Projects: Water and/or sanitary facilities - 8, launch ramp - 1, access - 8

Activity Plans: RAMPs for Oxbow-Brownlee, Boise Front and Payette River Corridor.

## Cultural Resources

### Objectives

Protect, through special designation and management, areas with significant cultural values.

### Actions

Nominate eight sites to the National Register of Historic Places and manage as shown below.

Surface and subsurface ROWs will be routed to avoid cultural sites.

| Sites | NR 1/ Acres | Minerals (acres) Locatables Withdrawal | Leaseables Closed | Leaseables No Surf | ROW Avoidance (acres) 5/ O | S | Sub | ORV Use (acres) 3/ O | L | C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Placerville Townsite | 8 4/ | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| 2. Grays Creek | 40 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 40 | 0 |
| 3. Indian Creek | 20 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| 4. Milk Creek | 20 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| 5. Cabin Creek | 20 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 20 | 0 |
| 6. Quartzburg | 386 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 386 | 0 |
| 7. Centerville | 516 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 516 | 0 |
| 8. Pioneerville | 581 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 581 | 0 |
| 9. Mineral | 429 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 0 | 2/ | 2/ | 0 | 429 | 0 |

1/ National Register of Historic Places.
2/ Acreage to be determined by National Register nomination process.
3/ O = Open, L = Limited, C = Closed.
4/ National Register of Historic Places (existing).
5/ O = Overhread; S = Surface; Sub = Subsurface.

Projects: 5 mi. fencing
Activity Plans: CRMP (9)

## Forest Resources

### Objectives

Manage 26,663 acres of suitable commercial forest land for timber management and harvest.

Allow firewood harvesting (commercial and noncommercial) on forest lands.

Manage 5,232 acres of forest lands under CFL set asides. This includes 5,139 acres for TPCC withdrawal, 70 acres for seed withdrawal, and 23 acres for campground withdrawal.

Provide an annual harvest of approximately 1.7 MMBF.

Obtain access to suitable commercial forest lands through acquisition when necessary for program management.

Actions

Projects: Build 68 mi. of forest access road (3.4 miles annually)
Acquire access on one to two areas

Activity Plans: Timber Management Plans

Special Considerations

Harvesting of suitable commercial forest land will generally be through selective cutting practices. Any clearcutting will be limited to a size of 40 acres or less. Timber harvest would occur on approximately 150-700 acres annually.

Mineral Resources

Objectives

Make 456,281 acres (94% of area) available for locatable exploration and development and 456,289 acres (94% of area) for leaseable mineral exploration and development.

Continue making available saleable minerals from three material sale sites and 16 free-use sites as needed.

Actions

| Leaseables (acres) | | | Locatables (acres) | | Salables (acres) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Open | Closed | No Surface Occ. | Open | Withdrawn | Available | Unavailable |
| 456,289 | 31,177 | 3,549 | 456,281 | 31,185 | 95 | 0 |

## AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

This plan recommends ACEC designation for three areas which met the criteria (of relevance and importance) to be considered for ACEC designations (Boise Front Area; Columbian Sharp-tail Grouse Habitat Area; and the Black Canyon Long-billed Curlew Management Area). The ACECs are shown on Map 2-3. The following summarizes the description and special requirements for the three ACECs recommended in the RMP. Additional information are available at the Boise District Office, BLM.

Name: Boise Front Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Purpose

The purpose for designating 12,000 acres of the Boise Front as an ACEC is to focus attention and identify management direction on this important natural resource. Management objectives are to protect and enhance the watershed resource, quality of wildlife habitat, variety of recreation opportunities, and scenic values.

Site Description

The Boise Front ACEC would encompass 12,000 acres in the hills and mountains lying immediately north and east of Boise, Idaho. The 12,000 acres are situated in a land ownership pattern with adjacent Forest Service, Idaho Fish and Game, State Department of Public Lands, and private lands. Elevations range from 3,200 feet at Lucky Peak reservoir to 5,680 feet near Lucky Peak. Topography is generally steep. A major portion of the land area contains slopes of 20 to 60 percent.

Soils in the area are formed in deeply weathered granite of the Idaho Batholith and are highly erosive and easily disturbed when dry or saturated.

Present vegetation includes cheatgrass and other annuals at the lower elevations, sagebrush and bitterbrush at mid elevations, and scattered stands of Douglas fir and ponderosa pine at higher elevations. Five major drainages usually provide streamflows throughout the year. Other stream courses are generally dry during the summer months with spring snowmelt and rainstorms contributing to seasonal streamflows. The major drainages and many smaller ones support riparian vegetation. Livestock use includes approximately 325 cattle in a rest/rotation grazing system managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Several bands of sheep trail across the area in spring and fall.

In 1959 after a fire eliminated much of the vegetative cover, two separate storms caused serious flooding and sediment damage to the northeast portion of the City of Boise. Following a costly cleanup, extensive watershed rehabilitation work was done by several agencies in a joint effort to stabilize the vulnerable resource. The terraces constructed as part of that effort are still visible from the City of Boise and vicinity as a reminder of the areas sensitivity to disturbance and forces of nature.

Resource Values

The Boise Front functions as an important ground water recharge area. Snow melt and rain waters enter the soil and percolate down through the granitic soils, faults and fractures and eventually create groundwater reservoirs. These subsurface reservoirs release water at numerous springs and support the perennial streams and riparian vegetation. Much of the subsurface flows accumulate in groundwater reservoirs which are available for Boise Valley users. The City of Boise is a major user of this groundwater and operates several groundwater wells for municipal use including geothermal heating.

The Boise Front is a crucial winter range for approximately 4,000 mule deer. The Highland Valley and Shaw Mountain roads are currently closed to vehicles from December 15 to April 1 to protect this herd. Upland game birds (quail, dove, chukar and Gray partridge), numerous small mammals, reptiles and non game birds are also found in the area. Two candidate (Federal Category II) plants, Aaseae's onion (Allium aaseae) and Mulford milkvetch (Astragalus mulfordea) have been identified in the area.

Recreation use on the Boise Front includes ORV activities, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, and interpretive uses along the Hulls Gulch National Recreation Trail.

The Boise Front is a scenic backdrop for the City of Boise and surrounding area. Although there are several powerlines traversing the area, they are generally not noticeable from a distance. More noticeable are the roads and trails, many of which have been established through unrestricted ORV use. It is currently managed as a Class II visual resource.

Cause for Concern

The combination of steep slopes and highly erodible granitic soils make the area extremely sensitive to changes in the vegetative community through surface disturbing activities. Disturbance of the vegetative community can lead to rill and gully erosion which are now evident on the Boise Front. Much of the serious rill and gully erosion has been attributed to disturbance caused by off road vehicle use. This erosion can reduce the function and value of the area as a watershed and groundwater recharge area. Springs and riparian vegetation may also be reduced. The current erosion problems are increasing and the ability of the area to fully function in its capacity as a watershed is threatened.

Surface disturbing activities which can lead to undesireable vegetative changes and erosion include unrestricted motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use, road construction and maintenance, mineral extraction, certain rights-of-way, fire occurrence, and suppression activities.

The scars from severe erosion can also reduce the attractiveness of the area as a scenic backdrop for viewers from the Boise vicinity and can reduce the quality of recreation activities.

Vehicle use and human disturbance during the winter months can reduce the effectiveness of winter habitat for deer populations by adding stress during a critical time.

Management Guidelines

Resource Use Limitations

The following resource use limitations will apply to the Boise Front ACEC to protect resource values:

1. Motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails.

2. The Highland Valley and Shaw Mountain roads will be closed to motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use from December 15 to April 1.

3. The upper portion of the 8th Street Road will be closed to 4-wheeled vehicles during the wet winter months.

4. The area will be managed to conform to Class II Visual Resource Management Guidelines.

5. All lands within the ACEC will be retained in Federal ownership.

Management Emphasis

The following activities will receive management emphasis to further protect resource values:

1. Closure and rehabilitation of certain roads and trails.

2. Maintenance and reconstruction of existing roads and trails.

3. Restriction of future rights-of-way to insure minimal erosion and visual intrusion.

4. Full fire suppression.

5. Rehabilitation of burned areas.

6. Installation of water control structures to reduce erosion where needed.

Name: Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Habitat Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Purpose

The purpose for designating 4,200 acres as an ACEC is to intensify habitat management for one of the last remaining populations of Columbian sharp-tailed grouse in western Idaho. The basic management objectives will be to improve, protect and enhance the quality of the habitat for this sensitive species.

Site Description

This ACEC would be located approximately 16 miles north of Weiser, Idaho on the south side of Hitt Mountain with USFS land, State land and private lands on the north, east and south.

It is bordered on the west by Mann Creek while Sage Creek and Deer Creek transect the area.

Topography is mostly rolling hills with some steep slopes adjacent to Mann and Sage Creeks. Elevation varies from 3,200 feet to 4,000 feet. Soils

are mixed and it is not uncommon to find pockets of loamy soil interspersed in shallow rocky soils.

The area presents a mosaic of vegetation types corresponding to the various soils. Vegetation associations include big sagebrush/grasses and mountain shrub patches with aspen, serviceberry, chokecherry, bittercherry and snowbrush shrubs, riparian zones with willow, rose and hawthorne shrubs with the northern areas of ponderosa pine with some Douglas-fir.

Resource Values

In addition to Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus), the area contains important spring, fall and summer habitat for mule deer which are common in the area. Concentrations of migrating mule deer use the area during the spring and fall. It is also important spring and fall elk range. The area has a rich diversity of wildlife. It supports a variety of mammals from coyotes to deer mice. Approximately 180 different species of birds have been observed on the area.

Causes for Concern

Columbian sharp-tailed grouse were once abundant and widespread throughout the northwest. This species has disappeared from most of its former range and it is now extinct in California, Oregon and Nevada and reduced to remnant populations over the remainder of its range.

Currently, remaining populations in Idaho are small and disjunct. In western Idaho, populations are extremely rare and are limited to Washington and Adams Counties. The largest known population in western Idaho is found in the vicinity of this ACEC. There are four known dancing grounds in the area and the fluctuating population numbers approximately 200 birds.

The Columbian sharp-tailed grouse has been designated as a "Species of Special Concern" by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDF&G) and as a "Sensitive Species" by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM policy is to maintain or increase current population levels of sensitive species through habitat protection and enhancement.

Management Guidelines

Resource Use Limitations

1. Motorized vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails.

2. Livestock grazing will be adjusted to allow the range to reach and maintain optimal habitat condition.

3. Surface occupancy for all oil and gas, and geothermal leases will be determined on a site specific basis.

4. Seasonal occupancy stipulations will be applied on all oil and gas and geothermal leases.

5. Rights-of-ways construction activities for transmission lines, pipelines and other major projects will not be allowed during the nesting and brood-rearing periods.

6. No permanent new roads will be allowed in the area.

7. All lands within the ACEC will be retained in Federal ownership.

Management Emphasis

1. Develop a fully comprehensive habitat management plan for the area.

2. Fire rehabilitation and vegetative manipulation will be conducted with native species emphasized.

3. Maintenance of the bordering fences to manage livestock movement will be conducted annually.

4. Pursue acquisition of key habitat areas on State and private lands.

5. Place high fire suppression priority on the area.

Name: Long-Billed Curlew Habitat Area of Critical Environmental Concern

Purpose

The purpose for designating approximately 61,000 acres as an ACEC is to identify the area as crucial nesting habitat for Long-billed Curlew (Numenius americanus), a federally protected migratory species. The main management objective will be to maintain nesting habitat for the 1,000 curlew pairs that nest and raise their young in the area.

Site Description

The area is a low, rolling upland lying between the Boise, Payette and Snake River valleys. The area is characterized by choppy rolling topography which supports a semi-desert type vegetative community. Average rainfall is approximately 11 inches per year with most of the moisture falling from November to June.

The native habitat has been highly modified over the years. Historically, the area was a sagebrush/bunchgrass vegetation community. Livestock grazing, frequent wildfire and the invasion of exotic annual grasses have largely eliminated the shrubs and reduced perennial grasses.

In general, there are four cover types: 1) annual rangeland, 2) sagebrush, 3) crested wheatgrass, and 4) irrigated agriculture. The annual rangeland type is the key habitat for nesting curlews.