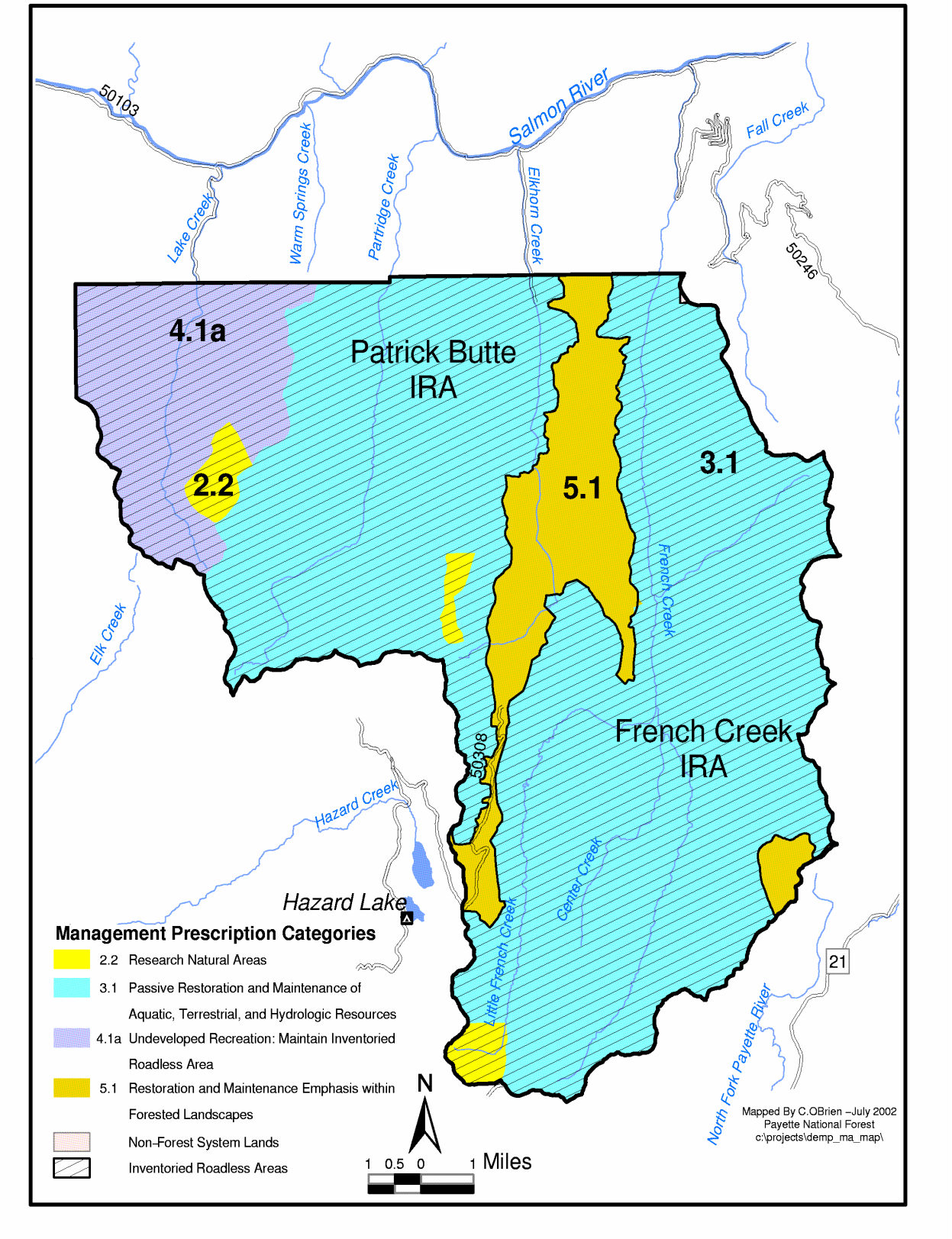
Management Area 09 –Lake Creek/French Creek –Location Map



Management Area 9
Lake Creek/French Creek

MANAGEMENT AREA DESCRIPTION

Management Prescriptions - Management Area 9 has the following management prescriptions (see map on preceding page for distribution of prescriptions).

Management Prescription Category (MPC)	Percent of Mgt. Area
2.2 – Research Natural Areas	2
3.1 – Passive Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial & Hydrologic Resources	75
4.1a - Undeveloped Recreation: Maintain Inventoried Roadless Areas	12
5.1 – Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Forested Landscapes	11

General Location and Description - Management Area 9 is comprised of National Forest System lands on the north side of the Payette National Forest from Lake Creek to French Creek (see map, preceding page). The area lies southeast of Riggins, Idaho, in Idaho County, and is part of the New Meadows and McCall Ranger Districts. The management area is an estimated 83,800 acres, almost all of which are administered by the Forest. The area is bordered by the Payette National Forest to the east, south, and southwest, and by a mix of BLM, private, and state lands to the north and west. The primary uses or activities in this management area have been dispersed recreation, livestock grazing, and timber management.

Access - The main access to the area is via Forest Roads 257 and 308 north from U.S. Highway 55 to Elkhorn Creek. Private landowners restrict access to the Forest from the Salmon and Little Salmon River canyons, except for Lake Creek Road to Forest Trail 155. The density of classified roads for the entire area is an estimated 0.2 miles per square mile, as most of the area is inventoried as roadless. Total road density for area subwatersheds ranges between 0 and 2.0 miles per square mile. A network of trails provides access to portions of the roadless area.

The Forest has a cost-share agreement with the State of Idaho for building and maintaining a cooperative road system in which all costs and responsibilities are shared. State lands in this area are in the Lake Creek drainage.

Special Features - The Lava Ridge National Recreation Trail bisects the management area. Hershey Point Lookout provides an excellent overview of the area. An estimated 89 percent of the area is inventoried as roadless, including substantial portions of the French Creek (39,648 of 88,816 acres) and Patrick Butte (35,015 of 74,096 acres) Roadless Areas. The Lava Butte Research Natural Area (370 acres) includes basalt and granitic cirque basins with diverse subalpine habitats. The Bruin Mountain Research Natural Area (680 acres) preserves an outstanding hanging valley, rare plant and insect species, and subalpine fir plant communities. The proposed Patrick Butte Research Natural Area (1,110 acres) encompasses a diverse range of subalpine plant communities, as well as several aquatic features.

Air Quality - This management area lies within Montana/Idaho Airshed ID-15 and Idaho County. Particulate matter is the primary pollutant of concern related to Forest management activities. There is an ambient air monitor located in McCall within the airshed to evaluate current background levels, trends, and seasonal patterns of particulate matter. There are three Class I areas within 100 kilometers of the Management Area: the Hells Canyon, Eagle Cap, and Selway-Bitterroot Wildernesses. Visibility monitoring has been expanded for these areas.

Between 1995 and 1999, emissions trends in Idaho County improved for PM 10, while PM 2.5 emissions remained constant. The most common sources of particulate matter within the county were wildfire, prescribed fire, and fugitive dust from unpaved roads. In addition to Forest management activities, crop residue and ditch burning may contribute to particulate matter emissions. The amount of agricultural-related burning was moderate within Idaho County (an estimated 13,500 acres). There were no point sources within the county.

Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources - Elevations range from 2,900 feet on Lake Creek to 8,841 feet atop Patrick Butte. Management Area 9 falls within the Granite Mountain Uplands and Salmon River Canyonlands Subsections. The main geomorphic landforms found in the area are glaciated mountains and uplands, periglacial uplands and mountain slopes, fluvial mountains and steep canyonlands, and depositional lands. Dominant slope gradients are 10 to 80 percent in the glaciated mountains and uplands, 15 to 40 percent on the periglacial uplands and mountain slopes, 30 to 50 percent on the fluvial mountains, 50 to 80 percent on steep canyonlands, and 0 to 20 percent on the depositional lands. The surface geology is primarily granitic rock from the Idaho Batholith, with localized volcanic rock in the Lava Ridge area. Soils generally have moderate to high surface erosion potential, and low to moderate productivity. Subwatershed vulnerability ratings range from low to high, with the majority being moderate (see table below). Geomorphic Integrity ratings for the subwatersheds vary from high (functioning appropriately) to moderate (functioning at risk) to low (not functioning appropriately), again the majority are moderate (see table below). Localized sedimentation occurs from roads, timber harvest, livestock grazing, and dispersed recreation. Lake Creek has been affected by recent flood events.

The management area comprises portions of the Allison-Lake, Partridge-Kelly, and French Creek Watersheds that drain directly into the Salmon River in the Lower Salmon River Subbasin. The main streams in the area are Lake Creek, Partridge Creek, Elkhorn Creek, French Creek, and Little French Creek. Most of the high mountain lakes are in the area around Hard and Patrick Buttes. Water Quality Integrity ratings for the subwatersheds vary from high (functioning appropriately) to moderate (functioning at risk) (see table below). There is localized accelerated sediment from roads, timber harvest, livestock grazing, and dispersed recreation. There are no 303(d) listed water bodies or TMDLs associated with this management area.

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			
1	7	1	2	5	2	4	5	0	0	0	0

The management area has designated critical habitat for chinook salmon. Chinook salmon, steelhead, bull trout, and brook trout have been found in Lake, Partridge, and French Creeks, and cutthroat trout have been found in French and Partridge Creeks. Native rainbow redband trout are found throughout the area. Chinook salmon and steelhead have been found in the lower two miles of Elkhorn Creek, downstream of natural falls. Sockeye salmon use the main Salmon River as a migration route to access lakes in the headwaters of the Salmon River. Shade-producing vegetation along Lake Creek was removed by channel scouring from flooding in 1997. Within the Lake Creek Watershed, episodic flooding has been common, with recent events occurring in 1964, 1974, and 1997. Otherwise, habitat conditions are generally at or near properly functioning condition in the management area. Impacts from roads and timber harvest are relatively minor, as this area is largely (89 percent) roadless. Risks to native fish populations include the presence of non-native species, and isolated natural habitat disturbances. The Lower French, Middle French, and Upper French Creek subwatersheds have been identified as important to the recovery of listed fish species, and as high-priority areas for restoration.

Vegetation - Vegetation at lower elevations is typically grasslands, shrublands, ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir on south and west aspects, and Douglas-fir and grand fir forests on north and east aspects. Mid and upper elevations are dominated by forest communities of Douglas-fir, grand fir, and subalpine fir, with pockets of lodgepole pine and aspen.

About 7 percent of Management Area 9 is comprised of rock, water, or shrublands and grasslands, including the Alpine Meadows and Perennial Grass Montane vegetation groups. The main forested vegetation groups are Warm Moist/Hydric Subalpine Fir (20 percent), Warm Dry Subalpine Fir (17 percent), Cool Moist Grand Fir (14 percent), High Elevation Subalpine Fir (13 percent), and Dry Grand Fir (9 percent).

The subalpine fir groups are functioning properly. A large percentage of the groups are at the beginning of their successional cycles following large, moderate-to-high intensity wildfires over the last 15 years. The Cool Moist Grand Fir group is also functioning properly. Much of this group is near the end of its successional cycle and at increasing risk of fire. The Dry Grand Fir group is at risk for fire that would not be within historical norms. Fire exclusion has led to high stand densities and fuel loadings, a high percentage of grand fir species, and a shift from a mixed severity fire regime to a lethal fire regime.

Alpine Meadows are functioning properly. The Perennial Grass Montane group is functioning at risk due to dominant older structural stages and the loss of Idaho fescue, which was reduced by historical livestock grazing.

Riparian area vegetation is generally considered to be functioning properly. Recent wildfires have greatly reduced overstory shade in some areas, especially in the upper reaches of the French and Elkhorn Creek drainages, but these effects are within historic norms for these vegetation groups, and effects to stream temperatures are minimal at these higher elevations.

Botanical Resources – Puzzling halimolobos, a current Region 4 Sensitive species, is known to occur within this management area. Additionally, short-styled tofieldia, a proposed Region 4 Sensitive species, occur within this area. Although no federally listed or proposed plant species

are currently known to occur in the area, potential habitat for Ute ladies'-tresses, Spalding's silene, and slender moonwort may exist within the area. Spalding's silene, a Threatened species, may occur in fescue grassland habitat types up to 5,500 feet. Ute Ladies'-tresses, a Threatened species, may have moderate to high potential habitat in riparian/wetland areas up 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.

Non-native Plants – Few exotic species or noxious weeds have been introduced to the area due to low road densities and low levels of past management. An estimated 14 percent of the area has high susceptibility to invasion by noxious weeds and exotic plants. The main weed of concern is Canada thistle, which currently occurs in scattered populations.

Wildlife Resources - The wide range of elevations and vegetation types in the management area provide a variety of wildlife habitats. The lower-elevation grasslands, shrublands, and forests are important winter/spring range for elk and deer. Forests provide habitat for a number of Region 4 sensitive species, including northern goshawk, flammulated owl, white-headed woodpecker, great gray owl, boreal owl, and three-toed woodpecker. The entire area provides nesting and forage habitat for migratory land birds, and general habitat for wide-ranging mammals like elk, bear, and mountain lion. Lynx habitat has been mapped in Lynx Analysis Units within the area. Terrestrial habitat is generally at properly functioning condition. Wildfires have created a mosaic of habitats, and disturbance and vulnerability are low due primarily to low road densities. In the roaded portion of the area, old and mature trees exist, but block sizes are small and have been fragmented by past harvest and wildfire.

Recreation Resources - Dispersed recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, sight-seeing, snowmobiling, ATV use, motorcycling, and camping occurs within Management Area 9. The area has no developed recreation sites. The area is in Idaho Fish and Game Management Unit 23. Most users come from McCall, Riggins, or New Meadows, or the Treasure Valley (Boise, Nampa, Caldwell), about 100 miles to the south. A network of trails provides a variety of motorized and non-motorized opportunities. Illegal ATV use is occurring in the Rainbow Lakes/Upper Twin Lakes area. ATV users are pioneering unauthorized trails throughout the Patrick Butte Roadless area. ATV users are riding on trails designed for 2-wheel motorized vehicles, causing erosion, rutting, and flow channels. Non-permitted outfitter and guide operations are causing conflicts with permitted outfitter and guides.

The primary recreation emphasis for this management area is providing quality motorized and non-motorized trail opportunities, with the emphasis in the Patrick Butte Roadless area on non-motorized trail opportunities.

Scenic Environment – Visually sensitive routes and use areas represent locations from which the scenic environment is considered especially important. These routes or areas generally have a more restrictive VQO assigned to them than areas not seen from such locations. The following is a list of visually sensitive routes or use areas with this management area. There may also be sensitive routes or use areas in adjacent management areas that could be affected by actions taken in this management area.

Route or Area Type	Sensitivity Level	Name of Route or Area
Roads	1	None
Roads	2	Goose Lake 257, Elk Meadows 308
Trails	1	Mary Lake 368, Link 371, Elk Lake 347, Partridge Creek 152, Lava Ridge 149, Cirque Basin 506, Clayburn Creek 505, Little French Creek 348
Trails	2	Bear Grass Saddle 151, Patrick Butte 153, Lake Creek 155, Sheep Mountain 157, Lava Butte Ridge 373, Elk Meadow 500, Elkhorn Creek 115, French Creek 116, Center Ridge 504, Little French Creek Meadow 503, French Creek Spur 308
Use Areas	1	Hershey Point Lookout, Lava Butte Lakes, Scribner Lake
Use Areas	2	None

Cultural Resources – The main cultural theme in this area is Prehistoric. This area received prehistoric use from ancestors of American Indian tribes, and was likely used for hunting, fishing, gathering, and as a travel way to and from the Salmon River to upland forests.

Timberland Resources - Of the estimated 65,500 tentatively suited acres in this management area, 7,700 acres have been identified as being suited timberlands, or appropriate for timber production. This represents about 2 percent of the Forest's suited timberland acres. The suited timberland acres are found in MPC 5.1 (see MPC map for this management area). Lands in MPCs 2.2, 3.1, and 4.1a have been identified as not suited for timber production. The level of past management has been fairly high in roaded areas and low or non existent elsewhere. Forest products such as fuelwood, posts, and poles are also collected.

Rangeland Resources - The management area contains all or portions of seven sheep allotments. Management Area 9 provides an estimated 15,800 acres of capable rangeland, which represents about 7 percent of the capable rangeland on the Forest.

Mineral Resources - Some past lode and placer gold mining has occurred in this area. There are several active claims; however, none of them have approved plans of operation. The potential for mineral development is considered low to moderate.

Fire Management - Prescribed fire has been used to reduce activity-generated fuels. Over half of this management area has burned in wildfires in the last 15 years. The largest fires were Partridge Creek in 1989 (3,200 acres), Warm Springs in 1992 (3,100 acres), and Corral in 1994 (47,300 acres). There are no identified wildland-urban interface subwatersheds or National Fire Plan communities in this area. Area fire regimes are estimated to be: 30 percent lethal, 49 percent mixed1 or 2, and 21 percent non-lethal. An estimated 20 percent of the area regimes have vegetation conditions that are highly departed from their historical range. Most of this change has occurred in the historically non-lethal fire regimes, resulting in conditions where wildfire would likely be much larger and more intense and severe than historically. In addition, 21 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, but not to the same extent as in the highly departed areas in non-lethal fire regimes.

Lands and Special Uses – A private landowner has submitted an application requesting that a permanent conditional easement be issued for his existing water diversion according to Public Law 99-545, commonly known as the "Colorado Ditch Bill". The water is diverted from the West Fork of Lake Creek and used for agricultural purposes. A designated communication site is located at Hershey Point for non-commercial, government use only.

MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

In addition to Forest-wide Goals, Objectives, Standards, and Guidelines that provide direction for all management areas, the following direction has been developed specifically for this area.

MPC/Resource Area	Direction	Number	Management Direction Description
MPC 2.2 Research Natural Areas	General Objective	0901	Establish the proposed Patrick Butte Research Natural Area to preserve the identified representative features of the area for future scientific study.
	General Standard	0902	Mechanical vegetation treatments, salvage harvest, prescribed fire, and wildland fire use may only be used to maintain values for which the areas were established, or to achieve other objectives that are consistent with the RNA establishment record or management plan.
	Road Standard	0903	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, or c) To maintain the values for which the RNA was established.
	Fire Guideline	0904	The full range of fire suppression strategies may be used to suppress wildfires. Fire suppression strategies and tactics should minimize impacts to the values for which the RNA was established.
MPC 3.1 Passive Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources	General Standard	0905	Management actions, including salvage harvest, may only degrade aquatic, terrestrial, and watershed resource conditions in the temporary time period (up to 3 years), and must be designed to avoid resource degradation in the short term (3-15 years) and long term (greater than 15 years).
	Vegetation Standard	0906	Mechanical vegetative treatments, excluding salvage harvest, may only occur where: a) The responsible official determines that wildland fire use or prescribed fire would result in unreasonable risk to public safety and structures, investments, or undesirable resource affects; and b) They maintain or restore water quality needed to fully support beneficial uses and habitat for native and desired non-native fish species; or c) They maintain or restore habitat for native and desired non-native wildlife and plant species.
	Fire Standard	0907	Wildland fire use and prescribed fire may only be used where they: a) Maintain or restore water quality needed to fully support beneficial uses and habitat for native and desired non-native fish species, or b) Maintain or restore habitat for native and desired non-native wildlife and plant species.

MPC/Resource Area	Direction	Number	Management Direction Description
MPC 3.1 Passive Restoration and Maintenance of Aquatic, Terrestrial, and Hydrologic Resources	Road Standard	0908	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, or c) To address immediate response situations where, if action is not taken, unacceptable impacts to hydrologic, aquatic, riparian or terrestrial resources, or health and safety, would result.
	Fire Guideline	0909	The full range of fire suppression strategies may be used to suppress wildfires. Emphasize suppression strategies and tactics that minimize impacts on aquatic, terrestrial, or watershed resources.
MPC 4.1a Undeveloped Recreation: Maintain Inventoried Roadless Areas	General Standard	0910	Management actions—including wildland fire use, prescribed fire, and special use authorizations—must be designed and implemented in a manner that does not adversely compromise the area's roadless and undeveloped character in the temporary, short term, and long term. "Adversely compromise" means an action that results in the reduction of roadless or undeveloped acres within any specific IRA. Exceptions to this standard are actions in the 4.1a Road standard, below.
	Road Standard	0911	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	0912	The full range of fire suppression strategies may be used to suppress wildfires. Emphasize tactics that minimize impacts of suppression activities on the roadless or undeveloped character of the area.
MPC 5.1 Restoration and Maintenance Emphasis within Forested Landscapes	Vegetation Guideline	0913	The full range of vegetation treatment activities 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	0914	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	0915	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 support management actions taken to reduce wildfire risks in wildland-urban interface areas; or e) To meet access and travel management objectives.
Soil, Water, Riparian, and Aquatic Resources	Objective	0916	Restore streambank stability and reduce erosion in Little French Creek Meadows by allowing vegetation composition and structure to recover from historic livestock grazing impacts.
	Objective	0917	Initiate restoration of watershed conditions and fish habitat through improved livestock grazing management in the Middle French Creek subwatershed to help strengthen the local bull trout population.
Vegetation	Objective	0918	Use a mix of prescribed and wildland fire, and mechanical treatments to restore or maintain vegetative composition and structure, and to reduce fuel loadings.
Botanical Resources	Objective	0919	Maintain or restore known populations and occupied habitats of TEPCS plant species, including puzzling halimolobos and short-styled tofieldia to contribute to the long-term viability of these species.

MPC/Resource Area	Direction	Number	Management Direction Description
Non-native Plants	Objective	0920	To reduce impacts on native plants and other resources, eradicate new and small infestations of Canada thistle, and control density and size of larger infestations. Emphasize prevention or eradication of new noxious weed infestations.
Wildlife Resources	Objective	0921	Increase white-headed woodpecker and flammulated owl habitat by managing ponderosa pine stands within the Dry Grand Fir vegetation group toward the desired ranges of size classes, canopy closures, species composition, snags, and coarse woody debris, as described in Appendix A.
	Guideline	0922	An increase in the white-headed woodpecker or flammulated owl habitat may be achieved by the following methods: a) Reducing tree densities and ladder fuels under and around existing large ponderosa trees and snags to reduce the risk of tree-replacing fire and to restore more open canopy conditions. b) Managing the firewood program to retain large-diameter ponderosa pine and large snags of other species through signing, public education, size restriction, area closures, or other appropriate methods.
Recreation Resources	Objective	0923	Establish a permanent trailhead facility for the Jackson Creek/French Creek Trail to improve recreation experiences. Include a toilet facility.
	Objective	0924	Install a trail bridge at Forest Trail 503 and Little French Creek to reduce impacts to water quality and fish habitat, and to increase user safety.
	Objective	0925	Provide trailhead parking and toilet facilities at Lava Butte Trail 505 off of Forest Road 308 to improve recreation experiences.
	Objective	0926	Improve public parking for new Forest Trail 155 trailhead in the Lake Creek area to accommodate increasing recreation use.
	Objective	0927	Explore opportunities to connect the existing French Creek Trail (116) to the Fall Fingers Road, and Elkhorn Creek Trail (115) to the Elk Creek Road to improve trail access.
	Objective	0928	Help prevent illegal outfitting by identifying and reporting unauthorized outfitter and guide operations to the Idaho Outfitter and Guide Licensing Board and Idaho Department of Fish and Game.
	Objective	0929	Resolve user conflicts arising from unauthorized motorized use by enforcing motorized trail designations and restrictions.
	Objective	0930	Manage recreation use to address erosion, flow channeling, soil compaction, and loss of vegetation.
	Objective	0931	As funding becomes available, redesign and reconstruct existing trails to mitigate the effects of flow channeling.
	Objective	0932	Rehabilitate pioneered, non-system trails to mitigate erosion, flow channeling, soil compaction and loss of vegetation.
	Objective	0933	Where alternatives exist, relocate trails that are currently within riparian areas to mitigate erosion and sedimentation.
	Objective	0934	Where motorized use is consistent with the recreation emphasis and will not cause unacceptable resource damage, reconstruct existing 2-wheel motorized trails to accommodate 4-wheel ATVs.

<table>
<tr><th>MPC/Resource Area</th><th>Direction</th><th>Number</th><th>Management Direction Description</th></tr>
<tr><td>Recreation Resources</td><td>Objective</td><td>0935</td><td>Achieve or maintain the following ROS strategy:

<table><tr><th rowspan="2">ROS Class</th><th colspan="2">Percent of Mgt. Area</th></tr><tr><th>Summer</th><th>Winter</th></tr><tr><td>Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized</td><td>40%</td><td>0%</td></tr><tr><td>Semi-Primitive Motorized</td><td>55%</td><td>99%</td></tr><tr><td>Roaded Natural</td><td>5%</td><td>0%</td></tr><tr><td>Roaded Modified</td><td>0%</td><td>1%</td></tr></table>
The above numbers reflect current travel regulations. These numbers may change as a result of future travel regulation planning</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Fire Management</td><td>Objective</td><td>0936</td><td>Identify areas appropriate for Wildland Fire Use, emphasizing Inventoried Roadless Areas. Use wildland fire to restore or maintain vegetative desired conditions and to reduce fuel loadings.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Guideline</td><td>0937</td><td>Coordinate with adjacent land managers (e.g., BLM and State of Idaho) to develop compatible wildland fire suppression and wildland fire use strategies.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Lands and Special Uses</td><td>Objective</td><td>0938</td><td>Acquire and provide public access to National Forest System lands in the French, Partridge, Elkhorn, and Shorts Creek areas to improve recreational opportunities.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Objective</td><td>0939</td><td>Improve public access to the Forest from the Little Salmon River corridor through right-of-way easement acquisition.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Objective</td><td>0940</td><td>Complete a site plan for the Hershey Point communications site. Designate the Hershey Point Lookout as a communications site for government use only to meet agency policy and eliminate potential use conflicts.</td></tr>
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