

## RECREATION RESOURCES

### Recreation

Power and floatboating, fishing, and water play sports are all popular and occur on a variety of water bodies. Major rivers include the Payette, Snake, Boise and Weiser. Major lakes and reservoirs include Payette, Cascade, Paddock, Lowell, Black Canyon, Crane Creek, Oxbow, Brownlee and Lucky Peak. Numerous other smaller streams and ponds also offer opportunities. Segments of the North and South Forks of the Payette River totaling 106 miles are under consideration for inclusion into the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. They have both been recommended as having potential for inclusion in a State Natural and Recreation System through the National Park Service's evaluation of the remaining potential river additions. One segment of the North Fork is continuous Class V whitewater and has been judged by kayaker aficionados to be one of the most challenging, and accessible runs anywhere in the world.

Hunting for big/small game, upland birds and waterfowl is a major use. Also popular is biking, horseback riding, camping, rock-collecting and sightseeing. Hanggliding is popular from Squaw Butte, Pickles Butte and the Boise Front. The state championships are held yearly from Squaw butte. Annual field dog trials and horse endurance rides have been held regularly in the resource area, and draw local and non-local participants. Off-road vehicle use is another major recreational use in the Cascade Resource Area. Aside from its dispersed use throughout the Area, concentrated use of "play areas" for ORVs have emerged in nine areas. These areas are located near the towns of Weiser, Payette, Parma, Emmett, Nampa, Eagle and Boise.

Snow-based activities are limited due to the lower elevations of most BLM lands. Snowmobiling and cross-country skiing opportunities are available in the upper elevations of the Boise Front and in northern areas of the resource area.

The Cascade Resource Area is divided into three Special Recreation Management areas (Boise Front, Oxbow-Brownlee and Payette River Corridors) and two Extensive Recreation Management areas (Treasure Valley and Cascade Uplands). In addition, one Wilderness Study Area has been identified north of McCall.

#### Boise Front SRMA (12,000 acres)

In Boise's "backyard" is one of the most popular and intensively used recreation areas in the state. BLM facilities include one interpretive National Recreation Trail (5 miles), approximately 20 miles of multi-purpose trails and an ORV parking area with loading ramp. An additional 40-50 miles of roads and trails are used for recreation but lie within the jurisdiction of local, state or other federal agencies. Popular recreational activities on the Boise Front include ORV use, hunting, horseback-riding, hanggliding, hiking, sightseeing and environmental education. Water sports, fishing and boating take place on Lucky Peak Reservoir. As the population of Boise and the Treasure Valley grows, so does the recreational pressure on the Boise Front. Historically, there has been a conflict with the various user

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groups, specifically between the ORV enthusiasts and other users. One ski area operates in the area, and state operated water sports, picnic and boat ramp facilities are located in the extreme southern portion of the SRMA along Lucky Peak Reservoir. The 1983 SCORP population growth estimate for Ada County (1980-2000) is about 57%.

### Oxbow-Brownlee SRMA (40,000 acres)

This SRMA is comprised of Oxbow and Brownlee Reservoirs on the Snake River. They form the boundary between Idaho and Oregon, and are popular for fishing, boating and water sports. The hills adjacent to the reservoir receive hunting, rockhounding, and ORV use. Also within the SRMA are 200 acres of sand dunes at Olds Ferry, which receive ORV use. BLM facilities in the SRMA consist of one campground and picnic area with a boat dock and ramp on Brownlee Reservoir. Other facilities consist of two privately owned campgrounds with boat ramps. Several more campgrounds with boat ramps on Brownlee Reservoir are located on the Oregon side. Commercial carp fishing is occurring in the reservoirs but does not appear to conflict with the sport-fishing activities. ORV use in the sand dune area is apparently having little vegetative impact but increased use in the steep ridges and canyons adjacent to the water is manifesting itself in unplanned trails and hillclimbs with subsequent erosion problems and visual impacts. BLM's Steck Campground is heavily used by local and non-local visitors. This high use has necessitated more intensive management each year. The 1983 SCORP population growth estimate for the vicinity (1980-2000) is 16 to 25%.

### Payette River Corridors SRMA (19,000 acres)

This area consists of the narrow river valleys containing segments of the North Fork, South Fork and main Payette River. Public land ownership along the north fork and mainstem is sparse and scattered, but more substantial along the south fork. The primary recreation uses are float boating, jet boating, fishing, other water sports and sightseeing. The segment of the north fork from Smiths Ferry to Banks is a world class Class V whitewater kayaking river, while other segments of the river offer a full range of kayaking, rafting, canoeing, and jet boating opportunities. Existing recreation facilities in this SRMA include five federal and one state campground and several unimproved public access points. There are no improved BLM facilities. Access to some of the isolated public lands is a problem, especially those large blocks lying on the south side of the South Fork of the Payette River. The 1983 SCORP population growth estimate for the vicinity (1980-2000) is 7 to 34%.

### Cascade Uplands Extensive Recreation Management Area (334,000 acres)

This is the largest of the RMAs within the Cascade Resource Area. It is primarily comprised of foothills and mountains. The historic townsites of Idaho City, Quartzburg, Centerville, Placerville and Pioneerville lie within this ERMA and receive varying degrees of tourist visits. Prominent water bodies for recreational use include Paddock, Payette and Cascade Reservoirs, the Weiser River and a segment of the North Fork of the Payette River.

Existing recreational facilities within the area include four federal and nineteen private campgrounds, several federal, state and local picnic areas and two ski areas. There are no improved BLM facilities in the RMA. Popular recreational uses in the area include boating, fishing and other water sports on the lakes, rivers and streams, all types of hunting, horseback-riding, hanggliding from Squaw Butte, rockhounding, hiking, cross-country skiing and ORV use. Snowmobiling is concentrated in the northern and higher elevation regions of the area. One intensively used motorcycle area has been leased under an R&PP to the Payette County Recreational District. The area is now a cycle park and improvements consist of trails, parking, restrooms, loading ramp and a BMX bicycle race track. The major problem in the ERMA is the abundance of scattered tracts of public lands and subsequent access and management. The 1983 SCORP population growth estimate for the vicinity (1980-2000) is 16 to 25%.

During the summer of 1986, 66,500 acres of public lands in the Cascade Uplands Extensive Recreation Management Area were burned by wildfires. The threat of erosion caused by off-road vehicle use necessitated an ORV closure in the area during the period of highest soil moisture (fall-winter-spring) while reseeding and rehabilitation efforts are in progress. The closure is expected to remain in effect until summer, 1987.

#### Treasure Valley Extensive Recreation Management Area (72,000 acres)

The majority of the land within this area is privately owned agricultural land. The public lands are primarily low, rolling hills, some small buttes, and a section of foothills to the Boise Ridge. It is the most densely populated area of the state and contains the towns of Boise, Nampa, Caldwell and Emmett. Recreational highlights on public lands in the area include hanggliding from Pickles butte, fishing and boating in the Snake, Boise and Payette Rivers, Black Canyon Reservoir, and Lake Lowell, hunting, horseback-riding (especially north of Eagle and south of Emmett) and ORV use. Although ORV use is dispersed throughout the area, several intensive use areas exist including areas north of Parma, south of Emmett and south of Nampa at Pickles Butte. There is also the Little Gem Cycle Park several miles east of Emmett. There are no improved facilities in the park other than a parking area and trails. The cycle park is a combination of private and public lands. Recreational facilities within the ERMA include six private and two local jurisdiction campgrounds, seven picnic areas and four water sports areas. Numerous public access points exist along rivers, canals and Lake Lowell. Future population growth in this area can only increase recreational pressure, not only within this ERMA but in adjacent areas as well. The 1983 SCORP population growth estimate for the vicinity (1980-2000) is 34 to 57%.

#### Box Creek Wilderness Study Area (110-91A)

A Wilderness Study Area, Box Creek (#110-91A), is located in the northern part of the Cascade Uplands ERMA. It is only 440 acres, but adjacent to the Lick Creek RARE II unit. The BLM area is similar to the Forest Service administered area in landform and vegetation, both consisting of rolling to extremely steep and broken terrain supporting mixed conifer forests of primarily Douglas-fir and subalpine fir; pine, spruce, larch and aspen. The

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forest cover is broken frequently by large granite outcrops. The major drainage is Box Creek.

### Visual

The public land has been inventoried to determine the quality of the visual resources in the Cascade Resource Area. Evaluation of the land was based on landform, vegetation, water, color, scarcity, influence of adjacent scenery and cultural modifications (intrusions) in accordance with the visual resource management (VRM) system presented in BLM Manual 8410.

The VRM system provides for management of visual resources to prevent undue degradation. Management classes based on scenic quality, sensitivity level, and distance zone are established to provide appropriate objectives for management. Locations of the classes are shown on Map 3-8. The acreages of public land in each VRM class would be the same in each alternative as they are now. The VRM classes and approximate acreages are: Class II - 81,000 acres; Class III - 383,466 acres; Class IV - 23,000 acres. Refer to Appendix K for explanation of VRM classes.

### Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)

The Cascade Resource Area has been classified as follows:

Roaded Natural	- 445,391 acres
Semi-Primitive Motorized	- 42,075 acres

The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum is explained in Appendix L. It will not be discussed further in this document.

### Leasables

## MINERAL RESOURCES

### Oil and Gas

The Cascade Resource Area has had much interest and activity in oil and gas exploration since the turn of the century. Shows of oil and gas have been made and leasing activity has continued to the present time in the sedimentary units of the Cascade area. Shows of methane gas that have been detected in over 200 water wells throughout southwestern Idaho indicate presence of small accumulations of flammable gas possibly suitable for domestic energy needs of individual residences.

Currently low prices of oil and gas have had the effect of greatly reduced petroleum exploration all over the U.S. Leasing and exploration in an extremely speculative area as the Cascade RA will most likely be minimal in the immediate future. Beyond the immediate future, exploration in the Cascade RA will probably be cyclical and vary with the economics of the oil and gas industry. There are currently few leases within the Cascade Resource Area. There is no geophysical or drilling activity occurring at this time. See Map 3-11 for areas of oil and gas potential.

There are no producing oil or gas wells in Idaho at this time.

No major areas currently exist as completely closed to leasing. Much of the area is, however, seasonally restricted because of wildlife habitat requirements. See Map 9 for areas seasonally restricted. This has adversely affected one geophysical operation. It is assumed for analysis purposes that oil and gas activities will continue at about the current level. Small recreation sites totaling 45 acres are currently subject to no surface occupancy restrictions.

#### Geothermal

The Cascade Resource Area has not had any significant geothermal interest previous to the mid 1970's. Geothermal resources in the resource area have not been developed beyond limited low temperature uses such as space heating and bathing. Production wells are currently limited to the Boise Geothermal project. Exploration and research in the CRA has been insufficient to completely define the nature and extent of geothermal resources. However, surface temperatures of springs within the CRA are as high as 92°C (198°F) with many wells in the 20°-40°C (68°-104°F) range. The primary known hydrothermal systems within the CRA occur at Crane Creek, Boise, and northwest of Weiser. See Map 3-12 for areas of geothermal potential.

There are no active drilling or exploration projects in the resource area at this time. The current availability of economic oil and gas energy sources has resulted in a low demand for alternative energy sources such as geothermal. While energy trends have proven difficult to project, it is believed that the demand for geothermal energy will remain low for the foreseeable future. A national shortage of oil and gas could result in increased demand with resultant increase in exploration for geothermal resources in the CRA.

No major areas currently exist as completely closed to geothermal leasing. Much of the resource area is however seasonally restricted because of wildlife habitat requirements. See Map 9 for areas seasonally restricted. It is assumed for analysis purposes that geothermal activities will continue at about the current level.

Other leasable minerals in the area include coal and hard rock leasing on acquired lands. The coal resource is a low grade uneconomic deposit Near Horseshoe Bend. Hard rock leasing activity has been limited to minor areas within the National Forest lands and has not lead to any mineral production. These other leasable minerals will not be addressed further.

#### Locatables

The Cascade Resource Area has had extensive mineral interest and activity for over 125 years. Twenty-one mining districts affect lands within or immediately adjacent to the resource area. Most of the districts were set up for placer gold. One was set up for coal and one for mercury. The others were lode deposits containing such minerals as gold, silver, lead and copper.

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Other locatable minerals of interest in the area include zinc, molybdenum, manganese, iron, bismuth, monazite, gypsum, diatomite and others. None of these deposits are known to be economic under the existing market conditions.

Mining exploration and production has been sporadic over time but a general interest has been consistent. Over 2,700 mining claims presently affect or are within one mile of lands with minerals managed by the Cascade Resource Area.

Current locatable minerals production in the resource area consists of "hobby minerals" (nodules, geodes, agate, opal, etc.), minor placer gold production, one active lode gold claim and significant silica sand production.

Withdrawals currently affect 6% of the public lands within the resource area. This is not currently a significant impact as compared to the general economic situation for the minerals industry at this time. It is assumed for analysis purposes that locatable mineral activity will increase slightly.

### Salables

The Cascade Resource Area has had highly significant production of mineral materials. Sand and gravel and quarry rock for road construction and maintenance, has been the major use of salable minerals found on public lands within the resource area. Cinders for road use, potting soil and decorative purposes and basalt drain rock have also been sold from the public lands within the Cascade Resource Area.

Other salable minerals of interest in the area include clay, petrified wood, sand and building stone. None of these are currently being sold from public lands within this resource area.

Exploration for and production of salable minerals is strongly tied to local market conditions. Production has been sporadic but has generally increased with increased population and improved economic conditions. There are currently 3 mineral material sale sites, 16 free use sites, and 2 community pit sites in the Cascade Resource Area.

Current salable mineral material production in the resource area consists of sand, sand and gravel, basalt quarry rock and cinders. Most of the production is free use to local road districts for maintenance of county roads.

No areas that are managed by BLM within the Cascade Resource Area are currently closed to mineral material production. It is assumed for analysis purposes that interest and need will continue at about the current level.

## FOREST RESOURCES

### Timber

The Cascade Resource Area contains 31,895 acres of commercial forest lands capable of producing at least 20 cubic feet of wood per acre per year of commercial tree species. The commercial trees growing on these Commercial Forest Lands (CFL) are ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, lodgepole