/or more important resource values.			
Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of Interior, that the Impact Area of the OTA be withdrawn to the DoD, with the IDARNG having administrative authority for all uses in the area including livestock grazing.			
The existing 43,000-acre avoidance area in Owyhee County (Lands Map 3) would continue to be managed as such.	To provide additional resource protection along the Snake River Canyon, the existing avoidance area would be enlarged to 105,000 acres (Lands Map 4).	A 159,000-acre avoidance area would extend from Guffey Bridge to Hammett to protect the scenic values of the Snake River Canyon and the nearby Oregon Trail (Lands Map 5).	The existing avoidance area would be reduced to delete those areas located west of Highway 78 (Lands Map 6).
The NCA boundary would be unchanged.		Recommend to Congress to realign the NCA boundary to areas more easily identified on the ground (Lands Map 6).	Recommend to Congress to realign the NCA boundary to areas more easily identified on the ground (Lands Map 7).
The existing utility corridor would be retained and no new utility corridors would be designated. All major energy transmission systems would be located within the existing utility corridor.	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided north of, and parallel with the Snake River (Lands Map 2).	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided south of the Snake River Canyon and roughly paralleling Highway 78. (Lands Map 2).	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided south of the Snake River Canyon and roughly paralleling Highway 78. (Lands Map 2).



3.2.14 Livestock Grazing

Rationale

Section 3(a)(3) of the Act establishing the NCA provides that uses of public lands existing on the date of enactment, including livestock grazing, shall be allowed to continue as long as they are consistent with the purposes for which the NCA was established. It is the intent of the BLM to manage livestock grazing in a manner that achieves objectives related to the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats.

Rangelands should be meeting Idaho S&Gs (Appendix 3) or making significant progress toward meeting the standards. When rangelands are meeting standards, they are providing for proper nutrient cycling, hydrologic cycling, and energy flow. Where livestock grazing is found to be a factor in not meeting a standard(s), stocking levels, duration, and season of use, are adjusted to help the area make progress toward meeting the standard(s).

Standard Operating Procedure

- Allotment Assessments/Evaluations and subsequent grazing permit modifications would receive priority based upon the potential level of livestock grazing impacts to other resources.
- Grazing permits would be revised or developed where evaluations show that S&Gs (Appendix 3) are not being met.
- Grazing management practices would:
 - o Provide for periodic rest and/or deferment during the critical growth stages of key forage plant species or allow sufficient re-growth to meet their needs for maintenance and reproduction.
 - o Provide for adequate amounts of vegetative ground cover and litter (determined on an ecological site basis) to support infiltration and soil stability, to protect resources, and to maintain site productivity.
 - o Provide sufficient residual vegetation to shade stream channels, provide cover, capture sediment, and stabilize

stream banks and channels so that streams are properly functioning.

- o Provide sufficient residual vegetation to maintain wetland functions, including dissipating water energy, capturing sediment, recharging ground water, stabilizing shorelines and streambanks, and providing structure for wildlife habitat appropriate to site potential.
- Check for presence of sensitive species (using existing data or new field surveys) before authorizing new projects or activities. Adjust plans as necessary to eliminate or mitigate effects to sensitive species.
- When opportunities arise, consider retiring all or portions of grazing permits in deference to wildlife habitat management.
- Necessary livestock facilities would be authorized to implement changes in grazing management practices (intensity, timing, duration, and distribution).
- Grazing management practices would be designed and scheduled to support vegetation management projects (restoration, fuels and ESR projects).
- When rehabilitated or restored areas are again available for livestock grazing, the area would be reevaluated under S&Gs (Appendix 3) to determine which grazing practices would best provide for the long-term maintenance and protection of the restored area. Likewise, the area would be a priority for annual monitoring to assure the continued viability of the project.

Description of Alternatives for Livestock Grazing

Management Action Common to All Alternatives

- Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of Interior, that the Impact Area of the OTA be withdrawn to the DoD, with the IDARNG having administrative authority for all uses in the area including livestock grazing. There would potentially be increased restrictions imposed to assure permittee safety. These restrictions could include limitations on access and the loca-



tion of watering troughs and range improvements.

Management Actions Common to Alternatives A, B and D

- Stocking levels, seasons and duration of use would be determined through the S&G process, which would include the potential for increases or decreases in authorized AUMs. (Appendix 3).
- Grazing levels and seasons of use would be managed to maintain current populations of SSPs.
- Areas treated for restoration or rehabilitation purposes would be rested from livestock grazing for whatever time is required for adequate recovery and/or seedling establishment. For purposes of analysis, 10 years is the average time areas would be rested from grazing. Although this rest period is significantly longer than would normally be used, it incorporates the assumption that many projects would not be initially successful. Unsuccessful projects would require additional treatment(s), which would significantly extend the period of time the affected area was rested from grazing. In most situations, permittees would resume grazing long before 10 years, but on average; the 10 year assumption provides an adequate basis for analyzing the different effects that the various alternatives would have on livestock grazing.
- BLM would not permit grazing that adversely affects the Idaho springsnail or its habitat on BLM-managed lands along the Snake and Bruneau Rivers or C.J. Strike Reservoir.
- Livestock grazing in pastures that are principally annual vegetation (Grazing Map 7) would be managed to leave sufficient residual litter for watershed protection.

Livestock Grazing – Alternative A

In addition to meeting the minimum requirements of laws, regulations, and policy mandates that apply to livestock grazing on public lands, additional proactive grazing manage-

ment actions would be implemented consistent with the intent of the NCA enabling legislation.

Approximately 3,900 acres, which includes Priest Ranch, located downstream from Swan Falls Dam, TWMA, Gold Isle, Cove Recreation Site, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment would continue to be closed and/or unallocated to protect wildlife habitat, reduce impacts to Snake River wildlife species, and protect cultural and recreational values (Grazing Map 4). Priest Ranch (340 acres) was acquired for wildlife purposes and has never been opened to livestock grazing. TWMA (300 acres) is managed only for wildlife purposes. Gold Isle (120 acres) was acquired for its wildlife values, and was never opened to grazing. Battle Creek Pasture 8B (3,040 acres) is unallocated because it is unfenced and lies along Highway 78 and adjacent to private lands. The adjacent Cove Recreation Site (100+ acres) is closed to grazing.

Although the current BLM grazing preference is about 44,000 AUMs, over the past 10 years, annual actual use has averaged 28,500 AUMs. Approximately 5,000 AUMs are from the OTA Impact Area and under the withdrawal would become the responsibility of the IDARNG. Future changes in grazing preference would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3).

Grazing activities in the OTA Impact Area would be coordinated between BLM, IDARNG, and grazing permittees to minimize conflicts and assure safety.

Livestock Grazing – Alternative B

As in Alternative A, stocking levels, seasons and duration of use would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3), as well as other NCA resource objectives, such as fuels management and habitat restoration. Stocking levels in annual grass pastures and/or allotments would be based on available forage.



Livestock grazing closures would continue as identified in Alternative A. In addition, 3,400 acres at Kuna Butte and the Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek allotment would be closed to grazing, and 1,300 acres along the Snake River downstream from Swan Falls Dam would have a seasonal grazing restriction to reduce conflicts with recreation use during the spring (Grazing Map 5). Forage competition between Piute ground squirrels and livestock would be minimized. Grazing at Kuna Butte for fuels and weeds reduction purposes would continue on an as-needed basis to protect adjacent private lands.

A more aggressive hazardous fuels management and habitat restoration program would be initiated, which would affect stocking levels, seasons of use, and turn out dates. Areas having been treated under restoration or rehabilitation projects and would be rested from livestock grazing until they achieve the desired resource objective.

Approximately 50,000 acres of raptor prey habitat would be restored. Habitat would be restored in those areas deemed most beneficial to raptor populations. Season of use, duration of use, and stocking levels would be managed to improve key forage plant vigor and cover and to meet long-term land management objectives for rangeland health. After a habitat restoration seeding has become established, the BLM authorized officer would determine when, how, and to what extent livestock grazing would be returned to the area to ensure long-term maintenance of habitat quality and watershed health.

In addition, approximately 70,000 acres of hazardous, highly flammable fuels would be treated through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects with the specific objective of reducing fire hazard.

For the purposes of analysis, we are estimating that during the first 10 years the average number of acres annually rested from grazing would increase from 6,000 acres to approxi-

mately 70,000 acres, after which 70,000 acres would be annually rested with livestock grazing resuming once full restoration objectives are met.

This level of rest would result in an average level of 24,100 AUMs including the 5,000 AUMs in the Impact Area that would be administered by the IDARNG. The average of approximately 10 years rest from grazing following vegetation treatment, accounts for those projects that may need to be treated more than one time before meeting objectives (USDA Sept. 2004, p 195; Monsen *et al.* 2004, pp 193-198).

A land exchange with the IDL would be accomplished to facilitate management of the NCA. In general, the State land exchanges would be completed on an acre-for-acre basis and it is expected that existing permittees would continue to graze in their current locations.

Livestock Grazing – Alternative C

There would be no public land grazing outside the OTA Impact Area except for vegetation management purposes (hazardous fuels and weeds reduction); however approximately 5,000 AUMS could be administered by the IDARNG under the withdrawal of the Impact Area.

Livestock Grazing Alternative D – Proposed

As in Alternatives A and B, stocking levels, seasons and duration of use would be determined through the S&G process (Appendix 3), as well as other NCA resource objectives.

Livestock grazing closures would be the same as Alternative B. In addition, 3,400 acres on Kuna Butte would be classified as chiefly valuable for purposes other than grazing, including recreation, special status plants, and cultural resources. As such, the area would be deleted from the Sunnyside Spring/Fall Allotment, and the area would only be grazed for fuels and weeds reduction purposes on an as-needed basis (Grazing Map 6). The 1,300



acres along the Snake River downstream from Swan Falls Dam would have a seasonal grazing restriction to reduce conflicts with recreation use during the spring. Forage competition between Piute ground squirrels and livestock would be minimized.

Livestock grazing management relative to restoration and fuels management projects would be the same as described in Alternative B but over a larger area. During restoration, the adjudicated AUMs for the treated area would be suspended. When a seeding has been determined to be successfully established, the BLM authorized officer would determine through the S&G process (Appendix 3) when, how, and to what extent livestock grazing would be authorized to ensure that future livestock grazing is managed to maintain the long-term habitat quality of the area.

For the purposes of analysis, we are estimating that during the first 10 years the average number of acres annually rested from grazing would increase from 11,500 acres to approximately 115,000 acres, after which 115,000 acres would be annually rested with livestock grazing resuming once restoration objectives have been met.

This level of rest would result in an average level of 20,000 AUMs including the 5,000 AUMs in the Impact Area that would be administered by the IDARNG. The average of approximately 10 years rest from grazing following vegetation treatment, accounts for those projects that may need to be treated more than one time before they meet objectives (USDA 2004, p 195 and Monsen *et al.* 2004, pp 193-198).

Livestock Grazing Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Livestock Grazing.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Livestock grazing would be managed to protect and enhance raptor populations and habitats.			
Common to Alternative A, B, and D Management Actions:			
Grazing would be managed in accordance with conservation measures listed in Appendix 12.			
Where needed, livestock exclosures would be used to protect sensitive plants or their habitat. Existing exclosures would be maintained.			
Livestock grazing within the OTA Impact Area would be administered by IDARNG following the withdrawal of the Impact Area to the DoD.			
Management Actions:			
Grazing levels would be determined through the S&G process		There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A
Livestock grazing in perennial pastures would be managed in accordance with S&Gs.	Livestock grazing in perennial pastures would be managed to minimize impacts to Piute ground squirrels	There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative B.
Livestock grazing in annual grass pastures would leave sufficient residual litter for watershed protection.		There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.



Livestock Grazing Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Livestock Grazing.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Priest Ranch, TWMA, Gold Isle, and Pasture 8B of the Battle Creek Allotment (3,900 acres) would not be grazed (Grazing Map 4).	Same as Alternative A and grazing would be closed on Kuna Butte (3,400 acres) and seasonally restricted on additional 1,300-acres (Grazing Map 5).	There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A, plus Kuna Butte (3,400 acres) would receive only intermittent grazing for fuels and weeds reduction, and grazing would be seasonally restricted on additional 1,300-acres. (Grazing Map 6)
When forage conditions warrant, approximately 200 acres would be grazed by livestock to reduce flammable fuels in the WUI.	When forage conditions warrant, up to 1,500 acres of firebreaks or greenstrips may be grazed to reduce flammable fuels. (Grazing Map 3)		
In addition to habitat restoration projects, 10,000 acres would be treated through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 70,000 acres would be treated through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 100,000 acres would be treated through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects.	
Up to 10,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 50,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 130,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	

3.2.15 Mineral Resources

3.2.15.1 Leasable Minerals

The NCA-enabling legislation closed the area to the operation of the mineral leasing laws.

3.2.15.2 Mineral Materials

Rationale

Section 3(d) of the NCA-enabling Act withdrew public lands in the NCA from entry, appropriation, or disposal under the general mining laws, mineral and geothermal leasing laws, and mineral material disposal laws. The Act provided for the continued extraction of min-

eral materials (sand, gravel, clay, building stone, and decorative rock) through mineral material sales and free use permits from sites that existed prior to the establishment of the NCA; however, no new mineral material sites may be established. BLM manages 16 active mineral material sites. There also exist another 29 previously-operated, but currently inactive sites. The public, communities, and government agencies have an ever-increasing need for mineral materials for the construction, repair and maintenance of homes, businesses, and public facilities, such as roads. Mineral material sales and free use permits would con-



tinue to be authorized to the extent compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established.

Description of Alternatives for Mineral Materials

Mineral Materials – Alternative A

BLM would issue mineral material sales and free use permits from existing active mineral material sites, and those sites would be reauthorized when the existing permits expire if adequate material is available. Also, if compatible with the NCA legislation, currently inactive sites could be reopened for operation if needed to meet the demand for mineral materials.

Mineral Materials – Alternative B

BLM would continue to issue mineral material sales and free use permits from existing mineral material sites, and if adequate material were available, those sites would be reauthorized when the existing permits expire. However, currently inactive sites would not be reopened for operation.

Mineral Materials – Alternative C

Same as Alternative B.

Mineral Materials – Alternative D – Proposed

Same as Alternative A.

Minerals Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Mineral Materials.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objective: Authorize mineral material sales and free use permits from existing active and inactive sites to the extent compatible with the NCA-enabling legislation.			
Management Actions:			
No new mineral material sites would be established.			
Authorize mineral material extraction from compatible active mineral material sites. Inactive sites could be reopened for operation if compatible.	Authorize mineral material extraction from compatible active mineral material sites if adequate material is present; however, inactive sites would not be reopened.		Same as Alternative A

3.2.15.3 Locatable Minerals

There is only one valid mining claim in the NCA, which has never been active. The NCA enabling legislation withdrew the area from further mineral location and disposal.

3.2.16 Recreation

Rationale

The FLPMA recognized recreation as an important component of multiple use management. Dispersed, unstructured activities typify most of the recreational uses occurring across the NCA. BLM Manual 8300 directs the BLM to designate administrative units known as

SRMAs where there is a need for a higher level of managerial presence or investment than is typical of most public land. Public land outside of SRMAs is designated as an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA) where limited resources are required to provide extensive, unstructured recreational activities.

The NCA-enabling legislation states that...“the secretary may provide for visitor use of the public lands in the conservation area to such extent and in such manner as the Secretary considers consistent with the protec-



tion of raptors and raptor habitat, public safety, and the purposes for which the conservation area is established”. Educational values are also recognized in the legislation and are given a major management emphasis. Although the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) approach to management is used to identify areas where certain types of recreation experiences would occur, we do not expect to provide the full range of experiences because the primary management focus in the NCA is raptor and habitat protection (Appendix 15).

It should be noted that existing and proposed shooting restrictions discussed in this section are not hunting regulations, but are meant to aid in achieving the NCA mission of providing for public use of the area consistent with public safety, as required by Section 4(d) of the NCA-enabling Act. Hunting regulations are promulgated by the Idaho Fish and Game Commission to manage wildlife populations, which are the property of the state, in accordance with statutory obligations.

It should also be noted that the proposed alternative (Alternative D) for recreational shooting management has been changed to reflect the existing situation described in Alternative A. This change was promulgated by the concern that a shooting restriction in the northern portion of the OTA could displace recreational use further south into an area of the OTA that accommodates more concentrated military use, and which could potentially increase user conflicts

Standard Operating Procedures

Recreation resources are managed according to BLM Manual 8300.

Description of Alternatives for Recreation

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

- Under all alternatives, a majority of the NCA would continue to be managed for “roaded natural” experience opportunities. This means the visitor could expect some opportunities to affiliate with other users in developed sites, but with some chance

for privacy. Self-reliance on outdoor skills would be of only moderate importance and there would be little challenge and risk. The landscape is mostly natural appearing as viewed from roads and trails. BLM management would be obvious in some areas for on-site control of users. Access and travel would be afforded with conventional motorized vehicles including sedans, trailers, recreation vehicles and motor-homes.

- Most of the NCA would be managed to emphasize undeveloped, motorized recreation experiences with limited facility development. All alternatives assume that most recreation-related improvements would be undertaken to protect resource values and to serve as staging areas for resource-based use, and not as visitor attractions in and of themselves.
- Outreach and public presentations play a significant role in all alternatives. Signs, brochures, maps, kiosks, websites, and other “light handed” measures would be the priority methods used to meet management objectives.
- Commercial recreation use would be authorized; however, no more than 5 land-based and 5 river-based permits would be authorized at any one time.
- Pursuant to section 4(b)(8) of the NCA enabling legislation, future recreation facility developments will be evaluated during the design and construction phase to determine whether fees for public use are appropriate.
- Higby Cave is closed to public entry for safety reasons.
- *Recreational Shooting* – The current Canyon and Plateau shooting restrictions would be retained, as described below (Recreation Map 4). Use of firearms within these areas for animal damage control and law enforcement is exempt from the shooting closure.
 - *Plateau* (37,700 acres) – The portion of the NCA located north of the PacifiCorp powerline, as well as the area located south of the PacifiCorp powerline and west of Swan Falls



Road would be closed year-round to the discharge of rifles and pistols.

- *Snake River Canyon* (23,500 acres) – Closed year-round to the discharge of rifles and pistols within the Snake River Canyon downstream from Gold Isle (near Grandview) except for the deer hunting season in Hunting Unit 40 on the south side of the Snake River. Shotguns and muzzleloaders would be allowed from September 1 to February 14. The width of the closed area is ½ mile from the river or 100 yards back from the canyon rim, whichever is greater.

Recreation – Alternative A

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum – Although the majority of the NCA would continue to be managed for “roaded natural” experience opportunities (467,900 acres), nearly 1,600 acres of opportunities for semi-primitive non-motorized experiences in the western portion of the Snake River Canyon would be provided, and 114,200 acres would be managed for semi-primitive motorized experience.

Facilities – Developed recreational facilities would only be provided at Dedication Point, Cove Recreation Site, and Rabbit Creek Trailhead. These sites would be maintained, improved, and expanded as needed to meet demand.

SRMAs – The five existing and overlapping SRMAs would be maintained and managed for their respective recreational values (Recreation Map 1).

- C.J. Strike Reservoir – 5,500 acres
- Oregon Trail – 3,300 acres
- Snake River BOP – 50,100 acres
- Owyhee Front – 6,300 acres
- Snake River BOP NCA – 483,700 acres

Recreational Shooting – The current Canyon and Plateau shooting restrictions would be retained, as described below (Recreation Map 4). Use of firearms within these areas for ani-

mal damage control and law enforcement are exempt from the shooting closure.

- *Plateau* (37,700 acres) – The portion of the NCA located north of the PacifiCorp powerline, as well as the area located south of the PacifiCorp powerline and west of Swan Falls Road would be closed year-round to the discharge of rifles and pistols.
- *Snake River Canyon* (23,500 acres) – Closed year-round to the discharge of rifles and pistols within the Snake River Canyon downstream from Gold Isle (near Grandview) except for the deer hunting season in Hunting Unit 40 on the south side of the Snake River. Shotguns and muzzle-loaders would be allowed from September 1 to February 14. The width of the closed area is ½ mile from the river or 100 yards back from the canyon rim, whichever is greater.

The following restrictions provide for public safety around the urban interface and high recreation use areas.

Climbing and Rappelling – Rock climbing and rappelling would continue to be prohibited along the Snake River Canyon. These activities not only adversely affect nesting raptors, but the unstable basalt rocks pose a significant safety hazard to those climbing on the cliffs.

Campfires – While specific restrictions may be imposed during high fire danger, there would be no general restrictions on open campfires.

Other Activities – Because of the impacts to the scenic quality in the high use areas of the canyon, the use of paintball guns and equipment would continue to be prohibited within the Snake River Canyon, and within 1/4 mile of the canyon rim.

Recreation activities not specifically mentioned would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine their compatibility with management objectives.



Environmental Education and Interpretation – BLM would continue to provide public information and presentations about the recreational, natural, and cultural resources of the area through a variety of methods. The three existing watchable wildlife sites at Dedication Point, TWMA, and C.J. Strike Reservoir would be maintained and improved as needed to provide the public with opportunities for viewing raptors and other wildlife species in their natural habitats. Management would continue to emphasize public information and education techniques over regulatory methods to reduce user conflicts and increase public awareness, enjoyment, and sensitivity to raptors and other resources values.

Wild and Scenic Rivers (W&SR) – The Snake River currently has 49 miles of river in a free-flowing condition (Recreation Map 11) and unique wildlife values associated with the Snake River Canyon. These two conditions make portions of the Snake River eligible for future consideration for special designation under the W&SR Act. However, Alternative A would make no recommendation about W&SR suitability. It would, however, protect the free-flowing condition and the outstandingly remarkable resource values along these segments of the Snake River. The protection would be similar to that outlined in BLM Manual 8351 for National W&SR Interim Management Protection guidelines.

Recreation – Alternative B

Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) – Although the majority (98%+) of the NCA would continue to be managed for “roaded natural” experience opportunities, nearly 6,900 acres of opportunities for semi-primitive non-motorized experiences in the western portion of the Snake River Canyon and around the Grand View area would be provided (Recreation Map 6).

Facilities – Dedication Point, Cove Recreation Site, and Rabbit Creek Trailhead would be maintained and expanded as needed to meet the increasing demand for developed recreational facilities. Two additional sites would be

developed to meet user demand, with Three Pole and Initial Point being potential locations (Recreation Map 3). As necessary small secondary sites could be developed to accommodate the ever-increasing demand for recreation.

SRMAs – Four new SRMAs would be designated based on significant recreational, scenic or cultural values (Recreation Map 2).

- *Snake River Canyon SRMA* – This SRMA would consist of 22,300 acres in the Snake River Canyon, the boundary of which would include the Snake River Canyon from Guffey Bridge upstream to the town of Grand View. The Snake River Canyon receives a tremendous amount of recreational visitor use throughout the year and the area was previously designated as an Archaeological District based on the number of significant cultural sites and resources.
- *Owyhee Front SRMA* – This SRMA would consist of 6,300 acres of desert habitat located west of State Highway 78. The boundary of this SRMA extends beyond the NCA boundary into the Owyhee Field Office and is managed as a part of the larger SRMA. The recreational values are the primary reason for designation. The Owyhee Front is a major destination site for Off-Highway Vehicle use, both recreational and competitive. This area contains hundreds of miles of trails for motorized and non-motorized activities. If the NCA boundary is realigned as proposed in the Lands and Realty Section, this SRMA would no longer be within the NCA.
- *C.J. Strike SRMA* – This SRMA would consist of 20,000 acres of desert and canyon land surrounding CJ Strike Reservoir. The boundary primarily follows gravel and paved roads that surround the reservoir. The recreational values are the primary reason for designation. Numerous excellent opportunities exist for educating the public about wildlife management programs, the cultural significance of the Oregon Trail, and potential recreational



activities, including flat water boating, wildlife viewing, waterfowl and upland bird hunting, fishing, and camping.

- *Oregon Trail SRMA* – This SRMA would consist of approximately 7,900 acres lying along a one-mile wide (1/2 mile on each side of the Oregon Trail) corridor of the South Alternate of the Oregon Trail. The purpose for the SRMA would be to protect the visual and historic values of the trail.

Recreational Shooting – The existing Canyon shooting restriction would be unchanged. The Plateau shooting restrictions would continue, but the area would be expanded to include the northern portion of the OTA and the area north of Moore Road (Recreation Map 5). This expansion is predicated on the increasing numbers of recreational shooters that are causing safety concerns for military training, grazing, and recreational activities in the portion of the OTA located north of the Impact Area. Use of firearms within the area for animal damage control and law enforcement would be exempt from the shooting closure.

Climbing and Rappelling – The unstable basalt rocks of the Snake River Canyon pose a significant safety hazard to the general public climbing and rappelling on cliffs. These safety concerns also exist in areas away from the canyon where volcanic rocks are exposed. To mitigate these safety issues, rock climbing and rappelling would be prohibited throughout the NCA.

Campfires – Campfires would be limited to established (improved) campsites to reduce the potential for accidental fires that destroy important shrub habitat. Additional restrictions on campfires may be imposed during periods of high fire danger.

Other activities – Same as Alternative A.

Environmental Education and Interpretation – Same as Alternative A, except that a comprehensive interpretive plan, with recommendations for facilities, exhibits, and programs, would be developed within two years to allow

for continuity of messages and information. The three existing watchable wildlife sites would be maintained, and at least two more wildlife-viewing sites would be identified and constructed. By the year 2010, a trail network and vehicle turnouts along main routes would be established to provide additional wildlife viewing opportunities.

W&SR – Two eligible sections of the Snake River (22 miles total) would be recommended suitable for recreation designation under the W&SR Act (Recreation Map 9). The Jackass Butte segment (9 miles) flows from approximately the upstream side of Jackass Butte downstream to the backwaters of Swan Falls Reservoir. The Swan Falls segment (13 miles) flows from just below Swan Falls Dam to the western NCA boundary. Alternative B would provide interim management protection of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of administratively suitable river segments until such time as Congress makes a determination. Refer to BLM Manual 8351 for National W&SR interim management protection guidelines.

Recreation – Alternative C

ROS – Although the majority (97%) of the NCA would continue to be managed for “roaded natural” experience opportunities, this alternative would provide for over 13,200 acres of opportunities for semi-primitive non-motorized experiences in the western portion of the Snake River Canyon and around the Grand View area (Recreation Map 7).

Facilities – Dedication Point and Cove Recreation Site would be maintained and expanded as needed to meet the increasing demand for developed recreational facilities. An additional four sites would be developed to meet user demand, with Three Pole, Black Butte, and Initial Point being possible locations (Recreation Map 3).

SRMAs – The four SRMAs described in Alternative B would be designated; however, if the proposed boundary change is implemented, then the Owyhee Front SRMA would no longer be in the NCA.



Recreational Shooting – Shooting restrictions would be the same as described in Alternative B.

Climbing and Rappelling – Rock climbing and rappelling would be prohibited throughout the NCA.

Campfires – Same as Alternative B.

Other Activities – Same as Alternative B.

Environmental Education and Interpretation – Same as Alternative B, except BLM staff would continue to educate the public about the importance and sensitivity of cultural resources, but cultural resources would not be emphasized through site-specific interpretation in order to provide them better protection. BLM would also continue to provide public information and presentations about recreational and natural resources of the area through a variety of methods.

W&SR – Four eligible sections of the Snake River (49 miles total) would be recommended suitable for recreation designation under the W&SR Act (Recreation Map 10). The Indian Cove segment (9 miles) flows from the eastern NCA boundary to the backwaters of C.J. Strike Reservoir. The Grand View segment (18 miles) flows from C.J. Strike Dam downstream to the upstream side of Jackass Butte. The Jackass Butte segment (9 miles) begins at the end of the Grand View segment and flows downstream to the backwaters of Swan Falls Reservoir. The Grand View and Jackass Butte segments are a continuous free-flowing section of river. The Swan Falls segment (13 miles) flows from just below Swan Falls Dam to the western NCA boundary. Alternative C would provide interim management protection of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of administratively suitable river segments while awaiting a determination by Congress. Refer to BLM Manual 8351 for National W&SR IMP guidelines.

Recreation – Alternative D – Proposed

ROS – The NCA would continue to be managed for “roaded natural” experience opportunities. This alternative would provide for approximately 4,400 acres of opportunities for semi-primitive non-motorized experiences in the western portion of the Snake River Canyon and around the Grand View area (Recreation Map 10).

Facilities – Dedication Point and Cove Recreation Site would be maintained and expanded as needed to meet the increasing demand for developed recreational facilities. An additional five recreation sites would be developed, with Black Butte, Three Pole, Kuna Butte, Guffey Butte, and Initial Point being examples (Recreation Map 3). As necessary small secondary sites could be developed to accommodate the ever-increasing demand for recreation.

SRMAs – Same as Alternative C.

Recreational Shooting – Same as Alternative A.

Climbing and Rappelling – Same as Alternative C.

Campfires – Same as Alternative C.

Other Activities – The use of paintball guns and equipment would continue to be prohibited within the Snake River Canyon and within 1/4 mile of the canyon rim. Other recreational activities not specifically mentioned would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine their compatibility with NCA management objectives.

Environmental Education and Interpretation – Same as Alternative C.

W&SR – The four eligible sections of the Snake River would be recommended as not suitable for inclusion in the W&SR system. The existing NCA legislation would continue to provide protection for the outstandingly remarkable values associated with the Snake



River Canyon. The VRM class II designations along the rivers, the mineral withdrawal, and limitations placed on OHV use will provide

protection for the outstanding remarkable values that would have been protected by a W&SR designation.

Recreation Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Recreation.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives: Common to all Alternatives			
Provide a diversity of quality, resource based recreational opportunities, while protecting resource values, minimizing user conflicts, and promoting public safety.			
Management Actions:			
The Oregon Trail SRMA would restrict OHV use to designated routes that do not impact visual and historic values.			
Recreation permits would not be issued in occupied sensitive plant habitat.			
Objectives: Special Recreation Management Areas			
Current management and emphasis would continue.	Emphasize special recreational, scenic and cultural values where current and projected recreational demand warrants	Emphasize educational and interpretive values	Same as Alternative B
Management Actions: Special Recreation Management Areas			
The five existing SRMA designations would be retained (Recreation Map 1)	Four SRMAs would be designated (Recreation Map 2)	Four SRMAs would be designated; however, if the proposed boundary change is implemented, then the Owyhee Front SRMA would no longer be in the NCA (Recreation Map 2).	
Objectives: Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)			
Provide a range of developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities by maintaining existing amenities (Appendix 15).	Provide a range of developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities with existing and new amenities, and provide new opportunities for non-motorized activities and unrestricted motorized activities in a semi-primitive setting.	Provide a range of developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities with existing and new amenities, and provide increased opportunities for non-motorized activities, and unrestricted motorized activities in a semi-primitive setting.	Provide a range of developed and undeveloped recreation opportunities with existing and new amenities, while emphasizing motorized activities.
Management Actions: ROS Objectives			
The majority of the NCA would be managed in a “roaded natural” setting with limited semi-primitive non-motorized setting opportunities (1,600 acres) (Recreation Map 5).	The majority of the NCA would be managed in a “roaded natural” setting, with an additional 6,400 acres designated for non-motorized setting opportunities (Recreation Map 6).	The majority of the NCA would be managed in a “roaded natural” setting, with an additional 13,200 acres designated for semi-primitive non-motorized setting opportunities (Recreation Map 7).	The NCA would be managed in a “roaded natural” setting, with 4,400 acres designated for semi-primitive non-motorized setting opportunities (Recreation Map 8).



Recreation Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Recreation.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Expand existing developed sites as needed (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.	Additional recreation facilities would be developed at Three Pole and Initial Point (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.	Additional recreation facilities would be developed at Celebration Park Annex, Three Pole, Guffey Butte, and Initial Point (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.	Additional recreation facilities would be developed at Celebration Park Annex, Three Pole, Guffey Butte, Black Butte, and Initial Point (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.
Current Plateau (37,500 acres) and Canyon (23,500 acres) recreational shooting restriction areas would be retained (Recreation Map 4).	The Canyon shooting restriction area would be retained, and the Plateau shooting restriction area would be enlarged to 99,400 acres (Recreation Map 5).		Same as Alternative A.
VRM I – 10,300 ac VRM II – 21,400 ac VRM III – 205,700 ac VRM IV – 246,300 ac	VRM I – 0 ac VRM II – 0 ac VRM III – 308,000 ac VRM IV – 175,700 ac	VRM I – 0 ac VRM II – 187,200 ac VRM III – 219,800 ac VRM IV – 76,700 ac	VRM I – 0 ac VRM II – 54,100 ac VRM III – 298,600 ac VRM IV – 131,000 ac
Objectives: Wild & Scenic Rivers			
Protect outstandingly remarkable values associated with rivers and streams.			
Management Actions: Wild and Scenic Rivers:			
No W&SR suitability recommendation will be made. (Recreation Map 11).	Recommend 22 miles of the Snake River as suitable for inclusion in the W&SR system (Recreation Map 9).	Recommend 49 miles of the Snake River as suitable for inclusion in the W&SR system (Recreation Map 10).	Recommend four segments of the Snake River as not suitable for inclusion in the W&SR system.

3.2.17 Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is not an issue in the NCA. See Wind Energy in Alternatives Considered but not Analyzed.

3.2.18 Transportation

Rationale

Federal regulations require BLM to designate all public lands as either open, limited, or closed to off-highway vehicles (OHV) for the purpose of (1) meeting public demand for OHV activities, (2) protecting natural re-

sources, (3) providing for public health and safety, and (4) minimizing conflicts between user groups. Regulations pertaining to OHV planning include 43 CFR 8342; EO 11644, Use of Off-Road Vehicles on Public lands (37 FR 2877: Feb. 9, 1977); EO 11989, Off-Road Vehicles on Public lands (42 FR 26959h: May 25, 1977).

Standard Operating Procedures

OHV use is managed according to BLM Manual 8300.



Description of Alternatives for Transportation

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

- The 53,000 acre OTA Impact Area is closed to public access for safety reasons, and therefore, is not reflected in the acreages identified as closed below.
- Route designations only apply to BLM managed lands and are not applicable to State and private lands or county roads. In addition, paved and graveled roads shown on Transportation Map 1 were identified as part of the base transportation system, and would remain open.

NCA Road Density

Existing routes in the NCA were inventoried in 2003. The current route density was analyzed using an ArcGIS 9 software program that identified natural breaks in the data that were used to divide the NCA into four route density categories.

Low – <1 mile of road/square mile
Medium – 1 to 2.5 miles of road/square mile
High – 2.5 to 4.5 miles of road/square mile
Very High – >4.5 miles of road/square mile

Route Designation Decision-making Process

Consistent with the FLPMA and with BLM regulations (43 CFR 8342.1), the Boise District has completed a route inventory and is completing an evaluation process to enable specific decisions on whether existing routes should be left open, closed, or limited in a special way. To do this, the BLM would utilize a systematic approach that evaluates inventoried routes for their current uses and conditions, and identifies potential conflicts with natural or cultural resources, and competing uses or users. This tool uses information provided by the BLM, which is then added to and validated by the public.

Hard surfaced, graveled routes and county roads are identified as part of the “base road network” and would remain open under all alternatives. As such, they will not be analyzed further in this process. Established ROW

may be limited to the use for which they were authorized.

Route Analysis (all routes not part of the base road network would be analyzed).

The RMP identifies areas as open, closed or limited in terms of type and timing of vehicle use. A route inventory (first phase of the analysis) was completed in March 2004.

The second phase of analysis includes the identification of potential conflicts with other resources and/or uses. The BLM ID team would identify routes that are:

- located within or near areas of significant resource values,
- routes or areas that receive specific types of use, and
- routes located within or adjacent to specially designated management areas.

These routes would then be analyzed, with input from the public, to determine if they are to remain open or have some restrictions based on type of use and potential impacts.

Route Evaluation Criteria

In order to make systematic and consistent decisions relative to specific route designations, criteria are needed to help BLM determine if the route(s) should be open, limited or closed.

The criteria are identified below; however, it is important to note that identification of specific resources or potentially conflicting uses does not automatically necessitate the closure of the route, but merely identifies the route for further in-depth analysis. As mentioned earlier, the range of alternatives for route designations will not be addressed through the RMP process but through a separate environmental analysis document.

The following questions would be answered during the analysis of each route. The different designations for a route under each alternative



would be based on the collective answers to these questions.

1. Is the route a paved or gravel surface, or an officially recognized ROW, an officially recognized County or State route, or officially recognized as part of a Federal planning document?
2. Is the continued use of the route likely to impact a State or Federal SSS or their habitat, cultural or other specially protected resource, or any special area designations?
3. Is the route a regional route that serves more than one planning sub-region, a principal means of connectivity within a sub-region, providing commercial or private property access?
4. Does the route contribute to recreational opportunities, route network connectivity, public safety, and/or public use access opportunities?
5. Can the commercial, private property or public use of the route be met by another

route within this route’s zone of influence?

6. Can impacts to identified sensitive resources be mitigated or avoided?
7. Would route closure or other mitigation address cumulative effects on other resources not identified as sensitive or specially protected?
8. Is this consistent with the RMP and the intent of the NCA-enabling legislation?

Once the above questions are answered, BLM would develop proposed route designations which would show routes as open, limited, or closed. The public would have an opportunity to review and provide comment on the route designation proposal and alternatives would be based on public comment.

The criteria identified in the following tables reflect those criteria that would be used to evaluate each route. The distances reflect a proximity that requires further analysis and do not necessarily mean a route must be closed if it is within the distance.

Transportation Table 3.1. Route Designation Criteria – Route Use.

Route Use/Need Access	Distance from route (ft)
Range Improvements – Commercial Ranching Facility	
Fence	330
Pipeline	330
Water Sites	330
Cattle Guard	150
Corral	300
Trailing Route	165
Administrative Use Sites	
Monitoring Site	330
Wildlife Resource (guzzlers, exclosures, etc.)	330
Vegetation Treatment (including rehab sites)	330
Weather Station	330
Utilities	
Cell Site/Communication Site	330
Electrical Transmission	330
Irrigation Canal	330
Gas Pipeline	330
Telephone	330
Mining	
Mining Claim	330
Mineral Material Site	330



Transportation Table 3.1. Route Designation Criteria – Route Use.

Route Use/Need Access	Distance from route (ft)
Tribal	
Treaty Areas	N/A
Traditional Use Areas (significant landform features such as caves, mesas, etc)	1320
Private Property	
Access	330
Military	
Facility/Training Site	330
Access	330
Public Use Site Access/Interpretive Panel	
Road Kiosk, Campground, Etc	330
Special Recreation Use Permits	
Commercial	1,320
Competitive	1,320
Large Group	1,320
RS 2477	
Assertion	N/A
Recognized Claim	N/A

Transportation Table 3.2. Route Designation Criteria – Concerns.

Environmental/Cultural Concerns	Distance from route (ft)
High Density Route Polygon (Habitat Fragmentation)	
Over 4 miles per square mile	N/A
303d Streams	
In, Along	165
Proximate (within ½ mile)	2,640
Raptors	
Nesting Area	1,650
Ground Nesting or Burrowing Raptors	1,650
Other Sensitive Wildlife Species	
Birds (Type 3) Habitat	660
Reptiles (Type 3) Habitat	660
Special Status Species (Plant and Animal)	
Types 1 and 2 in or through	2,640
Types 3-5 in or through	1,320
Riparian	
In, Along (within the banks or high water mark)	165
Cross stream or in the floodplain	165
Soils	
Route subject to erosion concerns *	N/A
Cultural Sites	
Proximate Register/Register Eligible/Undetermined	1,650
Through Register/Register Eligible/Undetermined	165
Special Recreation Management Area	
In or Through a Proposed	330



Transportation Table 3.3. Route Designation Criteria – Current Use.

Current Recreational Use/Users List	Type of Use *
Equestrian	Primary/Secondary
Mountain Biking	Primary/Secondary
OHV Hill Climbing	Primary/Secondary
Parking Area/Trailhead	Primary/Secondary
Snowmobile	Primary/Secondary
Special Recreation Use Permits	Primary/Secondary
Technical 4 WD/Rockcrawling	Primary/Secondary
Boating/Water/Fishing Access	Primary/Secondary
Camping	Secondary
Hiking – Popular Area	Primary/Secondary
Hunting – Popular Area	Primary/Secondary
Motorcycle Trials	Primary/Secondary
ATV and Motorcycle Trail Riding	Primary/Secondary
Mountain/Rock Climbing	Secondary
Public Use Site Access/Interpretive Panel	Primary/Secondary
Rockhounding	Primary/Secondary
Shooting	Primary/Secondary
Vistas, Sightseeing, Photography	Primary/Secondary
WSA Access	Secondary
Wildlife Watching	Primary/Secondary
Special Recreation Use Permit – Commercial	Primary/Secondary
Special Recreation Use Permit – Competitive	Primary/Secondary
Special Recreation Use Permit – Large Group	Primary/Secondary
Other	Primary/Secondary

*Primary = Route used for a specific activity
Secondary = Route used to get to a specific activity

Definitions:

Surfaced Road – Routes that have received substantial construction to the road bed including grading, crowning and drainage features (i.e., ditches, water turnouts, culverts, etc.), and emplacement of foreign surface material (i.e., asphalt, concrete, chip seal, road base material, etc.).

Right-of-Way (ROW) – A legal document that grants the holder the right to build, maintain and terminate a linear project across public land, wherein the U.S. retains the right to grant other compatible uses over and upon the same land. If a right-of-way grant does not specifically authorize access to the authorized facilities, the right of access by the grantee is assumed. To protect special resource values; however, BLM may restrict the access to a particular season(s) or by type of vehicle.

Water – Frequent Access – These features include pipelines and pipeline valves, water haul routes, wells, etc. that require frequent use, monitoring, or maintenance.

Water – Infrequent Access – These features include stock ponds, troughs, developed springs that require infrequent use, monitoring, or maintenance.

Representative Vegetation Community – Vegetation communities that are used as reference community types based on integrity and composition of vegetation, proximity to site potential and climax conditions; normally display a lack of anthropogenic disturbance and have received little or no livestock grazing.



Transportation – Alternative A

OHV designations would be as follows (Transportation Map 2):

- Open – 0 acres
- Limited – 431,200 acres
- Closed – 1,600 acres

In “limited” areas, motorized vehicles would be limited to designated routes, with no off-road cross-country travel. Until the route designation process is complete, all vehicles would remain on existing routes as identified in the 2004 BLM road inventory (Transportation Map 1).

Areas closed to motorized vehicles include:

- Halverson Bar – 1,150 acres extending from the Canyon/Ada County line upstream along the north side of the Snake River to approximately the USGS gauging station.
- TWMA – 320 acres.
- Gold Isle – 150 acres

The current route density in the NCA would be maintained as follows:

- Low (<1 mile/square mile) – 23%.
- Medium (1 – 2.5 miles/square mile) – 37 %
- High (2.5 – 4.5 miles/square mile) – 31%
- Very High (>4.5 miles/square mile) – 9%

Transportation – Alternative B

Access to the majority of the NCA on the current road network would continue, while providing additional areas for non-motorized activities.

The following OHV designations would be made (Transportation Map 3):

- Open – 0 acres
- Limited – 426,400 acres
- Closed – 6,400 acres

Areas closed to motorized vehicles would include:

- Halverson Bar – 1,150 acres.
- Guffey Butte – 2,000 acres – includes the majority of the butte.
- Wees Bar – 1,200 acres on the south side of the Snake River from approximately Con Shea Basin upstream to Priest Ranch.
- TWMA – 320 acres.
- Gold Isle – 150 acres
- Cove – 1,600 acres – includes land south of the “Bruneau Narrows,” east of Cove Recreation Site, north of State Highway 78, and west of the gravel road along the Oregon Trail South Alternate east of Cottonwood Campground.

The designated route network would continue access to most places in the NCA, but route densities would be modified to levels determined through the Route Designation process.

Up to 20 miles of non-motorized trails would be designated and signed to create a trail network.

Transportation – Alternative C

The management objective for this alternative would be to provide for non-motorized activities, and to minimize unnecessary routes while allowing continued access to the majority of the NCA.

The following OHV designations would be made (Transportation Map 4):

- Open – 0 acres
- Limited – 419,600 acres
- Closed – 13,200 acres

Areas closed to motorized vehicles would include:

- Halverson Bar – 1,150 acres
- Guffey Butte – 2,000 acres
- Wees Bar – 1,200 acres
- TWMA – 320 acres
- Gold Isle – 150 acres
- Cove – 1,600 acres



- Tick Basin – 1,900 acres on the north side of the Snake River from roughly Ball Point upstream to Tom Draw.
- Bigfoot Bar – 4,850 acres – includes lands on the north side of the Snake River from roughly Tom Draw upstream to the lower end of Bigfoot Bar.

The designated route network would continue access to most places in the NCA, but route densities would be modified to levels determined through the Route Designation process.

Up to 40 miles of non-motorized trails would be designated and signed to create a trail network.

Transportation – Alternative D – Proposed

Additional areas for non-motorized activities would be provided. Unnecessary routes would be reduced while allowing continued access to the majority of the NCA. The current Canyon Creek OHV area is included in the OHV limited designation, however the designation would not take effect for one year following the signing of the ROD to give a qualified entity or local government time to develop an acceptable management plan for the area. An acceptable management plan would include responsibility for management, maintenance

and supervision of the area and would prevent impacts from spreading outside of the area. If this does not occur within one year, OHV cross country travel would no longer be allowed.

The following OHV designations would be made (Transportation Map 5):

- Open – 0 acres
- Limited – 428,400 acres
- Closed – 4,400 acres

Areas closed to motorized vehicles would include:

- Halverson Bar – 1,150 acres
- Wees Bar – 1,200 acres
- TWMA – 320 acres
- Cove – 1,600 acres
- Gold Isle – 150 acres

The designated route network would continue access to most places in the NCA, but route densities would be modified to levels determined through the Route Designation process.

Up to 20 miles of non-motorized trails would be designated and signed to create a trail network.

Transportation Table 3.4. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Transportation.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Provide motorized access to the majority of the NCA with limited non-motorized opportunities.	Provide motorized access to the majority of the NCA while reducing the number of unnecessary routes, and increasing non-motorized opportunities.	Provide motorized access to the majority of the NCA while minimizing unnecessary routes and providing a diversity of non-motorized opportunities.	Same as Alternative B
Management Actions:			
Vehicles would be restricted to designated routes in the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District.			



Transportation Table 3.4. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Transportation.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 2) Open – 0 acres Limited – 431,200 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 1,600 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 3) Open – 0 acres Limited – 426,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 6,400 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 4) Open – 0 acres Limited – 419,600 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 13,200 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 5) Open – 0 acres Limited – 428,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 4,400 acres
Current route density would be maintained as follows: Low – 23%. Medium – 37 % High – 31% Very High – 9%	The designated route network would continue access to most places in the NCA, but route densities would be modified to levels determined through the Route Designation process.	Same as Alternative B.	Same as Alternative B.

3.2.19 Utility and Communication Corridors (Land Use Authorizations)

Also see Lands and Realty Section 3.2.13.

Rationale

The oil and gas, utility, and communication industries have a continuing need to upgrade and increase their infrastructure developments. As such, BLM would continue to receive ROW applications for major developments, such as communication sites, electric transmission lines, oil and gas pipelines, and wind energy developments. Currently, one utility corridor crosses the extreme eastern corner of the NCA. Future ROW applications, however, may propose developments that have a greater impact on the NCA. It is important to identify areas where developments of this type may be compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established, and where they would be unacceptable.

It should be noted that wind energy development has been determined to be incompatible with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats,

and as such, would not be authorized in the NCA.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Land containing significant cultural resources would be protected during any use authorization project installation or during use.
- Tribal interests and public access needs would be considered in all utility and communication site grants.
- Important sensitive species and other wildlife habitat would be protected and monitored if a land use authorization were granted.
- VRM I and II management areas would not be available for utility corridors

Description of Alternatives for Utility and Communication Corridors

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

- Land use authorizations would enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat



- All land use authorizations would require weed control measures.
- To protect occupied habitat SSS adjacent to construction activities, temporary or permanent project fencing would be required prior to the implementation of ground disturbing activities.
- New, renewing or amending ROW holders or other related permit holders would be required to reseed disturbed areas with perennial vegetation. In occupied and suitable slickspot peppergrass habitat, they would be required to conform to applicable conservation measures from the slickspot peppergrass CA (Appendix 12).
- Surface disturbing activities and/or human developments would be located with an appropriate buffer to protect occupied sensitive plant habitat.
- Surface disturbing activities would not be authorized in areas affecting SSS unless the action could be appropriately mitigated.

Utility and Communication Corridors – Alternative A

No new utility corridors would be designated and to the extent practical, all major utility transportation systems would be located within the existing utility corridor.

The existing 43,000-acre avoidance area (Lands Map 3) would continue to be managed as such. The compatibility of ROW applications outside the avoidance area would be evaluated on a site-specific basis. Surface disturbing activities would not be authorized in areas affecting SSS unless the action could be appropriately mitigated. The five existing communication sites would be maintained with new communication site proposals evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Utility and Communication Corridors – Alternative B

An emphasis on habitat protection and restoration would be provided with limited development. Energy related ROWs would be encouraged, consistent with the National Energy Policy. A utility ROW corridor (Lands Map 2)

north of, and parallel with, the Snake River would be designated. This new corridor would not only streamline the ROW application process but would confine major utilities to a designated area.

To protect the scenic values of the Snake River Canyon and the nearby Oregon Trail (Lands Map 4) a 105,000-acre avoidance area would be designated.

Existing communication sites would be retained and new sites would be limited in number with an emphasis on co-location of communication site users.

Utility and Communication Corridors – Alternative C

BLM would maintain the existing utility ROW corridor, and would provide potential for a new ROW corridor south of the Snake River Canyon and roughly parallel with Highway 78. The establishment of a new corridor (Lands Map 2) would streamline ROW application processing, and would confine major transmission ROW to a designated area.

A 159,000-acre avoidance area would extend from Guffey Bridge to Hammett to protect the scenic values of the Snake River Canyon and nearby Oregon Trail (Lands Map 5).

Utility and Communication Corridors – Alternative D – Proposed

BLM would maintain the existing utility ROW corridor, and would provide for a new ROW corridor south of the Snake River Canyon and roughly parallel with Highway 78 (Lands Map 2). This corridor would differ from Alternative C in that the corridor would run parallel with and approximately two miles north of the Saylor Creek Bombing Range to eliminate impacts to existing air space restrictions. The establishment of a new corridor would be consistent with the WVEC Study that will analyze the future energy transmission needs across the west. This would streamline ROW application processing, and would confine major transmission ROW to a designated area.



The avoidance area would be the same as Alternative A. The compatibility of ROW applications outside the avoidance area would be evaluated on a site-specific basis. Surface disturbing activities would not be authorized in

areas affecting SSS unless the action could be appropriately mitigated. The five existing communication sites would be maintained with new communication site proposals evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Utility and Communication Corridor Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Utility and Communication Corridors.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives: ROW applications for utility developments would be compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established, emphasizing habitat protection with economic development.			
Management Actions:			
The existing utility corridor would be retained and no new utility corridors would be designated. All major utility transmission systems would be located within the existing utility corridor.	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided north of, and parallel with the Snake River (Lands Map 2).	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided south of the Snake River Canyon and roughly paralleling Highway 78 (Lands Map 2).	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided south of the Snake River Canyon and roughly paralleling Highway 78 (Lands Map 2).
The five existing communication sites would be retained with new authorizations co-located in existing areas.			The five existing communication sites would be retained and new locations would be considered on a case-by-case basis.
The existing 43,000-acre avoidance area (Lands Map 3) would continue.	The existing avoidance area would be enlarged to 105,000 acres (Lands Map 4).	A 159,000-acre avoidance area would extend from Guffey Bridge to Hammett (Lands Map 5).	Same as Alternative A

3.2.20 Wildland Fire Ecology and Management

Rationale

In order to conserve a dwindling ecosystem component, remnant shrub habitat would have the highest priority for protection after human life and property, including the WUI.

All wildland fires would receive an AMR, which allows for a full range of management actions ranging from full, aggressive, and costly suppression tactics, to a confine or contain strategy using existing barriers, predicted weather changes, or minimal suppression activities.

Wildland Fire Use is the practice of using wildland fire for resource benefit, while limiting the cost of fire suppression (USDA& USDI 2003). Because of the extensive shrub loss that has occurred in the NCA, wildland fire use projects would not be used. AMR would continue to be used first and foremost to protect life and property while emphasizing firefighter and public safety. AMR is adaptable and appropriate in providing for a broad range of responses based on hazards, threats, resource management objectives, values at risk, tactical concerns, etc.



Standard Operating Procedures

- Extinguish fires with the least possible surface disturbance.
- In order to minimize risk to firefighters and to reduce wildland fire suppression costs, allow wildland fires to burn to natural fuel breaks where and when appropriate.
- Follow management direction in the District Oregon Trail Management Plan and the BOP NCA Cultural Resource Management Plan
- Conduct Fire suppression and fuels management activities in accordance with conservation agreements and recovery plans.
- Use Minimum Impact Suppression Tactics (MIST) when appropriate to mitigate potential adverse effects of fire suppression on values at risk. Areas where MIST may be used include slickspot peppergrass management areas, cultural sites such as the Oregon Trail, areas with highly erosive soils, and suitable wild and scenic river corridors.
- Minimize the spread of annual grasses and other invasive non-native species.
- Where possible, equipment used for suppression and prescribed fire would be cleaned before arriving on-site; vehicle wash stations set up in base camps. Staging areas and fire camps should be located on sites free of invasive non-native species.
- Support tribal trust obligations with fire management activities or otherwise address Tribal interests.
- Fuels projects would be designed to protect active raptor nests with an appropriate species specific buffer.
- Pre- and post-burn treatments would be used to reduce the overall threat of invasive non-native species establishment and spread
- Support fire hazard reduction efforts to reduce fire hazards in and around WUI areas, and in areas of high resource value.
- The IDARNG would be responsible for providing initial attack on all fires within the OTA.

Description of Alternatives for Wildland Fire Ecology and Management

Management Actions Common to All Alternatives

- Fire suppression priorities would be as follows:
 1. Threats to human life and structures in the WUI
 2. Remnant shrub habitat, slickspot peppergrass sites, and habitat restoration projects.
 3. Fire-altered areas dominated by annual grasses (cheatgrass)
- Habitat restoration would improve the overall health of the vegetation and return the Fire Regime Condition Classes (FRCC) closer to historic states. To this end, native and adapted non-native species would be seeded with low soil-disturbance techniques to meet the habitat needs of raptors and their prey base, reduce invasive species and provide improved fire resistance. Mechanical, chemical, and biological treatments, as well as prescribed fire (when conducted under appropriate conditions), would be used to help restore native plant communities and reduce the size and occurrence of future wildfires.
- FRCC classifications would be reassessed every ten years or as changes vegetation conditions warrant.
- Fire suppression in slickspot peppergrass management areas will be in conformance with the slickspot peppergrass CA or amendments thereto.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management – Alternative A

Over the long-term approximately 50,000 additional acres of remnant shrub habitat could burn if climate and fire ignition frequency trends continue. Hazardous fuels would be reduced on about 500 acres annually, including greenstrips, firebreaks, reseedings, weed treatments, etc. About 136 miles of existing fuel breaks would be maintained or improved to aid fire suppression efforts. Remnant sagebrush habitat supports a substantial amount of



the remaining slickspot peppergrass populations.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management – Alternative B

Over the long-term approximately 30,000 acres of additional remnant shrub habitat would burn if current climate and fire ignition trends continue, and if the fuels reduction and habitat restoration described in this alternative are effective in reducing fire sizes. The acres of restored shrub habitat would be increased. A greater emphasis would be placed on protecting shrub communities from wildfire. It is expected that up to 50,000-acres of degraded habitat would be restored with an emphasis toward reducing the fire return intervals and improving SSS and small mammal habitats. An additional 70,000 acres would be treated through hazardous fuels reduction projects, including greenstrips, firebreaks, reseedings, weed treatments, etc. About 144 miles of fuel breaks would be maintained or improved to aid fire suppression efforts. Fuels projects would be accomplished using a combination of prescribed fire, chemical, biological (including grazing), and mechanical treatments. This action would include creating strategically located fuel breaks to protect high-value resources, such as existing shrub communities and WUI areas.

Campfires would be restricted to improved campsites.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management – Alternative C

It is expected that up to 130,000 acres of degraded habitat would be restored, which would result in increasing the interval between fires and enhancing habitat for SSS and small mammals. An additional 100,000 acres would be treated through hazardous fuels reduction projects, including greenstrips, firebreaks, reseedings, weed treatments, etc. About 148 miles of fuel breaks would be maintained or improved to aid fire suppression efforts. Fuels projects would be accomplished using a combination of prescribed fire, chemical, biological (including grazing), and mechanical treatments. The number of acres burned would continue to average around 5,000 acres a year; however, net shrub loss would be limited to 15,000 acres over the long-term due to enhanced protection of remnant shrub stands and restoration efforts in other areas that would reduce fire size over the long-term.

Campfires would be restricted as described in Alternative B.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management – Alternative D – Proposed

Same as Alternative C.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Wildland Fire Ecology and Management.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objective:			
Protection of native plant communities would be one of the highest priorities for fire suppression.			
Common to All Management Actions:			
When setting specific suppression objectives the following criteria would be used in the event of multiple ignitions: (1) suppress wildland fires that threaten life and property in the WUI, (2) suppress fires that threaten important habitat, such as shrub communities, and (3) suppress fires in other areas (i.e., cheatgrass, crested wheat).			
The NCA would be designated as “not appropriate” for wildland fire use for resource benefit.			
The use of surface disturbing equipment would be limited during fire suppression on areas containing significant natural or cultural values, including native shrub communities, the Oregon Trail, and identified paleontological resources.			
All burned areas would be evaluated for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation with the goal of restoring shrub and perennial grass communities.			



Wildland Fire Ecology and Management Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Wildland Fire Ecology and Management.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Where appropriate, prescribed fire, herbicides and mechanical treatments would continue to be used on emergency stabilization and rehabilitation and restoration projects.			
Restoration and emergency stabilization and rehabilitation efforts would be applied with the intent of improving the existing fire regime condition class (FRCC).			
To protect slickspot peppergrass and its habitat from wildfires, BLM would implement the following actions consistent with the slickspot peppergrass CA: (1) protection of occupied slickspot peppergrass habitats would be a priority over the surrounding management area, (2) BLM would evaluate, create, and maintain fuel breaks around areas where frequent fires threaten occupied and suitable slickspot peppergrass habitats, and (3) aggressive fire suppression tactics would be used when occupied slickspot peppergrass habitats are threatened.			
Management Actions:			
Maintain 136 miles of existing fuel breaks (Vegetation Map 7).	Maintain existing fuel breaks and construct approximately 8 miles of fuel breaks (Vegetation Map 7).	Maintain existing fuel breaks and construct approximately 12 miles of fuels (Vegetation Map 7).	
10,000 acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 50,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	Approximately 130,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal habitat would be restored.	
In addition to habitat restoration projects, 10,000 acres of annual grasslands would be treated through fuels reduction/management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 70,000 acres would be treated through fuels reduction/management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 100,000 acres of annual grasslands would be treated through fuels reduction/management projects.	
There would be no restrictions on open campfires except during emergency fire situations.	Campfires would be restricted to established (improved) campsites.		
Grazing would be used on a site-specific basis for hazardous fuel reduction and maintenance of fuels management projects.			

3.2.21 Special Designations
See Recreation Section 3.2.16.

3.2.22 Social and Economic Conditions
3.2.22.1 Economic Conditions

Rationale

The FLPMA directs BLM to manage public lands for multiple use purposes. This mandate, however, was modified by the 1993 NCA-

enabling legislation (PL 103-64), which requires BLM to provide for a multitude of uses, so long as each use is compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established. The legislation, however, specifically withdrew the area from certain activities, including: (1) entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws (Desert Land Entry, Carey Act, State of Idaho Admissions Act,



etc.), (2) locatable mineral disposal, (3) mineral and geothermal leasing, and (4) mineral material disposal, with the exception that mineral materials could continue to be made available from existing sites to the extent compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established.

Description of Alternatives for Economic Conditions

Management actions that have a socio-economic impact come from the various resource programs and there are no specific management actions developed specifically for socio-economic development.

Economics Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Social and Economic Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Provide opportunities for utilization of natural resources at the current levels.	Expand restoration while providing increased opportunities for utilization of natural resources.	Enhanced restoration is a priority.	Enhanced restoration while protecting long-term social and economic opportunities at the expense of short- and mid-term economic opportunities.
Management Actions:			
Grazing levels would be determined through the S&G process.	Allocation of AUMs would be determined through the S&G process and would be based on achieving other resource objectives associated with the purposes of the NCA.	There would be no public land grazing except for fuels and weeds management purposes.	Same as Alternative A.
Authorize mineral material extraction from compatible active mineral sites. Inactive sites could be reopened for operation if compatible (45 existing sites would continue to be made available of which 16 are currently being used).	Authorize mineral material extraction from compatible active mineral material sites if adequate material is present; however, inactive sites would not be reopened. (16 currently active mineral sites would be available)		Same As Alternative A.
Current types, levels, seasons, locations, etc. of military maneuver training would continue (IDARNG Map 2).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres and an additional 20,400 acre maneuver training area would be made available (IDARNG Map 3).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 18,400 acres and 3,900 acres would be removed from the OTA (IDARNG Map 4).	Off-road vehicle maneuver training would be restricted to designated routes in 22,300 acres and an additional 4,100 acres would be made available for training (IDARNG Map 5).



Economics Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Social and Economic Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Approximately 10,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat would be restored.	Approximately 50,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat would be restored.	Approximately 130,000 targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat would be restored.	
In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 10,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 70,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	In addition to habitat restoration projects, approximately 100,000 acres would be treated through a combination of chemical, biological, and mechanical fuels management projects.	
The existing utility corridor would be retained and no new utility corridors would be designated. All major utility transmission systems would be located within the existing utility corridor.	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided north of, and parallel with the Snake River (Lands Map 2).	The existing utility corridor would be retained and a new utility corridor would be provided south of the Snake River Canyon and roughly paralleling Highway 78 (Lands Map 2).	Same as Alternative A.
The five existing communication sites would be retained with new authorizations co-located in existing areas.			The five existing communication sites would be retained and new locations would be considered on a case-by-case basis.
The NCA boundary would be unchanged.	Recommend to Congress to realign the NCA boundary to areas more easily identified on the ground (Lands Map 6).		Recommend to Congress to realign the NCA boundary to areas more easily identified on the ground (Lands Map 7).



Economics Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Social and Economic Resources.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Expand existing developed sites as needed (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.	Additional recreation facilities would be developed at Three Pole and Initial Point (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.	Additional recreation facilities would be developed at Celebration Park Annex, Three Pole, Guffey Butte, and Initial Point (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.	Additional recreation facilities would be developed at Celebration Park Annex, Three Pole, Guffey Butte, Black Butte, and Initial Point (Recreation Map 3). The rest of the NCA would remain in an undeveloped condition to provide for dispersed recreational opportunities and experiences.
Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 2) Open – 0 acres Limited – 431,200 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 1,600 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 3) Open – 0 acres Limited – 426,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 6,400 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 4) Open – 0 acres Limited – 419,600 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 13,200 acres	Vehicle access would be managed according to the following OHV Area Designations (Transportation Map 5) Open – 0 acres Limited – 428,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 4,400 acres

3.2.22.2 Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice will not be affected by any of the RMP Alternatives. See Social and Economics Sections 2.2.22 in Chapter 2, Affected Environment.

3.2.22.3 Hazardous Materials

Rationale

BLM is committed to reducing hazardous material situations on public lands. Federal agencies are required to comply with all Federal and State laws, regulations and policies regarding hazardous materials on public lands. These include:

- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended 1976/1980 (42 USC 6901f).

- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) 1980 (42 USC 9601f).
- Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) 1987 (33 USC 1251-1387).
- Clean Air Act, as amended 1977/1990 (42 USC 7418).
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act, as amended 1976 (43 USC 1701f).

Standard Operating Procedures

- Utilize educational programs for public awareness of the impacts of hazardous materials on health, safety, and the environment.
- Law enforcement would be utilized for investigation and apprehension, which would aid in the cost recovery phase of these actions.



- All authorizations providing for the use or storage of, or the potential for, hazardous materials would include special stipulations to assure human and natural resource safety.
- All hazardous material incidents would be responded to in a timely and efficient manner that provides for human safety and environmental protection.

alternatives in accordance with laws, regulations, and policies. Under all alternatives, consistent with DOI policy, the OTA Impact Area would be withdrawn to the DoD. The withdrawal is proposed due to past and current military actions at the site and the potential liabilities associated with those actions. This is particularly true due to the presence of unexploded ordnance associated with military activity.

Description of Alternatives for Hazardous Materials

The hazardous materials program would be managed in the same general manner in all

Hazardous Materials Table 3.1. Objectives and Management Actions by Alternative for Hazardous Materials.

Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D Proposed
Objectives:			
Authorize and manage land uses to reduce the occurrence and severity of hazardous material incidences on public lands and to minimize human health threats and natural resource risks from hazardous material contamination and associated actions.			
Management Actions:			
Protect human health and safety and prevent environmental damage from hazardous materials.			
Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of Interior, that the Impact Area of the OTA be withdrawn to the DoD, with the IDARNG having administrative authority for all uses in the area including livestock grazing.			

3.3 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

The following table provides a summary of impacts of the proposed management actions

for each of the four alternatives. The following table was developed from the Environmental Consequences Chapter 4.

Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

3.3.1 Air Quality	
All Action Alternatives	Overall, there would be a slight short-term adverse impact on air quality associated with surface disturbing activities. The potential exists for negligible, localized, long-term adverse impacts where IDARNG activities are routinely conducted or where BLM restoration activities disturb the soil and site stabilization takes a number of years. Since the air resource program would be managed in accordance with laws, regulations, and policies, with the goal of meeting current standards, all alternatives would meet the program objectives. The air quality objective would be met.



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

3.3.2 Cultural and Tribal Resources	
Alternative A	<p>Special stipulations on land use authorizations, voluntary compliance, and land use restrictions (VRM classification, application of the route designation criteria, avoidance areas, etc.) would have moderate to high beneficial impacts in areas with a high probability of cultural resources. However, with the increasing population and associated demands for use of the NCA, as well as only two developed recreation facilities, there would be increased potential for moderate adverse impacts to cultural resources.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would be met.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Special stipulations on land use authorizations, voluntary compliance, application of SOPs and land use restrictions (VRM classification, application of the route designation criteria, avoidance areas, etc.) would have moderate to high beneficial impacts in areas with a high probability of cultural resources. Closures to livestock grazing or motorized vehicle use in the river corridor would provide moderate long-term benefits at the local level. There would be slight to moderate adverse impacts from surface disturbing activities, changes in recreation management and the low level of VRM protection at the landscape level. The avoidance area would provide moderate protection from major utility development; however, development within the utility corridor would result in moderate long-term localized adverse impacts. Vegetation treatments would provide slight short-term adverse impacts and slight to moderate long-term benefits to traditional cultural properties.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would be met.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Special stipulations on land use authorizations, voluntary compliance, application of SOPs and land use restrictions (VRM classification, application of the route designation criteria, avoidance areas, etc.) would have moderate to high beneficial impacts in areas with a high probability of cultural resources. Closures to livestock grazing or motorized vehicle use in the river corridor would provide moderate long-term benefits at the local level. There would be a moderate level of adverse impacts from surface disturbing activities and changes in recreation management landscape-wide. The avoidance area would provide moderate protection from major utility development; however development within the utility corridor could have long-term moderate adverse impacts at the local level. Vegetation treatments would provide moderate short-term adverse impacts and moderate to high long-term benefits to traditional cultural properties.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Special stipulations on land use authorizations, voluntary compliance, application of SOPs and land use restrictions (VRM classification, application of the route designation criteria, avoidance areas, etc.) would have moderate to high beneficial impacts in areas with a high probability of cultural resources. Closures to livestock grazing or motorized vehicle use in the river corridor would provide moderate long-term benefits at the local level. There would be a moderate level of adverse impacts from surface disturbing activities, and changes in recreation management and the low level of VRM protection landscape-wide. Vegetation treatments would provide moderate short-term adverse impacts and moderate to high long-term benefits to traditional cultural properties.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would be met.</p>



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

3.3.3 Fish and Wildlife	
Alternative A	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Habitat restoration and areas closed to motorized vehicles would have slight to moderate localized benefits primarily for riparian species. Implementation of S & G would have moderate benefits at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. Overall, there would be slight improvement to riparian and wetland habitats.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements and vegetation treatments would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Implementation of S & G and application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. Loss of wildlife habitat due to limited vegetation treatments, IDARNG activities and fire would have moderate adverse impacts at the landscape scale. Overall, wildlife habitat would be lost because the rate of habitat treatments would not keep up with the rate of habitat loss.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would be met for riparian, wetland and open water species. The objective and DFC would not be met for upland wildlife because habitat loss would exceed restoration.</p>
Alternative B	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Areas closed to motorized vehicles would have moderate localized benefits primarily for riparian species. Intermediate levels of habitat restoration implementation of S&Gs would have moderate benefits at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. Overall, riparian and wetland habitats would improve.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements, consolidation of ownership, and vehicle closures would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vehicle restrictions, implementation of S&Gs, application of the route designation criteria and moderate levels of vegetation treatments would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. There would be large blocks of continuous shrub habitat in Management Areas 1 and 2 over the long-term. Soil disturbing activities including concentrated livestock use, utility development, IDARNG activities, and fire would have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the local level and in much of Management Area 3. The rate of habitat restoration would exceed the wild-fire-related loss of remnant shrub habitat. Overall, wildlife habitat would be maintained or moderately improved.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would be met.</p>
Alternative C	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Areas closed to motorized vehicle use and developed recreation sites would have moderate long-term localized benefits primarily for riparian species. Substantial habitat restoration and removal of livestock would be moderately to highly beneficial at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. The majority of riparian areas would be treated resulting in large blocks of continuous riparian habitat. Overall, the impacts would be highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements would provide slight localized benefits over the long-term. Substantial levels of vegetation treatments, motorized vehicle use restrictions, implementation of route designation criteria, and removal of livestock would be moderately to highly beneficial at the landscape level. All degraded upland habitats outside of the OTA would be treated, resulting in large blocks of con-</p>



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>tinuous shrub habitat over the long-term. Utility development and fire would have slight to moderate adverse impacts to wildlife and their habitat at the local scale. IDARNG activities and removal of livestock from annual grasslands would have slight short-term adverse impacts at the landscape scale. Restoration would exceed the loss of habitat due to wildfire or weed infestations. Overall, the impacts would be highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective and the DFC would be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Closures to motorized vehicles and developed recreation sites would have moderate localized benefits primarily for riparian species. Substantial habitat restoration and changes in livestock management would be moderately to highly beneficial at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. The majority of riparian areas would be treated resulting in large blocks of continuous riparian habitat. Overall, the impacts would be highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Closures to motorized vehicles and developed recreation sites would have moderate local benefits primarily for riparian species. Substantial habitat restoration and changes in livestock management would be moderately to highly beneficial at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. The majority of riparian areas would be treated resulting in large blocks of continuous riparian habitat. Overall, the impacts would be highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements would provide slight localized benefits over the long-term. Implementation of S&Gs and application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. Vegetation treatments would be highly beneficial at the landscape level. All degraded upland habitats outside of the OTA would be treated resulting in large blocks of continuous shrub habitat over the long-term. The loss of wildlife habitat due to fire would have moderate adverse impacts at the local scale. Soil disturbing activities including concentrated livestock use, IDARNG activities, and fire would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts at the local level. Overall, impacts would be moderately to highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would be met.</p>
3.3.4 Geology	
All Action Alternatives	No impacts. See Section 2.2.4 in Affected Environment Chapter 2.
3.3.5 Paleontology	
All Action Alternatives	No impacts. See Section 2.2.5 in Affected Environment Chapter 2.
3.3.6 Special Status Species	
3.3.6.1 Special Status Animals	
Alternative A	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Fish and wildlife management actions and habitat restoration could have slight adverse local impacts over the short-term to SSA including Idaho springsnails; however, these actions and vehicle closures would have slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Implementation of S&Gs could have slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic</p>



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>species. Habitat for riparian and open water species would be maintained at the landscape level, but enhanced only at the local level.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements, land consolidation, and vegetation treatments would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Implementation of S & G and application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. IDARNG activities, a lack of adequate recreation facilities, the loss of SSA habitat due to limited vegetation treatments and fire would have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the landscape scale. The amount of upland habitat loss would exceed the amount of habitat maintained or enhanced.</p> <p>The objective for SSAs and DFC for Fish and Wildlife would not be met because of the net loss of shrub habitat and limited riparian habitat restoration.</p>
Alternative B	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Fish and wildlife management actions could have slight adverse local impacts over the short-term to SSA including Idaho springsnails, but these actions and vehicle closures would have slight to moderate local or landscape level benefits for Idaho springsnails, bald eagles, and yellow-billed cuckoos over the long-term. Implementation of S & G and vegetation treatments would have slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. Overall, SSA habitat would be maintained or moderately improved.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements, restrictions on IDARNG activities in shrub habitats, grazing closures, and recreation developments would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Land consolidation, implementation of S & G and application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. Vegetation treatments could have slight to moderate localized adverse impacts over the short-term, but would have moderate benefits at the landscape level over the long-term. IDARNG off-road maneuver training, a lack of adequate recreation facilities, and the loss of SSA habitat due to fire and noxious weeds would have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the landscape scale. Overall, impacts would be slight to moderately adverse at the landscape level primarily in Management Area 3 and in the OTA over the long-term.</p> <p>The objective for SSA and DFC for Fish and Wildlife would be met for riparian, wetland and open water species but only partially met for upland species because upland habitat improvements would only slightly exceed habitat loss.</p>
Alternative C	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Fish and wildlife management actions could have slight adverse local impacts over the short-term to SSA including Idaho springsnails, but these actions and vehicle closures would have slight to moderate local or landscape level benefits for Idaho springsnails, bald eagles, and yellow-billed cuckoos over the long-term. Vegetation treatments and removal of livestock would be moderately to highly beneficial at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. Overall, the impacts would be highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements and recreation developments would result in slight to moderate localized benefits and restrictions on IDARNG activities in shrub habitats would be moderately or highly beneficial for remnant shrub stands over the long-term. Land consolidation and application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. Removal of live-</p>



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>stock would be highly beneficial to SSA in perennial communities and slightly beneficial to SSA in annual communities over the long-term. Vegetation treatments could have slight to moderate localized adverse impacts over the short-term, but would be highly beneficial at the landscape level over the long-term. IDARNG off-road maneuver activities and the loss of SSA habitat due to fire would have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the landscape and local levels respectively. However, the overall impacts would be highly beneficial at the landscape level over the long-term.</p> <p>The objective for SSA and DFC for Fish and Wildlife would be met for riparian, wetland, open water and some upland species. The objective and DFC would not be met for shrub dependent species in non-shrub areas in the OTA and fuels treatment areas outside the OTA that would not be restored.</p>
<p>Alternative D Proposed</p>	<p><u>Riparian/Wetland/Open Water Species</u> – Fish and wildlife management actions could have slight adverse local impacts over the short-term to SSA including Idaho springsnails. Fish and Wildlife management actions and vehicle closures would have slight to moderate local or landscape level benefits for SSAs including bald eagles and yellow-billed cuckoos over the long-term. Implementation of S & G and vegetation treatments would have slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level for riparian and aquatic species. Overall, the impacts would be highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p><u>Upland Species</u> – Wildlife habitat enhancements, restrictions on IDARNG activities in shrub habitats, grazing closures, and recreation developments would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Land consolidation and implementation of S & G and application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. Vegetation treatments could have slight to moderate localized adverse impacts over the short-term, but would be highly beneficial at the landscape level over the long-term. IDARNG off-road maneuver activities and the loss of SSA habitat due to fire would have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the landscape and local levels respectively. Overall, the impacts would be moderate to highly beneficial at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective for SSA and DFC for Fish and Wildlife would be met for riparian, wetland, open water and some upland species. The objective and DFC would not be met for shrub dependent species in non-shrub areas in the OTA and fuels treatment areas outside the OTA that would not be restored.</p>
<p>3.3.6.2 Special Status Plants</p>	
<p>Slickspot Peppergrass</p>	
<p>Alternative A</p>	<p>Land consolidations, restrictions on surface disturbing activities, and vegetation treatments would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. At the landscape level, implementation of the CA would be moderately beneficial, and giving fire suppression priority to slickspot peppergrass management areas and constructing and maintaining fuel breaks would be moderately to highly beneficial over the long-term at the landscape level. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts to suitable habitat in the short-term and would have slight to moderate long-term benefits at the local level. A lack of adequate recreation facilities could have slightly adverse localized impacts. IDARNG training could have slight to moderate adverse impacts in the OTA. Overall, populations could benefit moderately but species viability would not be ensured.</p>



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>The objective and the specific SSP DFC identified for Upland Vegetation (Section 4.2.8) would not be met because populations would remain isolated.</p>
<p>Alternative B</p>	<p>Land consolidation, restrictions on surface disturbing activities and livestock grazing in Sandberg bluegrass areas, and development of a recreation site would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. At the landscape level, implementation of the CA would be moderately beneficial at the short- and long-term. Giving fire suppression priority to slickspot peppergrass management areas and constructing and maintaining fuel breaks would be moderately to highly beneficial at the landscape level. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term to suitable habitat and would have moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Utility development and increased recreational use around Initial Point could have slight adverse localized impacts over the short- and long-term. IDARNG training could have slight adverse impacts in the local level OTA over the short-and long-term.</p> <p>The objective and specific SSP DFC under Upland Vegetation would be met in the western portion of Management Area 1 and the eastern portion of Management Area 2, but would largely be unmet in the remainder of the NCA. The limited degree of vegetation treatments would only slightly exceed the amount of habitat loss.</p>
<p>Alternative C</p>	<p>Restrictions on surface disturbing activities and development of recreation sites would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. At the landscape level, implementation of the CA and changes in vehicle management would be moderately beneficial and consolidating ownership, removing livestock, giving fire suppression priority to slickspot peppergrass management areas, and constructing and maintaining fuel breaks would be moderately or highly beneficial at the landscape level. Vegetation treatments would have slight adverse localized impacts to suitable habitat in the short-term and would be highly beneficial at the landscape level over the long-term. Utility development and increased recreational use around Initial Point could have slightly adverse localized impacts over the long-term. Restrictions on IDARNG training would be moderately to highly beneficial at the local level, but increased training levels in non-shrub areas could have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the local level in the OTA over the short- and long-term.</p> <p>The objective would be met. The specific SSP DFC under Upland Vegetation (Section 4.2.8.) would be met except for suitable habitat in non-shrub areas of the OTA where surface disturbing activities would occur.</p>
<p>Alternative D Proposed</p>	<p>Restrictions on surface disturbing activities and development of recreation sites would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term, but increased recreational use around Initial Point could have slightly adverse localized impacts. At the landscape level, implementation of the CA would be moderately beneficial and consolidating ownership, giving fire suppression priority to peppergrass management areas and constructing and maintaining fuel breaks would be moderately to highly beneficial over the short-and long-term. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts to suitable habitat in the short-term and would be highly beneficial at the landscape level over the long-term. Restrictions on IDARNG training would be moderately beneficial at the local level, but other military training activities could have slight adverse impacts at the local level in the OTA over the short-and long-term.</p>



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>The objective would be met. The specific SSP DFC for Upland Vegetation (Section 4.2.8.) would be met except for suitable habitat in non-shrub areas of the OTA where surface disturbing activities would occur.</p>
<p>3.3.6.2.1 Special Status Plants</p>	
<p>Alternative A</p>	<p>Individually restrictions on IDARNG training, land consolidation, grazing closures, restrictions on surface disturbing activities, implementation of the slickspot peppergrass CA, and areas closed to motorized vehicles would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would have slight to moderate long-term benefits at the local level. At the landscape level, improvements in vegetation condition would not exceed the loss of SSP populations to fire and weed infestations. Implementation of S&Gs and application of vehicle route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate short- and long-term benefits at the landscape level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit SSPs in shrub communities but could adversely affect SSPs in annual communities slightly at the landscape level. IDARNG activities would have slight to moderate short- and long-term adverse impacts in the OTA.</p> <p>The objective and DFC would not be met.</p>
<p>Alternative B</p>	<p>Areas closed to motorized vehicles and/or grazing, implementation of the slickspot peppergrass CA, and restrictions on IDARNG training and other surface disturbing activities would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would have moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit SSPs in shrub communities but could adversely affect SSPs in annual communities slightly at the landscape level over the long-term. Changes in livestock grazing, recreation, and vehicle management, and consolidating ownership would provide slight to moderate landscape-wide long-term benefits. Surface disturbing activities including development of recreation sites could have slight to moderate short-term localized adverse impacts. IDARNG activities, utility development, and limited recreation facilities and weeds treatments would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts at the landscape scale.</p> <p>The objective and specific SSP DFC under Upland Vegetation would be met in those portions of Management Areas 1 and 2 affected by vegetation treatments. In the remainder of the NCA the objectives and DFC would be unmet. Off-road maneuver training in non-shrub areas would maintain existing habitat fragmentation.</p>
<p>Alternative C</p>	<p>Individually, areas closed to motorized vehicles, implementation of the slickspot peppergrass CA, consolidating ownership, an increased number of recreation sites, and restrictions on IDARNG training and surface disturbing activities would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would be highly beneficial over the long-term at the landscape level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit SSPs in shrub communities but could adversely affect SSPs in annual communities slightly at the landscape level. Application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Removal of livestock would be highly beneficial to SSP associated with perennial communities and slightly beneficial to SSP associated with annual communities over the long-term at the landscape level. Surface disturbing activities including development of recreation sites and utilities could have slight to moderate localized adverse</p>



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>impacts over the short-term. IDARNG activities would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts in the OTA.</p> <p>The objective and specific DFC under Upland Vegetation would be met outside the OTA. Within the OTA the objective and DFC would not be met because of the potential for fires from live-fire training in the Impact Area; however, suppression efforts by the IDARNG would provide some degree of protection. Off-road maneuver training in non-shrub areas would maintain existing habitat fragmentation.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Individually, areas closed to motorized vehicle use and livestock grazing and restrictions on IDARNG training and surface disturbing activities, would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would be highly beneficial over the long-term at the landscape level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit SSPs in shrub communities but could adversely affect SSPs in annual communities slightly at the landscape level. Consolidating ownership, increased recreation facilities, implementation of S&Gs and application of route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Surface disturbing activities including development of recreation sites could have slight to moderate short-term localized adverse impacts. IDARNG activities would have slight to moderate adverse long-term impacts in the OTA.</p> <p>The objective and specific DFC under Upland Vegetation would be met outside the OTA. Within the OTA the objective and DFC would not be met because of the potential for fires from live-fire training in the Impact Area; however, suppression efforts by the IDARNG would provide some degree of protection. Off-road maneuver training in non-shrub areas would maintain existing habitat fragmentation.</p>
3.3.7 Soil Resources	
Alternative A	<p>The combined effects of livestock grazing, spread of invasive species, and wildland fire would have slight to moderate short- and long-term adverse impacts at the landscape level. At the local level, military maneuver activities and surface disturbing activities (including recreation) would result in slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts.</p> <p>The objectives would not be met. No DFC were identified.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Vegetation treatments would result in slight to moderate adverse local impacts over the short-term and moderate long-term benefits landscape-wide. The combined effects of livestock grazing, spread of invasive species, and wildland fire would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts at the landscape level. Military off-road maneuver training and surface disturbing activities would have moderate long-term localized adverse impacts. Restricting military maneuver activities would have highly beneficial localized impacts in shrub communities.</p> <p>The objective would be met in the majority of Management Areas 1 and 2 but not in the remainder of the NCA because areas dominated by annuals would be susceptible to soil erosion. No DFCs were identified.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Vegetation treatments would result in slight to moderate adverse local impacts over the short-term and highly beneficial long-term landscape-wide impacts. The combined effects of surface disturbing activities and wildland fire would have slight adverse impacts at the local level. Military off-road maneuver training would have</p>



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	<p>moderate long-term localized adverse impacts. Restricting military maneuver activities would have highly beneficial localized impacts in shrub communities.</p> <p>The objectives would be met except for designated off-road Maneuver Areas of the OTA. No DFCs were identified.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Vegetation treatments would result in slight to moderate adverse local impacts over the short-term and highly beneficial long-term landscape-wide impacts. The combined effects of livestock grazing, and wildland fire would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts at the landscape level. Military off-road maneuver training and surface disturbing activities would have slight to moderate long-term localized adverse impacts. Restricting military maneuver activities would have moderate to high localized short- and long-term beneficial impacts.</p> <p>The objectives would be met except for designated off-road Maneuver Areas of the OTA. No DFCs were identified.</p>
3.3.8 Upland Vegetation	
Alternative A	<p>Land consolidation, restrictions on surface disturbing activities, and areas closed to motorized vehicle use would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would have slight to moderate long-term benefits at the local level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit shrub communities and could adversely affect annual communities slightly at the landscape level over the long-term. Implementation of S&Gs, application of route designation criteria, avoidance areas, and VRM classifications would provide slight to moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. IDARNG activities, livestock grazing in annual communities, and limited recreation facilities and weeds treatments would have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the landscape scale over the long-term. Overall, there would be a landscape-wide loss of 40,000 acres of shrub communities and further ecological degradation principally as a result of fire.</p> <p>The objectives and DFCs would not be met because vegetative loss through fire and degradation would exceed BLM projections.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Individually, areas closed to motorized vehicle use, and restrictions on surface disturbing activities and livestock grazing in Sandberg bluegrass communities, and consolidating land ownership would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term; however, combined the impacts would be slight at the landscape level. Vegetation treatments and research areas could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would have moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit shrub communities and could adversely affect annual communities slightly at the landscape level. Implementation of S&Gs and application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Surface disturbing activities and development of recreation facilities could have slight to moderate short- and long-term localized adverse impacts. IDARNG off-road training, utility development, livestock grazing in annual communities, visual resources classifications, and inadequate recreation facilities and weeds treatments would have slight to moderate short- and long-term adverse impacts at the landscape scale. Overall, there would be a slight landscape-wide net increase (20,000 acres) in shrub communities, and degraded communities would occur primarily in Management Area 3 and non-shrub portions of the OTA.</p>



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	<p>The objective would be met. The DFCs would be met except for designated off-road Maneuver Areas of the OTA and in Management Area 3 where shrub communities would not increase.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Individually, areas closed to motorized vehicles, restrictions on surface disturbing activities, and consolidating land ownership would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments and research areas could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would be highly beneficial over the long-term at the landscape level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit shrub communities at the landscape level and could adversely affect annual communities slightly at the local level. Application of the route designation criteria and protection afforded by the VRM Class II designation would provide slight to moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Removal of livestock would be highly beneficial to perennial communities and slightly beneficial to annual communities over the long-term at the landscape level. Surface disturbing activities, development of recreation sites and utilities could have slight to moderate short- and long-term localized adverse impacts. IDARNG off-road training would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts in the OTA. Overall, there would be a substantial landscape wide net increase (115,000 acres) in shrub communities. Degraded communities would occur primarily in non-shrub portions of the OTA.</p> <p>The objective would be met. All DFCs would be met except in designated off-road Maneuver Areas of the OTA.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Individually, areas closed to motorized vehicles, restrictions on surface disturbing activities and livestock grazing in Sandberg bluegrass communities, and consolidating land ownership would provide slight to moderate localized benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments and research areas could have slight adverse localized impacts in the short-term, but would be highly beneficial over the long-term at the landscape level. Fire suppression priorities could moderately benefit shrub communities at the landscape level and could adversely affect annual communities slightly at the local level. Implementing S&Gs, application of the route designation criteria, and protection afforded by visual resources classifications (Class II) would provide slight to moderate benefits at the landscape level. Surface disturbing activities including development of recreation sites could have slight to moderate localized adverse impacts. IDARNG off-road training in non-shrub communities would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts in the OTA.</p> <p>The objective would be met. All DFCs would be met except in designated off-road Maneuver Areas of the OTA.</p>
3.3.9 Water Quality, Riparian, and Wetlands	
Alternative A	<p>Actions that limit surface disturbance or reduce the establishment or spread of noxious weeds (closures and restrictions to livestock grazing or limitations on off road vehicle use, etc.) would have slight to moderate long-term beneficial impacts at the local level. Existing recreation facilities would not meet the increasing demand for river-based recreation, which would result in slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts to riparian areas. Restoring one mile of riparian habitat and 80 acres of wetlands in the TWMA would result in slight long-term benefits at the local level; however, in the long-term, riparian areas would be moderately adversely impacted by weed infestations at the landscape level. In addition, maintaining or improving PFC along all 101 stream and shore-line miles would have a slight long-term benefit impact at the landscape level.</p>



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	The objective would be met; however, the DFCs would not be met as a result of limited restoration of riparian habitat.
Alternative B	<p>Construction of an additional pond at TWMA would moderately improve water quality at the local level over the long-term. Actions that limit surface disturbance or reduce the establishment or spread of noxious weeds (closures and restrictions to livestock grazing or limitations on off road vehicle use, etc.) would have slight to moderate long-term beneficial impacts at the landscape level. Additional recreational facilities would not meet the increasing demand for river-based recreation, which would result in slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts to riparian areas. Weed treatments and restoring 20 miles of riparian habitat and 80 acres of wetlands in the TWMA would result in slight to moderate long-term benefits at the local level. In addition, maintaining or improving PFC along all 101 stream and shore-line miles would have slight long-term benefits at the landscape level. Overall this alternative would maintain and slightly improve riparian areas.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Construction of an additional pond at TWMA would moderately improve water quality at the local level over the long-term. Actions that limit surface disturbance or reduce the establishment or spread of noxious weeds (elimination of livestock grazing or limitations on off road vehicle use, etc.) would be moderately to highly beneficial over the long-term at the landscape level. Of the four recreation facilities, only Celebration Park and Guffey Butte would provide additional water-based opportunities, but they would not meet the increasing demand for river-based recreation. The result of limited water-based recreation facilities would result in slight long-term adverse impacts to riparian areas. Weed treatments and restoring 40 miles of riparian habitat and 80 acres of wetlands in the TWMA would result in moderate to high long-term benefits at the landscape level. In addition, maintaining or improving PFC along all 101 stream and shore-line miles would have a slight long-term benefit at the landscape level. Overall this alternative would maintain and improve riparian areas.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Construction of an additional pond at TWMA would moderately improve water quality at the local level over the long-term. Actions that limit surface disturbance or reduce the establishment or spread of noxious weeds would have moderate long-term beneficial impacts at the landscape level. Recreation facility development would not meet the increasing demand for river-based recreation and would result in slight to moderate short- and long-term adverse localized impacts. Weed treatments and restoring 40 miles of riparian habitat and 80 acres of wetlands in the TWMA would result in moderate to high long-term benefits at the landscape level. In addition, maintaining or improving PFC along all 101 stream and shore-line miles would have a slight long-term benefit at the landscape level. Overall this alternative would maintain and improve riparian areas.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
3.3.10 Visual Resources	
Alternative A	Application of the route designation criteria would provide slight to moderate benefits at the local level over the long-term. Impacts from restoration activities would be slightly adverse in the short-term but would result in moderately beneficial impacts over the long-term at the local level. Slight, long-term adverse impacts from IDARNG activities would occur at the local level. Scenic values in the majority of



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	<p>the Snake River Canyon would be maintained over the long-term. Development of mineral material sites would have slight to moderate adverse impacts at the local level.</p> <p>The VRM objective would be met. No DFC identified.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Construction of two new recreation facilities, closures to motorized vehicles, application of the route designation criteria, and the designation of four SRMAs would provide slight to moderate local benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments would result in slight adverse impacts at the local level in the short-term and slight benefits at the landscape level over the long-term. Expanding the avoidance area would be slightly beneficial at the landscape level. Military training would be consistent with a VRM Class IV area. The W&SR recommendation would slightly to moderately benefit visual resources along 22 miles of the River. Slight long-term protection along the Oregon Trail and the Canyon would be provided by the SRMA designations. Use of active mineral material sites would have slight long-term adverse impacts at the local level.</p> <p>The VRM objective would be met. No DFC identified.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Construction of four new recreation facilities, closures to motorized vehicles, application of the route designation criteria, and the designation of four SRMAs would provide slight to moderate local benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments would result in moderate adverse impacts at the local level in the short-term and moderate benefits at the landscape level over the long-term. Expanding the avoidance area would be moderately beneficial at the landscape level over the long-term. Military training would be consistent with the VRM classifications. The W&SR recommendation would slightly to moderately benefit visual resources over the long-term along 49 miles of the Snake River. Elimination of livestock grazing would result in a slight long-term localized benefit in VRM Class II areas from the removal of range projects. The VRM II classification and SRMA designations along the Oregon Trail and in the Snake River Canyon would provide moderate long-term landscape-wide protection for the scenic values. Use of active mineral material sites would have slight long-term adverse impacts at the local level.</p> <p>The VRM objective would be met. No DFC identified.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Construction of five new recreation facilities, closures to motorized vehicles, application of the route designation criteria, and the designation of four SRMAs would provide slight to moderate local benefits over the long-term. Vegetation treatments would result in moderate adverse impacts at the local level in the short-term and moderate benefits at the landscape-level over the long-term. Maintaining the existing avoidance area would be slightly beneficial at the local level over the long-term. Military training would be consistent with the VRM classifications. The VRM II classification and SRMA designations along the Oregon Trail and in the Snake River Canyon would provide moderate long-term landscape-wide protection for the scenic values. Development of mineral material sites would have slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts at the local level.</p> <p>The VRM objective would be met. No DFC identified.</p>
3.3.11 Wild Horses and Burros	
All Action Alternatives	Not an issue. See Section 2.2.11 in Affected Environment.



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3.3.12 Idaho Army National Guard	
Alternative A	<p>There would be slight short- and long-term adverse impacts to IDARNG training activities from livestock grazing, dispersed recreation, and inadequate excavation training opportunities. There would be moderate beneficial impacts from the Impact Area withdrawal.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Mandatory restrictions on training in shrub areas would slightly to moderately reduce IDARNG training flexibility in the short- and long-term. Withdrawal of the Impact Area and increased training opportunities in the expansion area and excavation areas would have moderate to high long-term benefits. There would be slight adverse impacts from livestock grazing, dispersed recreation, and increased travel time to new training areas.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Collectively, the loss of training acreage, mandatory restrictions in shrub areas, scheduling conflicts, and loss of TDs would have moderate long-term adverse impacts to IDARNG training flexibility and high short-term adverse impacts to training capability during key training periods (May, June and July). Withdrawal of the Impact Area would have moderate long-term benefits.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Mandatory restrictions on training in shrub areas would slightly reduce IDARNG training capability in the short- and long-term. Withdrawal of the Impact Area and increased training opportunities in the expansion area and excavation areas would have moderate long-term benefits. There would be slight short- and long-term adverse impacts from livestock grazing, dispersed recreation, and increased travel time to new training areas.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
3.3.13 Lands and Realty	
Alternative A	<p>Consolidating land ownership and precluding major utility developments would have moderate long-term landscape-wide benefits. Maintaining the existing boundary would result in slight long-term adverse impacts landscape-wide.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Consolidating land ownership would have moderate long-term landscape-wide benefits. Maintaining the existing boundary and providing a second utility corridor would result in slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts at the landscape level. There would be moderate long-term benefits from the avoidance area at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Consolidating land ownership and realigning the boundary would have slight to moderate long-term landscape-wide benefits. Providing a second utility corridor would result in slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts. There would be moderate long-term benefits from the avoidance area at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Consolidating land ownership and realigning the boundary would have slight to moderate long-term landscape-wide benefits. Providing a second utility corridor</p>



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	<p>would result in slight to moderate long-term adverse impacts. There would be slight long-term landscape-wide benefits from the avoidance area. The objective and DFC would be met.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
3.3.14 Livestock Grazing	
Alternative A	<p>The long-term landscape-wide benefits of implementing S&Gs would be slight in perennial communities and negligible in annual communities. Activities that protect or enhance special resources would have moderate short- and long-term moderate localized impacts. Impacts with military activities would be moderate and localized.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Implementing S&Gs would be slightly beneficial in perennial and riparian communities over the long-term and would have negligible impacts in annual communities. Activities that protect or enhance special resources would have moderate short- and long-term localized impacts. Vegetation treatments would have moderate short-term adverse impacts at the local level and moderate long-term beneficial impacts at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Eliminating grazing would be highly adverse over the short- and long-term at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would not be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Implementing S&Gs would provide slight long-term beneficial impacts in perennial and riparian communities and negligible impacts in annual communities. Activities that protect or enhance special resources would have moderate short- and long-term localized impacts. Vegetation treatments would have moderate short-term adverse impacts and moderate to high long-term beneficial impacts at the landscape level.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
3.3.15 Mineral Resources	
3.3.15.1 Leasable Minerals	
All Action Alternatives	No impacts See Minerals Section 2.2.15 in Affected Environment Chapter 2.
3.3.15.2 Mineral Materials	
Alternative A	<p>Maximizing compatible mineral material development would have no impacts to the availability of mineral materials.</p> <p>The objective would be met. No DFC was identified.</p>
Alternatives B and C	<p>Authorizing mineral material extraction from existing open sites would have slight adverse impacts on the availability of mineral materials.</p> <p>The objective would be met. No DFC was identified.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Maximizing compatible mineral material development would have no impacts to the availability of mineral materials.</p> <p>The objective would be met. No DFC was identified.</p>



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3.3.15.3 Locatable Minerals	
All Action Alternatives	No impacts See Minerals Section 2.2.15 in Affected Environment Chapter 2.
3.3.16 Recreation	
Alternative A	Recreational developments would not keep up with demand, which would result in moderate to high landscape-wide adverse impacts over the long-term. Vegetation treatments, VRM classifications, application of route designation criteria, and live-stock closures would have slight long-term benefits at the local level. The objectives and DFCs would be met.
Alternative B	Insufficient recreational developments would result in moderate adverse landscape wide impacts over the long-term; however the two new sites would have moderate long-term beneficial impacts at the local level. Vegetation treatments, restrictions on military training in the Bravo Area, and the application of route designation criteria would have slight to moderate long-term benefits at the landscape level. Livestock and/or motorized vehicle closures would have moderate long-term benefits at the local level to river-based recreation. Motorized vehicle closures would have slight long-term localized adverse impacts to motorized recreation. The objectives and DFCs would be met.
Alternative C	Vegetation treatments, restrictions on military training in the Bravo Area, and elimination of livestock grazing would all have slight landscape-wide long-term beneficial impacts. Four additional recreation facilities would have slight long-term localized beneficial impacts by meeting the increasing recreational demand. The recommendation for W&SR designation would have slight localized long-term benefits. The 13,200 acres closed to motorized recreation would have the slight long-term beneficial impact of meeting a greater range of recreational opportunities but would also have slight long-term adverse impacts to motorized recreation. The objectives and DFCs would be met.
Alternative D Proposed	The seven recreation facilities would have moderate localized long-term beneficial impacts by meeting the future recreational demand. Restrictions on military training in the Bravo Area would have slight long-term beneficial impacts. The intermittent grazing of the Kuna Butte area would have slight short-term adverse impacts to recreation when it is being used for grazing. The amount of vegetation treatments would result in slight short-term localized adverse impacts and slight long-term landscape-wide beneficial impacts. The objectives and DFCs would be met.
3.3.17 Renewable Energy	
All Action Alternatives	No Impacts. See Lands and Realty Section 2.2.13 in Affected Environment Chapter 2.
3.3.18 Transportation	
Alternative A	The designation of approximately 1,600 acres (less than 1% of the NCA) as closed to motorized vehicle use provides for moderate to high localized long-term motorized vehicle opportunities with moderate to high adverse impacts to non-motorized vehicle activities. The area identified as limited to designated routes (431,200 acres) would have highly beneficial landscape-wide impacts. Designating (10,300 acres or about 2% of the NCA) as VRM Class I would result in moderate to high adverse lo-



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>calized impacts over the long-term. Vegetative treatments would result in short-term localized adverse impacts.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs identified under Recreation (See Section 4.2.16) would be met.</p>
Alternative B	<p>The 6,400 acres designated as closed and 120,000 acres of vegetation treatments would result in slight long-term landscape-wide benefits by reducing the number of routes, and increasing non-motorized opportunities. The utility corridors would have moderate landscape-wide long-term beneficial impacts.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative C	<p>The 13,200 acres designated as closed and 230,000 acres of vegetation treatments would result in slight long-term landscape-wide adverse impacts by reducing the number of routes. The utility corridors would not impact the transportation system.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>The 4,400 acres designated as closed would have slight localized adverse impacts and the 428,400 limited acres would have moderate to high landscape-wide beneficial impacts. Approximately 230,000 acres of vegetation treatments would result in moderate to high long-term landscape-wide adverse impacts by reducing the number of routes.</p> <p>The objective and DFCs would be met.</p>
3.3 19 Utility and Communications Corridors (Land Use Authorizations)	
All Action Alternatives	See Lands and Realty Section 3.3.13.
3.3.20 Wildland Fire Ecology and Management	
All Action Alternatives	See Upland Vegetation Section 3.3.8.
3.3.21 Special Designations	
All Action Alternatives	See Recreation Section 3.3.16 and Cultural and Tribal Resources Section 3.3.2.
3.3.22 Social and Economic Conditions	
3.3.22.1 Economic Conditions	
Alternative A	<p>There would be no changes in employment (1,100 jobs) and no changes in associated income.</p> <p>The objectives and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative B	<p>There would be a slight beneficial impact on the regional economy. Combined impacts of recreation, military, livestock operations, and vegetation treatments would result in a total increase of approximately 16 jobs or a 1% change from current conditions in NCA related jobs. The impact would be negligible (0.005%) in the region. Change in earnings would also be negligible, showing an increase of about \$400,000 in regional earnings. This is a 1% change in NCA generated earnings and a 0.004% change in earnings in Southwest Idaho.</p> <p>The objectives and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative C	At the Regional level, there would be a slight to moderate adverse economic impact on military activities and livestock operations. There would be a slight beneficial impact from recreation-related spending. Spending associated with vegetation treat-



Impacts Table 3.1. Summary of Impacts.

	<p>ments would be substantial, but would only have slight benefits at the Regional level. There would be a negligible increase in jobs. All sectors would see some increase in jobs with the exception of IDARNG and livestock management.</p> <p>The objectives and DFCs would be met.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>There would be a slight adverse economic impact on military activities and livestock operations. There would be a slight beneficial impact from recreation-related spending. Spending associated with vegetation treatments would be substantial, but would only have slight benefits at the Regional level. There would be a negligible increase in jobs. All sectors would see some increase in jobs with the exception of IDARNG and livestock management.</p> <p>The objectives and DFCs would be met.</p>
3.3.22.2 Environmental Justice	
All Action Alternatives	<p>Actions proposed under the alternatives would not cause disproportionate adverse human health or environmental impacts to minority and/or low-income populations.</p>
3.3.22.3 Hazardous Materials	
All Action Alternatives	<p>No impacts.</p>

Impacts Table 3.2. Summary of Cumulative Impacts.

Alternative A	<p>Alternative A has the potential to cumulatively affect the following resources and resource uses at a moderate level when combined with other actions and trends within a greater region of influence: upland and riparian vegetation, soils, water quality, cultural resources, and wildlife habitat. Population growth and change from agricultural use to residential development along with the continued loss of native vegetation within the NCA would result in loss of habitat for raptors and their prey as well as other wildlife, an increase in human-caused fires, and the associated loss in native vegetation, could result in the potential for increases in soil erosion. The NCA contribution to these overall cumulative impacts would be moderate.</p>
Alternative B	<p>Alternative B would increase vegetation treatments, reduce loss of vegetation and increase management activities to accommodate use of the NCA relative to Alternative A, resulting in a slight adverse overall cumulative impact.</p>
Alternative C	<p>Alternative C has the highest level of vegetation treatments and protection of natural resources and would not contribute to regional habitat loss. Successful restoration efforts would meet the needs of raptors and their prey and help off-set the regional loss of habitat. There would be negligible regional adverse cumulative impacts from reductions in livestock grazing and IDARNG activities; however, these would be off-set by negligible to slight beneficial cumulative impacts based on recreation, vegetation treatments, wildlife habitat improvement, and general economic growth.</p>
Alternative D Proposed	<p>Alternative D has the same level of vegetation treatment as Alternative C and also provides a high level of protection of natural resources and would not contribute to regional habitat loss. Successful restoration efforts would meet the needs of raptors and their prey and help off-set the regional loss of habitat. There would be no regional adverse cumulative impacts. However, there would be slight beneficial cumulative impacts based on recreation, vegetation treatments, wildlife habitat improvement, and general economic growth.</p>

