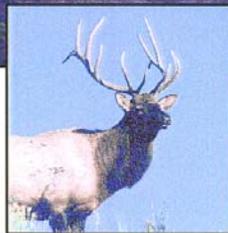
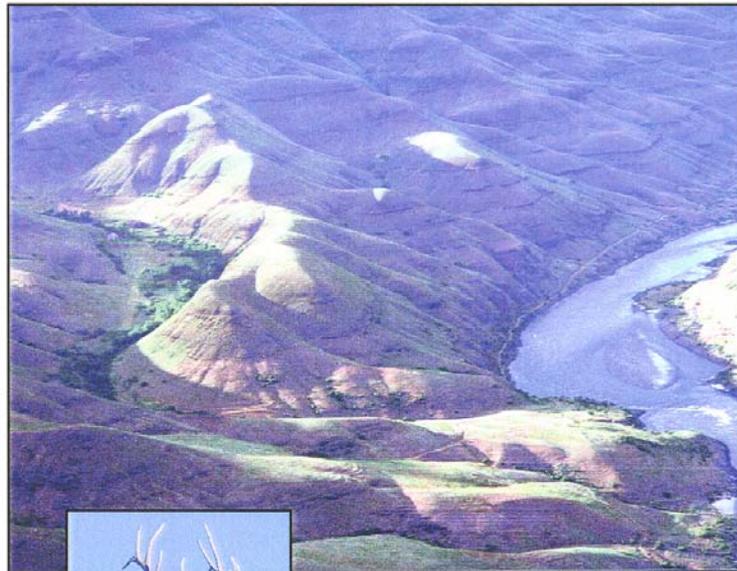




LONG RANGE MANAGEMENT PLAN

CRAIG MOUNTAIN

Wildlife Management Area



CLEARWATER REGION — APRIL 1998



SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

and

RECORD OF DECISION

on the

Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area Plan

INTRODUCTION

The Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA) has existed south of Lewiston since the initial purchases of land by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) in 1971. Through additional purchases and cooperator agreements, CMWMA had grown to about 24,000 acres by 1982. Long a destination for wildlife and outdoor enthusiasts, this area was expanded when approximately 60,000 acres were added in 1992 for the purpose of mitigating wildlife losses associated with inundation of wildlife habitats when Dworshak Reservoir was created.

CMWMA differs from other wildlife management areas managed by IDFG in large part because of historic interagency agreements on how some of the lands will be managed, and because the 60,000 acre Peter T. Johnson Unit must, by terms of the wildlife mitigation agreement with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), be managed to meet certain wildlife mitigation objectives. BPA requires a management plan that demonstrates IDFG commitment to wildlife mitigation guidelines and agreements, and the Idaho public wants a document that outlines the proposed management for CMWMA. A plan covering only the Peter T. Johnson portion of the area and IDFG obligations to wildlife mitigation was considered, but rejected because (1) the requirements for this section of CMWMA are detailed in other documents, and (2) public users of the area did not distinguish the Peter T. Johnson lands from others managed as part of CMWMA.

For these reasons, IDFG prepared a **DRAFT Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area Plan** that encompassed all lands managed by IDFG on Craig Mountain and circulated it for public comments, in conjunction with an extensive series of meetings and open house events where IDFG staff could respond to questions and concerns. By encompassing all lands, IDFG was able to provide a range of options not otherwise available. This approach in the DRAFT plan resulted in some initial misunderstanding by BPA and the Nez Perce Tribe. Comments of these two entities focused primarily on wildlife mitigation agreements and the Peter T. Johnson segment alone, the Tribe even addressing their comments to the “Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Management Unit” rather than the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

IDFG believes a holistic view of management opportunities afforded by CMWMA is essential to effectively address a broad range of public concerns. This approach enabled IDFG to incorporate issues and concerns of the public to a much greater degree than would have been

possible had the DRAFT management plan simply reiterated interagency agreements associated with Peter T. Johnson wildlife mitigation lands and detailed in other documents.

The DRAFT management plan was designed to address the general management direction for all lands managed by IDFG as part of the CMWMA. It was expressly NOT intended to provide a great amount of detail. The place for detailed inventories and management plans is in separate plans addressing specific issues in order that these documents may be updated as necessary as additional information is gathered and as specific conditions change through time. This way, individual documents for vegetation management, access management, fire response, etc., may be updated without revisiting fundamental principles regarding long-term management direction for the area as a whole.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

As in any area that has afforded a great deal of historic use, the future management of the CMWMA generated considerable discussion and concern. The DRAFT plan documents an extensive series of public meetings held 1992-1997 (Appendix I), and additional meetings were held following release of the DRAFT plan in April 1998.

Alternatives Analyzed in the Draft Management Plan

The DRAFT plan identified three general approaches to management that IDFG staff believed could be applied on CMWMA, given the land ownership pattern and existing agreements. Staff was asked to consider a full range of potential management alternatives, without either precluding options that the public might endorse or developing such a narrow range of alternatives that the DRAFT plan 'pre-selected' future management direction. These approaches were:

Alternative 1. This is a 'habitat-based' approach, where management activities would focus primarily on management of wildlife habitat. This approach is closely aligned with IDFG responsibilities to provide replacement 'Habitat Units' (HUs) for wildlife on the Peter T. Johnson portion of CMWMA.

Alternative 2. This is a 'wildlife-based' approach, where management activities would focus primarily on management of wildlife species. This approach is consistent with IDFG responsibilities to provide replacement 'Habitat Units' (HUs) for wildlife on the Peter T. Johnson portion of CMWMA, but is somewhat more attuned to historic management practices on CMWMA and other wildlife management areas throughout Idaho.

Alternative 3. This is an 'outdoor recreation-based' approach, where management would emphasize provision of outdoor (primarily wildlife-related) recreation wherever opportunities to do so did not conflict with existing requirements and agreements. Although IDFG staff realized in advance of plan preparation that this approach would be controversial, the intermingling of land ownerships and agreements made it a viable alternative for consideration.

Staff attempted to make it very clear in the DRAFT plan that these alternatives were designed to demonstrate the potential range of management opportunities, and that a final decision would involve a blend of actions derived from portions of each of the identified alternatives.

Comments received on the DRAFT plan were generally supportive of this approach. Many thoughtful and creative ideas were expressed, and only one person responded that

I didn't see the need for alternative methodology. Too time consuming & a waste of money!

SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

Responses to the DRAFT plan were received from 3 elected officials (representing Clearwater, Nez Perce, and Lewis Counties), one tribal government (Nez Perce), 2 federal agencies (U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Administration; and U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management), one State of Idaho agency (Idaho Department of Lands), four recreational organizations (Latah Wildlife Association, Concerned Sportsmen of Idaho, Panhandle Backcountry Horsemen, and Palouse Group Sierra Club), several businesses, and 50 individuals (Table 1).

Table 1. Summary of respondents to DRAFT CMWMA plan.

Class of Respondent	Number of responses
Tribal Governments	1
Federal/State/County Elected Officials	3
Federal Agencies	1
State Agencies	2
Businesses	2
Sportsmen/Recreation Groups	4
Individuals	50

COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVES

Despite efforts to make it clear that the final management decision would require a blending of actions from each of the alternatives presented, many respondents identified support for a particular Alternative.

Alternative 1 was supported by one individual, who wrote:

The vegetation or habitat emphasis implies that the capability of the land will be given priority consideration as management of wildlife is sustained. Wildlife populations will wax and wane through time but as long as the health and integrity of the land is the priority, the wildlife values will benefit as well.

Alternative 2 was supported by three of the four sportsman organizations, 20 individuals that signed and submitted a prepared form letter response, and several other individuals who sent letters. An example of the sentiments supported included the following:

I would like to voice my unequivocal support for Alternative 2... I believe this area has tremendous long-term potential for developing an ideal wildlife habitat that will also provide significant recreational opportunities for outdoors people. I also believe that this alternative is economically most realistic in that it is most closely aligned with the original intent of the BPA and will allow for the appropriate use of the management trust funds.

[Alternative 2] emphasizes the protection, preservation and management of fish and wildlife populations... proposes to support present day recreational uses such as camping, hunting, horseback riding, fishing, and hiking ... limits off-road use by cattle and restricts off-road use by motorized vehicles. This minimizes damage done by such uses which would be counterproductive to your primary goals for fish and wildlife ... will provide quality recreation rather than large quantity recreation. This is important.

Alternative 3 was not selected as a preferred alternative by any respondent.

Four respondents identified the Blended Alternative as preferable, with comments including the following:

*[The Blended Alternative] most closely approximates the historical **wildlife cultural heritage** uses of the area: hunting, fishing, viewing, etc.*

The IDFG “Blended Alternative” provides the best balanced use alternative and most closely approximates the historical use of this area for hunting, fishing, and other recreational uses. I strongly support this alternative.

COMMENTS ON ISSUES

Most of the people who commented on the DRAFT plan wrote very specific comments about particular issues. The most popular issues were (1) access management, (2) potential land exchanges, (3) recreation management, (4) livestock grazing, and (5) vegetation management. A sampling of the responses received is quoted below.

Access Management

Fully 75 percent of all respondents provided comments concerning access management issues. Several distinct themes emerged from comments received.

1. Specific support for motorized vehicle restrictions year-around was nearly unanimous.

Motorized public access to this area must be restricted to existing roads with special restrictions and closures to protect wildlife species from disturbance at selected times of the year and poaching year-around. ... Special attention must be given to restriction of all-terrain cycles (ATVs, ATCs, ORVs) to existing roads.

The restriction of motor vehicle access within the area is essential... We believe the area should be developed for a high level of non-motorized recreation. There is abundant opportunity for wildlife viewing, cross country skiing, hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding.

*The Department **must** be allowed to keep many roads in this area free of machine use in the summer and fall. This is a place that should be kept free of motorized loop trails, which needlessly wound wildlife habitat.*

Motorized vehicle restrictions introduced under the existing interim plan have already had positive impacts on the environment and we're beginning to observe beneficial behavioral responses in big game.

I am particularly pleased to see you have the courage to put some controls on the motorized users. It is not a case of having an unwarranted bias against these users; I just cannot see how you would successfully rebuild habitat and wildlife populations with the presence of motorcycles, ORV's and the like. It just does not seem realistic to have both maximum recreation and still be able to sustain the critter population.

The so-called "Loop Trail" is more than a bad idea. ... Set Craig Mt. aside for wildlife management and allow people access if they follow some sane and practical rules of blending in with the area.

I would like to see no more road access in this area and would like to see less road access. Roads need not be improved. I have observed numerous incidents

of off-roads motorized vehicle use in the CMWMA. I would like to see continued efforts / an increase in efforts to stop this damaging behavior.

I feel strongly that all roads that are currently closed to motor vehicles should remain closed. To increase motor vehicle access would have a direct negative impact on wildlife and be contrary to the goals and mandates the IDF&G has for managing the CMWMA. As many roads as possible should be seeded and put to bed... All off road vehicle use must continue to be banned and enforcement efforts increased.

Optimal wildlife management requires large tracts of non-motorized habitat. ORV restrictions on all presently closed roads and trails should be continued and strictly enforced. Other additional roads and trails should be closed as well.

As many roads as possible should be closed to enhance big game and other wildlife uses.

I have walked and hunted on Craig Mountain for many years. Vehicular management is critical to wildlife management. Unfortunately our society has individuals who always operate beyond what the law allows. ...Some individuals could not resist the "OFF Roding" fun and habitat degradation would continue in the flatter middle zones of the river breaks. The riparian vegetation efforts for water quality would be a joke.

A few commentors believed that access management should be limited to motorized vehicles:

Motorized vehicles restricted to primary existing roadway access; Non-motorized: allowed on all secondary/tertiary roadways.

The Concerned Sportsmen of Idaho believed that exceptions could be accommodated:

Plan conduct, and evaluate a test for allowing controlled use of off-road motorized vehicles during midday hours (perhaps 1100-1400 hours) for game retrieval and making and breaking camps. ... [and for] allowing for controlled motorized access (both on- and off-road types) for mobility-impaired hunters.

Only one commentor, writing on behalf of Clearwater County Commissioners, supported no restrictions on access, but it is unclear from this comment whether the commentor was talking about motorized or 'general access' to public lands-- two very different issues:

...no loss of access and that long range objectives remain as free, open access to all.

2. A plan to provide special consideration for the mobility-impaired received substantial support, although others proposed limitations on mobility-impaired access as well:

I have some problems with the mobility impaired access. There should be some days or weekends when NO vehicle access is allowed.

3. The Lewis and Clark ATV Club supported managed and supervised over-snow use by motorized vehicles restricted to selected roads, and only in areas apart from wintering wildlife. One commentor suggested events which could reduce management costs while providing recreational opportunity, i.e., litter clean-up, trail maintenance, and cabin/warming hut restoration.

4. An area for cross-country skiing, apart from any area in which motorized uses were allowed, was proposed.

I would like to see you designate an area for X-C skiing only and to allow skiers to construct and mark a trail. Skiing and snowmobiling do not mix. We would like an area where we can go.

Recreation Management

There were many comments concerning the future of recreation management on CMWMA. Some of these were intertwined with comments on motorized vehicle and road access, while others addressed camping and other uses of the area. Nearly all of these comments addressed a single, common theme-- CMWMA should be managed primarily to provide wildlife habitat, even if that management resulted in reduced (or at least not expanded) recreational opportunities.

Purchase of these lands over the past twenty years has been... a tremendous victory for government and for our state's wildlife. The overwhelming portion of funds used to acquire these important lands came from fish and wildlife sources. As a result, Craig Mtn. property should not be considered a playground, but rather a key source of habitat for fish and game. In any final plan that you write, the resource must win. All forms of recreation should be secondary to restoring these lands and for managing them to aid animals.

The [Latah Wildlife Association] would also favor strict controls over motorized access and camping facilities other than the primitive type in order to reduce pressure on wildlife in this area.

I would not want to see any camp grounds built. These tend to turn into "partying" and four wheeling areas. Keep the area as natural as possible.

... don't over-commercialize the area with expensively maintained campgrounds and keep ATV's at bay...

Recreational values and other human-related values are actually enhanced over the long-term when the natural values of these areas are emphasized, even if there are constraints on our use.

I do not believe the IDF&G should expend much effort on increasing fishing opportunity on the CMWMA. The focus should be on the target species.

Potential Land Exchanges

A large group of comments involved potential land exchanges. As with access management, several themes were identified:

1. Most agency responses indicated that blocking of ownerships was not necessary if the affected lands were already covered by interagency agreements identifying cooperative management. Lewis County Commissioners went on record opposing all exchanges involving Lewis County lands.

Lewis County has and will continue to adamantly oppose any trades involving the Dworshak Mitigation lands if it involves lands in Lewis County that would be traded to the Nez Perce Tribe.

2. Most individual commentors indicated that any such exchange should be based on the wildlife values of the lands, and continued access, as well as dollar values.

Any ownership adjustments by either purchase or land exchange should be closely scrutinized to be sure it benefits wildlife and further management goals and enhances public use or benefits.

Block-up isn't always such a good concept if the Dept. is swapping land for dry, over-harvested ground. ... if tribal lands are blocked up, will the public lose access in that area? If so I would strongly oppose such a block-up.

The draft plan unwisely leaves open the chance of land trades to block up ownership... This would be unwise... New owners might not continue public access in the way that the Department does, and such a swap offers potential tax burden harm to Lewis County.

I do not feel the IDFG properties, BLM properties or Idaho Department of Lands properties on the head waters plateau of Webb Creek, or Sweetwater Creek, or Captain John Creek-Brown's Creek should be traded to consolidate boundaries. These smaller parcels of land are readily accessible physically to the mobility impaired individuals and trading these parcels for an area that may be behind a locked gate or canyon land does not seem to serve the general public well.

3. Some commentors believed that it is important to attempt to reduce private land inholdings on CMWMA.

Acquisition of private inholdings by all involved agencies should be actively pursued.

We support the acquisition of additional private land with the CMWMA. The lands within the Cottonwood Creek drainage are most important... We do not support land trades which would remove from IDFG ownership lands in the Soldier's meadow or Lewis county area.

I urge the Department to continue acquiring some of the remaining private parcels and consolidate parcels through land swaps with the Nez Perce Tribe as appropriate.

I strongly support the acquisition of certain privately-owned lands by public agencies.

4. Some commentors believed that any action which reduces confusing boundaries would be acceptable.

Anything to reduce the extremely confusing boundaries would be great.

It would be very helpful to better identify public versus private land. There are 'No Trespassing' signs sprinkled throughout the area.

5. Some commentors were opposed to land exchanges for any reason.

The land trade is ill-advised and should not be consummated at this time.

Grazing Management

A small group of commentors provided statements concerning grazing on CMWMA. There was no written support for widespread grazing, and only a little support for limited grazing in selected areas if it would enhance wildlife values. A sample of comments includes the following:

*The dramatic reduction in domestic grazing is also already having a positive impact on habitat. This is especially apparent in the extremely critical riparian habitats. ... I do support the Departments plans to reintroduce limited grazing at some time in the future but only to the extent that the purpose of such grazing would be the **improvement** of riparian habitat.*

I also feel strongly that domestic livestock grazing should continue to be banned from the lands in the CMWMA. This is the best and fastest way to recover water

quality, riparian areas, meadows, etc. It is also a critical weapon in the “War on Weeds.”

I strongly support “retire CMWMA lands from permitted grazing use!”

Little and preferably no grazing.

Vegetation Management

The final group of comments concerns practices and procedures for management of vegetation on CMWMA. These comments formed a diverse set of proposals, similar only in that they address some aspect of vegetation management. A sampling of comments includes the following:

... test new methods to control yellow starthistle

The use of pelletized feed or certified WEED-FREE hay should not be (encouraged). It should be a requirement. With the major noxious infestation through out the Clearwater-Snake drainages and the Craig Mtn area you should NOT ask, it should be mandatory.

No timber harvest.

Selective [timber] harvest for purposes of stand improvement only.

I believe logging activity in the WMA should be limited to those situations where logging is prescribed for a specific wildlife management objective. Include the protection of all yew wood from taxall bark collectors.

RECORD OF DECISION

on the

CRAIG MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA PLAN

Since February 1992, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has participated in numerous meetings with state, tribal, and local government organizations, conducted many meetings with state and federal land management agencies, and conducted a long series of public scoping meetings to identify public interests and concerns regarding future management of the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA). As a result of these efforts, many issues and many widely differing viewpoints concerning potential management alternatives were developed and analyzed. Potential alternative management directions were summarized in the draft *Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area Management Plan* prepared in the December 1996 and subsequent draft *Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area Plan* released for public review in April 1998.

Public reviewers suggested numerous editorial additions, deletions or modifications to the text of the draft Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area Plan. Many of these comments have been incorporated into the final plan. Suggested comments which could influence issues outside the scope and purpose of this plan were not incorporated. Based on public review and comment, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has selected a blended alternative similar to Alternative 2 as identified in the April 1998 *Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area Plan* as the course for future action. This blended alternative is based on the following fundamental provisions:

1. All lands comprising the CMWMA, whether owned, leased, or cooperatively managed and whether acquired with license, dedicated, or other funds, will be managed consistently as a single wildlife management area.
2. All lands of the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit will be managed to fulfill all conditions and requirements associated with their acquisition for wildlife mitigation purposes.
3. IDFG will comply with all applicable state and federal laws regarding management and activities on these lands.
4. IDFG will advocate land management practices that protect, restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, especially habitats such as wetlands and riparian areas that benefit a wide variety of fish and wildlife species.
5. IDFG has committed to management requirements as outlined in specific cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding, including but not limited to a Sikes Act agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (1985 and as amended), a 10-year non-use grazing lease on BLM lands included within CMWMA signed in March 1997, a miscellaneous lease agreement signed in November 1997 concerning Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) ownership

within the CMWMA, and a memorandum of understanding among IDFG, IDL, BLM, and The Nature Conservancy for management of that portion of the Craig Mountain ecosystem open to the public.

The blended alternative selected features the following specific future management direction for the following Management Emphasis Areas on the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area:

Water

- Protect water rights for wildlife, and anadromous and resident fish.
- Take actions to prevent activities that may result in adverse impacts to fish habitat.
- Develop water sources to provide water to wildlife in areas where needed.
- Protect the integrity of natural seeps and springs and associated vegetation particularly rare plant species.
- Re-introduce beaver to Craig Mountain, in order that their activities will enhance water storage and slow spring run-off.

Air Quality

- Allow seasonal burning of vegetation in selected areas to promote development of desirable vegetative species and stand conditions.
- Conduct seasonal burning when air quality impacts to potentially-affected human communities will be minimized.

Soils

- Minimize management activities that result in soil disturbance in areas of native vegetation.
- Seed areas of bare or disturbed soils where practical with desirable native or non-native plant species to reduce potential for noxious weed invasion.
- Actively work to reduce or eliminate noxious weeds.
- Strive to re-vegetate areas where past activities (livestock concentration areas or trails, unnecessary roads, human activities such as mud-bogging or off-road vehicle use, etc.) have resulted in loss of vegetation.

Minerals

- Allow use of existing gravel pit by IDFG and other government agencies only; i.e., exclude private and commercial use to minimize pit expansion and associated air-borne dust.
- Preclude other mineral exploration and development.

Vegetation Management (including timber, noxious weeds, and efforts directed at riparian vegetation)

- Allow seasonal burning of vegetation in selected areas to promote development of desirable vegetation (species and stand conditions).
- Seed areas of bare or disturbed soils with desirable native or non-native plant species to reduce potential for noxious weed invasion.
- Strive to replace annual grasslands with native perennial grassland communities.

- Allow establishment of selected non-native plant species to meet objectives for ground cover, wildlife food, and other purposes.
- Use biological/chemical and mechanical control methods to limit, reduce, or eliminate noxious weeds.
- Encourage/require use of weed-free hay or pellets as livestock feed.
- Undertake timber harvest only to meet specified wildlife goals, including but not limited to establishment of desirable plant species, production of desirable stand conditions, reduction of wildfire hazards and reduction of noxious weed invasion/expansion.
- Any revenues generated through manipulation of vegetation or other activities on the CMWMA will be used only for purposes of managing the CMWMA.
- Seek to re-establish mid-to-late seral ponderosa pine forests maintained by prescribed fire regimes on some portions of the area.
- Allow commercial harvest of timber and/or firewood only when such activities achieve wildlife goals.
- Provide for cutting of firewood for personal use by permit where and when appropriate.
- Continue harvest of desirable plants and plant parts (i.e., berries, mushrooms, etc.) only for personal use (i.e., no commercial harvesting); require individual permits if use levels threaten to become detrimental.
- Strive to restore streamside riparian vegetation, using native species and desirable nonnative plant species, to achieve aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat objectives.
- Construct perimeter fences as necessary to manage livestock and/or wildlife in critical areas.
- Remove internal fencing within the CMWMA as appropriate.
- In general (i.e., unless specifically directed by agreement to provide other communities to achieve wildlife mitigation objectives), manage for mid-to-late seral and climax vegetative communities where appropriate.
- Re-introduce native but extirpated plant species that are endangered, threatened, or rare into suitable habitats in order to enhance species recovery and/or preclude species listing under protective laws and regulations.

Wildlife (including rare species)

- Provide and monitor habitat for identified wildlife mitigation indicator species.
- Strive to maintain game animal population levels dictated by (1) consideration of the carrying capacity of suitable habitat, (2) compatibility with wildlife mitigation objectives, and (3) demand for recreational opportunities.
- Re-introduce native but extirpated or rare wildlife species, including pine marten, beaver, and Shiras moose.

Wildlife-Associated Recreation (including hunting, fishing, and trapping)

- Encourage wildlife-associated recreational activities consistent with wildlife mitigation and wildlife management objectives.
- Maintain controlled hunts for mule deer and elk to ensure desirable population size and age structure in these wildlife populations.
- Strive to maintain general season hunts for black bear, mountain lion, white-tailed deer and game birds.
- Provide hunting opportunity for persons with disabilities with managed access.

- Special use permits will be provided for organized group activities occurring on the CMWMA. An appropriate equitable fee will be charged for the permit.
- Provide future development of recreational fishing opportunities as opportunities become available and where consistent with mitigation responsibilities.
- Provide trapping opportunity consistent with management objectives, such as maintaining beavers and other furbearers at desirable population levels.
- Provide map showing ownership and major topographic features for purchase by the public.

Livestock Management

- Authorize grazing by domestic livestock only for purposes of improving wildlife habitat.
- Seek methods that reduce or eliminate potential for unauthorized livestock use, preferably methods that preclude the need for expensive internal fence construction and maintenance. Encourage/require use of weed-free hay or pellets for recreational livestock.

Public Road Access

- Work with county government to ensure that county road access through the CMWMA to Wapshilla Ridge continues.
- Work cooperatively with BLM regarding road access down Eagle Creek and along Salmon River.
- Work closely with other agencies to identify access routes that should be maintained for administrative purposes, and seek to schedule timing of maintenance activities to minimize conflicts with wildlife management objectives.
- Minimize unnecessary secondary and tertiary roads and associated maintenance demands, permanently retiring and re-vegetating these routes or converting them to trails for non-motorized use.
- Continue restrictions on motorized use of secondary and tertiary roads during the non-snow months in order to maximize wildlife security and attain wildlife management objectives.
- Continue to provide over snow use by motorized vehicles (snowmobiles) on designated routes off of big game winter range.

Trail and Off-road Access Management

- Continue existing policy allowing no off-road use by motorized vehicles.
- Strive to develop, map, and maintain a system of trails for non-motorized use only, in conjunction with private organizations.
- Establish a volunteer network to patrol trails, identify maintenance needs, and assist in maintenance and litter-control activities.
- Identify and enforce regulations necessary to protect seasonally sensitive habitats.
- Identify and cooperate with the construction or maintenance of recreational livestock corrals and off-loading chutes as necessary at popular trailheads and in remote sections of the CMWMA, to localize and limit potentially adverse resource impacts.

Camping

- Allow primitive camping only.
- Provide and maintain toilets at popular trailheads and other areas where necessary for human safety and litter control.

Protection and Interpretation of Cultural and Historic Sites

- Protect known cultural sites.
- Minimize ground-disturbing activities.
- Secure archaeological clearances before conducting ground-disturbing activities.
- Incorporate existing sound historic buildings worthy of protection into administrative sites or facilities open to the public to maintain historic homesteads or ranches and to provide shelter to the recreating public.
- Eliminate unsafe buildings and facilities.
- Assist the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office in placement of interpretive materials as they are developed.

Potential Future Adjustments in Land Ownership

- Seek to influence or acquire management authority over inholdings through cooperative agreements, leases, or other means to minimize public confusion over boundaries and inadvertent trespass.
- Acquire management authority over inholdings, adjacent or nearby properties by agreement, purchase, donation, or other means when such lands include critical or unique wildlife habitat, consolidate property boundaries, or provide benefits to wildlife. Dispose of lands only by trade for other lands which will enhance wildlife management objectives, and only (1) when exchanged lands are of equal value and such trades result in enhancing desirable wildlife habitat, or (2) when exchanged lands are of equal value economically, provide equivalent wildlife habitat, and improve management.
- Undertake adjustments in land ownership only after the affected county government(s) have been fully involved.

All activities will only be undertaken within the funding limits of available budgets.

In addition to these broad long-term management guidelines, staff will prepare the following supplemental plans with more detailed programs as addendums.

1. A comprehensive timber management plan based on specific wildlife habitat goals, using GIS technology.
2. A fire management plan in cooperation with IDL and BLM.
3. A noxious weed management plan.
4. An access management plan and map.

Supervisor, Clearwater Region

Date

CRAIG MOUNTAIN
Wildlife Management Area

Management Plan
April 1998

Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Clearwater Region
1540 Warner Ave
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Prepared by:
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INTRODUCTION

The 76,679-acre Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area (CMWMA) is located about ten miles south of Lewiston, Idaho, just north and east of the confluence of the Snake and Salmon rivers (Figure 1). The CMWMA is comprised of two primary management units (Figure 2).

The Billy Creek Unit consists of 16,123 acres purchased by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) between 1971 and 1983. This land was acquired by IDFG, using funds derived from hunting license sales and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), to provide critical habitat for wildlife (primarily elk and deer) and recreation access for hunters and anglers along the Snake River.

The area was expanded by 59,991 acres in 1995, with acquisition of the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit, named for the administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration from 1981 through 1986. Mr. Johnson is also a third-generation Idahoan. The Peter T. Johnson Unit was purchased by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) under terms of the 1992 Dworshak Dam Wildlife Mitigation Agreement among BPA, the State of Idaho, and the Nez Perce Tribe. It was provided to the State of Idaho as partial mitigation for wildlife losses associated with the 1971 inundation of wildlife habitat along the North Fork Clearwater River resulting from construction of Dworshak Reservoir. The mitigation agreement included establishment of a \$3.019 million dollar trust fund for the long-term management of this area, and establishment of a \$7.1 million dollar trust for the purchase of future mitigation lands by the Nez Perce Tribe.

IDFG combined management of these adjacent units in 1996. IDFG acquired a 565-acre addition to the Billy Creek segment at Limestone Point in 1997. In 1998, IDFG owned 76,679 acres and managed approximately 38,000 additional acres under leases, easements, and agreements.

The CMWMA is characterized by gently rolling forested plateau at higher elevations, surrounded by deeply dissected canyon grasslands along the breaks of the Salmon and Snake rivers. The forested habitat is dominated by grand fir habitat types, while the grasslands are dominated by bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, and sand dropseed.

CRAIG MOUNTAIN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

LOCATION GUIDE



Figure 1. Location Guide – Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area

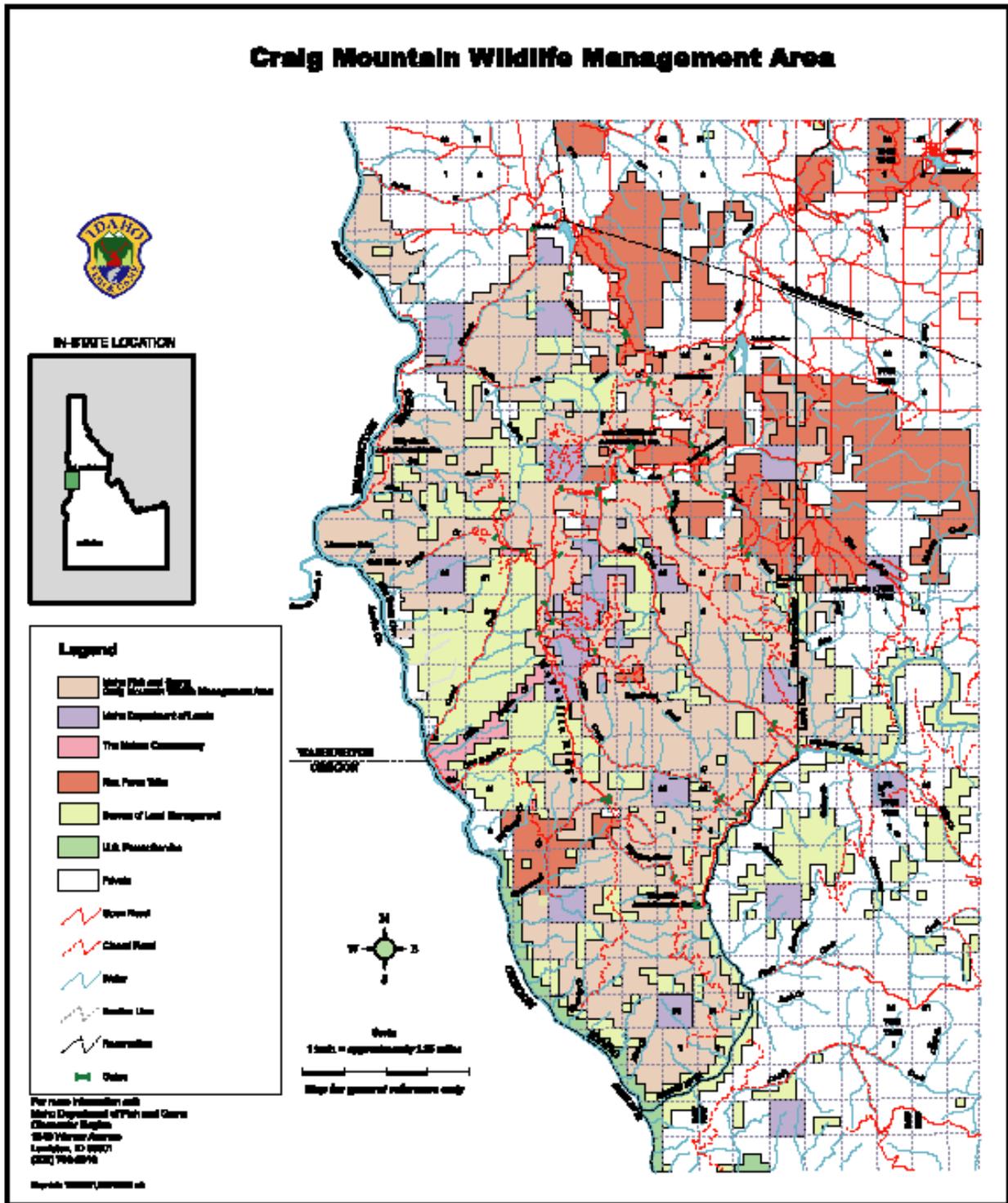


Figure 2. Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area is to protect and enhance wildlife populations and wildlife habitat, to mitigate for the habitat losses associated with the construction and inundation of Dworshak Reservoir, and to provide for compatible uses of these wildlife resources by the public.

CHAPTER 1 - PLANNING ISSUES AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to document public resources and management issues and to guide management activities and direction on the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area through the year 2055.

PLANNING PROCESS

The CMWMA plan has been developed under the following six-step process.

1. Inventory of baseline resource conditions

Extensive botanical (Mancuso and Moseley 1994), wildlife (Cassier 1995), and forestry resource (Narolski 1996) inventories were conducted on the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit and adjacent lands from 1992 to 1994. Physical features such as roads, fence lines, and buildings were also inventoried. Baseline resource data continues to be entered into the IDFG's Geographic Information System (GIS). Cultural resource surveys have been conducted in areas where groundbreaking activities have taken place.

2. Issue scoping

Management issues have been identified through a series of public meetings hosted by IDFG from 1992 to the present. Issues were further identified in public comments on the Draft Dworshak Environmental Assessment (EA), interagency team meetings and planning sessions, and during development of agreements with Bonneville Power Administration and the Nez Perce Tribe.

3. Development of alternatives

Alternatives developed are based on (1) baseline inventory information, (2) issues identified during scoping, and (3) management constraints due to existing agreements and legal requirements.

4. Selection and implementation of Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative will be selected following public review of the preliminary alternatives developed in this draft management plan. It is anticipated that the Preferred Alternative will represent a blend of actions from each of the alternatives presented, based on public input and preference.

5. Long-term monitoring of results

Desired future resource conditions (DFCs) will be defined in the final CMWMA management plan. A monitoring plan will be developed and implemented that will allow the IDFG to measure progress toward DFCs.

6. Adaptive management based on results of monitoring

If monitoring indicates that progress toward DFCs is not being achieved, IDFG will adjust management as needed to meet those conditions.

ORGANIZATION OF PLAN

This Management Plan includes five chapters and supporting appendices.

- Chapter One:** Includes an introduction to the Plan, and includes detail on any special management constraints existing on the area.
- Chapter Two:** Provides an overview of the historical management of the area and a detailed description of existing resources.
- Chapter Three:** Identifies issues and alternatives for management of the area.
- Chapter Four:** Provides an evaluation of the biological, physical, social, and economic effects of each alternative relative to constraints, mandates, and opportunities.
- Chapter Five:** Discusses the preferred management alternative and provides rationale for choices, outlines DFCs, provides specific goals and objectives, and includes a monitoring plan to ensure that DFCs will be met by management. Chapter Five is presented in DRAFT ONLY, based on preliminary discussions and directions, until all comments have been received; it will be re-written in greater detail in the final management plan.

MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS/AUTHORITIES

Direction from the Commission and Director

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission (Commission) has established and approved general policies for the management of Idaho's wildlife resources in the *Idaho Fish and Game Policy Plan 1990-2005: A Vision for the Future (1991)*. Below is a summary of those sections of the policy plan pertinent to the management of IDFG lands.

Management - *“Fish and wildlife habitat and populations will be preserved, protected, perpetuated and managed for their intrinsic and ecological values, as well as their direct benefit to man. Protection and restoration of wildlife habitat will continue to be a top priority in the management program.”*

Cooperation - *“The Department will advocate land management practices that protect, restore and enhance fish and wildlife habitat, especially habitats such as wetlands and riparian areas that benefit a wide variety of fish and wildlife species.”*

IDFG has a responsibility to manage lands it controls for the benefit of Idaho wildlife, and where opportunities exist, to provide for wildlife-associated recreation opportunities. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game strives to provide excellent public service and healthy sustainable wildlife populations through partnerships and sharing. The Director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has developed a Wildlife Management Area Planning Process. The Director has directed the CMWMA Management Planning Team to follow that process and ensure that all stakeholder issues and concerns are addressed in the plan.

In addition, the Director has requested that all species and habitat planning efforts by the IDFG be ecosystem-based. Accordingly, this plan will attempt to look at habitat conditions in both the short- and long-term context (at both fine and broad landscape scales) and opportunities to manage and restore habitats through practices designed to reduce short- and long-term risks to species and their habitats on CMWMA lands.

The planning team has utilized broad-scale ecosystem management information, including that collected under provisions of the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project, to help provide management direction for the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area. IDFG will continue to use input provided in partnership with other land managers on Craig Mountain such as the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Nez Perce Tribe, to encourage this landscape approach to land management. Because of its size and elevational ranges the CMWMA provides a unique laboratory to study and manage wildlife and habitats on an ecosystem basis.

Agreements and Requirements

As a condition of transfer, the State of Idaho and IDFG assumed special responsibilities on the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit. These responsibilities were defined in the *Mitigation Agreement for Dworshak Dam* (March 1992), *Wildlife Harvest Management Agreement for Dworshak Mitigation Lands* (February 1995), and *Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Project Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision* (June 1995).

Waters confined behind Dworshak Reservoir inundated lands within both the Reservation and ceded area of the Nez Perce Tribe. Additionally, in the late 1980s the Nez Perce Tribe obtained fee-title ownership to approximately 23,000 acres of forested land interspersed with the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit. Thus, the Nez Perce Tribe was a key participant and signatory to agreements and related materials which provide the basis for IDFG management of the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit.

Specifically, IDFG has an obligation, as representative of the State of Idaho, to meet the following requirements or objectives in the management of these lands:

1. **To protect, mitigate, and enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat affected by the construction of Dworshak Reservoir.** The State of Idaho has taken on responsibility to mitigate for 60 percent of the wildlife losses at Dworshak Reservoir. Specifically, the State of Idaho agreed to take lawful action to indemnify and hold harmless BPA for the term of the Wildlife Mitigation Agreement for 60 percent of any and all claims, adjudication, rules, suits, or actions binding on BPA, whether by State, Tribe, the Northwest Power Planning Council, Federal and State agencies, tribes, fish and wildlife organizations, or any other entity or individual, that BPA has satisfied any and all of its responsibilities that can be performed under the Northwest Power Planning Act of 1980 to protect, mitigate, and enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat in the state affected by the development of Dworshak Dam. The Nez Perce Tribe has taken on responsibility for mitigation of the other 40 percent of the losses.
2. **Management of the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit shall be with the advice and guidance of the Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Advisory Committee.** The Committee shall be made up of representatives of the State of Idaho, the Nez Perce Tribe, BPA, the Northwest Power Planning Council, the Pacific Northwest Utility Conference Committee, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
3. **IDFG will develop a plan to monitor and evaluate its activities on the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit.** Monitoring will document long-term changes in habitat quality and quantity and long-term trends in target wildlife species populations to assure that the mitigation required is accomplished.
4. **To slow undesirable changes in vegetation patterns, avoid further loss or degradation of habitat, increase populations of target wildlife species, and reduce grazing, timber production, and farming on these lands.** These expected results from future management of the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit formed the basis of the *Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Project Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Record of Decision* (June 1995). The Environmental Assessment and resulting FONSI and Record of Decision were prepared to meet the requirement of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. Target species of wildlife specifically identified include elk, white-tailed deer, river otter, pileated woodpecker, yellow warbler, and black-capped chickadee.
1. **To protect water rights for the benefit of wildlife and anadromous fish.**
5. **To avoid adverse impacts to historic and cultural resources on the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit.**
6. **To provide public access and use compatible with protection and enhancement of wildlife and wildlife habitat.** IDFG and the Nez Perce Tribe have agreed that the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit and any other wildlife mitigation lands would be open to the same extent for tribal and nontribal members. Public access onto these lands

is encouraged, but is not required as a condition of wildlife mitigation. Where public access is allowed, it is not to result in adverse impacts to wildlife populations, reduce wildlife habitat values, result in destruction of other natural resource values, impede goals for habitat enhancement, or reduce anadromous fish habitat. In the event that public access results in adverse impacts to wildlife, including reducing wildlife habitat values, destroying other natural resource values, impeding goals for wildlife enhancement, or reducing anadromous fish habitat, IDFG is required to take actions necessary to prevent further adverse impacts, or be subject to conditions identified in Section 11 of the *Wildlife Mitigation Agreement for Dworshak Dam*. IDFG retains authority to manage the property for lawful hunting, fishing, and trapping opportunity, public safety, wildlife habitat conservation, and to preserve and protect cultural, historic and religious sites.

7. **For game species of concern, the State of Idaho and the Nez Perce Tribe will cooperatively establish population and/or harvest management goals, objectives, and fair share allocations of the harvest.** The State and the Tribe currently agree to cooperatively manage elk, moose, and bighorn sheep as whole populations within the Craig Mountain Area.
8. **To establish a \$3.019 million operation and maintenance trust in a separate account. The principle, interest, and other earnings of the trust fund shall only be used for activities or actions to protect, mitigate, and enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat affected by the development of Dworshak Dam. Any revenues generated from the land are to be invested back into the area for the benefit of wildlife and wildlife habitat.** The trust generated approximately \$225,000 in 1997 for annual operation and maintenance activities on the land.
9. **To provide an undergraduate Idaho student internship in the field of forestry, wildlife biology, outdoor recreation, or a related field.** An additional trust has been established with BPA to fund this position, which is to involve summer work for IDFG on the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit.

Other Requirements Relative to Funding

The majority of the annual operating funding for the CMWMA derives from interest earned on the Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Trust Fund. General license funds and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Federal Aid program funds are used when and where appropriate. Each funding source includes some special requirements as noted below:

USFWS Federal Aid funds must be used for *restoration, conservation, and enhancement of wild birds and wild mammals, and the provision for public use of and benefits from these resources* (Federal Aid Handbook).

IDFG general license funds must be used to help meet the mission and policies of the Commission as stated in Idaho Code 36-103(b). This code section states, *All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed.*

General license funds are used to provide Fee-In-Lieu-of-Tax (FILT) payments (approximately \$86,500 annually in 1997) and fire protection payments (approximately \$39,700 annually in 1997) for the CMWMA.

Federal and State Law Requirements

Federal funds, including those derived from the USFWS Federal Aid Program, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and BPA have been used in part to purchase and manage CMWMA lands. As outlined under the **Agreements and Requirements** section, management of the CMWMA is directly affected by requirements of the 1980 Northwest Power Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969.

Other federal and state laws also affect management of the CMWMA. IDFG has responsibility under provisions of the Endangered Species Act to ensure that management actions protect threatened and endangered species, and responsibility under the Clean Water Act to ensure that water quality standards and guidelines are in place on CMWMA lands and waters.

Under the National Historic Preservation Act, IDFG must ensure that historic properties are protected on the CMWMA.

The Idaho Noxious Weed Law under Idaho Code 22-2405 requires all landowners to eradicate noxious weeds on their lands, except in special management zones. The counties are required to enforce the law and the State of Idaho is required to ensure the counties do so.

Consistent with Idaho Code 36-114 and through a cooperative agreement with the IDL, IDFG is required to pay a fee for fire protection on all forest and rangeland acreage it owns. Fees are submitted annually based on the number of qualified acres owned by IDFG.

IDFG is required by Idaho Code 63-602 to pay a fee-in-lieu-of-tax (FILT) payment on lands owned by the IDFG and meeting certain code requirements. These fees are submitted annually to affected counties based on the number of qualifying acres.

Restrictions by Deed

The quit claim deed that transferred the Peter T. Johnson Unit to the IDFG from BPA states that *the use and maintenance by the Grantee [State of Idaho] of the Property as a reserve for the conservation of wildlife, and the benefits which shall accrue to the Grantor [BPA] from the continued use of such property for such purpose.* The quit claim deed also states that wildlife restrictions include that management of the real property.....*shall be to protect, mitigate, and enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat affected by the construction and operation of the Dworshak Project.*

The 11,527-acre Prince property on the Billy Creek Unit was purchased under provisions of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program using federal funding. Compliance with this program is under the direction of the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation. This

program mandates that the property meets federal accessibility guidelines, have adequate maintenance, LWCF signing, and that the property be managed for outdoor recreation.

Regulations

IDFG has a published set of regulations governing public use of all Department lands and access areas. Regulations cover motor vehicle access, fires, fireworks, dog use, firearm use, and other land use activities and recreational opportunities. These regulations are available from the Clearwater Regional Office in Lewiston (208-799-5010) or state headquarters in Boise (208-334-2920).

IDFG will comply with other state and federal regulations as they apply.

Other Agreements

IDFG entered into a Sikes Act agreement with the BLM in 1985 governing cooperative management of BLM lands within the Billy Creek Unit of the CMWMA. IDFG and BLM signed a 10-year non-use grazing lease for the conservation of wildlife and fish resources on all 27,700 acres of BLM lands within the CMWMA in March 1997. In November 1997, IDFG secured a miscellaneous lease to benefit wildlife and wildlife habitat on 9,538 acres of land owned and managed by the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) within the CMWMA. In December 1997, IDFG entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the IDL, BLM, and The Nature Conservancy for the cooperative management of the Craig Mountain ecosystem.

LIFE SPAN OF PLAN

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Bonneville Power Administration and the Nez Perce Tribe agreed through the signing of the Wildlife Mitigation Agreement for Dworshak Dam (February 1992) that the maximum length of the mitigation agreement would be 60 years from the time the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit was turned over to the Department (1995). This Craig Mountain Management Plan will provide broad management direction during that time span, or in essence until the year 2055. This plan may be revised and updated, in whole or in part, as necessary to meet resource management objectives consistent with area goals and requirements.

PURPOSE OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREAS

Background

The IDFG manages over 360,000 acres of land statewide; of this total about 193,000 acres are owned (about 0.36% of Idaho's total acreage). Most of the remainder are managed under a variety of easements, agreements, and leases with private land owners and other land management agencies. A statewide network of 29 Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) varying

in size from several hundred acres to Craig Mountain's 110,000 plus acres provide critical habitat for nearly every species of wildlife found in Idaho and supply thousands of recreational use days annually.

Management Goals

IDFG acquires and develops wildlife management areas with the following four general goals in mind:

1. Preserve and improve habitat for the production and maintenance of wildlife and fish populations.
1. Provide public hunting and fishing opportunities.
1. Provide nonconsumptive wildlife and fish uses.
1. Provide scientific, educational and recreational uses not related to wildlife and fish.

The operation and management direction statements for all WMA plans are established on a priority basis and conform to these general goal statements.

Relationship to Species Management Plans

This plan and all other wildlife management area plans provide a mechanism to integrate the habitat management program with the species management plans approved by the Commission. Appropriate management of wildlife habitats under IDFG control will complement species management plans and should aid in the achievement of desired population goals. It should be recognized, however, that the IDFG usually does not own or manage all habitats needed by any wildlife species through their annual life cycle. An ecosystem management approach is required to assure all needs are met for wildlife species able to move freely off IDFG-owned and managed lands.

The goals for habitat and population levels for wildlife game species on the Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area are consistent with the management direction for Game Management Unit 11 in the big game species management plans and in the harvest agreement with the Nez Perce Tribe approved by the Commission. Habitat and population goals for the other wildlife species reflect the management direction provided in species management plans for upland game, waterfowl and non-game species.

CHAPTER 2 - EXISTING MANAGEMENT CONDITION

HISTORY

CMWMA has been the site of human occupation for thousands of years. Many sites of historic human occupation have been discovered on the CMWMA. All are legally protected.

European settlers arrived and homesteaded the area early in the twentieth century. Most settlers arrived on CMWMA lands during the 1905-1920 period, although miners had searched the area for gold as early as about 1860. Two of the prominent settlement areas included Zaza and Benton Meadows.

The Zaza area was first settled in 1909 when the General Land Office (now Bureau of Land Management) issued patents to homesteaders under the 1862 Homestead Act. Within ten years, most of the section encompassing Zaza was in private ownership. Zaza was not actually a town, but was rather a collection of farmsteads named in order to start a post office. The post office was established in 1916, but was disbanded in 1919 with the mail being sent to nearby Waha. A small store and hotel existed at Zaza, and for many years, Zaza was a stagecoach stop on the route between Lewiston and Grangeville. Today, only remnants of log homes stand in Zaza. The main reasons for settling this area were mining, logging, and cattle ranching. Mining failed for the simple reason that there were few mineral deposits worth developing. Logging ceased because there was no market for timber. Only ranching continued in the area.

Historically, Benton Meadows was a location used by Native Americans. Artifacts from the area indicate that human settlements existed there at least 10,000 years ago. Benton Meadows was named for Henry L. Benton, who first acquired 160 acres from the General Land Office in 1908. Later, he added another 160 acres adjoining the first property. More recently, the meadow was used as a cow camp, where ranchers based themselves for summer cattle operations on Craig Mountain. Benton Meadows currently serves as headquarters for the CMWMA managed by the IDFG.

By the late 1930s, most of the homesteads on Craig Mountain were abandoned. From the 1930s through the 1970s, the "Howard Ranch" was pieced together, parcel by parcel, by Ross and Nelson Howard, during which time the major land uses were livestock grazing accompanied by periodic timber harvest. The Howard Ranch was purchased by PENE Land Co. in 1984. PENE Land Co. (financed primarily by Aetna Life Insurance Co.) acquired the property as an investment in the timber and livestock industries. Under PENE Land Co. management, the area was intensively logged and grazed during the years 1985-1988. PENE Land Co. failed to meet its financial obligations to Aetna. In 1989, Aetna foreclosed on PENE Land Co., retaining ownership of approximately 60,000 acres. Logging ceased but intensive livestock grazing continued under Aetna management. In early 1992, The Conservation Fund, a private non-profit organization, purchased the property from Aetna. After completing a land trade with The Nature Conservancy, The Conservation Fund sold the property to BPA. Upon acquisition, BPA removed livestock grazing from the entire mitigation unit in order to reduce disturbance and preserve the mitigation potential of the area. Acquisition of the property by BPA brought the

CMWMA into public ownership for the first time since prior to the area being homesteaded in the early 1900s.

The Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit was selected as a site for wildlife mitigation associated with Dworshak Reservoir because it lies in relatively close proximity to the area of habitat losses, most of the State's mitigation responsibilities could be accomplished in one location, and because these lands included a number of diverse wildlife habitats within a relatively small area. It was believed that a change in management emphasis could greatly improve wildlife habitat and the associated wildlife populations on the area. Also, because the northern extent of the CMWMA lies within ten miles of the city of Lewiston, Idaho's seventh largest population center, the CMWMA has high recreation potential. Bringing the mitigation unit into public ownership assured public recreational use of the area, most of which was unauthorized while in private ownership.

The Billy Creek Unit is comprised of four major acquisitions occurring between 1971 and 1997. The largest of these entailed acquisition of the Burdette Prince Ranch in 1978, which totaled over 11,500 acres. This ranch, along with the other three acquisitions, was also managed primarily for livestock grazing with limited timber harvest while in private ownership. Since the first parcel was acquired in 1971, IDFG has managed the area, and each subsequent acquisition, for the benefit of wildlife and public recreation.

Until a few years ago, access to the Billy Creek Unit was limited to crossing the Snake River from the Washington side by boat. In recent years, IDFG, in cooperation with the BLM, have acquired public road access through private land in three locations to allow visitors to reach the area by motorized vehicle.

In 1996, IDFG combined management of the Billy Creek Unit and Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit because of the similarity in resources and habitats present and the philosophy IDFG wishes to employ in their management.

GEOLOGY

The CMWMA contains spectacular topographic relief, rising from about 800 ft. elevation along the Snake River to over 5,300 ft. along its summit. The steep, highly dissected canyons are dominated by grassland, woodland, shrubfield, and riparian habitats. The dominant surface rocks on Craig Mountain are formations of Columbia River Basalt. These basalt flows erupted from fissures during Miocene times (6-17 million years ago) and covered much of eastern Washington, northern Oregon and adjacent parts of Idaho. East to northeast trending folds and faults in the basalt and deep river canyons characterize the geology in the Lewiston vicinity.

Other rock types, all considerably older than the basalts, are also found on Craig Mountain. Along the Snake and lower Salmon rivers at the southern end of Craig Mountain, erosion has uncovered metamorphosed rhyolite and pyroclastics related to the Seven Devils volcanics. These give rise to some of the most sheer relief in the area. In the Snake River Canyon, most prominently in the Limestone Point area (across the river from Lime Point), outcrops of

calcareous rock are exposed. In places the limestone contains upwards of 90 percent calcium carbonate. Exposures of granodioritic and quartz dioritic rocks of the Idaho batholith are found in Captain John, Chimney, and Corral creeks.

SOILS

The soils on Craig Mountain vary from thin, rocky ridge-top scablands to deep ash and loess on productive forest sites along the summit. The majority of the parent material is basalt. Within the canyons, most soils have developed from a mixture of residual and colluvial material. Loams are the most common textural class and generally contain a high proportion of gravel and stone. Soils containing deposited material (ash or loess) are substantially more productive than those that are totally residual in origin.

The canyon slopes on Craig Mountain are dominated by the Kettenbach-Gwin complex, Klickson association, Hooverton association, and Limekiln association soil units. The vegetation associated with these soils is grasslands at all elevations on south slopes. North slopes generally progress from grasslands to shrubfields and finally canyon forests at low, mid and high elevations, respectively. Soils of the forested uplands are typically deep, well-drained silty loams and commonly contain a layer of volcanic ash. Major soils units underlying the upland forests include the Shilla complex, Seddow complex, Cramont complex and Larabee complex.

CLIMATE

The climate of north Idaho is influenced primarily by Pacific maritime air. This influence is modified by the Cascade Mountain Range, resulting in a climate with continental characteristics as well. Summers in the canyons are hot (mean temperatures average 80-90°F with maximums exceeding 100°F). Cloud cover and relative humidity are at their year-round minimums during summer months. Four thousand feet higher, the Craig Mountain plateau has more moderate summer temperatures. Rainfall during the summer is commonly associated with thunderstorms. Prevailing westerly winds from the Pacific result in relatively mild winter conditions. Periodically, the westerly flow is interrupted by waves of clear, cold air from Canada associated with high pressure systems and low temperatures.

Precipitation patterns on Craig Mountain are transitional between the Palouse Prairie to the north and Hells Canyon to the south. The main difference between the two patterns is that more moisture falls in the north in spring, especially May and June. Along this transitional gradient, Craig Mountain seems more closely aligned with the southerly pattern, i.e., reduced spring rainfall. Annual precipitation differs substantially between high and low elevations, averaging 20.0 inches on top and 13.4 inches along the canyon bottoms.

Most winter precipitation from late fall to spring falls as snow on top of Craig Mountain, while snow is uncommon in the nearby canyon bottoms. It is estimated that over 100 inches of snow falls at higher elevations. Throughout the Hells Canyon region, precipitation is minimal during

July and August, averaging only 10% of the yearly total. January is the coldest and July the warmest month throughout the region.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The CMWMA is located in southern Nez Perce County and western Lewis County at the northern end of the Hells Canyon ecosystem. It is located within the plateau and canyon slopes of Craig Mountain, extending from the mouth of the Salmon River northward approximately 29 miles to Redbird Creek, approximately 10 miles south of Lewiston, Idaho. The forested plateau is characterized by gently rolling terrain. The plateau breaks into the canyon grasslands of the Snake River to the west and Salmon River to the south and east.

NATURAL RESOURCES

For the purposes of this plan, terrestrial habitat is grouped into four general categories - forest, wet meadow-riparian, grassland, and shrubfield.

FOREST COVER TYPES

Coniferous (evergreen) forest covers more area than any other habitat on the CMWMA. There are approximately 27,800 acres of forest found in 617 individual forest stands. Within the canyons, coniferous forest is found primarily on north-facing slopes above approximately 2000 feet in elevation. On the mountain plateau, coniferous forest is more contiguous, although interrupted by a mosaic of dry and wet meadows. Eight coniferous tree species are present on Craig Mountain, including Douglas fir, grand fir, lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, western larch, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir in the overstory. Pacific yew is present in the understory in isolated locations.

There are five main coniferous forest cover types on the CMWMA including grand fir, Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and mixed conifer. Each of these types has varying understories, reflecting differing moisture and soil conditions.

Grand fir is the climax tree species for most of the summit area. Grand fir stands are currently extensive and are found mostly on the plateau, although some grand fir stands occur in canyon riparian situations. Stands generally include a mix of seral species, including Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine, and western larch. Historically, in upland habitats, grand fir stands were probably confined to north slopes and other cool moist sites. The extensive grand fir-dominated forests present today are the result of a combination of fire suppression, high-grade logging practices, and livestock grazing. Grand fir is also the cover type found along the major tributaries in the upper canyon elevations.

Douglas fir forest is the dominant type found within the canyons, occurring on steep north-facing slopes. Coniferous forest communities dominated by Douglas fir are only found in scattered locations atop the mountain. At the upper elevations, Douglas fir forests often grade

into grand fir types. Ponderosa pine is the most common seral species in the Douglas fir canyon forests. Historically, Douglas fir communities in the canyons were subjected to periodic but localized wildfires of varying severity. These fires often resulted in a mosaic of stand replacement patterns, and were less frequent than on the uplands. Fires resulted in habitat patterns that maintained structure and age diversity across the landscape within the canyon forests.

Ponderosa pine dominated forests currently are limited on the CMWMA, occurring primarily on the slopes off Wapshilla Ridge. Prior to European settlement, open ponderosa pine stands were more extensive and common on the Craig Mountain plateau. These open stands were maintained by relatively frequent underburning (10-25 year fire interval) that favored fire resistant species like ponderosa pine. However, most of the original ponderosa pine stands were eliminated through a combination of selective logging and fire suppression, and have been replaced by the grand fir and mixed conifer stands present today. Fire suppression and livestock grazing are currently acting to maintain grand fir communities.

Lodgepole pine cover types are scattered across the top of Craig Mountain but are most prevalent in the northeastern one-quarter of the CMWMA. Those stands are relatively young. Lodgepole stands are not present in the canyons.

Mixed conifer stands contain most of the conifer species present on the CMWMA. The composition and density of particular species is highly variable with no one species being clearly dominant over a large area. Many sites occupied by mixed conifer stands today (particularly where not located on north slopes or other moist, cool sites) probably consisted of open ponderosa pine-Douglas fir forests maintained by fire prior to European settlement.

Wildlife populations currently existing within the CMWMA forests are adapted to natural disturbance (fire) and have withstood heavy man-caused disturbance (logging and grazing). In order to provide suitable habitat for all forest-dwelling wildlife species occurring on Craig Mountain, it would be necessary to provide a balance between Douglas fir, grand fir, lodgepole or mixed conifer forest habitats that benefit wildlife species such as whitetailed deer and elk, and ponderosa pine/Douglas fir forests maintained by fire that benefit mule deer, wild turkey, pileated woodpecker, whiteheaded woodpecker, and pygmy nuthatch. At the present time, this balance does not exist. The current forest habitat is skewed toward grand fir, lodgepole pine, and mixed conifer cover types. In order to restore a balance of forest cover types, it would be necessary to manage for a greater percentage of forest dominated by large ponderosa pine and Douglas fir, having an open, more park-like structure, with understories containing grass and shrub-dominated areas. The current abundance of grand fir, lodgepole, and mixed conifer cover types are unlikely to reach a mature ponderosa pine/Douglas fir forest if left unmanaged. These large 'unnaturally' developed stands will be at risk of loss to insect and disease epidemics and/or stand-replacing fire. Where possible and appropriate, linkages would be beneficial between stands of each cover type, including mature ponderosa pine/Douglas fir types.

Various short- and long-term management actions could be used to restore mature ponderosa pine/Douglas-fir cover types in areas they naturally occurred. These actions could include the use of selective logging, thinning, prescribed fire, and planting of desired tree species. Carefully

controlled and monitored livestock grazing might also be used in local areas to help achieve desired habitat conditions. These actions could reduce the risk of stand-replacing fire.

The Douglas fir dominated canyon forests were historically maintained by fire which created a diversity of age and structure across the forested canyon landscape. These forests provide the vast majority of security cover for elk and mule deer within the Salmon and Snake River canyons. Consequently, manipulation of these canyon forests could have a major impact on wildlife security within a critical portion of the CMWMA. In the mid to upper elevations of the canyon forests, water is often in short supply and impacts the distribution of deer and elk in this habitat during the summer months.

WET MEADOW AND RIPARIAN COVER TYPES

Wet Meadow and riparian areas are really two distinct habitat types. However, both can be considered riparian habitats, with the wet meadows occurring at the upper elevations in the riparian gradient.

Wet Meadow Habitats

Wet meadow habitats are found in the headwaters of the mountain's major tributary streams. Large meadow systems on the CMWMA include Benton Meadows (West Fork Deer Creek), Larabee Meadows (Deer Creek), and Kruze Meadows (Webb and Brown's Creek). Other smaller unnamed wet meadows also exist. Streams forming in these meadows are low gradient in nature and the vegetation is dominated by grasses and sedges with few shrubs or trees present.

Because of the presence of surface or subsurface water in these meadows, the vegetation remains green and productive well into the summer when many adjacent habitats have become dry and dormant. These wet, productive conditions serve as a magnet to grazing livestock in mid-to-late summer, concentrating much of the summer livestock use on these very limited acres. Intensive use by livestock has changed the hydrologic function of these meadows, lowering the water table and resulting in a corresponding change in the vegetative community, characterized by an increase in non-native plant species. Additionally, livestock grazing has increased sedimentation and seasonal water temperatures, and has reduced water quality and streambank stability.

Wet meadows are an extremely important habitat type on Craig Mountain. They serve as important calving, fawning, and feeding areas for big game species; provide water for species using the surrounding coniferous forest; serve as year-round habitat for a variety of nongame species such as the sensitive spotted frog and western toad; and also contain two rare plants - plumed clover and sticky goldenweed.

Many dry meadows exist adjacent to wet meadows. Some of these dry meadows were created by past logging, although natural dry meadows also exist on the CMWMA. These are usually small in size and are characterized by having rocky shallow soils, which precludes tree or shrub establishment.

Riparian Habitats

For purposes of this plan, riparian vegetation is classified into four types: coniferous forest, white alder, mixed tall shrub, and netleaf hackberry. Riparian habitats adjacent to the larger streams on the CMWMA progressively change downstream from wet meadows to coniferous forest and finally to white alder.

The coniferous forest riparian cover type is present in mid to upper elevations along the major streams dissecting the management area. This type is found along stream gradients ranging from low to steep. Primary tree species include Engelmann spruce, grand fir and Douglas fir. Some common understory shrubs include Utah honeysuckle, blue huckleberry, and several currant species. The condition of this type ranges from good (Upper Eagle Creek) to poor (upper Browns Creek, Deer Creek, and the West Fork of Deer Creek). Poor conditions are often characterized by total absence of conifers. This has resulted from past logging and lack of regeneration caused, at least partially, by intensive livestock grazing.

The white alder riparian type is found along perennial streams below 2500 ft. elevation, and is the major riparian type in the larger drainages. Black cottonwood is sometimes present in the overstory. The shrub understory contains various species including red-osier dogwood, syringa, and common snowberry. This type has been moderately to severely impacted by livestock grazing with the greatest impact occurring at the lower elevations. One result of past grazing practices is that the presence of non-native plant species is high, noxious weeds are abundant, the shrub understory has (often) been removed, and streambank stability reduced.

The netleaf hackberry riparian cover type is found below the white alder type at the lowest elevations of some area streams. In this type, other trees and shrubs are generally absent. As with the lower elevation white alder type, these areas were often subjected to years of intensive grazing by livestock during winter, resulting in a high degree of disturbance which has allowed heavy invasions of cheatgrass and noxious weeds, particularly yellow starthistle, and in some places, scotch thistle. Streambank stability in this type is poor.

The mixed tall shrub riparian cover type contains a wide variety of shrubs, including ninebark, serviceberry, bittercherry, black hawthorne, oceanspray, blue elderberry, and others. This vegetation type is found along intermittent streams and in the bottom of draws within the canyons. The composition and proportions of various shrub species varies by area, and where undisturbed by livestock, shrub density is high. Where this type is found at lower elevations, use by wintering livestock has reduced shrub density and has either eliminated the herbaceous component or altered its composition to one dominated by non-native species.

Together, the white alder, netleaf hackberry, and mixed tall shrub riparian cover types comprise a very small percentage of the entire CMWMA. However, these types provide high value wildlife habitats, particularly where they exist as narrow ribbons in the bottom of deeply dissected canyons dominated by grasslands. As such, by mid-summer they often provide wildlife the only woody cover, shade, and water in what is otherwise a hot, dry landscape.

Canyon Grassland Cover Types

Canyon grasslands can be broadly classified into three cover types: bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, and sand dropseed.

Bluebunch wheatgrass communities are the most abundant grassland type on the CMWMA and cover more area than any other non-forested type on Craig Mountain. Where undisturbed, the vegetation appears as well-spaced clumps of bluebunch wheatgrass with an abundance of rock and bare ground. However, most sites have been disturbed and invaded by various weeds. Cheatgrass and yellow starthistle are particularly abundant. The degree of weed infestation varies from light to severe, with some areas completely dominated by yellow starthistle and cheatgrass.

Idaho fescue is the second most abundant canyon grassland cover type on Craig Mountain. Idaho fescue communities generally occur in cooler and moister sites than bluebunch wheatgrass. Idaho fescue sites on the CMWMA generally contain less yellow starthistle than bluebunch wheatgrass sites. Yellow starthistle or other weeds are abundant in most sites that have been severely impacted by livestock grazing. Scattered conifers (providing less than 10 percent canopy cover) may be found in bluebunch wheatgrass and Idaho-fescue habitats.

The distribution of bluebunch wheatgrass and Idaho fescue communities are generally determined by aspect and elevation. Bluebunch wheatgrass dominates all areas up to approximately 1500 ft., at which elevation Idaho fescue may be found on steep northerly slopes. As elevations increase, the extent of bluebunch wheatgrass communities decrease and Idaho fescue increases. Idaho fescue occupies most sites above 4000 ft., except on steep southerly exposures where bluebunch wheatgrass still prevails.

Sand dropseed is the other canyon grassland cover type and tends to occur mostly on flatter, bench areas below 2000 ft. elevation along the Snake and Salmon rivers. These sites, like low elevation shrubfields and riparian areas, have often been severely impacted by years of winter livestock grazing. Historic disturbance has resulted in extensive invasion of yellow starthistle and cheatgrass, which frequently dominate sand dropseed sites.

Most canyon grasslands on the CMWMA have been negatively impacted by prolonged intensive livestock grazing. The sites in best condition are the steepest and/or furthest from water, and hence, least impacted by livestock. The canyon grasslands also contain the greatest number and concentration of rare plant species. The disturbance created by livestock, particularly at the lower elevations, has allowed for the invasion of aggressive non-native plants, particularly cheatgrass and yellow starthistle. The presence of yellow starthistle currently is the most difficult habitat management issue on the CMWMA.

Shrubfield Cover Types

The major shrubfield types on Craig Mountain include mallow ninebark, snowberry-rose, and smooth sumac. The mallow ninebark type comprises the most extensive shrubfields on Craig Mountain and is found in two situations. The most extensive mallow ninebark shrubfields are

located on burned canyon slopes that previously supported Douglas fir/ninebark communities. This vegetation type predominates on north and easterly facing slopes on the west sides of the Eagle and China creek drainages, which burned in 1967. Mallow ninebark and associated shrubs have formed dense stands, although scattered Douglas fir and ponderosa pine are slowly regenerating. Eventually these sites will likely again support a Douglas fir forest. Ninebark shrubfields also exist as an extension of the Douglas fir/ninebark forest at lower elevations adjacent to grasslands along the north slopes of the Snake River breaks. Little or no conifer regeneration occurs on these sites.

Snowberry rose shrubfields are a component of the canyon grasslands, and are found on steep northeasterly to northwesterly facing slopes down to about 1500 feet in elevation. Smooth sumac occurs in patches on all slopes in the lower elevations of the canyon grassland system. Smooth sumac is most noticeable in early autumn when its foliage turns a brilliant red in sharp contrast to the dormant grasses. Like lower elevation riparian habitats, these sites have been heavily impacted by over 15 consecutive years of wintering livestock use. The herbaceous component is currently dominated by cheatgrass, yellow starthistle and other weeds.

WILDLIFE

The wildlife inventory conducted during 1993 and 1994 (Cassirer 1995) indicated the presence of at least 196 vertebrate species inhabiting the CMWMA. This included 133 bird, 47 mammal, 9 reptile, and 7 amphibian species.

A high level of human-caused disturbance, particularly logging and livestock grazing, have resulted in vegetative cover types that differ from what would have occurred without human intervention. This has favored an associated wildlife community of common generalist species while negatively impacting more sensitive specialist species. It should be recognized that future management of the CMWMA will also be influenced and guided by human disturbance. The extent and manner of this disturbance will determine future habitat and wildlife community development.

The CMWMA provides habitat for several big game species that are important to IDFG's wildlife program. Most notably these include elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and bighorn sheep. Elk are found throughout the CMWMA year long, but in most winters move off the mountain plateau and onto the steep canyon grasslands along the Snake and Salmon rivers.

Mule deer are found primarily within the Snake and Salmon River canyon forests, brushfields, and grasslands year-long. Mule deer numbers have declined from the level that existed in the mid-1980s. The exact cause of that decline is unknown. It is believed that adequate habitat exists for a much larger population than currently exists. Since the 1970s, IDFG has managed CMWMA mule deer to provide a high quality hunting experience with an abundance of mature bucks in the population.

White-tailed deer are most abundant on the plateau of Craig Mountain and within the northern half of the CMWMA. Whitetails prefer the dense coniferous forests created by human

intervention, which are dominated by grand fir, lodgepole pine, or mixed conifers. During winter, most whitetails migrate to lower elevations on private land between Lewiston and Craig Mountain or southeast of the CMWMA near Cottonwood Butte.

Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep were extirpated from the area during the first half of the twentieth century. IDFG reintroduced bighorns into the Billy Creek Unit in 1983. Accompanied by reintroductions in neighboring Oregon and Washington, bighorns have expanded in Idaho to inhabit the Snake River breaks southward to the confluence of the Salmon and Snake rivers. An abundance of unoccupied habitat exists within the lower Salmon River corridor including the CMWMA. The potential exists for additional sheep transplants into that area.

Other big game species occur on CMWMA. Black bear and mountain lion populations are healthy. Potential exists to reintroduce other species to the CMWMA that are important to IDFG's wildlife program, including beaver, pine marten, and possibly moose.

The CMWMA supports huntable populations of several upland game birds, including wild turkey, chukars, gray partridge, California quail, blue grouse, and ruffed grouse. Among these game birds, only the grouse are native; all the others have been introduced by IDFG.

Many nongame species inhabit the management area as indicated by Cassirer (1995). These include the target species yellow warbler, black-capped chickadee, pileated woodpecker and several Species of Special Concern including the northern goshawk, flammulated owl, white-headed woodpecker, and pygmy nuthatch.

TARGET SPECIES

IDFG is responsible for managing all wildlife on Craig Mountain, including game and nongame species. IDFG, BPA, and the Nez Perce Tribe agreed to six target species to specifically address the wildlife losses associated with Dworshak Reservoir. These species are elk, white-tailed deer, river otter, pileated woodpecker, black-capped chickadee, and yellow warbler. These species were chosen because they are either priority species for IDFG and/or Tribal wildlife programs, or are indicator species of habitats lost when Dworshak Reservoir flooded. These species are referred to throughout this plan. The ability to determine whether mitigation for Dworshak has been achieved will, in part, be determined by whether habitat for the target species improves in the long-term as a result of management activities undertaken on the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit.

FISHERIES

Aquatic habitats on Craig Mountain consist of springs, perennial and intermittent streams, and man-made ponds. The largest water bodies are the Salmon and Snake rivers which border the CMWMA, and Soldiers Meadows, a man-made irrigation reservoir owned by the Bureau of Reclamation. Soldiers Meadows lies immediately adjacent to the northeast perimeter of the

CMWMA. The larger streams on the CMWMA are Deer, Eagle, China, Cottonwood, Wapshilla, and Captain John creeks.

The main fisheries associated with these waters include rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, channel catfish, white sturgeon, steelhead and chinook salmon in the Snake and Salmon rivers; crappie and rainbow trout in Soldiers Meadow Reservoir; brook trout in man-made ponds, and brook trout, rainbow trout, wild steelhead, and chinook salmon in the larger perennial streams. Of these, only steelhead and chinook salmon are native. Special management direction was provided to protect habitat for these two species.

Past livestock grazing and high-grade logging altered the vegetative structure of most habitats on Craig Mountain. Particularly on the mountain's plateau, the removal of vegetation by these activities altered the hydrologic regime. Results have included an increased rate of water runoff and lowered water table. Livestock grazing has also removed or negatively influenced riparian vegetation, resulting in decreased streambank stability and in-stream shading, as well as increases in sedimentation and water temperature, all of which have negatively impacted both resident and anadromous fish habitat potential of perennial streams.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

Three species that occur on CMWMA are listed as threatened. These include the bald eagle (which winters on the area), and Snake River fall chinook salmon and wild steelhead, which spawn in the Snake and Salmon rivers and are reared in adjacent tributary streams. The National Marine Fisheries Service has primary management of authority for salmon and steelhead, and the USFWS for bald eagles.

Additionally, at least 12 other terrestrial wildlife species have been identified on the area that are considered rare or sensitive by either a federal or state wildlife or land management agency (Cassirer 1995). Mancuso and Moseley (1994) also identified a total of 13 rare plant species on CMWMA, 11 of which are present on IDFG property.

PUBLIC USE

Public use of the area permitted by previous landowners has varied. Previous owners of most of the CMWMA, particularly Nelson Howard and PENE Land Co., erected gates or barriers on most private secondary roads in order to restrict motorized access by the public. These closures were established to protect the owner's economic investments and to increase efficiency in conducting timber and grazing management activities. Gates were sometimes left open for various reasons, and friends, family, the grazing permittee, and others were provided keys to the gates. These keys were often duplicated resulting in additional individuals having motorized access privileges behind gates closed to the general public. The Howards, PENE Land Co., Aetna Life Insurance, and others often allowed access by foot for hunting, fishing, hiking, and various other recreational activities.

From 1989 to 1992, when Aetna Life Insurance Co. owned the property, no caretaker was present on the area. During that period, the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) and full-size 4-wheel-drive vehicles for recreational purposes increased dramatically. Because no caretaker was present, the access barriers erected by previous owners were opened, breached, destroyed, or otherwise circumvented until virtually all associated secondary and tertiary roads were open for unrestricted motorized access. The proliferation of OHVs accompanied with unrestricted access provided abundant opportunities for recreation, and the CMWMA became a popular area for off-highway and 4-wheel-drive users. That use, however, was detrimental to wildlife populations and habitat.

Disturbance to wildlife populations increased, including increased road hunting and illegal harvest activities. Some habitats (particularly wet meadows and canyon grasslands) suffered directly from activities including 'mudbogging' and hill climbing. Mudbogging disrupted the hydrological regime of wet meadows, altering the vegetative community, increasing stream siltation, reducing fisheries potential, causing gullying and lowering the water table. The fragile soils of the canyon grasslands rapidly eroded where disturbed by OHV hill climbing, also reducing water quality and increasing the rate of water runoff. Noxious weeds, particularly yellow starthistle, rapidly established on many of these disturbed sites.

In 1993, as custodial managers for BPA, IDFG repaired and closed the gates erected by previous landowners in order to preserve the mitigation potential of the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit. Because the re-establishment of these motorized road closures was conducted after a period of relatively unrestricted use by the public, this action was not popular. It infringed upon a pattern of motorized vehicle use established under Aetna management and restricted the activities of others who had special privileges on the area while in private ownership. However, re-establishment of the closures has been effective in benefiting wildlife resources. Wildlife security increased, road hunting was reduced, and illegal harvest activities decreased. Direct negative impacts to wildlife habitat by motorized vehicles were reduced, road maintenance reduced, and water quality improved. The probability of spreading noxious weeds by motorized vehicles was reduced as was the risk of undesired man-caused fires, particularly in canyon grasslands during the mid to late summer months.

Like the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit, the Billy Creek Unit was homesteaded near the turn of the century. Most homesteaders sold out to more prosperous ranchers who grazed large numbers of sheep, cattle, and horses. The Billy Creek Unit was acquired by IDFG to protect some of the most important big game and upland game bird habitats along the lower Snake River, as well as important anadromous fish spawning habitats in Captain John Creek.

Modern sportsmen were not the first hunters to use the Billy Creek Unit. Several rock inscriptions, marking the historical presence of Native Americans depict early Indians hunting for elk, deer, and bighorn sheep. For today's hunters, controlled hunts for mule deer, elk and bighorn sheep, and general hunts for white-tailed deer provide quality hunting opportunities, and many hunters travel to the unit in order to pursue upland game birds. Sportsmen using the Billy Creek Unit are not limited to birds or animals. The bordering Snake River offers anglers a mixed bag of fish that includes smallmouth bass, rainbow trout, crappie, channel catfish, steelhead, and white sturgeon.

During the spring, summer, and fall, anglers and boaters fish, camp, and picnic on the public beaches. Sightseers, bird watchers, horseback riders, and photographers have ample opportunity to enjoy themselves and hikers enjoy the challenge of the steep rocky terrain. Snowmobiling is very popular on the mountain plateau in winter, and mushroom picking is popular throughout the CMWMA in spring.

Physical Improvements

Three administrative sites currently exist on the CMWMA. These include Billy Creek (one house, two barns, two storage sheds, and one meeting room), Benton Meadows (three cabins, one barn, and two storage sheds) and Wapshilla Creek (one house, one barn, and five miscellaneous buildings). The Lewis-Clark Snowdrifters, the local snowmobile club, also have a warm-up shack on the CMWMA that is maintained by Nez Perce County.

Numerous other buildings and cabins are scattered throughout the CMWMA. Most of these buildings have decayed beyond repair, remnants from the early twentieth century when the area was homesteaded. Some are capable of being restored for public use. Currently four lineshacks exist on the area that are in fair to good condition and are available for overnight use by the public.

IDFG has the responsibility of integrating management planning for historic and cultural resources with management planning for wildlife as a method of avoiding impacts to historic and pre-historic resources located within the mitigation unit. IDFG will avoid sensitive sites in implementing habitat, recreation, or administrative activities.

Approximately 55 miles of primary and secondary roads are currently open to motorized use on the CMWMA in Nez Perce County, with approximately 93 miles of secondary roads closed. On the CMWMA in Lewis County, approximately 20 miles of open road are present, with no primary or secondary roads closed. A maze of closed tertiary roads exists in both Lewis and Nez Perce counties. This network is so extensive that the inventory and safety evaluation is not complete, and maintenance or permanent closure requirements have not yet been determined.

Water Rights

IDFG has agreed that valid existing water rights would be used to benefit wildlife and/or anadromous fish. Water rights associated with the CMWMA for these purposes are desirable.

CHAPTER 3 - ISSUES, CONCERNS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ALTERNATIVES

As with any property, ownership entails both opportunities and responsibilities. IDFG has now spent five years exploring these opportunities and responsibilities with its own staff, with other agencies, and with the public.

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Issue identification included three major elements: a series of local meetings with elected officials and the concerned public which included a Department survey of public opinion; IDFG internal review of legal documents and lands; and Interagency Workgroup review of legal documents and interagency responsibilities.

Public Issues

IDFG conducted a series of public meetings and issued a number of news releases to inform Idaho citizens of resource management opportunities and to provide a forum for people to express their opinions regarding the future management of CMWMA (for a listing of meeting dates and locations see Appendix). At each meeting, constraints imposed by the conditions of acceptance of the property from BPA were identified, and resource inventory information was provided. Additionally, a wide range of organized groups and clubs were contacted. Public issues and concerns were grouped into eight categories. While many were similar to issues identified by IDFG and other agencies, there were some new issues identified, as discussed below.

Noxious Weed Control--Almost all respondents to a Department survey felt that all means available should be employed to stop the spread of noxious weeds, including herbicides, biological agents, burning, and plowing infested sites, etc. Many felt that domestic livestock grazing should be eliminated to reduce a potential source of spreading noxious weed seeds, and some suggested that horse access should be eliminated or allowed only if certified weed-free feed was required. Many suggested that no off-road vehicle use be allowed, to stop spread of seeds and reduce exposure of bare soil. Several felt that efforts should be made to re-establish native plant communities resistant to weed invasion and special efforts should be taken to minimize soil disturbance.

Livestock Grazing--Many respondents said that livestock grazing was not compatible with wildlife and recreation management, and that livestock might spread noxious weeds. Some suggested that livestock grazing could be used to benefit winter range for deer and elk, and could provide some revenue. Some felt that grazing should be reinstated, as in the past. If grazing is reinstated, several suggested that the season of use should be shortened to reduce recreation conflicts and that additional fencing was needed to better control livestock distribution and to keep livestock out of riparian areas.

Timber Management--Most respondents felt that no commercial logging would be appropriate, but that selective harvest for stand improvement (thinning and removal of dead or diseased trees) and wildlife benefit should be allowed as firewood sales. While some suggested that no harvest be allowed, others emphasized the need to maintain old-age stands. Several people suggested that seedlings should be planted to promote forest development, and some identified a need to emphasize ponderosa pine and larch. A number of respondents felt that controlled burning or wildfire should be used to reduce risk of extensive wildfire. Many suggested that additional fencing be built to protect riparian areas and that willows and other desirable tree and shrub species be planted along waterways; several identified a need to develop pools to reduce erosion and cutting of stream banks.

Fish and Wildlife--Most respondents identified development of fisheries a low priority, given proximity to other stocked lakes and reservoirs; most identified habitat restoration for wildlife as the top priority in management. A number of comments were directed toward habitat restoration, especially at mid-elevations, and other efforts to improve winter forage for deer, elk, and turkeys. A few felt that non-game species should receive a management emphasis. Several people suggested that beaver could be used to help develop and maintain pools in area streams.

Seasonal Road Access--Most respondents favored limiting all motorized vehicles to primary existing roads, while allowing non-motorized vehicles, horses, and foot-travel on most roads (with seasonal restrictions to protect wildlife). Snowmobile use on some roads during winter was generally supported at public meetings, and local snowmobile groups actively advocated continued access. Vehicle access to one or more high-elevation viewpoints was identified as desirable. Special access hunting opportunities for mobility-impaired individuals were identified as desirable by a few respondents.

Trail Development and Use--Most felt that CMWMA had sufficient roads to provide access, but that only non-motorized vehicles, horses, and foot travel be allowed on most roads (although winter over-snow travel on high elevation roadways was generally supported). Many would restrict horses unless weed-free hay was required.

Camping and Picnicking--Most respondents favored minimal and primitive or no campsite development, identifying the proximity to commercial facilities and potential for littering and vandalism as problems. Some favored development of a very few concentrated campsites for ORV use. Some identified a need to install toilets at major access points and to provide a garbage collection site.

Archaeological and Historic Sites--The number of respondents favoring some interpretive signs and those opposed to all signs were about equal. Those that favored signs identified a need for better road directions, signs to explain the purpose of CMWMA and mitigation; provide for some outdoor education, and provide some identification of historic sites.

Department Issues

A summary of the legal requirements associated with wildlife mitigation on lands acquired for that purpose (the Peter T. Johnson portion of the Craig Mountain WMA) has been presented in

Chapter 1. Twelve issues were identified by staff as critical to future management. A brief introduction to each, and some of the issues critical to future management, are presented below.

Grazing of Domestic Livestock--Livestock grazing has been a part of the land management program on these lands since early settlement. Poor range condition in some areas, as well as increased potential for noxious weed invasion, has been attributed to livestock grazing levels and practices. Limitations on livestock movement to ensure protection and recovery of historically over-grazed areas will require extensive fence construction on large tracts of currently unfenced lands. Because of concerns about the potential of these lands to provide suitable habitat for wildlife mitigation (the fundamental purpose for their acquisition) the Bonneville Power Administration withdrew cattle from the area upon acquiring these lands, with the support of the IDFG. However, it was agreed that intensively-managed seasonal grazing may be used as a tool to manipulate vegetation in some areas in the future for the benefit of some wildlife species.

Should livestock grazing be reinstated on CMWMA? How would livestock use affect the wildlife mitigation purposes of future management of these lands? Would there be an impact on recreational opportunities, or on preservation of historic sites? If livestock grazing should be continued, what class of livestock is appropriate, and at what levels and seasons of use? What are the costs and time frames required to complete necessary fencing? What are the benefits of allowing livestock management (including fencing) as compared with costs?

Noxious Weeds--One of the dominant issues associated with any future management of the CMWMA is the issue of noxious weed control. Several species of noxious weeds occur on the area, but yellow starthistle is the most widespread and the most troubling. IDFG is committed to efforts to stop the spread and to attempt to reduce the occurrence of this aggressive invading species, going beyond control measures required by law, in order to reclaim valuable wildlife habitat that has been severely degraded by yellow starthistle invasion, but few effective methods for yellow starthistle control have been developed.

Vegetation surveys on CMWMA have identified occurrence and current distribution of noxious weeds on IDFG lands. Areas of priority for weed control will be developed, while seeking the means to eliminate these species on CMWMA. At the same time, other issues must be addressed, such as whether noxious weed control activities (i.e., herbicide application) interfere with other vegetation or wildlife management opportunities. Does the occurrence of noxious weeds negatively impact wildlife habitat and carrying capacity? Does livestock grazing contribute to spread of noxious weeds? Does recreation use of the area contribute to the spread of noxious weeds, by dispersing weed seed (by vehicles traveling from infested areas or by use of weed contaminated hay, for example)? Can (or should) the CMWMA be used as a testing ground for new and unproven weed control methodologies?

Forest Management (including potential harvest of timber and production of firewood)--Forested lands on the CMWMA have been harvested extensively for timber since the time of original settlement. Currently most forests are immature; few extensive stands of late seral stages of native forest cover types occur. High stand densities and interspersed with extensive grasslands (often dominated by quick-growing and highly flammable weed species) result in high risk of wildfire over much of the area. Some potential exists for limited selective harvest, to

reduce fire risks, to benefit wildlife, and to change forest tree species composition. Alternatively, lands could be managed with no harvest, which (in the absence of fire) would ultimately lead to development of climax forest vegetation communities (largely grand fir) on these lands.

What should be the desired future condition of forest types on CMWMA? Should timber harvest be utilized to alter vegetation on CMWMA to some more desirable future condition? What are the risks and benefits associated with designed application of timber harvests, versus the risks and benefits of no harvest? What are the costs and potential returns? What are the effects of timber harvest on desirable and undesirable plant and animal species, and thus on those purposes required under conditions for CMWMA to provide wildlife mitigation? If timber harvest is allowed, what is the impact on wildlife of removal of associated woody debris for firewood? Application of controlled fire has been suggested as a means of managing vegetation to achieve desirable mid-seral native stands; however, such burning has potential to adversely impact air quality. Is air quality on CMWMA a factor that would limit the potential use of controlled fire to manage vegetation? Some members of the public desire to collect firewood or gather wild mushrooms, berries, or other items from CMWMA. Are such activities compatible with management objectives? When? Should permits be issued or limits to individual consumption be prescribed? If so, who should administer the permits, and should there be a charge for the requested opportunities? Who should enforce the regulations?

Management of Streamside Vegetation--Streamside (riparian) vegetation is critical to many wildlife species, and often to aquatic species as well (due to the effects of such vegetation on screening and regulating water temperatures in streams). Research has shown this band of vegetation to be of critical importance due to its very limited area within the larger landscape. However, this band of vegetation along streams is often adversely impacted by domestic livestock use, as animals are attracted to streams for water and the lush forage provided by these areas. Riparian areas on CMWMA have been severely altered by past livestock management practices.

What is the potential for restoration of riparian habitats, and how much time is required for riparian vegetation to recover to desirable levels? What are the anticipated effects of riparian habitat restoration on indicator species, fish habitat, and water temperature? What constraints exist relative to livestock grazing or utilization by desirable wildlife species?

Management of Rare Plants and Animals--Rare, threatened, or otherwise unique plants and animals exist on portions of CMWMA, and many of these species are subject to special management consideration under provisions of state and federal law. Management of these species is also a special concern given the purpose for which CMWMA was acquired. Habitat provided by CMWMA may provide habitat suitable for species not presently found there, leading to greater species abundance and perhaps reducing the risk of future listings of threatened or endangered status under the law (and associated limitations on land use) elsewhere. What special management practices or measures will be required to stabilize or enhance the populations of rare plants and animals on CMWMA? Does rare plant and animal management preclude or enhance other desired land management opportunities?

Potential Development of Recreational (Camping) Facilities--CMWMA provides a large area of public land near to Lewiston, one of the most heavily populated areas in north central Idaho. It is a popular destination for outdoor recreationists, with access from the Snake and Salmon rivers, as well as access by road from Lewiston and Winchester at all times of the year. Current recreational opportunities include boating, fishing, hunting, picnicking, camping, snowmobiling, and winter skiing, to name only a few of the more popular activities. The potential exists to vastly increase recreational use of the area by improving access to and throughout the CMWMA, and by providing destination facilities, such as developed campgrounds and picnic areas. However, such development is costly, in terms of capital improvements, operations, maintenance and enforcement of regulations, and if funding could be secured, increased attractiveness of the area for recreation may reduce the effectiveness of the area to fulfill its primary purpose of an area set aside primarily for wildlife mitigation.

Are camping, picnicking, and other forms of dispersed recreation compatible with management objectives? If so, when, where and what types of recreational opportunities should be provided? What are the potential impacts of recreation on the wildlife mitigation purpose of the area? If some specific recreational sites are to be developed, how should use be controlled? Who assumes financial responsibility for vandalism and other kinds of damage to facilities? How are littering and other regulations to be enforced? Is funding for such enforcement available?

Access Management (Use of horses, mountain bikes, motorized vehicles, etc.)--One of the fundamental issues associated with recreational use of any area is the issue of access. The amount, timing, and type of access allowed is a major determinant of the amount and kind of recreational use of the area, which has direct impact on all other potential uses of the area, from wildlife protection to livestock management. CMWMA is currently accessible by several county roads and by the Salmon and Snake rivers. In addition, there are a large number of private roads on the area, most of which are gated and some of which have been open to at least limited public use at some periods of the year under past ownerships.

Which roads are needed for purposes of management, administration, and protection of people and resources? How should managers deal with the tremendous network of existing roads and access routes on CMWMA? Which roads can provide opportunities for recreation, while having little or no adverse impact on other management objectives, and during what times of the year? Which require a high degree of maintenance? Which roads may contribute sediment that may degrade water quality? What funding is available for annual road maintenance? Should some roads be accessible to only selected groups (such as the mobility-impaired) or during only selected seasons (such as winter, for snowmobile use)? What opportunities exist for development or improvement of trails? What kinds of recreation and times of use are compatible with CMWMA wildlife mitigation objectives? Can recreationists be directed to low-impact areas, and effectively kept away from those areas where their activities might damage resources that must be protected? How should different types of users (hikers, horsemen, and both motorized and non-motorized vehicle users) be best accommodated? Do management decisions result in a requirement for additional enforcement of regulations, and if so, how are those activities funded?

Potential Development of Fishing Opportunities--Existing reservoirs in the area of CMWMA are very popular among local fishermen. Although streams are limited in extent and distribution, there exists some opportunity to develop additional stream-fishing opportunity. Any additional development of fishing opportunity will likely require considerable expense for development, maintenance, and continuing management, and will draw additional recreationists to the area.

What opportunities exist for developing fishing on CMWMA? Is development of artificially-supported fisheries on CMWMA compatible with constraints imposed by wildlife mitigation requirements? What types of recreational opportunities should be provided, consistent with other management objectives? When? Is additional law enforcement presence required to ensure compliance with regulations that would be established?

Potential Development of Wildlife Opportunities (including upland game, waterfowl, and big game hunting)--CMWMA lies within Big Game Management Unit 11. This area is very popular with turkey hunters during the spring, and it offers a wide variety of upland game hunting for forest grouse, chukar partridge, grey partridge, and California quail throughout the fall. Upland game species are widely distributed. Hunting for migratory birds, including mourning doves, ducks and geese, is also available throughout the fall, primarily along the river corridors. The area is very popular during fall big game hunts; general hunt opportunity exists for white-tailed deer, black bear, and mountain lion, while mule deer and elk hunt opportunity is limited to those hunters successful in drawing for a limited number of highly-sought controlled hunt permits. Under existing guidelines, most hunting is done by hunters walking existing but closed roads and trails.

What extent and type of access is most desirable in order to provide continued hunt opportunity while still assuring the ability for continued abundance of game species? Should special access opportunities be provided to particular segments of the public, such as the physically challenged or mobility-impaired? What of camping facilities for use by hunters (and others)? Should overnight facilities (i.e., campgrounds) be developed? Should dispersed camping be allowed? Should management for game animals be emphasized? How should potential public use of game animals be weighed against opportunities to manage for the benefit of other, non-game species? What should be the appropriate focus of game management decisions relative to game animal population, location, and sex/age structure?

Potential Restoration of Cabins or Buildings for Public Use--A number of buildings, primarily houses and outbuildings built by previous owners, exist on CMWMA. Some have been renovated to provide administrative sites; others would require extensive restoration to be useable. At some sites, such as Benton Meadows, badly dilapidated buildings have been removed to be replaced by others more suitable to administrative requirements. Some buildings might be identified as 'historic sites' by the State Historic Preservation Office. Other buildings are used only periodically, but may be suitable for public use by recreational hikers, hunters, or others.

What are the administrative demands for future management of CMWMA, and which sites are most appropriate? What historic sites exist on CMWMA, and how should they be protected? If restoration of some sites is feasible, how should restoration be accomplished, by whom, and at

what cost? Who should assume responsibility for site protection and law enforcement? What opportunities exist to provide public recreational use of some buildings? If so, which buildings, and during what periods of the year?

Potential Development of Interpretive Sites--Situating at the juncture of two major rivers, CMWMA is rich in archaeological sites, and some of the existing buildings dating back to early settlement days may qualify as state historic sites. Other areas show evidence of historic development, such as the lime kilns near Lime Point.

What archaeological sites exist on CMWMA, and where do they occur? Are any in danger of damage to these sites associated with planned management activities? Should some sites be developed to promote understanding of previous cultures and their way of life? Who should fund cultural preservation/protection/development activities? Who should fund activities necessary to provide interpretation of such sites for visitors?

Minerals and Mining--Although no commercially viable deposits of gold or other precious minerals are known to exist within boundaries of CMWMA, there is some potential that placer deposits of gold may exist. In addition, there is one existing gravel pit on the area, one abandoned copper mine, and known potential quarries for limestone. Other significant mineral deposits may be located at some future time.

Given the potential for future mining activity on CMWMA, what guidelines are appropriate, given the set-aside of this area for purposes of wildlife mitigation? Management direction specifically identifies restoration of streams for salmon and steelhead as a priority management activity--is mineral extraction compatible with this objective? What are IDFG responsibilities to Idaho citizens as custodian of both this parcel of land and the state's fish and wildlife resources?

Interagency Management Issues

Since the IDFG is an agency of the State of Idaho, management of CMWMA is subject to a wide variety of State laws and statutes concerning management for the benefit of Idaho citizens. In addition, CMWMA lands are interspersed with lands owned or managed by the Nez Perce Tribe and several other state and federal agencies, as well as parcels owned by private landowners. As might be expected, this intermingling of ownerships and responsibilities has implications for management of CMWMA. All affected agencies and local government officials were contacted repeatedly about their management objectives and concerns as they might affect management of CMWMA, and an Interagency Work Group was identified to attempt to identify and resolve interagency management issues. A short summary of the concerns involving other agencies follows.

Nez Perce Tribe--The Nez Perce Tribe as a sovereign nation owns lands intermingled with CMWMA, as well as nearby reservation lands. Among Tribal concerns are protection and preservation of archaeological sites, allocation of water rights, collection of traditional foodstuffs and medicinal plants, harvest of game animals, and law enforcement authority. Many of these issues have been dealt with in the Wildlife Harvest Management Agreement for Dworshak Mitigation Lands, identified in Chapter 1.

U.S. Department of Energy, Bonneville Power Authority--Responsibility for wildlife mitigation, the driving force behind the purchase of the Peter T. Johnson segment, lies with Bonneville Power Authority (BPA). Under terms of the Mitigation Agreement for Dworshak Dam, the State of Idaho has taken on responsibility for 60 percent of the wildlife losses at Dworshak, and the Nez Perce Tribe has taken on responsibility for 40 percent of the losses.

U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management--The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages most public lands intermingled with CMWMA. The *Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Project Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision* (June 1995) specifically directs IDFG to make special efforts to coordinate management decisions with BLM. BLM is responsible for livestock lease arrangements on public lands and is a partner with IDFG in a grazing permit agreement, an interagency Sikes Act agreement, and a Memorandum of Understanding (also signed by the Idaho Department of Lands and The Nature Conservancy). In addition, BLM has authority relative to noxious weed control, access management, and recreational development along the Salmon River corridor.

U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service--The Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has authority under the Endangered Species Act for protection, preservation, and management of federally recognized threatened and endangered plants and animals.

U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service--The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has authority under the Endangered Species Act for protection, preservation, and management of threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service--The Forest Service (USFS) has the lead management role relative to actions within the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area along the Snake River.

Idaho Department of Lands--Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) owns lands intermingled with CMWMA, and signed a miscellaneous lease agreement with IDFG in November 1997 to benefit wildlife on 9,538 acres owned by IDL. IDL is also a cooperator in an interagency Memorandum of Understanding signed by representatives of IDFG, BLM, and The Nature Conservancy for cooperative management of lands open to the public within the Craig Mountain ecosystem.

Idaho State Historic Preservation Office--The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has concerns about identification, preservation, protection, restoration, and interpretation of archaeological and historic sites, and any necessary mitigation for disturbance of such sites.

Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation--Idaho Parks and Recreation (IPR) is a partner with IDFG in a Land and Water Conservation Agreement within the Billy Creek Unit of CMWMA.

Idaho Outfitters and Guides Board--Idaho Outfitters and Guides Board is the licensing body for any privately-outfitted recreation providers operating on CMWMA and associated lands.

Lewis and Nez Perce Counties--Portions of CMWMA lie within Lewis and Nez Perce counties, and the counties are concerned with maintenance of public roads, law enforcement, control of noxious weeds, gravel storage, and IDFG fees-in-lieu-of-taxes (FILT) received by county governments.

The Nature Conservancy--The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns lands intermingled with CMWMA, and as a landowner and cooperator in an interagency Memorandum of Understanding signed by representatives of IDFG, IDL, and BLM is concerned with noxious weed control, management of rare plants and animals, public use, and use by livestock.

Craig Mountain Recreation Study

Additional public input was derived from a graduate study designed to learn recreation preferences and activities of users of CMWMA, to estimate use levels, to obtain user attitudes and opinions about potential management strategies, and to determine what facilities, if any, might be developed (Griffith 1996). The study featured a questionnaire (270 useable returns, for a response rate of 62%), vehicle traffic counters, and voluntary on-site interviews. Results demonstrated year-round use of the area; use was heaviest during the fall (8,678 people), and least during winter (3,127 people) among an estimated 28,000 users in 1994-95 (Griffith 1996). Most users (82%) lived within 40 miles, and most (78%) stayed less than one day. Hunting, wildlife observation, and sightseeing were the dominant uses.

Only 51% responded when asked if they would support developed campgrounds with potable water and pit toilets. Of those, most (47%) said "no" while a slightly smaller group (37%) said "yes." A majority favored development or use of trails by non-motorized vehicles, while a majority (53%) stated that motorized trail facilities would detract from their enjoyment (Griffith 1996).

Even though there was support for individual kinds of projects, like campgrounds, pit toilets, and hiking (not motorized) trails, a surprising 37 percent indicated that "No Development" would add to their enjoyment of the area, and an additional 35 percent indicated that "No Development" would neither add to nor detract from their enjoyment. Only 28 percent indicated that the "No Development" option would detract from their experience (Griffith 1996).

Respondents were asked their opinions on a number of land management issues. A large majority (64%) favored road closures to protect wildlife; only 28 percent were opposed to road closures (Griffith 1996). Similarly, 61 percent accepted (26% opposed) timber harvest as part of long-term management, although 66 percent favored (22% opposed) leaving old-growth stands for their ecological values. Cattle grazing was acceptable to 59 percent of respondents, with 33 percent opposed.

MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES

The public scoping process revealed a wide range of desires relative to management of CMWMA, and a broad divergence of opinions relative to the intensity and direction of

management actions. Since the conditions whereby the State of Idaho acquired the property from BPA clearly demanded changes from past practices, IDFG developed a series of management alternatives to explore the range of options and alternatives available to IDFG as managers of the CMWMA. A “No Action” alternative was unacceptable and is not presented; such an alternative would fail to meet the contractual requirements that resulted in acquisition of the Peter T. Johnson area for purposes of wildlife mitigation.

Three alternatives were developed to allow comparisons among the range of actions available to IDFG. The alternatives developed emphasize “Vegetation Management” with a primary and consistent focus on habitat management leading to late seral or climax plant communities, a “Wildlife Management” alternative with emphasis on wildlife protection, and a “Recreation Management” alternative with an emphasis on providing maximum recreation opportunity.

It must be emphasized that the purpose of developing these alternatives was to define and outline each of the basic approaches to management of CMWMA that were consistent with wildlife mitigation purposes for which the land was acquired. No preferred alternative was developed, since the primary purpose of alternative development was to group a range of similar management options and opportunities to identify a potential range and scope for management decisions.

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission may decide that an integrated approach, using certain features of more than one alternative, provides the best opportunities for CMWMA management, and identify such a ‘blended’ alternative as preferable based on public input.

Alternative 1: Emphasize Unmanaged Vegetation

Under this Alternative, management emphasis on CMWMA would focus on natural development of existing vegetation and direct and indirect manipulation of plant communities. This alternative focuses on maintenance of existing types of wildlife habitat, and assumes that catastrophic fire would not occur although fire risk would be greatly increased on CMWMA. Many of the original native plant communities on CMWMA and the surrounding area have been altered or lost due to human manipulation and management of the land base. This alternative would not restore these habitats, as vegetation would likely proceed to a Douglas fir/Grand fir climax type in the absence of direct manipulation.

Management could feature all feasible means of direct and indirect manipulation of vegetation, including herbicide and pesticide application, selective timber harvest and re-planting, seasonal burning of undesirable vegetation, tightly controlled livestock management, and other practices. If manipulation of vegetation is either limited in scope or impact area, many objectives could not be achieved; natural succession would likely lead to Douglas fir/Grand fir climax vegetation, and perennial bunchgrass communities would lose out to annual grasses. Risks of wildlife would increase, driving the system to establishment of stands dominated by annual grasses and noxious weeds. However, some of the management objectives desired would include:

0. Reduce or eliminate non-native plant species from CMWMA.
0. Move forest succession toward potential natural vegetation.

- 0. Re-establish perennial bunchgrass communities.
- 0. Re-establish ponderosa pine/larch forests.
- 0. Re-introduce fire management to the primary tool for maintenance of grasslands, shrublands, and forests.
- 0. Restore native riparian vegetative corridors along waterways.
- 0. Rehabilitate wet meadows.

Alternative 2: Emphasize Management of Fish and Wildlife

Under this alternative, management emphasis on CMWMA would focus on direct and indirect manipulation of habitat to provide healthy forest and range conditions as well as healthy fish and wildlife populations. This approach is consistent with the objective to monitor indicator species populations to determine the degree of success in achieving targeted population objectives for indicator species. Management practices would focus on activities targeted at establishing and maintaining desirable wildlife species at optimum population levels. Management practices could include such things as ponds and guzzlers to benefit wildlife or improve wildlife distribution, fertilization or burning of critical winter ranges to promote forage, timber harvest to promote desirable timber stand conditions for food and cover of desirable species, introduction of non-native plant and animal species to control pests, improve forage, or provide recreational opportunity, and management of access to ensure minimal disturbance to wildlife during all critical periods. Some of the management objectives would include:

- 4. Develop more desirable seasonal surface water distribution.
- 4. Improve food/forage conditions and distribution for wildlife species.
- 4. Promote/protect thermal and hiding cover dominated by ponderosa pine and larch forests where appropriate, rather than mixed conifers dominated by Douglas fir/Grand fir, and its effective distribution on CMWMA.
- 4. Control or eliminate noxious weeds.
- 4. Reduce wildfire risk.
- 4. Reduce risk of destructive insect invasions.
- 5. Promote wildlife-associated recreational opportunities.

Alternative 3: Emphasize Management of Public Access and Recreation

Under this alternative, managers would identify all means possible to maximize public access and recreation opportunity consistent with mitigation requirements. This management alternative would be somewhat constrained by wildlife mitigation/restoration requirements. However, managers would be directed to seek out and develop additional opportunities for public access and recreation whenever and wherever opportunities could be identified. This approach would be the most costly of all alternatives to achieve, because this objective lies outside of the defined purposes of providing wildlife mitigation, and funds are not presently

available to support the kinds of development and facilities that might achieve management objectives. As a result, this alternative would demand implementation of a user-pay fee system and associated collection and enforcement infrastructure. Management objectives would include:

2. Development and maintenance of seasonal access routes.
1. Development and maintenance of ‘hardened’ campground facilities.
1. Identification, restoration, and interpretation of historic and archaeological sites.
1. Restoration of historic buildings and sites.
1. Identification and elimination of potential public hazards.
1. Development of a user-pay fee system and associated fee collection measures.
2. Development of a program to ensure equitable enforcement of regulations.

These three alternatives and some of their similarities and differences are identified in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of three management alternatives for Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area.

Management Emphasis Area	Alternative 1: Emphasize Existing Vegetation	Alternative 2: Emphasize Wildlife	Alternative 3: Emphasize Recreation
Water	Minimal development Promote natural seepage	Develop wildlife guzzlers Develop natural springs Restore beaver Protect anadromous fish	Develop potable camp water Develop reservoirs
Air Quality	Increased risk of wildfire	Allow seasonal burning for forest and range improvement	Discourage burning
Soils	Restore native ground cover Discourage off-road use by non-motorized vehicles Reduce noxious weeds	Seed bare areas with native and non-native plants Eliminate livestock trails	Harden road/trail surfaces Develop gravel pit Off-road motorized use over snow only
Minerals	No mining or surface disturbance	Allow limited mineral extraction compatible with agency management goals	Allow private mineral exploration and development
Vegetation Mgmt.	Eliminate non-native plant species Reduce annual grasses Promote late seral species	Use native and non-native plant species to provide wildlife food, cover	Use native and non-native plant species to provide wildlife food and cover plus visual attraction
Noxious Weeds	Use biological/chemical/mechanical controls Reduce ground disturbance Use native plants to replace weeds Weed-free hay only	Use biological/chemical/mechanical controls Restrict motorized access Use native and non-native plants to replace weeds	Use biological/chemical/mechanical controls Develop public education program
Timber, Vegetation	Allow Douglas fir/Grand fir to proceed to climax Promote late seral stands No firewood harvest	Harvest to reduce fire risk Re-plant to ponderosa pine Harvest to promote forage Plant non-native food trees	Harvest to reduce fire risk Thin, promote visuals Unlimited firewood harvest

	No private harvest of plant fruits or parts No commercial harvest of berries, mushrooms, etc.	Promote thermal cover Limited firewood harvest by permit only Personal use of plant fruits or parts by permit No commercial harvest of berries, mushrooms, etc.	Personal use of plants and parts allowed Harvest of berries, mushrooms, etc.
Riparian Vegetation	Protect native species Plant native species Fence critical areas Fence out livestock Re-introduce beaver	Protect native species Plant native/non-native species for rapid recovery Fence out livestock Re-introduce beaver	Protect native species Plant native/non-native plants Harden crossing areas Fence out livestock
Rare Species	Manage for late seral spp. Fence rare plant sites Re-introduce as possible	Manage for mid-seral and climax plant species Re-introduce as possible	Develop public education program Develop viewing sites
Wildlife	Focus on late seral habitat species Maintain wildlife pop'ns below levels of veg. impact	Manage for featured spp. Maximize game species Pop'ns rel. to habitat Reintroduce martin	Wildlife viewing area Focus recreation away from critical habitat Emphasize game species
Livestock	Limited intensive use for vegetation mgmt. Extensive fencing Encourage use of weed-free hay or pelletized feed	Grazing only to improve wildlife habitat Extensive fencing Encourage use of weed-free hay or pelletized feed	None; reduce conflict with recreationists Perimeter fencing to reduce trespass Internal fence removal
Hunting, Fishing, Trapping	Allow responsible sporting activities No recreational shooting to reduce disturbance Do not develop fishing sites	Encourage responsible sporting activities Maintain controlled hunts for mule deer and elk Develop fishing sites Develop opportunities for mobility-impaired hunters	Encourage sporting activities Allow general hunts for deer and elk Develop fishing sites Develop opportunities for mobility-impaired hunters
Road Access	Administrative use only on IDFG-controlled roads All county roads open Provide non-motorized hunt opportunity	Minimize secondary and tertiary road access All county roads open Provide non-motorized hunt opportunity	Develop viewpoints Develop hardened travel routes Over-snow road use on signed routes

	No off-road motorized vehicle use	No off-road motorized vehicle use	No off-road motor vehicle use Seasonal access mgmt
Trail Use	Reduce trail system Off-trail use by livestock prohibited	Maintain trail system Use regulations to protect sensitive areas Off-trail use by non-motor vehicles allowed Build livestock corrals	Improve trail system Encourage non-motor trail use Allow seasonal use by motorized vehicles on designated routes
Camping	No facilities developed until veg. goals reached No overnight camping except in campgrounds	Primitive camping only Develop toilets at trailheads	Develop hardened campgrounds Develop toilets Develop potable water sources
Cultural Interp.	Minimize development of roadside vistas Protect archaeological sites; no development Remove non-administrative buildings	General roadside vistas at notable sites Protect archaeological sites; no development Maintain selected historic buildings for public use	Develop numerous sites and vistas Develop archaeological sites; interpret Improve/maintain historic buildings for public use
Blocking of Land Ownership	Seek to acquire nearby lands having rare plant species Seek to acquire nearby lands with late seral veg. comm. Seek to acquire lands that maximize plant diversity Minimize checkerboard ownership to reduce fencing requirements	Seek to acquire nearby critical wildlife habitat Maximize habitat suitable for target wildlife spp. Maximize wildlife habitat diversity Seek to acquire inholdings with high wildlife value Seek to acquire inholdings to reduce mgmt conflict	Seek to acquire recreational sites Seek to acquire lands with improvements, easy access Seek to establish easily-recognized boundaries Minimize checkerboard ownerships

CHAPTER 4 - EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES

Each of the alternatives developed has associated with it a number of obvious, and many less obvious, effects on the resource base of lands encompassed in the CMWMA. These effects have implications not only for the resources, but also the public, other agencies, and the IDFG as custodians and managers of those resources. This chapter will attempt to highlight those effects.

As you review this section, remember that unlike many other planning documents, there is no “No Action” alternative. Lands compromising the CMWMA were acquired through purchase and endowed with operating funds to achieve a few very specific goals delineated in legal documents and those goals and requirements must be the topmost priority. Any additional actions or activities identified in this plan, if they do not address the legally-mandated objectives, must be achieved in a manner compatible with legal requirements and must be appropriately funded.

ALTERNATIVE 1

Alternative 1 was designed specifically to focus on the protection, preservation, and management of vegetation, and therefore can be characterized as the *wildlife habitat* alternative. More specifically, working within the physical setting of the CMWMA, Alternative 1 focuses on restoring late seral vegetative communities in an attempt to re-create a natural environment featuring native plant species in late seral conditions, and thereby benefiting regionally-adapted fish and wildlife species. This goal might be selected because it alone attempts to re-create and provide those critical habitat conditions most affected by land management activities (such as timber harvest and farming practices) and habitat conditions that therefore are among the rarest, most fragmented, and most unusual in the geographic area. Because this alternative focuses on vegetation, and because stand development and stand rotation ages are measured in decades or even centuries, this approach will demand a long-term commitment to vegetation management.

Physical Effects

Alternative 1 will have the fewest physical impacts of any of the alternatives examined. This alternative focuses on restoring native plant ground cover as a priority, and allowing vegetative communities to advance to late seral stages. With increased vegetation and decreased use by livestock, motorized vehicles, and other forms of human disturbance, this alternative should do the most to reduce sedimentation of the streams and waterways to an absolute minimum. However, some activities will result in short-term depletion of vegetation and this alternative results in a significantly increased risk of large-scale wildfire. Wildfire, if it occurs, could result in loss of forested lands, increased noxious weed invasion at lower elevations, and increased sediment delivery to streams. In addition, limited timber harvest to achieve management objectives would be allowed, which could also result in increased potential for soil erosion if not managed properly. Steps to reduce potential soil erosion would be included in the activity management plan.

This alternative would feature natural seepage at springs and re-introduction of beaver, two activities which could promote the availability of surface water and wet meadow complexes on CMWMA, and which would likely extend the season of surface water availability in some areas.

Natural and controlled burning of vegetation would be used to direct plant succession and to mimic natural evolutionary conditions. Fire would be employed in a mosaic to reduce overall risk of extensive wildfire on CMWMA.

Biological Effects

Although little change from present conditions would be expected under Alternative 1 in the short-term, there would be some rather dramatic long-term changes. Restoration of perennial native grasses would reduce the early spring forage production currently provided by cheatgrass (while at the same time contributing to reduction of summer and fall fire hazard). Retention of dead and down material, especially in forest stands, as a result of restrictions on firewood gathering would result in an increase in fuel load. Although controlled burning could be used to reduce overall fire risk, catastrophic wildfire could result in significant loss of habitat for wildlife, reduced habitat diversity, and long-term reductions in overall biodiversity.

The make-up of game species found on the area would likely change. In the absence of wildfire, development of perennial grasslands and late seral forest stands would likely allow numbers of white-tailed deer, black bears, and (likely) elk to increase, while numbers of mule deer and wild turkeys may decrease.

Social Effects

Alternative 1 provides the fewest opportunities for public recreation on CMWMA. Restrictions on road use, reduction in the trail system, and limitations on livestock use of the area would result in a significant decline in recreational use as compared to present. However, under this alternative CMWMA would contribute significantly to providing opportunities for solitary recreation within the Lewiston/Hells Canyon recreational area.

Economic Effects

Alternative 1 can be implemented at the least cost to IDFG, both initially and over the long-term. Intensive management requirements would be minimized, allowing the limited personnel time available to be employed in such high-priority activities as noxious weed control, fencing, and wildlife management. The most costly aspect of Alternative 1 would be the amount of fencing required to control livestock within the range district; without fencing to exclude livestock, some areas of vegetation will be unable to recover.

The limited opportunities for public recreation will reduce the expenditures necessary for enforcement of laws and regulations on the area. However, the CMWMA is unlikely to become the kind of destination that will generate tourism/recreation business for the benefit of local communities.

ALTERNATIVE 2

Alternative 2 was designed specifically to focus on the protection, preservation, and management of *fish and wildlife populations*. More specifically, this alternative focuses on working with individual species, and utilizing all management practices available to emphasize the well being of those species selected for emphasis under a featured-species management approach. Some species, such as white-tailed deer, may be managed to the detriment of other wildlife species. This approach might be selected to respond to concerns about the well being of certain, featured animal species and the opportunity they provide for outdoor recreation, such as wildlife viewing or harvest. Because this management approach features wildlife species, this approach requires a time commitment commensurate with the age structure of wild animals, which is typically measured in years or decades.

Physical Effects

Alternative 2 requires a significant amount of physical development on CMWMA: wildlife guzzlers and catchments, seeding, fencing, maintenance of roads and trails, construction of livestock corrals, etc. While these activities would have primarily very local effects, they would result in only slight alterations to the landscape or potential for increased sedimentation to waterways. Localizing impacts and development of water sources will likely result in an overall improvement in water quality, increased soil stability (and associated reduction in sedimentation), and decreased soil compaction.

Construction of livestock corrals at trailheads and near existing buildings (to be available for recreational use) would result in soil compaction within the corrals themselves and the general area as a result of increased human activity.

Biological Effects

Construction of corrals for livestock would likely become hot spots for noxious weed control, with seed imported in animal feed, on hair coats, and in animal droppings. While undesirable, at least such impacts will be highly localized so that control efforts can be efficiently targeted.

This alternative represents the least departure from existing management. Only minimal changes in wildlife populations would be expected in either the short or long term. Management will emphasize those habitats required by both target species for mitigation and by game animals. All big game species would be expected to increase slightly over time, as a result of increased forage due to general range condition improvement and lack of competition with livestock. While white-tailed deer and elk can be expected to increase in population numbers, little change would be expected in mule deer herds. Pine marten, once native, would be reintroduced. This alternative would result in the greatest diversity in plant communities, which relates directly with decreased risk of insect eruptions.

Social Effects

Because this alternative best approximates current management practices, notable changes in use by the public are unexpected in the short term. CMWMA will continue to be used for a wide range of outdoor recreation, including camping, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing. Controlled hunts for deer and elk would be expected to continue, and the area could be managed to emphasize unique recreational opportunities (including special opportunities unavailable elsewhere on most public lands, such as some special access opportunity for physically challenged individuals). Some opportunities currently limited in supply, such as recreational pond or reservoir fishing, could be enhanced.

The kinds of recreational opportunities must be managed to maintain the ability of IDFG to achieve wildlife mitigation requirements on CMWMA as detailed in wildlife mitigation agreements. Thus, motorized public access and development of recreational facilities would be limited to those areas where an absence of such facilities might result in resource damage.

Economic Effects

Alternative 2 requires considerably more investment by IDFG than Alternative 1. That investment is related to both physical facilities and enforcement of regulations. Funding for those investments will have to come from sources other than the established trust fund for wildlife mitigation. Offsetting a portion of that investment is opportunity for IDFG to provide destination-type outdoor recreation within the Lewiston/Hells Canyon area, with associated expenditures at area businesses.

One subtle economic impact particularly associated with this alternative is the impact of any land exchanges on associated county tax rolls. IDFG makes an annual contribution in lieu of taxes to each county based on its land holdings within the county; because CMWMA lies across the boundary of Lewis and Nez Perce counties, each proposed consolidation of ownership will have some impact on county revenues.

ALTERNATIVE 3

Alternative 3 was designed specifically to focus on management of natural resources for maximum benefits to human recreational opportunity. More specifically, working within the physical setting and the natural resource base available on CMWMA, Alternative 3 focuses on providing the maximum level and diversity of human recreational opportunity that might be afforded while meeting minimum required objectives for fish and wildlife mitigation and restoration. This goal is the least compatible with purposes for which lands comprising CMWMA were acquired and it will require the greatest amount of development and most intensive management of CMWMA lands; but, it might be selected because it alone attempts to maximize the outdoor recreational opportunities available from these lands. Because this alternative focuses on the demand for human recreation, and because recreational demand will change based on demographics of the area and availability of similar recreational opportunities

nearby, this approach can be adjusted and altered in a very short time-frame (one year or less) if funding to implement desired changes is available.

Physical Effects

Alternative 3 will have the greatest physical impact on CMWMA lands of all alternatives. This alternative would require extensive development of facilities to support increased human recreation. Development would include reservoirs; hardened campsites and trails; toilets and potable water sources; re-construction and maintenance of existing buildings; construction of corrals, fencing, viewing and interpretive areas; and an improved trail system. Development will also demand increased attention to infrastructure (road and trail) maintenance.

It is expected that selection of this alternative would result in increased sedimentation levels, and the high levels of recreational use could increase risks of physical hazards such as human-related wildfire and erosion, particularly near developed campgrounds, public access roads, and trails.

Biological Effects

Alternative 3 has the potential to reduce the capability of CMWMA to provide wildlife mitigation benefits. Although some wildlife mitigation will occur, increased emphasis on recreation and the high potential for inadvertent human interference in management plans increases the risk that CMWMA will not produce the maximum amount of wildlife mitigation that the land is capable of producing. Human activity often has the effect of displacing wildlife populations, particularly during certain critical periods of the year. Although such displacement can often be anticipated and minimized through management of use, enforcement of regulations is difficult.

High levels of human use increase the risk of transfer of noxious weed seeds to new sites, increasing the potential for establishment of new infestations and limiting the effectiveness of control efforts. In addition, the risk that rare plants species may be inadvertently harmed (or actively collected) increases as the level of recreational use increases.

High levels of human use may preclude current management objectives for game species, and enforcement of controlled hunt regulations becomes increasingly difficult. For these reasons, and in order to maximize the number of recreation days the CMWMA can provide, it is likely that controlled hunts for mule deer and elk on CMWMA and within Game Management Unit 11 would move from controlled hunts to general seasons. If this management strategy was to be implemented, there would likely be impacts on the sex and age structure of mule deer and elk herds, such as a reduction in the average age of harvested animals. Game animal populations may decline.

Social Effects

Alternative 3 is likely to be very popular with some segments of the public, as it would result in CMWMA becoming an outdoor recreation destination point. Human use of the area would be expected to increase dramatically, and to continue to increase in the foreseeable future as the

human population increases in the Clearwater Region. A requirement to charge for use of the area would be developed to offset required development costs, which could reduce the attractiveness of the CMWMA somewhat as a recreation destination.

This alternative represents the greatest risk to the ability of IDFG to meet contractual demands for wildlife mitigation. Although lands within CMWMA would continue to provide some degree of wildlife mitigation, that degree would likely be diminished by high levels of recreational use, and risk of unforeseen catastrophic events such as human-caused wildfire would increase significantly. There are other risks as well, such as the high potential for damage to archaeological sites on CMWMA.

The variety and types of recreational opportunities afforded by CMWMA would attract a wide diversity of recreational interests, and there is a high potential for conflicts to develop between different recreational interests. Such conflicts will increase the demand for enforcement of area regulations.

Economic Effects

Alternative 3 imposes the greatest degree of development costs on CMWMA, as well as imposing significant additional costs associated with facilities maintenance and recreation management. To minimize the potential for human displacement of wildlife during critical periods of the year, specific regulations must be developed and enforced. Funding to offset these costs must be developed, and that funding, in the interest of equity, should be imposed on those deriving benefits. That suggests that some type of user fee should be established. Since no fee for use of the area is currently in place, IDFG would need to develop a fee structure and a collection system that is equitable and sufficient to offset development costs.

CHAPTER 5: DEPARTMENT RESPONSES TO ISSUES, CONCERNS, OPPORTUNITIES AND ALTERNATIVES

Public input and professional review of issues, concerns, and opportunities has resulted in identification of potential courses of action that comply with the intent of mitigation, the IDFG trust responsibility to BPA and to Idaho citizens, and with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations. This chapter will outline the IDFG-identified courses of action that address these matters. The range of alternatives available to IDFG is relatively narrow, given the legal obligations of IDFG to manage CMWMA for wildlife mitigation purposes. Alternative 1, the vegetation management alternative, is both the least-cost alternative and reflects the greatest long-term commitment to a single course of action to achieve identified objectives. Alternative 3, which focuses on achieving maximum levels of recreational opportunity consistent with minimum wildlife mitigation requirements, demands the greatest financial inputs for operations, structures, maintenance and enforcement, but reflects the shortest-term commitment because many of the identified objectives can be achieved through regulations beginning immediately when structures (if required) are constructed. Alternative 2, the wildlife-emphasis alternative, lies between these, both in terms of financial commitments and time required to achieve objectives.

The intent of this section is to communicate the probable course of future management by IDFG on CMWMA. These actions and the rationale supporting them are described here for the final phase of public input prior to decision. It is anticipated that once the decisions regarding management direction are approved, this document will guide future management activities on CMWMA until another formal review including public input is completed. Such reviews probably will occur in ten-year intervals.

ALTERNATIVE SELECTED

IDFG has selected a blended alternative that combine features of each focused alternative described earlier. The selected alternative most closely approximates Alternative 2, emphasizing management of fish and wildlife, but it incorporates some actions directed specifically at restoring native vegetation and ensuring future public access and recreation.

RATIONALE FOR ALTERNATIVE SELECTION

After carefully considering the range of opportunities and constraints afforded by the lands comprising the CMWMA and public desires considering future management, IDFG has identified a proposed plan for action. The rationale leading to these decisions is consistent with:

1. Management requirements and authorities for which these specific lands were acquired and for which they are to be managed (described in Chapter one);

2. The mission, goals and objectives of IDFG for Wildlife Management Areas (described in Chapter One); and
7. Issues identified by the public, IDFG, and cooperating agencies (identified in Chapter Three).

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Ultimately the success or failure of IDFG in management of the Craig Mountain area is based on the effectiveness of management activities in achieving wildlife management objectives; i.e., have those wildlife species identified for particular emphasis benefited from management actions adopted on CMWMA? As indicated earlier, target species for wildlife mitigation include elk, white-tailed deer, river otter, pileated woodpecker, yellow warbler, and black-capped chickadee.

Commission policy directs IDFG to consider the potential of wildlife to provide recreational opportunities. CMWMA can provide exceptional opportunities for wildlife-associated recreation, particularly those opportunities that require management of the number of recreationists on the area (or portions of the area) at any given time. Examples include providing unique opportunities for physically-challenged sportsmen, novice hunters, and those seeking opportunities that feature either a high degree of solitude, horse-packing or back-packing skills, or other types of experience that can be assured only through control of access.

The variety of wildlife habitats available on CMWMA offer yet additional opportunities to restore wildlife species whose populations have declined, either locally, statewide, or regionally. Examples include the pine marten and beaver, furbearers native to Craig Mountain but no longer present.

For these reasons, IDFG proposes the following measures on CMWMA:

- ♦ ***Maintenance and restoration of those habitats critical to selected indicator species:***

Development and maintenance of old-age timber stands that provide snags in sufficient abundance and distribution to provide nesting sites and home range areas for a population of pileated woodpeckers, restoration of riparian vegetation (particularly deciduous shrubs and trees) to provide nesting habitat and food for yellow warblers and black-capped chickadees, and maintenance of security cover, travel corridors, and forage for white-tailed deer and elk.

Perimeter fencing of some parcels, construction of horse corrals in the vicinity of public-use destinations, and other livestock control devices will be constructed as necessary to minimize free-range access to CMWMA lands and to localize potential adverse impacts of livestock relative to vegetation restoration objectives. Use of pelletized feed or certified weed-free hay will be encouraged for livestock feed to reduce potential for introduction or spread of undesirable plants or seeds. IDFG will continue in its Memorandum of Understanding with BLM, IDL, and TNC to retire CMWMA lands from permitted grazing use.

- ♦ ***Limitations on harvest of big game species (elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, bighorn sheep, black bear, and mountain lion) to ensure that game management unit harvest objectives are fulfilled:***

Management of big game animals on CMWMA will comply with statewide species management plans and the Nez Perce Harvest Agreement for CMWMA, with particular emphasis on those big game animals most highly sought; i.e., the indicator species elk and white-tailed deer as well as bighorn sheep. It may mean that harvest regulations for particular species may vary from those of the remainder of the Big Game Management Unit to meet harvest objectives for one or more species at some times.

- ♦ ***Encouragement of recreational hunting:***

Hunting for game birds and game animals will be encouraged on CMWMA. Safety zones will be established around administrative buildings and other areas as needed to address human safety concerns.

- ♦ ***Promotion of those types of hunting experiences that are unique and/or for which demand exceeds supply:***

Recreational hunt opportunity for physically-challenged hunters will be developed, featuring strictly controlled road access and use of handicapped-accessible buildings on CMWMA. Big game hunting for most species will be allowed by permit only. Experiences that feature development of individual hunting skills (i.e., spotting and stalking game, horse- or back-packing, camping) and solitude will be emphasized.

- ♦ ***Pine marten and beaver will be re-introduced:***

Pine marten and beaver are two of the native furbearing animals not presently known to occur on Craig Mountain. These species will be re-introduced when suitable stock for transplant can be identified and animals captured. Other species, once native to lands within the CMWMA but now missing, may also be re-introduced.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Wildlife is dependent on suitable habitat to provide the correct mixture of food, water, shelter and security for continued existence. The success or failure of wildlife management objectives depends on successful vegetation management. IDFG has specific direction to manage CMWMA lands to protect, mitigate and enhance wildlife habitat and to slow undesirable changes in vegetation patterns and reduce grazing, timber production, and farming in a manner that benefits target wildlife indicator species.

Some of the undesirable changes in vegetation patterns that have occurred on CMWMA lands in the past include 1) the invasion and spread of non-native plants species, particularly noxious weeds, 2) the accumulation of fuels for undesired wildfire, 3) the fragmentation of forested

lands, 4) loss of old-age and late seral plant communities, and 5) fragmentation and elimination of riparian communities. IDFG will attempt to slow these undesirable changes by the following strategies.

♦ *Noxious weed control:*

Efforts to reduce or (where possible) eliminate noxious weeds and the potential for future infestation by undesirable plants will feature a multi-faceted approach to weed control. Biological, chemical, mechanical, and educational measures will be used (based on relative efficiency and expense) to reduce or eliminate noxious weeds, and educational and a variety of preventative measures will be employed to reduce their establishment in presently unaffected areas. Some portions of CMWMA may be used to test experimental weed control treatments. Control efforts will be followed where possible by measures to re-establish native or desirable non-native vegetation capable of resisting future invasion by weed species.

Potential for seed transfer of noxious weeds will be addressed by encouraging use of pelleted feeds or certified weed-free hay for livestock feed, reduction of ground disturbance wherever possible, an active program of seeding disturbed areas with desirable plant species, and development of a seasonal public access management program.

♦ *Reduction of wildfire risk:*

Risk of wildfire is relatively high seasonally due to grassland fuel and timber fuel quantities. Potential for wildfire on CMWMA is a critical consideration because wildfire can preclude other vegetation management goals. To reduce wildfire risk, efforts will be made to reduce and fragment noxious weeds stands to re-establish perennial grasslands in areas now dominated by either weeds or annual grasses and to conduct controlled burns in forest and rangeland to remove potential fuels for wildfire and to achieve vegetation management goals. In addition, selective timber harvest will be employed to reduce the risk of wildfire (both ignition and spread). Firewood collection will be allowed under permit to reduce the woody debris fuel load or to achieve desirable conditions for wildlife habitat in selected areas. Intensive short-term grazing by livestock may be allowed on some portions of CMWMA where necessary to remove annual plant growth that may contribute to potential fire hazard.

♦ *Reduction of fragmented plant communities:*

Fragmentation of forested stands will be addressed through development of a comprehensive timber harvest plan following completion of inventory and mapping of all timber stands on CMWMA. Harvest will be scheduled for the purpose of reducing wildfire risk, protection of critical wildlife habitats, maintenance of wildlife movement corridors, and establishment of desirable forest stand conditions (including allowing/encouraging development of late seral and climax forested plant communities where appropriate).

♦ *Development of mid-seral and climax plant communities:*

Controlled fire will be used to assist in manipulation of vegetation on CMWMA. In some cases, periodic fire is necessary to allow late seral grassland, shrub, and forest stands to develop. IDFG will coordinate use of controlled fire on CMWMA with BLM, IDL, and other land managers in the area of proposed burns. Impacts to air quality will be considered when planning controlled burns. Re-planting following harvest will be designed to promote re-establishment of ponderosa pine on southern exposures, while maintaining northern slopes in mixed conifer stands offering greater security, thermal protection, and food for wildlife. Collection of plants, seeds, and berries for private use will be allowed on CMWMA without permit as long as there is no evidence that such use interferes with objectives of establishing late seral vegetation communities or wildlife food or habitat requirements. However, no commercial harvest of plant parts will be allowed.

♦ *Restoration of riparian plant communities:*

Restoration of riparian vegetation is a critical component of management to maintain and improve water quality and water-dependent species, including endangered stocks of salmon and steelhead. Management will feature re-establishment of an unbroken woody riparian corridor along all permanent streams on CMWMA. Native species will be favored, but desirable non-native plant species will also be planted where appropriate to achieve other management goals, including establishment of food or cover for wildlife and to reduce the rate of snowmelt runoff. Development of riparian vegetation is critical to achieving wildlife mitigation objectives for yellow warblers and black-capped chickadees, which will use the trees for nesting as well as foraging areas, and will provide benefits to elk and white-tailed deer as well. In addition, beaver will be re-introduced to headwaters areas to promote construction of dams, in the belief that development of ponds will more than offset the local loss of some riparian trees. Fencing to exclude livestock may be employed to protect certain, critical areas.

WATER AND SOILS

Maintenance of water quality is fundamental to salmon and steelhead recovery, as required by federal law. Maintenance of water quality requires protection of stream banks from erosion, moderation of water temperature fluctuations, and minimization of sediment and chemicals to water supplies. To maintain water quality, IDFG proposes to maintain large tracts of CMWMA within a forested condition (to intercept solar radiation and extend the snowmelt period), to protect and enhance riparian vegetation (to slow run-off and to reduce the ability of stream water warming due to solar radiation), and to reintroduce beavers to headwater areas (to encourage the construction of dams and resultant reservoirs, which will slow run-off, saturate local soils, and extend the run-off period). In addition, IDFG will attempt to reduce the potential for sedimentation delivered to streams and waterways by reducing the amount of dirt and gravel-surfaced roadways on CMWMA and by converting noxious weed patches to restore desirable native and suitable non-native vegetation.

Soil stabilization and restoration will also be a priority. Native plants will be used wherever possible to restore ground cover and to reclaim areas affected by noxious weeds. Roads not needed for administration or recreational purposes will be seeded. Desirable non-native plants may be employed to reduce the risk of weed invasion or re-establishment and to meet other management objectives, such as wildlife food and cover.

CMWMA was acquired and is to be managed in trust for Idaho citizens and others. Given this requirement, existing mineral resources will be developed and used only where such development and use provides direct benefits to public resources and use. Thus, CMWMA will be closed to private mineral exploration or development. Existing gravel pits may be used to maintain/improve county roads (under existing agreements with the affected county governments) as well as to maintain, improve, or construct administrative roads, trails, and for other purposes within CMWMA lands.

RECREATION MANAGEMENT

A wide variety of recreational opportunities will be provided on CMWMA lands, and additional opportunities consistent with management requirements will be developed as funding allows. County road access to and through CMWMA will be maintained. On IDFG-controlled roads, motorized access will be limited to designated routes as defined under a seasonal road access plan. Secondary and tertiary road access will be restricted, and some tertiary roads will be permanently closed and seeded. No off-road use by motorized vehicles will be allowed.

Recreational emphasis on CMWMA lands will feature non-motorized types of opportunity, since this is the type of opportunity most compatible with wildlife management objectives and wildlife mitigation requirements, the type of opportunity least available on surrounding public and private lands, and a type of opportunity in high demand by public recreationists. Motorized vehicle recreational opportunities will be provided seasonally for over-snow use on designated roadways, and seasonal access to selected routes will be provided for mobility-handicapped visitors. Potential exists for some seasonal use of certain well-established trails by motorized vehicles under 40 inches in width. This use will be periodically re-evaluated, based on costs of trail maintenance, required costs of enforcement of regulations, and disturbance to wildlife and other recreational users. The existing trail system will be evaluated and maintained as funding and manpower allows.

Facilities construction will be minimal, based on funding availability. Parking areas will be established at trailheads, and public toilets will be provided at those areas most heavily used. Some of the existing buildings on CMWMA will be restored for public use. Some of the road-accessible sites will be re-constructed to meet ADA access requirements. Corrals will be constructed for livestock use at some remote sites. Hardened camping facilities will not be developed on CMWMA that might compete with IPR facilities nearby. However, primitive camping will continue to be allowed until precluded by costs of associated maintenance or enforcement of regulations.

Consistent with IDFG objectives on other wildlife management areas statewide, recreational hunting, fishing, and trapping will be encouraged. Shooting safety zones will be established around high-use public access and administrative sites. Special recreational opportunities for mobility-impaired sportsmen will be developed. Opportunities for special youth-only hunts will be considered. There are few opportunities to enhance sport fishing opportunities on CMWMA given the priority of salmon and steelhead restoration in existing waterways. Trapping will be regulated by permit, obtainable through the regional IDFG office in Lewiston.

Historic and cultural sites will be protected. While some historic buildings will be restored for public use, IDFG has only very limited funding for such projects. There are currently no plans to provide public interpretation of historic or cultural sites.

Consistent with planned recreational use, grazing by livestock will be minimized and internal fencing will be removed or reduced. Perimeter fencing will be constructed as funding and management needs dictate. Efforts will be made as funding becomes available to 'block-up' ownership in portions of CMWMA to reduce confusing checkerboard ownership and management and minimize perimeter fencing requirements. No ownership changes will be undertaken that might impair the ability of IDFG to achieve wildlife mitigation objectives for target species or which might diminish wildlife values associated with the CMWMA.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION

The 'Desired Future Condition' of CMWMA is briefly described as including the following key elements:

1. An extensive area characterized by native vegetation maintained in good to excellent stand conditions. Vegetation will be maintained in a variety of successional stages and in a complex mosaic of types, providing linkages and corridors of wildlife habitats, by allowing/encouraging establishment and succession of native and desirable non-native plant species and by limited timber harvest as necessary to fulfill wildlife management objectives.
1. Waterways will be characterized by pure water paralleled by unbroken riparian corridors, providing habitat for native fish and wildlife populations.
1. Soil erosion will be minimized through minimization of soil disturbance, control or elimination of noxious weeds, and restoration of biologically diverse plant communities.
2. Wildlife populations will be maintained below the potential maximum carrying capacity of the land base. Species will be managed to ensure that wildlife mitigation obligations are fulfilled, native species are restored to desirable population status, and game species maintained at levels which will provide hunting, fishing and trapping recreational opportunity.

2. Human recreation, and more particularly opportunities for wildlife-associated recreation and solitude, will be provided for present and future generations to the extent consistent with the ability of IDFG to fulfill wildlife mitigation and vegetation management requirements.
2. Cultural and historic values will be protected, and some significant sites will be stabilized and protected from natural and human-related degradation.
2. Craig Mountain Wildlife Management Area will be valued by the citizens of Idaho and the nation as a significant Idaho resource, a good neighbor to adjoining landowners, and an example of interagency cooperation.

MONITORING PROGRAM

Under the 1992 Dworshak Wildlife Mitigation Agreement (BPA 1992), IDFG is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effect of management activities on wildlife and wildlife habitat on the Peter T. Johnson Wildlife Mitigation Unit.

From 1992 to 1994, IDFG and other entities conducted an exhaustive and unprecedented survey of baseline wildlife and wildlife habitat conditions on the CMWMA. Surveys included rare plants, various habitat types, timber volumes, sensitive wildlife species, target wildlife species, wildlife communities, big game aerial surveys, undesirable plants (noxious weeds), amphibians and reptiles, aquatic macroinvertebrates (Rabe, 1994 a and b) and physical structures. All data has been or is currently being entered into the Department's Geographic Information System (GIS).

The availability of data from the above surveys and the ability to display and overlay layers of that data using GIS tools will greatly enhance IDFG's ability to monitor and evaluate future management activities on the CMWMA. Long-term monitoring of habitat conditions and wildlife population trends will provide the necessary information to adapt future management to provide a balance of benefits to a variety of species. Based on long-term habitat data, population goals for key wildlife species can be reevaluated in the future to ensure that existing goals are in line with habitat productivity.

HABITAT MONITORING

The proposed habitat monitoring is designed primarily to collect trend data. More specific techniques for conducting habitat monitoring on the CMWMA are provided by Mancuso and Moseley (1994). Monitoring will be conducted to meet the following goals:

4. Monitor changes in the quantity and quality of habitat for mitigation target species.
1. Monitor vegetation associated with small mammal pitfall trap sites and bird transect study points. This will include monitoring permanent plots at 15 pitfall trap sites and 28 bird transect study points.

2. Twelve grassland monitoring plots originally established by Dr. Ed Tisdale of the University of Idaho (Tisdale plots) between 1962 and 1981 have been re-established on the CMWMA. These plots should help in monitoring the occurrence of yellow starthistle.
3. Three selected populations of the rare plant Palouse goldenweed will be monitored. Data from these sites will be comparable to the Tisdale plots and can also be used to evaluate long-term trends in the grassland community.
4. Future additional vegetation monitoring will be undertaken to evaluate the effects of site specific habitat manipulations including forest management, weed control and prescribed fire. Specific monitoring strategies will be provided in the forest, weed and fire management plants, respectively. Potentially other vegetation monitoring could be undertaken on the CMWMA in cooperation with universities, agencies or other landowners. All vegetation monitoring plots will be resampled at least once every five years but resampling will not begin before 1997.
4. Permanent photopoints in representative forest cover types wet meadow, dry meadow, riparian, canyon grassland and shrubfield habitats will be established.

WILDLIFE MONITORING

Priorities for wildlife monitoring are to determine the impacts of management activities on target species and other species important to the IDFG wildlife program.

2. Monitoring will be undertaken to assess long-term trends in pileated woodpecker, yellow warbler and black-capped chickadee distribution and abundance. Sites selected for monitoring will coincide with those selected for vegetation monitoring. Wildlife and vegetation monitoring at specific plots or along specific transects will be conducted in the same year.
3. Aerial surveys to estimate the wintering elk and mule deer populations on the CMWMA will be conducted at least once every three years. Although no reliable technique currently exists to estimate white-tailed deer numbers, whitetails observed incidental to elk and mule deer surveys will be recorded.
4. Ten scent station trend survey routes have been established on the CMWMA in an attempt to determine the black bear population trend in the Craig Mountain area. Within this planning period, these routes will be surveyed annually, as long as this survey technique is an operational black bear survey method employed by IDFG.
5. A river otter habitat/sign survey will be conducted in October at least once every 5 years to determine habitat suitability and otter distribution. Incidental sightings of river otter will be collected on the lower Salmon and Snake rivers and tributary streams located within the CMWMA.

6. Small mammal monitoring will be conducted to determine the distribution and relative abundance of small mammal species within Douglas fir, wet meadow, grassland and riparian habitats. A cooperative arrangement with Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) and possibly other universities will be established to conduct small mammal monitoring. The frequency and intensity of small mammal monitoring will be dependent upon the capabilities of LCSC and possibly others.
7. Other wildlife monitoring may be conducted to evaluate the impacts of specific habitat treatments or wildlife introductions on the CMWMA. Where possible, the permanent survey points already established will be used to determine the impacts of future habitat treatments on wildlife.

Proposals for conducting additional monitoring for a variety of habitat and/or wildlife variables will be viewed favorably by IDFG. Such cooperative ventures could be undertaken with universities or other state or federal agencies.

DETAILED PROPOSALS

It is impossible to include all of the detail for specific programs in this overview of planning for CMWMA. Not only are the details of these plans lengthy, but they are subject to change on an irregular basis. Accordingly, and so as to inform all interested parties of IDFG plans in as much detail as possible as frequently as needed, detailed program plans will be appended to this plan as they are developed, reviewed by the public and cooperating agencies, and adopted.

Specific plans will be provided which address, at a minimum,

- Vegetation Management and Timber Harvest
- Noxious Weed Control
- Road and Access Management