

Environmental Consequences

Approximately 20,000 acres of both range and wildlife seedings are proposed in the next 20 years. These seedings would be designed to increase the carrying capacity of the range. Approximately 3,000 acres of crucial elk/mule deer winter range would also be aerial seeded along the Snake River Breaks.

The timber program has proposed approximately 1,136 acres of sales in deer fall/winter ranges. Minimal impacts are expected from these timber sales.

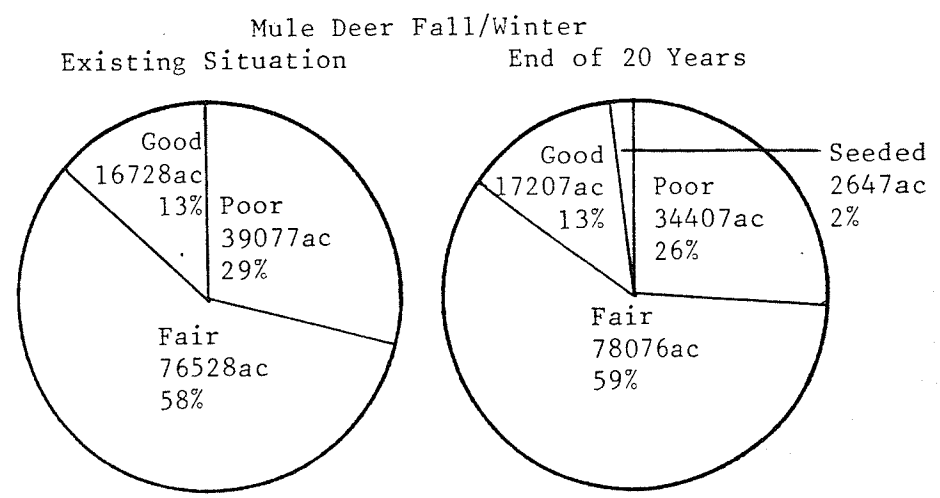
Approximately 1,894 acres of timber sales are proposed in crucial mule deer winter range. Impacts are expected to be minimal. The 116 miles of logging roads could put additional hunting pressure on populations.

Approximately 6,690 acres of crucial winter range is proposed for sale or exchange. This would decrease the available crucial habitat for the mule deer population by approximately 5%. If lands are exchanged for equal or better value, there would be no negative impacts.

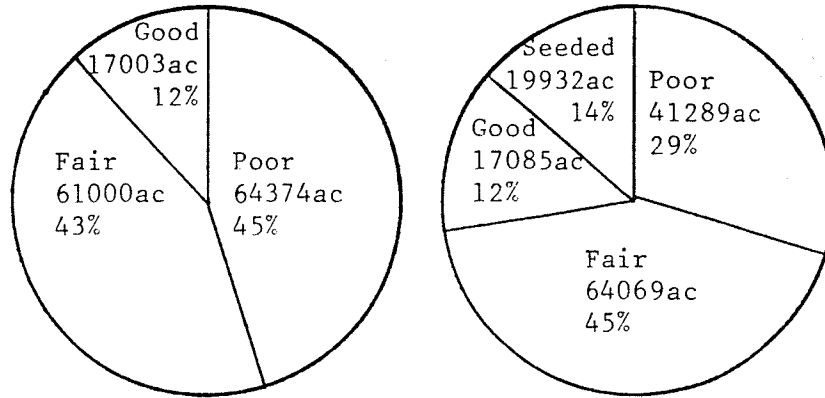
The 12,000 acre Boise Front ACEC would be managed as crucial mule deer winter range. Habitat improvement projects would help increase the carrying capacity of this crucial habitat.

Impacts from the proposed .15% livestock AUM increases, together with fences, water developments, and pipelines for livestock, are expected to provide less forage for mule deer populations. Overall, mule deer ranges in the resource area are expected to be able to support a 20% increase over the current population. This would not meet population goals set for the habitat by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The acreages and percentages of existing and 20-year projected habitat conditions are shown below.



Mule Deer Crucial Winter
Existing Situation End of 20 Years



Antelope

Crucial antelope winter ranges would not show any improvement under this alternative. Approximately 13% of the range would be seeded. This would increase the forage base for the population. The remaining range would not be seeded due to the infestation of medusahead wildrye.

Approximately 10% of this crucial habitat is proposed to be sold or exchanged. This loss of habitat could have negative impacts to the welfare of the herd.

The current population is approximately 50 animals. Through improved livestock management, and the use of grazing systems, and fences, water developments and pipelines for livestock, the habitat is expected to be able to support a population of 100 animals.

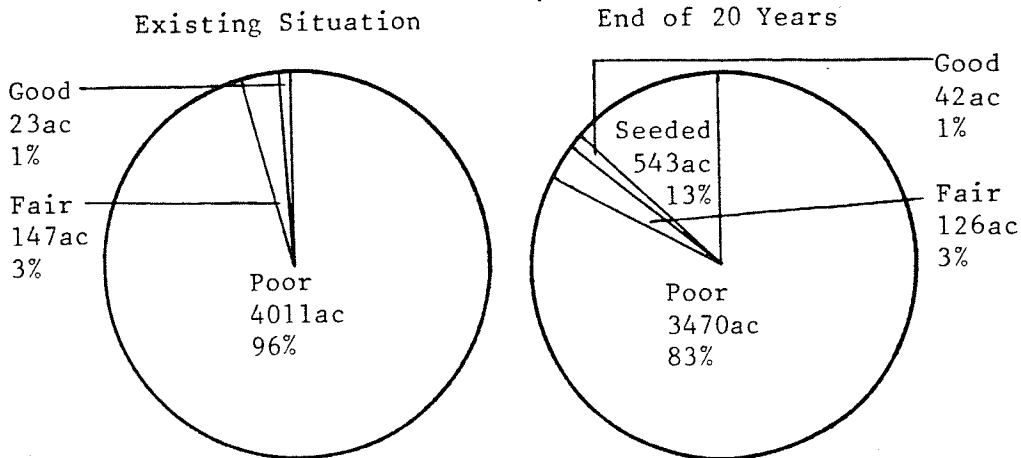
Seedings will emphasize shrub species to improve the winter forage factor.

This would not meet the population goals set for the area by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The acreages and percentages of existing and 20-year projected habitat conditions are shown below.

Environmental Consequences

Antelope



Sage Grouse

Currently 60% of sage grouse habitat is in fair to good condition. Under this alternative, a slight improvement is predicted.

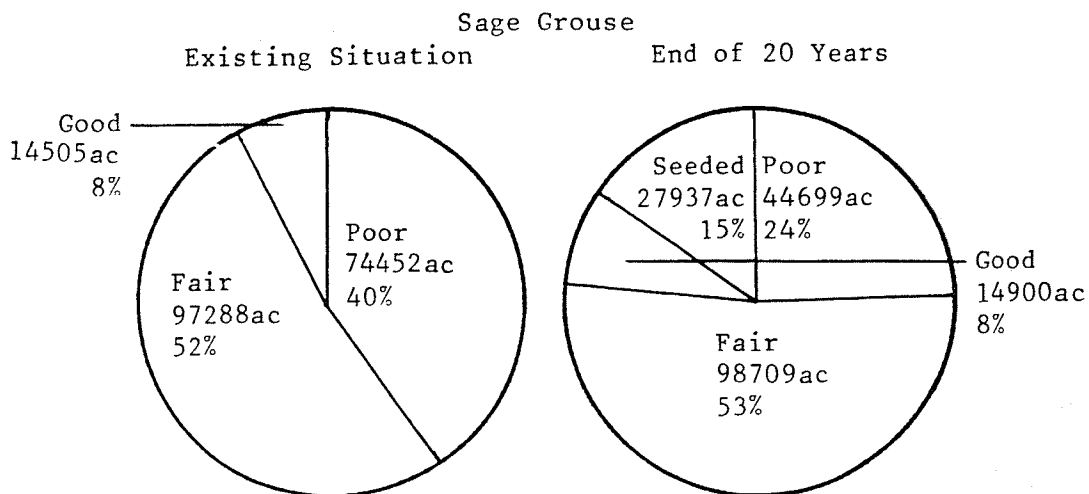
The seedings for both livestock and big game would improve nesting and brood-rearing habitat. These seedings would constitute approximately 15% of available sage grouse habitat. Approximately 9,000 acres occur in the crucial zone or 2 miles from a strutting ground. Disturbance of this area could have negative impacts during the breeding season.

Seedings without sagebrush would not improve the forage factor for this species. They will, however, relieve the grazing pressure on native ranges used by sage grouse.

Approximately 3,900 acres of land located within a crucial zone is proposed for sale or exchange. If these lands are disposed of, negative impacts to nesting habitat could occur.

The proposed 15% increase in livestock AUMs should have minimal impacts to sage grouse habitat. Special management may be necessary in some areas during the mating season.

The acreages and percentages of existing and 20-year projected habitat conditions are shown below.



Sensitive Animal Species

Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse

Currently 55% of sharp-tail habitat is in fair to good condition. Under this alternative habitat would show a slight improvement.

Approximately 330 acres of proposed wildlife seedings are expected to improve the nesting and brood-rearing habitat of the area.

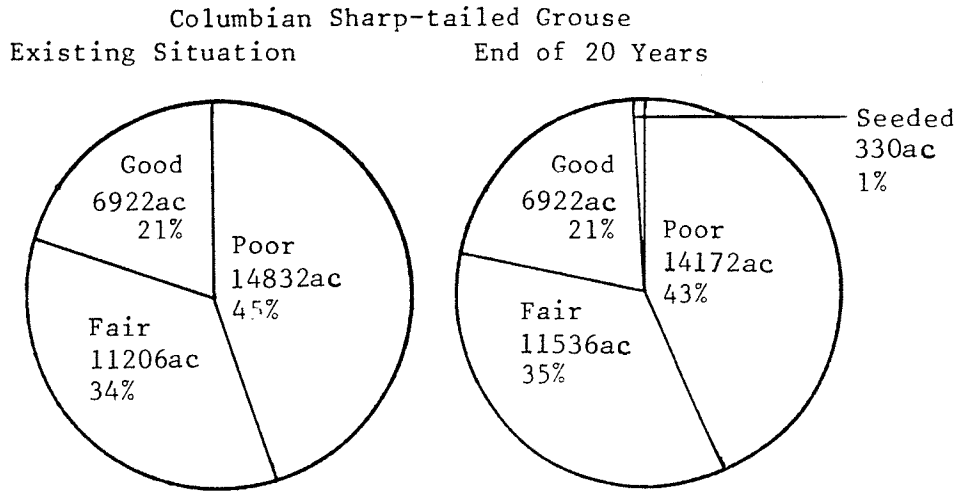
Due to the small population, the proposed 15% increase in livestock AUMs should have minimal impacts on the habitat and population.

The proposed land transfer of 880 acres could have negative impacts if a local population is using the area or a dancing ground is located nearby.

Approximately 4,200 acres in the Sage Creek allotment would be designated and managed as an ACEC. The Sage Creek allotment would be inventoried for vegetative production and livestock use adjustments would be pursued and monitored to benefit sharp-tailed grouse. Livestock use adjustments would improve sharp-tailed grouse habitat and should stimulate population growth.

The acreages and percentages of existing and 20-year projected habitat conditions are shown below.

Environmental Consequences



Long-billed Curlew

Range and wildlife seedings proposed under this alternative that occur in areas used by curlew would have negative impacts on nesting habitat. Most species of grasses used in seedings are too high to be used by nesting females.

Approximately 3,750 acres of curlew habitat is proposed for sale or exchange. Negative impacts could occur if vegetative structure is changed and nesting habitat is decreased.

The 61,000 acre Black Canyon Curlew Area would be designated and managed as an area of critical environmental concern (ACEC). The proposed management of the area would protect the habitat to maintain the current population of 1,000 nesting pairs.

Birds of Prey

This alternative would generally improve habitat conditions for raptors in the Birds of Prey area through ORV restrictions.

Livestock

Under this alternative livestock forage levels would decrease by 5,407 AUMs due to land transferred out of federal ownership. In the short term (5 year protection) with 2,800 AUMs produced on 7,600 acres of seedings, the resulting available forage level of 63,942 AUMs would be a 4% decrease from the present five year average license use of 66,424 AUMs.

Over the long term (20 year protection) additional seedings of 23,000 acres would produce 8,700 AUMs. Installation of improvements (water

systems, fencing) along with increased livestock management practices on approximately 76,000 acres of native range would increase forage production an additional 3,900 AUMs.

Total forage production is expected to reach 76,613 AUMs over the long term. This would be a 15% increase from the present five year average license use.

The greatest impact to the livestock program as in Alternative B would be the transfer of land out of federal ownership. In this alternative 33,101 allotted acres are scheduled for sale, exchange or desert land entry. Special designation, historic and cultural areas of 915 acres account for an additional loss of 162 AUMs.

In both the short and long term analysis of range improvements and land treatment, AUMs lost to transfers and other special designation areas were considered removed prior to addition of new forage generated.

Impacts are allotment specific and resulting AUM levels are shown in Appendix F.

Trend information is not available at present. Monitoring studies will be used to adjust stocking levels on allotments. Data presented in Appendix E will be used as baseline information in prioritizing management and monitoring efforts to improve range condition where needed. Annual grass ranges (medusahead/cheatgrass) would receive high priority land treatment efforts to restore perennial grasses.

Stock driveways would be eliminated on 22,237 acres, continued on 40,763 acres, and added on 627 acres for a total of 41,390 acres available.

Wild Horses

Under this alternative the Crane Creek herd would be removed.

The Four-Mile herd would be maintained at 20 head. The livestock AUM reduction of 424 AUMs for maintenance of range condition which has been in effect since 1977 would continue.

LANDS AND REALTY RESOURCES

Lands

Land transfer would consist of 243 acres for sale, 28,750 acres for sale or exchange, 6,174 acres for exchange and 560 acres for Desert Land Entry for a total of 35,727 acres.

Of the lands identified for sale, 80 acres would be a sanitary landfill for Ada County, and 160 acres already under R&PP lease to the Parma Rod and Gun Club would be patented. The remaining three acres are scattered occupancy and agricultural trespass parcels that have been surveyed and lotted. Transfer of land by sale would generate approximately \$21,600 based on a current appraisal for the 80 acres to be sold to Ada County, estimates

Environmental Consequences

of the value of the small parcels that total 3 acres, and the 160 acres for the Parma Rod and Gun Club.

The lands proposed for transfer or sale or exchange are generally small isolated parcels that appear to meet the disposal criteria in Section 203(a)(1) of FLPMA. Their disposal would reduce problem management areas and/or consolidate land ownership patterns, thereby improving management and reducing management costs. The larger parcels would be examined for exchange possibilities before sale is considered, although any parcel would be available for exchange.

There are three exchange proposals pending in the resource area being considered in this plan. They are referred to as the Brownlee, Little, and Henggeler exchanges. The Brownlee exchange is a State proposal to acquire 6,251 acres of public land for 6,171 acres of State land, however, it is proposed to retain 280 acres of the selected public land for timber production. This would result in a corresponding decrease in the number of acres to be acquired from the State. The exchange would consolidate State and public lands and would improve management efficiency for both governments.

The Little exchange is a private proposal to acquire 120 acres of public land for 160 acres of private land. The offered private land is identified for acquisition in the Boise Front MFP to facilitate watershed and grazing management. Action on this proposal has been initiated and will continue through development of this RMP.

The Henggeler proposal is to exchange 14 acres of private land for 83 acres of public land. The acquisition of the private land would provide access to the Snake River in an area with virtually no public access and would place the remainder of Crow Island in public ownership.

Land transfer for agricultural use (Desert Land Entry) would result in only one estimated trespass case, because of the limited number of acres to be transferred under this category. The average administrative cost for a trespass case is \$1,250.

Rights-of-Ways

Overhead, surface and/or subsurface rights-of-way would be restricted on 10,331 acres of public land due to conflicts with candidate or sensitive plants, significant cultural or recreation sites, and on the portion of the Payette River recommended for Wild and Scenic River study - 8 miles of the South Fork Payette River. The areas precluded or restricted are generally small acreages and there would be few conflicts with major utility rights-of-way since rights-of-way could be rerouted slightly to avoid the smaller areas.

Hydroelectric development would be precluded on 8 miles of the South Fork Payette River.

Withdrawals

Of the lands presently withdrawn for livestock driveways (approximately 53,000 acres), 22,237 acres would be revoked from withdrawals, 40,763 would continue, and 627 acres would be added.

There is only one C&MU classification in the resource area encompassing 37.31 acres. This parcel was acquired under a Section 8 (Taylor Grazing Act) exchange. When the order opening the lands to the administration of the public land laws was published, a C&MU classification was placed on it at the same time, precluding disposal. This parcel contains no unique resources and revoking the classification would put it in the same status of general retention as the other public lands adjacent to it.

Additional withdrawals may be forthcoming if Congress designates the Payette River as a Wild and Scenic River. The final acreage withdrawn may be more or less than that proposed in this plan.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGIC RESOURCESCultural Resources

Cultural resource sites in critical need of special management (Grey's Creek, Indian Creek, Milk Creek, Cabin Creek, Mineral, Quartzburg, Centerville and Placerville) would continue to be protected by BLM standard operating procedures and would receive additional protection through nomination and acceptance to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The effects of livestock trampling would be mitigated through the installation of protective fencing and the effects of erosion would be diminished by the removal of livestock from the immediate site area, and the improvement of riparian habitat.

Cultural Resource Management Plans (CRMP) prepared for these sites will detail additional inventory needs and monitoring schedules to determine the rate of deterioration, impacts of vandalism, etc.

Paleontologic Resources

The impacts from this alternative can not be fully analyzed since the paleontologic inventory for the resource area is not complete. The greatest possible impacts would be on the 35,727 acres proposed for transfer from federal ownership. Even with paleontologic clearances, unknown scientifically significant fossils could be lost, destroyed, or closed off from scientific study.

RECREATION RESOURCESRecreation

There would be 3,276 acres open to ORV use, 481,615 acres limited and 2,575 acres closed. These figures represent no change from Alternative C except that a 5 acre campsite would be closed instead of limited. The limited use areas would decrease by 35,727 acres as lands are transferred from federal ownership. Impacts would be minimal on recreational ORV use.