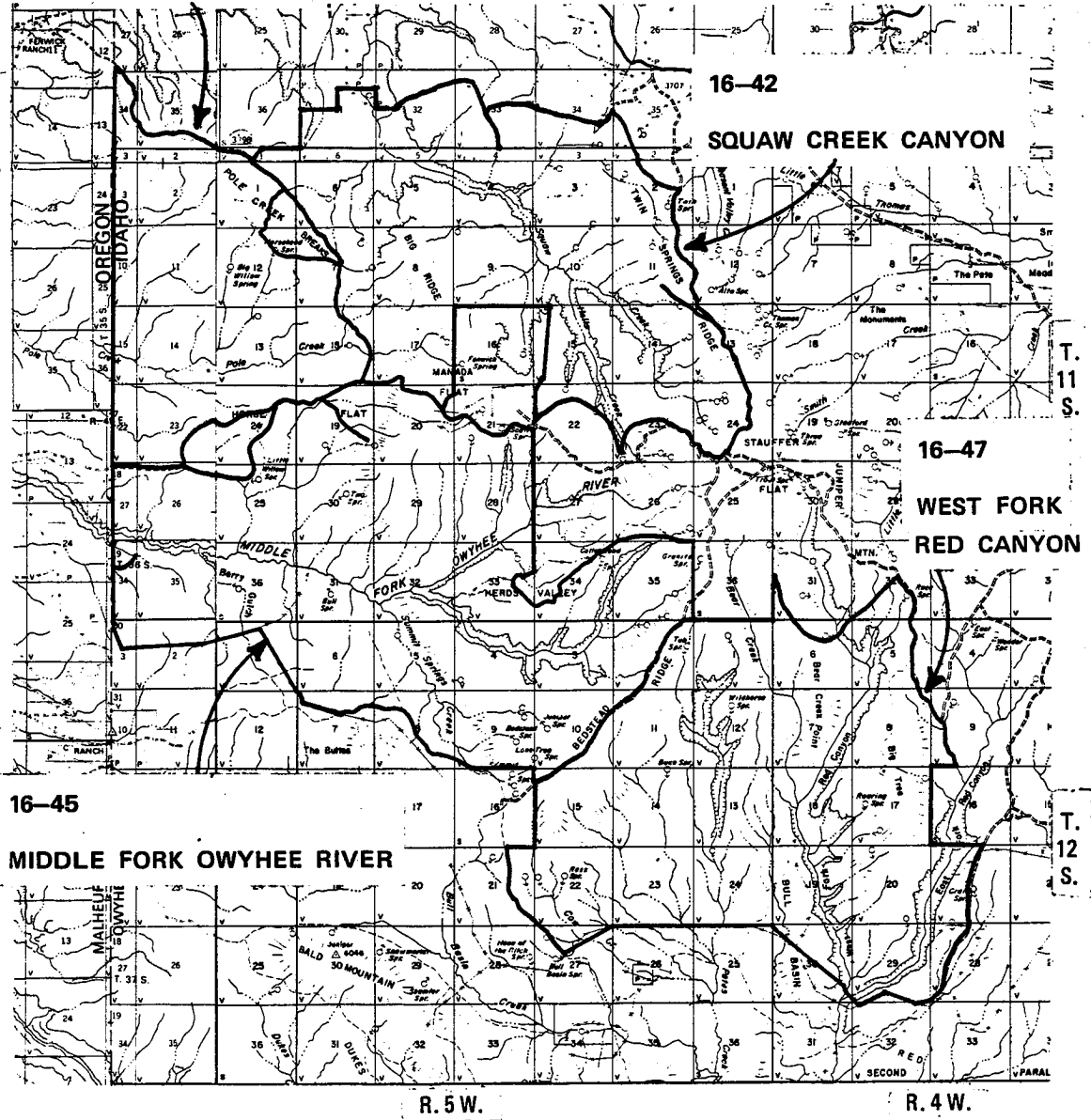


16-41

HORSEHEAD SPRING

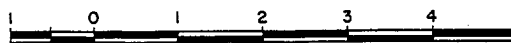


16-45

MIDDLE FORK OWYHEE RIVER



R. 5 W.

R. 4 W.



Scale in Miles

LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

## 16-47 West Fork Red Canyon

The naturalness of Unit 16-47 was questioned primarily because of a bladed fence line and two roads running into the unit, one in the northern and one in the southern portion.

The bladed fence line had been previously inventoried and evaluated. However, an additional hiking trip down the West Fork of Red Canyon found that the fence line runs down the bottom of the canyon for about 1/2 mile more than previously thought. However, in this 1/2 mile, the fence line is not bladed. The fence line does have a significant impact upon the natural character of the canyon as well as the sense of unconfined recreation and gets in the way of enjoying free mobility in the canyon bottom.

The northern road/way into the unit was also previously inventoried and evaluated. In the previous evaluation, it was determined that the road/way was inescapable when traveling through the drainage. This evaluation still stands. Though not mentioned in the protest, the fence line located just south of the northern boundary near Trout Springs should have been used as the boundary rather than the road.

Because of the additional known impact of the fence line in the main corridor of travel, and the impact of fence lines and old bladed roads in both major side drainages of this portion of the unit, the unit is adjusted to exclude all previously identified lands lying north of these impacts.

The vehicle route in the southern portion was previously identified as a way because it was only a 2-wheel track that wound a path through juniper with no sign of construction or maintenance, nor significant limbing of juniper trees. This evaluation still stands. It should be noted that some recent limbing of juniper has occurred in the northernmost portion of the way. Because of the lack of significant vegetative damage to both juniper and low sagebrush/grass vegetation, this way is not considered to be a significant impact at close distances. In addition, the flatness of the terrain makes this impact extremely localized with no significant impact on the natural landscape as a whole. Any contact with the way by a casual observer would be extremely brief and have minimal impact.

Though not mentioned specifically in the protest, all other imprints of man in the unit were reevaluated. During this reevaluation, it was determined that three fence line systems that penetrate to the rim of the East Fork of Red Canyon from the southeast boundary impact both the naturalness of this area as well as give a sense of confinement to the recreation experience. At intervals of one mile or less, these fences interrupt the free mobility of the casual observer between the rimrock and the eastern boundary road. The casual observer could escape the two northern fences upon penetrating the unit, however, the southernmost fence completely isolates a small portion of land from the rest of the unit. The unit boundary is adjusted to exclude this fence system.

The bladed fence line system and ways in the south-central core of the unit are considered to have a significant impact because of their location and concentration. There is, however, considerable acreage in both the West and East Fork of Red Canyon as well as the entire western third of the unit to provide a natural experience. Only in the West Fork of Red Canyon will a casual observer encounter a 1/2 mile section of fence penetrating the canyon from the south-central core area.

As a result of reevaluation of the unit the final decision is amended to exclude two areas of the unit totalling 1,828 acres as described above. The remainder of the unit, 12,882 acres, is identified as a Wilderness Study Area.

16-49a Deep Creek-Owyhee River

The naturalness of Unit 16-49a was questioned because of the number of existing known imprints of man within the unit and boundary roads (particularly cherrystem roads) as well as four internal roads, a reservoir and a fence line.

A vehicle route was located in T.13 S., R. 3 W., Secs. 28 and 33. This vehicle route consists of a 2-wheel track from the cherrystem boundary road in Sec. 28 in a southwest direction over a small saddle. There is no sign of construction or maintenance, therefore, the route is not a road, but rather a way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles. Because of its location on the hillside, it is visible from portions of the plateau country to the east. However, the wheel tracks do not represent a major scar on the face of the hill nor a significant impairment of the natural landscape. The spring development located nearby in Sec. 28, however, does represent a major scar on the hillside. Rehabilitation of the spring may be necessary if wilderness is recommended for the unit. The way can be expected to rehabilitate naturally.

Several light vehicle tracks were located in association with a reservoir in T. 12 S., R. 2 W., Sec. 34. Two vehicle routes extend from the eastern boundary road to the reservoir. A third route heads westward from the reservoir toward the rim of Deep Creek Canyon. This route rapidly deteriorates into a cattle trail when halfway to the canyon. The vehicle routes consist of 2-wheel tracks with well established sagebrush growing between the tracks. There is no sign of construction or maintenance, therefore, the routes are not roads but rather ways maintained solely by the passage of vehicles. Because of the flat terrain, the sagebrush vegetation is high enough to screen these ways from view except when one is almost standing on them. Therefore, the ways do not constitute a significant impairment of the natural landscape in the area as a whole. Contact with the ways by a casual observer would be brief and peripheral and have little or no impact upon the obtainment of a natural experience in the unit.

A vehicle route (way) showing no sign of construction or maintenance was previously inventoried in Sec. 10 leading from the eastern boundary road to a reservoir in the northeast corner of Sec. 9. An additional vehicle route was located extending westward from the reservoir but it quickly degenerates into a livestock trail. The vehicle route shows no sign of construction or maintenance. It appears to be a way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles. Because of the relatively flat terrain and screening from sagebrush, the entire way and reservoir are not a significant impairment of the natural landscape in the area as a whole. Contact with the way or reservoir by a casual observer would be brief and peripheral and have little or no impact upon the obtainment of a natural experience in the unit.

No reservoir could be located by helicopter in T. 12 S., R. 2 W., Sec. 17, other than the one previously inventoried near the rim of Deep Creek. The only resemblance of a reservoir that could be found in the location mapped in the protest was a natural depression in the bottom of a wash.

During the attempt to locate the reservoir, it was determined that the two vehicle routes leading to reservoirs in Secs. 17 and 20 are actually roads rather than ways as had been previously inventoried. Though not representing a significant impairment of the natural landscape due to the minimal amount of construction, these vehicle routes have obviously been bladed and are still serviceable, and are therefore roads.

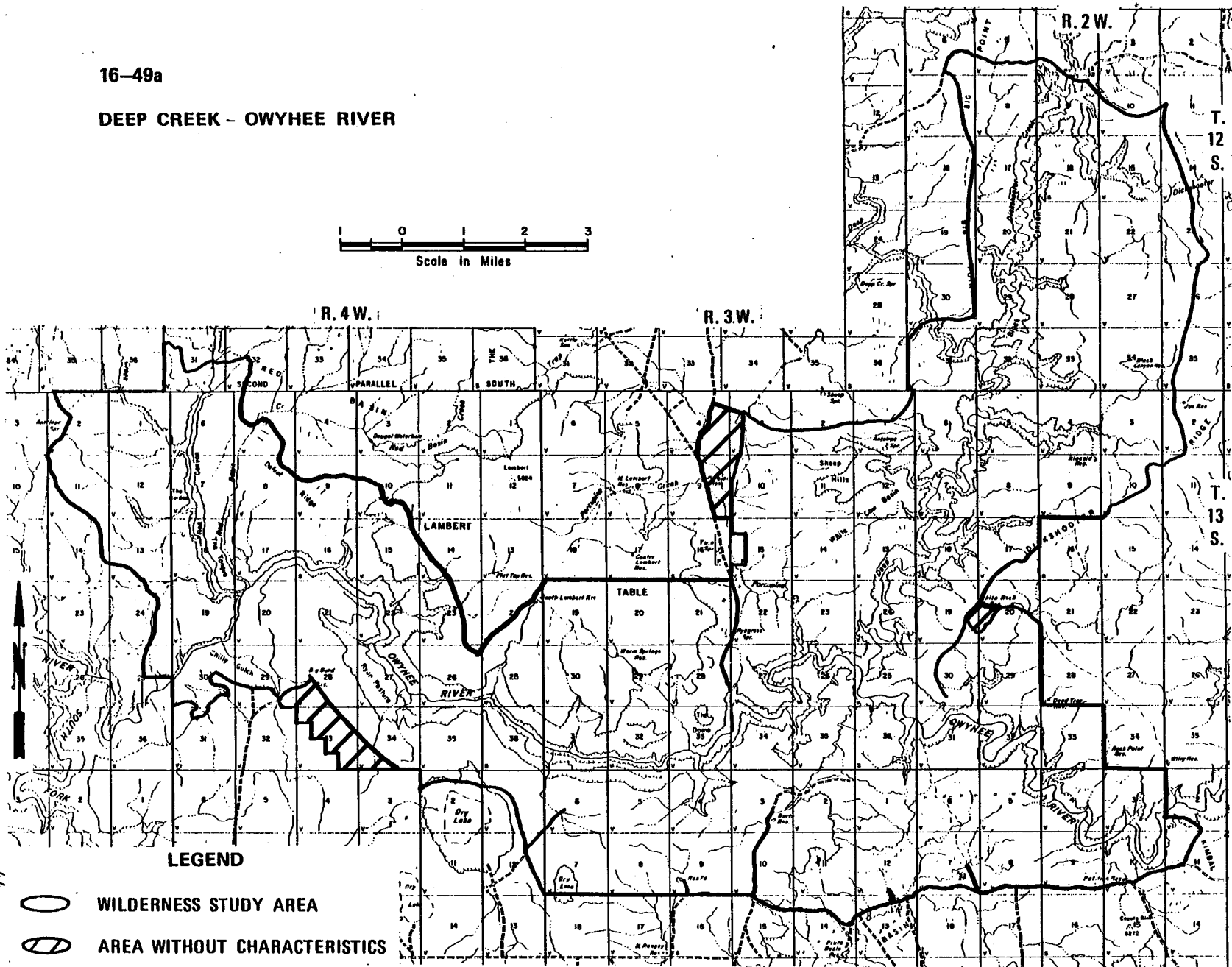
A fence line was located about the rimrock on the north side of the Owyhee River in T. 13 S., R. 2 W., Sec. 31. This fence is in disrepair. Because of its location on the rimrock, it is difficult to see and therefore does not impair the natural landscape.

Previous inventory field work had located a constructed livestock trail over the rimrock of Piute Creek in Sec. 36, about 1/4 to 1/2 mile south of the Owyhee River. Construction was limited to the rimrock area with no evidence of a trail in the creek bottom leading to the river nor on the rolling plateau country leading to the reservoir in T. 14 S., R. 3 W., Sec. 2. The protest claimed that this livestock trail is a road. Field reevaluation confirmed that there is no evidence of construction or established wheel tracks on either side of the rimrock construction. However, there is evidence of livestock trailing from the river to the reservoir along this route. Therefore, the route clearly is not a road because it shows no sign of maintenance or regular and continuous use by vehicles.

During the field reevaluation, it was determined that portions of a previously identified road extending from the reservoir in T. 14 S., R. 3 W., Sec. 3 to the reservoir in Sec. 2 should not be defined as a road because it clearly does not meet the maintenance and regular and continuous use requirement. From where this vehicle route leaves the flat plateau area in the NE 1/4 of Sec. 3 and proceeds down a wash into Sec. 2, it is heavily bladed, however, the old road bed has been badly eroded and overgrown with sagebrush and is no longer passable. There is evidence of wheel tracking around this area as well as along most of the route to the reservoir in Sec. 2. Though much of the route is still passable, the abundance and size of sagebrush and other vegetation in the old road bed

16-49a

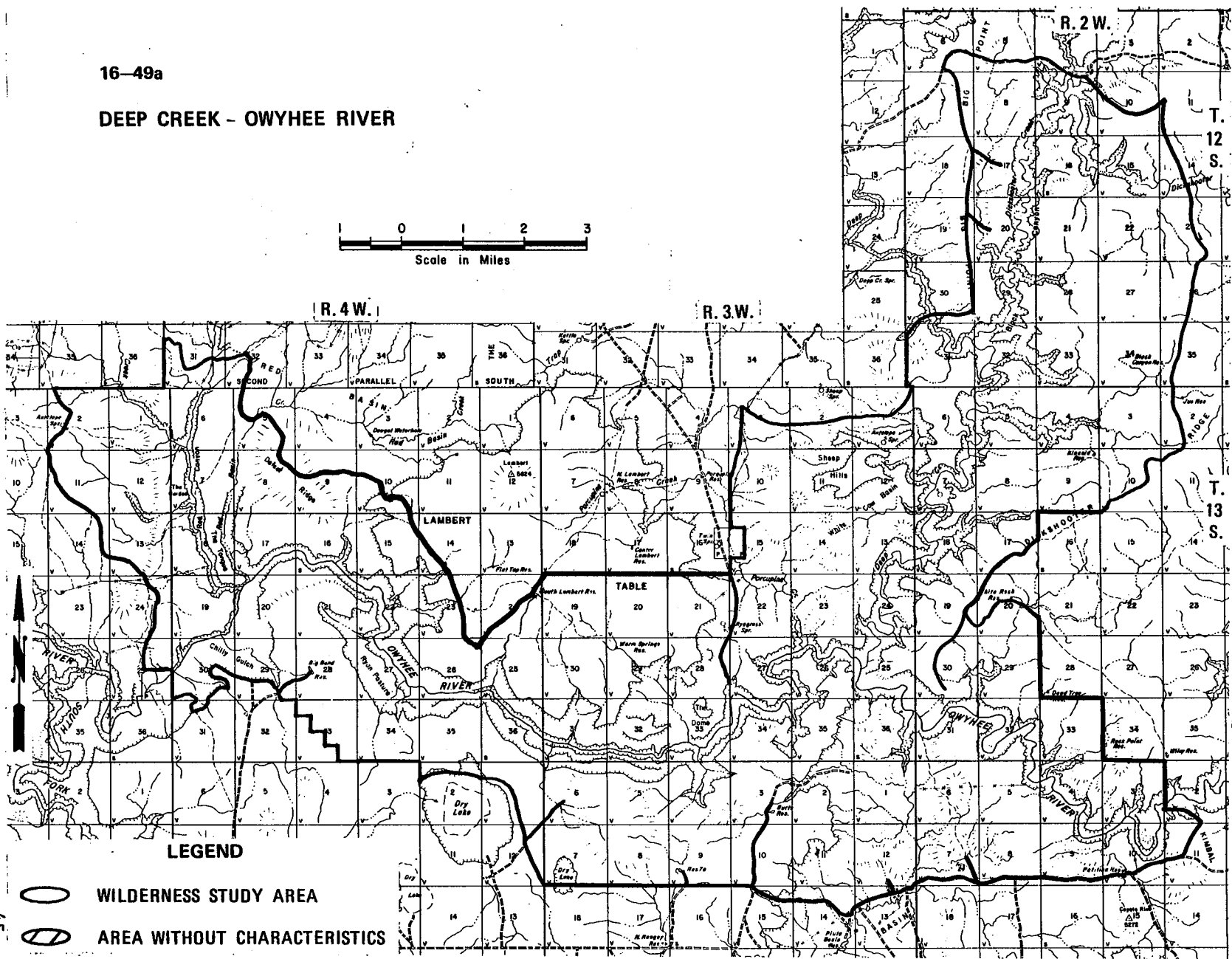
DEEP CREEK - OWYHEE RIVER





77

16-49a

# DEEP CREEK - OWYHEE RIVER



## LEGEND

-  WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
-  AREA WITHOUT CHARACTERISTICS

indicate that it does not receive regular and continuous use even to the point of not being maintained by the passage of vehicles.

During the field reevaluation, it was determined that the bladed fence line in T. 13 S., R. 3 W., Secs. 3 and 10 should be the boundary of the study area rather than the road in Secs. 4 and 9. This major fence line system isolates a small parcel of land from the rest of the unit. The size of this area is 460 acres.

Secondly, it was determined that the boundary on the southwest plateau area should be delineated by the legal subdivisions rather than an imaginary line 1/2 mile from the rim of the Owyhee Canyon. Such an adjustment is in line with policy and increases the study area by 600 acres.

Third, the eastern boundary of the unit is adjusted to follow a very substantial way and livestock trail rather than legal subdivisions. Such an adjustment makes the location of the boundary more discernable as well as eliminates a significant scar on the landscape from the periphery of the unit. This adjustment results in a 60 acre decrease in the size of the unit.

No new information has been supplied by the protest that would warrant changes other than the small adjustments in the unit boundaries as described above. These changes result in an 80 acre increase in the final study area acreage, the addition of several cherrystem roads in the northern portion of the unit, and the deletion of a cherrystem road in the southern portion of the unit. A total of 70,083 acres is now identified as a Wilderness Study Area.

16-49e Battle Creek

The naturalness of unit 16-49e was questioned because of the previously uninventoried imprints of man, including a spring/water tank, old stoves and corrals, a gap fence and sheep study station, mining activity, and three roads. The developed spring could not be located by helicopter. It may well exist but its presence is clearly not a significant impact on the naturalness of the area. No road or wheel tracks could be located by helicopter in T. 13 S., R. 1 W., Sec. 3. The only evidence of disturbance was a livestock trail in the shallow drainage bottom leading to Battle Creek. The old stoves or corrals could be located by helicopter.

A gap fence exists in the side drainage of Battle Creek in T. 13 S., R. 2 W., Sec. 25. The sheep study station also exists in Sec. 25. The structure consists of a number of large wooden panels used as a temporary animal confinement pen during the release of bighorn sheep. This structure could easily be removed.

A road was located in T. 13 S., R. 2 W., Sec. 26 leading from the southwest boundary to a rock corral structure. The road was obviously bladed and is still readily passable. The minimal amount of rock movement involved with the road and the relatively flat terrain of the region makes this road visible from only extremely close distances. Its impact on the area as a whole is minimal. No road could be located in T. 13 S., R. 1 W., Secs. 5 and 8. The only disturbance noted in the area was a livestock trail in the shallow drainage bottom leading to Battle Creek.

Though most of the imprints of man stated in the protest could not be located, they may still exist. The vastness of the area combined with the relatively minor character of the imprints made locating these imprints even by helicopter very difficult. Because they were not readily observable by air, their presence in the natural landscape is clearly very insignificant.

No new information has been supplied by the protest that would warrant a change in the final recommendation other than the addition of a short cherrystem road in the southwest portion of the unit, with no change in acreage. A unit of 31,540 acres is identified as a wilderness study area.