

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - STEP 1
ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)

Activity

Wildlife

Objective Number

1

OBJECTIVE:

Manage 200,000 acres of mule deer summer range in the Bennett Hills Planning Unit such that there is adequate food, cover, and water for 1,000 animals by 1990.

RATIONALE:

Approximately half (200,000 acres) of the Bennett Hills Unit is identified as suitable deer summer range, yet the URA indicates that resident deer numbers are low. The PAA states that the public desires to see additional big game animals. Policy plans developed in 1975 by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game outline management programs to increase the number of resident deer by 30 and 100 percent in Fish and Game Management Units 45 and 52 respectively. Critical portions of both management units lie within the Bennett Hills Planning Unit. In addition to the facts that more deer are wanted and that there is adequate habitat to handle more deer, the predicted increase in hunters is expected to double state-wide (Economic Supplement) by 1980, thus placing greater emphasis on the need for additional deer.

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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN
RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H. D.H.

Name (MFP)	Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill
Activity	Wildlife
Overlay Reference	
Step 1	No. 1 Step 3

DEER SUMMER (d_{su})

RECOMMENDATIONS

WL - 1.1

Intensify livestock grazing management sufficiently to ensure that no more than 60 percent of the herbaceous vegetation in any one pasture is utilized by domestic livestock.

RATIONALE

Food habit studies show that a sufficient portion of a mule deer's summer diet is composed of herbaceous vegetation. In order to provide adequate habitat for the expected increase in resident deer numbers additional forage has to be made available.

Multiple-Use Analysis

The improvement and increased availability of herbaceous forage would prove beneficial to summering mule deer and enhance the potential for increased resident deer numbers. The hunting season has been closed in the Bennett Hills Planning Unit due primarily to a lack of resident deer. With a sufficient resident population the season could be reopened thus creating a beneficial economic impact on the small towns located within the unit.

This recommendation is complementary to all activity recommendations except for the intensive livestock management recommendation. The conflict with livestock grazing is not considered a major conflict.

Multiple-Use Recommendation

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

The multiple-use benefits outweigh the conflict with livestock grazing.

Decision

Modify the multiple use recommendation as follows:

Maximum allowable utilization by livestock in any pasture will be determined in the formulation of the AMP. The degree of utilization in any use pasture will not exceed the identified needs of wildlife (food and cover) and watershed protection.

Reasons

To allow more flexibility in development of specific grazing systems and AMPs commensurate with related on-site needs.

Note: Attach additional sheets, if needed

(Instructions on reverse)

Form 1600-21 (April 1975)

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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN
RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H.

Name (MFP)	Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill
Activity	Wildlife
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DEER SUMMER (d_{su})

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 1.2

Throughout mule deer summer ranges, reduce the sagebrush canopy by 40 to 60 percent in those areas where the present sagebrush canopy cover exceeds 25 percent.

RATIONALE

To meet the expected increase in mule deer numbers additional forage is required. The reduction of sagebrush and corresponding increase in herbaceous vegetation (forbs and grasses) would help meet this demand.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation is complementary to the watershed recommendation (W-1.4), recreation recommendations (R-4.1, 4.2 & 4.3), and the livestock grazing recommendations dealing with brush control. The improved herbaceous vegetation would have a beneficial economic impact on wildlife, recreation, and livestock. Proper layout and design of brush removal projects would mitigate any adverse environmental impacts associated with such a project.

This recommendation does conflict with wildlife recommendation WL-7.1 which deals with maintaining the existing brush on sage grouse nesting and wintering areas. Since the sage grouse nesting areas overlap the deer summer areas, poorly designed brush removal projects could adversely affect sage grouse nesting. However, in those areas where brush is not limited, it is felt that brush control could be beneficial for brooding grouse. Consequently, the recommendation concerning sage grouse nesting habitat will be modified to the extent that brush removal will be allowed so long as sufficient brush is maintained for present and future nesting populations.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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B.H.

Name (MFP)
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DEER SUMMER (d_{su})

RECOMMENDATIONS

WL - 1.3

All revegetation projects located in deer summer areas should include a variety of both forbs and grasses.

RATIONALE

The introduction of a variety of herbaceous species would provide a greater variety of forage species for deer, and improve the opportunity to increase the quality as well as quantity of the summer range.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation is complementary to watershed recommendation (W-1.5) and does not conflict with any other activity recommendation. Providing a variety of species would be beneficial to the environment by establishing a diversity of vegetation thus increasing the complexity of the community. Economically the initial cost of the seeding would be increased, but the long-term economic return to all resource activities would over-ride these costs.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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DEER SUMMER (d_{su})

RECOMMENDATIONS

RATIONALE

WL - 1.4

Establish livestock grazing systems that will enhance the reproduction and forage availability of forbs and shrubs.

Livestock grazing systems offer us an opportunity by which we can improve mule deer summer range. However, the system, in order to enhance these species, must be based upon the physiological requirement of forbs and shrubs and not grasses alone.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation is complementary to watershed activity recommendation W-1.2 and range management recommendations dealing with grazing systems. The initial costs of implementing a grazing system is higher than the implementation of a season long system. However, the increased benefits derived from an intensively managed system should prove to off-set the initial costs.

There are no resource activity recommendations that conflict with this recommendation.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Reasons

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H.

Name (MFP)	Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hil
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DEER SUMMER (d_{su})

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 1.5

In cooperation with the Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game initiate studies that will:
1) identify what, if any, the specific habitat requirements are for fawning;
2) identify a census technique or method to determine how many resident deer inhabit the planning unit.

RATIONALE

No specific habitat requirements for fawning have been identified; however, it is conceivable that the animals are selecting areas that have a certain density of shrubs, etc. If this situation exists it then becomes a factor which must be considered prior to any brush control projects. Mule deer resident populations are known to be low. However, there are no census methods being used currently to identify the approximate number or trend. To identify whether or not the objective is being met a census method should be initiated.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation does not conflict with any other resource recommendation, nor does it create any adverse impact on the environment. If this information does not become available in the immediate future it could have serious social and economic impacts.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - STEP 1
ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)

Activity

Wildlife

Objective Number

2

OBJECTIVE:

Manage 122,500 acres of mule deer winter range in the Bennett Hills and Timmerman Hills Planning Units in order to provide adequate food and cover for 3500 animals by 1990.

RATIONALE:

It is presently unknown from where exactly the deer wintering in the two planning units come from. However, the majority are known to move from north of State Highway 68, and if these animals summering in Game Management Units 44, 48, 49, and perhaps even 43 are to be enhanced, the winter ranges in both planning units must be managed and improved. Of added importance to the winter ranges, specifically in Timmerman Hills, is the fact that the traditional winter ranges in Unit 48 (Sun Valley) are becoming unavailable to deer due to increased recreational activities and its associated development.

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H.

Name (MFP)	Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill
Activity	Wildlife
Overlay Reference	Step 1 No. 1 Step 3

DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL 2.1

Intensively manage livestock grazing sufficient to ensure that no more than 40 percent of the current annual growth on important shrubs is utilized by livestock on ranges identified as critical deer wintering areas. Important shrubs include bitterbrush, chokecherry, serviceberry, and sagebrush species.

RATIONALE

These shrubs comprise approximately 80 percent of a wintering deer's diet. Consequently if deer numbers are to be increased additional forage will have to be made available for the animals.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation could conflict with the range management recommendation to intensify livestock grazing. To date there is insufficient data to say if livestock are utilizing more than 40 percent of the current annual growth under the present grazing systems. If systems were implemented that introduced heavy grazing pressure on the critical winter ranges in the fall there could be a major conflict arising between livestock and wildlife. Such a system could seriously impact the environment. However, if a grazing system could not be designed that would reduce the browse utilization by livestock, there would be a significant economic impact on the livestock users if a reduction in numbers were the only alternative.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

It is felt that the mule deer resource wintering in these units are of critical importance and every effort should be made to enhance these herds.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation

Reason

The degree of use can be monitored through AMP and wildlife studies.

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H. - T.H.

Name (MFP)

Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill

Activity

Wildlife

Overlay Reference

Step 1 No. 1 Step 3

DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 2.2

No land treatment project that would reduce the existing shrub density should be proposed on the critical deer winter ranges.

RATIONALE

Sagebrush comprises an important component of the deer's winter diet and any reduction in quantity would adversely affect the capacity of the habitat to winter deer.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation conflicts with the range management recommendation dealing with the reduction of sagebrush in order to increase livestock forage. In addition these critical deer ranges are also identified as sage grouse wintering areas, upland game bird areas, and raptor foraging areas. Since all this wildlife is either directly or indirectly depend upon sagebrush it is felt that at the present time any reduction in brush would adversely impact wildlife. Consequently, until there is sufficient data to show that the present and future wildlife populations will not be adversely affected by brush control the existing wildlife recommendation will be accepted as stated.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation

Reasons

(Refer to Appendix I and II of Range Management for supplemental coordination guides).

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

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DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 2.3

Investigate the opportunity to improve portions of the winter range by the introduction of palatable shrubs.

RATIONALE

Habitat studies have indicated that the winter range could be improved by increasing the variety and quantity of shrubs. However presently the feasibility of such a planting is unknown. Experimental seedings and plantings should be undertaken on the winter ranges to determine seeding and/or planting rates, methods of such, and species.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation does not conflict with any other resource activity recommendation. The long-term environmental impacts would be beneficial by developing a diversity of species in areas and also improving both quality and quantity of winter forage for mule deer. The initial economic investment would be higher per acre than a normal seeding; however, when properly designed it will add a critical ingredient which cannot be judged from an economic viewpoint.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

B.H. - T.H!

Name (MFP)

Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill

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Wildlife

Overlay Reference

Step 1 No. 1 Step 3

DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 2.4

Implement grazing systems that will assure that no more than 1/3 of the critical winter ranges are grazed in the fall (after August 15).

RATIONALE

To improve both quality and quantity of forage for wintering deer, 2/3 of the critical deer winter ranges should be closed to livestock grazing after 8/15. Normally the herbaceous vegetation begins to dry on or about this date causing the livestock to turn toward the more nutritious shrubs resulting in a reduction of available winter forage for deer.

Multiple-Use Analysis

The only activity recommendation which could conflict concerns range management. Presently the four critical winter range areas encompass five allotments. The proposal is to revise or implement AMPs on three of the critical areas. Consequently this recommendation, if considered when implementing the AMPs, should not create any major conflicts. The King Hill critical range encompasses two allotments and it is not felt that under the existing AMPs that this recommendation will create a significant conflict.

Multiple-Use Recommendation

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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B.H. - T.H.

Name (MFP)

Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill

Activity

Wildlife

Overlay Reference

Step 1 No. 1 Step 3

DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL - 2.5

Defer livestock grazing on the critical deer winter ranges west of Highway 46 until after April 15, and those critical ranges east of Highway 46 until after May 1.

RATIONALE

The food habits of livestock and deer are very similar during the spring period, and prior to April 15 there is only a limited amount of forage being produced. Consequently when both game and livestock are on an area prior to April 15, there is competition for the existing forage. Deer have been under stress for several months due to cold temperatures and lack of high quality forage, and if additional stress is employed due to a lack of spring forage it could seriously impact the population.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation conflicts with the range management recommendation concerning opening dates. However, the recommended opening dates on critical areas lying west of Highway 46 coincides with the adjudicated opening date. The recommended opening date in areas lying east of Highway 46 does not complement the adjudicated opening date but does coincide with the overall feeling of the resource managers that May 1 would more aptly fit the physiological requirements of the vegetation.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Encourage the livestock users to defer grazing on the critical deer winter ranges until after April 15 on those areas west of Highway 46 and after April 30 on those areas east of Highway 46.

Reasons

Step 1 recommendation conflicted with the RM recommendation concerning opening dates; however, it was felt that from the multiple-use aspect the users should be encouraged to defer grazing for approximately two weeks.

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WL - 2.5 (Continued)

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Decision

Modify the Step 2 multiple use recommendation as follows:

Establish opening dates for livestock grazing compatible with identified wildlife needs.

Reasons

As a rule, livestock grazing seasons (opening and closing dates) have been established by previous range adjudication. A fixed season of use is one of the basic criteria to provide stability to a year round livestock operation.

An allotment management plan is the vehicle which allows flexibility in seasons of use. The normal season of use and allowable flexibility should be established or adjusted in AMP formulation to best-fit the needs of livestock and wildlife in any given allotment.

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Name (MFP)
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Step 1 No. 1 Step 3

DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL 2.6

Close the critical deer winter ranges to off-road vehicles from December 15 through March 31.

RATIONALE

Deer during the winter are under considerable stress due to deep snow, cold temperatures, and a lack of quality forage. Additional stress, such as harassment from humans or their machines could severely impair their ability to survive the winter.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation conflicts with recreation recommendation R-8.2 which recommends that the entire unit remain open to ORVs. However, since the critical deer areas are restricted to a small percentage of the unit and ORVs are felt to cause undue stress on wintering animals, the recreation recommendation will be modified.

Multiple-Use Recommendation

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

The critical areas do not constitute a large portion of the unit nor do they involve areas which are excellent snowmobile areas. Consequently it is not felt that the closure will significantly impact existing ORV use.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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B.H. - T.H.
Name (MFP)
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WINTER DEER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL 2.7

If the ongoing telemetry study identifies that definite deer migration routes exist in the planning units, such routes should be managed to insure that no barriers are created that would prevent the animals from going access to their winter ranges.

RATIONALE

In order to increase deer numbers the migration routes to and from the winter ranges must remain open and available to the animals.

Multiple-Use Analysis

There are no significant conflicts created by this recommendation with other resource activities, and it is felt that the recommendation should remain unchanged.

Multiple-Use Recommendation

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale as stated above.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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Name (MFP)

Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hil

Activity

Wildlife

Overlay Reference

Step 1 No. 1 Step 3

DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

WL 2.8

Coordinate with the wildlife program any brush removal project that is located on deer winter range, to insure that adequate winter deer forage and cover are maintained.

RATIONALE

Sagebrush comprises an important component of the deer's winter diet and the indiscriminate removal of brush could seriously impact winter mule deer population.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation complements watershed recommendation W-1.4 and Recreation recommendations R-4.1, .2, .3, and constitutes a minor conflict with range management recommendations dealing with brush removal. However, the wildlife recommendation does not preclude brush removal, it only states that sufficient brush needs to be maintained to meet the habitat requirements of wintering deer. Since the public value will be best served by maintaining and/or improving the deer populations as well as providing additional forage for livestock the wildlife recommendation, as proposed, will remain the same.

Multiple-Use Recommendation

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

Reasons

Refer to the above Multiple-Use Analysis and Rationale.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.

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B.H. - T.H.

Name (MFP)

Bennett Hills-Timmerman Hill

Activity

Wildlife

Overlay Reference

Step 1 No. 1 Step 3

DEER WINTER (d_{wt})

RECOMMENDATION

RATIONALE

WL 2.9

Propose no land disposal actions for any areas identified as deer winter range.

In order to successfully winter the project increase in deer numbers the existing winter range areas must be retained in public ownership and managed accordingly.

Support:

Initiate a land exchange to gain ownership of the private land identified as critical deer winter range on Picabo Hills.

Multiple-Use Analysis

This recommendation complements all activity recommendations except for lands. Lands recommendation L-3.1A recommends the disposal of a small portion of winter range located north of Bliss. This area lies on the fringes of the agricultural land and is felt to have more public value in its present native state as winter range than it would as agricultural land. By excluding this small area from the lands recommendation there would not be a significant impact on the overall disposal plan.

Multiple-Use Recommendations

Reasons

Accept the recommendation as stated above.

The winter range area has greater public value in its present state than it would have if sold to a private individual.

Decision

Adopt the Step 2 multiple use recommendation.