

## APPENDIX 9. CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR LISTED SPECIES

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
<p>Special Status Animal and Plant Management Note: Common to All Programs</p>	<p>The conservation measures contained throughout this table implement important elements for yellow-billed cuckoo conservation. The conservation measures reflect BLM’s commitment to support species conservation.</p> <p>1) In cooperation with Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and others:</p> <p>a) Continue to cooperate in determining the distribution of known populations and suitable habitats.</p> <p>b) Following current monitoring protocols, continue to cooperate in monitoring for species presence on a regular basis.</p> <p>c) Participate in research essential to conservation of the species. Cooperate in determining specific limiting factors in terms of habitat needs and characteristics.</p> <p>d) Cooperate in the management and improvement of suitable habitat to promote species conservation.</p> <p>e) Working with other agencies, compile a general list of BMPs that would apply to all programs, to the extent that such a list would assist with species and habitat conservation. The intent of implementing BMPs is to avoid or minimize negative impacts.</p> <p>2) Ensure that ongoing Federal actions support or do not preclude species conservation.</p>	<p>The implementation actions reflect BLM’s commitment to support species conservation. Actions apply to BLM lands and activities only.</p> <p>1) Following actions to be completed in cooperation with others:</p> <p>a) Mapping and data inventory:</p> <p>i) Use IDFG, CDC, USFWS, and other data to identify, record, and map known populations and suitable habitat on BLM lands.</p> <p>ii) Maintain a spatial database of species population and habitat information for BLM lands.</p> <p>iii) Participate in surveys and map new populations as found. Systematic inventories will continue to be conducted in cooperation with other agencies.</p> <p>b) Cooperate with IDFG and USFWS to conduct regular monitoring of populations on BLM lands. Assist in documenting whether cuckoos are using habitats and the type of use.</p> <p>c) BLM will participate as funding allows.</p> <p>d) Where appropriate, update or develop management plans for suitable habitat, particularly in areas with known populations, as well as in restoration areas.</p> <p>e) BMPs:</p> <p>i) SO to coordinate development of BMPs with FO, District Office (DO), USFWS, and IDFG. Instruction memorandum to be issued by SO.</p> <p>ii) FO to implement BMPs.</p> <p>2) Ongoing BLM activities:</p>

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>3) Ensure that new Federal actions support or do not preclude species conservation.</p> <p>4) Implement adaptive management as needed to achieve conservation objectives.</p> <p>5) Support conservation easements, cooperative management efforts, and other programs on adjacent non-Federal lands to support conservation of the yellow-billed cuckoo.</p>	<p>a) Review ongoing activities in locations with known populations.</p> <p>b) Determine if direct or indirect negative impacts to the species or its habitat are occurring as a result of ongoing discretionary BLM actions. If so, modify the activity to avoid or minimize negative impacts and, where feasible, promote species conservation.</p> <p>3) New BLM activities:</p> <p>a) Project-level inventories will be completed in suitable habitat during project planning if inventory information is not available or adequate. SO will issue instruction memorandum concerning special status species project-level inventories and assessment.</p> <p>b) If direct or indirect negative impacts to the species or its habitat are anticipated as a result of new BLM actions, modify the activity to avoid or minimize negative impacts and, where feasible, promote species conservation.</p> <p>c) Avoid implementing activities that have the potential to disturb or displace known populations of cuckoos during the breeding season (May through September).</p> <p>4) Conduct site-specific implementation and effectiveness monitoring. Adjust management as needed to ensure that management objectives are met.</p> <p>5) Take advantage of opportunities as they arise.</p>
Air Resources	None	None
Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation. As a part of conservation, the goals are to promote multi-tiered forested riparian habitat development and maintenance in suitable habitat and restoration areas, to avoid negative impacts, or to minimize impacts if avoidance is not possible.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p>



Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>2) Projects involving the application of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, etc.) that may affect the species will be analyzed at the project level and designed such that pesticide applications will support conservation and minimize risks of exposure.</p> <p>3) Where needed and feasible, coordinate with adjacent landowners and local governments regarding control of invasive plants in riparian areas through cooperative weed management programs.</p> <p>4) Conserve riparian vegetation in suitable habitat (for example, healthy willow stands and cottonwood trees) to maintain their integrity for use by yellow-billed cuckoos, and initiate management in restoration areas.</p>	<p>2) Site-specific stipulations will be developed locally using the following criteria:</p> <p>a) Evaluate the benefits and risks of vegetation treatment, including the following: application methods; pesticides, carriers, and surfactants used; needed treatment buffers; and use of non-chemical weed control (for example, bio-controls, hand pulling). If management objectives can be effectively accomplished using non-chemical methods, such is the preferred alternative.</p> <p>b) Apply appropriate spatial and temporal buffers to avoid species' exposure to harmful chemicals.</p> <p>c) Implement appropriate revegetation and weed control measures to reduce the risks of non-native species infestations following any ground/soil disturbing actions in or near suitable habitat.</p> <p>3) Take advantage of opportunities as they arise.</p> <p>4) Management actions:</p> <p>a) Emphasize eradication of non-native invasive species in riparian areas that compete with willow and cottonwood tree regeneration. Continue to identify problem areas (such as areas infested with tamarisk, Russian olive, and false indigo) and implement appropriate weed control measures.</p> <p>b) Avoid issuing commercial firewood cutting permits in suitable habitats in riparian forests. If permits are issued, ensure that such activities are consistent with the long-term maintenance of suitable habitat and enhancement of restoration areas.</p> <p>c) As needed, close suitable habitat in riparian forests to non-commercial firewood cutting and post the closure.</p>
<p>Upland Vegetation Management: Rangelands (includes weed management)</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Upland Vegetation Management: Rangelands (includes weed management)</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p>

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>2) Projects involving the application of pesticides in uplands adjacent to suitable yellow-billed cuckoo habitat or in restoration areas will be designed and implemented in accordance with the approach described in the <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.</p>	<p>2) See <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.</p>
<p>Forest and Woodland Management (includes weed management)</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Forest and Woodland Management (includes weed management)</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Projects involving the application of pesticides in forested areas and woodlands adjacent to suitable yellow-billed cuckoo habitat or in restoration areas will be designed and implemented in accordance with the approach described in the <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) See <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.</p>
<p>Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Management</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) In restoration areas, cooperate in creating opportunities for yellow-billed cuckoo occupancy by enhancing habitat.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Consider planting or other habitat enhancement measures to improve yellow-billed cuckoo habitat value.</p>
<p>Fish and Aquatic Habitat Management</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Fish and Aquatic Habitat Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p>
<p>Livestock Grazing Management: Permits and Leases</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Livestock Grazing Management: Permits And Leases</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Manage livestock grazing and trailing to promote growth and recruitment of healthy riparian vegetation communities (for example, willows and cottonwood trees). Maintain and promote suitable habitat and restore areas for the yellow-billed cuckoo while implementing</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Permit or lease renewal actions:</p> <p>a) For review of ongoing actions, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2).</p>



Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>rangeland health standards and guidelines (S&amp;Gs).</p> <p>3) Promote restoration of suitable habitat following fire, fire rehabilitation, restoration treatments, or other major disturbances.</p> <p>4) Maintain regular compliance checks on grazing allotments with known populations to identify problems as soon as possible and take immediate corrective measures.</p>	<p>b) For new actions, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3).</p> <p>c) As appropriate to avoid or minimize negative impacts, modify livestock grazing permits and leases.</p> <p>3) As needed, protect disturbed areas using temporary closures or other measures until the willow shrubs and cottonwood saplings (or other target riparian species) are re-established and self-sustaining.</p> <p>4) Ongoing, day-to-day BLM action.</p>
Livestock Grazing Management: Livestock Management Facilities	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Livestock Grazing Management: Livestock Management Facilities</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Manage livestock facilities to promote healthy riparian vegetation communities (for example, willows and cottonwood trees). Maintain and promote suitable habitat and restore areas for the yellow-billed cuckoo while implementing rangeland health S&amp;Gs.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) For review of ongoing actions, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2). For new actions, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). As appropriate to avoid or minimize negative impacts, modify existing and avoid placement of new livestock facilities.</p>
Wild Horse Management	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Wild Horse Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p>
Recreation Management	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Recreation Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Developed facilities (boat access, paved campgrounds, vault toilets, interpretive kiosks, etc.): Manage existing and new recreation facilities so as not to preclude species habitat conservation. This includes management of the physical facilities, as well as disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Management of existing and new facilities:</p> <p>a) For review of existing facilities, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2). As appropriate to avoid or minimize negative impacts, modify existing facilities.</p>

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>3) Dispersed use areas (informal areas, including camping areas and tie-up areas for pack animals and boats): Manage dispersed use sites so as not to preclude species habitat conservation. This includes limiting disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.</p> <p>4) Commercial and noncommercial recreation permits, including outfitter camps: Issue commercial and noncommercial recreation permits in accordance with goals for promoting species habitat conservation. This includes management of physical facilities (such as camps), as well as disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.</p> <p>5) Coordinate with the IDFG to educate recreation users at boat ramps and at designated camp areas about the need to conserve yellow-billed cuckoo habitat.</p>	<p>b) For new facilities, or for expansion of uses or seasons of use at existing facilities, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). In addition, avoid development of new recreation facilities or expansion of existing facilities in suitable habitat, if negative impacts are anticipated.</p> <p>3) For review of ongoing actions, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2). In addition, minimize human activity in suitable habitat if negative impacts are occurring. Close areas, either seasonally or year-round, as needed to protect the species and its habitat, and post and monitor the closure.</p> <p>4) Issuance and review of existing and new permits:</p> <p>a) For review of existing permits, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2). If needed, modify existing permits that conflict with achieving or maintaining suitable habitat conditions.</p> <p>b) For new permits, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). Avoid issuing recreation permits if negative impacts are expected. Consider the seasonal nature of the proposed activities, and whether this conflicts with yellow-billed cuckoo conservation needs. In particular, avoid permitting new recreation activities in suitable habitat. If a recreation permit is to be issued, apply stipulations to the permit to support or to not preclude species conservation.</p> <p>5) Take advantage of opportunities as they arise.</p>
<p>Recreation Management: Travel Management</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Recreation Management: Travel Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Manage roads, off-highway vehicle (OHV) routes and areas, as well as non-motorized trails, so as not to preclude species habitat conservation. This includes management of physical facilities,</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Review of existing and new roads, OHV routes, and areas and non-motorized trails:</p>



Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>as well as disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.</p> <p>3) Maintain regular compliance checks on OHV closures to protect known populations and to identify problems as soon as possible and take immediate corrective measures.</p>	<p>a) For existing roads, designated OHV routes and areas, and designated non-motorized trails, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2). Modify routes in locations with known populations, if negative impacts are occurring. Evaluate the need for seasonal OHV use restrictions in suitable habitat and, if needed, implement restrictions to reduce disturbance to the species and its habitat. Seek opportunities to close and revegetate OHV routes or non-motorized trails and use areas in suitable habitat, if negative impacts are occurring.</p> <p>b) For new roads, OHV routes and areas, and trails, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). Avoid constructing new roads, trails, routes, and areas if negative impacts are expected. Consider the seasonal nature of the proposed activities, and whether this conflicts with yellow-billed cuckoo conservation needs. In particular, avoid opening new roads, trails, routes, and areas in suitable habitat.</p> <p>3) Ongoing, day-to-day BLM activities.</p>
Visual Resource Management	None	None
Special Designation Area Management	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Special Designation Area Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Explore the potential for new designations that would enhance species conservation, such as good-condition cottonwood/willow riparian forest.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Take advantage of opportunities as they arise.</p>
Fire Management: Fire Suppression	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Fire Management: Fire Suppression</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation. Human life and firefighter safety and property take priority over species protection.</p> <p>2) Fire suppression efforts will be conducted, as possible, to protect yellow-billed cuckoo habitat.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Fire management activities:</p>

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>3) Coordinate with U.S. Forest Service, Idaho Department of Lands, or other applicable agency personnel regarding fire suppression activities in or near suitable habitat.</p>	<p>a) Review Fire Management Plan for adequacy in addressing conservation measures. Modify the plan if needed.</p> <p>b) Apply minimum impact suppression tactics (MIST) in suitable habitat, as appropriate. Consult with resource advisors to determine where MIST tactics should be applied to avoid or minimize negative impacts.</p> <p>c) Do not locate fire base camps, staging areas, and fueling areas in suitable habitat. Avoid locating these and other related activities in suitable habitat.</p> <p>3) Ongoing interagency coordination.</p>
<p>Fire Management: Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Fire Management: Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Implement Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&amp;R) activities to promote yellow-billed cuckoo habitat rehabilitation.</p> <p>3) Fire rehabilitation projects involving the application of pesticides in or adjacent to suitable habitat areas will be analyzed and implemented in accordance with the approach described in the <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) ES&amp;R activities:</p> <p>a) If needed and if natural recovery would not achieve habitat objectives, implement ES&amp;R activities to promote rehabilitation of suitable habitat. Plant locally appropriate trees and shrubs, if natural recovery of such vegetation is doubtful.</p> <p>b) As needed, protect disturbed areas using temporary closures or other measures until the cottonwood saplings (and other target tree and shrub species) are re-established and self-sustaining.</p> <p>3) See <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.</p>
<p>Fire Management: Wildland Fire Use</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Fire Management: Wildland Fire Use</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p>



Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	2) Wildland fire use projects (where allowed) will be designed to conserve suitable yellow-billed cuckoo habitat.	2) When developing wildland fire use plans, avoid burning suitable habitat, and develop appropriate burn prescriptions that maximize the conservation of suitable habitat.
Fire Management: Prescribed Fire	1) Activities within the <b>Fire Management: Prescribed Fire</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.  2) Prescribed fire projects will be designed to conserve suitable yellow-billed cuckoo habitat and restoration areas.	1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.  2) When developing and implementing prescribed fire plans, avoid or minimize negative impacts to suitable habitat, and use prescribed fire as a tool for enhancing restoration areas.
Fire Management: Non-Fire Fuels Management	1) Activities within the <b>Fire Management: Non-Fire Fuels Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.  2) Implement projects involving the application of pesticides in or adjacent to suitable habitat or restoration areas in accordance with the approach described in the <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.  3) Promote establishment of vegetation needed to achieve suitable yellow-billed cuckoo habitat.	1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.  2) See <b>Soil and Water Resources: Riparian/Wetland Areas (includes weed management)</b> program section.  3) Incorporate conservation actions into the fuels projects, as needed. For example, design seed mixes that will enhance or promote the growth of willows, cottonwoods, or other target shrub and tree species.
Fire Management: Community Assistance	1) Activities within the <b>Fire Management: Community Assistance</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.  2) Follow all measures included throughout the <b>Fire Management</b> program sections.	1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.  2) See actions within <b>Fire Management</b> program sections. Incorporate into community assistance agreements.
Lands and Realty Management: Land Tenure Adjustment (land sale, exchanges, withdrawals, etc.)	1) Activities within the <b>Lands and Realty Management: Land Tenure Adjustment (land sale, exchanges, withdrawals, etc.)</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.	1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	<p>2) Where feasible and funding is available, acquire through land exchange or purchase private lands that support known populations or could enhance habitat for yellow-billed cuckoo.</p> <p>3) Retain yellow-billed cuckoo habitat in Federal ownership to the extent possible, while balancing other needs.</p>	<p>2) Take advantage of opportunities as they arise. Priority should be given to lands that are adjacent to or near public lands.</p> <p>3) Review each land tenure decision in terms of species habitat. Retain suitable habitat in public ownership unless compelling circumstances necessitate the land tenure adjustment. If property with suitable habitat is to be transferred out of Federal ownership, permanent conservation easements may be attached to the transfer that would result in equal or greater protection than under Federal management. Such measures must be approved by the State Director.</p>
<p>Lands and Realty Management: Land Use Permits and Leases</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Lands and Realty Management: Land Use Permits and Leases</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Issue new land use permits and leases and review existing permits and leases at renewal so as not to preclude species habitat conservation. This includes management of physical facilities, as well as disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) For new permits and renewal of existing permits, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). Avoid issuing new permits or leases, or renewing existing permits or leases, in suitable habitat if negative impacts are expected. Consider the seasonal nature of the proposed activities, and whether this conflicts with yellow-billed cuckoo conservation needs. If a permit or lease is to be issued or re-issued in suitable habitat, apply stipulations to the permit that support or do not preclude species conservation and that avoid or minimize negative impacts.</p>
<p>Lands and Realty Management: Rights-of-Way</p>	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Lands and Realty Management: Rights-of-Way</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Issue new rights-of-way and review existing rights-of-way at renewal so as not to preclude species habitat conservation. This includes management of physical facilities, as well as disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) For new rights-of-way and renewal of existing rights-of-way, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). Avoid issuing rights-of-way, or renewing existing rights-of-way, in suitable habitat if negative impacts are expected. Consider the seasonal nature of the proposed activities, and whether this conflicts with yellow-billed cuckoo conservation needs. If a right-of-way is to be issued or re-</p>



Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
		issued in suitable habitat, apply stipulations to the right-of-way that support or do not preclude species conservation and that avoid or minimize negative impacts.
Mineral Management: Locatable Minerals	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Mineral Management: Locatable Minerals</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Approve plans of operations or allow notice level operations so as not to preclude species habitat conservation. This includes management of physical facilities, as well as disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Approval of plans of operations and notice-level operations:</p> <p>a) For review of existing plans of operation and notice-level operations, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2). To the extent allowed by law, modify plans of operation or notice-level operations that conflict with yellow-billed cuckoo management objectives in suitable habitat. For notice-level operations, notify the operator that modifications to proposed activities will be required to avoid negative impacts.</p> <p>b) For new plans of operation and notice-level operations, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). To the extent allowed by law, avoid approving plans of operation or notice-level operations that conflict with yellow-billed cuckoo management objectives in suitable habitat. Consider the seasonal nature of the proposed activities, and whether this conflicts with yellow-billed cuckoo conservation needs. For notice-level operations, notify the operator that modifications to proposed activities will be required to avoid negative impacts. If a plan of operations is to be approved in suitable habitat, apply stipulations to support or to not preclude species conservation. A notice will require modification by the operator until BLM determines that it will not result in undue or unnecessary degradation.</p>
Mineral Management: Saleable and Leasable Minerals	<p>1) Activities within the <b>Mineral Management: Saleable and Leasable Minerals</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.</p> <p>2) Approve development of saleable or leasable</p>	<p>1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.</p> <p>2) Approval of saleable and leasable minerals:</p>

Yellow-Billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*):

LUP Programs Evaluated	Conservation Measures	BLM Implementation Actions
	minerals so as not to preclude species habitat conservation. This includes management of physical facilities, as well as disturbances to the species resulting from human uses.	a) For review of existing mineral leases, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (2). Modify existing mineral leases if negative impacts are occurring. b) For new sales or leases, see <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section item (3). Avoid development of saleable or leasable minerals in suitable habitat if negative impacts are expected. Consider the seasonal nature of the proposed activities, and whether this conflicts with yellow-billed cuckoo conservation needs. If a minerals lease or sale is to be issued in suitable habitat, apply stipulations to support or to not preclude species conservation.
Cultural Management	1) Activities within the <b>Cultural Management</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.	1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.
Paleontology	1) Activities within the <b>Paleontology</b> program will implement relevant conservation measures as described in the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section to promote conservation.	1) Apply relevant conservation measures from the <b>Special Status Animal and Plant Management</b> program section at the beginning of this table.



## **APPENDIX 10. SNAKE RIVER WILD & SCENIC RIVER EVALUATION REPORT**

### **Eligibility, Classification, & Suitability**

#### **I. Introduction**

As part of the planning process for the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area (NCA) Resource Management Plan (RMP), a BLM interdisciplinary (ID) team completed a Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR) study under Section 5(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (WSRA). This study reviews BLM-administered public land along the 82 miles of the Snake River, evaluates and makes determinations regarding eligibility, makes preliminary classifications to those river segments found eligible, and makes suitability recommendations for all eligible segments.

This report is the official record of the eligibility and suitability determinations made by the ID Team. This report: 1) discusses the definition of free-flowing and whether or not the Snake River fits that definition; 2) describes the criteria for evaluating outstandingly remarkable values; 3) describes and assesses resource values, and determines if specific resource values are outstandingly remarkable; 4) determines preliminary classification for all eligible river segments; and 5) determines suitability recommendations for all eligible river segments.

#### Purpose

The WSR Act, passed by Congress in October 1968, instituted a legislative program to study and protect free-flowing river segments by making them part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (NWSRS). Congress did not intend to protect every remaining free-flowing river, but rather sought to conserve a representative sample of many of our most important natural and recreational rivers.

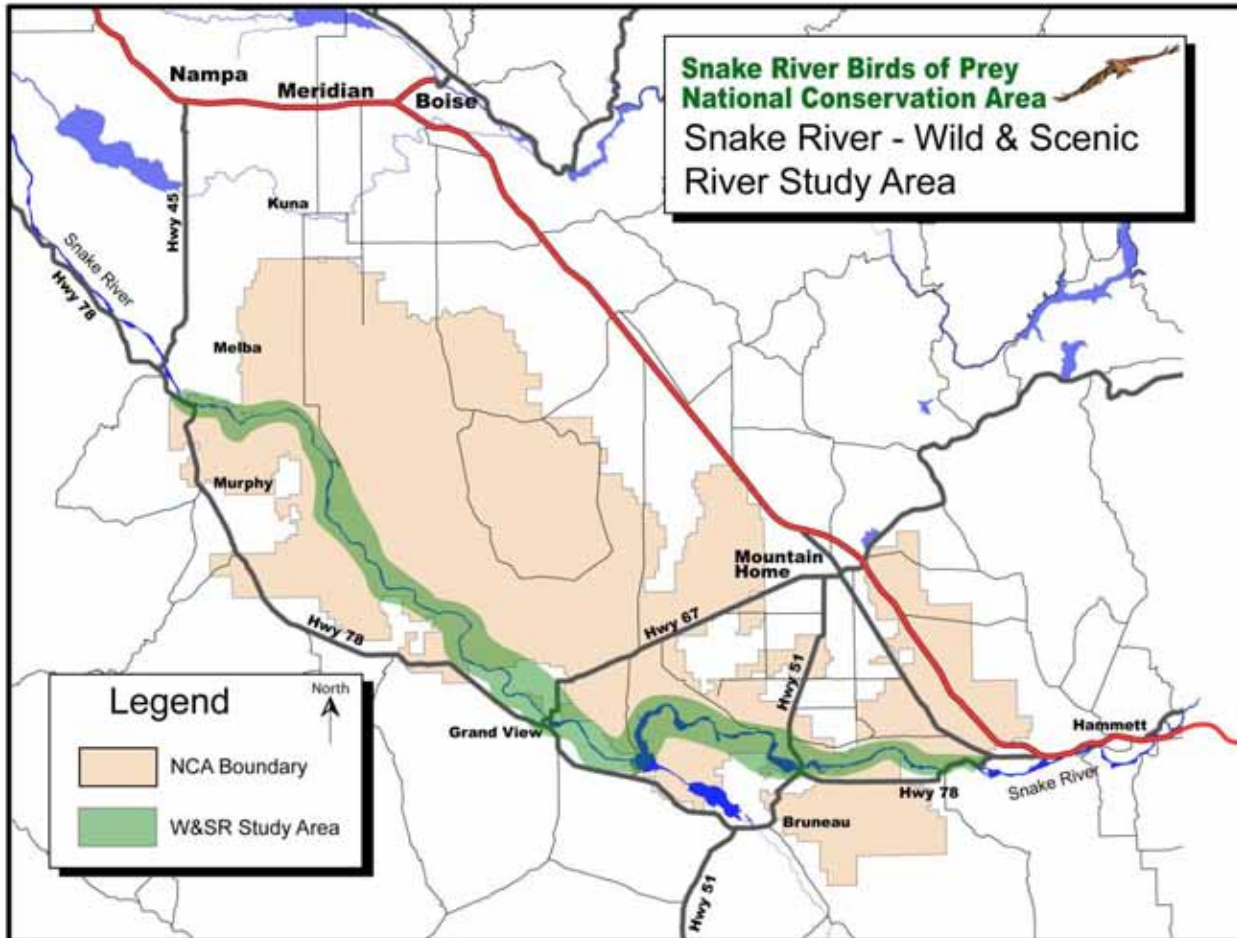
Directives in BLM Manual 8351 and “The Wild and Scenic River Study Process” technical report prepared for the Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council, 1999, were followed for integrating a wild and scenic river study within the resource management planning process.

#### Study Boundary

The study area boundary includes 82 miles of the Snake River from the upstream NCA boundary at about river mile 527 downstream to the western NCA boundary at approximately river mile 445 (Figure 1). Only those river segments that met the initial free flowing criteria were further evaluated for outstandingly remarkable values in this report.



The boundaries of any river proposed for potential addition to the NWSRS, as specified in section 4(d) of the WSR Act, are usually limited to that area measured within one-quarter mile above the ordinary high watermark on each side of the river. The study boundary for this evaluation of the Snake River used the one-quarter mile area as a starting point, but in some locations extended this distance to 100 feet beyond the canyon rim to include the entire expanse of the Snake River Canyon. In evaluating the river's scenic values, the surrounding background, when viewed from the canyon rim, was considered as part of the view shed.



**Figure 1. Snake River Wild & Scenic River Study Area.**

The Snake River's special values were assessed as to whether they are unique, rare or exemplary within the state, region, or nation. For purposes of this report and in order to better define the evaluation criteria, "regionally significant" refers to the portion of the United States that includes Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana, northern Nevada, northern Utah, and western Wyoming.



### Overview of the WSR Study Process

The first phase of a WSR study is the eligibility determination, an analysis to see whether the river is eligible to be considered for WSR designation.

To be considered eligible a water course:

**1. Must be a: River – defined as:**

A flowing body of water, or estuary, or section, portion, or tributary thereof, including: rivers, streams, creeks, runs, kills, rills, and small lakes.

**2. Must Be: Free flowing – defined as:**

Existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, with exceptions (low dams, diversion works, and other minor structures), diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway (channelization).

**Can:** be any size or length, lie between impoundments or major dams, be non-floatable or non-boatable, be intermittent, or non-perennial.

**3. And must possess at least one (1) outstandingly remarkable value, such as:** Scenic, Recreational, Geologic, Fish and Wildlife, Historic, Cultural, or other similar values including Biological, Botanical, Ecological, Hydrological, or Paleontological.

The second phase of the study is the classification analysis, which determines whether the river should be tentatively classified as a recreational, scenic, or wild river if it were designated by Congress. This tentative BLM classification is based on the level of development present within the river corridor.

The third phase of the study is the suitability assessment which looks at the possible impacts of designation, weighs various elements such as public access, long-term protection of resources, and traditional resource uses, and asks the basic question of would this be a worthy addition to the National Wild & Scenic River System.

## **II. Free Flowing Criteria and Determinations**

Free flowing is defined by Section 16(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as: “existing or flowing in a natural condition without impoundment, diversion, straightening, rip-rapping, or other modification of the waterway”. The existence of low dams, diversion works, or other minor structures at the time of evaluation does not automatically disqualify a stream from consideration.

Swan Falls Dam and C.J. Strike Dam create impoundments at two different locations along the 82 miles of the Snake River. Swan Falls Reservoir extends 9.5 miles upstream from Swan Falls Dam. CJ Strike Reservoir extends 24 miles upstream from CJ Strike Dam.

These two reservoirs on the Snake River do not meet the initial criteria as free flowing. The remaining segments of the Snake River do meet the initial criteria of free flowing (Table 1 and Figure 2).

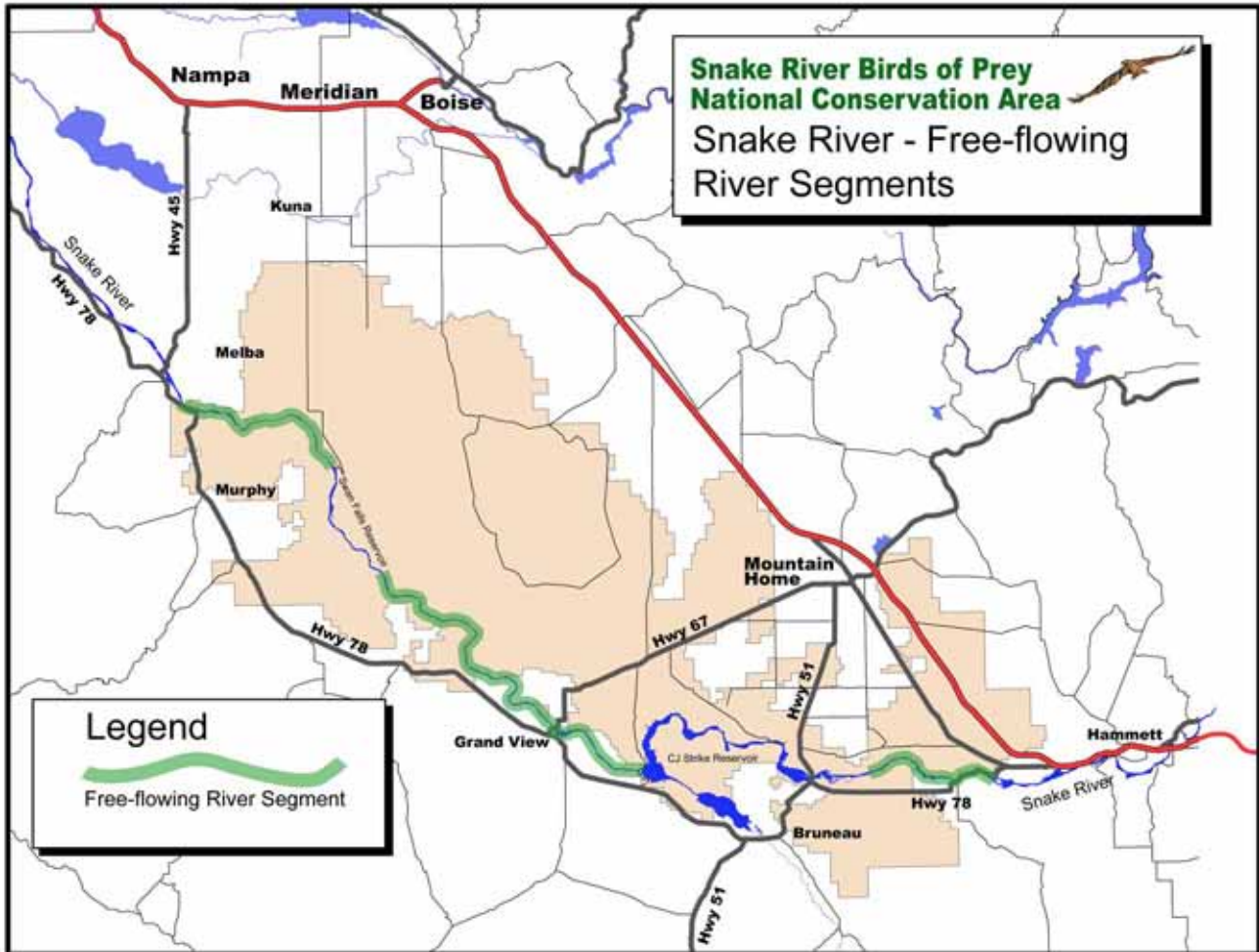


Figure 2. Free flowing segments of the Snake River.



Table 1. Free flowing determinations for the Snake River.

River Segment Description	Number of Miles	River Segment Name	Free Flowing Criteria Met
East boundary of the NCA to the backwaters of CJ Strike Reservoir	9	Indian Cove	Yes
Backwaters of C.J. Strike Reservoir to CJ Strike Dam	24	C.J. Strike Reservoir	No
Downstream of C.J. Strike Dam to the backwaters of Swan Falls Reservoir	26.5	Grand View	Yes
Backwaters of Swan Falls Reservoir to Swan Falls Dam	9.5	Swan Falls Reservoir	No
Downstream of Swan Falls Dam to the west boundary of the NCA	13	Swan Falls	Yes

**Findings Summary:** Three (3) segments of the Snake River (49 miles total) were found to meet the free-flowing criteria. Two (2) segments (33 miles total) did not meet the criteria.

The 26.5 mile Grand View segment has two distinct characters. The initial 17.5 miles downstream from CJ Strike Dam is visually characterized by being a wide valley floor with the canyon rim several miles to the north and no canyon rim south of the river. The ownership is predominately private land on both sides of the river, being either rural townships or agricultural fields and pasture lands. At the end of this segment the river turns north and the surrounding canyon closes back into a river characterized by vertical basalt cliffs on the north and broken cliffs and buttes to the south. The ownership changes to predominately public lands with some private lands spaced throughout. For this reason the Grand View segment will be divided and evaluated as two segments – the Grand View Segment and the Jackass Butte Segment.

The Grand View segment extends from just below CJ Strike Dam at the Strike Dam Road Bridge downstream approximately 17.5 miles to Jackass Butte at River Mile 474. The Jackass Butte Segment extends from Jackass Butte downstream approximately 9 miles to the backwaters of Swan Falls Reservoir (Figure 3).

These four (4) free flowing segments (Indian Cove, Grand View, Jackass Butte, and Swan Falls) will be further analyzed as to their possible outstandingly remarkable values.

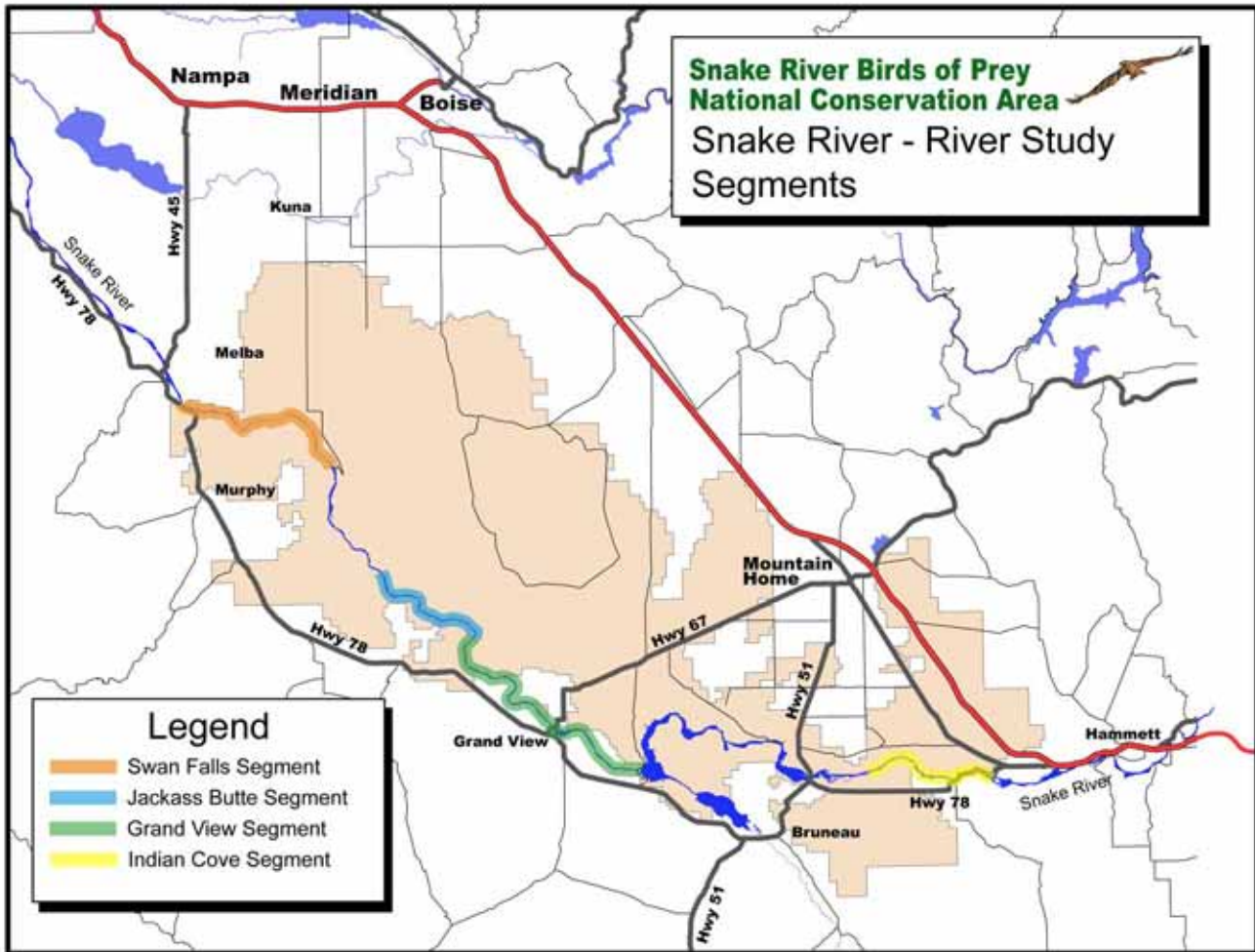


Figure 3. Snake River Eligibility Study Segments.

### III. Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs)

The determination that a river area contains ORVs is a professional judgment on the part of the interdisciplinary study team (ID team), based on objective, scientific analysis. In order to be assessed as outstandingly remarkable, a river-related value must be a unique, rare, or exemplary feature that is significant at a comparative state, regional or national scale. Dictionary definitions of the words “unique” and “rare” indicate that such a value would be one that is a conspicuous example from among a number of similar values that are themselves uncommon or extraordinary.

The ID team evaluated 49 miles of the Snake River, which met the free flowing criteria, by listing all of the river’s special values and then assessing whether they were unique, rare or exemplary within the state, region, or nation. Only one such value is needed for a segment to be eligible. Of the 82 miles of the Snake River in the study area, four segments (49 miles) were identified for further analysis for the presence of outstandingly remarkable values and are discussed in greater detail below.



The values, which must be directly river-related or owe their location or existence to the river ecosystem, are considered outstandingly remarkable if they are unique or exemplary compared to similar values of other rivers within a geographic region of comparison. The regions used for comparison in this study are the Northern Great Basin and the Northern Rocky Mountains.

The following eligibility criteria were used and are intended to set minimum thresholds to establish ORVs and are illustrative but not all-inclusive. The “standard” criteria for each resource and the Outstandingly Remarkable Value Rating used are from BLM Manual 8351 and are an interagency standard for greater consistency within the federal river-administering agencies.

### Discussion of River-Related Values

#### **Scenic (S)**

##### Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Value Rating

The landscape elements of landform, vegetation, water, color, and related factors result in notable or exemplary visual features and/or attractions. The BLM Visual Resource Inventory handbook, H-4810-1 may be used in addressing visual quality and in evaluating the extent of development upon scenic values. The rating must be a scenic quality “A” as defined in the BLM Visual Inventory Handbook. When analyzing scenic values, additional factors – such as seasonal variations in vegetation, scale of cultural modifications, and the length of time negative intrusions are viewed – may be considered. Scenery and visual attractions may be highly diverse over the majority of the river or river segment.



**Figure 4. View east of Indian Cove Segment of the Snake River.**

##### Evaluation of Present Situation

The general scenic character of the Snake River is one of vertical canyon cliffs interspersed with wide expansive views of valley floor and rolling hills leading south toward the Owyhee Mountains. The Swan Falls segment is the most enclosed, having cliffs on both sides of the river for the majority of the segment. The four segments, while similar, have slightly different visual characteristics.

The Indian Cove segment begins with canyon cliffs rising 400 feet along both sides of the river and then opening to distant views of hills and buttes to the south after approximately 2 miles. The canyon closes back in on the river again at approximately 6 miles (Figure 4.). The Grand View segment is privately owned land in some form of agricultural development for almost the entire length. This segment of the river opens into a large flood plain with the canyon rim typically 2-3 miles from the river on the north and no rim to the south (Figure 5). The downstream portion of the segment begins to move into open rangelands and the canyon rim comes back to within 1 mile of the river and starts to create a more enclosed canyon. At this point, the Jackass Butte segment begins.



**Figure 5. View west of Grand View segment of the Snake River.**

Initially the views in the Jackass Butte segment are limited in distance due to the canyon cliffs and rim and the curving of the river. At about three miles the canyon rim again disappears to the south, broken only by Castle Butte and Morgan Butte. The north rim fluctuates between being adjacent to the river to two miles from the river. At Wild Horse Butte the canyon closes in again and remains this way for the remainder of the segment. The Swan Falls segment is a large, one mile wide canyon for a majority of its length with cliffs ranging from 300 to 600 feet above the river (Figure 6).



**Figure 6. View west of Snake River Canyon below Swan Falls Dam.**



The vertical cliffs and angular talus slopes of all four segments provide straight visual lines of rock and low vegetation with a medium texture. Along the Swan Falls, Jackass Butte, and Indian Cove segments the cliffs vary in proximity to the river from immediately adjacent to approximately one half mile away. The cliffs along the Grand View segment are set back as much as three miles. The distance of the canyon rim creates differences in the scale of the canyon and the feeling of openness. The Swan Falls segment has the highest vertical cliffs (600 feet) but the canyon does not feel tight because the rim to rim distance averages about one mile across.

The south side of the four segments is a mixture of steep cliffs, buttes, rolling hills, and flood plains. The Indian Cove segment initially consists of flood plains slowly rising to low hills. The mixed ownership provides a mixture of croplands, groves of mature trees, and desert vegetation. This combination of vegetation breaks up the visual form across the landscape. The Grand View segment is almost entirely flood plains and rolling hills with no cliffs. The Jackass Butte segment changes character as the canyon cliffs come closer to the river to form an initial enclosed canyon that opens up after a few miles.

For the majority of the year the color tends to be dark cliff faces and brown/tan vegetation. The exception to this is the irrigated agricultural fields which stay green into the fall and the brief period during the spring when vegetation can be a brilliant green.

The BLM administered lands along the Snake River are categorized as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I, II, and III. The areas managed under VRM Class I are the north side of the Swan Falls segment, (which was classified as such when the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area received national protection in 1972), and those areas in the Grand View and Indian Cove segments along the Oregon National Historic Trail. The remaining segments are a mixture of VRM Class II and III.

### Finding

While the visual elements and scenic quality of the Snake River Canyon can be spectacular, they are not unlike many other portions of the Snake River through southern Idaho and other areas of volcanic activity. Examples of similar scenic views in Idaho include the Snake River Canyon and Lower Salmon Falls Creek near Twin Falls. The quality of the scenic values for these four segments of the Snake River does not constitute an outstandingly remarkable scenic value when compared to other regional scenes.

### **Recreational (R)**

#### Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

Recreational opportunities are, or have the potential to be, popular enough to attract visitors from throughout or beyond the region of comparison or are unique or rare within the region. Visitors are willing to travel long distances to use the river resources for recreational purposes. River-related opportunities could include, but are not limited to, sightseeing, wildlife observation, camping, photography, hiking, fishing and boating. Interpretive opportunities may be exceptional and attract, or

have the potential to attract, visitors from outside the region of comparison. The river may provide, or have the potential to provide, settings for national or regional usage or competitive events.

#### Evaluation of the Present Situation

The Snake River Canyon provides a unique opportunity to observe one of the largest concentrations of nesting raptors in the world. This opportunity attracts visitors from the local area, the region, the nation, and other countries. Feature articles in magazines and newspapers has prompted visitation from across the United States. Environmental organizations, such as Hawk Watch International and the Audubon Society, routinely bring visitors from throughout the U.S. for the opportunity to view birds of prey along this stretch of the Snake River.

The Snake River Canyon also provides diverse opportunities for additional recreational activities such as fishing, camping, float and power boating, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, waterfowl hunting, and parasailing primarily for local residents. Recreation use occurs year-round with visitor use being highest in the spring and early summer months and lowest during winter months.

#### Finding

Opportunities for general river-related recreational activities along the Snake River are similar to those that can be found on many western rivers. However, the Snake River Canyon provides a very unique raptor watching opportunity found in only a few places in the United States. This opportunity is truly an outstandingly remarkable recreational value to the birding community.

### **Geology (G)**

#### Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Value Rating

The river, or the area within the river corridor, contains one or more examples of a geologic feature, process or phenomenon that is unique or rare within the region of comparison. The feature(s) may be in an unusually active stage of development, represent a “textbook” example, and/or represent a unique or rare combination of geologic features (erosional, volcanic, glacial, or other geologic structures).

#### Evaluation of Present Situation

The NCA is located in the western Snake River Plain physiographic province, which is the western limb of a broad, flat arcuate depression which is concave to the north and extends 400 miles westward from northwest Wyoming to the Idaho-Oregon border. The structural depression is fault bounded and has an average width of about 35 miles. The western Plain is a north – northwest – trending 10 million year old basin bounded by normal faults. The surface consists primarily of Quaternary basalt flows underlain by Lake Idaho lacustrine sediments over 1000 feet thick and stream deposits derived from the Idaho batholith to the north and the Owyhee Mountains to the south.

Both arms of the Plain appear to have been strongly shaped by extension of the crust on the North American Plate during the past 17 million years. This structural formation was triggered by the magmatism of the migrating Yellowstone hot spot. In the NCA, the Snake River has cut a deep



canyon in the lake deposits. The basalts have repeatedly filled the canyon over the past 100,000 years and subsequently been eroded by the Snake River forming a new canyon. The canyon is the predominant surface feature in the NCA and provides important nesting habitat for the raptor populations that inhabit the area.

The volcanism in the western Snake River Plain region began with extrusion of rhyolitic lavas followed by the eruption of basalt and ashflow tuffs. As the plain pulled apart and subsided, a lake, or succession of lakes, known as Lake Idaho formed. Volcanic activity occurring when the lake was present resulted in many spectacular examples of three major types of phreatomagmatic volcanoes (volcanic activity associated with water): emergent, subaqueous, and subaerial. Emergent volcanoes, like Sinker Butte, began erupting under water and eventually build a volcanic edifice above the lake level. Subaqueous volcanoes erupt under water and never build above the lake level. Finally, subaerial volcanoes erupt through a buried aquifer system which produces violent eruptive features. All of these volcanic systems contain a significant amount of water, causing a high magma/water interaction. Emergent and subaqueous volcanoes usually form gently sloping tuff cones, whereas subaerial volcanoes form maars or tuff rings. The western Snake River Plain is an excellent area to study phreatomagmatic eruptions and hydrovolcanism.

**Bonneville Flood** – As glaciers receded during the last ice age, the inland basin of central Utah slowly filled with meltwater, creating Lake Bonneville. This lake covered approximately 20,000 square miles. The water level rose and finally crested at the lowest point in the basin – Red Rock Pass, Idaho. The lake crested over the pass over a period of 500 to 1000 years before a catastrophic failure of the alluvial threshold dropped the lake level by approximately 100 meters during the Bonneville flood about 14,500 years ago. Water spilled out of Lake Bonneville and flowed north into the valleys of Marsh Creek and the Portneuf River. The deluge entered the Snake River Plain just north of Pocatello and flowed west across southern Idaho before turning back north into the Hell’s Canyon region. Over an estimated eight week period approximately 380 cubic miles of water passed through and over the Snake River Canyon.

The Snake River and its canyons are the major geographic features across the volcanic plain and became the main conduit for the Bonneville flood. The varying topographic features of the Snake River produced distinct types of hydraulics. In places where the canyon is deep and constricted, the velocity of the water increased tremendously. This increased energy allowed the water to pick up talus boulders the size of houses, turn, roll, and smooth out their rough edges, and deposit them many miles downstream. When the water entered wide, open stretches, the velocity decreased and the energy of the water could not keep the boulders suspended. The rocks settled in the bottom of the river and are now exposed on the larger bars along the river. These large, rounded boulders were nicknamed “melon gravel” due to the resemblance to big watermelons.

Dedication Point is an excellent location to view some of the effects of this catastrophic event. The river canyon above Swan Falls Dam is narrow and constricted, and widens below the dam. The large bar on the north side of the river below Dedication Point is covered with the Bonneville Flood boulders. You will notice the boulders on the upstream side of the bar are larger than the boulders on the downstream end. This demonstrates how the river lost energy as the canyon widened and was

unable to hold the larger boulders in suspension. Floodwaters completely filled the canyon in some locations and flowed above the canyon rim in other areas. The force of the flood waters scoured the canyon in constricted locations. The river carved out many “box” canyons along the cliffs in places where large eddies formed.

### Finding

The portion of the Snake River Canyon located within the NCA provides fine examples of canyon development and erosional features created by massive flood action, however; similar and in many ways much more definitive features can be observed upstream and downstream from the NCA and in the Columbia River Gorge and its tributaries. The Bonneville Flood was a single catastrophic event that changed the face of the Snake River Canyon, but the Glacial Lake Missoula Flood, of the Columbia River drainage was many times larger exploding downstream at a rate 10 times the combined flow of all the rivers of the world. Lake Missoula was drained of its estimated 500 cubic miles of water in as little as 48 hours. Rebuilding and failure of the ice dam created catastrophic flooding perhaps as many as 100 times before the alpine glaciers receded for the last time. The geologic resources associated with these four segments of the Snake River, while interesting are not unique when compared to regional geologic features and do not meet the criteria as outstandingly remarkable.

### **Fish (F)**

#### Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Value Rating

Fish values may be judged on the relative merits of either fish populations, habitat, or a combination of these river-related conditions.

#### **Populations:**

The River is nationally or regionally an important producer of resident and/or anadromous fish species. Of particular significance is the presence of wild stocks and/or federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of “outstandingly remarkable.”

#### **Habitat:**

The River provides exceptionally high quality habitat for fish species indigenous to the region of comparison. Of particular significance is habitat for wild stocks and/or federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of “outstandingly remarkable.”

### Evaluation of Present Situation

#### **Populations:**

The Snake River’s aquatic habitat is home to 27 species of fish, including white sturgeon, the largest fresh water fish in North America. White sturgeon, redband trout and mountain whitefish are the only native game fish in the NCA, since the salmon and steelhead runs were blocked by downstream dams.



Twelve species of exotic game fish have been introduced into the Snake River system. These include small-mouth bass, rainbow trout, perch, crappie and channel catfish. Carp, an exotic fish, may be the most common large fish in the Snake River. Eleven native fish are considered non-game fish including suckers, northern pikeminnow, dace, shiners and sculpin.

**Habitat:**

The Snake River is a large volume, (greater than fifth order), river that is one of the most important water resources in the state. The river provides important agricultural, recreational, and wildlife resources. In this reach, the river flows through basalt canyons, rangeland, and agricultural land. The channel shape varies from being confined in the canyons to wide single channel areas with extensive floodplains and meandering channels with island complexes.

**Findings:**

The fish populations and habitat of the Snake River within the NCA are similar to those throughout Idaho and of other large volume rivers in the Pacific Northwest and do not constitute an outstandingly remarkable value.

**Wildlife (W)**

Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Values Rating

Wildlife values may be judged on the relative merits of either terrestrial or aquatic wildlife populations or habitat or a combination of these conditions.

**Populations:**

The river or area within the river corridor contains nationally or regionally important populations of indigenous wildlife species. Of particular significance are species considered to be unique, and/or populations of federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered, or sensitive species. Diversity of species is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of “outstandingly remarkable.”

**Habitat:**

The river or area within the river corridor provides exceptionally high quality habitat for wildlife of national or regional significance, and/or may provide unique habitat or a critical link in habitat conditions for federal or state listed (or candidate) threatened, endangered or sensitive species. Contiguous habitat conditions are such that the biological needs of the species are met. The diversity of habitats is an important consideration and could, in itself, lead to a determination of “outstandingly remarkable”.

## Evaluation of the Present Situation

### **Populations:**

Two-hundred and eighteen bird, 49 mammal, 14 reptile, 4 amphibian species, and an unknown number of invertebrates have been found in the area. Each plays an integral part in the unique ecosystem of the Snake River Plain and Canyon.

While many bird species can be found along the Snake River Canyon, the raptor populations are the most distinctive feature. This unique raptor aggregation is the largest concentration of nesting birds of prey in North America and is generally believed to be one of the densest in the world. It is for this reason the area was congressionally designated a National Conservation Area in 1994. Raptors are relatively scarce animals even under the best conditions because they exist at the top of the food chain where the amount of energy available will support only small populations.

This unusual concentration of raptors exists because of the co-occurrence of two factors critical to their survival. One is that nest sites are very abundant in cavities, cracks, and ledges in the fractured basalt and eroded sandstone that make up the walls of the Snake River Canyon, numerous side canyons, and buttes that arise in the Snake River plain. The second factor is the fertile, fine- and medium-textured loess soils that support grasses, forbs, and shrubs, which in turn sustain many small mammals, birds, reptiles, and invertebrates. These animal populations, especially Piute ground squirrels and blacktailed jackrabbits, are prey for the raptors. Thus, the co-occurrence of abundant nesting sites and food supplies is the chief factor explaining why so many raptors occur in the NCA.

Twenty-five raptor species can be found in the NCA at different times of the year. Sixteen species nest in the NCA, and the remaining nine occur here during migration or in winter. Prairie falcons, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, northern harriers, and American kestrels are the most common diurnal species. Several owl species are also common, including the barn owl, great horned owl, long-eared owl, short-eared owl, western screech owl, and burrowing owl. Of the 16 nesting raptor species, 10 are year-round residents. Winter visitors include the bald eagle, rough-legged hawk, sharp-shinned hawk, and Cooper's hawk.

### **Habitat:**

The proximity of the Snake River's vertical canyon cliffs to the abundant prey of the Snake River Plain has created a unique raptor habitat in North America. This one of a kind habitat has been recognized by Congress in its designation as a National Conservation Area and by the American Bird Conservancy in its designation as a Globally Important Bird Area.

Raptors use diverse habitats in the NCA, nesting in three distinct zones: the cliffs, the uplands above the canyon, and the riparian areas adjacent to the Snake River. Riparian habitats are limited occurring in narrow bands along the Snake River and several small streams. Trees in riparian areas are important nesting and roosting habitat for several raptors and are hunting habitat for some, including species found there only in the winter. Long-eared owls, northern harriers, western screech-owls, and saw-whet owls are the raptor species that nest in riparian areas of the Snake River.



### **Finding:**

The remarkable wildlife values (birds of prey) associated with this portion of the Snake River has been recognized since the 1950's. These same values lead to its first congressional designation as a Natural Area in 1972 and as a National Conservation Area in 1994. The unique raptor habitat and population constitutes an outstandingly remarkable wildlife value.

### **Cultural/Prehistory (C)**

#### Criteria for Outstandingly Remarkable Value Rating

The river, or area within the river corridor, contains a site(s) where there is evidence of occupation or use by Native Americans. Sites must have unique or rare characteristics or exceptional human interest value(s). Sites may have national or regional importance for interpreting prehistory; may be rare and represent an area where a culture or cultural period was first identified and described; may have been used concurrently by two or more cultural groups; and/or may have been used by cultural groups for rare sacred purposes. Many such sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which is administered by the NPS.

#### Evaluation of the Present Situation

The Snake River Canyon corridor contains hundreds of sites that indicate evidence of use or occupation by Native Americans. Some of these sites have unique or rare characteristics, and some exhibit exceptional human interest values. Many of the cultural resource sites have regional and national importance for interpreting prehistory and some are important because they represent where a culture or cultural period was first identified or described. A number of sites have indications that they were used by more than one cultural group concurrently. It is also believed by researchers that some sites contain traditional cultural properties (TCPs) and exist in the corridor for sacred or ceremonial purposes.

The lower elevation and protective walls of the Snake River Canyon provide a milder winter climate for both humans and animals than the surrounding Boise and Owyhee Mountains. Spring and fall salmon runs once provided a ready food supply for inhabitants. As such, the Snake River Canyon has been used by different cultures, dating as far back as 9,000 years, including the Shoshone, Bannock, and Paiute Cultures in prehistory and Euro American cultures after 1811.

The river corridor contains many prehistoric site types including lithic scatters, caves, habitation sites, rockshelters, burials, and rock art sites left by Native Americans.

Wees Bar is a large boulder field in the Swan Falls Segment that contains hundreds of petroglyphs etched into the basalt boulders that were deposited by the Bonneville Flood. This petroglyph field is one of the largest concentrations in the Pacific Northwest. Like most petroglyph sites, the Wees Bar site is considered rare as a site type and exceptional for its size and number of glyphs. Early Euro American miners and homesteaders also inscribed names, initials, and dates on some boulders within the canyon and at nearby Halverson Bar.

The Guffey Butte-Black Butte Archaeological District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1978 to protect over 200 known prehistoric sites in the area. The Archaeological District covers approximately 26,300 acres of public land extending upstream along the Snake River Canyon from Guffey Bridge to Grand View, which covers the Swan Falls, Jackass Butte, and a small part of the Grand View segments of the Snake River.

Schellbach Cave, a small cave in the Archaeological District excavated by Louis Schellbach in 1929, is recognized as the first archaeological expedition in Idaho. Well preserved artifacts excavated by Schellbach emphasized the importance of prehistoric fishing technology and the use of fish by early Canyon peoples.

The Snake River Corridor was probably simultaneously occupied by Shoshone and Northern Paiute Tribes. It is unclear just how much interaction or sharing of natural resources occurred. It is likely, however, that there were trade relations and intermarriages between the Tribes that helped foster cooperation and mutual sharing of resources. The cooperative relations probably changed as groups expanded or contracted based on resources, and personal strengths or personalities of their leaders. There was also an overlap of Euro-Americans and Native Americans using the Snake River Canyon from exploration in 1811 through the fur trade era, through the immigrant and homestead eras until the Indians were placed on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation and the Duck Valley Indian reservation by 1880.

The canyon was explored by the Astoria Party in 1812 after their canoes were capsized near Milner. Starting in 1842, thousands of immigrants traveled the South Alternate of the Oregon Trail that parallels the south side of the Snake River along the Indian Cove segment and then turns south of the Canyon below Grand View. Oregon Trail traffic diminished with the arrival of train tracks in the region during the 1870s and 1880s.

Camp Buford, which existed for less than a year, was established in 1866 as a US Cavalry Post to protect the emigrants along the Oregon Trail. The area began as a river crossing point and an emigrant camp spot at the confluence of the Snake and Bruneau Rivers. It is near this spot that Governor Caleb Lyon signed the Bruneau Indian Treaty of April 12, 1866, which Congress failed to ratify. These sites, located near the BLM's Cove Recreation Site, were later inundated by C.J. Strike Reservoir.

Fur trappers, Oregon Trail emigrants, gold miners, ranchers and homesteaders left traces from the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century. The site types include cattle and sheep herding camps, homesteads, town sites, miners' cabins, mine tailings and debris, stone monuments, ditches, depressions, and graves. Other historic period sites include transportation road networks, trails, ferry crossings, irrigation ditches, and historic trash dumps or scatters. At Wees Bar, the stone walls of a house built in 1902 still stand along with ruins of a dugout and other mining related artifacts and features.

Priest Ranch, which was the site of a ferry crossing, still exhibits leveled fields, apricot trees, ruins of an irrigation system of ditches, and a water wheel. The town site of Guffey was started on the north



bank of the Snake River, but was moved to the south bank one mile downstream from present day Celebration Park after the Guffey Railroad Bridge was finished in 1897. The bridge is now owned by Canyon County and accommodates foot and equestrian traffic.

Swan Falls Dam, which was built in 1901, became the first dam on the Snake River and is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1993, the dam was remodeled and continues to generate electricity for Idaho Power Company.

The town of Grand View was established in 1889 as part of an irrigation and settlement project. The Grand View ferry operated until 1921 when a bridge was constructed.

### Finding

The Snake River Canyon corridor through the four river segments contains abundant and significant evidence of prehistoric and historic cultures and values. However, these same values are replicated along other stretches of the Snake River outside of the NCA, and as such, are not considered unique or outstandingly remarkable from a regional perspective.

### **Other Similar Values**

No other similar values have been identified for these four segments of the Snake River.

### Outstandingly Remarkable Values Summary

The interdisciplinary team determined that the following river-related resources meet the criteria as outstandingly remarkable values: Wildlife and Recreation (all segments).

## **IV. Eligibility Determinations**

It is the determination of the ID Team that all four river segments of the Snake River currently exist in a free-flowing condition and contain at least one outstandingly remarkable value and therefore meet the requirements for eligibility as a Wild and Scenic River (Table 2).

Table 2. Eligibility determination summary for free flowing segments of the Snake River.

River Segment	Free Flowing Criteria Met	Outstandingly Remarkable Values	Eligible	Eligible Miles
Indian Cove	Yes	W, R	Yes	9
Grand View	Yes	W, R	Yes	17.5
Jackass Butte	Yes	W, R	Yes	9
Swan Falls	Yes	W, R	Yes	13

## **V. Classification Analysis**

### Potential Classifications

The WSR Act and Interagency Guidelines provide the following direction for establishing preliminary classifications for eligible rivers. All eligible river segments must be tentatively classified

and management measures instituted as necessary to ensure appropriate protection of the values supporting the eligibility and classification determinations. Actual classification is a Congressional determination.

### Classification Categories

Section 2 (b) of the WSRA specifies three classification categories for eligible rivers. Classification is based on the type and degree of human developments associated with the adjacent lands as they exist at the time of the evaluation.

**Wild rivers (W):** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.

**Scenic rivers (S):** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. Scenic does not necessarily mean the river corridor has to have scenery as an outstandingly remarkable value; however, it means the river segment may contain more development than a wild segment and less development than a recreational segment.

**Recreational rivers (R):** Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past. Parallel roads or railroads, existence of small dams or diversions can be allowed in this classification. A recreational river area classification does not imply that the river will be managed or prioritized for recreational use or development.

### Preliminary Classifications

Classification establishes a guideline for management until either a suitability determination or designation decision is reached. It is a determination based on existing characteristics of a river area resulting from human-caused change or level of development. Classification does not affect land use decisions related to private property.

The four Snake River segments are described below with the preliminary classification and are summarized in Table 3.

#### Indian Cove Segment (9 miles)

State Highway 78 parallels the initial stretch of the Indian Cove segment. This segment is a mixture of private and public lands. The private lands contain residential houses, out buildings, irrigated agricultural fields, and pasture lands. The segment is easily accessed at many locations and is paralleled, for a short portion, by a gravel road that accesses an irrigation pump station. A three mile canyon stretch is primarily a natural setting with road access at the canyon rim at several locations.



The parallel Highway and other roads, the level of access, and level of human development along this segment warrants a tentative classification of “recreational.”

#### Grand View Segment (17.5 miles)

The Grand View segment begins where Strike Dam Road crosses the Snake River just downstream from C.J. Strike Dam. Several gravel and paved roads parallel the Snake River in places between the Strike Dam Bridge and the town of Grand View where the river is crossed by State Highway 67. A majority of the land in this portion is privately owned with private residences, barns, and assorted outbuildings on the property. Much of the land is irrigated farmlands with evidence of human development. Downstream from the Highway 67 bridge paved and gravel roads either parallel the river or access the river for the rest of the segment. The south side of the river is all private land with human evidence being prominent. This segment meets the criteria for a recreational classification.

#### Jackass Butte Segment (9 miles)

The Jackass Butte Segment begins with gravel roads paralleling both sides of the river leading to private property. The primary views along this segment are of a natural setting. Although the private lands have residences and other developments associated with them, they do not dominate the scenery. Beyond this point the shoreline is mostly undeveloped with vehicle access at several locations. Additional private lands and developments exist along this segment further downstream. Although the level of shoreline development in this segment is less than the upstream Grand View segment, the segment does not meet the scenic classification description of “shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped...”, therefore, this segment would meet the criteria for a tentative classification of “recreational.”

#### Swan Falls Segment (13 miles)

Beginning just below Swan Falls Dam, this segment has a maintained gravel road paralleling the north shoreline and a dirt road along the south. These roads follow the river for about five miles. This stretch of the river has many undeveloped campsites with fire-rings and several vault toilets are located at strategic places for recreational users. The four miles below the end of the road are managed for nonmotorized experiences and the evidence of human development dates to the early 1900s. At approximately ten miles the river is again accessed by a gravel road at Celebration Park and crossed by an abandoned railroad bridge. Celebration Park is a developed county park with many facilities including a small campground, interpretive center, picnic area, and a concrete boat ramp with floating docks. Below the railroad bridge the land is primarily privately owned with residential houses and other buildings. This river segment is crossed by electric power lines at two locations. Although the views in this segment are primarily of natural settings, the level of access by roads, and other human developments warrant a tentative classification of “recreational.”

#### Classification Summary

All four eligible river segments of the Snake River were determined to have tentative classifications as recreational river (Table 3).



Table 3. Tentative Classification summary for Eligible Segments of the Snake River.

River Segment	Tentative Classification	Segment Miles
Indian Cove	Recreational	9
Grand View	Recreational	17.5
Jackass Butte	Recreational	9
Swan Falls	Recreational	13

## VI. Suitability Assessment

The third component of a WSR study is the suitability assessment. It is designed to identify the possible impacts of designation, weighs various elements such as public access, long-term protection of resources, and traditional resource uses, and asks the basic question of would this be a worthy addition to the National Wild & Scenic River System. Additionally, the willingness of county, state and local landowners to participate in river corridor management is considered.

### Criteria for Determining Suitability

In considering suitability, the criteria specified in Section 4(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (listed below) provide the basis for assessment.

- Characteristics that do or do not make the river corridor a worthy addition to the WSR system
- Current status of land ownership and uses in the area
- Reasonably foreseeable potential uses of the land and water that would be enhanced, foreclosed or curtailed if the river were designated
- Public, state, local or other interests in designation or non-designation of the river
- Estimated costs of acquiring necessary lands and interests in lands, and of administering the river if designated
- Ability of the agency to manage the river and protect identified values
- Historical or existing rights that would be adversely affected by designation
- Other issues and concerns identified in the land use planning process

## Indian Cove Segment

### River Values/Characteristics

The Indian Cove segment is visually very characteristic of many sections of the Snake River throughout southern Idaho. The north side of the river is flanked by basalt cliffs rising 300-400 feet above the river. The south shore is open, flat terrain that has been settled or otherwise modified. At the downstream end of this segment a butte on the south creates a three mile long canyon that is slightly less than ½ mile wide (rim-to-rim). Many different species of raptors use the cliffs for nesting and forage over the surrounding desert and farmlands. Public access to the river is limited by private land on the south and is somewhat limited on the north by topography (i.e. steep cliffs).



Opportunities for viewing raptors and other wildlife within the river corridor are limited by legal public access. Raptor viewing is primarily from the main county and state roads which provide few safe opportunities to pull to the shoulder. The Indian Cove segment is at the upstream end of the NCA where the raptor habitat begins to lose its uniqueness as raptor nesting habitat.

#### Land Ownership and Uses

Land ownership is approximately 39 percent private land and 61 percent BLM land (public). Private lands are associated with the community of Indian Cove primarily on the south side of the river. The public land lies mainly on the more rugged north side of the river.

Public land use along this segment includes primarily recreational activities such as boat fishing, and waterfowl hunting. The canyon cliffs limit the amount of general dispersed recreation that occurs on the public land in the area. Several irrigation pump stations, (two located on public land), transport river water to adjacent and distant agricultural fields. The private lands are primarily residential farms and associated irrigated agriculture or livestock pastures.

#### Potential Uses of Land and Water Resources enhanced or foreclosed

This river segment ends at the backwaters of CJ Strike Reservoir and the river gradient is very low. These factors make the potential for new hydroelectric facilities not very feasible. However, the private lands have potential for new pump systems for local irrigation. Designation would preclude any new hydroelectric facilities within this segment and would also preclude any new diversions or structures which would impact private landowners. Potential surface disturbing activities would not be constrained by designation. Designation would not significantly enhance any land or water resources along this segment.

#### Interest in Designation

Local and regional environmental and conservation organizations have expressed positive interest in including all eligible segments of the Snake River in the National W&S River System. Local communities have not expressed interest in federal designation for the river.

#### Estimated Costs of Acquisition and Administration

Initial costs associated with designation would include mapping and printing documentation of the wild and scenic river process, layout, design, and publication of educational information about the new designations including brochures, website updates, and maps. Future costs would depend on the level of threats to river-related values and are foreseen to result from the need for regulatory and educational signing, patrol and enforcement, and biological or visitor use monitoring. Additional land acquisition cost would occur if any private landowners were willing to sell. Currently no parcels have been identified for acquisition.

#### Ability to Manage/Protect River Values

Current BLM management of the area as an NCA protects a majority of the shoreline miles, especially those cliff areas with raptor nest sites. Current limitations on recreation management for

wildlife/raptor viewing are from topography and legal public access to the river and would not change with designation. Future potential threats to identified river related values are minimal.

#### Adverse Effects on Historical/Existing Rights

No adverse effects on historic or valid existing rights are expected as a result of designation of this segment as a recreational river.

#### Other Issues and Concerns

The intent of designation would be to preserve the identified river related wildlife and recreational values along this segment of the Snake River. NCA legislation provides protection for the raptors and their habitat. This would not change with or without designation. The major change in management would be prohibitions on new hydroelectric facilities and other diversions.

## **Grand View Segment**

#### River Values/Characteristics

The Grand View segment is characterized by a narrow riparian area surrounded by open, rural countryside. This area is similar to other stretches along the Snake River throughout southern Idaho.

Although the distant views of the Owyhee Mountains to the south and canyon rim to the north are nice, they are not unique or exceptional. The wildlife values (raptor habitat) associated with this segment are mainly foraging habitat and not as nesting habitat.

The Grand View segment lies in an area where the unique raptor habitat areas move away from the river and are generally outside the ¼ mile corridor. Ten miles of this 17.5 mile segment lie outside the official boundary of the NCA. The raptor nesting areas on BLM land within the river corridor are within the NCA and are currently protected by legislation.

#### Land Ownership and Uses

Land ownership is approximately 82 percent private land, 17 percent BLM land (public), and 1 percent state land.

Private land is associated with the town of Grand View, Idaho. Private land uses include residential houses and farms, irrigated agriculture, gravel pits, and livestock pastures.

The public land along this segment is situated at three locations – all on the north side or in (island) the river. Gold Isle (approximately 118 acres) is located at river mile 487 and was acquired for wildlife habitat in a 1996 land exchange. The Ted Trueblood Wildlife Management Area fronts 1.5 miles of Snake River shoreline. This area is also primarily a wildlife management area where waterfowl hunting is allowed. The remaining public land (approximately 600 ac.) gets a variety of recreation uses, primarily fishing and hunting.



### Potential Uses of Land and Water Resources enhanced or foreclosed

The private land along this segment is a historic floodplain characterized by low, flat farmland and pastures. Private lands not currently in irrigated agriculture have potential for new pump systems for local irrigation. Designation would preclude any new hydroelectric facilities within this segment and would also preclude any new diversions or structures which would impact private landowners. Potential surface disturbing activities would not be constrained by designation. Designation would not significantly enhance any land or water resources along this segment.

### Interest in Designation

Local and regional environmental and conservation organizations have expressed positive interest in including all eligible segments of the Snake River in the National W&S River System. Local communities have expressed either no interest or negative interest in designation. Landowners along this segment have not expressed interest in national designation for the river and have historically opposed any type of national designation.

### Estimated Costs of Acquisition and Administration

Initial costs associated with designation would include mapping and printing documentation of the wild and scenic river process, layout, design, and publication of educational information about the new designations including brochures, website updates, and maps. Future costs would depend on the level of threats to river-related values and are foreseen to result from the need for regulatory and educational signing, patrol and enforcement, and biological or visitor use monitoring. Additional land acquisition cost would occur if any private landowners were willing to sell. Currently no parcels have been identified for acquisition.

### Ability to Manage/Protect River Values

Current BLM management is very limited due to the small amount of public land. Current limitations on recreation management for wildlife/raptor viewing are from limited river access due to private ownership and would not change with designation. Future potential threats to identified river related values are minimal.

### Adverse Effects on Historical/Existing Rights

No adverse effects on historic or valid existing rights are expected as a result of designation of this segment as a recreational river.

### Other Issues and Concerns

The intent of designation would be to preserve the identified river related wildlife and recreational values along this segment of the Snake River. NCA legislation provides protection for the raptors and their habitat on the limited amount of BLM administered lands along this segment. This would not change with or without designation. The major change in management would be prohibitions on new hydroelectric facilities and other diversions primarily on private lands.

## Jackass Butte Segment

### River Values/Characteristics

The original designation of the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area in 1971 (27,000 acres) recognized the Snake River canyon as a unique raptor habitat. This designation started at the upstream end of the Jackass Butte segment and continued downstream to the end of the Swan Falls segment.

The Jackass Butte segment begins at the downstream end of the very open environment of the Grand View segment, and includes a river section bordered by large buttes and canyon rim on the south and canyon rim on the north. The many side canyons along this stretch provide abundant nesting opportunities for a variety of raptors. Additionally, as one moves downstream, access to this remote section of the river is more difficult and provides outstanding opportunities for viewing raptors in a more natural habitat with minimal contacts with other people. This combination of high numbers of nesting raptors and opportunities for seeing raptors in a natural habitat is not currently represented in the National WSR System.

### Land Ownership and Uses

Land ownership is approximately 35 percent private land, 63 percent BLM land (public), and 2 percent state land. The private lands are primarily associated with several large farms and ranches primarily in irrigated agriculture or pasture land. The state land is in an undeveloped, natural condition. The public land is undeveloped and is used for a variety of dispersed recreational activities.

### Potential Uses of Land and Water Resources enhanced or foreclosed

This river segment has a very low gradient and no rapids or other river obstacles. This creates opportunities for beginner and novice river floaters to experience the river canyon and its unique wildlife/raptor viewing opportunities. These opportunities could be further enhanced with the additional recognition of designation. This segment ends at the backwaters of Swan Falls Reservoir which combined with the low gradient, makes the potential for new hydroelectric facilities not very feasible. However, the private lands have potential for new pump systems for local irrigation. Designation would preclude any new hydroelectric facilities within this segment and would also preclude any new diversions or structures which would impact private landowners. Potential surface disturbing activities would not be constrained by designation.

### Interest in Designation

Local and regional environmental and conservation organizations have expressed positive interest in including all eligible segments of the Snake River in the National W&S River System. Local communities have expressed both positive and negative interest in designation.

### Estimated Costs of Acquisition and Administration

Initial costs associated with designation would include mapping and printing documentation of the wild and scenic river process, layout, design, and publication of educational information about the



new designation including brochures, website updates, and maps. Future costs would depend on the level of threats to river-related values and are foreseen to result from the need for regulatory and educational signing, patrol and enforcement, and biological or visitor use monitoring. Additional land acquisition cost would occur if any private landowners were willing to sell. Currently no parcels have been identified for acquisition.

#### Ability to Manage/Protect River Values

Current BLM management of the area as a NCA protects a majority of the shoreline miles, especially those cliff areas with raptor nest sites. Current recreation management for wildlife/raptor viewing is not limited by public access. Future potential threats to identified river related values are minimal.

#### Adverse Effects on Historical/Existing Rights

No adverse effects on historic or valid existing rights are expected as a result of designation of this segment as a recreational river.

#### Other Issues and Concerns

The intent of designation would be to preserve the identified river related wildlife and recreational values along this segment of the Snake River. NCA legislation provides protection for the raptors and their habitat. This would not change with or without designation. The major change in management would be prohibitions on new hydroelectric facilities and other diversions which would detract from the users' river experience.

## **Swan Falls Segment**

#### River Values/Characteristics

The Swan Falls segment is visually similar to several other sections of the Snake River in southern Idaho. The river flows within a basalt canyon with cliffs rising between 400 – 600 feet above the river with a width varying from ¼ to ½ mile.

The original designation of the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area in 1971 (27,000 acres) recognized the Snake River canyon as a unique raptor habitat. This designation started at the upstream end of the Jackass Butte segment and continued downstream to the end of the Swan Falls segment. While the NCA as a whole contains the highest concentration of nesting birds of prey in North America, the Swan Falls segment has the densest concentration of nesting raptors within the NCA. For example, prairie falcons, which normally maintain a nesting territory measured in miles, are known to nest within 200 yards of each other.

The Swan Falls segment also is the most accessible portion of the Snake River canyon to the general public. The Western Heritage National Scenic Byway terminates in the Snake River canyon at the upstream end of the Swan Falls segment. The combination of consistently high numbers of nesting raptors and the high probability of seeing raptors for a large number of visitors creates a unique wild-life and recreational opportunity which is not currently represented in the National WSR System.



### Land Ownership and Uses

Land ownership is approximately 22 percent private land, 74 percent BLM land (public), and 5 percent state land.

Private land at the upstream portion of the segment is owned by Idaho Power Company (IPC) and is associated with the Swan Falls Dam project. The majority of the IPC land is undeveloped and is managed in conjunction with the BLM for raptors and raptor habitat protection. These lands are often mistaken for public land. Another private land section contains Celebration Park, which is a county park dedicated to interpreting the archeological and cultural history of the river and canyon. Other private lands are located at the downstream end of the segment and include residences and open pastures.

The state land along this segment is undeveloped.

The public land along this segment is important nesting habitat in the cliffs but also provides recreational opportunities in the canyon along the river. Recreational uses are typically dispersed in nature and include activities such as fishing, camping, and bird watching.

### Potential Uses of Land and Water Resources enhanced or foreclosed

The Western Heritage National Scenic Byway terminates in the Snake River canyon at the upstream end of the Swan Falls segment. Designation of this segment could enhance the attention given to and the attractiveness for visiting this Scenic Byway. This additional attention could also enhance the economic development of the gateway community of Kuna by the increased visitation.

This river segment begins below Swan Falls Dam and continues to the western NCA boundary. The river gradient is very low along this segment. The potential for new hydroelectric facilities does not exist. One irrigation pump system exists along this segment which supplies water to a farm approximately one mile from the river. The potential for new pump systems for local irrigation do exist along the segments of private land. Designation would preclude any new hydroelectric facilities within this segment and would also preclude any new diversions or structures which would impact private land-owners. Potential surface disturbing activities would not be constrained by designation.

### Interest in Designation

Local and regional environmental and conservation organizations have expressed positive interest in including all eligible segments of the Snake River in the National W&S River System. Local communities have expressed positive interest in designation. Negative comments for designation have been minimal.

### Estimated Costs of Acquisition and Administration

Initial costs associated with designation would include mapping and printing documentation of the wild and scenic river process, layout, design, and publication of educational information about the new designations including brochures, website updates, and maps. Future costs would depend on the



level of threats to river-related values and are foreseen to result from the need for regulatory and educational signing, patrol and enforcement, and biological or social monitoring. Additional land acquisition cost would occur if any private landowners were willing to sell. Currently no parcels have been identified for acquisition.

#### Ability to Manage/Protect River Values

Current BLM management of the area as an NCA protects a majority of the shoreline miles, especially those cliff areas with raptor nest sites. Current recreation management focuses on opportunities for wildlife/raptor viewing and dispersed activities along the river. Future potential threats to identified river related values are minimal.

#### Adverse Effects on Historical/Existing Rights

No adverse effects on historic or valid existing rights are expected as a result of designation of this segment as a recreational river.

#### Other Issues and Concerns

The intent of designation would be to preserve the identified river related wildlife and recreational values along this segment of the Snake River. NCA legislation provides protection for the raptors and their habitat. This would not change with or without designation. The major change in management would be prohibitions on new hydroelectric facilities and other diversions.

#### **Suitability Summary**

The uniqueness of the NCA lies in its raptor habitat and the educational opportunities therein. As one moves both upstream and downstream from the area, certain elements of the habitat change just enough that the unusual concentration of nesting raptors, and the opportunities to see them diminishes.

These characteristics are best exemplified along the Jackass Butte and Swan Falls segments of the Snake River which make up what was the original designation of the Snake River Birds of Prey Natural Area in 1971. These two river segments provide unique raptor habitat in addition to the unique recreational opportunity of easily viewing large numbers of raptors. When the general public is asked about the “Bird of Prey Area” it is these river segments that typically come to mind. The community of Kuna and many community organizations have expressed positive interest in national designations that could potentially assist in the economic development of their community.

Although the Jackass Butte and Swan Falls segments currently are protected through the congressional designation as a national conservation area, these two segments would be worthy additions to the National WSR System due to the unique raptor habitat along the Snake River and raptor viewing opportunities not currently represented.

Although much of the land along the Grand View segment is used as foraging habitat by raptors, most of this segment lies outside the NCA boundary and is in private ownership. Local communities and

landowners have not expressed interest in designation and historically oppose all federal designations. This would make management of this segment as a Wild and Scenic river very difficult.

While a majority of the Indian Cove segment is in public ownership, public access to the river is limited by topography in many areas and by private land in others. The unique raptor nesting habitat along this stretch has permanent protection under the NCA legislation. Management of this stretch of river under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act would be similar to the Grand View segment. Local interest in designation is minimal and opposition to limitations due to designation is a major concern.

It is the determination of the ID Team that the Jackass Butte and Swan Falls segments of the Snake River be recommended suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Both segments are tentatively classified as recreational. Until Congress decides whether to add these river sections to the system, the BLM will manage them to preserve the river-related values identified in this report.

The ID Team has also determined that the Grand View and Indian Cove segments of the Snake River be recommended as not suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The public lands along these two river segments will continue to be managed to protect the unique raptor populations and adjacent raptor habitat under the NCA legislation.

## **VII. Protective Management for Suitable River Segments**

When a river segment is determined to be eligible and given a tentative classification, its identified outstandingly remarkable values shall be afforded adequate protection, subject to valid existing rights, and until the eligibility determination is superseded, management activities and authorized uses shall not be allowed to adversely affect either eligibility or the tentative classification from a wild area to a scenic area or a scenic area to a recreational river area.

Specific management prescriptions for all eligible river segments will provide protection in the following ways:

1. Free-flowing values: The free-flowing characteristics of the eligible river segments cannot be modified to allow stream impoundments, diversions, and/or channelization to the extent the BLM is authorized under law.
2. River Related Values: Each segment shall be managed to protect identified outstandingly remarkable values and, to the extent practicable, such values shall be enhanced.
3. Classification Impacts: Management and development of an eligible river segment and its corridor cannot be modified, subject to valid existing rights, to the degree that its eligibility or tentative classification would be affected. Should a non-suitable determination be made in the RMP process, then the river shall be managed in accordance with management objectives as outlined in the resource management plan.



**VIII. List of Preparers**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Responsibility</u></b>
Larry Ridenhour	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation, Scenic
John Doremus	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife, Fish
Dean Shaw	Archaeologist	Cultural History
Bob Harrison	Geologist	Geology

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

