



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Vale District Office  
100 Oregon Street  
Vale, Oregon 97918-9630  
<http://www.or.blm.gov/Vale/>

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
1790

Dear Public Land User:

Thank you for your interest in the Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan. The enclosed document is the decision record for this project. I have decided to implement Alternative D of the Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan EA #OR-035-97-02. The activity plan for the Lime Hill portion of the Grande Ronde Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) adopted under this decision provides for primitive recreation opportunities while at the same time protecting ACEC values. It also allows for issuance of a permit for non-commercial aircraft landing on the Snake River Flat Road with stipulations.

The EA and plan are available for review at the Baker Resource Area Field Office, 3165 10<sup>th</sup> St., Baker City Oregon, (541) 523-1256. It can also be viewed on the BLM Vale District website at [www.or.blm.gov/Vale](http://www.or.blm.gov/Vale). The decision record and EA are found under the Schedule of Proposed Actions for the Baker Resource Area under Planning and Environmental Analysis.

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, part 4. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in Baker Resource Area office (at the above address) within 30 days. The 30-day appeal/protest period for this decision ends Oct. 21st, 2000.

Sincerely,

*s/Penelope Dunn Woods*

Penelope Dunn Woods  
Field Manager, Baker Resource Area

Enclosure

**LIME HILL AREA ACTIVITY PLAN  
GRANDE RONDE  
AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OR-035-97-02**

**Proposed Action:** Implement site-specific management actions for protection and enhancement of ACEC values, while providing for public access and recreation on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the Lime Hill Area of the Grande Ronde ACEC, Asotin County, Washington.

**Type of Document:** Activity Plan/Environmental Assessment

**Authorizing Document:**

Baker Resource Management Plan  
Record of Decision  
Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management  
July 1989

**Preparing Agency:** Baker Resource Area, Vale District, Bureau of Land Management

**Information Contact:** Ted Davis  
Baker Resource Area Office  
Bureau of Land Management  
3165 10th Street  
Baker City, Oregon 97814  
(541) 523-1256

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 LIME HILL AREA COORDINATED ACTIVITY PLAN  
 GRANDE RONDE ACEC

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Table 1

Monitoring Plan for Lime Hill/Rogersburg Coordinated Activity Plan for Grande Ronde ACEC

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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)  
LIME HILL AREA COORDINATED ACTIVITY PLAN  
GRANDE RONDE  
Area of Critical Environmental Concern**

**CHAPTER I-Purpose of and Need for the Proposal**

The Lime Hill Area Coordinated Activity Plan covers approximately 4,280 acres of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Asotin County, Washington (refer to Map 1, appendix). The area is located at the confluence of the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers south along the Washington State shoreline of the Snake River to the Oregon-Washington State Line. This environmental assessment analyzes four alternatives for implementation of an activity plan for this acreage within the Grande Ronde Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). This document is tiered to the Baker Resource Area Resource Management Plan (RMP) Record of Decision (ROD) (1989). See also Appendix A for a background of the land exchange which deeded the area to the BLM, a description of the ACEC, and other pertinent information.

**Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action**

The proposed action is to manage the Lime Hill area of the Grande Ronde ACEC as described in Alternative B, Preferred Alternative. Three other alternatives are analyzed for management actions in the area. The area is designated within the Grande Ronde ACEC, and requires special management to ensure the protection of important and relevant values.

The purpose and need for the proposed action is to implement actions that will protect and enhance ACEC resources while providing for public access, recreation and other compatible resource uses. See a detailed explanation in Appendix A regarding the land exchange under which the BLM acquired this parcel.

**Decision to Be Made**

The authorized BLM officer (Baker Field Manager) will make a decision to accept one of the alternatives, or a combination of portions of the alternatives, and to implement coordinated actions within the Lime Hill planning area.

**Issues**

The following issues were identified as a result of interdisciplinary team (IDT) discussions, public scoping meetings conducted in Clarkston, Washington, and from public scoping comment letters. These issues were considered in the development of management actions for the plan, and are analyzed in the alternatives section.

1. How do the alternatives protect and enhance ACEC values?

This issue is addressed by actions proposed to ensure the maintenance of ACEC resources, including wildlife habitat, native plant communities, cultural resources and treaty rights, and scenic quality. Additional considerations are soils, noxious weeds and fire management, and cooperation with adjacent landowners.

2. How do the alternatives provide for uses such as recreation, vehicle access, and livestock grazing?

This issue is addressed by actions proposed for public access, recreation uses, land uses and permits, minerals, noxious weed control, livestock grazing, and fire management.

3. How do the alternatives affect public access?

This issue is addressed by actions to provide for public access. Considerations include road designations, off-road vehicles uses, aircraft use, facility and road management/maintenance, noxious weed control, locked gates, and enforcement.

## **CHAPTER II- ALTERNATIVES, including the Proposed Action**

Four alternatives are considered:

*Alternative A, the No Action Alternative* which is a continuation of current management;

*Alternative B, the Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative* which balances primitive recreation opportunities with protection of ACEC values;

*Alternative C, which emphasizes recreation uses;* and

*Alternative D, which provides for aircraft use.*

Key actions for these alternatives are graphically displayed on the four alternative maps (see Maps 3-6). The maps show areas for proposed facilities, access, and recreation use for the portion of the planning area that is likely to receive the highest visitor use. Design features are included with each alternative discussion. Design features are actions designed to reduce resource impacts.

### **Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail**

During the analysis process, some alternatives were considered but eliminated from detailed study. These alternatives failed to meet the purpose and need as described, were not technically feasible, or could not be implemented.

1. An alternative that proposed moving the pre-existing gate on Washington State lands to another location on Washington State lands was considered and dismissed because the Bureau of Land Management does not have authority over the road crossing Washington State property.
2. An alternative that proposed moving the gate on Washington State lands to a site immediately adjacent to BLM-managed land was considered but eliminated from detailed study. Placing a new gate on the road at the west boundary of BLM-managed lands would create a safety hazard,

since no vehicle turn-around could be provided without major excavation of the hillside. Such excavation was deemed undesirable since it would have unacceptable impacts on visual resources and public safety.

3. An alternative that included intensely developed recreation facilities was considered but eliminated from detailed study because it was concluded that major facilities such as campgrounds, visitor centers, and boat ramps would be incompatible with protecting and maintaining ACEC values. In addition, such facilities would generate unacceptably high levels of vehicle use, sanitation problems, noxious weed expansion, and wildlife harassment.
4. An alternative was considered for major construction and improvement to create a new access road that would bypass the community of Rogersburg, and provide vehicle access to Snake River Flat. The alternative was eliminated from further analysis because IDT review identified numerous potentially adverse impacts that would conflict with ACEC management objectives. Among these were:
  - the high potential for severe erosion and sediment transport to both private land and the Grande Ronde River resulting from road construction and maintenance at the head of two major draws;
  - any technically feasible location would result in a highly visible transportation system, including cut and fill construction, which would significantly impact scenic values and violate the Class II VRM (visual resource management) designation for the area;
  - increased public vehicle use and traffic on such a bypass road would result in disturbance and displacement of wildlife using the area in the winter and spring, including wintering bald eagles; and
  - road construction and maintenance costs would be high.
5. Mineral resource development was eliminated from analysis scenarios because any mineral activity would need to be analyzed separately at the time development is proposed.

### **Further Environmental Analyses**

Future projects that are different from the actions of this plan/EA, or that may have effects not analyzed in this EA, would require additional site-specific environmental analysis or documentation.

The following types of actions may be accepted or rejected on a case-by-case basis, depending upon how the proposed action would conform to stated ACEC objectives or would impact critical elements, scenic, and other ACEC values.

**Realty.** Applications for new rights-of-ways, leases or land use permits may require further analysis.

Permitting or issuing a right-of-way to Washington State Division of Aviation for public use of portions of the Snake River Flat Road as an aircraft landing area would not require further environmental analysis if their Plan of Development is consistent with this EA.

**Weed Treatment.** Large-scale chemical applications, 20 percent or more of the land area, or ground-disturbing weed treatments (for example, plowing and planting) would require further inventories and analyses for impact to ACEC values; including visual resources, T/E (threatened/endangered)/Sensitive species, and cultural resources.

**Recreation Use Permits.** Commercial and non-commercial, non-motorized special events, if authorized, would require a use permit.

**Wildlife.** Permanent, in-ground, facilities for fish enhancement (such as fish acclimation facilities).

**Livestock Grazing.** An application for livestock grazing on the lands would require further analysis to determine if the proposed use would be consistent with ACEC protection.

**Minerals.** Under the Surface Management (43 CFR 3809) and Occupancy and Use (43 CFR 3715) regulations, any proposal to conduct mining under the U.S. Mining Laws, as amended, would require a plan of operations and an EA under these regulations. An application for commercial use of the Rogersburg gravel pit would also require further analysis.

**Prescribed Fire.** The use of prescribed burning would require further analysis to determine if the proposed use would meet ACEC plan objectives and protect the identified ACEC values.

### **ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION**

Under this alternative, the existing management direction would continue. Few to no facilities for recreation use and controls would be developed, monitoring uses and information/education efforts would be the primary means employed to ensure protection of ACEC values. Vehicle uses on most existing roads would be allowed, but vehicle travel off these roads would not be permitted, in accordance with the current designation. Vehicle use refers to all motorized vehicles, including fixed-wing and rotary aircraft.

As used in the following descriptions for all alternatives, road maintenance refers to minor surface repairs and removal of obstacles within the existing travel track or road bed; road reconstruction refers to major surface and base repairs and may require work outside the existing travel track or road bed.

**Public Health and Safety.** The BLM would pursue law enforcement capability to patrol pre-determined routes during high-use periods. Under a temporary closure presently in place, restrictions were placed on uncontained fires, overnight camping, and requirements were included for proper disposal of human waste and campfire debris. Under this alternative, restrictions on

uncontained fires would be continued to reduce the potential for wildfire.

Information boards and signs would be installed and maintained at the entry to BLM-managed lands and along access roads. These include regulatory, informational, and property boundary signs.

**Public Access.** The Rogersburg Access Road on BLM-managed lands would be open for public access and would be maintained by BLM. A gate and lock would be installed on the road into the gravel pit, as identified in the Rogersburg Community Pit EA.

Highway vehicle uses on the Rogersburg Access Road, Lime Hill Road, and Snake River Flat Road would be permitted. All other lands would be closed to motorized vehicles (that is, vehicle use off existing roads would be prohibited), in accordance with the management direction for the ACEC. Public access to the Snake River Flat would be through the community of Rogersburg.

**Aircraft Landing.** Applications for a permit to use the Snake River Flat Road as a primitive aircraft landing area would be considered on a case-by-case basis. No major surface improvements or expansion of the existing road width would be permitted. Surface disturbance from maintenance would be kept to the minimum necessary for safe use. A plan of development would be required as part of the application. The application would be assessed for impacts to wildlife habitat, cultural resources, plant communities, weed control, public safety and potential for user conflicts. Within the physical capabilities of the facilities, agencies or organizations could apply for a lease under 43 CFR 2910 to use and maintain a landing strip. In the absence of a compelling resource need or public interest, applications for private or exclusive use facilities would not be considered.

- Stipulations and Conditions for Aircraft Use. Any permit for proposed public use facilities would require compliance with all stipulations and conditions identified by the Bureau of Land Management to ensure continued protection of natural and cultural resources. The stipulations and conditions would address requirements for maintenance, rehabilitation or restoration of site damage; liability insurance and bonding (accidents, property damage); third-party monitoring; emergency preparedness, and other measures to reduce environmental impacts. Ordinarily, costs and responsibilities are assumed by permit/lease holders in addition to costs of development/maintenance. These may include costs for additional inventories, preparation of additional environmental analyses if necessary; maintenance and reconstruction of airstrip and access roads; costs for weed control in the affected areas; costs for mitigation of any environmental or cultural resources damages that may be associated with direct impacts or unauthorized use; costs associated with fire suppression and/or property damage resulting from human-caused fire.

**Facilities and Road Management.** No recreational day-use facilities would be developed.

The Rogersburg Access Road would be maintained on the BLM-managed land, in accordance with an existing easement. The Gravel Pit Access Road would be maintained only under the terms and authorization of an existing Free Use Permit/Community Pit designation. The Lime Hill Road

would not be maintained by BLM.

A portion of the Snake River Flat Road located in Section 18, for a distance of one-quarter mile east of Rogersburg, would be maintained to minimum standards necessary for BLM administrative purposes. Generally, this means that the condition of the road would accommodate ATV (all-terrain vehicle) or four-wheel drive vehicles, but not highway vehicles or large heavy equipment. If a future natural event resulted in major damage or obstruction of this segment of the road, the road would not be reconstructed. If the Section 18 segment of this road required major reconstruction for future administrative access, further environmental analysis and a biological evaluation would be undertaken to determine the effects of reconstruction on ACEC values, including T/E critical fish habitat.

The remainder of the Snake River Flat Road (located in Section 19) would not be regularly maintained by the Bureau of Land Management, and would not be improved or reconstructed.

**Recreation.** Monitoring recreation use levels would be conducted to determine if ACEC values are being affected. No parking, camping, boating, or picnicking or sanitary facilities would be developed by BLM. No barriers (e.g., fences) would be installed to control vehicle uses.

The BLM-managed lands would be available for dispersed overnight camping, hunting, picnicking, sight-seeing, wildlife viewing, and similar natural experience recreation opportunities.

- An informational bulletin board would be installed at the entry point to BLM-managed lands.

**Wildlife Habitat Improvement** projects, such as prescribed fire and water developments for wildlife, would be cooperatively identified with WDFW and implemented on a case-by-case basis for BLM-administered lands currently in the cooperative agreement area.

**Cultural Resources.** Inventories for cultural resources would continue. Any cultural resource located would be monitored annually.

**Special Status Plants.** Inventories for botanical resources and T/E/Sensitive species would continue. Any T/E/Sensitive species located would be monitored annually.

Management actions would promote the protection of habitat for special status plants present in the area, including *Lomatium rollinsii*.

**Livestock Grazing.** No grazing is presently authorized on the newly acquired lands. Any application for livestock grazing would be analyzed to determine if the proposed use meets objectives and requirements for protection of ACEC values. If grazing were authorized, extensive range improvement projects would be necessary, including fencing for riparian protection and water developments, in order to achieve resource objectives in the ACEC. Any grazing uses would be assessed in a biological evaluation for impacts to critical fish habitat. Grazing would not be

authorized until concurrence with NMFS and USFWS is obtained.

**Fire Management.** Full suppression of wildfires would be implemented on BLM-managed lands.

### **ALTERNATIVE B: PROPOSED ACTION (Preferred Alternative)**

The approximate location of roads and facilities discussed below are shown on Map 4 in the appendix.

**Public Health and Safety.** The BLM would pursue increased law enforcement capability to patrol pre-determined routes during high-use periods. Law enforcement officers would work to increase public safety, compliance with rules and regulations, and practice of appropriate outdoor behavior. The BLM would pursue interagency law enforcement agreements to respond to violations of rules and regulations. The BLM would publicize access to the 1-800 "Violation Hot Line" for reporting incidents.

- No installation of permanent camping/boating facilities would be permitted without written BLM authorization. Ordinarily, such authorization would only be issued to other government agencies or persons with valid prior existing rights on the BLM-managed lands. Examples include structures and shelters, or anchoring structures to BLM-managed land.
- Information boards and signs would be installed and maintained at the entry to BLM-managed lands and at developed day-use facilities. These include regulatory, informational, and property boundary signs.

The following actions would be prohibited in the ACEC on approximately 2,070 acres, generally within one-quarter mile of the Grande Ronde and Snake River shorelines.

- Operating any motorized vehicle without authorization, except on the existing improved Rogersburg Access Road on BLM land;
- Aircraft landing without authorization;
- Building or maintaining any open campfires except those contained in a fire blanket, fire pan, or similar metal container with sides measuring at least 2 inches in height;
- Failure to remove campfire debris and disposing of it in a refuse container;
- Disposal of solid human waste except at designated locations or facilities provided for that purpose;
- Installation of permanent camping facilities;

- Overnight camping on the public lands located in Township 7 North, Range 46 East, Section 13 along the Rogersburg Access Road, west of Rogersburg.
- **Firearms:** Existing Washington State regulations prohibit reckless conduct in the discharge of firearms, and current BLM regulations prohibit use of firearms at developed recreation sites, including day-use facilities. Therefore, no additional shooting closures are considered necessary at this time. However, if monitoring demonstrates a compelling safety or resource need in the future, designation of a no-shooting safety zone or restricted use area may be considered in the Rogersburg urban-wildland interface area.

**Public Access.** The Rogersburg Access Road would be open and maintained for vehicle travel. Vehicle use would be restricted to the existing road. The Gravel Pit Road, Lime Hill Road, and Snake River Flat Road would be closed to vehicle travel, except for specifically authorized and administrative purposes. The Snake River Flat Road, Lime Hill Road, and Gravel Pit Road would be gated and locked as a vehicle control measure.

- Authorized personnel, for the purposes of vehicle access to lands or roads ordinarily closed, refers to persons conducting or cooperating in the official administrative business of the agency; and fire or rescue personnel. Special recreation events that may be authorized would not necessarily result in BLM authorization for vehicle access over closed roads.

Approximately 2 miles of hiking trails would be marked as a route for overland access from the Rogersburg Access Road to the Snake River Flat, by-passing the community of Rogersburg. BLM would work cooperatively with adjacent landowners to determine the best route for trails on BLM-managed lands. Unrestricted access by boat would continue unless monitoring shows negative impacts to ACEC values.

**Aircraft Landing.** The Snake River Flat Road and adjacent area on the flat would remain closed to general aircraft landing use. The road would not be maintained or constructed for aircraft use. Unauthorized aircraft tie-downs would be removed and the road would be marked as closed to aircraft.

**Facilities and Road Management.** BLM would construct a small public parking loop on the Rogersburg Access Road near the Gravel Pit Road entrance. The parking loop would be surfaced with gravel and would provide space for 4-5 highway vehicles and 1-2 recreational vehicles. An open space buffer zone would be established between the Rogersburg community and the parking lot. A "dead end" road sign would be placed at the parking lot, alerting the public that the parking loop constitutes the only available turn-around for their vehicles.

If monitoring shows that these measures do not satisfactorily control off-road vehicle uses, a fence and gate may be installed on the road near the developed parking lot. If a locked gate is installed, access for residents of Rogersburg would be provided through the locked gate (in accordance with

the existing easement). A three-quarter to one mile fence, or other control measures, would be constructed on the road perimeter to the proposed parking lot.

BLM would maintain, but would not reconstruct, the Snake River Flat Road (east of Rogersburg) for purposes of administrative vehicle access only. BLM may rehabilitate the road or allow the road to heal naturally. Rehabilitation would consist of preparing and revegetating the road surface with native grasses and forbs.

**Recreation.** The BLM-managed lands would continue to be available for hiking, hunting, picnicking, sight-seeing, wildlife viewing, and similar natural-experience recreation opportunities. Overnight camping on BLM-managed lands west of Rogersburg, including along the road and proposed parking lot, would be prohibited.

BLM-managed lands could be available for special, non-motorized events under special recreation use permits; however, seasons of use and numbers of participants and event locations may be stipulated or restricted to avoid disturbance of wildlife. High density motorized recreation events, horse trials, and cross-country mountain bike events (or similar events) would not be permitted on the BLM-managed lands.

Approximately 2 miles of primitive trail route for pedestrian access to the BLM-managed lands would be marked; stiles would be installed over fences and gates. Passage for horses would be accommodated. No camping, boating, or picnicking facilities would be developed; however, native shade trees would be planted.

Monitoring of recreation use levels and impacts would be conducted.

- If monitoring shows a demonstrated need, a vault toilet may be installed in the future near developed day-use parking facilities. Installation of vault toilets is conditional upon the results of cultural and botanical inventories, recreation use monitoring, and the acquisition of appropriate State approvals and permits. If all such conditions are met and documented, an administrative decision may be made to install vault toilets. Such facilities would be located and designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and blend in with the colors of the natural environment. In the short term, no vault toilet facilities are planned for BLM-administered lands east of Rogersburg.
- An information board would be installed on BLM-managed lands at the parking area.

**Wildlife Habitat.** Over the long term, wildlife habitat enhancement projects would be planned and implemented in cooperation with the WDFW Chief Joseph Wildlife area for all BLM-managed lands in the planning area. Four to eight wildlife guzzlers (or comparable water developments) would be developed in upland areas, at locations conditional upon the results of cultural and botanical inventories and any State agency consultations. Water developments would be located near escape

or hiding cover in T 6 N, R 47 E: Sections 4, 5, 8, and 9; and T 7 N, R 47 E: Sections 29, 30, 32, and 33. Native trees and shrubs would be planted in riparian zones in ephemeral and perennial drainages (e.g., ponderosa pine, cottonwood, water birch, and chokecherry are target species for riparian re-establishment).

Other improvement projects to be implemented would include installation of structures for perching or nesting and installation of woody debris in areas with such deficiencies. Vegetation treatments would be focused on natural system processes affecting a broad range of species with consideration to improving habitat effectiveness in big game winter range.

**Cultural Resources.** Inventories for cultural resources would continue. Any cultural resource located would be monitored annually.

**Special Status Plants.** Inventories for botanical resources and T/E/Sensitive species would continue. Any T/E/Sensitive species located would be monitored annually.

Management actions would promote the protection of habitat for special status plants present in the area, including *Lomatium rollinsii*.

**Livestock Grazing.** Livestock grazing on newly acquired lands could be used as a management tool to support the primary goal of wildlife habitat enhancement, native plant community improvement, and noxious weed control. Management objectives for the uplands would be to maintain or improve good to excellent native bunchgrass communities. Objectives for lowland flats would be to improve native perennial grass communities for good to excellent condition; including increasing bluebunch wheatgrass, wild rye and *Stipa*.

Monitoring studies would be conducted prior to considering livestock grazing as a vegetative management technique, and would be conducted annually following livestock grazing to determine if objectives were achieved.

Levels and duration of grazing, as well as maintenance and construction of range improvement projects, would be tailored for the purpose of vegetation management. It is expected that the amount of grazing would be low, short term, and limited in season and numbers. It is possible that no grazing would occur in the short term. The allotment would be categorized as an "I", or "improve" category allotment under this alternative.

Any grazing uses would be assessed in a biological evaluation for impacts to Snake River spring/fall chinook salmon, bull trout, and summer steelhead and would be subject to review and concurrence by NMFS and USFWS. Grazing would not be authorized until concurrence was received from NMFS and FWS.

**Fire Management.** Prescribed fire would be re-introduced as an ecosystem process and may be employed to meet resource objectives and to reduce potential for wildfire. Parameters would be

developed under a burn plan so that fire could be introduced as part of an ecosystem process to achieve resource management objectives for wildlife habitat improvement, re-invigorating native plant communities, and weed control. Prescribed burning could be implemented through planned ignition or natural fire. To mitigate potential air quality problems, all burning would be conducted during atmospheric conditions which favor smoke dispersal. Parameters for prescribed burning would include measures to avoid impacts to private property, and would incorporate a public involvement process for adjacent private landowners and state agencies.

### **ALTERNATIVE C: (Recreation Emphasis)**

This alternative is similar to Alternative B, with expanded public vehicle access and recreation facilities. The approximate location of roads and facilities discussed below are shown on Map 5 in the appendix.

**Public Health and Safety.** Same as under Alternative B.

**Public Access.** Same as under Alternative B, except that vehicle access would be allowed on a portion of the Snake River Flat Road, east of Rogersburg, and the vehicle restriction would be modified to reflect that change. Vehicle access would be through the existing community of Rogersburg.

**Aircraft Landing.** The Snake River Flat Road and adjacent area on the flat would be closed to general purpose, recreational access aircraft landing. The road would not be improved, maintained or reconstructed by BLM for regular aircraft use. However, under a special permit a state agency or organization could apply to assume liability and maintain the road as a primitive landing area emergency aircraft use or search and rescue training/operations. Stipulations and conditions would be similar to those described for Alternative A. It is assumed that the frequency, intensity, and duration of uses for emergency and search/rescue training would be limited, in comparison to general public use for recreational access. If monitoring showed that use levels were resulting in negative impacts to ACEC values and noxious weeds, the permit would be canceled.

**Facilities and Road Management.** In addition to the actions identified under Alternative B, under this alternative the Snake River Flat Road would be open to vehicle use, and an additional, second parking loop would be developed at the extreme west edge of Snake River Flat. The parking loop would be located at the terminal point for vehicle travel, and would provide for 5-6 highway vehicles. No recreational motor home access to this flat would be allowed, due to the narrow and rugged character of the road paralleling the river. Beyond the parking loop, there would be no vehicle access to the end of the existing road on the flat (Benchmark 839). Fencing would be installed around the parking area as a measure to control off-road highway vehicle access.

Road maintenance is similar to Alternative B, except that the road would be maintained by the Bureau of Land Management for passage by high clearance and four-wheel drive vehicles to the

second parking loop on the Snake River Flat. Maintenance would require periodic reconstruction (using large fill material) of the road bed on the ¼-mile segment which parallels the Snake River. The Snake River Flat Road to the parking loop would be surfaced with gravel. BLM would not maintain the remainder of the Snake River Flat Road.

**Recreation.** Same as under Alternative B, except a primitive camping/picnicking area would be designated near the Snake River Flat parking loop. Native trees may be planted for shade. Hiking trails would be developed to provide alternate access for pedestrians and horses. Camping and vehicle access to the Snake River Flat would be seasonally restricted, to reduce disturbance to wildlife that use the area in the spring and winter.

- Information and education are the same as under Alternative B, except an additional information bulletin board would be installed on BLM-managed lands at the second parking area on Lime Point Flat.

**Livestock Grazing.** Same as under Alternative B.

**Wildlife Habitat.** Same as under Alternative A, except sufficient cover and forage to support WDFW big game population objective numbers would be provided, as determined to be consistent with ACEC ecosystem management. BLM would work cooperatively with WDFW to establish population management objectives, and vegetation treatments would be designed to optimize habitat effectiveness.

**Special Status Plants.** Same as under Alternative A.

**Cultural Resources.** Same as under Alternative A.

**Fire Management.** Same as under Alternative B.

#### **ALTERNATIVE D: (Aircraft Use on Snake River Flat)**

This alternative is similar to Alternative B except that applications for a lease to use the Snake River Flat Road as a primitive aircraft landing area would be considered. The approximate location of roads and facilities discussed below are shown on Map 6 in the appendix.

**Public Health and Safety.** Same as under alternative B.

**Public Access.** Same as under alternative B.

**Aircraft Landing.** Applications for a permit to use the Snake River Flat Road as a primitive aircraft landing area would be considered. No major surface improvements or expansion of the existing road width would be permitted. Surface disturbance from maintenance would be kept to the minimum necessary for safe use. A plan of development would be required as part of the application. Within

the physical capabilities of the facilities, agencies or organizations could apply for a lease under 43 CFR 2910 to use and maintain a landing strip. In the absence of a compelling resource need or public interest, applications for private or exclusive-use facilities would not be considered.

BLM would not develop, construct, operate or maintain the Snake River Flat Road as a primitive airstrip or emergency landing strip for purposes of public use.

- **Stipulations and Conditions.** Any permit for proposed public use facilities would require compliance with all stipulations and conditions identified by the Bureau of Land Management to ensure continued protection of natural and cultural resources. The stipulations and conditions would address requirements for maintenance, rehabilitation or restoration of site damage, liability insurance and bonding (accidents, property damage); third-party monitoring; emergency preparedness and other measures to reduce environmental impacts. Ordinarily, costs and responsibilities are assumed by the permit holder, in addition to costs of development/maintenance, and may include costs for additional inventories; preparation of additional environmental analyses if necessary; maintenance and reconstruction of the airstrip and any access roads; costs for weed control in the affected areas; costs for mitigation of any environmental or cultural resources damages that may be associated with direct impacts or unauthorized use; and costs associated with fire suppression and/or property damage resulting from human-caused fire.

**Facilities and Road Management.** The same as Alternative B except for management of the Snake River Flat Road. The BLM would maintain the Snake River Flat Road between the Rogersburg east boundary and Snake River Flat, for purposes of BLM administrative access only and on an as-needed basis for this use. BLM would not actively maintain or reconstruct the road for aircraft use or access by airstrip operators.

**Recreation.** Same as under Alternative B.

**Livestock Grazing.** Same as under Alternative B.

**Wildlife Habitat.** Similar to Alternative B. However, less riparian and tree planting would be implemented on Snake River Flat.

**Special Status Plants.** Same as under Alternative A.

**Cultural Resources.** Same as under Alternative A.

**Fire Management.** Same as under Alternative B.

## **CHAPTER III-AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

A description of the affected environment is provided under the description of the Existing Situation

for ACEC and other resources in Appendix A, the Lime Hill Activity Plan.

The EA does not discuss impacts to the following critical elements of the human environment because no negative site-specific impacts were identified or the resource value or critical element did not occur in the analysis area:

- Environmental Justice
- Floodplains
- Hazardous or Solid Wastes
- Surface/Ground Water Quality
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Wilderness
- Native American Religious Concerns.

Other critical elements of the human environment merit further analysis and are addressed in the Environmental Consequences chapter below.

## **CHAPTER IV-ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Potential environmental impacts on resources and other environmental components for each of the four alternatives are addressed, including direct, indirect and cumulative effects (impacts, consequences, and effects are the same). Both short- and long-term effects are considered. Short term is assumed to be less than ten years, and long term is greater than ten years. Most of the effects are not quantified, but are described relative to the effects of continuing the existing management direction (Alternative A). Implementation of standard design features, as identified in the management actions, reduces or eliminates many potential environmental impacts.

Preliminary analysis, including scoping, indicates that the alternatives would not significantly affect the following: surface and ground water quality; air quality; mineral and energy resource availability, timber resources, or paleontological values; therefore, those topics are not included in this section.

Air Quality: For all alternatives, the major source of air pollutants associated with BLM management would be short-term, temporary smoke from prescribed fire; and temporary dust associated with road use, construction and maintenance activities, or other surface-disturbing actions. Dust is reduced or abated by measures such as applying water to exposed surfaces, revegetating exposed soils, or avoiding the causative action during periods of hot, dry weather. Smoke from prescribed fire is mitigated by burning during favorable atmospheric conditions.

Water Quality: Effects on surface and ground water quality overlap the effects on soils, vegetative and riparian communities, noxious weeds, and fish and wildlife habitat. With standard design features, enforcement of use regulations, and best management practices, no significant or negative effect on water quality is identified for any alternative.

## ***Effects on Wildlife Habitat***

Adverse effects on federally listed or proposed species are not anticipated since they would be managed as required by the Endangered Species Act. Management activities that affect general fish and wildlife habitat generally also affect special status fish and wildlife species.

### **Alternative A**

No threatened/endangered wildlife species would be adversely impacted. Peregrine falcon habitat would remain unchanged, as would habitat for big-eared bats. Although bald eagle perch trees would continue to be limited, this alternative would have no effect on bald eagles. As the road east of Rogersburg would remain open, rangeland habitat would be static, or improvement would be very slow. Wildlife harassment by vehicles would limit winter wildlife grazing on Snake River Flat. Indirect, secondary effects associated with the increase and expansion of noxious weeds on Snake River Flat (along the road if employed as a landing strip) would reduce available and potential native plant and wildlife habitat over the long term, and would reduce big game winter habitat.

### **Alternative B (Preferred)**

Closing roads, planting tall trees, placing poles for raptor perches, and installing water developments would improve threatened/endangered and other wildlife habitats. Water birch, cottonwood, and ponderosa pine would give vertical structure for future raptor perches in time, and provide songbirds perching and nesting sites. Improved grass cover would benefit ground-nesting birds. These birds in turn are prey species for peregrine falcons. Improved grass cover would benefit bighorn sheep, mule deer, and elk. Cliff and cave habitat would not be affected, as no actions are proposed that would impact or changes these areas. This alternative would result in no adverse effect to bald eagles and peregrine falcons. Habitat conditions would be expected to improve over time.

### **Alternative C**

The construction of two small parking areas, with associated higher camping use on Snake River Flat, would result in disturbance to resident wildlife species. Winter and spring seasonal restrictions on use would mitigate some of these impacts, however, not all disturbance to wildlife would be eliminated. Maintaining a portion of the Snake River Flat Road would reduce the available acreage of wildlife habitat, and reduce the quality of habitat within a quarter-mile of the road. Grass and riparian habitats would be most affected, possibly reducing nesting success of ground birds. Increased public access could place more hunting stress on chukar and Hungarian partridge populations. These birds are all prey species for peregrine falcons. Although trees would be planted that could be future perches for eagles, use by eagles would be limited due to heavier public use. Big game use would be limited on the lower third of the area, due to increased public use. Cliff and cave habitat would remain unchanged. This alternative would have no adverse effect on bald eagles or peregrines.

### **Alternative D**

The effects of this alternative are similar to those under Alternative B, with the following exceptions. Availability for aircraft use would increase the hazard of collision between birds and aircraft.

Consequently, raptor perches would not be built and tall trees would not be planted near the landing area in order to avoid increasing the hazard. Goose grazing on Snake River flat would be reduced. Big game use of Snake River Flat would be limited during aircraft use periods. Indirect effects associated with the potential increase and expansion of noxious weeds on Snake River Flat along the road employed as an airstrip, would reduce available and potential native plant and wildlife habitat over the long term, and would reduce big game winter habitat.

### ***Effects on Fish Habitat***

Adverse effects on federally listed or proposed species are not anticipated since they would be managed as required by the Endangered Species Act. Management activities that affect general fish and wildlife habitat generally also affect special status fish and wildlife species.

#### **Alternative A**

The road east of Rogersburg would continue to deteriorate and may contribute sediment into the river, which could affect fish. Vehicles driving on the road would continue to erode the existing road bed. Vehicles passing beyond this road could increase sediment delivery into the river which could affect fish. Over the long term, uncontrolled vehicle use and/or unauthorized off-road vehicle activity along the Snake River Flat Road and other roads in the ACEC may affect critical habitat for T/E fish species.

#### **Alternative B (Preferred)**

Fish species would not be affected. Closing roads eliminates sediment from entering the river and allows the road to revegetate. Closing the area beyond Rogersburg would eliminate ground disturbance from vehicles, which eliminates sediment. Riparian plantings would provide habitat diversity, shade, and bank stability. This alternative would have no adverse effect on critical habitat for listed T/E fish.

#### **Alternative C**

The construction of the parking area east of Rogersburg and the continued use of the road may affect fish from sediment delivery into the river. Increased traffic may produce more fine sediments from the roads which could enter the river. With proper construction of the parking loop and road, sediment delivery could be mitigated or eliminated. With mitigation, the direct impacts of this alternative may affect but is not likely to adversely affect T/E fish species. Over the long term, increased traffic on the Snake River Flat Road associated with this alternative may affect T/E fish species. Further evaluation would be needed to determine that the effect is not likely to be adverse. Seasonal restrictions for vehicle travel would partially mitigate the long term or cumulative effects.

#### **Alternative D**

The impacts would be similar to those under Alternative B. However, use of the Snake River Flat as an aircraft landing area may affect but is not likely to adversely affect T/E fish species. The alternative design features as well as proposed mitigation measures would help avoid adverse effects to these species.

### *Effects on Cultural Resources*

Bureau authorized or initiated actions would avoid adverse effects on cultural resources, traditional cultural properties, tribal traditional use areas, or sacred places.

#### **Alternative A**

Recreation use and vehicle access provides opportunity for both intentional and unintentional, unauthorized, artifact removal or disturbance to cultural properties. The opportunity for unauthorized uses is greater under Alternative A than under Alternative B or C. Cultural properties on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places would be vulnerable to erosion resulting from removal of vegetation by off-road vehicle travel, camping, and fire. Incidents of vandalism to sites are likely to increase due to higher levels of public use and ease of vehicle travel. Over the long term, the cumulative loss of sites or portions of cultural properties could occur.

#### **Alternative B (Preferred)**

Physical and administrative measures to control vehicle and recreation uses would enhance protection of cultural resource properties. Recreation use and increased vehicle access provide more opportunity for both intentional and unintentional, unauthorized, artifact removal. The opportunity for unauthorized disturbance or artifact removal is less under Alternative B than under Alternative A or C. Measures to protect and enhance native vegetation and minimize soil erosion would contribute to the long-term preservation of cultural properties, consistent with allocation of the properties to conservation. Measures which would redesign or relocate projects to avoid impacts to cultural resources are more likely to contribute to long-term preservation.

#### **Alternative C**

Physical and administrative measures to control vehicle and recreation uses would protect cultural resource properties over the long term. Recreation use provides opportunity for both intentional and unintentional, unauthorized, artifact removal. Under this alternative the increase in public use on Snake River Flat is likely to result in greater frequency of incidents of vandalism. Measures to protect and enhance native vegetation and minimize soil erosion would further the long-term preservation of cultural properties, consistent with allocation of the properties to conservation. Measures which would redesign or relocate projects to avoid impacts to cultural resources are likely to contribute to long-term preservation.

#### **Alternative D**

Same impacts as under Alternative C.

### *Effects on Visual Resources*

Surface-disturbing activities usually disrupt the existing landscape and cause effects to visual resources. In the long term, the property would be managed to meet VRM Class II objectives. Many of the actions proposed under Alternatives B and C would be designed to retain, through design

measures, the natural condition of the landscape. Recreation facilities would create additional contrasts in the short term, but would be designed to be rustic, natural-appearing and to blend in with the landscape.

### **Alternative A**

Under this alternative, no ground-disturbing management actions would take place, therefore, no direct disturbances that would impact the Class II designation would occur. However, indirect and secondary impacts to the VRM of the area would result from higher levels of recreation use in the form of informal campsite development, incidental pedestrian foot paths (off established trails), unauthorized off-road vehicle use, riparian/rangeland damage, general litter and human waste/sanitation conditions. Any expansion of noxious weed populations associated with this recreation use would alter the appearance of the natural vegetative landscape, creating large areas of contrast and reducing scenic qualities. These impacts would occur over the long term, and depending on the level of use of the area, would continue to have an ever-increasing impact on the area's resources, and potentially lower the scenic values of the area.

### **Alternative B (Preferred)**

Under this alternative, management actions would be carefully monitored to avoid violating the Class II designation of the area. Facilities and vehicle controls would mitigate most of the potential impacts of informal trails and campsites associated with recreation use. The addition of a parking area for vehicles along the Rogersburg access road would not significantly change the existing level of intrusion for the local riverside scene (since the area presently includes a well-traveled road and partly visible gravel pit). The parking loop, fencing, and trails would be designed to avoid attracting the attention of the casual observer. A small parking area is unlikely to impair scenic values, which would be maintained over the long term. Noxious weed control measures would help maintain native vegetation communities, which contribute to the overall natural landscape appearance. Spot weed treatment may create short-term localized contrasts, or a mosaic, in the appearance of the natural landscape, as weeds are eliminated and native plants become re-established. Prescribed fire may also create short term localized contrasts but should be eliminated as native plants become re-established.

### **Alternative C**

The effect on visual resources is similar to Alternative B, except the development of a second parking area would introduce an additional contemporary impact into the visual landscape as seen from the Snake River. The indirect, secondary, and cumulative effects of increased recreation use and vehicle parking on the Snake River Flat would be highly visible from the Snake River. The greater potential for unauthorized off-road vehicle travel may result in hillside trails, erosion, and increased numbers of noxious weed sites. These would create contrasting disturbed and undisturbed areas on the landscape. Additional primitive campsites would likely be established by users adjacent to the Snake River, adding further elements of contrast to the landscape. Under this alternative, the effect on scenic values would be greater than under Alternative B, but less than under Alternative A.

### **Alternative D**

Same impacts as under Alternative B, except that use of the Snake River Flat Road for aircraft landing would make the road more visible from hiker vantage points on the surrounding hills, due to vegetation removal.

### ***Effects on Vegetation***

Impacts on vegetation would result from planting, recreation facilities and road maintenance. Planting would affect the local composition of plant communities, and relative abundance would be influenced by the species selected for planting. Construction and use of recreation facilities would not influence the overall character of the vegetation, but on-site and off-site disturbance provide conditions which give competitive advantage to some species, including noxious weeds.

Under all alternatives, a combination of appropriate suppression and prescribed fire could be used to restore fire to its role in ecosystem processes for this area; and to reduce the likelihood of hot, intense wildfires, which contribute to loss of native plant communities, soil disturbance, and erosion. A fire program would likely result in more frequent, less intense, and smaller fires than recent wildfires that have occurred in the area. In upland habitat this would stimulate growth of grasses and forbs, rather than destroy plants. In dense vegetation stands, it would create openings, contributing to overall diversity and patches of different types.

Under all alternatives, failure to control noxious weeds would cause an adverse cumulative loss of native plants over time and a loss of available forage. Also, an increase in noxious weeds could lead to soil instability.

Over time, under all alternatives, secondary and indirect impacts from human recreational activity (such as OHV use, camping, foot traffic off trails) could damage shoreline, riparian, and lowland plant habitats. Such impacts include ground compaction on trails, trampling, and displacement of plants and cryptobiotic crusts between established plants. These impacts are generally localized in the vicinity of established or designated vehicle parking areas under Alternatives B and C, but more extensive on the flats under Alternative A.

Special Status Plants: In the absence of inventories and models to determine minimum viable populations for State-listed sensitive plants, it is not known what threshold or intensity of negative impacts would make the population vulnerable to extinction. If adequate soil seed banks were not present to allow for recovery, long-term impacts would lead to elimination of the plant(s) within this portion of their historic range. Bureau policy is to conserve these species through protection of habitats.

Noxious Weeds: Noxious weed control is necessary and critical to achieving resource condition objectives in the Grande Ronde ACEC. Common methods of noxious weed dispersal include spread by vehicles, downstream transport of seed deposited into water, and movement by people, livestock or wildlife from weed-infested to weed-free areas. Ground disturbance creates conditions under which many noxious weeds gain competitive advantage of other species. Maintaining healthy, good

condition native plant communities is a primary defense against the expansion of noxious weeds; while control measures and revegetation programs reduce the impacts. The effect of fire upon noxious weeds is not well known, and whether or not weeds respond positively or negatively may vary by individual species. If undesirable species that respond positively to fire are present on a site, fire prescriptions may be altered or the site avoided.

### **Alternative A**

Historic livestock grazing on the flats and upland basins resulted in heavy use near water sources, which led to changes in vegetation composition. Annual grasses, forbs and weeds increased while perennial grasses and riparian species sensitive to grazing decreased. Grazing has been less intense to non-existent in the past 20 years, commencing a process of competitive re-establishment of perennial grasses and riparian species. Re-introducing livestock on newly acquired lands could suspend this trend. Since the existing plant communities are a reflection of minimal grazing in recent decades, livestock grazing at correspondingly minimal levels (few numbers) would not lead to a change over current composition and diversity over the area as a whole. Since it is unlikely that even minimal levels of grazing could occur without some use of the flats and lower hillsides presently in early seral stage, an increase in noxious weeds could be expected due to trampling of the microbiotic crusts (currently serving as a defense against weed invasion). Weeds could therefore expand on the lowlands, and would require additional control measures.

Any level of grazing would require upland range improvements, possible herding and water hauling, or access to main rivers, to achieve appropriate distribution of livestock and minimize lowland and riparian impacts. It is likely that incidental grazing in the riparian zones would take place, delaying expansion of some native species.

Special Status Plants: Special status plants would not be substantially affected by any BLM-initiated activity. However, open vehicle access to public land, both on the Grande Ronde Flat and the Snake River Flat, would be likely to result in increased instances of vehicular use off designated roads throughout the flatter terrain and lower hills. Enforcement of vehicle restrictions to designated roads would probably be insufficient to completely prevent such activity without fencing and other physical controls. Other dispersed use activities may increase on the lands adjacent to the road east of Rogersburg. Such activities have the potential to directly reduce the quantity and quality of habitat for sensitive plant species through soil loss and invasion of noxious weeds. The extent of disturbance would be greater under this alternative than under either Alternative B, C or D, since the entire length of the existing road east of Rogersburg would be open and available to vehicular access.

Noxious Weeds: Among all the alternatives, Alternative A creates the greatest potential for spread of noxious weeds, reducing available and potential habitat for native plants, and reducing the quality of the recreation experience. Increased instances of unauthorized off-road activity would be likely to disturb soils and create enhanced opportunities for noxious weed establishment. There is potential for non-motorized activity to create soil disturbance, new trails, and additional disturbed habitat for weed invasion. Increased dispersed-use activities would be likely to result in wider distribution of noxious weed seed.

Under this alternative, there would be an increase in the noxious weed population located in the Rogersburg area and on Snake River Flat. With the greater potential for uncontrolled motor vehicle/aircraft access, as well as other potential recreational activities (mountain bikes, dirt bikes, walking, horseback riding, etc.), the current species of noxious weeds would begin spreading at a greatly increased rate. Although management activities in the form of noxious weed control would continue to be implemented, the rate of spread from the dispersed use would make containment and eradication of the species difficult. Surface disturbance occurring to the fragile soils of the area because of the increased vehicular and pedestrian traffic would create an environment more readily invaded by the noxious weed species of the region. The cumulative effects of the use would eventually result in an area more degraded and infested with weeds to the point where it would become less usable by the public and wildlife. Weed control could become problematic, and weeds would expand over the long term to occupy increasingly larger areas. Annual monitoring, inventory, and treatment would be done in the area to determine the effects of the increased use on the spread of the noxious weed species.

### **Alternative B (Preferred)**

The planned use of grazing management solely to promote diversity in the development of native plant communities would result in an improved trend over time toward late seral stages on flats and benches, and would enhance forage/browse for game and non-game species. Construction of recreation facilities and road maintenance would not be expected to directly influence the overall character of the vegetation. However, disturbance associated with these activities would provide conditions under which some species, including noxious weeds, would have competitive advantage. If additional fill or surfacing material is required from off-site, there would be the potential for introduction of new noxious weeds. Planting native species of trees and shrubs would have a positive short- and long-term effect on riparian vegetation, increasing diversity, structure, and expansion for riparian wildlife species. This would reduce some of the potential impacts of vegetation removal and disturbance resulting from recreation use in the shoreline riparian areas.

Special Status Plants: Special status plants would not be substantially affected by any BLM-authorized or initiated activity. Excluding public vehicle use and retaining the locked gate on the Snake River Flat Road east of Rogersburg would minimize instances of unauthorized vehicular use off designated roads throughout the flatter terrain and lower hills. Enforcement of vehicle restrictions to designated roads would be augmented with fencing or other physical controls. Existing and potential habitat disturbance would be minimized under this alternative.

Noxious Weeds: This alternative minimizes the potential for soil disturbance and spread of noxious weeds, in comparison to Alternative A, C or D. There is potential for non-motorized activity, such as mountain biking and horse trail riding, to create soil disturbance, new trails, and additional disturbed habitat for weed invasion. Over the long term, increased dispersed-use activities would be likely to result in wider distribution of noxious weed seed. However, impact of the level of increase of dispersed use over the area east of Rogersburg should be offset by the current weed control/management activities.

A slight increase of noxious weed populations would occur due to the increased vehicular activities on public land west of Rogersburg. Increased vehicle traffic would allow for the transportation of new seeds into the area. At the same time, the primary targeted species (rush skeletonweed and yellow starthistle), located east of Rogersburg, are unlikely to increase due to the primitive nature of the activities occurring in that area, and the vehicle restrictions established. Some seed spread might be noticed along newly established trails bypassing Rogersburg. Annual monitoring, inventory, and treatment would be done to determine if further regulations would be required to protect the resources of the ACEC. Emphasis would be placed on monitoring areas highly susceptible to invasion such as trails, campsites, and parking lots.

### **Alternative C**

Impacts on vegetation from livestock grazing, recreation facility construction and road maintenance, and riparian plantings are similar to Alternative B.

Special Status Plants: Special status plants would not be substantially affected by any BLM-initiated activity. Any future authorization of vehicle uses may contribute to the expansion of weed populations and the indirect reduction of special status plant habitat on Snake River Flat. Enforcement of vehicle restriction to designated roads would be augmented with fencing or other physical controls. The extent of habitat disturbance would be moderately greater than under Alternative B because of the increased level of activity anticipated around the parking area east of Rogersburg.

Noxious Weeds: Potential for soil disturbance and spread of noxious weeds would be moderately greater than under Alternative B or D, and less than under Alternative A, because of the increased level of activity by vehicles and pedestrians around the parking area east of Rogersburg. Non-motorized activity such as mountain biking and horseback riding would create soil disturbance, new trails, and additional disturbed habitat for weed invasion. Over the long term, increased dispersed use activities would be likely to result in wider distribution of noxious weed populations both east and west of Rogersburg. Expansion of the weed populations would reduce present and potential habitat for native plants east of Rogersburg. Annual monitoring, inventory, and treatment would be focused on areas highly susceptible to invasion, such as trails, campsites, and parking lots.

### **Alternative D**

Similar impacts as those under Alternative B. Over the long term, aircraft use and maintenance of the Snake River Flat Road would contribute to an increased spread of weeds, indirectly reduce available and potential habitat for native plant communities, and increase the risk of wildfire on the Snake River Flat. These effects for the Snake River Flat are greater than under Alternative B, but less than under Alternative A or C.

Special Status Plants: Similar impacts to Alternative B. Over the long term, aircraft use and maintenance of the Snake River Flat Road would contribute to the increase of non-native plants and indirectly reduce present and potential special status plant habitat over the long term.

Noxious Weeds: Similar impacts to Alternative B. Over the long term, aircraft use and maintenance of the Snake River Flat Road would contribute to an increased spread of the noxious weed species presently located on the flat. Additional control measures would be required to prevent the spread of yellow starthistle onto adjacent State and private lands. These effects are less than under Alternative A or C, but greater than under Alternative B.

### *Effects on Soils*

#### **Alternative A**

Although off-road travel would be prohibited, unauthorized use is highly likely and would lead to hillside trails, expansion of road ways, increased erosion, gully formations, and sediment transport to the flats. A larger impact to soils compaction and erosion would occur from increased vehicle travel in the area for recreation use, even using existing roads and trails. Although the Lime Hill Road would not be maintained for travel, use by vehicles on less steep areas would increase erosion of the surface because the road lacks subgrade reinforcement. Use of steep grades by vehicles such as ATVs would disturb the presently healing surface, make the road more visible, and would allow for expansion of noxious weeds along the road. Vehicle use on the Snake River Flat Road during wet seasons would lead to rutting, and surface disturbance during dry seasons would result in increase wind erosion. The road would require more frequent maintenance.

Wildfires could increase the potential for soil erosion. The amount of the impact would vary depending on the amount of acreage burned, intensity, and amount of fire lines constructed. Hot, intense fires would kill vegetation and lead to greater potential for soil wind and water erosion. Cool season ignitions (which are less intense and consume fewer acres because they are generally spot burns) would have temporary impacts on vegetation, which would recover in one or two growing seasons. Depending on levels and seasons of use, cattle grazing on the flats and basins would cause increased soil erosion from wind and water, and limit the amount of regrowth of existing plant communities and cryptobiotic crusts that protect the soil surface. Increased disturbance could cause expansion of noxious weeds and require additional weed treatment.

#### **Alternative B**

With road closures and fencing, soil impacts from compaction and erosion would be minimal in comparison to those under Alternative A or C. The development of a rocked surface parking loop would create temporary surface disturbance of small amounts of soil, but would offset the impacts of uncontrolled parking and surface disturbance that create opportunity for weed expansion. The likelihood of unauthorized OHV use is less under this alternative. The effects on soils from road maintenance are substantially less under this Alternative in comparison to Alternatives A and C.

Future relocation of the Rogersburg Access Road, and associated rehabilitation and closure of the old road, would result in additional soils disturbance with some loss of soil likely during construction operation. Timing the project during spring should mitigate most of the impacts that would arise from wet or dry weather disturbance. Soil erosion could occur following prescribed fire, but impacts are expected to be less due to more frequent and less intense fires.

### **Alternative C**

Increased vehicle recreation use and development of additional parking areas would cause soil erosion due to higher and more frequent surface impacts, associated continued road maintenance requirements, and likelihood for additional foot trails or unauthorized OHV activity. However, this impact on the Snake River Flat would be less than under Alternative A, since designated use areas would be provided to discourage surface disturbance caused by off-road use and parking. The effects on soils from fire are similar to those described for Alternative B. Soil compaction and erosion associated with construction of a parking area would lead to a temporary increase in noxious weeds in the immediate area and would require expanded weed treatment. Soils on the Snake River Flat are considered prime farmland if irrigated. Development of a parking loop and day-use facility in this area would impact a very small area (less than one acre of potential prime farmland).

### **Alternative D**

Effects are similar to but greater than those under Alternative B. Over the long term, use and associated maintenance of the Snake River Flat Road for aircraft landing would increase surface exposure through removal of vegetation and lead to soil erosion and compaction along the length of the road, depending upon the areas employed for landing, parking, and turning. To the extent that use of the area increases over time, there is an increased risk of wildfire from aircraft landing. Hot, intense fires would kill vegetation and lead to greater potential for soil wind and water erosion. Additional and cumulative soil disturbances would influence the spread of weeds and alter native plant communities.

### ***Effects on Recreation and Public Access***

Property in the vicinity of Rogersburg was in private ownership, and therefore closed to the general public, until January 1993, when the lands were acquired. A locked gate has precluded general public vehicle access to part of these lands. With the lands in public ownership, it is assumed that recreation demand and use levels would increase significantly over those of the past, based upon observed use on nearby and adjacent State lands. Planned and expected use levels would increase the most under Alternatives A and C, and to a lesser extent, D, because of the number of roads and areas open to motorized vehicle or aircraft travel, or the level of facilities provided. Use levels are expected to increase the least under Alternative B, which provides limited opportunities for additional vehicle-based public access.

Alternatives A and C provide the most motorized vehicle-based public access among the alternatives. Alternative D provides for motorized access by aircraft to Snake River Flat, while excluding land-based vehicles. Alternative B provides for motorized vehicle access to Grande Ronde River Flat, west of Rogersburg, but excludes all other motorized vehicle access on Snake River Flat and surrounding uplands. Under all alternatives, motorized access by boat is available, with no difference among alternatives.

### **Alternative A**

Under this alternative, recreational use of the area would be increased due to the accessibility of the

area to motorized vehicles. This would provide for more vehicle-based recreational opportunities in the form of hunting, fishing, hiking, camping, and general recreation activities. Indirect impacts on the recreational activities of the area would be in the form of vehicle traffic congestion due to limited turn-around points, fire ring development, and more campsite locations due to the increased use the area would receive. User conflicts between motorized vehicles, hikers, and aircraft could develop on Snake River Flat.

An increase in site degradation associated with higher levels of visitor use would be expected, as well as conflicts between primitive vs. non-primitive camping, and day-use vs. overnight use. Periodic monitoring would occur in this area to document use and activities as well as any and all detrimental impacts to the resource of the ACEC.

### **Alternative B (Preferred)**

Under this alternative, recreational opportunities would be balanced between a primitive setting on Snake River Flat and a day-use facility setting along the Rogersburg Access Road. With the development of parking facilities west of Rogersburg, more of the general public of all age categories would be able to access the confluence of the Grande Ronde and Snake rivers for fishing, hiking, hunting, picnicking, and other recreational opportunities. At the same time, maintaining a locked gate on the east side of the community would still allow for a balance of primitive and undisturbed recreational activities. Trail identification would allow all types of users to experience the benefits of the entire area through relatively easy hikes.

Recreation use regulations would mitigate most of the potential impacts to soils, vegetation, wildlife, and scenic qualities associated with recreational access or camping. All recreational activities would be carefully monitored for impacts on the resources designated within the ACEC boundaries, and to determine if any further management actions would be necessary (i.e., vault toilets, additional fencing or gates, barriers, day-use only limitations, etc.). Parking and day-use facilities along the Rogersburg Access Road, coupled with physical and administrative measures to inform and control vehicle uses and visitor behavior, should minimize user conflicts and discourage trespass on adjacent private land.

### **Alternative C**

Under this alternative, the primary focus for improvement would be directed more towards vehicular camping and away from primitive use. An increase in recreational activities would be expected, due to the ability of the general public to access both east and west sides of the Rogersburg community by vehicles. Although the vehicles would be limited to existing improved roads and parking areas, an increase in site degradation due to the quantity of use would be expected in both locations in the form of high-use campsites, pedestrian trailing, general play, riparian/vegetation damage and litter. The installation of vault toilets both east and west of Rogersburg would reduce human waste impacts to the area.

Parking and day-use facilities along the Rogersburg Access Road, coupled with physical and administrative measures to inform and control vehicle uses and visitor behavior, should minimize

user conflicts and discourage trespass on adjacent private land. However, vehicle and visitor access to Snake River Flat over the road through Rogersburg would likely lead to public-private landowner user conflicts.

#### **Alternative D**

Impacts are similar to Alternative B. Under this alternative, motorized vehicle access to Snake River Flat would be potentially provided for in the form of aircraft under a special-use permit, but not for other motorized vehicles. This would increase recreational aircraft use of this area and could result in increased conflicts with other recreational users, especially those seeking a more primitive recreational experience. Although motorized boat traffic on the rivers generates elevated noise levels during high-use periods, increased aircraft landings would add to existing noise levels. There would also be the perception that opportunities are being afforded to recreational aircraft users over other forms of motor-vehicle-based recreation. Increased aircraft landings on Snake River Flat would increase actions necessary for monitoring and law enforcement.

#### ***Effects on Livestock Grazing***

For comparative analysis, nearby rangeland is assumed to be stocked at approximately 10 acres per Animal Unit Month (AUMs). Given the steep topography, the newly acquired BLM lands could support approximately 200 AUMs of use, if managed as a custodial allotment (see RMP/ROD, page 14). However, the area would have to be managed as an "improve" allotment because of the ACEC resource objectives for vegetation, wildlife and fish habitat, T/E species, weed control program, and possible recreation conflicts.

This could reduce any potential use to 50-100 AUMs, and would require extensive range improvements (such as permanent and temporary fencing and water developments), and an Allotment Management Plan or grazing schedule for livestock use. Special status plant, native vegetation condition objectives, and noxious weed control measures would require enclosure fence construction and maintenance and spring development in the uplands for improved livestock distribution. These improvements would require additional funding and personnel to construct and maintain. Any livestock grazing management support facilities and projects would require additional site-specific environmental analysis prior to implementation.

Under all alternatives, no impacts to livestock management would be expected beyond those already addressed in the Baker RMP/ROD. BLM would control, direct, and stipulate any grazing use under existing laws, policies and regulations. Managing the land solely for maximum livestock production is precluded by the objectives and guidelines for both ACEC management and forage management.

#### **Alternative A**

Livestock grazing would not be authorized if the use would not allow for meeting ACEC resource objectives. If 50 AUMs is the minimum amount a lessee would apply for, and 100 AUMs is the maximum BLM would permit under a grazing application, the economic effect of not authorizing grazing would be minimal. Since OHV use would be restricted or limited to existing roads and trails

under this alternative, this would require the permittee to gather or move livestock within the ACEC using horses rather than motorized vehicles.

### **Alternative B (Preferred)**

No impacts are identified, since grazing would be employed solely to achieve wildlife habitat and vegetation management objectives. There is no current livestock grazing on the newly acquired BLM lands. Due to the present early seral condition of the low elevation vegetation communities and noxious weed objectives, no grazing is anticipated in the short term.

### **Alternative C and D**

Impacts are the same as under Alternative B.

### ***Socio-Economic Effects***

Other than the potential for livestock grazing and increase in recreational visits, socio-economic conditions and trends would not likely change significantly. Visits to BLM-managed lands and adjacent State lands are typically less than one day in duration. The majority of non-local visitors are those who are concluding a long boating or fishing trip on the Snake, Salmon, or Grande Ronde River, and are taking the boat out at the Heller Bar boat facility or continuing down river to Asotin, Clarkston and Lewiston. Most local visitors are using the BLM lands in conjunction with other adjacent State and federal lands for sight-seeing, wildlife viewing, boating, fishing, and hunting. These lands would continue to be similarly accessible for these activities under all alternatives. While visitation to the Snake River Canyon area is important, the overall economic effect of visits to the BLM-managed lands is slight because it does not introduce measurable additional local spending by people from outside the adjacent counties.

### **Alternative A**

The lack of restrictions placed on vehicle access would cause an increase in motorized travel away from the county road; however, the additional areas to be accessed by vehicles are unlikely to result in increased local spending, since most non-local visitors to the Lime Hill and Snake River Canyon area are not using motorized vehicles.

### **Alternative B**

The limitations placed on vehicle access would cause a minor decrease in motorized travel away from the county road, but this would be offset by improved visitor facilities for on-site parking. The vehicle facility is expected to result in an estimated 10% increase in visitation to the BLM-managed lands above current use levels. Pedestrian, boater, and horse access would be unaffected. The net effect on the region's economy is difficult to quantify, but likely would be slight, since the expected duration of stay by people using motorized vehicles would not exceed one or two days.

### **Alternative C**

The socio-economic effects of this alternative would be generally the same as under Alternative 3.

The addition of a second parking area would result in an increase in motorized travel away from the county road. Socio-economic conditions and trends would not be measurably changed in comparison to current conditions.

#### **Alternative D**

Currently the US Forest Service operates four airstrips which provide regional air access to Hells Canyon south of the ACEC, addressing the present demand for commercial and non-commercial recreation aircraft access to the Hells Canyon area. Authorization of an aircraft landing area permit on the Snake River Flat would primarily provide only local recreational access to Snake River Flat, which does not serve as a gateway or primary access to Hells Canyon NRA. The social perception may be that aircraft users have special access opportunities not shared by other vehicle users. Overall, any socio-economic conditions related to aircraft accessibility along the Snake River would not be changed, since the only geographic area which could be accessed by aircraft visitors is Snake River Flat. It is unlikely that the Snake River Flat location would be a significant base for a commercial aircraft recreation operations. There has been no demand for this type of use that could not be accommodated by the existing airstrips in Hells Canyon, and the vehicle/boat access available from Heller Bar.

### ***CUMULATIVE EFFECTS***

#### **Alternative A**

Among the alternatives, Alternative A would result in the greatest disturbance to wildlife, reduction and alteration of wildlife habitat, and potential for expansion of noxious weeds reducing native plant communities and wildlife habitat on the flats along the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers, and in the immediately adjacent uplands. This alternative has the greatest potential for conflict between users and adjoining landowners and places stress on wildlife, soil, and vegetation resources primarily on the large flats along the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. The conflicts and stresses are created by maximum authorized vehicle use plus high potential for unauthorized vehicle use on soils that are highly erosive. Implementing Alternative A would provide the least protection for ACEC resources, including cultural resources, threatened/endangered and sensitive species habitat, and visual resources (scenic qualities), while providing the greatest opportunity for motorized-vehicle-based recreation use.

#### **Alternative B**

This alternative provides for the most protection for wildlife populations, wildlife habitat, native plant communities, cultural resources, special status species, and scenic qualities over most of the planning area, while providing some opportunity for land-vehicle-based recreation use along the Grande Ronde River, with primarily non-motorized and boater access to the Snake River breaks. This alternative has potential for occasions of conflict between public land users and private landowners along the Rogersburg Road., due to expanded public vehicle access which was not available historically. Administrative and physical controls provide a balance of access opportunities, reduce most potential conflicts between users, and provide protection of ACEC resources.

### **Alternative C**

This alternative emphasizes recreation opportunities along the Grande Ronde and Snake River flats, providing for vehicle and potential aircraft-based recreation access to various areas. This alternative has similar potential as Alternative A for conflict between public land users and private landowners, because access to Snake River Flat would be through the community of Rogersburg. Since more roads would be available for vehicle travel, there is a greater potential for spread of noxious weeds onto adjacent lands and for an associated reduction in the present and potential native plant and animal habitat. ACEC resources would be maintained in the lowland areas along the major rivers, but compared to Alternative B or D, the ACEC resources are less likely to be protected or enhanced over the long term. ACEC resources would be more protected along the uplands and Snake River breaks of the planning area.

### **Alternative D**

This alternative provides protection for most ACEC resources over all uplands and low benches of the Grande Ronde, with the potential for motorized aircraft use along Snake River Flat. Over the long term, aircraft and associated uses on Snake River Flat have the potential to increase the spread of noxious weeds and indirectly reduce the potential and available winter range for wildlife and native plant habitat on Snake River Flat and adjacent lowland hills.

### ***Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources***

#### **Prime Farmlands**

Under Alternative C, construction of a parking area east of Rogersburg on the Snake River Flat would commit approximately 1 acre of identified prime farmland for recreational use. The lands are not irrigated and would not be available for agricultural purposes under the ACEC designation.

#### ***Residual Effects***

No residual impacts have been identified.

## **CHAPTER V-CONTACTS, CONSULTATIONS, PREPARERS**

### **Agencies, Organizations, Governments, Persons Contacted/Consulted**

Asotin County Board of Commissioners  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
Nez Perce Tribe  
Rogersburg lot owners  
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Washington State Natural Heritage Program  
Washington Division of Aeronautics  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
US Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
National Marine Fisheries Service

A list of people who wrote or provided comments at meetings about the activity plan is in the analysis file.

### **Public Participation and Notification**

A public scoping meeting was held in Clarkston, Washington, on April 2, 1996, and another on February 5, 1998. The meetings were attended by 32 persons, including representatives of the Nez Perce Tribe and the Asotin County Commission. The purpose of the meetings was to gather issues and concerns for management of the public lands in the Lime Hill area of the Grande Ronde ACEC. News releases were also made in the Lewiston Tribune.

Scoping comments were submitted at the public meetings or in writing by individuals, organizations, agencies, and the Nez Perce Tribe. Notes documenting the major issues and concerns raised during the scoping meetings are available for review in the analysis file at the Baker Resource Area office. Comment letters that were received are also on file in the Baker Resource Area office. Comments ranged from opposition to allowing public vehicle access to the Rogersburg Access Road and Snake River Flat Road, to favoring vehicle access to the Grande Ronde River mouth for fishing and to Snake River Flat by aircraft. Public access, protection of wildlife populations and habitats, and control of noxious weeds were common concerns.

Twelve pilots contacted BLM to express their desire to have the Snake River Flat Road open for emergency aircraft landing, recreation access, and search/rescue training operations. Two pilots represented the interests of Washington and Idaho aviation associations respectively. It was suggested that BLM consider opportunities for local pilot organizational chapters to "adopt an airport" for maintenance of a landing strip on BLM-managed land, with Washington State potentially assuming responsibility and liability under a lease arrangement. Several other pilots stated that although they had not personally used the area, they would be interested in such use .

## **List of Preparers**

Clair Button	Botany
John Denney	Soil/Water/Air
Matt Kniesel	Wildlife Habitat
Ralph Kuhns	Geology and Mineral Resources
Mark Lacy	Fish Habitat
Kevin McCoy	Recreation and Visual Resources/Noxious Weeds
Gene McLaughlin	Rangeland Vegetation
Jack Melland	Wildlife Habitat
Mary Oman	Cultural Resources
Fred Osborne	Surface Protection/Noxious Weeds
Jackie Dougan	Fisheries Biologist
Vicki Kellerman	Recreation and Visual Resources
Mike Woods	Noxious Weeds
Greg Miller	Wildlife Habitat

## GLOSSARY/ACRONYMS

**ACEC:** An Area of Critical Environmental Concern is a special land use designation defined in BLM regulations as an area "within the public lands where special management attention is required (when such areas are developed or used or where no development is required) to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources, or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards". ACEC designation is specified within the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA).

**ATV:** All-terrain vehicle. Three or four wheeled, small, motorized vehicle used for riding rough roads.

**AUM:** Animal unit month; the amount of forage required to sustain one cow and calf or their equivalent for one month (one AUM equals six bighorn sheep months).

**Bureau-Sensitive Species:** Species eligible as Federally listed or candidate, state-listed or state-candidate (plant) status, or otherwise approved for this category by the State Director.

**Candidate Species:** Any species included in the Federal Register "Notice of Review" that are being considered for listing as threatened or endangered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Cultivar:** Cultivar refers to a native species that is put under cultivation.

**Cultural Resources:** Fragile and nonrenewable elements of the environment, including archaeological remains (historic and prehistoric) and socio-cultural values traditionally held by ethnic groups (including sacred places, traditionally utilized raw materials, etc).

**FWS:** US Fish and Wildlife Service

**Locatable Minerals:** Minerals subject to exploration, development, and disposal by staking mining claims as authorized by the Mining Law of 1872, as amended. This includes gold, silver, and other uncommon minerals not subject to lease or sale.

**NMFS:** National Marine Fisheries Service

**NRA:** National Recreation Area

**OHV:** Off-road vehicle: Any motorized track or wheeled vehicle capable of cross-country travel over natural terrain.

**Prescribed Fire:** The introduction of fire to an areas under regulated conditions for specific management purposes (usually vegetation manipulation or fuels reduction).

**RMP:** Resource Management Plan; current generation of land use plans developed by the BLM under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

**Special Status Species:** Plant or animal species falling into any one of the following categories - Federally listed threatened or endangered species, species proposed for Federal listing as threatened or endangered, candidate species for Federal listing, State-listed species, Bureau-sensitive species, Bureau-assessment species.

**Traditional Cultural Property:** Historic properties that have significance deriving from the role that the property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.

**USFWS:** US Fish and Wildlife Service.

**VRM:** visual resource management. Classifications are explained in the RMP/ROD, page 49.

**Visual Resource:** The visible physical features of a landscape.

**WDFW:** Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

**WDNR:** Washington Department of Natural Resources

## **LIME HILL AREA AND ALTERNATIVE MAPS**

Map 1 - Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Planning Area

Map 2 - Road Names

Map 3 - Alternative A - No Action

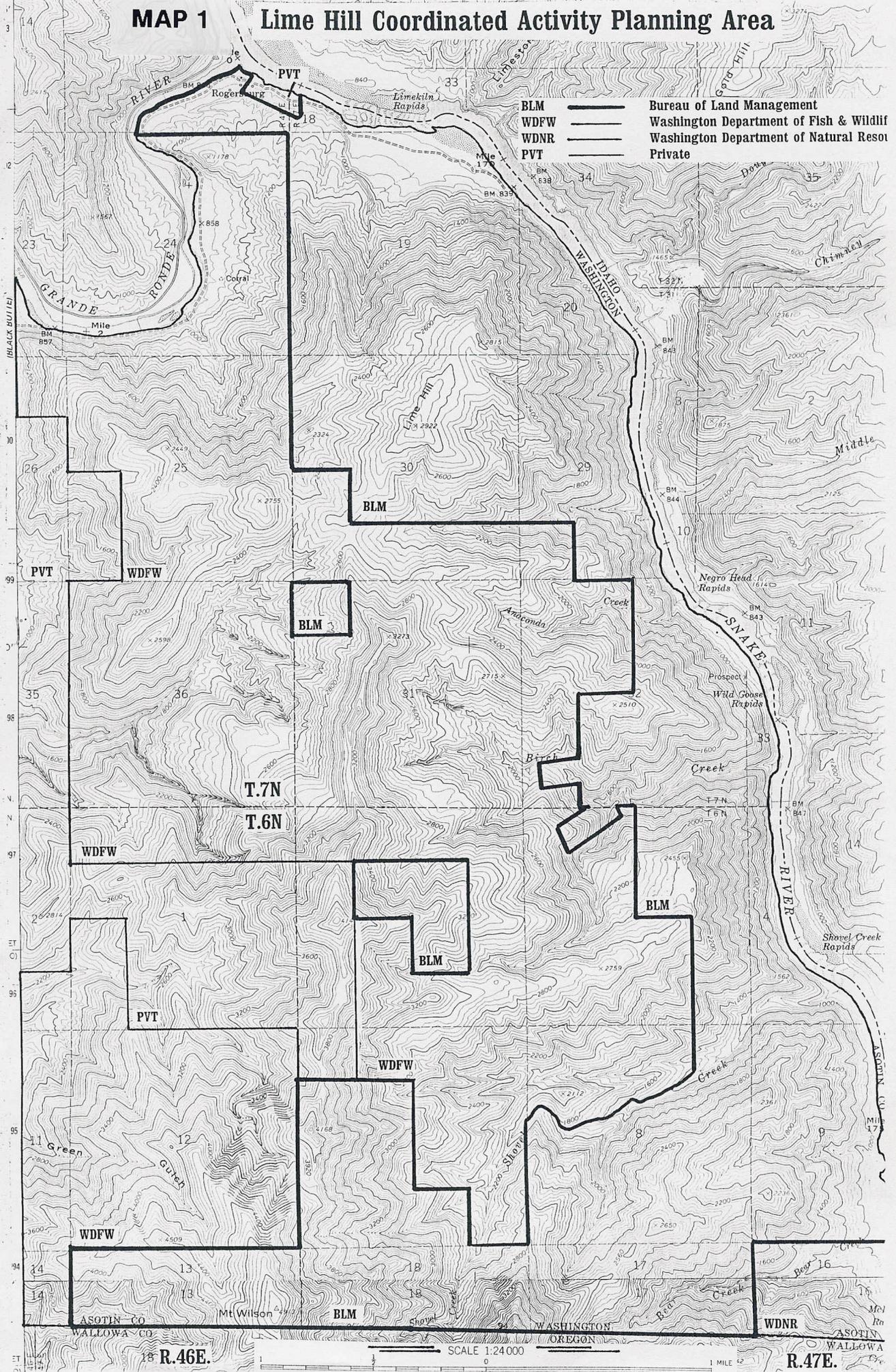
Map 4 - Alternative B - Preferred

Map 5 - Alternative C - Recreation Emphasis

Map 6 - Alternative D - Aircraft Landing

# MAP 1

# Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Planning Area



BLM Bureau of Land Management  
WDFW Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife  
WDNR Washington Department of Natural Resources  
PVT Private



MAP 3

HELLER  
BAR  
BOAT  
RAMP

ALTERNATIVE A  
NO ACTION

SNAKE  
RIVER

GATES TO BE  
UNLOCKED

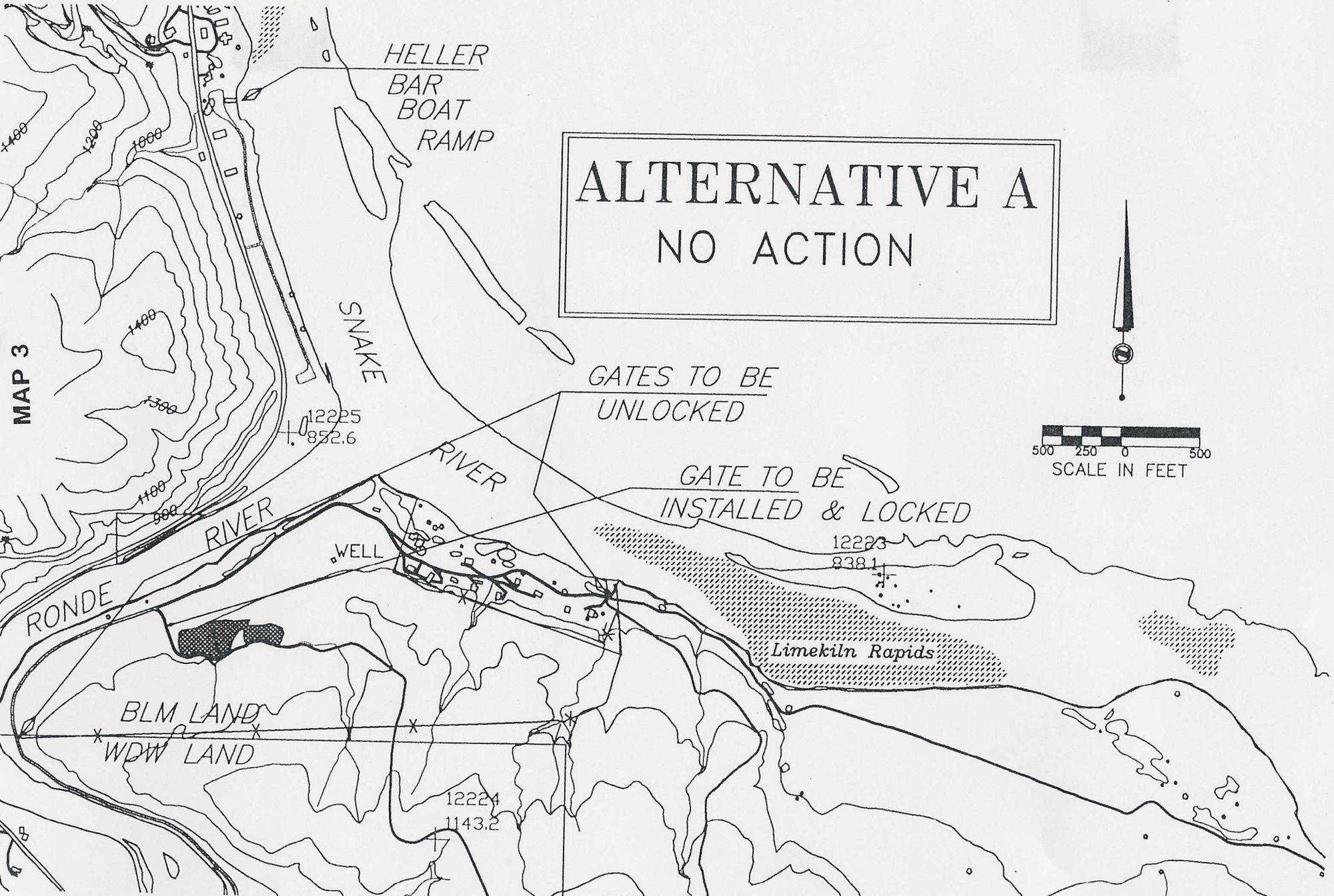
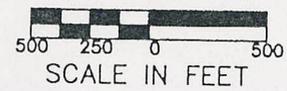
GATE TO BE  
INSTALLED & LOCKED

RONDE  
RIVER

WELL

Limekiln Rapids

BLM LAND  
WDW LAND

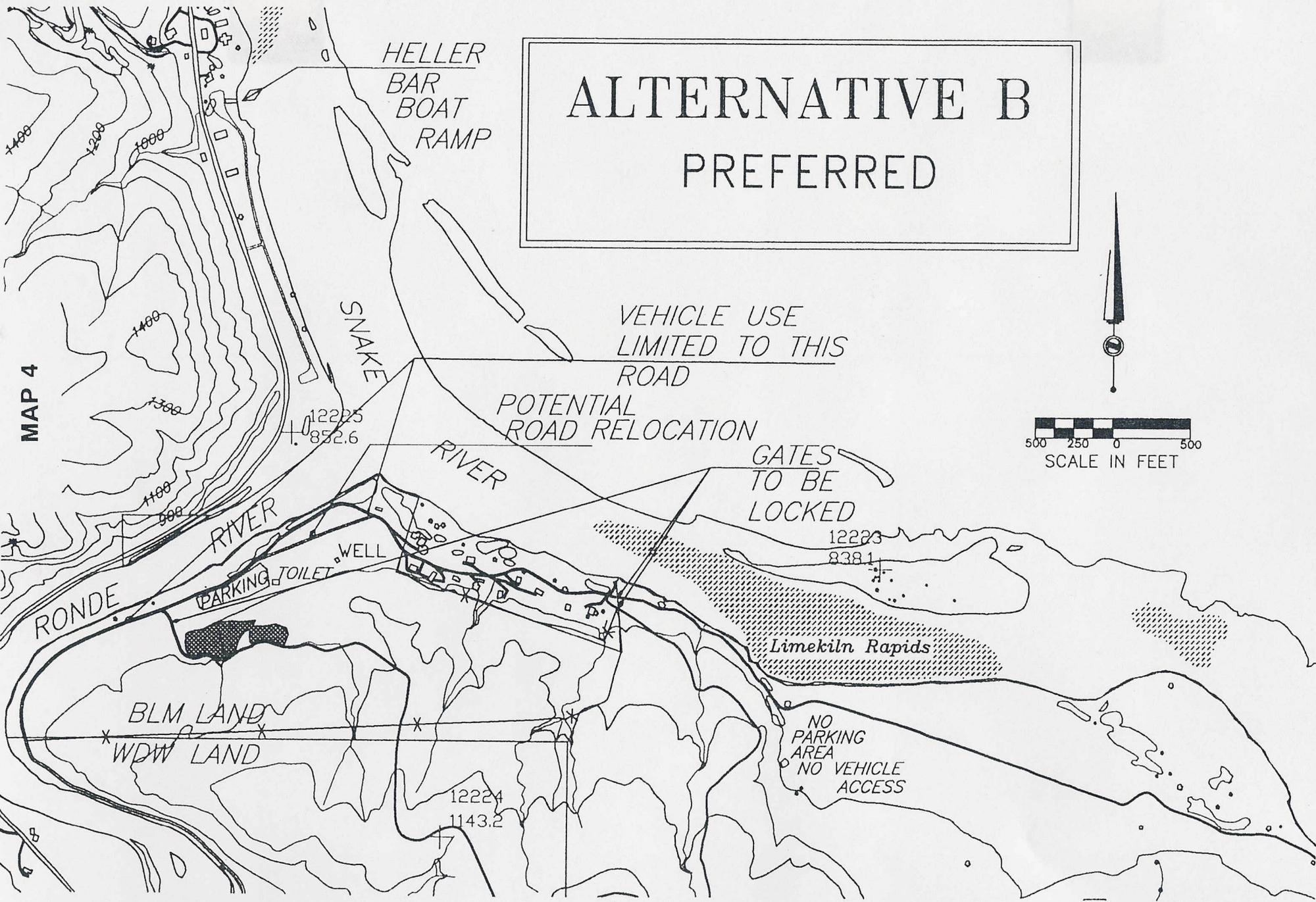


12225  
852.6

12223  
838.1

12224  
1143.2

# ALTERNATIVE B PREFERRED



MAP 4

HELLER  
BAR  
BOAT  
RAMP

ALTERNATIVE B  
PREFERRED

VEHICLE USE  
LIMITED TO THIS  
ROAD

POTENTIAL  
ROAD RELOCATION

GATES  
TO BE  
LOCKED



RONDE  
RIVER

SNAKE  
RIVER

RIVER

Limekiln Rapids

BLM LAND  
WDW LAND

NO  
PARKING  
AREA  
NO VEHICLE  
ACCESS

PARKING TOILET WELL

1400  
1200  
1000

1400  
1300

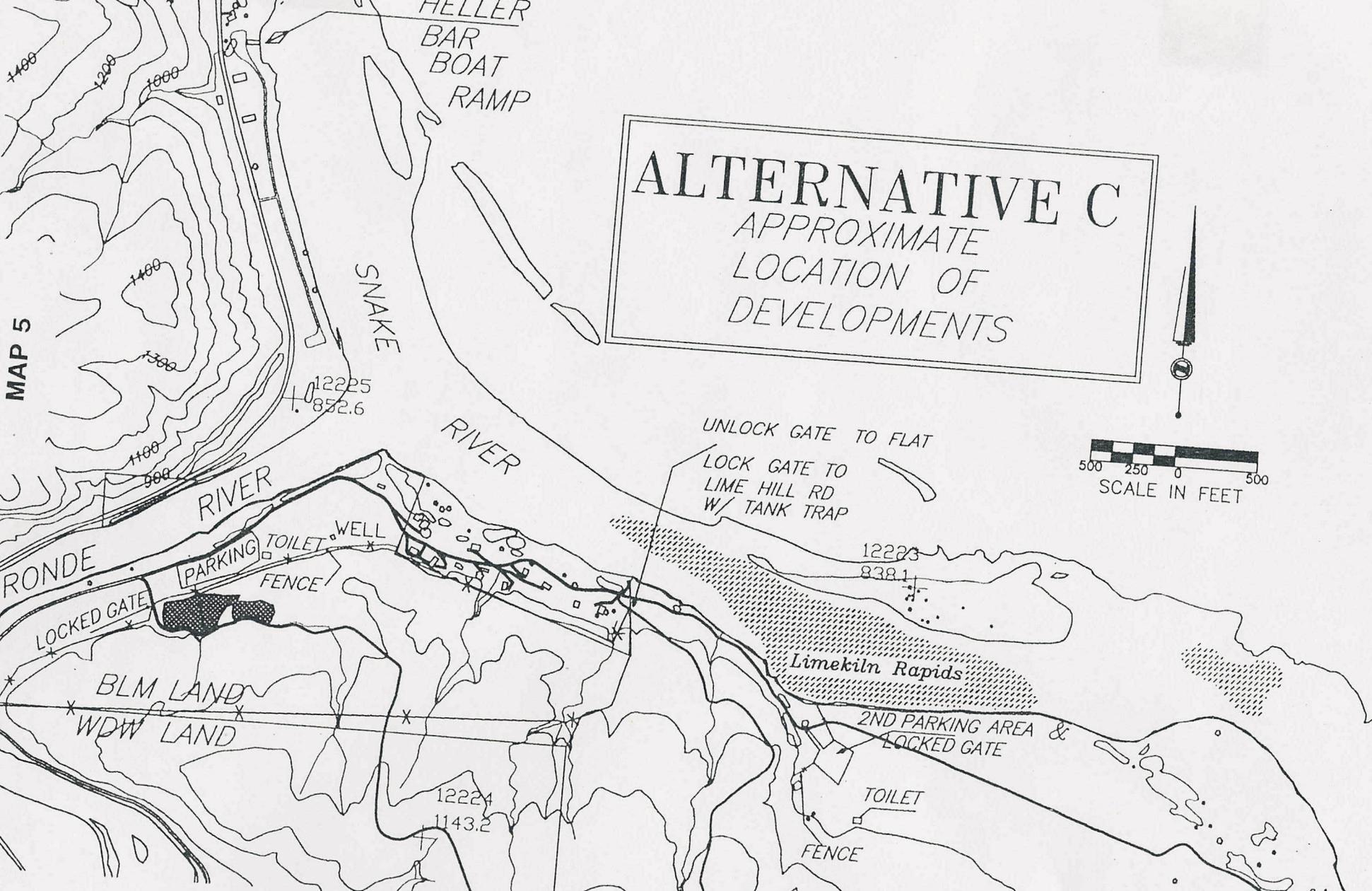
1100  
900

12225  
852.6

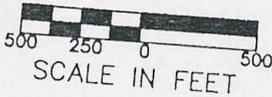
12223  
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12224  
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MAP 5



**ALTERNATIVE C**  
 APPROXIMATE  
 LOCATION OF  
 DEVELOPMENTS



# ALTERNATIVE D

MAP 6

HELLER  
BAR  
BOAT  
RAMP

SNAKE  
RIVER

RONDE  
RIVER

WELL

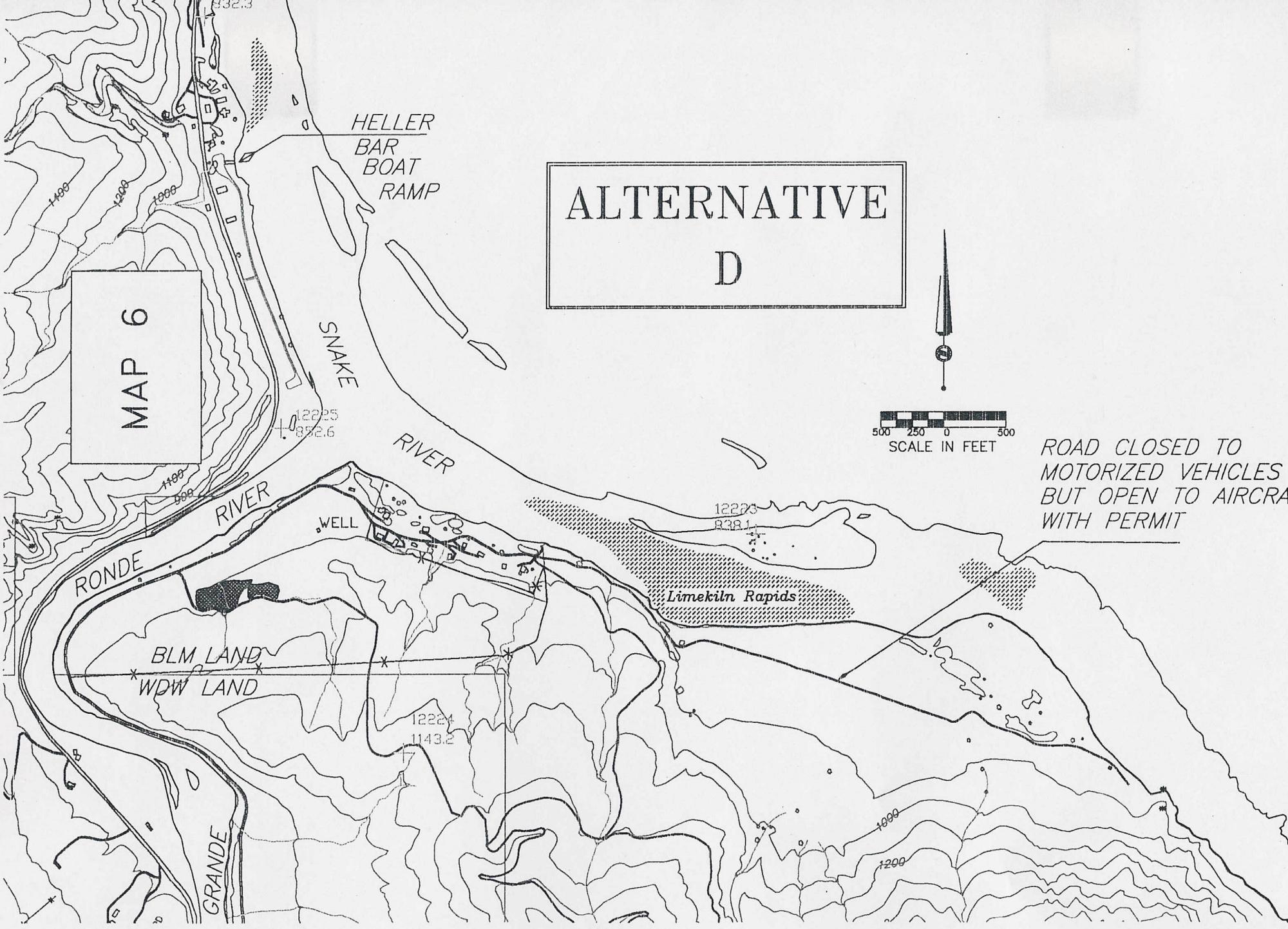
Limekiln Rapids

BLM LAND  
WDW LAND

GRANDE



ROAD CLOSED TO  
MOTORIZED VEHICLES  
BUT OPEN TO AIRCRAFT  
WITH PERMIT



**APPENDIX A  
LIME HILL AREA COORDINATED ACTIVITY PLAN  
GRANDE RONDE ACEC**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Background**

In 1989, the Bureau of Land Management designated the Grande Ronde Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) through the Baker Resource Management Plan Record of Decision.

The ACEC includes public land on the Grande Ronde River in Oregon and Washington State, and on the Snake River between the Oregon-Washington State boundary and the mouth of the Grande Ronde. Relevant and important values in this area of the Grande Ronde ACEC are wildlife habitat, anadromous fish habitat, natural ecosystem processes including native plant communities and special status plant and animal species habitat, cultural resources, scenic values, and recreation opportunities. This coordinated activity plan addresses management for the portion of the Grande Ronde ACEC which is adjacent to Lime Hill.

In November 1992 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acquired 2,112 acres of land in the ACEC near the mouth of the Grande Ronde River. The purpose of the acquisition was to consolidate public ownership and improve management of important resources in the Grande Ronde ACEC (Grande Ronde/Snake River Acquisition, Environmental Assessment OR-035-2-13). The public involvement process for the acquisition included presentations to the Asotin County Commission, newspaper notices, and a formal opportunity for public review and comment on the acquisition environmental assessment (EA). Public comments were received in support of the acquisition of these lands.

Between 1993 and 1995, land exchanges resulted in the acquisition and consolidation of additional public lands in the Grande Ronde Wild and Scenic River corridor and the Grande Ronde ACEC in Oregon and Washington. The Grande Ronde ACEC presently consists of approximately 13,000 acres of public land in the Grande Ronde and Snake River canyons.

In 1995, a BLM IDT began field assessments to identify needs and recommend planned management actions for all recently acquired public lands along the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. The Lime Hill area near Rogersburg was included in the initial field assessments. The interdisciplinary team recommended that an activity plan was needed to protect ACEC values and to facilitate cooperative management with the adjacent Chief Joseph Wildlife Area.

The lands within this proposed activity plan are located in the northeast portion of the Grande Ronde ACEC, in Asotin County, Washington. The activity plan area encompasses 4,280 acres of BLM-managed land from the mouth of the Grande Ronde River, south to Bear Creek on the Snake River

near the Oregon-Washington state line. The plan area includes shoreline on the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers, the uplands of Lime Hill, and the lower reaches of Anaconda Creek, Birch Creek, Shovel Creek, and land adjacent to Bear Creek. The Hells Canyon National Recreation Area is located to the south, and shares a 2-mile boundary with these BLM lands at the Oregon-Washington state line.

A public meeting was held in April, 1996, to scope issues and concerns to be considered in developing planned management actions and addressing public access for the Lime Hill area. The public meeting in Clarkston, Washington, was announced by public notice in the Lewiston Morning Tribune. Two newspaper articles in the Lewiston Tribune also provided notice of the public scoping and management issues. Finally, BLM and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) representatives met informally to discuss components of the proposed activity plan.

In spring 1996 the BLM designated an existing gravel pit in the planning area as a community mineral material site. BLM has subsequently authorized the removal of a limited volume of sand and gravel by Asotin County (Rogersburg Sand and Gravel Community Pit, EA OR-035-5-11). In July 1996 a temporary vehicle closure and restrictions to protect ACEC values were established for this area, pending the completion of an activity plan. Public notification of the emergency closure was provided by Federal Register Notice on July 12, 1996, by letter to interested citizens, and by news release.

In November of 1997 the Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan and Environmental Assessment (OR-035-97-02) were made available for public comment. In response to the numerous inquiries and concerns expressed, an additional public meet was held in Clarkston, Washington on February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1998 and the comment period was extended until February 22, 1998. Many comments regarding the use of the Snake River Flat Road as an aircraft landing area were received during this period.

Since the time of the original scientific assessment in 1996-1997 both Steelhead and Bull Trout were listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1974. A Biological Assessment for the Lime Hill Plan was submitted as part of the *Biological Assessment for Activities Associated With Bureau of Land Management Lands within the Lower Snake-Asotin Watershed* published in December of 1998.

### **Purpose of the Activity Plan**

The purpose of this activity plan is to identify management objectives, constraints, and planned actions for protection and enhancement of ACEC values, while providing for public access and uses compatible with maintaining ACEC resource values in the vicinity of Lime Hill, near Rogersburg, Washington (see Map). This activity plan applies only to lands administered by the BLM. The plan provides interim protection and management for ACEC resources until the next land use plan amendment or revision is completed.

### **Public Scoping**

Issues and concerns identified by the public during scoping included public access (what level of

public access will be allowed, how will it be provided), public health and safety (how will BLM ensure that recreation uses do not result in user conflicts), protection of wildlife and fish/wildlife habitat (how will BLM protect habitat for game and non-game species while providing for public access), protection of cultural resources, recreation opportunities (will the property be open to hunting and fishing and camping, what type of recreation facilities will be provided, how will recreation uses be managed to prevent environmental degradation), livestock grazing (will it be allowed on acquired lands), and control of noxious weeds (ensure that public uses and management actions are compatible with preventing the spread of noxious weeds).

### **Conformance with Land Use and Other Plans**

The proposed activity plan is in conformance with the Asotin County Shoreline Program (see Appendix B), the Wallowa/Grande Ronde River management plan, and the 1989 Baker Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (RMP/ROD). Copies of these plans are available at the Baker Resource Area office.

Both the Asotin County Shoreline Plan and the Wallowa/Grande Ronde River plan provide management objectives for actions within 200 feet and one-quarter mile, respectively, of the mean high waterline on public lands within the Grande Ronde River corridor.

This management plan is consistent with the management objectives and actions planned for the adjacent Chief Joseph Wildlife Area, administered by WDFW. Those lands that were administered by BLM prior to the new acquisition were previously incorporated into a cooperative management agreement for the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area.

New lands acquired in 1992 were included within the Grande Ronde ACEC in accordance with management direction for land tenure adjustments (RMP/ROD p. 20, 46, 54, 77), which provides that lands acquired with unique and fragile values in special management areas would be protected and managed in accordance with established guidelines.

The management prescription for the Grande Ronde ACEC is to:

"promote protection of the area's unique natural, scenic, geologic, ecologic, and cultural resource values; and to protect wildlife habitat and enhance recreation opportunities. Geologic system values of the Goosenecks National Natural Landmark will be protected. The visual resource will be protected within the viewshed corridor along the rivers; only those uses compatible with maintaining visual resource classifications will be allowed. Habitat for bald eagles, raptors, game and non-game species will be maintained or improved in cooperation with federal and state agencies. An ACEC management plan will be developed to protect natural, scenic, cultural and recreational values. Adjacent lands or inholdings may be acquired to enhance wildlife habitat, cultural resources, and recreational opportunities. A 'no surface occupancy' restriction will be applied to oil and gas exploration or development. Off-road vehicle use will be limited to designated roads and trails. Commercial timber harvest will be restricted to prescriptions that protect or enhance natural, visual and cultural values." (RMP/ROD p. 46).

This plan is tiered to the 1989 Baker RMP/ROD and to the Wallowa-Grande Ronde River management plan. The Baker RMP/ROD describes general management objectives, allocations and actions for the Grande Ronde Geographic Unit (pp. 73-77), which includes this portion of the Grande Ronde ACEC. The decision record for the Rogersburg Sand and Gravel Community Pit Environmental Assessment (OR-035-5-11) is incorporated by reference, with its mitigating measures and design features.

Mitigation measures concurred upon by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through consultation required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) are also incorporated into the plan. The document consulted on was the Biological Assessment for Activities Associated with Bureau of Land Management Lands within the Lower Snake-Asotin Watershed, otherwise referred to as the BA.

### **Relationship to Statutes, Laws and Regulations and Treaties**

The authority for designating and managing Areas of Critical Environmental Concern is found in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). Other laws, regulations and authorities related to the management of critical elements or specific resources, such as cultural resources and threatened/endangered species, are identified in the 1989 Baker RMP/ROD.

These lands are included within the ceded 1855 treaty and traditional use area of the Nez Perce Tribe, and provide (or contribute to) habitat for cultural plants, wildlife, and other treaty and cultural resources.

### **Relationship to Other Plans and Decisions**

#### Vegetation and Noxious Weeds

All actions and mitigating measures related to management of vegetation or noxious weed control are tiered to the Record of Decision for the 1991 Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States Final EIS; the 1986 Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Final EIS; the 1987 Supplement Noxious Weed EIS; the Decision Record for the 1994 Vale District 5-year Noxious Weed Control Program Environmental Assessment; and the Baker Resource Area Noxious Weed Plan. Copies of these documents are available at the Baker Resource Area headquarters office.

#### Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP or Eastside EIS)

The BLM and the US Forest Service have issued the draft Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) Environmental Impact Statement. That project does not address site-specific resource management activities, but rather assesses landscape-scale processes and long-term ecological health issues. Implementation of this activity plan would not limit the implementation of alternatives the ICBEMP project. Eventually, a Record of Decision selecting one of the alternatives addressed could amend certain management directions within the Baker

RMP/ROD, and by extension, this activity plan which tiers to the Baker RMP Final EIS/ROD.

## **EXISTING SITUATION**

Land in the planning area is located near the confluence of the Grande Ronde River and Snake River, in Asotin County, Washington. The area surrounds the community of Rogersburg and is adjacent to the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. Elevations range from 825 feet at the Grande Ronde River, to 4913 feet at the top of Mount Wilson. Principle nearby urban areas are Asotin and Clarkston, Washington and Lewiston, Idaho, located 30-35 miles to the north of the planning area. The main access road to Rogersburg crosses the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area, which is administered by the WDFW (refer to Map 1).

BLM lands provide good quality habitat for wildlife, both game and non-game species. Recreation uses include fishing, hunting, sight-seeing, camping, boating, and off-highway vehicle activity. Public recreation use and access was formerly more limited when a portion of the planning area was in private ownership.

The Rogersburg unincorporated community consists of 17 lots with permanent and seasonal residential home sites. This private land is surrounded by BLM-managed land on three sides and the Snake River on the fourth. The newly acquired BLM lands surrounding Rogersburg may be incorporated into the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area cooperative agreement management area, pending completion of this management plan.

The Grande Ronde River in Washington has no current state or federal Wild/Scenic river designation. The Snake River was designated for study as a potential wild and scenic river, and a study was conducted by the National Park Service in 1980. The study determined that the segment from the National Forest boundary downstream to Asotin was eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic Rivers system. However, the Secretary of Interior did not recommend this designation in 1983, and it was not recommended to Congress in 1985. As a result, the requirements of the Wild and Scenic River Act have been fulfilled and that segment of the Snake River no longer has any status under the Act.

### Relevant and Important Values

The relevant and important values of the Lime Hill portion of the Grande Ronde ACEC are described below.

#### *Wildlife and Threatened/Endangered Terrestrial Animal Habitat*

BLM-managed lands provide high quality upland and riparian habitat for both big game and non-game species, in conjunction with the adjacent Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. Some of the wildlife using these lands include mule deer, resident elk, bighorn sheep, coyote, bear, bobcat, mountain lion, river otter, rough-legged hawk, peregrine falcon, bald eagle, golden eagles, osprey,

heron, mountain quail, Lewis' woodpeckers, short-eared owl, chukars, Hungarian partridge, blue and ruffed grouse, introduced wild turkeys, meadowlarks, vesper sparrows, and other migratory birds. Nearly 190 bird species, 52 mammal species, and 15 reptile species use the area.

The area is critical big game winter habitat for deer and elk herds occupying the Oregon-Washington boundary area. Bighorn sheep use the area throughout the year. Native grasses and shrubs provide winter forage, and the low elevation ensures open ground for wintering herds.

Bald eagles are federally listed as threatened in Oregon and Washington; and peregrine falcons are federally listed as endangered. During the winter, from November to April, bald eagles forage along the major rivers. Peregrines migrate through and forage the area during the spring through fall months. Pacific Townsend's big-eared bat have been found using caves and rock caverns on adjacent State lands. It is assumed that big-eared bats also use this same habitat type on BLM-managed lands.

No bald eagle winter roost trees or nest trees are known to be located on the BLM-administered public lands in the project area. However, osprey and wintering bald eagles perch in a group of deciduous trees located near Rogersburg while foraging along the Grande Ronde and Snake rivers.

#### *Fisheries and Threatened/Endangered Fish Habitat*

The Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers provide habitat for spring chinook, fall chinook, steelhead trout, and bull trout. The spring and fall chinook were listed as threatened by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) under the Endangered Species Act in April 1993. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recently listed the Columbia River bull trout population as a threatened species (June 1999). Steelhead trout were federally listed as threatened on October 17, 1997.

The Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers also provide habitat for rainbow/redband trout, whitefish, sculpins, suckers, peamouth, chisel mouth, squaw fish, smallmouth bass, lamprey, and dace. Sturgeon and catfish are also present in the Snake River.

Although there are no known rearing or spawning perennial streams on BLM-managed land within the project area, intermittent streams contribute to the water quality for the main stem rivers. Fall chinook salmon and steelhead spawn in the Snake and lower Grande Ronde Rivers.

#### *Vegetation*

The range grasslands on upland steep slopes are in good to excellent condition, dominated by healthy bluebunch wheatgrass. Mid-slope areas and the gravel ridges are mixtures of good-condition sites and fair-condition, recovered range sites. The fair-condition range is dominated by sand dropseed and three awn, with minor components of bluebunch wheatgrass becoming re-established. A few basin wild rye are surviving on lower flats, and in swales and drainages. Shoreline flats are in an early seral stage, with an abundance of non-native annual grasses and spot infestations of noxious weeds.

A dense cryptobiotic crust of mosses, lichens, and liverworts is found on surrounding lands, including shoreline flats. The native perennial grasses and the cryptobiotic crust make an important contribution to a succession of native grasses and improved soil stabilization. Cryptobiotic crusts serve an important role as a primary defense against weed expansion, but are susceptible to trampling and disturbance.

Small and scattered stands of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine are located in the upland basins and mountain slopes, and along the shoreline of the Snake River.

### *Noxious Weeds*

Controlling the spread of noxious weeds is required by both federal law and Washington State law. The planning area is located in the Tri-State Noxious Weed Demonstration Area. Interagency cooperators in the Tri-State Demonstration Area include Baker Resource Area BLM, Asotin County, WDFW, the Nez Perce Tribe, Cottonwood Resource Area BLM, Nature Conservancy, the US Forest Service and private landowners. The demonstration area includes public lands where Oregon, Idaho, and Washington share borders along the Snake River.

Regionally, noxious weed invasion and expansion are concerns, with serious environmental and economic implications. Noxious weeds such as yellow star thistle and knapweed are aggressive, spread rapidly, out-compete the re-establishment of native vegetation in disturbed areas, and can transform river recreation locales into unuseable areas. For example, yellow star thistle is Asotin County's most serious weed threat at present. It has spread from about 2,000 acres in 1986 to 10,000 acres by 1991. By 1996 it was estimated that the acreage infested with yellow star thistle had increased five-fold.

The BLM is a partner with other agencies and private landowners. in implementing treatment actions to fulfill the mission of the demonstration area. The mission is to:

Reduce and/or attempt to eradicate existing weed infestations to where they will not have a significant economic or environmental impact; and to prevent establishment of new species and infestations into areas where they do not occur; and restore desirable vegetation where possible.

In the Lime Hill management area, noxious weeds are found in areas of active or recent disturbance, such as the gravel pit, along the Rogersburg Access Road and the Snake River Flat Road, and at spot locations in the uplands and Snake River frontage. Yellow star thistle, diffuse knapweed, and spotted knapweed are found scattered in pockets containing a few to several dozen plants. A larger area of yellow star thistle infestation (approximately 100 acres) was identified and treated in 1996 on the uplands of Lime Hill. A growing population of rush skeletonweed exists on the Snake River Flat. Treatment of these weeds was initiated in 1994 and is continuing. Russian thistle, Scotch thistle and teasel have invaded the disturbed flat and toe slope lands adjacent to the access road to Rogersburg. Other species of concern which might be transported to BLM-managed land are Dalmatian toadflax,

Canada thistle, leafy spurge, and purple loosestrife.

Noxious weeds may be spread by people or animals. One of the culprits in rapid, long-distance noxious weed dispersal is transport in the tire tread or body of any vehicle traveling from a weed infested area to a different location. Because much of the low elevation, flatter rangeland in the management area is in early seral condition, it is highly susceptible to weed invasion. Any ground-disturbing activity in the area creates ideal habitat for noxious weeds.

#### *Threatened/Endangered/Sensitive Plants*

No federally listed threatened/endangered plant species are present or have habitat on the lands covered by the plan. Although it is found elsewhere in Hells Canyon, no habitat for *Mirabilis macfarlanei*, (a federally listed threatened plant) is known on the BLM-managed lands.

However, habitat exists on BLM-managed land for four plant species of management concern. *Lomatium rollinsii* (Rollin's desert-parsley) is a Bureau-sensitive and Washington State-listed threatened plant, previously reported from the vicinity of Heller Bar. This plant has been found on the gravel ridge near the existing Rogersburg community gravel pit, and on the lower slopes around and southeast of Rogersburg. Potentially suitable habitat is primarily on the lower slopes and Snake River Flat southeast of Rogersburg.

*Arabis crucicetosa*, *Astragalus arthuri*, and *Lomatium serpentinum* are three additional species listed as sensitive by Washington State. *Arabis* and *Astragalus* have been confirmed on the moderately steep, northern aspect slopes of BLM-managed land south and east of Rogersburg. *Lomatium serpentinum* has been tentatively identified from habitat along the Snake River.

Although the area is occupied by non-native annual grasses, the entire habitat shows signs of ecological recovery and re-establishment of native perennial grass and forb species. A well developed cryptobiotic crust is present, including an inch-thick moss mat under annual bromes. Lichen development is limited to portions of the site where moisture competition from dominant native perennial grasses has reduced the cover of annual brome.

There is an on-going problem with invasion by noxious weeds, including knapweed, skeletonweed, and yellow star thistle. In particular, weeds pose a primary long-term threat for taking over the habitat for native plants and these special status species.

#### *Riparian/Wetland*

Historically, native riparian communities found at upland springs and seeps and adjacent to perennial water included willow, water birch, cottonwood, aspen, alder, maple, hawthorn, and chokecherry. Intermittent stream riparian components are hackberry, serviceberry, elderberry, ocean spray, mock orange, blackberry, poison oak, and sumac. Cottonwoods have been all but eliminated along the major river riparian zones, but are found on nearby Joseph Creek and its tributaries. On the Snake

River, the riparian vegetation is narrow, lacks structure and diversity, and is dominated by willow and hackberry. The Grande Ronde River riparian shoreline on BLM-managed land also lacks structure and diversity, but the components are present.

In the planning area there are approximately 0.6 miles of shoreline/riparian zone along the Grande Ronde River, and 6 miles of shoreline/riparian zone along the Snake River. On the west bank of the Snake River, a warm creek is located north of Bear Creek on BLM-managed lands. This unique feature was recorded by early land office surveyors. Anaconda Creek, Birch Creek, Shovel Creek, and an upper reach of Bear Creek are the principle ephemeral streams in the planning area.

### *Cultural Resources*

Cultural resources on the BLM-managed lands are within the Snake River National Register Archaeological District. Prehistoric sites on BLM-managed lands include camp sites, possible house pits, storage pits, and rock art (petroglyphs and pictographs). Few inventories have been conducted on the uplands or tributaries. A Class III (intensive) cultural resource inventory of the gravel pit and its undisturbed boundaries has been conducted, and a reconnaissance of the BLM-managed lands on the Grande Ronde and Snake River flats surrounding Rogersburg has been performed. Monitoring of recorded sites in the Snake River National Register District has been conducted, and incidents of vandalism documented. Cultural resource protection signs have been installed at high public-use locations.

No inventories or studies for traditional cultural properties have been conducted in the ACEC. Traditional cultural properties for the Nez Perce Tribe may be located on the lands included in the activity plan, since the area is part of the homeland and traditional use area for the Nez Perce. Traditional cultural properties may include, but are not limited to, places of importance for maintaining the cultural and religious customs, traditions, beliefs, or practices of an ethnic or social group. Whether or not there are any American Indian sacred places in the ACEC is unknown at this time.

Historic cultural resources on the BLM-managed lands within the management area include isolated homestead features, farm equipment, historic mining features, and structures in the Snake River canyon and adjacent uplands. Rogersburg, named after the Rogers family, was established as a post office in 1912. The post office was discontinued in 1939. A ferry across the Grande Ronde River provided access to the town of Rogersburg, where there was once a school and store. The cement foundation remains of the Rogersburg store/post office are located on BLM-managed lands, west of the Rogersburg residential community.

### *Nez Perce Treaty Rights and Traditional Uses*

The lower Grande Ronde River is located within the traditional homeland of the Nez Perce Indians, whose numerous villages were located on the lower Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers, including the

vicinity from Joseph Creek to the mouth of the Grande Ronde. The plan area was historically important for winter occupation, fishing, horse grazing, and hunting by the Nez Perce. These lands were ceded to the US government by the Nez Perce Treaty of 1855. Under the terms of the 1855 Treaty, the Nez Perce retained specific rights and privileges on the ceded lands, including the right to take fish at all usual and accustomed stations; the privilege of hunting, gathering roots and berries; and grazing stock on unclaimed lands in common with citizens. A number of plant and animal species present are known to have been traditionally used by Native Americans within the area. No treaty grazing privilege is currently exercised on the subject lands.

### *Scenic Qualities and Visual Resources*

The plan area on the Grande Ronde and Snake River has high scenic qualities and is designated as visual resource management (VRM) Class II. A Class II designation allows for management actions to take place within the characteristic landscape, but the level of change should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Key observation points for the landscape including the BLM-managed lands are the State park at Heller Bar, the county road west from Heller Bar, the access road into Rogersburg, and vantage points from both the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers.

Existing contemporary developments in the area include the county road, the road to Rogersburg, the gravel access road, residential housing at Rogersburg, Heller Bar, and other locations on both banks of the Grande Ronde River, a State park with parking and boat launching facilities, and overhead powerlines. The characteristic landscape on private land has a high degree of human intrusion at the mid and lower slopes of hills fronting the Grande Ronde River. On public lands there are few intrusions other than an existing gravel pit and the road to Lime Hill. The natural landscape and low level of intrusions contribute to the high scenic quality of Lime Hill and the Snake River canyon.

The Snake River frontage is characterized as rugged and scenic in relatively natural condition. The key observation point for the viewshed is visible only from the Snake River itself by float or power boaters. There is little to no intrusion on the Washington side, except for isolated and unobtrusive evidence of historic mining activity. This natural-occurring landscape coupled with the low level of intrusions add significantly to the scenic quality of the Snake River Canyon. However, numerous developments (including cabins and outhouses) occur on private lands in Idaho located just opposite this ownership.

### Other Resources Found in the Area of Critical Environmental Concern

#### *Recreation*

Hunting, sight-seeing, wildlife viewing, camping, and fishing are the primary recreation activities in the project area. There are no developed camping, parking, or boat launch/take-out facilities on BLM-managed lands. The Heller Bar public boat launch and parking site (on the west bank of the Snake River) meets the needs of both public and commercial floater/boater use of the Grande Ronde and Snake River. The launch access is on Washington State land and is cooperatively managed by

Washington State, the BLM, and the US Forest Service to serve the boating public of the Snake, Salmon, and Grande Ronde Rivers.

Access to the lands for the general public has been limited to boating and hiking. Physical access exists for vehicles over improved roads, but is presently limited by locked gates. Pedestrian and horse access to BLM-managed land has not been restricted. When part of the land was in private ownership, use and access were limited to owners, local residents, and their friends. Existing roads and access are further discussed below.

With the limited vehicle access, public recreation use on BLM-managed land has been light. However, on adjacent State lands fronting the Grande Ronde River, recreation use levels are much higher and indicate the environmental effects that could potentially occur on similar BLM-managed lands. Overnight and day camping, general visitor parking, and fishing are common on State land from late spring to early fall. Impacts observed as a result of this recreation use include recurring use of favored campsites, vegetation removal and soil compaction, fire rings, human waste and litter, and off-road travel and vehicle pullouts in the floodplain/riparian zone and on lands adjacent to the developed road. Some off-road vehicle use occurs despite signs and closures posted on the state property.

The Snake River shoreline is used by both float and power boaters. For float boaters, this reach of BLM-managed lands is the last opportunity to take-out or overnight camp before Heller Bar. During late summer, beaches receive high use for fishing, camping, and swimming. Recreation impacts observed include recurring camping at favored locations, vegetation removal and soil compaction, fire rings, human waste, and occasional litter on beaches or in the riparian zone.

The Washington segment of the Grande Ronde River is presently managed as a contiguous component of the Wallowa/Grande Ronde Rivers corridor under the Baker Resource Area Resource Management Plan (Wallowa/Grande Ronde River Plan, p. 50). Within the ¼ mile corridor of the Grande Ronde, current BLM regulations require the use of fire pans (or similar devices to contain fire) and proper disposal of human waste, campfire, and other debris. State and private lands in this segment are subject to the management provisions set forth in the State of Washington and Asotin County Shoreline Program.

#### *Public Access (Physical and Legal)*

Physical access refers to the existence of a road or other route, such as a foot trail or waterway, which is available for travel. Legal access refers to a legal right or easement which provides for such travel.

Physical vehicular access to BLM-managed lands is provided over a road paralleling the south bank of the Grande Ronde River, across land administered by the WDFW as part of the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. Asotin County does not consider this a county road, and maintains it incidentally to access a gravel source on BLM-managed lands. The WDFW has not designated or maintained this

road for public traffic, although vehicle travel is allowed under current management. Periodically the road is subject to damage from high-water flood events.

For the majority of the public, access to BLM-managed lands is available by foot over the existing road, or by boat from the rivers. Residents of Rogersburg have had access through a locked gate, in accordance with an existing easement across BLM-managed lands. However, the easement on BLM-managed land does not confer or extend any legal vehicle access for the public across Washington State lands to reach the BLM-managed lands. The easement was executed in 1990 when the surrounding property was in private ownership, and was transferred as an existing right when BLM acquired the land.

General public access by vehicle to BLM-managed lands has been limited by the presence of locked gates on existing roads. These gates have led to a public perception that BLM-managed lands are more accessible, and therefore exclusively used by Rogersburg residents. Even though pedestrian and boater access from adjacent lands has not been restricted, a locked gate on WDFW land has been a source of concern to the motorized public.

- The first gate was located on WDFW land, near the BLM boundary. The public and Asotin County requested that this gate be unlocked, and WDFW has since opened this gate. This gate did prevent general public vehicle access beyond that point, but allowed access to Rogersburg lot owners. A sign located on State land alerted the public to the gate on the road ahead, notifying them that there was no vehicle turn-around available at that point. The gate was originally installed to control vehicle access when the lands were in private ownership. When the land was first acquired by BLM, visitors would park on WDFW land and walk ¼ mile to reach the Grande Ronde shoreline near its mouth.
- A second gate is located on the road at the west boundary of the Rogersburg community. The gate and road within the property boundaries of the Rogersburg community are not under BLM jurisdiction.
- A third gate is located on BLM-managed land at the east boundary of Rogersburg. This gate provides entry to BLM's Snake River Flat Road. It was locked by BLM July 1996, following publication and implementation of a temporary emergency vehicle closure to protect resource values. Vehicle access is restricted to authorized persons only.

Four roads are located on BLM-managed lands (Refer to Map 2: Road Names, appendix). These roads are described and named for the purpose of discussion and analysis only. Under the emergency closure the Snake River Flat Road, Gravel Pit Road, and Lime Hill Road are currently closed to use by motorized vehicles. The purpose of the emergency action was to protect public health and safety and resource values pending completion of this plan. Motorized vehicle use of these existing roads (including fixed-wing and rotary aircraft) is addressed in the attached environmental assessment alternatives.

- The **Rogersburg Access Road** is about one-half mile in length and is located on BLM-managed land, between WDFW land and the west boundary of Rogersburg. The first gate was located at the entry to this road.

The road is graveled and maintained and provides access to the Rogersburg lot owners. Portions of the access road near the bank of the Grande Ronde River was damaged by a January 1997 flood, and has subsequently been reconstructed. This road is subject to the previously mentioned easement held by the Rogersburg lot owners. The easement guarantees access across BLM-managed lands for the Rogersburg lot owners, but does not legally exclude other public access. The easement does not include any portion of the existing road on State lands.

- The **Snake River Flat Road** is about one mile long, from where it begins east of Rogersburg to its terminus on BLM-administered land. The third locked gate is located at the entry to this road. Historically, this road was used for private vehicle access and private aircraft landing.

This road begins at a gated fence on BLM-managed land and parallels the Snake River for approximately one-quarter mile located in Section 18. In January 1997 a small section of hillside slumped onto this road segment, blocking vehicle passage. The road then crosses a large bench for about three-quarters of a mile before it ends at a canyon bluff on the Snake River (Section 19, near Benchmark 839). For discussion purposes, the large, level bench is called Snake River Flat. It is on the south shore of the Snake River, with about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of river frontage. The extreme south edge of the Flat is hemmed in by the rugged steep topography of the Snake River canyon, which is impassable by vehicle or on foot. Access to the canyon upriver beyond this point is by boat.

Presently, the road is an unsurfaced dirt two-track which has not been maintained since the property was acquired in public ownership. The surface has become revegetated with native and introduced grasses, and noxious weeds in disturbed areas. Noxious weeds control measures along the road and on the Snake River Flat are targeted at rush skeletonweed, knapweed, and yellow starthistle - three species of high concern for weed control in Asotin County and neighboring states. Although it extends east of Rogersburg, there is no known record that this dead-end segment was historically used or maintained as a designated county road.

Aircraft Landing A portion of the Snake River Flat dirt road located in Section 19 is reported by pilots to have been used as a light fixed-wing aircraft landing area for emergency landing and for recreational access. Recreational purposes identified by pilots who contacted the BLM include solitude, fishing, sight-seeing, "fly-ins," and camping. According to the Washington State Division of Aeronautics, the location is not presently a state regulated or federally designated or maintained landing area, nor was it identified on aviation maps or inventories as a landing area. There is no existing right-of-way, easement, agreement, or other legal instrument relating to the use of the landing area by members of the public or organizations that is recognized by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The road has not been maintained for emergency or general aircraft landing by the BLM. When the land was in private ownership, the road served two purposes. It provided vehicle access to a recreational leased cabin (since removed) at the south end of the flat, and served as a landing area for private aircraft. The road was maintained for these purposes by the former private landowner, and if use by others occurred, it is assumed to have been with the landowners' permission. The road is level and straight for about 2,000 feet across the flat, before it drops onto a lower river terrace. Homemade tie-downs are located at the east end of this road. There are no other improvements presently in place (either structural or safety-related) associated with past or recent use of the road as a landing area.

Although BLM has no formal record of frequency of aircraft landing on the road, some pilots and local residents have stated that the road has been intermittently used by only a few local pilots, primarily to access the Snake River shoreline for fishing during the summer.

The nearest public airports are 30 miles north at Clarkston, Washington, and Lewiston, Idaho. Four primitive airstrips are located upriver in the Snake River canyon, on National Forest System land: Pittsburg Landing, Dug Bar, Big Bar, and Temperence Creek. Two additional airstrips administered by the USFS on the Hells Canyon rim in Oregon are Memaloose Flat and Lord Flat.

The Snake River Flat and shoreline on BLM-managed land are neither remote nor inaccessible. Alternate means of accessing the Flat and river shoreline for recreational purposes would include travel by land-based vehicle and walking less than one-half mile from the nearest road. Boat access to the Flat and shoreline is readily available from the Heller Bar public boat launch site (one-half mile northwest on the Snake River), or from other primitive public launch sites on the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers.

- The **Gravel Pit Road** is about one-quarter mile in length. There is now a locked gate on this road, as part of the mitigation previously identified for the Rogersburg Sand and Gravel Community Pit designation. The gate prevents unauthorized removal of the sand and gravel from the county and community pit, and will forestall other unauthorized motorized vehicle activity and the spread of noxious weeds.

The Gravel Pit Road begins at the Rogersburg Access Road and continues southeast through an existing gravel pit on BLM-managed land, then onto State land. The State lands are fenced and closed to motorized vehicles (the portion of the road which continues onto State land is outside the jurisdiction of the BLM). South of the gravel pit, this road on BLM-managed land is a two-track trail which is not maintained, and is only passable by four-wheel drive or high clearance vehicles.

- The **Lime Hill road** ascends the steep north slope of Lime Hill. There is a wire gate at the entrance to this road east of Rogersburg.

The road, built in the 1960s to access a limestone deposit, has sloughed in many places and is

now revegetated with native grasses. The road was constructed onto a 40-60 percent slope, has many switchbacks, and ends on the mountainside. The road is not passable by standard highway or four-wheel drive passenger vehicles. It has not been maintained for vehicle traffic for many years. Past uses appear to have been limited to infrequent hunter access using ATVs (all terrain vehicles). Lower reaches of the road are used for administrative purposes (for example, weed control) by WDFW and the BLM.

During hunting season, vehicle access for hunters is controlled by WDFW on the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. There are no maintained access roads or easements to the BLM-managed lands on the Snake River breaks. The top of Lime Hill is accessible by road through State lands from Joseph Creek. The road is closed most of the year under the State's wildlife area management program.

#### Off-Highway Vehicle Designations

Under the management direction for the Grande Ronde ACEC, off-road vehicle uses are restricted to designated roads and trails. This means that travel off existing roads and trails is prohibited. In addition, to protect resource values, portions of existing roads may be designated for travel, while other portions may be closed to travel by motorized vehicles. Motorized vehicles include highway and off-highway vehicles (OHVs, such as motorbikes, snowmobiles, ATVs), and aircraft.

Unauthorized OHV uses have been intermittent on the BLM-administered public lands, but are increasing on adjacent State wildlife area lands. State lands are closed to OHV uses, except for administrative purposes. The OHV closure on State lands reduces harassment of wildlife, and protects the native vegetation and soils from disturbance caused by off-road vehicle travel.

Under the emergency measure presently in effect, vehicle use is allowed only on the Rogersburg Access Road, west of Rogersburg. All other roads are closed to motorized vehicle use, except for specifically authorized administrative purposes.

#### Existing Land Uses/Authorizations

The existing road access easement across BLM-managed lands to the Rogersburg lot owners is an authorized use, transferred along with the warranty deed at the time of acquisition of the property.

An overhead powerline supplying local residences at Rogersburg and upstream on the Grande Ronde River crosses BLM-managed lands for approximately one-half mile. The line is located in T 7 N, R 46 E, Section 13, SE¼. It crosses the mouth of the Grande Ronde River from Heller Bar to a point west of Rogersburg. Part of the line extends to Rogersburg, while another segment extends further west and crosses the Grande Ronde River to residences on the river's west bank. The power line was in place when that portion of the property was in private ownership, but is not presently recorded as a BLM right-of-way.

There are no communication sites or other facility rights-of-way authorized on the BLM-managed lands.

## Geology and Mineral Resources

Occurrences of mineral resources on the BLM-managed lands are limestone, sand and gravel, placer gold and silver, and copper. Lime Hill contains a large body of high grade limestone. However, when the property was acquired by BLM, a decision was reached that the limestone would not be available for mineral entry or development.

The Rogersburg Sand and Gravel Community Pit has been authorized, with free use for Asotin County, for a three-year term ending 1999. A one year extension will be authorized for Asotin County for the year 2000 and possibly beyond. There is enough gravel available now for their use, BLM's use for rocking the parking loop, as well as some small sales to the public without disturbing any additional ground beyond the current boundary of the pit. In the near future the BLM will consider expanding the current boundary of the pit and do the appropriate NEPA analysis and consultation.

The gravel pit has been developed in Bonneville flood deposits. These gravelly sands were deposited about 15,000 years ago in a big eddy at the mouth of the Grande Ronde River during the Bonneville flood. These flood deposits are underlain by Tertiary age, Grande Ronde and Imnaha basalts of the Columbia River Basalt Group and older, pre-Tertiary age, metamorphosed submarine lava flows, and marine sedimentary rocks. This mineral material source does not need to be crushed or screened prior to use for road surfacing maintenance. Deposits of this nature are not common in the Asotin County area.

The low areas around Rogersburg are covered with alluvial sediments, including Bonneville flood deposits. These sediments are underlain by Columbia River Basalt flows, except for the east end of the Snake River Flat. The Limekiln fault is a major fault zone which bisects the Snake River Flat and extends to the southwest along the west side of Lime Hill. The Limekiln fault may be a major recharge zone for groundwater in this area. The area south of the fault consists of much older (pre-Tertiary age) oceanic rocks (including limestone) and granitic intrusions. These older rocks outcrop along the Snake River to the south.

Mineral resource occurrences on BLM-managed lands include sand and gravel, limestone, placer gold and silver, lode Cu-Au-Ag-Zn-Pb, and warm springs. Alluvial deposits along the Snake River are known to contain very small particles of placer gold and silver. There are current mining claims located on BLM-managed lands in the vicinity of Wild Goose Rapids on the Snake River. Prospecting for base and precious minerals has occurred in Hells Canyon for more than 100 years in the older, pre-Tertiary, "exotic terrain" rocks. The following prospects are known to occur on public land south along the Snake River from the confluence with the Grande Ronde:

- Mammoth Cu-Au-Ag-Pb prospect, about 2.5 miles;
- Wild Goose Rapids placer gold and silver prospect presently claimed, about 4 miles;
- Shovel Creek Copper prospect, about 5.5 miles;
- Warm Springs Group Cu-Au-Ag-Zn-Pb prospects, about 6 miles.

None of these prospects are known to have produced any substantial amount of ore.

### Soils/Prime Farmland

Lowland and shoreline soil units in the area include Chard Loam on slopes varying from 2-40%, which may include areas of Dallesport very gravelly sandy loam; and Joseph cobbly loamy sand on 0-3% slopes. The Grande Ronde river bank is within the Joseph cobbly loamy sand map unit, while the flat and hill slopes are Chard Loam units. Snake River Flat includes soils in the Chard Loam, Veazie Silt Loam, and Bridgewater stony sandy loam map units, with Joseph cobbly loamy sand (formed in basaltic alluvium) along the shoreline. Permeability is moderate to moderately rapid for these units. Water erosion is slight to moderate for slopes less than 25 percent; and severe to very severe for slopes exceeding 25 - 30 percent. Small areas of Chard loam (2-5% slope) and Veazie silt loam (0-3% slope) mapped on the Snake River flat, if irrigated, would be considered Prime Farmland. These areas are not irrigated on the BLM lands, although they may have been cultivated when the lands were in private ownership. Bridgewater Variant Stony loam on 0 - 8% percent slopes along the Snake River was formed in alluvium, permeability is moderate in the surface and very rapid in underlying material, runoff is slow and hazard of water erosion is slight.

Other upland and canyon soil units vary from silt loams to stony clay loams. Four maps units comprise the majority of these mountain and canyonland soils. The Ferdinand Variant-Mallory Variant Association on 8 to 70 percent slopes located on Lime Hill includes well drained cobbly clay loam, permeability is slow, runoff is rapid, and the hazard of water erosion is very severe. The Limekiln Vairant very gravelly loam on 30-70 percent slopes is a shallow, well drained soil on south facing canyon walls. Permeability is moderate, runoff rapid, and hazard of water erosion is very severe. Limekiln-Rock Outcrop Complex on 40-120 percent slopes is on south-facing canyon walls and is mainly very stony silt loam with rock outcrops. Permeability is moderate, runoff is very rapid and water erosion hazard is very severe. The Matheny Variant-Limekiln Variant Complex on 60-90 percent slopes is located on north facing canyon walls, permeability is moderate and water erosion hazard is very severe.

### Water Resources

The area is semi-arid with low precipitation. Yearly precipitation averages between 12 to 18 inches, most of which falls in the form of rain rather than snow, resulting in a low snow pack. Streams on the BLM-managed lands are ephemeral, with the upland springs the only year-round water in addition to the Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers. In the immediate vicinity of Rogersburg, one well is recorded with the State of Washington. The well is 178 feet deep in basalt, with a static water level of 40 feet. Another well is recorded in the vicinity of Heller Bar, and is also in basalt, with a static water level of 65 feet. There is no record for shallow ground water in the vicinity of the management area.

### Air Quality

Air quality in the area is generally good. There are no Class I airsheds or non-attainment areas near the BLM-managed lands.

### Livestock Grazing

In the early 1900s domestic sheep grazed the area, but were later replaced by cattle and horse operations. The Chief Joseph Wildlife area lands adjacent to BLM-managed lands have not been grazed by livestock since the 1970s, and riparian and range conditions on State lands have improved. On adjoining BLM-managed lands along the Snake River breaks, livestock grazing has not been authorized since the mid to late 1970s. Those lands were incorporated into a cooperative agreement with WDFW to be managed in a manner consistent with the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. About 230 acres of BLM-managed land located on the west slope of Mount Wilson (T 6 N, R 46 E, Section 13: N½ N½) are currently leased for 29 AUMs (animal unit months) to a private ranch.

No livestock grazing has been authorized by the BLM on the lands which were acquired in 1993. The level of livestock use prior to acquisition was not significant, except at salting sites, bedding grounds, and some watering sites. The upland area, in general, was classed as “good” condition. The Lime Hill area was grazed by a few horses (15-20 animals) when privately owned, and a horse trail is visible on a prominent ridge descending Lime Hill.

### Social/Economic

The unincorporated community of Rogersburg is occupied by 17 private lot owners on a seasonal and permanent basis. On the opposite shore, a number of small acreage residences are located along the Grande Ronde River and Washington side of the Snake River. These include several full-time residents at Heller Bar, where a restaurant and jet boat excursion business is located. Recreation homes are situated on the bars of the Snake River canyon along the Idaho shore south to China Garden Creek.

The Grande Ronde and Snake Rivers are popular recreation areas for local residents and visitors from Oregon, Washington, Idaho and other regions. River-related recreation uses generate income for the local businesses at Heller Bar, Asotin, Lewiston and Clarkston. Visitor use at the State Heller Bar launch/take-out facility is approximately 9,000 visitors annually, with the majority of the use occurring between March and September. Boaters from the Grande Ronde, Snake, and Salmon Rivers use these BLM-administered lands. The uplands and Chief Joseph Wildlife Area receive moderate recreation use annually, including hunting, wildlife viewing, and fishing.

## **MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

### **Management Objectives**

Resource objectives for the Lime Hill area of the Grande Ronde ACEC are to:

- Maintain and enhance habitat for the benefit of game and non-game wildlife in cooperation with

WDFW, consistent with the management of adjacent lands in the Chief Joseph Wildlife Management Area. Cooperatively set goals for bighorn sheep, elk, deer, and game bird habitat compatible with achieving healthy condition of native plant and riparian communities.

- Maintain and enhance habitat for the benefit of threatened/endangered or sensitive plant and animal species. Improve foraging and perching habitat for raptors, and nesting habitat for ground-nesting birds. Protect populations of special status plants.
- Maintain and improve habitat for Threatened/Endangered (T/E)/Sensitive, anadromous, and resident fish by ensuring water quality is maintained or improved. Water quality is maintained by actions such as preventing or stabilizing erosion, improving riparian habitat, and preventing sediment movement into waterways and drainage areas.
- Maintain and enhance native plant communities in good to excellent condition. Manage to achieve a late seral plant community.
- Resource condition objectives for wildlife habitat and vegetation are to:
  - ▶ Control or eliminate noxious weeds.
  - ▶ Minimize soil surface disturbance that would create open ground susceptible to erosion or invasion by non-native plants or noxious weeds.
  - ▶ Improve and continue the upward trend on poor to fair plant communities; including increasing component of bluebunch wheatgrass, *Elymus*, and *Stipa comata*.
  - ▶ Continue good to excellent condition upland plant communities of bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue and *Stipa*.
  - ▶ Improve the condition, diversity and structure of riparian habitat, including re-introducing native trees and shrubs such as cottonwood, willow, ponderosa pine, water birch, and chokecherry.
- Protect and preserve the cultural resources and traditional cultural properties in the Snake River National Register District for conservation use through documentation, monitoring, education, and implementing measures designed to prevent or reduce threats to the resource from natural events or unauthorized activities.
- Maintain scenic quality and Class II visual resource classification. Design facilities to be unobtrusive and compatible with the natural-appearing landscape.
- Provide opportunity for public access and dispersed primitive recreation uses such as camping, hunting, hiking, fishing, sight-seeing, and boating to the level that these activities are compatible with protection of ACEC values.
- Other long-term objectives are to:
  - ▶ Provide opportunities for environmental awareness, volunteers and education;

- ▶ Encourage multi-agency studies and adaptive management;
- ▶ Develop partnerships with local, State, and Federal agencies and other landowners to achieve management goals and gain support for enhancing resource values in the ACEC.

## **Management Constraints**

Factors that influence the development of this activity plan are considered management constraints. Constraints may include laws, regulation, policy, or circumstances which further influence protection measures or coordination requirements.

The BLM is required to comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to ensure that actions are not likely to jeopardize the existence of threatened/endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. BLM policy also requires consultation with the FWS and NMFS on actions which may affect species proposed for such listing.

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended, the Antiquities Act of 1906, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 protect cultural resources and Native American graves on public lands. BLM is required to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office and Native American Tribes when actions are proposed which may affect cultural resources, including traditional use areas and sacred sites. In Washington, State laws also provide protection for archaeological sites, rock art sites, and Indian graves on public and private lands.

Federal agencies are directed to control noxious weeds on federal lands by the Carlson-Foley Act (PL 90-583) and the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974. Noxious weed management of the Lime Hill area would continue as part of an integrated noxious weed management program as described in the Baker Resource Area Weed Plan and Vale District Weed Management Plan.

Other laws and regulations which influence resource management on public lands are identified with greater detail in the 1989 Baker RMP/ROD.

### Adjacent Ownership

Most of the adjacent lands to the south and west are Washington State lands. The majority of these lands are in the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area managed by the WDFW. Other State lands located at Bear Creek are managed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Part of the southern boundary of the plan area is adjacent to the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area managed by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The community of Rogersburg is surrounded by BLM-administered public lands, creating an urban-wildland interface.

### Treaty Rights

The Nez Perce Tribe has treaty rights on these lands. Access to these public lands for the exercise of the treaty rights is guaranteed under the terms of the 1855 Treaty with the Nez Perce nation.

## **Management Actions**

Planned actions include direct actions to accomplish objectives; supporting or facilitating actions to permit implementation, mitigation and protection actions, and monitoring and evaluation. Standard design measures are included, because they reduce or eliminate environmental impacts.

Management actions from the 1993 Wallowa/Grande Ronde River Management Plan/EA (pp. 66-70) for the Washington segment of the Grande Ronde River (within ¼ mile of the high water line) are incorporated.

## **Roads and Public Access**

37. Public vehicle access to BLM-managed lands will be provided via the Rogersburg Access Road as long as vehicle access across State land is allowed. The Gravel Pit Road, Lime Hill Road, and Snake River Flat Road will be closed to vehicle travel, except for specifically authorized and administrative purposes. The Snake River Flat Road, Lime Hill Road, and Gravel Pit Road will be gated and locked as a vehicle control measure. (Authorized personnel, for the purposes of vehicle access to lands or roads ordinarily closed, refers to persons conducting or cooperating in the official administrative business of the agency; and fire or rescue personnel. Special recreation events that may be authorized would not necessarily result in BLM authorization for vehicle access over closed roads.)
38. BLM will construct a small public parking loop on the Rogersburg Access Road near the Gravel Pit Road entrance. The parking loop will be surfaced with gravel and will provide space for 4-5 highway vehicles and 1-2 recreational vehicles. An open space buffer zone would be established between the Rogersburg community and the parking lot. A "dead end" road sign would be placed at the parking lot, alerting the public that the parking loop constitutes the only available turn-around for their vehicles.
39. Approximately 2 miles of hiking trails will be marked as a route for overland access from the Rogersburg Access Road to the Snake River Flat, by-passing the community of Rogersburg. BLM would work cooperatively with adjacent landowners to determine the best route for trails on BLM-managed lands. Unrestricted access by boat would continue unless monitoring shows negative impacts to ACEC values.
40. If monitoring shows that these measures do not satisfactorily control off-road vehicle uses, a fence and gate may be installed on the road near the developed parking lot. If a locked gate is installed, access for residents of Rogersburg will be provided through the locked gate (in accordance with the existing easement). A three-quarter to one mile fence, or other control measures, will be constructed on the road perimeter to the proposed parking lot.
41. Existing easements will be maintained.
42. BLM will not seek to acquire a public access easement over the existing road on Washington State lands; neither will the BLM maintain the road on Washington State lands. If, in the future,

the access road on State land is closed to vehicle travel, access to BLM land would be by foot or by boat.

43. No new travel routes will be constructed. Minor relocation or reconstruction will be permitted for the purposes of maintaining existing easements, or to achieve ACEC objectives. Examples of objectives would include: to protect and buffer riparian conservation areas, or to maintain water quality by reducing potential erosion and sediment transport.
44. Roads open for vehicle travel or needed for administrative access will be maintained to the minimum standard necessary to provide for safe passage. Roads closed to vehicle travel will not be maintained or reconstructed

### **Aircraft Landing**

45. BLM will not develop, construct, operate or maintain the Snake River Flat Road as a primitive airstrip or emergency landing strip for purposes of public use.
46. Applications for a lease to the Snake River Flat Road as a primitive aircraft landing area will be considered. No major surface improvements or expansion of the existing road width will be permitted. Surface disturbance from maintenance will be kept to the minimum necessary for safe use. A plan of development will be required as part of the application. Within the physical capabilities of the facilities, agencies or organizations could apply for a lease under 43 CFR 2910 to use and maintain a landing strip. In the absence of a compelling resource need or public interest, applications for private or exclusive-use facilities will not be considered
47. Any lease or permit for proposed public use of the landing area will require compliance with all stipulations and conditions identified by the Bureau of Land Management to ensure continued protection of natural and cultural resources. The stipulations and conditions will address requirements for maintenance, rehabilitation or restoration of site damage, liability insurance and bonding (accidents, property damage); third-party monitoring; emergency preparedness and other measures to reduce environmental impacts. Ordinarily, costs and responsibilities are assumed by the permit/lease holder, in addition to costs of development/ maintenance, and may include costs for additional inventories; preparation of additional environmental analyses if necessary; maintenance and reconstruction of the landing area; costs for weed control in the affected areas; costs for mitigation of any environmental or cultural resources damages that may be associated with direct impacts or unauthorized use; and costs associated with fire suppression and/or property damage resulting from human-caused fire.
48. The BLM will maintain the Snake River Flat Road between the Rogersburg east boundary and Snake River Flat, for purposes of BLM administrative access only and on an as-needed basis for this use. BLM will not actively maintain or reconstruct the road for aircraft use or access by airstrip operators.

## **Recreation**

49. Facilities for dispersed recreation will be provided only to the minimum level necessary to reduce conflicts, prevent environmental degradation, and provide opportunities for camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife viewing, and sight-seeing.
50. Overnight camping on the public lands located in Township 7 North, Range 46 East, Section 13 along the Rogersburg Access Road, west of Rogersburg will be prohibited.
51. Building or maintaining any open campfires within a 1/4 mile of the Grande Ronde and Snake River shorelines is prohibited except those contained in a fire blanket, fire pan, or similar metal container with sides measuring at least 2 inches in height.
52. No installation of permanent camping/boating facilities will be permitted without written BLM authorization. Ordinarily, such authorization will only be issued to other government agencies or persons with valid prior existing rights on the BLM-managed lands. Examples include structures and shelters, or anchoring structures to BLM-managed land.
53. No developed boat launch facilities are planned. Public launch facilities at Heller Bar provide adequate river access for current and anticipated public use levels. In the absence of a compelling resource need or public interest, applications for private or exclusive-use boating facilities will not be considered.
54. BLM-managed lands are available for special, non-motorized events under special recreation use permits on a case-by-case basis. Applications for events will be individually assessed to determine whether or not the proposed activity is compatible with protection of wildlife, native vegetation, sensitive plants, cultural resources, and scenic values. Permit stipulations will include measures to ensure sanitation, human health, weed control, safety, and fire control. No motorized recreation events will be permitted.
55. Monitoring for recreation use levels and impacts will be conducted.
56. If monitoring shows a demonstrated need, a vault toilet may be installed in the future near developed day-use parking facilities. Installation of vault toilets is conditional upon the results of cultural and botanical inventories, recreation use monitoring, and the acquisition of appropriate State approvals and permits. If all such conditions are met and documented, an administrative decision may be made to install vault toilets. Such facilities would be located and designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and blend in with the colors of the natural environment. In the short term, no vault toilet facilities are planned for BLM-administered lands east of Rogersburg.
57. An information board will be installed on BLM-managed lands at the parking area.

## **Information and Enforcement**

58. Uses will be regulated to reduce the risk of wildfire in areas of concentrated visitor activity.
59. Uses will be regulated to provide for public health and safety in areas of concentrated visitor activity.
60. Physical facilities or administrative measures (regulations) will be implemented to encourage compliance with vehicle designations and to promote public health and safety.
61. Signs, bulletin boards, and information will be installed to inform users about property boundaries, weed identification and control, regulations, and to encourage a stewardship ethic for the public lands.

## **Wildlife and Threatened/Endangered/Sensitive Species Habitat**

62. Forage/browse for big game and non-game species will be provided consistent with population objectives for the adjacent Chief Joseph Wildlife area, and consistent with enhancing native plant and sensitive plant habitat. Wildlife habitat enhancement projects will be implemented in cooperation with the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. Projects may include vegetation manipulation, prescribed fire, water developments, fencing, and riparian plantings.
63. Four to eight wildlife guzzlers (or comparable water developments) will be developed in upland areas, at locations conditional upon the results of cultural and botanical inventories and any State agency consultations. Water developments will be located near escape or hiding cover in T 6 N, R 47 E: Sections 4, 5, 8, and 9; and T 7 N, R 47 E: Sections 29, 30, 32, and 33. Native trees and shrubs will be planted in riparian zones in ephemeral and perennial drainages (e.g., ponderosa pine, cottonwood, water birch, and chokecherry are target species for riparian re-establishment).
64. Other improvement projects to be implemented include installation of structures for perching or nesting and installation of woody debris in areas with deficiencies.
65. Best management practices will be employed in the design and implementation of projects to avoid sediment transport, erosion, and impacts to vegetation in riparian habitat conservation areas.
66. A biological evaluation will be written if a proposed project may have an affect on a listed fish, plant or wildlife T/E species on BLM lands. The current species that are in this area are the Snake River spring/fall chinook, steelhead, bull trout, and bald eagles. All projects that may affect a listed T/E species would be subject to consultation and concurrence with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and/or US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).
67. In general, projects will be designed to achieve a “no affect” finding, or a “may affect, not likely

to adversely affect” finding. Projects leading to a “may affect, likely to adversely affect” finding will not be implemented, or will be modified to reduce impacts.

68. Temporary, above-ground facilities for fish acclimation or fish census purposes may be authorized under the following conditions: no or minimal ground disturbance, no cultural resources or sensitive plant species are present, no or minimal road maintenance is necessary, no new roads are constructed.
69. Stabilization of river banks, and reduction of sediment transport to the rivers will be accomplished through riparian zone avoidance. Banks will be stabilized by promoting natural revegetation and planting riparian areas or by rocking, or by using a combination of these methods.
70. Any fences constructed will be designed to allow for big game passage. Vegetation treatments may be designed to improve habitat effectiveness in big game winter range.

### **Vegetation Management**

71. Vegetation projects may include, but are not limited to, riparian plantings and rehabilitation of disturbed sites.
72. Vegetation projects within the ACEC will emphasize the use of native plants or their cultivars. The use of non-native plants may be considered in exceptional circumstances for soil stabilization or integrated weed management. Examples of exceptional circumstances would be to immediately stabilize soils on steep slopes that are subject to mass erosion or wasting; or locations with observed low rates of success in establishing native vegetative cover on weed treatment locations where non-native planting may serve as an interim step toward native plant community recovery. Non-native plantings for wildlife forage purposes are discouraged.
73. Parameters will be developed for the re-introduction of fire as an ecosystem process. Fire will be used to enhance or maintain vegetative diversity and native plant communities, reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, improve wildlife habitat, and to control noxious weeds. Either planned ignition or prescribed natural fire may be used.
74. Weed treatment and monitoring measures will continue in conformance with the Northwest Area Noxious Weed EIS, the current Vale District Weed Environmental document, and Baker Resource Area Weed Plan. Chemical or mechanical treatments will be conducted through BLM contracts, contracts with Asotin County, or cooperation with WDFW. Appropriate buffers for streams and riparian zones will be used where chemical treatments are applied. Biological control organisms have been and will continue to be employed.
75. Because the timbered areas are largely inaccessible, there has been no commercial timber harvest in the area. Commercial timber harvest or firewood cutting will not be allowed.

## **Livestock Grazing**

76. Livestock grazing will be employed solely to achieve wildlife habitat enhancement on any BLM-managed lands presently included in the Chief Joseph Area cooperative management agreement
77. Livestock grazing on newly acquired BLM lands in the Lime Hill vicinity will be allowed only if ACEC resource management objectives would be met. Livestock grazing on newly acquired lands could be used as a management tool to support the primary goal of wildlife habitat enhancement, native plant community improvement, and noxious weed control. Management objectives for the uplands is to maintain or improve good to excellent native bunchgrass communities. Objectives for lowland flats is to improve native perennial grass communities for good to excellent condition; including increasing bluebunch wheatgrass, wild rye and *Stipa*.
78. Monitoring studies will be conducted prior to considering livestock grazing as a vegetative management technique, and will be conducted annually following livestock grazing to determine if objectives were achieved.
79. Levels and duration of grazing, as well as maintenance and construction of range improvement projects, will be tailored for the purpose of vegetation management. It is expected that the amount of grazing would be low, short term, and limited in season and numbers. It is possible that no grazing will occur in the short term. The allotment would be categorized as an "I", or "improve" category allotment.
80. BLM-managed land in T 6 N, R 46 E, Sec. 13 is currently under a livestock grazing permit and is not subject to the same objectives as those outlined above.
81. Any grazing uses will be assessed in a biological evaluation for impacts to Snake River spring/fall chinook salmon, bull trout, and summer steelhead and will be subject to review and concurrence by NMFS and USFWS. Grazing will not be authorized until concurrence was received from NMFS and FWS.

## **Threatened/Endangered/Sensitive Plant Habitat**

82. BLM lands will be inventoried for T/E/Sensitive plants. Inventories for known Washington State sensitive plants will be conducted to determine distribution and habitat. Habitat for populations of special status plant species will be maintained or enhanced.
83. Inventories will be conducted prior to undertaking any actions that may affect a Threatened/Endangered or BLM-Sensitive plant species. The proposed action would be modified or canceled if necessary to avoid substantial impacts to these special status plant species. The objective is to avoid actions that would contribute to the need to list a sensitive species as threatened or endangered, or to avoid impacts that would negatively affect a listed

species. Any proposed measures for avoidance or mitigation of impacts to federally listed plant species will be subject to consultation with the FWS. Any proposed measures for avoidance or mitigation of impacts to plant species of particular concern to Washington State would be subject to informal consultation with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources Natural Heritage program.

## **Cultural Resources**

84. Known and newly discovered cultural resource properties will be protected and preserved. Monitoring cultural resource properties will continue as identified in the Baker RMP/ROD and Wallowa/Grande Ronde River plan.
85. Inventories of low elevation river terraces and the Snake River Canyon will be conducted, targeting high recreation use areas. Inventories of the uplands and tributaries will be conducted as projects are proposed. Coordination with the Nez Perce tribe will be sought to identify any traditional cultural properties or sacred places.
86. Recreation uses will be monitored for direct and indirect impacts to cultural resources. If recreation- related impacts are identified, education efforts and regulations may be employed to mitigate unauthorized uses and encourage proper stewardship.
87. Prior to undertaking any ground-disturbing actions (including new projects as well as maintenance of existing developments), cultural resource inventories will be conducted. Inventories will include systematic subsurface examinations or testing to determine the presence of any buried cultural deposits. Most of the lands located on major river benches and flats have a potential for buried cultural resources. Ordinarily, the proposed action would be modified or canceled if necessary to avoid impacts to cultural resources.
88. Inventories, and any measures for avoidance and mitigation of impacts to cultural resources, are be subject to consultation with the Washington State Historic Preservation Office, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Wallowa Band of the Nez Perce. Proposed improvements to existing projects and new projects anticipated for the property would be consulted on. Because these lands are within the boundaries of the Snake River National Register District, the management objective for cultural resources on these BLM-managed lands puts higher priority on preservation and protection, rather than mitigation for other resource development.
89. The remains of the Rogersburg post office, now located on BLM-managed land, will be evaluated to determine if it meets the criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If the property is determined to have no historical significance, it may be removed and the site rehabilitated. If the remains are determined to have local or regional importance or educational value, the property may be stabilized and interpreted.

## **Minerals**

90. Valid existing mining claims on BLM-managed land will continue to be available for exploration and development, consistent with established BLM regulations for surface management (43 CFR 3809) and occupancy and use (43 CFR 3715). Any proposed locatable mineral resource development will require a plan of operations that would be further assessed for effects on ACEC values.
91. Access to the existing gravel pit will be controlled by a locked gate and fence, as identified in the Decision Record for the Rogersburg Sand and Gravel Pit EA.
92. All other standard design features, administrative and mitigating measures from the Rogersburg Sand and Gravel Pit EA Decision Record are also incorporated in to this plan.

### **Existing Land Uses**

93. An existing easement to the Rogersburg Lot Owners across BLM-managed lands will continue.
94. A one-half mile existing overhead power line will be authorized with a right-of-way. A BLM-approved plan of development will be required prior to any new construction or rerouting of existing power lines. The right-of-way will be the minimum width needed to provide for maintenance of the power line and poles, usually between 20 to 50 feet wide.
95. The power line may be moved if a determination is made that maintenance activities within the existing route would disturb cultural resources or sensitive plant species, or that a different route would enhance the visual resource.
96. Standard design would include: limiting vehicle travel and construction to the previously disturbed area as much as possible; confining maintenance activities to the route to be authorized, which would minimize removal of vegetation; conservation and re-use of topsoil during any construction; soil conservation practices, including avoiding construction or maintenance during wet conditions and constructing waterbars where needed; design to be visually compatible with the landscape. If moved, the new route would be examined to ascertain that no impact to cultural resources or T/E/Sensitive plant species would result. Maintenance and reclamation of disturbed areas would require compliance with stipulations to protect cultural resources and T/E species, control weeds and employ a BLM- approved mixture of native grasses for seeding.

### **Agreements**

97. Newly acquired BLM-managed lands will be incorporated into an updated cooperative agreement for the Chief Joseph Wildlife Area.
98. Agreements for monitoring and regulation enforcement will be sought with WDFW and/or

Asotin County law enforcement.

99. Cooperative and cost-share agreements between WDFW and BLM will be sought for management of the area.

### **Studies**

100. Cooperative studies may be conducted by recognized educational and research institutions. Authorization for temporary vehicle access to conduct such studies may be provided by BLM, with stipulations to protect fragile resources.

### **Fire Management**

101. An initial attack agreement will continue with the Nez Perce National Forest. Full suppression of human or natural-caused wildfires will be implemented on BLM-managed lands adjacent to the Rogersburg community and any facility developments, if the fire posed a risk to life or property.
102. Prescribed fire will be re-introduced as an ecosystem process and may be employed to meet resource objectives and to reduce potential for wildfire. Parameters will be developed under a burn plan so that fire can be introduced as part of an ecosystem process to achieve resource management objectives for wildlife habitat improvement, re-invigorating native plant communities, and weed control. Prescribed burning can be implemented through planned ignition or natural fire.
103. To mitigate potential air quality problems, all burning will be conducted during atmospheric conditions that favor smoke dispersal. Parameters for prescribed burning will include measures to avoid impacts to private property, and will incorporate a public involvement process for adjacent private landowners and state agencies.

## Monitoring

The monitoring program is portrayed in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Monitoring Plan for Lime Hill/Rogersburg**  
**Coordinated Activity Plan for**  
**Grande Ronde ACEC**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Uses</b>	<b>Measurements</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Rangeland Habitat (shrubs and grasses)	big game	forage utilization	no more than 50% use	once every 3 years
T&E Wildlife	bald eagle	presence of wildlife tree growth; survival of planted stock	trees for perches more than 20' tall, 100' spacing	once every 5 years
T&E Plants		baseline inventory	habitat mapping at 1:24,000 scale	one time as completed
T&E Plants		habitat condition/ presence	validation monitoring, negligible habitat loss	once every 3 years
Barriers	vehicle control	barriers in place and effective	vehicles restricted from off-road travel	semi-annually
T&E Fish	salmon, steelhead ,bull trout	streambank, road use, road conditions (see Biological Assessment)	compliance with Biological Assessment and Letter of Concurrence	annually
Noxious Weeds	control and eradication	baseline inventory plus % acres/species monitoring	no discernable increase in population	annually

## **APPENDIX B**

### Asotin County Shoreline Program Summary

The proposed action and alternatives addressed in the Lime Hill Environmental Assessment are in conformance with the following relevant policies or regulations of the Asotin Shoreline Program:

- All shoreline uses and activities would utilize effective measures to minimize any increase in surface runoff and to control, treat and release surface water runoff so that receiving water quality and shore properties and features are not adversely affected.
- All shoreline developments and uses would utilize effective erosion control methods during both project construction and operation.
- All shoreline uses and activities would be located, designed, constructed and managed to avoid disturbance of and minimize adverse impacts to fish and wildlife resources, including spawning, nesting, rearing and habitat areas and migratory routes.
- All shoreline uses and activity would be located, designed, constructed and managed in a manner that minimizes adverse impacts to the surrounding land and water uses and is aesthetically compatible with the affected area.
- Herbicides and pesticides would not be applied or allowed to directly enter water bodies or wetlands unless approved for such use by appropriate agencies.
- Shoreline uses and activities would be designed and operated to avoid blocking, reducing, or adversely interfering with the public's visual access to the water and shorelines.

**Decision Record  
and  
Finding of No Significant Impact**

**Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan-Grande Ronde ACEC  
Environmental Assessment OR-035-97-02**

**Baker Resource Area  
Vale District  
Bureau of Land Management  
Baker City, Oregon**

This Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents my decision to adopt the Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan as presented under Alternative D in the Environmental Assessment (OR-035-97-02). I have included in my decision, mitigation measures concurred upon by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through consultation required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The document consulted on was the Biological Assessment for Activities Associated with Bureau of Land Management Lands within the Lower Snake-Asotin Watershed, otherwise referred to as the BA.

**Public Comments Review**

Comments received on the EA in writing and at public meetings are summarized by category and addressed below:

Several letters were received from people who were concerned about a burglary that occurred after the west gate was opened and urged the gate to be locked and consideration given to providing some measure of security to the residents if recreation use is encouraged under the new activity plan. The west gate is currently locked (residents have keys) and the new parking area will be designed to discourage people from straying onto private land (fence, signs).

Several comments were received about opening the road through Rogersburg to the public to allow access to the Snake River Flat and aircraft landing area. The road will be closed near the gravel pit and the public will be expected to walk around the town site. The BLM has no authority to allow public access through Rogersburg. The Lime Hill and Snake River Flat Roads will be closed by locked gates and motor vehicle use denied except for aircraft use (with mitigations) on the Snake River Flat Road. Maintenance of the road through Rogersburg will remain the responsibility of the residents/owners.

Some people would like to have unlimited access to the public lands beyond Rogersburg without benefit of a boat or airplane and feel they have that right. Access is not denied to people who wish to walk around the community. Again, BLM has no authority to allow public use of the

road through Rogersburg and construction of an alternative route was considered but eliminated due to potential adverse impacts to ACEC management objectives.

A number of letters were received from people who are pilots or have an interest in using the aircraft landing area for access to the river. Their concerns have been addressed by allowing use of a portion of the Snake River Flat Road (with mitigation) for an aircraft landing area. This Decision Record incorporates the stipulations for aircraft use stated on pages 42-43 in A Biological Assessment for Activities Associated with Bureau of Land Management Lands within the Lower Snake-Asotin Watershed (BA) and concurred with by NMFS and USFWS.

People who live in Rogersburg wrote that without some kind of control on parking, recreationists come at all hours and park under roost trees used by eagles and osprey. It is expected that the parking loop and signing will reduce disturbance by recreationists to these nesting sites.

Many of the letters received urged that if the road is gated outside Rogersburg, that signs make it clear that the road dead ends and a turn-around be provided. These measures will be adopted.

### **Decision**

My decision to adopt the Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan as presented under Alternative D is based upon the interdisciplinary analysis contained in EA OR-035-97-02 (attached), the supporting record, field review, public comments received, and the BA and concurrence letter from the regulatory agencies (NMFS, USFWS). The amended proposal essentially adds mitigation measures to Alternative D. Alternative D is not the proposed alternative identified within the EA. The selected alternative is the same as Alternative B (the proposed action) with the exception that a permit for non-commercial aircraft landing on the Snake River Flat Road will be allowed with stipulations.

All mitigating measures, stipulations, design features, and monitoring described in the EA and BA are incorporated into project implementation. Implementation of the plan and management actions will begin immediately following the appeal period for this decision. The Lime Hill Coordinated Activity Plan will remain in effect until the land use plan for the Baker Resource Area is amended or revised. The following management actions will take place as a result of this decision:

- ! The BLM will construct a small public vehicle-parking loop on the Rogersburg Access Road near the Gravel Pit Road entrance for recreational access and use.
  
- ! The BLM will close 4.35 miles of existing roads on BLM lands. This includes closing the Gravel Pit Road, Lime Hill Road, and Snake River Flat Road to vehicle travel. These roads will be gated and locked.

- ! The portion of the Rogersburg Access Road on BLM lands will be open and maintained for vehicle travel up to the public vehicle-parking loop.
- ! A fence and gate will be constructed just to the west of the vehicle-parking loop to limit vehicle access. Rogersburg residents will have vehicle access through the locked gate in accordance to their existing easement. Pedestrian access through the fence will be provided.
- ! A hiking trail will be marked as a route for overland access from the vehicle-parking loop to the Snake River Flat by-passing the community of Rogersburg.
- ! Unless specifically authorized, all off-road vehicles will be restricted to existing, designated roads. The only designated road within the plan area is the Rogersburg access road west of Rogersburg.
- ! Wildlife habitat enhancement projects will be planned and implemented in cooperation with the Washington Department of Wildlife Chief Joseph Wildlife Area. These projects will include water developments, native tree and shrub planting, installation of structures for raptor perches, placement of woody material in areas with a deficit, and vegetation treatments which will focus on natural system processes, with an overall goal of improving wildlife habitat.
- ! Issue a permit (if requested) to Washington State Division of Aviation for public use of a portion of the Snake River Flat Road for non-commercial light, aircraft landing with stipulations. Stipulations include the following:
  1. The landing area will be closed from November 15 to March 1 each year.
  2. Access for landing area maintenance will be by foot or aircraft only.
  3. Maintenance of the landing area will be accomplished using hand tools only and primitive conditions will be maintained.
  4. No Storage or transport of aviation fuel will be allowed on site.
  5. Noxious weed control will continue in accordance with BLM standards.
  6. The designated landing, parking, and turn around area will be 1500 feet long by 100 feet wide, will be located on the Snake River Flat road and will be 225 to 500 feet from the Snake River.
  7. The permit will be subject to annual renewal. Permit renewal will depend on BLM monitoring showing no degradation of vegetative and soil conditions or wildlife habitat.
- ! Populations of existing noxious weeds will be aggressively treated and monitoring for new incidences will continue.

## **Decision Rationale**

The No-Action Alternative (Alternative A) was not chosen because it would have left the situation uncontrolled, with ever-increasing user conflicts occurring. The BLM has an obligation to manage for the values of the ACEC in order to maintain them or provide enhancement if possible. The BLM also has an obligation to manage for threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and species of concern, to avoid degradation of these species' habitats, which may cause population declines. The Lime Hill/Rogersburg situation requires action to fulfill these obligations.

Alternative C emphasized recreation use and would have allowed the public to use the Snake River Flat Road and airstrip by driving through Rogersburg; a parking loop would have been added at the east end of Rogersburg as well as the west end. The aircraft landing area would be open only for emergency use or search and rescue training operations and closed to motor vehicles other than airplanes. This alternative was not chosen because of the undue public pressure that would be drawn to the community of Rogersburg. It is unlikely that the community would grant an easement for public use through their community, and the BLM did not wish to develop an alternative route for motor vehicles around the community.

Although Alternative B (the Proposed Action) was identified as the preferred alternative in the EA, this alternative was not chosen because it excluded use of the Snake River Flat for aircraft landing.

Under Alternative D, the Snake River Flat area could be used for an aircraft landing area for the general public as well as for emergency use and training exercises with limitations. Otherwise this alternative is the same as the Proposed Action (Alternative B). This alternative allows for management and protection of ACEC values while providing for controlled recreational use of the area.

The project will not have any negative affects on Cultural Resources, Floodplains, Prime Farmland, Native American Religious Concerns, Hazardous Wastes, Surface and Ground Water Quality, Wetlands or Riparian Zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or Wilderness Areas.

There are Threatened and Endangered Species present and the effects to these from this plan has been analyzed and mitigated with the regulatory agencies concurring with a "A may effect, not likely to adversely affect" determination. There are noxious weeds in the vicinity, and all known populations are under management. Air quality will be affected during times of vehicle use during dry seasons but the impacts will be short lived and small due to road closures.

No disproportionately high adverse human or environmental impacts on minority of low-income populations or Indian tribes is likely to result from the proposed action or any alternatives.

This plan meets none of the criteria for significance. This action is consistent with the Baker Resource Area Resource Management Plan (1989) Record of Decision, (page 46).

### **Finding Of No Significant Impact**

On the basis of the information and analysis contained in Environmental Assessment (EA) OR-035-97-02, I have determined that there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action nor any of the alternatives considered. In relation to context, the project's affected region is localized, and the effects of implementation are relevant to the area affected by the activity plan and people living in the area. In relation to intensity or severity, the actions have mitigation to protect public health and safety; there are no unique characteristics involved; there is no apparent controversy about the quality of the human environment; there are no highly uncertain or unique or unknown risks; this project does not set a precedent for future actions that could have significant effects; the action does not appear to be related to any other action that could be significant; there are no impacts to sites that could be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or cause a loss of scientific, cultural, or historic resources; there is no significant impact to any species listed by the Endangered Species Act; there is no violation of any law or requirement protecting the environment.

I have determined that as long as the mitigating measures are followed and monitoring continues, implementing the actions associated with the activity plan will not cause resource degradation and will allow public use in this recently acquired area while balancing other resource values. Impacts to the community of Rogersburg will be minimized, although cannot completely be absolved. Based on the analysis of environmental impacts contained in the referenced Environmental Assessment (OR-035-97-02) and its supporting documentation, I have determined that the impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

### **Appeal Rights**

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, a notice of appeal must be filed in this office (BLM, 3165 10<sup>th</sup> St, Baker City, Oregon 97814) within 30 days from date that a notice of this decision is published in the Lewiston Morning Tribune. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

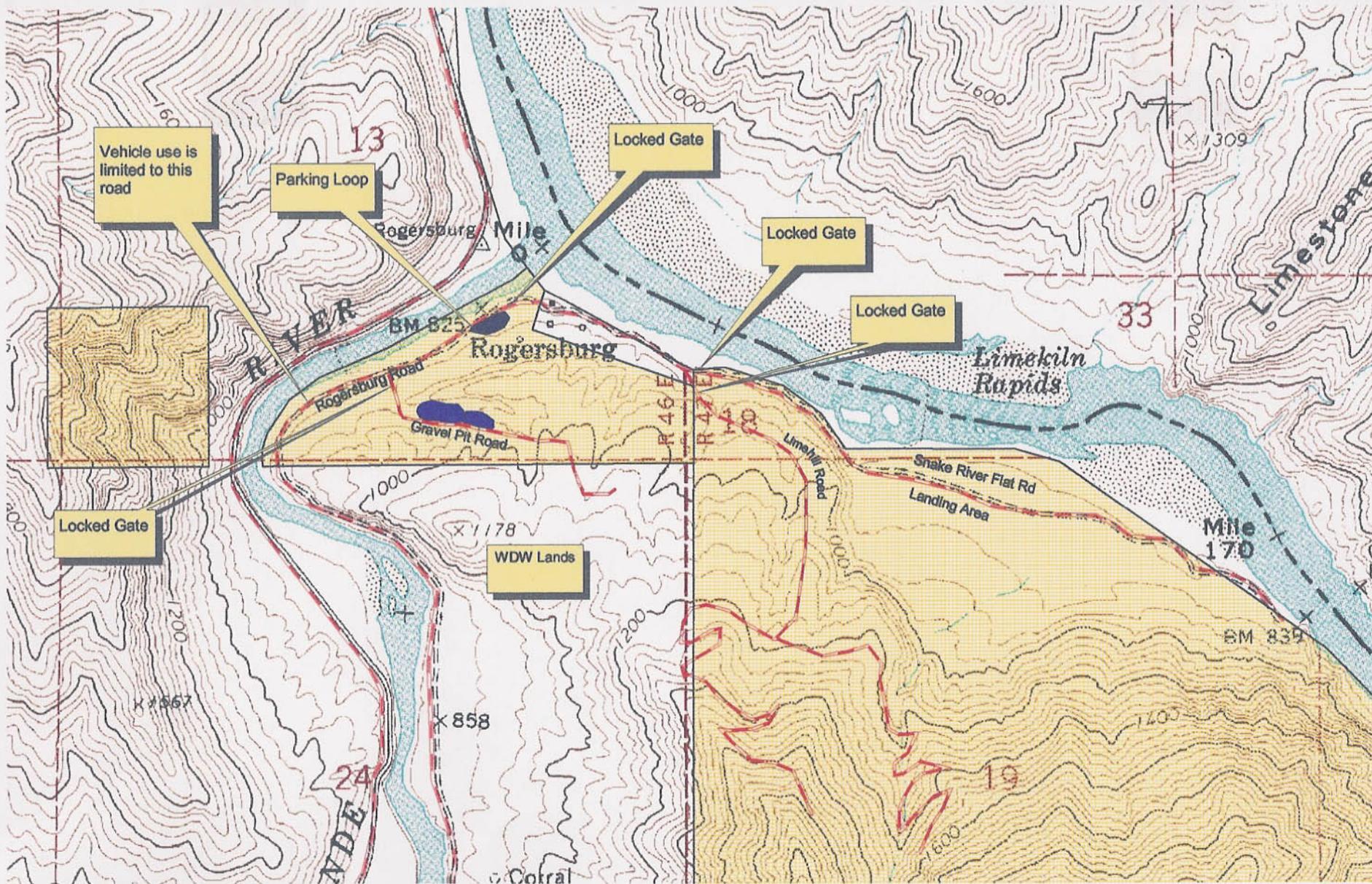
If you wish to file a petition (request), pursuant to regulation 43 CFR 4.21 (58 FR 4939, January 19, 1993), for a stay (suspension) of effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must be also submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

- (1) The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied,
- (2) The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits,
- (3) The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and
- (4) Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

s/Penelope Dunn Woods  
Penelope Dunn Woods  
Baker Field Office Manager,  
Baker Resource Area, Vale District

September 18, 2000  
Date



Vehicle use is limited to this road

Parking Loop

Locked Gate

Locked Gate

Locked Gate

Locked Gate

WDW Lands

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources. This information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This product was developed through digital means and may be updated without notification.

- Gravel Pit
- Parking Loop
- Roads
- Bureau of Land Management

## Lime Hill CAP - Public Access

