

## Environmental Consequences

be minimal as very little or no ORV use is occurring in these areas now or expected to occur in the near future.

A projected increase in big game numbers (deer-33%, elk-22%) through improved habitat is expected to increase big game hunting opportunity by the same amount. Opportunities for nonconsumptive uses would also increase.

Construction of 68 miles of timber harvest access roads (3.4 miles annually for 20 years) would increase recreational access into these areas on those roads that would remain open for timber management purposes.

Lands available for dispersed recreation would be reduced by the 17,524 acres identified for disposal.

Eight miles and a 2,600 acre corridor of BLM land along the South Fork of the Payette River would be proposed for Wild and Scenic Rivers study.

The Box Creek WSA (440 acres) will be managed under wilderness IMP guidelines pending Congressional action. Under IMP, ORV use in the area will be designated as "limited to existing roads and trails." As there are no existing roads and trails in the area, and minor recreational use occurring within the area, the effects of this action would be negligible. If Congress does not designate the WSA as wilderness, no other special designation of the area will be considered.

### Visual

More intensive management of the Boise Front SRMA (12,000 acres) could result in positive effects in the visual resource of the area by as much as 10-15%.

Improved riparian habitat on 155 miles of rivers and streams would improve the visual resource in these locations.

Harvesting approximately 1.7 MMBF of timber, and resulting access roads, may negatively impact the visual resource. Less obtrusive selective cutting will be the primary harvest method, although some clearcuts (not to exceed 40 acres each) may be proposed. All timber sales will be examined for visual impacts on a case-by-case basis.

Increased wildlife improvement projects could negatively impact the visual resource. Thirty miles of new fences are planned, as well as approximately 15,600 acres of shrub planting. With the use of standard mitigation measures on these projects, no significant adverse impacts are expected.

Project development in the range program could negatively impact the visual resource. Pipelines will be constructed using a ripper to bury the pipe, thus minimizing the adverse impacts. Other range developments should not adversely impact visual quality because the standard operating procedures for construction are expected to effectively mitigate potential impacts. Land treatments that are designed with feathered edges, multiple species seed mixtures and other mitigation measures should not cause significant adverse impacts.

Transferring 17,524 acres of land from public ownership could result in impacts to the visual resource. Acres transferred from federal ownership by sale or exchange, would no longer be under BLM control and visual quality would depend upon the management implemented by the new owner. Example: agricultural development would transform the areas' scenic views from one of sagebrush/grass dominance to one dominated by cropland and farming. The visual quality of transferred land that is maintained primarily for grazing purposes would not change significantly from present conditions.

## MINERAL RESOURCES

### Leasables

#### Oil and Gas

Approximately 100,000 acres of BLM land within this resource area have been classified as prospectively valuable for oil and gas. Considering a 12 month availability 1,200,000 acre/months of access exist. About 19,000 acres would continue to be affected by crucial deer winter range stipulations (closed 12/1 to 4/30) and 5,000 acres would continue to be closed from 2/15 to 6/30 to protect bird nesting and breeding areas. This would be a total protective closure of 117,500 acre months or approximately 10% of the available access. Since weather and soil conditions normally do not allow off-road activities before 4/15 each year the impact from the stipulations would not be significant.

The "no surface occupancy" stipulations under this alternative total 3,549 acres. The lands involved are generally small and outside of the lands identified as prospectively valuable for oil and gas. The impacts on the availability of lands for oil or gas leasing and development is therefore insignificant.

Since the lands identified for transfer would have oil and gas reserved in areas classified as prospectively valuable for oil and gas, the impact of land transfers would be insignificant.

Based on the lack of any commercial oil or gas wells in Idaho, the 35 dry holes in the resource area, the low potential of the area, and the above analysis, the overall impacts of oil or gas leasing and development would be insignificant.

#### Geothermal

Approximately 94% of the resource area would remain open for leasing under this alternative. The areas closed to geothermal leasing would be the existing 31,177 acres of withdrawn lands. Impacts from time stipulations would not be significant because the periods of closure generally match the period that has poor weather and soil conditions which limit access.

The "no surface occupancy" stipulations under this alternative total 3,549 acres. The lands involved are generally small parcels and represent a very small percentage of the total prospectively valuable area.

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Although various lands within the resource area have been classified as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources, the only KGRA within the area has been declassified and there are no geothermal leases within the whole resource area.

Based on the lack of any commercial geothermal electric projects in Idaho, the lack of any known large reservoirs in the area, the declining interest in geothermal resources and the above analysis, the overall impacts on the availability of geothermal leases and development would be insignificant.

### Locatables

The resource area would have 94% of its lands open to mining activity. Those areas closed to mining would be the existing withdrawals of 31,177 acres plus an additional 8 acres for cultural site protection.

A total of 17,604 acres of land are proposed for transfer from federal ownership under this alternative. No lands having valid mining claims or mineral potential would be transferred from federal ownership unless they are patented under the mining laws, the mineral estate is purchased at fair market value, or lands of equal overall values are obtained. The impact from land transfer on the availability of lands for mineral location and development would, therefore, be considered insignificant.

An analysis of the location of and activity on the existing mining claims and areas of mineral interest compared to an analysis of the actions proposed under this alternative indicates that there would not be any significant impacts on the availability of locatable minerals.

### Salables

#### Mineral Materials

Mineral material needs within the resource area have not been very high except in the Weiser area. No increase in need or decrease in overall availability would result from the actions under this alternative. Some existing pits will, however, be depleted within the timespan of this plan.

The impacts from this alternative on mineral material resources would be insignificant.

## FOREST RESOURCES

### Timber

The total acres of commercial forest land would be reduced by 23 CFL set aside acres to 26,663 acres.

The impacts of losing this 23 acres of commercial forest land acres would be minimal. The annual allowable cut would be approximately 1.7 million board feet.

## FIRE MANAGEMENT

The fire occurrence in the Cascade Resource Area is approximately 40 fires per year with a size of about 221 acres per fire per year. Agricultural development, or transfer acreages, about 3-4% of the total acreages, would gradually increase the number of fires and the cost of fire suppression. Fire management costs would increase approximately 3% to \$112,000 per year in this alternative.

This would be a gradual reduction in the annual acreage of wildfires burned, because of the effects of fuel breaks, and because of rehabilitation and greenstripping effects, including reseedling of fire resistance species, which would retard or reduce the larger fires. Refer to Resource Management Guidelines for Fire.

## ECONOMICS

### Crop Agriculture

With this alternative there would be 560 acres of agricultural development. The total annual crop sales would be \$542,600.

This level of annual sales would generate direct earnings of \$207,800. This would represent 0.2% of the RMP area farm earnings. The total earnings that would be generated, including interindustry interactions and household spending (the multiplier effect) would be \$529,700. This would be 0.02% of the total RMP area 1983 earnings.

The direct earnings would lead to a gain in farm employment of 7 jobs. This would be 0.2% of the 1983 farm wage and salary employment. The total earnings gain would lead to an increase of 24 jobs. This would be 0.02% of the RMP area 1983 wage and salary employment.

### Livestock

The initial livestock forage level would be 66,307 AUMs. This would support 5,526 animal units which would generate earnings of \$2.7 million. This would be 11% of the total permittee earnings, 6% of the RMP area meat animal earnings, and 3% of total farm earnings. The total earnings (including the multiplier effect) would be \$7.2 million. This would be 0.3% of total RMP area 1983 earnings.

The direct earnings would generate 96 jobs. This would be 2.8% of the 1983 farm wage and salary employment. The total earnings would generate 333 jobs. This would be 0.3% of the RMP area 1983 wage and salary employment.

This initial stocking level represents a capital value of between \$3.7 and \$16.6 million.

The 20-year livestock forage level would be 70,538 AUMs. This would support 5,878 animal units which would generate earnings of \$2.9 million. This would be 11% of total permittee earnings, 7% of the RMP area meat

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animal earnings, and 3% of total farm earnings. The total earnings (including the multiplier effect) would be \$7.7 million. This would be 0.3% of total RMP area 1983 earnings.

The direct earnings would generate 104 jobs. This would be 3% of the 1983 farm wage and salary employment. The total earnings would generate 357 jobs. This would be 0.3% of the RMP area 1983 wage and salary employment.

This 20-year stocking level represents a capital value of between \$3.9 and \$17.6 million.

### Recreation

Impacts would be the same as for Alternative A.

### Lumber and Wood Products

Approximately 1.7 million board feet of wood products would be harvested annually with this alternative. This would generate earnings of \$387,000. This would be 0.2% of the RMP area durable manufacturing 1983 earnings. The total earnings (including the multiplier effect) would be \$926,900. This would be 0.04% of the total RMP 1983 earnings.

The harvest level would lead to 18 jobs (Youngblood 1983). This would be 0.1% of the 1983 manufacturing wage and salary employment. Total employment (including the multiplier effect) would be 46. This would be 0.04% of the total 1983 RMP area wage and salary employment.

### Management Costs

Range and wildlife improvements associated with this alternative would cost approximately \$1.8 million.

### Summary

Total crop agriculture earnings and employment would increase by \$529,700 and 24 jobs. These are both less than one-tenth of one percent of the 1983 RMP area earnings and employment. The initial livestock stocking level would lead to earnings and employment (including the multiplier effect) of \$7.2 million and 333 jobs. These are both less than one-half of one percent of the RMP earnings and employment. The 20-year stocking level would lead to total earnings of \$7.7 million and employment of 357 jobs. This alternative would not lead to any change in the recreation-related earnings and employment. The total (including the multiplier effect) lumber and wood products earnings and employment would be \$926,900 and 46 jobs. These are both less than one-tenth of one percent of the 1983 RMP area earnings and employment. Project costs needed to implement this alternative would be \$1.8 million.

## SHORT-TERM USE VERSUS LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The short-term uses of man's environment are described for each alternative in Chapter 2. The relationship of these short-term uses to long-term productivity for various resources is discussed in Chapter 4. The environmental consequences presented in Chapter 4 show that a difference in long-term productivity would be expected from one alternative to another. A comparative summary of the environmental consequences for each alternative is presented in Chapter 2.

### IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Implementation of any of the alternatives would limit potential future uses of the land and resources to some extent. Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources occur when future options are foreclosed or resource values lost.

The Preferred Alternative (Alternative E) would result in the following irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources:

An irretrievable loss of soil would occur on 560 acres of lands put into agricultural production.

Wildlife habitat could be modified on up to 17,604 acres of transferred lands converted to other uses. Species most affected include elk, mule deer, sage grouse, and long-billed curlew. These areas would be committed for the foreseeable future.

Approximately 2,531 AUMs of grazing use lost from conversion of transferred lands to other uses would be lost for the foreseeable future.