

MONTPELIER
Wildlife Management Area

Management Plan
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Idaho Department Of Fish And Game
Southeast Region
1345 Barton Road
Pocatello, Idaho 83204

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Montpelier Wildlife Management Area (MWMA) is located ¼ mile east of the City of Montpelier in Bear Lake County. It is one of the properties managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Department) to provide wildlife habitat and wildlife related recreation. The Department owns 1333 acres, leases 320 acres from the Idaho Department of Lands and manages 505 acres of adjoining Bureau of Land Management property (Figure 1). The initial land acquisition was a gift from the Stauffer Chemical Company. Operating funds come primarily from license revenues and the Pittman-Robertson (Federal Aid) cost-share program. The major management objective is deer and elk winter range. Access for hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing on MWMA will be maintained as possible without compromising wildlife habitat values

This plan includes the vision and mission for MWMA; the goals, objectives and strategies for its management; and descriptive details of its location, wildlife, vegetation and history. It supplements the Department's Policy Plan 1990-2005: A Vision for the Future and was developed using public involvement. Appendix IX provides details of the issues and discussion topics from the final public open houses held during the planning process in 1996. This is a long-term plan for management of MWMA, with an indefinite life span. The plan will be modified as necessary to accommodate adaptive management, and to incorporate available new knowledge and techniques.

The mission of the MWMA is to enhance mule deer winter range through vegetation management; to benefit wildlife and fish species by maintaining optimal successional stage and vegetation type diversity while improving plant vigor; and to provide opportunities for nonconsumptive and consumptive wildlife-based recreation that is compatible with maintaining high quality wildlife and fish habitat.

Winter forage for deer and elk is provided through a variety of vegetation management approaches. Forage quantity and quality will be maintained or improved by using prescribed burns, planting, fertilization, and herbicides. Evaluation will continue using an established vegetation monitoring program. Winter security and thermal cover for wildlife will be provided by protecting riparian areas, limiting human access, marking boundaries and posting informational signs.

Upland game and nongame habitat needs will also be considered in management of the area. Needs of nongame and sensitive species will be evaluated before vegetation manipulations are implemented to benefit game species.

Motorized vehicles will be restricted to established roads while nonmotorized access will be permitted except during severe winters. Facilities will be limited to parking areas and interpretive signs. Primitive roads will be maintained as budgets permit.

Another significant issue addressed in this plan is to establish good working relationships with neighboring landowners. Long-term progress toward fostering good relationships with neighbors is planned by establishing and maintaining boundary markings and fences, controlling noxious weeds, and establishing a working group of neighbors and interested area users.

Figure 1. Map of Montpelier Wildlife Management Area.

VISION

The Montpelier WMA (MWMA) will be managed to provide public access, improve mule deer habitat and provide diverse upland and riparian communities for game and nongame wildlife species.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the MWMA is to enhance mule deer winter range through vegetation management; to benefit wildlife and fish species by maintaining optimal successional stage and vegetation type diversity while improving plant vigor; and to provide opportunities for nonconsumptive and consumptive wildlife-based recreation that is compatible with maintaining high quality wildlife and fish habitat.

DURATION OF PLAN

This is a long-term plan for management of MWMA, with an indefinite life span. The plan will be modified as necessary to accommodate adaptive management, and to incorporate available new knowledge and techniques.

LOCATION

This 2,158-acre Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the town of Montpelier in Bear Lake County (Figure 1). The legal description includes part or all of T 12S, R 44E, Sections 26, 35, and 36; T 12S, R 45E, Section 31; T 13S, R 44E, Sections 1 and 2; and T 13S, R 45E, Sections 6, 7 and 8. Topographic map coverage appears on USGS 7.5 Minute Series Montpelier Quadrangle and Montpelier Canyon Quadrangle.

DESCRIPTION

This WMA includes 2158 acres of land, of which 320 acres are leased from the Idaho Department of Lands and 505 acres are managed by agreement with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The MWMA is divided by Montpelier Canyon and U.S. Highway 89. Elevation ranges from 6000 feet along Montpelier Creek to 7600 feet on the upper slopes. Annual precipitation is 12-15 inches with most falling as snow. Temperatures range from -35°F to over 100°F. Snow depths frequently reach four feet and the ground usually remains snow covered through the winter. The exception is on south-facing slopes, where snow depths are less and melt off quickly. Vegetation is primarily a sagebrush/bitterbrush/bunchgrass community type. The riparian area along Montpelier Creek is dominated by a mixture of willows and alder.

The MWMA provides essential winter habitat for 350-400 mule deer, which is critical to their survival in severe winters. The south-facing slopes north of U.S. Highway 89 are especially

important wintering areas for deer. The MWMA also supports a population of gray partridge and a few forest grouse. It is estimated to provide 50-75 deer hunter days (\$2500-3750) and 20-25 upland game hunter days (\$700-875), for an annual value totaling \$3200-4624. Due to its proximity to the town of Montpelier, the MWMA is also used for outdoor appreciation and trapping.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, MONITORING

Issue 1: Perpetuation and enhancement of wildlife populations and habitat (Appendix IX).

Discussion: The mission of the MWMA is to provide winter habitat for mule deer and year-round habitat for upland game and nongame species. Montpelier Creek, which flows through the MWMA, supports native cutthroat trout. Within budget and time constraints, we will explore every reasonable method to improve habitat. While the MWMA was purchased primarily as mule deer winter range, we will manage the area for other wildlife species, including upland game, cutthroat trout and furbearers. Any habitat manipulation that takes place on MWMA must be in keeping with the mission of the area. Projects intended to specifically enhance nongame wildlife populations or habitat will be supported by nongame funding sources.

U.S. Highway 89 runs through or near parts of MWMA. Because deer may cross or concentrate near the highway, the risk of collisions between deer and vehicles is always present. One management goal is to provide secure winter habitat on the area to reduce winter movements of deer and permit them to forage in areas away from the highway. The Department is concerned about the potential impacts of planned widening and straightening of U.S. Highway 89 through Montpelier Canyon in that traffic may move faster and the risk of mortalities for deer may increase.

Department personnel and volunteers have conducted several habitat improvement projects on the MWMA, including planting bitterbrush seedlings on the site of a wildfire and aerial fertilization to improve forage quality on critical deer winter range. Although predation may also have an impact on deer populations, area management will not be directed at controlling predation; rather, management will focus on providing the forage and security needs to produce healthy deer populations.

- I. Goal: Provide secure winter habitat for big game and year-round habitat for fish, upland game and nongame wildlife.
 - A. Objective: Provide winter forage for mule deer and elk to maintain health of herds and reduce the incidence of depredations and highway mortalities.
 1. Strategies:
 - (a) Forage will be protected from trespass livestock with boundary fencing.

- (b) Forage will be maintained in optimum condition (a mixture of browse, forbs, and grass species available year-round) through prescribed burns (in cooperation with IDL and BLM), and/or herbicides
- (c) Bitterbrush seedlings will be planted on burned or disturbed sites as needed.
- (d) Emergency big game feeding will be conducted on or near MWMA in accordance with statewide policy. This policy authorizes the Department to feed big game only to prevent damage to private property, for public safety or to prevent excessive mortality in drainages that would affect the recovery of the herd.
- (e) Selected areas of MWMA have been fertilized by helicopter to enhance the productivity and palatability of shrubs, grasses and forbs for wildlife. Based on the results from these experimental plots, we may expand this program.
- (f) We will work with the Idaho Department of Transportation to provide recommendations for U.S. Highway 89 traffic control and construction to minimize vehicle-caused deer mortality.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Vegetation transects will be evaluated annually. Results will be used to compare changes in plant species composition and cover as well as wildlife use between treated and untreated plots. Using this information, as well as monitoring use by wildlife, we will be able to determine the need for additional treatments.
- (b) We will evaluate impacts of Highway 89 construction by monitoring winter deer mortality along the highway.

B. Objective: Provide winter security for wildlife.

1. Strategies:

- (a) Human entry onto the MWMA will be restricted to prevent disturbance of wintering big game.
- (b) Boundaries will be clearly marked and roads gated to prevent closed-season entry by motorized vehicles.
- (c) Information signs will be placed on all areas explaining the purpose of the closure.
- (d) All gates and information signs will be maintained annually.
- (e) Tall brush and trees will be retained for security and thermal cover by excluding riparian areas from fire and herbicide treatments.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Big game winter use will be monitored in conjunction with regional big game aerial surveys.
- (b) Upland game populations will not be formally monitored, but records of sightings will be kept.

II. Goal: Maintain or increase populations of nongame wildlife species.

A. Strategies:

- 1. Maintain or improve the diversity of vegetation types.
- 2. Evaluate needs for nongame wildlife and provide developments as necessary.
- 3. Consider non-target and sensitive species before habitat manipulation practices are put into effect.
- 4. Install and annually maintain nest boxes.

B. Monitoring: Monitor use and annually maintain nest boxes.

Issue 2: Need to provide a variety of nonconsumptive and consumptive recreational opportunities consistent with the MWMA mission (Appendix IX).

Discussion: Part of the mission for the MWMA is to provide adequate public access for consumptive and nonconsumptive public uses without compromising the quality of habitat, wildlife security or the outdoor experience of area users. License fees have been used in the purchase of WMA property and license holders, as well as others, expect reasonable access to these properties.

Foot access causes few problems for wildlife during typical years. An exception on MWMA would be during severe winter weather when animals are stressed by cold temperatures, deep snow or hunger. In contrast, motorized vehicle access may be detrimental to wildlife security and the condition of animals. Increased vulnerability during hunting seasons is directly related to vehicular access. Many area users may also define the quality of their outdoor experience by the amount of traffic or number of other people they encounter. For these reasons the roads on the segment north of Highway 89 are closed to motorized vehicles. A parking area was constructed in Montpelier Canyon on the north side of Highway 89 for nonmotorized access. The Road to the Bear Lake County Landfill provides access south of Highway 89.

The Department attempts to provide opportunity for a wide range of users to enjoy the lands it manages while protecting wildlife and their habitats.

Goal: Manage access to provide quality opportunities for hunting, trapping and wildlife appreciation.

Objective: Manage type and timing of use.

Strategies:

- 1. Security for game animals is maintained during the hunting season by limiting motorized vehicles to open and maintained roads.
- 2. Horse access is allowed, but no facilities are provided, other than parking.

3. Access maps are available at parking areas and vehicular access points.
4. Primitive camping is allowed, but no facilities are provided.
5. Quality of roads will be maintained as budgets allow.
6. Non-motorized access, such as hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding will be allowed. Signs will be placed at access sites addressing wintering big game. All human access may be prohibited during severe winters to prevent excessive stress on wintering wildlife.

Issue 3: We must maintain and/or improve working relationships with neighboring landowners (Appendix IX).

Discussion: It is important to establish a working relationship with neighboring landowners and permittees by maintaining open lines of communication. A major concern of neighboring landowners is deer depredations and winter feeding of deer during severe winters. To assist regional personnel, the Department has established a Regional Winter Feeding Advisory Committee. This committee and regional wildlife biologists have determined the criteria to be used to decide if and when big game are to be fed. During severe winters the regional supervisor, in consultation with the Winter Feeding Advisory Committee, will determine whether criteria have been met. If so, the regional big game operational plan will be implemented.

Noxious weeds must be controlled to prevent their spread to neighboring property. The wildlife profession and agri-business have disagreed in the past over the effects of "weeds." Wildlife biologists consider broad-leaved herbaceous plants to be a critical component of the diverse vegetation that makes up wildlife habitat. These forbs (or "weeds") provide density or visual obstruction, increasing the chances of successful nesting. They also provide food for a variety of wildlife species. In contrast, the agricultural industry views them as a threat to their livelihood by reducing crop production and forage value. We have now come to agree that weeds are everyone's concern. Noxious weeds are usually exotic plants which have not evolved with the natural controls that native plants have. Noxious weed infestations often result in a monotypic plant community which is unsuitable as wildlife habitat. Infestations in cropland and rangeland tend to reduce yields, forage quality and wildlife habitat values. By statute, landowners must control noxious weeds to prevent their spread to neighboring property.

Another important aspect of neighbor relations on the MWMA is public information regarding the boundaries between public and private land. Building and maintaining boundary fences may also help eliminate livestock trespass problems. Boundaries will be marked, and if necessary, fenced to eliminate trespass problems.

- I. Goal: Work to control noxious weeds (mandated by state law) which cause poor neighbor relations and may be a threat to native vegetation on MWMA.

Objective: Control Dyers' woad, whitetop, henbane, leafy spurge and thistle on MWMA.

1. Strategies:

- (a) Noxious weed problem areas will be identified and mapped.

- (b) Chemical herbicides will be applied using a four-wheeler and backpack sprayers.
- (c) Biological insect control will be used for Canada thistle, musk thistle and leafy spurge.
- (d) A working relationship will be maintained with Bear Lake County weed control officer.
- (e) Aerial application of herbicide may be considered for small areas of thick weeds, but every precaution will be taken to insure that native vegetation, especially bitterbrush and other shrub species, are not adversely affected.
- (f) Spraying will begin as early as possible in the spring and continue throughout the growing season.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Habitat personnel will maintain logs documenting chemical and biological weed treatments.
- (b) Location of insect releases will be mapped and inspected to monitor effectiveness.
- (c) We will work with Bear Lake County weed control officer to identify and help control noxious weeds.

II. Goal: Establish all boundaries and address other common concerns.

Objective: Clearly mark boundaries.

Strategies:

- 1. Survey boundaries that are not established.
- 2. Place or replace boundary markers on perimeter of MWMA.
- 3. Cooperatively maintain common fences.
- 4. Resolve situation in which neighbor is occupying a small portion of MWMA.

Issue 4: The Bear Lake County landfill, located on MWMA, is a potential liability and does nothing to promote the Department's mission.

Discussion: The landfill has been in place since before the property was given to the Department by the Stauffer Chemical company. In 1997 approximately 400 acres of the landfill and surrounding property was deeded to Bear Lake County. Although the agreement included assurances that the shooting range on the property would remain accessible to the public, the Department has no further management interest in the property. The Department retained ownership and management responsibility of the remaining 159 acres of the property, which includes the riparian area adjacent to Montpelier Creek and the area around the storage shed near the landfill access road.

Issue 5: The Department will acquire additional property to help achieve the WMA mission.

Discussion: The Department has purchased land for many years to improve and protect wildlife habitat as well as to provide public access. The practice has been welcomed by some but has been a topic of controversy for others. Sportsmen have always encouraged the Department to purchase additional land in order to provide the benefits listed above. However, some sportsmen have been concerned about how land purchases are funded.

County commissions have resisted the Department's purchase of lands because those lands were then removed from the county tax base. Private individuals resented the Department taking productive lands out of the hands of citizens who could farm or graze those lands for income. Both groups have felt that the Department has had enough problems managing the lands that they already owned without adding more land.

In order to reduce the resistance to Department ownership of land, several steps were taken. First, the Department introduced legislation that now allows "in lieu of taxes" payments to each county where the Department owns land. This satisfied county concerns. Secondly, the Department decided to focus its acquisition dollars towards: 1) key big game habitat, 2) wetlands capable of producing significant numbers of waterfowl and hunting opportunities, 3) access to waterways for fishing, 4) access for hunting, 5) lands adjacent to existing wildlife management areas, 6) upland habitats close to population centers, and 7) sites for fishing reservoir development (Department Policy A-14.04). The purchase of agricultural lands will be avoided, mostly due to their high cost. Also, when possible, easements will be purchased to provide access to the public and not take the land from private ownership.

Department policy A-14.04 states "The primary sources of funds for land acquisition are the Land Acquisition and Habitat Development Account [I.C. 36-107(c)], the waterfowl Habitat Improvement Program, Pittman-Robertson and Dingle-Johnson funds, Ducks Unlimited M.A.R.S.H. funds, some limited license funds, salmon-steelhead tag funds, and occasionally mitigation funds. Most of these funding sources have some restrictions on the kinds of properties which can be acquired." This policy controls how a particular acquisition can be funded.

For the WMA's within the Southeast Region, additional land will be acquired if some or all of the following criteria are met: 1) the land is adjacent to the WMA, 2) there is a willing seller, and 3) the land provides a benefit to wildlife (winter range, wetlands, etc).

Goal: To improve and protect wildlife habitat by acquiring land or easements.

A. Objective: Purchase land adjacent to WMA's.

Strategies:

1. Identify land that is being offered for sale and/or that falls within guidelines.
2. Approach owners with proposals that follow all Department policies.
3. Make neighbors and other agencies aware that the Department is interested in land purchases from willing sellers.

4. Inform county commission of any acquisition plans and hold public meetings if requested or deemed appropriate.
5. Identify land that may be acquired through trades with other individuals and/or agencies.

B. Objective: Acquire easements on lands that have high wildlife value and are not for sale.

Strategies:

1. Identify land that is not for sale but that is deemed to have important wildlife values.
2. Approach owners with easement options.

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APPENDIX I
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

This big game winter range begins along Montpelier Creek in the Bear River valley floor at 5,920 feet elevation and rises to 7,600 feet. The hillsides generally face south with intermittent short draws. Throughout the total area of 2,158 acres, effects of past surface mining, mineral exploration, grazing and farming are evident.

Habitat is primarily tall sagebrush, bitterbrush/shrub steppe and mixed shrub/grassland. Some aspen and conifers are found on north-facing slopes in draws. Before Department ownership, approximately 200 acres was irrigated farmland, and the remainder was rangeland.

The annual precipitation in the area is 12-15 inches, with most falling as snow during winter and spring. Temperatures range from -35°F to more than 100°F. Snow depths frequently reach four feet, and the ground usually remains snow covered throughout winter.

APPENDIX II

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Montpelier WMA is a small part of a once heavily stocked winter range for mule deer. Phosphate mining and livestock use have made serious inroads into this critical habitat. When the Department acquired some of these lands as a 1971 gift of mined land from the Stauffer Chemical Company, the bitterbrush and some of the sagebrush was hedged so severely that it was prostrate and producing virtually no forage available to deer in the winter. Subsequently, there was a severe reduction in deer numbers and that, along with removal of cattle, permitted some rejuvenation of browse. By 1985, the bitterbrush had responded well.

Later in 1971, the Department purchased 776 acres about one mile west of the Stauffer property. An additional 320 acres was added in 1974 and 78 acres more were purchased in 1985. The Bureau of Land Management included an adjacent 505 acres of federal land in a cooperative wildlife/range management program for this section of the Montpelier Canyon "front." Additionally, the Department leases 320 acres of IDL land immediately north of the 1974 purchase. Because part of the initial gift of land included a landfill site, which detracted from the Department's management objectives, that 400-acre parcel was given to Bear Lake County in 1997.

APPENDIX III

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Of the 558 acres given to the Department by the Stauffer Chemical Company, approximately 350 acres have been stripped for the surface mining of phosphate. Part of this area has been used for a shooting range by a local rod and gun club in the past, and the city of Montpelier has used the deeper pits for a sanitary landfill. In 1997, ownership of 400 acres of this parcel was transferred to Bear Lake County for use as a landfill. Part of the agreement included continued public access to the shooting range.

Department developments to date include boundary fences, a parking area which was built in 1991, and informational signing. A small storage facility is also located on the property near the landfill access road.

In order to achieve area management objectives and improve the quality of mule deer winter range, some vegetation has also been planted. Ten thousand bitterbrush seedlings were planted in the mid-1970's, shortly after the area came into Department ownership. Bitterbrush and small burnett were seeded by broadcast method in 1989. Another 2,500 bitterbrush seedlings were planted in 1995 following a wildfire the previous year, and an additional planting effort was conducted on this site in 1997.

A well is located near a former irrigated agricultural field in the center of the area, but has not been used since the Department acquired the property.

**APPENDIX IV
LAND AND WATER CONTROL**

LAND ACQUISITIONS:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Funds</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acquired From</i>
1971	Gift	158.65	Stauffer Chemical Co.
1971	PR	642.05	H. Winston Groo
1971	PR	134.40	H.W. Groo and others
1974	FG	320.00	J.H. Loertscher
1985	HB530	78.37	J. Costello
Subtotal		1,333.47	

LEASE:

<i>Effective Date/Length</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Leased From</i>
1998/10 years	320.00	Idaho Department of Lands

COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT:

<i>Effective Date/Length</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Agreement With</i>
1976/Indefinite	505.00	Bureau of Land Management
Total WMA	2,158.47	

EASEMENTS

Right of Way with Montpelier Irrigation Company.
Idaho Power Company power line easement.

WATER RIGHTS

No water rights are associated with any of these lands.

APPENDIX V
VEGETATION AND HABITAT TYPES

TREES

Utah Juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*)
Rocky Mountain Juniper (*Juniperus scopularum*)
Bigtooth maple (*Acer grandidentatum*)
Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)
Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menzesii*)

SHRUBS

Big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*)
Three-tipped sage (*Artemisia tripartita*)
Bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*)
Mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*)
Utah serviceberry (*Amelanchior utahensis*)
Mountain snowberry (*Symphocarpus oreophilus*)
Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
Rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*)
Douglas rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*)
Oregon grape (*Berberis repens*)
Wood's rose (*Rosa woodsii*)
Mountain-lover (*Pachistima myrsinites*)
Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
Willow (*Salix* spp.)
Mountain alder (*Alnus incana*)
Water birch (*Betula occidentalis*)
Black hawthorn (*Crataegus douglasii*)
Currant (*Ribes* spp.)
Skunkbush sumac (*Rhus trilobata*)

GRAMINOIDS

Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*)
Western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*)
Cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*)
Pine reedgrass (*Calamagrostis rubescens*)
Great Basin wildrye (*Elymus cinereus*)
Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*)
Oniongrass (*Melica bulbosa*)
Indian ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*)
Bulbous bluegrass (*Poa bulbosa*)
Nevada bluegrass (*Poa nevadense*)
Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*)

FORBS

Western yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
Silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*)
Wild onion (*Allium* spp.)
Aster (*Aster* spp.)
Milkvetch (*Astragalus* spp.)
Curlycup gumweed (*Grindelia squarrosa*)
Hairy goldaster (*Heterotheca villosa*)
Prairie goldenrod (*Solidago missouriensis*)
Bushy birdbeak (*Cordylanthus ramosus*)
Western salsify (*Tragopogon dubius*)
Small stalk falseflax (*Camelina microcarpa*)
Smartweed (*Polygonum* spp.)
Sego lily (*Calochortus eurycarpus*)
Arrowleaf balsamorhiza (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*)
Buckwheat (*Erigonum* spp.)
Little sunflower (*Helianthella quinquenervis*)
Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*)
Western gromwell (*Lithospermum ruderale*)
Yellow sweetclover (*Melilotus occininalus*)
Rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*)
Blue flax (*Linum perenne*)
Hawksbeard (*Crepis acuminata*)
Dandelion (*Taraxicum officinale*)
Halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*)
Hoary cress (*Cardaria draba*)
Western sticktight (*Bidens vulgata*)
Prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*)
Kochia (*Kochia scoparia*)
Russian thistle (*Salsola iberica*)
Lupine (*Lupinus* spp.)
Scarlet globemallow (*Sphaeralcea coccinea*)
Fireweed (*Epilobium angustifolium*)
Penstemon (*Penstemon* spp.)
Clasping pepperweed (*Lepidium perfoliatum*)
Field cress (*Lepidium campestre*)
Sticky geranium (*Geranium richardsonii*)
Moth mullein (*Verbascum blattaria*)
Violet (*Viola* spp.)
Jim Hill mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*)
Large-fruited biscuitroot (*Lomatium macrocarpum*)
Daisy fleabane (*Erigeron strigosus*)
Lance-leaved stonecrop (*Sedum lanceolatum*)
Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)
Musk thistle (*Cirsium nutans*)
Cinquefoil (*potentilla* spp.)

HABITAT CLASSES

<i>Class</i>	<i>Acres</i>
Tall sagebrush	398.00
Bitterbrush/shrub steppe	283.00
Mixed shrub steppe	122.00
Closed canopy shrub	920.00
Juniper/aspen woodland	180.00
Aspen	5.00
Agricultural lands	200.00
Streams	0.16
Total	2,108.16

APPENDIX VI
WILDLIFE AND FISHERY RESOURCES

MAMMALS

Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)
Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)
Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*)
Mink (*Mustela vison*)
Weasel (*Mustela* spp.)
Cottontail rabbit (*Sylvilagus nutallii*)
Black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)
Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)
Yellow-bellied marmot (*Marmota flaviventris*)
Golden-mantled ground squirrel (*Spermophilus lateralis*)
Northern pocket gopher (*Thomomys talpoides*)
Deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)
Mountain vole (*Microtus montanus*)
Sagebrush vole (*Lagurus curtatus*)
Chipmunk (*Eutamias* spp.)
Porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatum*)
Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)
Bushy-tailed wood rat (*Neotoma cinerea*)
Merriam shrew (*Sorex merriami*)

BIRDS

Blue grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*)
Sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)
Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)
Gray partridge (*Perdix perdix*)
Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)
Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)
Red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
Rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*)
Northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)
American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)
Great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*)
Black-billed magpie (*Pica pica*)
Common raven (*Corvus corax*)
American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*)
Brewer's blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*)
Brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*)
Turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*)

Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
Yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)
Vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*)
Yellow-rumped warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)
MacGillivray's warbler (*Oporornis formosus*)
Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)
Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)
Song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)
Chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)
Dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*)
Rufous-sided towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*)
Green-tailed towhee (*Pipilo chlorurus*)
House finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*)
Evening grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)
American goldfinch (*Carduelis psaltria*)
Lazuli bunting (*Passerina amoena*)
Calliope hummingbird (*Stellula calliope*)
Broad-tailed hummingbird (*Selasphorus platycercus*)
Common flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)
Eastern kingbird (*Tyrannus tyrannus*)
Western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*)
Western wood pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)
Horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*)
Violet-green swallow (*Tachycineta thalassina*)
Bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*)
Black-capped chickadee (*Parus atricapillus*)
Sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)
Robin (*Turdus migatorius*)
Hermit thrush (*Hylocichla guttata*)
Northern shrike (*Lanius excubitor*)
Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
Dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*)
House wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)
Cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)
Common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)
Mourning dove (*Zenaidura macroura*)
Western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)
European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES

Common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*)
Western terrestrial garter snake (*Thamnophis elegans*)
Great basin rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*)
Racer (*Coluber constrictor*)
Gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*)
Rubber boa (*Charina bottae*)
Sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*)
Western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*)
Western skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*)
Western toad (*Bufo boreas*)

FISH

Cutthroat trout (*Salmo clarki*)
Mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdi*)

APPENDIX VII

HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Montpelier Wildlife Management Area (MWMA) is managed by the Regional Wildlife Biologist assigned to the East Habitat District of the Southeast Region under the supervision of the Regional Habitat Manager. The habitat management program on MWMA is focused primarily on vegetation management in order to carry out the mission of enhancing mule deer winter range and providing quality habitat for other wildlife and fish.

Numerous techniques are available to manage vegetation, each depending on the objectives, limitations, potential natural vegetation and present state of a given site. Soils and climate are the primary constraints which determine the long-term potential for the plant species diversity and abundance on a site, which in turn determine the presence and carrying capacity of animal species there. The habitat management program for MWMA will apply techniques such as planting desirable species; chemical, biological and mechanical control of less desirable species, including noxious weeds; fertilization of selected areas; prescribed burns; and exclusion of livestock to reduce competition for forage. Any of these techniques may be applied when appropriate to achieve site-specific objectives, although vegetation management often requires no intervening action other than permitting natural ecological processes to occur.

In order to evaluate the outcome and efficacy of management actions, monitoring is essential. An important component of the habitat management program on MWMA is vegetation monitoring. Annual monitoring of vegetation using fixed transects provides a measure of species diversity, abundance, and utilization which can be used to evaluate previous actions and identify the need for additional action. By comparing results in treated and untreated areas, the efficacy of vegetation manipulations is evaluated. Using an adaptive management approach, future activity on a site will be planned based on the results of past activities as well as new techniques available or additional knowledge gained.

Monitoring for effects of vegetation management on wildlife is also important. Because it is not practical to measure these effects directly, the habitat management program on MWMA will primarily depend on regional game surveys, big game highway mortalities and depredations on adjacent private land to provide evidence of wildlife response. As future funding permits, monitoring may be expanded to include increased site-specific and time-based surveys of wildlife populations on MWMA.

Although all available information is utilized in planning management actions, baseline information for MWMA is not yet compiled in a comprehensive format, and some is not available. As part of the habitat management program, baseline mapping of soils and habitat types will be compiled as part of a future revision to the management plan.

APPENDIX VIII

TRAVEL PLAN

The Montpelier Wildlife Management Area is open to public travel with the following restrictions:

- All motorized vehicles must remain on open established roads.
- Interior roads are available only for administrative access in order to provide wildlife security.
- All human access may be prohibited during severe winters to prevent excessive stress on wintering mule deer.

A parking area has been provided on the north side of U.S. Highway 89 in Montpelier Canyon.

APPENDIX IX

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The regional wildlife habitat staff conducted three open house public meetings in March, 1996. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the future management of the Wildlife Management Areas in the Southeast Region. Meetings were held in Aberdeen, Pocatello, and Soda Springs.

We created displays demonstrating 1995 projects and the future management issues that we had identified prior to the meetings. We encouraged the attendees to give us written or verbal comments regarding management of the WMA's and any issues they felt that we need to address in our future management. We provided comment sheets for this purpose.

Over 400 invitations were mailed to neighbors, cooperators, legislators, sportsmen's groups, land management agencies and concerned citizens. Display advertisements were placed in area newspapers and a news release was issued concerning the open house meetings.

Fourteen people attended the public open house in Aberdeen on March 11, twelve attended the open house in Pocatello on March 12, ten people attended in Soda Springs on March 13 and two people telephoned with their input. The final document will be provided to the public in an open house forum in February, 1999.

The following is a list of issues mentioned by members of the public at the open house meetings or in written comments with a discussion of each issue.

Issue 1: Establish a fish-rearing facility on BRWMA.

Discussion: This idea was proposed as a method to help speed up the recovery of cutthroat populations in the Blackfoot River system. Fisheries biologists place fertilized cutthroat trout eggs in incubation boxes in some of the Blackfoot River tributaries. When the fry hatch and swim up, they enter the river from these tributaries and, it is hoped, return to these streams to spawn as adults. The project has been implemented with incubation boxes placed in tributaries of the Blackfoot River on BRWMA in 1997 and 1998 and will continue subject to evaluation of its efficacy by regional fisheries biologists.

In 1990, after considerable study of historical data and meetings with the public, the Fish and Game Commission approved an upper Blackfoot system fishery management plan to restore the wild cutthroat trout. The plan included ample harvest opportunity for hatchery trout in the reservoir, selective release of all wild cutthroat in the reservoir and limited harvest opportunity of only post-spawning cutthroat trout in the upper river and its tributaries. In October, 1997, the Commission approved rules allowing no harvest of cutthroat trout in the upper river and its tributaries. Artificial flies and lures with one barbless hook (no bait) are required as well. The plan also proposed to improve habitat. The 1995 purchase of the Stocking Ranch at the head of the Blackfoot River by the Department was a major boost to habitat improvement as well as guaranteed sportsmen access to 6.4 miles of the upper Blackfoot River (18.5% of the river's total length) and 1.3 miles of lower Angus Creek. Riparian areas on the BRWMA have been rested from livestock grazing in both 1995 and 1996. Stream bank stability has improved and sedge

and willow communities have expanded. The only uncontrolled aspect of fishery habitat on the BRWMA is the quality of water entering the area from adjacent upstream lands. The proposed land use trade with upstream neighbors will partially alleviate this water quality problem on the BRWMA.

Ideal cutthroat trout habitat exhibits the following characteristics: cool, clean water with deep pools for cover and resting, clean gravel bottom for spawning, aquatic insect diversity, stable stream banks and riparian vegetation for shade and woody debris. We are using available funding and manpower into rehabilitating trout habitat in the Blackfoot River on the BRWMA. With improved habitat, the cutthroat trout numbers will increase.

Issue 2: I would like to see more educational programs for families and children in Bear Lake and Caribou counties.

Discussion: Wildlife Management Areas provide excellent opportunities for educational programs dealing with wildlife and fish habitat. They also provide examples of habitat manipulation practices that can be used to benefit wildlife and fish. However, this issue seems to deal more with educational programs that do not necessarily relate to the management of our WMAs and, therefore, is outside the scope of this document.

We currently work with schools and summer camps to provide speakers on wildlife topics. Conservation officers, biologists and I&E staff make presentations to civic groups, in school classrooms and at outdoor activities. We also use volunteers/school groups to carry out habitat improvement projects.

Issue 3: Big game crossing Highway 30 at Georgetown Summit are frequently involved in vehicle/game collisions.

Discussion: This continues to be a problem not only at GSWMA, but also at the PWMA (Highway 91) and MWMA (Highway 89). The Idaho Department of Transportation (IDT) has erected warning signs. The cost of building and maintaining a deer and/or elk-proof fence would be prohibitive. We will work with IDT to improve conditions if this section of Highway 30 is upgraded in the future.

By improving the quality and quantity of the available forage, we are working to reduce depredation problems as well as the incidence of big game/vehicle collisions.

Issue 4: No more money should be spent on pheasants - spend more money on native species.

Discussion: Pheasants are the most popular upland game bird in Idaho. As a result, pheasant production is an important goal at SWMA. However, pheasants are not an indigenous species to Idaho, or even to the United States. Although pheasant hunting has become a traditional past time, there is a percentage of professionals, sportsmen and non-consumptive users who would prefer to focus Department time and finances on the native species of the area (sharp-tailed, sage and forest grouse). The thought is that in order to maintain populations of exotic birds species, if indeed it can be done, unacceptable levels of funding will be required. Since these birds are not

evolved for this environment, extensive and expensive alterations are needed to create suitable habitat. Native species, on the other hand, are suited to this area and can be managed more effectively without having to artificially manipulate the habitat.

In conjunction with the widespread appeal of the ring-necked pheasant is the fact that much of the funding available for upland game bird management is generated by the popularity of pheasant hunting. A major thrust of the Habitat Improvement Program, which is funded by the sale of upland game stamps, is to improve habitat for pheasants and some other upland game birds. Sharp-tailed, sage and forest grouse are not, at this time, included in that program.

Issue 5: No license funds should be spent on nongame projects.

Discussion: Most of the Department programs are funded, either directly or indirectly, by sportsmen dollars. This segment of the population is more interested in consumptive uses of wildlife and, therefore, prefers that their money be used in a way that benefits that type of use. They prefer that dollars generated by license sales go toward improving hunting and fishing. Efforts are being made on a National level to create a means by which the non-consumptive recreational users will also help support Wildlife and fish programs. But at this time, the major share of wildlife programs are funded by the consumptive users.

All projects that are targeted specifically for a nongame species will be funded through appropriate nongame funds or through donations. Most projects that are funded with license dollars also provide significant benefits to nongame species. However, the reverse is not necessarily true. Many of the nongame projects are nesting structures that are only suitable for nongame species. Most license-funded projects are general habitat-oriented plantings.

Issue 6: Do not use any license fees for the pheasant release program.

Discussion: As mentioned in Issue #4, above, some sportsmen prefer that Department funds go toward the management of native game bird species. In addition to that segment of the Department's constituency, is a group that prefers to put money into managing for wild bird populations rather than game farm pheasants. Pheasants Forever is an example of a group that promotes wild bird management and denounces game farm production.

Research has shown that stocking pheasants is NOT a viable solution to increasing a population. The sole reasoning for the stocking program is to provide hunting opportunity. In addition to not supplementing the wild population, research has also shown that introducing pen-reared pheasants, in fact, can be detrimental to the wild population by attracting predators, spreading disease, and passing on genetic problems. The stocking program currently costs the Department approximately \$50,000 per year for the birds. Department employee time and operating expenses are additional. This program has been in place for many years and has developed a strong support base. Seniors and young hunters seem to most benefit from this type of hunting.

Currently, sportsmen that hunt the game farm pheasants on a WMA purchase a WMA pheasant permit. In effect, the people that use that program pay for the program. The permit allows a hunter to harvest 10 pheasants from a WMA where game farm birds are released.

Issue 7: On Sterling WMA, leave 10-20 acre plots of 3-4" vegetation for goose pasture, May through July. Use grazing and burning to achieve and maintain these areas. One acre per 100 acres.

Discussion: As the new grazing plan is developed, consideration will be given to how to best provide goose pasture and not adversely impact waterfowl nesting habitat. Neighbors have brought this point up previously. Although attempts have been made to provide this type of area, they have been ineffective. American Falls reservoir is an extremely large body of water that attracts thousands of geese. The acreage that SWMA could manage for goose pasture is insignificant when compared to the available area around the reservoir. Other landowners adjacent to American Falls reservoir often provide the conditions for goose pasture just by the nature of the land use. These uses, however, typically do not provide high quality nesting cover. A main stumbling block for the Department is the cost and labor involved to adequately fence an area in order to control the grazing intensity that would be required to provide goose pasture. An additional concern would be that this high intensity grazing would be incompatible with the SWMA goal of providing quality nesting cover.

Goose pasture management may be considered for the BRWMA. There again, we will consider the overall need for this habitat component. We will also consider costs in terms of reduced nesting cover which may be at more of a premium than goose pasture.

Issue 8: There is still a weed problem on Sterling WMA.

Discussion: Traditionally, the wildlife profession and agri-business have disagreed on the effects of "weeds." This disagreement has been the root of the neighbor relations problem on SWMA for many years. Wildlife biologists considered the "forb" component (broad-leafed, herbaceous plants) as a critical part of the vegetation that makes up wildlife habitat. The forbs provide density and visual obstruction that increases the chances that a nest will be successful. The agri-business community however saw weeds as a threat to their livelihood in the form of reduced crop production. Eventually it became obvious to the wildlife supporters, that "noxious weeds" are everyone's concern. By law, weeds that are listed as "noxious" must be controlled by landowners. "Noxious" weeds are usually exotic plants that have not evolved with the same natural controls as native plants. The result of a noxious weed infestation is a monotypic plant community that usually is not suited for most wildlife species. These infestations tend to reduce crop and range yields as well as reduce the quality and quantity of wildlife habitat. It now is accepted that noxious weed control is a problem for everyone. There still is a division between the two groups concerning forbs that are not on the Noxious Weeds list. This may be one of those issues that is never resolved. However, SWMA neighbors do acknowledge that the Department has recognized the problem and is taking active measures to fulfill their responsibility.

A major effort has been made over the past years to control noxious weeds on SWMA. This effort will be continued for as long as necessary or as long as finances allow. Crews of temporary employees have used tractors, 4-wheelers and backpack sprayers to work on problem areas. A helicopter has also been hired for aerial spraying. The Bingham County Weed Supervisor makes periodic checks on the area to help identify problem spots. Logs are kept of the time and dollars spent on this problem.

These efforts to control noxious weeds are carried out just as intensively on all of the WMA's in the region. In particular, Department staff and temporary employees as well as the Bannock County Inmate Labor Detail have sprayed, dug and pulled dyer's woad and white top on PWMA. Department personnel have sprayed dyer's woad, thistle and henbane on GSWMA and MWMA. We have sprayed and pulled Canadian thistle and yellow toadflax on BRWMA. The regional habitat biologist stays in contact with the county weed supervisors in regards to weed infestations, new technologies for controlling weeds and contracting with counties to help control weeds.

Issue 9: Predators need to be controlled on SWMA.

Discussion: For many years wildlife professionals believed that because predators and prey evolved together, predation would not impact a prey species beyond the tolerance of that prey population. Recent research has shown that in some instances this previous theory does not hold true. In cases where habitat quality and/or quantity has been severely degraded or where predator levels are being sustained at unusually high levels, prey populations are being significantly impacted. In particular, waterfowl numbers are being suppressed at unhealthy levels by predators such as feral cats, skunks, foxes and raccoons. All of these predators are maintaining unusually high populations levels because of human subsidized den sites and food sources. These subsidies combined with fragmented nesting cover for waterfowl allow the predators to have an insurmountable advantage over nesting birds.

Research has shown that predation on the SWMA waterfowl nests is consistent with that unusually high impact. Since the top priority of SWMA is waterfowl production, a change in management seems to be appropriate. Several possibilities exist which include, but are not limited to, predator habitat management, sub-lethal poisoning, trapping and re-locating, and lethal removal. The statewide goal on WMA's is to achieve 30% nesting success. The recent study showed that SWMA is well below that level. The goals of the WMA do not include removing all predators. The goal is more to create a better balance between predators and their prey.

Issue 10: Do not construct a new building on SWMA

Discussion: A common perception by the public is that the Department spends more dollars on equipment (such as trucks) than on wildlife. In fact, equipment and facilities are critical to the Department being able to effectively carry out its programs.

The "Headquarters" on SWMA is used to store equipment, provide a work area for repairs and construction, and provide a shelter for employees and visitors during meetings and events. The current facility on SWMA is inadequate. The building is not weather proof, animal proof or secure. Equipment and supplies are constantly being damaged by birds and mice. In addition, conditions are conducive to health problems, such as Hantavirus, associated with deer mice. Very little work can be done inside of the building during the winter because of the cold temperatures, rain, wind, and snow accumulation. Equipment that is stored outside of the building is subject to vandalism and theft because of the poor condition of the fence and the remoteness of the compound. Finances will not allow a new building to be constructed entirely

with Department funds. A continuing effort is being made to locate outside cost sharing to help fund the project.

Issue 11: Crop sharing should be stopped on SWMA and that land planted with habitat.

Discussion: The purpose of WMA management is to develop and/or protect wildlife habitat. Every reasonable opportunity to improve habitat is explored, however, financial and/or logistic problems often constrain projects. Because of SWMA's unique situation of being a relatively small area surrounded by intense farming and grazing, habitat enhancements are required to sustain wildlife populations at levels requested by the public. Otherwise, the acreage could not provide the necessary habitat requirements. Additionally, wildlife species such as the ring-necked pheasant are closely linked to agriculture. In order to manage for pheasants, a farming program is necessary to provide the feeding, nesting and wintering habitat. Finally, in an effort to provide a diverse landscape to provide for a variety of wildlife species, woody cover plantings are needed to provide nesting, wintering, loafing and escape cover for nongame as well as game species. Currently, all agricultural land that is farmed on SWMA (approximately 366 acres) is part of the share-crop program. Cooperating local farmers provide compensation to the Department in exchange for the opportunity to farm on the WMA. The compensation is in the form of food plots, maintenance, planting of trees and nesting cover, and irrigation of trees and nesting cover on the WMA. No cash payments are made to the Department. This form of compensation is critical to the functioning of SWMA. The Department does not have access to equipment or the means to develop irrigation to properly supply the needs of wildlife populations. This program provides the Department with additional habitat developments on the WMA that, otherwise, would not be feasible. However, it is also important that the Department, and the resource, get a fair return on the leases that are made.

Issue 12: Restrict access to roads and trails necessary to satisfy diverse recreation objectives.

Discussion: Part of the mission of WMA's is to provide adequate public access for consumptive and non- consumptive public uses without compromising the quality of the habitat, the wildlife security, or the outdoor experience. License fees have been used in the purchase of WMA property and license holders, as well as others, need to have adequate access to these properties. The questions that arise are "How accessible should the land be?" and "What kinds of access are appropriate?" Foot access does not seem to cause many problems for wildlife during most of the year. An exception in the case of PWMA would be during a severe winter when animals are stressed by the cold temperatures and/or snow levels.

Vehicle access, however, can be detrimental to the quality of wildlife security and to the condition of the animals. Higher vulnerability during the hunting season is also a direct result of increased vehicular access. In addition, many sportsmen and women define the quality of their experience by the amount of traffic or the number of other hunters they encounter during an outdoor experience. The Department has always tried to provide opportunity for a wide range of constituents while protecting wildlife and it's habitat.

Issue 13: Neighbor relations need to be improved on SWMA.

Discussion: Since the inception of SWMA, neighbors and sportsmen have voiced concerns with the management practices used on the area. Often, the criticisms or suggestions were contradictory, unrealistic or contrary to the purpose and goals of the WMA. The topics included: "Not enough grazing," "Too much grazing," "Not enough farming," "Too much farming," "Too much wildlife," "Not enough wildlife," "Too many weeds," "Not enough vegetation." There were however, several suggestions that warranted a change and were incorporated. The Department has worked very hard to make sure that neighbor relations receive equal consideration with sportsmen concerns. The Department understands that effective management of SWMA is significantly easier with the cooperation and support of the local landowners. Over the past few years, relations have improved greatly. An on-going effort is being continued to further improve the relationships with neighbors. An Aberdeen office day has been established to allow better access to Department employees by neighbors. A local working team has been developed that is made up of local landowners, the local Natural Resources Conservation Service District Conservationist, and sportsmen. This group meets to discuss issues, provide input and to help disseminate information. This is part of the increased effort to keep neighbors informed about activities on the WMA. Improving communication is a top priority and several areas for improvement have been identified. However, despite all efforts, there are several chronic issues that may never be completely resolved to the complete satisfaction of some citizens (i.e. goose depredations and weeds). In these instances, it is important that both parties understand the positions and that efforts are made to minimize the impacts.

Issue 14: The public should never be locked out of a WMA. The BRWMA should have some sort of motorized access to forest property on both the north and south side of the river.

Discussion: In comparing this issue with Issue #12, one can see that as WMA managers, Department personnel are caught in trying to satisfy constituents who have varying ideas regarding the kind and amount of access that should be provided on our WMA's. Some sportsmen and women want increased levels of motorized access while other hunters and anglers want to see reduced levels of motorized access. The Department has attempted to provide varying degrees of motorized access on the WMA's in the Southeast Region. Please refer to the travel plans and maps for each WMA.

Motorized access to the Caribou National Forest (CNF) exists on the south side of the Blackfoot River at this time. Access can be gained by fording the river near the southwest corner of the BRWMA and following a four-wheeler trail up a draw along the west boundary of the BRWMA. Also, access can be gained by driving up Kendall Canyon to Mill Canyon at the southeast corner of the BRWMA.

Access to the CNF is also available on the north side of the Blackfoot River by driving up the Rasmussen Valley road and on to a road system on Rasmussen Ridge.

Issue 15: Children, senior citizens and handicapped people need closer access to the Blackfoot River.

Discussion: As stated previously, public access is a major part of the mission of all Department WMA's. This includes access for those of all physical abilities. Varying levels of barrier-free access is considered on all Department properties and is provided based on the level of use at each area. At the current time, the level of use at the BRWMA does not warrant the expenditure of funds and manpower that would be involved in creating barrier-free access. This situation will undoubtedly change as more people use the area for hunting, fishing and outdoor appreciation. We will continue to monitor the level of use and respond to the needs of our users. We will also consider providing barrier-free access at points further downstream that receive higher levels of traffic.

Issue 16: Mutual cooperation with other land management agencies (USFS and BLM) to accomplish habitat improvements.

Discussion: Wildlife and their associated habitats obviously cross the jurisdictional boundaries of several agencies and private land ownerships. Cooperation with these other land managers is necessary to provide the best possible habitat for wildlife and fish. We have worked with these agencies on wildlife and fish habitat projects on Department lands and well as on BLM, USFS, IDL and private property.

Projects such as prescribed burns, bitterbrush and Hobble Creek sagebrush plantings and Hobble Creek sagebrush seeding have been carried out on PWMA in cooperation with BLM. We have also planted bitter brush seedlings on critical winter range on BLM land.

The regional habitat biologist is working on an Coordinated Resource Management Plan for the Georgetown Summit area with IDL and private landowners. The Department would then have the opportunity to influence a larger portion of the big game winter range than that encompassed by the GSWMA. We also work with IDL and USFS in the BRWMA area on grazing and logging issues.

Issue 17: Exclude livestock grazing on elk calving meadows on the BRWMA.

Discussion: The presence of domestic livestock can displace elk from traditional calving areas. Therefore, the timing of any livestock grazing that occurs on the BRWMA should be such that it does not interfere with elk calving. Any livestock grazing done on the BRWMA must be consistent with the mission of the area and will be timed so as not to conflict with wildlife production and/or use of the BRWMA.

APPENDIX X

The following document is included as part of the Montpelier Wildlife Management Area (MWMA) management plan. The Federal Aid Project for MWMA is part of the annual management plan for the Southeast Region East Habitat District, so only selected portions of the document are specific to MWMA. Conversely, these excerpts reflect only those WMA activities relevant to the Federal Aid Project and may not include a complete list of planned activities for the current year on MWMA.

FEDERAL AID PROJECT STATEMENT AND PROGRESS REPORT

State: Idaho, Project Number: Other Funds, Project Leader: Jerry Deal, Period: 7/1/98-6/30/99
Southeast Region Habitat Management

EAST HABITAT DISTRICT AND GEORGETOWN, MONTPELIER, PORTNEUF AND BLACKFOOT RIVER WMAs

Management Priorities:

1. Big Game Winter Range
3. Public Access for Hunting and Fishing
4. Other Wildlife Appreciation and Production

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
BIG GAME WINTER RANGE						
Management Program – Vegetation Rejuvenation						
Coordinate collection of bitterbrush and sagebrush seed	1322	1 week		1440		Species benefited:
Coordinate planting of 8000 bitterbrush and sage brush seedlings on WMA’s and other public lands	1322	1 week		1440		Species benefited:

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Coordinate with Bureau of Land Management to perform controlled burn on Portneuf WMA	1710	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
Monitor vegetation transects on Montpelier, Georgetown and Portneuf WMAs	1332	2 weeks		2,880		Species benefited:
Control noxious weeds on all areas	1211	4 weeks		5,760		Species benefited:
Management Program - Control Trespass Grazing						
Supervise construction of boundary fence at Portneuf WMA Quinn Creek area	1211	2+ miles 3.5 weeks		5,040		
Repair and maintain boundary fencing on WMA's and conservation easements.	1211	25 miles 3 weeks		4,320		Species benefited: Elk, waterfowl, cutthroat trout
Management Program - Provide Security						
Maintain winter road/trail closures with gates and signing	1211	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
PUBLIC HUNTING						
Management Program - Provide Access						
Maintain signs and information boards at all WMA's	1211	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:
Place/replace boundary markers and other information signs at Georgetown Summit, Montpelier, Portneuf and Blackfoot River WMA's	1211	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
Provide/maintain access roads/trails and parking areas	1211	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:
Control noxious weeds in cooperation with counties	1211	(See winter range)				Species benefited:
Monitor hunter and angler use, enforce regulations and WMA management policies	1211	1.5 week		2,160		Species benefited:
OTHER WILDLIFE APPRECIATION AND PRODUCTION						
Management Program - Provide Nesting and Brooding Habitat						
Vegetation rejuvenation through burning, herbicides, and grazing	1322	(See winter range)				Species benefited:
Provide nest sites with structures and by preserving snags	1322	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
Management Program - Monitor Grouse Breeding Populations						
Conduct lek counts and drumming counts	1460	.5 week		720		Species benefited:
Management Program - Provide Public Access						
Provide and maintain access roads/trails and parking areas		(See public hunting)				
Compile species lists for distribution	1630	1.5 weeks		2,160		Species benefited:

ACTIVITY	ACTIVITY CODE	UNITS OF WORK		COST		COMMENTS
		Planned	Actual	Planned	Actual	
ADMINISTRATION						
Management Program - Provide Technical Assistance						
Review environmental impacts of proposed projects	1710	8 projects 2 weeks		2,880		Species benefited:
Assist landowners on wildlife management practices	1720	25 landowners 6 weeks		8,640		Species benefited:
Management Program - Administrative Duties						
Develop planning documents, review and evaluation	1620	15 documents 6 weeks		8,640		Species benefited:
Complete long-term management plans for WMAs	1630	6 weeks		8,640		
Maintain files; prepare administrative documents (reports, budgets, purchasing requests, time sheets, etc.)	1630	6 weeks		8,640		Species benefited:
Other duties (as assigned)	1630	5 weeks		7,200		Species benefited:
Management Program - Cooperation With Other Agencies						
Coordinate and meet with citizen working groups associated with Portneuf and Blackfoot River WMAs		2.5 weeks		3,600		
Attend coordination meetings, tours, and meetings related to projects by land management agencies	1630	1 week		1,440		Species benefited:

Total PR Contract With Overhead	\$0
Other Funds	\$82,080
Grand Total	\$82,080

NARRATIVE

This project will provide 8,000 acres of big game winter range and benefit 500 wintering elk and 1,000 wintering mule deer. The 1,720-acre Blackfoot River WMA will also provide waterfowl breeding habitat and improved cutthroat trout habitat on several miles of the Blackfoot River. This project will provide an estimated 3,000 person-days of hunting opportunity and 1,500 person-days of wildlife viewing and fishing opportunity.

Montpelier Wildlife Management Area Plan

Submitted by:

Jerry Deal, Regional Wildlife Biologist

Date:

Reviewed by:

Paul Wackenhut, Regional Habitat Manager

Date:

Tom Parker, State Wildlife Habitat Manager

Date:

Approved by:

Dexter Pitman, Regional Supervisor

Date: