

INTRODUCTION

Contained within this report are the Bureau of Land Management's final decisions on those BLM-administered lands in Idaho which qualify as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) and those which do not. Note that BLM is not at this time recommending that these areas should or should not be designated wilderness by Congress. BLM has determined that some inventory units contain wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 and that some do not. The areas that meet these characteristics are identified as WSA's and will be studied to determine whether or not they are suitable for wilderness. These studies will take place at a later date. Every WSA will be reviewed and acted upon by Congress after the studies are complete, whether the BLM deems them suitable for designation as wilderness or not.

These decisions are the result of intensive inventory field work conducted during the summer and fall, 1979. Procedures for evaluating wilderness criteria are noted in the BLM Wilderness Inventory Handbook, September 1978, and in Organic Act Directive 78-61, including changes 1, 2, and 3, and Instruction Memo No. 80-236.

The narratives included here are summaries of more detailed intensive inventory reports available in the BLM Idaho district offices. These summaries present a brief, overall picture of Idaho's intensive inventory decisions. For more detailed, site specific information, refer to the district files. More detailed maps and photographs are also contained in these files.

This report was prepared following a 90-day period for public comment on the intensive inventory, which ran from April 4, 1980, to July 3, 1980. Comments received by the offices of the BLM after July 3, 1980, were also utilized in the State Director's final decision, as the decision announcement date was extended from September to November 14, 1980.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Overview of BLM's Wilderness Review Process

The BLM's wilderness review process will be completed in three phases: Inventory, Study, and Reporting.

Phase I - Inventory: The inventory phase has two parts, initial and intensive. Its overall purpose is to identify those public lands having wilderness characteristics as defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Initial Inventory - In this stage, public lands administered by the BLM which clearly and obviously did not have wilderness characteristics were identified. Existing information, such as maps and aerial photos, along with input received from the public, were utilized to make this decision. Three criteria had to be met for an area to be recommended for intensive inventory. Each area must be: (1) at least 5,000 acres in size or contiguous to a proposed or existing wilderness area, (2) roadless, and (3) substantially free of man's imprints.

The proposed initial inventory decision was released by the Idaho State Director March 15, 1979. A 90-day public comment period followed, ending June 15, 1979. The final decision was released August 10, 1979.

Intensive Inventory - In this stage, as reflected in this report, field surveys were conducted. Each area was examined to determine the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics listed in the Wilderness Act: size, naturalness, the presence of outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation, and the presence of supplemental values. For an area to qualify as a Wilderness Study Area, it must meet the size criteria, must be substantially natural and have either outstanding opportunities for solitude or outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Inventory units totalling 1,938,255 acres of BLM land that were intensively inventoried, are discussed in this report.

Field work for the intensive inventory was conducted during the summer and fall, 1979. The public comment period for this decision ran from April 4, 1980, and ended July 3, 1980. The final decision on which areas are Wilderness Study Areas, originally scheduled for release in September, is contained in this report. A 30-day protest period is now initiated.

Protest and Appeal Procedures

The final intensive inventory decision for each inventory unit is considered individually and separately from the decision for every other inventory unit. These decisions will become effective on December 15, 1980, unless timely protests are received by the Idaho State Director of the BLM.

Persons wishing to protest any of the decisions announced herein must file a written protest with BLM Idaho State Director, Box 042, Federal Building, 550 W. Fort Street, Boise, Idaho 83724, on or before 4:15 PM, December 15, 1980. Only those protests received by the Idaho State Director by the time and date specified will be accepted.

The protest must specify the inventory unit(s) to which it is directed. It must include a clear and concise statement of the reasons for the protest, as well as data to support the reasons stated.

At the conclusion of the protest period, the State Director will publish in the Federal Register a notice of those decisions that were not protested and therefore have become final, and those decisions which are under formal protest. The notice will identify those inventory units under protest and will announce that the decision on the units will not become final pending a decision on the protest and any resulting appeal.

The State Director will issue a written decision on any protest which is filed according to the above requirements and will publish a notice in the Federal Register of the action taken in response to the protest.

Any person adversely affected by the State Director's decision on a written protest, may appeal such decision under the provisions of 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 4.

Phase II - Study: The study phase of the wilderness review will be completed as a part of the regional comprehensive land-use plans. During each planning effort, the public will have several opportunities to comment on all of the resource values within a Wilderness Study Area. These comments will be considered in making land use decisions prior to recommendations to the President and Congress on an area's suitability or nonsuitability as wilderness. This phase will begin soon after the announcement of this Wilderness Study Area decision.

Phase III - Reporting: Recommendations on an area's suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness designation will be reported to Congress through the Secretary of the Interior and the President. Reports on all WSA's must be submitted to the President by September 21, 1991.

B. Instant Study Areas (ISA's)

Congress directed that all natural areas identified prior to November 1, 1975, would automatically become Instant Wilderness Study Areas. Congress directed that these areas be inventoried and evaluated on an accelerated schedule to determine their suitability for wilderness designation (Section 603, FLPMA).

Three of these areas are located in Idaho:

| <u>Natural Area</u> | <u>District</u> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Birds of Prey | Boise |
| China Cup Butte | Idaho Falls |
| Grassland Kipuka (Great Rift) | Idaho Falls, Shoshone |

Inventories and reports have been completed for the China Cup Butte and Birds of Prey areas with the recommendation that these areas do not have wilderness characteristics. Public reviews were held in 1979, and the reports which will be submitted to Congress can be examined at the appropriate district office or in the State Office in Boise.

The Great Rift ISA was determined to have wilderness characteristics in the intensive inventory which was conducted in 1979. A suitability report and an environmental statement on the Great Rift are now undergoing administrative review in Washington.

Idaho Instant Study Areas

| <u>Area Name</u> | <u>Identified as Lacking Wilderness Characteristics</u> | | <u>Identified as Containing Wilderness Characteristics</u> | |
|------------------|---|--------------|--|--------------|
| | <u>Units</u> | <u>Acres</u> | <u>Units</u> | <u>Acres</u> |
| Great Rift | | | 1 | 374,400 |
| Birds of Prey | 12 | 161,736 | | |
| China Cup Butte | 2 | 16,110 | | |

C. Definitions

Terminology specific to the BLM Wilderness Review has evolved throughout the inventory process. To facilitate better communication, the following terms elaborate on definitions already given in the Wilderness Inventory Handbook and other guidance.

Cherrystemming: An unofficial term used to describe the way an inventory unit boundary is drawn to exclude a road that appears to enter the unit; the resulting boundary resembles a cherrystem.

Contiguous Lands: Lands or legal subdivisions having a common boundary. Lands having only a common corner are not contiguous.

FLPMA: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, which mandated the BLM Wilderness Review. Often referred to and pronounced "FLIPMA."

Instant Study Areas: Section 603 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act mandated that all primitive or natural areas formally identified prior to November 1, 1975, be studied for wilderness suitability and recommended to the President by July 1, 1980. These existing primitive and natural areas are called Instant Study Areas, or ISA's.

Inventory Unit: An area of public land indexed for easy reference at the start of the wilderness inventory. All BLM lands in Idaho are within an inventory unit; these units may or may not be roadless. An official file for each unit is maintained at the BLM district office and is available for public review.

Non-Public Land Inholdings: All non-federal lands, including state or private land located within the inventory units. These lands are not calculated in the acreage being evaluated for wilderness nor are they being inventoried for wilderness characteristics.

Public Lands: Any land and interest in land owned by the United States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except:

- lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf
- lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos
- lands in which the United States retains the minerals, but the surface is private.

Only public land is being inventoried for wilderness purposes.

RARE II: The wilderness inventory on lands administered by the Secretary of Agriculture through the United States Forest Service. The acronym stands for Roadless Area Review and Evaluation and the "II" signifies that it is the second time the Forest Service has inventoried and evaluated the lands it administers for wilderness values.

Road: For the purposes of the BLM's wilderness inventory, the following definition applies: "The word 'roadless' refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road."

To clarify this definition, the following sub-definitions also apply:

"Improved and maintained" - Actions taken physically by man to keep the road open to vehicular traffic.
'Improved' does not necessarily mean formal construction.
'Maintained' does not necessarily mean annual maintenance.

"Mechanical means" - Use of hand or power machinery or tools.

"Relatively regular and continuous use" - Vehicular use which has occurred and will continue to occur on a relatively regular basis. Examples are: access roads for equipment to maintain a stock water tank or other established water sources; access roads to maintained recreation sites or facilities; or access roads to mining claims.

Roadless: Refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use.

Roadless Area: A roadless area is defined as any contiguous unit of land (irregardless of size or configuration) which lies between two or more roads and/or non-BLM lands. The key word in this definition is "contiguous." The word contiguous means being of the same boundary. Unless an inventory unit is completely dissected by the discovery of additional roads that result in the identification of two or more new roadless units under 5,000 acres, the original inventory unit still meets the definition of a contiguous roadless area. Cherrystem roads or deadend roads penetrating into a unit do not completely break the contiguous acreage of a unit. Therefore, they are part of the boundary of the unit and cannot be used to declare the land within the remainder of the unit "roaded."

Solitude: Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are wilderness characteristics examined in the intensive wilderness inventory. Factors contributing to opportunities for solitude are size, vegetative screening, topographic relief, vistas, and physiographic variety.

Supplemental Values: Features of ecological, geological, or other scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value that may be present in an inventory unit. These are not necessary criteria for wilderness characteristics, as is stated in the Wilderness Act of 1964, but must be assessed during the intensive wilderness inventory.

Way: A two-wheel track created only by the passage of vehicles.
A "way" is not a road.

Wilderness: The definition contained in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 is as follows: "A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. Wilderness is an area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Wilderness Area: An area formally designated by Congress as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Wilderness Characteristics: Those characteristics of wilderness as described in Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. These include size, naturalness, solitude, primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and supplemental values.

Wilderness Inventory: An evaluation of the public lands in the form of a written description and a map showing those lands that meet the wilderness criteria as established under Section 603(a) of FLPMA and Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act. The lands meeting the criteria will be referred to as Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's). Those lands identified as not meeting wilderness criteria will be released from further wilderness consideration.

Wilderness Review: The term used to cover the entire wilderness inventory, study, and reporting phases of the wilderness program of the BLM.

Wilderness Study Area (WSA): A Wilderness Study Area is a contiguous roadless area over 5,000 acres in size (or of sufficient size) within which can be found apparent naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined recreation. A WSA is merely the identification of the physical limits of the wilderness resource. It makes no attempt to determine the value of the wilderness resource compared to other resource values. Because a WSA is partially defined as a roadless area, the physical limit of that resource may be the physical edge of the road. WSA boundaries are required to be along roads unless the inventory of the roadless unit shows a reason for adjusting away from the road due to a lack of naturalness or a clear and obvious lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation.

D. Interim Management Policy (IMP)

During the period of the wilderness review and until Congress acts on the President's recommendations on which areas are suitable for wilderness designation, the Secretary of the Interior is required to manage lands having wilderness characteristics so as not to impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness, subject to certain exceptions and conditions. This management is referred to as "interim management" and is discussed in a BLM document entitled Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review, December 1979. This is available at any BLM office.

E. How Wilderness Characteristics Were Evaluated

1. Size

" . . . has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition . . ."

Specifically, the size criteria will be satisfied for inventory units in the following situations and circumstances:

- a. Roadless areas with over 5,000 acres of contiguous public lands. State or private lands are not included in making this acreage determination.
- b. Any roadless island of the public lands of less than 5,000 acres.
- c. Roadless areas of less than 5,000 acres of contiguous public lands where any one of the following apply:
 - They are contiguous with lands managed by another agency which have been formally determined to have wilderness or potential wilderness values.
 - The public has indicated strong support for study of a particular area of less than 5,000 acres and it is demonstrated that it is clearly and obviously of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition, and of a size suitable for wilderness management.
 - They are contiguous with an area of less than 5,000 acres of other Federal lands administered by an agency with authority to study and preserve wilderness lands, and the combined total is 5,000 acres or more.

2. Naturalness

" . . . generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable . . ."

- Wilderness Act of 1964

This criteria states that areas must only appear to be primeval and untrammled by man with man's developments permissible, yet substantially unnoticeable on the landscape. Acceptable imprints include fences, reservoirs, spring developments, constructed trails, bridges, fire towers, fire breaks, fire suppression facilities, pit toilets, fishery enhancement facilities, snow gauges, water quantity and quality measuring devices, and other scientific devices.

The presence of these human developments cannot be used to declare an inventory unit unnatural. Only when these developments are of such a number and distribution throughout a unit, or portion of the unit, that they become substantially noticeable to a casual observer can they be used to declare an entire unit or portion of the unit unnatural.

Imprints of man outside a unit are not normally considered in assessing the area's naturalness.

3. Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

" . . . has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation . . ."

- Wilderness Act of 1964

Two key words appear here: "or" and "outstanding." Either opportunities for solitude or opportunities for primitive recreation must be present for an area to qualify as a WSA; both need not be present. These opportunities must be outstanding in order for an area to qualify as a WSA. Opportunities for either solitude or primitive recreation may exist in an inventory unit, but if these opportunities are not outstanding, the area does not qualify as a WSA.

The evaluation of opportunities for solitude during the inventory is based upon the ability of a unit of a given size, topographic relief and vegetative type to allow a visitor group to escape the sights and sounds of others within the unit as well as external influences (such as vehicle traffic on boundary roads or significant agricultural development and activity immediately adjacent to the unit.)

In order for an inventory unit to have outstanding opportunities for solitude it must be:

- a. Large enough so that topographic relief can provide plentiful screening among visitors as well as provide opportunities for visitors to disperse throughout the unit. If topographic relief tends to concentrate visitors into small or narrow corridors within the unit, the corridors must be sufficiently long enough and/or provide plentiful topographic or vegetative screening to lessen the impact of the corridor effect.
- b. Large enough so that vegetation can provide plentiful screening among visitors as well as not hinder the visitors' mobility throughout the unit. Land patterns of dense vegetation can create corridor effects.

The ability of vegetation to provide screening is dependent upon the height of the vegetation and its stand density in combination with topographic relief. Taller vegetation can provide excellent screening on both flat and steep topography if stand density is sufficient. In general, as topographic relief increases, stand density must also increase to provide the same amount of screening because a visitor is more able to look over or through light density stands as the angle of slope increases. Likewise, low vegetation can provide greater screening on flat ground than on rolling or steep topography. Low vegetation can provide excellent screening on flat topography if the unit is large enough to provide sufficient distance for visitors or external influences to blend or disappear into the landscape. Not only can low vegetation on flat terrain provide screening, it can give a definite sense of remoteness, vastness or wide open space; adding to the achievement of a sense of solitude. The greater the topographic diversity of a unit, the smaller the unit can be to provide outstanding solitude.

The evaluation of the opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation was based on a unit's size and ability to provide exceptional or unusual natural features and recreation attractions. Exceptional natural features are those topographic and vegetative features which provide exceptional scenery, create a diversity of landforms and/or enable a visitor to achieve reasonable mobility within a unit, and would result in a strong recreation attraction to a unit for one or more types of activities.

A unit is considered to have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation if the overall unit size in combination with one or more of the factors contributing to exceptional natural features give a visitor a sense of non-confinement within an esthetically pleasing area. Some examples of areas where outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation can exist are:

- a. In small units where topography and/or vegetation is such that there is a diversity of landforms to encounter and topographic relief readily permits mobility throughout the unit to make efficient use of the land available.
- b. In large units where topography tends to concentrate visitors in confining narrow corridors and the scenic quality within the corridor is exceptional. In units where there are strong corridor effects, the unit must be sufficiently large enough, or the corridor long enough, to negate the sense of confinement. In addition, the corridor must be exceptionally scenic to encourage travel within the corridor.

- c. In large units where topography and/or vegetation is such that there is a diversity of landforms to encounter, mobility may be difficult (but not confined to corridors).

Areas without diversity of landform or exceptional scenery may not offer outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, irregardless of their size and the ease of mobility within them. An example would be a large sagebrush flat where travel across a unit would eventually result in a sense of monotony.

Examples of primitive and unconfined types of recreation are: hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, spelunking, horseback riding, mountain or rock climbing, river running, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding, photography, bird watching, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, and sightseeing for botanical, zoological, or geological features. These opportunities include potential as well as present use.

4. Supplemental Values

" . . . ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value."

- Wilderness Act of 1964

The presence or lack of supplemental values, such as ecological geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical importance will not determine whether an inventory unit becomes a WSA. These values are not essential for WSA status; however, it is important that the presence or absence of these types of features in an area be noted.

5. Possibility of Returning Area to A Natural Condition

Many imprints of man have a significant impact on the naturalness of an area and are excluded from WSA's. When the impact of man's imprints is only moderate, there is the possibility of returning the area to a substantially unnoticeable level by natural processes or hand labor. This is dependent on the kind of imprint, the topography, the vegetation, the amount of rainfall, etc.

II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. Overview of Public Comments

The 90-day public comment period on the intensive inventory began on April 4 with a deadline of July 3. Comments were accepted and analyzed through the date of printing of this report, due to a change in the decision announcement date from September to November 14.

Over 3,200 comments were received from individuals and from a wide variety of organization interests.

Over 85 percent of the comments resulted from a nationwide effort on the part of conservationists to provide input to the BLM wilderness effort. For the most part these comments did not address specific inventory units and therefore did not contain unit-specific comments that could be utilized in the intensive inventory decision. The general statements on characteristics that were in these responses as well as the opinions for or against wilderness are being retained for use later in the study phase.

The remaining 15 percent of the total comments, generally were unit specific, with most of these providing comment on wilderness characteristics. Notable among these comments were the approximately 50 received that addressed the Idaho conservation groups' proposal for desert WSA's and another group of inputs that proposed an alternative "W" (addressing units in the Boise and Burley Districts only). It must be stressed that the content of these comments was not considered any differently than other comments.