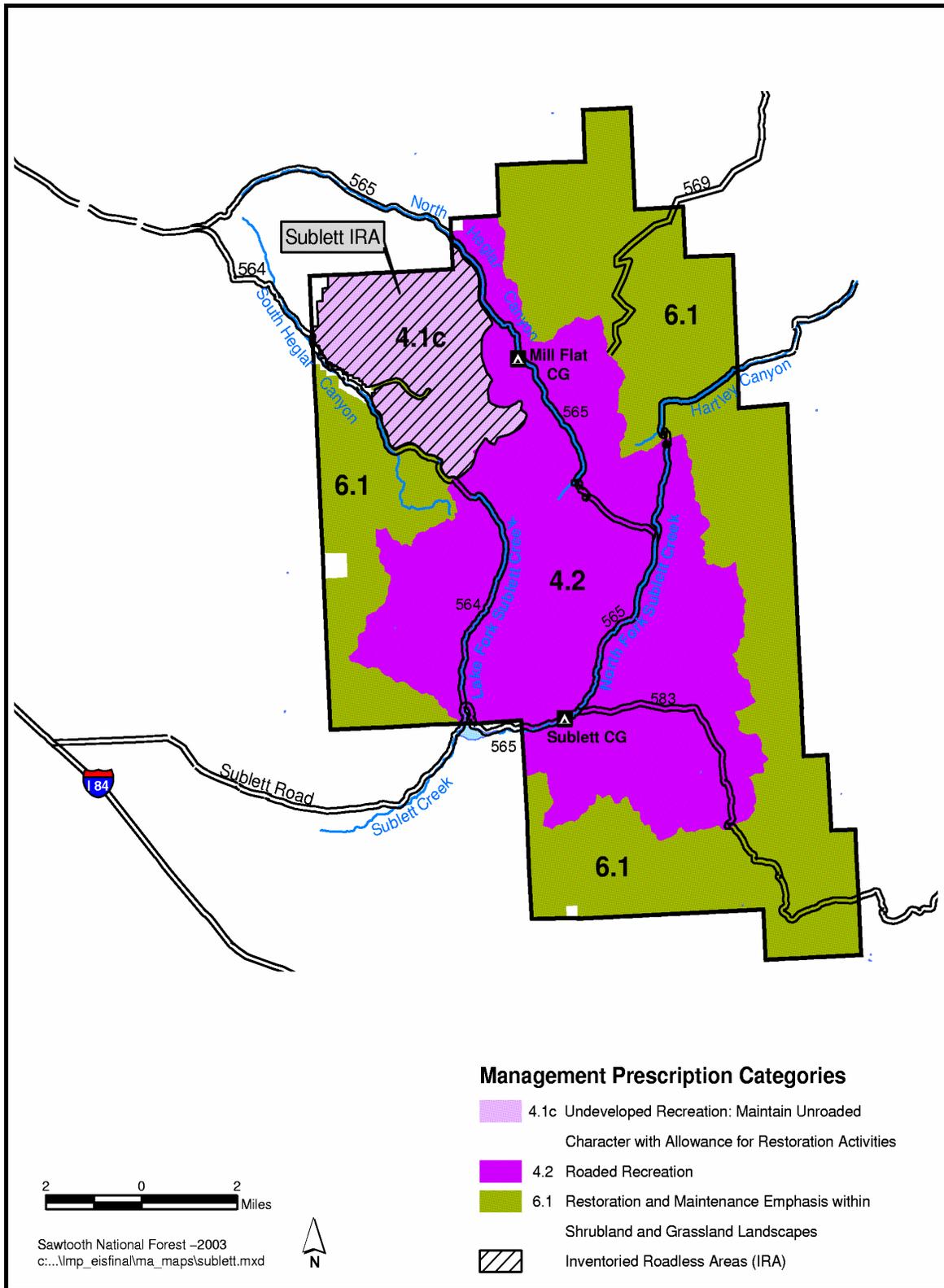


Management Area 20 –Sublett Location Map



## Management Area 20 Sublett

### MANAGEMENT AREA DESCRIPTION

**Management Prescriptions** - Management Area 20 has the following management prescriptions (see map on preceding page for distribution of prescriptions).

Management Prescription Category (MPC)	Percent of Mgt. Area
4.1c – Maintain Unroaded Character with Allowance for Restoration Activities	9
4.2 – Roaded Recreation Emphasis	44
6.1 – Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Shrubland & Grassland Landscapes	47

**General Location and Description** - Management Area 20 is comprised of Forest Service administered lands in the Sublett Mountain Range, which lies in Cassia and Power Counties, Idaho. The Minidoka Ranger District administers this area. There are many small communities in the vicinity, but the nearest large towns are Burley to the west and Pocatello to the east. The Curlew National Grassland lies a few miles to the southeast. The management area is an estimated 78,250 acres, which includes several small private inholdings totaling 620 acres, or less than 1 percent of the area. Private ranches and BLM land border most of the area. The majority of the private land has been converted to agriculture. The primary uses and activities in this area have been livestock grazing, dispersed recreation, and timber management.

**Access** - Management Area 20 lies south of Interstate 86 and east of Interstate 84. The main access to the area from the north is up North Heglar Canyon and Forest Road 565, or from the west from I-84 to Sublett Reservoir and up Forest Road 564. Both of these are well-maintained gravel roads. Other roads within the management area are typically native-surfaced and rough. Road access through private land is restricted in the eastern portion of the area. The density of classified roads is an estimated 1.4 miles per square mile, and roads are evenly distributed over the entire area. Total road density for area subwatersheds ranges between 0 and 3.2 miles per square mile. Several short trails also exist, but most travel in this area occurs along roads.

**Special Features** - The Sublett Inventoried Roadless Area comprises about 9 percent of the management area. The Hudspeth Cutoff, which extends across the southern portion of the area through Summit Springs and the South Fork drainage, is part of the historic Oregon Trail. The Sublett Reservoir offers fishing opportunities for rainbow trout, brown trout, cutthroat trout, and kokanee salmon, while providing irrigation water for ranches downstream.

**Air Quality** - Portions of this management area lie within Montana/Idaho Airsheds ID-25 and ID-20 and in Cassia, Power, and Oneida Counties. Particulate matter is the primary pollutant of concern related to Forest management activities. The closest ambient air monitor is located in Twin Falls. It is used to obtain current background levels, trends, and seasonal patterns of particulate matter. The closest Class I area is the Craters of the Moon National Monument. Visibility monitoring has been expanded for this area.

Between 1995 and 1999, emission trends for PM 10 in all counties improved. PM 2.5 trends for Oneida County improved slightly, while emission trends remained constant in Cassia and Power Counties. The most common source of particulate matter within the county was fugitive dust from unpaved roads and agricultural activities such as tilling. In addition to Forest management activities, crop residue and ditch burning may contribute to particulate matter emissions. All three counties had agricultural-related burning ranging from an estimated 10,100 acres up to nearly 22,000 acres. There were no point sources located within Cassia and Oneida Counties. Power County did have point sources near larger population centers.

**Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources** - Elevations range from 5,200 feet on the Forest boundary to 7,464 feet atop Cedar Creek Peak. Management Area 20 is predominantly in the Humboldt River High Plateau subsection, and the dominant landforms are fluvial mountains, plateaus and escarpments, and depositional lands. Slope gradients range from 40 to 70 percent on the fluvial mountains, from 0 to 30 percent on the plateaus and depositional lands, to near vertical on the escarpments. The surface geology is predominantly limestone, with some volcanic tuff. Soils are generally stable, and have low to moderate erosion potential and moderate productivity. Subwatershed vulnerability ratings in this area are all low (see table below). Subwatershed Geomorphic Integrity ratings vary from high (functioning appropriately) to moderate (functioning at risk), with the majority being moderate (see table below). Localized impacts from roads, livestock grazing, and dispersed recreation include accelerated erosion, upland compaction, and stream bank and channel modification.

The management area is comprised of portions of six watersheds that drain into three separate subbasins. About 70 percent of the area drains west into the Raft River Subbasin through the Sublett Creek, Meadow Creek, and Warm/Helgar Watersheds. The eastern portion of the area drains east into the Lake Walcott Subbasin through the Rockland and Upper South Fork Rock Creek Watersheds. The southern tip (less than 1 percent) drains south into the Curlew Valley Subbasin through the Juniper Valley Watershed. The main perennial streams in the area are the Lake Fork, North Fork, and South Fork of Sublett Creek. Most other streams run intermittently. There are no natural lakes in the area. Sublett Reservoir is located at the south end of the area, mostly off Forest administered lands. Water Quality Integrity ratings for the subwatersheds vary from high (functioning appropriately) to low (not functioning appropriately), with the majority being moderate (functioning at risk). Impacts include depleted stream flows from irrigation uses off-Forest, and accelerated sediment and nutrients from roads, livestock grazing, and dispersed recreation. Two of the 19 subwatersheds in this area have water bodies that were listed in 1998 as impaired under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act: Upper South Fork Rock Creek and Lake Fork Creek. The pollutants of concern are dissolved oxygen, stream flow alterations, nutrient, and sediment. Portions of this area are within a TMDL-assigned subbasin.

Subwatershed Vulnerability			Geomorphic Integrity			Water Quality Integrity			No. 303(d) Subs	No. Subs With TMDLs	No. Public Water System Subs
High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low	High	Mod.	Low			
0	0	19	3	16	0	5	13	1	2	8	0

No Threatened or Endangered fish species occur in Management Area 20. Rainbow and Yellowstone cutthroat trout are present in Sublett Creek, Lake Fork, the North and South Forks of Sublett Creek, and in Sublett Reservoir. These areas streams have been identified as important to maintaining or restoring strong populations of Yellowstone cutthroat trout and are a high-priority for restoration. Brown trout and kokanee salmon have been introduced to Sublett Reservoir and migrate up the aforementioned streams to spawn. Fish habitat is limited elsewhere due to the small size and intermittent nature of area streams. Aquatic habitat is functioning at risk due to sedimentation impacts and livestock grazing. Sublett Creek does not support fish below Sublett Reservoir due to off-Forest irrigation diversions and dewatering. Native cutthroat populations are at risk due to the presence of introduced fish species.

**Vegetation** - An estimated 66 percent of the management area is non-forested, or covered by grasslands, shrublands, meadows, rock, or water. Much of this area is comprised of the Mountain Big Sagebrush, Basin Big Sage, and Montane Shrub vegetation groups. The main forested vegetation groups are Aspen (6 percent), and Cool Dry Douglas-Fir (22 percent).

The Mountain Big Sagebrush and Basin Big Sage groups are functioning at risk due to fire exclusion and livestock grazing impacts, which have slightly altered structure and species composition. Montane Shrub is functioning properly.

The Cool Dry Douglas-Fir group is not functioning properly where fire exclusion has resulted in older, more decadent stands with more shade-tolerant subalpine fir and less seral species, specifically aspen, Douglas-fir, and lodgepole pine. Fire hazard is increasing in conifer stands due to increasing mortality from insect and disease infestations. Aspen is present in pure stands and mixed with subalpine fir; however, stands are dying out or being replaced by conifers.

Riparian vegetation is functioning at risk due to localized grazing and dispersed recreation impacts, and fire exclusion. In some areas, introduced grasses and noxious weeds are replacing native plants. Aspen and willow communities are becoming old and decadent, and are not regenerating due to fire exclusion and livestock use. Snag levels are below historic levels in some areas due to fuelwood gathering.

**Botanical Resources** - Currently, no known populations of Region 4 Sensitive species occur within this area. No federally listed or proposed plant species are known here, but potential habitat exists for Ute ladies'-tresses and slender moonwort. Ute ladies'-tresses, a threatened species, may have moderate to high potential habitat in riparian/wetland areas from 1,000 to 7,000 feet. Slender moonwort, a candidate species, may occur in moderate to higher elevation grasslands, meadows, and small openings in spruce and lodgepole pine, or open rocky outcrops.

**Non-native Plants** – Canada thistle is found in many drainages. Spotted knapweed, diffuse knapweed, whitetop, and musk thistle have also been found in areas surrounding Forest Service lands, thus posing a major threat from invasion. The main weeds of concern are Canada thistle and diffuse knapweed, which currently occur in small, scattered populations. An estimated 50 percent of the area is highly susceptible to noxious weed establishment and spread.

Subwatersheds in the table below have an inherently high risk of weed establishment and spread from activities identified with a “yes” in the various activity columns. This risk is due to the amount of drainage area that is highly susceptible to noxious weed invasion and the relatively high level of exposure from those identified vectors or carriers of weed seed.

Subwatershed	Road-related Activities	Livestock Use	Timber Harvest	Recreation & Trail Use	ATV Off-Road Use
Upper South FK Rock Creek	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Lake Fork Creek	Yes	No	No	No	No
Cold Springs Canyon Creek	Yes	No	No	No	No
Upper Meadow Creek	Yes	No	No	No	No
Upper Sublett Creek	No	No	No	Yes	No

**Wildlife Resources** - The cool shrublands and wooded draws provide habitat for sage grouse, ruffed grouse, blue grouse, and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse. Dry forests provide habitat for the Region 4 Sensitive goshawk, flammulated owl, and Townsend's big-eared bat, as well as nesting and foraging habitat for migratory land birds, and summer range for deer, elk, occasional moose, and mountain lion. The area is within lynx habitat, as identified in the Canadian Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy. Terrestrial habitat is functioning at risk in some areas due to localized impacts to sage grouse and deer habitat due resulting from fire exclusion and the introduction of non-native plant species. The level of human disturbance is low to moderate, and habitat fragmentation from roads, development, and fire is also low to moderate.

**Recreation Resources** - There are two developed campgrounds in the management area, Sublett in the Sublett Creek drainage, and Mill Flat in North Heglar Canyon. The rest of the area provides dispersed recreation opportunities year-round, primarily hunting, camping, horseback riding, and snowmobiling. The area is in Idaho Fish and Game Management Unit 56. Summer use is moderate, and over-snow use in the winter is moderate to high. One hundred miles of groomed trails are available for snowmobile use, most following the road system. Many of the recreation users are from local ranching communities, though some snowmobilers come from the Magic Valley and beyond. Most trails are open to motorized use. There is one outfitter and guide under permit within the area. There is also a cooperative agreement with a snowmobile club for the use of the Sublett Cabin Administration Site and for the grooming of 100 miles of snowmobile trails.

**Cultural Resources** - Cultural themes in this area include prehistoric, emigration/settlement, and Forest Service Administration. Prehistoric sites reflect hunting and gathering activities from the seasonal rounds of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes. The area was a travel way from the Goose Creek area to the Snake River and Fort Hall winter camps. Sites in the area indicate at least 4000 years of use. Historic use began with the emigrant trail through the area. The Hudspeth Cutoff from the Oregon Trail to the California Trail is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Sublett Guard Station was constructed in 1913.

**Timberland Resources** - Of the estimated 19,900 tentatively suited acres in this management area, 14,700 acres have been identified as being suited timberlands, or appropriate for timber production. This represents about 10 percent of the Forest's suited timberland acres. The suited timberland acres are found in MPCs 4.2 and 6.1, as shown on the management area MPC map.

Lands within MPC 4.1c are identified as not suited for timber production. Harvest opportunities are limited by access restrictions across private land. Timber harvest has occurred in the past. Fuelwood, posts, poles, and Christmas trees are removed in designated areas.

**Rangeland Resources** - The management area contains all or portions of seven cattle and four sheep allotments. Management Area 20 provides an estimated 22,300 acres of capable rangeland, which represents about 4 percent of the capable rangeland on the Forest.

**Mineral Resources** - Although many gold claims have been filed in the South Heglar and South Fork of Sublett Creek areas, all but one of these claims have been allowed to elapse. Little if any mining has occurred in this area in the past, and the potential for mineral development is low.

**Fire Management** - Prescribed fire has been used to improve vegetation conditions. No large fires have occurred in this area in the last 15 years. No National Fire Plan communities or wildland-urban interface subwatersheds occur in the area. Historical fire regimes for the area are estimated to be 100 percent mixed1 or 2. None of the area regimes has vegetation conditions that are highly departed from their historical range. However, 52 percent of the area regimes have vegetation conditions that are moderately departed from their historical range. Wildfire in these areas may result in larger patch sizes of high intensity or severity.

**Lands and Special Uses** – See the Recreation Resources section for recreation special uses.

## MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

In addition to the Forest-wide Goals and Objectives that provide direction for this management area, the following Objectives have been developed specifically for the area.

Resource/Program	Direction	Number	Management Direction Description
<b>MPC 4.1c Undeveloped Recreation: Maintain Unroaded Character with Allowance for Restoration Activities</b>	General Standard	2001	Management actions—including mechanical vegetation treatments, salvage harvest, wildland fire use, prescribed fire, special use authorizations, and road maintenance—must be designed and implemented in a manner that would be consistent with the unroaded landscape in the temporary, short term, and long term. Exceptions to this standard are actions in the 4.1c road standard, below.
	Road Standard	2002	Road construction or reconstruction may only occur where needed: a) To provide access related to reserved or outstanding rights, or b) To respond to statute or treaty.
	Fire Guideline	2003	The full range of fire suppression strategies may be used to suppress wildfires. Emphasize tactics that minimize impacts of suppression activities on the unroaded landscape in the area.
<b>MPC 4.2 Roaded Recreation Emphasis</b>	Vegetation Guideline	2004	Vegetation management actions—including wildland fire use, prescribed fire, and mechanical treatments—may be used to maintain or restore desired vegetation and fuel conditions provided they do not prevent achievement of recreation resource objectives.
	Fire Guideline	2005	The full range of fire suppression strategies may be used to suppress wildfires. Emphasize strategies and tactics that minimize impacts to recreation developments and investments.

Resource/Program	Direction	Number	Management Direction Description
<b>MPC 6.1 Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Shrubland and Grassland Landscapes</b>	Vegetation Guideline	2006	Any vegetation treatment activity may be used to restore or maintain desired vegetation and fuel conditions. The available vegetation treatment activities include wildland fire use. Salvage harvest may also occur.
	Fire Guideline	2007	The full range of fire suppression strategies may be used to suppress wildfires. Emphasize strategies and tactics that minimize impacts to habitats, developments, and investments.
	Road Guideline	2008	Road construction or reconstruction may occur where needed: a) To provide access related to reserved or outstanding rights, or b) To respond to statute or treaty, or c) To achieve restoration and maintenance objectives for vegetation, water quality, aquatic habitat, or terrestrial habitat; or d) To meet access and travel management objectives.
<b>Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources</b>	Objective	2009	Work with DEQ and EPA to validate the authenticity and causes for listing Sublett Creek and Fall Creek as 303(d) impaired water bodies, and to determine any Forest Service management activities that may be contributing to the listings.
	Objective	2010	Improve stream bank stability of C and E channel sections of Sublett Creek through modification of livestock grazing practices or systems.
<b>Vegetation</b>	Objective	2011	Restore and maintain early seral aspen, Douglas-fir, and lodgepole pine desired condition components in the Cool Dry Douglas-Fir vegetation group, as described in Appendix A.
	Objective	2012	Maintain climax aspen and increase aspen regeneration in the Aspen vegetation group.
	Objective	2013	Restore canopy cover to desired levels (described in Appendix A) within the Basin Big Sagebrush and Mountain Big Sagebrush vegetation communities. Restore native perennial grass/forbs composition of plant communities in these same areas.
	Objective	2014	Restore riparian vegetation along Sublett Creek through management of dispersed recreation and livestock grazing.
<b>Non-native Plants</b>	Objective	2015	Contain existing spot areas of noxious weeds and prevent invader species from becoming established, with emphasis on Canada thistle, diffuse knapweed, and spotted knapweed.
<b>Wildlife Resources</b>	Objective	2016	Provide blue and ruffed grouse, goshawk, and flammulated owl habitat by maintaining large and mature Douglas-fir to accommodate roosting, nesting, and other needs.
	Guideline	2017	Management actions in sage grouse habitat should be designed to meet the desired conditions for sagebrush described in Appendix A. Where greater than 40 percent of the sage grouse habitat in the management area has less than 10 percent canopy cover, actions should be designed to maintain or restore canopy cover conditions.
<b>Recreation Resources</b>	Objective	2018	Evaluate and incorporate methods to help prevent weed establishment and spread from off-road ATV/motorbike use in the Upper South Fork Rock Creek subwatershed, and from concentrated recreation use in Upper Sublett subwatershed. Consider annual weed inspection and treatment of trailheads, campgrounds, and other high-use areas; and posting educational notices in these areas to inform the public of areas that are highly susceptible to weed invasion and measures they can take to help prevent weed establishment and spread.

Resource/Program	Direction	Number	Management Direction Description															
<b>Recreation Resources</b>	Objective	2019	Achieve or maintain the following ROS strategy:															
			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">ROS Class</th> <th colspan="2">Percent of Mgt. Area</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Summer</th> <th>Winter</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Semi-Primitive Motorized</td> <td>18%</td> <td>100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roaded Natural</td> <td>29%</td> <td>Trace</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roaded Modified</td> <td>53%</td> <td>0%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		ROS Class	Percent of Mgt. Area		Summer	Winter	Semi-Primitive Motorized	18%	100%	Roaded Natural	29%	Trace	Roaded Modified	53%	0%
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The above numbers reflect current travel regulations. These numbers may change as a result of future travel regulation planning																		
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	Objective	2020	Complete the interpretive strategy for the Sublett Division to guide development of interpretive opportunities.															
	Objective	2021	Maintain Sublett Guard Station to preserve this cultural resource and continue agreement with Mt. Harrison Snowmobile Association.															
<b>Timberland Resources</b>	Objective	2022	Designate firewood-gathering areas in order to maintain snag and large woody debris components for wildlife and aquatic habitat, nutrient cycling, and soil productivity.															
	Objective	2023	Provide for commercial harvest opportunities through restoration activities to reduce fire and insect hazard in the management area.															
<b>Rangeland Resources</b>	Objective	2024	Maintain or restore riparian vegetation composition and streambank stability in Shirley Creek, Van Camp Creek, Lake Fork Creek, and Fall Creek drainages through improvements in livestock distribution, with emphasis on water development.															
	Objective	2025	Whenever possible, modify developed springs and other water sources to restore free-flowing water and wet meadows in sage grouse habitat.															
	Guideline	2026	When constructing or reconstructing fences, design or relocate them to avoid potential sage grouse mortality near leks.															
<b>Fire Management</b>	Objective	2027	Identify areas appropriate for Wildland Fire Use. Use wildland fire to restore or maintain vegetative desired conditions and to reduce fuels.															
	Guideline	2028	Coordinate with adjacent land managers to develop compatible fire suppression strategies and coordinated plans for wildland fire use.															
<b>Lands and Special Uses</b>	Objective	2029	Acquire right-of-way access for resource management activities along the northeast Forest boundary.															
<b>Facilities and Roads</b>	Objective	2030	<p>Evaluate and incorporate methods to help prevent weed establishment and spread from road management activities in the Upper South Fork Rock Creek, Lake Fork Creek, Cold Springs Canyon, and Upper Meadow Creek subwatersheds. Methods to consider include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When decommissioning, treat weeds before roads are impassable.</li> <li>➤ Schedule road maintenance activities when weeds are least likely to be viable or spread. Blade from least to most infested sites.</li> <li>➤ Consult or coordinate with the district noxious weed coordinator when scheduling road maintenance activities.</li> <li>➤ Periodically inspect road systems and rights of way.</li> <li>➤ Avoid accessing water for dust abatement through weed-infested sites, or utilize mitigation to minimize weed seed transport.</li> </ul>															