

Owyhee Resource Management Plan Objectives, Management Actions and Allocations

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Air Resources

Objective:

AIRQ 1: Meet or exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and the Prevention of Significant Deterioration regulations with all authorized actions.

Rationale: The Federal Clean Air Act and State of Idaho regulations require federal agencies to meet or exceed air quality standards.

Monitoring:

- Review of prescribed burn plan, pre-burn and post-burn calculations of acreage and tonnage on site.
- Annual Work Plan (AWP) identification.
- Maintain accurate records of both acreage and tonnage burned to date.
- Periodic review of NEPA documentation.
- Field review of compliance with mitigating measures.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Limit prescribed burning in juniper/sagebrush/grassland areas to a maximum of 15,000 acres per year (or the equivalent of 100,000 tons of fuels) and average 7,500 acres of prescribed burns per year over the life of the plan. Projected emissions from individual burns will be calculated to assure compliance with National Ambient Air Quality Standards and Prevention of Significant Deterioration regulations.
2. Limit unnecessary emissions from existing and new point and nonpoint sources by requiring and implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Stipulations for reducing or controlling emissions.

Soil Resources

Objective:

SOIL 1: Improve unsatisfactory and maintain satisfactory watershed health/condition on all areas.

Rationale: The BLM must comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Taylor Grazing Act, the Public Rangelands Improvement Act, the Clean Water Act, Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, and other federal and state laws and regulations regarding watershed health/condition and water quality. Improving or maintaining watershed health/condition will benefit grazing, wildlife, recreation, fishery and water quality programs.

Monitoring:

- Monitoring includes rangeland health assessments, collection of utilization, trend, climate, and ecological site inventory data by various methods. See Appendix MONT-1 for details concerning some of these procedures.
- Area specific monitoring may be conducted using various methods (e.g., 3-F erosion bridge).



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Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Implement grazing practices that during and at the end of the grazing season provide adequate amounts of ground cover (determined on an ecological site basis) to support proper infiltration, maintain soil moisture, stabilize soils, and maintain site productivity.
2. Implement grazing practices that improve or maintain native rangeland species to attain composition, density, aerial cover and vigor appropriate to site potential.
3. Limit OHMV use in high erosion hazard watersheds, watersheds that are at-risk or in unsatisfactory condition.
4. Grazing systems and other activities will be designed to minimize soil erosion caused by surface disturbing activities through proper timing with regard to soil moisture content and range readiness.
5. Provide a minimum of two growing seasons rest from livestock grazing and other watershed disturbing activities following fires.
6. Implement a juniper abatement plan for appropriate sites on which juniper is invading.

Objective:

SOIL 2: Achieve stabilization of current, and prevent the potential for future, localized accelerated soil erosion problems (particularly on streambanks, roads, and trails). Localized accelerated soil erosion is where humans, by their actions, are responsible for the site specific erosive process.

Rationale: The BLM must comply with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the Taylor Grazing Act, the Public Rangelands Improvement Act, the Clean Water Act, Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, and other federal and state laws and regulations regarding watershed health/condition and water quality. Improving or maintaining watershed health/condition will benefit grazing, wildlife, recreation, fishery and water quality programs.

Monitoring:

- Regular inspections of mineral related activities to assure compliance with plan of operation and permit stipulations.
- Monitoring of streambanks as part of riparian habitat assessments.
- Monitoring of site specific OHMV activities for soil/sediment impacts.
- Periodic inspection of other surface disturbing activities to assure compliance with BMPs.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Improve or maintain streambank and channel stability as appropriate for the site by managing grazing to limit annual trampling impacts to 10% or less of the linear bank length.
2. Authorizations for site specific surface disturbing activities (e.g., road building, drill pad construction, utility lines) will be reviewed to assure that approved Best Management Practices (BMPs) are incorporated to reduce soil erosion and sediment yields to a minimum.
3. Limit surface disturbing activities on soils sensitive to compaction or that have a high soil erosion potential rating, or that are exhibiting existing accelerated erosion problems.



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Water Resources

Objective:

WATR 1: Meet or exceed State of Idaho water quality standards on all Federally administered waters within the Owyhee Resource Area.

Rationale: Federal government agencies are required to comply with all federal, state, interstate and local requirements, administrative authority, and process and sanctions in respect to the control and abatement of water pollution. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) of 1977, as amended, requires the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nations waters.

Monitoring:

- Monitoring includes collection of rangeland health assessment, utilization, trend, climate, and water quality data by various methods. See Appendix MONT-1 for details concerning procedures.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. In pastures containing riparian areas categorized as unsatisfactory, non-functioning, or functional-at-risk, or stream segments listed as water quality limited in the current Idaho Division of Environmental Quality 303(d) list, implement grazing practices that make progress towards achieving proper functioning condition and satisfactory riparian condition. These grazing practices will, at a minimum, comply with the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, and BMPs and component practices approved in the Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan or subsequent plans. See Table RIPN-1 and Map RIPN-1 for affected areas. Future inventory or monitoring may indicate additional pastures to which this management action will apply.
2. Improve or maintain herbaceous vegetation species to attain composition, density, canopy and ground cover, and vigor appropriate for the site. Adequate residual stubble height in an amount appropriate for the site, will be present throughout the grazing treatment and overwinter. This pertains to key sedge and rush species which are excellent streambank stabilizers.
3. Improve or maintain woody riparian vegetation species to attain composition, density, canopy and ground cover, structure, and vigor appropriate for the site. Woody riparian vegetation utilization levels will be established to promote species reflective of the site potential.
4. Improve or maintain streambank and channel stability as appropriate for the site by managing grazing to limit annual trampling impacts to 10% or less of the linear bank length.
5. Implement a juniper abatement plan for appropriate sites on which juniper is invading.
6. Implement management practices addressing non-grazing impacts to riparian areas where needed and appropriate.
7. Provide a minimum of two growing seasons rest from livestock grazing following fires.



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Objective:

WATR 2: Follow current State water rights processes and procedures to acquire water rights for beneficial uses and support establishment of instream flows which are in the public interest.

Rationale: The BLM is committed to acquiring State water rights to guarantee future water availability for all public land activities and protest all water right applications by private individuals which may interfere with Bureau water rights.

Monitoring:

- Annual review of new project files and minimum instream flows recommended.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Obtain water rights for all water development projects.
2. Recommend, where appropriate, establishment of minimum instream flows for perennial streams managed by the BLM.

Vegetation

Objective:

VEGE 1: Improve unsatisfactory and maintain satisfactory vegetation health/condition on all areas.

Rationale: The Federal Land Policy Management Act 1976 - Section 201(a) mandates that public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of the ecological resources. The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 directs that the condition of the public rangelands be improved so that they become as productive as feasible for wildlife habitat and other rangeland values. The BLM is committed to maintaining and enhancing vegetation in terms of diversity and abundance of species and diversity of plant communities.

Monitoring:

- Monitoring includes collection of ecological site inventory, rangeland health assessment, utilization, trend, actual use, climate, and other data by various methods. See Appendix MONT-1 for details concerning procedures.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Implement grazing practices that during and at the end of the grazing season provide adequate amounts of ground cover (determined on an ecological site basis) to support proper infiltration, maintain soil moisture, stabilize soils, and maintain site productivity.
2. Implement grazing practices that improve or maintain native rangeland species to attain composition, density, foliar cover and vigor appropriate to site potential.



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3. Implement prescribed burning practices in areas where it is determined that burning would improve rangeland health and increase native plant biodiversity in western juniper and big sagebrush vegetation types. Mechanical and chemical methods may also be used.
4. Provide a minimum of two growing seasons rest from livestock grazing and other watershed disturbing activities following prescribed or wild fire.
5. In pastures containing riparian areas categorized as unsatisfactory, non-functioning or functional-at risk, implement grazing practices that make progress towards achieving proper functioning condition and satisfactory riparian condition. These grazing practices will, at a minimum, comply with the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (see 43 CFR 4180) and BMPs and component grazing practices approved in the Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan or subsequent plans. See Table RIPN-1 and Map RIPN-1 for affected areas. Future inventory or monitoring may indicate additional pastures to which this management action will apply.
6. Apply approved noxious weed control methods. (Includes burning, mechanical, manual, biological, and chemical control methods as identified in the Vegetation Management EIS (USDI, BLM, 1991).)
7. Implement grazing practices designed to meet Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and conform to the Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management (See Appendix LVST-1).

Riparian-Wetland Areas

Objective:

RIPN 1: Maintain or improve riparian-wetland areas to attain proper functioning and satisfactory conditions. Riparian-wetland areas include streams, springs, seeps, and wetlands.

Rationale: BLM Wildlife and Fisheries Management Manual Section 6500 directs the BLM to maintain the continued effectiveness of habitat improvements and to maintain and enhance important resident fisheries resources. BLM Manual Section 6840 directs BLM to ensure that the crucial habitats of sensitive animals will be managed and/or conserved to minimize the need for listing as Threatened or Endangered. The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) of 1977, as amended, requires the restoration and maintenance of the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nations waters. Water quality is directly related to the health of riparian ecosystems.

Monitoring:

- Monitoring includes collection of rangeland health assessment, utilization, trend, climate, and water quality data by various methods. See Appendix MONT-1 for details concerning procedures.



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Management Actions and Allocations:

1. In pastures containing riparian areas categorized as unsatisfactory, non-functioning, or functional-at-risk, implement grazing practices that progress towards achieving proper functioning and satisfactory riparian condition. These grazing practices will, at a minimum, comply with the Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management, and BMPs and component practices approved in the Idaho Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan or subsequent plans. See Table RIPN-1 and Map RIPN-1 for affected areas. Future inventory or monitoring may indicate additional pastures to which this management action will apply.
2. Improve or maintain herbaceous vegetation species to attain composition, density, canopy and ground cover, and vigor appropriate for the site. Adequate residual stubble height, in an amount appropriate for the site, will be present throughout the grazing treatment and overwinter. This pertains to those key sedge and rush forage species which are excellent streambank stabilizers.
3. Improve or maintain woody riparian vegetation species to attain composition, density, canopy and ground cover, structure, and vigor appropriate for the site. Woody riparian vegetation utilization levels will be established to promote species reflective of the site potential.
4. Improve or maintain streambank and channel stability as appropriate for the site by managing grazing to limit annual trampling impacts to 10% or less of the linear bank length.
5. Implement a juniper abatement plan for appropriate sites on which juniper is invading.
6. Implement management practices addressing non-grazing impacts to riparian areas where needed and appropriate.
7. Provide a minimum of two growing seasons rest from livestock grazing following fires.

Forest Management

Objective:

FORS 1: Manage Douglas-fir communities (about 36,200 acres) to emphasize forest health, vegetative diversity, wildlife and watershed values.

Rationale: The Federal Land Policy Management Act 1976 - Section 102(a)(8) mandates that public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of ecological resources. The BLM is committed to maintaining and enhancing vegetation in terms of diversity and abundance of species and diversity of plant communities, Douglas-fir communities are present on less than 3% of the public lands in the Owyhee Resource Area. Their retention is critical to overall ecological balance, particularly in light of harvesting activities on intermingled State and private lands.



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Monitoring:

- Monitoring includes examination for tree pests such as the Douglas-fir tussock moth and site inspections to ensure no unauthorized tree removals occur.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Classify all Douglas-fir forest lands (36,200 acres) as being unavailable for the management of forest products. Forest stands will be retained for biodiversity. Trees will only be cut in response to forest health and safety concerns.

Objective:

FORS 2: Use juniper harvesting to help achieve a desired plant community.

Rationale: The Federal Land Policy Management Act 1976 - Section 201(a) mandates that public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of ecological resources. The BLM is committed to maintaining and enhancing vegetation in terms of diversity and abundance of species and diversity of plant communities. Juniper harvesting is one of several methods available to control seral juniper encroachment into sagebrush-grassland ecological sites and manage the ecological balance of natural plant communities.

Monitoring:

- Monitoring includes site inspections to insure compliance with the standard woodcutting stipulations such as stumpage height, layout perimeter, slash dispersal and cutting of unauthorized vegetation such as aspen or mountain mahogany.
- Monitoring also includes collection of data concerning the impacts of the woodcut on the understory vegetation. See Appendix MONT-1 for details concerning procedures for vegetation monitoring.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Manage harvest of western juniper woodlands in accordance with layout and cutting standards in the Owyhee Juniper Woodland Harvest Management Plan (USDI, BLM, October 1987). See Map FORS-1.

Wildlife Habitat

Objective:

WDLF 1: Maintain or enhance the condition, abundance structural stage and distribution of plant communities and special habitat features required to support a high diversity and desired populations of wildlife.

Rationale: Section 102.8 of The Federal Land Policy and Management Act states that it is policy of the United States that public lands be managed in a manner that will protect the quality of multiple resources and will provide food and habitat for fish and wildlife and domestic animals. The Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) directs improvement of rangeland conditions and provides for rangeland improvements including providing habitat for wildlife. The Memorandum of Understanding between the BLM and IDF&G states that the two agencies will work for the common purpose of maintaining, improving and managing wildlife resources on public lands.



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Monitoring:

- Monitoring includes collection of utilization, trend, climate, rangeland health assessment, and other data to assess vegetation characteristics as they apply to wildlife species and wildlife habitat objectives.
- Additional monitoring includes use of appropriate techniques such as pellet group counts or breeding bird transects, lek counts, etc. which are applicable to specific types of wildlife. See Appendix MONT-1 for details concerning procedures for various methods.
- Periodically inspect/monitor authorized BLM activities including, but not limited to, range improvement projects, ROWs, OHMV use areas and woodcuts to insure compliance with wildlife stipulations and document observed habitat and animal disturbance.

Management Actions and Allocations:

1. Ensure that all activity plans include objectives for maintaining or enhancing habitat for those wildlife species known or likely to occur within the planning area.
2. Limit the adverse impacts of various land use activities, management actions and land tenure adjustments to wildlife populations and habitats through implementation of management actions identified in objectives FORS 2, WHRS 1, LVST 1, FIRE 1-4, LAND 1-6, LOCM 1, FLUM 1, MMAT 1, RECT 1 and HAZM 1.
3. Protect and enhance habitat for a diversity of wildlife through implementation of management actions identified in objectives SOIL 1 and 2, WATR 1 and 2, VEGE 1, RIPN 1, FORS 1 and 2, FISH 1 and 2, RECT 3, WNES 1 and 2, HAZM 1 and ACEC 1.
4. Adjust overall grazing management practices to ensure that adequate upland forage and cover remains to accommodate the needs of wildlife. Specifically:
 - limit utilization of key browse species, as measured in the fall, to a maximum of 30% within all deer winter habitat and 50% within all other habitats.
 - limit utilization of key upland herbaceous forage species to a maximum of 50% at the time of livestock removal from a pasture.More restrictive utilization standards may be imposed where necessary to accomplish specific wildlife or other resource objectives.
5. Design and implement vegetation treatments to improve habitat where juniper or shrub density is contributing to unsatisfactory habitat conditions. All treatments will be designed to protect scarce, unique and highly productive wildlife habitat types, retain large interconnected blocks of more common habitat types and accommodate specific wildlife habitat requirements including migration corridors for big game. Reseed burns with a variety of shrubs, forbs and grasses. Rest all burns and seedings from livestock grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons following treatment.
6. Ensure water availability for wildlife by providing unrestricted access to all livestock waters, requiring that where necessary, waters are left on following removal of livestock and constructing additional water developments where water is determined to be limiting. Ensure that water is available at intervals of no more than three miles apart in big game habitat.



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7. Retain all public land within crucial and other high quality wildlife habitats unless exchanging for land of equal or higher value and acquire additional high quality habitat through purchase or exchange with willing landowners. These include but are not limited to wetland/riparian habitats, crucial big game winter habitat and isolated tracts and shrublands adjacent to agricultural areas that provide important cover for upland game. Isolated tracts will be grazed only if needed to maintain or improve wildlife habitat.
8. Minimize barriers to big game movement by constructing new fences and modifying existing fences to meet or exceed Boise District Fence Policy standards for the species present.
9. Protect and enhance habitat for wildlife at all developed springs and selected undeveloped springs, wet meadows, reservoirs and stream riparian reaches by fencing to exclude livestock. Close all enclosures to livestock grazing for the life of this plan except where it is determined that controlled grazing is necessary to achieve a specific resource objective.
10. Where feasible, enhance waterfowl nesting habitat by ensuring waterfowl benefits are incorporated into reservoirs with the potential to support nesting waterfowl. Enhancement may include fencing, construction of nesting islands and/or other structures and planting food and cover species.
11. Develop cooperative wildlife habitat/farming development (Sikes Act) agreements designed to enhance habitat for upland game and other wildlife.
12. Protect raptor nests and manage adjacent vegetation to ensure adequate habitat for prey species. Authorize no human caused disturbance within a 0.5 mile radius of any known golden eagle nest between February 1 and June 30 and other species' nests between March 15 and June 30. Disturbance is defined as any activity which could result in frequent flushing of adults or young, nest abandonment or significant loss of prey base.
13. Ensure that all power poles on public land are designed to prevent raptor electrocution.
14. Ensure that management to maintain or improve habitat for raptors and their prey species receives priority consideration within the Snake River Birds of Prey National Conservation Area as detailed in the SRBOPNCA Management Plan. See Map NCA-1.
15. Install gates at entrances to caves and abandoned mine shafts where disturbance to bat populations is determined to be a problem.

