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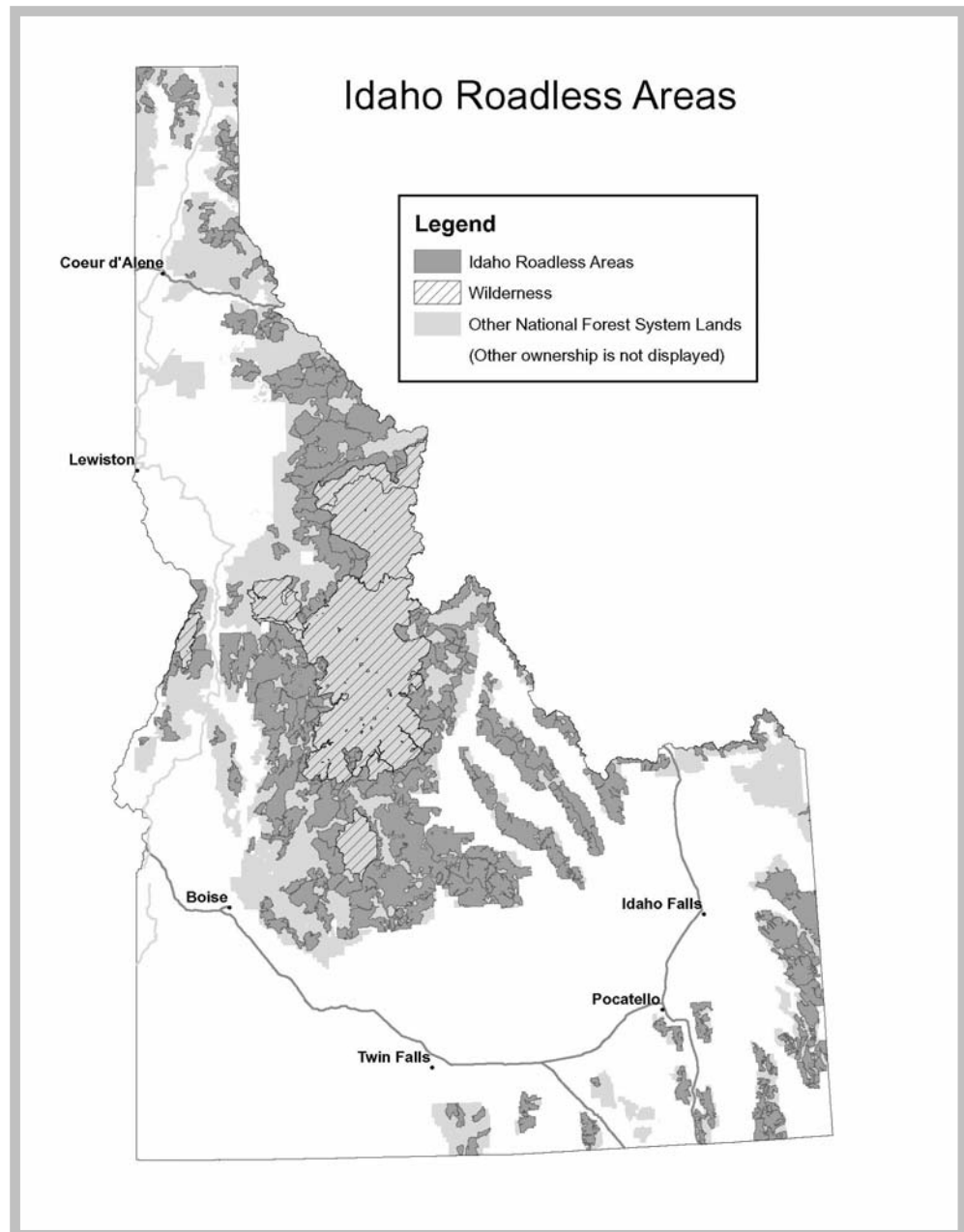
# Roadless Area Conservation

## National Forest System Lands in Idaho

### Final Environmental Impact Statement

#### *Appendix C—Idaho Roadless Areas*

#### *Volume 4: Boise, Payette, and Sawtooth National Forests*



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## APPENDIX C. IDAHO ROADLESS AREAS

The following appendix describes the roadless area attributes and characteristics for each roadless area found in Idaho. This roadless area specific information is intended to inform the public and decision maker about the variability in roadless character across the continuum of roadless areas. For reference, Appendix D summarizes the roadless characteristics in a tabular form. Maps of each of the roadless areas with the Existing Plan, Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule, and Modified Idaho Roadless Rule themes may be found in the EIS map packet.

The appendix is based on existing plan documents describing the roadless areas – generally found in appendix C of the existing plan environmental impact statements. Some of the plan appendix C's date back to 1987, others are more current because they have recently revised their plans.

Most acres have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

### Changes Between Draft and Final EIS

In response to public comment, the final EIS appendix C includes environmental consequences for application of each theme to each roadless area for the prohibited and permissible activities (timber harvest, road construction and reconstruction, and mineral leasing). A table is included for each roadless area that displays the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

The information regarding wildland urban interface (WUI) was removed from appendix C because it came from a variety of sources including appendix C of existing plans, as well as the map of WUI developed by the State of Idaho. Instead, appendix C of this EIS now displays the estimated acreage in each roadless area in a community protection zone (CPZ) in the Backcountry theme for the Modified Rule. This information is useful for showing the number of acres in the Backcountry theme where temporary roads could be constructed.

The CPZ acres displayed in the EIS and in appendix C show the total acres within 1½ miles of a community based on population projections in 2030 (see final EIS, section 3.1). However, it should be noted that these are approximations and are not set boundaries. Each project or activity would be required to determine whether or not it fits within the definition of CPZ and whether or not further action is warranted.

Other information has been updated where new information was available. Comments received on the draft EIS providing additional information on roadless areas were considered and incorporated into this appendix C of the final EIS. Comments concerning specific appendix C clarifications or corrections were reviewed with the interdisciplinary team and forest personnel to verify and make updates to appendix C in the final EIS.

Other changes to the final EIS appendix C include the addition of the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule acres to the tables displaying the acres by themes for each roadless area and minor adjustments to roadless area acreage from typing or mapping errors.

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## Bald Mountain #019

6,200 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Bald Mountain Roadless Area, on the Emmett Ranger District, includes the south slopes of the South Fork Payette River from the Garden Valley Ranger Station to Danskin Creek. This roadless area is accessed from the Banks-Lowman Highway (Forest Highway 17) via State Highway 55.

Elevations range from 3,100 feet along the South Fork Payette River to 5,148 feet at Bald Mountain. The area is underlain by Cretaceous granitics of the Idaho Batholith. Sagebrush-bitterbrush/grass communities and scattered stands of ponderosa pine are located on steep fluvial lands. Overall, the Bald Mountain area is marked with open slopes supporting sparse grass and brush vegetation interspersed with open stands of ponderosa pine. Major side drainages are deeply incised, with steep banks. Bald Mountain is the area's predominant feature.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The apparent naturalness and natural integrity of the Bald Mountain area have been affected by wildlife habitat improvements of bitterbrush plantings in some locations. In the northern portion there is evidence of constructed fire lines and some plantations following the 1987 Anderson Creek fire.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude, primitive recreation, and challenging experiences are somewhat limited by the relatively small size of the area. The steep and rugged terrain provides for challenging cross-country travel. The broken and complex terrain provides some opportunities for solitude.

**Special Features:** A segment of the South Fork Payette River lies adjacent to the southern boundary. This river segment is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. Approximately 300 acres of the river corridor occurs within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** Along the southern edge, ownership boundaries would form some of the boundaries, while in other locations a logical boundary could be created by a defined offset from the riverbank or highway. The other boundaries would benefit from some minor adjustments to make them more logical and definable.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This roadless area contains a portion of the South Fork Payette River from the confluence with Danskin Creek downstream to the Garden Valley Ranger Station. This portion of the river does not provide spawning habitat for listed bull trout but is potential nodal habitat (migrational and over-winter rearing). This portion of the river also provides a migration corridor that bull trout use to access spawning and rearing habitat outside the roadless area. The South Fork Payette River within the roadless area provides rearing habitat for redband rainbow trout. This roadless area also includes several tributaries to the South Fork Payette River that flow in from the north. These tributaries have been field surveyed, and Poorman Creek, Nelson Creek, and Carpenter Creek are not fish-bearing streams. Since these are the largest tributaries within the roadless area, it is not likely that any tributaries in the roadless area are fish bearing.

**Wildlife:** Suitable habitat for federally listed species is limited within this roadless area. Species such as gray wolf and lynx may occur within the roadless area; however, occurrence of these species is probably related to dispersing individuals. There is no identified lynx habitat in the area. Habitat for Regional sensitive species varies within this area. Bald eagles occur in this roadless area. Habitat for boreal owl and great gray owl does not exist or is very limited, while habitat for northern goshawk, flammulated owl,

and white-headed woodpecker does exist. Most of the area provides important elk and deer winter range. Habitat for pileated woodpecker nesting exists in the northern and southern portion of this area.

**Water:** Bald Mountain has numerous perennial streams that mostly flow southerly to the South Fork Payette River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. An estimated 3 acres of the area are within a municipal watershed for the Rivers Point Property Owners.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Most of the area has been infested by rush skeletonweed, a noxious weed.

**Recreation:** The area receives fairly heavy use during the fall big-game hunting season. The trails within the area provide for other backpacking and day hiking use.

**Timber:** The area includes an estimated 30,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 58,800 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 3,100 acres (50 percent) of the Bald Mountain roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 500 acres have low productivity; 2,500 acres, moderate productivity; and 300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There are no open grazing allotments in the roadless area. There are 160 acres of capable sheep rangeland within the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** A portion of the inactive Abella molybdenum mine lies along the area's western edge. The roadless area is not a mineral development interest area. There is a small area in the southwest corner of the roadless area that is identified as a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand, and gravel. There are no active mineral claims within the area. This roadless area contains 6,200 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide service provides cougar and bear hunting trips in the area, and another provides trail rides.

**Roads and Trails:** There is a 2-mile segment of a non-motorized trail in the area.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Surveys in adjoining and overlapping areas, in similar topographic situations, have resulted in low cultural resource site densities.

**Disturbances:** An estimated 650 acres of the roadless area were burned in the 1987 Anderson Complex fire. Approximately 80 percent of the area was burned in low intensity prescribed fires in 1997. Soil movement and localized landslides have occurred in the Hanks Creek, Whiskey Creek, Poorman Creek, and Russell Creek drainages during recent rain-on-snow events.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Bald Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Bald Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Bald Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



**Table Bald Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Bald Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	6,200	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	5,900	5,900	CPZ	4,600
				NonCPZ	1,300
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	300*	300*	300*	
Total Acres	6,200	6,200	6,200	6,200	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Bald Mountain Roadless Area is wild and scenic river (WSR). For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

**Table Bald Mountain-2. Potential activities**

Bald Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	5,900	5,900	4,600*
Timber cutting to improve TEPS <sup>1</sup> species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	6,200	5,900	5,900	5,900
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	6,200	5,900	5,900	5,900
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	5,900	5,900	4600*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	6,200	5,900	5,900	5,900

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 1,300 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 5,900 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to

<sup>1</sup> Threatened, endangered, proposed or sensitive species habitat (TEPS).

maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 5,900 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary to facilitate timber harvest. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. Other timber cutting activities such as slashing and burning could occur and would have minimal effects to roadless characteristics. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 5,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, 4,600 of which are in the community protection zone (CPZ). Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term. For the 1,300 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 5,900 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Bear Wallow #125

9,100 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Bear Wallow Roadless Area, on the Emmett Ranger District, lies between the Scriver Creek Road and the Middle Fork Payette River Road. The area is accessed from the Middle Fork Payette River Road (Forest Road 698) from the Banks-Lowman Highway (Forest Highway 17) via State Highway 55. The Bear Wallow Trail traverses the area from north to south. Elevations range from about 3,200 feet to 6,000 feet. Slopes are steep, dissected by small streams, and dominated by dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir.

Dense brush fields and old fire scars occur along the upper ridges and in the southern portion of the area. Timbered stands are concentrated near Scriver Creek and Middle Fork Payette River. Slopes into the river are over-steepened and highly erosive, with sparse vegetation except on the river terrace and in side drainages. The gentler slopes into Scriver Creek support denser stands of timber, interspersed with impenetrable stands of brush that originated from old fires. No prominent topographic features lie in the Bear Wallow Roadless Area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and apparent naturalness of the Bear Wallow Roadless Area are intact because few activities have occurred in this area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and remoteness are available due to the complex, broken terrain and the fairly continuous vegetative cover. Opportunities for primitive recreation and challenging experiences are good due to the rugged terrain. The area can be characterized as hot and dry during the summer months.

**Special Features:** A segment of the Middle Fork Payette River lies adjacent to the eastern boundary. This river segment is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 1.3 miles of the river and approximately 700 acres of the river corridor occur within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The southeastern boundary could be logically defined as a certain offset from the Payette River Road or the riverbank itself. The other boundaries would benefit from some minor changes to create more logical and manageable boundaries.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Bear Wallow includes small tributary streams that flow into the Middle Fork Payette River from the east. These tributaries are upstream from Scriver Creek and downstream of Sixmile Creek, which is partially included in the roadless area. Most of these tributaries have not been surveyed primarily due to their small size. The most likely fish-bearing streams are Tie, Baron, and Rocky Canyon Creeks (the largest of the tributaries), and any fish present are likely to be redband rainbow trout. Tributaries within this roadless area are identified as bull trout key watersheds (State of Idaho 1996). Bull trout are present.

**Wildlife:** Suitable habitat for federally listed endangered species such as the wolf and lynx is limited within this roadless area. There is no potential lynx habitat in this area. Individuals that pass through when dispersing from other areas are not likely to stay long because of the lack of denning habitat. The lower portion of the roadless area adjoins the South Fork Payette River, which provides bald eagle wintering habitat. No peregrine falcon habitat exists within this roadless area. Habitat exists for white-headed woodpecker and flammulated owl within lower-elevation ponderosa pine stands. Habitat for northern goshawk is provided within mid-slope forested areas. Limited habitat for pileated and white-headed woodpecker, and meadow and red-backed vole, exists within the roadless area. Key winter range

habitat is provided for elk and deer, most of it in the lower elevations adjacent to the Middle Fork Payette River.

**Water:** Bear Wallow has a number of perennial streams, most of them flowing easterly towards the Middle Fork Payette River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. An estimated 2,400 acres are within a municipal watershed of Rivers Point Property Owners.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. A very minor amount of rush skeletonweed has been identified in the area.

**Recreation:** The recreation use in this area is fairly minimal, with most of the use occurring during the fall big-game hunting season.

**Timber:** The area includes 65,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 131,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 6,700 acres (73 percent) of the Bear Wallow Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 300 acres are considered to have low productivity; 2,900 acres, moderate productivity; and 3,600 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Approximately 80 percent of the area is within an active sheep allotment. An estimated 2,300 acres are capable sheep rangelands.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area is not a mineral development interest area. There are only two mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 9,100 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide service provides cougar and bear hunting trips in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There is some all-terrain vehicle use on the motorized trail along the western side. There are segments of two motorized trails in the area, totaling about 6.1 miles.

**Heritage:** Although prehistoric sites have been documented in the South Fork Payette River corridor, the steep topography of the roadless area results in the area having low cultural resource sensitivity.

**Disturbances:** An estimated 700 acres have burned by wildfire since 1960.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Bear Wallow Roadless Area.

Table Bear Wallow-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Bear Wallow-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Bear Wallow-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Bear Wallow Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	8,400	8,400	8,400
Similar to Backcountry	9,100	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	700*	700*	700*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>9,100</b>	<b>9,100</b>	<b>9,100</b>	<b>9,100</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Bear Wallow Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

**Table Bear Wallow-2. Potential activities**

<b>Bear Wallow Potential Activities</b>	<b>Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule</b>	<b>Alternative 2 Existing Plan</b>	<b>Alternative 3 Proposed Rule</b>	<b>Alternative 4 Modified Rule</b>
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	9,100	8,400	8,400	8,400
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	9,100	8,400	8,400	1,500*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	8,400	8,400	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	9,100	8,400	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 1,500 acres in the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 8,400 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction is prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule timber cutting is prohibited on 8,400 acres except when done for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights; therefore there would be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral activities.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Rule, there are 8,400 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 1,500 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would likely maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

**Bernard #029****20,900 Acres****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

The Bernard Roadless Area, on the Cascade and Lowman Ranger Districts, includes parts of the Elk Creek, Sulphur Creek, and Deadwood River drainages. This area is accessed from the Warm Lake Highway (Forest Road 22), via State Highways 21 or 55. This area is also accessed from the Porter Creek (008), Tyndall-Sulphur (095), and West Fork Elk Creek (006) Trails.

Elevations range from about 6,000 feet along the Deadwood River to 8,203 feet atop Bernard Mountain. The southern portion of the area has characteristic moderately steep slopes, while the northern portion is dominated by glacial trough lands. Moderate to dense stands of Douglas-fir exist at the lower elevations, and stands of Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir are found at the higher elevations.

Overall, the area is marked with steep forested slopes that give way to open alpine meadows and scattered alpine timber stands. Scenic views of the Deadwood River Canyon, Deadwood Reservoir, and the Sawtooth Mountains can be seen from ridge tops. Notable landmarks include Pilgrim Mountain (8,196 feet), and Bernard Mountain (8,203 feet).

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of the area are intact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** When considered as part of the adjacent Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are plentiful. The steep and rugged terrain provides challenges to cross-country travel.

**Special Features:** A segment of the Deadwood River lies adjacent to the western boundary. This river segment is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation with a recreational classification. An estimated 500 acres of the river corridor occur within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The area has some very complex and irregular boundaries due to the long cherry stem exclusion of the road along Sulphur Creek. The eastern boundary of the area is adjacent to the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** Upper Sulphur Creek and its tributaries lie within the northern portion of the roadless area. A tributary from the north supports westslope cutthroat trout. Sulphur Creek is a tributary to the Middle Fork Salmon River that supports westslope cutthroat trout and listed Chinook and steelhead and is critical habitat for Snake River spring/summer Chinook. The area encompasses portions of other streams in the Johnson Creek drainage that may also provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for listed Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout. The entire roadless area lies within an area designated as critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon. The southern portion of the Bernard Roadless Area contains North Fork Deer Creek, Little Beaver Creek, and East Fork Deadwood River. All of these streams except Little Beaver Creek flow into the Upper South Fork Payette key bull trout watershed (State of Idaho 1996).

North Fork Deer Creek contains a small section of focal (spawning and rearing) bull trout habitat. This and adjacent subpopulations of bull trout in the South Fork Deer Creek are important because the upper Deadwood River watershed is isolated from colonization due to Deadwood Dam.

East Fork Deadwood River, Topnotch, Bernard, and other small tributaries to the upper Deadwood River contain only short sections of redband rainbow trout spawning and rearing habitat near their mouths. The rest of these streams are too steep and small. The East Fork Deadwood River appears to have good habitat; however, bull trout and other fish are absent upstream of the mouth.



Little Beaver Creek flows into Bear Valley, which has been designated as critical salmon habitat. Chinook salmon and steelhead trout may use the lower sections for rearing. Redband rainbow trout and westslope cutthroat trout may use Little Beaver Creek for spawning and rearing. An estimated 4.5 miles of streams in the area have bull trout spawning and rearing habitat. Bull trout, Chinook summer salmon and steelhead are identified as present in this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area with increasing activity occurring since the augmentation program in the 1990s. Sixty-eight percent of the roadless area has potential lynx habitat, but it is not known if lynx are present. Fisher, wolverine, boreal owl, great gray owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, and spotted frog are Region 4 sensitive species. These species are either known or highly likely to occur in this roadless area.

**Water:** The area has drainages flowing predominantly westerly to Johnson Creek and southerly to Deer Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** Idaho Douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*), a sensitive plant species, occurs in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The area receives some backcountry hunting, hiking, and camping.

**Timber:** The area includes an estimated 132,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 260,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 17,800 acres (85 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 12,100 acres are considered to have low productivity; 5,900 acres, moderate productivity; and 400 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** A portion of one cattle allotment encompasses about 35 percent of the roadless area and is managed under a rest-rotation system. There are 944 acres of capable cattle rangelands in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** Twenty-one mining claims exist in the area. The patented Deadwood mine adjoins the roadless area. The area is not an identified mineral development interest area. This roadless area contains 20,900 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provide bear and cougar hunting trips in the area, while another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides.

**Roads and Trails:** The area has three non-motorized trails totaling about 4.6 miles that access the adjacent Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as low to moderate. Mining sites have been located along the Deadwood River, although none have been identified within the roadless area.

**Disturbances:** There have been four recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences since 1960. An estimated 6,500 acres have burned in wildfires, most of this in the 1987 Deadwood fire.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Bernard Roadless Area.

Table Bernard-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Bernard-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Bernard -1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Bernard Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Primitive CPZ	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	20,900	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	20,400	20,400	CPZ	2,900
				NonCPZ	17,500
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	500*	500*	500*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>20,900</b>	<b>20,900</b>	<b>20,900</b>	<b>20,900</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Bernard Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Bernard-2. Potential activities

Bernard Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	20,400	20,400	2,900*
Timber cutting to improve TEPS species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	20,900	20,400	20,400	20,400
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	20,900	20,400	20,400	20,400
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	20,400	20,400	2,900*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	20,900	20,400	20,400	20,400

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 17,500 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 11,300 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources) and about 9,100 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance). Both prescriptions permit road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. The prescriptions do not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the



timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 20,400 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary to facilitate timber harvest. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. Other timber cutting activities such as slashing and burning could occur and would have minimal effects to roadless characteristics. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 20,400 acres under the Backcountry theme, 2,900 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 17,500 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent. Activities outside the CPZ would be designed to maintain or improve one or more of the roadless area characteristics over the long term.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 20,400 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Black Lake #036

5,300 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Black Lake Roadless Area, on the Cascade Ranger District, lies between the Thunder Mountain and Trapper Creek Roads (Forest Roads 440 and 440A), and adjoins the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. The area is accessed from the Thunder Mountain Road, off the Johnson Creek Road (Forest Road 413) north of Landmark. The area is also accessed by the Summit Trail (068).

Elevations range from about 7,000 feet near the Thunder Mountain Road to 9,169 feet at Pistol Rock. The area is underlain by Cretaceous granitics of the Idaho Batholith. Steep-sided, unshaped glacial valleys are vegetated with Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, and lodgepole pine in the higher country and Douglas-fir at the lower elevations. Generally, the Black Lake area has high-elevation U-shaped glacial valleys and cirque basin topography. Prominent landmarks include Pistol Rock and Black Lake.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural appearance and integrity of the area has been affected in some locations by historic mining activity. Overall, the area generally retains its natural appearance and natural integrity.

**Opportunities for Experience:** When considered alone, the Black Lake area has limited opportunities for solitude, challenge, and primitive recreation due to its small size. When considered as an addition to the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, the area would compliment the extensive opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the Wilderness.

**Special Features:** About 100 acres of the 1,290-acre Chilcoot Peak Research Natural Area lie within this roadless area.

**Manageability:** A portion of the area's boundaries is shared with the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Only a few minor boundary adjustments would be needed to make this a manageable addition.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Trapper and Riordan Creeks support bull trout. As the headwaters of Riordan Creek, Black Lake may also support bull trout. The entire roadless area is within area designated as critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon. Spawning and rearing habitat exists for Chinook salmon and bull trout. There is an estimated 3.1 miles of stream with bull trout spawning and rearing habitat. Bull trout, Chinook summer salmon, and steelhead habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area, with increasing activity occurring since the augmentation program in the 1990s. An estimated 88 percent of this roadless area is identified lynx habitat. Fisher, wolverine, boreal owl, great gray owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, and spotted frog are Region 4 sensitive species either known or highly likely to occur in this roadless area. Potential wolverine denning habitat has been identified in the area.

**Water:** There are a few scattered small bodies of water in the area. Black Lake contains the headwaters of Riordan Creek and Trapper Creek that eventually flow to Johnson Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There has been few plant surveys conducted in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 33,900 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 67,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 4,400 acres (83 percent) of the Black Lake Roadless Area are

tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 2,000 acres are considered to have low productivity and 3,000 acres are considered moderate productivity.

**Range:** Portions of two allotments encompassing the entire roadless area. One allotment is grazed by cattle and managed under a rest-rotation system. The other allotment is grazed with horses under a season-long grazing system. There are 200 acres of capable cattle rangeland in this roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are 263 mining claims in the area. The area is estimated to have a high level of mineral development interest. This roadless area contains 5,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area, and no special uses.

**Roads and Trails:** There is one non-motorized trail of an estimated 2.5 miles.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as moderate based upon the topography and report of historic sites. The area has had few surveys conducted within it.

**Disturbances:** There have been no major disturbances in the area recently.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Black Lake Roadless Area.

Table Black Lake-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Black Lake-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Black Lake-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Black Lake Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	5,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	5,200	5,200	5,200
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	100*	100*	100*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>5,300</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Black Lake Roadless Area is Research Natural Areas (RNA). For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Black Lake-2. Potential activities

Black Lake Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	5,200	5,200	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	5,300	5,200	5,200	5,200
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	5,300	5,200	5,200	5,200
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	5,200	5,200	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	5,300	5,200	5,200	5,200

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 5,200 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 5,200 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 5,200 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ, and none overlap municipal water supply systems; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or

associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 5,200 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

**Breadwinner #006****20,500 Acres****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

The Breadwinner Roadless Area is located on the Idaho City and Mountain Home Ranger Districts, and extends between Badger Creek recreation site and Alexander Flats along the Middle Fork Boise River and between Troutdale and Barber Flat on the North Fork Boise River. The Breadwinner area can also be accessed by the Cottonwood Creek (189), Haga Creek (130), and Short Creek (168) Trails.

Elevations in this roadless area, which is underlain by granitics of the Idaho Batholithic, range from 3,100 to 6,000 feet. Slopes are steep and dissected by small streams; about one-third of the area has slopes over 60 percent. Hot dry summers and shallow granitic soils support open brush-grass communities scattered with stands of ponderosa pine. Stands of Douglas-fir occur on northern slopes and are broken by open non-forested areas. Overall, the Breadwinner area has rolling dry slopes, forested peaks, and V-shaped canyons and gullies. The North Fork Boise River Canyon, from Troutdale to Rabbit Creek, provides good opportunities for river floating.

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** Although the natural integrity of this area has been affected by early placer mining, evidence of these past activities is very limited. The natural appearance is relatively intact. There is a short segment (0.17 mile) of forest road just within the roadless area boundary.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The 7-mile float trip down the North Fork Boise River from Rabbit Creek to Troutdale provides the best opportunities for solitude, primitive recreation, and challenging experience in this roadless area. This section of the river is rugged and isolated. Opportunities for the float trip are restricted to certain times of the year when river flows are adequate.

**Special Features:** The 900-acre North Fork Boise River Research Natural Area is contained within the Breadwinner Roadless Area. The Breadwinner Roadless Area contains an eight-mile stretch of the North Fork Boise River just prior to its confluence with the Middle Fork. The confluence of the Middle and North Fork Boise River occurs within the roadless area. A segment of the Middle Fork Boise River lies adjacent to the southern boundary and a segment of the North Fork Boise River bisects the roadless area. These river segments are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. Within the roadless area there are a total of 9.8 river miles and an estimated 3,000 corridor acres eligible for inclusion within the Wild and Scenic River system.

**Manageability:** There is a small (about 1,500 acres) portion in the northwestern corner that is effectively isolated from the main body of the roadless area. Redefining the boundaries to exclude this portion would facilitate wilderness manageability. The North Fork and Middle Forks of the Boise River would make logical boundaries for much of the area.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** Streams that are located in this area are Logging Gulch, French Creek, Haga Creek, and Meadow Creek. These streams contain redband rainbow trout, brook trout, and bull trout. The North Fork Boise River is important nodal (migration and over-wintering) habitat for bull trout and also contains suckers, whitefish, and sculpins. The North Fork Boise River also provides important wintering habitat for adult redband rainbow trout.

**Wildlife:** Bald eagles winter along the North and Middle Forks Boise River in this roadless area. The area contains species typical for ponderosa pine up to subalpine fir habitats. The area contains important security area for big game (elk and deer) and for species such as wolverine. Habitat for fisher, northern goshawk, white-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, great gray owl, and mountain quail exists or is

likely to exist in the area. Important winter range for elk and mule deer occurs along the Middle Fork and North Forks Boise River.

**Water:** The Breadwinner Roadless Area contains a portion of the North Fork Boise River, and the Middle Fork Boise River borders the area to the south. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Rush skeletonweed, a noxious weed, has infested an estimated 200 acres.

**Recreation:** Recreational use consists primarily of fall big-game hunting, some upland bird hunting, and some spring river floating and river fishing in the Middle and North Fork Boise River. There is some incidental hiking and backpacking in the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area includes about 77,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 155,400 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 8,600 acres (41 percent) are tentatively suited timberland, with 4,000 acres considered to have low productivity; 6,300 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** All of the roadless area is within a sheep allotment. There are no grazing improvements within the roadless area. There are 2,400 acres of capable sheep rangelands.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are currently 98 mining claims within the area. This roadless area contains 20,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides cougar and bear hunting opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** There are three trails in the area, including two motorized trails totaling about 5.7 miles and 1.5 miles of non-motorized trail.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. There are Civilian Conservation Corps structures, mining, and prehistoric sites documented along the Middle Fork Boise River.

**Disturbances:** There have been 13 recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences since 1960. An estimated 700 acres have burned by wildfire since then.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Breadwinner Roadless Area.

Table Breakwinner-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Breadwinner-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Breadwinner-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Breadwinner Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	20,500	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	16,600	16,600	16,600
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	3,900*	3,900*	3,900*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>20,500</b>	<b>20,500</b>	<b>20,500</b>	<b>20,500</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Breadwinner Roadless Area is 3000 acres as WSR, 500 acres as RNA and 400 acres managed under both WSR and RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Breadwinner-2. Potential activities

Breadwinner Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	16,600	16,600	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	20,500	16,600	16,600	16,600
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	20,500	16,600	16,600	16,600
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	16,600	16,600	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	20,500	16,600	16,600	16,600

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 16,600 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.



**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 16,600 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 16,600 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 16,600 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Burnt Log #035

23,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Burnt Log Roadless Area, on the Cascade Ranger District, lies about one mile north of Landmark. The area is accessed by the Horn Creek and Burnt Log Roads (Forest Roads 414 and 447), via the Warm Lake-Stanley Road (Forest Road 579). The area is also accessed by the McClure (089), Burnt Log (123), and Pistol Creek (087) Trails. The area has a very irregular shape, with long fingers and a narrow section adjoining the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

Elevations range from about 5,400 feet at the mouth of Burnt Log Creek to about 9,000 feet near Chilcoot Peak. In the lower portion of the Burnt Log Creek drainage, flat to gently rolling terrain drops off steeply into Johnson Creek. The area is dominated by lodgepole pine and subalpine fir, though stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir are found on lower, steep slopes. Overall, the Burnt Log Roadless Area is marked by flat ridge-tops and deep, steep V-shaped drainages.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of the Burnt Log Roadless Area is generally intact. There are short segments of three different forest roads within the roadless area, totaling 0.6 mile.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The area is fairly large, yet the extremely irregular and complex shape limits the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. As a result, many portions of the area are less than one mile wide, while the widest portion is less than 4 miles in width. Opportunities for solitude exist due to the complex and varied terrain, while the convoluted shape restricts opportunities for challenge or primitive recreation. A very narrow segment of the area is contiguous to the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

**Special Features:** About 700 acres of the 1,290 acre Chilcoot Peak Research Natural Area lies within this roadless area. A segment of Burnt Log Creek bisects the roadless area and is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 10.5 miles of the river and 3,100 acres of the river corridor occur within the roadless area. This roadless area also supports a small population of mountain goats. Chilcoot Creek and nearby Chilcoot Lake are areas of special recreational interest.

**Manageability:** Because of the very complex and irregular boundaries, it would be difficult to define and administer the area as a designated wilderness. More logical and definable boundaries could be drawn, but would result in a large reduction of acreage.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Peanut Creek, a tributary to Burnt Log Creek, supports westslope cutthroat trout. Burnt Log Creek supports westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout populations, and is used as spawning and rearing habitat by listed Chinook and steelhead. The roadless area encompasses portions of other streams in the Johnson Creek drainage that may also provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for listed Chinook, steelhead, bull trout, and cutthroat trout. The entire roadless area is within an area designated as critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon. An estimated 15.7 miles of stream are bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area, with increasing activity occurring since the augmentation program in the 1990s. Over 70 percent of this roadless area is potential lynx habitat. The roadless area provides relatively undisturbed and remote habitat that is very valuable for species. Fisher, a Region 4 sensitive species also occurs in this roadless area.

**Water:** There are a few scattered small bodies of water in the area. The area has a number of perennial streams in the Burnt Log Creek drainage that flow northwesterly to Johnson Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish, wildlife and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There has been few plant surveys conducted in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 187,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 369,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 21,300 acres (90 percent) of the Burnt Log Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 14,200 acres are considered to have low productivity and 8,800 acres are considered moderate productivity.

**Range:** A portion of one allotment encompasses about 80 percent of the roadless area. It is grazed by cattle and managed under a rest-rotation system. There are approximately 1,000 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area. The portion of the allotment within the roadless area receives moderate use and contains fences used for stock management.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are no mining claims in the area and the area is not considered a potential mineral development area. A portion of the roadless area is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 23,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. There is one outfitter-guide permit for big-game hunting and horse trail riding.

**Roads and Trails:** There are five trails within the roadless area, of which about 12 miles are motorized and 7.2 miles are non-motorized.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as moderate. Historic mining sites, Thunder Mountain Road, and prehistoric sites have been identified adjacent the area.

**Disturbances:** There have been six recorded wildfire ignitions or events since 1960 in the area, burning an estimated 1,900 acres.

#### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Burnt Log Roadless Area.

Table Burnt Log-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Burnt Log-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Burnt Log-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Burnt Log Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	23,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	19,900	19,900	19,900
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	3,800*	3,800*	3,800*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>23,700</b>	<b>23,700</b>	<b>23,700</b>	<b>23,700</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Burnt Log Roadless Area is 700 acres as RNA and 3100 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Burnt Log-2. Potential activities

Burnt Log Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	19,900	19,900	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	23,700	19,900	19,900	19,900
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	23,700	19,900	19,900	19,900
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	19,900	19,900	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	23,700	19,900	19,900	19,900

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 1,400 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources) and about 18,500 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance). Both prescriptions permit road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. The prescriptions do not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 19,900 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 19,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ. Therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 19,900 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Cathedral Rocks #038

8,200 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

In the previous Forest Plan, the Cathedral Rocks Roadless Area was as considered part of the larger Danskin Roadless Area. The area was and continues to be effectively segregated from the larger Danskin Roadless Area by Forest Road 165. Accordingly, the area has been made a separate, independent roadless area.

The Cathedral Rocks Roadless Area, in the Mountain Home Ranger District, is roughly bounded by the forest boundary on the south, and the South Fork Boise River on the north and east. This area lies about 35 miles east of Boise, and is accessed by Forest Roads 134 and 113 leading from State Highway 20.

Elevations range from 3,200 to 7,000 feet. The topography includes rolling to very steep hills, broadening into benches and valleys. Brush and grass communities, with scattered stands of ponderosa pine, dominate this area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** A primitive road network winds through the area. The northern portion retains its predominant natural appearance, while the southern portion is crossed by a number of primitive roads. There is a number of grazing developments in the form of water troughs or other water developments that detract from the natural appearance.

**Opportunities for Experience:** There are few opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation due to the relatively small size and the generally open terrain. The central portion narrows to about a mile in width.

**Special Features:** A segment of the South Fork Boise River lies adjacent to the eastern boundary and is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 1.5 miles of the river and 500 acres of the river corridor occur within the roadless area. Cathedral Rocks are a unique geological formation of special interest.

**Manageability:** The existing network of primitive roads could result in manageability problems with a wilderness designation. Much of the current boundaries occur along private/federal landlines.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams that are located in this area are Bock Creek, Menecke Creek, and Cayuse Creek. These streams are small with high gradients, but may provide some fish habitat during the spring and early summer. Usually, the flows decrease in late summer and fall to where the streams are too small to support a fish population. Bull trout habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf, although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity reported in the area. Habitat for wintering bald eagles occurs within the area. There is a historical nest site for peregrine falcon in the Cathedral Rocks area, but there has been no recorded nesting in the last 25 years. Only minor potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, and flammulated owl, due to past fires eliminating much of the nesting habitat. Potential habitat occurs for spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and the spotted frog. Historical habitat occurs for mountain quail. The roadless area provides security for big game and contains big-game winter range.

**Water:** A few perennial streams flow northeasterly to the South Fork Boise River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Leafy spurge, a noxious weed, has infested an estimated 26 acres.

**Recreation:** There are few recreational activities occurring in the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains 4,100 thousand board of standing timber volume, equivalent to 7,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 900 acres (11 percent) of the Cathedral Rocks roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 100 acres are considered to have low productivity; 900 acres, moderate productivity; and 100 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Portions of two cattle allotments cover the entire area. One is managed under a rest rotation system, and both have improvements such as water developments and fences within the roadless area. There are approximately 2,000 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are few mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 8,200 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no inventoried trails in the area.

**Heritage:** This area has had little previous survey; however, based upon the topography and sites found in the adjacent roaded areas, this roadless area appears to have moderate site sensitivity.

**Disturbances:** There have been 19 recorded wildfire occurrences or ignitions since 1960. Most of the acreage burned (8,000 acres) with the 1992 Foothills fire.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Cathedral Rocks Roadless Area.

Table Cathedral Rocks-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Cathedral Rocks-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Cathedral Rocks-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Cathedral Rocks Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	7,700	7,700	7,700
Similar to Backcountry	8,200	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	500*	500*	500*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>8,200</b>	<b>8,200</b>	<b>8,200</b>	<b>8,200</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Cathedral Rocks Roadless Area WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.



Table Cathedral Rocks-2. Potential activities

Cathedral Rocks Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	8,200	7,700	7,700	7,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	8,200	7,700	7,700	0
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	7,700	7,700	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	8,200	7,700	0	0

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 7,700 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction is prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 7,700 acres would allow limited timber for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 7,700 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in the Cathedral Rocks Roadless area because the area is not within 1½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting that occurs must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would likely maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.



## Cow Creek #028

14,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Cow Creek Roadless Area lies south and west of Arrowrock Reservoir, north of the Wood Creek Road, and east of the Grouse Creek Road. The northern boundary adjoins the Arrowrock Reservoir. The area is accessed from the Wood Creek Road and Grouse Creek Trail, via the Upper Black's Creek Road off Interstate 84. No trail access is present.

Elevations range from about 3,200 feet along the Middle Fork Boise River to about 5,000 feet. The area is underlain by Cretaceous granitics of the Idaho Batholith. Moderately steep lands with rounded ridge tops are strongly dissected and covered with open brush-grass communities. Overall, the area is marked by steep to rolling dry hills, broken by V-shaped canyons. No prominent features are present.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and apparent naturalness of the Cow Creek area is generally intact. There are approximately 50 stock tanks consisting of heavy equipment tires, scattered through the area that detract from the natural appearance. There are two segments of forest roads within the roadless area that total 3.76 miles. These roads penetrate to the interior of the roadless area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are affected by the lack of cover and views of adjacent development. A sense of solitude would be difficult to achieve from points where motorized use on Arrowrock Reservoir is readily observable.

**Special Features:** There are no identified special features.

**Manageability:** The area has some irregular boundaries that could be difficult to administer. Offsets from high water elevations of the reservoir could form fairly logical boundaries along most of the northern and eastern sides.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams of this area are Grouse, Cow, and Deadman Creeks. These streams are short and steep with intermittent flows. Grouse Creek is the largest stream and may have some redband rainbow trout in the lower reach. The fishery value of these streams is limited due to their small size. Bull trout habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity reported in the area. Bald eagles occur in this roadless area and there is an active eagle nest. Minor potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and white-headed woodpecker due to past fires eliminating nesting habitat. Potential habitat occurs for spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and spotted frog. Historical habitat occurs for mountain quail. The roadless area provides security for big game and contains big-game winter range.

**Water:** Perennials flow north and east to Arrowrock Reservoir and south to Wood Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. An estimated 940 acres are within a municipal watershed of United Water Idaho.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Rush skeletonweed has infested an estimated 2 acres of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Day hikers and fishermen accessing the South Fork Boise River use the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains 10,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 20,800 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 1000 acres (7 percent) of the Cow Creek Roadless Area contains

tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 800 acres are considered to have low productivity; 900 acres, moderate productivity; and 10 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** All of the area is within one sheep allotment managed under a rest rotation system. There is an intensive amount of water developments and some fencing. There are approximately 2,000 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** A small portion of the southwest corner of the roadless area has been identified as a low potential mineral development area. There are over 100 scattered mining claims in the southern portion of the roadless area. The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 14,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides cougar and bear hunting opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no inventoried system trails in the area.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Surveys in adjoining and overlapping areas, in similar topographic situations, indicate the area likely has a low site density.

**Disturbances:** There have been 11 recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. A total of 14,600 acres have burned in wildfires, with most of this attributed to the 1992 Foothills fire.

#### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Cow Creek Roadless Area. Table Cow Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Cow Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Cow Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Cow Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	14,700	14,700	14,700
Similar to Backcountry	14,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>14,700</b>	<b>14,700</b>	<b>14,700</b>	<b>14,700</b>

Table Cow Creek-2. Potential activities

Cow Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	14,700	14,700	14,700	14,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	14,700	14,700	14,700	900*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	14,700	14,700	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	14,700	14,700	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Roughly 900 acres of the Cow Creek Roadless Area are within the municipal watershed of United Water Idaho. If any wildland fire risk reduction activities occur in this roadless area, they are expected to take place within the municipal watershed area.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 14,700 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction is prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 14,700 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Rule, there are 14,700 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in or around the 900 acres of this roadless area that are within the municipal watershed of United Water Idaho. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. These activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

**Danskin #002****30,700 Acres****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

The Danskin Roadless Area, in the Mountain Home Ranger District, is roughly bounded by the forest boundary to the west, and the South Fork Boise River to the north and east. This area lies about 35 miles east of Boise, and is accessed by the Upper Black's Creek Road from Interstate 84. The area may also be accessed with off-highway vehicles throughout the Willow Creek area.

Elevations range from 3,200 to 7,000 feet. The topography includes rolling to very steep hills, broadening into benches and valleys. Brush and grass communities, with scattered stands of ponderosa pine, dominate this area. Overall, this area is marked by well-dissected rolling and steep hills, broke by v-shaped valleys. Danskin Peak (6,694 feet) lies west of the roadless area.

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of this area has been altered in many locations by an extensive network of all-terrain vehicle and motorcycle trails. There are 3.17 miles of forest roads within the roadless area. There are numerous scattered water troughs to facilitate grazing that also detract from the natural appearance.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are provided due to the large area and the complex broken terrain formed by the numerous drainages and streams flowing to the South Fork Boise River. The lack of vegetative screening on many of the arid slopes and upper elevations limits the available solitude. Currently motorized use on the popular off-road trail system interrupts the available solitude in much of the area. The large land area does provide opportunities for primitive recreation, while the harsh, arid summer climate challenges cross-country trekkers. The southeastern portion is almost effectively segregated by land ownership in holdings and adds little to the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation found in the rest of the area.

**Special Features:** The 600-acre Raspberry Gulch Research Natural Area occurs in the southeastern portion of the roadless area. A segment of the South Fork Boise River lies adjacent to the eastern boundary and is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 7.4 river miles and 1,900 corridor acres are within the roadless area. Approximately 300 acres of the Research Natural Area is within the river corridor.

**Manageability:** Due to the current and historical motorized use, management as designated wilderness with the accompanying motorized use restrictions could be unpopular with motorized user groups. A logical boundary adjustment to accommodate a wilderness designation would be the deletion of the southeastern portion (about 5,000 acres) that is effectively isolated by landownership exclusions. This portion also contains totally enclosed private parcels and primitive access roads that would add to the management difficulty.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** The main stream in this roadless area is Willow Creek, with tributaries of Beaver, Horse, and Packsaddle Creeks. Virtually all of the tributaries of Willow Creek are quite small with stream flows that are marginal for supporting fish life. Some of the small streams on the eastern side of this area may be providing spawning habitat for fish inhabiting the South Fork Boise River. Willow Creek contains a moderate-sized population of redband rainbow trout, but most of the tributaries are too small and intermittent to sustain fish populations. Bull trout habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf, although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity in the area. Wintering bald eagle habitat occurs within the area. Only minor potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, pileated

woodpecker, and white-headed woodpecker due to past fires that have eliminated much of the nesting habitat. Potential habitat occurs for spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and spotted frog. Historical habitat occurs for the mountain quail. The roadless area provides security for big game, and the area contains a considerable amount of big-game winter range.

**Water:** Willow Creek and associated streams drain the central portion of the area. Along the eastern boundary, perennial streams flow to the South Fork Boise River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Scotch thistle, a noxious weed, has infested an estimated 3 acres.

**Recreation:** The Danskin Mountains Trail Management Area occupies a large portion of this roadless area. The use is mainly motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle, although non-motorized uses are also gaining in popularity. There are hiking and horseback riding activities in the area. The area is a popular fall big-game hunting area; it also receives some upland bird hunting.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains 22,800 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 43,800 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 2,300 acres (8 percent) of the Danskin Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,100 acres are considered to have low productivity; 2,300 acres, moderate productivity; and 50 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** The Danskin Roadless Area contains portions of four active cattle allotments. All utilize a rest rotation system and have water developments and fences. There are approximately 6,100 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** Minerals present within the area include molybdenum, gold, silver, copper, lead, nitrate, asbestos, beryllium, and small amounts of uranium. The potential to develop these minerals is low to moderate. There are hundreds of mining claims located mainly in the western portion of the roadless area, which is a low potential mineral development area. This roadless area contains 30,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are three parcels of private land ownership totaling about 320 acres within the roadless area.

**Roads and Trails:** The area is noted for its extensive network of all-terrain vehicle and motorcycle trails. There are 59 trails with a total of 114 miles in the area. All are motorized trails.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Prehistoric isolates and historic habitations have been documented within the area.

**Disturbances:** There have been 23 recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. A total of 30,200 acres have burned in wildfires, with most of this attributed to the 1992 Foothills fire.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Danskin Roadless Area.

Table Danskin-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Danskin-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Danskin-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Danskin Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	28,500	28,500	28,500
Similar to Backcountry	30,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,200*	2,200*	2,200*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>30,700</b>	<b>30,700</b>	<b>30,700</b>	<b>30,700</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Danskin Roadless Area is 1600 acres as WSR, 1600 acres as RNA and 300 acres as both WSR and RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Danskin-2. Potential activities

Danskin Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	30,700	28,500	28,500	28,500
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	30,700	28,500	28,500	0
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire		28,500	28,500	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	30,700	28,500	0	0

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 28,500 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction is prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 28,500 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless



characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 28,500 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in the Cathedral Rocks Roadless area because the area is not within 1½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting activities that occur must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Deadwood #020

52,500 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Deadwood Roadless Area, on the Lowman and Emmett Ranger District, encompasses the Deadwood River drainage from the Deadwood Reservoir to the confluence of the South Fork Payette River. The area is bounded by the Scott Mountain Road (Forest Road 555) on the west and Deadwood Ridge on the east, and is accessed by the Banks-Lowman Highway (Forest Highway 17). The area is also accessed by the Deadwood Ridge (019) and Julie Creek (020) trails.

Elevations range from about 3,800 feet along the South Fork Payette River to 7,066 feet at Deadwood Mountain. This roadless area is underlain by granitics of the Idaho Batholith. Lands at lower elevations are moderately steep and dry, while those at higher elevations are steeper, moister, and more strongly dissected by streams. Steep, rugged canyons enclose the Deadwood River. Sagebrush-grass communities with stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir abound at lower elevations, while dense stands of lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, and subalpine fir dominate in higher areas.

Overall, the Deadwood Roadless Area is steep, rugged, and remote. Prominent features include the Deadwood River Canyon, Stevens Point (6,640 feet), Deadwood Mountain, and Deadwood Ridge.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Natural appearance and integrity of this roadless area is intact. There is some evidence of salvage logging in the southeast portion within the Clear Creek drainage.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The large land mass and the complex mountainous terrain broken by the numerous drainages flowing to the Deadwood River, and the Deadwood River Canyon provide opportunities for solitude and remoteness. Opportunities for primitive recreation are good, especially along the Deadwood River, and the ruggedness of the canyon provides challenging recreation experiences.

**Special Features:** The lower portion of the Deadwood River bisects the roadless area. The South Fork Payette River lies adjacent to the southern boundary. These river segments are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are an estimated 13.4 river miles and 4,500 river corridor acres within the roadless area. A portion of a Research Natural Area (about 600 acres) is located in this roadless area.

**Manageability:** Some minor boundary adjustments would be desirable to facilitate identification and management if the area were to be designated wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams draining the Deadwood Roadless Area are within the Upper South Fork Payette River bull trout key watershed (State of Idaho 1996). The lower Deadwood River bisects the Deadwood Roadless Area. Lower Deadwood River potentially serves as the only migratory corridor between the isolated populations of bull trout in Scott and Warm Springs Creeks. The Scott Creek population is located within this roadless area. Given the occurrence of a strong migratory population of bull trout in Clear Creek, the lower Deadwood may also provide feeding habitat or a migratory corridor for large migratory bull trout.

Scott, Ninemile, and No Man Creek, and the lower Deadwood River provide spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow trout throughout much of their extent. Many of the other streams within this roadless area--such as Lorenzo, Nellie's Basin, Meadow Camp Creek and several unnamed streams--provide spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow where they join the Deadwood River. All of these streams are too steep to provide fish habitat beyond a few hundred meters from their confluence with the Deadwood River. This roadless area also borders Clear Creek, and many tributaries of Clear Creek originate within this roadless area. Clear Creek is of special note because it contains the only



documented strong migratory population of bull trout within South Fork Payette River drainage. The area contains an estimated 4.1 miles of streams with bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves are known to occur within this area. Bald eagles can be found along the lower portion of Deadwood River and along the South Fork Payette River from mid-October to April. Fish from these rivers and carrion found on adjacent ungulate winter ranges are primary sources of food for wintering eagles. In addition, the Deadwood River corridor at the north end of the roadless area may provide a source of food for breeding bald eagles prior to ice melt at Deadwood Reservoir. Potential habitat for lynx, wolverine, and fisher occurs, however their presence in the area is unknown. Wolverine denning habitat has been identified in the area. An estimated 35 percent of the area contains potential lynx habitat.

The roadless area provides relatively secluded habitat important to these species. Fisher, wolverine, boreal owl, great gray owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, Townsend's bigeared bat, spotted bat, and spotted frog are Region 4 sensitive species that are known to occur or could potentially occur within the roadless area. The area provides summer and fall habitat for elk and mule deer. The roadless area provides security areas for elk and deer during hunting seasons. Lower-elevation slopes along the Deadwood and South Fork Payette Rivers provide wintering areas for elk, deer, and moose.

**Water:** The Deadwood Roadless Area has a number of perennial streams that flow to the Deadwood River. Along the east boundary a few perennials flow to Clear Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Rush skeletonweed, a noxious weed, has infested an estimated 4,100 acres of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The roadless area receives backcountry fall big-game hunting use concentrated mostly in the areas adjacent to trails and roads. Fall hunting is the predominant recreational use. A few trails in the area receive some mountain bike use. Some of the trails, particularly the Deadwood Ridge Trail, are popular hiking trails as well.

**Timber:** The area includes an estimated 339,700 thousand board feet of standing timber, equivalent to 662,700 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 40,700 acres (78 percent) of the Deadwood Roadless Area are considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 16,700 acres have low productivity; 20,600 acres, moderate productivity; and 50 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Portions of 3 different allotments cover approximately 50 percent of the roadless area. These allotments are vacant sheep grazing allotments. Deadwood has 4,500 acres of capable sheep rangeland.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are currently 177 scattered mining claims in the area. The southwestern portion is part of an identified moderate potential mineral development area. The area also has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 52,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no other private or state land within the roadless area. There is a television translator and buried power line in the area. One outfitter-guide service provides big game (deer and elk) and bear and cougar hunting trips in the area. Another outfitter-guide provides big game (deer and elk) hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides in the area. There is a permitted seismic monitoring station east of Scott Mountain Lookout.

**Roads and Trails:** There is a popular network of motorized trails in the area that receives a moderate amount of motorized trail bike and all-terrain vehicle use. There are segments of four motorized trails in the area totaling about 24.5 miles.

**Heritage:** The area has a low to moderate cultural resource sensitivity based on the topography. There are documented prehistoric, historic, and mining sites in the vicinity.

**Disturbances:** There have been eight recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. About 800 acres have burned in wildfires. There have been high infestations of Douglas-fir beetle along the southeast side in the Clear Creek drainage.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Deadwood Roadless Area.

Table Deadwood-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Deadwood-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Deadwood-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Deadwood Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	29,100	29,100	29,100	
Similar to Backcountry	52,500	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	18,300	18,300	CPZ	500
				NonCPZ	17,800
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	5,100*	5,100*	5,100*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>52,500</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Deadwood Roadless Area is 3400 acres as WSR, 500 acres as RNA and 200 acres as both WSR and RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

**Table Deadwood-2. Potential activities**

Deadwood Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	18,300	18,300	500*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	52,500	47,400	47,400	47,400
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	52,500	47,400	47,400	18,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	47,400	47,400	500*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	52,500	47,400	18,300	18,300

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 17,800 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 29,100 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 18,300 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). For the 29,100 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1 c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For the 18,300 acres under prescription 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For both the acres under 4.1c and 3.2, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are not permitted for this purpose.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule, 29,100 acres would fall under the Primitive theme and 18,300 acres under the Backcountry theme. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 29,100 acres under the Primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

For the 18,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under either management theme since it is not allowed under the Primitive theme and roads are not permitted for mineral leases under the Backcountry theme. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 29,100 acres under the Primitive theme and 18,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, 500 of which are in the CPZ. Within the Backcountry acres that are within the CPZ, timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 17,800 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 18,300 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited in the 29,100 acres of the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in the Primitive theme portions of the Deadwood Roadless area because the area is not within 1½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting activities that occur must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Elk Creek #022

15,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Elk Creek Roadless Area, in the Lowman Ranger District, is bordered by Bear Valley Creek on the east, Elk Creek on the north and Bearskin Creek on the west and south. The roadless area is accessed from the Clear Creek/Bear Valley Creek Road (Forest Road 582) via State Highway 21, and Warm Lake-Stanley Highway (Forest Road 579) via State Highway 55 or State Highway 21. The area is also accessed by Sheep Creek Trail, used by hunters and livestock permittees.

Elevations range from 6,500 feet to 7,700 feet. Steep slopes at lower elevations are vegetated with scattered to dense stands of lodgepole pine. At higher elevations and on northern exposures, subalpine fir dominates. Overall, the Elk Creek Roadless Area is marked by rolling, mountainous terrain dissected by Sheep Trail Creek and Cook Creek. A prominent landmark is Cook Creek Ridge on the northern end of the area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and apparent naturalness of this roadless area are relatively intact, since few activities have occurred in this area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are moderate because of the relatively small size of the area, and the proximity to developed areas; however, the rugged and forested nature of the area tends to counter these limitations.

**Special Features:** Segments of Elk Creek and Bear Valley Creek lie adjacent or within the northern and eastern roadless area boundaries. These creeks are eligible for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers. There are an estimated 8.3 river miles and 2,300 corridor acres within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The creeks that border the area on the north and to the east make fairly logical and definable boundaries for management. Forest Road 564 makes a deep intrusion into the area from the west, which makes the northern portion a long narrow area generally separated from the main body of the inventoried area. This road has made irregular boundaries that would benefit from adjustments to create a more manageable and definable boundary location if the area were to be designated wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Except for some minor headwater segments, this roadless area contains all of Sheep Trail Creek, which flows into Bear Valley Creek at the roadless area boundary, and all of Cook Creek, which flows into Elk Creek at the roadless area boundary. The northwestern boundary of the roadless area roughly follows the lower 2 miles of Bearskin Creek. The northern boundary roughly follows the lower 5 miles of Elk Creek, almost to its confluence with Bear Valley Creek. The eastern boundary roughly follows 8 miles of Bear Valley Creek, to within a half mile of Elk Creek.

Bear Valley Creek and Elk Creek both serve as spawning and rearing habitat for listed spring/summer Chinook salmon and steelhead trout, although most steelhead spawning is believed to take place further down stream in Bear Valley Creek. Bearskin Creek historically served as Chinook spawning habitat, but because of stream habitat changes, today Bearskin Creek serves only as rearing habitat. The lower ends of other perennial streams may also serve as rearing habitat for both Chinook and steelhead. The entire roadless area has been designated as critical habitat for salmon. An estimated 17.1 miles of streams have salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat.

The portion of Elk Creek adjacent to this roadless area, and the portion of Bear Valley Creek downstream of Cache Creek, serves as nodal or migratory habitat for listed bull trout. Bearskin Creek, the portion of Bear Valley Creek above Cache Creek, Sheep Trail Creek, and Cook Creek serve as adjunct habitat, meaning that they could provide spawning and rearing habitat. Bull trout have been found in portions of

Sheep Trail Creek and Bearskin Creek, but do not represent population strongholds. There is spawning and rearing habitat for cutthroat trout.

**Wildlife:** Boreal owl, great gray owl, northern goshawk, and spotted frog are sensitive species that are known to occur or could potentially occur within the roadless area. Gray wolves are known to occur within this area. The complex of wet meadows and adjacent forest cover with high elk use make this area potentially suitable for denning and rendezvous habitat. Potential habitat for wolverine and fisher occurs; however, their presence in the area is unknown. Great gray owls and northern goshawks are known to breed in the roadless area or in similar habitats immediately adjacent to the roadless area.

**Water:** Perennial streams in the area flow to Elk Creek and Bear Valley Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** There have been few plant surveys conducted in the area. No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The roadless area receives typical backcountry fall big-game hunting use, concentrated mostly in the areas adjacent to the Cook Ridge Road. The area receives little other recreational use. There are no recreation trails in the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 120,700 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 239,600 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 14,200 acres (95 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 9,600 acres are considered to have low productivity; and about 4,600 acres are considered moderate productivity.

**Range:** There are no open grazing allotments in the area. There are a number of short drift fences within the area. There are approximately 700 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are a few scattered mining claims in the area. The area is not an identified potential mineral development area. The roadless area does have some areas considered fair to good for common variety sand and gravel deposits. This roadless area contains 15,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides bear and cougar hunting trips in the area, while another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as moderate. Numerous prehistoric and historic mining sites have been identified adjacent to and within the area.

**Disturbances:** There have been 14 recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. Approximately 400 acres have burned in wildfires.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Elk Creek Roadless Area.

Table Elk Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Elk Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Elk Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Elk Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	15,000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	12,700	12,700	12,700
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,300*	2,300*	2,300*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>15,000</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Elk Creek Roadless Area is 2300 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Elk Creek -2. Potential activities

Elk Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	12,700	12,700	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	15,000	12,700	12,700	12,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	15,000	12,700	12,700	12,700
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	12,700	12,700	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	15,000	12,700	12,700	12,700

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan 12,700 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.1 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.



**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 12,700 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 12,700 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 12,700 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Grand Mountain #007

14,500 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Grand Mountain Roadless Area, on the Idaho City Ranger District, lies between Barber Flat and Dutch Creek, northeast of Boise. The area is bordered with the Barber Flat Road and the North Fork Boise River on the west and the Swanholm drainage on the east. The area is accessed by the Middle Fork Boise River Road and North Fork Boise River Road from State Highway 21.

Elevations range from about 3,860 feet at Alexander Flats to 7,264 atop Grand Mountain. The Middle Fork Boise River drainage is characterized by shallow to steep granitic stream-cut lands dominated by open stands of brush-grass communities. About 60 percent of the area has slopes greater than 60 percent. Lands drained by the North Fork Boise River are strongly dissected, granitic lands dominated by dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Steep, dry peaks and valleys are the dominant landforms.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Generally, the area retains its natural integrity and natural appearance. There are short segments of three forest roads within the roadless area totaling 0.4 mile.

**Opportunities for Experience:** There are opportunities for solitude and remoteness. The rugged terrain provides some opportunities for challenging recreation experiences. The opportunities are somewhat limited due to the shape of the area that narrows down to less than a half mile wide in the central portion. This irregular and disjointed shape affects the continuity of the area and limits the sense of remoteness and the available challenge of backcountry travel.

**Special Features:** A segment of the Middle Fork Boise River lies adjacent to the southern boundary. This river segment is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 700 acres of the river corridor occurs within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The area has some fairly irregular and complex boundaries. Manageability as a designated wilderness would benefit from simplified boundaries that could be created with little acreage difference.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams located in this area are Beaver, Browns, and Granite Creek. These are relatively small, steep, and rapid-flowing streams that contain moderate-sized populations of redband rainbow trout. They do not contain bull trout. The adjacent Middle Fork Boise River is an important bull trout stream that provides habitat for migration, rearing, and wintering.

**Wildlife:** The roadless area provides an important security area for big game (deer and elk) and is surrounded by highly roaded areas for the most part. The area forms an important link between unroaded areas to the south and the Sawtooth Wilderness for species such as pine martin and wolverine. There is a minor amount of potential lynx habitat (200 acres). There is identified habitat for fisher, northern goshawk, white-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, and northern three toed woodpeckers. Winter range for elk and mule deer occurs primarily along the Middle Fork Boise River.

**Water:** There are a number of perennial streams in the area that flow mostly southerly to the Middle Fork Boise River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Minor amounts (less than 1 acre each) of St. Johnswort and Dalmation toadflax occur in the area.

**Recreation:** The area has low recreation use. There is some fall big-game hunting and some upland bird hunting in the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area has an estimated 65,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to about 129,500 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 6,900 acres (48 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 5,000 acres are considered to have low productivity; 3,000 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,800 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** All of the area is within a sheep allotment. There are no grazing improvements within the roadless area. There are approximately 2,400 acres of capable sheep rangeland.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are 14 mining claims in the Grand Mountain area. There are known geothermal locations along the adjacent Middle Fork Boise River. This roadless area contains 14,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides cougar and bear hunting opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** There are two motorized trails totaling about 5 miles.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. There are Civilian Conservation Corps structures, and mining and prehistoric sites documented in the vicinity.

**Disturbances:** There have been seven recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. An estimated 1,500 acres have burned in wildfires, with most of this attributed to the 1992 Foothills fire. Past insect and disease activity have affected approximately 90 percent of the roadless area. Most of the conifer vegetation has had some defoliation, and there are scattered pockets of mortality.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Grand Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Grand Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Grand Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Grand Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Grand Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	14,500	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	13,800	13,800	CPZ	1,000
				NonCPZ	12,800
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	700*	700*	700*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>14,500</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Grand Mountain Roadless Area is 2300 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.]

Table Grand Mountain -2. Potential activities

Grand Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	13,800	13,800	1000*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat	14,500	13,800	13,800	13,800
Timber cutting to restore ecosystem structure to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	14,500	13,800	13,800	13,800
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire to communities	0	13,800	13,800	1000*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	14,500	13,800	13,800	13,800

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 12,800 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan 13,800 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 13,800 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 13,800 acres under the Backcountry theme, 1,000 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 12,800 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 13,800 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Grimes Pass #017

13,300 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Grimes Pass Roadless Area, in the Emmett Ranger District, extends from the Grimes Pass Road (Forest Road 382) to Rock Creek, south of the South Fork Payette River. The area is accessed from the Banks-Lowman Highway (Forest Road 17) via State Highway 55 and the Grimes Creek Road via State Highway 21. The Grimes Pass Roadless Area is underlain by Cretaceous granitics of the Idaho Batholith.

Elevations range from about 3,500 feet to 7,000 feet. Strongly dissected fluvial lands are vegetated with moderate to dense stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. Overall, the Grimes Pass Roadless Area has steep slopes and deep ravines. Dense timber stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine are interspersed with brushy areas and rock outcrops.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of this roadless area have been somewhat affected by scattered evidence of old mining roads and old diggings. There are segments of five different forest roads within the roadless area totaling 2.1 miles.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude, primitive recreation, and challenging experiences are somewhat limited because of this area's narrow and irregular shape, which confines use. The steep and rugged terrain provides considerable challenge to cross country foot travel and the broken terrain allows for seclusion and solitude.

**Special Features:** A segment of the South Fork Payette River lies adjacent and within the northern boundary. This river segment is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 6.5 river miles and 2,000 eligible corridor acres occur within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The Grimes Pass area could be more easily managed if the boundary were changed to eliminate that portion west of the Grayback/Bear Creek Ridge. However, the size and shape of the area are not well suited for wilderness management.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This roadless area contains a portion of the South Fork Payette River from Rock Creek, downstream to Sweet Creek. This portion of the river does not provide spawning habitat for listed bull trout but is identified as a nodal habitat (migrational and over-winter rearing). This portion of the river also provides a migration corridor that bull trout use to access spawning and rearing habitat outside the Grimes Pass Roadless Area. The South Fork Payette River within the Grimes Pass Roadless Area provides rearing habitat for redband rainbow trout.

This roadless area also includes several tributaries to the South Fork Payette River that flow in from the south. These tributaries have not been surveyed due to lack of access and because the natural channel morphology of these tributaries is steep, high gradient, and cascading. Therefore, it is not likely that these tributaries provide habitat for bull trout due to elevation, drainage size, and access limitations. Some of these tributaries most likely contain spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow trout.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves may occur within this area. Bald eagles winter along the South Fork Payette River. Fish from the river and carrion found on ungulate winter range provide the primary sources of food. Potential habitat for lynx, wolverine, and fisher occurs; however, their presence in the area is unknown. An estimated 13 percent of the area is potential lynx habitat. The roadless area provides relatively secluded habitat important to these species. Boreal owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, white headed woodpecker, three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog are sensitive species that are known to occur or could potentially occur within the roadless area. The area provides summer and fall habitat for elk and mule deer. Most of the area provides important winter range, with the lower elevation and south

aspects in Rock Creek receiving the most use. The roadless area provides security areas for elk and deer during hunting seasons.

**Water:** The Grimes Pass Roadless Area has a number of perennial streams that flow northerly to the South Fork Payette River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. This roadless area contains 1,600 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Rush skeletonweed has infested an estimated 14 acres of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The roadless area receives backcountry fall big-game hunting use that is concentrated mostly in the areas adjacent to trails and roads, but the area receives little other recreational use. There are no recreation trails in the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area includes an estimated 112,800 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 218,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 10,800 acres (81 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 2,500 acres have low timber productivity; 8,200 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,200 acres, high productivity

**Range:** There are no open allotments or capable grazing lands within the roadless area. There are 300 acres of capable sheep rangeland in this roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** The Pine Creek Camp and AMAX molybdenum prospects are located in this area. There are known geothermal sites along the adjacent South Fork Payette River. Most of the roadless area is identified as an area of potential mineral development. There are over 600 mining claims in the roadless area. This roadless area contains 13,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands in the area. One outfitter-guide service provide cougar and bear hunting trips in the area, four river outfitting companies provide river trips on the South Fork Payette, and one river outfitter has an assigned camp site just within the roadless boundary. There is a special use permit for an Idaho Power transmission line at a short segment along the roadless boundary.

**Heritage:** There is a high probability that historic cultural resources can be found in this roadless area because mining has occurred since the late 1800s. The area is included in the Boise Historic Mining District. Homesteads, mining, and prehistoric sites have been recorded in the vicinity.

**Disturbances:** There are high incidences of Douglas-fir mistletoe on the north slopes facing the South Fork Payette River.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Grimes Pass Roadless Area.

Table Grimes Pass-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Grimes Pass-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



**Table Grimes Pass-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Grimes Pass Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	13,300	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	9,600	9,600	CPZ	3,500
				NonCPZ	6,100
GFRG	0	1,700	1,700	1,700	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,000*	2,000*	2,000*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>13,300</b>	<b>13,300</b>	<b>13,300</b>	<b>13,300</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Grimes Pass Roadless Area is 2000 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

**Table Grimes Pass-2. Potential activities**

Grimes Pass Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	11,300	11,300	5,200*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	13,300	11,300	11,300	11,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	13,300	11,300	11,300	11,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	11,300	11,300	5,200*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	1,700	1,700	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	13,300	11,300	11,300	11,300

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 6,100 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 400 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), about 1,300 acres would be managed under prescription 5.2 (commodity production emphasis within forested landscapes) and 9,600 acres would be managed under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources).

For prescription 5.2 roads are generally permitted and timber harvest can occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term since the management emphasis is the sustainable production of goods and services.

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in the wildland urban interface, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 9,600 acres under prescription 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 9,600 acres under prescription 3.2, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 1,700 acres under prescriptions 5.1 and 5.2, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Grimes Pass Roadless Area contains 13,300 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 9,600 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 1,700 acres would fall under the GFRG theme. For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

For the 1,700 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Grimes Pass Roadless Area, the area does contain 13,300 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 1,700 acres under the GFRG theme and 9,600 acres under the Backcountry theme, 3,500 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities

would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be designed to be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 6,100 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 9,600 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 1,700 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Existing plan forest-wide management direction would still apply. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter the roadless characteristics on the 1,700 acres in GFRG over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or GFRG theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Hawley Mountain #018

7,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Hawley Mountain Roadless Area, in the Idaho City and Emmett Ranger Districts, lies between the Quartzburg exclusion and the forest boundary. This roadless area is accessed from the Jerusalem area off State Highway 55. No trail access is present.

Elevations range from 4,400 feet to 7,301 feet atop Hawley Mountain. Some strongly dissected granitic fluvial lands are vegetated with moderate to dense stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, while other lands include brush-grass communities interspersed with scattered stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine. Much of the area was burned during a wildfire in the 1960s and is currently vegetated with dense brush, young ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Overall, this area is marked by large areas of heavy brush, with smaller areas of heavy Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and grand fir. Hawley Mountain is the area's most prominent landmark.

The Hawley Mountain fire Lookout is staffed through a cooperative agreement with the State of Idaho. The lookout and access road has been excluded from the roadless area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and apparent naturalness of the Hawley Mountain area have been affected in some areas by past fire control activities such as constructed fire lines and segments of primitive roads. There are segments of three forest roads within the roadless area totaling 1.58 miles. These roads extend into the central portion of the roadless area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude, primitive recreation, and challenging experiences are limited somewhat by the relatively small size of the area. The rugged terrain and remote location of the area does provide for a degree of solitude and remoteness. The narrowness of the area (most of the area is less than 2 miles in width) tends to confine and limit use.

**Special Features:** No special features have been identified in this area.

**Manageability:** Some minor boundary adjustments would facilitate management as a designated wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This roadless area contains portions of headwater tributaries of the South Fork Payette River (Charters Creek and Coski Creek) and Alder Creek (Schilling, McKinzie, Longs, Bunches, and West Fork Creeks). The only surveyed stream within this roadless area is West Fork Creek, a headwater tributary to Alder Creek. Redband rainbow trout have been found within West Fork Creek and could potentially occur within Bunches, Longs, and Shilling Creeks within this roadless area. Coski and Charters Creeks within this roadless area have not been surveyed; potential fish presence is questionable since these are headwater tributaries of small streams. It is not likely that any of these tributaries within the roadless area provide habitat for bull trout due to drainage size and access limitations. Bull trout habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Suitable habitat for federally listed endangered species is limited within this roadless area. Species such as the gray wolf and lynx may occur within the roadless area; however, occurrence of these species is probably related to dispersing individuals. There is no identified lynx habitat in the roadless area. Bald eagle and peregrine falcon habitat does not exist within the area. Habitat for Region 4 sensitive species such as white headed woodpecker, great gray owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and northern three-toed woodpecker is identified in the area. The area provides some elk and deer winter range. Habitat for pileated woodpecker nesting exists in the northern and southern portion of this area.

**Water:** The area has perennial streams that flow easterly to Alder Creek and southeasterly to Granite Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. This roadless area contains 900 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. A minor amount of Rush skeletonweed occurs in the area (less than 1 acre).

**Recreation:** The area receives moderate use during the fall big-game hunting season, but there is little other recreational use.

**Timber:** The area has an estimated 33,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 68,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 6,400 acres (83 percent) of the Hawley Mountain Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,900 acres have low productivity; 3,600 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,100 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There are portions of two active cattle allotments covering approximately 75 percent of the area. The area has about 400 acres of capable cattle rangeland in this roadless area and 50 acres of capable sheep rangeland.

**Minerals and Energy:** The general area around Hawley Mountain Roadless Area includes some of the first mineral developments in the Boise Basin. There are currently 27 scattered mining claims in the area. The roadless area is not identified as a potential mineral development area. This roadless area contains 7,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide service provides cougar and bear hunting trips in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no trails in the area.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Surveys in the adjoining and overlapping areas, in similar topographic situations, indicate the area has a low site density.

**Disturbances:** There have been two recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. Approximately 3,600 acres have burned in wildfires, with most of this attributed to the 1966 Charter Mountains fire.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Hawley Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Hawley Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Hawley Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Hawley Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Hawley Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	7,700	7,700	7,700
Similar to Backcountry	7,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>

Table Hawley Mountain-2. Potential activities

Hawley Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	7,700	7,700	7,700	100*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	7,700	7,700	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	7,700	7,700	0	0

\* Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Some activities are expected to occur in the 100 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 7,000 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction is prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule timber cutting is prohibited on 7,700 acres in the Primitive theme, except where done for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 7,700 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. About 100 acres of the Primitive theme are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system; any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in these areas. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.



## House Mountain #001

25,600 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The House Mountain Roadless Area, on the Mountain Home Ranger District, lies about 37 miles north of Mountain Home, northeast of Boise. The area is accessed from a two-lane graveled road that parallels the South Fork Boise River on the area's southern boundary. Access is also provided from Forest Road 137, the Smith Prairie Road on the west, and the Castle Creek Road on the east.

Elevations within this area range from 3,200 to 7,700 feet, and most slopes are steep, dry and non-forested. About two-thirds of the area contains slopes over 40 percent. Sagebrush with an understory of forbs predominates on southern slopes, while scattered stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine with understories of dense brush or grass prevail on northern slopes. Overall, the area has steep, dry peaks and valleys. House Mountain (elevation 7,700 feet) lies along the roadless area's northern boundary, and Anderson Ranch Reservoir and Dam lie about one mile east of the roadless area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of the House Mountain area is intact as little evidence of man's activity exists. There are short segments of three different forest roads just within the roadless area boundaries. These segments total 0.6 miles.

**Opportunities for Experience:** There are moderate opportunities provided for solitude or remoteness. The lack of vegetative screening limits solitude in some locations. Views to the roads and other activities outside of the area readily occur in many locations. Opportunities for primitive recreation or challenging experiences are enhanced with the rugged terrain of the area.

**Special Features:** The South Fork Boise River lies adjacent to the southern and southwestern boundary. This river is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation with a recreational classification. An estimated 800 acres of this river corridor occurs within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** There are some very irregular boundaries in the northern portion that would create some management complexity. Many of the other boundaries are formed by other private or state lands ownership.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This unit has several short, small streams with limited amounts of water that drain into the South Fork Boise River. The main streams in the area are Pierce, Rock, and Elk Creeks. Pierce Creek has a population of redband rainbow trout that is small but self-sustaining at this time. Rock Creek has a population of cutthroat trout that are isolated from the South Fork Boise River by cascades and waterfalls near the mouth of the stream. Bull trout habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity reported in the area. Wintering bald eagle habitat occurs within the area, and the area contains bald eagle nesting habitat. Minor lynx and wolverine habitat occur in the area. Potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, white-headed woodpecker, pileated woodpecker, spotted bat and Townsend's big-eared bat. Known spotted frog populations occur. Historical habitat for mountain quail occurs. The roadless area provides security for big game and contains big-game winter range primarily in the south and west portions adjacent to the South Fork Boise River.

**Water:** Numerous perennial streams drain east and southeast to Anderson Ranch Reservoir, while others drain westerly to the South Fork Boise River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.



**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered or sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Two noxious weeds, leafy spurge, and yellow toadflax, have infested an estimated 10 acres of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is primarily big-game hunting dispersed camping, and fishing.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains 65,200 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 135,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 10,800 acres (42 percent) of the roadless area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,800 acres are considered to have low productivity; 5,500 acres, moderate productivity; and 3,800 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There are two sheep allotments that cover about 80 percent of the area, and two cattle allotments that cover the remaining 20 percent of the area. One cattle allotment has a few water developments and fences, and the other has no improvements. There are approximately 2,300 acres of capable cattle rangeland and 3,500 acres of capable sheep rangeland in this roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. There has been no mining activity in the past. There are currently 75 scattered mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 25,600 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** No private or state land occurs within the roadless area. There are two outfitter-guide permittees that operate in the area; one is permitted for cougar and bear hunting, and the other for bear hunting only.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 4.7 miles of motorized trails in the area.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Surveys in adjoining and overlapping area, in similar topographic situations, indicate the area likely has a low site density.

**Disturbances:** There have been no areas burned by wildfire since 1960. Douglas-fir bark beetle populations continue to be active at above endemic levels and are most pronounced where defoliation occurred by the Douglas-fir tussock moth in the early 1990s. Evidence of western pine and spruce beetle activity exists mainly east of House Mountain.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the House Mountain Roadless Area.

Table House Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table House Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table House Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

House Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	24,800	24,800	24,800
Similar to Backcountry	25,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	800*	800*	800*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>25,600</b>	<b>25,600</b>	<b>25,600</b>	<b>25,600</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the House Mountain Roadless Area is 800 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table House Mountain-2. Potential activities

House Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	25,600	24,800	24,800	24,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	25,600	24,800	24,800	600*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	24,800	24,800	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	25,600	24,800	0	0

\* Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Such activities are expected to occur in the 600 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 -½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 24,800 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction is prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 24,800 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights; therefore there would be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 24,800 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. About 600 acres of the Primitive theme area are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system; any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in these areas. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Lost Man Creek #041

12,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Lost Man Creek Roadless Area is a recently delineated roadless area that was identified during a 1999 roadless area inventory update for the Forest Plan Revision. The Lost Man Creek Roadless Area, in the Mountain Home and Idaho City Ranger Districts, lies about 12 miles west of Atlanta, northeast of Boise. The area is bordered by the Middle Fork Boise River to the north, Roaring River to the west, and Phifer Creek to the east. The area is accessed from the Middle Fork Boise River Road from State Highway 21.

Elevations range from 4,200 feet along the Boise River to 7,600 feet in the southeast corner. The area has complex drainage patterns formed by drainages to the north, west, and east. Primary streams in the interior of the area are Lost Man Creek and Deadman Creek. Lands drained by the Middle Fork Boise River are strongly dissected, granitic lands dominated by dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir.

Overall the area is characterized by steep rugged terrain, with complex drainage patterns eventually leading to the Middle Fork Boise River. The terrain is generally forested and dominated with stands of mixed conifer, ponderosa pine, and Douglas-fir.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Generally, the area retains its natural integrity and natural appearance.

**Opportunities for Experience:** There are opportunities for solitude and remoteness. The rugged terrain provides numerous opportunities for challenging recreation experiences. The size of the area provides ample opportunities for solitude, and the complex terrain and vegetative screening provide opportunities for isolation and visual screening.

**Special Features:** A segment of the Middle Fork Boise River lies adjacent to the northern boundary. This river segment is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 4.3 miles of the river and 700 acres of the river corridor occur within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The area has fairly logical boundaries along the north, east, and west formed by roads paralleling river drainages. The southern portion of the area has some irregular boundaries formed by past timber harvest areas and timber access roads. Manageability as a designated wilderness would benefit from simplified boundaries in the southern portion of the unit.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams located in this area are Lost Man Creek, Buck Creek, Phifer Creek, and Roaring River. All these streams are tributaries to the Middle Fork Boise River. Both occupied (focal) and unoccupied (adjunct) bull trout spawning and rearing habitat are present in the area. In addition to bull trout, redband/rainbow trout, and sculpin are present. The Middle Fork Boise River is important nodal (migration and over-wintering) habitat for bull trout, over-wintering habitat for adult redband/rainbow trout, and habitat for sculpin, whitefish, and suckers.

**Wildlife:** The area provides potential habitat for a number of sensitive wildlife species. Sensitive species likely to be found include mountain quail, northern goshawk, spotted frog, flammulated owl, and white-headed woodpecker. Wolverines have been sited wandering in the Trinity area, and these sightings have been confirmed with radio-collared wolverines. It is likely wolverines pass through this roadless area to get to the Trinities. Potential three-toed woodpecker habitat occurs in the roadless area. There have been fisher sightings along the Middle Fork Boise River. It is likely that the area provides foraging habitat for the Townsend big-eared and spotted bats. In general the area provides potential habitat for most or all current Region 4 sensitive species that occur on the Boise National Forest. At this time, there is no known

wolf pack activity occurring in the area. Lynx habitat occurs in the southeastern and central portions of the area, equating to approximately 18 percent of the roadless area.

**Water:** There are a number of perennial streams in the area that flow mostly northerly to the Middle Fork Boise River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are some minor amounts (0.04 acre) of rush skeletonweed, a noxious weed, identified in the area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is low. There is some fall big-game hunting and some upland bird hunting.

**Timber:** An estimated 8,000 acres (63 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. The roadless area has 81,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 161,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 5,400 acres in the area are considered to have low productivity; 3,000 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,900 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** All of the area is within a sheep allotment. There are no grazing improvements within the roadless area. There are approximately 2,600 acres of capable sheep rangeland in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are geothermal hot springs along the adjacent Middle Fork Boise River. There are currently 42 scattered mining claims in the area. The area has a small portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 12,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides cougar and bear hunting opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** An estimated 2.6 miles of one motorized trail occur within the area.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Historical logging and mining sites have been identified in the general vicinity.

**Disturbances:** Past insect and disease activity have affected the area. Much of the roadless area's conifer vegetation has had some defoliation by Douglas-fir tussock moth, and widely scattered tree mortality exists.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Lost Man Creek Roadless Area. Table Lost Man Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Lost Man Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Lost Man Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Lost Man Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	12,000	12,000	12,000
Similar to Backcountry	12,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	700*	700*	700*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>12,700</b>	<b>12,700</b>	<b>12,700</b>	<b>12,700</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Lost Man Creek Roadless Area is 700 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Lost Man Creek-2. Potential activities

Lost Man Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	12,700	12,000	12,000	12,000
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	12,700	12,000	12,000	200*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	12,000	12,000	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	12,700	12,000	0	0

\* Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 200 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 - ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 12,000 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction is prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 12,000 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights; therefore there would be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. Surface occupancy for new mineral leases would be prohibited; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 12,000 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. About 200 acres of the Primitive theme area are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system; any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in these areas. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.



## Mt. Heinen #003

12,800 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Mt. Heinen Roadless Area, in the Mountain Home Ranger District, is bordered by Arrowrock Reservoir on the south, Cottonwood Creek on the east, and private parcels on the west. This area lies about 20 miles northeast of Boise, and is accessed by the Middle Fork Boise River Road off State Highway 21.

Elevations in the Mt. Heinen area range from 3,200 feet along Arrowrock Reservoir to 6,339 feet at Mt. Heinen. The area is underlain by granitics of the Idaho Batholith, and many slopes are easily eroded. About half the area has slopes of over 40 percent. At lower elevations, sagebrush and bitterbrush with an understory of forbs and cheatgrass predominates, while stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir prevail at higher elevations.

Overall, the area is marked with steep, dry slopes that become more moist and forested at higher elevations. Mt. Heinen lies near the center of the area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of the Mt. Heinen Roadless Area are generally intact, as little human activity has occurred in the roadless area. There are about 7 miles of cleared fire lines radiating north, south, east, and west of Mt. Heinen. There are two segments of primitive road totaling about 1 mile within the roadless area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for primitive recreation and challenging experiences are somewhat limited because of the relatively small size of the area and the excluded private parcels that extend into the area.

**Special Features:** No special features have been identified in this roadless area.

**Manageability:** Some of the current boundaries follow private property lines. A small portion is effectively segregated by private property along Deer Creek. Manageability as a designated wilderness area would be improved by altering the boundaries to exclude this portion.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams of this area are Deer, Cinch, and the upper part of Smith Creek. These are short, small streams with steep gradients and intermittent flows. Grouse Creek is the largest stream and may have some redband rainbow trout in the lower reach on years when flows are adequate.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf, although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity reported in the area. Wintering bald eagle and nesting habitat occurs within the area. Minor wolverine habitat occurs in the area. Potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and white-headed woodpecker. Potential habitat occurs for spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and spotted frog. Historical habitat occurs for the mountain quail. The roadless area provides security for big game. The southern portion contains important elk and mule deer winter range.

**Water:** Perennial streams flow south to Arrowrock Reservoir and east to Cottonwood Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. An estimated 490 acres are within a municipal watershed of United Water Idaho.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Most of the recreation use in this area consists of fall big-game hunting and spring turkey hunting. There is some hiking and backpacking occurring in the area, with the top of Mt. Heinen generally being the destination for the views it provides.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 36,800 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 73,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 4,100 acres (32 percent) of the Mt. Heinen Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,700 acres are considered to have low productivity; 2,900 acres, moderate productivity; and 500 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Approximately 75 percent of the area is within an active cattle allotment managed under a restoration system. There are range improvements in the form of fences and water developments. The remaining 25 percent of the area is in a vacant allotment. There are approximately 500 acres of capable cattle grazing land and 600 acres of capable sheep grazing land in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are 40 mining claims in the area. Near Wood Gulch on the east, the area adjoins patented and unpatented lode mining claims with high gold potential. This roadless area contains 12,800 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. No special uses are known in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no recreation trails in the area. There is some illegal motorized use on some of the ridges.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Surveys in adjoining and overlapping areas, in similar topographic situations, show the area to be characterized by a low site density.

**Disturbances:** There have been three recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area since 1960. An estimated 4,800 acres have burned in wildfires, with most of this attributed to the 1992 Dunnigan fire. Douglas-fir and Western pine bark beetle activity occurs at low to moderate levels mainly along the perimeter of burned areas.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Mt. Heinen Roadless Area.

Table Mt. Heinen-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Mt. Heinen-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Mt. Heinen-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Mt. Heinen Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	12,800	12,800	12,800
Similar to Backcountry	12,800	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>12,800</b>	<b>12,800</b>	<b>12,800</b>	<b>12,800</b>



Table Mt. Heinen-2. Potential activities

Mt. Heinen Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	12,800	12,800	12,800	12,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	12,800	12,800	12,800	7,700*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	12,800	12,800	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	12,800	12,800	0	0

\* Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 7,700 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 12,800 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 12,800 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 12,800 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. About 7,700 acres of the Primitive theme area are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in these areas. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Nameless Creek #034

2,300 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Nameless Creek Roadless Area, on the Lowman Ranger District, is a “residual” area not included when the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness was created in 1980. This area adjoins the southwestern portion of the wilderness and is accessed by the Warm Lake-Stanley Road (Forest Road 579) via State Highways 21 or 55. The area is also accessed by the North Fork Elk Creek (005) Trail.

Elevations range from about 6,400 feet along Bear Valley Creek to nearly 8,000 feet. Lands vary from flat, wet grassy meadows with scattered stands of lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce, to moderately steep slopes with moderate to dense stands of lodgepole pine. Overall, the area has rolling to mountainous topography interspersed with large meadows. Prominent features include Nameless Creek and Nameless Meadow.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural appearance and integrity of this area are intact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude are good. When considered as part of the adjacent Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are plentiful.

**Special Features:** No special features have been identified in this roadless area.

**Manageability:** The northern boundary of the area is adjacent to the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Some minor boundary adjustments could make more logical, manageable boundaries if the area were to be designated wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This roadless area contains all of Nameless Creek except the lower two-thirds mile that flows out of the roadless area and enters Elk Creek. Nameless Creek does not provide spawning habitat for listed Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon or Snake River Basin steelhead, but may provide some rearing habitat at its lower end. The entire Bear Valley basin, including this roadless area, has been designated as critical habitat for salmon. Nameless Creek has not been surveyed thoroughly, but has been designated as adjunct habitat, meaning that it could provide spawning and rearing habitat for listed bull trout. This portion of Elk Creek serves as nodal or migratory habitat for bull trout. Bull trout, Chinook summer salmon and steel head habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves are known to occur within this area, with adjacent habitats within the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness used by wolves for denning and rearing areas. Potential habitat for lynx and wolverine occurs; however, their presence in the area is unknown. The mature forest habitats within the roadless area currently provide important cover and travel areas for these species. About 52 percent of the roadless area has been identified as potential lynx habitat. Great gray owl, northern goshawk, northern three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog are sensitive species that are known to occur or could potentially occur within the roadless area. Great gray owls and goshawks are known to breed in Bear Valley in habitats similar to those found in this roadless area. Many of these sensitive species occupy mid- to late-seral forested habitats, which have recently burned in this area. The roadless area provides summer and fall habitat for elk and mule deer, and elk calving areas.

**Water:** The area has a number of streams that flow to Elk Creek including Nameless Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** There has been few plant surveys conducted in the area. No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The roadless area receives typical backcountry fall big-game hunting use, concentrated mostly in the areas adjacent to trails and roads. The North Fork Elk Creek area is part of a “Watchable Wildlife Area.” The area receives light use as a portal to this wilderness.

**Timber:** The area has 5,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 10,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 1,700 acres (75 percent) of the Nameless Roadless Area are considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,000 acres are considered to have low productivity and 700 acres are considered moderate productivity.

**Range:** There are no grazing allotments in the roadless area. There are short drift fences in the area. There are 413 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. There are two mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 2,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides bear and cougar hunting trips in the area, and another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides.

**Roads and Trails:** There is a 1.2-mile segment of a non-motorized trail in the area, which accesses the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as moderate. Prehistoric sites have been identified adjacent the area. The roadless area has not been surveyed, but it is expected that sites exist within the area.

**Disturbances:** There has been one recorded wildfire occurrence in the area since 1960. An estimated 2,200 acres burned in the 1987 Deadwood fire.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Nameless Creek Roadless Area.

Table Nameless Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Nameless Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Nameless Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Nameless Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	2,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	2,300	2,300	2,300
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>2,300</b>

Table Nameless Creek-2. Potential activities

Nameless Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	2,300	2,300	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	2,300	2,300	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 2,300 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.1 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is unlikely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 2,300 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 2,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be

constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 2,300 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Peace Rock #026

191,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Switchback Roadless Area, identified in the 1990 Boise National Forest Plan, was merged with the Peace Rock Roadless Area, as they shared common boundaries. Peace Rock is the largest roadless area on the Boise National Forest. The roadless area is on the Cascade, Emmett, and Lowman Ranger Districts, between the Middle Fork Payette River and the Deadwood River. Additional stringers of land extend into the headwaters of the South Fork Salmon River. The roadless area is accessed off the Banks-Lowman Highway (Forest Highway 17), the Scott Mountain Road (Forest Road 555), and the Middle Fork Payette River Road (Forest Road 698), via State Highways 55 or 21. The area is also accessed by several trails, including the Switchback, Middle Fork Payette, Rattlesnake, Lightning Ridge, Silver Creek Summit, Peace Creek, and Tranquil Basin Trails.

Elevations range from about 3,600 feet along the Middle Fork Payette River to 8,696 feet at Rice Peak. The dominant landforms are steep, highly dissected slopes with sharp ridge tops and v-shaped drainages. At lower elevations, scattered to dense stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine predominate, while in higher areas, moderate to dense stands of subalpine fir and scattered stands of lodgepole pine prevail. Prominent features include Scott Mountain, Peace Rock, Wild Buck Peak, Lightning Creek Rock, Silver Creek Summit, Rice Peak, and several hot springs along the Middle Fork Payette River.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The apparent naturalness and natural integrity of the area have generally been unaffected, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. The area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature. There are five short forest road segments that are just within the roadless area boundaries totaling 2.28 miles. Most are in the Silver Creek vicinity.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The area's rugged terrain provides outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. Opportunities are extremely good for high-quality backpacking, remote hiking, and hunting. Opportunities for solitude are plentiful due to the large area, rugged and steep terrain, and numerous drainages.

**Special Features:** The jagged, rocky knobs of Peace Rock and Silver Creek Summit are notable distinct features. Scattered high-elevation glacial basins are special features that contrast with the dry steep terrain of most of the area. The Long Fork Silver Creek with its steep canyon walls is also a special feature of the area. Rice Peak fire lookout is managed for recreational rental use.

This roadless area contains segments of three different rivers that have been identified as eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers: Middle Fork Payette River, South Fork Payette River, and Deadwood River. The segments total an estimated 5,800 acres and 16.2 river miles within the roadless area. About 1,300 acres of a Research Natural Area are also located within this roadless area.

**Manageability:** The Peace Rock Roadless Area has some very complex and irregular boundaries in some locations due to cherry stem boundaries caused by excluding roads and associated timber harvest. Some of the boundaries would be difficult to identify on the ground and to administer. Creating more manageable boundaries would result in a reduction of acreage.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The Peace Rock Roadless Area contains portions of three major drainages that have important fisheries populations and habitats; Middle Fork Payette River, South Fork Salmon River, and Johnson Creek. This roadless area contains a sizeable portion of the Middle Fork Payette River from Bridge Creek upstream, including the headwaters and various tributaries. This reach of the Middle Fork includes focal, nodal, and adjunct bull trout habitat. This roadless area also contains Bull Creek and Sixteen-to-one



Creek, which provide focal habitat and/or adjunct habitat for bull trout. Wet Foot, West Fork, Six-mile, Valley, Peace, Lightning, Silver, and Long Fork Silver are identified as adjunct bull trout habitat. Streams downstream that have been sampled include Goat, Lake, Dash, Bryan, Bridge, Rattlesnake, Big Bulldog, Lightning, Onion, Lookout, Anderson Creeks, and all contain redband rainbow trout habitat. These tributaries are within state-identified bull trout key watersheds (State of Idaho 1996).

This roadless area also contains a segment of the South Fork Salmon River, including the headwaters. The mainstem South Fork within and adjacent to the roadless area provides spawning and rearing habitat for bull trout as well as westslope cutthroat, and listed Chinook and steelhead. Lodge pole, Mormon, Bear, Rice and Tyndall Creeks, and tributaries to Rice Creek and Yellowjacket Creek, support bull trout populations. Bear Lake has not been surveyed but could support bull trout. Other streams in the South Fork and Johnson Creek drainages may also provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for listed Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout. Portions of the roadless area within the South Fork and Johnson Creek drainages are designated as critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon. There are an estimated 1.7 miles of stream with salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat, and 45.8 miles of stream with bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Fisher, wolverine, boreal owl, great gray owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, and flammulated owl occur within this roadless area. Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area, with increasing activity occurring since the augmentation program in the 1990s. An estimated 48 percent of the roadless area is potential lynx habitat; however is not known if lynx are present. A small amount (200 acres) of bald eagle wintering habitat occurs in the area. There is very limited elk or mule deer winter range in the area, most of it along the small portion adjacent the South Fork Payette River.

**Water:** There are some high-elevation lakes in the northern portion of the area. The area has a complex drainage system with streams flowing in every direction to various major watersheds. The area contains a portion of the Middle Fork Payette River with numerous perennial streams flowing to it from the east and west, including Bull Creek. The area also has perennial streams flowing east and west to the South Fork Salmon River, east to the Deadwood River and Reservoir, and perennials flowing south to the South Fork Payette River and Anderson Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. An estimated 7,830 acres are within a municipal watershed of the Rivers Point Property Owners.

**Botanical:** Idaho Douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. Rush skeletonweed, a noxious weed, has infested an estimated 4,200 acres of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The area supports a wide range of backcountry recreation such as hunting, camping, and horseback riding. The area receives fairly high fall big-game hunting use. The Rice Peak Lookout is being developed into a lookout/cabin rental.

**Timber:** The area has 1,337,900 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, or 2,665,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 158,900 acres (83 percent) of the Peace Rock Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 64,400 acres are considered to have low productivity; 73,800 acres, moderate productivity; and 30,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There are portions of five allotments encompassing about 50 percent of the roadless area. One allotment is grazed by cattle and managed under a rest-rotation system. The other four are vacant sheep allotments. There are few range improvements in the area. There are 270 acres of capable cattle grazing land and 20,500 acres of capable sheep grazing land in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are geothermal hot springs along the Middle Fork Payette River. There are currently 270 mining claims in the roadless area. A portion of the inactive Abella molybdenum mining operation is located in the southeast corner of the area. The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 191,700 acres of high

geothermal potential. . Currently, a lease application has been submitted for geothermal development on 7,000 acres within the Peace Rock Roadless Area.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. There is an outfitter-guide permit for horse trail rides. One outfitter-guide service provides cougar and bear hunting trips in the area, while another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** This very large area has an extensive, well-maintained trail system. Most of the trail use is by all-terrain vehicle or motorcycle. There are 35 trails within the roadless area, of which 137.1 miles are motorized and 21.9 miles are non-motorized.

**Heritage:** The area has high cultural resource sensitivity. There are historic and prehistoric sites identified in the area. The South Fork Payette River corridor, the Wild Buck Trail area, and Tranquil Basin are locations where such sites have been identified.

**Disturbances:** There have been eight recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. An estimated 8,400 acres have burned in wildfires. Approximately 11,000 acres of low-intensity prescribed fire have occurred in the Bulldog and Rattlesnake Creek drainages. Localized areas of Douglas-fir beetle infestations killed a large percentage of the older Douglas-fir trees in the early 1900s. Evidence of this mortality occurs in scattered locations throughout the roadless area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Peace Rock Roadless Area.

Table Peace Rock-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Peace Rock-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Peace Rock-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Peace Rock Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	137,400	137,400	137,400	
Similar to Backcountry	191,700	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	47,200	47,200	CPZ	2,500
				NonCPZ	44,700
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	7,100*	7,100*	7,100*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>191,700</b>	<b>191,700</b>	<b>191,700</b>	<b>191,700</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Peace Rock Roadless Area is 5,800 acres as WSR, 1,200 acres as RNA and 100 acres as both WSR and RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Peace Rock-2. Potential activities

Peace Rock Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	47,200	47,200	2,500*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	191,700	184,600	184,600	184,600
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	191,700	184,600	184,600	52,200**
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	184,600	184,600	2,500*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	191,700	184,600	47,200	47,200

\* Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 44,700 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

\*\* Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 5,000 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access. Currently, a lease application has been submitted for geothermal development on 7,000 acres within the Peace Rock Roadless Area. However, given the prohibitions on road building under the 2001 Roadless Rule, it's not expected that the lease would be approved or become active.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 137,400 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities), 20,700 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), and 26,500 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration). For the 137,400 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1 c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. For the 47,200 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the acres under 4.1c, 3.1 and 3.2, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are not permitted for this purpose. Currently, a lease application has been submitted for geothermal development on 7,000 acres within the Peace Rock Roadless Area. Under the current plan, roads could not be constructed for geothermal development unless the plan is amended.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 47,200 acres would be in the Backcountry theme and 137,400 acres be in the Primitive theme. For the acres under the Primitive theme road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 137,400 acres under the Primitive theme because roads could not be constructed. For the 18,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under either management theme since it is not allowed under the Primitive theme and roads are not permitted for leasable mineral activities under the Backcountry theme. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area. Currently, a lease application has been submitted for geothermal development on 7,000 acres within the Peace Rock Roadless Area. However, given the prohibitions on surface occupancy and road building in the Proposed Rule, it's not expected that the lease would be approved or become active.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 137,400 acres under the Primitive theme and 47,200 acres under the Backcountry theme, 2,500 of which are in the CPZ. Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 44,700 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent. Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 47,200 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would likely maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term. Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 5,000 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes either since the two themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind. Currently, a lease application has been submitted for geothermal development on 7,000 acres within the Peace Rock Roadless Area. However, given the prohibitions on surface occupancy and road building in the modified rule, it's not expected that the lease would be approved or become active.

## Poison Creek #042

4,900 Acres Boise  
400 Acres Payette  
5,300 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Poison Creek Roadless Area is a recently delineated roadless area that was identified during a 1999 roadless area inventory for the Forest Plan Revision. The Poison Creek area lies within the West Mountain range, west of the Cascade Reservoir and northwest of Cascade, Idaho. The area lies within the Cascade Ranger District on the Boise National Forest and the Council Ranger District on the Payette National Forest. The area is accessed via Forest Road 422 along the west side of Cascade Reservoir and by the West Mountain Ridge Road (Forest Road 653). The area is also accessed by the motorized Poison Creek (4196) and Arling (4116) Trails. Generally the area consists of east-facing slopes of the West Mountain Ridge that form a backdrop for Cascade Reservoir.

Elevations range from 5,200 feet along the east boundary to 7,836 feet at Lone Tree Summit. Slopes in the roadless area are generally moist and stream-cut. Moderate to dense mixed conifer stands of grand fir, Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and western larch are found at lower elevations, while subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce and whitebark pine dominate in the higher country. Lodgepole pine is scattered throughout. Typical understory grasses include Idaho fescue, pine grass, elk and Ross sedges. Several shrubs are evident, including mountain maple, ninebark, common and mountain snowberry, blue huckleberry, grouse whortleberry, sagebrush and alder. Overall, the Poison Creek Roadless Area is marked by dense timber at lower elevations, giving way to alpine vegetation, meadows, exposed rock outcroppings, and steep non-forested slopes.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The area generally appears primarily affected by the forces of nature, with little evidence of man's imprint. The natural integrity of the area is intact. There are two short segments of unauthorized roads within the perimeter of the roadless area totaling 0.35 mile.

**Opportunities for Experience:** There are opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation due to the rugged terrain and forested cover over much of the area. The relatively small size diminishes the opportunities for challenge and risk. In some locations of the roadless area, a feeling of solitude or remoteness is diminished by the proximity of Cascade Reservoir, the adjacent rural developments, and the nearby communities of Cascade and Donnelly.

**Special Features:** The high-elevation Poison Lake is a special water feature. Lone Tree Summit is a notable landmark feature.

**Manageability:** The ridge road along the west boundary would form a logical boundary as would landownership boundaries along the north, south, and eastern boundaries.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The roadless area contains the headwater portions of Poison Creek, Rock Creek, Duck Creek, Gibson Creek, and three unnamed streams to the south of Duck Creek. These are mostly small, very steep, and rapid-flowing streams that contain small to moderate-sized populations of brook trout and possibly small populations of redband rainbow trout. They contain bull trout but are not in a priority bull trout watershed. No fishery exists in Poison Lake, but an exceptional assortment of aquatic invertebrates and amphibians inhabits the pond.

**Wildlife:** The ridge top provides an important raptor migration corridor. The area provides habitat for big-game species such as mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer. An estimated 29 percent of the area contains lynx habitat. There also is potential wolverine denning habitat. Pileated woodpecker and



boreal owl nesting habitat has been identified in portions of the area. White-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, northern goshawk, and northern three-toed woodpecker habitat likely exists in the area.

Bald eagles are known to use the lower portions of this area for perching during the spring and summer months, the area has a very small amount of bald eagle nesting habitat.

**Water:** Poison Lake is a high-elevation picturesque small water body. Perennial streams flow easterly to Cascade Reservoir, with Poison and Duck Creeks as the dominant drainages. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. This roadless area contains 3,200 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Summer recreation use is low, while fall recreation use increases slightly with big-game hunting seasons. The area is closed to off-road and off-trail motorized travel except for snowmobiles. Most of the snowmobile use occurs on the ridge top and on some of the east facing slopes that are void of trees. The winter snowmobile use is low due to the difficult terrain and the avalanche danger on the open east-facing slopes.

**Timber:** There is an estimated 25,900 thousand board feet of standing timber within the roadless area, equivalent to 51,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 2,500 acres (48 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 800 acres are considered to have low productivity; with 1,300 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,000 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There are no grazing allotments in the area. There are approximately 200 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are currently 5 mining claims in the roadless area. This roadless area contains 5,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no state or private lands, or authorized special uses in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are two motorized trails within the roadless area totaling 3.5 miles. Trail use is low and generally occurs during the fall big-game hunting season.

**Heritage:** Although sites have been documented adjacent and within the area, the cultural resource site sensitivity is low.

**Disturbances:** There have been no major disturbances in the area since 1960.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Poison Creek Roadless Area.

Table Poison Creek-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Poison Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Poison Creek-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise Only)

Poison Creek Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	4,900	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	4,900	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	0	4,900	CPZ	4,700
				NonCPZ	200
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,900</b>	

Table Poison Creek-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Payette Only)

Poison Creek Management Theme Payette	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	400	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	400	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	0	400	CPZ	100
				NonCPZ	300
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>400</b>	

Table Poison Creek-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Poison Creek Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	5,300	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	5,300	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	0	5,300	CPZ	4,800
				NonCPZ	500
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>5,300</b>	<b>5,300</b>	

Table Poison Creek-2. Potential activities (for Boise and Payette acres combined)

Poison Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	5,300	4,800*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	5,300	5,300	5,300	5,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	5,300	5,300	5,300	5,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	5,300	5,300	4,800*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	5,300	5,300	5,300	4,800*

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 500 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 5,300 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 5,300 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 5,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, 4,800 of which are in the CPZ. Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire

risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 500 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest would be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 5,300 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Any future activities would still be required to be consistent with applicable forest plan components, including forest-wide management direction which provides sideboards for project design. There could be some additional effect to the Poison Creek Roadless Area over existing plans because the Modified Rule would permit hazardous fuel reduction projects in the CPZ (and outside if there is significant risk), including the construction of temporary roads.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since road construction to access new mineral leases is prohibited.

## Poker Meadows #032

700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Poker Meadows Roadless Area, on the Lowman Ranger District, is a “residual” area not included in the wilderness when the Frank Church - River of No Return was created in 1980. This area adjoins the southwestern portion of the wilderness, and is accessed by the Warm Lake-Stanley Road (Forest Road 22) via State Highways 21 or 55. No trail access is present.

Elevations range from about 6,400 feet along Bear Valley Creek to nearly 8,000 feet. Lands vary from flat, wet grassy meadows with scattered stands of lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce to moderately steep slopes with moderate to dense stands of lodgepole pine. Overall, the Poker Meadows Roadless Area is marked with moderately steep forested slopes with interspersed wet meadows. No prominent landscape features are present.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural appearance and integrity of this area is intact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude are limited by the area’s small size. When considered as part of the adjacent Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are plentiful.

**Special Features:** This roadless area is adjacent to segments of Elk Creek that are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 2.9 miles of the river and 400 acres of the river corridor occur within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The northern boundary of the area is adjacent to the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Some minor boundary adjustments could make more logical, manageable boundaries if the area were to be designated wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This roadless area contains the lower two-thirds of an unnamed stream that flows into Bear Valley Creek at the roadless area boundary. This unnamed creek does not provide spawning habitat for listed Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon or Snake River Basin steelhead trout, but may provide rearing habitat at its lower end. The entire Bear Valley basin, including this roadless area, has been designated as critical habitat for salmon. This creek has not been surveyed, but probably does not provide spawning and rearing habitat for listed bull trout. The area contains an estimated 4.4 miles of stream with bull trout spawning and rearing habitat, and 4.6 miles of streams with salmon and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Fisher occur in this roadless area. Gray wolves are known to occur within this area. The complex of wet meadows and adjacent forest cover with high elk use make this area potentially suitable for denning and rendezvous habitat, although the proximity to the Warm Lake -Stanley Road may reduce this potential. Potential habitat for wide-ranging lynx and wolverine exists. An estimated 82 percent of the roadless area has identified potential lynx habitat. The mature forest habitats within the roadless area currently provide important cover and travel areas for these species. Great gray owls and goshawks are known to breed in the adjacent Bear Valley in habitats similar to those found in Poker Meadows Roadless Area. Many of the sensitive species occupy mid- to late-seral forested habitats. The importance of these late-successional habitats within this roadless area has increased due to the large fire-created seral areas occurring to the north of the roadless area.

This roadless area is part of a large complex of wet meadows interspersed with dense forest cover. These areas are used by elk for calving and are considered key summer habitat. The roadless area is important

for providing security areas for elk and deer during hunting seasons and for maintaining the snag component of forested habitats across large areas.

**Water:** The area includes parts of Bear Valley Creek and a few associated streams that flow into Bear Valley Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** There have been few plant surveys conducted in the area. No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area.

**Recreation:** The roadless area receives typical backcountry fall big-game hunting use, and some snowmobile use in the open areas and meadows.

**Timber:** The area includes 5,600 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 12,500 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 600 acres (89 percent) of the roadless area contain tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 100 acres are considered to have low productivity; 600 acres are considered moderate productivity.

**Range:** There are no grazing allotments in the area. There are approximately 100 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the area.

**Minerals and Energy:** A portion of the area is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. There are few mining claims. This roadless area contains 700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provide bear and cougar hunting trips in the area, while another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no recreation trails in the area.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as high. Prehistoric sites have been identified adjacent and within the area.

**Disturbances:** There have been four recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. Approximately 100 acres have burned in wildfires.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Poker Meadows Roadless Area. Table Poker Meadows-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Poker Meadows-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Poker Meadows-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Poker Meadows Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	300	300	300
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	400*	400*	400*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>700</b>	<b>700</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Poker Meadows Roadless Area is 400 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Poker Meadows-2. Potential activities

Poker Meadows Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	300	300	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	700	300	300	300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	700	300	300	300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	300	300	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	700	300	300	300

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 300 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.1 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 300 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 300 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be



constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 300 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Rainbow #008

31,500 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Rainbow Roadless Area, in the Mountain Home Ranger District, is located north of Anderson Ranch Reservoir, and south of Trinity Lakes. This area is accessed either by Fall Creek Road north of the reservoir, or Trinity Creek Road northwest of Featherville. The Rainbow Roadless Area is also accessed by the Alpine Lakes (1174), Rainbow Lakes (1175), Bear Hole (1176), and Cross Cut (1172) Trails.

Elevations in the Rainbow Roadless Area range from 6,000 to 9,100 feet. In the northern portion of the area, glaciers have created U-shaped valleys, rocky cirques, and scoured side slopes. Stands of subalpine fir and whitebark pine are scattered among extensive barren areas. Pockets of lodgepole pine occur in the northern portion. In the southern portion, granitic stream-cut lands with moderate to steep slopes are covered with moderate to dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Overall, Rainbow Roadless Area provides a scenic subalpine environment, marked by craggy peaks and cirque basins. Trinity Mountain lies within this roadless area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of the Rainbow Roadless Area is intact since little evidence of man's activity exists. There are four short segments of forest roads within the perimeter of the roadless area totaling 0.85 mile.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for primitive recreation are good as this area provides challenge and diversity of opportunity, and contains few man-made facilities. Opportunities for solitude are enhanced by complex terrain and forested vegetative cover. Glacial scouring and river dissection of the terrain provides a complex broken terrain that affords ample opportunities for experiencing solitude or remoteness.

**Special Features:** The numerous high-elevation glacial lakes found in the headwaters of the Rainbow Creek drainage are special features that attract many day hikers and backpackers. About 200 acres of the Trinity Mountain Research Natural Area is contained within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The area has some fairly irregular and complex boundaries. Manageability as a designated wilderness would benefit from simplified boundaries that could be created with little acreage difference.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Major streams with headwaters in this area are Fall Creek and Trinity Creek. Smaller streams are Talley, Dog, Green, and Wagontown Creeks. This unit has a diversity of fish species. Bull trout were found in Fall Creek in 1994 and are known to have inhabited Trinity Creek in past years (Casey, personal communication, 1996). The upper half of Fall Creek and all of the Trinity Creek drainage are bull trout priority watersheds. Redband rainbow trout are located in all the streams with suitable habitat such as Wagontown, Green, Dog, Fall, Bear Wallow, Tally, Parks, and Trinity Creeks. Kokanee salmon spawn in the lower part of Trinity Creek in the fall months but are blocked from using Fall Creek by the large culvert at the crossing of Forest Road 113. An estimated 29.5 miles of streams contain bull trout spawning and rearing habitat. Trinity Lakes and the Rainbow Basin Lakes are very popular waters for hikers and anglers during the summer months. These lakes contain rainbow, cutthroat, and brook trout.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf, although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity reported in the area. Wintering and nesting bald eagle habitat occurs within the area. The northern and central portions contain lynx habitat on an estimated 23 percent of the roadless area. Good wolverine and fisher habitat occurs in the area. Potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and white-headed woodpecker. Potential habitat

occurs for spotted bat and Townsend's big-eared bat. Known populations of spotted frog occur. Potential habitat occurs for mountain quail. The roadless area provides security for big game and contains big-game winter range.

**Water:** The Rainbow area contains some of the highly attractive and popular high-elevation lakes around Trinity Mountain Lookout. Perennial streams flow east and southeast to the South Fork Boise River and Anderson Ranch Reservoir. Other perennials flow west and southwest to Fall Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Few plant surveys have been conducted in the area.

**Recreation:** Recreation activities include backpacking, camping, big-game hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and trail bike riding. There is a concentration of non-motorized trails in the high-elevation Rainbow Lakes areas, with many of the lakes being destination camping or day hiking spots.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 128,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 255,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 17,700 acres (56 percent) of the roadless area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 10,700 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,100 acres, moderate productivity; and 7,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Approximately 85 percent of the area is within two sheep allotments that have no improvements. Ten percent of the area (around Rainbow Lakes) is not in an allotment. The remaining five percent of the area is within a cattle allotment that has some improvements in the form of fences and water developments. There are approximately 600 acres of capable cattle grazing land and 6,900 acres of capable sheep grazing land.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are few mining claims in the area. The roadless area does contain a small area considered a fair to good area for sand and gravel along the South Fork Boise River. This roadless area contains 31,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides cougar and bear hunting opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** There are nine non-motorized trails totaling about 6 miles, and five motorized trails totaling an estimated 16.7 miles.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Surveys in adjoining and overlapping areas, in similar topographic situations, indicate the area likely has a low site density.

**Disturbances:** Douglas-fir bark beetle populations continue to be active at above endemic levels and are most pronounced where defoliation occurred by the Douglas-fir tussock moth in the early 1990s. A complex of other bark beetle activity exists at various levels throughout the roadless area and adjacent areas. Tree mortality is most pronounced on north aspect Douglas-fir stands and where subalpine fir predominates.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Rainbow Roadless Area.

Table Rainbow-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Rainbow-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Rainbow-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Rainbow Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	31,300	31,300	31,300
Similar to Backcountry	31,500	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	200*	200*	200*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>31,500</b>	<b>31,500</b>	<b>31,500</b>	<b>31,500</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Rainbow Roadless Area is 200 acres as RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Rainbow-2. Potential activities

Rainbow Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	31,500	31,300	31,300	31,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	31,500	31,300	31,300	10,500*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	31,300	31,300	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	31,500	31,300	0	0

\* Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Such activities are expected to occur in the 10,500 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 31,300 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule timber cutting would be prohibited on 31,300 acres except when done for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire

risk to communities. Little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 31,300 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting would be prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. About 10,500 acres of the Primitive theme are located within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system; any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in these areas. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Red Mountain #916

110,400 Acres Boise

4,900 Acres Challis

115,300 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Red Mountain Roadless Area, on the Lowman Ranger District, Boise National Forest, and Yankee Fork Ranger District, Challis portion of the Salmon-Challis National Forest, lies north and east of Lowman and includes the Eight-mile and Warm Springs Creek drainages of the South Fork Payette River drainage, and the area east of Bear Valley Creek in the Middle Fork Salmon River drainage. The area is accessed from State Highway 21, the Clear Creek Road from Lowman to Bear Valley (Forest Road 582), the Warm Lake Road from Cascade (Forest Road 22), and the Fir Creek Road from Stanley (Forest Road 579). The northeastern part of the area is also accessed by the Bench Creek Trail (024), near Highway 21. The area is also accessed by several trails, including the Wyoming-Fir Creek (015), Clear Creek (145), Warm Springs (147), Link (148), and Kirkham Ridge (144) trails.

Elevations range from about 4,500 feet along the South Fork Payette River to 8,722 feet atop Red Mountain. Lower elevations include steep stream-cut slopes and canyons, while higher elevations are characterized by glacial trough lands and cirques. Vegetation in the South Fork Payette River drainage includes open sagebrush/grass communities, and moderate to dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. The Clear Creek and Bear Valley areas are marked by scattered to dense stands of lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, and subalpine fir, with scattered stands of Engelmann spruce in the wetter areas.

Overall, the area includes diverse mountainous terrain, ranging from heavily forested slopes to barren and dissected rocky canyons, to high alpine mountain lakes in cirque basins. Prominent features include Red Mountain, Eight-mile Mountain (7,871 feet), and the high-elevation Red Mountain lakes.

The area includes roughly 85,900 acres of Recommended Wilderness and therefore holds a high level of wilderness attributes and roadless characteristics.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Generally the area retains its natural appearance and natural integrity. There is one short segment (0.57 mile) of unauthorized road within the perimeter of the roadless area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Large area, extensive mountain terrain, and varied vegetative, landform, and water features allow for ample opportunities to experience solitude and primitive or challenging forms of recreation.

**Special Features:** The high-elevation Red Mountain Lakes are special landscape features. The roadless area lies adjacent to segments of Bear Valley Creek and the South Fork Payette River, which are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are an estimated 700 acres of these river corridors within the roadless area. Important habitat for three threatened fish species occurs in this roadless area.

**Manageability:** Some minor boundary adjustments would be desirable to facilitate identification and management if the area were to be designated wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** All of the streams within the Red Mountain Roadless Area are within either the Bear Valley or upper South Fork Payette River bull trout key watersheds (State of Idaho 1996). The entire Bear Valley basin, including portions of this roadless area, has been designated as critical habitat for salmon.

The main streams within the Bear Valley watershed that are bordered by or fall within this roadless area include Bear Valley, Fir, Cold, Wyoming, Sack, Pole, and Cache Creeks. This roadless area borders Bear Valley Creek, which provides spawning and rearing habitat for listed Chinook salmon and steelhead



trout. This section of Bear Valley Creek also contains nodal listed bull trout habitat and provides habitat for redband rainbow and westslope cutthroat trout. The mouth and lower portion of Fir Creek may have historically provided spawning habitat for Chinook and steelhead; however, currently Fir Creek is probably only used by these fish for rearing. Fir Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow, westslope cutthroat, and bull trout. Cold Creek provides focal bull trout habitat, and redband rainbow have been observed. Wyoming Creek provides focal bull trout habitat and spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow and possibly westslope cutthroat trout. Pole Creek may provide marginal rearing habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead. The same section of stream may also provide very limited spawning and rearing habitat for bull trout, westslope cutthroat, and redband rainbow. The lower 2 miles of Cache Creek may have historically provided spawning habitat for Chinook and steelhead, but currently only serves only as potential rearing habitat. Steelhead may potentially use up to 4 miles for rearing. Cache Creek provide focal and adjunct bull trout habitat. In addition, there are redband rainbow and potential westslope cutthroat trout spawning and rearing habitat. Sack Creek historically may have provided spawning habitat for Chinook and steelhead. Currently about one mile is potentially used by Chinook for rearing, and steelhead may use about 2.5 miles for rearing. A portion of Sack Creek is adjunct bull trout habitat and potentially provides spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow and westslope cutthroat trout. Sack Creek has very high densities of non-native brook trout.

Lost Lake is a small lake within the roadless area that contains bull trout, redband rainbow, and cutthroat trout. East and West Cache Lakes are also located within this roadless area, and both contain strong populations of native redband rainbow trout. These lakes are somewhat unique in that they support native populations of fish that are not augmented with hatchery fish.

The major streams within the upper South Fork Payette key bull trout watershed that border or fall within this roadless area include Clear, Fivemile, Eightmile, Little Tenmile, Casner, Warmspring, and Canyon Creeks. The streams listed above contain an estimated 20 miles of nodal and 29 miles of focal bull trout habitat. Clear Creek originates within this roadless area and is of special note because it contains the only documented strong migratory population of bull trout within the South Fork Payette River. In addition, Clear Creek is listed as a bull trout priority watershed. All of the streams listed above provide spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow trout. Many of the large number of small, unnamed streams that originate within this roadless area provide some spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow trout.

The Red Mountain and Cat Creek cluster of lakes are relatively pristine and can only be accessed by foot, horseback, bike, or, motorcycle. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has planted these lakes with rainbow, westslope cutthroat, rainbow/cutthroat hybrids, and grayling. In addition, a few of the lakes appear to have some remnant populations of native redband rainbow. The roadless area contains an estimated 29.5 miles of streams with bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves are known to occur within this area. The complex of wet meadows and adjacent forest cover with high elk use in the north-northwest portion make this area potentially suitable for denning and rendezvous habitat. Potential habitat for lynx, wolverine, and fisher occurs; however, their presence in the area is unknown. Suitable potential denning habitat for wolverine has been identified within the roadless area. Approximately 50 percent of the area is potential lynx habitat, with most of it concentrated in the northern half of the roadless area. Boreal owl, great gray owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, white-headed woodpecker, and three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog are sensitive species known to occur or that could potentially occur in the roadless area.

The area provides summer and fall habitat for elk and mule deer. The northern portion falls within Bear Valley and is used by elk for calving and rearing. The roadless area is important for providing security areas for elk and deer during hunting seasons. There is limited winter range for elk and deer, primarily along the lower elevations adjacent the South Fork Payette River.

**Water:** The area has a complex drainage system of numerous perennial streams that flow northwest to Bear Valley Creek, west to Clear Creek, and south to the South Fork Payette River. There are a number of small high elevation lakes around the Red Mountain summit. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish wildlife and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are minor amounts of spotted knapweed, rush skeletonweed, and Dalmation toadflax (noxious weeds), with less than 1 acre considered occupied or invaded by each.

**Recreation:** This is a large area and receives a variety of backcountry motorized and non-motorized use mostly on the existing 66-mile trail system. The roadless area receives typical backcountry fall big-game hunting use, concentrated mostly in the areas adjacent to trails and roads. A popular groomed snowmobile route follows the northern boundary, and snowmobile use occurs adjacent this trail in the open forest and open meadow areas. The high-elevation lakes in the northern portion of the roadless area are popular recreation destinations, accessible by a network of trails.

**Timber:** The roadless area has an estimated 545,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,075,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 74,900 acres (65 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 47,600 acres have low productivity; 35,100 acres, moderate productivity; and 3,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There are portions of two vacant sheep grazing allotments that occupy approximately 50 percent of the roadless area. There are a few short drift fences in the area. There are approximately 800 acres of capable cattle grazing land and 7,500 acres of capable sheep grazing land.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are currently 590 mining claims in the roadless area. The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 115,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state owned lands within the roadless area. There are three outfitter-guide services that provide big game (deer and elk) hunting trips and summer pack trips in the area. Another outfitter provides cougar and bear hunting trips in the area. An avalanche forecasting station is planned for this area. A domestic water transmission line and a diversion for irrigation and domestic water are permitted water uses in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 11 trails within the area, of which 59.6 miles are motorized and 6.4 miles are non-motorized.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as low.

**Disturbances:** The 1992 County Line fire and 1989 Lowman fire were major disturbances. A total of 15,600 acres have been burned by wildfire since 1960. There have been nine recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. The Mace Creek area has high infestations of Douglas-fir beetle. In the Canyon Creek corridor, an outbreak of spruce budworm has been followed by Douglas-fir beetle infestations.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Red Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Red Mountain-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Red Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Red Mountain-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)

Red Mountain Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	85,900	85,900	85,900
Primitive	0	11,800	11,800	11,800
Similar to Backcountry	110,400	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	11,400	11,400	11,400
GFRG	0	600	600	600
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	700*	700*	700*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>110,400</b>	<b>110,400</b>	<b>110,400</b>	<b>110,400</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Red Mountain Roadless Area is 700 acres as WSR.. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Red Mountain-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Challis only)

Red Mountain Management Theme Challis	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	4,900	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	4,900	4,900	4,900
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,900</b>	<b>4,900</b>

Table Red Mountain-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Red Mountain Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	85,900	85,900	85,900
Primitive	0	11,800	11,800	11,800
Similar to Backcountry	115,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	16,300	16,300	16,300
GFRG	0	600	600	600
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	700	700	700
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>115,300</b>	<b>115,300</b>	<b>115,300</b>	<b>115,300</b>

Table Red Mountain-2. Potential activities (for Boise and Challis acres combined)

Red Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	16,900	16,900	600
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	115,300	28,700	28,700	28,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	115,300	28,700	28,700	20,000 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	28,700	28,700	600
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	600	600	600
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	115,300	28,700	16,900	16,900

<sup>1</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or improve TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 3,100 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply..

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** For the portions of the roadless area in the Boise National Forest, about 600 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), 8,100 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 3,300 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 11,800 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 85,900 under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness). The 4,900 acres in the Challis National Forest are all managed under prescription 3 (Marsh Creek).

Roads are generally permitted and timber harvest can occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes under Challis prescription 3. Any timber activities and road building that occur under this prescription could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

Roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in wildland urban interface, and to meet travel management outcomes under Boise prescription 5.1. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 16,900 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would

still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 11,800 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted in 4.1 c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

The 85,900 acres under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness) are managed to maintain wilderness attributes and to allow ecological processes to prevail. Road construction is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities are allowed. Under this prescription the 85,900 acres are expected to maintain their wilderness attributes and roadless characteristics.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 23,200 acres under prescriptions 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 5,500 acres under Boise prescription 5.1 and Challis prescription 3, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Red Mountain Roadless Area contains 115,300 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 600 acres would fall under the GFRG, 16,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, 11,800 under the Primitive theme and 85,900 under the Wild Land Recreation theme.

For the 600 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining, the area does contain 115,300 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 11,800 acres under the Primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

The 85,900 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry, Primitive or Wild Land Recreation theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 85,900 acres under the Wild Land Recreation theme, 11,800 acres under the Primitive theme, 16,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ, and 600 acres under the GFRG theme.

The 85,900 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

Timber cutting is prohibited in 11,800 acres in the Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Such activities are expected to occur in the 3,100 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use.

There are no communities or municipal water supply systems adjacent to the Backcountry portion of this roadless area, therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 16,300 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Primitive theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 600 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive, Backcountry or GFRG themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.



## Reeves Creek #010

10,500 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Reeves Creek Roadless Area was part of the larger Caton Lake Roadless Area during the 1990 Forest Plan roadless evaluation. During the evaluation undertaken for Forest Plan Revision, it was determined that the utility corridor along Cabin Creek effectively separates this area from the main portion of Caton Lake, resulting in a spatially separate roadless area. Located on the Cascade Ranger District, the Reeves Creek Roadless Area lies northeast of Warm Lake within the South Fork Salmon River and Johnson Creek drainages. The area is accessed by the Johnson Creek Road from Landmark (Forest Road 413) via the Warm Lake Highway (Forest Road 22), and by roads leading from the South Fork Salmon River Road (Forest Road 474).

Elevations range from 5,280 feet in Paradise Valley to an 8,241-foot unnamed mountaintop. Slopes are moderately steep to steep and stream-cut, while many peaks and ridges have been glacially scoured and are separated by U-shaped glacial valleys. The lower slopes contain ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir, while lodgepole pine and subalpine fir are the predominant cover types in the high country.

Overall, the Reeves Creek Roadless Area is characterized as a forested mountain ridge broken by complex drainage patterns created by creeks and drainages flowing to Johnson Creek to the east, and to the South Fork Salmon River to the west.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Natural integrity and appearance of the area are largely intact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** There are opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the area. Opportunities for solitude have been limited in some areas due to the loss of vegetative screening from recent wildfires.

**Special Features:** There are no special features identified in the area.

**Manageability:** Cherry-stem roads to the east will make management difficult. Adjustments to simplify these boundaries would result in substantial reduction in the roadless area's size.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Upper Cabin Creek supports bull trout populations. While lower portions of Cabin Creek, Knox Creek, and Reeves Creek provide spawning and rearing habitat for Chinook, and likely for steelhead, the upper portions that are within the roadless area do not. The roadless area encompasses portions of streams on both South Fork Salmon River and Johnson Creek drainages that do or potentially may provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for listed species. The entire roadless area is within an area designated as critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon. An estimated 3.1 miles of streams contain bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area, with increasing activity occurring since the augmentation program in the 1990s. About 59 percent of this roadless area is potential lynx habitat. This roadless area has noted elk winter range. There is cliff habitat that provides good potential habitat for peregrine falcon. Fisher, wolverine, boreal owl, great gray owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog are sensitive species known to occur or that could potentially occur in the roadless area. Flammulated owl habitat is present along the lower elevations on west and south-facing slopes. Potential wolverine denning habitat has been identified in the area.

**Water:** There are a few scattered small bodies of water in the area. The area has perennial streams that drain southwest to Warm Lake Creek and east to Johnson Creek. Reeves Creek is the primary drainage in the area. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish wildlife and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is low with horseback riding, and hunting use occurring.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 66,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 130,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 8,500 acres (81 percent) of the Reeves Creek Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 4,900 acres are considered to have low productivity; 4,000 acres, moderate productivity; and 200 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There is a portion of one allotment encompassing about 50 percent of the roadless area that is grazed by cattle and managed under a rest-rotation system. There are approximately 400 acres of capable cattle grazing land. The portion of the allotment within the roadless area receives very little use.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. There are currently 20 mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 10,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. There are three outfitter-guide permits for fishing, hunting and horseback riding.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no trails within this roadless area.

**Heritage:** The cultural resource site sensitivity is moderate. Historic mining, cabin, and prehistoric sites have been documented adjacent and within the area.

**Disturbances:** There have been two recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area since 1960. An estimated 4,200 acres have burned in wildfires, with most of this attributed to the 1989 Warm Lake complex of fires. Approximately 1,100 acres were burned recently with low-intensity prescribed fire in the Cabin Creek and Reeves Creek area. Epidemic levels of Douglas-fir beetle infestations resulted in mortality of a large percentage of the older Douglas-fir trees in the early 1990s. Evidence of this mortality occurs in scattered locations throughout the roadless area where Douglas-fir is present.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Reeves Creek Roadless Area.

Table Reeves Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Reeves Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Reeves Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Reeves Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	10,500	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	10,500	10,500	10,500
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>10,500</b>	<b>10,500</b>	<b>10,500</b>	<b>10,500</b>

Table Reeves Creek-2. Potential activities

Reeves Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	10,500	10,500	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	10,500	10,500	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	10,500	10,500	10,500	10,500

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 4,900 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources) and 5,600 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Both prescription 3.1 and 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 10,500 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 10,500 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 10,500 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Sheep Creek #005

70,400 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Sheep Creek Roadless Area, in the Mountain Home and Boise Ranger Districts, lies south of the Middle Fork Boise River, about 45 miles east of Boise. The area is primarily accessed by the Middle Fork Boise River Road, although the high elevation, southern portion may be accessed by the Fall Creek and Roaring River Roads. The area is also accessed from the William H. Pogue National Recreation trail, and Lava Mountain, Roaring River, Corral Creek, and Devil's Creek trails. Elevations range from 3,500 feet along the Middle Fork to over 8,000 feet in the Trinities.

The Sheep Creek Roadless Area is underlain by granitics of the Idaho Batholith. Lower slopes, typically steep and dissected by small streams, are covered by grass and forbs that thrive in the hot, dry summers and shallow granitic soils. Open brush and grass communities are scattered with ponderosa pine on moister northern and eastern slopes. The higher elevations are characterized with glaciated peaks, valleys, and slopes; several small lakes are found along the southern divide. Stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir occur in upper Sheep Creek, but subalpine fir and whitebark pine prevail at higher elevations.

Overall, the area includes dry, rolling hills that gradually give way to steep, forested slopes and, at the highest elevations, craggy glacial peaks, cirques, and alpine lakes. Sheep Mountain (8,211 feet) lies near the area's eastern border, and Rattlesnake Mountain (8,177 feet) lies in the southwestern corner.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Although the natural integrity of this area has been altered by past mining activities, the natural appearance is basically intact. There are localized areas around the historic mining sites that have evidence of previous occupation and mining.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The area provides good opportunities for solitude since the area is vast, and has steep canyons and extensive timber cover. Opportunities for primitive recreation and challenging experiences are good because of the area's size, diversity, and topography, which provide opportunities for fishing, hunting, high-elevation hiking, cross-country skiing, and pack trips.

**Special Features:** The 500-acre Roaring River Research Natural Area occurs within the Sheep Creek Roadless Area. The roadless area lies adjacent to the Middle Fork Boise River, which is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 3.0 river miles and 2,500 eligible corridor acres occur within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** Some of the current boundaries follow some fairly irregular lines that would be difficult to administer if the area were designated wilderness. Established motorized use could also complicate a non-motorized mandate like designated wilderness. Simpler, more logical boundaries could be developed with little change in the overall acreage.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams in this area are Sheep Creek, Devils Creek, Pete Creek, Big Five Creek, and Roaring River. This area has been largely isolated from any development activity and is a very important refuge area for bull trout. Sheep Creek and Roaring River are both priority bull trout watersheds and have healthy self-sustaining populations of bull trout at this time. The Sheep Creek population appears to be one of the more stable and stronger subpopulations on the forest. Nodal habitat is also available to both of these streams in the Middle Fork Boise River. Roaring River presently has a large culvert at the crossing of Forest Road 255 that is blocking any upstream migration of bull trout to the upper reaches of the stream. Redband rainbow trout also inhabit the streams of this area. The adjacent Middle Fork Boise

River contains mountain suckers, whitefish, and kokanee during the fall months. An estimated 34.8 miles of streams are considered bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf, although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity reported in the area. Wintering bald eagle habitat occurs within the area. An estimated 24 percent of the area in the southeastern half of the area is identified as potential lynx habitat. Good potential habitat occurs for the fisher and wolverine. Potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, great gray owl, and white-headed woodpecker. Potential habitat occurs for spotted bat and Townsend's big-eared bat. Known populations of spotted frog occur in the area. Habitat occurs for mountain quail; a recent (within last 10 years) sighting has occurred in the Roaring River drainage. The roadless area provides security for big game and contains big-game winter range.

**Water:** This area contains the headwaters of Sheep Creek, Roaring River, and Smith Creek. There are numerous perennials that flow to these creeks and rivers and well as those that flow directly to the Middle Fork Boise River, located along the northern boundary. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There are small amounts of noxious weeds present, with an estimated 2 acres infested by spotted knapweed, and 4 acres by rush skeletonweed.

**Recreation:** Recreation is concentrated mostly on the trail system that is used by expert motorcycle riders and is also popular with hikers, backpackers, and horseback riders. The area is also used extensively during the fall hunting season. There is some fishing in the high-elevation lakes, and hiking or backpacking occurring with the lakes as destinations.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 291,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 574,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 38,100 acres (54 percent) of the Sheep Creek Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberland. An estimated 19,500 acres are considered to have low productivity; 21,300 acres, moderate productivity; 6,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Ninety percent of the area is within a vacant allotment. Five percent is within a cattle allotment managed under a rest rotation system and has some water developments. Another 5 percent is within a sheep allotment that has no improvements. There are approximately 100 acres of capable cattle grazing land and 9,500 acres of capable sheep grazing land in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** The probability of finding minerals in the area is high as historic mining areas of Twin Springs, Sheep Creek, Rattlesnake Mountain, and the West Fork, Middle Fork, and East Fork Roaring River all lay within this roadless area. Minerals produced include gold, silver, and lead. Some molybdenum exploration has occurred in the Sevir Creek drainage. There are currently 460 mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 70,400 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. There are two outfitter-guides that provide bear and cougar hunting and one outfitter-guide that provides llama pack trips and fishing.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity, based on the topography. Sites in the vicinity include historic mining, prehistoric, and isolated historic finds likely related to sheep herding activities.

**Roads and Trails:** There are eight motorized trails in the area totaling an estimated 56.7 miles.

**Disturbances:** There have been two recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area since 1960. Most of the area (27,700 acres) was burned in the 1992 Foothills fire. Douglas-fir bark beetle activity has been active at moderate to high levels through 1996, but appears to have declined since 1997. During a recent rain-on-snow event, there were blowouts and soil movement in the Roaring River, South Fork Sheep Creek, and Sheep Creek drainages.



### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Sheep Creek Roadless Area.

Table Sheep Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Sheep Creek -2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Sheep Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Sheep Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	67,400	67,400	67,400
Similar to Backcountry	70,400	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	3,000*	3,000*	3,000*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>70,400</b>	<b>70,400</b>	<b>70,400</b>	<b>70,400</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Sheep Creek Roadless Area is 500 acres as RNA and 2500 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

**Table Sheep Creek-2. Potential activities**

Sheep Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	70,400	67,400	67,400	67,400
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	70,400	67,400	67,400	800*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	67,400	67,400	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	70,400	67,400	0	0

\* Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 800 acres of this roadless area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 27,500 acres are within prescription 4.1a (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character) and 39,900 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under both these prescriptions, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights.

Under prescription 4.1c, mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 67,400 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 67,400 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting would be prohibited except to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire adjacent to communities or municipal water supply systems. About 800 acres of the Primitive theme are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system; any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in these areas. However, no new roads can be constructed and these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Snowbank #924

34,200 Acres Boise

1,500 Acres Payette

35,700 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Snowbank Roadless Area lies within the West Mountain range, west and south of Cascade. The area lies within the Emmett and Cascade Ranger Districts on the Boise National Forest and the Council Ranger District on the Payette National Forest. The area is accessed from the Snowbank Mountain Road (Forest Road 446) off State Highway 55. Snowbank is also accessed from Anderson Creek Road, Pole Creek Road, and Forest Roads 622, 625, 646, and 653. The area is also accessed by several forest trails, including Wilson Creek (133), West Mountain (139), Blue Lake (119), and Skein Lake (122) trails.

Elevations range from 5,200 feet to 8,322 feet at Snowbank Mountain. Slopes in the roadless area are generally moist and stream-cut. On the North Fork Payette slope, glaciated trough lands predominate. Moderate to dense stands of Douglas-fir, grand fir, and ponderosa pine are found at lower elevations, while subalpine fir and whitebark pine dominate in the higher country. Lodgepole pine is scattered throughout. Typical understory grasses include Idaho fescue, pine grass, elk and ross sedges. Several shrubs are evident, including ninebark, common and mountain snowberry, huckleberry, grouse whortleberry, sagebrush and alder.

On Snowbank Mountain there is a federal aviation site, a radar site, and an access road that has been excluded from the Snowbank Roadless Area. Overall, the Snowbank Roadless Area is marked by dense timber at lower elevations, giving way to alpine vegetation, meadows, and small mountain lakes near the peaks. Special attractions include Gabes Lake, Blue Lake, Shirts Lake, Tripod Peak, and Wilson Meadows.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The area's natural appearance and natural integrity are noticeably altered in many locations from intensive grazing. This is particularly noticeable around the high elevation lakes and wet meadows. There are segments of 3 unauthorized roads totaling 1.97 miles within the roadless area. There is a sheep driveway within the roadless area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Generally there are considerable opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation due to the large size and rugged terrain of the area. In some locations adjacent to the Snowbank summit the opportunities are reduced by the physical presence of the summit facilities and the access road.

**Special Features:** The high-elevation lakes are a special water feature. Mountain cirques and craggy rock peaks are also special features. There is a fire lookout on Tripod Peak.

**Manageability:** The road to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) communication site would complicate wilderness management in this area. This area is an especially popular area for winter snowmobile and summer motorized use. A wilderness designation could cause considerable conflicts with established use.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The west slopes contain portions of the headwaters of Sagehen, Renwick, Antelope, Third Fork Squaw, Squaw, and Poison Creeks, all of which drain into Squaw Creek. These tributaries are within the Squaw Creek Key Watershed for bull trout (State of Idaho 1996). Bull trout have been found within the headwater areas of Squaw Creek and Third Fork Squaw Creek, and most of the tributaries to Squaw Creek identified within the roadless area are identified as potential bull trout habitat. Gabes Lake does not support fish, but provides good macro-invertebrate and amphibian habitat. Bull Corral Creek contains rainbow trout. An estimated 13.8 miles of streams contain bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Peregrine falcon habitat and a historic (1950) nest site is present in this roadless area. The ridge top provides an important raptor migration corridor. The area provides habitat for big-game species such as mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer. Potential lynx and wolverine denning habitat has been identified in the area. An estimated 48 percent of the area is potential lynx habitat. Sizeable amounts of pileated woodpecker nesting habitat have been identified in the western portion of the area. Habitat for northern goshawk, great gray owl, flammulated owl, boreal owl, white-headed woodpecker, and northern three-toed woodpecker occur in the area.

**Water:** Blue Lake is a highly used, picturesque lake less than one mile from the Snowbank Road. Gabes Lake is also another popular use lake in the area. There are other small high-elevation lakes in the area. There are several perennial streams that flow either easterly to the Cascade Reservoir or the North Fork Payette River, or westerly to Squaw Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. This roadless area contains 4,600 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Rush skeletonweed, a noxious weed, has infested less than 1 acre of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The area supports a wide range of backcountry recreation such as hunting, camping, horseback riding, and fishing. The area receives fairly heavy winter snowmobile use, and the steep east facing slopes rising to West Mountain are particularly favored for challenging a snow machine's "high tracking" ability. The area also receives fairly heavy fall big-game hunting use. Some of the high elevation lakes are popular backpacking or hiking destinations.

**Timber:** The area has 234,300 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 470,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 27,600 acres (77 percent of the roadless area) are considered tentatively suitable timberland. An estimated 5,600 acres are considered to have low productivity; 16,900 acres, moderate productivity; and 7,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Portions of five cattle grazing allotments encompass about 85 percent of the roadless area. There are some structural improvements in the form of fencing, spring developments, and rider cabins within the roadless area. There are 4,300 acres of capable cattle rangeland within the roadless area. The Van Wyck sheep driveway crosses the northern portion of the area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are currently 14 mining claims located in the area. This roadless area contains 35,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. There is an outfitter-guide permit for horse trail riding and a cooperative agreement with the state for a fire lookout at Tripod Peak. There is a permit for an irrigation water transmission line.

**Heritage:** Early mining sites and old cabin remnants are scattered within the Snowbank Roadless Area and a wide variety of sites have been documented in and around the roadless area. Cultural resource sensitivity is moderate.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 13 trails within the roadless area, of which 7.4 miles are motorized and 42 miles are non-motorized.

**Disturbances:** There have been no recent major disturbances in the area.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Snowbank Roadless Area.

Table Snowbank-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Snowbank-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Snowbank-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)

Snowbank Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	34,200	34,200	34,200
Similar to Backcountry	34,200	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>34,200</b>	<b>34,200</b>

Table Snowbank-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Payette only)

Snowbank Management Theme Payette	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	1,500	1,500	1,500
Similar to Backcountry	1,500	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,500</b>

Table Snowbank-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Snowbank Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	35,700	35,700	35,700
Similar to Backcountry	35,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>35,700</b>	<b>35,700</b>	<b>35,700</b>	<b>35,700</b>

Table Snowbank-2. Potential activities (for Boise and Payette combined)

Snowbank Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	35,700	35,700	35,700	35,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	35,700	35,700	35,700	2,500*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	35,700	35,700	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	35,700	35,700	0	0

\* Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 2,500 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 35,700 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 35,700 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 35,700 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting would be prohibited except to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. There area 2,500 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system; any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in these areas. However, no new roads can be constructed and these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.



## Steel Mountain #012

23,500 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Steel Mountain Roadless Area, located in the Idaho City and Mountain Home Ranger Districts, is bounded on the west by Phifer Creek Road, on the east by James Creek Road, and on the north by the Middle Fork Boise River Road. The area is also accessed by Hot Creek Trail, which bisects the area from west to east.

Elevations range from about 4,500 feet along the Middle Fork Boise River to 9,730 feet at Steel Mountain. Glaciated peaks, valleys, and slopes with rugged and rocky terrain characterize higher elevations. Nearly 40 percent of the land surface consists of outcrops of hard, fractured granite. Open brush and grass communities, and moderate to dense Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir forests occur in the lower areas. There are scattered pockets of whitebark pine in elevations above 8,000 feet.

Overall, the area includes glaciated, rocky peaks at higher elevations, several small lakes at mid elevations, and steep timbered slopes at lower elevations. Steel Mountain, at 9,730 feet elevation, is the highest peak on the Boise National Forest.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of the Steel Mountain Roadless Area has been slightly affected by past mining activity. There is evidence of dredging adjacent the Middle Fork Boise River. There is an estimated 4 miles of primitive road in the Bald Mountain Creek area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are good because the extensive vegetation and rugged topography creates several isolated areas. Opportunities for primitive recreation are also good because the rugged terrain provides challenging cross-country travel.

**Special Features:** Steel Mountain, at 9,730 feet elevation, is the highest peak on the Boise National Forest. The roadless area contains segments of Elk Creek and the Middle Fork Boise River, which are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 4.1 river miles and 2,200 acres of corridor occur within the roadless area. Lake Creek is a high-elevation alpine lake of special interest.

**Manageability:** The area has some readily manageable boundaries. The northern boundary could logically consist of the Middle Fork Boise River while the west and southwest boundary would be an offset from the road along James Creek and Grade Creek.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams in this area are the upper ends of Steel, Elk, Phifer, Hot, and Lake Creeks, which are very small and steep, with limited fishery habitat. They contain redband rainbow trout in the lower reaches where flows are sufficient. The southern part of this area also contains the headwaters of Elk Creek, a priority bull trout watershed. Large waterfalls at the road crossing of Forest Road 126 prevent the upstream migration of fish to the headwaters of Elk Creek. Within the roadless area, there are 12.5 miles of streams considered bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** The roadless area is an important security area for deer and elk. The area forms an important link between unroaded areas to the south and the Sawtooth Wilderness for species such as pine martin, wolverine, and perhaps lynx. Potential lynx habitat is scattered throughout the area, with about 36 percent of the roadless area being potential habitat. Potential wolverine denning habitat has been identified in the area. Habitat for fisher, northern goshawk, boreal owl, flammulated owl, northern three-toed woodpecker and white-headed woodpecker occurs in the area. Winter range for big game is generally absent. Steel Mountain contains potential mountain goat habitat.

**Water:** Steel Mountain has a number of perennial streams that flow northwest and east to the Middle Fork Boise River, and south to Feather River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest. This roadless area contains 3,100 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** Idaho Douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. There is approximately 8 acres considered infested by St. Johnswort, a noxious weed, and less than 1 acre occupied by Dalmatian toadflax.

**Recreation:** The area receives some fall big-game hunting, backpacking, and hiking. Fishing occurs in Lake Creek Lake. The trails receive motorized use and some equestrian use.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 113,700 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 221,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 13,900 acres (59 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 8,600 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,300 acres, moderate productivity; and 2,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** The entire area is within two sheep grazing allotments, and there are no grazing improvements within the roadless area. There are approximately 2,600 acres of capable sheep rangeland.

**Minerals and Energy:** There has been considerable past mining activity along the Middle Fork Boise River and some limited activity along James Creek Road. The area has a low estimated interest in mineral development. There are 165 mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 23,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. There are two outfitter-guide permittees that provide cougar and bear hunting opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** There is one 8.7 mile motorized trail in the area.

**Heritage:** The area is part of the South Boise Historic Mining District. Prehistoric and historic sites, including the mining towns of Atlanta and Yuba City, are located adjacent and within the roadless area. Cultural resource site sensitivity of the roadless area is moderate.

**Disturbances:** None of the area has burned in wildfires since 1960. Bark beetles have affected much of the northern portion of the roadless area. The southern portion has had heavy infestations of Tussock moth. Such insect and disease processes have affected about 60 percent of the area.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Steel Mountain Roadless Area. Table Steel Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Steel Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Steel Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Steel Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	21,300	21,300	21,300
Similar to Backcountry	23,500	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,200*	2,200*	2,200*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>23,500</b>	<b>23,500</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Steel Mountain Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Steel Mountain-2. Potential activities

Steel Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	23,500	21,300	21,300	21,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	23,500	21,300	21,300	3,100*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	21,300	21,300	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	23,500	21,300	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Roughly 3,100 acres of this roadless area within a municipal watershed. If any wildland fire risk reduction activities occur in this roadless area, they are expected to take place within or adjacent to the municipal watershed area.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 21,300 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 21,300 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 21,300 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in or adjacent to the 3,100 acres within the municipal watershed. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Stony Meadows #027

13,600 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Stony Meadows Roadless Area, on the Cascade Ranger District, lies west of Warm Lake in the Clear Creek, Big Creek, and Curtis Creek drainages. This area is accessed from Warm Lake Highway (Forest Road 22) via State Highway 55, the Clear Creek Road (Forest Road 409), and Stony Meadows Road (Forest Road 433). The area is also accessed from Tyndall Creek (107) and Alpine Creek (106) trails.

Elevations range from about 5,500 feet to over 8,000 feet. Moderately steep to steep slopes are moderately dissected, and are vegetated with moderate to dense stands of grand fir, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir; and scattered stands of Douglas-fir. Curtis Lake is centrally located in the roadless area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and apparent naturalness of the Stony Meadows Roadless Area are generally intact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation occur within the area. Dense vegetation and dissected terrain provide some opportunities for solitude. The irregular shape with narrow appendages and cherry stemmed road exclusions limits opportunities for primitive recreation.

**Special Features:** The high-elevation lakes are special landscape features. Curtis Lake is a high elevation lake of special interest.

**Manageability:** The very complex and irregular shape would make boundary identification and administration difficult. Creating a more manageable unit would result in a loss of considerable acres.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Stony Meadow Creek in the Middle Fork Payette River drainage supports bull trout. Within the portion of the roadless area that lie in the South Fork Salmon River drainage, Trail Creek, Trail Creek tributaries, and Curtis Creek and tributaries support westslope cutthroat and bull trout. The roadless area encompasses all or portions of other streams in the South Fork Salmon River drainage that may also provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for listed Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout. That portion of the roadless area that lies within the South Fork Salmon River drainage is designated as critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon. An estimated 8.4 miles of streams in the area provide bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area, with increasing activity occurring since the augmentation program in the early 1990s. Approximately 77 percent of this roadless area is potential lynx habitat. Fisher, wolverine, boreal owl, great gray owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and spotted frog are Region 4 sensitive species either known or highly likely to occur in this roadless area.

**Water:** Curtis Lake is a popular backcountry lake. There are a few other small, scattered high-elevation lakes. The Oro Mountain area has perennial streams that flow east primarily to Curtis Creek and southeast to the Middle Fork Payette River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** Idaho Douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is low, with hunting and horseback riding as the primary recreation uses.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 109,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 218,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 12,500 (92 percent) of the Stony Meadows Roadless Area are

tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,800 acres are considered to have low productivity; 8,500 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,000 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** This roadless area receives no domestic livestock grazing use. There are no capable rangelands in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are few mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 13,600 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as moderate. Prehistoric sites have been identified adjacent to the area.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. There is one outfitter-guide permit for horse trail rides and hunting.

**Roads and Trails:** There are two motorized trails within the roadless area totaling about 5.2 miles.

**Disturbances:** There have been no acreages burned by wildfire since 1960. Approximately 700 acres have been burned with prescribed fire in the Curtis Creek area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Stony Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Stony Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table StonyMountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Stony Meadows-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

<b>Stony Meadows Management Theme</b>	<b>Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule</b>	<b>Alternative 2 Existing Plan</b>	<b>Alternative 3 Proposed Rule</b>	<b>Alternative 4 Modified Rule</b>
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	6,400	6,400	6,400
Similar to Backcountry	13,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	7,200	7,200	7,200
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>13,600</b>	<b>13,600</b>

Table Stony Meadows -2. Potential activities

Stony Meadows Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	7,200	7,200	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	13,600	13,600	13,600	13,600
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	13,600	13,600	13,600	7,200
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	13,600	13,600	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	13,600	13,600	7,200	7,200

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 6,400 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 7,200 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). For the 6,400 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted in 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For the 7,200 acres under prescription 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For both the acres under 4.1c and 3.2, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are not permitted for this purpose.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 7,200 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 6,400 acres would fall under the Primitive theme. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 6,400 acres under the Primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

For the 7,200 acres under the Backcountry theme, road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and



rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under either management theme since it is not allowed under the Primitive theme and roads are not permitted for leasable mineral activities under the Backcountry theme. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 6,400 acres under the Primitive theme and 7,200 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ.

Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in this roadless area because the area is not within 1½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting activities that occur must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There are no communities or municipal water supply systems adjacent to the Backcountry portion of this roadless area, therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 7,200 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Primitive theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Ten Mile/Black Warrior #013

118,800 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Ten Mile/Black Warrior Roadless Area is within the Idaho City and Lowman Ranger Districts. The area lies between the Middle Fork Boise River and the South Fork Payette River, and adjoins the Sawtooth Wilderness. The Black Warrior portion of this roadless area is accessed from the Middle Fork Boise River Road (Forest Road 268), the central portion from the Pikes Fork-Graham Road (Forest Road 312), and the northern portion from State Highway 21.

The area is also accessed by several forest trails, including the North Fork Boise River Trail from Johnson Creek Campground to the Deer Park Campground; and the Horse Heaven (050), Johnson Creek (059), Ten Mile Ridge (157), Blue Jay (149), Black Warrior (053), and Wapiti Creek (160) trails. The interior of the area is accessed from the road along Crooked River and Big Silver Creek that accesses the Graham administrative site (Forest Road 312). This road and the facilities at the administrative site have been excluded from the roadless area.

Elevations range from 4,700 feet along the Middle Fork Boise River near Deer Park to 8,930 feet at West Warrior Peak. Lands include strongly dissected stream-cut lands, steep canyon lands, and glaciated trough lands. Vegetation varies from scattered to dense stands of ponderosa pine or Douglas-fir, to dense and open stands of lodgepole pine and subalpine fir interrupted by avalanche paths. Overall, the Ten Mile/Black Warrior Roadless Area includes moderately steep forested areas that give way to rocky glaciated terrain at higher elevations. Prominent features include Picket Mountain (8,218 feet) and Wolf Mountain (8,785 feet). Goat Mountain, West and East Warrior Peaks, and Swanholm Peak are other notable landforms in the area.

The area includes roughly 76,500 acres of Recommended Wilderness and therefore holds a high level of roadless characteristics.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Generally the natural integrity and appearance of the Ten Mile/Black Warrior is intact. There are some specific isolated areas where man's imprint is noticeable. There is evidence of early mining activities in the Graham area, and a four-wheel drive trail up Black Warrior Creek to the Overlook Mine is still evident. There is an additional 2 miles of primitive road along Eagle Creek.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are good because the Ten Mile/Black Warrior Roadless Area is a large rugged area, and contains a variety of vegetation and terrain. The opportunities are further enhanced when the area is considered in conjunction with the adjacent Sawtooth Wilderness.

**Special Features:** The roadless area contains segments of the North and Middle Fork Boise River that are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are an estimated 11 river miles and 4,200 acres of eligible corridor within the roadless area. There are scattered high-elevation lakes in the area. The steep-walled canyon of the North Fork Boise River east of Deer Park is a unique and scenic geologic feature.

**Manageability:** The cherry-stem exclusion of the road accessing the Graham administrative site creates a very irregular boundary. A logical topographic boundary on the north end would be the ridgeline between Ten Mile Creek and the South Fork Payette River. Some minor adjustments of some of the other irregular boundaries would also help create a more definable, locatable boundary for wilderness management.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The creeks and streams of this roadless area can generally be separated into those that flow predominantly northerly to the South Fork Payette River and those that flow southerly to the major drainages of the North Fork and Middle Fork Boise River watersheds.

South Fork Payette Watersheds - These drainages encompass the northern portion of the roadless area and include Tenmile, Wapiti, Chapman, Wolf Creek, and other small streams. These streams are within the Upper South Fork Payette River bull trout key watershed (State of Idaho 1996). In addition all of Tenmile Creek is designated as a bull trout priority watershed. Tenmile is suspected to have a strong population of bull trout and therefore is designated as adjunct and nodal habitat for its entire length. Wapiti Creek supports a strong bull trout population and is designated nodal for its entire length. Chapman Creek contains a small isolated population of bull trout that are bounded by a blown-out, virtually uninhabitable section of stream below a steep narrow section of stream above. This patch of habitat is less than 0.5 mile in length. Tenmile and Wapiti Creeks both provide extensive spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow trout. MacDonald Creek provides limited spawning and rearing habitat for redband rainbow near its confluence with the South Fork Payette River. Blue Jay and Wolf Creeks and the rest of the small streams that originate in this roadless area are too small and steep to provide spawning and rearing habitat.

Middle and North Fork Boise River Watersheds - This area encompasses the central and southern portion of the roadless area. Major streams in this portion are the upper sections of Bear, Rocky, Hunter, Taylor, Lodgepole, Johnson, and Black Warrior creeks. This portion also contains upper reaches of the Middle Fork Boise River, North Fork Boise River, Bear River, and Crooked River. Most of the drainages within this area are bull trout priority watersheds and are producing high quality spawning and rearing habitat. Due to the relatively isolated nature of the area, most of these streams still contain bull trout and are extremely important to the viability and persistence of fish in this area. The rivers are providing nodal (wintering and migration) habitat and connectivity between the lower-elevation nodal habitats in Arrowrock Reservoir and the upriver spawning and rearing areas. The rivers and streams also contain thriving populations of redband rainbow trout and some smaller numbers of cutthroat and brook trout. About 60,600 acres (51 percent) of the roadless area is considered bull trout spawning and rearing habitat. There are 72.5 miles of streams with bull trout spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves have been recorded in this area. Potential habitat for lynx, wolverine, and fisher occurs, however their presence in the area is unknown. Approximately 32 percent of the area is potential lynx habitat. The roadless area provides relatively secluded habitat important to these species and considerable potential wolverine denning habitat has also been identified in the area. Boreal owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, white-headed woodpecker, and the three-toed woodpecker are known to occur or could potentially occur within the roadless area. The area has a number of small marshy lakes that provide suitable habitat for western toads, long-toed salamanders, and spotted frogs. Bald eagles winter along the North Fork Boise River. Moose occur along the North Fork Boise River in the Graham area. The area provides summer and fall habitat for elk and mule deer. Mountain goats are present in the Wolf Mountain and Goat Mountain areas.

**Water:** This large area has numerous perennial streams and headwaters of major rivers. There is a complex drainage pattern with drainages to numerous individual watersheds. In the northern portion of the area, Ten Mile Creek and associated streams flow northerly to the South Fork Payette River. Bear River, Crooked River, Johnson Creek, and the North Fork Boise River with numerous associated perennials occur in the central portion of the unit. Perennial streams in the southern portion of the area flow southerly to the Middle Fork Boise River. There is a spring box water development that serves as a domestic water source for the adjacent Graham Guard Station. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** Idaho Douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. An estimated 9 acres have St. Johnswort, a noxious weed.

**Recreation:** The area receives typical backcountry fall big-game hunting use concentrated mostly in the areas adjacent to the trails and roads. The area provides access to the west side of the Sawtooth Mountains. Hiking, backpacking, and camping are dispersed recreation activities that take place in the area, and some of the high-elevation lakes, such as Jenny Lake, are popular backpacking destinations. The

area accommodates motorized and non-motorized trail use; a trail network that traverses the area is a popular motorcycle route and the Bear River Trail is a popular equestrian use trail.

**Timber:** The area has an estimated 402,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 803,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 57,300 acres (48 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 46,100 acres are considered to have low productivity; 24,300 acres, moderate productivity; and 4,900 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Approximately 80 percent of the area is within a sheep allotment that has no improvements within the roadless area. There are approximately 15,100 acres of capable sheep rangelands.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are almost 2,000 mining claims in the area. A portion of the roadless area is estimated to have a low level of interest for mineral development. The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 118,800 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide service provides deer, elk, bear and cougar hunting trips, summer pack trips, and llama pack services in the area, while another outfitter-guide provides guided horse rides in the Swanholm/Graham area.

**Roads and Trails:** There is an extensive trail system, with 14 different trails totaling about 77 miles. There are six non-motorized trails totaling about 39.3 miles and eight motorized trails totaling 37.8 miles.

**Heritage:** The area has moderate cultural resource site sensitivity. There are historic and prehistoric sites in the vicinity and within the area.

**Disturbances:** There have been 36 recorded wildfire ignitions or occurrences in the area. An estimated 43,600 acres have burned in wildfire since 1960, most of it associated with the 1994 Rabbit Creek fire. The Taylor Creek and Upper Johnson Creek drainages have experienced some significant amounts of soil movement and soil erosion.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Ten Mile/Black Warrior Roadless Area.

Table Ten Mile/Black Warrior -1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Ten Mile/Black Warrior -2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Ten Mile/Black Warrior -1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Ten Mile/Black Warrior Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	76,500	76,500	76,500
Primitive	0	37,000	37,000	37,000
Similar to Backcountry	118,800	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	1,100	1,100	1,100
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	4,200*	4,200*	4,200*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>118,800</b>	<b>118,800</b>	<b>118,800</b>	<b>118,800</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Ten Mile/Black Warrior Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

Table Ten Mile/Black Warrior 2. Potential activities

Ten Mile/Black Warrior Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	1,100	1,100	1,100
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	118,800	38,100	38,100	38,100
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	118,800	38,100	38,100	1,100
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	38,100	38,100	1,100
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	1,100	1,100	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	118,800	38,100	1,100	1,100

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 1,100 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), 37,000 under prescription 4.1c (unroaded recreation) and 76,500 under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in the wildland urban interface, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber cutting is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 37,000 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

The 76,500 acres under prescription 1.2 (Recommended Wilderness) are managed to maintain wilderness attributes and to allow ecological processes to prevail. Road construction is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities are allowed. Under this prescription the 76,500 acres are expected to maintain their wilderness and roadless area characteristics.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 37,000 acres under prescription 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 1,100 acres under prescription 5.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The area contains 118,800 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 1,100 acres would fall under the GFRG, 37,000 under the Primitive theme and 76,500 under the Wild Land Recreation theme.

For the 1,100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral



activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining, the Ten Mile/Black Warrior Roadless Area does contain 118,800 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred in the 1,100 acres under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

The 76,500 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless and wilderness attributes.

No new leasable mineral activity would occur in the Primitive or Wild Land Recreation theme since surface occupancy is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 76,500 acres under the Wild Land Recreation theme, 37,000 acres under the Primitive theme, and 1,100 acres under the GFRG theme.

The 76,500 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

In the 37,000 acres in the Primitive theme, timber cutting would be prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in this roadless area because the area is not within 1½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. In addition, no new roads can be constructed under the Primitive theme and any activities that occur must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 1,100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Forest-wide management direction that provides additional criteria for resource protections would still apply.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive theme since this theme prohibits surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area. Surface use and occupancy could occur in the GFRG theme if allowed under the forest plan.



## Tennessee #033

1,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Tennessee Roadless Area, on the Lowman Ranger District, is a “residual” area not included when the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness was created in 1980. This area adjoins the southwestern portion of the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, and is accessed by the Warm Lake/Stanley Road (Forest Road 579) via State Highways 21 or 55.

Elevations range from about 6,400 feet along Bear Valley Creek to nearly 8,000 feet. The area is underlain by Cretaceous granitics of the Idaho Batholith, with small areas of Tertiary volcanics and Quaternary alluvium. Lands vary from flat, wet grassy meadows with scattered stands of lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce to moderately steep slopes with moderate to dense stands of lodgepole pine. Generally, the Tennessee Roadless Area displays moderate to steep forested slopes. A prominent feature is Tennessee Creek.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural appearance and integrity of this area are intact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for primitive recreation and solitude are limited by the area’s small size. When considered as part of the adjacent Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, the opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are plentiful.

**Special Features:** The southern boundary lies adjacent to Elk Creek, an eligible Wild and Scenic River. An estimated 100 acres of the river corridor occur within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The eastern boundary of the area adjoins the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Some minor boundary adjustments could make more logical, manageable boundaries if the area were to be designated wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This roadless area contains most of the lower third of Tennessee Creek, which flows into the roadless area from the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, and flows out of the roadless area into Elk Creek. Tennessee Creek does not provide spawning habitat for listed Snake River spring/summer Chinook salmon or Snake River Basin steelhead, but may provide rearing habitat in the lower portion within the roadless area. The entire Bear Valley basin, including this roadless area, has been designated as critical habitat for salmon. Tennessee Creek has not been surveyed, but is unlikely to provide spawning and rearing habitat for listed bull trout. This portion of Elk Creek serves as nodal or migratory habitat for bull trout. There are an estimated 4.4 miles of streams with bull trout spawning and rearing habitat in the roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Boreal owl, great gray owl, northern goshawk, three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog are sensitive species known to occur or could potentially occur within the roadless area. Gray wolves are known to occur within this area. The Tennessee Roadless Area is part of a larger complex of wet meadows and adjacent forest cover that provide key calving and summer range for elk. While Tennessee's small size and closeness to the Warm Lake -Stanley Road limit its suitability for denning and rendezvous sites, the area contributes to maintaining large, relatively undisturbed habitat for wolves and ungulates. Potential habitat for wide-ranging lynx, wolverine, and fisher occurs; however, their presence in the area is unknown. The mature forest habitats within the roadless area currently provide important cover and travel areas for these three species. An estimated 62 percent of the roadless area has been identified as potential lynx habitat. Most of these species occupy mid- to late-seral forested habitats. The importance of these late-successional habitats within Tennessee Roadless Area has likely increased due to

the large fire-created seral area occurring to the north of the roadless area. The area provides summer and fall habitat for elk and mule deer.

**Water:** The area has a few perennials that flow southerly to Elk Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** There have been few plant surveys conducted in the area. No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area.

**Recreation:** The roadless area receives typical backcountry fall big-game hunting use, and some snowmobile use in the open areas and meadows.

**Timber:** The roadless area has an estimated 5,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 11,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 900 acres (89 percent) of the Tennessee Roadless Area contain tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 600 acres are considered to have low timber productivity and 400 acres are considered moderate productivity

**Range:** There are no grazing allotments in the area. There are about 50 acres of capable cattle rangelands in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are no known mining claims in the area. The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 1,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides bear and cougar hunting trips in the area, and another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no recreation trails in the area.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as moderate. Prehistoric sites have been identified adjacent the area. The roadless area has not been surveyed, but it is expected that sites exist within the area.

**Disturbances:** The 1987 Deadwood fire burned an estimated 700 acres of the area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Tennessee Roadless Area.

Table Tennessee-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Tennessee-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Tennessee-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Tennessee Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	1000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	900	900	900
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	100*	100*	100*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Tennessee Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Tennessee-2. Potential activities

Tennessee Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	900	900	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	1000	900	900	900
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	1000	900	900	900
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	900	900	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	1000	900	900	900

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan 900 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.1 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 900 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 900 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ. Therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 900 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

**Whiskey #031****5,000 Acres****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

The Whiskey Roadless Area, on the Cascade Ranger District, adjoins the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness along the wilderness area's western boundary. The Whiskey Roadless Area includes the headwaters of Whiskey Creek, a drainage of Johnson Creek, and lies about 6 miles south of Landmark. The area is accessed from Landmark by Whiskey Creek Road via the Warm Lake-Stanley Road (Forest Road 579). The area is also accessed by Sulphur Creek Trail (083).

Elevations range from 6,800 feet to 8,777 feet. The roadless area is generally vegetated with lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce. Overall, the Whiskey Roadless Area is marked by low, rolling timbered hills.

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of this roadless area are generally intact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** When considered alone the Whiskey Roadless Area has limited opportunities for solitude, challenge, and primitive recreation due to the area's small size. When considered as an addition to the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness, the area would compliment the current extensive opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Opportunities for solitude are limited in the western appendage.

**Special Features:** There are no identified special features in the area.

**Manageability:** A portion of the area's boundaries is shared with the Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness. No boundary adjustment would be needed to make this a manageable addition.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** Sand Creek historically supported Chinook spawning, and likely provides Chinook and steelhead rearing habitat. Whiskey Creek likely also provides rearing habitat for Chinook and steelhead. These streams are tributaries to Johnson Creek, which provides Chinook and steelhead spawning and rearing habitat outside the roadless area. The entire roadless area is within an area designated as critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook salmon. The roadless area contains an estimated 3.1 miles of streams with Chinook or steelhead spawning and rearing habitat.

**Wildlife:** Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area, with increasing activity occurring since the augmentation program in the 1990s. An estimated 88 percent of this roadless area is potential lynx habitat. Wolverine, boreal owl, great gray owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, and spotted frog are Region 4 sensitive species either known or highly likely to occur in this roadless area. The roadless area provides relatively undisturbed, largely inaccessible habitat that is very valuable for these species.

**Water:** The area has a few perennial streams that flow west to Johnson Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish, wildlife and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. There have been few plant surveys conducted in the area.

**Recreation:** There are two trails, of which 1.5 miles are motorized and 2.1 miles are non-motorized.

**Timber:** The roadless area has an estimated 37,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 75,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 4,700 acres (95 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,200 acres are considered to have low productivity; 1,600 acres are considered moderate productivity.

**Range:** There is a portion of one allotment encompassing about 95 percent of the roadless area that is grazed by cattle and managed under a rest-rotation system. There are approximately 200 acres of capable cattle rangeland in the roadless area. The portion of the allotment within the roadless area receives moderate use and contains fences used for stock management.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are no known mining claims. The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 5,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. There is one outfitter-guide permit for big-game hunting.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated as low. Prehistoric sites have been identified in the vicinity.

**Disturbances:** There have been no major disturbances in the area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Whiskey Roadless Area. Table Whiskey-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Whiskey-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Whiskey-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Whiskey Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	5,000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	5,000	5,000	5,000
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>5000</b>

**Table Whiskey-2. Potential activities**

Whiskey Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	5000	5000	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	5000	5000	5000	5000
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	5000	5000	5000	5000
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	5000	5000	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	5000	5000	5000	5000



**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan 5,000 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.1 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. The prescription does not require that the road be temporary. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 5,000 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 5,000 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ. Therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 5,000 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Whiskey Jack #009

6,600 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Whiskey Jack Roadless Area, in the Mountain Home Ranger District, lies within the Trinity Creek drainage about 4 miles northwest of Featherville. This roadless area is bordered on the north and west by Trinity Ridge Road from Phifer Creek, and is accessed by this road or by Trinity Creek Road from Featherville. The area is also accessed by Cross Cut Trail and Elk Springs Trail.

Elevations in this area range from 4,950 feet to nearly 7,200 feet. Lower elevations are marked by strongly dissected, stream-cut lands vegetated with scattered to dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. At higher elevations, steep slopes are vegetated with scattered to dense stands of lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, and subalpine fir. Overall, timbered, well-dissected steep or rolling hills characterize the area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of this roadless area are relatively intact because few activities have taken place within the area itself. There are short segments of four different forest roads within the roadless area totaling 0.5 mile.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude, remoteness and primitive recreation are limited by the relatively small size of the area. The overall width of the area in most locations is little more than a mile wide. The opportunities for challenge and remoteness would accordingly be limited.

**Special Features:** There are no identified special features in the area.

**Manageability:** Because this roadless area is narrow, the only wilderness boundary that would warrant consideration would be the roads and harvest units that currently bound the roadless area. Distinct topographic features for a boundary are lacking.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams in this area are Whiskey Jack and the upper ends of Spring Creek and Bear Creek. Whiskey Jack Creek contains a healthy population of small redband rainbow trout. The streams do not contain bull trout at this time as the culvert at Forest Road FDR 172 is blocking any upstream migration of fish into Whiskey Jack Creek and likely has contributed to the reduction of bull trout numbers in this drainage. Whiskey Jack is in the Trinity Creek watershed and the entire drainage is a priority watershed for bull trout. The streams of this drainage are adjunct (unoccupied) habitat at this time, but are high priority for re-introduction of bull trout.

**Wildlife:** The area occurs within the range of the gray wolf, although there is no known denning or rendezvous activity reported in the area. An estimated 55 percent of the area is potential lynx habitat. Wolverine and fisher habitat occurs in the area. Potential habitat occurs for northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and white-headed woodpecker. Potential habitat occurs for spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and spotted frog. Potential habitat occurs for mountain quail. The roadless area provides security for big game.

**Water:** Perennials flow southeasterly to Feather River and the South Fork Boise River. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. A minor amount of noxious weeds occur in the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreational activities are backpacking, big-game hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and trail bike riding.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 28,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 56,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 4,800 acres (73 percent) of the roadless area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 2,800 acres are considered to have low productivity; 1,200 acres, moderate productivity; and 1,800 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** The entire area is covered with portions of three sheep allotments. None of the allotments have any improvements. There are approximately 1,300 acres are capable sheep rangelands.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are currently 56 mining claims in the area. This roadless area contains 6,600 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There is no private or state land within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides cougar and bear hunting opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** There are three motorized trails in the area totaling an estimated 3.7 miles.

**Heritage:** This area is included in the South Boise Historic Mining District. Prehistoric and historic sites are located within and adjacent to the area. The site sensitivity is moderate.

**Disturbances:** Approximately 650 acres of this roadless area have burned in wildfires since 1960. Douglas-fir bark beetle populations continue to be active at above endemic levels and are most pronounced where defoliation occurred by the Douglas-fir tussock moth in the early 1990s. A complex of other bark beetle activity exists at various levels throughout the roadless area and adjacent areas. Tree mortality is most pronounced on north aspect Douglas-fir stands and where subalpine fir is dominant.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Whiskey Jack Roadless Area.

Table Whiskey Jack-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Whiskey Jack-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Whiskey Jack-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Whiskey Jack Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	6,600	6,600	6,600
Similar to Backcountry	6,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>6,600</b>

Table Whiskey Jack-2. Potential activities

Whiskey Jack Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	6,600	6,600	6,600	6,600
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	6,600	6,600	6,600	0
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	6,600	6,600	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	6,600	6,600	0	0

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 6,600 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 6,600 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 6,600 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting would be prohibited except to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in this roadless area because the area is not within 1½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. In addition, no new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting activities that occur must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Whitehawk Mountain #021

9,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Whitehawk Mountain Roadless Area, in the Lowman Ranger District, includes the ridge area between the Deadwood and Bear Valley Creek drainages, and extends from the Boise County line to the head of the South Fork Deer Creek. This roadless area is accessed from the Clear Creek-Bear Valley Road (Forest Road 582) via State Highway 21. Access is provided on the west by the Deadwood Ridge Trail (019).

While the area encompasses most of Whitehawk Mountain, the Whitehawk Mountain Lookout and access road are excluded from the roadless area. Elevations range from 6,800 feet to 8,100 feet atop Whitehawk Mountain. Lower elevations are marked by steep slopes vegetated with lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and subalpine fir. At higher elevations, glaciated lands are vegetated with dense to open stands of lodgepole pine and subalpine fir. Overall, the Whitehawk Mountain Roadless Area is marked by steep, forested slopes with rocky outcrops at higher elevations. Whitehawk Mountain is a prominent feature.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and apparent naturalness of the Whitehawk area is relatively intact. There are a number of very short, forest road segments that are within the boundary of the roadless area. Seven different segments total an estimated 0.7 mile.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are somewhat limited by the relatively small size and a very irregular and fractured shape. The presence of the lookout and the access road on the single dominant landform of the area also limits the sense of remoteness and solitude.

**Special Features:** There are no identified special features within the area.

**Manageability:** The area has a very irregular shape due to the exclusion of surrounding roads and timber harvest units. Identification of its boundaries and administration as a wilderness would be difficult with the current irregular boundaries. It would not be possible to refine more logical boundaries with a less fractured shape without losing significant acreage of the roadless area.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The streams draining the Whitehawk Roadless Area are within the Upper South Fork Payette River bull trout key watershed (State of Idaho 1996). In addition much of the area drains into a bull trout priority watershed. The remaining portion drains into Bear Valley, which has been designated critical salmon habitat.

Middle Fork and East Fork Warm Springs Creek harbor strong but isolated focal populations of bull trout. Middle Fork Warm Springs Creek is entirely within this roadless area while only about 20 percent of the East Fork Warm Springs flows through this roadless area. These populations may potentially serve as sources of bull trout colonizers for other nearby, but somewhat isolated, patches of suitable bull trout habitat. Bearskin Creek originates within this roadless area and flows into Bear Valley. Bearskin Creek contains a strong focal population of bull trout. The lower section of Bearskin Creek, which is outside of this roadless area, may currently provide rearing habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead. Redband rainbow and westslope cutthroat trout may use this stream (including the portions with this roadless area) for spawning and rearing. Redband rainbow trout spawn and rear in a small portion of the sections of Warm Springs and Middle Fork Warm Springs Creek that flow through this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves are known to occur within this area. Potential habitat for lynx, wolverine, and fisher occurs, however their presence in the area is unknown. The roadless area provides relatively secluded habitat important to these species. Most of the Whitehawk Roadless Area has been identified as

potential lynx habitat (72 percent). Boreal owl, great gray owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog are sensitive species known to occur or could potentially occur within the roadless area. The area provides summer and fall habitat for elk and mule deer. The roadless area is important for providing security areas for elk and deer during hunting seasons and for maintaining the snag component of forested habitats across large areas.

**Water:** Perennial streams in the area flow southwest to the Deadwood River and easterly to Bear Valley Creek and Elk Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other uses on the forest.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. Rush skeletonweed, a noxious weed, has infested less than 1 acre of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The roadless area receives typical backcountry fall big-game hunting use, concentrated mostly in the areas adjacent to trails and roads.

**Timber:** The roadless area includes an estimated 69,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 137,500 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 8,000 acres (89 percent) of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 4,900 acres are considered to have low productivity; 2,900 acres, moderate productivity; and 700 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Approximately 60 percent of the area is within a vacant sheep allotment. There are no range improvements in the area. There are 300 acres of capable cattle grazing land and 300 acres of capable sheep grazing land in the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area has few mining claims. The area has a portion that is considered a fair to poor permissive area for silt, sand and gravel. This roadless area contains 9,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state-owned lands within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides bear and cougar hunting trips in the area, while another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no recreation trails in the area.

**Heritage:** Cultural resource site sensitivity is rated low.

**Disturbances:** The 1992 Cub Creek fire burned an estimated 500 acres in the area, much of it at high intensity. A high level of Douglas-fir beetle infestation has occurred in the Middle Fork Warm Springs drainage.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Whitehawk Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Whitehawk Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Whitehawk Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Whitehawk Mountain -1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Whitehawk Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	9,000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	8,900	8,900	9,000
GFRG	0	100	100	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>

Table Whitehawk Mountain-2. Potential activities

Whitehawk Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	9,000	9,000	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	9,000	9,000	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	100	100	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 100 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), 3,900 acres would be managed under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources) and 5,000 acres would be managed under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in wildland urban interface, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber cutting is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 8,900 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the

unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 8,900 acres under prescriptions 3.1 and 3.2, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 100 acres under prescription 5.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. This roadless area contains 9,000 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the 100 acres under prescription 5.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 8,900 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 100 acres would fall under the GFRG theme. For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber cutting activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

For the 100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining, the Whitehawk Mountain Roadless Area does contain 9,000 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred in the 100 acres under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 9,000 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 9,000 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Wilson Peak #040

7,900 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Wilson Peak Roadless Area is a recently delineated roadless area identified during the 1999 roadless area inventory update for the Forest Plan Revision. The Wilson Peak Roadless Area, on the Idaho City Ranger District, lies east of Pioneerville and west of Pilot Peak Lookout. The area is accessed from Forest Road 380 north of Mores Creek Summit and Forest Road 314 from State Highway 21.

Elevations range from about 5,000 feet in the southwestern extent of the area to 7,837 at Wilson Peak. The area has some complex drainage patterns formed by the headwaters of numerous drainages flowing to the north, south, east, and west. The North and East Forks of Elk Creek are the primary drainages in the south, while to the north drainages flow to Clear Creek and Grimes Creek. Wilson Peak is the dominant landform. Moderate to dense mixed conifer stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir occur throughout the area. Subalpine fir commonly occurs at the highest elevations.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Generally, the area retains its natural integrity and natural appearance. A primitive road approaches Wilson Peak from the south. This forest road segment extends into the roadless area for a distance of 1.4 miles. The area has had some scattered, light salvage harvesting in response to Douglas-fir beetle activity; as a result there may be a subtle change in the natural integrity of the area. The natural appearance is also altered at the locations of the individual tree patches that were harvested.

**Opportunities for Experience:** There are opportunities for solitude and remoteness. The rugged terrain provides some opportunities for challenging recreation experiences. The complex terrain and vegetative screening provides opportunities for isolation and solitude. The irregular and disjointed shape affects the continuity of the area and limits the sense of remoteness and the available challenge of backcountry travel, with some areas being less than a mile in width.

**Special Features:** There are no special features identified in the area.

**Manageability and Boundaries:** The area has some fairly irregular and complex boundaries. Creating more logical or simplified boundaries would reduce the size of the area.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** There are two small fish-bearing streams in this roadless area. Grimes Creek, a small stream inhabited by many brook trout and a smaller population of redband, lies in the northern portion and meanders through lush meadows. Elk Creek is in the southern portion of the area and contains a small population of redband trout. Neither stream supports bull trout or is within a priority bull trout watershed.

**Wildlife:** The roadless area is an important security area for big game (deer and elk) and is largely surrounded by highly roaded areas. The area forms an important link between high-elevation areas to the east (Pilot Peak, Sunset Mountain) and the Boise Ridge/Shafter Butte area to the southwest. Species such as gray wolf, wolverine, and perhaps lynx may use this area as a travel way between these areas. An estimated 70 percent of the area contains potential lynx habitat. Habitats for fisher, northern goshawk, great gray owl, flammulated owl, white-headed woodpecker, and northern three-toed woodpecker occur in the area.

**Water:** There are a number of perennial streams in the area that flow to Clear Creek, Grimes Creek, and Elk Creek. Water in the area contributes to recreation, fish and wildlife habitat and other uses on the forest. An estimated 950 acres are within a municipal watershed of Idaho City.

**Botanical:** No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive plant species are known to occur in the area. A minor amount of noxious weeds occur in the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The area has low recreation use, although there is some fall big-game hunting.

**Timber:** The roadless area has 42,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to about 83,600 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 5,300 acres (67 percent) of the Wilson Peak Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 600 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,000 acres, moderate productivity; and 600 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** This roadless area contains portions of four different allotments that cover approximately 70 percent of the area. There are 700 acres of capable sheep rangeland in this roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** Historic mining has occurred within and around the roadless area. There are over 500 mining claims in the area. A portion of the area is considered to have an estimated moderate level of interest for mineral development. This roadless area contains 7,900 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. There are no special uses in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There is an estimated 2.5 miles of motorized trail (Forest Trail 163) approaching Wilson Peak from the north.

**Heritage:** The area has moderate cultural resource sensitivity. There are historic sites in the area or in the immediate vicinity. Part of the area is within the Boise Historic Mining District.

**Disturbances:** There has been an estimated 10 acres that have burned by wildfire since 1960.

#### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Wilson Peak Roadless Area.

Table Wilson Peak-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Wilson Peak-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Wilson Peak-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Wilson Peak Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	7,900	7,900	7,900
Similar to Backcountry	7,900	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>7,900</b>

Table Wilson Peak-2. Potential activities

Wilson Peak Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction for allowed timber cutting	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	7,900	7,900	7,900	7,900
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	7,900	7,900	7,900	950*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	7,900	7,900	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	7,900	7,900	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 950 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without road access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 7,900 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require road access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 7,900 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Rule, there are 7,900 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Such activities are expected to occur in the 950 acres of the Primitive theme within or adjacent to the municipal water supply system. However, no new roads can be constructed and these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Big Creek Fringe #009

1,100 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Big Creek Fringe Roadless Area encompasses a narrow strip of land less than a mile wide between Big Creek and the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness on the Krassel Ranger District. Access is by road along Big Creek (Forest Roads 340 and 371), and by the trail from Big Creek into Cougar Basin (Forest Trail 004). Secesh Roadless Area lies directly to the west; Placer Creek Roadless Area lies to the northwest; and Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness forms the eastern border.

The area consists of extremely steep, northwest-facing slopes that drain into Big Creek. The soils derive from granitic rocks of the Idaho Batholith and generally are light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,400 feet to 7,600 feet. The area is mostly forested with Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and Engelmann spruce. Its understory includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, meadow rue, thimbleberry, mountain maple, pinegrass, buffaloberry, spirea, and queencup.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** There have been no major human-caused disturbances and there is only about 0.5 mile of unauthorized road within the boundaries; thus, the natural integrity appears intact and the natural appearance is high.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The area consists primarily of slopes facing the Big Creek Road. Because development (summer homes, lodge, work center, air strip) occurs along the road, and the road is a popular access point for the adjacent Wilderness area, the opportunity for solitude within the Fringe itself is low. Due to its shape (a long, narrow strip of land), the area alone provides very little opportunity for primitive recreation. The opportunities for primitive recreation become high, however, in conjunction with the adjacent Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness. The steep slopes offer challenging backpacking.

**Special Features:** In conjunction with the Big Creek Road, the area serves as an access point to the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness. The portion close to Big Creek is an elk calving area. About 400 acres are within an eligible Wild and Scenic River corridor.

**Manageability:** Due to the area's small size, alternative boundaries are not practical. Because the area is less than 5,000 acres, the only wilderness management opportunity would be to add the area to the existing Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Fish habitat in this roadless area is limited to several small, unnamed tributaries of Big Creek, and a half-mile reach of Lick Creek. It is unlikely that these streams support fish populations. However, the area is within the Big Creek sub-watershed, which provides or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon and steelhead trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for Chinook summer salmon.

**Wildlife:** Habitat is present for many species including elk, deer, moose, cougar, black bear, mountain goat, boreal owl, northern and three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, spotted frog, and gray wolf (an experimental, non-essential population). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, is present in most of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are present for wolverine and fisher.

**Water:** The area contains portions of Big Creek and Lick Creek, but no lakes. The entire area drains into Big Creek, an important anadromous stream.



**Botanical:** No populations of threatened, endangered or sensitive plants are known to occur. Few botanical surveys have been done in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Uses of the area are off-trail, non-motorized, and very light (estimated at 50-100 recreation visitor days a year), consisting primarily of fall hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking.

**Timber:** The area contains an estimated 12,300 thousand board feet, equivalent to 24,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 1,000 acres (92 percent) is considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 20 acres are considered to have low productivity; 900 acres, moderate productivity; and 60 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** The area has no livestock grazing permits. There are no capable grazing lands within the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is no mineral or energy activity in this area at the present time. The mineral potential is moderate. This roadless area contains 1,100 acres of medium geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** The Payette National Forest administers all lands in the roadless area. There are no non-Federal lands, permanently encumbered land titles, or cost-share agreements of record within the roadless area. One outfitter-guide provides mainly summer recreation opportunities.

**Roads and Trails:** An estimated one-half mile of Forest Service Trail 004 passes through this small fringe area and accesses the Cougar Basin area of the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness. This non-motorized trail receives considerable use by hikers and pack stock in summer and fall.

**Heritage:** There has never been a cultural resource inventory within this roadless area. Half of the area is rated low and half as high for potential cultural sites.

**Disturbances:** Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals for these fire regimes are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). There have been no major fires within this area for the past 60 years. Timber in the area has minor, endemic infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle, mountain pine beetle, and spruce bark beetle.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Big Creek Fringe Roadless Area. Table Big Creek Fringe-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Big Creek Fringe-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Big Creek Fringe-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Big Creek Fringe Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	1100	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	700	700	CPZ	700
				NonCPZ	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	400*	400*	400*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>1100</b>	<b>1100</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Big Creek Fringe Roadless Area is Wild and Scenic River (WSR). For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Big Creek Fringe-2. Potential activities

Big Creek Fringe Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	700	700	700
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	1000	700	700	700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	1000	700	700	700
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	700	700	700
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	1000	700	700	700

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 700 acres are within prescription 3.2 (Active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 700 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 700 acres under the Backcountry theme, all of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber

harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could also be done throughout to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Caton Lake #912

45,400 Acres Payette

39,100 Acres Boise

84,500 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Caton Lake Roadless Area occurs on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette National Forest, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. The South Fork Salmon River, East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and Warm Lake Roads bound the Caton Lake Roadless Area. Several trails enter the area, but travel in much of the area is restricted by the vegetation and rugged topography. The Needles Roadless Area lies to the west, Secesh Roadless Area lies to the north, Meadow Creek and Burnt Log Roadless Areas adjoin to the east, and Peace Rock Roadless Area lies to the south.

The area rises steeply out of three major canyons through timberlands and meadows to high, glaciated granite crests. Soils derive from granitic parent materials of the Idaho Batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range widely from 3,663 to 9,195 feet. Indian Ridge, Caton Lake, Log Mountain, and Thunderbolt Mountain are prominent scenic landmarks.

Lands at lower elevations are steep and strongly dissected by streams, with brush fields and moderate to dense stands of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and western larch. Higher elevation lands are U-shaped glacial valleys with steep side slopes and gently sloping alluvial bottoms, adjacent to high peaks, rocky ridges, and cirque basins. Lodgepole pine and subalpine fir are the dominant tree species. Ground cover at the lower elevations includes pinegrass, Idaho fescue, ceanothus, bluebunch wheatgrass, snowberry, ninebark, serviceberry, elk sedge, tall huckleberry, meadow rue, thimbleberry, mountain maple, buffaloberry, queencup, and spirea. Higher-elevation ground cover includes elk sedge, low huckleberry, beargrass, and woodrush.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is generally high, as this is a large area with few effects from past development. The natural appearance for this area is high, although appearance has been recently changed by a number of large wildfires, most notably the 1994 Thunderbolt fire. There are an estimated 1.25 miles of unauthorized road within the boundary.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Due to its large size, rugged terrain, and limited access, this area has a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Steep, rugged mountains characterize the area. Roads access the edges and several trails access portions of the interior. Much of the area is open to motorized travel on designated trails.

**Special Features:** Scenic Caton Lake lies in the heart of the area. The Phoebe Meadows Research Natural Area (1,100 acres) also occurs within the area. Approximately 1,100 acres of land the South Fork Salmon River are considered eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System.

**Manageability:** Several boundary options have been reviewed for this area. One option includes the entire area, for approximately 84,500 acres. The other options retain core sections of the area and, where possible, move the boundaries to natural features to improve manageability. Existing uses and landownership would not seriously complicate managing the area as wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The roadless area encompasses tributaries of the South Fork Salmon River (Fourmile Creek, Camp Creek, Phoebe Creek, Indian Creek), East Fork South Fork Salmon River (Caton Creek), and Johnson Creek. These tributaries provide or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout; and Region 4 sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for Chinook summer salmon. Other

species within the roadless area include resident redband rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, suckers, and sculpin.

**Wildlife:** The bald eagles migrate along the South Fork Salmon River. Habitat is present for many wildlife species, including deer, elk, black bear, mountain goat, cougar, boreal owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and northern and white-headed woodpecker. The area provides important winter and summer range, as well as wallows, licks, and escape areas, for deer and elk. Two migration routes for big game have been identified in addition to elk calving areas. Gray wolves (an experimental, nonessential population) have been reported in this and adjacent areas. Potential habitat for lynx (a threatened species) occurs in about half of the area, generally occurring above drier ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir habitats in the South Fork Salmon River canyon. Suitable habitat and travel corridor are present for wolverine and fisher.

**Water:** The area contains numerous streams and wetland areas, and several lakes. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and South Fork Salmon River. Johnson Creek is a major tributary of the East Fork South Fork, which flows into the South Fork Salmon River. All these streams provide important anadromous fish habitat. Johnson Creek, East Fork South Fork, and South Fork Salmon River are designated as water quality limited water bodies under the Clean Water Act. The South Fork Salmon River has an established total maximum daily load. Potential exists for a small hydropower project along Caton Creek.

**Botanical:** No known populations of endangered, threatened, or sensitive plants are present. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The main recreation activities consist of hunting, backpacking, horseback riding, and trail biking.

**Timber:** There is an estimated 682,800 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,356,500 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 64,400 acres (76 percent) of the Caton Lake Roadless Area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 30,300 acres are considered to have low productivity; 41,400 acres, moderate productivity; and 6,700 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** The area contains an estimated 100 acres of capable rangeland. One cattle allotment occurs in the southern portion of the roadless area on the Boise National Forest, while no grazing permits exist on the Payette portion.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area has very few active mining claims. There is very little potential for future locatable mineral or energy development. This roadless area contains 84,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** The Forest Service administers all lands in the roadless area. There are no known special use permits associated with this area. One outfitter-guide provides mainly summer recreation opportunities for clients.

**Roads and Trails:** Approximately 50 miles of Forest Service system trail are in this area. The terrain and trail system provide for some motorized use by trail bikes, limited to designated routes.

**Heritage:** Previous cultural resource inventory found an absence of heritage resources. The likelihood of cultural resources is rated as low across most of the area, with smaller portions rate as moderate or high.

**Disturbances:** Fire occurrence in this area ranges from high along the South Fork Salmon River to moderately high at the higher elevations. Mean fire return intervals for these fire regimes range from frequent (16-35 years) to very infrequent (100-300 years). Approximately 23,700 acres have burned in wildfire between 1960 and 2000. Recent major wildland fires burned in 1992 (Camp fire, 100 acres) and 1994 (Thunderbolt fire, 1,000 acres). The forest has ignited four prescribed fires in the area since 1988. Douglas-fir and Engelmann spruce bark beetles are active in the area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Caton Lake Roadless Area.

Table Caton Lake-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Caton Lake-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Caton Lake-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Payette only)**

Caton Lake Management Theme Payette	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
				CPZ	NonCPZ
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	45,400	0	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	43,400	43,400	CPZ	700
				NonCPZ	42,700
GFRG	0	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>45,400</b>	<b>45,400</b>	<b>45,400</b>	<b>45,400</b>	<b>45,400</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Payette portion of the Caton Lake Roadless Area is 1,100 acres as RNA and 900 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

**Table Caton Lake-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)**

Caton Lake Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
				CPZ	Non-CPZ
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	39,100	0	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	29,400	29,400	CPZ	2,900
				Non-CPZ	26,500
GFRG	0	9,500	9,500	9,500	9,500
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	200	200	200	200
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>39,100</b>	<b>39,100</b>	<b>39,100</b>	<b>39,100</b>	<b>39,100</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Boise portion of the Caton Lake Roadless Area is 200 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.



Table Caton Lake-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Caton Lake Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	84,500	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	72,800	72,800	CPZ	3,600
				NonCPZ	69,200
GFRG	0	9,500	9,500	9,500	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,200	2,200	2,200	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>84,500</b>	<b>84,500</b>	<b>84,500</b>	<b>84,500</b>	

Table Caton Lake-2. Potential activities (for Payette and Boise combined)

Caton Lake Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	82,300	82,300	13,100*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	84,500	82,300	82,300	82,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	84,500	82,300	82,300	82,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	82,300	82,300	13,100*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	9,500	9,500	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	84,500	82,300	82,300	82,300

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 69,200 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 9,500 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), 64,100 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), and 8,700 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in

the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 72,800 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 72,800 acres under prescriptions 3.1 and 3.2, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 9,500 acres under prescriptions 5.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Caton Lake Roadless Area contains 84,500 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the area under prescription 5.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 9,500 acres would fall under the GFRG and 72,800 acres under the Backcountry theme.

For the 9,500 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Caton Lake Roadless Area, the area does contain 84,500 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 72,800 acres under the Backcountry theme, 3,600 of which are in the CPZ, and 9,500 acres under the GFRG theme.

Within the 3,600 Backcountry acres that are within the CPZ, timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated,

and the timber cutting activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 69,200 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 72,800 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For 9,500 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or GFRG theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Chimney Rock #006

8,500 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Chimney Rock Roadless Area lies within the McCall Ranger, northeast of Secesh Meadows. War Eagle fire lookout sits on the northern edge of the unit. A few trails extend a short distance into the area, but much of the area is only accessible by cross-country travel. The Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Roadless Area lies to the north and east, Crystal Mountain Roadless Area lies to the west, and Secesh Roadless Area lies to the south, beyond the Secesh Meadows subdivision.

Named for the resistant granitic formation "Chimney Rock," the area forms a high bench of moderate relief. Soils derive from granitic parent materials of the Idaho Batholith and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,700 to 8,200 feet. Dense, continuous stands of lodgepole pine cover much of the area. Ground cover species include beargrass, elk sedge, dwarf huckleberry, and pinegrass.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is moderate and the natural appearance somewhat impaired, mainly due to impacts inside and adjacent to the western boundary from private development in the Secesh Meadows subdivision. There is an estimated 2.3 miles of unauthorized road within the boundary. Once visitors leave the affected area and enter the drainages, the area appears relatively unaffected by human activity.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The lack of nearby large population centers and the dense, continuous stands of lodgepole pine afford a moderate opportunity for solitude. The absence of trails and facilities provides a substantial opportunity for primitive recreation and challenging hunting and hiking. Nearly 90 percent of the area is closed to motorized vehicle travel, including snowmobiles. Access roads pass around the outer edges of the area and intrude near the junction of Grouse Creek and Secesh River.

**Special Features:** "Chimney Rock" is a scenic landmark near the northern boundary of the area. About 200 acres of the Secesh River, passing near the area's western boundary, is eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River system.

**Manageability:** Due to the topography and surrounding roads, no practical opportunity exists to alter the boundaries to increase manageability. There are no private or state land in-holdings, and no dominant current uses that would affect potential manageability.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams in this area are considered critical habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, contributing to the quality of occupied downstream habitat. Several resident fish species may also occur in area streams. Bull trout, Chinook summer salmon, and steelhead habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Elk, deer, boreal owl, northern goshawk, great gray owl, spotted frog, northern three-toed woodpecker, and bear can be found in the area. Elk calving areas occur in nearby Secesh Meadows, but the area is too high in elevation for elk or deer winter range. Suitable habitat is found for gray wolf, an experimental, non-essential population. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in almost all of the area. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine are also found here.

**Water:** No lakes or reservoirs occur in the area. The main streams are Piah Creek and Warm Spring Creek. All streams in the area drain directly into and provide good quality water for the Secesh River, an important anadromous fishery. Three permitted water systems serving the Secesh Meadows subdivision exist on the western boundary of the roadless area. The systems are spring fed or diverted from unnamed creeks, and are all piped underground.

**Botanical:** No threatened or endangered or sensitive plant species are known to occur in this roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The majority of the recreation use in the roadless area is big game hunting. Other uses are considered low.

**Timber:** The area contains an estimated 79,700 thousand board feet, equivalent to 156,500 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 8,200 acres (96 percent) of the Chimney Rock Roadless Area is considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 2,200 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,300 acres moderate productivity; and 20 acres, high productivity. There have been no recent timber sales.

**Range:** No range allotments or livestock operations occur in this roadless area. There are no capable grazing lands within the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are very few active mining claims in the Chimney Rock Roadless Area. Historically, there was little activity within the area, although some moderate-scale placer mining occurred along the western boundary. The potential for future locatable mineral and energy development is limited. This roadless area contains 8,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no non-Federal lands, permanently encumbered land titles, or cost-share agreements of record within this area.

**Roads and Trails:** Non-motorized recreation is the dominant recreation use due to the terrain and absence of trails.

**Heritage:** This area has not had extensive cultural resource inventories to date. There are no identified prehistoric activity areas within the roadless area. However, there is some evidence of historic placer and hard rock mining activities.

**Disturbances:** Historic wildland fire occurrence is low to moderately low. Mean fire return intervals are infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). An estimated 1,600 acres of the roadless area have burned since 1960. Most of these acres were from the Burgdorf Junction fire in 2000. No recent major insect or disease infestations have occurred in the area.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Chimney Rock Roadless Area. Table Chimney Rock -1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Chimney Rock -2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Chimney Rock-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Chimney Rock Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	8,500	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	8,300	8,300	CPZ	3,200
				NonCPZ	5,100
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	200*	200*	200*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>8,500</b>	<b>8,500</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Chimney Rock Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Chimney Rock-2. Potential activities

Chimney Rock Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	8,300	8,300	3,200*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	8,500	8,300	8,300	8,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	8,500	8,300	8,300	8,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	8,300	8,300	3,200*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	8,500	8,300	8,300	8,300

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 5,100 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 8,300 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 8,300 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.



**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 8,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, 3,200 of which are in the CPZ.

Within the 3,200 Backcountry acres that are within the CPZ, timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 5,100 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 8,300 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since road construction is not permitted to access new mineral leases.

## Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak #004

92,900 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Roadless Area is located on the McCall Ranger District, in the north central portion of the forest. The area stretches from Marshall Mountain in the west, across the South Fork Salmon River to Pueblo Summit in the east. The Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness forms the area's north boundary. The Chimney Rock, Crystal Mountain, and Secesh Roadless Areas lie to the south, and Marshall Mountain Mining District lies to the west.

The area is extremely rugged. The steep river breaks and canyons of the Salmon and South Fork Salmon River drainages typify the area. The soils derive from granites of the Idaho Batholith and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 2,700 to 8,160 feet. Much of the area is heavily timbered with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, grand fir, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir. Common ground cover includes bunchgrasses, pinegrass, ninebark, beargrass, elk sedge, and dwarf huckleberry.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and natural appearance of the area are high, except in the heavily mined Warren Meadows area and along the border near the Salmon River, where several special uses are in effect. Associated with the mining, are an estimated 23.5 miles of unauthorized and 8.6 miles of forest roads within the boundary. Other portions of this large area have had very little disturbance.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The limited access and rugged terrain over much of the area create a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. The area is very remote from any large population centers, although local use from Warren, Secesh Meadows, and McCall is increasing.

**Special Features:** The South Fork Salmon River Canyon and the Wolf Fang Peak area are scenic landmarks. The South Fork Salmon River has been found eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are 5.5 miles and 1,700 acres of land considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. The area also provides important habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout, and has many significant cultural resource sites.

**Manageability:** Forest Plan alternatives evaluated boundary options that would add portions of this area to the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness. These changes would enhance existing wilderness by moving the boundaries to ridge tops and away from mid-slope. Existing mining activity could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams in this area are considered critical habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, contributing to the quality of habitat in downstream areas where Chinook summer salmon occur. Steelhead and bull trout, both threatened species, are also found in the roadless area. Introduced brook trout occur in some area streams. Bull trout, Chinook summer salmon, steelhead, inland redband trout, pacific lamprey, and westslope cutthroat habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The area's wildlife species include elk, deer, moose, bighorn sheep, northern goshawk, and pileated woodpecker. Suitable habitat also exists for Townsend's big-eared bat, white headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, flammulated owl, boreal owl, great gray owl, and spotted frog. The area provides big game winter range and elk calving habitat. Suitable habitat for an experimental, non-essential population of gray wolf is found here. Suitable habitat for the peregrine falcon is also found in the roadless area. Migrating bald eagles occasionally visit the South Fork Salmon River. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the

major drainages are potential habitat. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine can be found at higher elevations.

**Water:** There are only a few lakes and no reservoirs in this area. The main streams include California Creek, Warren Creek, and South Fork Salmon River. The central and western portions of the area drain into the main Salmon River, and the eastern portion drains into the South Fork Salmon River. Portions of Warren Creek watershed have been negatively affected by past mining activities, including stream dredging. Placer and dredge mining, along with poorly designed roads on private or patented lands, continue to contribute large amounts of sediment to the drainage. Sediment is also a concern in the South Fork Salmon River drainage due to its highly valued anadromous fishery. The South Fork Ranch has a hydropower facility, an irrigation ditch system, and a spring-fed domestic water system on Smith Creek, west of their property. The Sandy Cove Subdivision has a permitted water system on Pony Creek, with a small diversion above ground, and a below-ground piping system.

**Botanical:** Candystick (*Allotropa virgata*) and Cascade reedgrass (*Calamagrostis tweedyi*) two sensitive plant species occur in this roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds.

**Recreation:** The Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Roadless Area provides opportunities for non-motorized and motorized recreation uses including hunting, fishing, trail bike riding, and backpacking. Recreation use is low to moderate.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains 796,200 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,618,600 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 76,200 acres (82 percent) of the Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 28,500 acres are considered to have low productivity; 39,500 acres, moderate productivity; and 21,500 acres, high productivity. A small part of the area was entered for salvage harvest following the 1994 wildfires. The area of impact centered in the area of Smith Knob to Pilot Peak to Bear Creek Point. Harvesting was done by helicopter, and no new roads were constructed.

**Range:** A portion of one sheep allotment, Marshall Mountain, occurs in the western portion of the roadless area. This allotment has a deferred rotation grazing system, and the level of structural improvements is low. An estimated 2,100 acres (2 percent) of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

**Minerals and Energy:** Several hundred active mining claims exist within the roadless area. Much of the area has an extensive mining history, with hundreds of old exploration and mine development workings. Most of this disturbance is in a zone about 5 miles wide and 12 miles long, extending from the Marshall Mountain Mining District in the northwest through the Warren Mining District in the southeast. Only limited activity is occurring at present, but there is at least one producing mine in the Warren area. Much of the area has a high potential for future mineral development, particularly in the previously described zone. This roadless area contains 90,900 acres of high and 2,000 acres of medium geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** The roadless area surrounds one privately owned parcel of 92 acres. There are also an estimated 1,010 acres of unpatented mining claims in which the claimants hold surface occupancy rights. These claims lie in the California and Union Creek drainages in the western portion of the area. There are no cost-share agreements of record within this area. An outfitter-guide provides hunting and guiding services in the Warren Creek drainage.

**Roads and Trails:** The rugged terrain and trail system allow for limited motorized use by trail bikes. An estimated 33 miles on non-motorized trails exist in the area, and 12 miles of motorized trails.

**Heritage:** There are significant and outstanding prehistoric Indian cultural sites in the area, including a house pit village, rock shelters, pictographs, lithic scatters, and cambium-peeled pine trees. This area also has a multiple resource National Register of Historic Places listing for 19th century Chinese sites within the historic Warren Mining District. This is the only place in the State of Idaho that contains such a

designation. Also, within this area are two Forest Service historic guard stations that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and one active Forest Service fire lookout.

**Disturbances:** Wildland fire occurrence ranges from high to low. Mean fire return intervals range from very frequent (less than 25 years) at the lowest elevations to very infrequent (151300 years) at the highest elevations. The majority of this area would be classified as infrequent (76-150 years). An estimated 51,200 acres have burned between 1960 and 2000. Substantial acreage in the South Fork and Pilot Peak portions of the roadless area burned in the 1994 Chicken fire. Significant portions in the northwestern part of the roadless area burned in the 1994 Corral fire and 2000 Burgdorf Junction fire. Douglas-fir bark beetle activity is at near epidemic levels in portions of the roadless area that burned in the 1994 fires.

**ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION**

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Roadless Area. Table Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak -1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak -2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	36,700	36,700	36,700	
Similar to Backcountry	92,900	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	54,500	54,500	CPZ	9,300
				NonCPZ	45,200
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,700*	1,700*	1,700*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>92,900</b>	<b>92,900</b>	<b>92,900</b>	<b>92,900</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak-2. Potential activities

Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	54,500	54,500	9,300 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	92,900	91,200	91,200	91,200
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	92,900	91,200	91,200	54,900 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	91,200	91,200	9,300 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	92,900	91,200	54,500	54,500

<sup>1</sup> Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 45,200 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup> Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 400 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 - ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 3,600 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities), 33,100 acres are within prescription 4.1 a (undeveloped recreation, maintain inventoried roadless areas), 41,500 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources) and 13,000 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). For the 36,700 acres under prescription 4.1a and 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For the 54,500 acres under prescriptions 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under any of the four prescriptions since roads are not permitted for this purpose.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 54,500 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 36,700 acres would fall under the Primitive theme. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme Ares, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 36,700 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

For the 54,500 acres under the Backcountry theme, road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under either management theme since it is not allowed under the Primitive theme and roads are not permitted for mineral leases under the Backcountry theme. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 36,700 acres under the Primitive theme and 54,500 acres under the Backcountry theme, 9,300 of which are in the CPZ. Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 45,200 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 54,500 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 400 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes either since the two themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind.



## Council Mountain #018

16,600 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Council Mountain Roadless Area covers the top of Council Mountain, which is bordered on the west by Council Valley and on the east by the Middle Fork Weiser River. The Middle Fork Weiser River Road, the East Fork Weiser River Road, and Cottonwood Creek Road provide the principal access. A few primitive trails criss-cross the area. The area is surrounded by a combination of private and public lands, with Snowbank Roadless Area located several miles to the south.

Cirque basins with granite intrusions and steep, grassy, basaltic slopes characterize the area. The soils in the western portion derive mainly from volcanic parent materials and are mostly dark colored, fine textured, and rocky. The soils in the extreme eastern portion are derived from granitic parent materials and are mainly light colored, coarse textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,400 feet to 8,126 feet. Generally, the area receives heavy precipitation, mostly snow in winter and rain in the spring with hot, relatively dry summers.

The area is mostly forested with Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, grand fir, and western larch (scattered in cool sites), with riparian-related Engelmann spruce above midslope. Lodgepole pine, like western larch, is associated with cool airflow and can be found in drainage bottoms and at upper elevations associated with subalpine fir. Typical grasses include Idaho fescue, needle grass and sedges. Several shrubs are evident, including ninebark, ocean spray, huckleberry, thimbleberry, currants, and willow (remnants). Aspen clones are present, scattered, but old and declining in health due to conifer encroachment.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and natural appearance for this area are medium to high. The area is somewhat affected by grazing-related developments such as fencing and water ponds as well as other developments that occur near the area borders. There is an estimated 2.1 miles of unauthorized road and 0.2 mile of forest road within the boundary. Upon leaving the disturbed areas, visitors would not be affected by the past activities.

**Opportunity for Experience:** Due to the visibility of the town of Council and the easy access, this area provides only a moderate opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. The area's open ridges and deep snow pack make it popular for winter sports, including challenging ski mountaineering.

**Special Features:** The Council Mountain Research Natural Area covers approximately 100 acres of Council Mountain.

**Manageability:** The area has fairly irregular and complex boundaries along much of its perimeter and is less than one mile wide in one point. More manageable boundaries could be defined but this would also result in a reduction of acreage. Established motorized use within the roadless area, as well as private land, along the south and southeast perimeter, could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The roadless area contains bull trout rearing habitat. Rainbow trout and introduced brook trout also occur within the roadless area. Most streams within the roadless area are believed to provide little fish habitat due to the high stream gradient.

**Wildlife:** Elk, pileated woodpecker, vesper sparrow, and Williamson's sapsucker can be found in various locations of the roadless area. Big game species are mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer. Because of the unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate most of the year and the area acts as a security area. No threatened or endangered species has been verified in the area. Potential lynx (a threatened species) habitat occurs in about one third of the area, generally in the northern portion. The area also provides habitat for the peregrine falcon. Habitat for several Region 4

sensitive species—including northern goshawk, Townsend’s big-eared bat, white headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, fisher, flammulated owl, boreal owl, great gray owl, and spotted frog—are also found in the area.

**Water:** The roadless area lies within three watersheds: the Upper Weiser River, Middle Fork Weiser River, and the Goodrich-Bacon Watershed. The area mainly drains into two non-anadromous streams: the Middle Fork Weiser River and Cottonwood Creek. Eventually, these streams empty into the Snake River, an important hydroelectric supplier for the Northwest. The closest identified water body is the Middle Fork Weiser River. Current uses include: domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation. The Middle Fork is also listed as a Special Resource Water.

**Botanical:** Swamp onion (*Allium madidum*) and bank monkeyflower (*Mimulus clivicola*) two sensitive plant species occur in this roadless area. There are no inventoried areas of noxious weeds in the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hunting, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, trail riding and scenic viewing.

**Timber:** The area contains 94,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 187,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 10,900 acres (66 percent) of the Council Mountain Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 700 acres are considered to have low productivity; 7,400 acres, moderate productivity; and 3,400 acres, high productivity. Tree mortality is ongoing, primarily among Douglas-fir, resulting from insect and diseases associated with mature to overmature, low vigor trees.

**Range:** A portion of one cattle allotment covers 100 percent of the roadless area. It is managed under a deferred rotation system. The cattle allotment has a moderate level of structural improvements. There are 2,500 acres (15 percent) of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are no mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the Council Mountain Roadless Area. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low. This roadless area contains 16,600 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** Private lands (Boise Cascade) form part of the southeastern boundary of the roadless area. At this time there are no in-holdings or permitted special uses within the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are six system trails in the area totaling an estimated 18 miles. About 55 percent of these trail miles are open for motorized use.

**Heritage:** There are several identified prehistoric and historic cultural resources within the area of Council Mountain. This is the former range of Eagle Eye’s Band of Northern Shoshone who occupied this area as late as 1890. Some historic Indian trails have become Forest Service maintained trails within this area. Prehistoric activity areas are present in the form of lithic artifact scatters on the landscape. There is evidence of early and contemporary livestock grazing activities, as well as early logging, and mineral exploration. Around 1918, the Weiser National Forest established a forest fire lookout on Council Mountain. The first lookout site consisted of an alidade on a table, with a telephone, and was associated with a log cabin residence. Later a square lookout house was constructed, and was later removed. This administrative site was abandoned in the early 1950s.

**Disturbances:** Historic fire occurrence and fire hazards are low. Since 1960, there have been no major wildfires within the roadless area. Prescribed fire is planned within the roadless area from Sheep Creek to Boulder Creek. The effects of past western spruce budworm are evident in the dead tops of Douglas-fir, grand fir, and subalpine fir, which were defoliated in the early 1980s. There is a slight occurrence of Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe in the roadless area and concern exists that untreated areas in the roadless

area will affect treated and reforested areas in the roaded areas. There were numerous small debris slides of less than one acre in size inventoried within this roadless area after the January, 1997 storm event.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Council Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Council Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Council Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Council Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Council Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	16,500	16,500	16,500
Similar to Backcountry	16,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	100*	100*	100*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>16,600</b>	<b>16,600</b>	<b>16,600</b>	<b>16,600</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Council Mountain Roadless Area is Research Natural Area (RNA). For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

**Table Council Mountain-2. Potential activities**

Council Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	16,600	16,500	16,500	16,500
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	16,600	16,500	16,500	0*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	16,500	16,500	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	16,600	16,500	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. The Council Mountain Roadless Area contains a domestic water supply system. If any wildland fire risk reduction activities occur in the Primitive theme portion of the roadless area, they are expected to focus on protecting the quality of the water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 16,500 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 16,500 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 16,500 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited under the Primitive theme except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities that occur in the Primitive theme area are expected to focus on protecting the domestic water supply system present in this roadless area. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term. No new leasable mineral activity is expected since either surface occupancy or road building to access new mineral leases is prohibited under the Primitive theme.

## Crystal Mountain #005

13,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Crystal Mountain Roadless Area, located in the north central portion of the Forest, lies just south of the Salmon River on the McCall Ranger District. The Warren Wagon Road, Fall Fingers Road, War Eagle Road, and the Marshall Mountain Mining District border the Crystal Mountain Roadless Area. Access is via the surrounding roads and by a primitive trail that enters the area. The area is surrounded on three sides by other roadless areas: French Creek on the west, Secesh on the south, and Chimney Rock and Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak on the east. The Marshall Mountain Mining District and Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness lie to the north.

High ridges, glaciated valleys, and several lakes typify the northern part of the area, while low relief characterizes the lower western and southern portions. Soils derive from granites of the Idaho Batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,900 to 8,256 feet.

The northern portion has open stands of whitebark pine and subalpine fir. Ground cover in this area is generally sparse, with clumps of elk sedge dominating. Dense stands of lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce cover the remainder of the area. Common ground cover species include beargrass, elk sedge, dwarf huckleberry, and pinegrass. The 1994 Corral fire burned through the northwestern edge of the area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance for the area are high. Although the area is not large, it is round in shape, with only minor roaded or developed inclusions. There is an estimated 2.8 miles of unauthorized road within the boundary. Once visitors leave the roads that surround the area, the signs and effects of development are not apparent.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The area has a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation, and offers challenging backpacking and hunting. The roads accessing this area pass around the outer edges and intrude in only a couple places. Much of the area has no trail access and can be reached only by cross-country hiking. The area is remote from any large population centers and presently receives light recreational use.

**Special Features:** A unique feature on the western boundary is Crystal Mountain, a large quartz deposit and patented mining claim. About 100 acres of the Secesh River, passing near the southwest boundary, is eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. The area provides important habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout, and for westslope cutthroat trout.

**Manageability:** Manageability would not be compromised by current uses or land ownership. The combination of topography, location, and surrounding roads does not lend the area to alternative boundaries.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams in this area are considered critical habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, contributing to the quality of occupied downstream habitat. Chinook summer salmon and steelhead, both listed as threatened species, are found in some area streams. Other resident fish species include rainbow trout and introduced brook trout.

**Wildlife:** The area has habitat for elk, deer, bear, boreal owl, northern goshawk, great gray owl, spotted frog, and northern three-toed woodpecker. Suitable habitat is found for an experimental, non-essential gray wolf population. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about two thirds of the area. Connecting habitat and travel corridors for wolverine and fisher are also found in the area.

**Water:** Several small lakes occur in the northern part of this area, including California Lake. The main streams in the area are Willow Creek, Threemile Creek, Flat Creek, and Sand Creek. Water from these streams enters the Secesh River via Lake Creek and Grouse Creek.

**Botanical:** No federally listed plant species or Region 4 sensitive species are known to occur in this roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds.

**Recreation:** Non-motorized uses in the area include hunting and hiking. Big game hunting and trail biking account for most of the use in the area.

**Timber:** The area contains 55,300 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 109,000 hundred cubic feet. The Crystal Mountain Roadless Area includes an estimated 9,500 acres (73 percent) considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 5,600 acres are considered to have low productivity; 7,000 acres, moderate productivity; no acres are considered high productivity. There have been no recent timber sales in the area.

**Range:** A portion of two sheep allotments, Marshall Mountain and Bear Pete, occur within the roadless area. These allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system, and the level of structural improvements is low. The area has an estimated 2,800 acres (21 percent of the roadless area) of capable sheep grazing land.

**Minerals and Energy:** Very few active mining claims exist within the Crystal Mountain Roadless Area. This roadless area contains 13,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no non-federal lands, permanently encumbered land titles, or cost-share agreements of record within this area. There are no special uses in this area.

**Roads and Trails:** About half of the area is currently open to motorized use, and the other half allows snowmobiling, with two-wheeled motorized use (and a small segment of all-terrain vehicle use) on the only trail in the area, which is roughly five miles in length.

**Heritage:** Prehistoric and historic cultural resources have been identified within this area. Prehistoric Indian sites are few; however, they indicate presence. Historic sites are associated with placer and hard rock mining activities, as well as early logging activities. There is one actively used Forest Service fire lookout in this area.

**Disturbances:** Between 1960 and 2000, an estimated 7,100 acres of the roadless area burned in wildfires. A small part of the northwest portion of this area burned in the 1994 Corral fire, generally with stand-replacing effects. Much of the rest of the area burned in the Burgdorf Junction fire of 2000. No recent major insect and disease infestations have occurred in this area.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Crystal Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Crystal Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Crystal Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Crystal Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Crystal Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	13,000	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	12,900	12,900	CPZ	2,100
				NonCPZ	10,800
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	100*	100*	100*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Crystal Mountain Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Crystal Mountain-2. Potential activities

Crystal Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	12,900	12,900	2,100*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	13,000	12,900	12,900	12,900
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	13,000	12,900	12,900	12,900
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	12,900	12,900	2,100*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	13,000	12,900	12,900	12,900

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 10,800 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 5,200 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources) and about 7,700 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance). Both prescriptions permit road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would

still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 12,900 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 12,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, 2,100 of which are in the CPZ.

Within the 2,100 Backcountry acres that are within the CPZ, timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 10,800 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 12,900 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since road construction is not permitted to access new mineral leases.

## Cuddy Mountain #016

41,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Located in the southwest portion of the forest, the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area lies between Wildhorse River on the north, Snake River and Brownlee Creek on the west, and the Hornet Creek slope on the east. Brownlee Reservoir on the Snake River lies to the west; Payette National Forest administered land lies to the east; and the Shoe Peg Valley private land lies directly to the south. Several roads, off-road vehicle tracks, and primitive trails access the area. Access is limited by private land at low elevations.

Rimrock cliffs, steep slopes, and gentle, open ridge tops typify the area. Most soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are generally dark colored, medium textured, and rocky. Some scattered areas of light colored, coarse textured, rocky granitic soils occur. Elevations range from 3,500 to 7,800 feet.

Lower elevations are typically covered by grass and brush, including cheatgrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, ninebark, snowberry, old willow complexes, ceanothus, sagebrush, hawthorn, and service berry. Mid to upper slopes contain ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, scattered western larch, and grand fir, with pinegrass, elksedge, thimbleberry, ninebark, white spirea and willow as understory vegetation. The higher ridges support subalpine fir, lodgepole pine in cool draws, and riparian-influenced Engelmann spruce. Associated with these ridges are grassy meadows at higher elevations and a sparse ground cover, including huckleberry in cool draws and elksedge on higher dry aspects. Stands of decadent aspen are also scattered within the roadless area.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is moderate and the natural appearance is moderate due to past management activities. Roads intrude along the western boundary, and fences and stock ponds occur throughout the area. There are an estimated 17.9 miles of unauthorized road and 3.5 miles of forest road within the boundary. In some portions of the area, visitors are unaffected by signs of human activities.

**Opportunity for Experience:** The opportunity for solitude is high and the opportunity for primitive recreation is moderate because of the moderate recreation use and the lack of large population centers nearby. The opportunity for challenging experiences is moderate, consisting mainly of hunting.

**Special Features:** Special features include a State of Idaho sensitive plant (tall swamp onion) near Rush Lake, big game winter range, and five recorded historically significant sites. The area also contains the Cuddy Mountain, Emery Creek, and Lost Basin Grasslands Research Natural Areas, which cover about 1,800 acres. Scenic landmarks include Devil's Slide, Crooked River Point, Cuddy Point, and Cuddy Mountain itself. Excellent brook trout fishing attracts fishermen to the area.

**Manageability:** The boundary of the roadless area varies from regular along much of the southern and western perimeter to fairly irregular along its eastern perimeter. It also narrows to under two miles wide in several locations and contains a number of deep indentations from roads and other developments. Because of this, opportunities for logical alternative boundaries are limited and would also likely result in a significant reduction of acreage. Private land and mining activity within the roadless area could also complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Rainbow trout occur throughout the roadless area. Brook trout, brown trout, and Yellowstone cutthroat trout have all been introduced into Rush Creek within the roadless area. Electro fishing surveys in 1998 revealed both brook trout and Yellowstone cutthroat trout within the roadless area. Bull trout are thought to be present in isolated local populations.

**Wildlife:** Habitat for several sensitive species—including fisher, northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, flammulated owl, white headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, mountain quail, great

gray owl, and spotted bat—are also found in the roadless area. Big game species include mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer. The lower elevations are considered big game winter/spring range. Because of the large unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate most of the year, and the area acts as a security area. No threatened or endangered species has been verified in the area. The area does not contain potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species. The area provides habitat for peregrine falcon.

**Water:** The roadless area lies within Brownlee Basin to the north and Weiser Basin to the south. The northern portion includes two watersheds, Wildhorse River and Brownlee. The southern portion also includes two watersheds, Pine Creek and Rush Creek. The entire area drains into the Snake River, which is listed as a Special Resource Water and is an important source of northwest hydroelectric power. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold-water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation.

**Botanical:** Tolmie's onion (*Allium tolmiei* var. *persimile*) and bank monkeyflower (*Mimulus clivicola*) two sensitive plant species occur in this roadless area. Inventoried noxious weed species found within the area include Canada thistle and yellow toadflax. Canada thistle occurs primarily in the northern portion around Grizzly Creek and in the southern portion around Rush Creek. The area around Starveout Creek and No Business Creek is infested with some Scotch thistle. Overall noxious weed infestation is estimated to occur on less than one percent of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hunting, hiking, camping, horseback riding, all-terrain vehicle and trail biking, scenic viewing, snowmobiling and backcountry skiing.

**Timber:** The Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area includes an estimated 258,500 thousand board feet of standing timber, equivalent to 511,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 26,500 acres (65 percent) of the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area are considered tentatively suited timberland. An estimated 2,400 acres have low productivity; 16,100 acres, moderate productivity; and 10,800 acres, high productivity.

Tree mortality is ongoing, primarily among Douglas-fir, resulting from insect and disease factors associated with mature to overmature low vigor trees. Conifer tree species composition is changing to more climax tree species like grand fir and subalpine fir. Early seral tree species have slowly been replaced through succession.

**Range:** Portions of five cattle allotments cover 100 percent of the roadless area. All these allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. Two allotments have a moderate level of structural improvements, while three have low levels. The Salmon River sheep driveway occurs within the area. The area has an estimated 6,000 acres of capable cattle grazing land.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are several active mining claims in the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area, mostly along the west flank of Cuddy Mountain. There are no approved plans of operation for exploration or development activities anywhere in the vicinity, and the potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low. This roadless area contains 41,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** There are no permitted special uses within the roadless area at this time. There is a 160-acre parcel of private land within the roadless area accessed by a low-standard two-wheel drive road from the north. There is one permitted outfitter offering trail rides in parts of the roadless area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 17 system trails within the roadless area totaling an estimated 83 miles. About 60 percent of the trail miles are motorized.

**Heritage:** Several prehistoric and historic cultural resources have been identified within this area. Surface lithic scatters represent prehistoric archaeological sites. This area was formerly occupied by a reclusive "mountain man" named Jim Summers who drove the last of the free roving Shoshone Indians from this mountain plateau during the late 1800s. His burial site has been fenced to protect it from grazing

livestock, and is interpreted with a sign as a historic site. Evidence remains of mining activity. The Buck Park administrative and historic site is used for the benefit of domestic livestock grazing activities. The ruins of the Weiser National Forest Cuddy Mountain fire lookout also remain.

**Disturbances:** Between 1960 and 2000, wildfire burned an estimated 300 acres within the roadless area. Fire frequency has been lengthened through fire exclusion. The 1994 Cuddy Mountain Complex fire occurred within this roadless area, and shrub/brush communities have resprouted. Prescribed fire opportunities for fuel reduction and habitat improvement projects exist. Western spruce budworm and Douglas-fir tussock moth were affecting the Douglas-fir/grand fir component, but currently they are at endemic levels. Tree mortality is ongoing primarily among Douglas-fir, resulting from moderate to high infections of dwarf mistletoe where Douglas-fir beetle kills the trees weakened the most by the mistletoe. Western pine beetle is present, but currently at endemic levels causing scattered individual ponderosa pine tree mortality. Mountain pine beetle has caused tree mortality in the lodgepole pine forests.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area. Table Cuddy Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Cuddy Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Cuddy Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Cuddy Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	36,500	36,500	36,500
Similar to Backcountry	41,000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	2,700	2,700	2,700
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,800*	1,800*	1,800*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>41,000</b>	<b>41,000</b>	<b>41,000</b>	<b>41,000</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area is RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Cuddy Mountain-2. Potential activities

Cuddy Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	2,700	2,700	2,700
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	41,000	39,200	39,200	39,200
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	41,000	39,200	39,200	5,600*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	39,200	39,200	2,700
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	2,700	2,700	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	41,000	39,200	2,700	2,700

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 2,900 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 2,700 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes) and 36,500 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 36,500 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 36,500 acres under prescription 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 2,700 acres under prescriptions 5.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area contains 41,000 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the 2,700 acres under prescription 5.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 2,700 acres would fall under the GFRG and 36,500 under the Primitive theme. For the 2,700 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics



over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Cuddy Mountain Roadless Area, the area does contain 41,000 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme Ares, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 36,500 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive theme since surface occupancy is prohibited.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 36,500 acres under the Primitive theme and 2,700 acres under the GFRG theme. Timber cutting in the Primitive theme is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur within or adjacent to the 2,900 acres of the Primitive theme that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 2,700 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive or GFRG themes since either surface occupancy or roads construction is prohibited to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for road building for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## French Creek #026

88,800 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The French Creek Roadless Area was combined with the Patrick Butte Roadless Area in previous inventories. The two roadless areas have now been separated due to recent timber and road development in the Lower Elkhorn Salvage Sale (1996). The French Creek Roadless Area lies in the north central section of the Forest, on the New Meadows and McCall Ranger Districts. The area includes Bear Pete Ridge and the head of French Creek, and extends south to Brundage Mountain. The Hazard Lakes and Elk Meadow roads (Forest Roads 257 and 308) provide access to the western portion of the area, and the Warren Wagon and Fall Fingers Roads (Forest Highway 21 and Forest Road 246) provide access to the eastern portion. Access to the north is limited due to private ownership of adjacent lands. Trails provide access into the area from the west and east. The Salmon River lies to the north, with the Secesh and Crystal Mountain Roadless Areas to the east and the Patrick Butte Roadless Area to the west.

The area is very rugged with steep river breaks, high alpine meadows, glacial cirque basins, and many small alpine lakes. Soils derive generally from granitic parent material and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,400 to 8,700 feet.

Stands of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, and larch grade into lodgepole pine, spruce, and subalpine fir at the higher elevations. Understory plants include pinegrass, wheatgrass, fescue, ceanothus, snowberry, willow tall huckleberry, ninebark, beargrass, and mountain maple. Large portions of this area burned in the 1985 French Creek fire and the 1994 Corral fire.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance of the area are mainly intact and high, although the appearance has substantially changed over much of the area due to recent wildfires. There are few developed structures or signs of human presence to affect visitors or detract significantly from the natural appearance. There are an estimated 3.1 miles of unauthorized road and 0.6 mile of forest road within the boundary.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Due to its size, topography, and limited access, the northern two thirds of the area provides a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Many roads pass near the area and vehicles easily access the perimeter, and much of the interior is closed to motorized use. Trails provide limited access to much of the area, but portions have no trail access and can only be reached by cross-country travel. The southern third of the area is separated into two smaller fingers, and this area receives substantially more motorized use, particularly by snowmobilers. Much of this area is open to snowmobile and two-wheeled motorized vehicles. The opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in this portion of the area are low in the winter, and moderate the rest of the year.

**Special Features:** Black Tip, Bear Pete Peak, and Bruin Mountain are prominent landmarks. The 700 acre Bruin Mountain Research Natural Area preserves a hanging valley, rare plant and insect species, and subalpine fir communities. About 11,400 acres adjacent to Hard Creek, Hazard Creek and the Secesh River are considered eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River system. About 400 acres of the Research Natural Area are within the eligible Wild and Scenic River corridor. An estimated 3,600 acres of the southeastern portion of the area are part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall.

**Manageability:** The area has irregular and complex boundaries along much of its perimeter, with narrow fingers and large indentations. More manageable boundaries could be defined, but this would likely result in a considerable reduction of acreage. Management might also be complicated by State in-holdings within the roadless area, which might require access in the future. Motorized vehicle operation from snowmobiles and motorcycles has become a dominant use along the perimeter and in the southern

portion of the area. However, existing uses would not seriously complicate managing the remainder of the area for wilderness.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Streams in this area that drain to the Salmon and Secesh Rivers are considered critical habitat for Chinook summer salmon, contributing to the quality of habitat in the area and downstream. Two threatened species, steelhead and Chinook summer salmon are found in lower French Creek. Historically, these species likely accessed the upper French Creek drainage above a barrier cascade falls. The stream provides a critical juvenile summer refugia for Salmon River steelhead and salmon seeking to escape high water temperatures. Streams in the area that flow into the North Fork Payette River contain resident native and introduced fish species, but no listed species.

**Wildlife:** The area provides habitat for gray wolf, considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the major drainages are potential habitat. In addition, the area provides habitat for many Region 4 sensitive species, including fisher, wolverine, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, boreal owl, three-toed woodpecker, white-headed woodpecker, great gray owl, and spotted frog. Lower elevations are considered winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big game species are mountain lion, black bear, and moose. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine can be found at higher elevations. Due to the large, unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate for most of the year, and the roadless area serves as a security area for many species.

**Water:** There are about 20 small alpine lakes in this roadless area. The main streams in the area are French Creek and its tributaries, including Little French Creek. The majority of the streams drain into the main Salmon River via French Creek. There is a diversion on private land bordering the northeast portion of the roadless area that diverts water from outside the area into French Creek. The northeastern portion of the area drains into Lake Creek and the Secesh River, and the southeastern portion drains into the North Fork Payette River, which is part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall. Water from the roadless area is also used for several domestic uses and for power generation by a small hydroelectric plant located off National Forest lands.

**Botanical:** No federally listed plant species are known to occur in this roadless area. Tobias' saxifrage (*Saxifraga bryophora var tobiasiae*) a sensitive plant species occurs in this roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The French Creek Roadless Area provides opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation, and features an extensive trail system. The area receives year-round use through activities such as backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and backcountry skiing. Snowmobiling has been increasing rapidly in this area, especially in the areas near Burgdorf and Brundage Mountain.

**Timber:** The area contains an estimated 626,800 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,262,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 63,900 acres (72 percent) of the French Creek Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 26,200 acres are considered to have low productivity; 47,600 acres, moderate productivity; and 8,100 acres, high productivity. Small portions of the area were salvage logged following a spruce bark beetle epidemic in the early 1990s and wildfires in 1994.

**Range:** Portions of nine sheep allotments and one cattle allotment cover most of the roadless area. The Bill Hunt and Vance Creek sheep allotments have a seasonal (fall) grazing system, and the rest of the allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system. All allotments have a low level of structural improvements. An estimated 15,400 acres of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep, and 300 acres have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle.

**Minerals and Energy:** Some past placer mining and exploration has occurred in the area. There are few current mining claims and no approved plans of operation. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low. This roadless area contains 88,800 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** The State of Idaho owns 640 acres within the roadless area. No other permanently encumbered land titles of record occur within the area. An estimated 2,000 acres of National Forest System lands along the eastern boundary of the roadless area, north of McCall, are subject to consideration for mutual road systems under the assured ingress and egress provisions of the State of Idaho - Forest Service Cooperative Road Agreement (Cost-Share). Several permits have been issued for special uses within the roadless area. These uses include snowcat skiing and backcountry skiing near Brundage Mountain area, and outfitter and guide services for fly fishing and mountain bike tours. Brundage Mountain is proposing to add helicopter skiing in the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are portions of 15 system trails in the area, including an estimated 51 miles of motorized trail and 22 miles of non-motorized trail.

**Heritage:** Prehistoric activity areas have been identified on mountain ridges where traditional Indian trails were established years ago. At lower elevations, in the French Creek drainage, log cabin ruins associated with early mineral exploration can be found. This roadless area has not been thoroughly examined for prehistoric sites, and the potential for locating additional prehistoric sites is moderate in the unsurveyed portions of this area.

**Disturbances:** An estimated 58,000 acres of the roadless area were burned over by wildfires between 1960 and 2000. Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area ranges from high in the southern portion to moderate and low in the central and northern portions. Mean fire return intervals range from frequent (26-75 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). The 1994 Corral fire disturbed an estimated 60 percent of this area. Fire severity ranged from stand replacement to light surface burning. Prescribed fire has not played a role in past disturbances, but could be utilized to support natural ecosystems and reduce unwanted fuel loadings.

Large areas of spruce bark beetle infestation occurred in the early 1990s, and much of the tree mortality from this outbreak fueled the 1994 Corral fire. Douglas-fir beetle outbreaks have increased in and around portions of the burned areas since the fire.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the French Creek Roadless Area.

Table French Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table French Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table French Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

French Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	12,000	12,000	12,000	
Similar to Backcountry	88,800	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	76,000	76,000	CPZ	3,900
				NonCPZ	72,100
GFRG	0	100	100	100	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	7,00*	7,00*	7,00*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>88,800</b>	<b>88,800</b>	<b>88,800</b>	<b>88,800</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the French Creek Roadless Area is 700 acres as RNA and 6,300 acres as Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR). For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table French Creek-2. Potential activities

French Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	76,100	76,100	4,000 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	88,000	88,100	88,100	88,100
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	88,000	88,100	88,100	81,100 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	88,100	88,100	4,000 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	100	100	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	88,000	81,800	76,100	76,100

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 72,100 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 5,100 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 100 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), 71,500 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 4,500 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), and 12,000 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is

maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 76,000 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 12,000 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 88,000 acres under prescriptions 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 100 acres under prescriptions 5.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The French Creek Roadless Area contains 88,800 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the 100 acres under prescription 5.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 100 acres would fall under the GFRG theme, 76,000 acres under the Backcountry theme, and 12,000 under the Primitive theme.

For the 100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the French Creek Roadless Area, the area does contain 88,800 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred in the 100 acres under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 11,500 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.



No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 12,000 acres under the Primitive theme, and 76,000 acres under the Backcountry theme, 5,100 of which are in the CPZ, and 100 under the GFRG theme.

Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 72,100 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 76,000 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 5,100 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive, Backcountry or GFRG themes since either surface occupancy or roads construction is prohibited to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic #001

29,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Roadless Area lies along the western boundary of the Forest between the Snake River, the Hells Canyon Wilderness, and the tops of the Snake River breaks. The area lies across the Snake River from the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest with the Hells Canyon Wilderness to the north and west. Indian Creek Roadless Area lies to the south. Access is by the paved road along the Snake River, the gravel road on the Kleinschmidt Grade, and the dirt road to Kinney Point. Several trails access the area but foot travel is difficult because of the extremely steep terrain.

The area is mostly very steep, with bluffs, rimrock cliffs, and side canyons. Hells Canyon, North America's deepest gorge, dominates the area's geography. Soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are generally dark colored, medium textured, and rocky. Some scattered areas of light-colored, coarse-textured, rocky granitic soils occur. Elevations range from 1,500 to 8,355 feet.

Forested cover is composed of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine graduating to grand fir, western larch, lodgepole pine, to subalpine fir and whitebark pine as elevation increases, with Engelmann spruce existing as riparian coniferous vegetation. The understory vegetation also changes as elevations increase and includes bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, ninebark, common snowberry, white spirea, pinegrass, blue huckleberry, mountain maple, and elk sedge. At lower elevations in old homesteads, apple and pear trees can be found associated with shrub/brush communities along Forest Road 545.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance are largely high and intact. Some primitive road intrusions reduce these qualities somewhat in local portions of the area. There is an estimated seven miles of unauthorized road within the boundary.

**Opportunity for Experience:** The opportunity for solitude is high due to the topography, vegetation, and the lack of large population centers nearby. Opportunities for primitive and challenging recreation experiences are high as well, due to the exceptionally rugged terrain, steep slopes, and remoteness of the area. Off-trail hiking is difficult, making almost any activity a challenging experience.

**Special Features:** The area is currently designated as a Scenic Area. Scenic landmarks and vista points include Kinney Point, Horse Mountain, and Sheep Rock National Natural Landmark. These vista points provide scenic views of Hells Canyon, Seven Devils Mountains, Eagle Cap Wilderness, and the historic Kleinschmidt Grade. The area contains Flatiron Rock, which has become a popular rock climbing area. Fossil hunting is popular, and this area has most if not all of the inventoried caves on the forest. About 500 acres are within an eligible Wild and Scenic River corridor.

**Manageability:** Except for the cherry-stem intrusion for the road into Sheep Rock, the roadless area boundaries would be fairly manageable. Some reduction in size would likely result from defining a boundary around the cherry-stem. Private land in-holdings and a buried power line within the roadless area could complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Threatened Chinook summer salmon and steelhead trout occur in Deep Creek. Tributaries to Hells Canyon and Oxbow Reservoirs support adfluvial rainbow trout populations. The roadless area also provides limited habitat for bull trout. Most fish habitat occurs in the low-gradient segments near the mouths of area streams.

**Wildlife:** The lower elevations along the Snake River breaks are considered as winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big game species are mountain lion, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, and black bear. Because of the unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife species is very low during

most of the year, and the area acts as a security area. The only threatened or endangered species verified in the area is the bald eagle, which forages on winter-killed big game in the winter range area above the Snake River. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about eleven percent of the area. Generally only the upper elevations are potential habitat. Habitat for the peregrine falcon exists. In addition, habitats for several Region 4 sensitive species are also found in the roadless area, including flammulated owl, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, northern goshawk, wolverine, fisher, mountain quail, great gray owl, spotted frog, and Townsend's big-eared bat.

**Water:** The roadless area lies within the Hells Canyon Basin on the north and the Brownlee Reservoir Basin on the south. The northern portion lies within the Deep Creek subwatershed of the Granite-Bush watershed. The southern portion lies within the Kinney-Kirby, Sawpit-Thirty-two, and Copper-Limepoint subwatersheds in the Granite-Bush watershed. The entire area is drained by tributaries to the Snake River, which is listed as a Special Resource Water and is an important source of hydroelectric power. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation.

**Botanical:** Bartonberry (*Rubus bartonianus*) a sensitive plant species occur in this roadless area There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds.

**Recreation:** Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hunting, hiking, fishing, camping, rock climbing, caving, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing, and scenic viewing. Sheep Rock National Natural Landmark is located in the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 174,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 358,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 14,200 acres (48 percent) of the roadless area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,300 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,100 acres, moderate productivity; and 8,000 acres, high productivity. Most forest stands are mature to overmature, with overmature trees near 300 years old and mature trees approaching 100 years old. Fire suppression in this area has allowed most climax tree species like grand fir and subalpine fir to dominate over early seral ponderosa pine, western larch, and lodgepole pine.

**Range:** A portion of one sheep allotment covers 100 percent of the roadless area. The allotment is managed under a deferred rotation system. The allotment has a low level of structural improvements. There are approximately 4,700 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are no mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Roadless Area. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low. This roadless area contains 29,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** Several in-holdings of private land, comprising about 600 acres, exist within the roadless area. There are two buried power lines that come up from the Snake River south of Eckels Creek, crossing the area. These lines provide power to the Cuprum/Bear area and a microwave site on Lynes Point, both of which are just east of the boundary.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 11 system trails within the roadless area totaling approximately 50 miles. About 90 percent of the trail miles are non-motorized.

**Heritage:** This roadless area is located adjacent to the Snake River winter Nez Perce Indian villages. Nez Perce Indians and their ancestors accessed the uplands above the Hells Canyon during the warmer seasons for the procurement of big game and plant resources. The probability for finding additional prehistoric resources within this area ranges from medium to high. During the historic period, mineral exploration occurred, and mining sites can still be found within this roadless area.

**Disturbances:** Between 1960 and 2000 wildfires burned an estimated 20,100 acres within the roadless area. The 1992 Windy Ridge fire burned over large areas north of Kleinschmidt Grade. Other large fires

included Eagle Bar (1988), Emmett (1989), and Eckels Creek (1960). There were numerous small debris slides (less than one acre) inventoried within this roadless area after the January 1997 storm event.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Roadless Area.

Table Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	29,200	29,200	29,200
Similar to Backcountry	29,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	500*	500*	500*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>29,700</b>	<b>29,700</b>	<b>29,700</b>	<b>29,700</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

**Table Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic-2. Potential activities**

Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	29,700	29,200	29,200	29,200
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	29,700	29,200	29,200	9,400*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	29,200	29,200	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	29,700	29,200	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Such activities are expected to occur in the 9,400 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 29,200 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 29,200 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 29,200 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 9,400 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Horse Heaven #925

13,400 Acres Payette

4,300 Acres Boise

17,700 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Horse Heaven Roadless Area was formally the northern portion of the Meadow Creek Roadless Area. During the Forest Plan Revision roadless inventory update, the Meadow Creek Roadless Area was separated into two roadless areas after an existing power line and access road were identified. The Horse Heaven Roadless Area is on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette Forest, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise Forest.

The Horse Heaven Roadless Area lies in the south central portion of the Payette National Forest and the northeast portion of the Boise National Forest, southeast of Yellow Pine, between the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and the old Thunder Mountain Roads. Access is from the Johnson Creek, South Fork Salmon River, East Fork South Fork Salmon River, old Thunder Mountain Roads, and several trails. The Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness is adjacent, separated from the roadless area only by the East Fork South Fork Salmon River Road. The Stibnite mining area adjoins the eastern boundary. The Caton Lake Roadless Area lies to the west, Sugar Mountain Roadless Area to the east, Meadow Creek Roadless Area to the south, and Secesh Roadless Area to the north.

Topography is generally moderate except for the canyons whose streams follow steep gradients. Soils derive from Idaho Batholith granitics and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from about 4,700 feet near Yellow Pine to 7,722 feet along Antimony Ridge. Antimony Ridge is the prominent landscape feature. Engelmann spruce, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and, to a lesser extent, ponderosa pine comprise the bulk of the timber stands. Common ground cover includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, pinegrass, and thimbleberry.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Surrounding roads, cherry-stem roads along the western boundary, a telephone corridor, and scattered mining claims detract from the natural integrity in some portions of the area. There is an estimated 0.2 mile of unauthorized road within the boundary. Overall, however, visitors are unaffected by human developments, and the natural appearance is moderately high.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The opportunity for solitude is high because of limited recreation use and remote location. Primitive recreation opportunities are moderate. Challenging experiences include trail bike riding and big game hunting. Roads encircle the area, but no roads and only a few trails access the interior. The area is adjacent to the community of Yellow Pine.

**Special Features:** An elk security area lies in the north end.

**Manageability:** Several boundary options have been considered for this area. All enhance manageability by moving the boundaries away from areas with existing incompatible uses and, where possible, to natural features. There are numerous mining claims in the area, which may require modification of the boundary due to mining development inclusions.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The roadless area encompasses tributaries of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River (No Mans Creek, Bishop Creek, and Pepper Creek) and Johnson Creek. These tributaries provide or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout; and Region 4 sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for Chinook summer salmon. Other species within the area include resident rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, suckers, and sculpin.



**Wildlife:** Wildlife species include elk, deer, boreal owl, flammulated owl, bear, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, great gray owl, northern goshawk, spotted frog, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about three quarters of the area. The area has elk winter range. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine.

**Water:** The area contains numerous streams, and wetland areas. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River and Johnson Creek. Johnson Creek flows into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River. All these streams provide important anadromous fish habitat. Johnson Creek and the East Fork South Fork are designated as water quality limited water bodies under the Clean Water Act. There is one permitted special use permit for a water transmission line for domestic water, and another permit for a water transmission line for domestic and irrigation water. This roadless area contains 12,200 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** No known population of endangered, threatened, or sensitive plants occur in the roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is light. Big game hunting is the main recreation use.

**Timber:** This roadless area includes an estimated 159,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 310,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 16,800 acres (95 percent) of the roadless area contains tentatively suited timberlands. There are 8,200 acres considered to have low timber productivity; 9,300 acres moderate productivity; and no acres of high productivity. Timber species include Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and to a lesser extent, ponderosa pine and grand fir.

**Range:** The area contains an estimated 300 acres of capable cattle grazing land. There is a portion of one cattle and horse allotment encompassing the entire roadless area, which is grazed by horses and managed under a season long system; however, the portion within the roadless area receives very little use.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are numerous mining claims in the roadless area, with active mineral exploration underway on the Boise portion of the roadless area. Past mining is evident in portions, especially around the Stibnite Mine area and along Antimony Ridge. The potential for the future developing mineral resources is moderate to high. This roadless area contains 17,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** One outfitter-guide provides mainly fall big game hunting opportunities for clients. There are three outfitter-guide permits for fishing, hunting, and horse trail riding.

**Roads and Trails:** There are no motorized trails in the area.

**Heritage:** No cultural resources inventory has occurred in this area; however, about 75 percent of the roadless area rates out as having low sensitivity; a small portion, moderate sensitivity; and a very small part, high sensitivity.

**Disturbances:** Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). An estimated 100 acres burned between 1960 and 2000. Douglas-fir bark beetles are active in the area.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Horse Heaven Roadless Area.

Table Horse Heaven-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Horse Heaven-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Horse Heaven-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Payette only)

Horse Heaven Management Theme Payette	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	13,400	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	13,400	13,400	CPZ	1,200
				NonCPZ	12,200
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>13,400</b>	<b>13,400</b>	<b>13,400</b>	<b>13,400</b>	

Table Horse Heaven-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)

Horse Heaven Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	4,300	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	2,200	2,200	CPZ	1,200
				NonCPZ	1,000
GFRG	0	2,100	2,100	2,100	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>4,300</b>	<b>4,300</b>	

Table Horse Heaven-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Horse Heaven Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	17,700	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	15,600	15,600	CPZ	2,400
				NonCPZ	13,200
GFRG	0	2,100	2,100	2,100	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>17,700</b>	<b>17,700</b>	

**Table Horse Heaven-2. Potential activities (Payette and Boise combined)**

Horse Heaven Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	17,700	17,700	4,500*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	17,700	17,700	17,700	17,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	17,700	17,700	17,700	17,700
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	17,700	17,700	4,500*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	2,100	2,100	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	17,700	17,700	17,700	17,700

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 13,200 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 2,100 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), about 6,600 acres would be managed under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), and about 9,000 acres would be managed under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 15,600 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 15,600 acres under prescriptions 3.1 and 3.2, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 2,100 acres under prescription 5.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Horse Heaven Roadless Area contains 17,700 acres of high

geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the 2,100 acres under prescription 5.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 15,600 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 2,100 acres would fall under the GFRG theme. For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

For the 2,100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Horse Heaven Roadless Area, the area does contain 17,700 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 2,100 acres under the GFRG theme and 15,600 acres under the Backcountry theme, 2,400 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term. For the 13,200 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 15,600 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 2,100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or GFRG theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Indian Creek #019

### 4,800 Acres

#### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Indian Creek Roadless Area adjoins the southeast corner of Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Roadless Area on the Forest's western boundary. Forest Road 072 down Indian Creek from Cuprum accesses the top of the area. The Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Area Roadless Area lies a short distance to the northwest, Bureau of Land Management land and the Snake River to the west, and Payette National Forest to the east.

The area is very steep and rugged, except for a relatively flat area at the bottom of the canyon. Soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are mostly dark colored, fine textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 2,280 feet to 4,838 feet. Generally the area receives heavy precipitation; mostly snow in winter and rain in the spring, with hot, relatively dry summers.

Large openings of sagebrush and bunchgrass separate stringers of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir mixed with grand fir in the cool draws. Ground cover in the stringers includes ninebark, twinberry, serviceberry, and pinegrass and remnants of willow components. Old homesteads contain pear and apple trees.

#### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Many range developments and mining claims (especially along Windy Ridge) impair the natural integrity and give the area a moderate natural appearance. Lode mines have disturbed some areas and effects are highly visible. There are an estimated six miles of unauthorized road and two miles of forest road within the boundary.

**Opportunity for Experience:** Range, timber and mining activities as well as roads reduce the opportunities for solitude to a low level. The area's steep slopes provide challenging hiking but, in general, opportunities for primitive recreation experiences are limited.

**Special Features:** There are no special features in the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The area is relatively narrow in shape for much of its length and has fairly irregular boundaries along much of its eastern perimeter. Because of its small size and narrow shape, the area has few logical alternative boundaries. Private land within the area could also complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

#### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Bull trout occur upstream of the roadless area in Indian Creek. Rainbow trout and introduced brook trout occur within the roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The lower elevations along the Snake River breaks are considered as winter/spring range for deer and elk. Mountain lion and occasionally black bear are likely the only other big game species found in the area. Because of the area's unroaded character, human interaction with wildlife species is low during most of the year and the area acts as a security area. There is no potential habitat for the lynx, a threatened species. Marginal habitat for peregrine falcon exists. Habitats for several sensitive species – including Townsend's big eared bat, northern goshawk, spotted frog, flammulated owl, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, and mountain quail – are also found in the roadless area.

**Water:** The roadless area lies within the Indian-McGraw watershed, in the Lower Indian and Middle Indian subwatersheds. The entire area drains into Indian Creek, which flows into the Snake River, an important hydroelectric supplier for the Northwest. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold-water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation.

**Botanical:** Bank monkeyflower (*Mimulus clivicola*) a sensitive plant species occurs in this roadless area. The only inventoried noxious weed found in the roadless area is diffuse knapweed. It is found on less than five acres.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is light and consists mainly of dispersed recreation that includes hunting, hiking, fishing and scenic viewing.

**Timber:** There is an estimated 16,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 32,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 1,000 acres of the roadless area contain tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,000 acres are considered to have low productivity; 800 acres, moderate productivity; and 200 acres, high productivity. Tree mortality is ongoing, primarily among Douglas-fir, due to insect and disease factors associated with mature to overmature low vigor trees.

**Range:** Portions of two cattle allotments and one sheep allotment cover the entire roadless area; all three allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a low level of structural improvements on all of the allotments. There are an estimated 1,300 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle, and about 50 acres classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are a few active mining claims along the western edge of the Indian Creek Roadless Area. There are no approved plans of operation for exploration or development activities anywhere in the vicinity, and the potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low. This roadless area contains 4,800 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Features:** One in holding of non-federal land of about 160 acres lies within the roadless area and is accessed by an unpermitted low standard road from the west. There are no permitted special uses within the roadless area at this time.

**Roads and Trails:** There is one non-motorized system trail (225) totaling about eight miles in length.

**Heritage:** Previous cultural resource inventories have identified prehistoric archaeological sites and ruins of historic period homesteads. The Indian Creek Valley was an access for Indian people traveling between the Snake River winter camps to the summer high elevation seasonal camps. The probability of finding additional prehistoric archaeological resources ranges from medium to high.

**Disturbances:** Historic fire occurrence is low throughout this area, although fires tend to spread quickly. Between 1960 and 2000 wildfires burned an estimated 4,600 acres within the area. The Windy Ridge fire occurred in 1992, and disturbed a large portion of this roadless area. Minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle, western pine beetle, and mountain pine beetle are present. Minor amounts of dwarf mistletoe are also present. There were numerous small debris slides of less than one acre in size inventoried within this area after the January 1997 storm event.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Indian Creek Roadless Area.

Table Indian Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Indian Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Indian Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Indian Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	4,800	4,800	4,800
Similar to Backcountry	4,800	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>4,800</b>	<b>4,800</b>	<b>4,800</b>	<b>4,800</b>

Table Indian Creek-2. Potential activities

Indian Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	4,800	4,800	4,800	200*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	4,800	4,800	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	4,800	4,800	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 200 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 4,800 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 4,800 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 4,800 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 200 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Meadow Creek #913

8,000 Acres Payette

21,300 Acres Boise

29,300 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Meadow Creek Roadless Area is on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette National Forest, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. During the Forest Plan Revision roadless inventory update, the Meadow Creek Roadless Area was separated into two roadless areas after an existing power line and access road were identified. The Meadow Creek Roadless Area is the southern portion of the roadless area by the same name evaluated under the 1988 Forest Plan. The northern portion, now called the Horse Heaven Roadless Area, is described earlier in this appendix.

The Meadow Creek Roadless Area lies in the south central portion of the Payette National Forest and the northeast portion of the Boise National Forest, southeast of Yellow Pine, between the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and the old Thunder Mountain Roads. Access is from the roads and several trails. The Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness adjoins the southeastern boundary, and the Stibnite mining area adjoins the northeastern boundary. The Caton Lake Roadless Area lies to the west, and the Horse Heaven Roadless Area to the north.

Topography is generally moderate except for the canyons whose streams follow steep gradients. Soils derive from Idaho Batholith granitics and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,200 near Johnson Creek to 8,863 feet at the Meadow Creek fire lookout. Prominent features include Riordan Lake, Meadow Creek, and Meadow Peak. Engelmann spruce, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine and, to a lesser extent, ponderosa pine comprise the bulk of the timber stands. Common ground cover includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, pinegrass, and thimbleberry.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Surrounding and intruding roads, a telephone corridor, and scattered mining claims detract from the natural integrity in some portions of the area. There are an estimated 4.2 miles of unauthorized road and 3.4 miles of forest road within the boundary. Overall, however, visitors are unaffected by human developments, and the natural appearance is moderately high.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The opportunity for solitude is high because of limited recreation use and remote location. Primitive recreation opportunities are moderate. Opportunities for solitude are good around Riordan Lake, which is sheltered by extensive vegetation and small draws. Challenging experiences include trail bike riding and big game hunting. Roads encircle the area, but no roads and only a few trails access the interior.

**Special Features:** Riordan Lake is a special feature of the area. Meadow Creek fire lookout lies within the roadless area. About 100 acres are within an eligible Wild and Scenic River corridor.

**Manageability:** The main portion of the area could have boundaries that would be easily defined by an offset from the surrounding roads. There are numerous mining claims in the area that could complicate future management.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Tributaries of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River (Meadow Creek) and Johnson Creek (Riordan Creek, Bear Creek, and Trapper Creek) provide or may potentially provide spawning or rearing habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout; and Region 4 sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for Chinook summer salmon. Other species within the roadless area include resident rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, suckers, and sculpin. Introduced arctic grayling and golden trout are stocked in Meadow Lake.

**Wildlife:** Wildlife species include elk, deer, boreal owl, bear, white-headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, great gray owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, spotted frog, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this roadless area, with increasing activity occurring since the re-introduction program in the mid 1990s. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in most of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine and fisher.

**Water:** The area contains numerous streams and wetland areas, as well as Riordan and Meadow Creek Lakes. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River and Johnson Creek. Johnson Creek and Meadow Creek are major tributaries of the East Fork South Fork River, which flows into the South Fork Salmon River. All streams provide important anadromous fish habitat. Johnson Creek and East Fork South Fork are designated as water quality limited water bodies under the Clean Water Act. This roadless area contains 200 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Recreation:** Recreation use is light, with big game hunting and trail bike riding as the main recreation uses, making up most of the estimated 300-500 annual recreation visitor-days. Other uses include camping, horseback riding, and winter snowmobile use. Riordan Lake is a popular motorbike trip, and Meadow Creek Lookout is popular for its views into the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness.

**Botanical:** No known populations of endangered, threatened, or sensitive plants occur. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Timber:** The area contains an estimated 233,800 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 458,800 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 26,500 acres (90 percent) of the Meadow Creek Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 14,900 acres are considered to have low productivity and 13,600 acres are considered to have moderate productivity. The main timber species include Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and to a lesser extent ponderosa pine and grand fir. The Thunderbolt Fire Salvage Sale harvested a small portion of the area in 1995.

**Range:** A portion of one cattle and horse allotment encompassing about 50 percent of the area is grazed by horses and managed under a season long system, although the portion within the roadless area receives very little use. The area contains an estimated 1,200 acres of capable grazing land.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are numerous mining claims in the roadless area, with active mineral exploration underway on the Boise portion of the roadless area. Past mining is evident in portions, especially around the Stibnite Mine area. The potential for the future developing mineral resources is moderate to high. This roadless area contains 29,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are three outfitter-guide permits for fishing, hunting, and horse trail riding. There is one permitted special use permit for a water transmission line for domestic water, and another permit for a water transmission line for domestic and irrigation water. One outfitter-guide provides mainly fall big game hunting opportunities for clients.

**Roads and Trails:** There are three motorized trails within the roadless area totaling 14 miles.

**Heritage:** This area has not had a cultural resources inventory. However, about three-quarters of the area is rated as low; a small portion moderate, and a very small part as high for finding cultural resources.

**Disturbances:** Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). Between 1960 and 2000, an estimated 6,900 acres were burned by wildfires. The Indian fire in 2000 burned around 3,000 acres. Epidemic levels of Douglas-fir bark beetle infestations resulted in mortality of a large percentage of the older Douglas-fir trees in the early 1900s. Evidence of this mortality occurs in scattered locations throughout the roadless area wherever Douglas-fir is present.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Meadow Creek Roadless Area.

Table Meadow Creek-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Meadow Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Meadow Creek-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Payette only)**

Meadow Creek Management Theme Payette	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	8,000	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	8,000	8,000	CPZ	2,000
				NonCPZ	6,000
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>8,000</b>	<b>8,000</b>	

**Table Meadow Creek-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)**

Meadow Creek Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	21,300	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	12,900	12,900	CPZ	400
				NonCPZ	12,500
GFRG	0	8,300	8,300	8,300	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	100*	100*	100*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>21,300</b>	<b>21,300</b>	<b>21,300</b>	<b>21,300</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Meadow Creek Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

**Table Meadow Creek-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)**

Meadow Creek Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	29,300	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	20,900	20,900	CPZ	2,400
				NonCPZ	18,500
GFRG	0	8,300	8,300	8,300	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	100*	100*	100*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>29,300</b>	<b>29,300</b>	<b>29,300</b>	<b>29,300</b>	

Table Meadow Creek-2. Potential activities (Payette and Boise combined)

Meadow Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	29,200	29,200	10,700*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	29,300	29,200	29,200	29,200
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	29,300	29,200	29,200	29,200
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	29,200	29,200	10,700*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	8,300	8,300	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	29,300	29,200	29,200	29,200

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 18,500 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 8,300 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), 8,200 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), and 12,700 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 20,900 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 20,900 acres under prescription 3.2, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 8,300 acres under prescriptions 5.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Meadow Creek Roadless Area contains 29,300 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any



geothermal leasing occurred in the acres under prescription 5.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 8,300 acres would fall under the GFRG and 20,900 acres under the Backcountry theme. For the 8,300 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Meadow Creek Roadless Area, the area does contain 29,300 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 8,300 acres under the GFRG theme and 20,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, 2,400 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 18,500 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent. Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 20,900 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 8,300 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or GFRG theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Needles #911

131,300 Acres Payette

29,900 Acres Boise

161,200 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Needles Roadless Area is located on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts of the Payette National Forest, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. This roadless area lies between Long Valley in the west and the South Fork Salmon River in the east, and between the Lick Creek Road (Forest Road 48) in the north and the Warm Lake Road (Forest Highway 22) in the south. Access is by the surrounding roads and by trail systems into most of the major drainages; however, some places can only be reached by cross-country travel. Private and State lands in Long Valley lie to the west, the Secesh Roadless Area borders on the north, and the Caton Lake Roadless Area adjoins the east boundary.

Soils are derived from granites of the Idaho Batholith. In general, they are light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,650 feet to over 9,000 feet. Lands at lower elevations are steep and strongly dissected by streams, with brush fields and moderate to dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Higher elevation lands are U-shaped glacial valleys with steep side slopes and gently sloping alluvial bottoms, adjacent to high peaks, rocky ridges, and cirque basins. Lodgepole pine and subalpine fir are the dominant tree species. Ground cover varies from ninebark, thimbleberry, currants, grouse whortleberry, and pinegrass in lower elevations to sparse clumps of elk sedge in the higher elevations.

The area includes roughly 90,200 acres of Recommended Wilderness and therefore holds a high level of roadless characteristics.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is generally high, as this is a large area with few effects from past development. The natural appearance for this area is high, although appearance has been recently changed by a number of large wildfires, most notably the 1994 Blackwell fire. There are an estimated 30.2 miles of unauthorized road and 2.7 miles of forest road within the boundary.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The area has high opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation due to its substantial size, rugged topography, and limited access. Although opportunities are somewhat limited in portions of the area adjacent to heavily used access roads and trails, much of the area may be reached only by steep trails or cross-country travel. Only a few trails have the ability to support motorbike use, and they provide challenging trail bike riding. The area's rugged topography also provides excellent and challenging hiking, horseback riding, rock climbing, and backcountry skiing.

**Special Features:** Rugged granite peaks with many glacial cirques, hanging valleys, and alpine lakes characterize the area. Jughandle Mountain, Nick Peak, and the Needles are a few of the scenic landmarks. The 1,000 acre Needles Research Natural Area lies in the southern portion of the roadless area. About 2,700 acres adjacent to the South Fork Salmon River is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation.

**Manageability:** The area has some fairly irregular boundaries. Manageability as a designated wilderness would benefit from simplified boundaries that could be created with some acreage reduction. Existing uses and land ownership would not seriously complicate managing this area as wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** This area contains streams important to anadromous fish, as well as streams that support only resident fish. Those streams supporting anadromous fish are considered critical habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon. Chinook summer salmon and steelhead trout, another threatened fish species, are found in some area streams that drain into the South Fork Salmon River. These streams provide important spawning and rearing habitat. Threatened bull trout are in the South Fork Salmon River and

upper Gold Fork River drainages, and may occur in the headwaters of Lake Fork Creek. Native westslope cutthroat trout and redband rainbow trout are present. Brook trout and other introduced fish species are also found in some area streams.

**Wildlife:** Habitat exists for Region 4 sensitive species such as great gray owl, northern goshawk, three toed woodpecker, harlequin duck, spotted frog, and boreal owl. Mountain goat, black bear, and cougar also occur. The area provides habitat for gray wolf, considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area, and peregrine falcon. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Big game winter range occurs along the South Fork Salmon River, and bald eagles occasionally migrate along the river corridor. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine are found at higher elevations.

**Water:** The Needles area has over 50 alpine lakes, most of which are in the Lick Creek Range in the western third of the area. The main streams in the area are the South Fork Salmon River, Buckhorn Creek, Kennally Creek, Fitsum Creek, East Fork Lake Creek, Gold Fork River, and Dollar Creek. The western third of the area drains into the North Fork Payette River below McCall. The eastern two thirds of the area drains into the South Fork Salmon River, which is an important anadromous drainage for threatened chinook summer salmon and steelhead trout. Twin Lakes, Boulder Lake, Maloney Lake, Maki Lake and Louie Lake all have dams and some sort of headgate system. They are all currently under U.S. Department of Interior permanent easements. Maki Lake's dam was breached in the 1950s and has never been repaired. The Forest Service breached the dam on Maloney Lake, and the permittees have not requested to rebuild it.

**Botanical:** Idaho douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The area supports a wide range of backcountry recreation such as hunting, fishing, camping, horse riding, hiking, backcountry skiing, and trail bike use. Snowmobile use is increasing, and the area also provides opportunities for rock climbing and photography.

**Timber:** The area includes an estimated 1,403,700 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 2,797,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 116,400 acres (72 percent) of the Needles Roadless Area is considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 50,400 acres have low timber productivity; 69,900 acres, moderate productivity; and 28,600 acres, high productivity. There have been timber sale entries on the Boise National Forest portion of the area since the Forest Plan.

**Range:** All or portions of three sheep allotments occur within the roadless area: North Fork Lick Creek, Lake Fork, and Jughandle. The Lake Fork and Jughandle allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system, and the North Fork Lick Creek allotment has a seasonal (fall) system. All allotments have a low level of structural improvements. An estimated 7,600 acres of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep, and an estimated 40 acres have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle. There is a portion of one cattle allotment managed under a rest-rotation system within the roadless area. The allotment covers approximately 10 percent of the area and receives minimal grazing use.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are few active mining claims and no hydropower permits on the Payette portion of the Needles Roadless Area, and there is low potential for future locatable mineral or energy development. Some limited placer activity occurs in the southern portion of the area, but most of this is recreational suction dredging. On the Boise National Forest portion, placer mining in the Gold Fork River occurs. Potential for gold and silver mining exists, and there are several registered active claims. This roadless area contains 161,200 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or state lands or permanently encumbered land titles of record in this area. An estimated 160 acres of National Forest System lands adjacent to private lands south of Jughandle Mountain are subject to consideration for mutual road systems under the assured ingress and egress provisions of the Boise Cascade Corporation - Forest Service Cooperative Road Right-of-Way Construction and Use Agreement (cost-share). Electronics sites are proposed in the

vicinity of Nick Peak and Square Top Mountain. One outfitter and guide provides llama pack trips and mountain bike touring services. Outward Bound has a special use permit for rock climbing, camping, and hiking. Two outfitter-guides provide summer recreation opportunities for clients.

**Roads and Trails:** There is an estimated 104 miles of trail open to motorized use, and 71 miles of non-motorized trail.

**Heritage:** Nez Perce Indian trails cross the mountain range, connecting the South Fork Salmon River, and North Fork Payette River valleys for the seasonal harvest of summer Chinook and sockeye salmon. These Indian trails were used into the early part of the twentieth century. Today, Indian people continue to harvest summer Chinook summer salmon from the South Fork Salmon River but they no longer use the traditional trails. The Forest Service has improved and maintained these trails historically. Otherwise, little is known about the historic use of this area.

**Disturbances:** Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area ranges from moderately low in the northern section to moderately high and high in the southern section. Mean fire return intervals range from infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). Recent large wildland fires include the 1994 Blackwell fire; the 1989 Foolhen, Green Mountain, and Spruce Creek fires; the 1979 Kennally Creek fire, and the 2000 Nick fire. Significant “natural fires” during this time include the 600-acre Golden Lake fire, and the 400-acre Jughandle fire. Prescribed natural fires were allowed to burn during the period of 1977-1988 as a part of the previous Lake Fork fire Management Area Plan. An estimated 24,900 acres burned between 1960 and 2000. No recent major insect or disease infestations have occurred in this area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Needles Roadless Area.

Table Needles-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Needles-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

#### Needles-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Payette only)

Needles Management Theme Payette	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	90,200	90,200	90,200
Primitive	0	7,100	7,100	7,100
Similar to Backcountry	131,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	31,500	31,500	31,500
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,500*	2,500*	2,500*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>131,300</b>	<b>131,300</b>	<b>131,300</b>	<b>131,300</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Needles Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Needles-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)

Needles Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	3,300	3,300	3,300
Primitive	0	5,800	5,800	5,800
Similar to Backcountry	29,900	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	19,500	19,500	19,500
GFRG	0	100	100	100
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,200*	1,200*	1,200*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>29,900</b>	<b>29,900</b>	<b>29,900</b>	<b>29,900</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in Boise portion of the Needles Roadless Area is 1000 acres as RNA and 200 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Needles-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Needles Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	93,500	93,500	93,500
Primitive	0	12,900	12,900	12,900
Similar to Backcountry	161,200	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	51,000	51,000	51,000
GFRG	0	100	100	100
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	3,700*	3,700*	3,700*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>161,200</b>	<b>161,200</b>	<b>161,200</b>	<b>161,200</b>

Table Needles-2. Potential activities (Payette and Boise combined)

Needles Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	51,100	51,100	100
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	161,200	64,000	64,000	64,000
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	161,200	64,000	64,000	51,500*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	64,000	64,000	100
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	100	100	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	161,200	64,000	51,100	51,100

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 400 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.



**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without road access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 100 acres would be managed under prescription 5.2 (commodity production emphasis within forested landscapes), 28,100 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 22,900 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 12,900 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 93,500 under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness).

For prescription 5.2 roads are generally permitted and timber harvest can occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term since the management emphasis is the sustainable production of goods and services. For the 51,000 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 12,900 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. The 93,500 acres under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness) are managed to maintain wilderness characteristics and to allow ecological processes to prevail. Road construction is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber harvest or leasable mineral activities are allowed. Under this prescription the 93,500 acres are expected to maintain their wilderness and roadless area characteristics. Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 63,900 acres under prescriptions 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 100 acres under prescriptions 5.2, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Needles Roadless Area contains 161,200 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the 100 acres under prescription 5.2, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 100 acres would fall under the GFRG, 51,000 acres under the Backcountry theme, 12,900 under the Primitive theme and 93,500 under the Wild Land Recreation theme. For the 100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Needles Roadless Area, the area does contain 161,200 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when



necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

In the Primitive theme road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 12,900 acres under the Primitive theme because roads could not be constructed. The 93,500 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless and wilderness characteristics.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry, Primitive or Wild Land Recreation theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 93,500 acres under the Wild Land Recreation theme, 12,900 acres under the Primitive theme, 51,000 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ, and 100 acres under the GFRG theme. The 93,500 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

Timber cutting is prohibited in 12,900 acres in the Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Such activities are expected to occur in the 400 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term. There are no communities or municipal water supply systems adjacent to the Backcountry portion of this roadless area, therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects. Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 51,000 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Primitive theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use.

For the 100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive, Backcountry or GFRG themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Patrick Butte #002****80,700 Acres****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

In previous inventories, the Patrick Butte Roadless Area was combined with the French Creek Roadless Area, described earlier in this appendix. During the Payette Forest Plan Revision roadless inventory update, the Patrick Butte area was separated, due to recent development.

The Patrick Butte Roadless Area lies in the north central section of the forest, extending from Granite Mountain north through Patrick Butte and Hard Butte, and including Lava Ridge. The Hazard Lakes and Elk Meadow Roads provide access to the eastern portion. Trail access exists from the west, north, and east. The Salmon River lies to the north with the French Creek Roadless Area to the east and the Rapid River Roadless Area to the west.

The area is very rugged with steep river breaks, high alpine meadows, glacial cirque basins, and over 30 lakes. Several of the cirque basins have unusual basalt headwalls, which surround granitic basins. Elevations range from 3,400 to over 8,800 feet.

The area is generally forested with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir and larch at lower elevations and lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir at higher elevations. Understory plants include species such as pinegrass, wheatgrass, fescue, ceanothus, snowberry, willow, tall huckleberry, ninebark, beargrass, and mountain maple.

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance for this area is largely intact. There are an estimated 6.6 miles of unauthorized road and 2.3 miles of forest road within the boundary. The few timber developments along the perimeter and the few internal range developments would not affect visitors or detract significantly from the natural appearance.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Due to its substantial size, topography, and limited access, the area has a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Though many roads pass near the area, vehicles do not easily access much of the area. Roads and trails easily access other parts of the area's boundary. Within the area, trails provide limited access into much of the area, but portions have no trail access and can only be reached by cross-country hiking. The topography and climate provide challenging backpacking, hiking, and ski mountaineering.

**Special Features:** The area contains a number of craggy, scenic peaks including Granite Mountain, Hard Butte, and Patrick Butte. It also contains more than 30 lakes and many glacial cirque basins. The Lava Ridge National Recreation Trail (149) passes through the roadless area. The area also contains the 300 acre Lava Butte Research Natural Area and the 800 acre proposed Patrick Butte Research Natural Area. Segments of Hazard and Hard Creek are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are 6.6 miles of Hard Creek and 5.4 miles of Hazard Creek and 3,800 acres of land considered eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System.

**Manageability:** The area has fairly irregular and complex boundaries along much of its perimeter. It is also relatively narrow in shape for almost two-thirds of its length. More manageable boundaries could be defined but this would likely result in a reduction of acreage. Localized motorized use within the roadless area could also complicate managing this area as wilderness but could be minimized through boundary adjustments. Private land and water developments within the roadless area could also complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** Two federally listed threatened species, steelhead trout and Chinook summer salmon, are found in streams (Lake, Partridge, and Elkhorn Creeks) draining the Patrick Butte Roadless Area. All

three streams provide a critical juvenile summer refugia for Salmon River fish seeking to escape high water temperatures. Other species with spawning and rearing habitat in the roadless area include threatened bull trout, and isolated local populations of westslope cutthroat. Bull trout, Chinook summer/fall salmon, steelhead, inland redband trout, pacific lamprey, and westslope cutthroat habitat overlaps this roadless area.

**Wildlife:** Lower elevations are considered winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big game species are mountain lion, black bear, and moose. Due to the large, unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate for most of the year, and the area serves as a security area for many species. There is habitat for the gray wolf, considered in this area as an experimental, non-essential population. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about one third of the area. Generally the upper slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Potential habitat for peregrine falcon also exists. Habitats for many Region 4 sensitive species – including wolverine, fisher, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, boreal owl, three-toed woodpecker, white-headed woodpecker, mountain quail, great gray owl, spotted frog – exist in the roadless area.

**Water:** There are about 30 small alpine lakes in this roadless area. The main streams in the area are Partridge and Hazard Creeks and their tributaries. The majority of the streams eventually feed the main Salmon River. Water use developments within the roadless area include a small diversion with an earthen ditch in the northwest corner, and a dam with a headgate at Twin Lakes. Owners of these developments have submitted applications for ditch bill easements. Water from the roadless area is also used for several domestic uses and for power generation by a small hydroelectric plant located off National Forest lands.

**Botanical:** Puzzling halimolobos (*Halimolobos perplexa* var. *perplexa*) and Tobias' saxifrage (*Saxifraga bryophora* var. *tobiasiae*) two sensitive plant species occur in the roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The Patrick Butte Roadless Area provides opportunities for quality backcountry Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized recreation, as well as motorized recreation. The adjacent road system provides access to the area for day hikes as well as overnight trips. This area is also a destination backcountry recreation area due to the large number of high mountain lakes. Uses include camping, overnight backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, and forest product gathering (huckleberries, mushrooms). Snowmobile use is dramatically increasing in this area, specifically in the portion from Granite Mountain to Clayburn Trailhead. Summer use occurs from July 1 through the fall due to the snow at the high elevations.

**Timber:** The area contains an estimated 704,700 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to about 1,379,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 54,700 acres (68 percent) of the roadless area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 17,600 acres are considered to have low productivity; 33,100 acres, moderate productivity; and 18,200 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** All or portions of five sheep allotments and three cattle allotments cover about 60 percent of the roadless area. Two sheep allotments are grazed under a seasonal grazing system (fall) and all the others are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a low level of structural improvements on all of the allotments. There are an estimated 3,400 acres of land within the roadless area classified as capable for grazing by cattle and 10,800 acres classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are few mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the area. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low. This roadless area contains 80,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or State in-holdings within the roadless area. Two special use permits have been issued for uses within the roadless area. These include snowcat skiing and a low-standard road. Helicopter skiing has also been recently proposed for portions of the area but a decision has not been made on this use.

**Roads and Trails:** Motorized use within the area consists of motorcycle and all-terrain vehicle use. There are 35 system trails within the area comprising about 113 miles of trail. Four of these trails are open to motorized use.

**Heritage:** Prehistoric artifacts and one historic cabin, probably associated with early settlement, have been found within the roadless area.

**Disturbances:** An estimated 20,300 acres burned between 1960 and 2000 in the roadless area. Insignificant amounts of prescribed fire have occurred within the area. An uncharacteristic level of spruce beetle activity occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, killing trees that burned in the Corral fire of 1994. In 1997, flooding, landslides and numerous creek scourings occurred in Lake Creek, Hazard Creek, Hard Creek, and Bascom Canyon.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Patrick Butte Roadless Area.

Table Patrick Butte-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Patrick Butte-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Patrick Butte-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Patrick Butte Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	20,800	20,800	20,800	
Similar to Backcountry	80,700	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	47,900	47,900	CPZ	4,200
				NonCPZ	43,700
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	12,000*	12,000*	12,000*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>80,700</b>	<b>80,700</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Patrick Butte Roadless Area is 3,700 acres as WSR, 1,200 acres as RNA, and around 7,100 acres as a ski area. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Patrick Butte-2. Potential activities

Patrick Butte Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	47,900	47,900	4,200 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	80,700	68,700	68,700	68,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	80,700	68,700	68,700	48,100 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	68,700	68,700	4,200 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	80,700	68,700	47,900	47,900

<sup>1</sup> Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 43,700 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup> Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 200 acres of the Primitive theme within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 19,100 acres are within prescription 4.1a (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character), 1,700 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 47,900 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). For the 20,800 acres under prescriptions 4.1a and 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For the 47,900 acres under prescription 3.1, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For all three prescriptions (4.1a, 4.1c and 3.1), no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are not permitted for this purpose.



**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 47,900 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 20,800 acres would fall under the Primitive theme. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 20,900 acres under the Primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

For the 47,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under either management theme since it is not allowed under the Primitive theme and roads are not permitted for leasable mineral activities under the Backcountry theme. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 20,800 acres under the Primitive theme and 47,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, 4,200 of which are in the CPZ. Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 43,700 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 47,900 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 200 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes either since the two themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind.



## Placer Creek #008

6,900 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Placer Creek Roadless Area is located on the Krassel Ranger District and lies south of Smith Creek and east of the Big Creek Work Station. It is accessed by the Warren-Profile Gap and Big Creek Roads, and by two primitive mining roads from the south. The Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness and the Cottontail/Pilot Peak and Secesh Roadless Areas surround the area.

Steep and rugged timbered slopes with many granite outcrops and talus slopes typify the area. Soils derive from granitic rocks of the Idaho Batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,400 to above 8,000 feet.

Stands of Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce, and lodgepole pine give way to subalpine fir and whitebark pine on the upper slopes. Lower-elevation ground cover includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, thimbleberry, pinegrass, and buffaloberry. Higher-elevation ground cover includes elk sedge, low huckleberry, beargrass, and woodrush.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is somewhat affected by the presence of old mining sites and mining roads that intrude into the interior of the area. There is an estimated 0.4 mile of unauthorized road within the boundary. The natural appearance is low near the surrounding and intruding roads, and fairly high away from them.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Steep, densely timbered slopes contribute to light use and moderate to high opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Challenging big game hunting is available.

**Special Features:** A small group of unnamed mountains exceeding 8,000 feet is the area's central feature. Scenic Placer Lake sits in a small alpine basin at the head of Placer Creek. About 100 acres are within an eligible Wild and Scenic River corridor.

**Manageability:** No practical boundary alternatives exist. The area is considered in its entirety in the roadless evaluation. Past, existing, and potential mining activity could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Area streams support redband rainbow trout, and habitat for Chinook summer salmon and steelhead in the lower reaches. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook summer salmon.

**Wildlife:** The area wildlife species include elk, deer, boreal owl, bear, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, great gray owl, spotted frog, white-headed and three-toed woodpecker and gray wolf (an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine and fisher.

**Water:** The area encompasses Placer Creek and other small tributaries of Smith Creek, and unnamed tributaries to Big Creek and Government Creek. Placer Lake is the only body of standing water. The entire area eventually drains into Big Creek, an important anadromous fishery. Big Creek Lodge and its licensed hydropower facility are located just outside the southeastern edge of the area. However, the diversions for the hydropower facility, a well, and domestic water system are located within the roadless area.

**Botanical:** No known populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants are present. Few botanical surveys have been done for this area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use consists of such activities as hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking. Use is light (approximately 300-500 recreation visitors' days annually) and is a mix of motorized and non-motorized activity. However, due to the steep terrain and lack of a trail system, motorized recreation is less common.

**Timber:** The area contains an estimated 64,900 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 126,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 3,600 acres (52 percent) of the Placer Creek Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,100 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 3,100 acres, moderate productivity; and 200 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** The area has no livestock grazing permits. There are no capable grazing lands.

**Minerals and Energy:** Numerous mining claims exist. Although there are no approved operating plans within the area at this time, it is likely there would be proposals for exploration or development in the future. The entire area has high potential for mineral development. This roadless area contains 1,600 acres of high and 5,300 of medium geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** On the south boundary, at the northern edge of the community of Big Creek, is a private land access road.

**Roads and Trails:** Motorized use, primarily two-wheeled, does occur on user-established routes extending from the National Forest System roads that surround the area, or existing non-system mining-exploration roads.

**Heritage:** The roadless area has not been surveyed for cultural resources. However, the majority of the area is rated low, about a third as moderate, and a small portion high for potential resources.

**Disturbances:** Wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). There have been no major fires within this area between 1960 and 2000. Minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle and mountain pine beetle exist.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Placer Creek Roadless Area.

Table Placer Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Placer Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Placer Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Placer Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	4,100	4,100	4,100
Similar to Backcountry	6,900	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	2,700	2,700	2,700
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	100*	100*	100*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>6,900</b>	<b>6,900</b>	<b>6,900</b>	<b>6,900</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Placer Creek Roadless Area is 100 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Placer Creek-2. Potential activities

Placer Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	2,700	2,700	0 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	6,900	6,800	6,800	6,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	6,900	6,800	6,800	2,700 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	6,800	6,800	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	6,900	6,800	2,700	2,700

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the Backcountry areas outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. The Placer Creek Roadless Area contains a domestic water supply system. If any wildland fire risk reduction activities occur in the Backcountry portion of this roadless area, they are expected to focus on protecting the quality of the water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. The Placer Creek Roadless Area contains a domestic water supply system. If any wildland fire risk reduction activities occur in the Primitive theme portion of the roadless area, they are expected to focus on protecting the quality of the water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 4,100 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 2,700 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). For the 4,100 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For the 2,700 acres under prescription 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For both the acres under 4.1c and 3.2, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are not permitted for this purpose.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 2,700 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 4,100 acres would fall under the Primitive theme. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases

of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 4,100 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

For the 2,700 acres under the Backcountry theme, road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under either management theme since it is not allowed under the Primitive theme and roads are not permitted for mineral leases under the Backcountry theme. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 4,100 acres under the Primitive theme, and 2,700 acres under the Backcountry theme. None of the Backcountry acres are in the CPZ, but this roadless area does contain a domestic water supply system.

Timber cutting is prohibited under the Primitive theme except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities that occur in the Primitive theme area are expected to focus on protecting the domestic water supply system present in this roadless area. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Within the Backcountry areas, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities that occur in the Backcountry theme area are expected to focus on protecting the domestic water supply system present in this roadless area.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 2,700 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Primitive theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive theme since either surface occupancy or road building to access new mineral leases is prohibited.

## Rapid River #922

57,700 Acres Payette  
21,000 Acres Nez Perce  
78,700 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Rapid River Roadless Area encompasses the corridor of Rapid River, a Wild and Scenic River, and is contiguous to the Hells Canyon Wilderness along the area's western boundary. The Rapid River, Black Lake, Bear Creek, Whitebird Ridge, and Smokey-Boulder Roads, and several trails provide access to the edge of the area, and a network of trails provides good access within the area. The Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Roadless Area lies to the southwest, with Patrick Butte Roadless Area directly to the east across the Little Salmon drainage.

The area is quite rugged with craggy peaks, glacial cirques, hanging valleys, steep forested slopes, and deep river canyons. Elevations range from 2,200 to 8,747 feet.

The area is generally forested with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, and western larch at lower elevations, and Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir at higher elevations. Pacific yew is also present. Several low brush and grass species such as pinegrass, wheatgrass, fescue, ceanothus, snowberry, ninebark, serviceberry, and willow grow on the steep, dry, west and south exposures. Elk sedge, huckleberry, meadow rue, mountain maple, pinegrass, violet, alder, and beargrass occur in cooler and moister areas.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity and appearance for this area is high. There are an estimated 5.8 miles of unauthorized road and 0.1 mile of forest road within the boundary. The mining, grazing, and prescribed fire activities have had little impact.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Due to its substantial size, terrain, and moderate accessibility, the area has a high opportunity for solitude and a moderate opportunity for primitive recreation. The topography and climate provide challenging backpacking and hiking.

**Special Features:** Rapid River, a designated Wild and Scenic River, lies within the roadless area and provides salmonid spawning and rearing habitat. There are 13.1 miles of Rapid River and 8,400 acres of land in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. One Research Natural Area (Pony Creek) lies within the area (1,900 acres). The Lick Creek and Pollock Mountain lookouts are located within the area.

**Manageability:** The area has some irregular and complex boundaries, largely along its southern perimeter. The western boundary is contiguous with the eastern boundary of the Hells Canyon Wilderness. Limited access and the relative ease of control at access points should also contribute to manageability of the area. Private land within the roadless area could also complicate management.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Three threatened fish species—steelhead trout, bull trout, and Chinook summer salmon—are distributed throughout the Rapid River drainage. This subwatershed provides optimum spawning and rearing habitat for these three species, along with high quality water for the downstream Rapid River Fish Hatchery. The fish stocks present in Rapid River above the hatchery are unique in that the Chinook and steelhead stocks are of wild origin and likely not influenced by hatchery fish. The West Fork Rapid River has a barrier to upstream fish movement located about one-third mile above its confluence with the main stem, making most of the West Fork's habitat unavailable for anadromous species. Bull trout, also of wild origin, are fluvial and grow to a large size. This subwatershed is the largest, best remaining aquatic stronghold within the Little Salmon River landscape. Rapid River is one of the key areas for the survival and recovery of listed salmon and trout. An isolated population of bull trout also occurs within Bear



Creek. Although spawning and rearing has not been documented, the presence of a barrier falls in lower Bear Creek suggests that spawning is occurring. Rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and introduced brook trout can also be found within the roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The lower elevations are considered winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big game species are mountain lion and black bear. An occasional mountain goat or bighorn sheep may be found in the area. Due to the large, unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate for most of the year, and the area serves as a security area for many species. There are no threatened or endangered species verified in the area. There is a peregrine falcon nest located on a small tributary to Rapid River. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about one third of the area. Generally, the upper slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Habitats for several Region 4 sensitive species are also found in the roadless area. Unconfirmed sightings of wolverine have been reported, and the remoteness of the area suits the animal's basic requirements. Habitat also exists for flammulated owl, white-headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, mountain quail, boreal owl, great gray owl, and spotted frog.

**Water:** The roadless area lies mainly within the Little Salmon River Basin to the north, with a small portion in the Brownlee Reservoir Basin to the south. Major drainages include Rapid River, draining north and east into the Little Salmon River, and Bear Creek draining into the Wildhorse and eventually the Snake River.

Rapid River and the West Fork Rapid River have stringent water quality standards as set forth in Public Law 94-199, which designated Rapid River as a Wild and Scenic River. The standards are designed to protect water quality, fish habitat, and for the downstream salmon hatchery. The roadless area contains a small number of high-elevation lakes. Water uses also include domestic and agricultural water supplies.

**Botanical:** Puzzling halimolobos (*Halimolobos perplexa var perplexa*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. There are minor occurrences of Scotch thistle, yellow star thistle, and spotted knapweed found on the Nez Perce portion of the roadless area. Noxious weeds are estimated to infest less than one percent of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The Rapid River Roadless Area provides opportunities for diverse dispersed recreation uses including hiking, hunting, horseback riding, fishing, overnight backpacking, and trail bike riding. Snowmobiling is also popular in the Lick Creek and Pollock Mountain areas. Recreational use tends to be seasonal in nature. The northern portion receives heavy use in the spring and fall from both day and overnight hiking and backpacking, due to the lower elevation providing earlier access from snow. The southern portion and ridges receive use during the summer and fall due to higher elevations, which limit early access, and also during hunting season.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 564,600 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,115,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 42,000 acres (53 percent) of the roadless area contain tentatively suited timberlands. There are 5,700 acres considered to have low timber productivity; 24,200 acres, moderate productivity; and 20,900 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** All or portions of four sheep allotments and three cattle allotments cover the entire roadless area. Three allotments are managed under a rest rotation grazing system, while four allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a low level of structural improvements on all but one of the allotments; one cattle allotment has a moderate level of structural improvements. There are an estimated 2,000 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle and 6,400 acres of land that have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

**Minerals and Energy:** There were no active mining claims in the area. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is low. However, the roadless area includes mineralized zones, which may continue to attract occasional interest from prospectors when mineral values are high. This roadless area contains 78,700 acres of high geothermal potential.



**Landownership and Special Uses:** One outfitter and guide permit has been issued for big game hunting within the area and there is a permitted, microwave communications site on the summit of Smith Mountain. There are four patented mining claims consisting of about 180 acres within the roadless area. About 500 acres of the roadless area lie within a cost share agreement area with Boise Cascade, Inc. There is a development consisting of 118 “ranchettes” subdivided from former ranchlands located immediately adjacent to the roadless area on lower Rapid River. There is a water diversion within the area associated with a small hydroelectric project that is under a special use permit.

**Roads and Trails:** Motorized use within the area consists of two-wheel motorcycle, all-terrain vehicle, and four-wheel drive use of the road to Black Lake. There are 37 system trails within the area comprising about 116 miles of trail. Twelve of these trails are open either entirely or partially to at least one form of motorized use. Trail 166 on the Nez Perce portion is seasonally open to motorized use from June 15 to September 15, to provide big game security on winter range.

**Heritage:** Some historic sites associated with early mining and homesteading have been located in the roadless area. Three historic Forest Service fire lookouts are located in or at the edge of the roadless area.

**Disturbances:** An estimated 5,400 acres of the roadless area were burned by wildfires between 1960 and 2000. Significant wildfires include the 1962 Cannon Lakes, 1968 Paradise, 1989 Curren, and 1994 Rapid River fires. Prescribed fire has been used repeatedly within the area, with approximately 5,900 acres burned since 1984. Current plans call for burning approximately 8,000 more acres in the near future. No uncharacteristic insect and disease events have occurred within the area; however, some spruce beetle activity has occurred in the head of the drainage. The portion of the roadless area on the Nez Perce National Forest is experiencing an increase in Douglas-fir bark beetle activity related to and expanding from old burns in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. In 1997, numerous creek scourings on feeder creeks to Boulder Creek and the Little Salmon occurred.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Rapid River Roadless Area.

Table Rapid River-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Rapid River-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Rapid River-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Payette Only)**

Rapid River Management Theme Payette	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	51,700
Primitive	0	6,000	51,700	0
Similar to Backcountry	57,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	45,700	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	6,000*	6,000*	6,000*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>57,700</b>	<b>57,700</b>	<b>57,700</b>	<b>57,700</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Payette portion of the Rapid River Roadless Area is 4,100 acres as WSR and 1,900 acres as RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Rapid River-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Nez Perce only)

Rapid River Management Theme Nez Perce	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	16,700
Primitive	0	14,000	16,700	0
Similar to Backcountry	21,000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	2,400	0	0
GFRG	0	300	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	4,300*	4,300*	4,300*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Nez Perce portion of the Rapid River Roadless Area is 4,300 acres as WSR.

Table Rapid River-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Rapid River Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	68,400
Primitive	0	20,000	68,400	0
Similar to Backcountry	78,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	48,100	0	0
GFRG	0	300	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	10,300	10,300	10,300
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>78,700</b>	<b>78,700</b>	<b>78,700</b>	<b>78,700</b>

Table Rapid River-2. Potential activities (Payette and Nez Perce combined)

Rapid River Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	48,400	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	68,400	68,400	68,400	0
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	68,400	68,400	68,400	0
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	68,400	68,400	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	68,400	16,700	0	0

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** For the portion of the roadless area in the Payette National Forest, about 6,000 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities), about 40,800 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), and about 4,900 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). For the portions under the Nez Perce National Forest, around 100 acres would be managed under prescription 10 (lakes, wetlands, riparian), 9,400 under prescription 11 (East Meadow Creek/Rapid River/Silver Creeks, riparian), 200 under prescription 12 (forested lands – timber production), 500 acres under prescription 16 (winter range), 600 acres under prescription 17 (timber production/visual quality), 100 acres under prescription 19 (non-forest grassland), and 200 acres under prescription 20 (old-growth).

No road construction would be expected under Payette prescription 4.1c because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For the 45,700 acres under prescriptions 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

The 9,500 acres under prescription 11 and 19 have been declared unsuitable for commercial timber production. While limited timber cutting is permitted under prescription 11 to improve wildlife habitat or to control insect and disease outbreaks, no new road construction is permitted so little to no timber cutting activity is expected.

Timber harvest and associated road building are allowed on the 1,400 acres under prescriptions 10, 16, 17, and 20. While any timber harvest or associated road building would likely alter roadless characteristics over the short and long term, the impacts would be somewhat lessened by the mitigation measures required under each of these prescriptions. Prescription 10 requires safeguards for riparian habitat, prescription 16 requires safeguards for elk winter range habitat, prescription 17 stipulates mitigation measures to protect visual quality, and prescription 20 has certain requirements to ensure old-growth conservation.

Roads are generally permitted and timber harvest can occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes under Payette prescription 12. Any timber activities and road building that occur could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected for the 51,000 acres under 4.1c, 3.1 and 3.2 since roads are not permitted for this purpose. There are no prohibitions against new mineral leases or associated road building in the forest plan prescriptions for the remaining 16,700 acres in this roadless area. No phosphate mining or oil and gas activities are expected since the area has little to no potential for these minerals. The area does contain 96,800 acres of medium geothermal potential. Any geothermal activities that occur would likely alter the roadless characteristics of the area over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule all 68,400 acres in the Rapid River Roadless Area would be managed under the Primitive theme. This would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no

timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, all of Rapid River Roadless Area would be classified as Wild Land Recreation. The Rapid River Roadless Area would experience the same protections as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

## Secesh #010

248,100 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Secesh Roadless Area lies within the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts on the Payette National Forest. The area stretches across the center of the Forest, from Payette Lake on the west to Big Creek on the east. The Warren-Elk Creek Road (Forest Road 340) on the north and the Lick Creek Road (Forest Road 48) on the south provide boundaries and the principal vehicle access. Trails provide entry into much of the area, with some portions being accessible only by cross-country hiking. The Needles and Caton Lake Roadless Areas lie directly to the south; the French Creek Roadless Area lies to the west; the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness adjoins to the east; and the Crystal Mountain, Chimney Rock, and Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak Roadless Areas lie to the north.

The area is extremely rugged, with many craggy peaks, glacial cirques, hanging valleys, and deep canyons. The soils derive from granites in the Idaho Batholith and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,400 feet to over 9,200 feet.

Tree stands are dominated by lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, with subalpine fir and whitebark pine found at higher elevations. Understory vegetation includes queencup, tall huckleberry, spirea, pinegrass, ninebark, meadowrue, buffaloberry, mountain maple, willow, thimbleberry, serviceberry, beargrass, snowberry, bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, and ceanothus.

The area includes roughly 110,300 acres of Recommended Wilderness and therefore holds a high level of roadless characteristics.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Although several activities have occurred along portions of the boundary, the natural integrity of the area remains high. This is a large area with relatively few road corridor or other developed incursions. The natural appearance for this area is also high, although this appearance has been modified in some areas by road intrusions and recent fires. There are an estimated 32.2 miles of unauthorized road and 2.2 miles of forest road within the boundary. When visitors leave surrounding road corridors, they are not affected by human activity or developments.

**Opportunities for Experience:** This area has a high opportunity for solitude and for primitive recreation because of its substantial size, rugged terrain, limited access, and the lack of large population centers nearby. The roads accessing this area pass around the outer edges and intrude in only a few places. The rugged topography and climate provide many challenging and primitive recreation opportunities.

**Special Features:** The Secesh River and South Fork Salmon River are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are 13.9 miles of the Secesh River and 10.4 miles of the South Fork Salmon River and 4,200 acres of land associated with the Secesh River and 3,600 acres of land associated with the South Fork Salmon River. Scenic landmarks include Slick Rock, Loon Peaks, and the South Fork Salmon River Canyon. Elk winter range occurs along the East Fork South Fork Salmon River and along the South Fork Salmon River. About 2,800 acres are in Research Natural Areas in Pony Meadows and Circle End Creek. Three potential National Natural Landmarks lie within the boundaries: Slick Rock, Lick Creek Block Stream, and Rainbow Rock. There are approximately 4,300 acres of the western portion of the area that are part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall, and an additional 700 acres in the eastern portion that are part of the Yellow Pine Water Users watershed.

**Manageability:** As mentioned above, this area is very large and relatively intact, lending itself to many boundary options. The current level of developed uses and activities is relatively low both within and around the area. The Loon Lake Trail is a highly publicized and used mountain bike trail. Mountain bike use on the Duck Lake - Twenty Mile Lakes Trail is moderately high.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The Secesh Roadless Area contains streams important to anadromous fish, as well as streams that support only resident fish. Those streams supporting anadromous fish are considered critical habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon. Chinook summer salmon and steelhead trout, another threatened fish species, are found in area streams, which provide important spawning and rearing habitat. North Fork Lake Fork Creek tributaries may support bull trout, another threatened species. Large densities of brook trout, as well as non-game fish, are also found in these streams.

**Wildlife:** Habitat exists for elk, deer, cougar, pika, bighorn sheep, boreal owl, fisher, northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, white-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, great gray owl, spotted frog, harlequin duck, mountain goat, and many other species. The bald eagle, a federally listed species, may be found. The gray wolf, considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area, has been confirmed in this roadless area. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Peregrine falcon nesting habitat may also be found in the area. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine are also present at higher elevations. Important big game winter range exists along the South Fork Salmon River.

**Water:** The Secesh Roadless Area has over 50 alpine lakes, most of which are in the Lick Creek Range in the western third of the area. Within this portion, both Box and Blackwell Lakes have low relief dams at their outlets used for irrigation storage. The western portion of the area drains into the North Fork Payette River, which is part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall. The middle portion of the area drains into the Secesh River. The Secesh River drains into the South Fork Salmon River, which also drains the eastern portion of the area.

**Botanical:** Candystick (*Allotropa virgata*), puzzling halimolobos (*Halimolobos perplexa var perplexa*), Tobias' saxifrage (*Saxifraga bryophora var. tobiasiae*), three sensitive plant species occur in the roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** This roadless area provides opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation. Much of the recreation use includes backpacking, hiking, big game hunting, fishing, photography and rock climbing. Snowmobile use is increasing in the western portion of the area. Other uses include trail biking, all-terrain vehicle riding, horseback riding, mountain bike riding, and backcountry skiing.

**Timber:** The area includes an estimated 1,896,000 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 3,795,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 165,500 acres (67 percent) of the Secesh Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. There are 90,000 acres considered to have low timber productivity; 116,400 acres, moderate productivity; and 21,800 acres, high productivity. Fringes of the area have been entered for salvage timber harvest in the last decade. The western edge was impacted by 1991 spruce beetle salvage efforts and the 1994 wildfire post-fire salvage. A small area along the northern boundary was also entered with the 1994 wildfire post-fire salvage.

**Range:** Portions of six sheep allotments occur within the western part of the roadless area: North Fork Lick Creek, Victor Loon, Lake Fork, Brush Creek, Fall Creek, and Twentymile. The Lake Fork, Brush Creek, Fall Creek, and Twentymile allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system, and the North Fork Lick Creek and Victor Loon allotments have a seasonal (fall) system. All allotments have a low level of structural improvements. An estimated 10,200 acres of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep. There is also some limited recreational stock grazing allowed in the eastern part of the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** Most of the Secesh Roadless Area has little history of mining-related activity and limited potential for future development. Past mining activity occurred in Ruby and Willow Basket Creeks, and around Secesh Meadows. Most active mining claims are in the eastern portion of the area near Yellow Pine and Edwardsburg, and in the northern portion near Warren. The potential for future mineral development in these areas is relatively high. This roadless area contains 247,900 acres of high and 100 acres of medium geothermal potential.



**Landownership and Special Uses:** The roadless area surrounds three privately owned parcels totaling 306 acres. There are also an estimated 600 acres of unpatented mining claims in which the claimants hold surface occupancy rights. These claims lie south of Warren Wagon Road, near Steamboat Summit. There are also an estimated 1,280 acres of State of Idaho public school endowment lands within the area. An estimated 1,800 acres of National Forest System lands along the western boundary of the area, east of McCall, are under consideration for long-range land exchange proposals with the State of Idaho, Department of Lands. These same lands are also subject to consideration for mutual road systems under the assured ingress and egress provisions of the State of Idaho - Forest Service Cooperative Road Agreement (cost-share).

Special use permits have been issued for several outfitter and guide services involving rock climbing, backpacking, llama packing, trail rides, sight-seeing, fishing, and big game hunting. Special use permits have also been issued for several domestic/irrigation waters systems near private land around Big Creek. There is one exempted hydropower system within the roadless area, also in the Big Creek area. Box Lake has a rock-faced dam approximately 300 feet long with a corrugated steel siphon, and concrete headwall with a head gate. Blackwell Lake has a concrete dam and head gate. Both deliver water via a natural drainage as opposed to a ditch, and users have applied for Ditch Bill Easements. There are several other ditch bill applications pending for water diversions from within the roadless area.

**Roads and Trails:** There is an estimated 93 miles of trails open to motorized use, and 73 miles of non-motorized trails. The Loon Lake Trail is an internationally recognized mountain bike trail, even being referred to as “the Holy Grail of singletrack”, and receives a high level of use. The Duck Lake – Twenty Mile Lakes Trail receives moderate mountain bike use. The rest of these trails receive low to moderate use.

**Heritage:** This vast area has had limited heritage resources inventories; however, prehistoric and historic heritage resources have been identified within the area. Indians have used the Secesh River area for the harvesting of summer Chinook and sockeye salmon, leaving evidence of their activities through 1924. Historically, there is a 1943, B-23 Bomber crash site at Loon Lake, a recreational destination within this roadless area. Evidence of gold and cinnabar mining is visible in the Ruby drainage.

**Disturbances:** Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area ranges from high in the North Fork Payette drainages and lower elevations of the South Fork Salmon River to moderately low in the upper elevations of the Secesh drainages. Mean fire return intervals range from frequent (25-75 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). Major wild fires within the last 30 years include the 1985 Savage Creek fire, the 1994 Chicken fire, the 1989 Steamboat Complex, and the 1994 Corral/Blackwell Complex. An estimated 94,300 acres burned between 1960 and 2000. Most of the major areas of spruce bark beetle activity burned in the 1994 wildfires, although some beetle activity still occurs throughout the area wherever spruce is found. Douglas-fir bark beetles are at near epidemic levels in some areas burned in the 1994 wildfires.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Secesh Roadless Area.

Table Secesh-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Secesh-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Secesh-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Secesh Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	110,300	110,300	110,300	
Primitive	0	7,700	7,700	7,700	
Similar to Backcountry	248,100	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	118,500	118,500	CPZ	12,400
				Non-CPZ	106,100
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	11,600*	11,600*	11,600*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>248,100</b>	<b>248,100</b>	<b>248,100</b>	<b>248,100</b>	

\*\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Secesh Roadless Area is 8,800 acres as WSR, 2,800 acres as RNA and 100 acres as both WSR and RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Payette National Forest LRMP.

Table Secesh -2. Potential activities

Secesh Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	118,500	118,500	12,400 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	248,100	126,200	126,200	126,200
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	248,100	126,200	126,200	119,600 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	248,100	126,200	126,200	12,400 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	248,100	118,500	118,500	118,500

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 106,100 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 1,100 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 77,300 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 41,200 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 7,700 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities), and 110,300 under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness).

For the 118,500 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource

values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 7,700 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For areas under prescription 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1c, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes under 3.1 and 3.2, and 4.1c prohibits new surface occupancy.

The 110,300 acres under prescription 1.2 (Recommended Wilderness) are managed to maintain wilderness characteristics and to allow ecological processes to prevail. Road construction is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber harvest or leasable mineral activities are allowed. Under this prescription the 85,900 acres are expected to maintain their wilderness and roadless area characteristics.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 118,500 acres under the Backcountry theme, 7,700 under the Primitive theme and 110,300 under the Wild Land Recreation theme.

For the acres under the Backcountry Theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 7,700 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

The 110,300 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless and wilderness characteristics.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry, Primitive or Wild Land Recreation theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 110,300 acres under the Wild Land Recreation theme, 7,700 acres under the Primitive theme and 118,500 acres under the Backcountry theme, 12,400 of which are in the CPZ.

The 110,300 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be

prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 106,100 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 118,500 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 1,100 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes either since the two themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Sheep Gulch #017

5,800 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Located on the west side of the Forest, the Sheep Gulch Roadless Area lies just east of Brownlee Reservoir. Lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Idaho Department of Lands, as well as National Forest System lands, surround the area. The West Fork Brownlee Creek Road (085) and several foot and horseback trails provide access.

Large plateau summits and dry ridge tops characterize the area. Soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are generally dark colored, medium textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,600 to 5,600 feet. Sagebrush, grass and shrub/brush cover a large portion of this area, with mature to overmature coniferous timbered stands limited to west to northwest aspects, composed of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine trees with extremely scattered western larch. Where the sagebrush and timber meet, there is often tall brush with young single and clumped conifers encroaching on the sagebrush/grass vegetative types.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is generally unaffected and the natural appearance is high despite the presence of some range developments (stock tanks) and intruding primitive two-track roads, such as those near Box Springs and Sheep Camp Gulch. There is an estimated three miles of unauthorized road within the boundary. Vegetation and topography provide some natural screening and minimize the effects of these developments.

**Opportunity for Experience:** Light use gives the area a high opportunity for solitude and a moderate opportunity for primitive recreation experiences such as big game hunting.

**Special Features:** No special features have been identified in this roadless area.

**Manageability:** Except for the cherry-stem intrusion of four-wheel drive road 023 into interior tree plantations, the roadless area boundaries would be fairly regular. However, excluding the centrally located developments would be difficult. A significant reduction in size would be likely to result when defining a boundary around the cherry-stem intrusion. When combined with the overall small size of the area, opportunities for logical alternative boundaries do not exist.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Rainbow trout and introduced brook trout occur within the roadless area. Limited fish habitat is available due to the high stream gradient and intermittent nature of most streams within the roadless area.

**Wildlife:** The lower elevations along the Snake River breaks are winter and spring range for deer and elk. Because of the unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife species is very low during most of the year, and the area acts as a security area. There is no potential habitat for lynx in this roadless area. Habitat for several Region 4 sensitive species is also found in the roadless area, including Townsend's big-eared bat, northern three-toed woodpecker, flammulated owl, and spotted frog.

**Water:** The roadless area lies within the Brownlee Reservoir watershed and is mostly drained by Cottonwood and West Brownlee Creeks and their tributaries. The closest identified water body is the Snake River with Brownlee, Oxbow, and Hells Canyon Reservoirs. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold-water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation. The entire area drains into the Snake River, which is listed as a Special Resource Water and is an important source of hydroelectric power.

**Botanical:** No known threatened, endangered or Region 4 sensitive plant populations occur in the area. Inventoried noxious weed species found within the area include Canada thistle and Scotch thistle. This area has Scotch thistle in the northeast portion along the West Fork of Brownlee Creek. Minor amounts of Canada thistle occur on the higher elevations in the southern portion of the area. Overall, noxious weed infestation is estimated to occur on about 2 percent of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hiking, hunting, horseback riding, trail bike riding and wildlife viewing.

**Timber:** The area contains 15,600 thousand board feet of standing timber, equivalent to 32,800 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 1,500 acres (26 percent) of the Sheep Gulch Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 100 acres are considered to have low productivity; 600 acres, moderate productivity; and 800 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** All or portions of two cattle allotments and one sheep allotment cover 100 percent of the roadless area. The cattle allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system while the sheep allotment is managed under a seasonal (fall) system. One allotment has a moderate level of structural improvements, while two have low levels. There are an estimated 2,000 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle and 500 acres that have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are no mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the Sheep Gulch Roadless Area. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low. This roadless area contains 5,800 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no in-holdings or other ownership or permitted special uses within the roadless area at this time.

**Roads and Trails:** There are three system trails within the roadless area totaling 17 miles. All of these trails are open for motorized use.

**Heritage:** Several prehistoric activity areas have been previously identified in this upland environment. There is a low to medium probability for finding additional prehistoric sites. Domestic livestock grazing was introduced into this area as early as 1880.

**Disturbances:** There have been no major fires within the roadless area between 1960 and 2000. Prescribed burns were conducted on 200 acres at Box Springs and 1,300 acres in the Cherry Creek area in 1986. There were several small debris slides (less than one acre) inventoried within this roadless area after the January 1997 storm event.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Sheep Gulch Roadless Area.

Table Sheep Gulch-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Sheep Gulch-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Sheep Gulch-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Sheep Gulch Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	5,800	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	5,800	5,800	5,800
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>5,800</b>	<b>5,800</b>

Table Sheep Gulch-2. Potential activities

Sheep Gulch Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	5,800	5,800	0*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	5,800	5,800	5,800	5,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	5,800	5,800	5,800	5,800
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	5,800	5,800	0*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	5,800	5,800	5,800	5,800

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the Backcountry areas outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. The Sheep Gulch Roadless Area contains a domestic water supply system. If any wildland fire risk reduction activities occur in the Backcountry portion of this roadless area, they are expected to focus on protecting the quality of the water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 5,800 acres are within prescription 3.2 (Active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted

for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 5,800 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule there are 5,800 acres under the Backcountry theme. None of the Backcountry acres are in the CPZ, but this roadless area does contain a domestic water supply system.

Within the Backcountry areas, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities that occur in the Backcountry theme area are expected to focus on protecting the domestic water supply system present in this roadless area.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 5,800 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected since road construction is prohibited to access new mineral leases.

## Smith Creek #007

2,300 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Located on the Krassel Ranger District, the Smith Creek Roadless Area lies between Smith Creek and the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Forest Road 371 and two primitive trails provide access. The Placer Creek Roadless Area adjoins Smith Creek Roadless Area to the south and west.

Steep, southwest-facing slopes, with rocky outcrops at the higher elevations, typify the area. Soils derive from Idaho Batholith granitic parent materials and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,400 feet to 8,400 feet. Dense stands of Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine cover the area. Common understory species include elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, meadow rue, thimbleberry, mountain maple, pinegrass, and buffaloberry.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Appearance:** There is an estimated 0.3 mile of unauthorized road and 0.1 mile of forest road within the boundary. One mining claim in the southern tip and roads along the western boundary do little to detract from the area's high natural integrity or its high natural appearance.

**Opportunity for Experience:** The opportunity for solitude is low; the area is small, so the visitor is always near a road. Primitive recreation opportunity is high in conjunction with the adjacent wilderness. No roads or maintained trails intrude, but the entire area is accessible by perimeter roads. The area offers challenging big game hunting.

**Special Features:** McFadden Point is a prominent landmark.

**Manageability:** The only boundary option considered, because of the area's small size, is as an addition to the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Past, present, and future mining activities could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The area is within the Smith Creek subwatershed, which provides spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon and steelhead trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook summer salmon.

**Wildlife:** Deer and elk occupy the area during the summer and light winters when snow accumulations are below average, and elk use the area for calving. The area also contains habitat for boreal owl, bear, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, spotted frog, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about two thirds of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for lynx, wolverine, and fisher.

**Water:** The area contains a few small, unnamed streams that are tributary to Smith Creek. There are no wetland areas or lakes. The entire area eventually drains into Big Creek, an important anadromous fishery.

**Botanical:** No known populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants are known. Few botanical surveys have been done for the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Use is light (approximately 300-500 recreation visitor days annually) because of the steep terrain and lack of a trail system. Recreation activities consist of non-motorized activities such as hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking.

**Timber:** The area contains an estimated 23,600 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 45,200 hundred cubic feet. The roadless area contains an estimated 1,300 acres (57 percent) of tentatively suited timberlands.

**Range:** There are no livestock grazing permits or capable grazing lands within the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are numerous mining claims in the area. The approved Plan of Operations for one small mining and milling operation includes an access trail to a mine portal and waste dump in the roadless area. The mineral potential in this area is high. This roadless area contains 2,300 acres of medium geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** No state or private land is found within this roadless area. There are no special use permits associated with this area.

**Roads and Trails:** About 1/2 mile of the Smith Creek Cutoff Trail (Forest trail 003) passes through this area. This short piece of trail is used as access from the Smith Creek Road to the Mosquito Ridge trailhead. There is an abandoned Forest Service trail that still receives some use from lower Smith Creek to McFadden Point. There are also some old mining exploration trails in the area and a frequently used ridge route between Pueblo Summit and McFadden Peak that are used by recreationists. Along the road following Smith Creek that borders the area on the west are some short spurs used to access camping and woodcutting areas.

**Heritage:** There has never been a formal heritage resources inventory within this roadless area. The probability of finding resources is rated as low in most of the area and high elsewhere.

**Disturbances:** Wildland fire occurrence in this area remains low. Since 1960 there have been no wildfires of any size. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years). Natural fuel loading is slowly increasing primarily from blow down and bug kill. Opportunities for natural fuels treatment are limited and considered low priority. Minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle and mountain pine beetle exist.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Smith Creek Roadless Area.

Table Smith Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Smith Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Smith Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Smith Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	2,300	2,300	2,300
Similar to Backcountry	2,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>2,300</b>

Table Smith Creek-2. Potential activities

Smith Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	2,300	2,300	2,300	2,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	2,300	2,300	2,300	0
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	2,300	2,300	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	2,300	2,300	0	0

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without road access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 2,300 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require road access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 2,300 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 2,300 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in this roadless area because the area is not within 1 ½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting that occurs must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Sugar Mountain #014

10,300 acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Located on the Krassel Ranger District, the Sugar Mountain Roadless Area lies between Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness to the north and east, and the Profile Gap and Monumental Summit Roads (Forest Roads 340 and 412) on the west and south. These roads provide access to the edge of the area, but no interior trails exist. The area also adjoins Secesh and Horse Heaven Roadless Areas.

Generally steep, rugged slopes typify the area. Soils derive from granitic rock of the Idaho Batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,300 to 8,738 feet. Lower elevation tree species include Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and ponderosa pine, which then grade into spruce, subalpine fir, and whitebark pine at the higher elevations. Common lower-elevation ground cover includes pinegrass, Idaho fescue, ceanothus, bluebunch wheatgrass, snowberry, ninebark, serviceberry, tall huckleberry, mountain maple, and thimbleberry. Higher-elevation understory is mostly forbs and low shrubs, such as elk sedge, low huckleberry, and woodrush.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity and Appearance:** Natural integrity and appearance have been somewhat affected by past mining exploration and excavation activities, but still remain moderate to high overall. There is an estimated 1.1 miles of unauthorized road within the boundary.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are high in conjunction with the Franck Church - River of No Return Wilderness. Steep, rugged, and remote, the area is seldom used. Big game hunting provides challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** Sugar Mountain and Missouri Ridge are prominent landmarks. A big game migration route passes near Sugar Mountain.

**Manageability:** No boundary options were considered. Past or future mining activity could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** The roadless area encompasses two tributaries of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River (Sugar Creek, Salt Creek). These tributaries provide or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened Chinook summer salmon and steelhead trout. Salt Creek probably provides rearing habitat for Chinook summer salmon and/or steelhead. Salt and Sugar Creeks probably support resident populations of rainbow trout. Limited area may support bull trout, another listed species. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for spring/summer Chinook summer salmon.

**Wildlife:** Habitats exist for elk, deer, bear, boreal owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, great gray owl, spotted frog, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, grouse, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about two thirds of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine and fisher.

**Water:** The area contains several streams, but no wetland areas or lakes. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, which flows into the South Fork Salmon River. Both provide important anadromous fish habitat. The East Fork South Fork has been designated as a water quality limited water body under the Clean Water Act. This roadless area contains 3,600 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** No populations of threatened, endangered or sensitive plants are known to occur in the roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the area.



**Recreation:** Due to the steep terrain and lack of a trail system, recreation is light, mostly non-motorized, and consists of such activities as hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking.

**Timber:** The area includes an estimated 80,200 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 154,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 8,900 acres (86 percent) of the Sugar Mountain Roadless Area contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,800 acres are considered to have low productivity; 5,600 acres, moderate productivity; and no acres of high productivity.

**Range:** There are no livestock grazing permits or capable grazing lands within the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are numerous mining claims in the roadless area. Although significant exploration and some development occurred in the past, there is no activity at present. Most of the area has moderate potential for future mineral development. This roadless area contains 10,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** Numerous mining claims exist within and around the roadless area. There is one permitted special use for an outfitter-guide. One outfitter-guide provides mainly fall big game hunting opportunities for clients.

**Roads and Trails:** No Forest Service maintained trails occur in this roadless area. However, there are some access routes used by recreationists, including an old route taking off at the mouth of Salt Creek and heading up to Sugar Mountain, and the abandoned Missouri Ridge Trail taking off from the Profile Gap Road on the west edge at the area.

**Heritage:** The area has not had a cultural resource inventory. Most of the area rates as low and one-fifth as high.

**Disturbances:** Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). There have been no major fires within this area since 1960, with only 200 acres burned. There are minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle, western pine beetle, and mountain pine beetle.

#### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Sugar Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Sugar Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Sugar Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Sugar Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Sugar Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	10,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	10,300	10,300	10,300
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>10,300</b>	<b>10,300</b>	<b>10,300</b>	<b>10,300</b>

Table Sugar Mountain-2. Potential activities

Sugar Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	10,300	10,300	3,600*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	10,300	10,300	10,300	10,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	10,300	10,300	10,300	10,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	10,300	10,300	3,600*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	10,300	10,300	10,300	10,300

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the Backcountry areas outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Roughly 3,600 acres of the Sugar Mountain Roadless Area are within a municipal watershed. If any wildland fire risk reduction activities occur in this roadless area, they are expected to take place within the municipal watershed area.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 10,300 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.1 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 10,300 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The

Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 10,300 acres under the Backcountry theme. None of the Backcountry acres are in the CPZ, but 3,600 acres of the roadless area are within a municipal watershed.

Within the Backcountry areas, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities that occur are expected to occur within or adjacent to the 3,600 acres of this roadless area that are within a municipal watershed.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 10,300 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases.

## Blackhorse Creek #039

7,700 acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Blackhorse Creek Roadless Area includes the small northwestern portion of what was the Buttercup Mountain Roadless Area in the 1987 Sawtooth Forest Plan. During the Forest Plan Revision roadless area inventory update, the Buttercup Roadless Area was divided into three separate areas because the existing roads that separate them were considered to be too highly developed to meet wilderness standards.

The Blackhorse Creek Roadless Area is located in Camas County, within the Fairfield Ranger District, about 13 miles north of Fairfield, Idaho. It is bordered on the north and west by the Ketchum-Featherville Road (Forest Road 227) and on the southwest and southeast by the Little Smoky Creek Road (Forest Road 015).

The topography is very steep over much of the area. Precipitation averages from 16 to 20 inches. The elevations range from around 6,200 feet to over 8,400 feet. The slopes are generally vegetated up to the ridgelines with Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, and some lodgepole pine on the northern and eastern slopes. The southern and western slopes are vegetated with mountain shrub-sagebrush-grass communities. The brush communities include snowberry, bitterbrush, and sagebrush. Aspen is present but it is in decline due to fire exclusion and conifer encroachment.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Natural integrity and apparent naturalness are rated low because of mining activities, improved and unimproved roads along the borders, interior exclusions, and range management activities. The area includes 0.5 mile of unauthorized roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are moderate, due primarily to the area's small size. The Ketchum-Featherville and Little Smoky Creek Roads can be seen from portions of the area. The distances from the center of the area to the boundary are generally less than two miles. Topographic relief, with numerous small and steep draws, does provide some opportunity for solitude. Opportunities for primitive recreation and challenging experiences are both rated moderate.

**Special Features:** Numerous old cabins exist from past mining activities.

**Manageability:** The boundary, as inventoried, would be difficult to manage because of many road intrusions, adjacency to numerous roads and timber sale areas, and irregular private land property boundaries. Although boundaries could be established that would improve overall wilderness qualities, an acreage reduction would occur.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** A few tributaries to Little Smoky Creek are thought to provide habitat for threatened bull trout. Occupied or historic habitat for redband trout may exist over most the area. Isolated pockets of brook trout are also present. No streams are considered strongholds for any fish species of concern.

**Wildlife:** Deer and elk are relatively common. Known nesting areas of northern goshawk, a Region 4 sensitive species, lie within the area. Habitat for threatened Canada lynx exists. Habitat exists for several Region 4 sensitive species, including wolverine, boreal owl, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, flammulated owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog. Probable sightings of gray wolves have been reported. Grey wolves are considered an experimental non-essential population in this area. Black bear, cougar, bobcat, and pine martin are also present.

**Water:** Primary drainages within this area include tributaries to Little Smoky Creek, Blackhorse Creek, and Carrie Creek. Water from this area is used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation. There are no lakes within the area.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Aspen is in decline due to a lack of fire, encroachment of conifers, and disease. There are no inventoried sites of noxious weeds in this roadless area.

**Recreation:** The predominate recreation uses are motorized trail bike riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, big-game hunting and snowmobiling. Fishing opportunities are poor.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is 30,099,000 board feet, equivalent to 56,700 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 3,000 acres of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,200 acres of the roadless area are considered to have low timber productivity; 2,800 acres have moderate productivity; and 200 acres have high productivity.

**Range:** One sheep allotment covers about 25 percent of the grazed area and one cattle allotment covers the remaining 75 percent. Both allotments are managed under deferred rotation systems. There is a high level of structural grazing improvements on the cattle allotment, and a low level on the sheep allotment. Of the current allotments, 1,800 (23 percent of the roadless area) acres are considered capable for cattle grazing, and 100 acres (less than 1 percent) are considered capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are 19 registered mining claims, no leases, and no withdrawals within the roadless area. Two semi-active mines, some patented mining properties, and numerous mining prospects exist on the edge of the highly mineralized northern half of the area. The potential for energy or leasable minerals is low. This roadless area contains 7,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or state lands within the roadless area. Two special use permits have been issued for outfitter and guide services within the roadless area. Short-term special uses within the area have been increasing.

**Roads and Trails:** Motorized use comprises about 60 percent of the overall recreation use. There is one motorized trail (280) within the roadless area, which is about 6 miles in length.

**Heritage:** The area contains some historic sites associated with mining activities. A small number of American Indian cultural sites have also been identified within the area.

**Disturbances:** Wildfire has not been a significant factor within the roadless area. Dwarf mistletoe infections in Douglas-fir are common throughout the area.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Blackhorse Creek Roadless Area.

Table Blackhorse Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Blackhorse Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Blackhorse Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Blackhorse Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	7,700	7,700	7,700
Similar to Backcountry	7,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>

Table Blackhorse Creek-2. Potential activities

Blackhorse Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	7,700	7,700	7,700	7,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	7,700	7,700	7,700	1,100*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	7,700	7,700	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	7,700	7,700	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 1,100 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 7,700 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule timber cutting is prohibited on 7,700 acres except when done for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 7,700 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 1,100 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. No changes from mineral leasing.



## Black Pine #003

44,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Black Pine Roadless Area is located about 45 miles southeast of Burley, Idaho in Cassia County. The primary access includes Interstate 84, Idaho State Highway 81 from I-84 to Malta, Idaho; Utah State Highway 42 from I-84 on the south to the Utah-Idaho state line; and Raft River Highway District Highway 30 (formerly U.S. 30) from the Utah-Idaho state line to Malta. Several developed roads penetrate the area from all four sides. This area includes much of the Black Pine Division of the Minidoka Ranger District.

The major physiographic feature is the Black Pine Mountain Range. This range extends north and south through the area for about 17 miles and is comprised of limestones, calcareous sandstones, shales, and quartzites. Topography ranges from gently sloping lands around the base of the mountains to steep dissected slopes at the higher elevations. The flatter foothills occur primarily below 5,800 feet. The valley soils are deep alluvium and loess deposits that vary in depth and productivity. The mountain slope soils also vary from shallow, droughty soils to deep, moist soils. The soils in general are quite erodible. Elevations range from 4,960 feet at the southwest corner to 9,385 feet atop Black Pine Peak.

Vegetation types are sagebrush, juniper, aspen, mountain shrub, and conifer. The sagebrush type generally occurs on south and west exposures and extends from the boundary to the top of the mountain. The juniper type occurs on the foothill lands. The browse type occurs on the northeast and southwest edges. Conifer timber, Douglas-fir and subalpine fir, is generally confined to the north and east exposures and has experienced extreme insect mortality. There are scattered small patches of aspen and mountain mahogany.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Natural integrity and apparent naturalness are low. There are numerous intrusions into the area from unimproved roads, and there are livestock water developments, fences, and revegetation projects. There is evidence of past mining activities in upper Black Pine Canyon. The large open pit of Black Pine Gold Mine now exists in the Black Pine Division just southeast of the roadless area. The area includes 12.3 miles of unauthorized roads and 19.3 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are moderate. Overall topographic screening is moderate and vegetative screening is low. The distance from perimeter to core of the area is less than 2 miles in most places. There are many off-site intrusions, primarily roads and highways. The unit is clearly visible from Interstate 84 on the north and east sides, and the Raft River Highway District Highway 30 on the west. The opportunities for primitive recreation experiences are low except for the higher elevations. There are few opportunities for challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** The Pole Canyon Research Natural Area is located within the area (200 acres).

**Manageability:** The location of the boundaries would make this area difficult to manage. Some of the boundary coincides with the Forest boundary, but most of it follows no distinct features. Although there is some opportunity to improve manageability through changes to boundaries, acreage would be substantially reduced and intrusions would likely still occur.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Yellowstone cutthroat trout populations are considered to be strong in Eight Mile Creek and present but depressed in Six Mile Creek. The Eight Mile Creek population is thought to be the most pure strain on the Sawtooth National Forest. Both of these streams are on the west side of the roadless area. Six Mile Creek also contains rainbow trout. No threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. Habitat exists for Region 4 sensitive species, including Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and Columbia sharp-tailed grouse. This area is important summer range for mule deer. Large numbers of deer winter at lower elevations in the southern one-third of the area. There is habitat for other common species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawk, golden eagle, badger, cougar, bobcat, and coyote. This is one of the few places on the forest used by ferruginous hawks and Columbia sharp-tailed grouse. Grey wolves are considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area.

**Water:** The roadless area includes portions of all drainages of this mountain range. This area contributes small quantities of water for down stream irrigation. Eight Mile and Six Mile Creeks are the only perennial streams. Other drainages run water seasonally from snow melt and summer storms. Water quality is considered high in approximately 1,300 acres of the area, and fair over most of the remaining area. Water quality in Eight Mile and Six Mile Creeks is fair during periods of low flow and poor during high flows.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Small populations of black henbane, whitetop, and Canada thistle, and Dyers Woad have been identified within the roadless area. Their combined acreage is less than one percent of the roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use of the area is minor and primarily limited to big game and small game hunting in the fall. Fishing in this area is considered to be poor because of the small number of streams containing trout and because of the small size of the trout. There are no permanent recreation developments, and there is little opportunity for any intensive development of recreation sites.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 56,000 thousand board feet, equivalent to 109,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 5,800 acres of the roadless area are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 300 acres are considered to have low timber productivity and 5,500 acres have moderate productivity.

**Range:** This entire roadless area is allocated to livestock grazing. It contains portions of six cattle allotments and one sheep allotment, which are managed under deferred rotation systems. Numerous range improvements are present, including fences, corrals, water developments, and pipelines. Livestock range revegetation projects have occurred within the area. An estimated 10,400 acres (24 percent of the roadless area) are classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 100 acres (less than 1 percent) are considered capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** The southern two-thirds of the Black Pine Range have been explored for gold deposits since the late 1800s. The area has high potential for occurrence and development of low-grade gold deposits. There is little or no potential for the occurrence of leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate), and mineral materials (sand, gravel, and building stone). The roadless area has in the past been leased for oil and gas but has not been explored. The area has a low potential for development of oil and gas resources. This roadless area contains 44,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There is one 120-acre parcel of private land within the roadless area boundary. A number of other parcels of private land adjoin the boundary. One outfitter and guide operation is permitted within the area.

**Roads and Trails:** The trail system in the area consists of about 20 miles of old, unmaintained trails and stock driveways, all of which are open to motorized travel.

**Heritage:** There is a moderate level of prehistoric sites and historic mining sites within the area.

**Disturbances:** Fire activity has been minimal in this area. Through the late 1980s and early 1990s, a Douglas-fir bark beetle epidemic killed much of the Douglas-fir in the Black Pine Division. One large sale and several smaller sales removed salvage timber from approximately 1,500 acres. Helicopters were used to remove salvage timber from the roadless area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Black Pine Roadless Area.

Table Black Pine-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Black Pine-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Black Pine-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Black Pine Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	44,000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	43,800	43,800	43,800
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	200*	200*	200*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>44,000</b>	<b>44,000</b>	<b>44,000</b>	<b>44,000</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Black Pine Roadless Area is RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

**Table Black Pine-2. Potential activities**

Black Pine Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	43,800	43,800	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	44,000	43,800	43,800	43,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	44,000	43,800	43,800	43,800
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	43,800	43,800	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	44,000	43,800	43,800	43,800

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 43,800 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would

be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 43,800 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 43,800 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 43,800 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. No new roads can be constructed since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems near the roadless area. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Boulder-White Clouds #920

**322,700 Acres Sawtooth**

**139,300 Acres Challis**

**462,000 Acres Total**

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Most of the Boulder-White Clouds Roadless Area is within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area of the Sawtooth National Forest. A large portion is on the Ketchum Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest, and on the Lost River and Yankee Fork Ranger Districts of the Challis portion of the Salmon-Challis National Forest. The Sawtooth is the lead forest for the roadless area evaluation. The Boulder-White Cloud Roadless Area is also commonly known as the "White Clouds."

This roadless area is adjoined by three Bureau of Land Management roadless areas, known as Wilderness Study Areas. They all adjoin the eastern portion of this roadless area. The Boulder Creek Wilderness Study Area is 1,930 acres in size; the Jerry Peak Wilderness Study Area is 46,150 acres; the Jerry Peak West Wilderness Study Area is 13,530 acres. The total Bureau of Land Management acreage adjoining this roadless area is 61,610 acres.

This large roadless area is located north of Ketchum, Idaho, east of the upper Big Wood River Valley, east of the Sawtooth Valley, south of the Salmon River, and west of the East Fork Salmon River. The boundary is 3 miles north of Ketchum, 2 miles east of Stanley, and 28 miles south of Challis, Idaho. This area is located in Blaine and Custer Counties. Primary access is by way of State Highway 75 from Ketchum to Stanley and east down the Salmon River, the East Fork Salmon River Road, U.S. Highway 93 in the Big Lost River Valley, and Trail Creek out of Ketchum. From these highways and roads, which are mostly adjacent to the roadless area, access is provided on numerous developed roads of various standards, many of which were originally constructed for mining purposes.

The Boulder-White Clouds Roadless Area consists mostly of high, steep, rugged ridges and peaks that make up the mountain ranges, the U-shaped valleys, and over-steepened slopes. Elevations range from 6,200 feet along the Salmon-Challis National Forest boundary at Herd Creek to 11,815 feet atop Castle Peak. A majority of the area is over 8,000 feet and several other peaks exceed 11,000 feet. The mountain ranges of the White Cloud Peaks and Boulder Mountains are rocky, barren, and very steep. Soils across the area vary from moderately to highly erodible. The northwestern portion of the area has long, steep, bisected slopes that have not been glaciated. The eastern portion of the area on the Salmon-Challis National Forest receives little moisture, being in the rain shadow of the major peaks. Slopes are more rolling and stable with a vegetative cover of grass and sagebrush. Trees occur only in the more moist north slopes and higher elevations.

Vegetation on the remaining area is typical of mountain slopes in central Idaho. South slopes at lower elevations are generally sagebrush and grass. As elevations increase, the tree density increases. Above 8,000 feet, tree stands become a mixture of Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce (limited to the creek bottoms), and whitebark pine. Patches of aspen are scattered throughout. Limber pine and whitebark pine are found in the high cirque basins and near timberline. North slopes tend to have solid stands of trees except where soils are thin. The area contains many meadows, which are very important to wildlife.

Mountain peaks are spectacular and colorful, especially the White Cloud Peaks, which show the forces of nature with their folded and faulted strata. The White Cloud Peaks area has numerous cirque basins with high quality lakes and clear mountain streams.

The area includes roughly 194,100 acres of Recommended Wilderness and therefore holds a high level of roadless characteristics.



## ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** As a whole, the area has very high natural integrity, showing little impact by man. The apparent naturalness is extremely high. The Big Lost River drainage portion, outside of the main high peaks area, has a moderate level of natural integrity and appearance. Past activities have included sagebrush spraying, prescribed burning, historic logging, historic mining, and the construction of fences and water developments to better manage livestock. Long-term campsites occur in some locations. The area includes 12.4 miles of unauthorized and 19.6 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are very high. The rugged mountains provide a high degree of topographic screening. Vegetation, though not dense, also provides good screening. An exception to these screening factors is the rolling non-timbered slopes in the eastern portion of the area. In these areas, there is little tree cover to provide screening, but there are some long, V-shaped canyons. Distances from the center of the area to the perimeter provide outstanding opportunities for solitude, as does the fact that there are no permanent off-site intrusions. Opportunities for solitude are reduced on the Big Lost River portion of the area due to the ease of public access and high hunter use in the fall.

Opportunities for primitive recreation are also outstanding. Numerous activities can take place with little impact on other users. The screening by both vegetation and topography enhances primitive recreation potential. Self-reliance and challenge are found in many activities. More than 150 peaks are over 10,000 feet in elevation. The mountains are precipitous and many areas are devoid of trails, making access more challenging.

**Special Features:** Castle Peak, Boulder Peaks, White Clouds Peaks, and numerous high mountain lakes are special features to the area. Segments of the North Fork Big Wood River (5.5 miles), West Fork North Fork Big Wood River (4.3 miles), Little Boulder Creek (7.0 miles), Boulder Chain Lakes Creek (4.4 miles), Germania Creek (12.5 miles), South Fork East Fork Salmon River (5.9 miles), West Fork East Fork Salmon River (5.4 miles), Warm Springs Creek (21.4 miles), West Pass Creek (6.0 miles), Salmon River (0.4 mile), East Fork Salmon River (4.4 miles), and Trail Creek (10.0 miles) are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 34,700 acres will be established as a special management corridor to protect the outstandingly remarkable values.

Some old mining cabins, the remains of an old fire lookout site, and other old developments are of historic interest. Horton Peak and Lookout Mountain are two historic fire lookouts in the area.

**Manageability:** The portion of the roadless area within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area is managed to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values, and enhance their associated recreational values. Management options are, therefore, limited.

As inventoried, the area would be difficult to manage. Boundaries are complex and irregular, with many indentations and sections that run across slopes and drainages. Boundary modifications would be necessary to enhance manageability and form logical boundaries should the area become wilderness. One section of state-owned land is located on the Big Lost River portion of the area. Other than that, there are only a few very small parcels of private land within the boundary that could complicate wilderness management. The boundary could be changed slightly to exclude them.

There are numerous access locations available due to the area's large size. Historic and current patterns of motorized use would present some difficulty in enforcing a non-motorized use policy. Approximately half of the designated roads and trails on the Big Lost River side are open to motorized vehicles, and most of this portion is open to snowmobile use. The majority of this portion of the area is also open to the retrieval of legally-taken game with motorized vehicles.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Fish species present in the Salmon River and Wood River portions of the area include Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, Wood River sculpin, rainbow trout, and brook trout. Spring and summer spawning runs of Chinook summer salmon, and spawning



runs of steelhead trout occur in some of the tributaries to the Salmon River. Bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout occur as both resident populations, and as adults moving up some of these streams from the Salmon River to spawn. Sockeye salmon move up the Salmon River, which adjoins the roadless area. The salmon and steelhead travel approximately 900 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River to spawn in these waters. Wood River sculpin is on the Region 4 sensitive species list.

The Big Lost River fishery is primarily a hatchery rainbow trout population. Some natural rainbow trout reproduction occurs; however, this is supplemented throughout the summer with catchable hatchery fish. Brook trout, whitefish, and shorthead sculpin are also found in streams. Whirling disease, prevalent in the Big Lost River and its tributaries, is having an impact on natural production. There are no threatened, endangered or Region 4 sensitive species in the Big Lost River drainage.

**Wildlife:** Habitat for wolverines, pygmy nuthatch, spotted bat, and spotted frogs may also occur here. Sixty species of mammals have been reported within the area. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area and are known to occur here. The area is within the range of the Canada lynx, a threatened species, and lynx has been sighted here. Habitat also occurs for bald eagle, fisher, northern goshawk, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Big game animals are common and include elk, mule deer, moose, mountain goat, antelope, bighorn sheep, black bear, and cougar. The East Fork Salmon River drainage contains key big game winter habitat.

**Water:** The area contains numerous mountain lakes and large streams, which drain into the Salmon River, East Fork Salmon River, Big Lost River, or Big Wood River. This water supports important fish, wildlife, and recreation resources on the forest. It provides for aquatic habitat, irrigation, hydropower, and other important uses off the forest. Water from streams on the Big Lost River side is stored in Mackay Reservoir for irrigation use in the lower valley. Water quality is generally very high.

**Botanical:** White Cloud milkvetch (*Astragalus vexilliflexus nubilus*), pointed draba (*Draba globosa*), and wavy-leaf helenium (*Thelypodium repandum*), three sensitive plant species occur in this roadless area. In the Salmon River and Big Wood River portions of the area, spotted knapweed is present on an estimated 160 acres, and yellow toadflax on 33 acres. In the Big Lost River portion, localized populations of noxious weeds include leafy spurge, diffuse knapweed, and spotted knapweed. Unique pockets of whitebark pine occur here. The whitebark pine in this area is still free of white pine blister rust, which has infested most other areas in the west.

**Recreation:** Portions of this area receive heavy recreation use, including both non-motorized and motorized dispersed activities. These activities include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, motorbike riding, snowmobiling, camping, big game hunting, and fishing. Fishing opportunities are good in some areas.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 1,821,100 thousand board feet, equivalent to about 3,536,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 112,200 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. There are 143,900 acres considered to have low timber productivity; 83,600 acres, moderate productivity, and 35 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Approximately 80 percent of the roadless area is grazed by livestock. The area contains all or portions of eight cattle allotments and one cattle/horse allotment (primarily on the eastern side and at the lower elevations), and ten sheep allotments (one is inactive). They are grazed in deferred rotation systems. There are a moderate number of grazing facilities in the eastern portion of the area, consisting primarily of fences and water developments. There are 14,800 acres of land (32 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 12,700 acres (3 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is high potential for the occurrence of locatable resources, specifically gold, silver, lead, zinc, tungsten, and molybdenum. Development potential is rated as moderate. There are approximately 100 mining claims located primarily within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area

portion of the roadless area. The Sawtooth National Recreation Area is Congressionally withdrawn from mineral entry subject to valid existing rights.

Activity on the mining claims has been limited to assessment work in the 1990s, due to low metals prices. There is low potential for the occurrence and development of leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate) and oil and gas resources. There is also low potential for the development of mineral materials (sand, gravel, and building stone). This roadless area contains 462,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There is one State-owned section of land in the northwest portion and a few other small parcels of private land within the roadless area. Permitted special uses consist of nine outfitter and guides engaging in summer pack trips, day rides, big-game hunting, fishing, backcountry skiing, and snowmobiling.

**Roads and Trails:** The developed trail system consists of 54 trails for a total of 323 miles. All but about 15 miles are open to mountain bikes. Trails currently open to motorized cycles total 118 miles.

**Heritage:** Some prehistoric American Indian campsites have been identified from the lithic scatters left after tool making. Some of the old mining cabins, the remains of one old fire lookout site, and other old developments are of historic interest. Horton Peak and Lookout Mountain are two existing historic fire lookouts within the area. The probability of finding new archaeological sites is moderate.

**Disturbances:** There have been no large fires in recent years. Some past sagebrush burning has occurred in the east side of the White Cloud Mountains, north of the North Fork Big Lost River Road. Douglas-fir beetle and mountain pine beetle infestations have occurred within the area. High intensity thunderstorms and high spring floods often impact drainages. Landslides are rare but they also cause some damage.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Boulder-White Clouds Roadless Area.

Table Boulder-White Clouds-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Boulder-White Clouds-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Boulder-White Clouds-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Sawtooth only)**

Boulder-White Clouds Management Theme Sawtooth	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	158,900	115,500	115,500	
Primitive	0	43,900	87,300	87,300	
Similar to Backcountry	322,700	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	84,500	84,500	CPZ	28,000
				NonCPZ	57,200
GFRG	0	700	700	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	34,700*	34,700*	34,700*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>322,700</b>	<b>322,700</b>	<b>322,700</b>	<b>322,700</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Sawtooth portion of the Boulder-White Clouds Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

Table Boulder-White Clouds-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Challis only)

Boulder-White Clouds Management Theme Challis	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	35,200	115,800	115,800	
Primitive	0	52,300	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	139,300	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	51,800	23,500	CPZ	900
				NonCPZ	22,600
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>139,300</b>	<b>139,300</b>	<b>139,300</b>	<b>139,300</b>	

Table Boulder-White Clouds-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Boulder-White Clouds Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	194,100	231,300	231,300	
Primitive	0	96,200	87,300	87,300	
Similar to Backcountry	462,000	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	136,300	108,000	CPZ	28,900
				NonCPZ	79,800
GFRG	0	700	700	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	34,700	34,700	34,700	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>462,000</b>	<b>462,000</b>	<b>462,000</b>	<b>462,000</b>	

Table Boulder-White Clouds-2. Potential activities (Sawtooth and Challis combined)

Boulder-White Clouds Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	137,000	108,700	28,900 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	462,000	233,200	196,000	196,000
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	462,000	233,200	196,000	128,800 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	233,200	196,000	28,900 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	104,800	700	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	462,000	233,200	108,700	108,700

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 79,800 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 20,100 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** For the portions of the roadless area on the Sawtooth National Forest, around 700 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within shrubland and grassland landscapes), 22,100 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 62,400 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 43,900 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 158,900 under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness). For the areas on the Challis National Forest, 35,200 acres would be managed as Recommended Wilderness, 32,600 acres would be managed under prescription 11 (Pioneer Mountains), 19,200 acres under prescription 18 (Mackay Point) and 52,300 acres under prescription 7 (East Fork).

Timber harvest and associated road building are generally permitted under Challis prescription 11 and 18. Any timber activities and road building that occur could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Under prescription 7, commercial timber harvest is prohibited, but timber cutting and road building for restoration purposes are both allowed. While any timber cutting could alter roadless characteristics in the short-term, the limitation of commercial timber harvest would limit these impacts.

Under Sawtooth prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in the WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions.

For the 84,500 acres under Sawtooth prescriptions 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 43,900 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

The 158,900 acres under Boise prescription 1.2 (Recommended Wilderness) and 35,200 acres in the Challis National Forest are managed to maintain wilderness characteristics and to allow ecological processes to prevail. Road construction is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber harvest or leasable mineral activities are allowed. Under this prescription the 158,900 acres are expected to maintain their wilderness and roadless area characteristics.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 128,400 acres under prescriptions 4.1c, 3.1 and 3.2, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 700 acres under prescriptions 6.1 and the 104,100 acres under Challis prescriptions 7, 11, and 18, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Boulder-White Clouds Roadless Area contains 462,000 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the 104,800 acres where roads for mineral access would be permitted, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 700 acres would fall under the GFRG, 108,000 acres under the Backcountry theme, 87,300 under the Primitive theme and 231,300 under the Wild Land Recreation theme.

For the 700 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining, the area does contain 462,000 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 87,300 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

The 231,300 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless and wilderness characteristics.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry, Primitive or Wild Land Recreation theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 231,300 acres under the Wild Land Recreation theme, 87,300 acres under the Primitive theme and 108,700 acres under the Backcountry theme, 28,900 of which are in the CPZ.

The 231,300 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes. These 231,300 follow the boundaries in the proposed wilderness legislation introduced by Representative Alan Simposn (H.R. 222, Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act (CIEDRA, 2007)).



Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 79,800 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 108,700 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 20,100 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive or Backcountry themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases.



## Buttercup Mountain #038

56,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Buttercup Mountain Roadless Area includes the large eastern portion of what was the Buttercup Mountain Roadless Area in the 1987 Sawtooth Forest Plan. That area has been broken into three separate areas. Existing roads that separate these areas are considered to be too highly developed to meet wilderness standards.

This roadless area is located in Blaine and Camas Counties, and is within both the Fairfield and Ketchum Ranger Districts. It is located about 3 miles southwest of Ketchum and 9 miles northeast of Fairfield, Idaho. It is bordered on the north by the Ketchum-Featherville Road (Forest Road 227) and on the west by the Little Smoky Creek, Liberal Creek and Willow Creek Roads (Forest Roads 015, 096, and 017). The southern and eastern borders are the forest boundary with the exception of the area south of Greenhorn Creek and east of the North Fork of Deer Creek and Kinsey Creek.

The area around Buttercup Mountain is rugged terrain, and in other parts of the area, the topography is often very steep. The elevations range from around 5,800 feet to over 9,000 feet.

The slopes are generally vegetated up to the ridgelines with Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, and some lodgepole pine on the northern and eastern slopes. The southern and western slopes feature mountain shrub-sagebrush-grass communities, including snowberry, bitterbrush, and sagebrush. Some aspen is present but it is in decline due to conifer encroachment and lack of fire.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Natural integrity and apparent naturalness are rated low because of mining activities, range management activities, and improved and unimproved roads along the borders and interior exclusions. The area includes 9.9 miles of unauthorized and 4.7 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are moderate. The Little Smoky, Willow Creek and Ketchum-Featherville Roads can be seen from many parts of the area. Due to the road intrusions, the distances within the roadless area to roads are generally less than 2 miles. Topographic relief, with numerous small and steep draws, does provide some opportunity for solitude. Primitive recreation opportunities are moderate, and opportunities for challenging experiences are moderate.

**Special Features:** Buttercup Mountain (9,075 feet in elevation) and Mahoney Butte (7,904 feet) are prominent features within this area. There are other special geological, scenic, or cultural resource features throughout the area. Some old cabins exist from past mining activities.

**Manageability:** The boundary, as inventoried, would be difficult to manage because of the many road intrusions and the adjacency to numerous roads and timber sale areas. Numerous boundary changes could be made that would improve overall wilderness qualities; however, acreage reductions would occur.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Wood River sculpin, a Region 4 sensitive species, are thought to be present in most of the area streams. Occupied or historic habitat for redband trout may exist over most the area. Isolated pockets of brook trout are also present.

**Wildlife:** Big-game winter range exists in Deer Creek and Willow Creek. Deer and elk numbers are relatively high. Moose have been transplanted to Willow Creek and have spread throughout the area. Upper areas of Buttercup Mountain provide nesting sites for the peregrine falcon. Known nesting areas of the Region 4 sensitive species, northern goshawk, lie within the area. Habitat for other sensitive species include boreal owl, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, flammulated owl, boreal owl, northern three-

toed woodpecker, wolverine, and spotted frog. Habitat for Canada lynx exists in this roadless area. Probable sightings of gray wolves, considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area, have been reported. Black bear, cougar, bobcat, and pine martin are also present.

**Water:** Major drainages within this area include Little Smoky Creek, Willow Creek, Greenhorn Creek, and Deer Creek. Runoff from this area provides an important source for water for irrigation on the Camas Prairie and the Wood River Valley. It also supplies storage water for local reservoirs. Water quality is considered high in only about 400 acres of the area. There are no lakes within the area.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Aspen is in decline due to a lack of fire, encroachment of conifers, and disease.

Noxious weed infestations of spotted knapweed (about 9 acres), diffuse knapweed, and Canada thistle occur in the area, but less than one percent of the area acreage is affected. Noxious weed populations are thought to be decreasing on the west side of the area, and static or increasing on the east side. Cheat grass has been increasing in recent years on the lower, drier sites, especially after disturbances. Areas of old forest are scattered throughout the area.

**Recreation:** The predominant recreation uses are motorized trail bike riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, big game hunting, backcountry skiing and snowmobiling. A few miles of groomed snowmobile trail lie within the roadless area. Access across private lands on the southern flank is limited. Fishing opportunities are fair.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 308,400 thousand board feet, equivalent to 581,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 35,700 acres are classified as tentatively suited for timber harvest. An estimated 1,700 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 35,000 acres, moderate productivity; and 400 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Six sheep allotments cover about one-third of the roadless area, and two cattle allotments cover the remaining two-thirds. Of the roadless area's 56,700 acres, 1,900 acres (3 percent) are considered capable for cattle grazing; and 9,000 acres (16 percent), are capable for sheep grazing. The sheep allotments are managed under a deferred rotation grazing system, while the cattle allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a high level of structural grazing improvements on the cattle allotments, and a low level on the sheep allotments. Some established sheep trails used for grazing allotment access exist within the roadless area.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are 21 registered mining claims, no leases, and no withdrawals within the roadless area. Two semi-active mines, some patented mining properties, and numerous mining prospects exist in the highly mineralized areas around Buttercup Mountain, Dollarhide Summit, Carrie Town, and Deer Creek. The potential for leasable minerals is low. This roadless area contains 56,700 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or State lands within the roadless area. Eight special-use permits have been issued for outfitter and guide services within the roadless area. Short-term special uses within the area have been increasing

**Roads and Trails:** Motorized use comprises about 60 percent of the overall recreation use. The non-motorized uses are more predominant in the east end of the area. There are 15 system trails within the roadless area, comprising about 37 miles. All of these trail miles are open for motorized use.

**Heritage:** The area contains some historic sites associated with mining activities. A small number of American Indian cultural sites have also been identified within the area.

**Disturbances:** Wildfire has not been a significant factor within the roadless area. Only a small area, 100 acres, has been burned by wildfire since 1960. Two prescribed burns, totaling 1,000 acres, have been conducted. Douglas-fir mistletoe is common throughout the area. Deer Creek has been damaged by major floods several times, most recently in the spring of 1984.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Buttercup Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Buttercup Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Buttercup Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Buttercup Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Buttercup Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	56,300	56,300	56,300
Similar to Backcountry	56,700	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	400*	400*	400*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>56,700</b>	<b>56,700</b>	<b>56,700</b>	<b>56,700</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Area in the Red Mountain Roadless Area is Bald Mountain Ski Area. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

**Table Buttercup Mountain-2. Potential activities**

Buttercup Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	56,700	56,300	56,300	56,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	56,700	56,300	56,300	11,600*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	56,300	56,300	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	56,700	56,300	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 11,600 acres of the Primitive within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 56,300 acres are within prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would

be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule timber cutting is prohibited on 56,300 acres except when done for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 56,300 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 11,600 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Cache Peak #007

26,500 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Cache Peak Roadless Area is located 26 air miles southeast of Burley, Idaho in Cassia County. The primary access is by the Independence Lake and Almo Park Roads (Forest Roads 728 and 727). The roadless area comprises much of the southern portion of the Albion Division of the Minidoka Ranger District.

The topography in some of the canyons is steep, rough, and rocky, with slopes varying from 10 to 70 percent. The higher reaches of the range have been glaciated. Cache Peak is the highest peak south of the Snake River in Idaho and is composed of metamorphic gneisses, mica schists, and quartzites. These are some of the oldest rocks in the state, age-dated at 2.4 billion years.

Four mountain lakes range in size from 4 to 15 acres. The soil is quite erodible. Elevations range from 5,800 to 10,339 feet. The area supports a variety of vegetation types, including pinyon-juniper, sagebrush, mountain brush, lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, aspen, and mixed conifer/aspen types.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is good, with only a small percentage of the area affected by livestock grazing and associated facilities. The natural appearance of most of the area is high. The area includes 9.3 miles of unauthorized and 10.1 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are low due to limited topographic and vegetative screening. The opportunities for primitive recreation are moderate. There are few opportunities for challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** The area contains a small portion of Castle Rocks, a noted formation associated with the City of Rocks National Historic Reserve. Cache Peak is the highest mountain in Idaho south of the Snake River, and Independence Lakes are the only example of paternoster lakes this far south in the state.

**Manageability:** The eastern and southern boundaries of the roadless area are the forest boundary. The west side is located along a broad ridge. Less-defined boundaries exist on the north and northwest portions, cutting across drainages and ridges. Boundaries could be modified to create an area with manageable boundaries and still retain a suitable acreage.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Some of the streams in the area contain Yellowstone cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout. Independence Lakes contain grayling and California golden trout. Mill Creek contains leatherside chub. The leatherside chub, a native species that has become rarer throughout much of its range, is considered a species of concern by the State of Idaho. No known threatened, endangered, or sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. This area provides habitat for the northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, and flammulated owl. The area is summer range for mule deer. There have been a number of elk sightings, and an occasional moose is sighted. The lower elevations on the south end provide winter range for mule deer and elk. There is habitat for common species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawks, golden eagle, cougar, bobcat, coyote, badger, and beaver. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area.

**Water:** This area includes the headwaters of Almo, Stines, Dry, Mill, Waterfall, Chokecherry, and Grape Creeks, and Green Canyon. The watershed value is moderate, providing relatively small amounts of water for irrigation off the forest. Water quality is generally fair during periods of low flow and fair to

poor during high flows. Four natural lakes, the Independence Lakes, are located on the east side of Mount Independence. Water on the forest is used primarily for fish, wildlife, and recreation.

**Botanical:** Davis' wavewing (*Cymopterus davisii*) a sensitive plant species occurs in this roadless area. Some introduced species of grasses and forbs have been seeded in conjunction with range revegetation projects and fire rehabilitation. Small populations (totaling less than 10 acres collectively) of spotted knapweed, musk thistle, Canada thistle, and leafy spurge have been identified within the roadless area. This area contains many patches of old forest scattered throughout.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is moderate, except in the lake basin, where it is heavy. Primary activities include big game and small game hunting, and fishing, hiking, and backpacking around Cache Peak. Fishing in Independence Lakes is considered good. Fishing opportunities throughout the rest of the area are marginal due to the small size of the trout. Both motorized and non-motorized recreation use occurs. About 2,000 acres around Cache Peak and Independence Lakes are closed to off-highway vehicle use except for snowmobiles. The area contains one minimally developed campground in conjunction with the developed trailhead to Independence Lakes.

**Timber:** The area contains about 85,700 thousand board feet of standing timber, equivalent to 166,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 9,400 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. About 8,500 acres are considered to have low productivity; 900 acres, moderate productivity; and no acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Portions or all of eight cattle allotments occur within the area. They are managed under rest and deferred rotation systems. There is a low level of livestock grazing facilities present, consisting primarily of fences and water developments. About 90 percent of the area is grazed; the area encompassing the lake basin is not grazed. An estimated 6,400 acres (24 percent of roadless area) are classified as capable for grazing by cattle, and 1,900 acres (7 percent) are considered capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area has a moderate potential for the occurrence and development of locatable uncommon variety building stone, locally referred to as "Oakley stone." There is low potential for the occurrence and development of other locatable metal commodities such as gold, silver, copper and lead, or for mineral materials such as sand, gravel and other building stone. There is low to no potential for the occurrence of oil and gas, or leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate). This roadless area contains 26,500 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There is no private land within the area. Several parcels of private land border the perimeter. There are two permitted outfitter and guide operations.

**Roads and Trails:** The trail system in the area consists of five trails totaling an estimated 36 miles, of which 22 miles are open to motorized travel.

**Heritage:** The presence of cultural sites is moderate near springs. The potential for finding additional sites is probable. Views from the higher promontories include an overview of the City of Rocks National Historic Reserve, an area established to protect trail remnants and a significant camp area located on the historic Salt Lake to California Trail.

**Disturbances:** Only 100 acres have been affected by wildfire in recent times. Approximately 3,700 acres of prescribed burning to help revegetate livestock range have occurred, but this burning has not significantly changed the natural integrity. Moderate impacts to lodgepole pine stands have occurred from mountain pine beetles and dwarf mistletoe.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Cache Peak Roadless Area. Table Cache Peak-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Cache Peak-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Cache Peak-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Cache Peak Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	26,500	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	7,100	7,100	CPZ	2,200
				NonCPZ	13,500
GFRG	0	19,400	19,400	10,800	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>26,500</b>	<b>26,500</b>	<b>26,500</b>	<b>26,500</b>	

Table Cache Peak-2. Potential activities

Cache Peak Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	26,500	26,500	13,000*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	26,500	26,500	26,500	26,500
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	26,500	26,500	26,500	26,500
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	26,500	26,500	13,000*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	19,400	19,400	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	26,500	26,500	26,500	26,500

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 13,500 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** under the existing forest plan about 10,800 acres would be managed under prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), about 8,600 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within shrubland and grassland landscapes) and 7,100 acres would be managed under prescription 4.2 (roaded recreation emphasis).

For prescriptions 5.1 and 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within its desired condition. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall

management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected.

For the 7,100 acres under prescription 4.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted as long as they don't compromise recreation resource objectives. Timber activities and road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term since the management emphasis is on roaded recreation, not roadless area preservation.

There are no prohibitions against new mineral leases or road building to access mineral leases in the existing forest plan prescriptions for the Cache Peak Roadless Area. No phosphate mining or oil and gas activities are expected since the area has little to no potential for these minerals. The area does contain 26,500 acres of high geothermal potential. Any geothermal activities that occur would likely alter the roadless characteristics of the area over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 7,100 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme and 19,400 acres would fall under the GFRG theme. For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

For the 19,400 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Cache Peak Roadless Area, the area does contain 26,500 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 15,700 acres under the Backcountry theme, 2,200 of which are in the CPZ, and 7,700 acres under the GFRG theme.

Within the 2,200 Backcountry acres that are within the CPZ, timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber cutting activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 13,500 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 15,700 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or

wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 10,800 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or GFRG theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Cottonwood #010

11,300 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Cottonwood Roadless Area is located about 30 air miles southeast of Twin Falls, Idaho, in Cassia County. The primary access is by Highway 30, and the Foot Hills Road from just east of Murtaugh, Idaho to Oakley, Idaho. It is located in the northeast corner of the Cassia Division of the Sawtooth National Forest, on the Minidoka Ranger District. The area is composed of volcanic rhyolite ash flows that overlie older limestones and quartzites. The canyons contain some high, vertical rhyolite cliffs. The soil is moderately erodible. Elevations range from 7,200 feet at the southwest end of the area to 5,000 feet where Big Cottonwood Creek leaves the forest boundary. The higher elevations on the west side contain a few stands of lodgepole pine with heavy grass-brush ground vegetation between stands. Lower elevations, to the north and east, support stands of sagebrush, juniper, and mountain mahogany.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is high. The natural appearance is moderate with the existence of livestock grazing facilities and some primitive roads now being used as trails. The area includes 0.6 mile of unauthorized and 6.5 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are low because of the area's relatively small size, short distances from the perimeter, and the effects of highly used adjacent areas. A large number of people could be attracted to this area, as it is very accessible to a large population base, further reducing the feeling of solitude. Opportunities for primitive recreation are also moderate due to the lack of diversity and challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** Special features include the bighorn sheep population that inhabits the cliffs of Big Cottonwood canyon.

**Manageability:** The topographic features would provide a manageable boundary for wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Big Cottonwood Creek and some tributaries contain Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Big Cottonwood Creek and Sawmill Creek provide important spawning habitat for cutthroat trout. Trout habitat has improved significantly since 1988, when riparian systems were implemented in the lower portions of Big Cottonwood Creek, and since the total rest from livestock grazing in recent years. No known threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** Wintering bald eagle, a Forest Service sensitive species is known to this area. This area also provides habitat for the northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, flammulated owl, and spotted frog. The area is summer range for mule deer, and for California bighorn sheep, introduced in this canyon beginning in 1986. The lower elevations also provide winter range for mule deer and bighorns. Rio Grande turkeys have been introduced into this canyon beginning in 1988. There is habitat for common species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawks, golden eagle, cougar, bobcat, and coyote. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area.

At the mouth of the canyon, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has established the Big Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Management Area. They are managing this area to provide habitat for wildlife, especially bighorn sheep, turkey, mule deer, cutthroat trout, pheasant, and partridge. The Wildlife Management Area also controls access into the canyon at this point.

**Water:** This roadless area includes most of the area draining into Big Cottonwood Creek. Big Cottonwood Creek provides water for irrigation, including the Big Cottonwood Creek Wildlife Management Area. Water quality is good and improving. As much as 400 acres are considered as having high water quality.

None of this water reaches the Snake River by way of the original channel to Dry Creek. Water not used for irrigation is intercepted by irrigation ditches and goes to the Murtaugh Reservoir.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Canada thistle is a problem in lower Big Cottonwood Creek, below the forest boundary, but to date the roadless area has been free of noxious weeds.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is low but increasing, consisting primarily of hunting, fishing, and some off-highway vehicle use. Horseback riding and mountain biking are increasing. Many spectacular views of the Oakley Valley exist from some of the high ridges. Fishing opportunities are fair.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 1,162 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 2,334 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 300 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberland, and all roadless area acres are considered to have low timber productivity.

**Range:** The entire area is within the Cottonwood cattle allotment. This allotment is now vacant because the use was waived back to the Forest Service by the former permittee. There is a moderate amount of remnant fence and a small number of water developments within this allotment. There are approximately 5,000 acres (43 percent of roadless area) classified as capable for grazing cattle.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence and development of locatable minerals, leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate). The area has moderate potential for development of mineral materials (rhyolite building stone). The roadless area is potentially valuable for oil and gas resources but has low development potential at this time. The area contains 11,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There is no private or State land in the roadless area. The only special use permitted within this area is one cougar-hunting guide.

**Roads and Trails:** The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has acquired the private land at the mouth of Big Cottonwood Creek, and has closed the lower trail access to motorized vehicles. Motorized vehicles can still access the area from Cave Canyon to the north and several trail accesses in the south and west portions of the area. All of the roadless area is open to motorized use. A number of undeveloped four-wheel drive roads exist on ridges and in canyon bottoms. The Big Cottonwood Creek trail system consists of one trail totaling about 8 miles. There are also a number of non-system trails, which are not maintained but receive extensive use.

**Heritage:** This entire area was historically used by American Indians. Evidence of use exists throughout the area, consisting primarily of the lithic scatters left after tool making.

**Disturbances:** Fire has played a moderate role in this area. The most significant fire since 1960 was the 1988 Poison Fire that burned 2,000 acres, across the canyon in the center of this area. Primarily grass and brush lands were burned.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Cottonwood Roadless Area.

Table Cottonwood-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Cottonwood-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Cottonwood-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Cottonwood Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	11,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	11,300	11,300	11,300
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>11,300</b>	<b>11,300</b>	<b>11,300</b>	<b>11,300</b>

Table Cottonwood-2. Potential activities

Cottonwood Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	11,300	11,300	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	11,300	11,300	11,300	11,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	11,300	11,300	11,300	11,300
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	11,300	11,300	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	11,300	11,300	11,300	11,300

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 11,300 acres are within prescription 3.2 (Active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.



**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 11,300 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 11,300 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 11,300 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. No new roads can be constructed since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems near the roadless area. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Elk Ridge #019

9,400 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Elk Ridge Roadless Area is located in Camas County, about 8 miles north of Fairfield, Idaho, in the Fairfield Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest. It is bounded by Couch Summit Road (Forest Road 094) on the west, Little Smoky Creek on the north, and Wells Summit Road (Forest Road 095) on the east. The perimeter of the area is fairly accessible.

The granitic slopes are generally vegetated up to their crests with Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine on the northern and eastern slopes, and with mountain brush-sagebrush-grass on the southern and western slopes.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Both the natural integrity and apparent naturalness rate as low because of the visibility of management activities and structural improvements that alter natural characteristics. The existence of some unimproved roads prevents a higher rating.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The opportunities for both solitude and primitive recreation are low. The topographic and visual screening rate is low to moderate, and the distance from the perimeter to the core is only around one mile in most places. The area's close proximity to roads and all-terrain vehicle trails also diminish these opportunities. Opportunities for challenging experiences are limited.

**Special Features:** There are no notable special features in this roadless area.

**Manageability:** Manageable boundaries would be very difficult to establish because numerous developed roads penetrate the roadless area. The combination of size and shape of the area does not provide an opportunity to establish definable boundaries.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Threatened bull trout and Region 4 sensitive Wood River sculpin may occur in area streams. Rainbow trout are common in streams over most the area. Isolated pockets of brook trout are also present.

**Wildlife:** Mule deer, elk, and black bear are found within the area. Small mammals include beaver, muskrat, mink, badger, weasel, and red squirrel. Predators include cougar, coyote, and bobcat. The roadless area includes marginal winter range for deer and elk. It contains suitable habitat for peregrine falcon. Habitat for Canada lynx, a threatened species, is found in the area. The area provides habitat for northern goshawk, wolverine and fisher, flammulated owl and boreal owl, great gray owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and spotted frog. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area.

**Water:** Runoff from this area provides an important source for water for irrigation on the Camas Prairie. Water also flows to the South Fork Boise River and is used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Spotted knapweed is known to occur on 1 acre, or less than 1 percent of the roadless area. Old forest is scattered throughout.

**Recreation:** The area receives a minimal amount of dispersed recreation use, mostly in the forms of hunting, snowmobiling, and all-terrain vehicle riding. Fishing opportunities are fair.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 28,300 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 54,300 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 4,400 acres are classified as tentatively suited

timberlands. An estimated 500 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 4,300 acres, moderate productivity; and 100 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Portions of three cattle allotments, all managed under deferred rotation grazing systems, cover the entire roadless area. Sheep are allowed 10 days of use for travel to other sheep allotments. There are two cow camps within the roadless area located near the eastern and southeastern boundaries. There is a high level of developed improvements (water) and fences within the area. There are 2,200 acres (24 percent of roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are no registered mining claims, no leases, and no withdrawals within the roadless area. Presently, there are no mining activities. The potential for locatable minerals is low. There is no potential for leasable minerals. This roadless area contains 9,400 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no tracts of private land within the area. Permitted special uses within the roadless area include two outfitter and guide permits and a Sheriff's Department communication site on Elk Ridge.

**Roads and Trails:** Motorized use comprises approximately 80 percent of the overall recreation use. There are no system trails within the roadless area but groomed snowmobile trails are used in the winter.

**Heritage:** No cultural resources have been found.

**Disturbances:** An estimated 45 acres have been affected by wildfire since 1960.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Elk Ridge Roadless Area.

Table Elk Ridge-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Elk Ridge-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Elk Ridge-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Elk Ridge Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	9,400	9,400	9,400
Similar to Backcountry	9,400	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>9,400</b>

Table Elk Ridge-2. Potential activities

Elk Ridge Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	9,400	9,400	9,400	9,400
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	9,400	9,400	9,400	2,700*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	9,400	9,400	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	9,400	0	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 2,700 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 9,400 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped Recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 9,400 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 9,400 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 2,700 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Fifth Fork Rock Creek #023

16,600 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Fifth Fork Rock Creek Roadless Area is located about 18 miles south of Twin Falls, Idaho, in Twin Falls County. The primary accesses are by the Indian Spring Road, (Forest Road 544) south of Kimberly, Idaho, and by the Rock Creek Highway (County Road G-3) and west on the Oakley-Rogerson Road (Forest Road 500). The roadless area is located in the Cassia Division of the Minidoka Ranger District.

The area is composed of canyons eroded in rhyolite flows, with surrounding mountains and bench lands. The roadless area includes most of the area draining into the Fifth Fork, Little Creek, and Rock Creek. The soil is moderately erodible. Elevations range from 4,700 feet where Fifth Fork leaves the Forest boundary, to about 7,200 feet on the south end of the roadless area.

Mixed stands of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and aspen dominate the higher elevations in the southern end of the roadless area, along with some open meadows. The lower elevation areas to the north are dominated by sagebrush-grass communities. Some juniper occurs in the northeast corner.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is moderate, due to the heavy livestock grazing and the presence of facilities for grazing. The natural appearance is low with high evidence of impacts from grazing, some primitive roads, and some evidence of past fire suppression and rehabilitation activity. The area includes 0.2 mile of unauthorized and 12.2 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are good near the center of the area and moderate near the edges. Adjacent areas receive heavy use, including all kinds of motorized uses. Opportunities for primitive recreation are good. The area contains large, steep canyons, creating good diversity and challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** Fifth Fork contains the only known strong population of redband trout on the Forest.

**Manageability:** The topographic features would provide a manageable boundary for wilderness on the east, north and west boundaries. On the south end, much of the roadless area boundary crosses ridges and canyons, creating a less manageable boundary. Some adjustments from the inventoried boundary would be desirable.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Fifth Fork contains redband trout and brown trout in the main creek and a few minor tributaries. Little Creek contains redband trout. Rock Creek contains redband, Yellowstone cutthroat, rainbow, and brown trout. Redband trout are currently being studied by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine whether they warrant federal listing. No currently designated threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** This area is mule deer summer range, and the north end of the area also provides mule deer winter range in low snow years. There is habitat for other common species of wildlife such as sage grouse, blue and ruffed grouse, hawks, golden eagle, cougar, bobcat, coyote, badger, and beaver. Elk numbers are slowly building on the Cassia Division, and elk are seen occasionally in this and nearby areas. There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. This area provides habitat for northern goshawk, flammulated owl, and Columbia sharp-tailed grouse. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. The area has bighorn sheep habitat. Mountain bighorn sheep were native to the area but were extirpated in the last century. Beginning in December 1986, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game made five California bighorn sheep introductions in Big Cottonwood and Dry Creek drainages. Some of the sheep moved west and are now located in an area adjacent to this roadless area.

**Water:** Fifth Fork contributes a significant quantity of water to Rock Creek, at a point about 1.5 miles below the forest boundary. Little Fork contributes a relatively small quantity to Rock Creek 0.25 mile below the forest boundary. Rock Creek leaves the forest with a substantial flow of water. Water quality from Fifth Fork is fair during periods of low flow and poor during periods of high flow. Water quality from Little Creek and Rock Creek is generally good, with increased sediment during periods of high flow. Water from this area is used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Some introduced species of grasses and forbs have been seeded in small portions of burned areas after wildfires. Noxious weeds have been increasing on forest and non-forest lands in this area. However, only small populations (less than 1 acre) of Scotch thistle have been identified within the roadless area. Very little old forest occurs within this area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use in the area is moderate. The major uses are off-road vehicle riding, upland bird hunting, and big game hunting. Horseback riding and mountain biking are also popular. Fishing opportunities are moderate in Rock Creek, but poor in Fifth Fork and Little Creek because of the small size of the trout. Most use occurs in the fringes of the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 6,400 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to approximately 12,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 1,100 acres are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,100 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; however, no acres are considered to have moderate or high productivity.

**Range:** The entire roadless area is allocated to livestock grazing. Most of the area is grazed by cattle and lies within two of nine deferred grazing units of one cattle allotment. There is a moderate amount of fence and a small number of water developments within the roadless area. The very eastern portion of the area lies within one sheep allotment used by bands of sheep rotating through this and other allotments to the south and east. There are 2,800 acres (17percent of roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 7,500 acres (45 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There has been no recorded mineral activity in this area. No precious or base minerals are known to exist. There is low potential for the development of mineral materials (building stone) due to the remote location. The roadless area is prospectively valuable for oil and gas resources but has low development potential at this time. This roadless area contains 16,600 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** No private or State lands occur in the roadless area. The only special use permitted within this area is one cougar-hunting guide.

**Roads and Trails:** The roadless area contains three system trails totaling 9 miles, of which 6 miles are open to motorized travel. It also contains some wheel-track roads that are currently open to motorized use. Most of the perimeter of this roadless area is bordered by roads open to motorized vehicles.

**Heritage:** This entire area was historically used by American Indians. Evidence of use exists throughout the area, consisting primarily of the lithic scatters left after tool making.

**Disturbances:** Fire has played a moderate role in this roadless area, with three fires totaling an estimated 6,000 acres burned in recent years. About 1,000 acres burned in the Sagehen and Buckbrush Flats areas in 1981. Primarily grass, sage and bitterbrush were burned. An extensive bark beetle epidemic in the 1960s and 1970s killed large numbers of lodgepole pine trees.



### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Fifth Fork Rock Creek Roadless Area. Table Fifth Fork Rock Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Fifth Fork Rock Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Fifth Fork Rock Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Fifth Fork Rock Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	8,600	8,600	8,600
Similar to Backcountry	16,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	8,000	8,000	8,000
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>16,600</b>	<b>16,600</b>	<b>16,600</b>	<b>16,600</b>

**Table Fifth Fork Rock Creek-2. Potential activities**

Fifth Fork Rock Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	8,000	8,000	8,000
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	16,600	16,600	16,600	16,600
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	16,600	16,600	16,600	8,200*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	16,600	16,600	8,000
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	8,000	8,000	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	16,600	8,000	8,000	8,000

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 200 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** under the existing forest plans about 8,000 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within shrubland and grassland landscapes), and 8,600 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities).

For prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions. For the 8,600 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 8,600 acres under prescription 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 8,000 acres under prescription 6.1 new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Fifth Rock Roadless Area contains 16,600 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the acres under prescription 6.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 8,000 acres would fall under the GFRG and 8,600 under the Primitive theme. For the 8,000 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Fifth Rock Roadless Area, the area does contain 16,600 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 8,600 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed. No new leasable mineral activity would occur under the Primitive theme since surface occupancy is prohibited.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 8,600 acres under the Primitive theme and 8,000 acres under the GFRG theme. Timber cutting is prohibited in 8,600 acres in the Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Such activities are expected to occur in the 200 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 8,000 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. However, these lands are generally shrubland or grassland, therefore little timber harvest is expected. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive or GFRG themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Hanson Lakes #915

39,900 Acres Sawtooth

13,500 Acres Challis

17,600 Acres Boise

71,000 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Hanson Lakes Roadless Area is located within the Sawtooth National Recreational Area of the Sawtooth National Forest, the Yankee Fork Ranger District of the Salmon-Challis National Forest, and the Lowman Ranger District of the Boise National Forest.

The Hanson Lakes Roadless Area has also been previously known as the Sawtooth Addition and Ten Mile -East. It is contiguous to the north end of the Sawtooth Wilderness; lies south of and adjacent to State Highway 21; east of Canyon Creek; and north of the South Fork Payette River. It is 9 miles west of Stanley. It is entirely within Custer County. In addition to access from State Highway 21, there is access from the Grandjean, Stanley Lake, Elk Meadows, Trap Creek, Vader Creek, and Thatcher Creek Roads.

The Sawtooth Mountain Range runs southeast to northwest through the area, terminating near Highway 21. The landform is heavily glaciated, with steep mountain slopes, cirque basins, and U-shaped valleys. The area on the west side is strongly dissected and has heavily timbered V-shaped valleys, canyons, and moraines that drain steeply into Canyon Creek. The east side is a large morainal area of rolling terrain, wet meadows, small pocket lakes, and dry benches. Twelve high mountain lakes are found in the cirque basins. Elevations range from 5,000 feet at the mouth of Canyon Creek to 9,290 feet near Hanson Lakes on the Payette River-Salmon River divide. The east side has a colder environment than the west.

The lower slopes on the east side are dominated by lodgepole pine with intermixed Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, Engelmann spruce, and aspen. Higher elevations are dominated by whitebark pine and subalpine fir in open stands. On the west side, the lower elevations contain ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir and sagebrush-grass communities. The higher elevations have primarily lodgepole pine and subalpine fir. Except for a number of wet meadows and the areas above timberline, the area is predominantly tree-covered. The soils are generally moderately erodible.

The area includes roughly 28,700 acres of Recommended Wilderness and therefore holds a high level of roadless characteristics.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** As a whole, the area has a very high natural integrity, showing little impact by man. Some cattle and sheep grazing occur on low-elevation grassy areas. Some of the creeks and meadows have been degraded in the past by cattle grazing. However, changes in the grazing system have resulted in this area being rested from cattle grazing for a number of years, restoring most of the natural appearance.

The surrounding area is relatively undeveloped and natural appearing. Small timber harvests are located in the lodgepole pine periphery, and a larger cutting area is located on Elk Mountain. The area includes 3.3 miles of unauthorized and 0.8 mile of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation experiences are outstanding. The area has high topographic and vegetative screening. The distance from the center to the perimeter is about 4 miles. Diversity and opportunities for challenge are high. Much of the area is remote and contains few trails. Highway 21 can be seen and heard from those areas adjacent to the eastern boundary, and from nearby higher-elevation areas. Adjacency to the Sawtooth Wilderness enhances many of the roadless area's attributes.

**Special Features:** High cirque basins and mountain ridges are prominent, as is the gorge of Canyon Creek along the southwest corner. Mt. Zumwalt at 8,812 feet is a special feature in the western portion.

Elk Meadow is a special feature. About 200 acres of the Bear Creek Research Natural Area lies within the roadless area. Segments of Fishhook Creek (1.2 miles), Goat Creek (2.1 miles), Elk Creek (10.9 miles), Stanley Lake Creek (5.8 miles), and Redfish Lake Creek (0.2 mile) are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. An estimated 8,600 acres will be included in the special management corridors surrounding these stream segments.

**Manageability:** The area lacks definable boundaries on the east side; however, the large size would allow for boundary adjustments without much of an acreage reduction. The area between Redfish Lake and Stanley Lake lacks easily definable boundaries. The Wilderness boundary is now along a trail in that area. The western boundary would be a quite manageable offset from State Highway 21. In keeping with the legislated intent of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, development options are limited. Management direction for the National Recreation Area is to preserve and protect the natural, scenic, and fish and wildlife values of the area, and enhance their associated recreational values.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Fish species present include Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, redband trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout. Spring and summer spawning runs of Chinook summer salmon, and spawning runs of steelhead trout, occur in some of the tributaries to Valley Creek and Marsh Creek. Bull trout occur as both resident populations, and as adults moving up some of these streams from the Salmon River, Middle Fork Salmon River, and the South Fork Payette River to spawn. The strong Canyon Creek bull trout population may provide an important source of colonizers to other areas of suitable bull trout habitat within the South Fork Payette River. Cape Horn Creek is considered a stronghold stream for bull trout. Salmon and steelhead travel approximately 900 miles from the ocean to spawn in these waters. Several of the alpine lakes have been stocked with westslope cutthroat trout and rainbow trout by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

**Wildlife:** Lynx, bald eagle, wolverine, and fisher have been sighted in the area. Gray wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. This roadless area provides habitat for Northern goshawk, white-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Big-game animals include elk, mule deer, mountain goat, moose, black bear, and cougar. Numerous other species of non-game animals and birds are present. The Boise Forest portion of the roadless area provides an estimated 1,600 acres of winter range for deer and elk along the lower elevations of the South Fork Payette River.

**Water:** This area contributes substantial quantities of water to Valley Creek, Salmon River, Middle Fork Salmon River, and the South Fork Payette River. Major drainages include portions of Fishhook, Meadow, Goat, Iron, Crooked, Stanley, Elk, Trap, Swamp, Cape Horn, Marsh, Bench, North Fork Canyon, South Fork Canyon, and Bear Creeks. This water provides for aquatic habitat, irrigation, hydropower, and other important uses off the Forest. Water quality is generally very good, with 9,500 acres noted as producing high quality; however, most drainages have excessive fine sediment from the naturally steep, erodible granite geology. This roadless area contains 10,400 acres of surface water (municipal water supply).

**Botanical:** Stanley thlaspi (*Thlaspi idahoense* var. *aileeniae*) a sensitive plant species occurs here. A small infestation of rush skeletonweed (0.02 ac.) is known to exist. Much of the timbered area is old forest.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is light when compared to the Sawtooth Wilderness. Most use occurs on the Sawtooth National Recreation Area portion. A fair amount of use (primarily fall hunting) occurs along State Highway 21 and in the Grandjean area. Uses in the area consist primarily of hiking to Bridalveil Falls, Hanson, Bench, Martin, Elizabeth, Kelly, and Zumwalt Lakes for fishing and camping, and fall hunting. Several of the trails receive heavy use from people accessing the Sawtooth Wilderness. Mountain bike use is also popular on the Bench Creek and Elk Meadows Trails. Telemark skiing is popular in the Cooper Mountain area. Fishing opportunities are good.

**Timber:** The roadless area includes an estimated 347,500 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 688,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 40,400 acres are classified as tentatively suited

timberlands. An estimated 2,700 acres are considered to have low productivity; 12,200 acres, moderate productivity; and 400 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** Some sheep grazing occurs at lower elevations on the north end of the area, totaling about 5 percent of the area. The Boise National Forest portion of the area contains one active and one vacant sheep allotment. Much of the lower elevations along the southeast side are in a cattle grazing allotment. However, changes in the grazing system have resulted in this area being rested from cattle grazing for a number of years. Few grazing facilities exist in the area. There are 900 acres of land classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 3,600 acres for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals, leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate), mineral materials (sand, gravel and building stone), and oil and gas resources. The area within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area has been congressionally withdrawn from mineral entry. No recorded mineral activity has occurred within this area. The area around Cooper Mountain was actively explored in the 1960s and 1970s for gold. The claims were dropped in the early 1970s. There is a moderate potential for the occurrence of rare earth minerals along the South Fork Payette River but development potential is low. This roadless area contains 71,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** No State or private lands occur within the area. One outfitter provides black bear and cougar hunting trips in the area and another provides deer and elk hunting trips, summer pack trips, and trail rides.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 16 developed trails totaling 53 miles; 19 miles are open to motorized vehicles.

**Heritage:** There are no known significant cultural resources and the possibility of locating any is low.

**Disturbances:** Recent fire activity has been negligible. Bark beetles are present in high levels. In Canyon Creek, an outbreak of spruce budworm has been followed by Douglas-fir bark beetles. During periods of high-intensity rain, extreme erosion and soil displacement occurs in the Canyon Creek, Bear Creek and Camp Creek drainages.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Hanson Lakes Roadless Area. Table Hanson Lakes-1a-d displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Hanson Lakes-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Hanson Lakes-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Sawtooth only)**

Hanson Lakes Management Theme Sawtooth	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	15,100	15,100	15,100	
Primitive	0	2,500	2,500	2,500	
Similar to Backcountry	39,900	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	13,700	13,700	CPZ	4,200
				NonCPZ	9,500
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	8,600*	8,600*	8,600*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>39,900</b>	<b>39,900</b>	<b>39,900</b>	<b>39,900</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Sawtooth portion of the Hanson Lakes Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

Table Hanson Lakes-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Challis)

Hanson Lakes Management Theme Challis	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	13,500	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	13,500	13,500	CPZ	500
				NonCPZ	13,000
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	

Table Hanson Lakes-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise)

Hanson Lakes Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	13,600	13,600	13,600
Primitive	0	3,800	3,800	3,800
Similar to Backcountry	17,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	200*	200*	200*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>17,600</b>	<b>17,600</b>	<b>17,600</b>	<b>17,600</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Boise portion of the Hanson Lakes Roadless Area is RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

Table Hanson Lakes-1d. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Hanson Lakes Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	28,700	28,700	28,700	
Primitive	0	6,300	6,300	6,300	
Similar to Backcountry	71,000	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	27,200	27,200	CPZ	4,700
				NonCPZ	22,500
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	8,800	8,800	8,800	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>71,000</b>	<b>71,000</b>	<b>71,000</b>	<b>71,000</b>	



**Table Hanson Lakes-2. Potential activities (Sawtooth, Challis and Boise combined)**

Hanson Lakes Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	27,200	27,200	4,700 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	71,000	33,500	33,500	33,500
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	71,000	33,500	33,500	33,500 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	33,500	33,500	4,700 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	14,400	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	71,000	33,500	27,200	27,200

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 22,500 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. The Hanson Lakes Roadless Area contains around 10,400 acres of municipal water supply. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are expected to focus on securing the municipal water supply that is provided by this roadless area.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 13,500 acres would be managed under Challis prescription 3 (Marsh Creek). the remaining acres would be managed under the following Boise/Sawtooth prescriptions: 2,800 acres would be managed acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 10,000 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 900 acres under prescription 4.2 (roaded recreation emphasis), 6,300 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 28,700 under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness).

For the 13,500 acres under Challis prescription 3, roads are generally permitted and timber harvest can occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Any timber activities and road building that occur under this prescription could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

For the 26,300 acres under prescriptions 3, 3.1, and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 900 acres under prescription 4.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted as long as they don't compromise recreation resource objectives. Timber activities and road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term since the management emphasis is on roaded recreation, not roadless area preservation.

For the 6,300 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

The 28,700 acres under prescription 1.2 (Recommended Wilderness) are managed to maintain wilderness characteristics and to allow ecological processes to prevail. Road construction is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber harvest or leasable mineral activities are allowed. Under this prescription the 28,700 acres are expected to maintain their wilderness and roadless area characteristics.

For areas under prescription 3, 3.1, 3.2 and 4.1c, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes and/or reserved and outstanding rights. Leasable mineral activities are permitted in the 14,400 acres under Boise/Sawtooth prescription 4.2 and Challis prescription 3. No phosphate mining or oil and gas activities are expected since the area has little to no potential for these minerals. The area does contain 71,000 acres of high geothermal potential. Any geothermal activities occur in the 14,400 acres under prescriptions 3 and 4.2, would likely alter the roadless characteristics of the area over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 27,200 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme, 6,300 under the Primitive theme and 28,700 under the Wild Land Recreation theme.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 6,300 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

The 28,700 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless and wilderness characteristics.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry, Primitive or Wild Land Recreation theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 28,700 acres under the Wild Land Recreation theme, 6,300 acres under the Primitive theme and 27,200 acres under the Backcountry theme, 4,700 of which are in the CPZ.

The 28,700 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 22,500 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on all 27,200 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. The Hanson Lakes Roadless Area contains around 10,400 acres of municipal water supply. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are expected to focus on securing the municipal water supply that is provided by this roadless area. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes either since the two themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Huckleberry #016

7,700 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Huckleberry Roadless Area is located within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and is 8 miles south of Stanley, Idaho. This roadless area lies west of the Sawtooth Valley between Hell Roaring Creek and Redfish Lake. It is bounded on the west by the Sawtooth Wilderness and on the east by private lands and Decker Flats Road (Forest Road 210). The southern boundary is just north of Hell Roaring Creek Road (Forest Road 315). Access is from State Highway 75 and Hell Roaring Road, Mays Creek Road, and Decker Flats Road.

The area is in the Sawtooth Moraines Lands Group. It is dominated by prominent lateral moraines and undifferentiated morainal material. The lateral moraines have steep, benchy slopes, while the undifferentiated areas have gentle slopes with hummocky topography. Soils are deep, but contain high volumes of rounded cobble and are poorly defined. Erodibility is low. Productivity for timber and forage is low due mainly to climatic limitations and the rocky soils. The area contains portions of Redfish Lake Creek, Decker Creek, and Hell Roaring Creek drainages. Elevations range from 6,600 feet at Redfish Lake to 7,800 feet.

Vegetation is primarily lodgepole pine. A few small parks and meadows are present. These openings are in wet creek bottoms or on the south side of the lateral moraines.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is high. The construction and maintenance of about 20 miles of trail, and minor amounts of timber harvest (primarily firewood) along the Hell Roaring Creek Road, are the only physical developments or human-caused impacts in the area. To the visitor, after leaving the trailhead, lakeshore, or road, the area appears natural. In terms of natural integrity and appearance, there is no discernable difference between this area and the adjacent Wilderness, except that one gets closer to human activities on the eastern edge of the roadless area.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive outdoor recreation are moderate to high. Distances to the core of the area are less than 2 miles. Vegetative screening is high due to the tree density. Topographic screening is low, with most screening occurring in the hummocky areas. Diversity is lacking and there is little challenge. Motorized use on Redfish Lake influences those on the north side of the moraine, which slopes to the lake. Within this area one can hear the sounds of vehicles traveling on the highway in the Sawtooth Valley.

**Special Features:** The area has a unique geology in that the morainal deposits represent two glacial periods, Early and Late Bull Lake. The scenic quality of the area is typical of the scenic Sawtooth Valley. The Huckleberry Fens area, located southeast of Redfish Lake, includes bog environments containing a number of rare plants. The Redfish Lake Moraine Research Natural Area (1,500 acres) was established on the east side of Redfish Lake to preserve a large alpine glacier lateral moraine that includes cold springs, rocky lakeshore habitat, and Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir plant communities. Hell Roaring Creek (0.4 mile) is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. A special management corridor (an estimated 1,000 acres) will be established to protect its outstandingly remarkable values.

**Manageability:** Boundaries would be quite manageable. The western boundary is the Sawtooth Wilderness. The northwest boundary is Redfish Lake. The eastern boundary follows roads most of the way. The southern boundary is the Hell Roaring Creek Road. There could be some difficulty controlling motorized use from the adjoining area in the areas with gentle terrain. Some of the area has historically been open to motorized use.

In keeping with the legislated intent of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, development options are limited. Management direction for the National Recreation Area is to preserve and protect the natural, scenic, and fish and wildlife values of the area, and enhance their associated recreational values.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Fish species present include Snake River sockeye salmon, Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, kokanee salmon, rainbow trout, and eastern brook trout. Spring and summer spawning runs of Chinook summer salmon, and spawning runs of steelhead trout occur in Hell Roaring Creek, Lower Huckleberry Creek, and Bull Moose Creek. Bull trout occur as both resident populations and as adults moving up stream from the Salmon River to spawn in Upper Huckleberry Creek and Bull Moose Creek. Upper Huckleberry Creek and Bull Moose Creek also contain westslope cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout. Sockeye salmon spawn in Redfish Lake. Kokanee salmon are resident in Redfish Lake. Sockeye and Chinook summer salmon, and steelhead, travel about 900 miles from the Columbia River mouth to spawn in these waters. Sockeye salmon are an endangered species, while Chinook summer salmon, steelhead, and bull trout are threatened. The westslope cutthroat trout is a Region 4 sensitive species.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. This area provides habitat for threatened Canada lynx, fisher, northern goshawk, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Habitats also occur here for other Region 4 sensitive species, including bald eagle, wolverine, Townsend's big eared bat, spotted bat, and spotted frog.

The area contains deer and elk summer range. Due to the dense timber, there are few openings to provide summer forage. Black bear, cougar, and numerous species of non-game wildlife and birds are present. This roadless area provides connectivity between areas on all sides for wildlife.

**Water:** This area contributes water to the Salmon River system. The watershed condition is excellent and water quality is good. This water provides for aquatic habitat, irrigation, hydropower, and other important uses off the forest.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. This roadless area contains the Huckleberry Fens portion of the Sawtooth Peatlands Research Natural Area. There are no known occurrences of noxious weeds in this roadless area. The forested areas are almost entirely old forest.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is generally light. Other than big-game hunting, most use occurs from those traveling on trails to the Sawtooth Wilderness. Most use occurs on the Hell Roaring Trail on the south edge of the roadless area.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 60,100 thousand board feet, equivalent to 119,000 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 5,900 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 5,800 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 1,600 acres, moderate productivity; but no areas have high productivity.

**Range:** No livestock are grazed within the area because of the dense timber stands.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals, leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate), mineral materials (sand, gravel, and building stone), and oil and gas. This roadless area contains 7,700 acres of high geothermal potential. The area has been congressionally withdrawn from mineral entry. No recorded mineral activity has occurred within this area.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or State lands within the area. Some private lands border it on the east. Five outfitter and guides hold permits for day rides, hunting, scenic trips, and fishing trips.

**Roads and Trails:** One trail is open to motorized trail cycles but receives very little use. The trail system consists of five trails that pass through the area totaling 20 miles.

**Heritage:** No significant cultural resources have been found, and the potential to find sites is low to moderate.

**Disturbances:** Fire occurrence has been insignificant. Mountain pine beetles continue to kill increasing numbers of trees.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Huckleberry Roadless Area.

Table Huckleberry-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Huckleberry-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Huckleberry-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Huckleberry Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	7,700	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	5,200	5,200	CPZ	2,600
				NonCPZ	2,600
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	2,500*	2,500*	2,500*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>	<b>7,700</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Huckleberry Roadless Area is 1,500 acres as a RNA and 1,000 acres as WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

**Table Huckleberry-2. Potential activities**

Huckleberry Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	5,200	5,200	2,600*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	7,700	5,200	5,200	5,200
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	7,700	5,200	5,200	5,200
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	5,200	5,200	2,600*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	7,700	5,200	5,200	5,200

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 2,600 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or



associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 5,200 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 5,200 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 5,200 acres under the Backcountry theme, 2,600 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 2,600 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 5,200 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. No new roads can be constructed unless the activity is done in conjunction with a fuel reduction project already authorized in the CPZ or authorized under the significant risk determination outside the CPZ. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Liberal Mountain #040

10,600 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Liberal Mountain Roadless Area includes a small southwestern portion of what was Buttercup Mountain Roadless Area in the 1987 Sawtooth Forest Plan. That area has been broken into three separate areas. Existing roads that separate them were considered to be too highly developed to meet wilderness standards. This roadless area is located in Camas County, within the Fairfield Ranger District, about 7 miles north of Fairfield, Idaho. It is bordered on the south by the Forest boundary, on the west by the Basalt Creek Road (Forest Road 095), on the north by a portion of the Liberal Creek Road (Forest Road 018), and on the east by a portion of the Willow Creek Road (Forest Road 017).

The topography is very steep over much of the area. The elevations range from around 5,800 feet to 8,272 feet on Liberal Mountain. The slopes are generally vegetated up to the ridgelines with Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, and some lodgepole pine on the northern and eastern slopes. The southern and western slopes are vegetated with mountain shrub-sagebrush-grass communities. The brush communities include snowberry, bitterbrush, and sagebrush. Some aspen is present but it is in decline due to fire exclusion and encroachment of conifers.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Natural integrity and apparent naturalness are rated low because of mining activities, improved and unimproved roads along the borders and interior exclusions, and range management activities. The area includes 0.6 mile of unauthorized and 0.9 mile of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are moderate, due primarily to the area's small size. The Little Smoky, Basalt Creek, and Willow Creek Roads can be seen from portions of the area. The distance from the center of the area to the boundary is generally less than 2 miles. Topographic relief with numerous small and steep draws, does provide some opportunity for solitude. Primitive recreation opportunities are moderate, and opportunities for challenging experiences are moderate.

**Special Features:** No significant special features occur in this roadless area.

**Manageability:** The boundary, as inventoried, would be difficult to manage because of the many road intrusions and adjacency to numerous roads and timber sale areas. Boundaries could be established that would improve overall wilderness qualities; however, an acreage reduction would occur.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** A few tributaries to Little Smoky Creek are thought to provide habitat for bull trout, a threatened species. The Willow Creek drainage has habitat for Wood River sculpin, a Region 4 sensitive species. Occupied or historic habitat for redband trout may exist over most the area. Brook trout are also present in isolated pockets.

**Wildlife:** Deer and elk are relatively common. Moose occur in some of the main drainages from past introductions. Habitat exists for Canada lynx, a threatened species, fisher, northern goshawk, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Habitat for wolverine, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, flammulated owl, and spotted frog may also occur within the area. Probable sightings of gray wolves have been reported. Gray wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. Black bear, cougar, bobcat, and pine martin are also present.

**Water:** Primary drainages within this area include Liberal, Cannonball, Wardrop, Sampson, and Big Deer Creeks, and tributaries to Willow Creek. Runoff from this area provides an important source for water for irrigation on the Camas Prairie and also provides water for the Boise River system used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation. There are no lakes within the area.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Aspen is in decline due to a lack of fire, encroachment of conifers, and disease. Noxious weed infestations of spotted knapweed and Canada thistle occur in the area but less than one acre is affected. There are numerous stands of old forest scattered throughout the area.

**Recreation:** The predominant recreation uses are motorized trail bike riding, mountain biking, horseback riding, hiking, big-game hunting, and snowmobiling. A few miles of groomed snowmobile trail lie within the area. Motorized use comprises about 60 percent of the overall recreation use. Fishing opportunities are poor.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 31,800 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 61,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 6,700 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 400 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 6,400 acres, moderate; and 300 acres, high.

**Range:** The area contains two cattle allotments that are managed under deferred rotation systems. There is a high level of structural grazing improvements on these allotments. The entire roadless area is allocated to cattle grazing. There are 1,700 acres (16 percent of roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are 25 registered mining claims, no leases, and no withdrawals within the roadless area. The potential for leasable minerals is low. This roadless area contains 10,600 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or State lands within the roadless area. Two special-use permits have been issued for outfitter and guide services within the area.

**Roads and Trails:** There are two system trails within the roadless area, totaling about 8 miles. All of these trail miles are open for motorized use.

**Heritage:** The area contains some historic sites associated with mining activities. A small number of American Indian cultural sites have also been identified within the area.

**Disturbances:** Wildfire has not been a recent significant factor within the roadless area. Douglas-fir mistletoe is scattered throughout the area.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Liberal Mountain Roadless Area.

Table Liberal Mountain-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Liberal Mountain-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Liberal Mountain-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Liberal Mountain Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	8,700	8,700	8,700
Similar to Backcountry	10,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	1,900	1,900	1,900
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>10,600</b>

Table Liberal Mountain-2. Potential activities

Liberal Mountain Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	1,900	1,900	1,900
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	10,600	10,600	10,600	10,600
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	10,600	10,600	10,600	1,900
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	10,600	10,600	1,900
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	1,900	1,900	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	10,600	10,600	1,900	1,900

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 1,900 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Shrubland and Grassland Landscapes) and 8,700 under prescription 4.1c (Undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities).

For prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions.

For the 8,700 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 8,700 acres under prescription 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 1,900 acres under prescription 6.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Liberal Mountain Roadless Area contains 10,600 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the acres under prescription 6.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 1,900 acres would fall under the GFRG and 8,700 acres under the Primitive theme. For the 1,900 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas

development or phosphate mining in the Liberal Mountain Roadless Area, the area does contain 10,600 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 8,700 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

No new leasable mineral activity would occur under the Primitive theme since surface occupancy for new leases is prohibited.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 8,700 acres under the Primitive theme and 1,900 acres under the GFRG theme.

Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in this roadless area because the area is not within 1 ½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting activities that occur must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 1,900 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. However, these lands are generally shrubland or grassland, therefore little timber harvest is expected.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive or GFRG theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Lime Creek #937****83,600 Acres Sawtooth****13,500 Acres Boise****97,100 Acres Total****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

The Lime Creek Roadless Area is located on the Fairfield Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest and the Mountain Home Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. This roadless area is located 10 miles northwest of Fairfield, Idaho, in Camas County. Access is by way of the Couch Summit Road (Forest Road 094), north of Fairfield; the Ketchum-Featherville Road (Forest Road 227) along the northern boundary; and the South Fork Boise River Road (Forest Road 156) downstream from Featherville. Numerous trails access the area.

Subalpine and glacial associated lands comprise most of this area, which contains the headwaters of Boardman, Deadwood, Deer, Lime, and Soldier Creeks. The highly erodible character of the steep granite slopes restricts use. The roadless area is of great importance for its snowpack and resulting water production. Elevations range from 4,400 feet along the South Fork Boise River to over 10,000 feet at Smoky Dome. Open sagebrush-grass communities dominate the south and westerly aspects, while moderate to dense stands of Douglas-fir and sub-alpine fir occupy north and easterly aspects at higher elevations.

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** Evidence of man's activity exists in the forms of permitted grazing, grazing developments, and heavy recreation use. The trail to the Iron Mountain Lookout is well developed. The area includes 1.7 miles of unauthorized and 3.7 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude vary within the roadless area. The large size and varied terrain of the area provide some opportunities for solitude. However, the terrain tends to concentrate use largely along trails and more easily accessible areas. Most activity occurs near the heavily used developed sites close to Anderson Ranch Reservoir and the heavily roaded area near Sprout Mountain. Opportunities for primitive recreation are moderate to low because of the relatively small amount of rugged terrain and relatively few high mountain lakes. The limited access and high rattlesnake populations make the fishing experience along Lime Creek a challenge.

**Special Features:** The ten-mile-long Soldier Mountain chain includes a number of high peaks, including Smoky Dome and Iron Mountain. The South Fork Boise River (2.6 miles) is eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. A special management corridor (an estimated 1,700 acres) will be established to protect its outstandingly remarkable values.

**Manageability:** The boundary, as inventoried, would be difficult to manage for wilderness values due to adjacent timber sale areas and excluded roads that penetrate the defined area. The south and west boundaries primarily border other land ownerships, which could complicate accessibility. Historic and current patterns of motorized recreation use would also contribute to management difficulties. Establishment of a manageable boundary would result in a substantial reduction in acreage.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** Lime Creek offers historic spawning and rearing habitat for bull trout, a threatened species. The Camas Creek watershed provides habitat for the Wood River sculpin, a Region 4 sensitive species. Kokanee salmon travel up the lower reaches of the tributaries of the South Fork Boise River to spawn. Kokanee from Anderson Ranch Reservoir use the lower 4 to 5 miles of Lime Creek for spawning. Deer Creek crosses the northwest corner of the roadless area and is one of the few streams in the South Fork Boise River drainage with a natural population of westslope cutthroat trout, a Region 4 sensitive species.



Rainbow and brook trout are common in several streams within the area. Lime Creek is known to support a strong population of native redband trout. Smoky Dome Lake contains golden trout.

**Wildlife:** Habitat exists for Forest Service sensitive bald eagle, threatened Canada lynx, fisher, northern goshawk, white-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Gray wolves are considered an experimental/ non-essential population in this area. The area may also contain habitat for wolverine, Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, mountain quail, and spotted frog. There are two elk feeding grounds near the South Fork Boise River. One lies within the roadless area and one lies just outside.

This area provides habitat for numerous species of big game, small game, and predatory animals. Mule deer, elk, and black bear are found within the area. Small mammals include beaver, muskrat, mink, pika, badger, weasel, and red squirrel. Predators include cougar, coyote, and bobcat. The roadless area includes winter ranges for deer and elk.

**Water:** Numerous miles of perennial streams within the roadless area fall within the South Fork Boise, Lime Creek, and Camas Creek watersheds. Lime Creek is a major drainage that flows west into Anderson Ranch Reservoir on the South Fork Boise River. Water from this area is used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation. The area includes about a half dozen high-elevation mountain lakes.

**Botanical:** Least phacelia (*Phacelia minutissima*), a sensitive plant species occurs in the area. Noxious weeds found within the roadless area include leafy spurge (569 acres), spotted knapweed (24 acres), diffuse knapweed, rush skeletonweed, and Canada thistle. These populations appear to be staying at about the same level. Scattered pockets and slopes of old forest occur across the area.

**Recreation:** Dispersed recreation is the predominant use of the roadless area and includes activities such as big-game hunting, horseback riding, all-terrain vehicle and trail bike riding, hiking, mountain biking, and backpacking. Winter recreation uses include snowmobiling and snowcat skiing. Approximately 75 percent of all recreation use is motorized use. Fishing is good in Lime Creek, which is very popular with local fishermen.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 370,900 thousand board feet, equivalent to 731,100 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 49,500 acres are classified as tentatively suitable timberlands. An estimated 2,700 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 34,400, moderate productivity; and 13,300 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There are portions of seven sheep allotments and six cattle allotments within the roadless area. The sheep allotments are managed under a rest rotation grazing system, while the cattle allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a high level of structural improvements on the cattle allotments, and a low level of structural improvements within the sheep allotments. One designated and several historic sheep driveways lie within the area. There are 11,900 acres of land (12 percent of roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 8,000 acres (8 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are a few inactive mines within the area. There are six registered mining claims, no leases, and no withdrawals within the roadless area. The potential for locatable minerals and leasable minerals is low. This roadless area contains 97,100 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** No State or private lands are located within the roadless area. Five special-use permits have been issued for uses within the roadless area. These uses include three hunting outfitter and guide permits, a snowcat skiing permit, and a radio repeater permit on Iron Mountain for the Camas County Sheriff's Department.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 18 system trails within the roadless area, comprising an estimated 97 miles of trail. All of these trails are open for motorized use.

**Heritage:** The area has low cultural resource sensitivity. Surveys in adjoining and overlapping areas, in similar topographic situations, show the area to be characterized by a low site density.

**Disturbances:** Fire activity has been minimal in recent years. One fire of 40 acres has been recorded since 1960. Spruce budworm and Douglas-fir tussock moth populations have returned to endemic levels after killing many trees in the early 1990s. Mountain pine beetle and Douglas-fir beetle epidemics are still active in localized areas. Most insect activity has occurred on the north-facing slopes above the South Fork Boise River and upper Lime Creek, affecting about a third of the roadless area.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Lime Creek Roadless Area.

Table Lime Creek-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Lime Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Lime Creek-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Sawtooth only)**

Lime Creek Management Theme Sawtooth	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	81,900	81,900	81,900
Similar to Backcountry	83,600	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,700*	1,700*	1,700*
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>83,600</b>	<b>83,600</b>	<b>83,600</b>	<b>83,600</b>

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Sawtooth portion of the Lime Creek Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

**Table Lime Creek-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)**

Lime Creek Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	13,500	13,500	13,500
Similar to Backcountry	13,500	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>	<b>13,500</b>

Table Lime Creek-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Lime Creek Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	95,400	95,400	95,400
Similar to Backcountry	97,100	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,700	1,700	1,700
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>97,100</b>	<b>97,100</b>	<b>97,100</b>	<b>97,100</b>

Table Lime Creek-2. Potential activities (Sawtooth and Boise combined)

Lime Creek Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	97,100	95,400	95,400	95,400
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	97,100	95,400	95,400	4,900*
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	95,400	95,400	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	97,100	95,400	0	0

\*Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 4,900 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 95,400 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 95,400 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 95,400 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited except when done to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 4,900 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of roaded access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Lone Cedar #011

6,800 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Lone Cedar Roadless Area is located 37 air miles southeast of Twin Falls, Idaho, in Cassia County. The primary access is by the Goose Creek Road south of Oakley, Idaho at Coal Banks Creek and the Rodeo Creek Road (Forest Road 533) in Trapper Creek. This area is located in the Cassia Division of the Sawtooth National Forest, on the Minidoka Ranger District.

The area is comprised of volcanic rhyolite ash flows that overlie older limestones and quartzites. There are many rhyolite ledges and cliffs throughout the area. Trapper Creek has especially vertical walls. The soil is very erodible, composed primarily of volcanic ash. Elevations range from 6,400 feet on the west end to 4,800 feet on Trapper Creek at the Forest boundary.

The vegetation types vary with elevation. At the lower elevations on the east end, a mixed stand of sagebrush and juniper dominates. Mountain mahogany stands occur on the west end at the higher elevations. Some juniper occurs on the slopes of Trapper Creek. The ground vegetation varies from bunch grass types on the east to grass-brush types on the west.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is low due to impacts from past vegetative manipulation, livestock grazing, livestock grazing facilities, and past fire suppression activities. The natural appearance is moderate for the same reasons. The area includes 0.2 mile of unauthorized and 1.7 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are low since the surrounding area receives all forms of motorized recreation use. Off-site intrusions are visible (Lower Goose Creek Reservoir, Trapper Creek and Lone Cedar Roads, and Trapper Creek watershed projects). The distance from the perimeter to the center is less than one mile. Opportunities for primitive recreation are also moderate due to the lack of diversity and challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** Special features include several lines of high, vertical cliffs, composed of white volcanic ash stone in Ibex Hollow. Other volcanic ash stone outcrops have eroded into unusual cone shapes.

**Manageability:** Manageable boundaries exist on the east end in the form of the forest boundary, along Trapper Creek on the north, the Rodeo Creek Road along the west end, and Lone Cedar Creek on the south side. A portion of the southwest boundary is not well defined.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Trapper Creek contains rainbow trout, brook trout, and leatherside chub. The leatherside chub, a native species that has become rare throughout much of its range, is a species of concern for the State of Idaho. No fish occur in Lone Cedar Creek. No known threatened, endangered, or sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. This area is summer range for mule deer. There is habitat for other common species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawks, golden eagle, beavers, cougar, bobcat, and coyote. Gray wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area.

**Water:** This area includes the country draining into Lone Cedar Creek from the north, and the slopes draining into Trapper Creek from the south. It contributes small quantities of water to the Lower Goose Creek Reservoir for irrigation off the forest. Water quality is fair. Virtually all sediment from these drainages is eventually trapped in the reservoir.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species in the roadless area. Some introduced species of grasses and forbs have been seeded in large portions of burned areas after wildfires. Noxious weeds have been increasing on forest and non-forest lands in this area. However, only small populations of black henbane and Canada thistle, about three acres each, have been identified in the roadless area. Although the acreage is small, most of the forested area is old forest.

**Recreation:** The small amount of recreation is dispersed and primarily related to big and small game hunting, with minor amounts of off-road vehicle use. Fishing opportunities are fair in Trapper Creek.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 73 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to 141 hundred cubic feet. No portion of the roadless area is considered tentatively suited timberland.

**Range:** This entire area is within portions of two cattle allotments, both grazed in a deferred rotation system. These portions of both allotments contain a moderate amount of fence, and they contain a small number of stock water developments. There are 3,900 acres (57 percent of the roadless area) of land classified as capable for cattle grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence and development of locatable minerals, and leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate). The area has a high potential for the occurrence of, and a moderate potential for development of, mineral materials (rhyolite building stone). There is a recent proposal to remove lichen-covered rhyolite building stone from this area. The roadless area is prospectively valuable for oil and gas resources but has low development potential at this time. This roadless area contains 6,800 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or State lands within this roadless area. The only special use permitted is one guide who hunts cougars.

**Roads and Trails:** There are few established trails and no constructed trail system. All roads on the perimeter are open to motorized vehicle use, except for the brief mule deer buck hunt in the fall.

**Heritage:** This entire area was historically used by Native Americans. Evidence of use exists throughout the area, consisting primarily of lithic scatters left after tool making.

**Disturbances:** Fire has recently played a major role in this area. Much of the southern two-thirds was burned in the 1981 Lone Cedar fire, and follow-up controlled burns to remove additional sagebrush and juniper. A portion of the area has been chained to take down juniper snags and scarify the soil, and then seeded to grasses, forbs, and shrubs. The 1992 Trapper fire burned a small acreage of juniper and sagebrush in the northwest corner. Since 1960, five wildfires have consumed 2,600 acres of vegetation. During some years, this area is hit by high-intensity thunderstorms, resulting in large debris flows on the steep slopes of Trapper Creek. The lower reaches of Lone Cedar Creek are deeply entrenched as a result of past livestock use in conjunction with these severe storms.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Lone Cedar Roadless Area.

Table Lone Cedar -1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Lone Cedar-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Lone Cedar-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Lone Cedar Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	6,800	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	6,800	6,800	6,800
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>6,800</b>	<b>6,800</b>

Table Lone Cedar-2. Potential activities

Lone Cedar Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	6,800	6,800	6,800
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	6,800	6,800	6,800
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	6,800	6,800	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	6,800	6,800	6,800	6,800

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 6,800 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Shrubland and Grassland Landscapes).

For prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions. Leasable mineral activities are permitted under prescription 6.1. The area contains 6,800 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 6,800 acres would fall under the GFRG. For the 6,800 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the area, the area does contain 6,800 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 6,800 acres under the GFRG theme. Roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. However, these lands are generally shrubland or grassland, therefore little timber harvest is expected.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the GFRG theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

## Mahogany Butte #012

21,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Mahogany Butte Roadless Area is located 38 air miles southeast of Twin Falls, Idaho, in Cassia County. Road access is by way of Trapper Creek, Goose Creek at Coal Banks Creek, or from Nevada by way of Piney Creek. It is located in the Cassia Division of the Minidoka Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest. The boundaries are the Nevada state line, the Badger Gulch Road, the Trout Creek Pass Road, the Trout Creek Road, the Piney Creek Road, and the Beaverdam Creek Road.

The area is characterized by wide canyons with a combination of very steep and gentle slopes, containing only a few large rock outcrops. High ridge tops and gentle mountains, with some gentle plateau areas, dominate the high country. The geology consists of volcanic ash flow rhyolite on the southern end of the area overlying carbonaceous shales, phosphate, and limestone. The Phosphoria formation, carbonaceous shales, and underlying limestone are exposed in the north half of the area. The soil is moderately erodible in the western and northern two thirds of the area, and highly erodible volcanic ash soil in the south and eastern one third. Elevations range from about 5,200 feet at the Nevada border to 7,208 feet on Mahogany Butte.

Small stands of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and aspen dominate north exposures on the north end of the area. Small timbered areas also occur on the west side. Most of the area is at lower elevations, and supports primarily grass and brush land, with some pockets of mountain mahogany.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is low due to a number of unimproved roads, the impacts of heavy livestock grazing, and the presence of grazing facilities. The natural appearance is low with the evidence of impacts from grazing, primitive roads, and some evidence of past fire suppression activity. A large increase in the number and size of beaver ponds in portions of Trout Creek has added to the natural beauty of these areas in recent years. However, these have been achieved through fencing, which detracts from the naturalness of the area. The area includes 10.3 miles of unauthorized and 23.6 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude over much of the area are low because of the area's relatively small size and the effects of motorized use on adjacent areas. It is also beneath a commercial and military flyway. Opportunities for primitive recreation are also moderate due to the lack of diversity and challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** Significant ecological features in the area include the large springs, which are the beginning of permanent water flow in Trout Creek and the large rock pinnacles in Swanty Creek. Another significant feature is Phantom Falls, a 50-foot water fall on Fall Creek.

**Manageability:** The current boundaries of this area would create a manageable area.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Trout Creek contains Yellowstone cutthroat trout and rainbow trout, and includes important year-round and spawning habitat for Yellowstone. The leatherside chub, a native species that has become rare throughout much of its range, is considered a species of concern by the State of Idaho. It is known to have historically occurred in Trout Creek and possibly Jay Creek and Beaverdam Creek; however, its present status is unknown. The leatherside chub is known to be present in Trapper Creek and possibly Fall Creek within the roadless area. Fall Creek also contains rainbow trout and brook trout. No known threatened or endangered fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. The area provides summer range for

mule deer, and there is habitat for other common species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawks, golden eagle, cougar, bobcat, coyote, beaver, and badger. Elk numbers are slowly building on the Cassia Division, and elk have been seen here occasionally. This unroaded area connects low-elevation winter ranges and the higher timbered areas of cover for mule deer and elk.

**Water:** This area includes large portions of Piney Creek, Trout Creek, Jay Creek, Beaverdam Creek, and Fall Creek. It contributes a moderate amount of water to the Goose Creek system, all of which is caught in Lower Goose Creek Reservoir. This water is used for irrigation in the Oakley Valley.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Some introduced species of grasses and forbs have been seeded in small portions of burned areas after wildfires. Noxious weeds have been increasing on forest and non-forest lands in this area. However, only 6 acres of black henbane have been identified within the roadless area. Although the acreage is small, most of the forested area is in an old forest condition.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is primarily hunting and off-highway vehicle use in the fall. Fishing opportunities in Trout Creek and Fall Creek are fair. Moderate trail bike use occurs on a number of undeveloped roads. Snowmobiling is popular in the higher elevation areas to the north. There is no opportunity for intensive recreation development.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 4,192 thousand board feet, equivalent to or 8,354 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 700 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 700 acres are considered to have low timber productivity.

**Range:** This entire area is allocated to livestock grazing. The northern portion is grazed primarily by sheep, with a small number of cattle. There is a small amount of fence and a small number of water developments within the area. The southern and eastern portions are grazed by cattle in a separate allotment. This portion of the roadless area contains a large amount of fence, stock ponds, and developed springs for stock water. These allotments are both managed in a deferred rotation system. There are 11,900 acres of land (56 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 4,900 acres (23 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence and development of locatable minerals. Exploration for low-grade gold resources occurred in the 1980s but they have not proven to be valuable enough to warrant further exploration or development. The mining claims have been abandoned. The area has moderate potential for the occurrence of solid leasable minerals (coal and phosphate) but a low development potential. This low rating is based on the limited reserves of both phosphate and carbonaceous shale, located in a remote location. The shale, locally thought to be coal, was used (with limited success) to heat homes around the turn of the century. A 3,000-acre "coal" reserve still exists within the area.

There is low potential for the occurrence and development of mineral materials (building stone). The roadless area is prospectively valuable for oil and gas resources but has low development potential at this time. This roadless area contains 21,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** All of the land within the roadless area is in National Forest ownership, except for one 80-acre parcel on Trout Creek. This in-holding could add complexity to wilderness management. The only special use permitted within this area is one guide who hunts cougars.

**Roads and Trails:** Undeveloped trails exist to varying degrees throughout the area. The only developed trail is the 2-mile trail to Phantom Falls in Fall Creek, which is not suitable for motorized travel. Much of the perimeter of this roadless area is bordered by roads that are open to motorized vehicles.

**Heritage:** This entire area was historically used by American Indians. Evidence of use exists throughout the area, consisting primarily of the lithic scatters left after tool making.

**Disturbances:** Fire has recently played a significant role in this roadless area. The 1959 Jay Creek fire burned a large acreage in the southeast corner, on the Nevada border. The 1992 Trapper Fire burned a small portion of the north end of the area. In 1995, the upper Beaverdam Creek drainage burned in the eastern portion of the area. In 1997, a small fire burned in Willow Creek. With these and other smaller fires, an estimated 5,700 acres have burned since 1960.

An extensive bark beetle epidemic in the 1960s and 1970s killed large numbers of lodgepole pine trees in the small timbered area in the north and western portions of the area. The subalpine fir component is experiencing mortality from insects, disease, and other environmental factors.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Mahogany Butte Roadless Area.

Table Mahogany Butte-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Mahogany Butte-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Mahogany Butte-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Mahogany Butte Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	21,000	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	21,000	21,000	21,000
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>	<b>21,000</b>

**Table Mahogany Butte-2. Potential activities**

Mahogany Butte Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	21,000	21,000	21,000
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	21,000	21,000	21,000
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	21,000	21,000	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	21,000	21,000	21,000	21,000

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 21,000 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within shrubland and grassland landscapes).

For prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions. Leasable mineral activities are permitted under prescription 6.1. The area contains 21,000 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 21,000 acres would fall under the GFRG. For the 21,000 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. However, these lands are generally shrubland or grassland, therefore little timber harvest is expected.

Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the area, the area does contain 21,000 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 21,000 acres under the GFRG theme. Roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. However, these lands are generally shrubland or grassland, therefore little timber harvest is expected.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the GFRG theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.



## Mount Harrison #006

30,000 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Mount (Mt.) Harrison Roadless Area is located 15 air miles southeast of Burley, Idaho in Cassia County. The primary access is by the Howell Canyon Road (Forest Road 549) south of Albion, Idaho. It is located in the Albion Division of the Minidoka Ranger District. The boundaries generally follow the forest boundary, except where they follow the roads, some of which penetrate deep into the interior.

The geology of the area consists of metamorphic gneisses, mica schists, and quartzites that are some of the oldest rocks in the state, with age dates at 2.4 billion years. Much of the area is steep and rocky. Water from the area is important for recreation uses, in-stream flows for trout, wildlife, and downstream irrigation and hydropower uses. Elevations range from about 5,500 feet to 9,263 feet on Mt. Harrison.

Douglas-fir, subalpine fir and aspen are found on the northerly slopes with sage-grass and mountain brush communities on southern aspects.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is rated moderate to high. The natural appearance is rated as low as a result of livestock grazing impacts, grazing facilities, the existence of low-standard roads, past fire suppression activity, and recreation developments. The area includes 8.0 mile of unauthorized and 23.6 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** The opportunities for solitude are considered low, mostly because of the intrusions, including the highly developed Howell Canyon, which almost divides the area, and the short distance from the perimeter to the interior. Opportunities for primitive recreation experiences are limited, due to the lack of diversity and few challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** A bout 300 acres of the Mt. Harrison Research Natural Area lies within this roadless area.

**Manageability:** Manageable boundaries would be difficult to establish. Boundary modification would not enhance the area's wilderness characteristics.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Some streams in the area contain Yellowstone cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout. No known threatened, endangered or Region 4 sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** Although there are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present, the area provides habitat for threatened Canada lynx. This area may also provide habitat for northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, flammulated owl, and boreal owl. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. The area is summer range for mule deer. The lower elevations on the west side provide winter range for mule deer. There is habitat for other species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawks, golden eagle, cougar, bobcat, coyote, badger, and beaver.

**Water:** This area contains portions of most of the drainages that run outward from Mt. Harrison. Water quality is generally fair during periods of low flow and fair to poor during high flows. Water from this area is used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation. Maintenance of minimum water flow from this portion of the roadless area is important.

**Botanical:** Christ's Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja christii*) a threatened species and Davis' wavewing (*Cymopterus davisii*) one sensitive plant species occur in the area also occurs here. Minor populations of Engelmann spruce and limber pine occurs within the area, and they are rare in extreme southern Idaho. Aspen is in decline from conifer encroachment due to the lack of fire. Some introduced species of grasses

and forbs have been seeded in conjunction with range revegetation projects and fire rehabilitation. Noxious weeds have been increasing on forest and non-forest lands in this area. However, only small populations of Canada thistle (4 acres) and medusa head (0.4 acre) have been identified within the roadless area. Small amounts of old forest are scattered across the timbered portions of the area.

**Recreation:** This area is used extensively for various types of recreation. Big-game hunting in the fall is a major use. Some small-game hunting also occurs. Fishing opportunities are marginal due to the small size of the trout and the few scattered streams containing trout. Dispersed uses include hang gliding, groomed snowmobile trails, and horseback riding. The paved Howell Canyon Road allows easy access for off-road vehicle use and hiking in summer, and cross-country skiing in the winter. The adjacent developed portions of Howell Canyon include the Pomerelle Ski Area, the Lake Cleveland Recreation Area, the Thompson Flat Campground and summer homes, and the Mt. Harrison Fire Lookout. Visitors to the Mount Harrison lookout have an excellent view of the roadless area.

**Range:** About 90 percent of the roadless area is allocated to livestock grazing. Portions or all of six cattle allotments are located within the area. They are managed in rest and deferred rotation systems. There are a small number of livestock grazing facilities, consisting primarily of fences and water developments. There are 10,600 acres of land (35 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 68,000 thousand board feet, equivalent to 132,800 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 6,800 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 400 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 800 acres, moderate productivity; and no acres, high productivity.

**Minerals and Energy:** The area has moderate potential for the occurrence and development of locatable uncommon variety building stone locally referred to as "Oakley stone." There is moderate potential for the occurrence of other locatable metal commodities such as gold, silver, copper, and lead, but development potential is low. There was historic development of underground lead, silver and copper deposits on the southern edge of the roadless area. Production was limited due to the remote location and type of deposits. There is low potential for development of mineral materials (sand, gravel, and other building stone). Potential for the occurrence and development of oil and gas leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate) is low. The Howell Canyon area was withdrawn from mineral entry in 1996 to protect a Research Natural Area, a rare plant species, and ski area capital improvements. This roadless area contains 30,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private lands within the area. Some parcels of private land adjoin the boundary. The area is used by two outfitter and guide operations. It also contains one electronic site used by four permittees.

**Roads and Trails:** The area contains 15 miles of trail, all of which are open to motorized vehicles.

**Heritage:** There are a moderate number of cultural sites within the area. The probability of finding others is likely.

**Disturbances:** The 1996 Elba Fire, which burned about 4,700 acres of the area, is the only significant fire that has occurred in recent years. Mountain pine beetle and Douglas-fir beetle damage has occurred to timber.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Mount Harrison Roadless Area.

Table Mount Harrison-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Mount Harrison-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Mount Harrison-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Mount Harrison Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	7,700	7,700	7,700	
Similar to Backcountry	30,000	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	0	0	CPZ	1,400
				NonCPZ	20,500
GFRG	0	22,000	22,000	100	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	300*	300*	300*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	<b>30,000</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Mount Harrison Roadless Area is a RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

Table Mount Harrison-2. Potential activities

Mount Harrison Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	22,000	22,000	1,500 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	30,000	29,700	29,700	29,700
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	30,000	29,700	29,700	22,300 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	29,700	29,700	1,500 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	22,000	22,000	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	30,000	29,700	22,000	22,000

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 20,500 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 300 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 22,000 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within shrubland and grassland landscapes) and 7,700 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities).

For prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road

building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions.

For the 7,700 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 7,700 acres under prescription 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 22,000 acres under prescription 6.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Mount Harrison Roadless Area contains 30,000 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the acres under prescription 6.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 22,000 acres would fall under the GFRG and 7,700 acres under the Primitive theme.

For the 22,000 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining, the area does contain 30,000 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 7,700 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

No new leasable mineral activity would occur under the Primitive theme since surface occupancy for new leases is prohibited.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 7,700 acres under the Primitive theme, 21,900 acres under the Backcountry theme, 1,400 of which are in the CPZ, and 100 acres under the GFRG theme.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 300 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 20,500 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 21,900 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 100 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive, Backcountry or GFRG themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Pettit #017****3,100 Acres****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

The Pettit Roadless Area is located within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, 16 miles south of Stanley, within Custer and Blaine Counties. The roadless area lies on the west side of the Sawtooth Valley between the Hell Roaring Creek Road and Pettit Lake. The east side is near the private land in the Sawtooth Valley. The west side borders the Sawtooth Wilderness. Access is from State Highway 75 and the Pettit Lake, Yellow Belly, and Mays Creek Roads.

The terrain is dominated by prominent glacial lateral moraines and portions of end moraines. Pettit and Yellow Belly Lakes are morainal lakes adjacent to the roadless area. The only other lake in the area is McDonald Lake, about a half mile west of Yellow Belly Lake. Soils are deep and well developed. The soil surface is very cobbly, as is the soil profile. Elevations range from 7,000 feet on the valley floor to 7,900 feet at the Wilderness boundary. Vegetation is predominantly dense lodgepole pine. A few small park-like openings occur.

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is moderate. The construction and maintenance of 6 miles of trail are man-made developments in the area. The Mays Creek Road, a two-track road that is still visible, is within the area. There is also some evidence of past timber cutting activity. However, the area appears natural to the visitor upon leaving the trailhead, lakeshore, or road. The area includes 2.1 miles of forest road.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for primitive recreation are low. Opportunities for solitude are moderate, but the range of opportunities is low. There are few areas more than a mile from existing roads. The fact that the area abuts the Sawtooth Wilderness adds to the solitude, however. Motorized boat use on Pettit Lake influences solitude, because users are aware of the boat sights and sounds. The vegetative screening and topographic screening by the moraines provide some solitude.

**Special Features:** Scenic features within the area include views of the Sawtooth Peaks, Yellow Belly Lake, and Pettit Lake. Pettit Lake Creek (0.1 mile) and Yellowbelly Lake Creek (0.8 mile) are eligible for designation as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Special management corridors (a total of 1,000 acres) will be established to protect their outstandingly remarkable values.

**Manageability:** Although low development intrusions exist, the boundaries would be quite manageable. The boundary generally follows roads, lakeshores, and the existing wilderness boundary. If this area were not adjacent to the Sawtooth Wilderness, its small size would not meet wilderness criteria. Since the area is in the Sawtooth National Recreation Area, management options for development are limited. Management direction for the National Recreation Area is to preserve and protect the natural, scenic, and fish and wildlife values of the area, and enhance their associated recreational values.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** Fish species present include Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and brook trout. Use by spring and summer Chinook summer salmon and steelhead may occur in Mays Creek and Yellow Belly Creek, tributaries to Alturas Lake Creek and the Salmon River. Bull trout occur as both resident populations and as adults moving up streams from the Salmon River to spawn. Chinook summer salmon and steelhead travel approximately 900 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River to spawn in these waters.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves are known to inhabit the roadless area and are an experimental/non-essential population in this area. The area provides habitat for threatened Canada lynx, bald eagle, northern goshawk, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Habitat is thought to be



present for wolverine and spotted bat. Habitat for Townsend's big-eared bat, flammulated owl, and spotted frog is unknown. The area contains deer and elk summer range. Due to the dense timber, there are few openings to provide summer forage.

**Water:** The main streams within the area are portions of Mays Creek, and the creeks draining to Yellow Belly and Pettit Lakes. This area contributes water to the Salmon River system. The watershed condition is excellent and water quality is good. This water provides for aquatic habitat, irrigation, hydropower, and other important uses off the forest. Approximately 1,600 acres are considered as producing high-quality water.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. There are no inventoried sites of noxious weeds. Most of the area is old forest.

**Recreation:** Fishing, backpacking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and camping are the typical activities pursued by those traversing the area. Little use occurs within the area other than on the trails or along the lakeshore. Fishing opportunities are good. Some of the trails receive heavy use by people accessing the Sawtooth Wilderness. The dense stands of lodgepole pine present a scenic foreground view to the towering Sawtooth Range. Enjoying scenery is a recreational pursuit occurring both within and outside the area.

**Timber:** The roadless area contains an estimated 17,300 thousand board feet, equivalent to about 34,400 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 2,000 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,900 acres are considered to have low productivity; 100 acres, moderate productivity; and 0 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** No livestock are grazed within the area because of the dense timber stands.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals, leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate), mineral materials (sand, gravel, and building stone), and oil and gas. The area has been Congressionally withdrawn from mineral entry. No recorded mineral activity has occurred within this area. About 3,100 acres are high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private lands or permitted special uses within the area.

**Roads and Trails:** The Pettit Lake Trail and the Pettit Lake Cutoff Trail are the two major access trails to the Sawtooth Wilderness. The area contains four developed trails totaling 13 miles, all of which are closed to motorized vehicles.

**Heritage:** No significant cultural resources have been found, and the potential to find sites is low.

**Disturbances:** Recent fire occurrence has been rare. Bark beetles continue to kill scattered patches of trees.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Pettit Roadless Area.

Table Pettit-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Pettit-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Pettit-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Pettit Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	3,100	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	2,100	2,100	CPZ	1,200
				NonCPZ	900
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,000*	1,000*	1,000*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>3,100</b>	<b>3,100</b>	<b>3,100</b>	<b>3,100</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Pettit Roadless Area is WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP

Table Pettit-2. Potential activities

Pettit Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	2,100	2,100	1,200*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	3,100	2,100	2,100	2,100
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	3,100	2,100	2,100	2,100
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	2,100	2,100	1,200*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	3,100	2,100	2,100	2,100

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 900 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 2,100 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted

for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 2,100 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 2,100 acres under the Backcountry theme, 1,200 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 900 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 2,100 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Pioneer Mountains #921

119,600 Acres Sawtooth

172,500 Acres Challis

292,100 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

More than half of the Pioneer Mountains Roadless Area is within the Lost River Ranger District of the Salmon-Challis National Forest, while the remainder is on the Ketchum Ranger District of the Sawtooth National Forest. The Sawtooth is the lead forest for this roadless area evaluation. The roadless area is adjoined by two Bureau of Land Management roadless areas, known as Wilderness Study Areas, on the southern boundary of this roadless area. The Little Wood River Wilderness Study Areas is 4,265 acres, while the Friedman Creek Wilderness Study Areas is 9,773 acres (total of 14,038 acres).

The Pioneer Mountains Roadless Area is located 20 miles southwest of Mackay, Idaho and 5 miles east of Ketchum, Idaho, in Custer and Blaine Counties. It extends for 38 miles in a northwest to southeast direction. It is bounded generally by the Wood River Valley on the southeast, the Trail Creek Road on the northwest, the East Fork Big Lost River on the northeast, and the National Forest boundary to the south. Primary access is by way of State Highway 75 in the Wood River Valley, the Trail Creek Road, the East Fork Big Lost River Road, the Antelope Creek Road, the Muldoon Creek Road, and the Little Wood River Road.

The mountainous terrain varies from alpine basins, flats and benches, to steep, rocky walls topped by mountain peaks. Glacial cirques with vertical relief of 3,000 to 4,000 feet are found at the base of many peaks. The Pioneer Range is the second highest in Idaho, with Hyndman Peak the highest point at 12,009 feet. The lower elevations of the area are near 6,000 feet. There are gentle, rolling hills in the eastern portion of the area. There are numerous lakes and streams.

Vegetation at the lower elevations consists of Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and aspen scattered within a sage-grass community. Spruce and wet sedge meadows occur in parts of the eastern portion of the roadless area. At higher elevations, vegetation changes to subalpine forest and then to alpine meadows under the barren mountain summits.

The area includes roughly 108,000 acres of Recommended Wilderness and therefore holds a high level of roadless characteristics.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Natural integrity and appearance are rated very high in the central high peaks area, and high to moderate in the rest of the area. The large size, variation of topography, quality of the scenery, and visual screening enhance the natural integrity. There are, however, some localized impacts from past roading and mining activities, and livestock grazing facilities. The Big Lost River portion contains three major road intrusions, reducing the distance from roads to less than 4 miles in most areas. These road intrusions reduce the natural integrity and appearance in those areas, although the topography and visual screening minimize the effects. The area includes 22.3 miles of unauthorized roads and 10.7 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are very good in the central high peaks area because of the distance from the boundaries, the rugged terrain, and topographic and vegetative screening. They are good, moderate, or low in the rest of the area. Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are reduced in the Big Lost River portion where the three main roads intrude into the area. Challenging experiences are readily available in the central high peaks area, including technical and non-technical climbing, and cross-country travel opportunities. There are many high peaks, the mountains are precipitous, and many areas are devoid of trails.

**Special Features:** Hyndman Peak at 12,009 feet is a special feature of the area. There are also many other spectacular high peaks, cirque basins, and mountain lakes. The area in general is very scenic. Pioneer Cabin is a well-known historic feature. On the Big Wood River side, segments of North Fork Hyndman Creek (4.6 miles), Muldoon Creek (2.3 miles), and Box Canyon Creek (3.4 miles) are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. Special management corridors (an estimated 3,600 acres) will be established to protect their outstandingly remarkable values. Several Research Natural Areas occur in this roadless area including the Iron Bog Research Natural Area, 400 acres; Smiley Mountain Research Natural Area (3,100 acres); and Surprise Valley Research Natural Area, 1,500 acre. One special interest limber pine area also occurs here.

**Manageability:** The boundary as presently inventoried would be difficult to manage. Because of the size of the area, a boundary could be established that would enhance manageability and form logical boundaries, although an acreage reduction would result. Boundaries on the west side would be more easily established because there are fewer intrusions. Boundaries could be modified to exclude the areas rated good or better for locatable minerals, and most of the areas rated moderate. The fact that most of the area is currently open to motorized and mechanized uses would complicate manageability. Heli-skiing is currently available in some areas. There are seven parcels of non-forest land within the boundary on the Big Lost River side of the area and one on the Big Wood River side, which would complicate manageability.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Fish species present in the Wood River drainages include Wood River sculpin, rainbow trout, brook trout, and westslope cutthroat trout (in mountain lakes). The Region 4 sensitive species, Wood River sculpin, occurs in the Big and Little Wood River drainages.

The Big Lost River fishery is primarily a hatchery rainbow population. Some natural rainbow production occurs, however this is supplemented throughout the summer with catchable hatchery trout. Brook trout, mountain whitefish, and shorthead sculpin are also found in the streams. Whirling disease, which affects natural reproduction, is prevalent in the Big Lost River and its tributaries. The mountain lakes in this area support a variety of fish. There are no threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive fish species in this drainage.

**Wildlife:** Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. The roadless area provides habitat for threatened Canada lynx. The Region 4 sensitive species, wolverine is known to be present. The area provides habitat for northern goshawk, flammulated owl, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, great gray owl, and fisher. Habitat is uncertain for Townsend's big-eared bat, likely for spotted bat, and unknown for spotted frog. The area supports big game such as mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, and mountain goats. The higher elevations contain historic bighorn sheep range, and sheep are occasionally sighted. Blue grouse are common, along with spruce grouse and various species of songbirds. Black bear and cougar are present.

**Water:** The area contains numerous mountain lakes, and large and small streams that drain into the Big Lost River, Big Wood River, and Little Wood River drainages. Water quality varies from good to poor across the area, the best occurring in high cirque basins. The water from this area provides for aquatic habitat, irrigation, hydropower, and other important uses off the forest.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive species present. Proposed sensitive plants, Mt. Shasta sedge (*Carex stramineiformis*), wedge-leaf saxifrage (*Saxifraga adscendens oregonensis*), and nodding saxifrage (*Saxifraga cernua*), are known to exist here, while park milkvetch (*Astragalua leptaleus*) and petalless campion (*Silene uralensis montana*) may possibly be present. The Iron Bog Research Natural Area occurs within the roadless area. One special interest limber pine area occurs here. This is an area of high botanical diversity. Noxious weeds have not been a serious problem. There are some occurrences of Canada thistle and spotted knapweed (five acres). Stands and pockets of old forest occur throughout the roadless area.

**Recreation:** The current recreation use and potential of the area is tied to dispersed forms such as hunting, back packing, mountain climbing, cross-country hiking, mountain biking, off-road vehicle use, trail riding, fishing, cross-country skiing, helicopter skiing, and snowmobiling. The area is currently not heavily used. Fishing opportunities are good in some areas.

**Timber:** The area contains 348,200 thousand board feet of standing timber volume, equivalent to about 658,500 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 35,400 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. About 12,800 acres are considered to have low productivity; 34,700 acres, moderate productivity; and 700 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** This area contains portions or all of six cattle and 19 sheep allotments. They are managed under deferred rotation systems. Most of the cattle allotments on the Big Lost River side have been intensively developed with numerous fences, water developments and past vegetative treatments. Portions of the cattle allotments on the Big Wood River side have been developed with fencing and water developments. There are 42,200 acres of land that are classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 63,000 acres capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** This roadless area has a long history of mineral exploration and mining. There are numerous mining claims and some operating mines. Approximately three quarters of the area is rated moderate or better in locatable mineral potential. There was heavy exploration for locatable minerals in the 1980s, but most of that activity has ended. This roadless area contains 289,100 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are eight parcels of private land scattered across the area. They are mainly associated with patented mining claims, and the acreage involved is small. Special-use permits have been issued within the area for 11 outfitter and guides. Services include snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, hiking, trail rides, mountain biking, wagon rides, hunting, fishing, llama packing, technical mountain climbing, photography, and heli-skiing.

**Roads and Trails:** The developed trail system consists of 40 trails totaling 181 miles, 40 miles of which are open to motorized travel.

**Heritage:** The area contains a number of old buildings associated with mining, and the remains of a few old trapper cabins. Pioneer Cabin is a well-known historic building.

**Disturbances:** The incidence of man-caused and lightning caused fires has been light, with four wildfires totaling 400 acres since 1960. Prescribed burning and sagebrush spraying has occurred on portions of the sagebrush community. The effects of these treatments are still visible. Timber stands have sustained infestations of spruce budworm, tussock moth, and mountain pine beetle. Dwarf mistletoe infection is widespread.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Pioneer Mountains Roadless Area.

Table Pioneer Mountains-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Pioneer Mountains-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Pioneer Mountains-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Sawtooth only)

Pioneer Mountains Management Theme Sawtooth	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed I Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	58,400	58,400	58,400	
Primitive	0	28,700	28,700	28,700	
Similar to Backcountry	119,600	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	7,900	7,900	CPZ	1,900
				NonCPZ	27,000
GFRG	0	21,000	21,000	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	3,600*	3,600*	3,600*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>119,600</b>	<b>119,600</b>	<b>119,600</b>	<b>119,600</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Sawtooth Portion of the Pioneer Mountains Roadless Area is Wild and Scenic River (WSR). For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

Table Pioneer Mountains-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Challis only)

Pioneer Mountains Management Theme Challis	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	49,600	49,600	49,600	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	172,500	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	117,900	117,900	CPZ	9,300
				NonCPZ	108,600
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	5,000*	5,000*	5,000*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>172,500</b>	<b>172,500</b>	<b>172,500</b>	<b>172,500</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Challis Portion of the Pioneer Mountains Roadless Area is a RNA. For further information on this designation, see the Challis National Forest LRMP.

Table Pioneer Mountains-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Pioneer Mountains Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	108,000	108,000	108,000	
Primitive	0	28,700	28,700	28,700	
Similar to Backcountry	292,100	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	125,800	125,800	CPZ	11,200
				NonCPZ	135,600
GFRG	0	21,000	21,000	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	8,600	8,600	8,600	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>292,100</b>	<b>292,100</b>	<b>292,100</b>	<b>292,100</b>	

**Table Pioneer Mountains-2. Potential activities (Sawtooth and Challis combined)**

Pioneer Mountains Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	146,800	146,800	11,200 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	292,100	175,500	175,500	175,500
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	292,100	175,500	175,500	161,200 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	175,500	175,500	11,200 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	138,900	21,000	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	292,100	175,500	146,800	146,800

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 135,600 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in the 14,400 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** For the portion of Pioneer Mountains in the Sawtooth National Forest, around 21,000 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within shrubland and grassland landscapes), 3,300 acres under prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 4,600 under prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 28,700 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities) and 58,400 under prescription 1.2 (recommended wilderness). For the portion of the roadless area in the Challis National Forest around 49,600 acres would be managed as Recommended Wilderness, 70,000 acres would be managed under prescription 11 (Pioneer Mountains) and 47,900 acres under prescription 25 (Antelope Creek).

Timber harvest and associated road building are generally permitted under Challis prescription 11 and 25. Any timber activities and road building that occur could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term.

For prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions.

For the 7,900 acres under prescription 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values.

However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 28,700 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

The 108,000 acres under prescription 1.2 and the Challis prescription for Recommended Wilderness are managed to maintain wilderness characteristics and to allow ecological processes to prevail. Road construction is prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber harvest or leasable mineral activities are allowed. Under this prescription the 108,000 acres are expected to maintain their wilderness and roadless area characteristics.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 36,600 acres under prescriptions 4.1c, 3.1 and 3.2, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 21,000 acres under prescriptions 6.1 and the 117,900 acres under Challis prescriptions 11 and 25, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The Pioneer Mountains Roadless Area contains 289,100 acres of high geothermal potential and 3,000 acres of medium geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the 138,900 acres where roads for mineral access would be permitted, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 21,000 acres would fall under the GFRG, 125,800 acres under the Backcountry theme, 28,700 under the Primitive theme and 108,000 under the Wild Land Recreation theme.

For the 21,000 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. However, these lands are generally shrubland or grassland, therefore little timber harvest is expected. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining in the Pioneer Mountains Roadless Area, the area does contain 289,100 acres of high geothermal potential and 3,000 acres of medium geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term.

For the acres under the Backcountry theme timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and

Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 28,700 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

The 108,000 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless and wilderness characteristics.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry, Primitive or Wild Land Recreation theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are only allowed for restoration purposes. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 108,000 acres under the Wild Land Recreation theme, 28,700 acres under the Primitive theme and 146,800 acres under the Backcountry theme, 11,200 of which are in the CPZ.

The 108,000 acres managed under the Wild Land Recreation theme would experience the same protections they had as Recommended Wilderness under the Forest Plans. Road construction would be prohibited except for reserved and outstanding rights and no timber cutting or leasable mineral activities would be allowed. These acres would therefore maintain both their roadless characteristics and wilderness attributes.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 14,400 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term. For the 135,600 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent. Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 146,800 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive or Backcountry themes since these themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases.

## Railroad Ridge #922

42,900 Acres Sawtooth

7,900 Acres Challis

50,800 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The majority of the Railroad Ridge Roadless Area is within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area of the Sawtooth National Forest. The remainder is within the Lost River Ranger District of the Salmon-Challis Forest. The Sawtooth is the lead forest for the roadless area evaluation. This area is located 20 miles due east of Stanley, just south of Clayton, and 20 miles southwest of Challis in Custer County. The roadless area is bounded on the west by the Slate Creek Road. The southern boundary is 150 feet from the Jim Creek and Big Boulder Creek Roads. The National Forest boundary (both Sawtooth and Salmon-Challis) forms the north and east boundaries. Primary access is by way of State Highway 75, Slate Creek Road, and East Fork Salmon River Road.

This area has a variety of land types. The south end consists of weakly and moderately dissected glaciated lands. Railroad Ridge, with a high elevation at 9,600 feet, is a remnant of a glacial moraine from the Nebraskan Ice Age. The north and east ends of the roadless area consist of the Challis Mountain land type with Challis Volcanic flows forming the mountains. The area is moderately to strongly dissected, forming canyons with colorful outcroppings of rock and many areas of boulder fields and rock slides. The lowest elevation is at 6,000 feet along the Salmon River. Soils are shallow and moderately erodible, with low to moderate fertility. Water quality is good but many drainages or segments suffer from excessive fine sediment.

The vegetation in the higher elevation area to the south is characteristic of an alpine zone. Vegetation over the rest of the area is primarily a mixture of whitebark pine, Douglas-fir, sagebrush, and grass.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** Numerous range improvements are present, including water developments and fences, but they are not major detractions to the natural beauty of the area. Sagebrush and grass prescribed burning has occurred on the east side. Grazing is quite intensive. A number of old mining roads and four-wheel drive roads are present on the western side of the area. The trail up French Creek was formerly a road. A small electronic site has been constructed near Potaman Peak just inside the roadless area boundary, where two small buildings and a tower exist. The visibility of these developments and roads reduces the natural integrity to moderate. The broken topography and the fact that most four-wheel drive roads were not constructed, leads to a moderate apparent naturalness rating. The area includes 9.3 miles of unauthorized and 13.0 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** A high degree of solitude occurs due to the topographic screening and difficulty of access, although vegetative screening is minimal. Distance to the core from the perimeter rarely exceeds 3 miles, but one should be able to feel secluded and alone. The dissected and broken topography makes this area appear larger than it is. There are opportunities for primitive recreation. Other than hiking and some limited camping, there are few summer activities, or opportunities for challenge.

**Special Features:** Railroad Ridge has scenic and scientific values due to its unique plant communities and geology. Whitebark pine stands occur here with trees up to 1,100 years old. These trees are free of white pine blister rust, which has infested most areas of the west. An estimated 1,000 acres will be established as a special management corridor to protect the outstandingly remarkable values of the adjacent Salmon River, which is eligible for designation as a Wild and Scenic River.

**Manageability:** That portion of the roadless area within the Sawtooth National Recreation Area is managed to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values, and enhance their associated recreational values. The east and most of the north boundaries follow the



Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Challis National Forest boundaries. These boundaries could be located on the ground, but do not follow terrain features, and cut across numerous ridges and drainages. The west boundary is Slate Creek and Silver Rule Creek. The southern boundary is on Big Boulder Creek Road and would be a manageable boundary. Historic and current patterns of motorized use would present some difficulty in enforcing a non-motorized use policy. Access to the east portion of the boundary is limited by a lack of access through private land.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Chinook summer salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout are threatened fish species found in several creeks that drain from into the Salmon River. Sockeye salmon, an endangered species, travel up the Salmon River, which adjoins this roadless area. Habitat for westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout is also found in the area. Salmon and steelhead travel approximately 900 miles from the mouth of the Columbia River to spawn in these waters. Rainbow trout and brook trout inhabit Big Lake Creek and French Creek. Sullivan Lake does not contain fish because of winterkill.

**Wildlife:** Gray wolves, an endangered species whose population in this area is considered experimental and non-essential, are known to use this and adjoining areas. Habitat exists for Canada lynx, a threatened species, bald eagle, fisher, northern goshawk, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Habitat for Townsend's big-eared and spotted bats, flammulated owl, and spotted frog is unknown. Big-game animals are common and include elk, mule deer, mountain goat, antelope, bighorn sheep, black bear, and cougar. The eastern portion contains big-game winter range. This roadless area connects habitat within it, and on all sides, for both wildlife and fish.

**Water:** Big Lake Creek, French Creek, Big Boulder Creek, and Slate Creek are the four major drainages. Sullivan Lake is within the area, and Jimmy Smith Lake is on the boundary. This area contributes relatively small amounts of water to the Salmon River and the East Fork Salmon River. This water contributes to downstream uses such as aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower.

**Botanical:** White Cloud milkvetch (*Astragalus vexilliflexus nubilus*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. Noxious weeds include a small population of Dalmatian toadflax near Livingston Mill in Big Boulder Creek and a population of yellow toadflax (15 acres) in Mill Creek. Scattered pockets and slopes of old forest occur across the area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use is relatively low. Summer use consists of hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, motorized cycle riding, and four-wheel drive vehicle use. Fall hunting accounts for a majority of the use. Fishing opportunities are moderate. This area is valued for the primitive recreation opportunity it provides. The absence of lakes and well-maintained trails ensures that use levels are low, solitude is readily available. Wildlife viewing opportunities are outstanding.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 180,100 thousand board feet, equivalent to about 354,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 26,000 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 8,900 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; and 23,600 acres, moderate productivity.

**Range:** This area contains portions or all of two cattle grazing allotments managed in a rest rotation system. The entire roadless area is allocated to livestock grazing. There are a large number of grazing facilities in the eastern portion of the area, consisting primarily of fences and water developments. There are 4,600 acres of land (9 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing. No acreage is identified as capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence and development of leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate) and oil and gas resources. There is also low potential for the development of mineral materials (sand, gravel, and building stone). There is a high potential for the occurrence of locatable minerals (lead, zinc, and silver), but a low potential for development due to the lack of geologic information to verify reserves and the present cost to develop a mine in a remote location. The Sawtooth



National Recreation Area is congressionally withdrawn from mineral entry. Claims that pre-date the creation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area exist in and adjacent to this area. This roadless area contains 50,800 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Land Ownership and Special Uses:** One 640 acre section of State land, used for grazing purposes, occurs within the roadless area. There are no permitted special uses within the roadless area.

**Roads and Trails:** The area contains six system trails totaling about 40 miles, of which 17 miles are open to motorized vehicles.

**Heritage:** There are only a few known cultural sites, and the potential to locate others is low.

**Disturbances:** Fire activity has been low. Mountain pine beetles are currently attacking small pockets of whitebark pine and lodgepole pine. Douglas-fir beetles are also active. High intensity thunderstorms and spring floods often impact several drainages. Landslides are rare but they also cause some damage.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Railroad Ridge Roadless Area. Table Railroad Ridge-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Railroad Ridge-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Railroad Ridge-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Sawtooth only)**

Railroad Ridge Management Theme Sawtooth	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	0	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	42,900	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	41,900	41,900	CPZ	12,400
				NonCPZ	29,500
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,000*	1,000*	1,000*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>42,900</b>	<b>42,900</b>	<b>42,900</b>	<b>42,900</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Sawtooth portion of the Railroad Ridge Roadless Area is a WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest LRMP.

**Table Railroad Ridge-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Challis only)**

Railroad Ridge Management Theme Challis	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	7,900	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	7,900	0	7,900	CPZ	300
				NonCPZ	7,600
Backcountry	0	0	0	0	
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>7,900</b>	

Table Railroad Ridge-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Railroad Ridge Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	7,900	0	0	
Similar to Backcountry	50,800	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	41,900	49,800	CPZ	12,700
				NonCPZ	37,100
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,000	1,000	1,000	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>50,800</b>	<b>50,800</b>	<b>50,800</b>	<b>50,800</b>	

Table Railroad Ridge-2. Potential activities (Sawtooth and Challis combined)

Railroad Ridge Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	41,900	49,800	12,700*
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	50,800	49,800	49,800	49,800
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	50,800	49,800	49,800	49,800
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	49,800	49,800	12,700*
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	50,800	49,800	49,800	49,800

\*Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 37,100 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 41,900 acres are within Sawtooth prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources) and 7,900 acres are within Challis prescription 7 (East Fork – Roadless)

Commercial timber production is not allowed under Challis prescription 7. The area is managed to maintain riparian habitat, range quality and overall wildlife habitat. Similarly, Boise prescription 3.1 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. Under both prescriptions, if temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for

restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 49,800 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 49,800 acres under the Backcountry theme, 12,700 of which are in the CPZ. Within the CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 37,100 acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 49,800 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and structure. No new roads can be constructed unless the activity is done in conjunction with a fuel reduction project already authorized in the CPZ or authorized under the significant risk determination outside the CPZ. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.

## Smoky Mountains #914

304,100 Acres Sawtooth

42,900 Acres Boise

347,000 Acres Total

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Smoky Mountains Roadless Area is located in Camas, Elmore, and Blaine Counties in south central Idaho, extending along a north-south axis for about 20 miles. The area is about 45 miles wide. The center of this area is about 25 miles north of Fairfield, Idaho. The eastern border is about 2 miles west of Ketchum, Idaho, and the western border is approximately 50 miles east of Boise, Idaho. This area includes portions of the Fairfield and Ketchum Ranger Districts and the Sawtooth National Recreation Area of the Sawtooth National Forest, and the Mountain Home Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. The roadless area can be accessed from the south by the Ketchum-Featherville Road, from the northeast by State Highway 75, from the northwest by the Middle Fork Boise/Yuba River Road, from the west by the James Creek Road, and from numerous side roads off of these main ones.

This area contains the headwaters of the South Fork Boise River on the west, the Big Wood River on the east, and the Salmon River on the north. Water is relatively abundant throughout the area with many springs, perennial streams, and a small number of high mountain lakes. Topography is broken with numerous steep slopes and talus rock slides. Elevations range from 5,000 to 10,174 feet. The western and central portions are characterized by glaciated granitic peaks, valleys and slopes. Rocky cirques, U-shaped valleys, and scoured side slopes are also common.

Vegetation is characteristic of the subalpine plant community. Scattered stringers of Douglas-fir, subalpine fir, and lodgepole pine interspersed with occasional Engelmann spruce and whitebark pine exist throughout most of the area. The lower elevations in the western portion of the area contain moderate to dense timber stands. Ponderosa pine stands occur along the lower portions of the South Fork Boise River. Aspen is scattered throughout the Smoky Mountains at low to moderate elevations. Non-forested vegetation is characterized by the sagebrush-grass-sedge plant community in the dryer areas. Open sagebrush-grass communities dominate the south and westerly aspects, while moderate to dense stands of Douglas-fir and subalpine fir grow on north and easterly aspects at higher elevations.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of this area is largely intact. The high scenic qualities that are found in many parts of the area contribute to a high level of natural appearance, although evidence of roads does exist. The area includes 5.7 miles of unauthorized and 20.4 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are very high because of the roadless area's large size and varied topography. A significant portion of this roadless area exceeds five miles from the nearest road. Numerous opportunities for primitive recreation exist. There are many opportunities for challenging experiences due to the long distances on trails and the rugged topography. Visual intrusions include developments on Bald Mountain, of the Sun Valley Ski Area, which are visible from many high locations within the eastern portion of the roadless area.

**Special Features:** Spectacular scenery is found throughout the area. Bluff Creek Canyon is spectacular and scenic. Blue Clay Creek contains large areas of blue clay-like formations. There are also large areas of barren granite badland-like areas. Castle Creek contains large castle-like spires. A large band of mineralized granite dissects Warm Springs Creek. It is a distinctive geologic feature known as the Rooks Creek Stock of the Idaho Batholith. The area also contains many high glacial cirque basins and high-elevation alpine lakes. Segments of Alpine Creek (0.9 mile), Alturas Lake Creek (7.5 miles), Beaver Creek (0.9 mile), Big Wood River (1.1 miles), Elk Creek (2.6 miles), the Salmon River (4.1 miles), and the South Fork (3.0 mile) and Middle Fork (0.2 mile) Boise River are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. Special management corridors (an estimated 9,600 acres) will be established to protect their outstandingly remarkable values.

Significant cultural resources associated with early day mining and travel can be found throughout the area. These occur especially around Vienna and Carriestown historical sites, between Rocky Bar and Atlanta, in Placer Creek, West Fork Warm Springs Creek, Rooks Creek, and Beaver Creek. There are also other old buildings and corrals within the area.

**Manageability:** The boundary, as inventoried, would be difficult to manage because of the many road intrusions and adjacency to numerous roads and timber sale areas. Numerous boundaries could be established that would improve overall wilderness qualities; however, an acreage reduction would occur. The fact that most of the area is currently open to motorized and mechanized uses would complicate manageability. Heli-skiing is currently available in many areas. Several small parcels of private land within the boundary would complicate management or require boundary adjustments to exclude them.

## RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Steelhead, sockeye, and Chinook are present in the Salmon River drainages. The Salmon and Boise River watersheds within this area are occupied bull trout habitat. This roadless area is a stronghold for bull trout. The Wood River sculpin, a Region 4 sensitive species, occurs in the Big Wood River watershed. Sawtooth Valley has kokanee salmon in a number of streams. Brook trout, rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, whitefish, and mountain suckers are common in streams throughout the area. Golden trout can be found in Baker Lake. Kokanee salmon migrate up the South Fork Boise River, which adjoins the roadless area.

The Middle Fork Boise River also flows on the northwestern boundary of the roadless area. The area has an important subpopulation of bull trout in the Yuba River and tributaries. A small isolated subpopulation is also found in Elk Creek on the southwest corner of the area. Both Elk Creek and Yuba River are priority bull trout watersheds. The Yuba population is connected to nodal habitat in the Middle Fork Boise River, and migration to the lower river area is being restored with the construction of a fish ladder in Kirby Dam. Redband and rainbow trout, and whitefish also inhabit these streams.

**Wildlife:** Suspected wolverine denning sites are also located within the area. Major big-game species include elk, mule deer, black bear, and mountain lion. Moose are seen occasionally. The area provides habitat for a small population of mountain goats, which can be found in high, isolated areas year-round. It also provides a large, important area of connectivity with adjoining areas for many wildlife species. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. Their presence has been confirmed within the roadless area.

Habitat exists for threatened Canada lynx, fisher, bald eagle, northern goshawk, white-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, boreal owl, northern three-toed woodpecker, and great gray owl. Habitat for Region 4 sensitive species including Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, and spotted frog may also occur within the roadless area. Black bear, cougar, and bobcat are present. Prairie falcons also nest within the area.

**Water:** Portions of the Big Smoky Creek, Warm Springs Creek, Baker Creek, and Yuba River drainages, and drainages of tributaries to the Salmon River lie within the roadless area. The South Fork Boise River bisects a portion of the area. The roadless area contains approximately 30 high-elevation lakes. Water from this area is used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation. Approximately 200 acres are considered to have high water quality.

**Botanical:** Bug goldenweed (*Haplopappus insecticurus*) a sensitive plant species occurs in the roadless area. The area contains the upper portions of the unique Vat Creek bogs.

Noxious weed infestations of leafy spurge (1,600 acres), spotted knapweed (2 acres), diffuse knapweed, rush skeletonweed, St. Johnswort (1 acre) and Canada thistle occur in the area, but less than 1 percent of the area is affected. Noxious weed populations are thought to be increasing in the South Fork Boise River drainage. One leafy spurge infestation of approximately 700 acres occurs along the South Fork Boise River near the west end of the area.



**Recreation:** Hiking, mountain biking, motorized trail biking, fishing, big-game hunting, mountain climbing, and horseback riding are the primary summer uses. Snowmobiling, backcountry skiing, and helicopter skiing are the predominant winter activities. Approximately two-thirds of the use is motorized.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 1,596,800 thousand board feet, equivalent to about 3,030,200 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 177,300 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 67,700 acres are considered to have low productivity; 150,700 acres, moderate productivity; and 10,200 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** There is one vacant allotment covering about 3 percent of the roadless area, two cattle allotments covering about 3 percent of the area, and 15 sheep allotments covering about 94 percent of the area. There is a low level of structural grazing improvements within the roadless area boundary. Most allotments are managed under deferred rotation systems. Several are under rest rotation systems. There are active sheep trails used to access sheep allotments within the area. There are 700 acres of land (less than 1 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 44,900 acres (13 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There are about 70 registered mining claims and no energy leases. Several mining claims are active. The only withdrawal is the Sawtooth National Recreation Area portion of the roadless area. It has been withdrawn from mineral entry but some valid claims still exist from before the establishment of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Approximately 100,000 acres are rated with a moderate or better potential for locatable minerals, with 40,000 to 50,000 acres rated good or better. This roadless area contains 347,000 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are a few tracts of private land scattered throughout the area. They are mainly associated with patented mining claims, and the acreage involved is small. Thirteen special-use permits have been issued for uses within the roadless area. They include one helicopter skiing operation, one yurt camping operation, and others conducting hunting, fishing, trail horse rides, lama hiking, mountain biking operations, and snowmobiling tours.

**Roads and Trails:** There are 70 system trails within the roadless area comprising an estimated 380 miles of trail. About 270 of these miles of trail are open for motorized use. Important put-and-take fisheries occur in Baker Creek and Warm Springs Creek.

**Heritage:** Several cultural resources associated with early day mining and travel can be found throughout the area. These occur especially around Vienna, Carriatown, and Spanish town historical sites, between Rocky Bar and Atlanta, in Placer Creek, West Fork Warm Springs Creek, Rooks Creek, and Beaver Creek. The area is part of the South Boise Historic Mining District. There are also other old buildings and corrals within the area.

**Disturbances:** Recent fire activity has been relatively low. The last significant fire was approximately 800 acres in 1992. Total number of acres burned since 1960 is 2,600. Tussock moths were active in conifer stands in 1994 and 1995 on less than 5 percent of the area. Mountain pine beetles are active in lodgepole pine stands near Alturas Lake and Beaver Creek. Dwarf mistletoe has had significant impacts in the Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine throughout the area. High-intensity thunderstorms and spring runoff scour stream channels and create large debris flows in some drainages periodically. Major avalanches occur periodically in some drainages, which denude sizeable areas of trees and create large debris piles.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Smoky Mountains Roadless Area.

Table Smoky Mountains-1a-c displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Smoky Mountains-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.



Table Smoky Mountains-1a. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Sawtooth only)

Smoky Mountains Management Theme Sawtooth	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	191,900	191,900	191,900	
Similar to Backcountry	304,100	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	102,600	102,600	CPZ	25,800
				NonCPZ	76,800
GFRG	0	0	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	9,600*	9,600*	9,600*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>304,100</b>	<b>304,100</b>	<b>304,100</b>	<b>304,100</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Sawtooth portion of the Smoky Mountains Roadless Area is Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR). For further information on this designation, see the Sawtooth National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).

Table Smoky Mountains-1b. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Boise only)

Smoky Mountains Management Theme Boise	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	41,700	41,800	41,800	
Similar to Backcountry	42,900	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	0	0	0	
GFRG	0	100	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	1,100*	1,100*	1,100*	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>42,900</b>	<b>42,900</b>	<b>42,900</b>	<b>42,900</b>	

\*The Management Prescription for the Forest Plan Special Areas in the Boise portion of the Smoky Mountains Roadless Area is a WSR. For further information on this designation, see the Boise National Forest LRMP.

Table Smoky Mountains-1c. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative (Total)

Smoky Mountains Management Theme Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule	
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0	
Primitive	0	233,600	233,700	233,700	
Similar to Backcountry	347,000	0	0	0	
Backcountry	0	102,600	102,600	CPZ	25,800
				NonCPZ	76,800
GFRG	0	100	0	0	
SAHTS	0	0	0	0	
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	10,700	10,700	10,700	
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>347,000</b>	<b>347,000</b>	<b>347,000</b>	<b>347,000</b>	

Table Smoky Mountains-2. Potential activities (Sawtooth and Boise combined)

Smoky Mountains Potential Activities Total	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	102,700	102,700	25,800 <sup>1</sup>
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	347,000	337,400	337,400	337,400
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	347,000	337,400	337,400	135,600 <sup>2</sup>
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	337,400	337,400	25,800 <sup>1</sup>
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	100	100	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	347,000	337,400	102,700	102,700

<sup>1</sup>Temporary road construction and timber cutting may be allowed in the 76,800 acres of Backcountry outside the CPZ to facilitate hazardous fuels removal, but only if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system.

<sup>2</sup>Timber cutting is prohibited in Primitive except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities are expected to occur in 33,000 acres of the Primitive theme within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system.

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the Existing Plan about 100 acres are within prescription 5.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within forested landscapes), 234,700 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities), 41,700 acres are within prescription 3.1 (passive restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), 55,200 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources), and 5,700 acres are under prescription 4.2 (roaded recreation emphasis).

For prescription 5.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as long as its primary objective is maintaining the desired forest vegetation. As such, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to achieve resilient forested landscapes.

For the 234,700 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

For the 96,900 acres under prescriptions 3.1 and 3.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted to prevent unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values. However, it is less likely that roads would be constructed in areas with the 3.1 prescription since passive restoration is desired. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and

rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration.

For the 5,700 acres under prescription 4.2, road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest are permitted as long as they don't compromise recreation resource objectives. Timber activities and road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term since the management emphasis is on roaded recreation, not roadless area preservation.

Leasable mineral activities are permitted under both prescriptions 5.1 and 4.2. If any mineral leases occurred they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term. For both the acres under 4.1c, 3.1, 3.2 and 4.2, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since roads are not permitted for this purpose.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 102,600 acres would fall under the Backcountry theme, and 233,700 acres would fall under the Primitive theme. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 233,700 acres under the Primitive theme because roads could not be constructed.

For the 102,600 acres under the Backcountry theme, road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under either management theme since it is not allowed under the Primitive theme and roads are not permitted for mineral leases under the Backcountry theme. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 233,700 acres under the Primitive theme and 102,600 acres under the Backcountry theme, 25,800 of which are in the CPZ. Within the Backcountry CPZ timber cutting for hazardous fuel removal would be allowed, and temporary roads could be constructed to facilitate timber harvest if that is the desired tool for hazardous fuel removal. Temporary road construction would likely change roadless characteristics in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would likely be maintained or enhanced over the long term.

For the 76,800 Backcountry acres outside the CPZ, timber cutting and temporary road construction to facilitate timber harvest could be allowed to reduce hazardous fuels if it is determined that there is a significant risk to a community or a municipal water supply system. Since additional conditions would be required, it is likely that temporary road construction for this purpose would be infrequent.

Timber cutting from existing roads, including those constructed for fuel reduction projects, or using aerial systems could be done on 102,600 acres of Backcountry to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function, provided that these activities maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or

wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

Timber cutting is prohibited under Primitive theme except to improve TEPS habitat, ecosystem composition and function, or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire, but only adjacent to a community or a municipal water supply system. Any wildland fire risk reduction activities are expected to occur in the 33,000 acres of the Primitive theme area that are within 1 ½ miles of a community and/or contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed for these activities, so limited timber harvest is expected because of lack of road access. In addition these activities must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As under the Backcountry theme, activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry or Primitive themes either since the two themes either prohibit surface occupancy or roads to access new mineral leases of any kind.

**Sublett #005****7,100 Acres****OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION**

The Sublett Roadless Area is located 35 air miles east of Burley, Idaho in Cassia County. The primary access is by Interstate 84 and the South and North Hegler Canyon Roads (Forest Roads 564 and 565). The roadless area is located in the Sublett Division of the Minidoka Ranger District, between the South and North Hegler Canyon Roads. The topography is gentle in the canyon bottoms with canyon slopes ranging from 15 to 65 percent. The geology is composed of siltstones, limestones and quartzites. Soils are some of the most stable on the forest. The area contains three springs and one intermittent stream. Elevations range from 5,200 to 7,500 feet.

Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine grow on the north and east slopes. South and west slopes are predominantly sagebrush and mountain brush types.

**ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS**

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity is moderate to high, and the natural appearance is moderate to high. There has been a low level of management activity in this area. The area includes 1.8 miles of unauthorized and 0.8 mile of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are low. It is less than 1.5 miles from the perimeter to the center of the area in most places. Opportunities for primitive recreation are also poor due to the lack of diversity and challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** There are no significant special features.

**Manageability:** Manageability would be difficult due to the small size. Most of the boundaries would follow roads or the National Forest boundary. The southern third is located across slopes and drainages, making a very poor boundary. Moving the boundary would not significantly improve manageability.

**RESOURCES**

**Fisheries:** There are no fish present in the roadless area.

**Wildlife:** There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. One Canada lynx was trapped in this area in recent years; Canada lynx are now listed as a threatened species. No specific acreage has been identified as habitat for Canada lynx. Habitat may be present for sensitive species including Townsend's big-eared bat, northern goshawk, and Columbia sharp-tailed grouse.

The south and west slopes provide feed for mule deer during winter months. The north end of the area is closed to snowmobiling due to key winter range. Summer range along with winter range is provided for the Sublett Division big-game herd. Elk numbers are building on and adjacent to the Sublett Division. This roadless area is becoming more important as summer and winter range for elk. There is habitat for other species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawks, golden eagle, badger, cougar, bobcat, and coyote.

**Water:** The area is drained to the northwest by North and South Hegler Canyons. Side canyons drain east and west into the two main canyons. This area contributes little water for uses off the forest. Almost no surface flow leaves the forest, and its primary contribution is probably to ground water. The little water that is on the roadless area is important to wildlife. Water quality is generally good.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, and sensitive species present. Noxious weeds have been increasing on forest and non-forest lands in this area. However, only small populations of diffuse and spotted knapweed, musk thistle, whitetop, and Canada thistle have been identified within this roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation consists of dispersed uses, primarily mule deer hunting and upland bird hunting. Some off-highway vehicle use occurs, as well as some winter snowmobiling where it is allowed. Five miles of road are groomed for snowmobile trails in winter. Much of the area is bordered by roads that are open to motorized vehicles.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 25,800 thousand board feet, equivalent to 49,900 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 2,500 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 32 acres are considered to have low productivity; 2,000 acres, moderate productivity; and 500 acres, high productivity.

**Range:** This entire area is allocated to livestock grazing. It contains portions or all of two cattle and two sheep allotments. They are managed under rest and deferred rotation systems. There have been few facilities developed for livestock grazing in the past, although some future developments are planned. There are 900 acres of land (12 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 300 acres (less than 1 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There is low potential for the occurrence and development of locatable minerals and mineral materials (building stone). There is a moderate potential for the occurrence of phosphate, a leasable solid mineral resource. However, due to the limited resource, lack of geologic information to verify the resource, and distance from a processing facility (Pocatello), the development potential is low. The roadless area is prospectively valuable for oil and gas resources but has low development potential at this time. This roadless area contains 7,100 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or State lands within the boundary. There is one permitted outfitter and guide operation in this area.

**Roads and Trails:** There is no developed trail system.

**Heritage:** Few cultural resources are known to exist, and site density is expected to be moderate to low

**Disturbances:** There has been minimal fire activity in the area since 1960. The recent Douglas-fir bark beetle infestation has caused high mortality.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Sublett Roadless Area.

Table Sublett-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Sublett-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Sublett-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Sublett Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	7,100	7,100	7,100
Similar to Backcountry	7,100	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>7,100</b>	<b>7,100</b>	<b>7,100</b>	<b>7,100</b>



Table Sublett-2. Potential activities

Sublett Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	0	0	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	7,100	7,100	7,100	7,100
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	7,100	7,100	7,100	0
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	7,100	7,100	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	7,100	7,100	0	0

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing plan about 7,100 acres are within prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities). Under this prescription, any management activities must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character. Road construction would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment is permitted when it is consistent with maintaining roadless characteristics, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. Since roads are only permitted for reserved and outstanding rights, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule these 7,100 acres would allow limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed. No road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. There would therefore be no short term adverse effects expected to roadless characteristics due to road construction. The Proposed Rule prohibits surface occupancy for new mineral leases; therefore there would be no change to roadless character from mineral leasing.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there 7,100 acres under the Primitive theme. Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in this roadless area because it is not within 1 ½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting that occurs must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

There would be no new leasable mineral activities since new surface occupancy and road building for mineral access are both prohibited.

## Third Fork Rock Creek #009

14,300 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Third Fork Rock Creek Roadless Area is located about 24 miles southeast of Twin Falls, Idaho, in Cassia County. The primary access is by the Rock Creek Highway (County Highway No. G-3), south of Hansen, Idaho. It is located in the Cassia Division of the Minidoka Ranger District.

The area is composed of canyons eroded in volcanic rhyolite flows, with surrounding mountains and bench lands remaining. The soil is moderately erodible. Elevations range from 4,420 feet where Rock Creek leaves the Forest to 7,708 feet at Pike Mountain.

Mixed stands of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and aspen dominate the higher elevations in the southern portion of the area, along with some open meadows. The lower elevation areas to the north are dominated by sagebrush-grass communities with small stands of other shrubs scattered throughout.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is moderate, due to the heavy livestock grazing and the presence of facilities for grazing. The natural appearance is low with high evidence of impacts from grazing, some primitive roads now being used as trails, and some evidence of past fire-suppression activity. The area includes 3.1 miles of unauthorized and 6.0 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are moderate because of the area's narrow shape, short distances from the perimeter, and the effects of highly used adjacent areas. Opportunities for primitive recreation are also moderate due to the lack of diversity and challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** There are no significant special features within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The topographic features would provide a manageable boundary for wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Third Fork contains redband trout, Yellowstone cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and brown trout in the main creek and its small tributaries. No known threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. Habitat for the northern goshawk, a Region 4 sensitive species, may be present as well as for Townsend's big-eared bat, spotted bat, and flammulated owl. This area is summer range for mule deer. There is habitat for other species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, partridge, hawks, golden eagle, cougar, bobcat, coyote, badger, and beaver. Elk numbers are slowly building on the Cassia Division, and elk have been seen occasionally in this area. This unroaded area connects low-elevation winter ranges and the higher timbered areas of cover for mule deer and elk.

Since 1986, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has introduced California bighorn sheep five times in the Big Cottonwood and Dry Creek drainages to the east. Some of these sheep and their offspring have been observed in the northern portion of this roadless area. Most of this area is potential habitat for bighorns. Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep were native to the Cassia Division.

**Water:** This roadless area includes most of the drainages of the First Fork, Second Fork, and Third Forks of Rock Creek; Harrington Fork Creek; and slopes that drain directly into the east side of Rock Creek. It contributes approximately half of the water that leaves the Forest in Rock Creek. It is an important contributor to down stream irrigation. Water quality is generally good, with periods of increased sediment load during high flow. Water from this area is used primarily for downstream aquatic habitat, irrigation, and hydropower generation.

**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Some introduced species of grasses and forbs have been seeded in small portions of burned areas after wildfires. Noxious weeds have been increasing on Forest and non-Forest lands in this area. However, only small populations of knapweed and Canada thistle have been identified within this roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use in the area is heavy. The major use is off-highway vehicle riding. Horseback riding and mountain biking are also popular. Some snowmobile use occurs, primarily in the higher-elevation areas. Fishing opportunities are poor because of the small size of the trout. Most of the perimeter of this roadless area is bordered by roads open to motorized vehicles. The Pike Mountain historic lookout site, and developed interpretive scenic overlook, is on the western edge of the roadless area. It is accessible by all motorized vehicles.

**Timber:** The current standing volume of timber is estimated to be 9,300 thousand board feet, equivalent to about 18,600 hundred cubic feet. An estimated 1,600 acres are classified as tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 1,600 acres are considered to have low productivity.

**Range:** The entire roadless area is allocated to livestock grazing. Most of this area is grazed by sheep. A small portion of the east side is grazed by cattle. These allotments are grazed in a deferred rotation system. There is a small amount of fence and a small number of water developments within these allotments. There are 1,200 acres of land (less than 1 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 9,800 acres (69 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Energy:** There has been past interest in mineral resources in this area. Exploratory drilling for low-grade gold resources occurred in the lower Third Fork and Wahlstrom Hollow areas, but it has not proven to be valuable enough to justify further exploration or development. The claims were relinquished after a limited amount of test drilling. There is a moderate potential for development of mineral materials (rhyolite building stone). The roadless area is prospectively valuable for oil and gas resources but has low development potential at this time. This roadless area contains 14,300 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** There are no private or State lands within the roadless area. The only special-use permitted within this area is one guide who hunts cougars.

**Roads and Trails:** The Third Fork trail system is the primary off-road vehicle system on the Minidoka Ranger District. Construction and maintenance work has been contributed by local trail bike clubs, with much of the construction financed by the State of Idaho off-road vehicle funds. Other volunteers, including local horse user clubs, have contributed time to trail construction and maintenance. The Third Fork trail system consists of nine trails totaling approximately 30 miles, all of which are open to motorized vehicles.

**Heritage:** This entire area was historically used by American Indians. Evidence of use exists throughout the area, consisting primarily of lithic scatters left after tool making. Evidence also demonstrates that fishing occurred in Rock Creek and Third Fork for salmon that historically came into this area from the Pacific Ocean via the Snake River.

**Disturbances:** Fire has recently played a significant role in this roadless area. A number of timber stands burned in the head of Third Fork in a 1974 wildfire. A large fire in 1987 burned primarily grassland in the Harrington Fork and Lower Third Fork Areas. In 1988, a fire burned timber and grassland in the First Fork drainage. With these and other smaller fires, an estimated 14,000 acres have burned since 1960. The burned timber stands have regenerated to thick stands of lodgepole pine. Most grassland areas have been successfully regenerated to grasses, forbs and shrubs.

The extensive bark beetle epidemic in the 1960s and 1970s killed large numbers of lodgepole pine trees. The 1974 wildfire burned many of these stands within this roadless area. The summer after the 1987 Harrington Fire, a high-intensity thunderstorm caused a large debris flow in the Dry Fork of Harrington Fork, and a number of other small debris flows or gullies in lower Harrington Fork. These have now stabilized.

### ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Third Fork Rock Creek Roadless Area.

Table Third Fork Rock Creek-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Third Fork Rock Creek-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

**Table Third Fork Rock Creek-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative**

Third Fork Rock Creek Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	7,900	7,900	7,900
Similar to Backcountry	14,300	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	0	0	0
GFRG	0	6,400	6,400	6,400
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>14,300</b>	<b>14,300</b>	<b>14,300</b>	<b>14,300</b>

**Table Third Fork Rock Creek-2. Potential activities**

Third Fork Rock Creek Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	6,400	6,400	6,400
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	14,300	14,300	14,300	14,300
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	14,300	14,300	14,300	6,400
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	14,300	14,300	6,400
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	6,400	6,400	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	14,300	14,300	6,400	6,400

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plans about 6,400 acres would be managed under prescription 6.1 (restoration and maintenance emphasis within shrubland and grassland landscapes) and 7,900 under prescription 4.1c (undeveloped recreation, maintain unroaded character with allowance for restoration activities).

For prescription 6.1 roads are permitted for restoration purposes, to reduce wildland fire risks in WUI, and to meet travel management outcomes. Timber harvest is permitted as a mechanism for maintaining vegetation within the desired condition. Prescription 6.1 applies to lands that are over 50 percent

shrubland or grassland, however, so little timber harvest is expected. In the limited forested areas, road building and timber harvest would be permitted for a range of vegetation management objectives. These activities could alter roadless characteristics in the short and long term, although the impacts would be minimal since the overall management goal is to maintain vegetation within desired conditions. For the 7,900 acres under prescription 4.1c, no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. While mechanical vegetation treatment for restoration purposes is permitted under 4.1 c, little to no timber cutting would be anticipated because roads could not be constructed.

Roads for new mineral leases are not permitted for the 7,900 acres under prescription 4.1c, so no new mineral leasing activity is expected. For the 6,400 acres under prescription 6.1, new mineral leases and roads would generally be permitted. The area contains 14,300 acres of high geothermal potential, but it has little to no potential for oil and gas leasing or phosphate mining. If any geothermal leasing occurred in the acres under prescription 6.1, it would likely alter roadless characteristics over both the short and long term.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 6,400 acres would fall under the GFRG and 7,900 under the Primitive theme. For the 6,400 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes. Timber activities and road building to meet these objectives could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. Leasable mineral activities and road building to access mineral leases are permitted under the GFRG theme. While there is little to no potential for oil and gas development or phosphate mining, the area does contain 14,300 acres of high geothermal potential. If any geothermal activities occurred under the GFRG theme, then they would alter roadless characteristics in both the short and long-term. For the acres under the Primitive theme no road construction would be expected because it would be prohibited except in cases of reserved and outstanding rights. Timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities would be permitted for both the Backcountry and Primitive theme areas, but little to no timber cutting would be anticipated for the 7,900 acres under the primitive theme because roads could not be constructed. No new leasable mineral activity would occur under the Primitive theme since surface occupancy for new leases is prohibited.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 7,900 acres under the Primitive theme and 6,400 acres under the GFRG theme. Timber cutting is prohibited in the Primitive theme except to maintain or restore TEPS habitat, restore ecosystem composition and function or to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire to a community or a municipal water supply system. Activities to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire are not expected to occur in this roadless area because the area is not within 1 ½ miles of a community, nor does it contain a municipal water supply system. No new roads can be constructed and any timber cutting activities that occur must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. Activities away from roads would likely be in the form of prescribed fire or wildland fire use. Any such projects would be designed to or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

For the 6,400 acres under the GFRG theme roads would generally be permitted and timber harvest could occur for both restoration and commodity production purposes, as long as these activities are consistent with applicable forest plan components. Timber harvest and associated road building could alter roadless characteristics over the short and long-term. However, these lands are generally shrubland or grassland, therefore little timber harvest is expected. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Primitive or GFRG theme since either surface occupancy is prohibited or roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases. The GFRG exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.



## Thorobred #013

6,100 Acres

### OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

The Thorobred Roadless Area is located about 40 air miles south of Twin Falls, Idaho, in Cassia County. The primary access is from the north via Rock Creek Canyon and Monument Peak, or from the south from Nevada up Piney Creek. It is located in the Cassia Division of the Sawtooth National Forest, on the Minidoka Ranger District. The southern end is on the forest boundary (the Nevada state line).

Canyons eroded in volcanic rhyolite ash flows comprise most of the area, with surrounding gentle ridges and bench lands. Many large rhyolite bluffs and cliffs occur within the canyons. The soil is fairly stable. The watershed value is moderate, providing water primarily for irrigation off the Forest.

Elevations range from 6,000 to 7,000 feet. Most of the area is in grass and sagebrush with small stands of aspen and conifers. Surrounding areas are similar except for an increase in aspen and conifer timber to the north.

### ROADLESS CHARACTERISTICS

**Natural Integrity:** The natural integrity of the area is moderate due to the presence of some past and present heavy livestock grazing and the presence of grazing facilities. The natural appearance is moderate with high evidence of impacts from grazing, grazing facilities, and some primitive roads. The area includes 1.4 miles of unauthorized and 7.1 miles of forest roads.

**Opportunities for Experience:** Opportunities for solitude are moderate because of the area's small size, the lack of topographic and vegetative screening and the effects of highly used adjacent areas. The roadless area is also within a commercial and military flyway. Opportunities for primitive recreation are also moderate due to the lack of diversity and challenging experiences.

**Special Features:** There are no significant special features within the roadless area.

**Manageability:** The topographic features would provide a manageable boundary for wilderness.

### RESOURCES

**Fisheries:** Goose Creek and lower Thorobred Creek support Yellowstone cutthroat trout, a native species. Goose Creek contains leatherside chub, a species of concern by the State of Idaho. Leatherside chub is a native species whose numbers have been declining over much of its range; however, their status is unknown. No known threatened, endangered, or Region 4 sensitive fish species are known to exist within the area.

**Wildlife:** There are no known threatened or endangered wildlife species present. Grey wolves are considered an experimental/non-essential population in this area. This area may provide habitat for the northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, and Columbia sharp-tailed grouse; all Region 4 sensitive species. The area is summer range for mule deer. There is good habitat for other common species of wildlife such as sage grouse, forest grouse, hawks, golden eagle, cougar, bobcat, coyote, badger, and beaver. Elk numbers are slowly building on the Cassia Division, and elk have been seen occasionally in this area. This area connects low-elevation winter ranges and the higher timbered areas of cover for mule deer and elk.

**Water:** This area includes virtually all of the East and West Forks of Thorobred Creek, and a portion of the Goose Creek drainage. The roadless area contributes a small quantity of water to Goose Creek. The water is used for downstream irrigation off the Forest. All of this water that is unused to that point is impounded in the Lower Goose Creek Reservoir and used for irrigation in the Oakley Valley. Water quality is fair during periods of low flow and poor during periods of high flow due to high sediment production and bank damage.



**Botanical:** There are no known threatened, endangered, or sensitive plant species present. Noxious weeds have been increasing on forest and non-forest lands in this area. However, only small populations of Canada thistle have been identified within this roadless area.

**Recreation:** Recreation use consists primarily of hunting and off-highway vehicle use. Goose Creek provides a marginal opportunity for fishing, since trout numbers are low. There is no opportunity for intensive recreational development. Much of the perimeter of this roadless area is bordered by roads open to motorized vehicles.

**Timber:** The current estimate of standing volume is 2,100 thousand board feet, equivalent to about 4,200 hundred cubic feet. The area includes 400 acres of tentatively suited timber. An estimated 400 acres are considered to have low productivity

**Range:** This entire area is allocated to livestock grazing. Most of the area lies within the western unit of the Goose Creek cattle allotment. It is grazed every year in a deferred rotation system, along with four other units and two Bureau of Land Management units. This area contains a moderate amount of fence and a few stock ponds. The small western portion of the roadless area that lies west of Goose Creek is within the Little Piney sheep allotment. It is grazed by sheep bands in a rotation with other allotments to the north. The only development is the fence between the sheep and cattle allotments. There are 4,100 acres of land (68 percent of the roadless area) classified as capable for cattle grazing, and 100 acres (less than 1 percent) capable for sheep grazing.

**Minerals and Geology:** There is low potential for the occurrence and development of locatable minerals, leasable solid minerals (coal and phosphate), mineral materials (building stone), and geothermal resources. The roadless area is prospectively valuable for oil and gas resources but has low development potential at this time. This roadless area contains 6,100 acres of high geothermal potential.

**Landownership and Special Uses:** No State or private lands are located within the roadless area. The only special use permitted within this area is one guide who hunts cougars.

**Roads and Trails:** Access consists of constructed and unimproved roads on much of the perimeter, and a few unimproved roads within the area. No developed trail system exists.

**Heritage:** This entire area was historically used by American Indians. Evidence of use exists throughout the area, consisting primarily of lithic scatters left after tool making.

**Disturbances:** This area has a past history of significant fire activity. Since 1960, the area has seen wildfire affecting an estimated 5,800 acres.

## ALTERNATIVE DISCUSSION

This section discusses the general effects of each alternative on the Thorobred Roadless Area.

Table Thorobred-1 displays distribution of acres to each theme or theme equivalents by alternative. These values represent potential, long-term outcomes of managing the roadless area based solely on theme assignments. Table Thorobred-2 describes the potential acreage available for each regulated activity under each alternative.

Table Thorobred-1. Acres by theme or theme equivalent, by alternative

Thorobred Management Theme	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Wild Land Recreation	0	0	0	0
Primitive	0	0	0	0
Similar to Backcountry	6,100	0	0	0
Backcountry	0	6,100	6,100	6,100
GFRG	0	0	0	0
SAHTS	0	0	0	0
Forest Plan Special Areas	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>6,100</b>	<b>6,100</b>

Table Thorobred-2. Potential activities

Thorobred Potential Activities	Alternative 1 2001 Roadless Rule	Alternative 2 Existing Plan	Alternative 3 Proposed Rule	Alternative 4 Modified Rule
Road construction or reconstruction when timber cutting is allowed	0	6,100	6,100	0
Timber cutting to improve TES species habitat or to restore ecosystem composition and structure	6,100	6,100	6,100	6,100
Timber cutting to reduce risk of uncharacteristic wildland fire effects	6,100	6,100	6,100	6,100
Timber cutting to reduce significant risk of wildland fire	0	6,100	6,100	0
Road construction or reconstruction to access new mineral leases	0	0	0	0
Surface use and occupancy for new leases	6,100	6,100	6,100	6,100

**Alternative 1 (2001 Roadless Rule):** Under the 2001 Roadless Rule little to no timber cutting for ecosystem restoration would be anticipated because road construction is prohibited to facilitate timber harvest. Therefore no adverse effects to roadless characteristics are expected from timber activities or associated road building. Additionally, no new leasable mineral activity would be expected given the final EIS analysis assumption that no activity would occur without roaded access.

**Alternative 2 (Existing Plans):** Under the existing forest plan about 6,100 acres are within prescription 3.2 (active restoration and maintenance of aquatic, terrestrial and hydrology resources). Prescription 3.2 permits road construction or reconstruction and timber harvest to address immediate response situations, where if action is not taken unacceptable impacts to aquatic, terrestrial or hydrology resource values could occur. If temporary roads were used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced in the long-run. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed to maintain or enhance roadless characteristics. It's expected, however, that temporary roads would be favored since the purpose of any road would be to facilitate restoration. Since roads are only permitted for restoration purposes, no new leasable mineral activity is expected since it would require roaded access.

**Alternative 3 (Proposed Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Proposed Rule 6,100 acres would be available for limited timber cutting for ecosystem restoration and/or reduction of wildland fire risk to communities. Road construction would be permitted when necessary for the permitted timber activities. If temporary roads are used, then the road construction would likely change the unroaded character in the short-term. However, since the road would be decommissioned and rehabilitated, and the timber harvest activities would be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes, roadless characteristics would be maintained or enhanced over the long term. If the project used a permanent road, then the changes to unroaded character would be long-term, while the timber harvest activities would still be designed for restoration and/or fire risk reduction purposes. No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted for mineral leases. The Backcountry exception for roadbuilding for phosphate leases is not relevant since there is no potential phosphate present in this roadless area.

**Alternative 4 (Modified Idaho Roadless Rule):** Under the Modified Idaho Roadless Rule, there are 6,100 acres under the Backcountry theme, none of which are in the CPZ; therefore no roads could be constructed to facilitate fuel reduction projects. In addition, since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems nearby, no timber harvest or associated road building would occur for the purpose of reducing the significant risk of wildland fire effects.

Timber cutting from existing roads or using aerial systems could be done throughout all 6,100 Backcountry acres to improve TEPS habitat or ecosystem composition and function. No new roads can be constructed since there are no communities or municipal water supply systems near the roadless area. Timber cutting for these purposes would occur on a limited basis and must maintain or improve at least one or more roadless characteristics. As such, these activities are expected to maintain or improve roadless characteristics over the long-term.

No new leasable mineral activity is expected under the Backcountry theme since roads are not permitted to access new mineral leases of any kind.





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