

Environmental Consequences

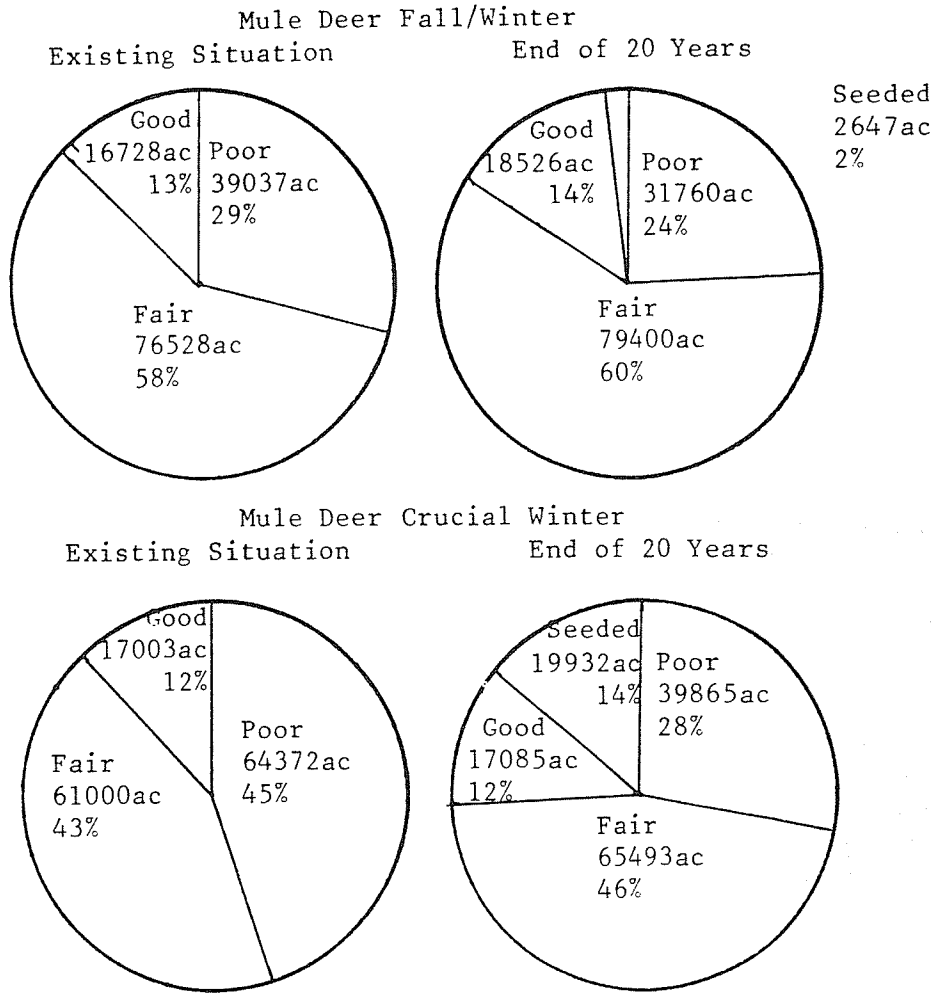
There are 6,690 acres of crucial winter habitat proposed for exchange with the state. Impacts would be minimal because the exchange would be for lands of equal or higher value for wildlife.

The 12,000 acre Boise Front ACEC would be managed as crucial mule deer winter range. The Snake River Breaks, on the western border of the resource area, is another very important crucial deer and elk winter range. Intensive livestock management will have to be considered on this area (from Grouse Creek north to Indian Creek) to provide enough forage for wintering herds.

Currently, 55% of the crucial winter range is in fair to good condition. In the fall/winter range, 70% is in the fair to good class. Considering the current condition, fences, water developments, and pipelines for livestock, proposed seedings and availability of AUMs for wildlife, the habitat would be able to support the proposed 33% increase in the population.

This would exceed 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.



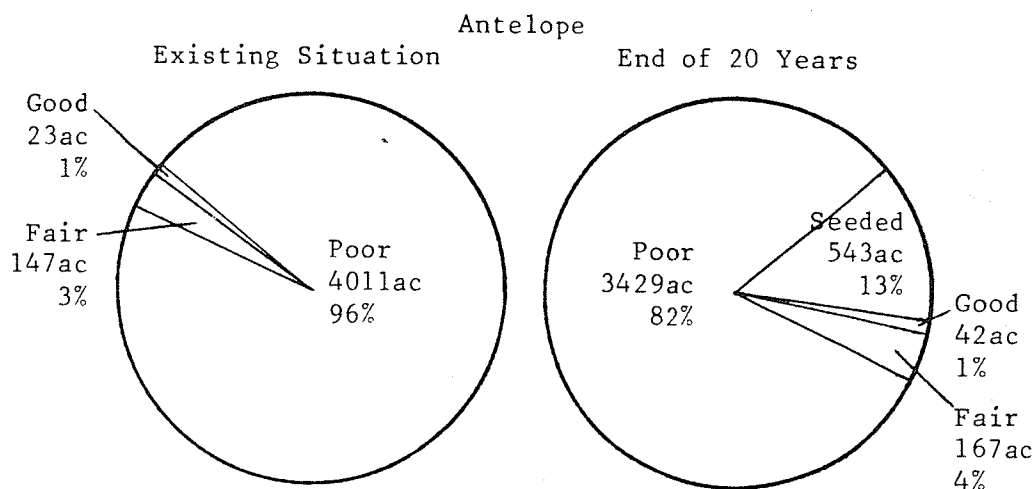
Antelope

Crucial antelope winter ranges would show little improvement under this alternative. The ranges, however, are dominated by medusahead wildrye. Eradication techniques for medusahead ranges have not been fully developed and are not economical.

The current population of the resource area is 50 animals. After improvements 13% of the range would be seeded, and with the increased use of grazing systems in the area, fences, water developments and pipelines for livestock, the habitat should support a population of 175 animals.

This would exceed 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.



Sage Grouse

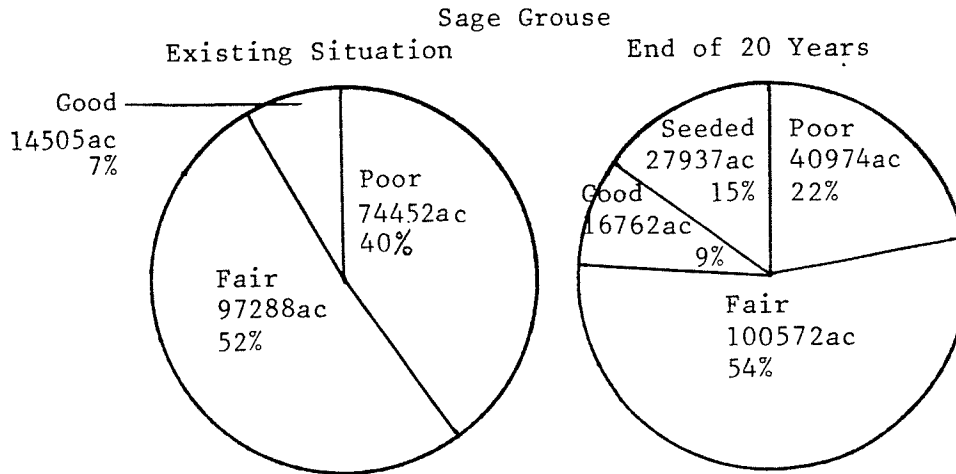
Currently, 60% of the sage grouse habitat is in fair to good condition. A slight improvement in the habitat would occur due to livestock management.

All seedings proposed in Alternative D are also proposed in this alternative. The seedings which would constitute 15% of the habitat would improve nesting and brood-rearing habitat.

Approximately 1,040 acres of habitat are proposed for sale or exchange. Each parcel would be evaluated as to its importance to the local sage grouse population. All habitat crucial to the sage grouse population will be retained in federal ownership.

Environmental Consequences

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



Sensitive Animal Species

Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse

The slight improvement in this habitat would occur in the northern regions of the resource area. Currently, 45% of the habitat is in poor condition. This is due mainly because of medusahead wildrye invasion. Due to reduced grazing pressure these areas would improve.

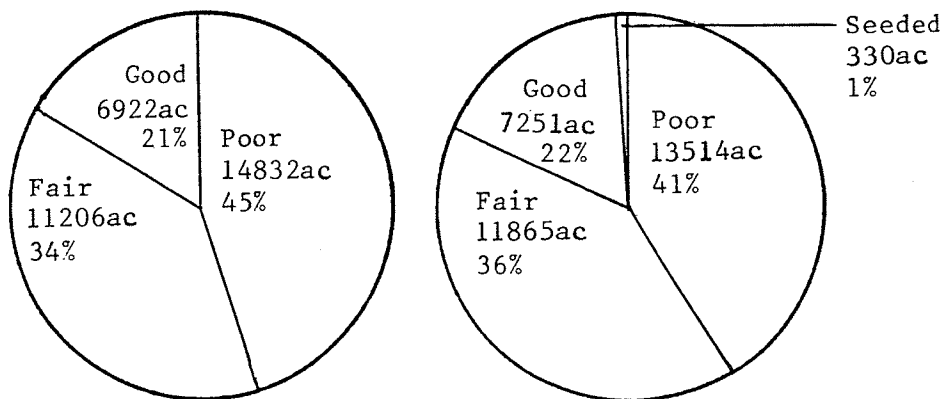
Approximately 330 acres of seedings are proposed in this habitat. The areas would have to be evaluated to assure that no seeding would destroy a dancing ground. The seedings should improve nesting and brood-rearing cover.

The proposed land transfer of 360 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 habitat and should stimulate population growth.

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

Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse
Existing Situation End of 20 Years



Long-billed Curlew

All proposed seedings in this alternative would have negative impacts on breeding curlews. The physical structure of most grass species is too high and dense to be used as nesting habitat.

Approximately 760 acres of curlew habitat is proposed for sale or exchange. These areas would be reviewed to evaluate any impacts on local curlew populations. Crucial habitat will be retained in federal ownership.

The proposed Long-billed Curlew ACEC would contain approximately 61,000 acres of public land. These lands would continue to be managed to provide nesting and breeding habitat for 1,000 pairs of breeding curlews.

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 initial forage levels would start at 66,257 AUMs which is a small decrease from the present five year average license use of 66,424 AUMs. This decrease is due to existing land transfers and desert land entry applications currently being processed.

Over the long term (20 year projection) losses of 14,382 acres to land transfers out of federal ownership account for a reduction of 2,531 AUMs. An additional 162 AUMs would be lost to special designation, historic, and cultural withdrawals of 915 acres.

Environmental Consequences

Further reductions to provide forage for big game winter and summer range account for an additional loss of 2,729 AUMs over the long term. In total, 5,422 AUMs would be lost under this alternative.

In the short term (5 years) with approximately 1,700 AUMs produced on 5,000 acres of seedings, the resulting available forage level would reach approximately 68,000 AUMs. This would be a 2% increase from the present five year average license use.

Over the long term seedings of 18,279 acres are expected to produce 6,097 AUMs. Installation of improvements (water systems, fencing) along with increased livestock management practices on approximately 66,800 acres of native range are expected to increase forage production an additional 3,433 AUMs. Total forage production is expected to reach 70,536 AUMs over the long term. This represents a 6% increase over the present five year average license use.

In the long term analysis of range improvements and land treatment, AUMs lost to transfers, special designation areas, and wildlife forage 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. Twelve new allotment management plans will be established along with revising existing plans (where necessary) to increase livestock management and improve range conditions. On other allotments data presented in Appendix E will be used as baseline information in prioritizing management and monitoring efforts to improve range condition. Annual grass ranges (medusahead/cheatgrass) will receive high priority land treatment and/or livestock management 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

The West Crane wild horse herd would be removed from the West Crane Allotment.

The Four-Mile wild horse 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 563 acres for sale, 10,107 acres for sale or exchange, 6,374 acres for exchange, and 560 acres for Desert Land Entry for a total of 17,604 acres.

Of the lands identified for sale, 80 acres would be a sanitary landfill for Ada County, 320 acres for a sanitary landfill site for Canyon 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 \$38,000 based on a current appraisal for the 80 acres to be sold to Ada County, estimates of the value for the 320 acre parcel to Canyon County, the small parcels that total 3 acres, and the 160 acres for the Parma Rod and Gun Club.

The lands proposed for transfer by 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 by 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. 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 80 acre parcel selected is in the curlew area and will be retained. Another parcel may be selected from the proposed sale or exchange lands or from lands proposed for disposal under DLE that are relinquished or rejected. 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 a few additional trespass cases, but because of the limited number of acres to be transferred under this category, it would not be a significant increase. The average administrative cost for a trespass case is \$1,250, resulting in increased costs of approximately \$2,500 on an estimated two trespass cases.

Rights-of-Ways

Overhead, surface and/or subsurface rights-of-way would be restricted on 6,696 acres of public land due to conflicts with candidate or sensitive plants, significant cultural or recreation sites. 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 these areas. Hydroelectric development would be precluded on 8 miles of the South Fork Payette River.

Environmental Consequences

Withdrawals

Of the lands presently withdrawn for livestock driveways (approximately 63,000 acres), 22,237 acres would be revoked from the 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 RESOURCES

Cultural 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 17,524 acres proposed for transfer from federal ownership. Even with paleontologic clearances, unknown scientifically significant fossils could be lost or destroyed or closed off from scientific study.

RECREATION RESOURCES

Recreation

Based on the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (1983) data, the overall demand for recreation opportunities in the Cascade Resource Area is expected to increase 54-78% by the year 2000. This would result in demand increasing from the current 622,000 activity occasions to approximately 1,034,000 activity occasions. These increases are expected to

occur primarily due to increased population and leisure time and should occur regardless of the alternative chosen in the RMP process. The location and relative mix of recreational activities would vary somewhat between alternatives, but overall demand throughout the Cascade Resource Area would be unaffected by any of the alternatives.

There would be 244,118 acres open to unrestricted ORV use (except competitive races) 241,215 acres limited and 2,133 acres closed to ORV use. Most of the limited use areas fall into the "high erosion hazard" (HEH) category of soils and topography. The limited areas include the following acreages: Boise Front SRMA (11,995), Oxbow-Brownlee (39,779), Payette River Corridor (18,984), Black Canyon Planning Unit (65,000), Birds of Prey Natural Area (640), sharp-tailed grouse ACEC (4,200), identified cultural sites (2,020), developed recreation sites (12), and candidate and sensitive plant sites (1,000). The remaining limited acres fall into the "high erosion hazard" (HEH) category.

The closed areas include the following acreages: research natural areas and/or candidate and sensitive plant sites (1,545), developed recreation sites (36), Silica Sands area (40), and the Clay Peak Motorcycle Park buffer zone (512).

ORV use in the Boise Front SRMA is currently limited to designated roads and trails. Giving this area ACEC status would not effect this designation. Rehabilitation of the approximately 10 miles of currently closed roads and trails on the Boise Front might be expected to decrease unauthorized ORV use by as much as 15-20% (BLM lands only), with proportionate improvements in the visual and aesthetic qualities and watershed integrity.

Impacts on ORV recreation by limiting use in the Oxbow-Brownlee and Payette River Corridor SRMAs, cultural sites, recreation sites, the sharp-tailed grouse ACEC and most T&E sites are expected to be minimal as very little use off roads and trails in these areas is occurring now or is expected to occur in the near future (snowmobiles excepted). However, the transfer (T1) of 320 acres in the Pickles Butte ORV play area would reduce the play area to 180 acres of public lands. ORV use would most likely continue on the transferred lands until the County started landfill activity. As the landfill areas become reclaimed, ORV activity would most likely be displaced.

Limitations on 65,000 acres of public land in the Black Canyon Planning Unit are currently in effect with apparently minimal impact on recreational ORV use.

Limiting 900 acres in the Little Gem Cycle Park can be accomplished by rerouting existing trails so that ORV use will not be impacted.

An annual seasonal closure of approximately four miles of roads and trails for Boise Front winter deer habitat is currently in effect with apparently minimal impact to recreational ORV use.

Impacts on ORV recreation by closing 2,133 acres of developed recreation sites, T&E sites, research natural areas and a buffer zone are expected to