NORTH CAMAS ANALYSIS UNIT

DESCRIPTION

The North Camas Unit encompases the area north of State Highway 20 and south of the Sawtooth National Forest, west of Willow Creek, and east of Wild Horse Creek (8 miles west of Hill City, Idaho). Most lands border the national forest and are hilly to mountainous. Vegetation is sagebrush-grass in the lower areas, ranging to Douglas-fir and some ponderosa pine stands in the higher country. Public, state, and private land is intermingled throughout the unit in various and complex patterns. Wildlife, livestock grazing and trailing, and recreation are the major uses.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

The majority of this area is identified for disposal by state exchange or other means. Some large blocks of public land will be retained and managed for open space, recreation, wildlife habitat, and livestock grazing. State lands in these areas wil be acquired.

SPECIFIC MANAGEMENT DECISIONS AND RATIONALES

Lands

Decision Number 1

Because of the complex land patterns, lands within this unit will be disposed of with the following restrictions, priorities, or exceptions:

a. The Lime Creek Area (see MFP 3 Overlay) will be disposed of by exchange in the following priority:

   (1) U.S. Forest Service administration

   (2) State/BLM exchange with priority given to BLM acquiring state land in Deer Creek Area (see MFP 3 Overlay).

b. Retain the Deer Creek Area (see MFP 3 Overlay) with an active exchange program with the state to enhance each agency's management capabilities.

PLAN AMENDMENT NO. NC-1

Plan Name Sun Valley MFP Page NC-1
Chapter _____ Area Monument
Heading Lands

(Summarize substance of text material change in amendment document.)

CHANGE : See attached

(Describe rationale for above amendment and give reference to location of amendment document.)

REASON :

SIGNATURE AS APPROPRIATE :

Program Leader _____ Date _____

Area Plan/Environ Coord W. Baker Date 11/8/91

Area Manager _____ Date _____

Retention To Transfer - Area 2

Amend the Sun Valley MFP and Monument RMP by re-designating the following lands from retention to transfer category.

Sun Valley MFP - Map No. 1 and 1d

Area 2 - Parcel A

T. 1 N., R. 15 E., B.M., Camas County
Section 21: SW¼SW¼;
Section 28: NW¼NW¼; containing 80 acres

Monument RMP - Map No. 1 and 1e

Area 2 - Parcel B

T. 5 S., R. 17 E., B.M., Lincoln County
Section 30: Lot 4
Section 31: Lots 1,2,3,4
S½NE¼, E½NW¼
NE¼SW¼, N½SE¼SW¼,
N½SE¼, N½N½S½SE¼,
S½NW¼SW¼SE¼;
Section 32: S½N½, N½SW¼,
N½N½SE¼, N½S½NW¼SE¼,
N½SW¼NE¼SE¼;
Section 33: SW¼NE¼, S½NW¼,
N½NW¼SW¼, N½N½NE¼SW¼,
S½NW¼NE¼SW¼, N½N½NW¼SE¼; containing 1033.15 acres.

Alternative No. 1 - Preferred Alternative/Private Exchange

Change this parcel management category from retention to transfer from federal ownership. Dispose of the lands under authority of Section 206 (Exchanges) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) (43 U.S.C. 1716). This would allow the Bureau to obtain privately owned lands with high values for public access, recreation and wildlife, and riparian habitat potential in exchange for the above identified lands. Allotted AUMs in the allotment would be retired and not be readjudicated or permanently allotted. Management emphasis would be geared to riparian habitat improvement. Grazing would be considered as a management tool on a temporary non-renewable use based on inventory of livestock capacity and after the appropriate level of NEPA analysis. The type of livestock and use will be selected on the basis of the ability to use this type management to control vegetation while protecting steep, fragile slopes and sensitive riparian habitat.

c. Except for the Lime Creek Area, make state exchange the priority disposal method to block up public land for efficient management.

d. Lands containing cultural values of National Register significance will be retained in either federal or state ownership.

e. Legal and physical public access to Deer Creek from the south will be obtained.

Rationale

Many isolated tracts exist plus tracts interlaced with private and state lands to the point administration of public land is difficult or impossible.

Emphasis on disposal by state exchange will allow each agency to efficiently manage blocked up tracts of land rather than isolated tracts. Alternative means of disposal will eliminate lands not possible to administer.

This analysis unit contains lands with potentially significant cultural resources. This significance will be determined, explored, and evaluated prior to disposal.

The Deer Creek Area contains lands with a combination of scenic, wildlife, and recreation values that justify retention.

Convenient access to the retained areas would benefit the public.

Minerals

Decision Number 1

Stock driveway withdrawals will be revoked and all areas will be open to leasable and locatable minerals and geothermal leasing.

Mineral material sales and free use will be allowed if consistent with this plan.

Rationale

All withdrawals will be revoked since the Federal Land Policy and Management Act adequately protects public land resources.

Geothermal energy needs are recognized and the North Camas Unit has potential that will be made available on retained lands and during interim management of lands identified for disposal.

The need for mineral materials by state and local governments has been established. Material should be provided for public benefit when consistent with management decisions for other resources.

Forest Products

Decision Number 1

Intensively manage areas that are capable of timber production. Use the following guidelines for all timber harvesting except sanitation cuts or salvage sales conducted because of damage by fire, disease, insects, or other similar causes.

Timber Harvest Guidelines

a. No clear cut will exceed 45 acres.

b. Maximum clear-cut widths will be 1600 feet on big game winter range and 1000 feet on summer range.

c. No timber harvest on crucial elk or deer winter range except in case of damage by disease, insects, fire, etc., or unless the harvest would be beneficial to the big game involved.

d. Cut in a mosiac or mottled pattern.

e. Strive for a ratio of 60 percent forage to 40 percent cover on harvested timber stands.

f. Maintain snags for wildlife. Each area to be harvested will be evaluated and guidelines will be developed for the number of snags to be retained.

g. Comply with the provisions of the Idaho Forest Protection Act.

h. A 200-foot radius will be left around nests of sensitive bird species. Other nests will be protected to the extent practical.

Decision Number 2

Firewood, Christmas trees, posts and poles, and other woodland products will be sold on vegetative permits. These sales will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Rationale for Decisions 1 and 2

Although the availability and demand for forest products has been small, demand will probably increase, especially for firewood, posts and poles, and Christmas trees. The timber can be used on a managed basis to meet some public needs. These needs will be local in nature because of the distance to the larger population areas and the limited quantities.

Livestock Forage

Decision Number 1

Stock and manage the grazing allotments as summarized and updated in the Rangeland Program Summary (RPS). Tables from the current RPS are enclosed as Appendix 3, summarizing the stocking rates and other management. Changes in grazing management may be made based on monitoring and/or findings of environmental assessments, consistent with other provisions of this land use plan. Changes will be documented in revisions of the RPS.

Rationale

Livestock grazing is the major use within this analysis unit. It is a very important segment of the local economy, and can be managed for sustained yield and multiple use. The selected grazing management has been subjected to comprehensive analysis in an environmental impact statement, and is consistent with the public comments received.

Decision Number 2

Brush control, seeding, water developments, fencing, and other range improvements will be implemented as described in Table A of Appendix 3, contingent on sufficient funding levels. These improvements, and any others proposed, will be subject to an environmental assessment and cost-benefit analysis prior to final approval.

Rationale

Range improvements of all types are needed to improve range condition in some areas. These include livestock management facilities such as fences, water developments, and cattleguards, as well as land treatment.

Decision Number 3

Allotments may be divided or combined to meet the needs of the livestock industry and/or to improve livestock management.

Rationale

Changing requirements for livestock operators may require combining or splitting allotments for improved management of the range or to meet management objectives.

Decision Number 4

Conversions from sheep to cattle and from cattle to sheep will be allowed within the inventoried carrying capacity and will take into account range suitability, manageability, wildlife habitat, and other factors. An environmental assessment will be completed to evaluate the details of each specific proposal.

Rationale

There is a continuing trend to change livestock operations from sheep to cattle. Care must be taken to ensure the change from sheep to cattle will not damage the range or wildlife habitat. The range inventory takes into account suitability, palatability, and diet.

Decision Number 5

Increased forage will be allocated to livestock on a nonrenewable basis for a minimum of five years, during which monitoring must confirm the permanent nature of the forage before increasing the active preference.

Rationale

This procedure will allow monitoring of the increased stocking rate through utilization and trend studies. It will allow increased use with much more flexibility to evaluate the effects of the use.

Decision Number 6

Vegetation manipulation may be done under the following guidelines:

a. Brush may not be removed in crucial elk or deer winter range unless an analysis indicates it will not adversely affect the elk or deer.

b. In sage grouse areas, the Western States Sage Grouse Committee's guidelines will be used (see Appendix 1). Guidelines may be modified by local area, e.g., mosaic patterns within a two-mile radius of strutting grounds.

c. Proposed treatments will be designed to have as little adverse impact on the visual resources as practical (see VRM for classes).

d. Proposals to use chemical sprays will be cleared through the applicable BLM requirements and reviewed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

Rationale

Much of the vegetation manipulation will be accomplished with controlled burns or modified suppression plans. However, all other techniques of brush control are available to meet particular needs. The guidelines will minimize adverse impacts on other resources.

Watershed

Decision Number 1

Maintain sufficient vegetative cover to protect public lands from accelerated erosion. Minimize soil compaction and disturbance due to livestock grazing, timber harvest, and construction and maintenance of all facilities. Consider time of year for the use, select techniques that are less disturbing, etc.

Rationale

Most of this unit is hilly to mountainous. Because of the steep slopes, extreme care must be taken not to increase erosion and reduce productivity.

Decision Number 2

Minimize stream sedimentation by stabilizing deteriorating streambanks. Improve to at least fair condition all riparian areas, and reduce sediment from high source areas such as mine tailings, poorly located or designed roads, areas of active channelling, etc.

Rationale

Water quality of the streams in this unit is generally good. Most of the streams drain into irrigation reservoirs, and any increase in sedimentation will shorten their life span. Many of the streams are also good fisheries, which would be adversely effected by sedimentation.

Decision Number 3

Protect all ground water recharge areas. Uses that would adversely affect ground water quality or quantity, or reduce artesian pressure, should be restricted.

Rationale

Ground water quality and quantity are important for irrigation and domestic use within and outside the unit.

Decision Number 4

Protect all developed springs from livestock use at the water source.

Rationale

These water sources are important for all of the public land uses. The protection of the source areas will make a more dependable water supply, protect important wildlife habitat, and reduce the likelihood of spreading disease in livestock.

Wildlife

Decision Number 1

Provide forage for big game animals as listed in Table NC-1, at the end of this analysis unit section.

Rationale

This forage allocation will allow for an increase in big game numbers as projected by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The public lands only

supply a proportionate share of the needed forage. The remainder will be produced by private and state lands. Competition for forage between big game and livestock is only about 7 percent based on dietary overlap.

Decision Number 2

Manage major deer migration routes to minimumize impedance to big game. Facilities such as fences, right-of-way facilities, and buildings will be constructed in such a way as to have a minimal effect. Bureau fencing specifications will be used, which are designed to minimize impacts on big game habitat.

Rationale

The big game migration routes are important for the maintenance of healthy populations. These corridors can be managed with a minimal impact.

Decision Number 3

All crucial deer and elk ranges will be managed for the needs of the animals, within the allocation limit. Vegetation manipulation, including timber harvest, will only be done where there are minimal adverse impacts on the crucial habitat.

Rationale

All crucial habitats are essential for the survival of the expected populations. Disruption of these areas can cause severe hardships, including starvation, for the big game.

Decision Number 4

All seedings in wildlife areas will have a seed mixture that provides forbs and shrubs (if needed and adaptable) and a mixture of appropriate grasses.

Rationale

Seed mixtures, particularly with appropriate forbs and/or shrubs, will increase the value of the area for wildlife as well as increase livestock forage and stabilize soil conditions.

Decision Number 5

Riparian areas will be given special attention. All riparian areas in poor condition will be improved to at least fair condition. All others will be maintained or improved.

Rationale

Riparian areas are particularly important to a large number of wildlife species. These areas are also very productive for livestock forage and, if abused, can cause severe erosion and sedimentation problems.

Decision Number 6

Streams will receive special attention. Appropriate management techniques will be used to improve stream bank vegetation to at least fair to good condition. The major streams are Big Deer Creek, Ear Creek, Rough Creek, and South Fork Lime Creek.

Rationale

These streams presently have fish populations or have the potential for a fishery. The prime interest is to improve areas in poor condition or with erosion problems to improve habitat quality.

Decision Number 7

Protect raptor habitat to the extent practical.

Rationale

Raptors are an important segment of the wildlife population. Some species are particularly sensitive to man's presence.

Visual Resources Management (VRM)

Decision Number 1

Manage the Lime Creek and Deer Creek areas in visual resource class III (see MFP 3 Overlay).

Rationale

The area identified for retention and the area to be transfered to the Forest Service have visual resources that should be protected. A class III designation will allow development while maintaining visual quality.

Decision Number 2

The remainder of the unit will be managed in visual resource class IV.

Rationale

Class IV, allowing changes to subordinate the natural landscape character, reflects management appropriate for the remaining range lands interspersed with structures and altered land patterns associated with farming development.

Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs)

Decision Number 1

The unit will be open to ORV use.

Rationale

No problems have been identified or are anticipated.

Cultural Resources

Decision Number 1

Cultural resource values will be considered in all actions. Disposal proposals are subject to the findings of significance of cultural resources on unit lands.

Rationale

All cultural values will be protected as required by policy and law.

Fire Management

Decision Number 1

Wildfires starting between June 1 and September 30 will be suppressed as quickly as possible. Modified suppression may be used during the rest of the year, based on the following considerations:

a. Potential beneficial and adverse effects of the burn.

b. Potential size of the fire.

c. Cost of suppression.

d. Existence of an adequate prescription.

e. Monitoring of the fire from the initial report until it is out.

f. Fuel type in which the fire is burning. Timber fires will be suppressed.

Rationale

Fall and spring burning can be very beneficial to certain values on public land, including forage production and diversity, wildlife habitat, watershed condition, etc. Generally, ridge tops become effective fire lines, preventing fires from getting larger. Cool nights help suppress fires in sagebrush communities.

TABLE NC-1

DEER AND ELK SEASONAL USE
BY GRAZING ALLOTMENT ON PUBLIC LANDS
IN THE NORTH CAMAS ANALYSIS UNIT

ALLOTMENT	DEER MONTHS SUMMER May 1-Oct 30	DEER MONTHS MIGRATION Apr 16-Apr 30 Nov 1-Nov 14	DEER MONTHS WINTER Nov 15-Apr 15	ELK MONTHS SUMMER May 1-Oct 30	ELK MONTHS WINTER Nov 15-Apr 14
Base Line	107	13			25
Cow Creek	19	16			
Deer Creek (NC)	381	45	50	84	70
Ear Creek	288	34		44	
Elk Creek	128	15		6	21
Fairfield	24	8			
Hot Springs	115	13			
McHan Creek	29	3			
Mill Canyon	65	8			10
Mountain View	39	5			
Phillips Creek	19	2			
Piney	58	6			2
Powell Creek	24	3			1
Roanhide	134	16		20	
Rough Creek	232	28		36	
Sheep Point	66	11			30
Sheep Trail	120	30			
Soldier	123	18		16	
Three Mile	10	2			
Willow Creek	63	8	60		
	2044	284	110	206	159