

Description of Alternatives

1. Past, current and expected funding suggested that this alternative would not be economically feasible. It would require a high investment level to treat all lands invaded by medusahead rye (greater than \$50.00 per acre on the best sites to \$100.00 on poorer sites). A benefit/cost analysis using the current grazing fee charges would not prove beneficial.
2. It would not meet the provisions of existing laws and regulations for providing for multiple use of the public lands. This alternative would have catastrophic impact on crucial wildlife habitat as available AUMs would be given to livestock.
3. Existing social acceptance of providing for wildlife habitat on public lands for nature study, hunting and overall enjoyment by the areas population and the people of the State of Idaho would make the alternative unacceptable. Public comments received during the early stages of the planning process favored giving wildlife consideration in our plans.

This alternative would not meet the public's interest.

Maximum Wildlife Production

This alternative would have emphasized converting land capabilities to wildlife habitat to the maximum extent possible without consideration for other resource needs and/or demands.

This alternative was not further developed because:

1. All the currently developed alternatives would meet the reasonable numbers for wildlife populations desired by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.
2. The development of maximum wildlife habitat on public lands would create major increases in wildlife numbers that would have significant impacts (adverse) on adjacent private lands because the private land contains a major amount of winter habitat (50%+) that would have to support the wintering wildlife. This would be in direct conflict with private landowners management of private wintering livestock ranges.

Public comments received during early stages of the planning process identified that population explosions were a problem particularly in wintering areas. A maximum wildlife production alternative is counter to solving this concern and would not solve the issue. An alternative designed to increase wildlife populations and provide winter wildlife habitat needs will be developed.

Maximum Environmental Protection

This alternative would have limited any outside influence to the natural ecosystem of the area and would have prohibited the conversion of any lands to uses that would deplete resources or result in surface disturbing activities.

It was not developed because:

1. Much of the vegetative resources have been disturbed and invaded by exotic vegetative species which do not contribute to the natural habitat of endemic species. The treatment of entire areas invaded by exotic species (medusahead rye) is currently not feasible in light of existing and expected funding levels over the duration of this planning and management cycle.
2. Much of the land pattern is fragmented and affected by management activities (generally non natural) occurring on adjacent private lands.
3. Based upon current and expected funding levels and past program funding levels this alternative would be unfeasible to implement. Excessive costs would be required beyond a reasonable level to provide boundary fencing and no benefiting program would have the funds for such costs.

Public input received during early stages of planning process centered upon recognition of all uses at moderate management levels. As a result of this public input, the above would not be an acceptable alternative.

No Livestock Grazing

This alternative would have removed the grazing of livestock from the public lands in the resource area. This alternative was eliminated from consideration early in the planning process. It was determined that it is both unreasonable and not feasible in light of local social, economic and environmental conditions. The rationale for not considering this alternative is:

1. The resource area is made up of both blocked and fragmented public lands. About 336 of the allotments exist on this land base (487,500 acres). Extensive fencing of the public land boundary would be required to keep livestock off of the public lands from adjacent private lands and U.S. Forest Service allotments. This fencing cost would be prohibitive and unreasonable and the enforcement of no grazing would be unrealistic as well as unmanageable. This fencing would also have an adverse impact on movement of wildlife particularly if fences had to be built to meet sheep specifications.
2. Livestock grazing is an important industry in the eight county area that the resource area lies within. It contributes \$43 million and 1,553 jobs to the regional economy of west-central Idaho. Given this economic significance and the general social acceptance of livestock grazing by the people in this area and the State of Idaho, there would be no realistic support for this alternative.
3. Although a no grazing alternative would, in part, satisfy a portion of the range management issue, it would not have resulted in major rangeland improvements. This is due to the magnitude of poor condition rangeland resulting from invasion of medusahead rye grass and not as a result of livestock on the rangeland.

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4. Livestock grazing has long been recognized as a legitimate use of the public lands. The removal of this use from a multiple use resource area, where forage in fair or better condition exists, cannot be justified.
5. Public input received during public meetings, supported management actions that recognized all uses on public lands. No - "No Grazing" type management actions were proposed.

RELATIONSHIP TO NEPA GOALS

The alternatives described in this RMP/EIS all would achieve the requirements of sections 101 and 1023(1) of NEPA and other environmental laws and policies. Each of the alternatives is designed to use practicable means to create and maintain conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, but the emphasis is different in each alternative. Alternative A would place little emphasis on preservation of natural aspects of our national heritage and enhancement of the quality of renewable resources. Alternatives A, B, C, D and E would limit the range of uses and the environment. Alternative E, the Preferred Alternative, would attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment while preserving important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage.

All actions taken to implement the Preferred Alternative (Alternative E) would be monitored as outlined in Appendix P.

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

A comparison between alternatives is shown on the following page.

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

Resource	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D	Alternative E	
SOILS - Erosion Rate	Up to 10% increase.	5% increase.	20% decrease.	10% increase.	2% increase.	
WATER QUALITY	Slight improvement.	Slight decline.	Moderate improvement.	Slight decline.	Slight improvement.	
VEGETATION - Rangeland Condition	Decline on 3 to 5% of the area.	Improvement on 18 to 23% of the area.	Improvement on 20 to 25% of the area.	Improvement on 14 to 19% of the area.	Improvement on 22 to 27% of the area.	
CANDIDATE AND SENSITIVE PLANTS	2 Research Natural Areas-475 acres. Slight protection.	5 Research Natural Areas-1,355 acres. Moderate protection.	5 Research Natural Areas -1,355 acres. Full protection.	5 Research Natural Areas-1,355 acres. Full protection.	5 Research Natural Areas-1,355 acres. Moderate protection.	
RIPARIAN HABITAT - Miles changed - primary cause	106 - maintain 11 - improve-AUM/projects 5 - decrease-AUM 71 - improve-AMP	101-maintain 9 - improve-AUM/projects 12 - decrease-AUM 176 - improve-AMP	107 - maintain 12 - improve-AUM/projects 3 - decrease-AUM 140 - improve-AMP	94 - maintain 11 - Improve-AUM/projects 17 - decrease-AUM 204 - improve-AMP	102 - maintain 16 - Improve-AUM/projects 4 - decrease-AUM 142 - improve-AMP	
AQUATIC HABITAT - Miles changed - primary cause	67 - maintain 14 - improve-projects 73 - improve-AMP	58 - maintain 10 - improve-projects 12 - decrease-AUM 178 - improve-AMP	57 - maintain 23 - improve-AUM/projects 142 - improve-AMP	55 - maintain 10 - Improve-projects 14 - decrease-AUM 206 - improve-AMP	66 - maintain 14 - Improve-projects 142 - improve-AMP	
WILDLIFE						
Population	Elk 5% decrease Mule Deer 5% decrease Changes that Habitat would Support	Antelope No change Sage Grouse Slight decrease Sharp-tailed Grouse Slight decrease Curlew Little change	25% increase 25% increase 50 animal increase Slight increase Slight increase Slight decrease	35% increase 35% increase 150 animal increase Moderate increase Moderate increase Little change	20% increase 20% increase 50 animal increase Slight increase Slight increase Little change	22% increase 33% increase 125 animal increase Slight increase Slight increase Little change
LIVESTOCK - 20-year AUM	66,014	71,076	53,643	76,613	70,536	
WILD HORSES - 4-Mile Herd Size West Crane 20 years	10 12	20 0	20 30	20 0	20 0	
LANDS						
Sale	243	563	243	243	563	
Sale/Exchange	1,397	33,409	0	28,750	10,107	
Exchange	0	5,957	5,775	6,174	6,374	
DLE	560	560	0	560	560	
Special Exc.	0	0	11,306	0	0	
TOTAL	2,200	40,489	17,324	35,727	17,604	
RIGHTS-OF-WAY - Acres restricted & resource values	4,333 Cultural, recreation.	6,886 Candidate & sensitive plants, cultural, recreation.	10,326 Candidate & sensitive plants, cultural, recreation.	10,331 Candidate & sensitive plants, cultural, recreation.	6,696 Candidate & sensitive plants, cultural, recreation.	
CULTURAL - National Register of Historic Places	No new sites nominated. One site reevaluated.	8 sites nominated. One site reevaluated.	8 sites nominated. One site reevaluated.	8 sites nominated. One site reevaluated.	8 sites nominated. One site reevaluated.	
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS - Recommend for study	None.	South Fork Payette - 8 miles.	South Fork Payette - 8 miles. North Fork Payette - 6 miles.	South Fork Payette - 8 miles.	South Fork Payette - 8 miles.	
RECREATION - Off-road vehicle designations	Open - 75% Limited - 25% Closed - Less than 1%	Open - 70% Limited - 30% Closed - Less than 1%	Open - Less than 1% Limited - 99% Closed - Less than 1%	Open - Less than 1% Limited - 99% Closed - Less than 1%	Open - 50% Limited - 50% Closed - Less than 1%	
MINERALS - Locatable	94%	94%	93%	93%	94%	
Acreeage open Leasable	94%	94%	93%	94%	94%	
FORESTRY - Commercial Forest Lands Annual Harvest Roads needed annually	26,686 1 million board feet 2 miles	25,642 1.7 million board feet 3.4 miles	20,026 1/2 million board feet 1 mile	25,347 2.9 million board feet 5.8 miles	26,663 1.7 million board feet 3.4 miles	
FIRE - Annual suppression costs	\$109,300	\$115,000	\$109,300	\$115,000	\$112,000	
ECONOMICS -						
Direct Earnings						
Crop Agriculture	\$ 207,800	\$ 207,800	\$ 0	\$ 207,800	\$ 207,800	
Livestock (20-year)	\$ 2,700,000	\$ 2,900,000	\$ 2,200,000	\$ 3,100,000	\$ 2,900,000	
Recreation (20-year)	\$ 4,700,000	\$ 4,700,000	\$ 4,700,000	\$ 4,700,000	\$ 4,700,000	
Lumber/Wood	\$ 215,000	\$ 387,000	\$ 107,500	\$ 645,000	\$ 387,000	
Total Earnings						
Crop Agriculture	\$ 529,700	\$ 529,700	\$ 0	\$ 529,700	\$ 529,700	
Livestock (20-year)	\$ 7,200,000	\$ 7,600,000	\$ 5,800,000	\$ 8,200,000	\$ 7,700,000	
Recreation (20-year)	\$10,600,000	\$10,600,000	\$10,600,000	\$10,600,000	\$10,600,000	
Lumber/Wood	\$ 515,000	\$ 926,900	\$ 257,500	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 926,900	
Direct Employment						
Crop Agriculture	7	7	0	7	7	
Livestock (20-year)	96	103	77	111	104	
Recreation (20-year)	392	392	392	392	392	
Lumber/Wood	10	18	5	30	18	
Total Employment						
Crop Agriculture	24	24	0	24	24	
Livestock (20-year)	333	354	266	382	357	
Recreation (20-year)	884	884	884	884	884	
Lumber/Wood	26	46	13	77	46	
AUM/Capital Value						
Low (20-year)	\$ 3,700,000	\$ 4,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 4,300,000	\$ 3,900,000	
High (20-year)	\$16,500,000	\$17,800,000	\$13,400,000	\$19,200,000	\$17,600,000	
Management Costs	\$ 442,000	\$ 1,900,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 1,800,000	