

## 2. Criteria #2: Manageability

- About 65,700 acres are being recommended as non-suitable; these are plateau areas adjacent to the Bruneau Canyon. The plateaus are all in poor ecological condition and are physically isolated from the canyon by sheer walled cliffs. Imprints of man and the accessibility of the area to vehicles indicates that the wilderness values do not warrant the managerial attention that may be necessary to effectively manage these areas as wilderness.

## 3. Quality Standards

### a. Energy and Mineral Resources

- no known energy or mineral conflicts

### b. Impacts on Other Resources

- 18,750 acres proposed for brush control and seeding of non-native species

### c. Impact on Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

- wilderness values will be irreversibly lost on 18,750 acres scheduled for seeding of non-native species
- plateau areas will lack the affirmative safeguards of wilderness designation; accretion of small projects could erode wilderness characteristics
- if Wild and Scenic River legislation is passed, nondesignation as wilderness will have no impact on the canyon or its wilderness values; without Wild and Scenic River legislation the canyon will lack the affirmative safeguards of wilderness

### d. Public Comment

- Following MFP Step 2 recommendations 45 public comments were received (42 supporting wilderness and 2 opposed). Most comments centered on the plateau areas of the WSA. Twenty-six commenters stated the plateaus should be recommended for wilderness regardless of the Wild and Scenic River designation. The most prevalent reason cited was the value of the plateau as a representative of the salt desert shrub vegetation community.

### e. Local Social and Economic Effects

- there are no significant social impacts
- there are no significant economic effects on Owyhee County or the State of Idaho

f. Consistency with Other Plans

- this recommendation conflicts with the 1974 Owyhee County Comprehensive Land Use Plan which states, "since the County does not have the resources to handle increased traffic and tourists the County Plan does not recommend the wild river designations."
- recommendation is consistent with Idaho Fish and Game Department's big game management plans which specify priority management of bighorn sheep habitat for this species

APPENDIX

WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS - RELATION TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

SHEEP CREEK EAST WSA - 111-36B - Recommendation WN-2.1

1. Criteria #1: Wilderness Values

a. Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

- 5,050 acres
- 97% natural appearing
- outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation
- wilderness inventory found unit lacked outstanding opportunities for solitude

b. Special Features

- none identified

c. Multiple Resource Benefits

- not applicable to recommendation

d. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- less than 35,500 acres of sagebrush steppe ecosystem in designated wilderness
- this WSA would be a poor representative of the sagebrush steppe ecosystem since there are no areas in good ecological condition

2. Criteria #2: Manageability

- The entire WSA cannot be effectively managed as wilderness. The only wilderness value identified for this WSA is the opportunity for primitive recreation. Research indicates individuals seeking primitive experiences require 6 or less contacts per day for the experience to be satisfactory (see BLM Manual 8320). The relatively small size of this WSA and the corridor effect of the canyon drastically limits the numbers of parties that could use the area and have a satisfactory primitive experience. A permit system would be necessary to regulate use and maintain opportunities for solitude. The wilderness values of this WSA do not warrant the managerial attention that would be necessary for primitive recreation.

## APPENDIX

### WILDERNESS PLANNING CRITERIA AND QUALITY STANDARDS - RELATION TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

SHEEP CREEK EAST WSA - 111-36B - Recommendation WN-2.1

#### 1. Criteria #1: Wilderness Values

##### a. Mandatory Wilderness Characteristics

- 5,050 acres
- 97% natural appearing
- outstanding opportunities for primitive recreation
- wilderness inventory found unit lacked outstanding opportunities for solitude

##### b. Special Features

- none identified

##### c. Multiple Resource Benefits

- not applicable to recommendation

##### d. Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System

- less than 35,500 acres of sagebrush steppe ecosystem in designated wilderness
- this WSA would be a poor representative of the sagebrush steppe ecosystem since there are no areas in good ecological condition

#### 2. Criteria #2: Manageability

- The entire WSA cannot be effectively managed as wilderness. The only wilderness value identified for this WSA is the opportunity for primitive recreation. Research indicates individuals seeking primitive experiences require 6 or less contacts per day for the experience to be satisfactory (see BLM Manual 8320). The relatively small size of this WSA and the corridor effect of the canyon drastically limits the numbers of parties that could use the area and have a satisfactory primitive experience. A permit system would be necessary to regulate use and maintain opportunities for solitude. The wilderness values of this WSA do not warrant the managerial attention that would be necessary for primitive recreation.

### 3. Quality Standards

a. Energy and Mineral Resources

- no known energy or mineral conflicts

b. Impacts on Other Resources

- 3,150 acres proposed for controlled burning

c. Impact on Nondesignation on Wilderness Values

- affirmative safeguards of wilderness designation would be lacking; accretion of small projects could erode wilderness characteristics

d. Public Comment

- Following MFP Step 2 recommendations, 30 comments were received. All supported wilderness and were opposed to our rationale that this area could not be effectively managed as wilderness.

e. Local Social and Economic Effects

- there are no significant social impacts
- there are no significant economic effects on Owyhee County or the State of Idaho

f. Consistency with Other Plans

- recommendation does not conflict with the 1974 Owyhee County Comprehensive Land Use Plan

NOV 24 1981

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN - STEP 1  
ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

Name (MFP)	Bruneau
Activity	Transportation/Support
Objective Number	#1

Objective T-#1:

Provide legal road access over 58 miles of existing roads across private and state land in support of the recreation, wildlife habitat, and range resource disciplines and to meet the requirements of transportation planning as soon as possible.

Rationale:

The Bruneau Transportation Plan includes 25 roads totaling 506 miles of which only roads totaling 130 miles have unrestricted legal access. No easements exist on 24 miles of private road within 12 road systems totaling 305 miles. Furthermore, with 16 road systems totaling 344 miles, 34 miles cross Idaho state land without permit. The lack of easements or permits to use these road segments implies that travel or maintenance could be restricted at any time by the landowners on 58 miles which are part of 25 roads totaling 506 miles. The impacts of the sudden closure of these roads cannot be quantified realistically, but public indignation and disrupted BLM programs would be forces to reckon with. Furthermore, no appropriated money may be spent for road maintenance or construction on private land unless the road is covered by an easement. Delay in implementing a program of survey, appraisal, and acquisition will result in increased acquisition costs largely due to rapidly increasing land values.

MAR 23 1983

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN  
RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

Name (MFP)	Bruneau
Activity	Transportation/Support
Overlay Reference	Step 1 T-1      Step 3

Recommendation T-1.1:

Evaluate, prioritize, and coordinate road access needs with respect to:

1. Resource management needs
2. Engineering feasibilities (location, costs)
3. Intra-agency and/or other user demands
4. Type of easement, permit, or agreement needed

Rationale:

Because historically BLM has enjoyed relatively unrestricted ingress and egress across existing private roads, little attention has been focused on legal access or engineering standards. Jurisdiction for road control and maintenance responsibility is conveniently uncertain in most instances except dedicated county roads.

Support Needs:

1. Resource specialists and access specialists

Multiple Use Analysis:

Inter-discipline coordination, including engineering input, will lead to the identification and prioritization of specific access needs to interconnect the transportation plan road system while minimizing resource conflicts and maximizing benefits.

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Same as Step 1.

Decision:

Accept Multiple Use Recommendation.

1983

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN  
RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

Name (MFP)	Bruneau
Activity	Transportation/Support
Overlay Reference	
Step 1	T-1
Step 3	

Recommendation T-1.2:

On a priority basis immediately commence to survey existing and/or proposed road locations needed for BLM administration and public access and prepare survey plats in accordance with BLM 2130 Manual requirements.

Rationale:

Survey and platting is the first step in the easement acquisition process. This can be a time-consuming step and survey problems commonly delay the easement acquisition process. However, survey notes and easement plats can easily be retained pending the appropriation of money for the steps of appraisal and purchase of easements.

Support Needs:

1. Cadastral survey
2. Operations survey

Multiple Use Analysis:

No resource conflicts identified.

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Same as Step 1.

Decision:

Accept Multiple Use Recommendation.



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK PLAN  
RECOMMENDATION-ANALYSIS-DECISION

Name (MFP)	Bruneau
Activity	Transportation/Support
Overlay Reference	
Step 1	T-1 Step 3

Recommendation T-1.3:

Appraise and purchase easements as surveys are completed and funds become available.

Rationale:

Appraisal and easement purchase must be completed in close sequence to bring the easement acquisition to a successful conclusion.

Support Needs:

1. State Office appraisal staff
2. District access specialist

Multiple Use Analysis:

No conflicts identified.

Multiple Use Recommendation:

Same as Step 1.

Decision:

Accept Multiple Use Recommendation.

I. NAME: Jacks Creek-Shoofly Creek Bighorn Sheep Habitat Area - an Area of Critical Environmental Concern

II. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

- A. Protect and enhance the habitat for 100 California bighorn sheep in the Little Jacks Creek Canyon area.
- B. Protect and enhance bighorn sheep habitat for potential reintroduction of sheep into Shoofly Creek and Big Jacks Creek drainages.
- C. Protect, maintain or improve the habitat to at least a good range condition class.
- D. Protect and maintain the scenic and natural values present in the area.

III. DESCRIPTION:

A. General Description

This 56,300 acre area has numerous rugged, deep canyons which have exceptional scenic quality. The canyon complex provides suitable habitat for California bighorn sheep. In 1967, 12 California bighorns were released on Rattlesnake Creek, a tributary of Little Jacks Creek. The population has expanded throughout a 20,900 acre area on the Little Jacks Creek drainage and westward into the gulches between Little Jacks Creek and Shoofly Creek. The population numbers of the Little Jacks Creek population seem to still be increasing. Data collected during June of 1980 showed a ewe:lamb ratio of 100:74 and an estimated population of 100 bighorns.

An area of approximately 11,600 acres on Shoofly Creek and 23,800 acres on Big Jacks Creek contains habitat which is potentially suitable for the introduction of bighorn sheep. Sheep may expand into these areas naturally from the herd on Little Jacks Creek or they may be transplanted into these areas by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The determination of whether or not to transplant sheep into these areas has not been made at this time. Existing and potential bighorn sheep habitat areas are shown on overlay D-2.

B. Relevance

This area satisfies the relevance criteria because bighorn sheep are a wildlife resource and the habitat needed to support them is considered to be a natural system or process.

C. Importance

Fewer than 1,700 California bighorns exist in the United States. The entire world population of California bighorns is limited to about 3,500 animals. Maintenance of existing populations and the reestablishment of other populations is needed to ensure the continued existence of these bighorns. Protection of bighorn sheep

habitat has been identified as a major concern by the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game, various state and national environmental organizations as well as numerous individuals during the development of the Bruneau MFP and the Bruneau-Kuna Grazing EIS.

D. Criticalness

California bighorn sheep have been designated as a "sensitive species". "Sensitive species" refers to wildlife species which have been officially designated by the BLM and Idaho Department of Fish and Game through a Memorandum of Understanding. They are species for which special management considerations are necessary to ensure their continued existence. Although these species are not in as much jeopardy as endangered or threatened species, further population declines or habitat determination may result in the more restrictive listings.

Bighorn sheep formerly ranged over Owyhee County. They were eliminated sometime between 1920-1930 after a period of decline. A combination of factors is considered responsible for their extinction. Evidence suggests that the scabies mite, introduced by domestic sheep, was the principal factor in eliminating some populations and severely reducing others. Over-hunting and competition for forage with domestic livestock are considered contributing factors in the loss of the remaining populations.

Maintenance of suitable bighorn habitat in this area is dependent upon maintaining an adequate high quality food supply and limiting the amount of disturbance from people, vehicles, livestock or other activities.

Protection of the bighorn habitat is dependent upon maintaining a separation of use between domestic livestock and the bighorn sheep. Bighorns generally avoid using areas where concentrations of other ungulates (cattle, horses, sheep, deer, antelope, etc.) occur. Bighorns restrict their habitat use to areas of less disturbance. This habitat constriction can cause temporary forage overuse and intraspecific stress, or both. The result is a lower carrying capacity. If the carrying capacity is reduced too far, the insidious effects of inbreeding can result in total loss of the population.

Bighorns also avoid contact with people. Close proximity to the population centers of Southwest Idaho results in numerous and increasing human visits to the Little Jacks Creek area. In addition to hunting and fishing, there is a moderate amount of human activity tied to the bighorns themselves. Photographers interested in photographing bighorns hike and backpack into the Little Jacks Creek area. This causes additional disturbance to the sheep. If the level of disturbance increases significantly above current levels, the sheep population may decline.

#### E. Protectability

This area is capable of being protected by the special management measures described later. Factors which could jeopardize the scenic and natural values or the bighorn sheep habitat can be regulated by the management measures specified.

#### IV. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The following special management measures will be undertaken to protect the existing and potential bighorn sheep habitat areas and the scenic and natural values within the area.

##### A. Little Jacks Creek Area (Existing bighorn sheep habitat area)

1. Livestock use levels will be adjusted, if necessary, to provide adequate forage for at least 100 bighorns in the Little Jacks Creek area.
2. Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) will be developed which will maintain or improve the vegetation to at least a good range condition class.
3. The management priority for the canyons is for bighorns and other wildlife. Where necessary to prevent livestock access to canyons, livestock management measures (ie. salting or fencing) will be implemented.
4. A separation of use between cattle and bighorn will be maintained by not developing livestock water sources within one mile of bighorn habitat unless the potential adverse impacts to bighorn can be avoided or mitigated.
5. The conversion of cattle use to domestic sheep use will not be allowed unless the use will not be within one mile of the habitat and reasonably be guaranteed to be maintained by physical barrier of, but not limited to, fences and canyons.
6. Retain public lands within bighorn habitat, unless a proposed exchange results in the acquisition of higher quality habitat.
7. Support the public acquisition of private lands and the exchange for state lands within bighorn sheep habitat.
8. Maintain the current low level of human disturbance in bighorn habitat by not constructing or upgrading any roads that would lead to or encourage human disturbance in bighorn habitat.
9. No surface occupancy will be allowed for oil and gas and geothermal exploration or development within the habitat area.
10. The area will be recommended for withdrawal from the 1872 mining laws.

11. Activities or developments which would impair the scenic quality of the area would not be allowed. The area will be managed as VRM Class II with the canyon system as the Key Observation Point.
  12. Motorized vehicle use would be allowed only on designated roads and trails.
- B. Big Jacks Creek and Shoofly Creek Area (Potential bighorn sheep habitat area)

Until a decision has been made on whether or not to introduce bighorn sheep into these areas, no action or development will be undertaken which will negate the opportunity to manage these areas for bighorn sheep.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

The ACEC recommendation for this area was presented to the public during the Bruneau-Kuna MFP II Open House meetings that were held on December 14 and 15, 1981. There has been no public comment specifically related to the recommendation. Most comments received during the public review period indicate that wilderness designation is preferable to establishing the area as an ACEC.



Jack's Creek - Shoothy Creek Bighorn Sheep Habitat Area - ACEC

I. NAME: Owyhee River/Battle Creek/Deep Creek Bighorn Sheep Habitat Area - an Area of Critical Environmental Concern

II. MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

- A. Protect and enhance the habitat for approximately 300 California bighorn sheep in the Battle Creek/Deep Creek/East Fork Owyhee River area.
- B. Protect and enhance bighorn sheep habitat for the potential re-introduction of sheep on the South Fork Owyhee River. The population goal for the South Fork is 150-250 bighorns.
- C. Protect and maintain the scenic and natural values present in the area.
- D. Protect, maintain or improve the habitat to at least a good range condition class.

III. DESCRIPTION:

A. General Description

This 175,000 acre area has numerous rugged, deep canyons which have exceptional scenic quality. The canyon complex provides the habitat to support an existing California bighorn sheep herd. The portion of the area along the South Fork of the Owyhee River contains suitable habitat for bighorn expansion or bighorn reintroduction.

In 1963, 1965 and 1966 a total of 38 California bighorns were released along the East Fork of the Owyhee River between Battle Creek and Deep Creek. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game estimates about 300 bighorns are now present in this Owyhee River population. Approximately 170 of these are within the Bruneau Resource Area and 130 are within the Owyhee Resource Area.

The area along the South Fork Owyhee River has been identified by the BLM and Idaho Department of Fish and Game as potential habitat for bighorn sheep. The area is an approved release site.

B. Relevance

This area satisfies the relevance criteria because bighorn sheep are a wildlife resource and the habitat needed to support them is considered to be a natural system or process.

C. Importance

The combination of scenic canyons and wildlife species found in this area is very unusual in southwestern Idaho.

Fewer than 1,700 California bighorns exist in the United States. The entire world population of California bighorns is limited to about 3,500 animals. Maintenance of existing populations and the

reestablishment of other populations is needed to ensure the continued existence of these bighorns. Protection of bighorn sheep habitat has been identified as a major concern by the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game, various state and national environmental organizations as well as numerous individuals during the development of the Owyhee and Bruneau MFP and the Bruneau-Kuna Grazing EIS.

D. Criticalness

California bighorn sheep have been designated as a "sensitive species". "Sensitive species" refers to wildlife species which have been officially designated by the BLM and Idaho Department of Fish and Game through a Memorandum of Understanding. They are species for which there is concern for their continued existence. Although these species are not in as much jeopardy as endangered or threatened species, further population declines or habitat determination may result in the more restrictive listing.

Bighorn sheep formerly ranged over Owyhee County. They were eliminated sometime between 1920-1930 after a period of decline. A combination of factors is considered responsible for their extinction. Evidence suggests that the scabies mite, introduced by domestic sheep, was the principal factor in eliminating some populations and severely reducing others. Over-hunting and competition for forage with domestic livestock are considered contributing factors in the loss of the remaining populations.

Maintenance of suitable bighorn habitat in this area is dependent upon maintaining an adequate high quality food supply and limiting the amount of disturbance from people, vehicles, livestock or other activities. Bighorns generally avoid using areas where concentrations of other ungulates (cattle, horses, sheep, deer, antelope, etc.) occur. Bighorns restrict their habitat use to areas of less disturbance. This habitat constriction can cause temporary forage overuse and intraspecific stress, or both. The result is a lower carrying capacity. If the carrying capacity is reduced too far, the insidious effects of inbreeding may result in total loss of the population.

Except for the area west of Battle Creek there appears to be good habitat separation between cattle and bighorns. Cattle use of bighorn forage habitat (the plateaus) is low due to lack of water. Cattle use along the canyon bottoms is limited by the lack of access points. However, cattle use along the East Fork Owyhee River in the vicinity of Battle Creek and on some stretches of Battle Creek is occasionally heavy. Protection of the bighorn habitat is dependent upon maintaining or improving the range condition as well as maintaining the separation of use between domestic livestock and bighorn sheep.

Bighorns also avoid contact with people. Visits to bighorn habitat on the Owyhee River and its tributaries are infrequent throughout most of the year. The greatest influx of people occurs during the hunting season. During the month of May, the river is



usually floatable and a smaller peak of human use occurs at this time. If the level of human use increases significantly above current levels, the bighorn sheep population may decline.

E. Protectability

This area is capable of being protected by the special management measures described later. Factors which could jeopardize the scenic quality, natural values or bighorn sheep habitat can be regulated by the management measures specified.

IV. SPECIAL MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The following special management measures will be undertaken to protect the existing and potential bighorn sheep habitat areas and the natural and scenic values within the area.

- A. Activities or developments which would impair the scenic quality of the area would not be allowed. The area will be managed as VRM Class II with the canyon system as the Key Observation Point.
- B. Motorized vehicle use would be allowed only on designated roads and trails.
- C. Livestock use levels will be adjusted, if necessary, to provide adequate forage for the bighorn population goals.
- D. Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) will be developed which will maintain or improve the vegetation to at least a good range condition class.
- E. The management priority for the canyons will be for bighorns and other wildlife. Where necessary to prevent livestock access to canyons, livestock management measures (ie. salting or fencing) will be implemented.
- F. A separation of use between cattle and bighorn will be maintained by not developing livestock water sources within one mile of bighorn habitat unless the potential adverse impacts to bighorn can be avoided or mitigated.
- G. The conversion of cattle use to domestic sheep use will not be allowed unless the use will not be within one mile of the habitat and reasonably be guaranteed to be maintained by physical barrier of, but not limited to, fences and canyons.
- H. Public lands within bighorn habitat will be retained unless a proposed exchange results in the acquisition of higher quality habitat.
- I. Support the public acquisition of private lands and the exchange for state lands within bighorn sheep habitat.
- J. The current low level of human disturbance in bighorn habitat will be

maintained by not constructing or upgrading any roads that would lead to or encourage human disturbance in bighorn habitat. Use of the river by boaters will be restricted to levels that do not adversely impact the bighorn sheep.

- K. No surface occupancy will be allowed for oil and gas and geothermal exploration or development within the habitat area.
- L. The area will be recommended for withdrawal from the 1872 mining laws.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

The ACEC recommendation if the area is not designated as wilderness, for the Bruneau Resource Area portion was presented to the public during the Bruneau-Kuna MFP II Open House meetings that were held on December 14 and 15, 1981. There has been no public comment specifically related to the recommendation. Most comments received during the public review period indicate that wilderness designation is preferable to establishing the area as an ACEC. On the Owyhee portion of the area, the area was recommended for management as a Bighorn sheep herd management area and as a special recreation management area at the open house meetings. The land use plan decision is to recommend it as an ACEC if it is not designated wilderness to be consistent with the recommendation for the Bruneau Resource Area. The special management requirements for the ACEC do not change from the specific management recommendations made for the herd management area or special recreation management area. There were no comments opposing the specific management recommendations for the area during the open house.