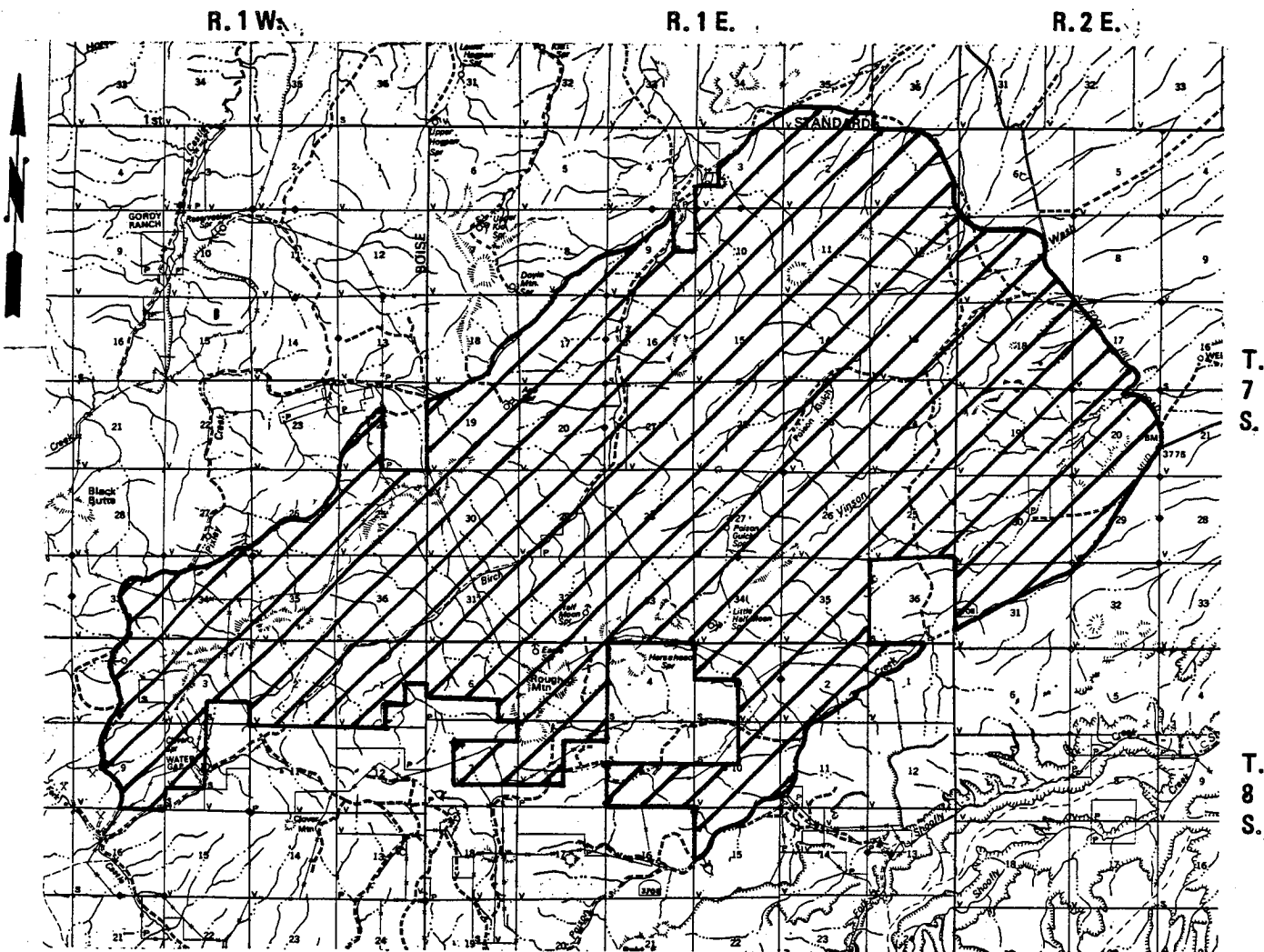


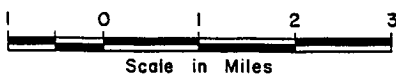


111-5
POISON GULCH



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS



The April 1980 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 30,742 acres of BLM land in a very irregular configuration, about 12 miles long and six miles wide with one state inholding and two private inholdings. It is located 18 miles southwest of Grandview. The unit lies in a region of steep mountains and rolling hills dominated by the four parallel drainages of Birch Creek, Poison Gulch, Vinson Creek and Poison Creek. The vegetation is dominated by northern desert shrubs and grasses with isolated patches of heavy riparian vegetation in the drainage bottoms.

NATURALNESS:

The initial inventory identified low-standard roads in two major drainages of the unit, Birch Creek and Poison Gulch. These roads, in combination with an additional road identified along the east side of Rough Mountain and intruding state lands along the southern periphery of the unit create two narrow land necks which in effect divide the unit into three subunits. The western subunit of over 10,000 acres has a major fence line system running through its center, several fences in the southern periphery, and two major developed springs cut into hillsides. These springs and their service roads are visible from great distances because of topography and the amount of soil disturbance. The central subunit of over 7,600 acres is relatively free of intrusions except for a major way cutting to the center of the subunit and a developed spring in the southern periphery. The eastern subunit is cut in half by a substantial way, and a way also penetrates to private land in the eastern periphery. There is also a fence line in the southern finger of the subunit. The imprints of man in each of the subunits generally cause localized impacts but are not substantially noticeable in the subunits as a whole, except in some portions of the western subunit.

SOLITUDE:

The dominance of low shrubby and grassy vegetation in the unit offers minimal vegetative screening. The rugged mountainous terrain of the western subunit, with its numerous draws running perpendicular to Birch Creek, offers fair to good topographic screening. However, this topographic layout tends to draw visitors into a narrow corridor of use along Birch Creek and increase the potential of visitor contacts. The relatively straight, open character of the canyon would enhance this corridor effect. In addition, much of the Birch Creek canyon area, where opportunities for solitude would be greatest, is state land. Outside Birch Creek canyon, the unit is generally confined to narrow land fingers where opportunities for solitude are minimal. The relatively small size of the subunit, the corridor effect at its core, the lack of adequate vegetative and topographic screening, and the generally poor configuration of the subunit renders the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding.

The central subunit of over 9,600 acres is comprised of a long series of ridges running north-south throughout the length of the subunit. These ridge lines give way to numerous draws often with steep gradients, where varying amounts of topographic screening occur depending upon the depth and steepness of gradient. However, the short lengths of these draws combined with a lack of significant vegetative screening and the small size and narrow configuration of the subunit render the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding. The eastern subunit of over 9,000 acres is comprised of a rolling to steep hilly region dissected by numerous shallow drainages. This terrain, because of its shallow open character, provides only poor to fair topographic screening. The lack of adequate topographic screening combined with a lack of vegetative screening and the subunit's small size and poor configuration renders the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The primitive and unconfined recreational opportunities within the unit include backpacking, camping, hiking, horseback riding, fishing and hunting. The small size of each subunit, their relatively uniform character, and the lack of any exceptional or unusual natural features and recreational attractions render the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding. The mental and physical challenge associated with the recreational opportunities is considered to be moderate.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Specific reasons given for supporting the proposed decision not to identify the unit as a study area included:

- The unit is not substantially natural, fences and service roads in portions of the unit represent significant instances of man's presence.

- Opportunities for solitude are limited because the dominance of low sagebrush and grass vegetation offers minimal screening.
- There are limited opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation.

Specific reasons were not given by those requesting study area identification for the unit.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Roadless/Naturalness:

The proposed decision identified several roads and ways, fence lines, livestock water developments, and mining activity. While the road systems represent substantial intrusions into the unit, resulting in subdividing the unit into three natural areas, many of the isolated range developments are not considered substantially noticeable in the unit as a whole, even though some have significant localized impact, because of steep topography and low vegetation.

Solitude:

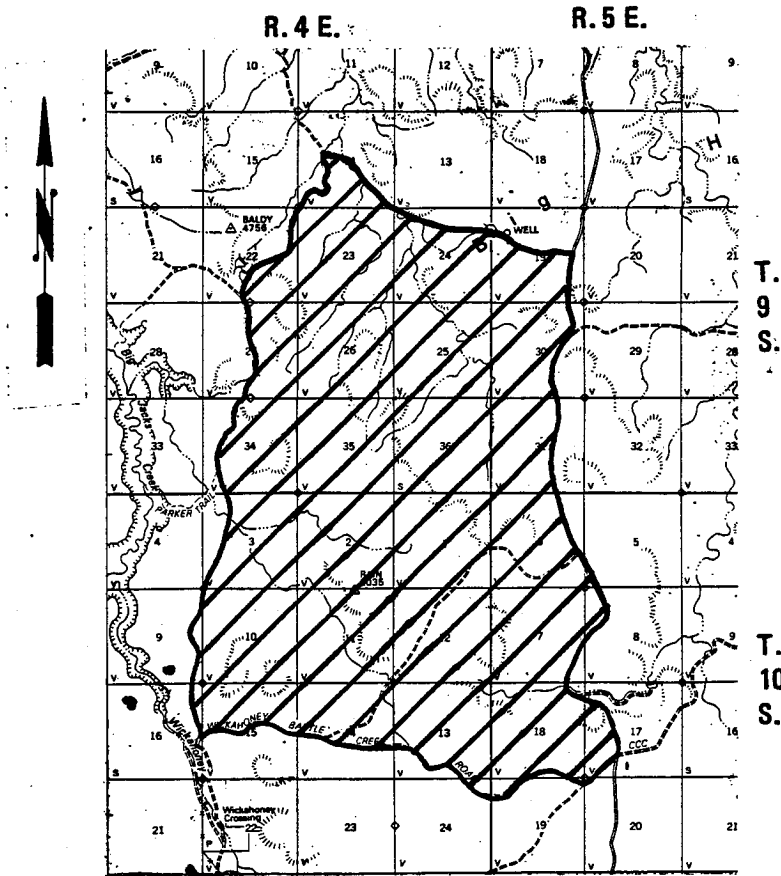
As stated in the proposed decision, the unit lacks outstanding opportunities for solitude due to a combination of topographic features and minimal vegetative screening. Although some of the canyons and rugged mountainous terrain in portions of the unit do offer solitude, the topographic layout would clearly draw visitors into narrow corridors of use and increase the potential for visual contact in these corridors. Therefore, the opportunity to avoid the sights and sounds of others in the unit (solitude) cannot be considered outstanding.

* * *



DECISION:

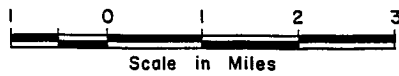
No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. The unit is not identified as a wilderness study area due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation.

111-7a
BIG HILL



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS



111-7a BIG HILL

The April 1980 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 12,924 acres of BLM land, in a rectangular configuration 6 1/2 miles long by four miles wide, with one state inholding centrally located. The unit is located along the west side of Highway 51, 18 miles south of Bruneau. The unit lies in a gently rolling to moderately hilly region. The terrain generally consists of uniform ridges and shallow drainages radiating from a low flat-topped hill in the south-central portion of the unit, with the more prominent drainages running in a northerly direction. Much of the unit has been recently burned and consists of grasses with pockets of unburned desert shrubs.

NATURALNESS:

The unit is significantly impacted by ways and numerous bladed fire lines, rehabilitated by mechanical means which give the lines a cultivated appearance. There is a fence crossing the unit in a north-south direction to the core of the unit. At the center of the unit this fence turns east and connects with the northeast boundary. The fence is associated with a crested wheatgrass seeding.

SOLITUDE:

The dominance of grassy and shrubby vegetation in the unit offers minimal vegetative screening. The rolling to moderately hilly terrain generally offers poor to fair topographic screening. Isolated areas in shallow drainages in the northern portion of the unit offer good topographic screening. Highway 51 is readily visible from large portions of the eastern half of the unit. Though isolated areas offer solitude, the small size of the unit combined with the general lack of vegetative and topographic screening and the influence of Highway 51 render the opportunities for solitude less than outstanding.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The primitive recreational opportunities in the unit include camping, backpacking, hiking and horseback riding. The small size and uniform character of the unit, and the lack of exceptional or unusual natural features and recreational attractions render the recreational opportunities less than outstanding. There is no significant mental or physical challenge associated with the recreational opportunities.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments that specifically addressed unit 111-7a were in agreement that the unit should not be identified as a study area because of 1) a lack of naturalness and 2) a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude due to insufficient topographic and vegetative screening and significant external influences from Highway 51.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Public comment supported the conclusion that the area should not be identified as a study area for reasons specified in the proposed decision.

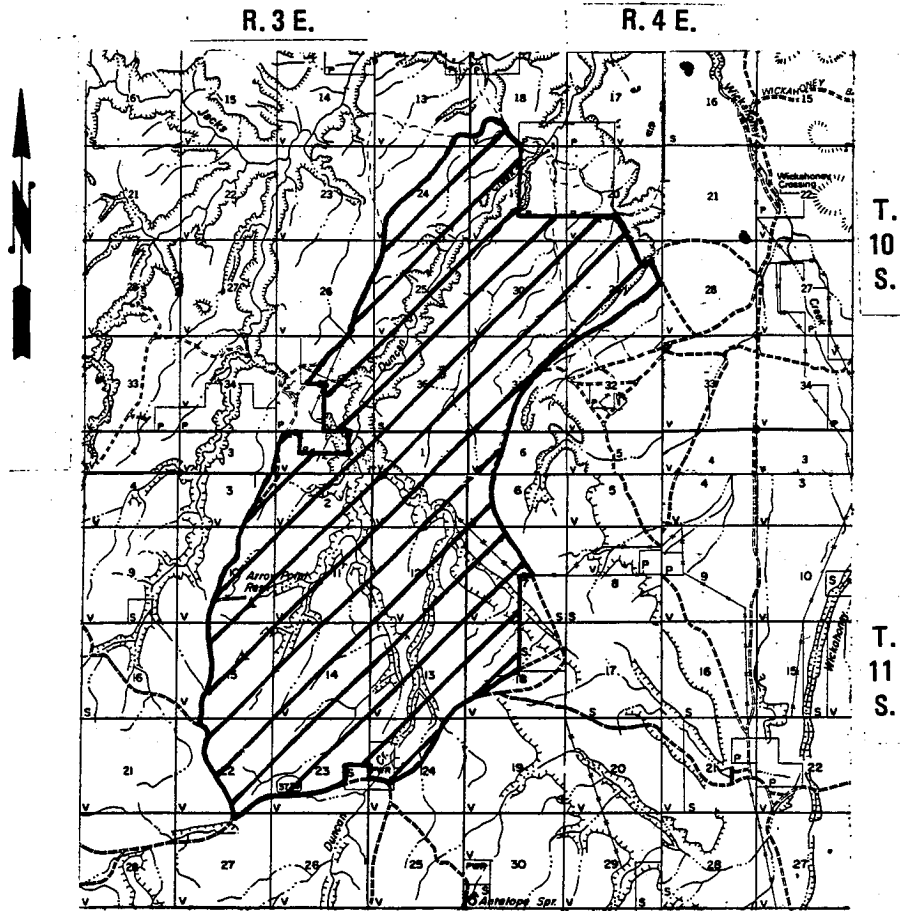
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DECISION:



No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. The unit is not identified as a wilderness study area due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation.

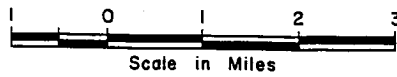
111-7b

DUNCAN CREEK



LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS



The April 1980 proposed decision included the following evaluation of wilderness characteristics.

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 10,005 acres of BLM land, in an area eight miles long and 2-4 miles wide. There is one centrally located state inholding which nearly cuts the unit in half. The unit is located ten miles west of Highway 51, 28 miles southwest of Bruneau. The unit lies in a flat to gently rolling region dominated by the relatively deep canyon system of Duncan Creek and Zeno Canyon. The vegetation of the unit is dominated by northern high desert shrub species with riparian vegetation in the canyon bottoms.

NATURALNESS:

Imprints of man are limited to a fence line in association with the state inholding in the northern half, two stock ponds and a light way in the southwest periphery, and another short fence line in the southeast periphery of the unit. An area of 600 acres on the east has been seeded but appears natural in character. These imprints are not substantially noticeable; the unit appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature.

SOLITUDE:

The dominance of low shrubby vegetation over much of the unit affords minimal vegetative screening. Only in the canyon bottoms, where riparian vegetation is heavy, can vegetative screening be considered fair to excellent. The canyon system within the unit affords fair to excellent topographic screening, especially in the central portion of the unit where the canyons are narrow and tightly meandering. However, the canyons would tend to concentrate users in a narrow corridor along the western half of the unit and increase the potential for visitor contacts. The number of miles of canyon combined with its meandering character and heavy riparian vegetation would tend to minimize this corridor effect. Due to the unit's small size and narrow configuration, complicated by the state inholding, opportunities for solitude are not considered outstanding because of the limited area which offers topographic and vegetative screening.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

Primitive recreational opportunities within the unit are primarily associated with the canyons, and include camping, backpacking, hiking, nature photography and sightseeing. The quality of recreational opportunities is generally considered to be less than outstanding because of the limited area which offers natural features and recreational attractions.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The area contains scenic values associated with the canyon and ecological values, including spring red-banded trout populations and important sage grouse habitat.

* * *

PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments opposed to a study area stated that the unit did not have outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive recreation because of minimal vegetative and topographic screening, and that the unit lacked naturalness.

Those supporting the unit as a study area gave the following reasons:

- Surrounding roads (boundary roads) are not obtrusive; roads are really ways because they are not maintained.
- The unit is natural because imprints of man are insignificant.
- The unit has outstanding opportunities for solitude because the numerous miles of narrow branching canyons and draws provide solitude and do not cause a significant corridor effect.
- The unit offers outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation because of the narrow canyons and the diversity of recreational opportunities including hiking, camping, sightseeing, hunting and photography.
- The unit has outstanding supplemental values including exceptional scenery and wildlife values (bighorn sheep, mule deer, antelope, sage grouse, and redbanded trout habitat).

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Roadless/Naturalness:

Public comment stated that the boundary roads are generally unobtrusive and that the imprints of man are insignificant; several points should be noted, however.

Though the western and southern boundary roads are not readily visible from within the unit because these roads generally lie at equal or slightly higher elevations than the lands within the study area, the minimal topographic relief and low vegetation permits visitors to the periphery of the unit to have visual contact with vehicles traveling on the roads. These roads are major service roads and receive regular use. Therefore, these roads exert an external influence upon the southern and eastern peripheries of the unit.

It should be noted that the fence line referred to in the proposed decision, which is located in association with a state section, consists only of a remnant blading of a now removed fence.

Solitude:

Public comment stated that the canyon systems provide opportunities for solitude because of the mitigating effect that the number of miles of branching canyons, the meandering character of the canyons and the riparian vegetation have on the corridor effect of the canyon.

A re-evaluation of the unit recognizes that, with the minimal vegetative and topographic screening provided by the rolling plateau lands, when considered in combination with the topographic and vegetative screening of the canyons and the corridor effect of the canyons, outstanding opportunities for solitude are not provided in the majority of the unit. As stated in the roadless/naturalness evaluation, notable external influences (regular vehicle traffic on boundary roads) can be experienced in the southern and eastern peripheries of the unit.

Primitive Recreation:

It is recognized that the small size of an area does not necessarily limit opportunities for primitive recreation, particularly if the area involved has exceptional or unusual natural features and recreational attractions. This unit offers ten miles of narrow canyon to explore by foot which is a small area. Therefore, with the overall small size of the unit, the number of miles of interesting hiking within the unit would not make opportunities for primitive recreation outstanding.

Supplemental Values:

The presence of supplemental values does not qualify an area as a study area if other characteristics are not present.

* * *

DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. The unit is not identified as a wilderness study area due to a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and for primitive recreation.