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The following information details the rationale, standard operating procedures, objectives and management actions for each resource and resource use throughout the life of this plan.

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. In accordance with the planning criteria, including the Clean Air Act, all authorized actions would meet or exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Emissions from point and non-point sources will be limited by requiring and implementing mitigation measures.
- An approved burn plan, that includes information and techniques to reduce or alter smoke emission levels, will be in place prior to implementing a prescribed burn.
- All prescribed fire actions will be coordinated with other affected agencies through the Montana/Idaho Smoke Management Program certified by the EPA and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.
- The majority of fuel types do not allow for opportunities to reduce emissions; therefore, emissions will be managed primarily by timing and atmospheric dispersal.

Air Quality Objectives and Management Actions

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.

2.2 CULTURAL AND TRIBAL RESOURCES

Rationale

The BLM’s management of cultural resources 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 potential effects of agency and agency-approved actions on significant archaeological and historic properties through a process of inventory, evaluation and effects analysis, and consultation with American Indian Tribes, State Historic Preservation Office, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and



interested publics. Section 110 of the NHPA directs agencies to establish programs to inventory, evaluate and nominate sites to the NRHP and to protect, preserve, manage, and maintain cultural properties.

As part of BLM’s cultural resource management program, the Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG) protects and monitors cultural and historic sites within the Orchard Training Area (OTA) under the requirements of a Cultural Resources Memorandum of Agreement, which is an addendum to the OTA Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Standard Operating Procedures

- American Indians have access to the public lands in 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 will be protected.
- Section 110 cultural resource surveys will be conducted. Based on historic numbers, it is estimated that 80 to 240 acres will be surveyed for cultural resources per year.
- Conduct interpretation and education, data recovery and recordation, and site stabilization activities as key elements in the protection of cultural resources.
- Retain public lands containing important cultural resources and plant habitat unless they can be exchanged for lands containing better habitat and/or more significant resource values.
- Adverse impacts to cultural resources will be mitigated with specific management actions chosen for each project. Management actions could be chosen from a variety of options that include, but are not limited to:
 - 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.
 - o Preservation of the site by limiting surface collection of artifacts.
 - o Archaeological testing.
 - o Data recovery through salvage excavation.
 - o Full data recovery through scientific excavation.
 - o On-site mitigation of potential adverse impacts.

Cultural and Tribal Resources Objectives and Management Actions

Objective:
Manage cultural resources by emphasizing mitigation and public interpretation.
Management Actions:
Acquire lands that contain significant natural or cultural resources as opportunities arise.
Protect cultural resources in place without actions such as site excavations or removal of objects when possible.
Restrict vehicles to designated routes in the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District.
Revoke the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) designation.



Cultural and Tribal Resources Objectives and Management Actions

Enlarge the Oregon Trail Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) to approximately 7,900 acres. (Recreation Map 1)

Protect the Oregon Trail as a Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class II area. [Visual Resource Management (VRM Map)]

2.3 FISH AND WILDLIFE

Rationale

Pursuant to Section 3(a)(2) of the 1993 NCA-enabling legislation (PL 103-64), 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.

Raptors and Raptor Prey: The greatest benefit to raptors is 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, inter-connected, and expanded. Restoring degraded areas to shrub/bunchgrass habitat with a forb component and biological soil crust provides additional habitat for small mammals, invertebrates, lizards, snakes, and birds.

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

Upland Game: Pheasant, quail, dove, and partridge have additional nesting and escape cover if shrub/bunchgrass habitat is improved adjacent to agricultural sites. Additional water sources will also expand the amount of usable range for upland birds. Nuttall’s cottontails 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 habitats provides 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 will especially benefit migratory songbirds in the spring.

Special Status Species (SSS): See Special Status Species, Section 2.4 below.

Fish and Wildlife Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Emphasize protection and enhancement of raptor prey and other wildlife populations and habitats, expand areas utilized by raptor prey and big game, and reduce competition for forage in perennial pastures between livestock and Piute ground squirrels.
Management Actions:
Restore or maintain plant species diversity and hydrologic functioning of springs and seeps, where possible.
Increase raptor nesting, perching, feeding and roosting opportunities through tree planting or artificial structures.
Remove exotic trees and shrubs and plant cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs on up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat.
Protect and restore all river, stream, and reservoir shorelines (approximately 101 miles) to maintain or enhance fisheries and aquatic-riparian habitat.
Provide additional surface water for big game, upland game, and non-game species.
Include shrubs that are suitable for raptor prey (small mammals) and big game in habitat restoration projects.
Plant up to 100 acres of yellow-billed cuckoo woodland habitat in appropriately sized blocks.
Restore approximately 130,000-targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat. Habitat restoration priorities will be emphasized where it is most beneficial to raptor prey populations, rather than being limited to currently burned areas.
Convert approximately 100,000 acres of annual grasslands to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects. This is in addition to habitat restoration projects.
Construct an additional pond (approximately 20-acres) at the Ted Trueblood Wildlife Management Area (TWMA) to increase habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl.
Improve up to two miles of riparian/wetland habitat annually.
Treat approximately 4,000 acres for noxious weed infestations annually. Restored areas and Special Status Plants (SSP) habitat have priority for treatment.



Fish and Wildlife Objectives and Management Actions

Priest Ranch (340 ac), TWMA (300 ac) Gold Isle (120 ac), and Cove Recreation Site (100 ac) will be closed to livestock grazing. Kuna Butte (3,400 ac) of the Sunnyside Spring/Fall Allotment and Pasture 8B (3,040 ac) of the Battle Creek Allotment will only be grazed for the purpose of meeting specific NCA resource management objectives, under a fuels/weed reduction contract or as a temporary non-renewable grazing authorization (Grazing Map 1). Prior to grazing, an environmental analysis will be completed to identify impacts and develop appropriate mitigations. In addition to the above, livestock grazing in the Snake River Pasture (1300 ac) of the Melba Seeding Allotment, located downstream from Swan Falls Dam, will be restricted to the dormant season to reduce conflicts with spring and summer recreational use along the Snake River.

Livestock grazing will not be permitted in areas restored with perennial species until the plants are successfully established and can withstand grazing. Where practicable, these areas will only be grazed during the dormant season or grazed under a rotational grazing system to maintain the perennial species.

Retain Canyon and Plateau shooting restrictions as described below (Recreation Map 2). Use of firearms within these areas for animal damage control and law enforcement are exempt from the shooting closure.

- Plateau (37,700 acres) – 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 except for deer hunting season in Hunting Unit 40 on the south side of the Snake River. Shotguns and muzzleloaders will be allowed from September 1 to February 14. The width of the closed area is 1/2 mile from the river or 100 yards back from the canyon rim, whichever is greater.

2.4 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES (SSS) – ANIMALS AND PLANTS

Rationale

The BLM Manual Section 6840 (Special Status Plant 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 or BLM sensitive species. In addition, the management of Idaho rangelands is outlined in the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (S&G) (Appendix 2). Standard 8 (Sensitive Species) represents the standards against which the NCA SSS will be measured. Management actions will focus on minimizing or eliminating the threats associated with wildland fire, competition from exotic species, grazing, and off-road vehicle activity.

The yellow-billed cuckoo is a candidate for threatened or endangered species listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) that needs immediate attention. Management actions authorized or funded by BLM should be implemented in a manner that do not jeopardize the continued existence of this species or result in the destruction or modification of its critical habitat. Once a species is listed, BLM's mission, through law enforcement, research, and land management, is to enhance the species' chance for recovery and survival. State sensitive species and species proposed for Federal listing (candidate species) will be given the same management consideration as listed species.



In consultation with the USFWS, BLM developed conservation measures to promote the protection and conservation of listed, proposed and candidate species and their habitat. These conservation measures, included as Appendix 9, are considered land use plan management actions specific to the protection of the candidate and other SSS. These measures will remain in effect for the protection of the yellow-billed cuckoo unless or until they are amended or replaced through subsequent consultation.

The BLM and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) agreed to *“Ensure, to the best of their abilities, that critical habitats and populations of sensitive species occurring on lands administered 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”* (IDFG and BLM Master MOU 2003 cover sheet).

The BLM and IDFG consider 30 species in Idaho “range wide/globally imperiled”; however, habitat exists for only two of the species in the NCA. Additionally, 21 species are “regional and State imperiled” and 17 species are on the Idaho watch list (Appendix 3). All of these species are important, but in the NCA, there will be special emphasis on the prairie falcon and Piute ground squirrel, which are “regional and State imperiled” species. Restoration of upland shrub/bunchgrass habitat helps stabilize ground squirrel populations; thereby helping to stabilize the prairie falcon population.

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

Standard Operating Procedures

- Retain public lands containing important plant habitat unless they can be exchanged for lands containing better habitat and/or more significant resource values. Land exchanges should enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat.
- Recreation permits will not be issued in areas that adversely affect SSS habitat.
- Federal actions shall not contribute to the need to federally list candidate species or BLM sensitive species.
- Inventories will be conducted prior to BLM authorizing surface disturbing actions to determine the presence or absence of SSS.
- Wildland fires will be suppressed using the most aggressive tactics possible to minimize impacts to SSS habitat.
- IDARNG has responsibility for (1) initial attack for fires within the OTA (2) maintenance of a BLM-authorized firebreak system, (3) hazardous fuels management within the Impact Area, and (4) strict control of ignition sources (pyrotechnics and tracer ammunition) in times of high fire danger.



Special Status Species Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Emphasize maintenance, protection, and enhancement of raptors and other sensitive wildlife populations and habitats.
The distribution, abundance, and vigor of SSPs will be maintained or improved.
Management Actions:
Increase raptor nesting, perching, feeding and roosting opportunities through tree planting or artificial structures.
Remove exotic trees and shrubs and plant cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs on up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat.
Protect and restore all river, stream, and reservoir shorelines (approximately 101 miles) to maintain or enhance fisheries and aquatic-riparian habitat.
Manage giant fairy shrimp habitat with protection of the fairy shrimp as the priority. As more is learned about its biological and ecological requirements, BLM will incorporate appropriate protection measures. (Wildlife Map)
Maintain or improve 136 miles of existing fuel breaks and construct approximately 12 miles of new fuel breaks. (Vegetation Map)
Include in all BLM authorizations permitting surface disturbing activities (non-grazing), requirements that (1) affected areas be reseeded with a perennial vegetative cover, and (2) surface disturbing activities be located at least 1/2 mile from occupied sensitive plant habitat.
Implement the following actions consistent with the slickspot peppergrass CA (Appendix 8) to protect slickspot peppergrass and its habitat from wildfires: (1) occupied habitat has priority for suppression over the surrounding area, (2) use aggressive fire suppression tactics when occupied habitats are threatened, and (3) create and maintain fuel breaks around areas where frequent fires threaten habitat.
Keep 90% of the wildfires occurring within slickspot peppergrass management areas (Fire Map) to 100 acres or less while keeping 90% of wildfires in the remainder of the NCA to 200 acres or less.
Require all permit holders in slickspot peppergrass habitat to conform to applicable conservation measures from the CA (Appendix 8).
Require IDARNG to avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover during military training activities.
Restrict vehicle maneuver training to designated routes in the 22,300-acre Bravo Area. This restriction becomes effective <u>after</u> the authorization for an additional 4,100 acres (expanded Maneuver Area) goes into effect on land adjacent to the existing OTA boundary. [Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG) Map]

2.5 SOIL RESOURCES

Rationale

The BLM must comply with the Federal Land Policy & Management Act (FLPMA), Clean Water Act (CWA), Idaho S&Gs, 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 will 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 should provide for adequate amounts of vegetative ground cover and litter (determined on an ecological site basis) to support infiltration and soil stability, protect resources, and maintain site productivity.
- Where livestock grazing is permitted, it will be managed through the Idaho S&G process.
- Undue erosion from surface disturbing activities will 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 will 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.

Soil Resources Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Watersheds have stable vegetative communities that provide for proper hydrologic function, nutrient cycling, energy flow, and soil stability.
Soil productivity is maintained and enhanced. Accelerated soil erosion caused by human activities will be minimal.
Minimize the potential for localized soil erosion processes on all soils with a moderate to very high soil erosion potential. (Soil Map)
Management Actions:
Retain all public lands in the 43,000-acre right-of-way (ROW) avoidance area to protect the visual corridor along the Historic Oregon Trail and the resources along the Snake River canyon. (Lands Map 1)
Manage vehicle access according to the following Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area Designations. (Transportation Map)
Open – 0 acres
Limited – 428,400 acres (limited to designated routes)
Closed – 4,400 acres

2.6 UPLAND VEGETATION

Rationale

PL 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 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 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 and off-road vehicle activity. This would allow treatment (restoration, fuels) of essentially all acres outside of the OTA currently identified as non-shrub habitat. However, over the long-term, because of increasing recreation and other uses, it is anticipated that 30,000 acres of remnant shrub communities would be lost to wildfire.

The management of Idaho rangelands is outlined in Idaho S&Gs. 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 will be evaluated for possible Emergency Stabilization and Restoration (ESR). Objectives 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.
- Prescribed fire and biological, chemical or mechanical fuels management treatments will 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.
- Efforts will be made to restore native and/or desirable non-native vegetation in degraded habitats (i.e., exotic plant or seeded communities) to help create mosaics of vegetation that are resistant and resilient to disturbance. Restoration efforts will be prioritized using a variety of criteria including: (1) proximity to existing shrub communities, sensitive species habitat, priority raptor nesting sites, major roads and fences; (2) soils and ecological types; and (3) precipitation zone. Management Area 1 would have the highest probability for success.
 - Grazing practices will provide sufficient residual vegetation to improve, restore, and/or maintain hydrologic functioning, and to provide plant species diversity and structure for quality habitat.
- Recreation permits will not be issued in areas that adversely affect SSS habitat.

Upland Vegetation Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Limit further loss of existing native shrub habitat to no more than 30,000 acres and increase the acres of restored shrub habitat.
Special status plant and animal habitats will be in good ecological condition, where potential allows, and authorized human uses would be compatible.
Emphasize protection and enhancement of raptor prey and other wildlife populations and habitats, expand areas utilized by raptor prey and big game, and reduce competition for forage in perennial pastures between livestock and Piute ground squirrels.



Upland Vegetation Objectives and Management Actions

Management Actions:
Designate up to 5,000 acres for research purposes.
Limit open fires to established (improved) campsites. Additional restrictions may be imposed during periods of high fire danger.
Treat approximately 4,000 acres for noxious weed infestations annually. Restored areas and SSP habitat have priority for treatment.
Include in all BLM authorizations permitting surface disturbing activities (non-grazing), requirements that (1) affected areas be reseeded with a perennial vegetative cover, and (2) surface disturbing activities be located at least 1/2 mile from occupied sensitive plant habitat.
Require all permit holders in slickspot peppergrass habitat to conform to applicable conservation measures from the CA. (Appendix 8)
Implement the following actions consistent with the slickspot peppergrass CA (Appendix 8) to protect slickspot peppergrass and its habitat from wildfires: (1) occupied habitat has priority for suppression over the surrounding area, (2) use aggressive fire suppression tactics when occupied habitats are threatened, and (3) create and maintain fuel breaks around areas where frequent fires threaten habitat.
Restore approximately 130,000-targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat. Habitat restoration priorities will be emphasized where it is most beneficial to raptor prey populations, rather than being limited to currently burned areas.
Convert approximately 100,000 acres of annual grasslands to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects. This is in addition to habitat restoration projects.
Livestock grazing in annual-dominated areas will be managed to leave sufficient residual litter after grazing for small mammal food and cover, and for watershed protection.
Priest Ranch (340 ac), TWMA (300 ac) Gold Isle (120 ac), and Cove Recreation Site (100 ac) will be closed to livestock grazing. Kuna Butte (3,400 ac) of the Sunnyside Spring/Fall Allotment and Pasture 8B (3,040 ac) of the Battle Creek Allotment will only be grazed for the purpose of meeting specific NCA resource management objectives, under a fuels/weed reduction contract or as a temporary non-renewable grazing authorization (Grazing Map 1). Prior to grazing, an environmental analysis will be completed to identify impacts and develop appropriate mitigations. In addition to the above, livestock grazing in the Snake River Pasture (1300 ac) of the Melba Seeding Allotment, located downstream from Swan Falls Dam, will be restricted to the dormant season to reduce conflicts with spring and summer recreational use along the Snake River.
Restrict vehicle maneuver training to designated routes in the 22,300-acre Bravo Area. This restriction becomes effective <u>after</u> the authorization for an additional 4,100 acres (expanded Maneuver Area) goes into effect on land adjacent to the existing OTA boundary. [Idaho Army National Guard (IDARNG) Map]
Locate military assembly and bivouac areas in existing, hardened sites adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the OTA in non-shrub sites. Where appropriate, BLM will authorize IDARNG to gravel or cinder frequently used sites.
Require IDARNG to avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover during military training activities.



2.7 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.

The Clean Water Act (CWA) 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 will be required for water bodies containing water quality limited segments. Sinker Creek and Rabbit Creek were the only streams originally identified in the Sub-basin assessment as 303(d) listed streams. Sinker Creek still remains listed for temperature.

Standard Operating Procedures

- The BLM's management mandate authorizes only those uses and activities that comply with State water quality standards. Uses and activities will be managed to meet water quality standards on water quality limited stream segments.
- Implement water resource objectives and maintain or improve water quality. Public lands adjacent to stream segments not meeting State water quality standards and/or Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) will be managed to produce an upward trend in the structure and composition of key riparian/wetland vegetation, as well as the desired physical characteristics of the stream channel.
- To comply with State water quality standards, BLM takes the following actions to address Section 303(d) listed stream segments in the NCA:
 - o Assess the effect of management actions on Section 303(d) listed streams and other water bodies.
 - o For water bodies that remain on the 303(d) list and are affected by BLM management activities, BLM will develop or adjust management actions necessary to restore water quality and meet Idaho standards. The BLM will work with State agencies and local Tribes to set priorities and timelines for addressing listed water bodies. The BLM will also develop Water Quality Restoration Plans to address the water quality parameter at issue.
- Grazing practices will provide sufficient residual vegetation to improve, restore, and/or maintain hydrologic functioning, and to provide plant species diversity and structure for quality habitat.
- Conduct aggressive weed suppression activities at the TWMA. Other riparian areas infested with noxious weeds should also be treated, as weeds are identified.



Water Quality, Riparian and Wetlands Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Rivers, streams and reservoir shorelines will have appropriate aquatic-riparian habitat.
Management Actions:
Treat up to 20 acres of TWMA decadent wetland vegetation with prescribed fire each year for five years.
Restore 80 acres of the TWMA wetlands within five (5) years to achieve good ecological condition.
Construct an additional pond (approximately 20-acres) at the TWMA to increase habitat for migrant shorebirds and nesting waterfowl.
Improve up to two miles of riparian/wetland habitat annually.
Remove exotic trees and shrubs and plant cottonwood, willow, and other desirable trees and shrubs on up to 40 miles of riparian and wetland wildlife habitat.
Initiate biological weed control measures as a priority. When biological weed control methods are not feasible, BLM will use approved herbicides, tillage, and prescribed fire as appropriate.
Protect and restore all river, stream, and reservoir shorelines (approximately 101 miles) to maintain or enhance fisheries and aquatic-riparian habitat.
Priest Ranch (340 ac), TWMA (300 ac) Gold Isle (120 ac), and Cove Recreation Site (100 ac) will be closed to livestock grazing. Kuna Butte (3,400 ac) of the Sunnyside Spring/Fall Allotment and Pasture 8B (3,040 ac) of the Battle Creek Allotment will only be grazed for the purpose of meeting specific NCA resource management objectives, under a fuels/weed reduction contract or as a temporary non-renewable grazing authorization (Grazing Map 1). Prior to grazing, an environmental analysis will be completed to identify impacts and develop appropriate mitigations. In addition to the above, livestock grazing in the Snake River Pasture (1300 ac) of the Melba Seeding Allotment, located downstream from Swan Falls Dam, will be restricted to the dormant season to reduce conflicts with spring and summer recreational use along the Snake River.

2.8 VISUAL RESOURCES

Rationale

Section 102(a)(8) of FLPMA states that public land will be managed to protect the quality of scenic values and, where appropriate, to preserve and protect certain public land in its natural condition. Section 101(b) of NEPA requires Federal agencies to “assure for all Americans...aesthetically pleasing surroundings”. Guidelines for the identification of Visual Resource Management (VRM) classes on public land are contained in BLM 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 (e.g. 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 will be 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. 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.

Visual Resources Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:

Protect the visual resources of historic areas with a secondary emphasis on the Snake River Canyon.

Management Actions:

Manage the areas along the Oregon Trail and the Snake River Canyon as VRM Class II, the OTA as Class IV and remaining areas as Class III. [Visual Resource Management (VRM) Map] This will provide reasonable protection of the Oregon Trail and flexibility in managing the remainder of the NCA.

2.9 WILD HORSES AND BURROS

Rationale

About 3,400 acres (7%) of the 51,000 acre Black Mountain Herd Management Area (HMA) is located within the NCA. Due to its proximity to Highway 78 and other competing uses in the area, this portion of the HMA receives minimal use by wild horses; therefore the HMA will continue to be managed in conformance with requirements in the Owyhee RMP.

2.10 IDAHO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD (IDARNG)

Rationale

The IDARNG conducts military training activities in the 138,500-acre OTA (all ownerships) under the authority of an MOU, which was last amended in 2002. Among other things, that 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. The Impact Area is closed to public access for safety purposes. The closure is incorporated as an Ada County ordinance to protect the public from the potential safety and health hazards related to live firing, unexploded ordnance, and munitions-related chemical soil contamination.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Military training activities will be restricted from sensitive resource areas and cultural resources.
- Existing firing ranges, support and maintenance facilities, and utilities will be operated, maintained, and upgraded by IDARNG, as authorized under BLM ROWs.
- OTA road improvements and maintenance, fence repair, sign maintenance, and public notification of training activities are authorized or required through the OTA MOU.
- IDARNG has responsibility for (1) initial attack for fires within the OTA (2) maintenance of a BLM-authorized firebreak system, (3) hazardous fuels management within the Impact Area, and (4) strict control of ignition sources (pyrotechnics and tracer ammunition) in times of high fire danger.



Idaho Army National Guard Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Authorize military training in a manner that reduces impacts to existing shrub habitats, supports BLM habitat restoration projects, and provides modified and/or new areas to enhance military training opportunities.
Management Actions:
Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of the 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 Impact Area, including livestock.
Allow recreational activities within the OTA outside of the Impact Area. (IDARNG Map)
Require all military vehicles from outside the Treasure Valley area to be washed prior to entering the OTA.
Incorporate into the OTA law enforcement Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) a requirement to monitor and report public contacts/incidents in the OTA.
Authorize one 5-acre and one 50-acre excavation-training site. (IDARNG Map)
Authorize temporary or permanent military drop zones on a case-by-case basis.
Locate military assembly and bivouac areas in existing, hardened sites adjacent to designated roads in the Bravo Area and as needed throughout the rest of the OTA in non-shrub sites. Where appropriate, BLM will authorize IDARNG to gravel or cinder frequently used sites.
Require IDARNG to avoid shrub stands with 10% or greater canopy cover during military training activities.
Restrict vehicle maneuver training to designated routes in the 22,300-acre Bravo Area. This restriction becomes effective <u>after</u> the authorization for an additional 4,100 acres (expanded Maneuver Area) goes into effect on land adjacent to the existing OTA boundary. (IDARNG Map)

2.11 LANDS AND REALTY

Rationale

The NCA Lands and Realty program is composed of discretionary and non-discretionary cases. Nondiscretionary cases are application-generated proposals that BLM is required to process, such as ROW, land use permits, and various leases. Congress has delegated BLM 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. The BLM has full discretion to determine whether to act on specific proposals. In its evaluation process, BLM determines whether a proposal is feasible, is in the public interest, and if sufficient personnel and funding are available to process the case. Land adjustment proposals primarily involve the acquisition of in-holdings and the blocking up of Federal ownership to facilitate management and reduce conflicts with adjacent landowners.

Designation of utility corridors and ROW avoidance areas are non-discretionary actions (see Utility and Communication Corridors, Section 2.17). Areas designated as either suited or unsuited for a



specific use is a landscape-scale RMP decision, and bears heavily on future ROW applications. An existing utility corridor crosses the extreme eastern corner of the NCA. The utility industry 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 a ROW avoidance area(s) is appropriate to protect these sensitive resources.

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. To improve management and facilitate use, Congress will be requested to realign the boundary.

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.
- Tribal and public access needs will be considered in all land tenure adjustments.
- Retain public lands containing important cultural resources and plant habitat unless they can be exchanged for lands containing better habitat and/or more significant resource values.
- Land exchanges should enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat.
- 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 removed from the NCA by virtue of a boundary adjustment will be managed consistent with the BLM land use plan(s) in effect for the adjacent public lands.
- Land tenure adjustments (exchanges, purchases, donations, etc.) will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, and completed only when in the public interest and consistent with the NCA-enabling legislation.

Lands and Realty Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Consolidate public land ownership to enhance administration and improve resource management.
Meet the needs of the public in a manner that minimizes impacts on resources consistent with NCA legislative requirements.
Management Actions:
Retain all public lands in the 43,000-acre avoidance area to protect the visual corridor along the Historic Oregon Trail and the resources along the Snake River canyon. (Lands Map 1)
As opportunities arise, acquire scattered State and private lands within the NCA to improve management.



Lands and Realty Objectives and Management Actions

Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of the 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 Impact Area, including livestock grazing.
Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of the Interior, that the NCA boundary be realigned to areas more easily identified on the ground. (Lands Map 2)
Restrict major utility developments to the two utility corridors identified. (Lands Map 3)
Include in all BLM authorizations permitting surface disturbing activities (non-grazing), requirements that (1) affected areas be reseeded with a perennial vegetative cover, and (2) surface disturbing activities be located at least a half-mile from occupied sensitive plant habitat.
Require permit holders in slickspot peppergrass habitat to conform to applicable conservation measures from the CA (Appendix 8).

2.12 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 as long as they are consistent with the purposes for which the NCA was established. It is BLM's intent 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 or making significant progress toward meeting them. When rangelands meet 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 progress towards meeting the standard(s).

Standard Operating Procedure

- Grazing allocations, which include stocking levels, seasons and duration of use, would be determined through the Idaho S&G process, which would include the potential for increases or decreases in authorized animal unit months (AUMs).
- Grazing permits and livestock facilities will be authorized through the Idaho S&G process.
- Grazing management practices:
 - o Provide for periodic rest and/or deferment during critical growth stages of key forage plant species and allow sufficient re-growth to meet the plants' 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, protect resources, and maintain site productivity.



- o Provide sufficient residual vegetation to shade stream channels, provide cover, capture sediment, and stabilize streambanks 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.
- Grazing management practices will be designed and scheduled to support vegetation management projects [restoration, fuels and Emergency Stabilization and Restoration (ESR)].
 - o Areas treated for restoration or rehabilitation purposes will be rested from livestock grazing for whatever time is necessary for adequate recovery and/or seedling establishment, up to ten (10) years.
- Manage grazing in accordance with conservation measures listed in the CA. (Appendix 8)

Objectives:
Livestock grazing would be managed to maintain or enhance prey habitat and reduce competition for forage in perennial pastures between livestock and Piute ground squirrels.
Management Actions:
As part of the OTA Impact Area withdrawal, IDARNG would assume responsibility for livestock management in the Impact Area.
Consider and when appropriate, retire all or portions of grazing permits in deference to wildlife habitat management when opportunities arise.
Suspend the adjudicated AUMs for treated areas during treatment establishment.
Use livestock exclosures to protect sensitive plants or their habitat, where needed.
The BLM authorized officer determines through the Idaho S&G process when, how, and to what extent livestock grazing will be authorized when a seeding has been determined to be successful to ensure that future livestock grazing is managed to maintain the long-term habitat quality of the area.
Use grazing on a site-specific basis for hazardous fuel reduction and maintenance of fuels management projects, including up to 1,500 acres of greenstrips and firebreaks. (Grazing Map 2)
Livestock grazing in annual-dominated areas will be managed to leave sufficient residual litter after grazing for small mammal food and cover, and watershed protection.



Livestock Grazing Objectives and Management Actions

Priest Ranch (340 ac), TWMA (300 ac) Gold Isle (120 ac), and Cove Recreation Site (100 ac) will be closed to livestock grazing. Kuna Butte (3,400 ac) of the Sunnyside Spring/Fall Allotment and Pasture 8B (3,040 ac) of the Battle Creek Allotment will only be grazed for the purpose of meeting specific NCA resource management objectives, under a fuels/weed reduction contract or as a temporary non-renewable grazing authorization (Grazing Map 1). Prior to grazing, an environmental analysis will be completed to identify impacts and develop appropriate mitigations. In addition to the above, livestock grazing in the Snake River Pasture (1300 ac) of the Melba Seeding Allotment, located downstream from Swan Falls Dam, will be restricted to the dormant season to reduce conflicts with spring and summer recreational use along the Snake River.

2.13 MINERAL RESOURCES

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 mineral 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 with another 29 previously operated, but currently inactive sites. Mineral material sales and free use permits will be authorized to the extent compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established.

Mineral Materials Objectives and Management Actions

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 will be established.
Authorize mineral material extraction from compatible active mineral material sites. Inactive sites could be reopened for operation if compatible.

2.14 RECREATION

Rationale

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 (Recreation) directs the BLM to designate administrative units known as Special Recreation Management Areas (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’s 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 protection of raptors and raptor habitat, public safety, and the purposes for which the conservation area is established.” Educational values are also recognized and given a major management emphasis. The BLM does not expect to provide the full range of experiences because the primary management focus in the NCA is the protection of raptor populations and habitat.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Requests for recreational special use permits will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine compatibility with NCA management objectives.

Recreation Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Provide a range of developed and undeveloped recreational opportunities with existing and new amenities, while protecting resource values, minimizing user conflicts, and promoting public safety.
Management Actions:
Recreation permits will not be issued in occupied sensitive plant habitat.
Prohibit rock climbing and rappelling due to safety and resource concerns.
Limit open fires to established (improved) campsites. Additional restrictions may be imposed during periods of high fire danger.
Prohibit the use of paintball guns and equipment within the Snake River Canyon and within 1/4 mile of the canyon rim.
Retain Canyon and Plateau shooting restrictions as described below (Recreation Map 2). Use of firearms within these areas for animal damage control and law enforcement are exempt from the shooting closure. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plateau (37,700 acres) – 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 except for deer hunting season in Hunting Unit 40 on the south side of the Snake River. Shotguns and muzzleloaders will be allowed from September 1 to February 14. The width of the closed area is 1/2 mile from the river or 100 yards back from the canyon rim, whichever is greater.
Manage the NCA in a “roaded natural” setting, with 4,400 acres designated for semi-primitive, non-motorized opportunities in the western portion of the Snake River Canyon and around the Grandview area. (Recreation Map 3)
Maintain and expand both Dedication Point and Cove Recreation Site as needed to meet the increasing demands for developed recreational facilities. Develop five additional recreation sites with Black Butte, Three Pole, Kuna Butte, Guffey Butte, and Initial Point being examples. (Recreation Map 4) Develop small secondary sites as necessary to meet user needs.



Designate four SRMAs based on significant recreational, scenic or cultural values. (Recreation Map 1)

- *Snake River Canyon SRMA* – This SRMA consists of 22,300 acres in the Snake River Canyon downstream from Grandview, Idaho that is managed for the protection of cultural and scenic values.
- *Owyhee Front SRMA* – This SRMA consists of 6,300 acres located west of State Highway 78. The boundary extends beyond the NCA into Owyhee Field Office lands, and is managed as part of the larger SRMA. If the NCA boundary is realigned as proposed in the Lands and Realty Section, this SRMA would no longer be within the NCA. The purpose of the SRMA is to provide enhanced management of recreational uses.
- *C.J. Strike SRMA* – This SRMA consists of 20,000 acres surrounding C.J. Strike Reservoir along the Snake River. The purpose of the SRMA is to provide enhanced recreation management associated with the reservoir, and protection of the Oregon Trail adjacent to the reservoir.
- *Oregon Trail SRMA* – This SRMA consists of approximately 7,900 acres lying along a one-mile wide (1/2 mile on each side) corridor of the South Alternate of the Oregon Trail. The purpose of the SRMA is to protect the visual and historic values of the Trail.

Objectives:

Protect outstandingly remarkable values associated with rivers and streams.

Management Actions:

Recommend four segments of the Snake River as not suitable for inclusion in the WSR system. (Recreation Map 5) The existing NCA legislation provides protection for the outstandingly remarkable values associated with the Snake River Canyon.

2.15 RENEWABLE ENERGY

Rationale

The NCA supports the densest concentration of nesting raptors in North America, as well as incredible numbers of migrating raptors. It also provides important habitat for songbirds, 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 more of these species during certain seasons. As such, wind energy developments are incompatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established and are not an appropriate use in the NCA.

2.16 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 resources, (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) and EO 11989, Off-Road Vehicles on Public lands (42 FR 26959h: May 25, 1977).

Standard Operating Procedures

- 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 the Transportation Map were identified as part of the base transportation system, and remain open.
- The RMP identifies areas as open, closed or limited in terms of type and timing of vehicle use. A route inventory was completed in March 2004. In areas identified as limited to existing routes, this inventory is the basis for the identification of “existing”.
- Hard surfaced, graveled routes and county roads are identified as part of the “base road network” and will remain open. Established ROW may be limited to the use for which they were authorized.

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. 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 need for more in-depth analysis of the route. Route designations were not addressed through the RMP process, but will be done through a separate environmental analysis.

The following questions will be answered during the analysis of each route.

1. Is the route a paved or gravel surface, an officially recognized ROW, an officially recognized County or State route, or officially recognized in a Federal-planning document?
2. Is the continued use of the route likely to impact a State or Federal SSS or its habitat, cultural or other specially protected resource, or any special area designations?
3. Is the route a regional one that serves more than one planning sub-region, a principal means of connectivity within a sub-region, which provides 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 will develop proposed route designations, which would show routes as open, limited, or closed. The public will have an opportunity to review and provide comment on route designation proposals, and alternatives will be based on public comment.

The following tables reflect the criteria that will 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 specified distance.

Transportation Table 2.1. 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 rehabilitation 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
Tribal	
Treaty Areas	N/A
Traditional Use Areas (significant landform features such as caves, mesas, etc.)	1320
Private Property	
Access	330



Transportation Table 2.1. Route Designation Criteria – Route Use.

Route Use/Need Access	Distance from route (ft)
Military	
Facility/Training Site	330
Access	330
Public Use Sites	
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 ROW	N/A

Transportation Table 2.2. 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 -Water Quality Impaired Streams	
Adjacent to or Along	165
Proximate (within ½ mile)	2,640
Raptors	
Nesting Area	1,650
Ground Nesting or Burrowing Raptors	1,650
Special Status Species (Plant and Animal)	
Types 1 and 2 in or through	2,640
Types 3-5 in or through	1,320
Riparian	
Near streams, riparian areas, or floodplains	165
Soils	
Route subject to erosion concerns	N/A
Cultural Sites	
Proximate Register/Register Eligible/Undetermined	1,650
Through Register/Register Eligible/Undetermined	165



Transportation Table 2.3. 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
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



Transportation Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Provide motorized access to the majority of the NCA while reducing the number of unnecessary routes, and increasing non-motorized opportunities.
Management Actions:
Designate and sign up to 20 miles of non-motorized trails to create a trail network.
Restrict vehicles to designated routes in the Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District.
Include the current Canyon Creek OHV area (approximately 300 acres) in the OHV “ limited” designation. However, that 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 opportunity for ownership and/or 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 will not be allowed.
Manage vehicle access according to the following OHV Area Designations. (Transportation Map) Open – 0 acres Limited – 428,400 acres (limited to designated routes) Closed – 4,400 acres
Close the following areas to motorized vehicles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halverson Bar – 1,150 acres • Wees Bar – 1,200 acres • TWMA – 320 acres • Cove – 1,600 acres • Gold Isle – 150 acres

2.17 UTILITY AND COMMUNICATION CORRIDORS (LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS)

Rationale

The oil and gas, utility, and communication industries have a continuing need to upgrade and increase their infrastructure developments. As such, BLM will address ROW applications for developments, such as communication sites, electric transmission lines, and oil and gas pipelines. Major utilities will be restricted to the two corridors identified. (Lands Map 3) Potential developments within these corridors would be compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established. Wind energy development is incompatible with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of raptor populations and habitats, and as such, will not be authorized in the NCA. (See Lands and Realty, Section 2.11.)

Standard Operating Procedures

- Land containing significant cultural resources will be protected during any use-authorized project installation or during use.



- Tribal interests and public access needs will be considered in all utility and communication site grants.
- Important sensitive species and other wildlife habitat will be protected and monitored if a land use authorization is granted.
- VRM Class II management areas will not be available for utility corridors.
- Land use authorizations will enhance or at least not adversely affect raptor populations or their habitat.
- To protect occupied SSS habitat adjacent to construction activities, temporary or permanent project fencing is required prior to the implementation of ground disturbing activities.
- Surface disturbing activities and/or human developments will be located with an appropriate buffer to protect occupied, sensitive plant habitat.
- Surface disturbing activities are not authorized in areas supporting SSS unless the action could be appropriately mitigated.
- Include in all BLM authorizations permitting surface disturbing activities (non-grazing), requirements that (1) affected areas be reseeded with a perennial vegetative cover, and (2) surface disturbing activities be located at least a half-mile from occupied sensitive plant habitat.

Utility and Communication Corridor Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
ROW authorizations for utility developments will be compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established, emphasizing habitat protection with economic development.
Management Actions:
Restrict major utility developments to the two utility corridors identified. (Lands Map 3)
Retain the five existing communication sites and consider new locations on a case-by-case basis.
Include in all BLM authorizations permitting surface disturbing activities (non-grazing), requirements that (1) affected areas be reseeded with a perennial vegetative cover, and (2) surface disturbing activities be located at least a half-mile from occupied sensitive plant habitat.
Require all permit holders in slickspot peppergrass habitat to conform to applicable conservation measures from the CA. (Appendix 8)
Retain all public lands in the 43,000-acre ROW avoidance area to protect the visual corridor along the Historic Oregon Trail and the resources along the Snake River canyon. (Lands Map 1)

2.18 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 Wildland Urban interface (WUI).

All wildland fires would receive an Appropriate Management Response (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. Because of the extensive shrub loss within the NCA, wildland fire use projects will not be used. AMR would 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 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 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, i.e., cultural sites such as the Oregon Trail, and areas with highly erosive soils.
- Minimize the spread of annual grasses and other invasive non-native species.
- Where possible, equipment used for suppression and prescribed fire is to be cleaned before arriving on-site, i.e., vehicle wash stations set up in base camps. Staging areas and fire camps should be located on sites free of invasive, non-native species.
- Fuels projects will be designed to protect active raptor nests with an appropriate species-specific buffer, if needed.
- Pre- and post-burn treatments will 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.
- IDARNG has responsibility for (1) initial attack for fires within the OTA (2) maintenance of a BLM authorized firebreak system, (3) hazardous fuels management within the Impact Area, and (4) strict control of ignition sources (pyrotechnics and tracer ammunition) in times of high fire danger.
- Fire suppression priorities are 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 will 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 will 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), may be used to help restore native plant communities and reduce the size and occurrence of future wildfires.
- The use of surface disturbing equipment is limited during fire suppression on areas containing significant natural or cultural values, including native shrub communities, the Oregon Trail, and identified paleontological resources.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management Objectives and Management Actions

Objective:
Protection of native plant communities is one of the highest priorities for fire suppression.
Management Actions:
Limit open fires to established (improved) campsites. Additional restrictions may be imposed during periods of high fire danger.
Maintain or improve 136 miles of existing fuel breaks and construct approximately 12 miles of new fuel breaks. (Vegetation Map)
Use grazing on a site-specific basis for hazardous fuel reduction and maintenance of fuels management projects, including up to 1,500 acres of greenstrips and firebreaks. (Grazing Map 2)
Evaluate all burned areas for emergency stabilization and rehabilitation with the goal of restoring shrub and perennial grass communities.
Use a combination of prescribed fire, herbicides and mechanical treatments where appropriate, on all vegetation treatment projects, including ESR.
Implement the following actions consistent with the slickspot peppergrass CA (Appendix 8) to protect slickspot peppergrass and its habitat from wildfires: (1) occupied habitat has priority over the surrounding area, (2) use aggressive fire suppression tactics when occupied habitats are threatened, and (3) create and maintain fuel breaks around areas where frequent fires threaten habitat.
Restore approximately 130,000-targeted acres of degraded small mammal and big game habitat. Habitat restoration priorities will be emphasized where it is most beneficial to raptor prey populations, rather than being limited to currently burned areas.
Convert approximately 100,000 acres of annual grasslands to a perennial plant community through a combination of biological, chemical, and mechanical fuels management projects. This is in addition to habitat restoration projects.

2.19 SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

(See Recreation, Section 2.14)



2.20 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

2.20.1 Economic Conditions

Rationale

FLPMA directs the BLM to manage public lands for multiple use purposes. This mandate, however, was modified by the 1993 NCA legislation, 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 be made available from existing sites to the extent compatible with the purposes for which the NCA was established.

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

2.20.2 Hazardous Materials

Rationale

The 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.

The BLM policy requires that areas subject to hazardous materials accumulation from military activities be withdrawn to the DoD.

Standard Operating Procedures

- Utilize educational programs for public awareness of the impacts of hazardous materials on health, safety, and the environment.
- 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.

Hazardous Materials Objectives and Management Actions

Objectives:
Protect human health and safety and minimize environmental damage from hazardous materials.
Management Actions:
Authorize and manage land uses to reduce the occurrence and severity of hazardous material incidences.
Recommend to Congress, through the Secretary of the 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 Impact Area, including livestock.



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