

PORTNEUF
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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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
LIST OF FIGURES	ii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
VISION.....	3
MISSION STATEMENT	3
DURATION OF PLAN	3
LOCATION	3
DESCRIPTION.....	3
MANAGEMENT ISSUES	4
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, MONITORING.....	4
ISSUE 1: PERPETUATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND HABITAT	4
ISSUE 2: NONCONSUMPTIVE AND CONSUMPTIVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	7
ISSUE 3: RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING LANDOWNERS	8
ISSUE 4: ACQUIRE ADDITIONAL PROPERTY	10
REFERENCES	12
APPENDIX I	13
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION	13
APPENDIX II.....	14
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	14
APPENDIX III.....	15
DEVELOPMENT HISTORY.....	15
APPENDIX IV.....	16
LAND AND WATER CONTROL.....	16
APPENDIX V.....	17
VEGETATION AND HABITAT TYPES.....	17
APPENDIX VI.....	20
WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES	20
APPENDIX VII	23
HABITAT MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	23

APPENDIX VIII.....	25
TRAVEL PLAN	25
APPENDIX IX.....	26
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS	26
APPENDIX X.....	34
FEDERAL AID PROJECT STATEMENT AND PROGRESS REPORT.....	34

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of Portneuf Wildlife Management Area.	2
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Portneuf Wildlife Management Area (PWMA) is located 16 miles south of Pocatello in Bannock 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 3,104 acres and either surrounds or borders on 800 acres of isolated tracts owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (Figure 1). The initial land purchase was made with Pittman-Robertson funds. Operating funds come primarily from license revenues with some Pittman-Robertson (Federal Aid) cost-share program funds. The primary management objective is to maintain and/or improve deer winter range. Access for hunting, trapping and wildlife viewing on PWMA will be maintained as possible without compromising wildlife habitat values

This plan includes the vision and mission for PWMA; 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 PWMA, 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 PWMA is to enhance mule deer winter range and sharp-tailed grouse habitat through vegetation management; to benefit wildlife and fish 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 are compatible with maintaining high quality wildlife and fish habitat.

Winter forage for mule deer is provided through a variety of vegetation management approaches. Forage quantity and quality will be maintained or improved by using prescribed burns, tree removal, planting, fertilization, herbicides and grazing management. Evaluation will continue using an established vegetation monitoring program. Winter security and thermal cover for wildlife will be provided by protecting riparian areas and by limiting shrub treatments to those necessary to meet forage objectives. Security will be further provided by restricting 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 non-motorized 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.

Figure 1. Map of Portneuf Wildlife Management Area.

VISION

The PWMA will be managed to provide and improve mule deer winter range and provide diverse upland and riparian communities for game and nongame wildlife species.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the PWMA is to enhance mule deer winter range and sharp-tailed grouse habitat through vegetation management; to benefit wildlife and fish 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 are compatible with maintaining high quality wildlife and fish habitat.

DURATION OF PLAN

This is a long-term plan for management of PWMA, 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

The Portneuf Wildlife Management Area (PWMA) is located in Bannock County approximately 16 miles southeast of Pocatello (Figure 1). The legal description includes parts of T 8S, R 36E, Sections 11,12, 13, 14, 23, 24, 25 and 26; and T 8S, R 37E, Sections 7, 18, 19, 29, and 30. Topographic map coverage appears on USGS 7.5 Minute Series McCammon Quadrangle.

DESCRIPTION

The 3,104-acre PWMA lies on the lower west slope of the Portneuf Range between the Portneuf River and Haystack Mountain. It is bounded by Old Highway 91 on the west, Caribou National Forest and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property on the east, and private lands to the north and south. Within its boundaries are 800 acres of BLM isolated tracts, of which 400 acres are designated as a Resource Natural Area. The general aspect is west with several small drainages dissecting the slope. Mountain brush, juniper and Douglas fir occur on some upper and north-facing slopes. Aspen is also present in higher elevation locations. Riparian areas are dominated by willows, red osier dogwood, water birch and cottonwood. Bench areas with gentler slopes were previously used as dry cropland, but are now generally dominated by sagebrush and bitterbrush. Temperatures on the area range from -30°F to 103°F. Elevation ranges from 4,680 feet to 6,463 feet. Annual precipitation is 10-14 inches, half of which falls during the growing season. Snow depths may reach three feet.

Portneuf WMA comprises critical winter range for 300-500 mule deer. Some elk and moose also winter on the area. With continued human population growth in Bannock County, big game winter range is being lost to housing developments, ranchettes, industrial construction, and roads. As development continues, intact winter range becomes increasingly important, both for its value to wildlife and its role in reducing depredation problems.

PWMA is a popular area for hunting both big game and upland game. Barrels are placed at access points each year to collect wings of harvested birds. Results of these surveys indicate an average of 20-30 ruffed grouse, 30-45 sharp-tailed grouse and 15-20 blue grouse are harvested annually on or near PWMA. These upland game hunting trips are valued at about \$3,400. During deer and elk seasons over 500 hunter-days are spent on PWMA, with an economic value of over \$25,000. Total annual value of hunting on PWMA is estimated at \$28,515. In addition, because of its proximity to Pocatello, PWMA is used extensively for nonconsumptive outdoor recreation.

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, MONITORING

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

Discussion: The mission of the PWMA is to provide winter habitat for mule deer and year-round habitat for upland game and nongame wildlife. Robber's Roost and Quinn Creeks, which flow through PWMA, support native cutthroat trout. While the PWMA was purchased primarily as mule deer winter range, we manage the area for other wildlife species, including upland game, cutthroat trout, furbearers and nongame.

For example, the breeding complex (lek and nesting area) for sharp-tailed grouse includes all lands within a 1.5 mile radius of lek sites, because most nesting occurs within this area. Hart et al. (1950) reported that prescribed fire may be a useful management tool for opening dense stands of sagebrush and creating an interspersion of grass and shrub cover. Some of the bench areas on PWMA have very dense stands of sagebrush/bitterbrush with little understory. Habitat for sharp-tailed grouse breeding complexes may be improved by using prescribed burns in early spring to create a mosaic of brush and dense grass/forb areas.

Within budgets and time constraints, we will explore every reasonable method to improve habitat. Any habitat manipulation that takes place on PWMA must be in keeping with the mission of the area. Funding for projects designed to enhance nongame wildlife populations and/or habitat will come from nongame funding sources.

We have worked in cooperation with the BLM on several habitat improvement projects, including the planting of bitterbrush and Hobbie Creek sagebrush seedlings, spreading sagebrush seed and planning prescribed burns.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of elk present on PWMA and surrounding lands in winter as noted during aerial surveys of big game and reports from neighbors. The presence of elk enhances the diversity of wintering wildlife on the area and

enriches the opportunity for wildlife viewing. However, as the elk population increases, there is potential for competitive interactions with mule deer on winter ranges and greater potential for depredation conflicts on adjacent lands.

I. Goal: Provide secure winter habitat for big game and year-round habitat for upland game, nongame wildlife and fish.

A. Objective: Provide winter forage for mule deer and elk.

1. Strategies:

- (a) Forage will be protected from trespass or excessive grazing by livestock with boundary fencing and/or closely monitored grazing agreements.
- (b) Forage will be maintained in optimum condition using a combination of treatments, which may include prescribed burns (in cooperation with the USFS and BLM), fertilization, managed grazing or herbicides as appropriate.
- (c) Bitterbrush seed will be collected and turned over to a nursery contractor to raise seedlings for transplanting on disturbed sites.
- (d) Emergency big game feeding may be conducted on PWMA in accordance with statewide policy. The policy states that the Department is authorized 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) No permanent feed sites will be established on PWMA and emergency feed sites will not be placed near roads or human disturbance.
- (f) Relative growth and potential interactions of mule deer and elk populations on the area will be carefully monitored and used to provide harvest recommendations.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Vegetation transects will be evaluated annually. These will provide information about vegetation composition, cover and utilization, which will help determine the need for additional treatments.
- (b) Mule deer and elk use of PWMA will be monitored annually using regional big game aerial surveys and impacts will be assessed through periodic inspections of the area throughout the winter.

B. Objective: Provide secure winter habitat by restricting access and managing vegetation.

1. Strategies:

- (a) Motorized entry onto PWMA will be restricted from November 15 to June 1 each year to prevent harassment of big game.

- (b) Boundaries will be clearly marked and roads gated to prevent closed-season entry by motorized vehicles.
- (c) During severe winters, as defined in winter feeding advisory guidelines, PWMA may be closed to all human access to reduce the stress to wintering wildlife.
- (d) Information signs will be posted to explain the purpose of any closures.
- (e) All gates and signs will be maintained.
- (f) Security and thermal cover will be maintained by minimizing impacts to tall brush and timber in riparian areas and aspen/shrub communities during fire or herbicide treatments.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Big game winter use will be monitored in conjunction with regional big game aerial surveys.
- (b) The area manager will monitor snow depths, public use and animal presence throughout the winter.

II. Goal: Provide good breeding habitat for upland game species.

A. Objective: Provide for upland game bird production.

1. Strategies:

- (a) Develop sharp-tailed grouse breeding complexes using prescribed burns.
- (b) Protect grouse nesting cover by controlling trespass grazing.
- (c) Preserve trees and shrubs in riparian areas and juniper communities to provide habitat for forest grouse by minimizing impacts from fire and herbicide treatments.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Monitor relative breeding population by annual grouse lek counts.
- (b) Evaluate vegetation transects on burned and unburned areas of PWMA to assess condition of grouse breeding habitat.

B. Objective: Maintain or increase populations of nongame wildlife species.

1. Strategies:

- (a) Maintain or improve vegetation diversity.
- (b) Consult with Idaho State University Biology Department to evaluate potential habitat needs for nongame wildlife on PWMA and develop habitat where practical.
- (c) Evaluate potential impacts on non-target and sensitive species prior to initiating habitat manipulations for big game and upland game.

- (d) Recruit volunteer organizations such as Boy Scouts to maintain and install additional nest boxes for bluebirds and other nongame birds.

2. Monitoring:

- (a) Record use of nest boxes during annual maintenance.
- (b) Suggest to local chapter of the Audubon Society that the annual Christmas Bird Count and/or a Breeding Bird Survey route include PWMA.

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

Discussion: Part of the mission of PWMA is to provide adequate public access for consumptive and nonconsumptive public uses without compromising the quality of the habitat, wildlife security, or the outdoor experience. License fees have been used in the purchase of WMA property and license holders, as well as others, expect reasonable access to these properties. Questions relevant to this issue are "How accessible should the land be?" and "What kinds of access are appropriate?"

Foot access appears to cause few problems for wildlife during most of the year, due to low densities of area users on foot, although studies indicate big game do avoid humans regardless of the mode of travel. During severe winters when animals are already stressed by cold temperatures and/or deep snow, human presence may induce unacceptable levels of stress and reduce animal survival. Vehicle access can also be detrimental to wildlife security and can impact the condition of animals due to disturbance. Increased vulnerability during hunting seasons is directly related to vehicular access. Additionally, area users may define the quality of their experience by the amount of traffic or number of hunters they encounter. For these reasons, vehicle access on PWMA may be limited to specific times and locations, consistent with the Department's objectives of providing opportunities to a wide range of constituents while protecting wildlife and associated habitat.

Roads which previously connected to one another to form "loops" have been blocked off or shortened. Other roads have been blocked to reduce overall road density and reduce impacts on riparian areas. Access onto PWMA is available from the north via Bonneville Road, and on the west via Robber's Roost Creek and the south boundary access. Each of these routes also permits motorized access to the Caribou National Forest boundary east of PWMA.

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

- A. Objective: Manage type and timing of use.

Strategies:

- 1. Maintain security cover for game animals during the hunting season by limiting motorized vehicles to open and maintained roads and providing parking areas at selected access points.

2. Horse access will be allowed, but no facilities will be provided, other than parking. Certified weed-free hay should be used if feed is carried onto or across PWMA for pack or riding animals.
3. Access maps will be available at parking areas and vehicular access points.
4. Primitive camping is allowed, but no facilities are provided. Open fires may be restricted during conditions of high fire risk.
5. Quality of roads will be maintained as budgets allow, with some maintenance or improvement planned for each year.
6. Motorized vehicle access will be prohibited from November 15 to June 1 each year for wintering wildlife security. Additional road closures may be implemented for the safety of area users or to prevent damage to roads during wet conditions.
7. Non-motorized public access, such as hiking and cross-country skiing, will be allowed. Signs will be placed at access sites addressing wintering big game. In the event of a severe winter, as defined in the regional winter feeding advisory guidelines, the PWMA may be closed to ANY human entry to reduce the stress to wintering wildlife.

B. Monitoring:

1. Collect user survey forms throughout the year and compile results annually.
2. Monitor area use to ensure enforcement of motorized vehicle restrictions and to evaluate impacts of area users on wildlife.

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

Discussion: It is important for the Department to establish a working relationship with neighboring landowners and permittees by maintaining open lines of communication for discussing mutual concerns. Some important concerns in neighbor relations on the PWMA are grazing management, depredations on private land, winter feeding of big game, noxious weed control, water control and public information regarding the boundaries between public and private land. Building and maintaining boundary fences will eliminate potential and current livestock trespass problems. A Winter Feeding Advisory Board and Winter Feeding Plan have been established to determine when deer and/or elk should be fed during severe winters, reducing the impact of big game on private land. Control of noxious weeds is pursued on a continuing basis throughout the growing season to reduce the impact of weeds on wildlife habitat and prevent their spread to adjacent private land, and to comply with state law.

The Sikes Act Cooperative Agreement for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) isolated tracts provides a basis for communication to share technical information and an opportunity for planning management activities between the Department and BLM professionals. The establishment of the PWMA Working Group provides further opportunity to communicate with

and foster good working relationships between neighboring landowners and other members of the public interested in management of PWMA. The group is comprised of agency representatives, neighboring landowners, the Bannock County Weed Control Supervisor and other concerned citizens.

I. Goal: Work to control noxious weeds, which cause poor neighbor relations and may be a threat to native vegetation on PWMA.

A. Objective: Control Dyers' woad, whitetop, Russian knapweed and thistle on PWMA.

Strategies:

1. Identify noxious weed problem areas and map them.
2. Seasonal temporary employees, Bannock County Sheriff's Commission Inmate Labor Detail, volunteers and permanent staff will apply chemical herbicides using a four-wheeler and backpack sprayers. They will physically remove plants when herbicide application is not appropriate due to weather or plant growth stage.
3. Biological insect control will be used for Canada and musk thistle.
4. Consult with and maintain working relationship with county weed control officer.
5. Consider aerial herbicide application for small areas of heavy weed infestations, but ensure every precaution will be taken to prevent adverse effects on native vegetation, particularly bitterbrush and other shrub species.
6. Begin weed control activities as early as possible in the spring and continue throughout the growing season.

B. Monitoring:

1. Maintain logs documenting details of chemical and biological weed treatments.
2. Map the location of insect releases and inspect the areas to monitor effectiveness.
3. Work with Bannock County weed control officer to identify and help control noxious weeds by participating in training and remaining apprised of new weed control problems.

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

Objective: Clearly mark boundaries.

Strategies:

1. Survey all boundaries not yet established on the ground.
2. Place or replace markers on PWMA boundary .
3. Maintain boundary fences.

4. Coordinate with landowners with which the Department shares Quinn Creek as a common boundary and develop cooperative agreement on fence placement.
5. Participate in land-use trade agreements with adjacent property owners when wildlife will benefit from improved habitat and landowners are willing cooperators.
6. Purchase land or obtain easements in accordance with Department policy when necessary to achieve the mission of PWMA.

III. Goal: Maintain forum for information exchange.

Objective: Use local working group to inform about PWMA projects and operations, and as a source to learn of local issues and concerns.

Strategies:

1. Meet formally with local working group at least annually.
2. Contact working group members regarding issues as the need arises.
3. Recruit additional working group members to diversify representation of sportsmen and citizens-at-large.

Issue 4: 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. Hunters and anglers have encouraged the Department to purchase additional land in order to provide the benefits noted above. However, some individuals 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 [*Idaho Code* 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 permit 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. Identify land that may be acquired through trades with other individuals and/or agencies.
5. Inform county commission of any acquisition plans and hold public meetings if requested or deemed appropriate.

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

The 3,104-acre PWMA lies on the lower west slope of the Portneuf Range between the Portneuf River and Haystack Mountain. The entire area is within the Basin and Range geomorphic province. Elevation ranges from 4,680 feet to 6,463 feet. It is bounded by Old Highway 91 on the west, Caribou National Forest and U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) property on the east, and private lands to the north and south. Within its boundaries are 800 acres of BLM isolated tracts, of which 400 acres are designated as a Resource Natural Area. PWMA is topographically diverse, with generally west-facing slopes dissected by steep drainages and topped by more gently sloped benches on wider ridgetops. Soils are well developed and relatively deep except at the upper elevations where bedrock is near the surface. The lower elevation fan terraces and foothills are covered by well-drained loess and silty alluvium derived from loess. Higher foothills and mountains have well-drained calcareous soils derived from limestone, dolomite and related rock (McGrath 1984).

Mountain brush, juniper and Douglas fir occur on some upper and north-facing slopes. Aspen is also present in higher elevation locations. Riparian areas are dominated by willows, red osier dogwood, water birch and cottonwood. Bench areas with gentler slopes were previously used as dry cropland, but are now generally dominated by sagebrush and bitterbrush.

Temperatures on the area range from -30°F to 103°F. Annual precipitation is 10-14 inches, half of which falls during the growing season. Snow depths may reach three feet at upper elevations, but little or no snow may accumulate at lowest elevations in some years. There are an average of 93 frost-free days between spring and fall. Evaporation rate is about 42 inches per year.

APPENDIX II

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The PWMA has a history as mule deer winter range, pasture for domestic livestock and dryland agriculture prior to acquisition by the Department. The first and largest purchase of land was 2,820 acres from M.S. Bastian in 1970. Three smaller parcels were purchased by 1974 to achieve the present area of 3,104 acres. The area has been referred to as the Portneuf Winter Range Wildlife Management Area and the Portneuf Game Range by the Department, and informally as Robber's Roost by local users since before its establishment. It is now designated as the Portneuf Wildlife Management Area.

Prior to its settlement and use for agriculture, the area of Portneuf Canyon was known as a dangerous stretch to pass through on a stagecoach due to the gangs of bandits frequenting the area. One well-publicized robbery involved the theft of \$60,000 in gold from a Virginia City stage coach, which is rumored to have been hidden in what became known as Robber's Roost. However, the area's historical use as mule deer winter range is now its most significant value.

Since its acquisition, there has been no domestic livestock grazing. Interior fences have been removed and some interior roads have been blocked off. The most frequent use of the area is for hunting mule deer and forest grouse, although it is also visited for wildlife appreciation and outdoor recreation. Development of an archery range was proposed in 1985, but was not implemented.

APPENDIX III

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Since its acquisition PWMA has been managed for mule deer winter range and public deer and grouse hunting. Interior and extraneous fences have been removed. Boundary fences are being relocated on property lines, replaced, repaired or replaced by markers only. Sections of fence which inhibit big game movements are being replaced or altered.

Some road work has been done in coordination with Bannock County and some adjacent landowners. In 1990 a culvert was installed on the Bonneville Road Extension to improve access to the north end of PWMA. The Robber's Roost road has been graded, water bars were constructed, low spots were graveled and a stream crossing was improved. A culvert was installed in 1998 at a seep in the Crane Creek area and the water crossing on the south access road was improved. However due to the impact of weather, water, motorized vehicle traffic, beavers, soil movements, etc., there is a continuous need for maintenance on all primitive interior roads which remain open. Several interior roads have been closed to motorized vehicles to reduce risk to area users and eliminate loops. Fenced parking areas have been developed at area boundaries at the Bonneville Road extension, Crane Creek and near Robber's Roost Creek and within the fenced boundary along the south access road.

A small cabin near the lower reach of Robber's Roost Creek was sold and removed in 1985. The last remaining structure is a small storage shed. Plans to construct an archery range in the Robber's Roost area in the 1980's were never implemented.

**APPENDIX IV
LAND AND WATER CONTROL**

LAND ACQUISITIONS:

<i>Year</i>	<i>Funding Source</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Acquired From</i>
1970	PR	2819.59	Merlin and Christie C. Bastian
1970	PR	40.00	Edythe Shumway
1973	FG	34.61	Lynn Crump
1974	FG	210.26	Frank Hough
WMA Total		3104.46	

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Sikes Act Cooperative Agreement with Bureau of Land Management for isolated tracts within Bannock County: 800 acres total, including 400 acres in a proposed Research Natural Area.

EASEMENTS AND RIGHT OF WAY

Perpetual easement for irrigation structure and ditch in Robber's Roost Creek Perpetual easement for irrigation pipeline in Crane Creek Reservation of ditch/pipeline right-of-way in Robber's Roost Creek IDFG holds a perpetual easement for public access on Bonneville Road Extension from adjacent landowners. Department agreed to pay 50% of cost of road maintenance, not to exceed \$750/year.

WATER RIGHTS

None

APPENDIX V
VEGETATION AND HABITAT TYPES

The following plant species occur on Portneuf Wildlife Management Area:

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 (*Symphocarpos 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 balsomroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*)
Buckwheat (*Erigonum* spp.)
Little sunflower (*Helianthella quinquenervis*)
Dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*)
Western gromwell (*Lithospermum ruderales*)
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 TYPES

ARTRV/SYOR/AGSP (Mountain big sagebrush/Mountain snowberry/Bluebunch wheatgrass)
ACGR/CARU (Bigtooth maple/Pinegrass)
JUOS/ARTRV/AGSP (Utah juniper/Mountain big sagebrush/Bluebunch wheatgrass)
CELEI/AGSP (Mountain mahogany/Bluebunch wheatgrass)
ARTRV/ELCI (Mountain big sagebrush/Great Basin wildrye)
PSMEG/CARU (Douglas fir/Pinegrass)

APPENDIX VI

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES RESOURCES

The PWMA provides winter range for mule deer, elk and moose. Approximately 300-500 mule deer winter on the PWMA, as well as a few elk and moose. The PWMA also supports a small population of deer year-round.

Blue and Ruffed grouse occur on the area, as well as sharp-tailed grouse. Other game birds on the area include: sage grouse, mourning dove, gray partridge and ring-necked pheasant. Beaver, bobcat, coyote, red fox, mink and raccoon are furbearers that occur on the PWMA. Robber's Roost Creek and Quinn Creek support populations of cutthroat trout.

MAMMALS

Moose (*Alces alces*)
Elk (*Cervus elaphus*)
Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)
Coyote (*Canis latrans*)
Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)
Black bear (*Ursus americanus*)
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*)
Richardson's ground squirrel (*Spermophilus richardsonii*)
Bushy-tailed wood rat (*Neotoma cinerea*)
Merriam shrew (*Sorex merriami*)

BIRDS

Blue grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*)
Sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)
Sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*)
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*)
Common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*)
Yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*)
House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
Vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*)
Yellow-rumped warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)
MacGillivray's warbler (*Oporornis formosus*)
Song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)
Chipping sparrow (*Spizella passerina*)
Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*)
Brewer's sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)
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 playcercus*)
Hairy woodpecker (*Dendrocopos villosus*)
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 atricappilus*)
Sage thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)
American robin (*Turdus migatorius*)
Hermit thrush (*Catharus guttatus*)

Northern shrike (*Lanius excubitor*)
Loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
American dipper (*Cinclus mexicanus*)
House wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)
Ruby-crowned kinglet (*Regulus calendula*)
Cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*)
Common nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor*)
Mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*)
Western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*)
Pine siskin (*Spinus pinus*)
European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

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

Portneuf Wildlife Management Area (PWMA) 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 PWMA 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 that 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 PWMA 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 PWMA is annual vegetation monitoring. Fixed transects provide a measure of species diversity, abundance, and utilization which can be used to compare treated and untreated sites. The efficacy of vegetation manipulations can then be evaluated, and the need for additional action identified. 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.

Prescribed burning is one habitat management method used to increase grasses and forbs in deer winter range and reduce shrub biomass, which also improves sharptailed grouse habitat. On PWMA prescribed burns were conducted on 120 acres in 1987, 20 acres in 1995 and 80-100 acres in 1996 to improve habitat quality on bench areas with dense stands of sagebrush on abandoned agricultural fields. Further burns are planned for the future, although proper conditions are not always available to achieve the desired objective of a mosaic pattern that removes some shrubs while stimulating grasses and forbs. For example, the 1987 burn exceeded the target acreage, while a 1998 attempt never achieved sustained ignition. Monitoring burns from the past provides evidence of their value in meeting vegetation objectives

Planting desirable species on PWMA improves its value as deer winter range. Bitterbrush and Hobble Creek sagebrush remain the primary species planted, although others may be included in future plantings. In 1974, 3000 bitterbrush seedlings were planted on a wildfire site, which has recovered well with the additional resprouting and reinvasion of native shrubs and grasses. In 1994, 1000 bitterbrush seedlings were planted on the south-facing slopes adjacent to Crane Creek and Robber's Roost Creek and on the 1987 burn area. Survival was poor due to low moisture the following spring and summer. About 7,000 bitterbrush seedlings were planted in

the same areas in 1995, and due to more favorable moisture conditions, survival was significantly higher. Bitterbrush was again planted in 1997 on the site of a 1996 prescribed burn in the Crane Creek drainage. In cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management Hobbie Creek sagebrush seed, a variety of big sagebrush which deer find to be especially palatable and nutritious. was broadcast on the area of a 1992 wildfire. This technique may be used on other suitable areas as time and funding permit.

Aerial fertilizer application was done in 1993 in the Robber's Roost and Crane Creek areas and again in 1995 north of Quinn Creek. Vegetation monitoring is done annually to evaluate the long-term effects on forage for wintering mule deer. Herbicides are used primarily for weed control and are applied throughout the growing season on target species. Aerial application of herbicide to control Dyer's woad was done in 1992 with mixed public response to the action. The preferred method for herbicide application is spot spraying only target species.

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 PWMA will primarily depend on regional game surveys 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 PWMA.

Although all available information is utilized in planning management actions, baseline information for PWMA 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 Portneuf WMA is open to public access with some restrictions:

- All motorized vehicles must remain on open, established roads, which are identified on current area maps (Figure 1).
- Interior roads are closed to motorized vehicles from November 15 to June 1 each year to provide wildlife security.
- All human access may be prohibited during severe winters to provide wildlife security.
- Motorized access may be prohibited when extremely wet or during periods of thawing to protect roads and provide for public safety.
- Visitors may not harass or otherwise disturb wildlife during non-hunting seasons.

Four parking areas are provided at access points near the boundaries of PWMA. The south end of the Bonneville Road extension has parking adequate for horse trailers. From this access a gate permits motorized travel to the upper WMA boundary and public lands to the east, as well as interior access to the Crane Creek drainage. The other parking areas are located along Old Highway 91, permitting non-motorized access to the lower end of Crane Creek and motorized access to Robber's Roost Creek and the south end of the WMA.

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 fish and wildlife habitat. They also provide examples of habitat manipulation practices that can be used to benefit fish and wildlife. However, this issue seems to deal more with educational programs that do not necessarily relate to the management of our WMA's 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 wide-spread 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 fish and wildlife 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 agribusiness 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 its 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 fish and wildlife. We have worked with these agencies on fish and wildlife habitat projects on Department lands and well as on BLM, USFS, IDL and private property.

Projects such as prescribed burns, bitterbrush and Hobbie Creek sagebrush plantings and Hobbie 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 Portneuf Wildlife Management Area (PWMA) management plan. The Federal Aid Project for PWMA is part of the annual management plan for the Southeast Region East Habitat District, so only selected portions of the document are specific to PWMA. 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 PWMA.

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
2. Public Access for Hunting and Fishing
3. 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.

Portneuf 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: