

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - STEP 1
ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)

Twin Falls

Activity

Watershed

Objective Number

WS-1

Objective: WS-1

Designate 480.5 acres, identified as wetland and riparian areas, as protective management areas for watershed values. Maintain 143.2 acres in good and excellent condition. Enhance 337.3 acres in fair or poor condition so that they are raised at least one condition class in 5 years.

Rationale:

BLM Manual 6740 establishes policy and procedures for the identification, protection, maintenance, enhancement and management of fresh, brackish and saline water wetland areas. It applies to all Bureau of Land Management (BLM) programs and actions. These areas include, but are not limited to, areas adjacent to waterways (whether waters are surface, subsurface or ephemeral), potholes, wet meadows, sloughs, marshes, swamps, bogs and muskegs, flood plains, lakes, reservoirs, springs and estuarine areas administered by BLM. Riparian areas which presently or potentially support broad-leaf vegetation in arid and semi-arid ecosystems are of special management concern.

This manual section implements Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands). Wetland-riparian areas are fragile and comprise an extremely small percentage of the public lands administered by the BLM. Many have been destroyed or degraded. This degradation is influencing water quality and quantity; flood frequency and severity, pollution, commercial, recreational and subsistence fisheries, area aesthetics and a wide range of fish and wildlife, including many endangered, threatened and sensitive species.

There were two main types of wetlands identified during the inventory of Twin Falls planning unit; those associated with streams (riparian) and those associated with springs and seeps. The beneficial hydrological functions of these areas are different.

Riparian areas in good or excellent condition reduce flood velocities, stabilize banks, share sediment loads with base flows, serve as ground water recharge areas and reduce evaporation losses from surface waters. As discussed in URA 4 (.45B3), these functions improve water quality. Improving water quality follows Bureau of Land Management Watershed Objective 1603.12E3b.

Most riparian areas are also floodplains. BLM Manual 7221 describes the policies, responsibilities and procedures to be used to incorporate floodplain management into all Bureau activities. This manual section implements Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management). One of the major objectives of floodplain management is to restore, maintain and preserve the natural and beneficial functions of floodplains. This is best accomplished by maintaining floodplains in good ecological condition.

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Recommendation: WS-1.1

Allow no development of undeveloped springs or further development of other springs pending final management designation for wetland preservation.

Rationale:

Development can cause irreversible damage to the existing wetland and to the wetland potential. Damage is caused by excavation of the soil and by the removal of the water from the area.

It is an accepted range management practice to develop springs and distribute the water through pipelines to water troughs in order to obtain more even utilization of range forage. However, as discussed above, in URA 4 (.45B3a) and in Objective WS-1, when these springs have associated wetlands they have important hydrological and biological functions which can be impaired by the removal of water. BLM is required to manage (protect, maintain and enhance) wetlands by Executive Order 11990 and BLM Manual 6740.

The majority of springs and associated wetlands in Twin Falls Planning Unit have been adversely impacted by cattle overuse and by the removal of water by development. (Twenty-nine of thirty-six springs and seeps examined during the water-rights inventory were developed.)

Support:

Range to make condition ratings based on successional stage, plant cover and composition. Wildlife, range, hydrologist to develop multidisciplinary wetlands management plan.

Priorities for protection and enhancement of wetlands and for development and mitigation can be established by formulating a comprehensive multidisciplinary water management plan which designates each wetlands management.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

Form 1000-1 (April 1981)

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

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Multiple Use Analysis

The issue is one of proper wetland development and management. A plan is needed to show which springs can be developed and which ones cannot. The plan should show the water needs for the wetland habitat so a determination can be made showing how much water can be removed. Where possible the plan should show the method of development that is least damaging to existing resource values. Enhancing measures should be shown in the plan to show how the wetland habitat can be improved during development to benefit the various resource values and uses. The plan should show priority groups to establish an order of which wetlands should be developed first through last.

The plan should be a brief documentation prepared as a summary document using the information in the existing riparian/wetland inventory done in 1980. The plan should be a multidisciplinary effort to evaluate the wetland values of each resource present.

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Accept WS-1.1 -
Develop a multidisciplinary wetlands
management plan.

Reasons:

Proper management of wetlands is important to all resource values. Data is needed to show what the gains and losses are from development so judgment can be made as to whether a development should be done and to what degree it can be done. The information is needed to determine some modifications that may improve the habitat for some resource uses while the development is being done.

Support Needs:

Multidisciplinary team to prepare
documentation from currently existing
inventories.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Reject WS-1.1.
2. Use the EA process by itself.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

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Decision:

Reject the multiple-use
recommendation.

Rationale:

Protection of wetlands can best be provided on a site-by-site basis through an adequate EA process. A multi-disciplinary EA team will prepare a high intensity EA for those actions significantly effecting wetland areas. This is the best way to show the gains and losses on a site specific basis.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

Form 1600-21 (April 1975)

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Name (MFP)	Twin Falls
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Recommendation: WS-1.2

Fence developed spring sites to protect wetlands and water supply.

Rationale:

The Wetland-Riparian section of the Manual 6740.33 recommends that spring sites be protected from overuse by grazing animals or other conflicting uses by fencing. Fencing will allow the establishment of better cover and recovery of brushy species, if present. This will help prevent erosion, provide more diverse wildlife habitat and provide visual contrast.

As discussed in the Objective rationale and in URA 4 (.45B3), erosion in wetlands can detrimentally impact water yields. Preventing erosion and preserving water yields are supported by Watershed Objective 1603.12E3a and b.

Support:

Division of Operations:

Engineers for layout and design, fencing crew to construct fence.

Watershed and Wildlife:

To identify extent of wetland requiring fencing.

Multiple Use Analysis

Studies show that fencing is the only accepted, reliable means of protecting wetlands from livestock abuse. It allows the sustained beneficial use of the spring waters without affecting the productivity of the site. Although aesthetics are adversely affected by fences, their protective qualities outweigh the inconvenience to the human eye, exemplified by support from Wildlife (WL-2.6, 2.10, 3.1, 3.8) and Cultural Resources (CRM-1.6, 1.7).

(Decision)

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Accept WS-1.2 -
Fence wetland around developed springs.

Reasons:

Concentrations of animals in and near springs can deteriorate the quality of this resource.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

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Step 1 WS-1.3 Step 3

Recommendation: WS-1.3

Pipe overflow water from water troughs to fenced areas where wetland values can be enhanced. Appropriate areas for piping water to are existing channels or small reservoirs.

Rationale:

When a spring is developed, water is removed from the spring site with a concomitant reduction in the size of the wetland. The loss of this wetland can be partially mitigated by developing a wetland from the trough overflow. Existing channels are less likely to erode when water is applied than are other areas. Frequently, wetland vegetation may already be present in the channel. If channels are not used, the small reservoirs will retain the water and allow establishment of hydrophytes. Fencing of the area where the water is piped will protect wet soil from compaction and prevent overutilization of vegetation by cattle.

When trough overflow is not piped away from the trough compaction of the wet soil and the continued application of water can result in gully formation.

Support:

Division of Operations:

Engineers for layout and design,
fencing crew to construct fence.

Mitigation and restoring measures are expected for adversely impacting wetlands by executive Order 11990 (Protect of Wetlands) and BLM Manual 6740.13C.

Multiple Use Analysis

Spring developments normally supply livestock water to troughs. Some of these developments are without proper overflow equipment resulting in a trampled and deteriorated wetland. This undesirable situation can easily be changed for the better by piping this overflow water away from the trough and into its natural drainage or a nearby pond. This wetland should then be fenced, protecting it from destructive forces and preserving its vegetation for wildlife and natural beauty.

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Step 1 WS-1.3 Step 3

The fencing of overflow wetlands is supported by Wildlife and conflicts with none of the other activities.

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Accept WS-1.3 -
Fence and protect overflow wetland.

Reasons:

Livestock can trample a wetland, causing soil compaction, deteriorated vegetation and potential gully cutting.

Support Needs:

Division of Operations -
For layout and design and construction.

R. A. Staff -
Identify the sites and implement the projects.

Administration -
Contracting and procurement.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Reject WS-1.3.
2. Fence some of the overflows.

Decision:

Accept the multiple-use recommendation.

Rationale:

Fencing of developed springs is necessary to protect the resources as well as the development. Excess use and trampling of the spring area by livestock can seriously degrade the water quality and impair water yield.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

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Recommendation: WS-1.4

Give maximum protection to the riparian habitat bordering perennial streams with fisheries value. Fence as necessary along the rims of canyons on Fifth Fork of Rock Creek, McMullen Creek, Shoshone Creek and Salmon Falls Creek to prevent cattle access to the riparian area. Rest riparian areas from cattle use until in good ecological condition.

Support:

Engineers for layout and design.

Fencing crew to construct fence.

Range to make condition ratings based on successional stage, plant cover and composition and to develop and implement management plan.

Rationale:

Riparian areas in good ecological condition have beneficial water quality and flood values. These are discussed in URA 4 and Objective 1 rationale. Protecting riparian habitats on the above named streams will conform with Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetland) and Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management). It will implement manual sections 6740 and 7221 and accomplish Watershed objectives 1603.12E3b and c.

The State of the Art document on best management practices for livestock grazing and water quality protection arrived at the following principal conclusions:

- 1) Severe damage to riparian wildlife and fisheries habitat often results from riparian zone activities such as livestock grazing.
- 2) The riparian zone is a critical habitat during some life stage for a very high percentage of the species inhabiting a given geographic area.
- 3) In most cases good livestock management alone is not adequate to protect riparian, fisheries and wildlife habitat from severe damage.
- 4) Of the livestock grazing management techniques available for riparian habitat protection, only riparian zone fencing appears capable of certain protection.
- 5) It is not economically feasible to fence all riparian habitat on livestock grazing lands.

The above named creeks should be fenced because fencing is the only method that assures riparian zone protection and these creeks have important fisheries

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

Form 1600-21 (April 1977)

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Step WS-1.4 Step 3

Multiple Use Analysis

Fencing streams is a controversial and expensive proposition throughout the West. The intended purpose is to protect or restore riparian habitat to a good to excellent ecological condition. Fences, along with time, accomplish this objective, allowing riparian vegetation to grow and multiply unchecked.

Several conflicts arise with this proposition. First, and most important, is that livestock are locked away from their traditional watering streams by the fence. Recreation and aesthetics are also affected by the dense vegetation and fence, which restricts access for fishing and hunting. Another problem is cost and the benefits derived from it. Besides the obvious cost of fence installation, there would also be yearly maintenance plus the cost of new water sources for the cattle. It would be expensive to fence the streams mentioned so the recommendation must be modified. The cost of implementing a deferred grazing system in Western Stockgrowers Allotment, including needed water sources and forage development to facilitate the rest, is estimated at about \$230,000.

By implementing grazing management in the Western Stockgrowers, Magic Common and Baker Lost Creek Allotments the targeted streams will get periodic rests. Shoshone and McMullen Creeks could then be monitored for trend by establishing ungrazed exclosures that could be compared with selected, long term trend study plots. Little can be done at Salmon Falls Creek immediately because we need the cooperation of the Boise District. It is reasonable to work with the cooperators and attempt to find an alternate place for this grazing through development of the land use plan in the Jarbridge R.A. The Fifth Fork of Rock Creek just passes through a small portion of public land offering the BLM little to no chance of improving that stream. With a monitoring system on the two highest potential streams we can watch the effects of the new management systems and act accordingly if future change occurs.

^(Decision)
Multiple Use Recommendation:

Reasons:

Modify WS-1.4 -
Fence exclosures on Shoshone Creek in Magic Common Allotment and on McMullen Creek in Western Stockgrowers. Implement grazing management in the allotments bordering these streams and monitor for riparian trend.

The cost of fencing the streams plus the cost of developing alternate water sites and forage is reason to try livestock grazing management and monitor the changes if they occur. Examination of 1950 and 1978 aerial photos and site examination shows that Shoshone Creek probably has not changed significantly in 30 years, so it probably will not change soon.

This modification is consistent with WS-3.1.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

Form 1600-21 (April 1975)