



**N. McCLELLAN MOUNTAIN - 20,646  
Acres (RARE II No. 6237)**

**1. Description**

- a. History** This area was inventoried in RARE and enlarged in the RARE II inventory. The John Day Planning Unit Environmental Impact Statement and the RARE II Environmental Impact Statement designated the area to nonwilderness uses. The Forest currently manages a portion of the higher elevation area as unroaded.
- b. Location and Access** This area is located about five miles south of Mt. Vernon, Oregon, in the Aldrich Mountain Range, on the boundary of the Malheur National Forest overlooking the John Day River valley (T. 14 S , R. 28 E., T 14 S , R. 29 E., T. 14 S , R. 30 E., T. 15 S , R. 30 E , of the Willamette Meridian).
- Forest road Nos 21 and 1458 provide access to the northwest corner, while a trail from Forest road No. 2160212 accesses Fields Peak. Access from the south is by Forest roads Nos 2190, 2100011, and 4900845. The Ingle Creek and Dead Horse Mountain trails are accessed from Forest road No. 49. Off-Forest roads from U.S. 26 up Moon, Riley, McClellan, and Harper Creeks provide access to the northern boundary.
- c. Geography and Topography** The extremely varied terrain is primarily steep and broken slopes highly dissected with streamcourses, including Hattie, Hells Canyon, Miner, Tex, Ingle, Moon (and tributaries), McClellan, Buck Gulch, Riley, and Harper Creeks. Dominant high points are McClellan, Moon, Riley, Dead Horse, Cinnabar, Ingle, and Coal Pit Mountains as well as Fields and Second Peaks, and two other unnamed peaks approaching or exceeding 7,000 feet. Relief is approximately 4,160 feet, from 7,363 feet at Fields Peak to about 3,200 feet on Fields Creek. See Figure C-13.
- d. Geology and Soils** General geologic formations are Fields Creek Formation, a conglomerate of mudstone, shale, graywacke, and tuff; and the Laycock Graywacke, a massive graywacke and tuff formation.
- Soil types are predominantly gravelly loam and silty loam textured soils, both forested and nonforested. Most of the types are loamy and clayey or volcanic ash nonforested soils, interspersed with large areas of forested volcanic surface soils. Soil depth is variable but is generally 8 to 18 inches. Triassic-age sedimentary rocks cover most of the area with some foliated sedimentary and volcanic rocks of Paleozoic age on the east, Cretaceous-age intrusives in the central portion, and Triassic-age oceanic crustal rocks in the northwest portion of the area.
- e. Vegetation** This area is 47 percent forested. Of these acres, 1,500 meet the Pacific Northwest Region's definition of old growth. Vegetation on the forested west- and south-facing slopes is primarily ponderosa pine with mixed conifer understories (Douglas-fir and white fir). The ground cover includes elk sedge, pinegrass, and wheatgrass. Forested areas north of McClellan Mountain are primarily white fir, Douglas-fir, western larch, and lodgepole pine, with a ground cover of huckleberry, pinegrass, and bromegrass. The highest elevations are occupied by subalpine fir and/or alpine sage and other subalpine shrubs and grasses. The drier or nonforested sites on all aspects are vegetated with juniper, sagebrushes, mountain-mahogany, and some scattered ponderosa pine. Ground cover on these sites includes wheatgrass, fescue, and bluegrass.

f Current Uses

Big-game hunting is the primary recreational use of the roadless area. (See Table C-2 ) There is also limited hiking, horseback riding, game bird hunting, and sightseeing. The area provides excellent opportunities for backcountry ski-touring, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. The proposed Pacific Crest-to-Desert Trail would pass through the southern part of the area.

Wildlife in the area is varied, the most visible being mule deer and elk. There have been mountain lion, black bear, and bighorn sheep (possibly from the Aldrich Mountain herd) reported within the roadless area. Bird species are numerous and include songbirds, raptors, game birds such as the blue grouse and mountain quail, and possibly the pileated woodpecker, a resident of old-growth forests. Mammals range from big game to voles, marmots, and chipmunks. A "seed" herd of bighorn sheep is planned for introduction on McClellan Mountain. Pine marten may be present in the old-growth forests on north-facing slopes. Elk winter range exists on lower slopes of the northern portions of the area. Two and one half miles of Riley Creek provide limited trout fishing. Tex, Riley, and McClellan Creeks provide steelhead spawning and rearing habitat.

There are four grazing allotments providing an average of 1,400 Animal Unit Months annually. Livestock use is limited because of the terrain.

Attractions include the opportunity to be in some very wild and rugged country with no intrusions from others. The area offers solitude, peace, and quiet. There are many unusual geologic formations, as well as numerous high-vantage points. The area will continue to be used by big-game hunters.

**2. Wilderness  
Capability**

a. Manageability  
and Boundaries

The present boundary does not follow natural physical characteristics in many places and often is located midslope, which prevents easy location on the ground. Boundary changes would improve manageability and separate many of the impacts of human activity. They would also reduce the size of the area.

b. Natural  
Integrity

Natural integrity is very high. There are some Primitive jeep trails along the southern boundary of the area. These could easily be separated from the area by a slight boundary adjustment.

c. Naturalness

The effects of grazing have had the most impact on the area's naturalness. Stock ponds are scattered throughout the southern third of the area. Fencing, mostly in the southern portion of the area, could easily be removed. The impact of the fence is low. The presence of cattle and evidence of their use, such as salt grounds, dust beds, etc., remain the most visible impact.

There is some scattered evidence of recreational use, such as primitive game racks and hunter camp areas. These are low impacts and could easily be corrected. There are several foot trails throughout the area which are not maintained and appear similar to game paths. One trail, Fields Peak, is maintained and is recommended for trailbike riders. This trail could also be separated from the area or managed for nonmotorized use.

The effects of fire suppression are not noticeable to the average visitor. Under natural conditions, low intensity fire would have selectively maintained ponderosa pine in the understories rather than allowing the conversion to fir species.

d Opportunity  
for Solitude

Opportunities for solitude are excellent. The deep canyons, vegetation, and rough, broken terrain provide excellent screening from distractions. The area is large enough to reduce the chance of human interaction

e. Primitive  
Recreation  
and Challenge

The opportunities for Primitive hiking, hunting, backpacking, and similar activities is good, and the steep, rugged terrain is physically demanding although not particularly challenging

There is great scenic variety, ranging from forested benches to deep canyons with open slopes and forested bottom lands. The current visual resource variety class is A, distinctive

Located within the unit are 13 possible cultural resource sites (11 prehistoric and 2 historic) There are no other identified sites This indicates travel through, and use by, American Indians and Europeans. There is at least one old mining and cabin site in the area.

f Special Features

There are no Threatened or Endangered Species present within this area. One Sensitive plant species is found here An area in the northeastern portion of McClellan Mountain has been identified as a high priority candidate for proposal as a Research Natural Area

3. Availability  
for Wilderness

a Resource  
Potentials

The area currently provides roaded natural, semiprimitive motorized, and nonmotorized recreation opportunities. (See Table C-3.) This area could provide 29,170 Recreation Visitor Days per year. (See Table C-4.)

There are 4,108 acres of forested land tentatively suitable for timber management activities. These timber stands are multistoried and consist primarily of mixed conifer Average overstory age is 160 years, average age of the understory is 75 years There is a standing volume of 30 4 million board feet (5 3 million cubic feet) With the use of intensive timber management techniques, 197 thousand cubic feet (1,127 thousand board feet) would be contributed to the annual allowable sale quantity in the first decade. The long-term sustained yield capacity from this area would be 234 thousand cubic feet per year

The area has no known locatable mineral potential, although an old mercury prospect covered by one mining claim is located on Cinnabar Mountain at the northeast corner of the area The U S. Geological Survey does not consider the area to have potential for oil, gas, or geothermal resources.

The potential for increased livestock use is low Terrain is one limiting factor.

b Management  
Considerations

The Aldrich Mountain Range, historically, is one of the hardest hit by lightning on the Bear Valley Ranger District The hazard is high to very high The south and west slopes are dry with flash fuels, while the north faces have dense concentrations of heavy fuels Lack of access requires that most fires in the unit be attacked by helicopter or smokejumper crews.

Insect damage from the western spruce budworm is widespread on the northern face of the Aldrich Mountain Range. At this time, mortality is considered insignificant and the trees appear to be recovering. Species involved are Douglas-fir and white fir. The white fir component has a high cull factor in the greater than 12-inch diameter classes from root rots.

There are no present or planned impacts on the water resource in terms of impoundments, power withdrawals, etc , nor are there any measuring sites

There are no lands of other ownership within the roadless area. Private, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W) managed lands adjoin the roadless area boundary on the north.

#### **4. Wilderness Evaluation**

The Strawberry Mountain Wilderness is 8 miles east, Monument Rock Wilderness is 32 miles east, North Fork John Day Wilderness is 38 miles northeast, and Black Canyon Wilderness is 16 miles west. The ecosystems present in this area are also represented in these wildernesses.

The nearest major metropolitan centers are Portland, Oregon (260 miles northwest) and Boise, Idaho (200 miles east).

In the 1979 RARE II study, there were 154 comments favoring wilderness and 2,585 comments favoring nonwilderness management. In recent Forest planning activities, this area received a moderate level of comments at a ratio of 1.3 opposing wilderness designation for every 1 favoring it--almost equally balanced.

The primary reasons favoring wilderness for this area included the opportunity for solitary, Primitive recreation and the natural character of the area. Fish, wildlife, and water quality were also strong concerns.

The primary reasons opposing wilderness were the potential mineral resource values, some evidence of mining activity and off-road vehicle use, and a stated preference for scenic-Primitive or roadless designation.

There was support particularly for special management of the higher elevation areas.

#### **5. Environmental Consequences**

Table C-17 displays the various management area assignments for this area by alternative.

##### **a. Vegetation/Trees**

In Alternative B-Modified merchantable timber volume is expected to be harvested over time. The tree sizes, stand density and composition would change to a managed forest appearance as the overstory is removed and remaining trees are thinned. Designated old growth would be retained in all alternatives and would continue to progress through the natural successional cycle.

In Alternatives A, C-Modified, F, I, and NC, little change in trees/vegetation is expected; present characteristics would be retained and naturalness overall would be unchanged, except the effects of naturally occurring wildfires.

- b Vegetation/Grass and Shrubs In Alternative B-Modified forage for wildlife and livestock is expected to increase on forested areas where the overstory is removed and the understory is thinned. The long-term effects on this transitory forage is a gradual decrease in forage as tree canopies again close and shade the understory. Seeding of introduced grass species will provide higher quality forage and change the forage species composition. The native forage species of elk sedge, pinegrass, brome, and wheatgrass are also expected to increase in vigor and density naturally as the timber stands are opened by harvest activities.
- In Alternatives A, C-Modified, F, I, and NC, forage production is expected to remain at present levels and may decrease as Douglas-fir and white fir further encroach under the ponderosa pine on south slopes.
- c Wilderness Alternatives A, C-Modified, I, and NC, would preclude motorized vehicle use and timber harvest activities, including construction of timber access roads on the area managed as semiprimitive. Future wilderness consideration would remain a possibility. The area would continue to appear very natural to users.
- In Alternative B-Modified users would see motorized vehicles, timber harvest activities, and new timber access roads. The area would eventually appear managed with human activities evident in the forested areas. Future wilderness consideration would be foregone by the end of the first decade.
- In Alternative F use of motorized vehicles would be allowed (although on only a portion of the area), otherwise it is similar to Alternatives A, C-Modified, I, and NC.
- d Recreation In Alternative B-Modified the recreational opportunity would be roaded modified with expectations of increased vehicle use. Big-game hunting is the primary recreation activity and hunter success is expected to increase due to reduced hiding cover in timber harvest areas and easier access. The opportunity for a nonmotorized backcountry hunting experience would decrease as additional access roads are traveled by more hunters.
- Alternatives A, C-Modified, I, and NC offer a semiprimitive nonmotorized recreation opportunity, which would provide a more natural setting to users.
- Alternative F offers both semiprimitive nonmotorized and motorized recreational opportunities. Visitors would use and/or encounter snowmobiles, motorcycles, and vehicles in areas accessible to them. Road access should remain Primitive as it now exists, new road construction is not expected and access would be limited by weather to specialized vehicles, especially during periods other than summer. Eventually, more trails may be constructed to accommodate users, and the natural environment of the area protected for the proposed Pacific Crest-to-Desert Trail.
- e. Scenery The scenic variety in the area, ranging from forested benches to deep canyons with open slopes and forested bottom lands, would be maintained under all alternatives. Viewers should expect to see evidence of activities such as clearcuts and access roads in the forested areas in Alternative B-Modified. The naturalness of the area would be affected more by the above alternative than by Alternatives A, C-Modified, F, I, and NC. Over the long term, users would see managed forest served by a network of access roads for the removal of timber.

In Alternatives A, C-Modified, F, I, and NC, the present scenery would be maintained and no significant changes are foreseen, barring a major outbreak of insects, diseases, or wildfire, except for about 2,000 acres which would be developed under these alternatives.

f Wildlife

Old-growth timber and snags would be available to nongame wildlife to a greater extent in Alternatives A, C-Modified, F, I, and NC. Management standards would adequately protect key habitats of all wildlife under all alternatives. Moreover, old growth is designated in all alternatives to meet requirements for pileated woodpecker and pine marten habitat. Thirty percent of the area is in elk winter range. This range would be affected by removal of some hiding and thermal cover by harvest activities; forage would increase in Alternative B-Modified. Timber harvest activities on the north slopes would improve the cover/forage ratio by reducing the amount of trees and improving forage on deer and elk summer range. Wildlife snag levels would be least affected by Alternatives A, C-Modified, F, I, and NC and would be most affected under Alternative B-Modified.

g Water, Riparian,  
Fisheries

There are no significant differences between alternatives on effects to streams. Management standards will adequately protect the streamside areas under all alternatives. Increased accessibility and use indirectly associated with timber harvest and access roads is expected in Alternative B-Modified.

h. Cultural Resources

All alternatives are similar in effects on cultural resources. There is no discernible difference between alternatives when considering existing regulations, laws, and management standards related to cultural resources.

i. Soils

All alternatives are similar in effects on soils. There is no discernible difference between alternatives when considering existing regulations, laws, and management standards.

TABLE C-17  
 McCLELLAN MOUNTAIN MANAGEMENT BY ALTERNATIVE  
 (Acres)

Management Area	NC <sup>1/</sup>	Alternatives				
		A	B-Mod	C-Mod	F	I-Preferred
1. General Forest	N/A	543	2,702		509	509
2. Rangeland		789	7,511		752	752
3. Riparian Areas		85	397		74	74
4A. Big-Game Winter Range			561			
4B. Big-Game Winter Range Enhancement						
5. Bald Eagle Winter Roost						
6A. Strawberry Mt. Wilderness						
6B. Monument Rock Wilderness						
6C. Pine Creek						
7. Scenic Area						
8. Special Interest Area						
9. Research Natural Area			940			
10. Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	N/A	18,629		20,646	10,676	18,717
11. Semi-Primitive Motorized					8,041	
12. Developed Recreation						
13. Old Growth	N/A	320	1,400		320	320
14. Visual Corridors			4,750			
15. Unit Plan Wildlife Emphasis Areas						
16. Minimum Level Management		280	2,385		274	274
17. Byram Gulch Municipal Supply Watershed						
18. Long Creek Municipal Supply Watershed						
19. Administrative Sites						
20. Wildlife Emphasis Areas with Scheduled Harvest						
21. Wildlife Emphasis Area Non-Scheduled Harvest						
22. Wild and Scenic River						
TOTAL ACRES	N/A	20,646	20,646	20,646	20,646	20,646

<sup>1/</sup>The Timber Management Plan, upon which the No Change Alternative is based, was developed in 1979. The plan was not an integrated plan and, consequently, did not address all resource uses and outputs in an integrated manner. As a result, these acreages are not available