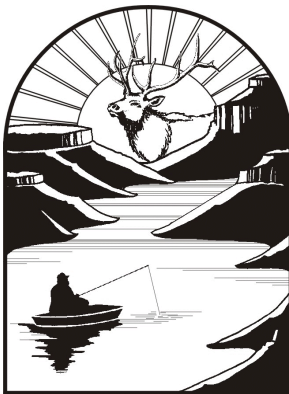

Chapter 1
Introduction





Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 RMP Program and Policy

The Pacific Northwest Region of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) is conducting a multi-year program to prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for each of its major facilities. This program is guided by Federal legislation and policies to ensure that Federal lands are managed to serve a wide range of public purposes. Preparation of RMPs is specifically authorized in Title 28 of Public Law 102-575. It is also an outcome of *Assessment '87*, a Reclamation study that examined the future direction of its programs. This study established a broad framework for moving forward into the 21st century with increased emphasis on the improved management of projects and the protection of the environment. Each RMP is intended to provide the management framework needed to balance the development, use, and protection of Reclamation lands and their associated natural, cultural, and recreational resources. It is Reclamation's blueprint for future resource management decisions to guide Reclamation, managing partners, and agency cooperators and to inform the public about the resource management policies and actions to be implemented over the life of the RMP.

Reclamation's resource management policy is to provide a broad level of stewardship to ensure and encourage resource protection, conservation,

and multiple use, as appropriate. Management practices and principles established in this RMP, in accordance with existing Federal laws, regulations, and policies, provide for the protection of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources; cultural resources; public health and safety; and applicable uses of Reclamation lands and water areas, public access, and outdoor recreation.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Plan

The Ririe Reservoir RMP is a 10-year plan to provide management direction for lands and waters under Reclamation jurisdiction in the vicinity of Ririe Reservoir, located near Idaho Falls, Idaho. These lands also include portions of the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), located to the southeast of Ririe Reservoir; Cartier Slough WMA, located north of Ririe Reservoir; and the Ririe Outlet Channel, located west of Ririe Reservoir (see Frontispiece). Collectively, these are referred to as the "RMP Study Area" in this document.

The purpose of this RMP is to address current and anticipated future issues to permit the orderly and coordinated development and management of lands and facilities and the water surface under Reclamation jurisdiction in the RMP Study Area. The plan will be used as the basis for directing

activities on Reclamation lands and the reservoir in a way that maximizes overall public and resource benefits, consistent with the purposes of the areas, and that provides guidance for managing the area during the next 10 years.

Through implementation of the RMP, Reclamation aims to balance competing and conflicting demands for differing uses and maximize compatibility with surrounding land uses, while affording an appropriate level of resource protection and enhancement.

Over the course of implementing the RMP, it will be reviewed, reevaluated, and revised (if necessary) in cooperation with all involved agencies and Tribes to reflect changing conditions and management objectives. If a proposed modification to the RMP would significantly affect area resources or public use, opportunities for public involvement will be provided. The RMP will be fully updated at the end of its 10-year life.

In addition to this introductory chapter, the RMP contains the six chapters, summarized below.

Chapter 2 summarizes the relevant natural, visual, cultural, and socioeconomic resources around the reservoir. The resource inventory describes existing conditions and lays the framework for identifying suitable resources for a variety of land and water uses, as well as sensitive resources that require special protection, enhancement, or restoration.

Chapter 3 summarizes existing land use and management. The range of existing land uses is described and existing land use agreements and policies identified. These include: Project facilities and general operations (i.e., Ririe Dam, Reservoir and Outlet Channel), agreements and easements, recreational uses, and access and transportation.

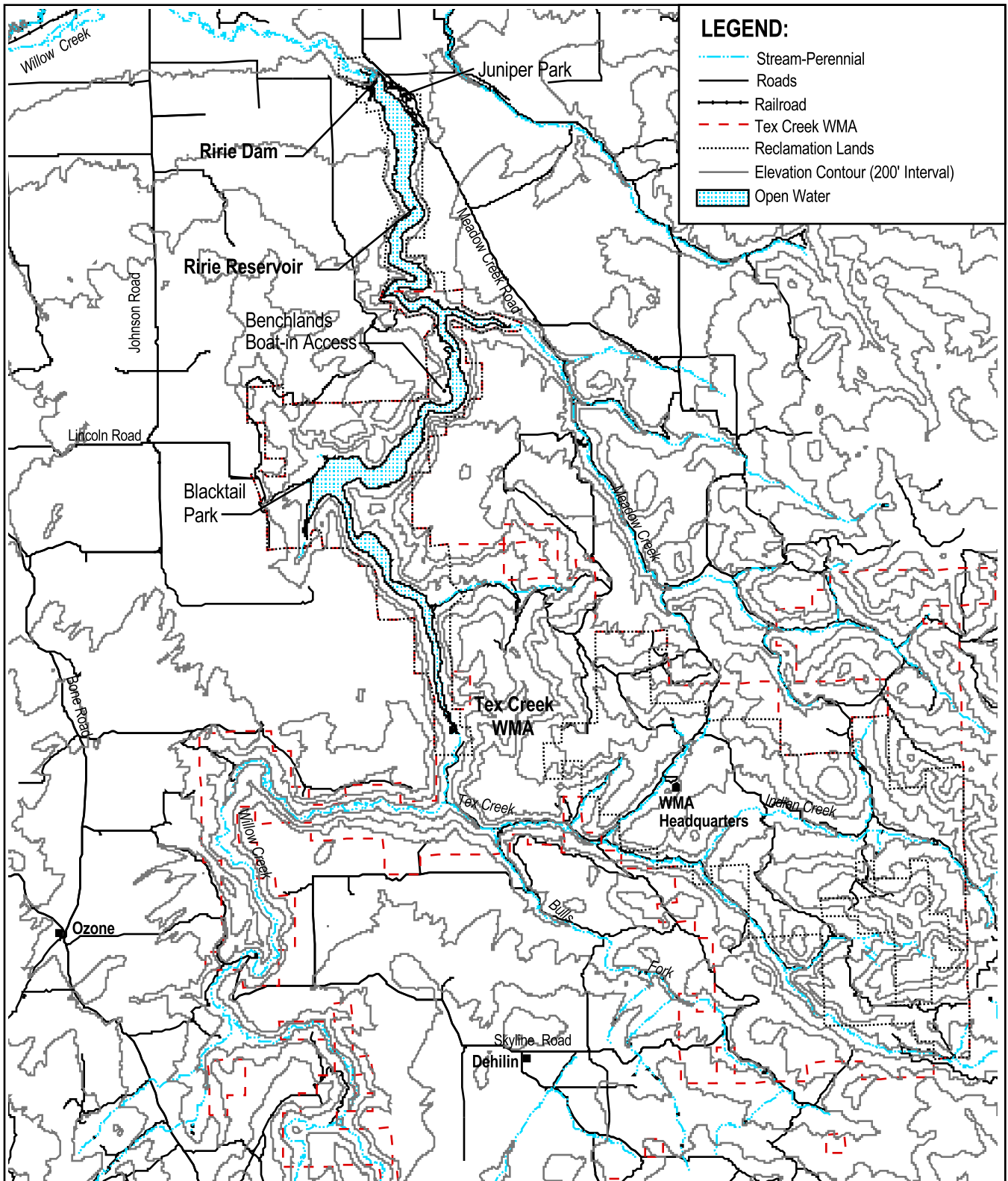
Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the RMP planning process, including the public involvement program (e.g., input received through newsbriefs response forms, meetings/workshops, and agency consultation). This chapter also describes Reclamation's efforts to consult with Tribes regarding their interests. All of this information helped identify the range of issues and concerns, establish goals and objectives, identify the range of alternative plans for study, and modify the preferred alternative, which became the RMP.

Chapter 5 is the core of the RMP and provides a detailed description of the Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions associated with the plan. This chapter is organized according to the following four themes: (a) natural resources; (b) cultural resources; (c) recreation resources; and (d) access, coordination, and implementation.

Chapter 6 presents the implementation program associated with the management actions set forth in Chapter 5. This includes a description of program phasing, priorities, and responsible entities, as well as the process involved with amending and updating the plan.

1.3 Location and Description of the RMP Study Area

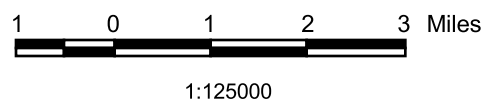
The RMP Study Area consists of the four separate areas three of which are shown on Figures 1.3-1 and 1.3-2 including Reclamation lands at Ririe Reservoir, Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA; Tex Creek), and Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Cartier Slough WMA (Cartier Slough). The Ririe Outlet Channel, the fourth area, is shown on the Regional Location Map (Frontispiece). These lands comprise a total of 14,854 acres and each is described below.



LEGEND:

- Stream-Perennial
- Roads
- +— Railroad
- - - - - Tex Creek WMA
- Reclamation Lands
- Elevation Contour (200' Interval)
- █ Open Water

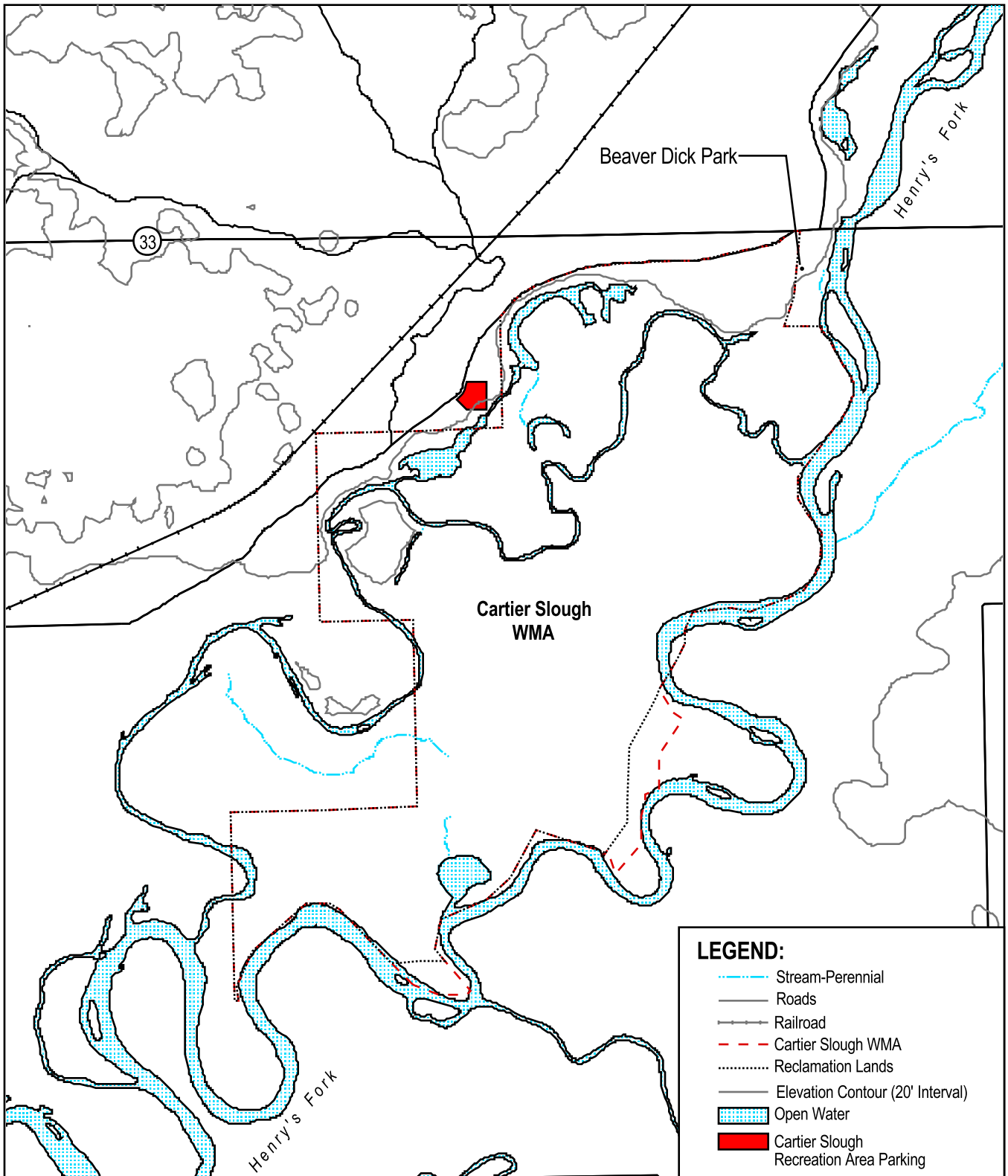
Figure 1.3-1
Area Map - Ririe Reservoir
and Tex Creek WMA



The information displayed here is based on the best available data at the time of publication. Neither the authors, Reclamation, or any other party here warrant or represent that the information is in every respect complete and accurate, and are not held responsible for errors or omissions.

Source: USBR, 2001; EDAW, 2001

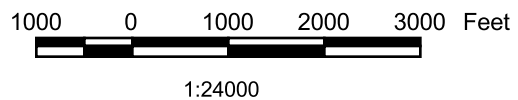
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LEGEND:

- Stream-Perennial
- Roads
- Railroad
- Cartier Slough WMA
- Reclamation Lands
- Elevation Contour (20' Interval)
- Open Water
- Cartier Slough Recreation Area Parking

Figure 1.3-2
Area Map - Cartier Slough WMA



The information displayed here is based on the best available data at the time of publication. Neither the authors, Reclamation, or any other party here warrant or represent that the information is in every respect complete and accurate, and are not held responsible for errors or omissions.

Source: USBR, 2001; EDAW, 2001



Photo 1-1. Ririe Reservoir looking south toward Juniper boat ramp and beyond.

Ririe Reservoir is located on Willow Creek, a minor tributary of the Snake River. It is approximately 20 miles east of Idaho Falls, and just south of Highway 26. This location places the reservoir along one of the major travel routes between Interstate 15 and Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks in Wyoming.

When the reservoir is full, there are 1,560 acres of surface water at Ririe Reservoir. The reservoir extends along 12 miles of Willow Creek and is less than one mile wide along the entire length. The reservoir is an important recreation resource in the region, especially for residents near Idaho Falls and Rexburg. In addition, it is a fairly convenient stop for visitors traveling between Interstate 15 and Jackson Hole along Highway 26. Two roads provide direct vehicular access to the reservoir—Meadow Creek Road (at the north end of the reservoir on the east bank near the dam), and Lincoln Road (on the west side of the reservoir just north of Blacktail Creek).

The Tex Creek WMA is a 34,269-acre reserve on the southern part of the reservoir, established to mitigate for wildlife habitat lost when Ririe and Teton Reservoirs were constructed. Tex Creek includes lands owned by Reclamation, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Idaho Department of

Lands (IDL), and the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Tex Creek is managed by IDFG and provides important winter range habitat for elk and mule deer, as well as habitat for upland game birds.

Cartier Slough consists of approximately 1,026 acres of Reclamation's Ririe and Teton mitigation lands adjacent to the Henry's Fork of the Snake River west of Rexburg.



Photo 1-2. Entrance to Tex Creek WMA Headquarters.

The area is managed by IDFG and is adjacent to Beaver Dick County Park in Madison County.

The Ririe Outlet Channel is located downstream of the dam and north of Idaho Falls. Extending west from Willow Creek to the Snake River, its purpose is to control flood flows of Willow Creek above Idaho Falls.

1.4 Project History

The Ririe Project consists of Ririe Dam, Reservoir, and the Ririe Outlet Channel. In 1962, the Project was specifically authorized for the purpose of flood control, irrigation, recreation, and habitat for fish and wildlife.

Construction on the project began in January 1970 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE).



Photo 1-3. Ririe Reservoir under construction in 1973.

On October 14, 1976, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) transferred the Project to Reclamation. Construction was completed a year later in November 1977, and the reservoir was filled to capacity for the first time in 1978.

The Ririe Outlet Channel is a floodway outlet bypass channel that extends directly west of Willow Creek 7.8 miles to the Snake River upstream of Idaho Falls.

Reclamation's portion of Tex Creek was purchased by Reclamation and the COE in 1976 as mitigation for habitat losses associated with construction of the Ririe and Teton Projects. Other portions of Tex Creek are owned by the IDFG, BLM, IDL, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) (Table 1.4-1). IDFG manages Tex Creek primarily as big game winter

range and resident wildlife under agreement with Reclamation and the other landowners.



Photo 1-4. Ririe Reservoir near completion in 1976.

Cartier Slough was purchased by the COE and Reclamation in 1976 and 1977, respectively, as mitigation for wetland and waterfowl losses resulting from construction of Ririe and Teton Projects. Cartier Slough is managed by IDFG primarily as habitat for waterfowl.

1.5 Overview of Public Involvement and Agency and Tribal Coordination

Reclamation conducted an extensive public involvement program as part of the RMP planning process to ensure representation and participation by all those interested in the future of the RMP Study Area.

To achieve full representation, the program was designed to reach a user population that was dispersed over a broad geographical area, representing diverse points of view, and enthusiastic in participating in the RMP planning process.

The public involvement program consisted of four primary elements: (1) six newsbriefs mailed to agencies, Tribes, elected officials,

organizations, media, and individuals; (2) three public meetings/workshops; (3) eight meetings with an Ad Hoc Work Group, a group formed as part of the RMP planning process to represent key agencies, Tribes, and interest groups in the area; and (4) a public web site providing access to newsbriefs, draft materials including the Draft EA, and meeting announcements. These elements, as well as additional agency and Tribal consultation efforts, are discussed in further detail in Chapter 4.

Table 1.4-1. Tex Creek WMA Land Ownership

Land Ownership	Acres
Bureau of Land Management	9,600 ¹
Idaho Department of Lands	648 ²
Idaho Department of Fish and Game	9,215 ¹
Bureau of Reclamation – Teton Mitigation Lands	9,104
Bureau of Reclamation – Ririe Mitigation Lands	2,502
Bureau of Reclamation – Non-Mitigation Lands	2,480 ³
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	720
Total	34,269

Source: IDFG 1999; Reclamation 2000.

¹Estimate, plus/minus 20 acres.

²Idaho Department of Lands owns one full section of land; however, it is oversized and contains 648 acres.

³Estimate, plus/minus 5 acres.