



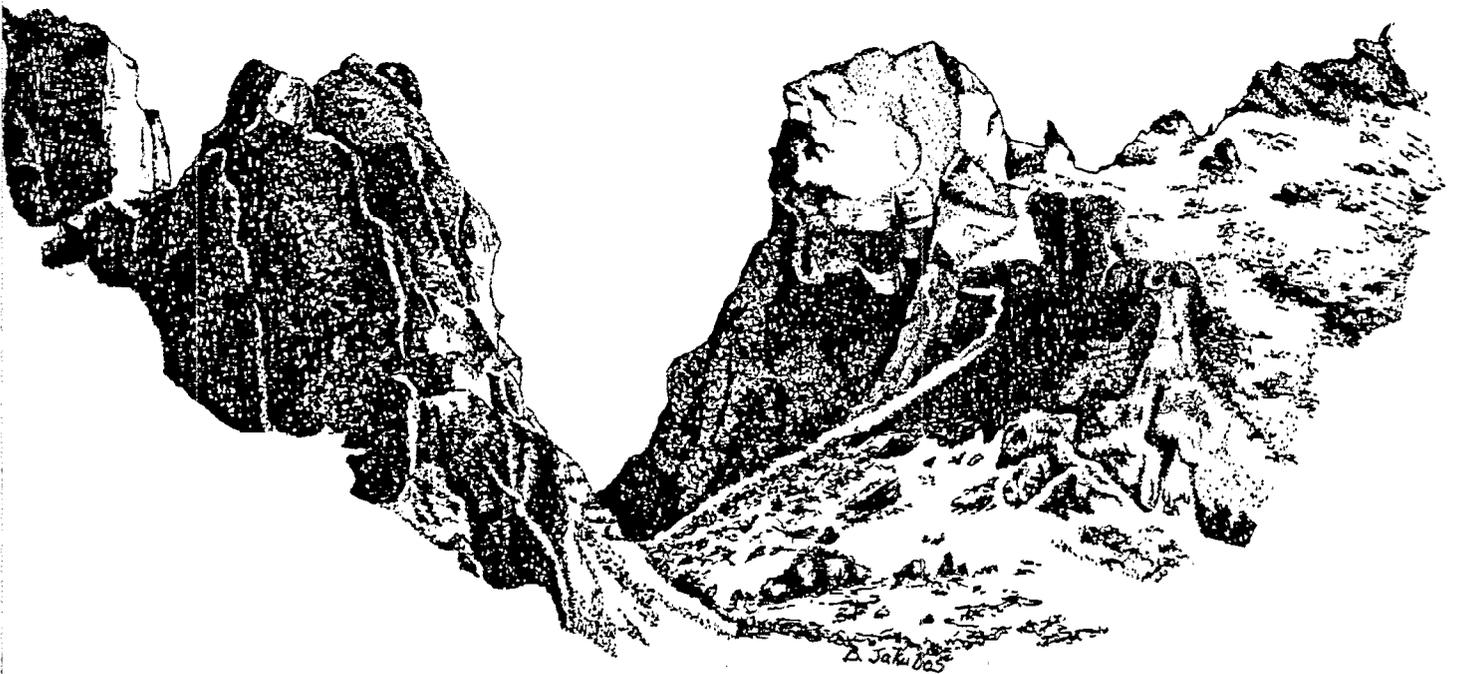
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

November 1995



Final *Leslie Gulch ACEC* *Management Plan* Summary of Management Actions



As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

BLM/OR/WA/PL-95/050+1792



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

IN REPLY REFER TO:

1602

OCT 31 1995

Dear Reader:

This is the final management plan for the Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The management actions presented here were developed during a process which included four opportunities for public input. Many of you provided comments and suggestions for the management of Leslie Gulch and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest and efforts.

The management actions selected include nine amendments to the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan and 48 other actions. We feel that the array of actions selected will protect the natural values found in Leslie Gulch for the foreseeable future while allowing for compatible resource uses.

Implementation of the plan was approved with a memorandum to the Vale District Manager from the Oregon/Washington BLM Director dated February 7, 1995. This document is contained in Appendix 1.

Sincerely yours,

Ralph Heft
Malheur Resource Area Manager

Leslie Gulch, Oregon



Layer on layer of falling pumice.

Compressing more and more fuming,

gas pockets and columns forming,

more eruptions and red hot lava flowing,

then cooling, and finally rain falling,

over the eons, on spores and seeds.

Rain eroding, wind too, freezing and

thawing, cracking, grinding, leaching

minerals and growing algae dyeing colorful rocks,

becoming more colorful for us to see.

Multitudes of fantastic shapes, what may they be?

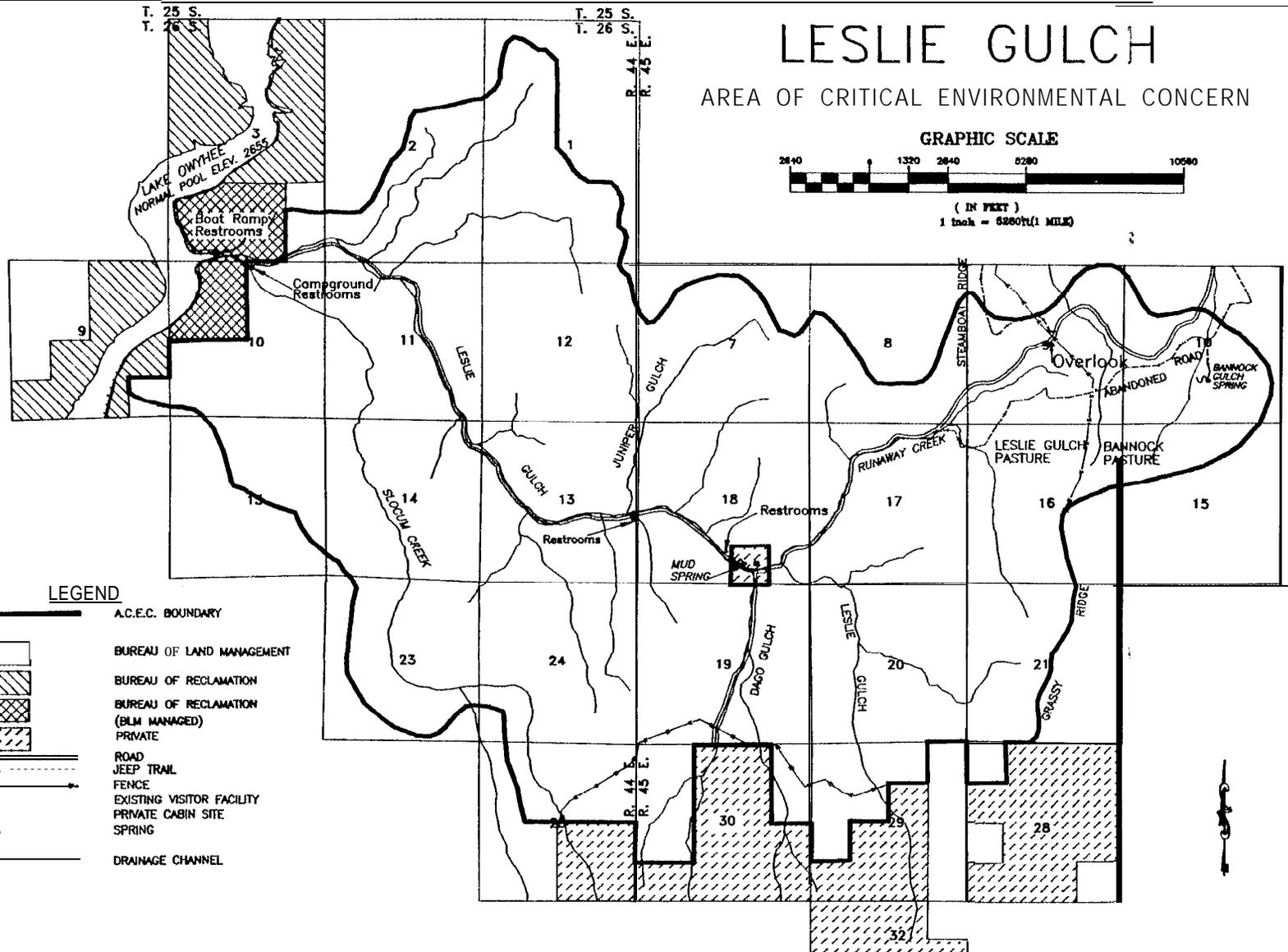
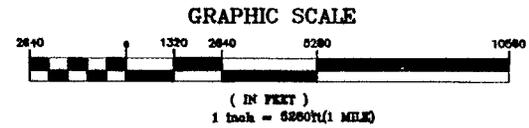
Juniper, grass, ferns and flowers,

And who is the sage?

MGO 1993

LESLIE GULCH

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN



LEGEND

-  A.C.E.C. BOUNDARY
-  BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
-  BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
-  BUREAU OF RECLAMATION (BLM MANAGED)
-  PRIVATE
-  ROAD
-  JEEP TRAIL
-  FENCE
-  EXISTING VISITOR FACILITY
-  PRIVATE CABIN SITE
-  SPRING
-  DRAINAGE CHANNEL

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INTRODUCTION

An area is designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) when special management attention is required to protect specific relevant and important values or to provide public safety from natural hazards. These values can include important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes.

Leslie Gulch was designated as an ACEC in 1983 to protect the relevant and important values of high quality scenery, California bighorn sheep habitat and special status plant species habitat. The objectives for management within the ACEC are to protect, conserve and enhance these values while authorizing compatible activities within the area.

The 11,653 acre Leslie Gulch ACEC drains into the Owyhee Reservoir approximately 50 miles south of Ontario, Oregon, and 60 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. The boundary of the ACEC is generally defined by the watershed boundaries of Leslie, Slocum, Juniper, Dago and Runaway Gulches and their tributaries and private land boundaries along the south side.

Mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk and California bighorn sheep are found in the upland habitats of the ACEC and in adjacent lands. Upland game birds such as chukar partridge and California quail occupy much of the area. The rugged canyons also provide habitat for coyote, bobcat, reptiles, and a variety of non-game migratory birds. Raptors, northern flickers and white-throated swifts use the numerous cliff crevices and cavities, which also provide potential habitat; for bats.

Leslie Gulch is popular for recreational use. Developed recreational opportunities include boating, fishing, camping and sightseeing. The boat launch facility is a favored takeout point for floaters on the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River and provides the only launch facility on the upper Owyhee Reservoir. Dispersed recreational opportunities include hiking, rockclimbing, hunting, outdoor photography and wildlife watching. Leslie Gulch and the surrounding area provides one of the few places in Oregon where bighorn sheep can be hunted. The developed rockclimbing routes within the ACEC are highly challenging.

Approximately 85% of the ACEC is made up of portions of three Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The Slocum Creek, Honeycombs and Upper Leslie Gulch WSAs have all been recommended by the BLM for wilderness designation. The Oregon Wilderness Environmental Impact Statement identified all three WSAs as having a high degree of naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation.

The Leslie Gulch pasture of the Three Fingers Allotment makes up approximately 90 percent of the ACEC. The remainder of the ACEC is within the Bannock pasture of the same allotment.

One 40-acre, privately owned parcel is located at the confluence of Leslie and Dago gulches and is surrounded by the ACEC. There is a cabin and a perennial spring on the parcel.

PLANNING PROCESS

During development of the management plan for the Leslie Gulch ACEC, there were four solicitations seeking public input from interested individuals, organizations and other government agencies. Preliminary scoping of issues was completed in March of 1992. Three further documents were mailed for public comment:

◆ *The Analysis of Management Alternatives Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern*

This document, which was mailed for public comment in September, 1993, presented an array of three alternatives for management of each resource topic contained within the ACEC. No preferred alternative was identified.

◆ *Environmental Assessment OR-030-94-02 for Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) Draft Amendment of the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan and Draft ACEC Management Plan*

This document was mailed for public comment in January, 1994. Following analysis of public comment, a preferred alternative was identified which consisted of management actions selected from the three alternatives identified in the previous mailing. All four alternatives were then analyzed for environmental impacts. This met the National Environmental Policy Act requirements for analysis of impacts of proposed actions. A draft Finding of No Significant Impact was also presented which stated that an EIS would not be necessary.

◆ *Proposed Amendment of the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan and Proposed ACEC Management Plan and Environmental Assessment OR-030-94-02 for Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)*

Mailed in April, 1994, this document identified those management actions which required amendment of the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan (MFP), those actions which did not require plan amendment, and presented the amended EA. Changes in the EA reflected public comment. The Finding of No Significant Impact, which was signed on March 24, 1994, was also presented. The final management actions are the same those which were presented in this document.

Five protest letters were received to the *Proposed Amendment of the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan and Proposed ACEC Management Plan*. Of these, three were determined to raise issues which were relevant and had standing. These protests were reviewed by the BLM Director and his responses to the protests dated January 30, 1995 are the final decisions of the Department of the Interior for the protests. This document also served as the decision record for the MFP amendments.

The Vale District Manager responded to other concerns which were raised in each of the five letters. No adjustments were made in proposed management actions as a result of any of the five protest letters.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

More than 380 of each of the final three documents were mailed and a regional news release announced their availability. Approximately 195 comments were received, and appropriate adjustments were made to proposed management as a result of these comments.

Other outreach efforts included posting mail-in interest forms at four locations in Leslie Gulch and conducting visitor use surveys during the summer of 1993. Vale District held meetings with certain user groups known to be affected by the plan. Meetings were held with rock climbers, grazing permittees, a recreational equestrian group, a native plant conservation group and four civic organizations.

PLANNING RECORDS

All planning records, including files of public comments and copies of protests, are available for public review at the Vale District Office.

RELEVANT AND IMPORTANT VALUES

Special Status Plants

The canyons of Leslie Gulch support the highest concentration of rare plant species in eastern Oregon, five of which are candidates for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. All are associated with the unusual volcanic ash formations found in the area. Two of these species, Ertter's groundsel (*Senecio ertterae* - Category 1) and Packard's blazing star (*Mentzelia packardiae* - Category 2), grow predominantly on the greenish-yellow volcanic ash-tuff talus slopes. Grimy ivesia (*Ivesia rhypara* var. *rhypara* - Category 2) and Owyhee clover (*Trifolium owhyense* - Category 2) grow on a shallow volcanic ash substrate. Sterile milk-vetch (*Astragalus sterilis* - Category 2) also is found scattered on volcanic ash deposits throughout the region. Three uncommon plant species, Packard's sagebrush (*Artemisia packardiae*), Mackenzie's phacelia (*Phacelia lutea* var. *mackenziorum*) and bare-stemmed buckwheat (*Eriogonum novonudum*) are also found in the canyons and bluffs of the ACEC. Ertter's groundsel and Packard's blazing star have been listed by the state of Oregon as threatened, and grimy ivesia and sterile milk-vetch were proposed for addition to the state list in 1993.

Scenic Values

The scenery within the ACEC is dominated by spectacular geologic formations created by the differential weathering of the Leslie Gulch Ash-Flow Tuff member of the Succor Creek formation. The tuff may be 2,000 feet thick in some places. Its great thickness, uniformity and relative resistance to weathering formed the impressive cliffs, outcrops and spires that characterize the area. As the volcanic rocks cooled, gases trapped inside led to the creation of the eerie and spectacular "honeycombing" effect in some areas, and is responsible for many skyline windows in the rock formations. The various ash layers present a variety of colors ranging from yellow to green and multiple shades of red. The areas's vegetation and intrusions of more resistant rhyolite dikes, frequently columnar in appearance, provide additional contrasting texture and color to the inspiring landscape.

Bighorn Sheep Habitat

California bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis californiana*) are a Category 2 candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act. In the early 1900s, bighorn sheep in Leslie Gulch were extirpated due to domestic sheep diseases and unregulated hunting. Seventeen bighorns were reintroduced in Leslie Gulch in 1955 and a second release of 15 head was made north of the ACEC in 1987. The herd has grown to a population of approximately 200-240 animals which range outside of the ACEC, utilizing a 120-square mile area on the east side of Owyhee Reservoir and the Owyhee River.

INTERIM MANAGEMENT POLICY AND GUIDELINES FOR LANDS UNDER WILDERNESS REVIEW

The 1989 BLM Oregon Final Wilderness EIS and subsequent 1991 BLM Oregon Wilderness Study Report to the President recommended nearly all of the three WSAs within the ACEC be designated as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System. In 1992, the President submitted to Congress the same recommendation. Congress has no deadline to make a decision on the wilderness issue. There is substantial public support for wilderness designation of the WSAs.

While in study status, the three wilderness study areas within the Leslie Gulch ACEC are managed in accordance with ELM's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands under Wilderness Review (IMP) (BLM Manual Handbook 8550-1) and Instruction Memorandum OR-94-023, "Interim Management of Wilderness Study Areas". In general, the only activities allowed under these guidelines are temporary uses that create no new surface disturbance. Proposed surface disturbing management actions which would require reclamation could not be implemented until Congress removes an area from WSA status. Surface disturbing actions proposed in this plan have been assessed and meet the IMP by providing for one or more of the following: 1) the action is the minimum necessary to protect or enhance wilderness values; 2) the action provides the minimum necessary facilities for public enjoyment of the wilderness values; or 3) the action is necessary for public health and safety in the use and enjoyment of the public lands' wilderness values. Implementation of any surface disturbing action within a WSA must be substantiated by appropriate monitoring. Monitoring results must show that the impacts on wilderness values requires a project's implementation as a minimum action to protect or enhance the wilderness resources or their uses.

Activities that do not impair the land's suitability as wilderness or those that protect or enhance wilderness values are permitted in WSAs. The IMP requires separate analysis of impacts for the exceptions of use or surface-disturbing activities to ensure that wilderness values are maintained. The environmental analysis of the proposed action for this ACEC Management Plan has determined that the management actions affecting WSAs meet the minimum requirements for approval under IMP. A decision to implement an approved ACEC management action within a WSA must have a project plan and assure the following: 1) the project is determined necessary and timely to protect the needs of wilderness values and/or is relevant to visitors' health, safety, and/or their enjoyment of the wilderness values and uses, and 2) the project size, scope and design do not exceed the extent of action necessary to meet the purpose and needs for responsible management of wilderness values and uses.

The IMP states that livestock grazing activities, mining, and mineral leasing uses on lands under wilderness review may continue in the manner and degree in which these uses were being done on October 21, 1976. These are "grandfathered" uses. Livestock grazing is grandfathered in all three WSAs. There are no grandfathered mining claims or mineral leases within the WSAs of the Leslie Gulch ACEC.

New permanent structures, installations or trails are permitted if needed to preserve wilderness and resource values or provide the minimum necessary for public health and safety in the use and enjoyment of the public lands' wilderness values. Maintenance, construction or removal of existing structures and installations are permitted if accomplished by primitive means. New permanent range improvements may be approved for the purpose of enhancing wilderness values by better protecting the rangeland in a natural condition.

Land use authorizations such as leases and special use permits may be permitted if BLM determines that wilderness values would not be impaired. Changes in livestock use are allowed if the changes do not cause declining condition or trend of the vegetation or the soil. Noxious weeds may be controlled by grubbing or chemicals if there is no effective alternative and there are no serious adverse impacts on wilderness values.

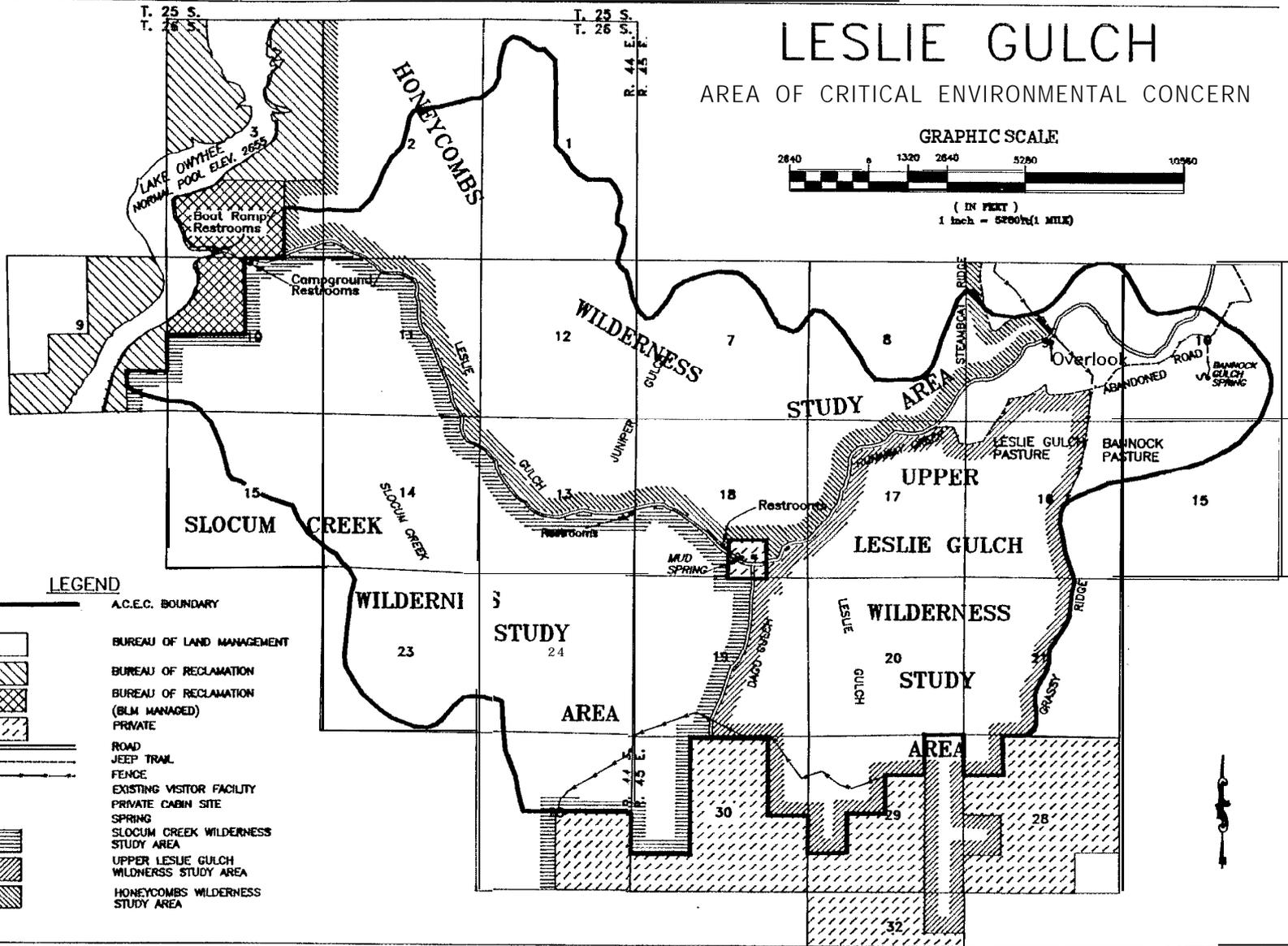
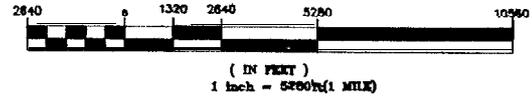
The IMP provides for land exchanges when BLM receives lands within an area under wilderness review in exchange for public lands not under wilderness review .

Any portions of the WSAs that are Congressionally designated as wilderness would be managed in accordance with BLM's Wilderness Management Policy; Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 8560 and BLM Manual 8560 (Management of Designated Wilderness Areas) and other applicable laws and regulations. A wilderness management plan would be developed for any designated wilderness area. All issues and needs to specifically manage the wilderness area(s) would be addressed in the plan. Appropriate decisions of this plan would be included in the wilderness management plan.

LESLIE GULCH

AREA OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN

GRAPHIC SCALE



LEGEND

- A.C.E.C. BOUNDARY
- BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
- BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
- BUREAU OF RECLAMATION (BLM MANAGED)
- PRIVATE
- ROAD
- JEEP TRAIL
- FENCE
- EXISTING VISITOR FACILITY
- PRIVATE CABIN SITE
- SPRING
- SLOCUM CREEK WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
- UPPER LESLIE GULCH WILDERNESS STUDY AREA
- HONEYCOMBS WILDERNESS STUDY AREA



SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

This section presents a comprehensive list of the final management actions selected during development of the Leslie Gulch ACEC Management Plan. Those actions which required an MFP amendment are noted.

I. LAND TENURE

A. OBJECTIVE: Protect and enhance the scenic values, special status plant and bighorn sheep habitat and wilderness values which are found on and influenced by private land surrounded by the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 1: *This MFP amendment permits acquisition of the 40 acre parcel located in T26S R45E Sec 18 SW^{1/4} SE^{1/4} through exchange, direct purchase, donation, easement, life estate or any other means. Public acquisition would only be completed with the cooperation of a willing seller. The Bureau recognizes its commitment to counties in Oregon for no net gain in federal land to maintain a stable economy and county tax base. Therefore, land exchange is the preferred method of acquisition.*

RATIONALE: The parcel has two sensitive plant species, Packards blazing star and Erters groundsel, provides the only reliable bighorn sheep water within the ACEC and has outstanding scenic values. It provides public vehicular access to Dago Gulch and is used by the public for parking and camping. This use could be terminated at any time by the land owner. Although no known development is planned, the landowner could construct additional structures on the property increasing the level of impact to the surrounding setting. Allowing acquisition through any of several means will increase the chances for successful acquisition of this important parcel.

B. OBJECTIVE: Reduce the impacts of developments which are contained on the 40 acre Dago Gulch parcel upon the ACEC's scenic and wilderness values.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 2: *With public acquisition of the 40 acre parcel at the junction of Dago and Leslie Gulches, the area would be reclaimed to a mostly primitive state by removal of all structures and reseeding with native vegetation. No water would be developed at the site for public consumption.*

RATIONALE: Returning the area to a mostly primitive condition would eliminate the visual impacts of the site on the surrounding ACEC. Development of water at the site for public consumption would increase conflicts between humans and the bighorn sheep and other wildlife which water at the site. Developed water would also attract more recreational use within the ACEC.

C. OBJECTIVE: Correct an acreage error in the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 3: *This ME'P amendment designates the Leslie Gulch ACEC as 11,653 acres.*

RATIONALE: Recent measurements using new technology has resulted in an updated ACEC acreage of 11,653 acres.

II. ACCESS AND ROADS

A. **OBJECTIVES:** Reduce the level of impact to the scenic values and special status plants along the Dago Gulch Road. Reduce vehicular trespass from the Dago Gulch Road into the Upper Leslie Gulch and Slocum Creek Wilderness Study Areas.

***MANAGEMENT ACTION 4:** This MFP amendment proposes a locked gate and fence in Dago Gulch near the southern boundary of the 40 acre private parcel. The road will remain open for access to private land owners and for administrative purposes.*

RATIONALE: Vehicle traffic is impacting special status plant sites along the road. Vehicles are also leaving the road and driving into adjacent WSAs. An existing right of way to the private lands in upper Dago Gulch entitles the owner to use and maintain the road.

B. **OBJECTIVES:** Reduce driving hazards and road congestion, disperse recreational use, direct use away from special status plant sites and provide for increased back country access.

***MANAGEMENT ACTION 5:** Construct up to four pullout/parking areas along the Leslie Gulch Road. If mitigation standards in the remainder of the plan are insufficient for the protection of resource values, then development of a vehicle pullout/parking site will be considered. Additionally, a pullout/parking site may be developed if over fifty percent of back country visitors surveyed during the two-month highest annual visitation period have had their opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation significantly impacted.*

RATIONALE: Where parking is not provided, visitors occasionally park on the road surface creating traffic congestion. When parking off of the road, drivers are damaging vegetation, causing soil compaction, and are threatening special status plant species within WSAs. The distribution of recreational use in the ACEC is partially dependent on the availability of suitable parking. Visitors can be directed away from the more heavily used areas to reduce the impacts to wilderness resources and improve opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. The establishment of pullout/parking areas would meet the IMP by providing the minimum necessary facilities for safe parking at determined locations so visitors may use and enjoy wilderness values in the back country of the ACEC.

C. **OBJECTIVES:** Reduce conflicts between the Leslie Gulch Road and the special status plant sites located along the road.

***MANAGEMENT ACTION 6:** Evaluate road width, maintenance practices and design where the Leslie Gulch Road crosses special status plant sites to identify opportunities to reduce conflicts with the plants. Road realignment in non-WSA locations could be made for enhancing special status plant habitat.*

***MANAGEMENT ACTION 7:** Road maintenance on the Leslie Gulch Road will be done as needed. Generally, the road is graded annually with major work scheduled in response to flood events. Outside special status plant sites, the road maintenance follows standard practices with a goal being to retain a graded and drained road prism. Procedures to achieve this include cleaning of the roadside ditches, backslopes, and crowning of the road surface. Roadside seeding with native plant species may be done to reduce weed invasion.*

MANAGEMENT ACTION 8: *Drainage crossings along the Leslie Gulch Road will have drop structures constructed as necessary to retain existing road standards. Where culverts have been installed, culvert maintenance will follow standard practices including tail ditch maintenance and control of intersecting drainages to control runoff.*

RATIONALE : Slight changes to road maintenance practices or road design can allow recovery of lost plant habitat adjacent to the road. The primary concern will be to avoid further habitat losses while retaining the existing levels of access.

The nature and levels of recreational use in Leslie Gulch dictate that a moderate standard of access be maintained. However, improving the road standard would encourage additional use of the ACEC which would adversely impact the relevant and important values of the ACEC. Storm events within the gulch often result in high levels of runoff that can seriously degrade the drainage crossings along the Leslie Gulch Road. Crossings and culverts must be designed and maintained to withstand high peak flows. Surface flow can also erode the surface of the road if not properly diverted. Standard maintenance practices and designs have evolved over long periods of time to provide for stable roads. All road work will consider the scenic values contained within the ACEC and must meet IMP guidance since the WSA boundaries are at the shoulders of the roads.

D. OBJECTIVE: Control accelerated soil erosion on the Steamboat Ridge Road and reduce vehicular trespass into the Honeycombs WSA while retaining vehicular access to Steamboat Ridge.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 9: *Erosion control improvements will be installed where accelerated erosion is occurring on the Steamboat Ridge Road. WSA boundary signs and increased patrolling will be used to discourage vehicular traffic into Honeycombs WSA. If monitoring indicates that unacceptable resource damage is continuing, Steamboat Ridge Road would be closed using emergency OHV closure procedures.*

RATIONALE: Effective closure of the road would require extensive and costly measures to prevent off highway vehicles from driving around the closure causing increased resource damage. The level of use upon the Steamboat Ridge Road is very low. The road is not within the WSA and crosses only about 0.25 mile of the ACEC. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife uses the road for annual big game inventory.

III. MINERALS

A. OBJECTIVES: Protect the relevant and important and wilderness values of the ACEC from damage caused by plant and mineral collection.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 10 : *This MFP amendment closes the ACEC to vegetation and mineral collection without a permit. Permits may be granted for scientific and educational purposes provided that the relevant and important and wilderness values are protected.*

RATIONALE: Plant material collection is a particular threat to special status plants. Other plant species are an integral part of the scenery within the ACEC. Collection of plants for fire wood or other uses could adversely affect the Relevant and Important Values of the ACEC.

The intricate rock formations are also important components of the scenery in the ACEC. These formations would be desirable for landscaping purposes.

Extraction of these types of materials is contrary to the definition of wilderness, as described in the Wilderness Act, which states that a wilderness is an area of earth untrammelled by man, protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions. The collection of natural materials within WSAs for the purpose to advancing scientific or educational understanding of resource values of a WSA is permissible so long as wilderness values are not-so impaired as to make the area unsuitable for wilderness designation.

B. OBJECTIVES: Protect the relevant and important and wilderness values of the ACEC from adverse impacts due to mineral exploration and development.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 11: A locatable mineral withdrawal will be pursued for the entire ACEC as called for in the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan. Because the area to be withdrawn is larger than 5,000 acres, a mineral withdrawal will require Congressional notice and is subject to veto by either house of Congress.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 12: The entire ACEC will remain closed to salable mineral development as called for in the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 13: Mineral leasing will be restricted to no surface occupancy as called for in the Northern Malheur Management Framework Plan.

RATIONALE: Any potential mineral development scenario would not be compatible with the relevant and important values of the ACEC. Those portions of the ACEC within WSAs are protected from development as long as they remain in study status. In those areas outside the WSAs, locatable mineral activity is regulated under the 43 CFR 3805 regulations to prevent unnecessary and undue degradation of the federal lands. Under these regulations impacts to the relevant and important values of the ACEC may not be prevented. If the ACEC were left open to location under the mining law, a plan of operations and submission of a bond will be required for any locatable mineral development proposed within the ACEC. However, claimants would retain the basic right to pursue development of claims under the Mining Law of 1872 even if they impact the relevant and important values for which the ACEC was designated.

Any Congressionally designated wilderness would likely be withdrawn from mineral activity. Congress can adjust wilderness boundaries during the designation process, so portions of the ACEC may not be protected. Any mining claims located within the WSAs while in study status would be subject to validity examination should any development work be proposed following designation as wilderness. With a valid discovery, mineral development could proceed within the designated wilderness area.

Following Congressional action which does not designate the areas as wilderness, the WSA portions of the ACEC would again become available for locatable mineral development if the ACEC does not have a mineral withdrawal.

IV. LIVESTOCK GRAZING

A. OBJECTIVES: Protect the special status plant species and high quality scenery from possible damage due to livestock grazing. Eliminate conflicts between livestock and those recreationists who do not want to see livestock or their sign in the scenic, primitive setting of Leslie Gulch. Maintain the active grazing preference for the grazing permittees within the Three Fingers Allotment.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 14: *This MFP amendment closes the Leslie Gulch pasture to livestock grazing. Grazing will continue in the Bannock pasture. The 264 animal unit months of grazing capacity in the Leslie Gulch pasture are moved to the other pastures of the Three Fingers Allotment.*

RATIONALE: Livestock grazing is a discretionary activity authorized by the BLM. Livestock removal from the Leslie Gulch pasture would eliminate all potential threats to special status plants associated with livestock grazing. These threats include destruction of habitat through trailing, destruction of plants by trampling and ingestion, and transport of noxious weed seeds. Although improving, the lower serai vegetative conditions of the bottom areas near the Gwyhee Reservoir may improve more quickly with removal of livestock grazing, reducing the chance of weed invasion.

Removal of livestock from the Leslie Gulch pasture helps protect the high quality scenery. There will be no new livestock trails, no grazed appearance, no livestock and no livestock sign to alter the scenic, natural setting within the ACEC.

The 264 AUMs of active preference are accommodated elsewhere in the Three Fingers Allotment. There is no reduction in active preference and no economic impact to the grazing permittees who currently use the Leslie Gulch pasture.

Livestock grazing relocation is based on The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Section 202 and implementing regulations at 43 CFR 1610.4-7. In addition, removal of livestock grazing from the Leslie Gulch pasture is supported by BLM policy as follows:

1621.31A1c--"Maintaining existing ecological stage in order to protect a special status species"

1622.31A1--"Identify public lands where livestock grazing will be excluded considering terrain characteristics, potential of the soil and vegetation, the presence of undesirable vegetation or the presence of other resources that may require special management or protection,..."

B. OBJECTIVE: Maintain vegetative condition in that portion of the ACEC in the Bannock pasture which may be affected by livestock.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 15: *Establish additional vegetative monitoring in the portion of the ACEC in the Bannock pasture.*

RATIONALE: Monitoring of vegetation in the Bannock Pasture will be necessary to determine whether livestock grazing is having any negative impacts to ACEC values in that area.

C. OBJECTIVE: Ensure compliance with closure of Leslie Gulch pasture to grazing.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 16: Monitor Leslie Gulch pasture for compliance with livestock closure to determine the extent of livestock drift from adjacent areas. Range riders will be utilized to control livestock movement in unfenced areas without natural barriers. If livestock trespass occurs in the Leslie Gulch pasture more than 3 or 4 times per grazing season with more than 10 to 15 head each time, drift fences will be constructed in areas without natural barriers.

RATIONALE: Monitoring will be necessary to determine compliance with livestock closure of Leslie Gulch Pasture and to determine whether a drift fence is necessary.

V. NOXIOUS WEEDS

A. OBJECTIVES: Control infestations of noxious weeds found within the Leslie Gulch ACEC while protecting the special status plant populations from inadvertent impacts from weed control practices.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 17: Continue the existing combination of manual and chemical weed control methods. All chemical control actions will be done on a site-specific basis and will be monitored on-site by a botanist to eliminate chances for impacts to special status plant species. Manual control methods will be used where they are effective. If chemical control is necessary, application would be according to the Vale District Five Year Integrated Weed Control Plan and EA. Chemical application would use methods that apply chemical targeted to individual plants.

RATIONALE: The spread of noxious weeds represents a substantial threat to the populations of special status plants and to the preservation of the natural biological setting of the ACEC and WSAs. Several species of noxious weeds are established within the ACEC and others are nearby. Since these infestations are still small, eradication remains feasible. Careful use of control methods will substantially reduce the potential for negative impacts to special status plants. Biological controls have not been found for whitetop or Scotch thistle.

B. OBJECTIVE: Protect special status plant habitat by reducing the potential for introduction of additional noxious weed seeds to the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 18: Clean road maintenance equipment prior to moving into the ACEC.

RATIONALE: Road maintenance equipment can carry plant seeds within soil upon the equipment. Road graders and other equipment working in weed infested areas can transport weed seeds to other areas when they move.

C. OBJECTIVE: Reduce the potential sites for new infestations of weeds by reducing the amount of bare ground within the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 19: Seed selected sites of low seral vegetation to native species where noxious weeds have been found or could grow within the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 20: Seed areas disturbed during road maintenance to native species where the seeding will not adversely impact special status plant habitat.

RATIONALE: Freshly disturbed soil and other areas of bare ground provide natural habitat for the pioneering habit of noxious weed species. Vegetation established on these sites consumes the available soil moisture and nutrients leaving less available for newly establishing weed species. Potential invasion by other species, such as the knapweeds (*Centaurea* spp.) and yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), presents additional threats to native plants.

VI. WILD HORSES

OBJECTIVES: Protect the special status plants within the ACEC from potential impacts from wild horses.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 21: This MFP amendment removes the Leslie Gulch ACEC from the Three Fingers Herd Management Area. Any horses which move into the ACEC will be relocated to the HMA or gathered and removed for adoption.

RATIONALE: Although wild horse use of the ACEC is currently minimal, the animals have used the area in the past and could move into the area once again. Special status plant sites could be impacted if horses were to concentrate on the sites for any length of time. The 7,000 acres of the ACEC that are within the Herd Management Area represent approximately 10% of the HMA. This amendment does not change the numbers of horses that will be maintained within the HMA.

VII. SPECIAL STATUS PLANTS

A. OBJECTIVE: Maintain viable populations of the five special status plant species found in the Leslie Gulch ACEC on all suitable habitat.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 22: If monitoring indicates that a special status plant species may be threatened with immediate extinction, the species will be introduced into identified suitable habitat. This action will be considered following consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and other experts.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 23: Periodically collect a limited number of seeds and cooperate with the Center for Plant Conservation to maintain a seed bank for the five special status plant species.

RATIONALE: Reintroductions and seed collections of the special status plants will help insure that the species' genetic material will be maintained should stochastic events beyond human control severely deplete population numbers.

B. OBJECTIVE: Reduce and eliminate where possible impacts of human activities on suitable habitat for special status plant species.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 24: Install site-specific trail segments, fences and/or signs if monitoring indicates a need to protect special status plants or their habitat. These actions will be considered if any impact occurs to any special status plant site.

RATIONALE: One of the primary purposes in designating Leslie Gulch as an ACEC was to protect the special status plant species and their habitats found there. Many populations of these species are accessible to both direct and indirect human activities. Specific management of the species and their habitats, which requires a broad range of measures is necessary to control potential threats to their existence and to maintain viable populations of these species within their natural setting.

VII. WILDLIFE

A. OBJECTIVE: Protect relevant and important ACEC values while allowing management of California bighorn sheep.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 25: *Base bighorn sheep transplant operations at Slocum Creek Campground. Require ODFW to submit a proposal to BLM for evaluation of environmental impacts and approval if other sites are needed for operations. Require ODFW to submit a proposal to BOR for evaluation of environmental impacts and approval if BOR withdrawn lands along Owyhee Reservoir are needed.*

MANAGEMENT ACTION 26: *Review ODFW placement of wormer blocks or feed supplements for bighorn sheep to evaluate impacts to ACEC values. Placement will require approval by BLM.*

RATIONALE: California bighorn sheep are one of the relevant and important values of the ACEC and management is necessary to maintain a healthy population. Slocum Creek Campground is already used for camping and no further impacts on ACEC values will result from ODFW base operations at that location. Negative impacts on BOR withdrawn lands will be considered during an evaluation process. Potential damage to special status plant sites or other ACEC values will be avoided through the evaluation process if ODFW needs other areas for operations. BLM review of the placement of wormer blocks and feed supplements will assure that there are no negative impacts to the ACEC's relevant and important values.

B. OBJECTIVE: Avoid or mitigate conflicts between recreational use and special status or other wildlife species.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 27: *Collect baseline data on bald eagle winter use, raptor species nesting sites, and other special status wildlife species in the ACEC.*

MANAGEMENT ACTION 28: *Coordinate with and support ODFW inventory and monitoring efforts.*

MANAGEMENT ACTION 29: *Restrict or close areas to recreational uses during critical seasons if conflicts occur.*

RATIONALE: In areas where there is high recreational use, there is a potential for visitor/wildlife conflicts to occur. Little is known about the presence and distribution of special status wildlife species in the ACEC other than California bighorn sheep. Bighorn sheep, as well as big game species and upland game birds, are currently monitored by ODFW. Of particular concern are raptor nests, bat roosts and bighorn sheep lambing areas that could be disturbed by recreational activities. If conflicts are identified, restrictions or closures will be necessary to protect wildlife resource values.

VIII. FIRE

A. OBJECTIVE: Protect the relevant and important values of the ACEC from impacts caused by fire suppression activities while limiting the potential for fires to spread to adjacent private lands.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 30: *Retain the Vale District Fire Management Activity Plan as the overall guidance for fire suppression activities within the ACEC.*

RATIONALE: The Fire Management Activity Plan highlights ACECs and WSAs for special consideration when wild fire occurs within or approaches them. These fires have personnel assigned who monitor the **fire** suppression efforts to control impacts to the special values noted within these areas. IMP guidance is incorporated into the provisions of the Activity Plan.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 31: *The Interim Policy and Guidance for Lands Under Wilderness Review will continue to be followed for fire suppression activities within the ACEC if the WSAs are not designated as wilderness. This guidance applies to the entire ACEC.*

RATIONALE: The IMP for WSAs specifies that fire suppression methods be selected which are most effective while being least damaging to wilderness values. Although this guidance does not completely rule out the use of mechanized earth moving equipment, it requires that this method of fire suppression be used only as a last resort. Occasional extreme fire conditions may require the use of a variety of suppression methods. This policy is appropriate for protecting the relevant and important values of the ACEC.

B. OBJECTIVE: Retain fire management alternatives which could be used to enhance the Relevant and Important and wilderness values found within the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 32: *Prescribed or naturally occurring fire map be utilized when specific management objectives are identified to enhance ACEC or wilderness values.*

RATIONALE: Low intensity fire can be used to achieve a wide variety of management objectives, generally aimed at manipulating vegetation. In Leslie Gulch these objectives will likely be to retain naturally occurring vegetation or to return a portion of the ACEC to a more natural vegetative community.

IX. RECREATION

A. OBJECTIVES: Protect the special status plants by reducing the potential for spread of noxious weeds into the area by domestic recreational livestock. Reduce conflicts between recreationists within the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 33: *This MFP amendment eliminates recreational domestic livestock from the Leslie Gulch ACEC. Administrative uses for conducting official business, such as for removal of trespass livestock and search and rescue activities are allowed.*

RATIONALE: Horses and other domestic livestock can transport weed seeds in their hooves and digestive tracts. Hay brought into the ACEC for feed and for bedding can also contain weed seeds. There has been nominal historic recreational horse use in the ACEC with most use being associated with big game hunting. Most of the ACEC is within 2.5 miles of the Leslie Gulch Road and public lands outside of the ACEC remain available for recreational domestic livestock use.

B. OBJECTIVES: Protect the scenic values, special status plants and wilderness values of the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 34: *This MFP amendment designates the Leslie Gulch ACEC as day use only outside of the Slocum Creek Campground.*

RATIONALE: The back country portions of the ACEC remain readily available via day hiking due to the central location of the Leslie Gulch Road and size of the ACEC. Camping remains available within the ACEC at the Slocum Creek campground and outside the ACEC on surrounding public lands. Dispersed camping has resulted in the proliferation of camp fire sites, trash, damage to vegetation due to gathering wood for fires and damage to special status plant sites.

C. OBJECTIVES: Maintain the ACEC's scenic values and meet requirements of the IMP for WSAs.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 35: *Within one year, rock climbers will remove or mitigate all fixed anchors, artificial hand holds and visual evidence of contrasting chalk use developed in the ACEC since 1990. This does not include those fixed anchors at the "Einstein" climbing site. These fixtures at the "Einstein" climbing site will be removed or mitigated by the rock climbers within five years, with a minimum of 20 percent of the original number of fixed anchors removed/mitigated every year. The removal and mitigation methods must be approved by BLM. Fixed anchors will be inspected by rock climbers and any unsafe fixed anchors, artificial hand holds and visible evidence of hand drying agents will be immediately removed by rock climbers. Until removed or mitigated, camouflaging techniques must be applied and maintained by rock climbers on all existing fixed anchors at the "Einstein" site.*

RATIONALE: The most popular recreational pursuit within the ACEC is leisure driving to enjoy the exceptional scenic qualities of the natural landscape. Sport rock climbing at the "Asylum" climbing site is a visually disruptive presence within view of the Leslie Gulch Road.

Although enjoyment of climbing with fixed anchors may be enhanced when performed outdoors in a natural setting, pursuit of the activity or its enjoyment does not require wilderness characteristics. While the placement of fixed anchors is preferred for safety, the establishment of climbing routes with fixed anchors within WSAs, considered permanent installations under the IMP, are not a minimum requirement to enjoy wilderness values and are not in compliance with the IMP. BLM approval of specific equipment removal or mitigation plans will allow for analysis of these procedures to help ensure the least impacting methodologies are selected.

Continued placement of fixed anchors would cause accumulative impacts to the wilderness value of naturalness, and likely impact some outstanding opportunities for solitude with other WSA visitors in the ACEC. Over the long term, requirements of the IMP will be met. The visual scaring and disruptive contrast of fixed anchors will become less apparent at the

"Einstein" site as fixed anchors are removed or mitigated. Opportunities for rock climbing without the placement of fixed anchors and artificial hand holds will remain available throughout the ACEC.

D. OBJECTIVE!: Maintain the existing roaded natural, semiprimitive motorized and primitive recreational settings, and protect the ACEC's outstanding scenic values while providing limited developed recreational facilities and motorized access.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 36: *The existing lockable gate at-the Overlook will be retained to provide for visitor safety and resource protection.*

RATIONALE: Road damage from flash flooding within Leslie Gulch can create unsafe driving conditions or make the area temporarily inaccessible by automobiles. The ACEC could also require temporary access restrictions due to other unforeseeable circumstances for the purpose of protecting important resource values or for public safety.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 37: *Specific project plans will be developed prior to construction of developed recreational facilities. Provision for the physically challenged will be a component of project plans and of upgraded maintenance of certain existing facilities.*

RATIONALE: Project plans will ensure design and development of facilities is no greater than that required to meet public needs within the scope of this plan, while allowing appropriate protection of the area's important values.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 38: *A signs plan will be developed for administrative and informative sign placement within the ACEC. Signs will coordinate with a brochure/pamphlet about the ACEC.*

RATIONALE: A signs plan will determine the scope and type of signs required to assist resources protection and visitors' enjoyment of the area without negatively impacting the relevant and important value of the ACEC. Written literature will provide information about resource values, user ethics, safety, rules of use in the area, the BLM, and other appropriate subjects.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 39: *At rock climbing sites, there will be no alteration of hand/foot holds, and temporary hardware will not be left on walls or climbing sites.*

RATIONALE: The Einstein climbing site is and other climbing sites may be visible to primary back country access routes and the Leslie Gulch Road. The artificially altered hand/foot holds and various types of climbing equipment result in visual impacts which are visible to many visitors to the ACEC. Removal of temporary equipment when climbers leave the sites will significantly reduce the impacts to the natural setting of the ACEC and to those recreationists seeking to enjoy a primitive recreational experience.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 40: *If monitoring indicates that ACEC or wilderness values are being significantly impacted by climbing activities, then group size and frequency of use will be limited or all rock climbing eliminated. Impacts on cultural resources, accelerated soil erosion, soil compaction, or evidence of accumulative trash or human feces will require use limitations to preclude further impacts. A twenty percent increase of bare soil at a site will require employment of use restrictions. visitor use may resume at sites if reestablishment of native plant species covers at least eighty percent of the original bare*

soil measurement. Site-specific use restrictions may be employed if over fifty percent of surveyed non-rock climbing visitors have had their opportunities for outstanding solitude or primitive recreation significantly impacted by rock climbing activities.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 41: *There will be no competitive or commercial rock climbing activities in the ACEC.*

RATIONALE: Concentrated use at climbing sites could cause damage to vegetation, accelerated soil erosion, disturbance of wildlife or disturbance of cultural sites along the access trails or at the climbing sites themselves. These disturbances could result in visual impacts which exceed the visual resource management class II or exceed acceptable levels of impact to the wilderness values of naturalness, primitive setting and solitude. Organized competitive or commercial climbing events attract large groups of people. As with any commercial venture on public lands, the exploitation or promotion of rock climbing requires BLM authorization.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 42: *The use of chalk or other drying agents by rock climbers will be mitigated by removal of any contrasting deposits on rock walls which are visible from the primary access routes used by other ACEC visitors before leaving the climbing sites.. Removal techniques must leave no scarring on the rock surface. Inadequate cooperation by climbers may result in prohibition on the use of certain drying agents or further restriction on climbing activities within the ACEC. BLM will post trailhead registers and notify known rock climbers in the area.*

RATIONALE: The use of drying agents on the hands is a recognized safety factor for rock climbers. The use of some drying agents, especially white chalk, results in highly contrasting deposits on the red colored rock in Leslie Gulch. Deposits of contrasting chalk and intentional marring of the rock surface are unnatural and to some visitors an abusive visual intrusion on the naturalness of the area. Appropriate substitutes are available and should be used to preserve the naturalness of the ACEC. The responsibility to reduce the impacts of chalk use rests with all rock climbers.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 43: *A cooperative agreement will be developed with the rock climbers for implementing management actions, monitoring of use, minimizing resource impacts, promoting climbing ethics, developing a search and rescue plan and other climbing related subjects. Unsuccessful agreement efforts or inadequate cooperation and assistance from rock climbers will result in further BLM imposed restrictions on or complete removal of rock climbing activities in the ACEC.*

RATIONALE: An instrument is needed to coordinate with the rock climbers to ensure critical elements of this plan are carried out. A cooperative agreement would mutually benefit rock climbers and BLM. The agreement is an excellent tool to mutually ensure continued communication and cooperation, provides rock climbers a direct and active role in managing their own activity, and formalizes understanding for the continuance of rock climbing activities within the constraints of the ACEC plan.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 44: *Site-specific signs or trail segments will be developed or restrictions on visitor use will be employed if monitoring indicates a need to protect specific areas. Unnecessary primitive trails will be closed and reclaimed. Trails will be kept to the minimum needed for reasonable access and resource protection.*

RATIONALE: Concentrated visitor use can impact natural values. Special status species can be impacted or areas of accelerated soil erosion can be created. Trails can be used to route visitors away from sensitive areas. Minimizing trail development and sign placement would enhance the naturalness and visual qualities of the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 45: An Owyhee Breaks trailhead will be provided at an established pullout/parking area. Site specific trail segments will be established only to protect important ACEC or wilderness values. The Owyhee Breaks trail route will cross the ACEC south to north. This backcountry trail corridor will be developed if user demands indicate a need for providing an identifiable route from the Owyhee Reservoir Resort south to the Birch Creek Historic Ranch on the Owyhee National Wild River.

RATIONALE: The presence of the Leslie Gulch Road makes the ACEC a logical location for trailhead establishment in this region's largely unroaded country. The Owyhee Breaks trail is designed to be a non-treaded, point-to-point type of hiking route. Treaded trail may be site-specifically established in order to protect ACEC or wilderness values.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 46: A back country visitor access permit system will be implemented if monitoring indicates a need for the protection of resource values. The permit system may be incrementally implemented, depending on the extent or severity of impacts occurring.

RATIONALE: The purpose of a back country visitor access permit system is to limit visitor levels thus providing continued opportunities for solitude and to prevent damage to important values of the ACEC and WSAs. Back country use of the ACEC is increasing. Repeated use has created trails in some locations. If unacceptable impacts occur, limits may be needed to reduce the levels of use.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 47: Any activity requiring the BLM issuance of a special use permit (special recreation use permits, land use permits) or other special authorizations will normally be limited to a maximum of six persons. Specific exceptions may be allowed.

RATIONALE: Physical impacts caused by concentrated use by larger groups will be reduced. Vehicle congestion and contact between parties in the back country will also be reduced.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 48: The present "Limited" Off Highway Vehicle use designation will be retained to restrict vehicle traffic to the Leslie Gulch and Steamboat Ridge roads. Vehicle access to Dago Gulch will be consistent with the existing private right-of-way and controlled with a locked gate located on public lands approximately 0.5 miles north of the existing gate.

RATIONALE: This action protects the relevant and important and wilderness values of the ACEC. The IMP is met by limiting vehicle use to existing roads and ways within the area. The Steamboat Ridge Road is left open to provide access beyond the XCEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 49: The Back Country Byway and Watchable Wildlife designations will be removed. The Wilderness Study Area, Special Recreation Management Area, and Resource Natural Area designations will be retained.

RATIONALE: Removal of these designations will remove the Leslie Gulch ACEC from BLM's national level promotional programs and reduce the rates of increased use expected for this area in the future. Increased visitor use will have additional impacts upon all of the special natural resource values contained within the ACEC.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 50: *The restroom adjacent to the 40 acre private parcel will be moved to Dago Gulch and a day use parking area developed at Dago Gulch if the private land or easement is acquired by BLM. As an alternative, a restroom and pullout/parking area will be relocated to upper Leslie Gulch. A small pullout/parking area will be provided at upper Leslie Gulch until a determination for the private Dago Gulch parcel is made.*

RATIONALE: Since four major drainages and two roads merge near the mouth of Dago Gulch, the area receives high levels of recreational use and has been somewhat impacted by this use. This location is the first area west of The Overlook which can physically accommodate any concentration of parked vehicles or visitor facility development. A designated parking area will help protect resource values by preventing off road driving and parking. Natural features allow for screening of developed facilities in this area. Visitors are currently parking off of the Leslie Gulch Road at upper Leslie Gulch impacting vegetation there.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 51: *A vehicle access loop and approximately 10 campsites each with a table, grill and vehicle parking will be developed at the Slocum Creek campground within the existing campground area. Revegetation with native plant species will be accomplished as appropriate. Table shades may be provided at no more than half of the tables.*

MANAGEMENT ACTION 52: *The existing 14 day maximum camping limit may be shortened for Slocum Creek to no less than seven days if the campground is full over fifty percent of the time during its highest two month use period.*

RATIONALE: Due to the area's remoteness, most reservoir boating parties stay longer than one day. Camping at Slocum Creek provides a level of security for boats and gives opportunity for extended stays by persons desiring to further explore and enjoy the values of the ACEC. Land based recreationists also utilize the camping opportunities offered at Slocum Creek. Restricting development to the presently disturbed area keeps concentrated use activities over 200 feet from a known special status plant site near the campground. The proliferation and scarring of unsightly dispersed rock fire pits is avoided and fire safety is enhanced by placement of fire rings. Individual campsites provide designed spacing between camping parties to enhance the camping experience, and prevents overcrowding at the campground. Shading provides for more bearable camping conditions during the intense summer heat of the canyon.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 53: *Potable water will not be developed within the ACEC.*

RATIONALE: There has been little public demand for developed water within the ACEC. Without developed water, the average length of camping stay at Slocum Creek campground will likely remain shorter than if water were provided, thus maintaining a lower rate of increased use while providing more visitors the opportunity to camp in the ACEC. Day use visitors of the ACEC can readily carry enough water to meet their needs.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 54: Additional day use and boat trailer parking, a safety dock, a fish cleaning station, and a waste disposal facility provided for floaters of the Owyhee Wild and Scenic River will be provided.

RATIONALE: These facilities are located adjacent to the ACEC on BOR withdrawn lands, and are administered by BLM for recreational purposes through an interagency agreement. This portion of the ACEC receives very heavy levels of use in the spring.

River floatboaters are required to carry out and properly dispose human solid waste from the wild river corridor. Presently, approximately 65 percent of the Owyhee River floatboaters take out at Leslie Gulch. Plastics and other trash are very difficult to remove from vault restrooms. Since the river floating season is short, the disposal unit may be an annually placed temporary structure.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 55: Temporary overnight facilities may be provided at the Slocum Creek Campground for a BLM visitor contact/resource protection employee. This facility will be used during the peak recreational use season.

RATIONALE: The ACEC is a two hour drive from the BLM district office. Temporary housing will improve BLM's efficiency when providing for visitor services, initiation of a permit system, resource protection and monitoring of visitor uses and resource values.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 56: Camp fires will be restricted to the Slocum Creek campground.

RATIONALE: Destruction and damage to the ACEC's limited amount of dead woody vegetation will be reduced. The visual character of the natural landscape will be protected by eliminating the contrasting presence of fire rings, charcoal and destroyed vegetation.

E. OBJECTIVE: Maintain the suitability of the wilderness study areas for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

MANAGEMENT ACTION 57: Comply with the requirement of the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review.

RATIONALE: BLM is required by law to comply with this guidance.

MANAGEMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the actions described in the proposed MFP amendments and the proposed ACEC Management Plan, as well as ongoing maintenance in the ACEC, have been listed in the following table. Five time frames have been identified: immediate, short-term, long-term, ongoing, and as needed. Immediate actions are those which will be implemented within one year after the final plan goes into affect. **Short-term** actions should be completed within two to five years after plan approval. **Long-term** actions should be completed within six to ten years after plan approval. **Ongoing** actions are those that are currently taking place and will continue, or those actions which will continue after immediate implementation. As **Needed** actions have no scheduled time frames and will only be implemented if monitoring indicates a need for the action.

Approximate costs in 1996 dollars for specific actions are given in the appropriate time frame column. An X indicates that the action will be completed within that time period with no cost.

Implementation of the identified management actions will be an element of the Vale District's annual budgetary planning process. Distribution of limited funding will be based on prioritizing actions District-wide.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE AND PROJECTED COSTS

Table 1

Time Frames and Projected Costs (1996 dollars)

Management Action		Immediate	Short-term	Long-term	Ongoing	As Needed
MA-1	Pursue acquisition of 40-acre parcel				\$15,000 plus purchase	
MA-2	Reclamation on 40 acre private parcel, if acquired					\$15,000
MA-3	Correct ACEC acreage	X				
MA-4	Gate installed at Dago Gulch	\$2500				
MA-5	Construction of up to 4 pull-out/parking areas					\$2000/each
MA-6	Identify opportunities to reduce road maintenance and special status plant conflicts	\$500				
MA-7	Maintain roads			\$2500/year		
MA-7	Roadside seeded with native plants					\$1000-5000
MA-8	Drainage crossings maintained or improved					\$5000-70,000
MA-9	Erosion control on Steamboat Ridge Road	\$500				
MA-9	Increased patrols and WSA boundary signs on Steamboat Ridge Road	\$1000				
MA-10	Close ACEC to vegetation and mineral gathering	X				
MA-11 MA-12	ACEC withdrawn from locatable and saleable mineral development	\$10,500	\$4000			
MA-13	Mineral leasing in ACEC restricted to no surface occupancy				X	

Management Action		Immediate	Short-term	Long-term	Ongoing	As Needed
IA- 14	Remove livestock grazing from Leslie Gulch pasture	\$3500				
4A-15	Establish additional vegetative monitoring in Bannock pasture	\$200			\$200/year	
4A-16	Construct drift fence					\$2000-\$4000
4A-16	Range use supervision				\$1750/year	
4A-17	Existing combination of manual and chemical weed control	\$1000-4000			\$1000-4000/year	
4A-17	Monitor for weeds	\$500			\$500/year	
4A-18	Clean road maintenance equipment prior to moving into ACEC				\$500/year	
MA-19 MA-20	Seed native plants at selected sites for weed control	\$1000-3000				\$1000-3000
MA-21	Remove ACEC from Three fingers HMA	X				
MA-22	Special status plant monitoring	\$1000-5000			\$2000-5000/year	
MA-22	Introduce special status plants into suitable habitat					\$2000
MA-23	Collect special status plant seeds for seed bank	\$500			\$500/year	
MA-24	Install site-specific trail segments, fences, signs to protect special status plants or their habitat					\$500-15,000
MA-25	Base ODFW bighorn transplant operations at Slocum Creek Campground. Other sites evaluated and approved prior to operations					\$1700/site
MA-26	ODFW placement of wormer blocks/feed supplements evaluated and approved by BLM					X
MA-27	Special status wildlife surveys				\$500/year	\$1000-10,000

Management Action		Immediate	Short-term	term	Ongoing	Needed
MA-28	Support ODFW wildlife inventory and monitoring in ACEC Campground. Other potential sites evaluated and approved prior to operations					
MA-29	Restrict or close areas where wildlife/recreation conflicts occur					\$0-3500
MA-30	Retain Fire Management Activity Plan	X				
MA-31	Manage fire suppression as per IMP				X	
MA-32	Use of prescribed fire					X
MA-33	Removal of recreational domestic livestock use	\$1500				
MA-34	Dispersed recreation limited to day use only. Camping only at Slocum Creek Campground	\$500				\$100-500
MA-35	Existing fixed anchors only at Einstein climbing site. Climbing routes at Einstein closed over 5-year period	\$2000	\$4000			
MA-36	Maintain gate at Overlook					\$100-500
MA-37	Develop project plans for developed facilities		\$10,000			\$0-7000
MA-38	Develop/maintain a Signs Plan	\$3500				\$0-3500
MA-38	Develop/maintain ACEC literature	\$10,000				\$10,000-20,000
MA-39	Rock-climbing hand/foot holds not altered, temporary hardware removed	\$3000	\$7000			
MA-40 MA-41	Rock climbing group size and frequency limited. No competitive or commercial rock climbing.					\$0-3000
MA-42	Chalk, other drying agent use mitigated	\$500			\$500/year	
MA-43	Develop and implement cooperative agreement with rock climbers	\$7000	\$5000			

Management Action	Immediate	Short-term	Long-term	Ongoing	As Needed
MA-44	Site specific signs or trail segments developed and maintained to protect significant resource values				\$500-20,000
MA-45	Owyhee Breaks trailhead at established pullout/parking				\$2000
MA-46	Back country visitor access permit system implemented and maintained				\$10,000/year
MA-47	Activity requiring special use permits normally limited to six person maximum				\$500-3000/each
MA-48	Vehicle traffic restricted to Leslie Gulch and Steamboat Ridge roads	\$500			
MA-49	Back Country Byway and Watchable Wildlife	\$200			
MA-50	Move restroom to Dago Gulch and maintain; develop day use parking area if private		\$20,000		\$1000/year
MA-51	Campsites developed and maintained at Slocum Creek		\$30,000		\$5000/year
MA-52	Shorten 14 day maximum camping limit at Slocum Creek Campground				\$500
MA-53	No development of potable			X	
MA-54	Additional parking, safety dock, fish cleaning, and waste disposal facility provided and maintained at boat launching area		\$60,000		\$4500/year
MA-55	Temporary overnight facilities provided and maintained at Slocum Creek Campground for BLM employee	\$30,000			\$3000/year
MA-56	Camping and ground fires only at Slocum creek	\$500			\$100-500

M	<u>nt Action</u>	mm	3h t rm	ig rm		
	Implement IMP mon special value and visitation, p vid and public pr ect measures		12 00	00		

MONITORING EFFECTS OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

Monitoring will be developed and implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken in the Leslie Gulch Management Plan to meet management objectives. AS **data** are collected, implementation of additional analyzed actions may be necessary. Data may also indicate that a revision of this plan is necessary in order to refine goals and objectives or to consider other management options. Below is a list of monitoring activities that will occur with implementation of the Leslie Gulch Management Plan. Specific methods and locations of monitoring studies are on file at the Vale District office.

Management actions will be implemented as determined by annual review by an interdisciplinary team. Prioritization will be determined by BLM policy and resource protection needs as determined by the changing resource conditions within the ACEC.

ACCESS AND ROADS

- ◆ Periodicall; inspect Dago Gulch for vehicle trespass beyond the locked **gate**.
- ◆ Annually inspect the Steamboat Ridge Road for accelerated erosion and correct as necessary.
- Annually inspect areas where the Leslie Gulch Road crosses special status plant sites for negative impacts to the plants by the road. Work with road maintenance personnel as necessary to correct conflicts.

MINERALS

- ◆ Periodically check the ACEC for mineral related activity. This activity would be in trespass following mineral withdrawal.

LIVESTOCK GRAZING

- ◆ Monitor trend of perennial vegetation condition in the portion of the ACEC within the Bannock pasture. This will be completed by installation of at least one permanent photo plot and one 100 foot line intercept transect.
- ◆ Use supervision will be made at a minimum of once a month to detect livestock trespass. More frequent checks may be made when livestock are present in adjacent pastures.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

- ◆ Conduct at least two field trips annually in spring and early summer for the purpose of identifying and recording infestation sites and directing control efforts.
- ◆ Monitor effectiveness of control measures for white-top, Scotch thistle, and other invasive weeds.

WILD HORSES

- ◆ Wild horse activity will be monitored during livestock use supervision monitoring. Use supervision will be made at a minimum of once a month. More frequent check maybe made when livestock are present in adjacent pastures.
- ◆ Conduct aerial inventory of wild horses annually.

SPECIAL STATUS PLANTS

- ◆ Implement monitoring studies at selected locations that will track viability of known populations of the five sensitive plant species within the ACEC. Specific methods of monitoring and locations of studies are on file at the Vale District Office.
- ◆ Continue inventories within the ACEC to determine distribution and numbers of the sensitive plant species.
- ◆ Conduct general ecological monitoring at specific sites where special status plants are known to occur which will help give understanding of natural processes and causes of population trends for sensitive status plant species.
- ◆ Assess yearly impacts of human activities, including but not limited to hiking activities, road repair work, and camping, at selected locations of sensitive plant species.

WILDLIFE

- ◆ Monitor the ACEC for winter use by bald eagles and other raptors with a minimum of one winter survey (December 1- February 1) when roads are passable.
- ◆ Monitor for prairie falcon, golden eagle, and other raptor species of concern during nesting season. Any nests that are located will be monitored for human disturbance.
- ◆ Conduct inventory and monitoring for special status wildlife species as budget constraints permit. Areas of high recreational use will have the highest priority for survey. If special status species are found, appropriate monitoring will be developed and implemented.

FIRE

- ◆ Any wild fire within or near the ACEC will have a Resource Advisor assigned who will advise the Incident Commander concerning resource values in the area. Provisions of IMP, the Vale District Fire Management Activity Plan and this plan will be followed.

RECREATION

- ◆ Maintain records of the volume of motorized and nonmotorized recreational use. Emphasize selected popular, sensitive resource, concentrated and adversely impacted user sites and locations. Recreational uses monitored include road travel, camping, and various day use land and water-based related activities.

Monitoring methods will include road and trailhead mechanical counters, voluntary sign-in registers, patrols, visitor use surveys, plot photography, comparative physical resource evaluation, and tracking of issued use permits.

- ◆ Evaluate user satisfaction, preference, trends, demography and economic impacts by conducting periodic visitor use surveys for both motorized and nonmotorized land and water-based activities.

Elements of measure include retention and enjoyment of the ACEC's relevant and important values, meeting wilderness values and providing quality recreational camping and day use experiences. Evaluation elements for measuring economic impacts include duration of stay, user patterns/histories and demography of the ACEC's visitors.

- ◆ Conduct patrols and checks, as necessary, for compliance with the provisions of this plan.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Oregon State Office
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, Oregon 97208

RECEIVED
FEB 09 1995
VALE DISTRICT

In Reply Refer to:
1610/1785(933)

FEB - 7 1995

Memorandum

To: District Manager, Vale 

From: State Director, Oregon/Washington

Subject: Implementation of the Northern Malheur Plan Amendment for the Leslie Gulch Area of Critical Environmental Concern

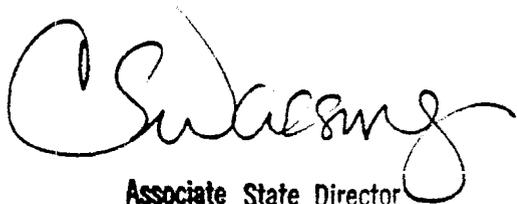
In April, 1994, the proposed plan amendment and environmental assessment was distributed to the public for review with the opportunity to protest under 43 **CFR 1610.5-2**. As a result, three valid protests were received from various individuals or groups. After careful consideration, the Director has responded to the germane portions of the protests and **affirmed** all aspects of the decisions. Since a member of the Director's field planning staff personally toured the area, affirmation of our proposed resource protection actions and procedural review of alternatives and environmental consequences is noteworthy. A copy of each of the Director's responses is attached and should be made a part of your official planning record, along with this memorandum. Please note that the portions of the original protests which were found to be without formal standing or not germane to the plan amendment should receive a formal District Manager response. This would also be appropriate for the other party who failed to demonstrate standing to protest, but should receive more feedback than a protest rejection notice. One option would be to forward that party a copy of the similar protest response to the group with comparable concerns.

In accordance with 43 CFR 1610.3-2(e), the proposed plan amendment was forwarded to the **Honorable** Barbara Roberts, Governor of Oregon for her staff review for consistency with State plans, programs and policies. Based on the absence of any known letter or contact by the Governor's Natural Resource Assistant or the Governor's Forest Planning Team, it appears there are no known inconsistencies or objections from the State.

We also understand there were no protests or appeals filed on the proposed Leslie Gulch Area of Critical environmental Concern Management Plan, included on pages 19-34 of the

April 1994 document. Since there is no further reason to modify, further amend or defer the proposed actions in the April 1994 document, it is unconditionally approved and you are hereby authorized to implement all aspects of the decision relating to land tenure adjustment, road maintenance and closures, visitor use and recreational livestock use restrictions, domestic: livestock use restrictions, wild horse herd management and **public** information and interpretative improvements. Since the environmental assessment and decision record clearly anticipated the necessary actions required to meet the plan objectives, no further environmental analysis or decisionmaking steps are anticipated. We suggest that your staff utilize an inexpensive news release to notify all addressees on the MFP mailing list and other interested publics that the proposed decision has been approved and affirmed by the Director without change. We also recommend noting the status of the decision in your FY 1995 **Malheur Resource Area Planning Update** report.

Please provide OR-933 with copies of your news release or other mailer which **indicates** our decision has been affirmed. Please extend our appreciation to your staff for the close support and cooperation in developing this plan to provide appropriate resource protection, visitor services **and** public safety while protecting and enhancing Leslie Gulch resources. Please keep the Oregon State Office staff informed of your progress.



Associate State Director

1 Attachment

1 - Director's responses to three protests (11 pages)

cc: **WO-480 (406-LS)** (w/o attachments)

ID-930 (Attention: Wallace Evans) (**w/o** attachments)

OR-912 (Attention: Chris Strebig) (with attachments)

OR-931 (with attachments)

**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Vale District Office
100 Oregon Street
Vale, Oregon 97918

**OFFICIAL BUSINESS
PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300**

**FORWARDING AND ADDRESS
CORRECTION REQUESTED**