

# RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY for the LEMHI RESOURCE AREA

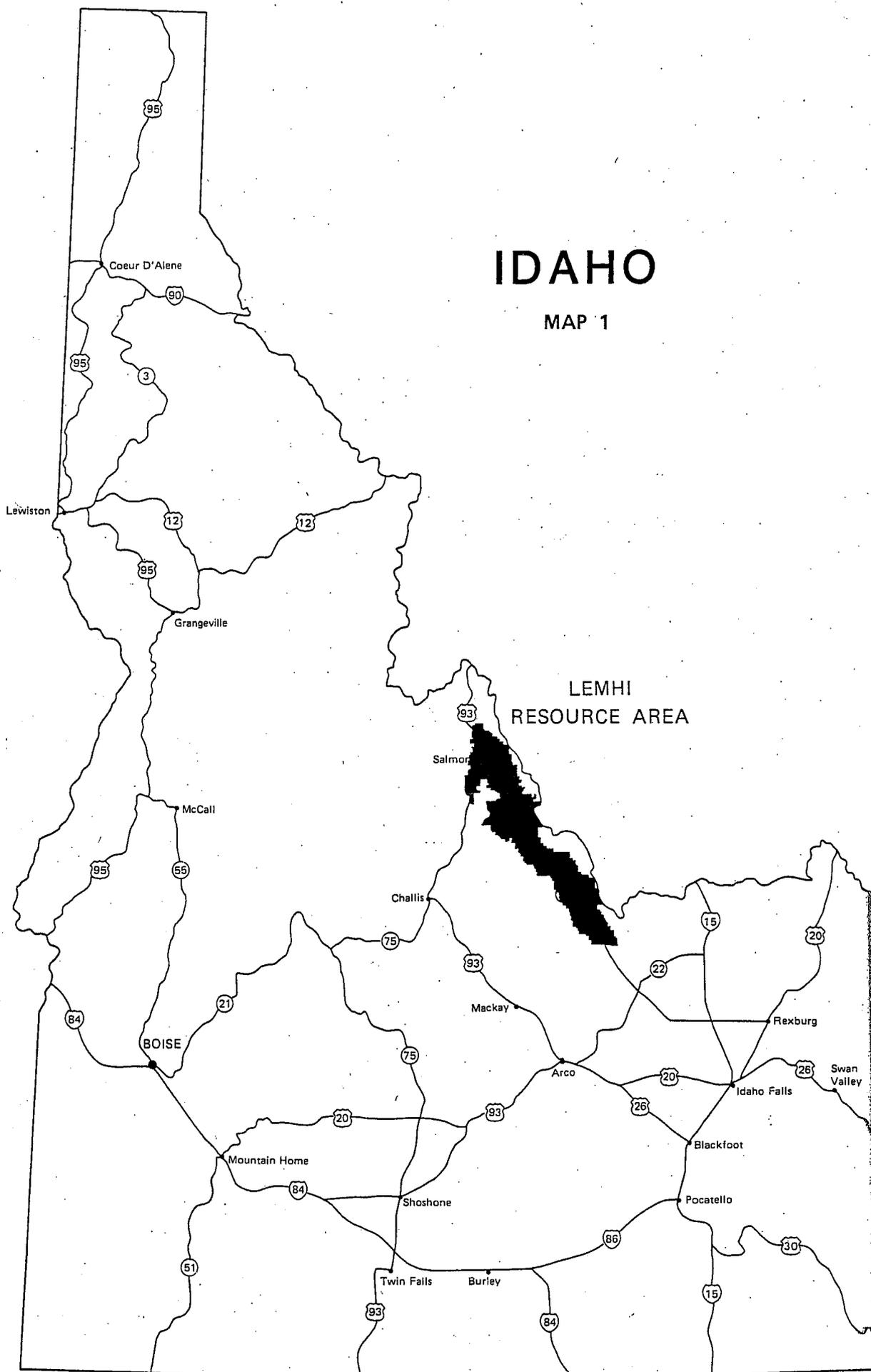


U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
SALMON DISTRICT, IDAHO  
June 1987



# IDAHO

MAP 1



GENERAL LOCATION MAP

RANGELAND PROGRAM SUMMARY  
FOR  
THE LEMHI RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

This Rangeland Program Summary (RPS) summarizes the grazing decisions reached as a result of the Lemhi Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) and for the 8 grazing allotments from the Ellis-Pahsimeroi EIS area which are now part of the Lemhi Resource Area. These decisions, based on the information provided from our planning and consultation process, will give direction for range management, in the Lemhi Resource Area, towards the improvements and maintenance of the range resource according to a multiple-use and sustained yield concept. The decisions include: 1) the kind of livestock; 2) the period of grazing use; 3) the level of grazing use; and 4) the allotments within which grazing use will occur. This RPS also summarizes the rangeland monitoring and evaluation efforts to be made.

BACKGROUND

An ecological site inventory was conducted during 1981, 1982, and 1983 to determine the ecological condition of the public range lands. This inventory revealed that 2,324 acres of excellent, 267,207 acres of good, 136,914 acres of fair and 1,064 acres of poor ecological condition range currently exist. Also, 47,198 acres were not classified because they consisted of talus slopes or rock outcrops with slopes in excess of 50 percent or dense timber stands that provide little forage for livestock.

An apparent trend inventory was conducted in conjunction with the ecological site inventory. Trend may be explained as the direction a plant community is heading compared to where it is now. For this inventory if the plant community succession is towards the potential plant community or towards management objectives then the trend is upward. Conversely if the plant community succession is away from the potential plant community or management objectives, then the trend is downward. The results of the apparent trend inventory are: 27 percent upward; 59 percent static; and 13 percent downward.

These inventories, along with consultation with range users, concerned agencies and other existing data, enabled the BLM to sort grazing allotments into three categories which help focus attention on areas of highest concern. All grazing allotments were assigned one of three management categories, I (improve), M (maintain), and C (custodial). Allotments in unsatisfactory condition or with significant resource conflicts but good potential for improvement are classified as "I". Allotments in satisfactory condition are classified as "M". Allotments that have low potential, or consist of small isolated tracts, are classified as "C". The category for each allotment is shown in Table 1. Of the 89 allotments, 55 are in category "I", 16 are in category "M" and 17 are in category "C". Also of the 8 Ellis-Pahsimeroi allotments, 4 are in category "I", 1 is in category "M", and 3 are in category "C". This gives a total breakdown of 59 "I", 17 "M", and 20 "C" category allotments.

Most range problems in the Lemhi area can be attributed to four major factors: repetitive early grazing of spring range; overutilization of riparian zones and meadows, both wet and dry; the spread of noxious plants; and the division of old grazing units into small grazing allotments.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the rangeland management program for the Lemhi RMP are:

1. Manage 459,481 acres for grazing.
2. Improve 595 acres of poor condition range to good and 21,876 acres of fair condition range to good.
3. Provide 52,632 animal unit months (AUMs) of livestock forage in 20 years.

### Required Management Actions

In the long-term, reductions would be made on 46 allotments, increases would occur on 6, and 36 would remain unchanged. Grazing adjustments would be made over the 20-year life of the RMP and would occur only after conducting monitoring studies and coordinating with affected users. The initial stocking level of 43,602 AUMs would be below the active preference and the five-year average use. The long-term stocking level of 52,632 AUMs would be 18 percent below the active preference but only 2 percent below the five-year average use. Proposed improvements would include 22,700 acres of brush control, 4,400 acres of seedings, 32 springs, 50 miles of pipelines, 4 reservoirs, and 63 miles of fences. Selected allotment management plans (AMPs) would be designed to maintain or enhance forage for wintering elk herds (8,800 acres).

The long-term active preference of 52,632 AUMs is expected to be achieved within the 20 year life of the RMP. The current and proposed active preference and percent of adjustment are shown by allotment in Table 3.

Individual allotment objectives and associated management actions are shown in Table 2. Table 2 is a refinement of Table B-4 from the Draft Lemhi RMP and EIS, page B-27. It portrays the management actions required to meet multiple use objectives and solve problems and conflicts addressed in the RMP. This table covers only the "I" category allotments. It does not contain the "M" or "C" category allotments because they will be managed to maintain the status quo in regards to range management.

All the allotments are listed in priority order for monitoring and management action on Table 4. This priority ranking will also help guide the budgeting process for range improvement expenditures.

The current active preference of 63,898 AUMs is the starting point from which adjustments either upward or downward will be made. The proposed initial active preference of 43,602 AUMs is the short-term stocking level that will be reached over a period of 4 to 5 years.

## RANGELAND MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The current active preference of 63,898 AUMs is the starting point from which adjustments either upward or downward will be made. The proposed preference of 52,632 AUMs is a target level that will be reached over a period of several years. Land tenure adjustments (changes in land ownership) must have occurred or public land must have been allocated to another public purpose and monitoring studies must have borne out the need for adjustments in grazing preference. The current and proposed preference and the percent of adjustment are shown by allotment in Table 3.

Adjustments will be implemented through coordination and consultation with the permittees involved. Data from actual grazing use studies, forage level utilization studies, and long-term range trend studies (when available) will be used to arrive at adjusted stocking levels. This will be an on-going process rather than a one-time adjustment. It is Bureau policy that decisions adjusting grazing preference will not be solely based on a one-point-in-time inventory.

If agreement cannot be reached with individual permittees on the amount of grazing adjustment needed to balance active preference with forage productivity, needed adjustments will be implemented by formal decision under Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations. When livestock use adjustments are implemented by decision, the decision will be based upon operator consultation and monitoring of resource conditions. All adjustments will be made in the manner specified in current regulations. Most adjustments by decision, either upward or downward, will be scheduled in stages, unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise. This will allow monitoring of allotment conditions after an initial adjustment and again after a secondary adjustment. If needed, a third adjustment will be given.

When grazing preference changes are made because of land tenure adjustments, the affected permittees will be given written notice two years before the preference is adjusted. The two-year notification may be waived by the affected party. Grazing adjustments resulting from public land sales, land exchanges, desert land entries, etc. will not be staged over a period of time. They will be one-time adjustments when the public land goes out of public ownership or is devoted to a public purpose which does not include livestock grazing. The lands in the transfer categories are shown on Map 3 of the Lemhi RMP/EIS. It is important to remember that lands so identified may not necessarily pass out of federal ownership or be devoted to another public purpose immediately. Those lands will be managed for multiple use, which includes livestock grazing, until such time as action is taken on specific parcels.

The results of implementing the selected RMP will be examined periodically to inform the BLM resource managers and the public of the progress of the plan. The results being achieved under the plan will be compared with the plan objectives. The methods used to evaluate this progress is outlined in the following Lemhi Resource Area Range Monitoring Plan.

## LEMHI RESOURCE AREA RANGE MONITORING PLAN

The Lemhi Range Monitoring Program will focus primarily on utilization, actual use, and trend, correlated with weather as the principal source of data for evaluation purposes. Vegetative production, ecological condition, phenology, prescribed fire data, photo record and livestock counts along with watershed data may also be collected to complement utilization, actual use, and trend data on allotments with known resource use conflicts or other controversy. Key riparian areas may also require intensive monitoring.

### Monitoring Priorities

Our monitoring program is, and will be, limited by the availability of personnel and funds. The following priorities will be used to determine the order and intensity allotments will be monitored.

- Priority 1. All "I" category allotments with highest priority due to apparent problems and conflicts.
- Priority 2. All "I" category allotments with moderate priority due to apparent problems and conflicts.
- Priority 3. All remaining "I" category allotments with lower priority.
- Priority 4. "M" category allotments with allotment management plans.
- Priority 5. "M" category allotments without allotment management plans.
- Priority 6. All "C" category allotments.

Table 4 shows allotment monitoring by priority.

### Monitoring Intensity

The intensity of sampling and selection of monitoring procedures will be determined by the management objectives for each allotment. These objectives take into account such factors as: 1) resource conflicts, 2) intensity of planned management program, 3) diversity of vegetation types, and 4) personnel and funding capabilities.

Intensity of monitoring will correspond largely with the priorities identified in Table 4.

## Methods

There are various methods available for collecting monitoring data. The methods that will be considered are outlined in detail in the Bureau's Technical Reference series - TR-4400-1 Planning for Monitoring, TR-4400-2 Actual Use Studies, TR 4400-3 Utilization Studies, TR 4400-4 Trend Studies, and TR 4400-7 Analysis Interpretation and Evaluation. Also, Technical References TR 4400-5 Supplementary Studies, TR 4400-6 Climate/Weather, and TR 4400-8 Statistical Analysis will be used when they become available in 1987. The details of methods to be used will be available at the Salmon District Office.

## User Participation

Permittees will be notified in advance and will be invited to participate in all phases of the monitoring. Actual use record keeping will be their responsibility. They will be important in identifying key areas. There is always the opportunity for them to collect additional weather data. The permittee will also be needed to identify unusual problems that occur within their allotment.

## MULTIPLE-USE RESOURCE MONITORING

Many of the other resource values found on the public lands are affected by the range program. In order to evaluate these effects other resources will be monitored. This monitoring effort is portrayed in the Resource Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (Table 5).

