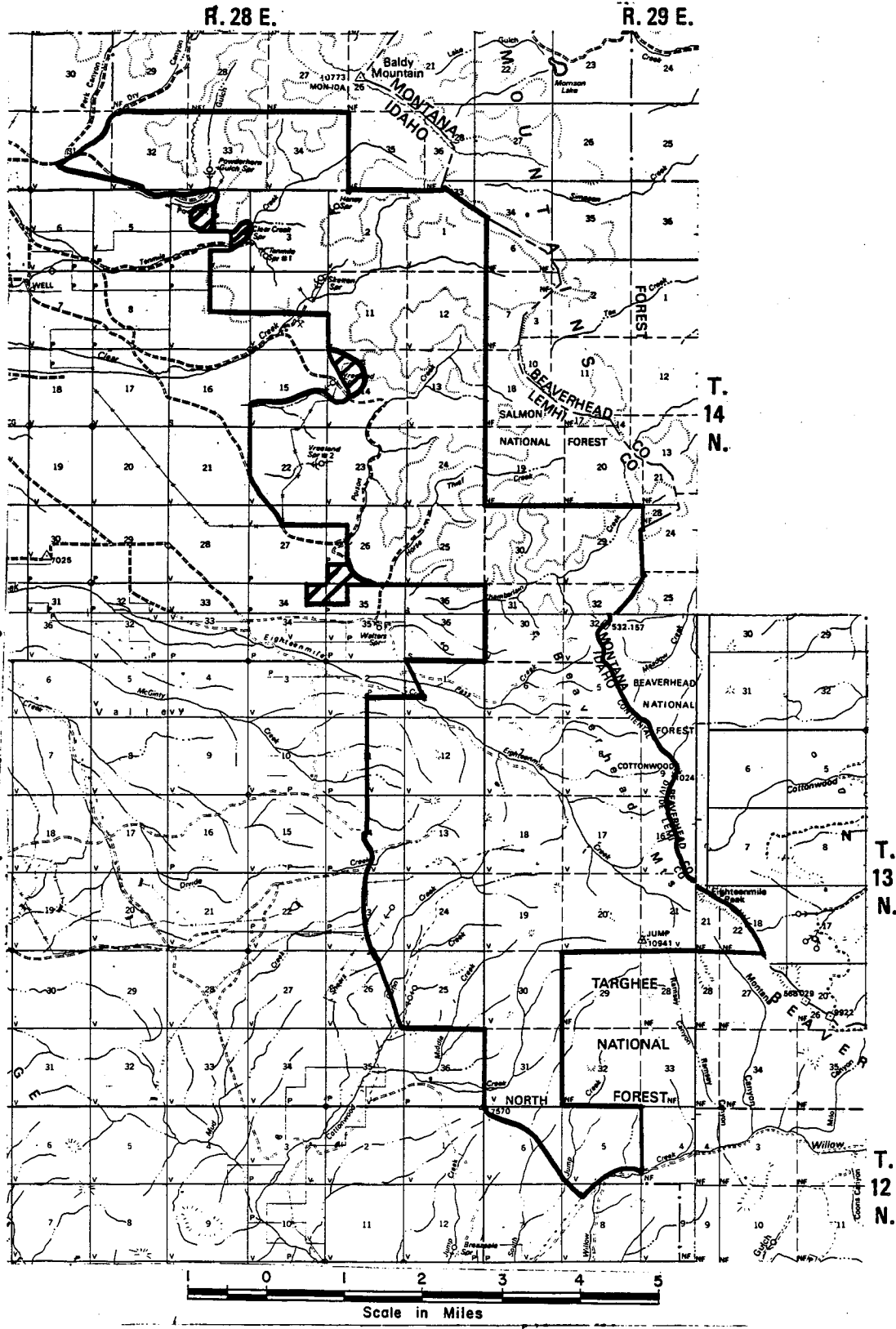




SALMON DISTRICT
UNITS IDENTIFIED AS
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS

43-3
EIGHTEEN MILE



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 24,922 acres of BLM land. This figure differs from the 19,280 acres shown in the August 1979 report. During intensive inventory it was felt that the initial inventory boundary, drawn along an elevation line on most of the western side, had been incorrectly located; while it more accurately should have followed the land ownership pattern in most instances. The unit is located along the Idaho side of the Continental Divide from Baldy Mountain south to Eighteenmile Peak. The unit is contiguous with RARE II Area M4-945 Italian Peak which has been recommended for further planning. The topography is mountainous with numerous deep creek valleys draining into Eighteenmile Creek to the west. The Continental Divide offers rolling meadows and precipitous cliffs. Elevation varies from 7,600 to 11,141 feet. Vegetation varies from lowland sage-grass communities up through Douglas fir, lodgepole pine and limber pine to grassy meadows on the Divide. Willow-aspen riparian vegetation occupies most creek bottoms.

NATURALNESS:

The imprint of man in the unit is largely unnoticeable. A few range developments exist, the most prominent being a ditch leading from Shears Creek to several water holes. Mining is taking place in Clear Creek just outside the unit's border. During field inventory the natural area was found to include some 4,882 acres initially thought to be vegetatively impacted.

SOLITUDE:

The rugged terrain, vegetative screening, remoteness, and limited accessibility of the unit provide for an outstanding opportunity for solitude.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

The unit offers outstanding opportunities for backpacking, rockhounding, hunting, wildlife viewing, and cross-country skiing.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

Supplemental values include the reported sighting of wolves and endangered species in the vicinity.

REHABILITATION:

Several short jeep trails exist which could revegetate easily if left unused.

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PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments favoring study area status stated:

- Limited access to the area would control future use and assure continued opportunity for solitude.
- Area provides the type of unconfined recreation people are looking for.
- Unit contains varied wildlife and mountainous terrain; proximity to wolf habitat area.
- Unit contains wild undisturbed terrain with outstanding solitude and recreation; excellent for backpacking.
- Contains few imprints of man; is removed from man's external influences.

Comments opposing study area status indicated:

- Road goes up Clear Creek to Eighteen Mile Creek to Nicholia.
- Fences and old homesteads in area affect naturalness.
- Area contains mining prospects; mining deposits.
- Two wheel paths (roads) necessary for livestock management cover the area.
- Unit does not offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Roadless/Naturalness:

The road from Clear Creek past Eighteen Mile Creek to Nicholia was recognized as a road and forms a portion of the western boundary of the unit.

The area west of the unit is divided up by a maze of high quality impenetrable woven wire sheep fences. None of these fences penetrate the unit although some define the unit border. Several less highly developed fences occur within the unit. None of the old homesteads are within the unit.

Mining areas have been excluded from the unit. The occurrence of mineral deposits has no bearing on the determination of wilderness characteristics.

Primitive two-wheel tracks extend for short distances up Shears, Eighteen Mile, Pass and Poison Creeks. None of these tracks appear to have been constructed or maintained.

The reference to rehabilitation in the proposed decision was to areas that already met the naturalness criteria, not to areas that did not.

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DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 24,922 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness, and the solitude-recreation criteria.

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

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 30,110 acres of BLM land, with a 640-acre State inholding. This unit was identified in the August 1979 report as containing 20,000 acres, with lands only in the Salmon District. Due to a reevaluation of a previously identified road separating Units 45-12 and 32-16, some acreage from Unit 32-16 in the Idaho Falls District has been added to Unit 45-12. The unit lies southwest of Taylor Mountain and is bounded on the south by U. S. Forest Service RARE II Area 4-210 Borah Peak, which has been recommended for wilderness status. The unit is contiguous to the RARE II area for 13 miles. The eastern portion is characterized by an open and sloping sage-grass covered area. The western portion is steep, hilly terrain and vegetation includes scattered stands of Douglas fir and juniper. Several large rock outcrops occur in the west portion.

NATURALNESS:

The majority of the unit has retained a natural appearance. The inventory identified two road systems: one leading south from the Dry Creek Road to private land at Buck Springs, the other runs between Squaw Creek and Buck Springs, which includes a short spur road to Camp Springs. These roads trim 2,590 acres from the unit.

Several range developments exist in the form of watering troughs and reservoirs, however, these developments are localized and do not have an impact on the unit as a whole. Most access routes to the developments are not heavily used and require 4-wheel drive vehicles. The old Dry Creek Reservoir is hardly noticeable. Man-made imprints are not substantial within the western portion of the unit.

SOLITUDE:

Topographic and vegetative screening in the eastern portion of the unit is considered minimal, and when combined with a somewhat irregular configuration renders opportunities for solitude less than outstanding. The unit is therefore decreased by 2,540 acres. The eastern portion is separated from the west by the high ridge north of Squaw Creek.

In the western portion due to the large size, excellent topographic relief, moderate vegetative screening, lack of nearby development, and remoteness of the unit, an outstanding opportunity for solitude does exist.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

Primitive and unconfined recreation opportunities are considered less than outstanding in the eastern portion due to the narrow corridor between the road to Camp Springs and nearby private and State land. This narrow corridor, 1/3 - 1/2 mile wide, is considered a constricting factor which limits primitive unconfined recreation.

Within the larger western portion, there are no continuing barriers or man-made developments to limit recreation activities. Opportunities include hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, camping and backpacking. The combination of interesting natural features and diversity of recreation opportunities in the western portion are considered outstanding.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The western portion of the unit has been identified as important elk winter range. Archaeological sites within the unit include hunting blinds, rock shelters, and surface lithic scatters.

REHABILITATION:

Areas disturbed for water developments and jeep trails could be rehabilitated.

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PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments favoring study area status indicated:

- The unit has outstanding scenery and camping when combined with the Borah Peak, RARE II area.
- Unit is in undisturbed condition, few imprints of man.
- Unit is of large size.
- Great area to experience diversity and quality of wilderness activity.
- Area contains excellent riparian vegetation and a wide variety of desert plants.
- The road, which BLM identified up Short Creek, is not a road; has not been improved or maintained.

Comments opposing study area status stated that jeep trails are all over area, a lack of outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation, and a lack of naturalness.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Additional field checks were completed, based on public comment. The road up Short Creek was constructed by the BLM in 1970 and shows evidence of cuts and fills. Therefore, it remains identified as a road, forming a portion of the unit boundary.

While there are jeep trails all over the area to the north of the unit, they do not carry over into the unit except as noted in the proposed decision.

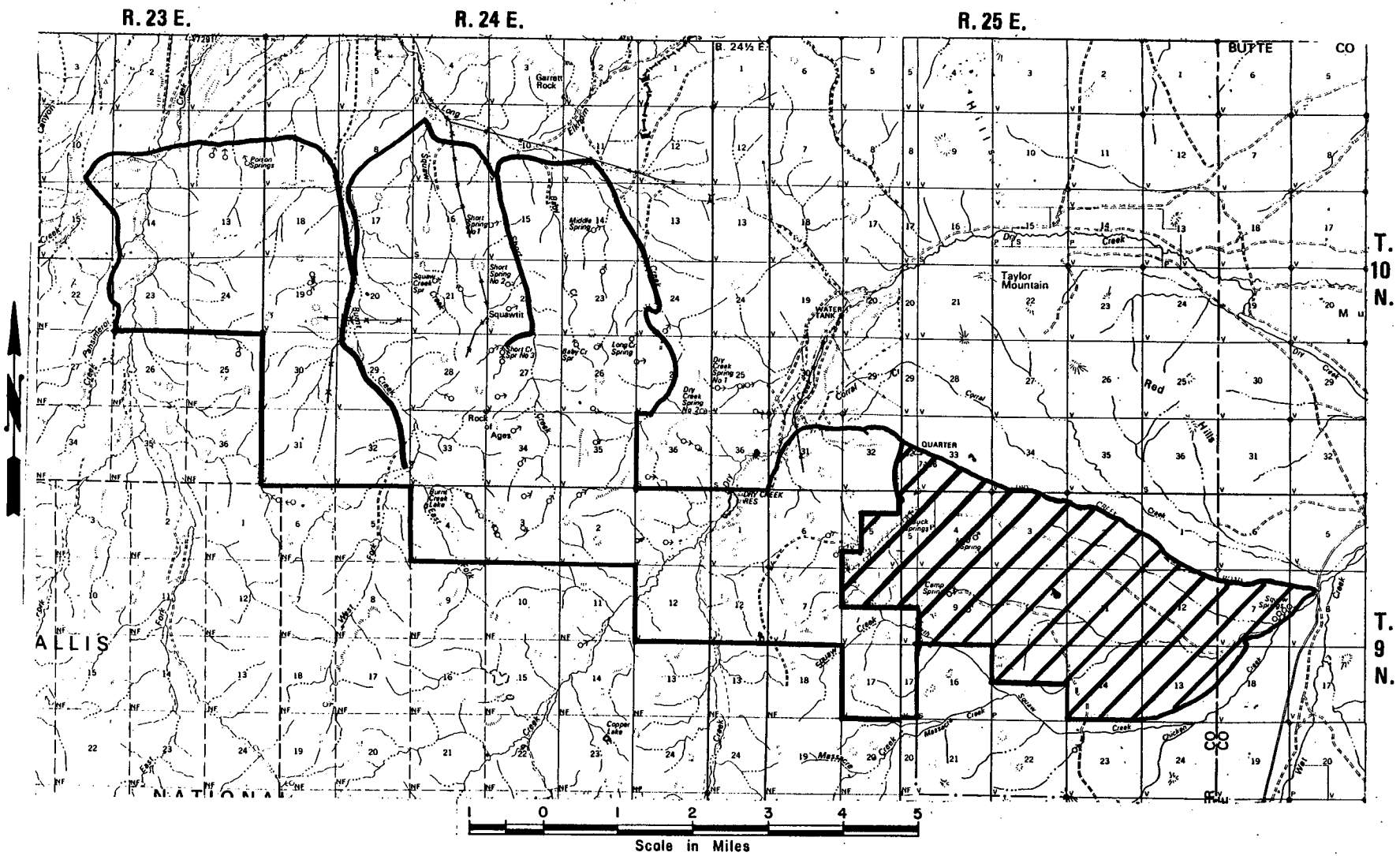
The reference to rehabilitation in the proposed decision was to areas that already met the naturalness criteria, not to areas that did not.

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DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 24,980 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness and the solitude-recreation criteria.

45-12
BURNT CREEK

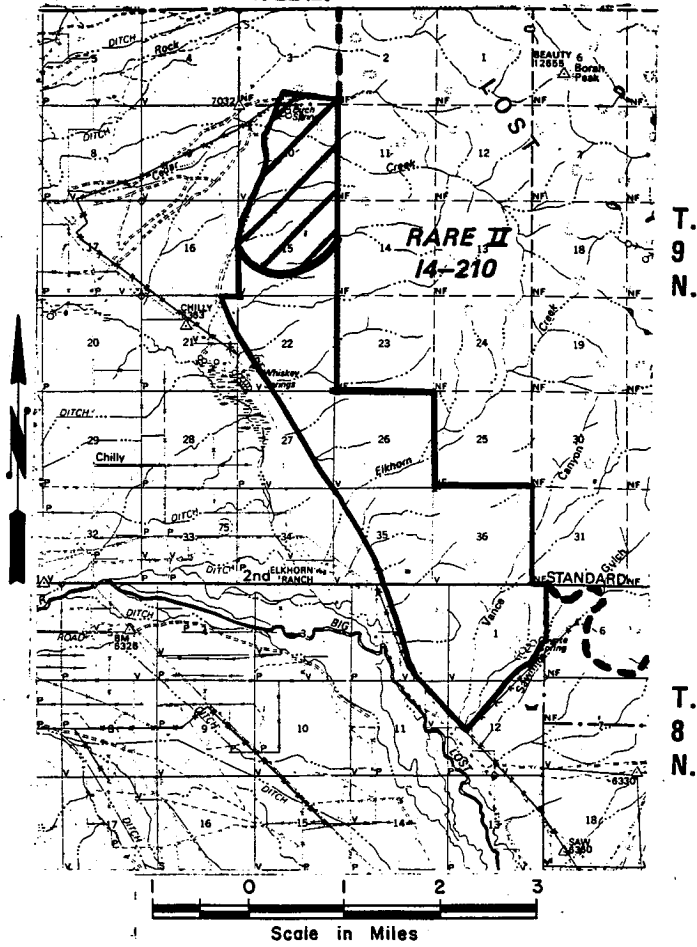


LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

47-4
BORAH PEAK

R. 22 E.



LEGEND



WILDERNESS STUDY AREA



AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

47-4 BORAH PEAK

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

SIZE AND PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:

The unit contains 3,880 acres of BLM land with a 640-acre State inholding. This figure differs from the 4,594 acres shown in the August 1979 report due to the previous inclusion of the State acreage with the BLM land, and an additional change due to a recalculation of acreage. The unit is located east of Chilly, and west of Borah Peak. Topography is relatively steep and west sloping. Vegetation is sagebrush-grass with scattered mountain mahogany. The unit has a six mile common border with the proposed RARE II wilderness area 4-210, Borah Peak. The northern 780 acres of the unit are not contiguous to the RARE II area due to boundary modifications.

NATURALNESS:

The unit has retained a natural appearance. Most areas of disturbance have occurred in the northern end of the unit around Birch Springs. Powerlines and a telephone line along the west boundary are obvious external negative influences.

SOLITUDE:

Outstanding opportunities may be present in the BLM unit and are definitely present when the unit is considered as a portion of the larger BLM/FS area.

PRIMITIVE AND UNCONFINED RECREATION:

No constraints exist to limit an outstanding opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation, when considered with the contiguous RARE II area.

SUPPLEMENTAL VALUES:

The principal supplemental value is the unit's proximity to Borah Peak and Leatherman Peak.

REHABILITATION:

Disturbed areas could be restored.

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PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY:

Comments that favored study area status indicated:

- Unit is in undisturbed condition with few imprints of man.
- Unit contains outstanding scenery and camping when combined with the Borah Peak RARE II area.
- A great area to experience diversity and quality of wilderness activity.

Comments opposed to study area status stated:

- Highway 93 is along the entire length of the unit, vehicle noise is evident.
- The unit surrounds a State section with a sheep camp on it.
- Telephone and powerlines run across the unit; two old logging trails are visible.
- Unit is in the path of Air Force jet training route 302.
- The size of the unit at 3,100 acres is below the 5,000-acre minimum.
- Many roads lead to water troughs and salt licks.
- Unit has poor recreation possibilities; it's simply a hillside.

COMMENT EVALUATION:

Highway 93 does run the length of the unit on the west side, however, the unit boundary is the uppermost utility line east of the highway. No utility lines are within the unit.

The State section is not included in the acreage and was not inventoried for wilderness characteristics. It appears blocked within the unit due to the contiguous Forest Service RARE II area on the east.

No water troughs are within the unit, and only two very rough old jeep trails have been noted in the unit.

The unit meets the size criteria, and the solitude-recreation criteria when considered as a part of a larger block of land with the contiguous RARE II area, 4-210, Borah Peak. This option of considering small blocks of BLM land when adjacent to RARE II areas is provided in Bureau wilderness inventory policy.

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DECISION:

No new information was received through public comments that would warrant a change in the decision. A unit of 3,100 acres is identified as a wilderness study area as it meets the naturalness criteria, and when considered with the contiguous RARE II area, meets the size, and the solitude-recreation criteria.