APPENDIX C

SOILS

SOILS ASSOCIATIONS

Soil
Association

1. Steep limestone and soft sedimentary soils on mountain uplands. This unit makes up 6 percent of the area. Soil management problems are severe in this association due to steep slopes and a large variety of soils subject to water erosion and some slumping. Soils with particular management problems are the Argora and Hagenbarth series with water erosion problems, and the Knep series associated with land movement and slumping. This association is found in management areas 1 and 4.

2. Gentle sloping silty soils on dry basalt plains. This unit makes up 8 percent of the area. These soils are associated with moderate wind and water erosion problems. They tend to be dusty and rock outcrop is commonly a problem. This association is found in management areas 2 and 4.

3. Gentle sloping loamy soils on dry basalt plains. This unit makes up 6 percent of the area. These soils are associated with moderate wind and water erosion problems. They tend to be dusty and rock outcrop is a common problem. This association is found in management areas 2, 3, 4, and 7.

4. Gently sloping gravelly dry alliuval fan soils. This unit makes up 3 percent of the area. Generally, these soils are gravelly and droughty. The Medicine and Sparmo soils series are subject to moderate wind and water erosion. This association is found in management areas 1, 4 and 7.

5. Gently sloping sandy loam soils on dry basalt plains. This unit makes up 5 percent of the area. These soils are droughty and subject to severe wind erosion. Stoniness and rock outcrop are a common problem. This association is found in management areas 2, 3, 4, and 7. Most areas are free of natural bluebunch wheatgrass.

6. Aspen and ountain clayey soils. This unit makes up 5 percent of the area. These soils are subject to moderate water erosion. The Paulson series has potential for yielding fine suspended sediments harmful to water quality. Rock outcrop is commonly a problem. This association is found in management areas 4 and 8.

7. Gently sloping sandy loam soils on moist basalt plains. This unit makes up 3 percent of the area. These soils are subject to severe wind erosion, but are not as droughty as association 5. Stoniness and rock outcrop are commonly a problem. This association is found in management areas 5, 6 and 4.

8. Sandy soils on basalt plains. This unit makes up 2 percent of the area. These soils are subject to very severe wind erosion. They are droughty and are generally stabilized by existing plant communities. This association is found in management areas 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10.

9. Shifting sand dunes. This unit makes up less than 1 percent of the area. These moving sand dunes and hills are virtually free of ground vegetation. They continue to move northeasterly a little each year by blowing winds. These sand dunes are covering scattered land ownership tracts as they continue to move. This association is found in management areas 5 and 6.

10. Gently sloping loamy soils on moist basalt plains. This unit makes up 12 percent of the area. These soils vary in depths to bedrock. Stoniness and rock outcrop are a common problem. Wind and water erosion are slight to moderate. This association is found in management areas 3, 4 and 5.

11. Rhyolite soils on mountain and gentle sloping toe slopes. This unit makes up 6 percent of the area. The soils are very shallow to deep soils over stony and rock outcrops of rhyolite. These soils are stable soils except for small inclusions of Araveton and Decross soils that are subject to water erosion. The Patelzick and Mogg soils have very low production potential. This association is found in management areas 1, 3, 4, and 5.

12. Moderately steep silty moist soils on a upland foothills. This unit makes up 14 percent of the area. These soils are generally associated with upland dryland farming. They are extremely subject to water erosion. A special 208 water erosion program has been established for the Willow Creek drainage areaq in management area 8. However, the whole association has the same potential for this 208 problem and should be dealt with accordingly. The area also has moderate wind erosion potential. This association is found in management areas 4, 8, and 10.

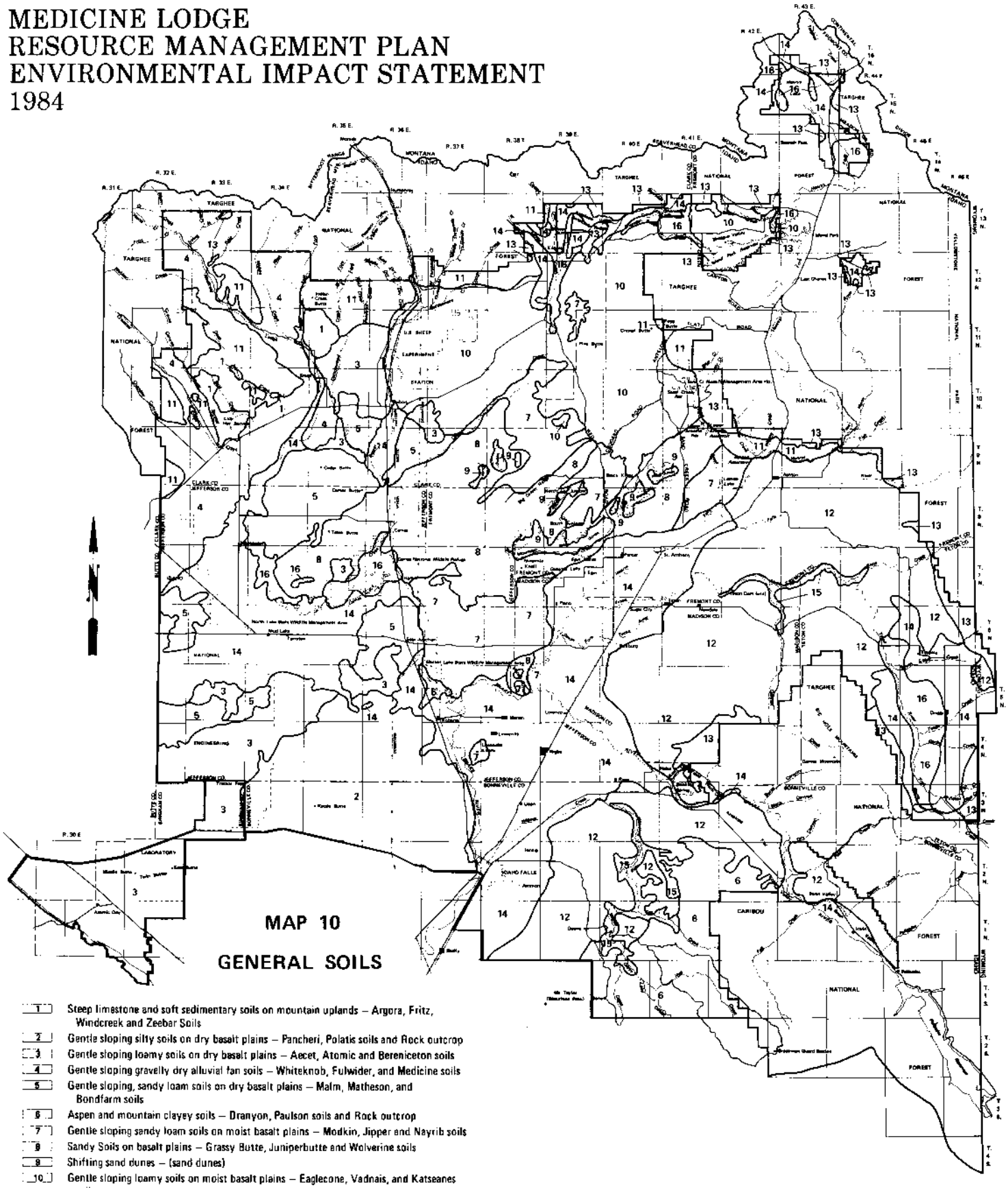
13. Forested soils on uplands and mountains. This unit makes up 3 percent of the area. Greys, Greybo and Turnville soils are subject to heavy water erosion. Mikesell soils have heavy clay that could affect water quality. Dranyon, Ezbin, Raynoldson, and Stringer soils are subject to moderate water erosion. Judkins, Targhee and Ketchum soils are fairly stable. This association is found in management areas 1, 3, 4 (near Victor), and 5.

14. Stream terraces and dry lakebed soils. This unit makes up 23 percent of the area. There are a great many soils series in this unit. Erosion is generally minor except for some stream bank erosion. Some soils occasionally have water table problems. This association is found in all management areas except 6, 8, and 4 near Victor.

15. Willow Creek drainage soils. This unit makes up 23 percent of the area. These soils are not very well identified. They are generally on steep canyon walls with rock outcrop. Silty and loamy soils are subject to water erosion and damage from ORV use. This association is found in management areas 4 and 8.

16. Wet flood plain soils. The Bootjack, Foxcreek, Furniss, Fury, Levelton, Sawtell Peak, Tepete, Tonks, Zohner, and Zufelt soil series have been classified as wetland habitat of the U.S. This unit makes up 3 percent of the area. These poorly drained wet land soils are soil of national wet land importance. They should be preserved as marsh and wetlands. They occur in management areas 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9.

MEDICINE LODGE
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
1984



1 Steep limestone and soft sedimentary soils on mountain uplands – Argora, Fritz, Windcreek and Zeebar Soils
2 Gentle sloping silty soils on dry basalt plains – Pancheri, Polatis soils and Rock outcrop
3 Gentle sloping loamy soils on dry basalt plains – Aecet, Atomic and Bereniceton soils
4 Gentle sloping gravelly dry alluvial fan soils – Whiteknob, Fulwider, and Medicine soils
5 Gentle sloping, sandy loam soils on dry basalt plains – Malm, Matheson, and Bondfarm soils
6 Aspen and mountain clayey soils – Dranyon, Paulson soils and Rock outcrop
7 Gentle sloping sandy loam soils on moist basalt plains – Modkin, Jipper and Nayrib soils
8 Sandy Soils on basalt plains – Grassy Butte, Juniperbutte and Wolverine soils
9 Shifting sand dunes – (sand dunes)
10 Gentle sloping loamy soils on moist basalt plains – Eaglecone, Vadnais, and Katseanes soils
11 Rhyolite soils on mountains and gentle sloping toe slopes – Latigo, Parkay, Patelzick and Mogg soils
12 Moderately steep silty moist soils on uplant foothills – Rexburg, Ririe and Rin soils
13 Forested soils on uplands and mountains – Turnville, Judkins, Targhee and Ezbin soils
14 Stream terrace and dry lake bed soils – Bannock, Driggs, Terreton and St. Anthony soils
15 Willow Creek drainage soils – Torriorthents, Cryoborolls and Rock outcrop
16 Wet floodplain soils – Aquolls, Aquents, Aquepts and Tepete soils

APPENDIX D

RECREATION

AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

An Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is an area within the public lands where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. ACEC management objectives are formulated to protect an area's important resources and values without unnecessarily or unreasonably restricting uses that are compatible with that protection. All designated ACECs receive first priority for planning and management over other areas in the Resource Area.

Three sites in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area have been identified and nominated for ACEC designation. They include the 1,120 acre North Menan Butte, 10,000 acres within the Snake River system and 25,000 acres surrounding the western portion of the St. Anthony Sand Dunes.

North Menan Butte ACEC

North Menan Butte is one of five volcanic cones that erupted along a north-south trending fissure zone near the confluence of the Henry's Fork and South Fork of the Snake River. The cones were formmed when magma (molten rock) was suddenly chilled as it came in contact with the water-saturated plain. Volcanic tuff (compacted volcanic ash) cones such as these are very rare and found only in a few parts of the world.

The butte was designated a National Natural Landmark because of its unique geologic value. It is closed to domestic livestock grazing and off-road-vehicle use, except for oversnow vehicles. It is an important site for geologic research and frequently used as an outdoor classroom by local school groups.

Although closed to ORV use, vehicle operators ignore the restrictions and continue to damage the natural values on the butte. Special management is needed to protect the fragile geologic and vegetative resources.

ACEC management objectives to protect the butte's integrity and resource values are as follows.

- Prevent resource damage resulting from unauthorized ORV use through increased enforcement and public information.

- Ensure that the integrity of the butte is maintained to complement the National Natural Landmark designation.

- Provide information and interpretation services and facilities on the butte to encourage non-motorized recreation activities and nature study.

Snake River ACEC

The Snake River ACEC includes parts of the Henry's Fork, South Fork and main stem of the Snake River and contains about 10,000 acres of public land. The river flows through some of the most valuable terrestrial and aquatic wildlife

habitat in Idaho. Like many other high quality river systems there is a significant amount of recreation use. This use has been increasing each year and is expected to continue the present trend throughout the future. The varied resource values of this river system provide a high quality yet fragile ecosystem that is attractive to recreationists. Proper management is needed to prevent long-term damage or degredation of the river's important value to the people from coast-to-coast and other countries.

Wildlife that occupy the lands along the Snake River are a major concern, particularly the bald eagles. Eagles are an endangered species under the 1973 Endangered Species Act, which requires careful analysis of all activities that may affect their survival. The extensive riparian bank lands and islands provide wintering habitat for elk, moose and mule and whitetail deer. Much of the deer population remains year round. The Snake River, particularly the South Fork, is a high quality cutthroat trout fishery. Brown, lake and rainbow trout are also present. This fishery supports over 88,830 angling hours annually (Moore 1980).

Major recreation uses of the river corridor include power and float boating, fishing, camping, sightseeing, picnicking, off-road-vehicle riding, and hiking. Commercial outfitters and guides provide fishing and scenic boat trips. Increases in recreation use have the potential to degrade important resource values and even change recreation opportunities.

The National Rivers Inventory List (1980) includes 61 miles of the Snake River from Palisades Dam to the confluence with the Henry's Fork. The end result could be a designation by the U.S. Congress as a scenic and/or recreational river. Designation would protect and preserve the free flowing nature of the river and the scenic, wildlife and recreational values through specific legislation.

ACEC management objectives to protect the important wildlife, scenic and recreation values of the river are as follows.

-Maintain and perpetuate the cottonwood-riparian ecosystem.

-Initiate a lands program to block up public land ownership and identify boundaries.

-Monitor use to determine trends and effects on resource values.

-Maintain recreation opportunities and uses at a level that is compatible with preserving other resource values.

-Maintain the river's scenic values, particularly in the South Fork Canyon from Conant Valley to Heise.

-Develop specific activity plans for managing the recreation, wildlife and scenic values along the river system. Coordinate all plans with other land and resource managing agencies and private land owners.

Sand Dunes ACEC

The Sand Dunes ACEC is located ten miles west of St. Anthony, Idaho. Concerns about the future condition of the soil, wildlife and recreation values in the area call for special management.

Soils in the area vary from a loamy sand to active sand dunes. The loamy sands are presently stabilized by a sagebrush-bitterbrush-perennial grass plant community. Wind erosion presently moves between 5 to 40 tons of soil per acre and with the removal of the vegetation on the stabilized soils this erosion rate could be expected to increase significantly. Any activities (e.g., overgrazing, ORV use, road construction, mineral exploration, etc.) that would have the potential to remove the vegetation in this area would need to be evaluated and monitored closely.

Wildlife is a major management concern in this area. Over 32 mammalian species, 94 avian species and 11 species of amphibians/reptiles reside in the area. Elk, deer, moose and sage grouse are the major game species that use this area. They are dependent on this area mainly for winter range and as a migration corridor into this crucial area. Some of the big game species migrate into this wintering area from as far away as Yellowstone National Park and Montana. The very existence of the elk herd as it is known today is dependent on this key area. Development in this area such as roads, agricultural entry, residential development, overgrazing, ORV use, and removal of the high quality forage would also be detrimental to the elk herd as well as the moose and deer that winter in the area.

Recreational opportunities are high within this area as well as the surrounding area. One of the major uses consists of ORV use on the active sand dunes. Local clubs are the primary users at this time, but there is an expected increase in use as the area gains notoriety. With seasonal and area restrictions this use is compatible with most of the major concerns in the area.

Much of the area has been nominated for designation as a National Natural Landmark. The geologic significance of a large inland sand dune, the vegetative importance and crucial wildlife habitat were the primary reasons for the nomination.

ACEC management objectives to protect the area's integrity and important resource values are as follows.

-Maintain the area's vegetative community in a good condition for wildlife habitat needs.

-Develop a recreation area management plan to maintain motorized recreation opportunities and provide for non-motorized activities where appropriate and to accomodate recreation use increases.

-Provide for vehicle access to the open sands while restricting use in vegetated areas to protect important soil resources and wildlife habitat.

CLASSIFICATION CRITERIA FOR WILD, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVER AREAS *

ATTRIBUTE	WILD	SCENIC	RECREATIONAL
Water Resources Development	Free of impoundment.	Free of impoundment.	Some existing impoundment or diversion. The existence of low dams, diversions or other modifications of the waterway is acceptable, provided the waterway remains generally natural and riverine in appearance.
Shoreline Development	Essentially primitive. Little or no evidence of human activity. The presence of a few inconspicuous structures, particularly those of historic or cultural value, is acceptable. A limited amount of domestic livestock grazing or hay production is acceptable. Little or no evidence of past timber harvest. No ongoing timber harvest.	Largely primitive and undeveloped. No substantial evidence of human activity. The presence of small communities or dispersed dwellings or farm structures is acceptable. The presence of grazing, hay production or row crops is acceptable. Evidence of past or ongoing timber harvest is acceptable, provided the forest appears natural from the riverbank.	Some development. Substantial evidence of human activity. The presence of extensive residential development and a few commercial structures is acceptable. Lands may have been developed for the full range of agricultural and forestry uses. May show evidence of past and ongoing timber harvest.
Accessibility	Generally inaccessible except by trail. No roads, railroads or other provision for vehicular travel within the river area. A few existing roads leading to the boundary of the river area is acceptable.	Accessible in places by road. Roads may occasionally reach or bridge the river. The existence of short stretches of conspicuous or longer stretches of inconspicuous roads or railroads is acceptable.	Readily accessible by road or railroad. The existence of parallel roads or railroads on one or both banks as well as bridge crossings and other river access points is acceptable.
Water Quality	Meets or exceeds Federal criteria or federally approved State standards for aesthetics, for propagation of fish and wildlife normally adapted to the habitat of the river, and for primary contact recreation (swimming) except where exceeded by natural conditions.	No criteria prescribed by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 have made it a national goal that all waters of the United States be made fishable and swimmable. Therefore, rivers will not be precluded from scenic or recreational classification because of poor water quality at the time of their study, provided a water quality improvement plan exists or is being developed in compliance with applicable Federal and State laws.	

* Table to be used only in conjunction with text.

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APPENDIX E

WILDERNESS

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of the preferred alternative (proposed action) is to recommend both the Sand Mountain and Snake River Islands Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) as nonsuitable for designation as wilderness. This action is needed to specify that the two WSAs, totaling 21,870 acres of public land, would be managed under the Medicine Lodge Resource Management Plan. The plan calls for managing the WSAs for multiple uses other than wilderness while protecting the important resource values and uses they offer. In addition, this analysis of the proposed action and alternatives serves the purpose of documenting the evaluation of the two WSAs as either suitable or nonsuitable for designation as wilderness as required in Section 603 of the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

The need for this study and environmental impact statement (EIS) analysis results from Section 603 of FLPMA. It directs the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to review all public land roadless areas of 5000 acres or more and roadless islands for their wilderness potential. The review process developed by the BLM has three parts. They are called the inventory, study and reporting phases.

The inventory phase identified areas that possess wilderness characteristics, as defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act, and identified them as WSAs. Guidelines for conducting the inventory were given in the BLM's 1978 Wilderness Inventory Handbook and through other directives. Four WSAs in the Medicine Lodge Resource Area were identified through the inventory (See Table 1).

TABLE 1
WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS IN THE MEDICINE LODGE RESOURCE AREA

NAME	NUMBER	ACREAGE	COUNTY
Sand Mountain	35-3	21,100	Fremont, Jefferson
Table Rock Islands*	34-2	380	Bonneville
Pine Creek Islands*	34-3	155	Bonneville
Conant Valley Islands*	34-4	235	Bonneville
TOTAL		21,870	

*Because of the many similarities between the three island WSAs, they have been combined and are referred to as the Snake River Islands WSA (34-2,3, & 4).

The purpose of the study phase is to determine which WSAs will be recommended as suitable for wilderness designation and which will not. Recommendations for the Snake River Islands and the Sand Mountain WSAs are made through the BLM's multiple resource planning process using the wilderness study policy criteria and quality standards listed later in this chapter. The BLM's planning regulations and final wilderness study policy were used to guide the study.

The reporting phase begins after the completion of the draft Resource Management Plan/EIS. A wilderness study report will be prepared that addresses the results of the study and contains the preliminary wilderness

recommendations. The report will summarize the planning documents, EIS and the results of public participation. All recommendations on suitability for the WSAs (areas that were studied under Section 603 of FLPMA) will be reported through the Director of the BLM, the Secretary of the Interior and the President to Congress. Congress will make the final decision on whether the WSAs will be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The BLM's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Land Under Wilderness Review (IMP) currently serves as the principal document for managing the WSAs until Congress acts. The goal of the IMP is to ensure that the wilderness qualities inherent to each WSA are unchanged at the time Congress makes the final decision.

Location

The WSAs are located in southeastern Idaho in Bonneville, Fremont and Jefferson counties. The Sand Mountain WSA is situated about 10 miles west of the city of St. Anthony. The Snake River Islands are within a 25-mile segment of the South Fork, between Swan Valley and Heise.

Wilderness Study Policy and Quality Standards

Criterion No. 1: Evaluation of Wilderness Values

Consider the extent to which each of the following components contribute to the overall value of an area as wilderness:

1. Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics: The quality of an area's size, naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

2. Special Features: The presence or absence and quality of the optional wilderness characteristics such as ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

3. Multiple Resource Benefits: The benefits to other multiple resource values and uses which only wilderness designation of the area can ensure.

4. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System: Consider the extent to which wilderness designation of the area under study would contribute to expanding the diversity of National Wilderness Preservation System from the standpoint of each of the factors listed below.

    a. Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features as represented by ecosystems and landforms.

    b. Assessing the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within a day's driving time (5 hours) of major population centers.

    c. Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness areas. The analysis considers federal and state lands designated as wilderness, areas officially recommended for wilderness and other federal and state lands under wilderness study.

Criterion No. 2: Manageability

The area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character.

Quality Standards for Analysis and Documentation

The following are the six quality standards for analysis and documentation that must be addressed in all wilderness EISs and wilderness study reports.

Standard 1. Energy and Mineral Resource Values. Recommendations as to an area's suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness designation will reflect a thorough consideration of any identified or potential energy and mineral resource values.

Standard 2. Impacts on Other Resources. Consider the extent to which other resource values or uses of the area would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

Standard 3. Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values. Consider the alternative use of land under study if the area is not designated as wilderness, and the extent to which the wilderness values of the area would be foregone or adversely affected as a result of this use.

Standard 4. Public Comment. The BLM's wilderness study process will consider comments received from all levels of interested and affected public sectors -- local, state, regional, and national. Wilderness recommendations will not be based on a vote-counting, majority rule system. The BLM will develop its recommendations by considering public comment in conjunction with a full analysis of the WSA's multiple resource and social-economic values and uses.

Standard 5. Local and Regional Social and Economic Effects. The BLM will give special attention to any significant social-economic effects, as identified through the wilderness study process, which wilderness designation of the area would have on local areas.

Standard 6. Consistency with Other Plans. The BLM will fully consider and document the extent to which the recommendation is consistent with officially approved and adopted resource-related plans of other federal agencies and state and local governments, as required by BLM planning regulations.

ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

The alternatives analyzed in this resource management plan (RMP) and EIS offer a range of land use choices from those favoring resource protection to those favoring resource production. The preferred alternative was selected based on the planning issues, wilderness study criteria and standards and the environmental analysis.

Formulation of Alternatives

Five alternatives were developed in the Medicine Lodge RMP that projected different combinations of public land uses and management practices that respond to the planning issues. Within each of the five alternatives, an alternative was developed for each WSA being studied for wilderness (see Table 2). As required by the wilderness study policy, an alternative for all wilderness, no wilderness and no action was examined. There is more than one no wilderness alternative because the overall goals of the different RMP alternatives would project different management for the areas being studied if they are not recommended for designation.

TABLE 2

Wilderness Study Area	Alternative				
	A	B	C	D	E
Sand Mountain	None	None	None	Partial	All
Snake River Islands	None	None	None	Partial	All
Total Acres Possible for Wilderness Designation	0	0	0	6,715	21,870

Alternatives Considered in Detail

Alternative A

Under this alternative, both WSAs would be recommended as nonsuitable for designation as wilderness. Management would continue at the present level and special designations or management prescriptions would not be made to protect important resource values. The specific management direction for each of the WSAs is shown in the description of management units 6 and 9, contained in Part II, Chapter 2 and Appendix F.

Alternative B

Under this alternative, both WSAs would be recommended as nonsuitable for designation as wilderness. Management emphasis would favor the production and use of commodity resources and special designations or management prescriptions would not be made to protect important resource values. The specific management direction for each of the WSAs is shown in the description of management units 6 and 9, contained in Part II, Chapter 2 and Appendix F.

Alternative C: Preferred

Under this alternative, both of the WSAs would be recommended as nonsuitable for designation as wilderness. A variety of resource uses would be managed for, with priority given to protecting fragile and important values while allowing present uses to continue. Part of the Sand Mountain WSA and most of the Snake River System would be designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. The specific management direction for each of the WSAs is shown in the description of management units 6 and 9, contained in Part I. C., Part II, Chapter 2 and Appendix F.

Alternative D

Under this partial wilderness alternative, parts of both WSAs would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation. The boundary for the Sand Mountain WSA was modified to exclude lands where vegetation needs to be mechanically manipulated to improve and sustain big game winter habitat and to leave open some of the lands most popular to off-road-vehicle enthusiasts. A total area of 6,560 acres of the sands would be recommended wilderness. Islands that have the most significant external influences were excluded from the Snake River WSA. Twelve islands totaling 155 acres of public land located in the most remote part of the river canyon would be recommended for designation as wilderness. The specific management direction for each of the WSAs is shown in the description of management units 6 and 9, contained in Part II, Chapter 2 and Appendix F. If Congress decides not to designate one or more of the WSAs as wilderness, management would revert to that described under Alternative C.

Alternative E

Under this alternative, all of both WSAs would be recommended suitable for wilderness designation. Management emphasis would favor protection of fragile resources, wildlife habitat and natural systems and encourage non-consumptive resource uses. The specific management direction for each of the WSAs is shown in the description of management units 6 and 9, contained in Part II, Chapter 2 and Appendix F. If Congress decides not to designate one or more of the WSAs as wilderness, management would revert to that described under Alternative C.

SELECTION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative was selected based on the planning issues, wilderness study policy criteria and standards and the environmental analysis. The rationale for selection of the preferred wilderness recommendation for each WSA is described below.

Sand Mountain

The preferred alternative for the Sand Mountain WSA is to recommend it nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The major reasons for this recommendation are as follows:

1. Management of the area as wilderness would be potentially difficult under both the partial and all wilderness alternatives because of the anticipated impacts on wilderness values. These impacts would result from the potential conflicts with motorized vehicle use. Eliminating motorized vehicles would be difficult because much of the area's boundary follows legal subdivisions and does not provide sufficient topographic barriers to discourage vehicle travel. The sands have been traversed by recreational vehicles in the past and changing this use would require an extensive enforcement program.

2. Motorized recreation use that now occurs would be adversely affected. About 2,500 visitor days of recreational vehicle riding would be eliminated on a landscape that has the capability of absorbing extensive ORV use. The local social and economic environment would incur losses, particularly to local businesses. Estimates of this loss, derived from ORV sales and services, amount to $25,300 and three jobs. A no wilderness decision would allow ORV use to continue and secure the local market for vehicle sales and service.

3. Wilderness management of the WSA would not allow mechanical vegetation manipulation projects designed to improve crucial big game wintering habitat. A no wilderness decision would offer the management flexibility needed to provide maximum wildlife forage for increasing big game animals, particularly elk, and maintain the potential carrying capacity of crucial winter range.

4. A no wilderness recommendation would be responsive to the wishes of the majority of recreationists and be consistent with local and state plans.

The no wilderness recommendation along with the proposed management of the area is the most appropriate use of the lands and resources. The WSA's wilderness values are fairly high, but the other resource values and uses that would be lost as a result of wilderness management are higher. The sand dunes provide a landscape where properly managed off-road-vehicle use can take place without causing significant erosion and scarring problems. The area also supports important habitat for wintering big game herds that can be manipulated to maintain forage for increasing populations.

The proposed management plan for the WSA includes recreation management for both motorized and non-motorized uses, protective management as an area of

critical environmental concern, and National Natural Landmark. These management options will allow a variety of existing uses to continue and protect the area's important natural values.

Snake River Islands

The preferred alternative for the Snake River Islands WSA is to recommend them nonsuitable for wilderness designation. The major reason for this recommendation is that the islands would be difficult to manage over the long term. The islands are susceptible to off-site impacts and their boundaries are ever-changing because of the erosive action of the river.

Under the preferred alternative, the Snake River Islands WSA would be managed as part of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Snake River ACEC is comprised of all banks and islands that are public lands and are associated with parts of the South Fork, Henry's Fork and main stem of the Snake River. Management of the river system as a whole is considered the best approach towards protecting important public values. Additionally, the BLM will recommend that 61 miles of the South Fork, from Palisades Reservoir to the confluence with the Henry's Fork, be studied as a national scenic and recreation river. A study must be authorized by Congress and would be done as a coordinated effort, involving all land and resource managing agencies and private land owners.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Sand Mountain

The Sand Mountain WSA is located about 10 miles west of St. Anthony, Idaho. It contains 21,100 acres of public land and a 640-acre state inholding. The principal landform characterizing the area is shifting sand dunes. The most prominent feature is Sand Mountain, which rises about 500 feet above the adjacent plain.

Energy and Minerals

None of the lands have been leased for geothermal resources and no mining claims for locatable minerals have been filed. All of the lands are either leased for oil and gas or are available for leasing under the simultaneous oil and gas leasing system. The WSA has a low to medium potential for the development of oil, gas and geothermal resources. There is no known potential for the development of locatable minerals. The development potential for dune sand is rated high, while the potential for developing volcanic cinders, pumice and lava building stone is low to medium.

Further information can be found in the Geology, Energy and Minerals Report, which is on file in the Idaho Falls District Office.

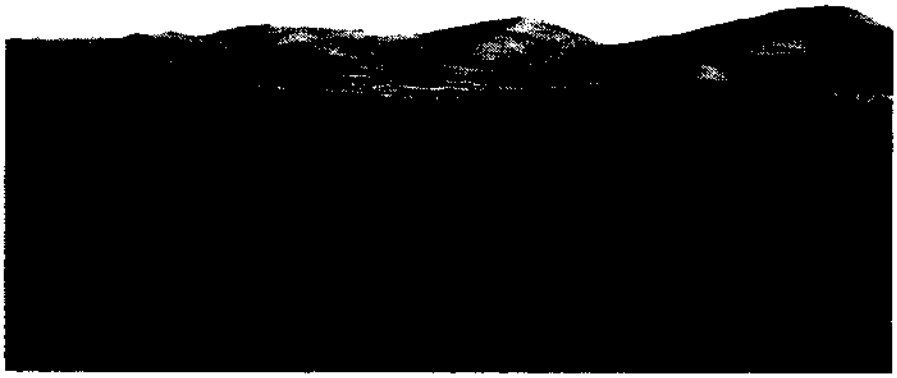
Grazing Management

The Sand Mountain WSA includes all of the Egin Lakes and portions of the Junipers, West Ridge and Nine Mile Knoll grazing allotments. About twenty percent of the total 2,481 AUMs is authorized for livestock grazing within the WSA. Grazing of cattle, sheep and horses is allowed from the beginning of May until the end of December. The only range improvements are 5 miles of livestock control fences.

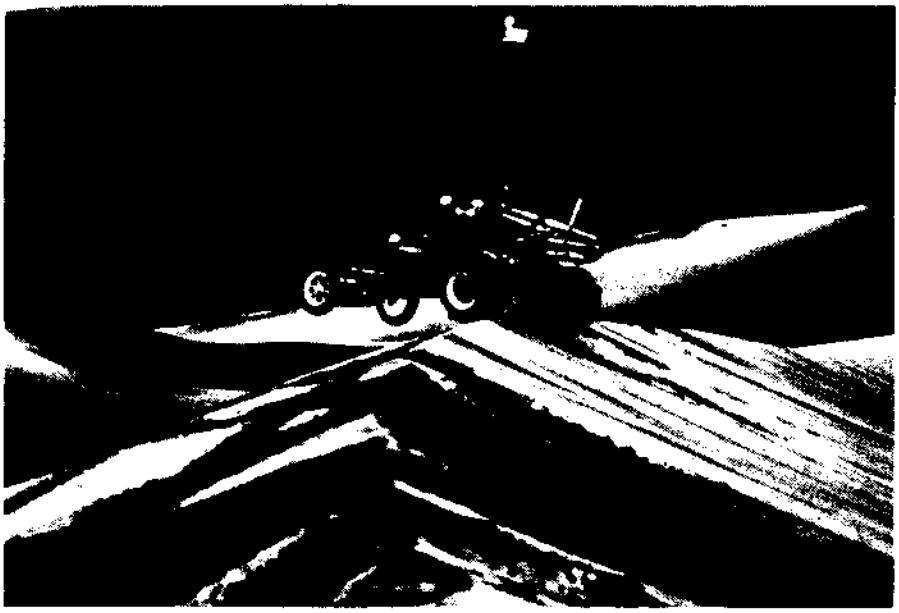
Recreation and ORV Management

Recreational use of the dunes occurs year round. The most intense seasons of activity are the spring, summer and fall, particularly during the major holiday weekends. Most of the activity involves off-road vehicle use of the open sand and camping near the access points. Sand play, picnicking and sightseeing also occur to a moderate degree. Winter activities include snowmobiling on the eastern open part of the area, cross-country skiing and wildlife viewing. The amount of visitor use occuring each year is not known, but is estimated to be about 2,500 visitor days for all activities. The majority of the use is associated with off-road vehicles designed and built for travel across the open sands.

At the WSA's eastern boundary there is a privately owned parcel of land and development known as the Sand Hills Resort. The resort provides overnight camping, picnicking and day use facilities for off-road vehicle enthusiasts who come to ride on the dunes. The resort depends on income derived from these recreationists who come from states throughout the region.



Sand Mountain rises nearly 500 feet above the surrounding plain.



Dune riding - a popular recreation activity on the sands.

Middle dunes looking northwest across Egin Lakes.