Protect and maintain the cultural, geologic, scenic, and natural values present in the area.

Description (including Relevance and Importance)

Site Description

This 84,111 acre area has numerous rugged, deep canyons which provide high quality habitat for California bighorn sheep, have exceptional scenic and natural qualities, and contain valuable cultural sites. This area is within portions of MUA 10, 11, 15, and 16 in the southwest part of the Jarbidge Resource Area. See Map 5 for location.

The two river canyons and small side canyons offer rugged high quality habitat for California bighorn sheep. In December of 1982, 12 California bighorns were transplanted to the West Fork of the Bruneau River. This initial transplant consisted of 10 ewes and 2 rams. Five lambs were counted by Idaho Fish and Game in 1983. IDF&G has planned to supplement this initial transplant with 25 additional sheep in 1984.

During the same 1983 transplant, IDF&G delivered bighorns to the Nevada Department of Wildlife for transplant in Nevada on the East Fork of the Jarbidge River. Twelve sheep were released. Three or four of the original transplant were observed in the Jarbidge Wilderness during the summer of 1983. An unknown number of these sheep were killed by mountain lions. One radio collared ewe with lamb moved to the mouth of the Jarbidge River.

One of the most interesting side canyons on the Jarbidge River is Arch Canyon. It holds a variety of topographic features, numerous cultural sites, and a rich plant community. The lower part of the canyon is rugged and protected from grazing. Two natural stone arches and the high sculptured walls create a maze-like passage. The "Arch" is really a natural bridge since Cougar Creek flows through the holes in the process of creating the bridge, an entrenched meander was cut off and left high and dry. The typical geological term in the southwest for this feature is a rincon. Caves, large and small, are found along the cliffs. The canyon creates a cool shady microclimate that encourages ferns and mosses. The cool fern-covered walls are a striking contrast to the hot dry lands above. Arch Canyon provides habitat for two sensitive species: California bighorn and Bailey's Ivy. It contains some of the region's best stratified archaeological sites. Arch Canyon, the East Fork Jarbidge River Canyon, and other side canyons offer outstanding scenic values, as well as being unique natural areas in their own right.

Relevance

The Bruneau/Jarbidge River ACEC is considered relevant as part of a natural system or process, based on the existence of bighorn sheep habitat, and important geologic, scenic, natural, and cultural values.

Importance

Bighorn Sheep Habitat - Fewer than 4,000 California bighorns exist in the United States. The entire world population of California bighorns is

limited to about 6,000 animals. Maintenance of existing populations and the reestablishment of other populations is needed to ensure the continued existence of these bighorns. Protection of bighorn sheep habitat has been identified as a major concern by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, various state and national environmental organizations as well as numerous individuals during the development of the Owyhee and Bruneau MFPs and associated grazing EISs, as well as the Jarbidge RMP/EIS.

Bighorns generally avoid using areas where concentrations of other ungulates (cattle, horses, sheep, deer, antelope, etc.) occur. Bighorns restrict their habitat use to areas of less disturbance. These habitat constrictions can cause temporary forage overuse and intraspecific stress, or both. The result is a lower carrying capacity. If the carrying capacity is reduced too far, the insidious effects of inbreeding can result in total loss of the population. Mitigating measures can be utilized on a site specific basis to reduce or eliminate these adverse effects.

Bighorns also avoid contact with people. Close proximity to the population centers of southwest Idaho results in numerous and increasing human visits to the Bruneau/Jarbidge River area. Increasing numbers of humans rafting the river complex increase the chance of driving sheep from prime to marginal habitat. In addition to hunting, rafting, and fishing, there is a moderate amount of human activity tied to the bighorns themselves. Photographers interested in photographing bighorns hike and backpack into the area. This causes additional disturbance to the sheep. If the level of disturbance increases significantly above current levels, the sheep population may decline.

Maintenance of suitable bighorn habitat in this area is dependent upon maintaining an adequate high quality food supply and limiting the amount of disturbance from people, vehicles, livestock, or other activities.

California bighorn sheep have been designated as a "sensitive species." "Sensitive species" refers to wildlife species which have been officially designated by the BLM and Idaho Department of Fish and Game through a Memorandum of Understanding. They are species for which special management considerations are necessary to ensure their continued existence. Although these species are not in as much jeopardy as endangered or threatened species, further population declines or habitat determination may result in the more restrictive listings.

Cultural Resources - The entire river complex is rich in cultural resources. These resources are important because most are protected sites in rock shelters and caves which contain stratified deposits. This is in sharp contrast to the thin lithic scatters which account for 99% of the sites in the region. The cultural resources are critical because they are susceptible to damage by "potters," (illegal artifact thieves). Special protective management is necessary because at present about 80% of the caves have been "potted" and partially damaged, and 20% of the values have been destroyed. If vandalism continues, the destruction could be complete.

Geologic Values - Much of the river canyon complex, especially Arch Canyon, is characterized by rhyolite flows. This material through erosion

often forms tall thin spires of rock called hoodoos. The hoodoos are well developed in Arch Canyon giving it a highly scenic and inspiring aspect.

Scenic and Natural Values - Scenic values are recognized as important by the Department of Interior. Of the total 121 miles of the Jarbidge and Bruneau Rivers that is recommended for Wild and Scenic designation, approximately 90% is included within the proposed ACEC boundary. Most of the ACEC is within a wilderness study area which is classed as a Visual Class I area. The southern portion of the ACEC is managed as a Visual Class II area. As mentioned above, the natural geology of the area has created very distinctive and spectacular scenic canyons. In addition, the naturalness of many of these canyons contributes to the area's scenic quality. For instance, the maze-like canyon below the arches in Arch Canyon represents a significant natural system. It has never been grazed and harbors sensitive plants. The unusual degree of solitude and naturalness found in this area is a significant factor in why the area is such a high quality habitat for bighorn sheep.

It is unique among the Jarbidge side canyons for its perennial water and cool moist exposures. It is the eastern limit of the Pacific tree frog.

There are two plant species within the ACEC that have been identified as Federal Category II (data does not exist to support listing as either threatened or endangered) or sensitive. These are *Astragalus atratus* var. *inseptus* (Federal Category II) and *Leptotactylon glabrum* (sensitive). Both of these species are located in the river canyon. ACEC designation would give protecting these two species priority over livestock grazing and recreation use, and would require a plan of operations for mining that would provide protection or mitigation of adverse effects on threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species.

In addition to these two species, two uncommon plant species occur in the proposed Bruneau/Jarbidge ACEC. Lady fern (*Athryium felix* - famina (L.) Roth) and Bailey's ivy (*Ivesia baleyii*), although uncommon in the local region, are not rare elsewhere and are not threatened, endangered, or sensitive (Bailey's ivy was on the Idaho list of sensitive species but has now been dropped from the list).

The East Fork of the Jarbidge River is also a unique natural area that is a good example of the transition zone between the Great Basin and Columbia Provinces. Much of the river canyon and upper foothills are in good and excellent ecological condition.

Special Management Requirements

The following special management measures will be undertaken to protect the existing and potential bighorn sheep habitat areas and the scenic and natural values within the area.

1. The management priority for the canyons is for bighorns and other wildlife. Where necessary to prevent livestock access to canyons, livestock management measures (i.e., salting or fencing) will be implemented.

2. Livestock water sources will not be developed within one mile of bighorn sheep habitat unless adverse effects can be mitigated.

3. No conversions from cattle to sheep will be allowed in allotments containing bighorn sheep habitat, unless a satisfactory separation can be maintained by fences or topographic features.

4. Retain public lands within bighorn habitat, unless a proposed exchange would result in the acquisition of higher quality habitat.

5. Maintain the current low level of human disturbance in bighorn habitat by not constructing or upgrading any roads that would lead to or encourage human disturbance in bighorn habitat.

6. No surface occupancy will be allowed for oil and gas and geothermal exploration or development within the habitat area.

7. The area will be recommended for withdrawal from the 1872 mining laws.

8. Activities or developments which would impair the scenic quality of the area would not be allowed. The area will be managed as VRM Class I or II with the canyon system as the Key Observation Point.

9. Motorized vehicle use would be allowed only on designated roads and trails.

10. The protection of threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species will be given priority over livestock and recreation use.

Compatible and Incompatible Uses

Existing primitive recreation uses of the river canyon complex are compatible uses.

ORV use, livestock use, utility corridor use, mineral development, and hydro development are uses that need to be analyzed on a case by case basis to determine compatibility.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The development of this plan and the implementation of the final decisions has been and will be guided by federal and state laws, federal rules and regulations, and cooperative and legal agreements. The following section describes the standard operating procedures, policies, and management guidelines which will be applicable to implementation of the plan.

Public Land Management

The public lands will be planned and managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield as required by FLPMA and other principles as outlined in BLM planning regulations. Any valid use, occupancy, and

development of the public lands, including, but not limited to those requiring rights-of-way, leases, and licenses will be considered, subject to applicable environmental review procedures, unless specifically excluded in the plan. In some areas, however, environmental values, hazards, or manageability considerations may require limitations on either the type or intensity of use, or both. Those limitations are identified in the plan's land use allocations and management objectives for specific areas within the public lands. BLM will include stipulations and special conditions as necessary in leases, licenses, and permits to ensure the protection and preservation of resources.

Lands

General

The public lands will be retained in Federal ownership and managed by BLM according to the principles of multiple use and sustained yield, except those lands specifically identified in the plan or amendment as transfer areas. The USFS/BLM boundary adjustment is a statewide effort coordinated by the two Regional Forest Service Offices and the Idaho State Office-BLM. A statewide amendment will be prepared on this action and incorporated into those plans in effect at the time of the boundary adjustment approval.

Public lands that are to be retained in federal ownership may be considered for Recreation and Public Purposes needs, private exchanges and state exchanges. Such action will follow amendment procedures as outlined in BLM Manual 1617.4.

Withdrawals

It is BLM policy to review all withdrawals on and classifications of public lands by October 20, 1991, and to eliminate all unnecessary withdrawals and classifications. Reviews will be made following the land use planning process and will consider the following:

1. For what purpose were the lands withdrawn?

2. Is that purpose still being served?

3. Are the lands suitable for return to the public domain (e.g., not contaminated or "property" such as buildings)?

After completion of the RMP the Classification and Multiple Use Act Classifications (I-2345 and I-2316) will be removed. Those lands not identified for transfer will be retained and will not be available for application for agricultural development.

The environmental assessment or planning process will be followed to consider alternative methods such as rights-of-way, cooperative agreements for meeting the withdrawal/classification objectives.

Withdrawal/classification modifications and extensions must provide for maximum possible multiple uses, with particular emphasis upon mineral

exploration and development. When withdrawals are revoked, the lands continue to be in a retention category.

New withdrawals proposed will be handled on a case by case basis in accordance with Section 204 of the FLPMA, with full public participation.

Acquisitions

Lands to be acquired through exchange or purchase will be done in the furtherance of one or more of the resource programs including, but not limited to cultural, paleontologic, recreation, wildlife and soils.

Transfers

Transfer areas are those public lands identified through the planning process which are available for transfer from federal ownership. Transfer of public land within a transfer area may be accomplished by any means authorized by law. Specific transfer methods may also be specified. Final transfer from BLM jurisdiction, however, is subject to a decision by the authorized officer, based on detailed analysis and such documentation as prescribed by law or regulation.

Lands that are within the boundary of the Snake River Birds of Prey Area (MUA 5), mineral in character areas, wilderness study areas (WSAs), or designated wilderness areas will not be identified as transfer areas.

Lands may be acquired by BLM as authorized by law, but only within retention areas (multiple use areas). Objectives for acquiring lands in connection with BLM programs are established in the RMP.

BLM will manage transfer areas until transfer of title occurs. Management actions will be taken as necessary to meet resource or user needs. Public investments in transfer areas will be kept to a minimum.

Land disposal actions are, primarily, accomplished under sale, agricultural entry, exchange, and Recreation and Public Purpose (R&PP) land laws. Miscellaneous transfers can also occur through Color of Title actions, airport conveyances, and State in lieu selections.

All disposals of public lands must be consistent with the planning requirements of FLPMA and must also be evaluated through the environmental assessment process as required by NEPA. Public notice will be given on each disposal action and each action may be protested or appealed.

A preliminary consideration in all disposal actions is to provide protection for existing rights, access, and future anticipated needs. This protection is provided for through the issuance of rights-of-way to existing users or reservations to the Federal government in areas of anticipated needs.

General considerations for the major types of disposal actions are discussed below:

Agricultural - Consideration for allowing the use of public lands for agricultural development under the Desert Land and Carey Acts generally fall into four steps. They are:

1. The lands must be identified for disposal through the land use planning process.

2. The lands must be desert in character and physically suited for agricultural development by irrigation.

   The following criteria are used to determine the suitability classification of potential agricultural lands:

   a. If there is 60% or more SCS Class I, II, or III 1/ soils in a 40-acre parcel, the parcel may be classified suitable for agricultural development. If there is more than 40% SCS Class IV or poorer soils in each 40-acre parcel, the entire parcel is unsuitable for classification.

   b. Cropland in Capability Classes II through V (particularly subclass "e") that has an average annual erosion rate of more than three times that at which soil forms (4-5 tons per acre per year on the average for deep soils, lower for shallower soils) will be found unsuitable.

   c. Any public lands containing known archaeological, paleontologic, or historical values determined to be unique or possibly significant would be found unsuitable for disposal pending further analysis.

   d. Any public lands where rare, endangered, threatened, or sensitive species of plants or animals are known to live (or nest) would be found unsuitable for disposal, unless mitigation is possible.

   e. Certain tracts of land identified for community needs such as landfills, gravel pits, sewage plants, schools, etc., would be found unsuitable for disposal for agriculture.

   f. Certain tracts of land identified as valuable for wildlife habitat would be found unsuitable for disposal. The guidelines and analysis contained in the Environmental Statement (Agricultural Development for Southwest Idaho, February, 1980, Appendix 1-1) are used to select the wildlife leave areas.

   g. Public land that does not qualify for agricultural use or disposal under Desert Land Act or Carey Act because of other public purpose will be found unsuitable for disposal under these laws. Those lands that become fragmented as a result of DLE/CA action and not needed for other public purposes may be considered for disposal through sale or exchange.

1/ Agricultural Handbook No. 210.

h. Certain tracts of land identified as having agricultural limitations based on slope and/or flood plain management will be found unsuitable.

3. Post Classification (Allowance or Rejection)

a. An economic analysis must show a high likelihood that the lands can be farmed at a profit over a long term.

b. Applicant must show a legal right to appropriate water including a permit to drill a well if part of the operation. Application that would contribute to the mining of groundwater will not be allowed. The Idaho Supreme Court Decision #13794 regarding use of Snake River water above Swan Falls Dam for agricultural development will be resolved before proceeding with the allowance to enter the land.

4. Compliance

a. The entryman must show compliance with cultivation, fund expenditure, irrigation system development, and publication requirements, and payment of required fees to obtain patent to the land.

Under Carey Act development, the Bureau's primary concerns are retention vs. disposal determination and physical suitability of the land. Application processing and feasibility study evaluations are the responsibility of the State of Idaho.

The BLM will continue to work closely with the Idaho Department of Water Resources under terms of a cooperative agreement to process existing Carey Act and Desert Land Entry applications.

Soil erosion which occurs on public lands as a result of excess irrigation flows from private agricultural lands will be treated as a trespass in order to stop the erosion and to rehabilitate the damage to public land.

Public lands currently under CA/DLE applications that are relinquished will generally revert to a retention category and will not be made available for further application for agricultural purposes. Some relinquished lands may be identified for possible transfer via exchange only.

Exchanges - Before an exchange can be consummated, the BLM must determine that the public interest will be well served by making the exchange as contemplated by Section 206 of FLPMA. Full consideration will be given to improved Federal land management and the needs of State and local publics through an evaluation of the needs for lands for economic development, community expansion, recreation areas or opportunities, food, fiber, minerals, and wildlife. Another consideration is that lands must be equal in value, or, if not equal, a cash payment not exceeding 25 percent of the total value of Federal lands may be made by the appropriate party to equalize the values. Any lands delineated for transfer in the exchange only

category but not needed to consummate the exchange, will be retained in federal ownership (see Appendix C for a more detailed explanation of criteria).

Sales - Sales of public lands can be made upon consideration of the following criteria found in Section 203 of FLPMA:

1. Such parcel, because of its location or other characteristics, is difficult and uneconomic to manage as part of the public lands, and is not suitable for management by another Federal department or agency; or

2. Such parcel was acquired for a specific purpose and is no longer required for that or any other Federal purpose; or

3. Disposal of such parcel will serve important public objectives, including but not limited to, expansion of communities and economic development which cannot be achieved prudently or feasibly on land other than public land and which outweigh other public objectives and values. These include, but are not limited to, wildlife, grazing, recreation, and scenic values which would be served by maintaining such parcel in Federal ownership.

Sales may be made through (1) competitive bidding, (2) modified competitive bidding wherein some individual(s) may be given the opportunity to match the high bid, and (3) direct sale wherein the tract is sold at fair market value to a predetermined buyer. All sales must be made at no less than fair market value as determined by the approved procedure, generally an official appraisal.

Land Use Authorizations

Land use permits under Section 302 of FLPMA should be used as an interim management measure for resolving unauthorized use problems prior to a final land use/status determination, and for one time uses of short duration. Leases may be used as a longer term (5 to 10 years) interim management tool, particularly where future disposal or dedication to another particular land use is contemplated. The latter may allow for agricultural use on a site that may be needed in the future for communication purposes, materials source, or community expansion needs.

Land use permits (LUPs) for irrigated agricultural use of public land will be used sparingly and be restricted to resolve situations where other alternatives prove to be impractical, such as: 1) small areas of public land isolated between a farmed field and a canal, ditch, or road; and 2) renewal for an existing circular pivot already authorized by a LUP until the land is removed from agricultural production and rehabilitated or until the land is transferred from public ownership. In cases where a pivot must cross public land, the lands are to remain unfarmed and a LUP will be issued only for the crossing pivot.

Rights-of-way, under Title V of FLPMA, will be considered in the Jarbidge Resource Area except where specifically identified in the RMP for

avoidance. Future communication site needs will be restricted to existing sites as much as possible. New sites will be considered if there is a demonstrated need and the resource conflicts are low or can be mitigated.

Cooperative agreements are to be used with other Federal entities for uses which are not appropriately covered by a right-of-way or a withdrawal. Flood control and aquifer recharge areas may be most appropriately covered by cooperative agreements.

Airport leases are considered only when a definite need has been shown, supported by a specific development and management plan, and a showing of financial capability to carry out the project.

Each action would require a site-specific examination. An environmental assessment would be prepared on the proposal with special emphasis placed upon identification and mitigation of adverse effects upon resource values such as rare, endangered, threatened, or sensitive species, cultural or paleontologic resources, wetland/riparian zones, and flood plains.

Access

The Boise District will continue its ongoing program of identifying and obtaining BLM access across non-bureau lands where needed to accomplish bureau objectives.

Unauthorized Use

It is BLM policy to identify, abate, and prevent unauthorized use of public lands. Trespass settlement is geared to recover at least fair market value for the unauthorized use and to require rehabilitation of the land and resource damaged by the unauthorized action. Settlements may be made through administrative action or through civil or criminal court proceedings.

Soil, Water, and Air

Soils

Soils will be managed to maintain productivity and to minimize erosion.

Project level planning will consider the sensitivity of soil, water, and air resources in the affected area on a site specific basis. Stipulations will ensure project compatibility with soil, water, and air resource management. All construction of management facilities and land treatments will be designed to minimize adverse impacts to the soil, water, and air resources. All areas disturbed during project construction will be reseeded with a mixture of grasses, forbs, and shrubs.

In agricultural development areas, maintain control of all lands necessary to prevent erosion resulting from irrigation and farming practices. These might include, but will not be limited to vegetation strips, slopes, drainage ways, flood plains, etc.

Minimize soil erosion by maintaining good, perennial vegetation cover on all sites. Manage native perennial range to attain good ecological condition. Rehabilitated or manipulated sites are considered to be in good condition from a watershed standpoint when at least 75% (by weight) of the sites potential for production is composed of perennial vegetation.

Air

Under the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977), BLM-administered lands were given Class II air quality classification, which allows moderate deterioration associated with moderate, well-controlled industrial and population growth. BLM will manage all public lands as Class II unless they are reclassified by the State as a result of the procedures prescribed in the Clean Air Act (as amended, 1977). Administrative actions on the public lands will comply with the air quality classifications for that specific area.

Water

A variety of methods may be employed to maintain, improve, protect, and restore watershed conditions. Priority will be given to meeting emergency watershed needs due to flooding, severe drought, or fire.

Water quality will be maintained or improved in accordance with State and Federal standards. State agencies will be consulted on proposed projects that may significantly affect water quality.

Facilities and structures designed to maintain or improve existing water sources, provide new water sources, control water level or flow characteristics, or maintain or improve water quality may be developed. BLM will work closely with the Idaho Department of Water Resources, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other local, state, and federal agencies to determine appropriate location and designs for such projects.

Management activities in riparian zones will be designed to maintain or improve riparian habitat condition.

Roads and utility corridors will avoid riparian zones to the extent practicable.

Water rights are administered by the Idaho Department of Water Resources. The Bureau complies with all State of Idaho water laws.

Mitigation measures implemented because of resource management guidelines or site specific analysis will be monitored for their effectiveness.

Range Resources

Allotment Categorization

All grazing allotments in the resource area have been assigned to one of three management categories based on present resource conditions and the

potential for improvement (Appendix Table D-2). The "M" allotments generally will be managed to maintain current satisfactory resource conditions; "I" allotments generally will be managed to improve resource conditions; and "C" allotments will receive custodial management to prevent resource deterioration.

Rangeland Management

Grazing Preference - Within each grazing allotment or group of allotments, a grazing preference is established at a level that will ensure that adequate forage is also available for wildlife and where present, wild horses. Sufficient vegetation is reserved for purposes of maintaining plant vigor, stabilizing soil, providing cover for wildlife, and other nonconsumptive uses.

Grazing decisions or agreements may be made for those allotments where adequate information exists. In the other allotments where there is inadequate information, additional data will be collected for up to five years to provide an adequate basis to begin implementation of any additional decisions needed. An initial stocking rate will also be established, which may be adjusted upwards or downwards in the final decision as a result of monitoring. All grazing decisions will be issued in accordance with applicable BLM regulations.

Implementing Changes in Allotment Management

Activity plans (AMPs or CRMPs) are commonly used to present, in detail, the types of changes required in an allotment, and to establish a schedule for implementation. Actions set for under the plan that affect the environment will be analyzed and compared to alternative actions. During the analysis, the proposal may be altered to mitigate adverse impacts. The following sections contain discussions of the types of changes likely to be recommended in an activity plan and the guidance that applies to these administrative actions.

Existing AMPs will be reviewed by January 1988 to determine if they need updating or revision. Those AMPs determined to be satisfactory as written will continue to be implemented and managed as written and reviewed again in 1993. Those AMPs needing updating (minor changes) will be updated by January 1989. Those AMPs requiring revision will have new AMPs prepared by January 1990.

Livestock Use Adjustments

Livestock use adjustments are most often made by changing one or more of the following: the kind or class of livestock grazing an allotment, the season of use, the stocking rate or the pattern of grazing.

It is Bureau policy that decisions adjusting allowable levels of livestock grazing not be based solely on a one-point-in-time inventory. Monitoring data must show that adjustments are necessary and justified. This includes both permanent increases or decreases in grazing use. It is also Bureau policy that decisions be issued or agreements entered into within 5 years of the publication of the Range Program Summary (Appendix D).