

PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREAS**Big Creek Fringe
Roadless Area No. 0412009
1,083 Acres****DESCRIPTION**

The Big Creek Fringe IRA encompasses a narrow strip of land less than a mile wide between Big Creek and the Frank Church – River of No Return (FC-RONR) Wilderness on the Krassel Ranger District. Access is by road along Big Creek (Forest Roads 340 and 371), and by the trail from Big Creek into Cougar Basin (Forest Trail 004). The Secesh IRA lies directly to the west; Placer Creek IRA lies to the northwest; and the FC-RONR Wilderness forms the eastern border.

The area consists of extremely steep, northwest-facing slopes that drain into Big Creek. The soils derive from granitic rocks of the Idaho batholith and generally are light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,400 feet to 7,600 feet. The area is mostly forested with Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and Engelmann spruce. Its understory includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, meadow rue, thimbleberry, mountain maple, pinegrass, buffaloberry, spirea, and queencup.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: There have been no major human-caused disturbances and there is only about 0.5 mile of unclassified road within the boundaries; thus, the natural integrity appears intact and the natural appearance is high.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area consists primarily of slopes facing the Big Creek Road. Because development (summer homes, lodge, work center, air strip) occurs along the road, and the road is a popular access point for the adjacent Wilderness area, the opportunity for solitude within the Fringe itself is low. Due to its shape (a long, narrow strip of land), the area alone provides very little opportunity for primitive recreation. The opportunities for primitive recreation become high, however, in conjunction with the adjacent FC-RONR Wilderness. The steep slopes offer challenging backpacking.

Special Features: In conjunction with the Big Creek Road, the area serves as an access point to the FC-RONR Wilderness. The portion close to Big Creek is an elk calving area.

Manageability and Boundaries: Due to the area's small size, alternative boundaries are not practical. Because the area is less than 5,000 acres, the only wilderness management opportunity would be to add the area to the existing FC-RONR Wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: An estimated one-half mile of Forest Service Trail 004 passes through this small fringe area and accesses the Cougar Basin area of the FC-RONR Wilderness. This non-motorized trail receives considerable use by hikers and pack stock in summer and fall. Other uses of the area are off-trail, non-

motorized, and very light (estimated at 50-100 RVDs a year), consisting primarily of fall hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking. One outfitter-guide provides mainly summer recreation opportunities for clients. Inventoried Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	100%	0%
Roaded Modified	0%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	100%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	0%	0%

Fisheries: Fish habitat in this roadless area is limited to several small, unnamed tributaries of Big Creek, and a half-mile reach of Lick Creek. It is unlikely that these streams support fish populations. However, the area is within the Big Creek subwatershed, which provides or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened chinook salmon and steelhead trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for chinook salmon.

Wildlife: Habitat is present for many species including elk, deer, moose, cougar, black bear, mountain goat, boreal owl, northern and three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, spotted frog, and gray wolf (an experimental, non-essential population). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, is present in most of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are present for wolverine and fisher.

Water: The area contains portions of Big Creek and Lick Creek, but no lakes. The entire area drains into Big Creek, an important anadromous stream.

Range: The area has no livestock grazing permits. There are no capable grazing lands within the IRA.

Timber: The area contains an estimated 12,262 thousand board feet (MBF), equivalent to 24,262 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 1,000 acres (92 percent) is considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 24 acres are considered to have low productivity; 908 acres, moderate productivity; and 58 acres, high productivity.

Minerals: There is no mineral or energy activity in this area at the present time. The mineral potential is moderate.

Heritage: There has never been a cultural resource inventory within this roadless area. Half of the area is rated low and half as high for potential cultural sites.

Landownership and Special Uses: The Payette National Forest administers all lands in the IRA. There are no non-Federal lands, permanently encumbered land titles, or cost-share agreements of record within the IRA. No special uses occur within the area.

Disturbances: Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals for these fire regimes are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). There have been no major fires within this area for the past 60 years. Timber in the area has minor, endemic infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle, mountain pine beetle, and spruce bark beetle.

Botanical Characteristics: No populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants are known to occur. Few botanical surveys have been done in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wildernesses and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness adjoins the eastern boundary. The Hells Canyon Wilderness is 62 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is 26 air miles to the northwest. The area is 40 air miles from McCall and 150 miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated Wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Edwardsburg, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Only two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	Low
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Low
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 1,000 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 12,262 MBF or 24,262 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. The area is identified as having moderate potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The area is currently open for snowmobile use, which would also be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA disposition for each alternative in acres rounded off to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its Management Prescription Category (MPC) assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	1,100	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	1,100	0
Potential low levels of development	0	1,100	1,100	0	0	0	1,100
Available for full range of development	1,100	0	0	0	1,100	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	794	803	0	806	0	806
Total	0	794	803	0	806	0	806

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	N	H	H	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Big Creek Fringe IRA for wilderness. All of the area would be available for low levels of development. Before any action is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Caton Lake
Roadless Area Nos. 0412912 and 0402912
84,520 Acres (45,417 Payette NF Acres; 39,104 Boise NF Acres)

DESCRIPTION

The Caton Lake IRA occurs on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette National Forest, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise National Forest. The South Fork Salmon River, East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and Warm Lake Roads bound the Caton Lake IRA. Several trails enter the area, but travel in much of the area is restricted by the vegetation and rugged topography. The Needles IRA lies to the west, Secesh IRA lies to the north, Meadow Creek and Burnt Log IRAs adjoin to the east, and Peace Rock IRA lies to the south.

The area rises steeply out of three major canyons through timberlands and meadows to high, glaciated granite crests. Soils derive from granitic parent materials of the Idaho batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range widely from 3,663 to 9,195 feet. Indian Ridge, Caton Lake, Log Mountain, and Thunderbolt Mountain are prominent scenic landmarks.

Lands at lower elevations are steep and strongly dissected by streams, with brush fields and moderate to dense stands of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and western larch. Higher elevation lands are U-shaped glacial valleys with steep side slopes and gently sloping alluvial bottoms, adjacent to high peaks, rocky ridges, and cirque basins. Lodgepole pine and subalpine fir are the dominant tree species. Ground cover at the lower elevations includes pinegrass, Idaho fescue, ceanothus, bluebunch wheatgrass, snowberry, ninebark, serviceberry, elk sedge, tall huckleberry, meadow rue, thimbleberry, mountain maple, buffaloberry, queencup, and spirea. Higher-elevation ground cover includes elk sedge, low huckleberry, beargrass, and woodrush.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity is generally high, as this is a large area with few effects from past development. The natural appearance for this area is high, although appearance has been recently changed by a number of large wildfires, most notably the 1994 Thunderbolt Fire. There are an estimated 1.25 miles of unclassified road within the boundary.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Due to its large size, rugged terrain, and limited access, this area has a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Steep, rugged mountains characterize the area. Roads access the edges and several trails access portions of the interior. Much of the area is open to motorized travel on designated trails.

Special Features: Scenic Caton Lake lies in the heart of the area. The Phoebe Meadows Research Natural Area (1,233 acres) also occurs within the area. There are approximately 1,100 acres of land considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. These acres are associated with the South Fork Salmon River.

Manageability and Boundaries: Several boundary options have been reviewed for this area. One option includes the entire area, for approximately 84,500 acres. The other options retain core sections of the area and, where possible, move the boundaries to natural features to improve manageability. Existing uses and landownership would not seriously complicate managing the area as wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The main recreation activities consist of hunting, backpacking, horseback riding, and trail biking. Approximately 50 miles of Forest Service system trail are in this area. The terrain and trail system provide for some motorized use by trail bikes, limited to designated routes. One outfitter-guide provides mainly summer recreation opportunities for clients. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	14%	6%
Roaded Modified	5%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	21%	40%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	59%	54%

Fisheries: The roadless area encompasses tributaries of the South Fork Salmon River (Fourmile Creek, Camp Creek, Phoebe Creek, Indian Creek), East Fork South Fork Salmon River (Caton Creek), and Johnson Creek. These tributaries provide or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout; and Region 4 sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for chinook salmon. Other species within the roadless area include resident redband rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, suckers, and sculpin.

Wildlife: Habitat is present for many wildlife species, including deer, elk, black bear, mountain goat, cougar, boreal owl, northern and white-headed woodpecker, and northern goshawk. The area provides important winter and summer range, as well as wallows, licks, and escape areas, for deer and elk. Two migration routes for big game have been identified in addition to elk calving areas. Bald eagles (a threatened species) migrate along the South Fork Salmon River. Gray wolves (an experimental, non-essential population) have been reported in this and adjacent areas. Potential habitat for lynx (a threatened species) occurs in about half of the area, generally occurring above the drier ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir habitats in the South Fork Salmon River canyon. Suitable habitat and travel corridor are present for wolverine and fisher.

Water: The area contains numerous streams and wetland areas, and several lakes. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and South Fork Salmon River. Johnson Creek is a major tributary of the East Fork South Fork, which flows into the South Fork Salmon River. All these streams provide important anadromous fish habitat. Johnson Creek, the East Fork South Fork, and the South Fork Salmon River are designated as water quality limited water bodies under the Clean Water Act. The South Fork Salmon River has an established Total Maximum Daily Load.

Range: The area contains an estimated 138 acres of capable rangeland. One cattle allotment occurs in the southern portion of the unit on the Boise Forest, while no grazing permits exist on the Payette portion.

Timber: There is an estimated 682,779 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,356,490 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 64,400 acres (76 percent) of the Caton Lake IRA are tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 30,334 acres are considered to have low productivity; 41,407 acres, moderate productivity; and 6,717 acres, high productivity.

Minerals: The area has very few active mining claims. There is very little potential for future locatable mineral or energy development. Potential exists for a small hydropower project along Caton Creek.

Heritage: Previous cultural resource inventory found an absence of heritage resources. The likelihood of cultural resources is rated as low across most of the area, with smaller portions rate as moderate or high.

Landownership and Special Uses: The Forest Service administers all lands in the IRA. There are no known special use permits associated with this area.

Disturbances: Fire occurrence in this area ranges from high along the South Fork Salmon River to moderately high at the higher elevations. Mean fire return intervals for these fire regimes range from frequent (16-35 years) to very infrequent (100-300 years). Approximately 23,653 acres have burned in wildfire between 1960 and 2000. Recent major wildland fires burned in 1992 (Camp Fire, 100 acres) and 1994 (Thunderbolt Fire; 1,000 acres of the IRA). The Forest has ignited four prescribed fires in the area since 1988. Douglas-fir and Engelmann spruce bark beetles are active in the area.

Botanical Characteristics. No known populations of endangered, threatened, or sensitive plants are present. However, there is one proposed sensitive plant, Blandow's Helodiuim (*Helodium blandowii*) that is found in the IRA. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is 10 air miles to the east, Hells Canyon Wilderness is 42 air miles to the west, and Gospel Hump Wilderness is 32 air miles to the north. The area is 20 air miles from McCall, and 100 miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Cascade, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been moderate public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Nine concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 64,400 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 682,779 MBF or 1,356,490 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The current use of trails by motorized vehicles in the area would be lost, as would use by snowmobiles in winter.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA disposition for each alternative in acres rounded off to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	83,400*	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	84,500	1,100
Potential low levels of development	57,800	81,700	81,700	0	17,700	0	73,700
Available for full range of development	25,600	1,700	1,700	0	65,700	0	9,600

*Recommended Wilderness areas do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas within them.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	14,456	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	15,785	14,605	37,611	0	33,726	0	11,070
Total	15,785	14,605	37,611	0	48,182	0	11,070

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	M	M	H	N	H	N	M

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of the Caton Lake IRA for wilderness. The Phoebe Meadows Research Natural Area (1,100 acres) would retain its undeveloped character. The remainder of the IRA would be available for mainly low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Chimney Rock
Roadless Area No. 0412006
8,534 Acres

DESCRIPTION

The Chimney Rock IRA lies within the McCall Ranger, northeast of Secesh Meadows. War Eagle Fire Lookout sits on the northern edge of the unit. A few trails extend a short distance into the area, but much of the area is only accessible by cross-country travel. The Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak IRA lies to the north and east, the Crystal Mountain IRA lies to the west, and the Secesh IRA lies to the south, beyond the Secesh Meadows subdivision.

Named for the resistant granitic formation “Chimney Rock,” the area forms a high bench of moderate relief. Soils derive from granitic parent materials of the Idaho Batholith and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,700 to 8,200 feet.

Dense, continuous stands of lodgepole pine cover much of the area. Ground cover species include beargrass, elk sedge, dwarf huckleberry, and pinegrass.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity is moderate and the natural appearance somewhat impaired, mainly due to impacts inside and adjacent to the western boundary from private development in the Secesh Meadows subdivision. There is an estimated 2.3 miles of unclassified road within the boundary. Once visitors leave the affected area and enter the drainages, the area appears relatively unaffected by human activity.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The lack of nearby large population centers and the dense, continuous stands of lodgepole pine afford a moderate opportunity for solitude. The absence of trails and facilities provides a substantial opportunity for primitive recreation and challenging hunting and hiking. Nearly 90 percent of the area is closed to motorized vehicle travel, including snowmobiles. Access roads pass around the outer edges of the area and intrude near the junction of Grouse Creek and Secesh River.

Special Features: “Chimney Rock” is a scenic landmark near the northern boundary of the area. The Secesh River, passing near the area's western boundary, is suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River system. There are an estimated 229 acres of river corridor considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the roadless area.

Manageability and Boundaries: Due to the topography and surrounding roads, no practical opportunity exists to alter the boundaries to increase manageability. There are no private or state land inholdings, and no dominant current uses that would affect potential manageability.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Non-motorized recreation is the dominant recreation use in the area due to the terrain and absence of trails. The majority of the recreation use in the IRA is big-game hunting. Other uses are considered low. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	37%	0%
Roaded Modified	0%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	27%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	63%	73%

Fisheries: Streams in this area are considered critical habitat for threatened chinook salmon, contributing to the quality of occupied downstream habitat. Several resident fish species may also occur in area streams.

Wildlife: Elk, deer, boreal owl, northern goshawk, great gray owl, spotted frog, northern three-toed woodpecker, and bear can be found in the area. Elk calving areas occur in nearby Secesh Meadows, but the area is too high in elevation for elk or deer winter range. Suitable habitat is found for gray wolf, an experimental, non-essential population. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in almost all of the area. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine are also found here.

Water: No lakes or reservoirs occur in the area. The main streams are Piah Creek and Warm Spring Creek. All streams in the area drain directly into and provide good quality water for the Secesh River, an important anadromous fishery. Three permitted water systems serving the Secesh Meadows subdivision exist on the western boundary of the roadless area. The systems are spring fed or diverted from unnamed creeks, and are all piped underground.

Range: No range allotments or livestock operations occur in this roadless area. There are no capable grazing lands within the IRA.

Timber: The area contains an estimated 79,731 thousand board feet (MBF), equivalent to 156,485 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 8,200 acres (96 percent) of the Chimney Rock IRA is considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 2,179 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,331 acres moderate productivity; and 17 acres, high productivity. There have been no recent timber sales in the area.

Minerals: There are very few active mining claims in the Chimney Rock IRA. Historically, there was little activity within the area, although some moderate-scale placer mining occurred along the western boundary. The potential for future locatable mineral and energy development is limited.

Heritage: This area has not had extensive cultural resource inventories to date. There are no identified prehistoric activity areas within the roadless area. However, there is some evidence of historic placer and hard rock mining activities.

Landownership and Special Uses: The Payette National Forest administers all lands within the IRA. There are no non-federal lands, permanently encumbered land titles, or cost-share agreements of record within this area.

Disturbances: Historic wildland fire occurrence is low to moderately low. Mean fire return intervals are infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). An estimated 1,608 acres of the IRA have burned since 1960. Most of these acres were from the Burgdorf Junction Fire in 2000. No recent major insect or disease infestations have occurred in the area.

Botanical Characteristics: No threatened or endangered or sensitive plant species are known to occur in this roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is located 8 air miles to the north, the Hells Canyon Wilderness is located 33 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is located 10 air miles to the north. The area is 30 road miles from McCall and 130 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Riggins, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been little public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendations in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	Moderate
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 8,200 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 79,731 MBF or 156,485 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. Snowmobile use and ATV/motorcycle use on motorized trails, though currently low, would also be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded off to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	8,500	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	8,500	0
Potential low levels of development	8,500	8,500	8,500	0	0	0	8,500
Available for a full range of development	0	0	0	0	8,500	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	354	6,588	0	6,588	0	6,588
Total	0	354	6,588	0	6,588	0	6,588

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	N	L	H	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Chimney Rock IRA for wilderness. All of the IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any action is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak
Roadless Area 0412004
98,833 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

This IRA is located on the McCall Ranger District, in the north central portion of the Forest. The area stretches from Marshall Mountain in the west, across the South Fork Salmon River to Pueblo Summit in the east. The FC-RONR Wilderness forms the area's north boundary. The Chimney Rock, Crystal Mountain, and Secesh IRAs lie to the south, and the Marshall Mountain Mining District lies to the west.

The area is extremely rugged. The steep river breaks and canyons of the Salmon and South Fork Salmon River drainages typify the area. The soils derive from granites of the Idaho Batholith and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 2,700 to 8,160 feet. Much of the area is heavily timbered with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, grand fir, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir. Common ground cover includes bunchgrasses, pinegrass, ninebark, beargrass, elk sedge, and dwarf huckleberry.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity and natural appearance of the area are high, except in the heavily mined Warren Meadows area and along the border near the Salmon River, where several special uses are in effect. Associated with the mining, are an estimated 23.5 miles of unclassified and 8.6 miles of classified roads within the boundary. Other portions of this large area have had very little disturbance.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The limited access and rugged terrain over much of the area create a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. The area is very remote from any large population centers, although local use from Warren, Secesh Meadows, and McCall is increasing.

Special Features: The South Fork Salmon River Canyon and the Wolf Fang Peak area are scenic landmarks. The South Fork Salmon River has been found suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are 5.5 miles and 1,701 acres of land considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. The area also provides important habitat for threatened chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout, and has many significant cultural resource sites.

Manageability and Boundaries: Forest Plan alternatives evaluated boundary options that would add portions of this area to the FC-RONR Wilderness. These changes would enhance existing wilderness by moving the boundaries to ridge tops and away from mid-slope. Existing mining activity could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak IRA provides opportunities for non-motorized and motorized recreation uses including hunting, fishing, trail bike riding, and backpacking. The rugged terrain and trail system allow for limited motorized use by trail bikes. An estimated 33 miles on non-motorized trails exist in the area, and 12 miles of motorized trails. Recreation use is low to moderate. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Non Forest Service	6%	6%
Roaded Natural	17%	0%
Roaded Modified	0%	2%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	39%	55%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	37%	37%

Fisheries: Streams in this area are considered critical habitat for threatened chinook salmon, contributing to the quality of habitat in downstream areas where chinook salmon occur. Steelhead and bull trout, both threatened species, are also found in the IRA. Introduced brook trout occur in some area streams.

Wildlife: The area's wildlife species include elk, deer, moose, bighorn sheep, northern goshawk, and pileated woodpecker. Suitable habitat also exists for Townsend's big-eared bat, white headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, flammulated owl, boreal owl, great gray owl, and spotted frog. The area provides big-game winter range and elk calving habitat. Suitable habitat for an experimental, non-essential population of gray wolf is found here. Suitable habitat for the peregrine falcon is also found in the IRA. Migrating bald eagles occasionally visit the South Fork Salmon River. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the major drainages are potential habitat. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine can be found at higher elevations.

Water: There are only a few lakes and no reservoirs in this area. The main streams include California Creek, Warren Creek, and the South Fork Salmon River. The central and western portions of the area drain into the main Salmon River, and the eastern portion drains into the South Fork Salmon River. Portions of the Warren Creek watershed have been negatively affected by past mining activities, including stream dredging. Placer and dredge mining, along with poorly designed roads on private or patented lands, continue to contribute large amounts of sediment to the drainage. Sediment is also a concern in the South Fork Salmon River drainage due to its highly valued anadromous fishery.

The South Fork Ranch has a hydropower facility, an irrigation ditch system, and a spring-fed domestic water system on Smith Creek, west of their property. The Sandy Cove Subdivision has a permitted water system on Pony Creek, with a small diversion above ground, and a below-ground piping system.

Range: A portion of one sheep allotment, Marshall Mountain, occurs in the western portion of the roadless area. This allotment has a deferred rotation grazing system, and the level of structural improvements is low. An estimated 2,103 acres (2 percent) of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

Timber: The IRA contains 796,220 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,618,619 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 76,200 acres (77 percent) of the Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 28,472 acres are considered to have low

productivity; 39,465 acres, moderate productivity; and 21,517 acres, high productivity. A small part of the area was entered for salvage harvest following the 1994 wildfires. The area of impact centered in the area of Smith Knob to Pilot Peak to Bear Creek Point. Harvesting was done by helicopter, and no new roads were constructed.

Minerals: Several hundred active mining claims exist within the roadless area. Much of the area has an extensive mining history, with hundreds of old exploration and mine development workings. Most of this disturbance is in a zone about 5 miles wide and 12 miles long, extending from the Marshall Mountain Mining District in the northwest through the Warren Mining District in the southeast. Only limited activity is occurring at present, but there is at least one producing mine in the Warren area. Much of the area has a high potential for future mineral development, particularly in the previously described zone. There is very little potential for future development of energy resources.

Heritage: There are significant and outstanding prehistoric Indian cultural sites in the area, including a house pit village, rock shelters, pictographs, lithic scatters, and cambium-peeled pine trees. This area also has a multiple resource National Register of Historic Places listing for 19th century Chinese sites within the historic Warren Mining District. This is the only place in the State of Idaho that contains such a designation. Also, within this area are two Forest Service historic guard stations that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and one active Forest Service fire lookout.

Landownership and Special Uses: The roadless area surrounds one privately owned parcel of 92 acres. If the area were classified as wilderness, access to this private parcel would be limited. There are also an estimated 1,010 acres of unpatented mining claims in which the claimants hold surface occupancy rights. These claims lie in the California and Union Creek drainages in the western portion of the area. There are no cost-share agreements of record within this area. An outfitter-guide provides hunting and guiding services in the Warren Creek drainage.

Disturbances: Wildland fire occurrence ranges from high to low in this large area. Mean fire return intervals range from very frequent (less than 25 years) at the lowest elevations to very infrequent (151-300 years) at the highest elevations. The majority of this area would be classified as infrequent (76-150 years). An estimated 51,225 acres have burned between 1960 and 2000. Substantial acreage in the South Fork and Pilot Peak portions of the roadless area burned in the 1994 Chicken Fire. Significant portions in the northwestern part of the roadless area burned in the 1994 Corral Fire and 2000 Burgdorf Junction Fire. Douglas-fir bark beetle activity is at near epidemic levels in portions of the roadless area that burned in the 1994 fires.

Botanical Characteristics: No federally listed plant species are known to occur in this roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness forms the north border of the roadless area, the Hells Canyon Wilderness is located 30 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is located 3 air miles to the north. The area is an estimated 40 road miles from McCall and 140 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Riggins, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: An estimated 76 percent of this IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses. The remainder (24 percent) lies within the M331 Ecoregion (Great Plains-Palouse Dry Steppe Province), which is minimally represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been moderate public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Six concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

This roadless area is a portion of the roadless area complex studied by Congress during the passage of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980. When Congress finalized the boundaries of the FC-RONR Wilderness, this roadless area was excluded.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 76,200 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 796,220 MBF or 1,618,619 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. This area is identified as having high potential for mineral development. There are trails currently being utilized for mountain bike use, and those opportunities would be foregone. There are also several miles of motorized trails in the area and over half the area is open to snowmobile use. These opportunities would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion portion (76 percent of IRA) is well represented in designated wildernesses, and M331 Ecoregion (24 percent of IRA) is minimally represented. Concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA disposition for each alternative in acres rounded off to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	93,000	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	93,000	33,700
Potential low levels of development	68,900	69,000	31,200	0	0		59,300
Available for full range of development	24,100	24,000	61,800	0	93,000	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	218	0	0	0	25,054	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	15,477	15,824	34,020	0	17,816	0	6,392
Total	15,695	15,824	34,020	0	42,870	0	6,392

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effect on wilderness characteristics is based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	M	M	H	N	H	N	M

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak IRA for wilderness. About 36 percent of the area would retain its undeveloped character under proposed management prescriptions. The remainder of the IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Council Mountain
Roadless Area No. 0412018
16,567 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

The Council Mountain IRA covers the top of Council Mountain, which is bordered on the west by Council Valley and on the east by the Middle Fork Weiser River. The Middle Fork Weiser River Road, the East Fork Weiser River Road, and the Cottonwood Creek Road provide the principal access. A few primitive trails criss-cross the area. The area is surrounded by a combination of private and public lands, with Snowbank IRA located several miles to the south.

Cirque basins with granite intrusions and steep, grassy, basaltic slopes characterize the area. The soils in the western portion derive mainly from volcanic parent materials and are mostly dark colored, fine textured, and rocky. The soils in the extreme eastern portion are derived from granitic parent materials and are mainly light colored, coarse textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,400 feet to 8,126 feet. Generally, the area receives heavy precipitation, mostly snow in winter and rain in the spring with hot, relatively dry summers.

The area is mostly forested with Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, grand fir, and western larch (scattered in cool sites), with riparian-related Engelmann spruce above midslope. Lodgepole pine, like western larch, is associated with cool airflow and can be found in drainage bottoms and at upper elevations associated with subalpine fir. Typical grasses include Idaho fescue, needle grass and sedges. Several shrubs are evident, including ninebark, ocean spray, huckleberry, thimbleberry, currants, and willow (remnants). Aspen clones are present, scattered, but old and declining in health due to conifer encroachment.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity and natural appearance for this area are medium to high. The area is somewhat affected by grazing-related developments such as fencing and water ponds as well as other developments that occur near the area borders. There is an estimated 2.1 miles of unclassified road and 0.2 mile of classified road within the boundary. Upon leaving the disturbed areas, visitors would not be affected by the past activities.

Opportunity for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Due to the visibility of the town of Council and the easy access, this area provides only a moderate opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. The area's open ridges and deep snow pack make it popular for winter sports, including challenging ski mountaineering.

Special Features: The Council Mountain Research Natural Area covers approximately 112 acres of Council Mountain.

Manageability and Boundaries: The area has fairly irregular and complex boundaries along much of its perimeter and is less than one mile wide in one point. More manageable boundaries could be defined but this would also result in a reduction of acreage. Established motorized use within the roadless area, as well as private land, along the south and southeast perimeter, could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hunting, hiking, fishing, horseback riding, trail riding and scenic viewing. There are six system trails in the area totaling an estimated 18 miles. About 55 percent of these trail miles are open for motorized use. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	0%	0%
Roaded Modified	30%	23%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	70%	61%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	0%	16%

Fisheries: The roadless area contains bull trout rearing habitat. Rainbow trout and introduced brook trout also occur within the roadless area. Most streams within the roadless area are believed to provide little fish habitat due to the high stream gradient.

Wildlife: Elk, pileated woodpecker, vesper sparrow, and the Williamson's sapsucker can be found in various locations of the roadless area. Big-game species are mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer. Because of the unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate most of the year and the area acts as a security area. No threatened or endangered species has been verified in the area. Potential lynx (a threatened species) habitat occurs in about one third of the area, generally in the northern portion. The area also provides habitat for the peregrine falcon. Habitat for several Region 4 sensitive species—including northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, white headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, fisher, flammulated owl, boreal owl, great gray owl, and spotted frog—are also found in the area.

Water: The roadless area lies within three watersheds: the Upper Weiser River, Middle Fork Weiser River, and the Goodrich-Bacon Watershed. The area mainly drains into two non-anadromous streams: the Middle Fork Weiser River and Cottonwood Creek. Eventually, these streams empty into the Snake River, an important hydroelectric supplier for the Northwest. The closest identified water body is the Middle Fork Weiser River. Current uses include: domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation. The Middle Fork is also listed as a Special Resource Water.

Range: A portion of one cattle allotment covers 100 percent of the roadless area. It is managed under a deferred rotation system. The cattle allotment has a moderate level of structural improvements. There are 2,467 acres (15 percent) of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle.

Timber: The area contains 94,426 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 187,103 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 10,900 acres (66 percent) of the Council Mountain IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 676 acres are considered to have low productivity; 7,390 acres, moderate productivity; and 3,396 acres, high productivity. Tree mortality is ongoing, primarily among Douglas-fir, resulting from insect and diseases associated with mature to overmature, low vigor trees.

Minerals: There are no mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the Council Mountain IRA. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low.

Heritage: There are several identified prehistoric and historic cultural resources within the area of Council Mountain. This is the former range of Eagle Eye's Band of Northern Shoshone who occupied this area as late as 1890. Some historic Indian trails have become USDA Forest Service maintained trails within this area. Prehistoric activity areas are present in the form of lithic artifact scatters on the landscape. There is evidence of early and contemporary livestock grazing activities, as well as early logging, and mineral exploration. Around 1918, the USDA Weiser National Forest established a forest fire lookout on Council Mountain. The first lookout site consisted of an alidade on a table, with a telephone, and was associated with a log cabin residence. Later a square lookout house was constructed, and was later removed. This administrative site was abandoned in the early 1950s.

Landownership and Special Uses: Private lands (Boise Cascade) form part of the southeastern boundary of the IRA. At this time there are no inholdings or permitted special uses within the area.

Disturbances: Historic fire occurrence and fire hazards are low. Since 1960, there have been no major wildfires within the roadless area. Prescribed fire is planned within the roadless area from Sheep Creek to Boulder Creek. The effects of past western spruce budworm are evident in the dead tops of Douglas-fir, grand fir, and subalpine fir, which were defoliated in the early 1980s. There is a slight occurrence of Douglas-fir dwarf mistletoe in the roadless area and concern exists that untreated areas in the roadless area will affect treated and reforested areas in the roaded areas. There were numerous small debris slides of less than one acre in size inventoried within this roadless area after the January, 1997 storm event.

Botanical Characteristics: Swamp onion (*Allium madidum*), a Region 4 sensitive species, is known to occupy portions of the roadless area. There are no inventoried areas of noxious weeds in the IRA.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is about 30 air miles to the east, Hells Canyon Wilderness is about 21 air miles north, Eagle Cap Wilderness is about 40 air miles west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is about 45 air miles northeast. The area is less than 10 road miles from Council and about 100 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall, Weiser, and Council, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M342 Ecoregion (Intermountain Semi-desert Province), which is minimally represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Three concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	Moderate
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Moderate
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 10,900 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 94,426 MBF or 187,103 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having very low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The area receives heavy motorized trail use and snowmobile use. These opportunities would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M342 Ecoregion is minimally represented in existing wildernesses. Three concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	16,500*	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	100	100	16,600	100	100	16,600	100
Potential low levels of development	16,500	16,500	0	0	0	0	16,500
Available for full range of development	0	0	0	0	16,500	0	0

*Recommended Wilderness areas do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas within them.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	9,807	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	6,199	6,199	0	0	0	0	10,422
Total	6,199	6,199	0	0	9,807	0	10,422

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	H	H	N	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of the Council Mountain IRA for wilderness. The 112-acre Council Mountain Research Natural Area would retain its undeveloped character. The remainder of the IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Crystal Mountain
Roadless Area No. 0412005
13,004 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

Crystal Mountain, located in the north central portion of the Forest, lies just south of the Salmon River on the McCall Ranger District. The Warren Wagon Road, Fall Fingers Road, War Eagle Road, and the Marshall Mountain Mining District border the Crystal Mountain IRA. Access is via the surrounding roads and by a primitive trail that enters the area. The area is surrounded on three sides by other roadless areas: French Creek on the west, Secesh on the south, and Chimney Rock and Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak on the east. The Marshall Mountain Mining District and the FC-RONR Wilderness lie to the north.

High ridges, glaciated valleys, and several lakes typify the northern part of the area, while low relief characterizes the lower western and southern portions. Soils derive from granites of the Idaho batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,900 to 8,256 feet.

The northern portion has open stands of whitebark pine and subalpine fir. Ground cover in this area is generally sparse, with clumps of elk sedge dominating. Dense stands of lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce cover the remainder of the area. Common ground cover species include beargrass, elk sedge, dwarf huckleberry, and pinegrass. The 1994 Corral Fire burned through the northwestern edge of the area.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity and appearance for the area are high. Although the area is not large, it is round in shape, with only minor roaded or developed inclusions. There is an estimated 2.8 miles of unclassified road within the boundary. Once visitors leave the roads that surround the area, the signs and effects of development are not apparent.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area has a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation, and offers challenging backpacking and hunting. The roads accessing this area pass around the outer edges and intrude in only a couple places. Much of the area has no trail access and can be reached only by cross-country hiking. The area is remote from any large population centers and presently receives light recreational use.

Special Features: A unique feature on the western boundary is Crystal Mountain, a large quartz deposit and patented mining claim. The Secesh River, passing near the southwest boundary, is suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic River System. There are 138 acres of land considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. The area provides important habitat for threatened chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout, and for westslope cutthroat trout.

Manageability and Boundaries: Manageability would not be compromised by current uses or land ownership. The combination of topography, location, and surrounding roads does not lend the area to alternative boundaries.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: About half of the area is currently open to motorized use, and the other half allows snowmobiling, with 2-wheeled motorized use (and a small segment of ATV use) on the only trail in the area, which is roughly 5 miles in length. Non-motorized uses in the area include hunting and hiking. Big-game hunting and trail biking account for most of the use in the area.

Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	25%	0%
Roaded Modified	0%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	39%	100%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	36%	0%

Fisheries: Streams in this area are considered critical habitat for threatened chinook salmon, contributing to the quality of occupied downstream habitat. Chinook salmon and steelhead, both listed as threatened species, are found in some area streams. Other resident fish species include rainbow trout and introduced brook trout.

Wildlife: The area has habitat for elk, deer, bear, boreal owl, northern goshawk, great gray owl, spotted frog, and northern three-toed woodpecker. Suitable habitat is found for an experimental, non-essential gray wolf population. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about two thirds of the area. Connecting habitat and travel corridors for wolverine and fisher are also found in the area.

Water: Several small lakes occur in the northern part of this area, including California Lake. The main streams in the area are Willow Creek, Threemile Creek, Flat Creek, and Sand Creek. Water from these streams enters the Secesh River via Lake Creek and Grouse Creek.

Range: A portion of two sheep allotments, Marshall Mountain and Bear Pete, occur within the roadless area. These allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system, and the level of structural improvements is low. The area has an estimated 2,765 acres (21 percent of the IRA) of capable sheep grazing land.

Timber: The area contains 55,325 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 108,969 hundred cubic feet (CCF). The Crystal Mountain IRA includes an estimated 9,500 acres (73 percent) considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 5,623 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,983 acres, moderate productivity; no acres are considered high productivity. There have been no recent timber sales in the area.

Minerals: Very few active mining claims exist within the Crystal Mountain IRA. There is limited potential for future locatable mineral or energy development.

Heritage: Prehistoric and historic cultural resources have been identified within this area. Prehistoric Indian sites are few; however, they indicate presence. Historic sites are associated with placer and hard rock mining activities, as well as early logging activities. There is one actively used Forest Service fire lookout in this area.

Landownership and Special Uses: There are no non-federal lands, permanently encumbered land titles, or cost-share agreements of record within this area. There are no special uses in this area at this time.

Disturbances: Between 1960 and 2000, an estimated 7,106 acres of the IRA burned in wildfires. A small part of the northwest portion of this area burned in the 1994 Corral fire, generally with stand-replacing effects. Much of the rest of the area burned in the Burgdorf Junction fire of 2000. No recent major insect and disease infestations have occurred in this area.

Botanical Characteristics: No federally listed plant species or Region 4 sensitive species are known to occur in this roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is located 6 air miles to the north; the Hells Canyon Wilderness is located 28 air miles west; and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is located 8 air miles north. The area is an estimated 30 road miles from McCall, and 130 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Riggins, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 9,500 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 55,325 MBF or 108,969 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. There is some degree of mountain bike use, and those opportunities would be foregone. The area is open to snowmobile use in winter and has one trail that is open to motorized use. Those opportunities would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	13,000	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	13,000	0
Potential low levels of development	13,000	13,000	13,000	0	0	0	13,000
Available for full range of development	0	0	0	0	13,000	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	2,149	4,739	0	4,739	0	0
Total	0	2,149	4,739	0	4,739	0	0

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	N	M	H	N	H	N	N

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of the Crystal Mountain IRA for wilderness. All of the IRA would be available for low levels of development, primarily watershed or habitat restoration. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Cuddy Mountain
Roadless No. 0412016
41,006 Acres

DESCRIPTION

Located in the southwest portion of the Forest, Cuddy Mountain lies between Wildhorse River on the north, Snake River and Brownlee Creek on the west, and the Hornet Creek slope on the east. Brownlee Reservoir on the Snake River lies to the west; Payette National Forest administered land lies to the east; and the Shoe Peg Valley private land lies directly to the south. Several roads, off-road vehicle tracks, and primitive trails access the area. Access is limited by private land at low elevations.

Rimrock cliffs, steep slopes, and gentle, open ridge tops typify the area. Most soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are generally dark colored, medium textured, and rocky. Some scattered areas of light colored, coarse textured, rocky granitic soils occur. Elevations range from 3,500 to 7,800 feet.

Lower elevations are typically covered by grass and brush, including cheatgrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, ninebark, snowberry, old willow complexes, ceanothus, sagebrush, hawthorn, and service berry. Mid to upper slopes contain ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, scattered western larch, and grand fir, with pinegrass, elksedge, thimbleberry, ninebark, white spirea and willow as understory vegetation. The higher ridges support subalpine fir, lodgepole pine in cool draws, and riparian-influenced Engelmann spruce. Associated with these ridges are grassy meadows at higher elevations and a sparse ground cover, including huckleberry in cool draws and elksedge on higher dry aspects. Stands of decadent aspen are also scattered within the roadless area.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity is moderate and the natural appearance is moderate due to past management activities. Roads intrude along the western boundary, and fences and stock ponds occur throughout the area. There are an estimated 17.9 miles of unclassified road and 3.5 miles of classified road within the boundary. In some portions of the area, visitors are unaffected by signs of human activities.

Opportunity for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The opportunity for solitude is high and the opportunity for primitive recreation is moderate because of the moderate recreation use and the lack of large population centers nearby. The opportunity for challenging experiences is moderate, consisting mainly of hunting.

Special Features: Special features include a State of Idaho sensitive plant (tall swamp onion) near Rush Lake, big-game winter range, and five recorded historically significant sites. The area also contains the Cuddy Mountain, Emery Creek, and Lost Basin Grasslands Research Natural Areas. Scenic landmarks include Devil's Slide, Crooked River Point, Cuddy Point, and Cuddy Mountain itself. Excellent brook trout fishing attracts fishermen to the area.

Manageability and Boundaries: The boundary of the roadless area varies from regular along much of the southern and western perimeter to fairly irregular along its eastern perimeter. It also narrows to under 2 miles wide in several locations and contains a number of deep indentations from roads and other

developments. Because of this, opportunities for logical alternative boundaries are limited and would also likely result in a significant reduction of acreage. Private land and mining activity within the roadless area could also complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hunting, hiking, camping, horseback riding, ATV and trail biking, scenic viewing, snowmobiling and backcountry skiing. There is one permitted outfitter offering trail rides in parts of the roadless area. There are 17 system trails within the roadless area totaling an estimated 83 miles. About 60 percent of the trail miles are motorized. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	0%	0%
Roaded Modified	13%	11%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	79%	51%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	8%	38%

Fisheries: Rainbow trout occur throughout the roadless area. Brook trout, brown trout, and Yellowstone cutthroat trout have all been introduced into Rush Creek within the roadless area. Electro fishing surveys in 1998 revealed both brook trout and Yellowstone cutthroat trout within the roadless area. Bull trout are thought to be present in isolated local populations.

Wildlife: Big-game species include mountain lion, black bear, elk, and mule deer. The lower elevations are considered big-game winter/spring range. Because of the large unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate most of the year, and the area acts as a security area. No threatened or endangered species has been verified in the area. The area does not contain potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species. The area provides habitat for peregrine falcon. Habitats for several Region 4 sensitive species—including northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, fisher, white headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, mountain quail, great gray owl, spotted bat, and flammulated owl—are also found in the roadless area.

Water: The roadless area lies within the Brownlee Basin to the north and the Weiser Basin to the south. The northern portion includes two watersheds, Wildhorse River and Brownlee. The southern portion also includes two watersheds, Pine Creek and Rush Creek. The entire area drains into the Snake River, which is listed as a Special Resource Water and is an important source of Northwest hydroelectric power. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold-water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation.

Range: Portions of five cattle allotments cover 100 percent of the roadless area. All these allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. Two allotments have a moderate level of structural improvements, while three have low levels. The Salmon River sheep driveway occurs within the area. The area has an estimated 6,030 acres of capable cattle grazing land.

Timber: The Cuddy Mountain IRA includes an estimated 258,502 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber, equivalent to 511,178 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 26,500 acres (65 percent) of the Cuddy Mountain IRA are considered tentatively suited timberland. An estimated 2,387 acres have low productivity; 16,098 acres, moderate productivity; and 10,789 acres, high productivity.

Tree mortality is ongoing, primarily among Douglas-fir, resulting from insect and disease factors associated with mature to overmature low vigor trees. Conifer tree species composition is changing to more climax tree species like grand fir and subalpine fir. Early seral tree species have slowly been replaced through succession.

Minerals: There are several active mining claims in the Cuddy Mountain IRA, mostly along the west flank of Cuddy Mountain. There are no approved plans of operation for exploration or development activities anywhere in the vicinity, and the potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low.

Heritage: Several prehistoric and historic cultural resources have been identified within this area. Surface lithic scatters represent prehistoric archaeological sites. This area was formerly occupied by a reclusive “mountain man” named Jim Summers who drove the last of the free roving Shoshone Indians from this mountain plateau during the late 1800s. His burial site has been fenced to protect it from grazing livestock, and is interpreted with a sign as a historic site. Evidence remains of mining activity. The Buck Park administrative and historic site is used for the benefit of domestic livestock grazing activities. The ruins of the USDA Weiser National Forest Cuddy Mountain Fire Lookout also remain.

Landownership and Special Uses: There are no permitted special uses within the roadless area at this time. There is a 160-acre parcel of private land within the IRA accessed by a low-standard two-wheel-drive road from the north.

Disturbances: Between 1960 and 2000, wildfire burned an estimated 278 acres within the roadless area. Fire frequency has been lengthened through fire exclusion. The 1994 Cuddy Mountain Complex fire occurred within this roadless area, and shrub/brush communities have resprouted. Prescribed fire opportunities for fuel reduction and habitat improvement projects exist. Western spruce budworm and Douglas-fir tussock moth were affecting the Douglas-fir/grand fir component, but currently they are at endemic levels. Tree mortality is ongoing primarily among Douglas-fir, resulting from moderate to high infections of dwarf mistletoe where Douglas-fir beetle kills the trees weakened the most by the mistletoe. Western pine beetle is present, but currently at endemic levels causing scattered individual ponderosa pine tree mortality. Mountain pine beetle has caused tree mortality in the lodgepole pine forests.

Botanical Characteristics: Tolmie’s onion (*Allium tolmiei* var *tobiasiae*) is known to occur in the roadless area. Inventoried noxious weed species found within the area include Canada thistle and yellow toadflax. Canada thistle occurs primarily in the northern portion around Grizzly Creek and in the southern portion around Rush Creek. The area around Starveout Creek and No Business Creek is infested with some Scotch thistle. Overall noxious weed infestation is estimated to occur on less than 1 percent of the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is about 43 air miles to the northeast, Hells Canyon Wilderness is about 17 air miles north, Eagle Cap Wilderness is about 25 air miles west, and Gospel Hump Wilderness is about 46 air miles northeast. The area is less than 20 road miles from Council and about 130 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve local communities of McCall, Weiser, and Council, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: An estimated 70 percent of this IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses. The remainder of the IRA (30 percent) lies within the M342 Ecoregion (Intermountain Semi-desert Province), which is minimally represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: This IRA has had low to moderate public support for wilderness designation. Three concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested it for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act. A high level of public interest in maintaining the area's undeveloped character has been expressed by a local interest group known as the Friends of Cuddy Mountain.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Moderate
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 26,500 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 258,502 MBF or 511,178 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. There are some trails currently utilized for mountain bike use and those opportunities would be foregone. Parts of the area are open to snowmobile use, and there are several miles of trail open to motorized use. Those opportunities would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion portion (70 percent of IRA) is well represented in designated wildernesses, and M342 Ecoregion (30 percent of IRA) is minimally represented. Three concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	39,200*	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	1,800	1,800	3,800	1,800	1,800	41,000	1,800
Potential low levels of development	30,500	38,900	30,400	0	16,300	0	36,500
Available for a full range of development	8,700	200	6,800	0	22,900	0	2,700

*Recommended Wilderness figures do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas within them.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	4,433	0	0	0	1,492	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	3,771	8,029	16,591	0	15,552	0	17,114
Total	8,204	8,029	16,591	0	17,044	0	17,114

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	M	M	H	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of the Cuddy Mountain IRA for wilderness. There are three Research Natural Areas, Cuddy Mountain, Emery Creek, and a part of Lost Basin Grassland, totaling an estimated 1,818 acres within the IRA that would retain their undeveloped character. The remaining IRA would be available for mainly (93 percent) low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**French Creek
Roadless Area No. 0412026
88,816 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

The French Creek area was combined with the Patrick Butte IRA in previous inventories. The two roadless areas have now been separated due to recent timber and road development in the Lower Elkhorn Salvage Sale (1996).

The French Creek IRA area lies in the north central section of the Forest, on the New Meadows and McCall Ranger Districts. The area includes Bear Pete Ridge and the head of French Creek, and extends south to Brundage Mountain. The Hazard Lakes and Elk Meadow roads (Forest Roads 257 and 308) provide access to the western portion of the area, and the Warren Wagon and Fall Fingers Roads (Forest Highway 21 and Forest Road 246) provide access to the eastern portion. Access to the north is limited due to private ownership of adjacent lands. Trails provide access into the area from the west and east. The Salmon River lies to the north, with the Secesh and Crystal Mountain IRAs to the east and the Patrick Butte IRA to the west.

The area is very rugged with steep river breaks, high alpine meadows, glacial cirque basins, and many small alpine lakes. Soils derive generally from granitic parent material and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,400 to 8,700 feet.

Stands of ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, and larch grade into lodgepole pine, spruce, and subalpine fir at the higher elevations. Understory plants include pinegrass, wheatgrass, fescue, ceanothus, snowberry, willow tall huckleberry, ninebark, beargrass, and mountain maple. Large portions of this area burned in the 1985 French Creek Fire and the 1994 Corral Fire.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity and appearance of the area are mainly intact and high, although the appearance has substantially changed over much of the area due to recent wildfires. There are few developed structures or signs of human presence to affect visitors or detract significantly from the natural appearance. There are an estimated 3.1 miles of unclassified road and 0.6 mile of classified road within the boundary.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Due to its size, topography, and limited access, the northern two thirds of the area provides a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Many roads pass near the area and vehicles easily access the perimeter, and much of the interior is closed to motorized use. Trails provide limited access to much of the area, but portions have no trail access and can only be reached by cross-country travel. The southern third of the area is separated into two smaller fingers, and this area receives substantially more motorized use, particularly by snowmobilers. Much of this area is open to snowmobile and two-wheeled motorized vehicles. The opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation in this portion of the area are low in the winter, and moderate the rest of the year.

Special Features: Black Tip, Bear Pete Peak, and Bruin Mountain are prominent landmarks. The 677-acre Bruin Mountain Research Natural Area preserves a hanging valley, rare plant and insect species, and subalpine fir communities. Segments of Hard Creek and Hazard Creek are considered eligible and the Secesh River is suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System. There are a total of 4.2 miles

of Hard and Hazard Creeks and 1,245 acres of land considered eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System, and 4.4 miles of the Secesh River and 1,001 acres of land considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. An estimated 3,584 acres of the southeastern portion of the area are part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall.

Manageability and Boundaries: The area has irregular and complex boundaries along much of its perimeter, with narrow fingers and large indentations. More manageable boundaries could be defined, but this would likely result in a considerable reduction of acreage. Management might also be complicated by State inholdings within the roadless area, which might require access in the future. Motorized vehicle operation from snowmobiles and motorcycles has become a dominant use along the perimeter and in the southern portion of the area. However, existing uses would not seriously complicate managing the remainder of the area for wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The French Creek IRA provides opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation, and features an extensive trail system. There are portions of 15 system trails in the area, including an estimated 51 miles of motorized trail and 22 miles of non-motorized trail. The area receives year-round use through activities such as backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and backcountry skiing. Snowmobiling has been increasing rapidly in this area, especially in the areas near Burgdorf and Brundage Mountain. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	13%	0%
Roaded Modified	1%	2%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	48%	98%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	38%	0%

Fisheries: Streams in this area that drain to the Salmon and Secesh Rivers are considered critical habitat for chinook salmon, contributing to the quality of habitat in the area and downstream. Two threatened species, steelhead and chinook salmon, are found in lower French Creek. Historically, these species likely accessed the upper French Creek drainage above a barrier cascade falls. The stream provides a critical juvenile summer refugia for Salmon River steelhead and salmon seeking to escape high water temperatures. Streams in the area that flow into the North Fork Payette River contain resident native and introduced fish species, but no listed species.

Wildlife: The area provides habitat for gray wolf, considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the major drainages are potential habitat. In addition, the area provides habitat for many Region 4 sensitive species, including fisher, wolverine, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, boreal owl, three-toed woodpecker, white-headed woodpecker, great gray owl, and spotted frog. Lower elevations are considered winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big-game species are mountain lion, black bear, and moose. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine can be found at higher elevations. Due to the large, unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate for most of the year, and the IRA serves as a security area for many species.

Water: There are about 20 small alpine lakes in this roadless area. The main streams in the area are French Creek and its tributaries, including Little French Creek. The majority of the streams drain into the main Salmon River via French Creek. There is a diversion on private land bordering the northeast portion of the IRA that diverts water from outside the area into French Creek. The northeastern portion of the area drains into Lake Creek and the Secesh River, and the southeastern portion drains into the North Fork Payette River, which is part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall. Water from the roadless area is also used for several domestic uses and for power generation by a small hydroelectric plant located off National Forest lands.

Range: Portions of nine sheep allotments and one cattle allotment cover most of the roadless area. The Bill Hunt and Vance Creek sheep allotments have a seasonal (fall) grazing system, and the rest of the allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system. All allotments have a low level of structural improvements. An estimated 15,369 acres of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep, and 281 acres have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle.

Timber: The area contains an estimated 626,815 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,262,938 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 63,900 acres (72 percent) of the French Creek IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 26,205 acres are considered to have low productivity; 47,594 acres, moderate productivity; and 8,146 acres, high productivity. Small portions of the area were salvage logged following a spruce bark beetle epidemic in the early 1990s and wildfires in 1994.

Minerals: Some past placer mining and exploration has occurred in the area. There are few current mining claims and no approved plans of operation. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low.

Heritage: Prehistoric activity areas have been identified on mountain ridges where traditional Indian trails were established years ago. At lower elevations, in the French Creek drainage, log cabin ruins associated with early mineral exploration can be found. This roadless area has not been thoroughly examined for prehistoric sites, and the potential for locating additional prehistoric sites is moderate in the unsurveyed portions of this area.

Landownership and Special Uses: The State of Idaho owns 640 acres within the IRA. If the area were classified as wilderness, access to State land would be affected. No other permanently encumbered land titles of record occur within the area. An estimated 1,960 acres of National Forest lands along the eastern boundary of the roadless area, north of McCall, are subject to consideration for mutual road systems under the assured ingress and egress provisions of the State of Idaho - Forest Service Cooperative Road Agreement (Cost-Share). Several permits have been issued for special uses within the roadless area. These uses include snowcat skiing and backcountry skiing near Brundage Mountain area, and outfitter and guide services for fly fishing and mountain bike tours. Brundage Mountain is proposing to add helicopter skiing in the area.

Disturbances: An estimated 57,970 acres of the roadless area were burned over by wildfires between 1960 and 2000. Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area ranges from high in the southern portion to moderate and low in the central and northern portions. Mean fire return intervals range from frequent (26-75 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). The 1994 Corral Fire disturbed an estimated 60 percent of this area. Fire severity ranged from stand replacement to light surface burning. Prescribed fire has not played a role in past disturbances, but could be utilized to support natural ecosystems and reduce unwanted fuel loadings.

Large areas of spruce bark beetle infestation occurred in the early 1990s, and much of the tree mortality from this outbreak fueled the 1994 Corral Fire. Douglas-fir beetle outbreaks have increased in and around portions of the burned areas since the fire.

Botanical Characteristics: No federally listed plant species are known to occur in this roadless area. Tobias' saxifrage (*Saxifraga bryophora* var *tobiasiae*), a Region 4 sensitive plant species, and short-style tofieldia (*Triantha occidentalis* ssp *brevistyla*), a proposed sensitive plant species, occur in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the IRA.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is 6 air miles to the northeast, the Hells Canyon Wilderness is 12 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is 9 air miles to the northeast. The area is about 20 road miles from McCall and 120 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, this area would serve the local communities of McCall and Riggins, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively high public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Twenty concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	Moderate
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Moderate
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 63,900 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 626,815 MBF or 1,262,938 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The use of the 50-plus miles of motorized trails and the extensive snowmobile use would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Twenty concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation. Past and present interest in recommendation has been very high.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	88,100*	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	700	700	700	700	700	88,800	700
Potential low levels of development	71,900	81,200	81,800	0	0	0	88,100
Available for full range of development	16,200	6,900	6,300	0	88,100	0	0

*Recommended Wilderness areas do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas within them.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	10,009	0	0	0	36,617	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	2,730	15,681	26,217	0	3,431	0	3,505
Total	12,739	15,681	26,217	0	40,048	0	3,505

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	M	M	H	N	H	N	L

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the French Creek IRA for wilderness. The 677-acre Bruin Mountain Research Natural Area would retain its undeveloped character. The remaining IRA would be available for low levels of development, primarily watershed and habitat restoration. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Roadless Area No. 0412001 29,651 Acres

DESCRIPTION

The Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic lies along the western boundary of the Forest between the Snake River, the Hells Canyon Wilderness, and the tops of the Snake River breaks. The area lies across the Snake River from the Wallowa-Whitman NF with the Hells Canyon Wilderness to the north and west. Indian Creek IRA lies to the south. Access is by the paved road along the Snake River, the gravel road on the Kleinschmidt Grade, and the dirt road to Kinney Point. Several trails access the area but foot travel is difficult because of the extremely steep terrain.

The area is mostly very steep, with bluffs, rimrock cliffs, and side canyons. Hells Canyon, North America's deepest gorge, dominates the area's geography. Soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are generally dark colored, medium textured, and rocky. Some scattered areas of light-colored, coarse-textured, rocky granitic soils occur. Elevations range from 1,500 to 8,355 feet.

Forested cover is composed of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine graduating to grand fir, western larch, lodgepole pine, to subalpine fir and whitebark pine as elevation increases, with Engelmann spruce existing as riparian coniferous vegetation. The understory vegetation also changes as elevations increase and includes bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, ninebark, common snowberry, white spirea, pinegrass, blue huckleberry, mountain maple, and elk sedge. At lower elevations in old homesteads, apple and pear trees can be found associated with shrub/brush communities along Forest Road 545.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity and appearance are largely high and intact. Some primitive road intrusions reduce these qualities somewhat in local portions of the area. There is an estimated 6.9 miles of unclassified road within the boundary.

Opportunity for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The opportunity for solitude is high due to the topography, vegetation, and the lack of large population centers nearby. Opportunities for primitive and challenging recreation experiences are high as well, due to the exceptionally rugged terrain, steep slopes, and remoteness of the area. Off-trail hiking is difficult, making almost any activity a challenging experience.

Special Features: The area is currently designated as a Scenic Area. Scenic landmarks and vista points include Kinney Point, Horse Mountain, and Sheep Rock National Natural Landmark. These vista points provide scenic views of Hells Canyon, the Seven Devils Mountains, the Eagle Cap Wilderness, and the historic Kleinschmidt Grade. The area contains Flatiron Rock, which has become a popular rock climbing area. Fossil hunting is popular, and this area has most if not all of the inventoried caves on the Forest.

Manageability and Boundaries: Except for the cherry-stem intrusion for the road into Sheep Rock, the roadless area boundaries would be fairly manageable. Some reduction in size would likely result from defining a boundary around the cherry-stem. Private land inholdings and a buried power line within the roadless area could complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hunting, hiking, fishing, camping, rock climbing, caving, snowmobiling, wildlife viewing, and scenic viewing. Sheep Rock National Natural Landmark is located in the area. There are 11 system trails within the roadless area totaling approximately 50 miles. About 90 percent of the trail miles are non-motorized. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	18%	7%
Roaded Modified	23%	10%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	0%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	59%	83%

Fisheries: Threatened chinook salmon and steelhead trout occur in Deep Creek. Tributaries to Hells Canyon and Oxbow Reservoirs support adfluvial rainbow trout populations. The IRA also provides limited habitat for bull trout. Most fish habitat occurs in the low-gradient segments near the mouths of area streams.

Wildlife: The lower elevations along the Snake River breaks are considered as winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big-game species are mountain lion, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, and black bear. Because of the unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife species is very low during most of the year, and the area acts as a security area. The only threatened or endangered species verified in the area is the bald eagle, which forages on winter-killed big game in the winter range area above the Snake River. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about eleven percent of the area. Generally only the upper elevations are potential habitat. Habitat for the peregrine falcon exists. In addition, habitats for several Region 4 sensitive species are also found in the roadless area, including flammulated owl, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, northern goshawk, wolverine, fisher, mountain quail, great gray owl, spotted frog, and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Water: The roadless area lies within the Hells Canyon Basin on the north and the Brownlee Reservoir Basin on the south. The northern portion lies within the Deep Creek subwatershed of the Granite-Bush watershed. The southern portion lies within the Kinney-Kirby, Sawpit-Thirty-two, and Copper-Limepoint subwatersheds in the Granite-Bush watershed. The entire area is drained by tributaries to the Snake River, which is listed as a Special Resource Water and is an important source of hydroelectric power. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation.

Range: A portion of one sheep allotment covers 100 percent of the roadless area. The allotment is managed under a deferred rotation system. The allotment has a low level of structural improvements. There are 4,716 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

Timber: The IRA contains an estimated 174,457 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 358,895 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 14,200 acres (48 percent) of the IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,344 acres are considered to have low productivity; 6,107 acres, moderate productivity; and 8,025 acres, high productivity. Most forest stands

are mature to overmature, with overmature trees near 300 years old and mature trees approaching 100 years old. Fire suppression in this area has allowed most climax tree species like grand fir and subalpine fir to dominate over early seral ponderosa pine, western larch, and lodgepole pine.

Minerals: There are no mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic IRA. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low.

Heritage: This roadless area is located adjacent to the Snake River winter Nez Perce Indian villages. Nez Perce Indians and their ancestors accessed the uplands above the Hells Canyon during the warmer seasons for the procurement of big game and plant resources. The probability for finding additional prehistoric resources within this area ranges from medium to high. During the historic period, mineral exploration occurred, and mining sites can still be found within this roadless area.

Landownership and Special Uses: Several inholdings of private land, comprising about 600 acres, exist within the roadless area. There are two buried power lines that come up from the Snake River south of Eckels Creek, crossing the area. These lines provide power to the Cuprum/Bear area and a microwave site on Lynes Point, both of which are just east of the boundary.

Disturbances: Between 1960 and 2000 wildfires burned an estimated 20,115 acres within the roadless area. The 1992 Windy Ridge Fire burned over large areas north of Kleinschmidt Grade. Other large fires included Eagle Bar (1988), Emmett (1989), and Eckels Creek (1960). There were numerous small debris slides (less than one acre) inventoried within this roadless area after the January 1997 storm event.

Botanical Characteristics: Bartonberry (*Rubus bartonianus*), a Region 4 proposed sensitive plant species, is known to occur in the roadless area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is about 24 air miles to the east, the Hells Canyon Wilderness is adjacent to the north and east, the Eagle Cap Wilderness is 20 air miles west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is 26 air miles northeast. The area is about 30 road miles from Council and about 120 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall, Weiser, and Council, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: This area has had low to moderate public support for wilderness designation. Six concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 14,200 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 174,457 MBF or 358,895 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The motorized use on a few miles of motorized trails and the relatively small area open to snowmobile use would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Six concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	29,700	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	29,700	0
Potential low levels of development	29,700	29,700	11,300	0	0	0	29,700
Available for full range of development	0	0	18,400	0	29,700	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	1,168	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	4,804	11,016	0	9,844	0	11,016
Total	0	4,804	11,016	0	11,012	0	11,016

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	N	M	H	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic IRA for wilderness. All of the IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Horse Heaven
Roadless Area Nos. 0412925 and 0402925
17,744 acres (13,445 Payette NF Acres; 4,299 Boise NF Acres)

DESCRIPTION

This IRA was formally the northern portion of the Meadow Creek IRA. During the Forest Plan Revision roadless inventory update, the Meadow Creek IRA was separated into two IRAs after an existing power line and access road were identified. The Horse Heaven IRA is on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette Forest, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise Forest.

The Horse Heaven IRA lies in the south central portion of the Payette National Forest and the northeast portion of the Boise NF, southeast of Yellow Pine, between the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and the old Thunder Mountain Roads. Access is from the Johnson Creek, South Fork Salmon River, East Fork South Fork Salmon River, old Thunder Mountain Roads, and several trails. The FC-RONR Wilderness is adjacent, separated from the IRA only by the East Fork South Fork Salmon River Road. The Stibnite mining area adjoins the eastern boundary. The Caton Lake IRA lies to the west, the Sugar Mountain IRA to the east, the Meadow Creek IRA to the south, and the Secesh IRA to the north.

Topography is generally moderate except for the canyons whose streams follow steep gradients. Soils derive from Idaho batholith granitics and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from about 4,700 feet near Yellow Pine to 7,722 feet along Antimony Ridge. Antimony Ridge is the prominent landscape feature. Engelmann spruce, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and, to a lesser extent, ponderosa pine comprise the bulk of the timber stands. Common ground cover includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, pinegrass, and thimbleberry.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: Surrounding roads, cherry-stem roads along the western boundary, a telephone corridor, and scattered mining claims detract from the natural integrity in some portions of the area. There is an estimated 0.2 mile of unclassified road within the boundary. Overall, however, visitors are unaffected by human developments, and the natural appearance is moderately high.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The opportunity for solitude is high because of limited recreation use and remote location. Primitive recreation opportunities are moderate. Challenging experiences include trail bike riding and big-game hunting. Roads encircle the area, but no roads and only a few trails access the interior. The area is adjacent to the community of Yellow Pine.

Special Features: An elk security area lies in the north end.

Manageability and Boundaries: Several boundary options have been considered for this area. All enhance manageability by moving the boundaries away from areas with existing incompatible uses and, where possible, to natural features. There are numerous mining claims in the area, which may require modification of the boundary due to mining development inclusions.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Recreation use is light. Big-game hunting is the main recreation use. There are no motorized trails in the area. One outfitter-guide provides mainly fall big-game hunting opportunities for clients. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	16%	4%
Roaded Modified	9%	2%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	94%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	75%	0%

Fisheries: The roadless area encompasses tributaries of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River (No Mans Creek, Bishop Creek, and Pepper Creek) and Johnson Creek. These tributaries provide or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout; and Region 4 sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for chinook salmon. Other species within the area include resident rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, suckers, and sculpin.

Wildlife: Wildlife species include elk, deer, boreal owl, flammulated owl, bear, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, great gray owl, northern goshawk, spotted frog, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about three quarters of the area. The area has elk winter range. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine. Wolverine is particularly sensitive to disturbance and trapping and is a wide-ranging species. The IRA provides relatively undisturbed habitat largely inaccessible to trappers. Boreal owls require old, moist forest for foraging and cavities made by flickers or pileated woodpeckers in large, decadent trees for nesting. The IRA provides a necessary component in the network of habitat.

Water: The area contains numerous streams, and wetland areas. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River and Johnson Creek. Johnson Creek flows into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River. All these streams provide important anadromous fish habitat. Johnson Creek and the East Fork South Fork are designated as water quality limited water bodies under the Clean Water Act. There is one permitted special use permit for a water transmission line for domestic water, and another permit for a water transmission line for domestic and irrigation water.

Range: The area contains an estimated 346 acres of capable cattle grazing land. There is a portion of one cattle and horse allotment encompassing the entire roadless area, which is grazed by horses and managed under a season long system; however, the portion within the IRA receives very little use.

Timber: This IRA includes an estimated 159,368 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 310,321 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 16,800 acres (95 percent) of the IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. There are 8,229 acres considered to have low timber productivity; 9,346 acres moderate productivity; and no acres of high productivity. Timber species include Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and to a lesser extent, ponderosa pine and grand fir.

Minerals: There are numerous mining claims in the roadless area, with active mineral exploration underway on the Boise portion of the IRA. Past mining is evident in portions, especially around the Stibnite Mine area and along Antimony Ridge. The potential for the future developing mineral resources is moderate to high.

Heritage: No cultural resources inventory has occurred in this area; however, the Predictive Model for Cultural Resource Management rates about 75 percent of the IRA as having low sensitivity; a small portion, moderate sensitivity; and a very small part, high sensitivity.

Landownership and Special Uses: There are three outfitter-guide permits for fishing, hunting, and horse trail riding.

Disturbances: Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). An estimated 139 acres burned between 1960 and 2000. Douglas-fir bark beetles are active in the area.

Botanical Characteristics: No known population of endangered, threatened, or sensitive plants occur in the IRA. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is within ¼ mile at one point along the northern boundary. The Hells Canyon Wilderness is located 45 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is located 20 air miles to the north. The area is 30 air miles from McCall and 150 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Cascade, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness as part of the Meadow Creek IRA. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act. This roadless area is a portion of the roadless area complex studied by Congress during the passage of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980. When Congress finalized the boundaries of the River of No Return Wilderness, it did not include this IRA.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Moderate
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 16,800 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 159,368 MBF or 310,321 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be

retained. This area is identified as having high potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The use of the area by snowmobiles would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	17,700	0
Potential low levels of development	6,700	17,700	17,700	17,700	1,000	0	15,600
Available for a full range of development	11,000	0	0	0	16,700	0	2,100

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	8,615	8,485	8,485	1,854	13,279	0	7,407
Total	8,615	8,485	8,485	1,854	13,279	0	7,407

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	H	H	H	M	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Horse Heaven IRA for wilderness. The IRA would be available for mostly (88 percent) low levels of development. Before any action is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the IRA, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Indian Creek
Roadless Area No. 0412019
4,832 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

The Indian Creek IRA adjoins the southeast corner of Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic IRA on the Forest's western boundary. Forest Road 072 down Indian Creek from Cuprum accesses the top of the area. The Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic Area IRA lies a short distance to the northwest, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and the Snake River to the west, and Payette National Forest System land to the east.

The area is very steep and rugged, except for a relatively flat area at the bottom of the canyon. Soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are mostly dark colored, fine textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 2,280 feet to 4,838 feet. Generally the area receives heavy precipitation; mostly snow in winter and rain in the spring, with hot, relatively dry summers.

Large openings of sagebrush and bunchgrass separate stringers of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir mixed with grand fir in the cool draws. Ground cover in the stringers includes ninebark, twinberry, serviceberry, and pinegrass and remnants of willow components. Old homesteads contain pear and apple trees.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: Many range developments and mining claims (especially along Windy Ridge) impair the natural integrity and give the area a moderate natural appearance. Lode mines have disturbed some areas and effects are highly visible. There are an estimated 6.2 miles of unclassified road and 1.8 miles of classified road within the boundary.

Opportunity for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Range, timber and mining activities as well as roads reduce the opportunities for solitude to a low level. The area's steep slopes provide challenging hiking but, in general, opportunities for primitive recreation experiences are limited.

Special Features: There are no special features in the IRA.

Manageability and Boundaries: The area is relatively narrow in shape for much of its length and has fairly irregular boundaries along much of its eastern perimeter. Because of its small size and narrow shape, the area has few logical alternative boundaries. Private land within the area could also complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Recreation use is light and consists mainly of dispersed recreation that includes hunting, hiking, fishing and scenic viewing. There is one non-motorized system trail (225) in the area totaling about 8 miles in length. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	0%	0%
Roaded Modified	100%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	0%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	0%	100%

Fisheries: Bull trout occur upstream of the roadless area in Indian Creek. Rainbow trout and introduced brook trout occur within the roadless area.

Wildlife: The lower elevations along the Snake River breaks are considered as winter/spring range for deer and elk. Mountain lion and occasionally black bear are likely the only other big game species found in the area. Because of the area's unroaded character, human interaction with wildlife species is low during most of the year and the area acts as a security area. There is no potential habitat for the lynx, a threatened species. Marginal habitat for peregrine falcon exists. In addition, habitats for several Region 4 sensitive species—including Townsend's big eared bat, northern goshawk, spotted frog, flammulated owl, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, and mountain quail—are also found in the roadless area.

Water: The roadless area lies within the Indian-McGraw watershed, in the Lower Indian and Middle Indian subwatersheds. The entire area drains into Indian Creek, which flows into the Snake River, an important hydroelectric supplier for the Northwest. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold-water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation.

Range: Portions of two cattle allotments and one sheep allotment cover the entire roadless area; all three allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a low level of structural improvements on all of the allotments. There are an estimated 1,254 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle, and about 51 acres classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

Timber: There is an estimated 16,458 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 32,309 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 1,000 acres (21 percent) of the IRA contain tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 991 acres are considered to have low productivity; 845 acres, moderate productivity; and 160 acres, high productivity. Tree mortality is ongoing, primarily among Douglas-fir, due to insect and disease factors associated with mature to overmature low vigor trees.

Minerals: There are a few active mining claims along the western edge of the Indian Creek Roadless Area. There are no approved plans of operation for exploration or development activities anywhere in the vicinity, and the potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low.

Heritage: Previous cultural resource inventories have identified prehistoric archaeological sites and ruins of historic period homesteads. The Indian Creek Valley was an access for Indian people traveling between the Snake River winter camps to the summer high elevation seasonal camps. The probability of finding additional prehistoric archaeological resources ranges from medium to high.

Landownership and Special Uses: One inholding of non-federal land of about 160 acres lies within the roadless area and is accessed by an unpermitted low standard road from the west. There are no permitted special uses within the roadless area at this time.

Disturbances: Historic fire occurrence is low throughout this area, although fires tend to spread quickly. Between 1960 and 2000 wildfires burned an estimated 4,571 acres within the area. The Windy Ridge Fire occurred in 1992, and disturbed a large portion of this roadless area. Minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle, western pine beetle, and mountain pine beetle are present. Minor amounts of dwarf mistletoe are also present. There were numerous small debris slides of less than one acre in size inventoried within this area after the January 1997 storm event.

Botanical Characteristics: The only inventoried noxious weed found in the roadless area is diffuse knapweed. It is found on less than 5 acres. Overall, noxious weed infestation is estimated to occur on less than 1 percent of the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is about 35 air miles to the northeast, Hells Canyon Wilderness is about 7 air miles north, Eagle Cap Wilderness is about 15 miles west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is about 37 air miles northeast. The area is less than 30 road miles from Council and about 140 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve local communities of McCall, Weiser, and Council, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Three concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	Low
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Low
Special Features	None

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 1,000 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 16,458 MBF or 32,309 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. The area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Three concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	4,800	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	4,800	0
Potential low levels of development	0	0	0	0	0	0	4,800
Available for a full range of development	4,800	4,800	4,800	0	4,800	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	607	0	0	0	607	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	607	623	0	0	0	623
Total	607	607	623	0	607	0	623

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	M	M	M	N	M	N	M

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Indian Creek IRA for wilderness. The IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Meadow Creek
Roadless Area Nos. 0412913 and 0402913
29,304 Acres (8,014 Payette NF Acres; 21,290 Boise NF Acres)**

DESCRIPTION

The Meadow Creek IRA is on the Krassel Ranger District of the Payette NF, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise NF. During the Forest Plan Revision roadless inventory update, the Meadow Creek IRA was separated into two IRAs after an existing power line and access road were identified. The Meadow Creek IRA is the southern portion of the roadless area by the same name evaluated under the 1988 Forest Plan. The northern portion, now called the Horse Heaven IRA, is described earlier in this appendix.

The Meadow Creek IRA lies in the south central portion of the Payette NF and the northeast portion of the Boise NF, southeast of Yellow Pine, between the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, Johnson Creek, and the old Thunder Mountain Roads. Access is from the roads and several trails. The FC-RONR Wilderness adjoins the southeastern boundary, and the Stibnite mining area adjoins the northeastern boundary. The Caton Lake IRA lies to the west, and the Horse Heaven IRA to the north.

Topography is generally moderate except for the canyons whose streams follow steep gradients. Soils derive from Idaho Batholith granitics and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,200 near Johnson Creek to 8,863 feet at the Meadow Creek Fire Lookout. Prominent features include Riordan Lake, Meadow Creek, and Meadow Peak. Engelmann spruce, Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine and, to a lesser extent, ponderosa pine comprise the bulk of the timber stands. Common ground cover includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, pinegrass, and thimbleberry.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: Surrounding and intruding roads, a telephone corridor, and scattered mining claims detract from the natural integrity in some portions of the area. There are an estimated 4.2 miles of unclassified road and 3.4 miles of classified road within the boundary. Overall, however, visitors are unaffected by human developments, and the natural appearance is moderately high.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The opportunity for solitude is high because of limited recreation use and remote location. Primitive recreation opportunities are moderate. Opportunities for solitude are good around Riordan Lake, which is sheltered by extensive vegetation and small draws. Challenging experiences include trail bike riding and big game hunting. Roads encircle the area, but no roads and only a few trails access the interior.

Special Features: Riordan Lake is a special feature of the area. Meadow Creek Fire Lookout lies within the roadless area.

Manageability and Boundaries: The main portion of the area could have boundaries that would be easily defined by an offset from the surrounding roads. There are numerous mining claims in the area that could complicate future management.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Recreation use is light, with big-game hunting and trail bike riding as the main recreation uses, making up most of the estimated 300-500 annual recreation visitor-days (RVDs). Other uses include camping, horseback riding, and winter snowmobile use. Riordan Lake is a popular motorbike trip, and Meadow Creek Lookout is popular for its views into the FC-RONR Wilderness. One outfitter-guide provides mainly fall big-game hunting opportunities for clients. There are three motorized trails within the roadless area totaling 14 miles. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	16%	4%
Roaded Modified	13%	2%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	21%	94%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	50%	0%

Fisheries: Tributaries of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River (Meadow Creek) and Johnson Creek (Riordan Creek, Bear Creek, and Trapper Creek) provide or may potentially provide spawning or rearing habitat for threatened chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout; and Region 4 sensitive westslope cutthroat trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for chinook salmon. Other species within the roadless area include resident rainbow trout, mountain whitefish, suckers, and sculpin. Introduced arctic grayling and golden trout are stocked in Meadow Lake.

Wildlife: Wildlife species include elk, deer, boreal owl, bear, white-headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, great gray owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, spotted frog, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Confirmed gray wolf activity has occurred in this IRA, with increasing activity occurring since the re-introduction program in the mid 1990s. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in most of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine and fisher. Wolverine and fisher are particularly sensitive to disturbance and trapping. The IRA provides relatively undisturbed habitat, largely inaccessible by trappers. Boreal owls require old, moist forest for foraging and cavities made by flickers or pileated woodpeckers in large, decadent trees for nesting. The IRA provides a necessary component in the network of habitat.

Water: The area contains numerous streams and wetland areas, as well as Riordan and Meadow Creek Lakes. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River and Johnson Creek. Johnson Creek and Meadow Creek are major tributaries of the East Fork South Fork River, which flows into the South Fork Salmon River. All streams provide important anadromous fish habitat. Johnson Creek and the East Fork South Fork are designated as water quality limited water bodies under the Clean Water Act.

Range: A portion of one cattle and horse allotment encompassing about 50 percent of the area is grazed by horses and managed under a season long system, although the portion within the IRA receives very little use. The area contains an estimated 1,162 acres of capable grazing land.

Timber: The area contains an estimated 233,843 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 458,754 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 26,500 acres (90 percent) of the Meadow Creek IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 14,874 acres are considered to have low productivity; 13,579 acres, moderate productivity; and no acres, high productivity. The main timber species include Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and to a lesser extent ponderosa pine and grand fir. The Thunderbolt Fire Salvage Sale harvested a small portion of the area in 1995.

Minerals: There are numerous mining claims in the roadless area, with active mineral exploration underway on the Boise portion of the IRA. Past mining is evident in portions, especially around the Stibnite Mine area. The potential for the future developing mineral resources is moderate to high.

Heritage: This area has not had a cultural resources inventory. However, the Predictive Model for Cultural Resource Management rates three-quarters of the area as low; a small portion moderate, and a very small part as high for finding cultural resources.

Landownership and Special Uses: There are three outfitter-guide permits for fishing, hunting, and horse trail riding. There is one permitted special use permit for a water transmission line for domestic water, and another permit for a water transmission line for domestic and irrigation water.

Disturbances: Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). Between 1960 and 2000, an estimated 6,881 acres were burned by wildfires. The Indian Fire in 2000 burned around 3,000 acres. Epidemic levels of Douglas-fir bark beetle infestations resulted in mortality of a large percentage of the older Douglas-fir trees in the early 1900s. Evidence of this mortality occurs in scattered locations throughout the IRA wherever Douglas-fir is present.

Botanical Characteristics: No known populations of endangered, threatened, or sensitive plants occur. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is within one-quarter mile of the southern boundary. The Hells Canyon Wilderness is located 45 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is located 20 air miles to the north. The area is 30 air miles from McCall and 150 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Cascade, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act. This roadless area is a portion of the roadless area complex studied by Congress during the passage of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980. When Congress finalized the boundaries of the FC-RONR Wilderness, it did not include this remaining IRA in the designated wilderness.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Moderate
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 26,500 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 233,843 MBF or 458,754 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. This area is identified as having moderate to high potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently being used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The use of motorized trails and the area by snowmobiles would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Status	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	29,300	0
Potential low levels of development	0	29,300	29,300	29,300	12,500	0	20,900
Available for full range of development	29,300	0	0	0	16,800	0	8,400

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	17,161	24,209	24,209	6,848	17,361	0	17,076
Total	17,161	24,209	24,209	6,848	17,361	0	17,076

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	H	H	H	H	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Meadow Creek IRA for wilderness. The IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Needles
Roadless Area Nos. 0412911 and 0402911
161,153 Acres (131,264 Payette NF Acres; 29,890 Boise NF Acres)

DESCRIPTION

The Needles IRA is located on the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts of the Payette NF, and the Cascade Ranger District of the Boise NF. This IRA lies between Long Valley in the west and the South Fork Salmon River in the east, and between the Lick Creek Road (Forest Road 48) in the north and the Warm Lake Road (Forest Highway 22) in the south. Access is by the surrounding roads and by trail systems into most of the major drainages; however, some places can only be reached by cross-country travel. Private and State lands in Long Valley lie to the west, the Secesh IRA borders on the north, and the Caton Lake IRA adjoins the east boundary.

Soils are derived from granites of the Idaho batholith. In general, they are light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,650 feet to over 9,000 feet. Lands at lower elevations are steep and strongly dissected by streams, with brush fields and moderate to dense stands of ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Higher elevation lands are U-shaped glacial valleys with steep side slopes and gently sloping alluvial bottoms, adjacent to high peaks, rocky ridges, and cirque basins. Lodgepole pine and subalpine fir are the dominant tree species. Ground cover varies from ninebark, thimbleberry, currants, grouse whortleberry, and pinegrass in lower elevations to sparse clumps of elk sedge in the higher elevations.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity is generally high, as this is a large area with few effects from past development. The natural appearance for this area is high, although appearance has been recently changed by a number of large wildfires, most notably the 1994 Blackwell Fire. There is an estimated 30.2 miles of unclassified road and 2.7 miles of classified road within the boundary.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The area has high opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation due to its substantial size, rugged topography, and limited access. Although opportunities are somewhat limited in portions of the area adjacent to heavily used access roads and trails, much of the area may be reached only by steep trails or cross-country travel. Only a few trails have the ability to support motorbike use, and they provide challenging trail bike riding. The area's rugged topography also provides excellent and challenging hiking, horseback riding, rock climbing, and backcountry skiing.

Special Features: Rugged granite peaks with many glacial cirques, hanging valleys, and alpine lakes characterize the area. Jughandle Mountain, Nick Peak, and the Needles are a few of the scenic landmarks. The 1,019-acre Needles Research Natural Area lies in the southern portion of the roadless area. The adjacent South Fork Salmon River is suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are 0.9 mile and 2,695 acres of land considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the roadless area.

Manageability and Boundaries: The area has some fairly irregular boundaries. Manageability as a designated wilderness would benefit from simplified boundaries that could be created with some acreage reduction. Existing uses and land ownership would not seriously complicate managing this area as wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The area supports a wide range of backcountry recreation such as hunting, fishing, camping, horse riding, hiking, backcountry skiing, and trail bike use. Snowmobile use is increasing, and the area also provides opportunities for rock climbing and photography. There is an estimated 104 miles of trail open to motorized use, and 71 miles of non-motorized trail. Two outfitter-guides provide summer recreation opportunities for clients. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Preservation	0%	5%
Roaded Natural	6%	1%
Roaded Modified	6%	3%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	24%	30%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	64%	61%

Fisheries: This area contains streams important to anadromous fish, as well as streams that support only resident fish. Those streams supporting anadromous fish are considered critical habitat for threatened chinook salmon. Chinook salmon and steelhead trout, another threatened fish species, are found in some area streams that drain into the South Fork Salmon River. These streams provide important spawning and rearing habitat. Threatened bull trout are in the South Fork Salmon River and upper Gold Fork River drainages, and may occur in the headwaters of Lake Fork Creek. Native westslope cutthroat trout and redband rainbow trout are present. Brook trout and other introduced fish species are also found in some area streams.

Wildlife: Habitat exists for Region 4 sensitive species such as wolverine, northern goshawk, great gray owl, white-headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, flammulated owl, harlequin duck, spotted frog, fisher, and boreal owl. Mountain goat, black bear, and cougar also occur. The area provides habitat for gray wolf, considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area, and peregrine falcon. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Big-game winter range occurs along the South Fork Salmon River, and bald eagles occasionally migrate along the river corridor. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine are found at higher elevations.

Water: The Needles area has over 50 alpine lakes, most of which are in the Lick Creek Range in the western third of the area. The main streams in the area are the South Fork Salmon River, Buckhorn Creek, Kennally Creek, Fitsum Creek, East Fork Lake Creek, Gold Fork River, and Dollar Creek. The western third of the area drains into the North Fork Payette River below McCall. The eastern two thirds of the area drains into the South Fork Salmon River, which is an important anadromous drainage for threatened chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Twin Lakes, Boulder Lake, Maloney Lake, Maki Lake and Louie Lake all have dams and some sort of headgate system. They are all currently under U.S. Department of Interior permanent easements. Maki Lake's dam was breached in the 1950s and has never been repaired. The Forest Service breached the dam on Maloney Lake, and the permittees have not requested to rebuild it.

Range: All or portions of three sheep allotments occur within the roadless area: North Fork Lick Creek, Lake Fork, and Jughandle. The Lake Fork and Jughandle allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system, and the North Fork Lick Creek allotment has a seasonal (fall) system. All allotments have a low

level of structural improvements. An estimated 7,634 acres of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep, and an estimated 41 acres have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle. There is a portion of one cattle allotment managed under a rest-rotation system within the roadless area. The allotment covers approximately 10 percent of the area and receives minimal grazing use.

Timber: The area includes an estimated 1,403,681 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 2,797,348 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 116,400 acres (72 percent) of the Needles IRA is considered tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 50,442 acres have low timber productivity; 69,923 acres, moderate productivity; and 28,610 acres, high productivity. There have been timber sale entries on the Boise NF portion of the area since the Forest Plan, and several more are planned. The Payette NF has one timber entry on their portion of the roadless area.

Minerals: There are few active mining claims and no hydropower permits on the Payette portion of the Needles IRA, and there is low potential for future locatable mineral or energy development. Some limited placer activity occurs in the southern portion of the area, but most of this is recreational suction dredging. On the Boise NF portion, placer mining in the Gold Fork River occurs. Potential for gold and silver mining exists, and there are several registered active claims.

Heritage: Nez Perce Indian trails cross the mountain range, connecting the South Fork Salmon River, and North Fork Payette River valleys for the seasonal harvest of summer chinook and sockeye salmon. These Indian trails were used into the early part of the twentieth century. Today, Indian people continue to harvest summer chinook salmon from the South Fork Salmon River but they no longer use the traditional trails. The Forest Service has improved and maintained these trails historically. Otherwise, little is known about the historic use of this area.

Landownership and Special Uses: There are no private or state lands or permanently encumbered land titles of record in this area. An estimated 160 acres of NFS lands adjacent to private lands south of Jughandle Mountain are subject to consideration for mutual road systems under the assured ingress and egress provisions of the Boise Cascade Corporation - Forest Service Cooperative Road Right-of-Way Construction and Use Agreement (Cost-Share). Electronics sites are proposed in the vicinity of Nick Peak and Square Top Mountain. One outfitter and guide provides llama pack trips and mountain bike touring services. Outward Bound has a special use permit for rock climbing, camping, and hiking.

Disturbances: Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area ranges from moderately low in the northern section to moderately high and high in the southern section. Mean fire return intervals range from infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). Recent large wildland fires include the 1994 Blackwell Fire; the 1989 Foolhen, Green Mountain, and Spruce Creek Fires; the 1979 Kennally Creek Fire, and the 2000 Nick Fire. Significant “natural fires” during this time include the 600-acre Golden Lake Fire, and the 400-acre Jughandle Fire. Prescribed Natural Fires were allowed to burn during the period of 1977-1988 as a part of the previous Lake Fork Fire Management Area Plan. An estimated 24,930 acres burned between 1960 and 2000. No recent major insect or disease infestations have occurred in this area.

Botanical Characteristics: No federally listed plant species are known to occur in this IRA. Idaho douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*), a Region 4 sensitive plant species, and Idaho bitterroot (*Lewisia kelloggii*), a Region 4 proposed sensitive plant species, are known to occur in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the IRA.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is located 23 air miles to the east, the Hells Canyon Wilderness is 27 air miles west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is 26 air miles to the north. The area is less than 10 road miles from McCall and about 110 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Cascade, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively high public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Nine concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act. The Payette and Boise Forests recommended a large part of this area for wilderness designation in their original Forest Plans.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY**Capability Summary:**

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 116,400 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 1,403,681 MBF or 2,797,348 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. A high level of motorized trail use and snowmobile use would be forgone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Nine concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation. The Payette and Boise Forests have previously recommended part of this area for wilderness designation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	94,900*	95,200*	95,200*	160,200*	0	95,200*	95,200*
Maintain undeveloped character	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,000	98,000	66,000	1,800
Potential low levels of development	9,500	51,500	62,700	0	3,300	0	64,100
Available for a full range of development	55,000	12,700	1,500	0	59,900	0	0

*Recommended Wilderness areas do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas within the areas.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	1,851	0	0	0	19,495	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	38,732	29,420	31,535	0	23,855	0	24,564
Total	40,583	29,420	31,535	0	43,350	0	24,564

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	H	M	M	N	H	N	M

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative recommends 95,173 acres of the Needles IRA for wilderness. The 1,819-acre Needles Research Natural Area would retain its undeveloped character. The remainder of the IRA would be available for low levels of development activities. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Patrick Butte
Roadless Area No. 0412002
80,676 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

In previous inventories, the Patrick Butte IRA was combined with the French Creek IRA, described earlier in this appendix. During the Forest Plan Revision roadless inventory update, the Patrick Butte area was separated, due to recent development.

The area lies in the north central section of the Forest, extending from Granite Mountain north through Patrick Butte and Hard Butte, and including Lava Ridge. The Hazard Lakes and Elk Meadow Roads provide access to the eastern portion. Trail access exists from the west, north, and east. The Salmon River lies to the north with the French Creek IRA to the east and the Rapid River IRA to the west.

The area is very rugged with steep river breaks, high alpine meadows, glacial cirque basins, and over 30 lakes. Several of the cirque basins have unusual basalt headwalls, which surround granitic basins. Elevations range from 3,400 to over 8,800 feet.

The area is generally forested with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir and larch at lower elevations and lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, and subalpine fir at higher elevations. Understory plants include species such as pinegrass, wheatgrass, fescue, ceanothus, snowberry, willow, tall huckleberry, ninebark, beargrass, and mountain maple.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity and appearance for this area is largely intact. There are an estimated 6.6 miles of unclassified road and 2.3 miles of classified road within the boundary. The few timber developments along the perimeter and the few internal range developments would not affect visitors or detract significantly from the natural appearance.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Due to its substantial size, topography, and limited access, the area has a high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Though many roads pass near the area, vehicles do not easily access much of the area. Roads and trails easily access other parts of the area's boundary. Within the area, trails provide limited access into much of the area, but portions have no trail access and can only be reached by cross-country hiking. The topography and climate provide challenging backpacking, hiking, and ski mountaineering.

Special Features: The area contains a number of craggy, scenic peaks including Granite Mountain, Hard Butte, and Patrick Butte. It also contains more than 30 lakes and many glacial cirque basins. The Lava Ridge National Recreation Trail (149) passes through the roadless area. The area also contains the 354-acre Lava Butte Research Natural Area and the 791-acre proposed Patrick Butte Research Natural Area. Segments of Hazard and Hard Creek are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are 6.6 miles of Hard Creek and 5.4 miles of Hazard Creek and 3,731 acres of land considered eligible for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the roadless area.

Manageability and Boundaries: The area has fairly irregular and complex boundaries along much of its perimeter. It is also relatively narrow in shape for almost two-thirds of its length. More manageable boundaries could be defined but this would likely result in a reduction of acreage. Localized motorized

use within the roadless area could also complicate managing this area as wilderness but could be minimized through boundary adjustments. Private land and water developments within the roadless area could also complicate management as wilderness as access and maintenance needs arise.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The Patrick Butte IRA provides opportunities for quality backcountry semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, as well as motorized recreation. The adjacent road system provides access to the area for day hikes as well as overnight trips. This area is also a destination backcountry recreation area due to the large number of high mountain lakes. Uses include camping, overnight backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, and forest product gathering (huckleberries, mushrooms). Snowmobile use is dramatically increasing in this area, specifically in the portion from Granite Mountain to Clayburn Trailhead. Summer use occurs from July 1 through the fall due to the snow at the high elevations. Motorized use within the area consists of motorcycle and ATV use. There are 35 system trails within the area comprising about 113 miles of trail. Four of these trails are open to motorized use. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	3%	0%
Roaded Modified	4%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	55%	100%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	38%	0%

Fisheries: Two federally listed threatened species, steelhead trout and chinook salmon, are found in streams (Lake, Partridge, and Elkhorn Creeks) draining the Patrick Butte IRA. All three streams provide a critical juvenile summer refugia for Salmon River fishes seeking to escape high water temperatures. Other species with spawning and rearing habitat in the IRA include threatened bull trout, and isolated local populations of westslope cutthroat.

Wildlife: Lower elevations are considered winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big-game species are mountain lion, black bear, and moose. Due to the large, unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate for most of the year, and the area serves as a security area for many species. There is habitat for the gray wolf, considered in this area as an experimental, non-essential population. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about one third of the area. Generally the upper slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Potential habitat for peregrine falcon also exists. Habitats for many Region 4 sensitive species—including wolverine, fisher, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, boreal owl, three-toed woodpecker, white-headed woodpecker, mountain quail, great gray owl, spotted frog—exist in the roadless area.

Water: There are about 30 small alpine lakes in this roadless area. The main streams in the area are Partridge and Hazard Creeks and their tributaries. The majority of the streams eventually feed the main Salmon River. Water use developments within the roadless area include a small diversion with an earthen ditch in the northwest corner, and a dam with a headgate at Twin Lakes. Owners of these developments have submitted applications for ditch bill easements. Water from the roadless area is also used for several domestic uses and for power generation by a small hydroelectric plant located off National Forest lands.

Range: All or portions of five sheep allotments and three cattle allotments cover about 60 percent of the roadless area. Two sheep allotments are grazed under a seasonal grazing system (fall) and all the others are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a low level of structural improvements on all of the allotments. There are an estimated 3,445 acres of land within the roadless area classified as capable for grazing by cattle and 10,771 acres classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

Timber: The area contains an estimated 704,737 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to about 1,379,224 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 54,700 acres (68 percent) of the IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 17,640 acres are considered to have low productivity; 33,094 acres, moderate productivity; and 18,164 acres, high productivity.

Minerals: There are few mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the area. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low.

Heritage: Prehistoric artifacts and one historic cabin, probably associated with early settlement, have been found within the roadless area.

Landownership and Special Uses: There are no private or state inholdings within the IRA. Two special use permits have been issued for uses within the roadless area. These include snowcat skiing and a low-standard road. Helicopter skiing has also been recently proposed for portions of the area but a decision has not been made on this use.

Disturbances: An estimated 20,293 acres burned between 1960 and 2000 in the roadless area. Insignificant amounts of prescribed fire have occurred within the area. An uncharacteristic level of spruce beetle activity occurred in the late 1980s and early 1990s, killing trees that burned in the Corral Fire of 1994. In 1997, flooding, landslides and numerous creek scourings occurred in Lake Creek, Hazard Creek, Hard Creek, and Bascom Canyon.

Botanical Characteristics: Two Region 4 sensitive plants, Puzzling halimolobos (*Halimolobos perplexa* var. *perplexa*), and Tobias' saxifrage (*Saxifraga bryophora* var. *tobiasiae*), have been located in the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is about 15 air miles to the northeast, the Hells Canyon Wilderness is about 8 air miles to the west, the Eagle Cap Wilderness is about 35 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is about 12 air miles to the northeast. The area is about 15 road miles from McCall and 115 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, this area would serve the local communities of McCall, New Meadows, and Riggins, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively high public interest in this area becoming wilderness. This IRA was specifically suggested for wilderness recommendations by 10 concerned individuals or organizations in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 54,700 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 707,737 MBF or 1,379,224 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The area receives moderate use by snowmobilers and motorized trail users, and these uses would also be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Ten concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Disposition Status	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	79,600*	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	1,100	1,100	4,100	1,100	1,100	80,700	24,000
Potential low levels of development	79,200	79,600	50,200	0	0	0	56,700
Available for a full range of development	400	0	26,400	0	79,600	0	0

*Recommended Wilderness areas do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas within the areas.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	293	0	0	0	34,765	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	8,823	38,383	0	8,488	0	120
Total	293	8,823	38,383	0	43,253	0	120

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	N	M	H	N	H	N	N

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of the Patrick Butte IRA for wilderness. The 354-acre Lava Butte RNA and the proposed 791-acre proposed Patrick Butte RNA would retain their undeveloped character. Another 30 percent of the IRA would retain its undeveloped character through other management prescriptions. The remainder of the IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Placer Creek
Roadless Area No. 0412008
6,944 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

Located on the Krassel Ranger District, the Placer Creek IRA lies south of Smith Creek and east of the Big Creek Work Station. It is accessed by the Warren-Profile Gap and Big Creek Roads, and by two primitive mining roads from the south. The FC-RONR Wilderness and the Cottontail/Pilot Peak and Secesh IRAs surround the area.

Steep and rugged timbered slopes with many granite outcrops and talus slopes typify the area. Soils derive from granitic rocks of the Idaho batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,400 to above 8,000 feet.

Stands of Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce, and lodgepole pine give way to subalpine fir and whitebark pine on the upper slopes. Lower-elevation ground cover includes elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, thimbleberry, pinegrass, and buffaloberry. Higher-elevation ground cover includes elk sedge, low huckleberry, beargrass, and woodrush.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity is somewhat affected by the presence of old mining sites and mining roads that intrude into the interior of the area. There is an estimated 0.4 mile of unclassified road within the boundary. The natural appearance is low near the surrounding and intruding roads, and fairly high away from them.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Steep, densely timbered slopes contribute to light use and moderate to high opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation. Challenging big-game hunting is available.

Special Features: A small group of unnamed mountains exceeding 8,000 feet is the area's central feature. Scenic Placer Lake sits in a small alpine basin at the head of Placer Creek.

Manageability and Boundaries: No practical boundary alternatives exist. The area is considered in its entirety in the roadless evaluation. Past, existing, and potential mining activity could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Recreation use consists of such activities as hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking. Use is light (approximately 300-500 recreation visitors' days annually) and is a mix of motorized and non-motorized activity. However, due to the steep terrain and lack of a trail system, motorized recreation is less common. Motorized use, primarily two-wheeled, does occur on user-established routes extending from the National Forest System roads that surround the area, or existing non-system mining-exploration roads. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	45%	0%
Roaded Modified	0%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	100%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	55%	0%

Fisheries: Area streams support redband rainbow trout, and habitat for chinook salmon and steelhead in the lower reaches. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for spring/summer chinook salmon.

Wildlife: The area wildlife species include elk, deer, boreal owl, bear, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, great gray owl, spotted frog, white-headed and three-toed woodpecker and gray wolf (an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine and fisher.

Water: The area encompasses Placer Creek and other small tributaries of Smith Creek, and unnamed tributaries to Big Creek and Government Creek. Placer Lake is the only body of standing water. The entire area eventually drains into Big Creek, an important anadromous fishery. Big Creek Lodge and its FERC licensed hydropower facility are located just outside the southeastern edge of the area. However, the diversions for the hydropower facility, well, and domestic water system are located within the roadless area.

Range: The area has no livestock grazing permits. There are no capable grazing lands within the IRA.

Timber: The area contains an estimated 64,947 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 126,347 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 3,600 acres (52 percent) of the Placer Creek IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,090 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 3,094 acres, moderate productivity; and 192 acres, high productivity.

Minerals: Numerous mining claims exist. Although there are no approved operating plans within the area at this time, it is likely there will be proposals for exploration or development in the future. The entire area has high potential for mineral development.

Heritage: The IRA has not been surveyed for cultural resources. However, the majority of the area is rated low, about a third as moderate, and a small portion high for potential resources.

Landownership and Special Uses: On the south boundary, at the northern edge of the community of Big Creek, is a private land access road.

Disturbances: Wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). There have been no major fires within this area between 1960 and 2000. Minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle and mountain pine beetle exist.

Botanical Characteristics: No known populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants are present. Few botanical surveys have been done for this area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness lies across the road for a small section of the eastern boundary. Hells Canyon Wilderness is 45 air miles west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is 17 air miles northwest. The area is 40 air miles from McCall and 170 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Edwardsburg, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY**Capability Summary:**

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 3,600 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 64,947 MBF or 126,347 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. This area is identified as having high potential for mineral development. While no trails currently are used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. There is limited motorized trail use and the area is open to snowmobile use. These opportunities would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	6,900	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	6,900	0
Potential low levels of development	4,100	6,900	6,900	0	1,900	0	6,900
Available for a full range of development	2,800	0	0	0	5,000	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	1,445	1,439	1,439	0	2,884	0	2,884
Total	1,445	1,439	1,439	0	2,884	0	2,884

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	H	H	H	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of Placer Creek IRA for wilderness. The IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Rapid River
Roadless Area Nos. 0412922 and 0117922
78,522 Acres (57,676 Payette NF Acres; 20,846 Nez Perce NF Acres)

DESCRIPTION

The Rapid River IRA encompasses the corridor of Rapid River, a Wild and Scenic River, and is contiguous to the Hells Canyon Wilderness along the area's western boundary. The Rapid River, Black Lake, Bear Creek, Whitebird Ridge, and Smokey-Boulder Roads, and several trails provide access to the edge of the area, and a network of trails provides good access within the area. The Hells Canyon/Seven Devils Scenic IRA lies to the southwest, with Patrick Butte IRA directly to the east across the Little Salmon drainage.

The area is quite rugged with craggy peaks, glacial cirques, hanging valleys, steep forested slopes, and deep river canyons. Elevations range from 2,200 to 8,747 feet.

The area is generally forested with ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, and western larch at lower elevations, and Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir at higher elevations. Pacific yew is also present. Several low brush and grass species such as pinegrass, wheatgrass, fescue, ceanothus, snowberry, ninebark, serviceberry, and willow grow on the steep, dry, west and south exposures. Elk sedge, huckleberry, meadow rue, mountain maple, pinegrass, violet, alder, and beargrass occur in cooler and moister areas.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity and appearance for this area is high. There are an estimated 5.8 miles of unclassified road and 0.1 mile of classified road within the boundary. The mining, grazing, and prescribed fire activities have had little impact.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Due to its substantial size, terrain, and moderate accessibility, the area has a high opportunity for solitude and a moderate opportunity for primitive recreation. The topography and climate provide challenging backpacking and hiking.

Special Features: Rapid River, a designated Wild and Scenic River, lies within the IRA and provides salmonid spawning and rearing habitat. There are 13.1 miles of Rapid River and 4,081 acres of land in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. One Research Natural Area (Pony Creek) lies within the area. The Lick Creek and Pollock Mountain Lookouts are located within the area.

Manageability and Boundaries: The area has some irregular and complex boundaries, largely along its southern perimeter. The western boundary is contiguous with the eastern boundary of the Hells Canyon Wilderness. General manageability as a designated wilderness could be improved by some simple adjustments that would result in minor acreage differences. Limited access and the relative ease of control at access points should also contribute to manageability of the area. Private land within the roadless area could also complicate management.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The Rapid River IRA provides opportunities for diverse dispersed recreation uses including hiking, hunting, horseback riding, fishing, overnight backpacking, and trail bike riding. Snowmobiling is also popular in the Lick Creek and Pollock Mountain areas. Recreational use tends to be seasonal in nature. The northern portion receives heavy use in the spring and fall from both day and overnight hiking and backpacking, due to the lower elevation providing earlier access from snow. The southern portion and ridges receive use during the summer and fall due to higher elevations, which limit early access, and also during hunting season. Motorized use within the area consists of two-wheel motorcycle, ATV, and four-wheel drive use of the road to Black Lake. There are 37 system trails within the area comprising about 116 miles of trail. Twelve of these trails are open either entirely or partially to at least one form of motorized use. Trail 166 on the Nez Perce portion is seasonally open to motorized use from June 15 to September 15, to provide big-game security on winter range. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	1%	1%
Roaded Modified	9%	8%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	43%	35%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	47%	56%

Fisheries: Three threatened fish species—steelhead trout, bull trout, and chinook salmon—are distributed throughout the Rapid River drainage. This subwatershed provides optimum spawning and rearing habitat for these three species, along with high quality water for the downstream Rapid River Fish Hatchery. The fish stocks present in Rapid River above the hatchery are unique in that the chinook and steelhead stocks are of wild origin and likely not influenced by hatchery fish. The West Fork Rapid River has a barrier to upstream fish movement located about one-third mile above its confluence with the main stem, making most of the West Fork's habitat unavailable for anadromous species. Bull trout, also of wild origin, are fluvial and grow to a large size. This subwatershed is the largest, best remaining aquatic stronghold within the Little Salmon River landscape. Rapid River is one of the key areas for the survival and recovery of listed salmon and trout. An isolated population of bull trout also occurs within Bear Creek. Although spawning and rearing has not been documented, the presence of a barrier falls in lower Bear Creek suggests that spawning is occurring. Rainbow trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and introduced brook trout can also be found within the roadless area.

Wildlife: The lower elevations are considered winter/spring range for deer and elk. Other big game species are mountain lion and black bear. An occasional mountain goat or bighorn sheep may be found in the area. Due to the large, unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife is low to moderate for most of the year, and the area serves as a security area for many species. There are no threatened or endangered species verified in the area. There is a peregrine falcon nest located on a small tributary to Rapid River. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about one third of the area. Generally, the upper slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Habitats for several Region 4 sensitive species are also found in the roadless area. Unconfirmed sightings of wolverine have been reported, and the remoteness of the area suits the animal's basic requirements. Habitat also exists for flammulated owl, white-headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, mountain quail, boreal owl, great gray owl, and spotted frog.

Water: The IRA lies mainly within the Little Salmon River Basin to the north, with a small portion in the Brownlee Reservoir Basin to the south. Major drainages include Rapid River, draining north and east into the Little Salmon River, and Bear Creek draining into the Wildhorse and eventually the Snake River.

Rapid River and the West Fork Rapid River have stringent water quality standards as set forth in Public Law 94-199, which designated Rapid River as a Wild and Scenic River. The standards are designed to protect water quality, fish habitat, and for the downstream salmon hatchery. The roadless area contains a small number of high-elevation lakes. Water uses also include domestic and agricultural water supplies.

Range: All or portions of four sheep allotments and three cattle allotments cover the entire roadless area. Three allotments are managed under a rest rotation grazing system, while four allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system. There is a low level of structural improvements on all but one of the allotments; one cattle allotment has a moderate level of structural improvements. There are an estimated 1,992 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle and 6,444 acres of land that have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

Timber: The IRA contains an estimated 564,562 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 1,115,883 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 42,000 acres (53 percent) of the IRA contain tentatively suited timberlands. There are 5,712 acres considered to have low timber productivity; 24,246 acres, moderate productivity; and 20,876 acres, high productivity.

Minerals: There were no active mining claims in the area. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is low. However, the roadless area includes mineralized zones, which may continue to attract occasional interest from prospectors when mineral values are high.

Heritage: Some historic sites associated with early mining and homesteading have been located in the roadless area. Three historic Forest Service fire lookouts are located in or at the edge of the roadless area.

Landownership and Special Uses: One outfitter and guide permit has been issued for big game hunting within the area and there is a permitted, microwave communications site on the summit of Smith Mountain. There are four patented mining claims consisting of about 180 acres within the roadless area. About 500 acres of the roadless area lie within a cost share agreement area with Boise Cascade, Inc. There is a development consisting of 118 “ranchettes” subdivided from former ranchlands located immediately adjacent to the roadless area on lower Rapid River. There is a water diversion within the area associated with a small hydroelectric project that is under a special use permit.

Disturbances: An estimated 5,381 acres of the roadless area were burned by wildfires between 1960 and 2000. Significant wildfires include the 1962 Cannon Lakes, 1968 Paradise, 1989 Curren, and 1994 Rapid River Fires. Prescribed fire has been used repeatedly within the area, with approximately 5,900 acres burned since 1984. Current plans call for burning approximately 8,000 more acres in the near future. No uncharacteristic insect and disease events have occurred within the area; however, some spruce beetle activity has occurred in the head of the drainage. The portion of the IRA on the Nez Perce NF is experiencing an increase in Douglas-fir bark beetle activity related to and expanding from old burns in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. In 1997, numerous creek scourings on feeder creeks to Boulder Creek and the Little Salmon occurred.

Botanical Characteristics: Puzzling halimolobos (*Halimolobos perplexa* var *perplexa*), a Region 4 sensitive species, occurs within the area. There are minor occurrences of Scotch thistle, yellow star thistle, and spotted knapweed found on the Nez Perce portion of the IRA. Noxious weeds are estimated to infest less than one percent of the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The Hells Canyon Wilderness is adjacent to the western boundary, the FC-RONR Wilderness is approximately 20 air miles to the east, the Gospel Hump Wilderness is approximately 22 air miles to the east, and the Eagle Cap Wilderness is approximately 25 air miles to the west. The area is about 25 road miles from McCall and 150 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, this area would serve the local communities of McCall, New Meadows, Riggins, and Grangeville, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been moderate to high public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Nineteen concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendations in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY**Capability Summary:**

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Moderate
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 42,000 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 564,562 MBF or 1,115,883 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. The area is identified as having low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. The area has several miles of trail open to motorized use and about a third of the area is open to snowmobiles. These opportunities would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Nineteen concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	51,700*	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	10,200	13,300	10,200	10,200	10,200	61,900	10,200
Potential low levels of development	49,100	52,200	57,900	11,300	41,300	11,300	63,000
Available for a full range of development	19,200	13,000	10,400	5,300	27,000	5,300	5,300

*Recommended Wilderness areas do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas or the designated Wild and Scenic River within them.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities (Payette NF)	6,215	0	0	0	15,149	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities (PNF)	5,073	9,708	35,882	0	20,084	0	8,235
Total (Payette NF)	11,288	9,708	35,882	0	35,233	0	8,235
Undecided (Nez Perce NF)	20,846	20,846	20,846	20,846	20,846	20,846	20,846

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effect on wilderness characteristics is based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	M	M	H	N	H	N	M

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of the Rapid River IRA for wilderness. The 1,918-acre Pony Creek Research Natural Area would retain its undeveloped character. Another 10,200 acres would retain their undeveloped character through restrictive management prescriptions. An estimated 63,000 acres would be available for low levels of development, and 5,300 acres would be available for a full range of development activities. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

The Nez Perce National Forest is not revising its Forest Plan at this time and, therefore, the disposition of the 20,846 acres of the Inventoried Roadless Area on the Nez Perce is undecided at this time beyond what is in their current Forest Plan.

**Secesh
Roadless Area No. 0412010
248,251 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

The Secesh IRA lies within the McCall and Krassel Ranger Districts on the Payette NF. The area stretches across the center of the Forest, from Payette Lake on the west to Big Creek on the east. The Warren-Elk Creek Road (Forest Road 340) on the north and the Lick Creek Road (Forest Road 48) on the south provide boundaries and the principal vehicle access. Trails provide entry into much of the area, with some portions being accessible only by cross-country hiking. The Needles and Caton Lake IRAs lie directly to the south; the French Creek IRA lies to the west; the FC-RONR Wilderness adjoins to the east; and the Crystal Mountain, Chimney Rock, and Cottontail Point/Pilot Peak IRAs lie to the north.

The area is extremely rugged, with many craggy peaks, glacial cirques, hanging valleys, and deep canyons. The soils derive from granites in the Idaho Batholith and are mainly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,400 feet to over 9,200 feet.

Tree stands are dominated by lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine, with subalpine fir and whitebark pine found at higher elevations. Understory vegetation includes queencup, tall huckleberry, spirea, pinegrass, ninebark, meadowrue, buffaloberry, mountain maple, willow, thimbleberry, serviceberry, beargrass, snowberry, bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue, and ceanothus.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: Although several activities have occurred along portions of the boundary, the natural integrity of the area remains high. This is a large area with relatively few road corridor or other developed incursions. The natural appearance for this area is also high, although this appearance has been modified in some areas by road intrusions and recent fires. There are an estimated 32.2 miles of unclassified road and 2.2 miles of classified road within the boundary. When visitors leave surrounding road corridors, they are not affected by human activity or developments.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: This area has a high opportunity for solitude and for primitive recreation because of its substantial size, rugged terrain, limited access, and the lack of large population centers nearby. The roads accessing this area pass around the outer edges and intrude in only a few places. The rugged topography and climate provide many challenging and primitive recreation opportunities.

Special Features: The Secesh River and South Fork Salmon River are suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation. There are 13.9 miles of the Secesh River and 10.4 miles of the South Fork Salmon River and 4,177 acres of land associated with the Secesh River and 3,604 acres of land associated with the South Fork Salmon River considered suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. Scenic landmarks include Slick Rock, Loon Peaks, and the South Fork Salmon River Canyon. Elk winter range occurs along the East Fork South Fork Salmon River and along the South Fork Salmon River. Research Natural Areas (RNAs) have been established at Pony Meadows and Circle End Creek. Three potential National Natural Landmarks lie within the boundaries: Slick Rock, Lick Creek Block Stream, and Rainbow Rock. There are approximately 4,330 acres of the western portion of the area that are part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall, and an additional 714 acres in the eastern portion that are part of the Yellow Pine Water Users watershed.

Manageability and Boundaries: As mentioned above, this area is very large and relatively intact, lending itself to many boundary options. The current level of developed uses and activities is relatively low both within and around the area. The Loon Lake Trail is a highly publicized and used mountain bike trail. Mountain bike use on the Duck Lake – Twenty Mile Lakes Trail is moderately high.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: The Secesh IRA provides opportunities for motorized and non-motorized recreation. Backpacking, hiking, big-game hunting, fishing, photography and rock climbing account for much of the recreation use in the area. Snowmobile use is increasing in the western portion of the area. Other uses include trail biking, ATV riding, horseback riding, mountain bike riding, and backcountry skiing. There is an estimated 93 miles of trails open to motorized use, and 73 miles of non-motorized trails. The Loon Lake Trail is an internationally recognized mountain bike trail, even being referred to as “the Holy Grail of singletrack”, and receives a high level of use. The Duck Lake – Twenty Mile Lakes Trail receives moderate mountain bike use. The rest of these trails receive low to moderate use. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	9%	2%
Roaded Modified	0%	4%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	30%	76%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	61%	18%

Fisheries: This area contains streams important to anadromous fish, as well as streams that support only resident fish. Those streams supporting anadromous fish are considered critical habitat for threatened chinook salmon. Chinook salmon and steelhead trout, another threatened fish species, are found in area streams, which provide important spawning and rearing habitat. North Fork Lake Fork Creek tributaries may support bull trout, another threatened species. Large densities of brook trout, as well as non-game fish, are also found in these streams.

Wildlife: Habitat exists for elk, deer, cougar, pika, bighorn sheep, boreal owl, fisher, northern goshawk, Townsend’s big-eared bat, white-headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, flammulated owl, great gray owl, spotted frog, harlequin duck, mountain goat, and many other species. The bald eagle, a federally listed species, may be found. The gray wolf, considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area, has been confirmed in this IRA. Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about half of the area. Generally, all but the lower slopes of the major drainages are potential lynx habitat. Peregrine falcon nesting habitat may also be found in the area. Travel corridors for fisher and wolverine are also present at higher elevations. Important big-game winter range exists along the South Fork Salmon River.

Water: The Secesh has over 50 alpine lakes, most of which are in the Lick Creek Range in the western third of the area. Within this portion, both Box and Blackwell Lakes have low relief dams at their outlets used for irrigation storage. The western portion of the area drains into the North Fork Payette River, which is part of the municipal watershed for the city of McCall. The middle portion of the area drains into the Secesh River. The Secesh River drains into the South Fork Salmon River, which also drains the eastern portion of the area. The Secesh and South Fork Salmon Rivers are important anadromous fisheries that provide habitat for threatened chinook salmon and steelhead trout.

Range: Portions of six sheep allotments occur within the western part of the roadless area: North Fork Lick Creek, Victor Loon, Lake Fork, Brush Creek, Fall Creek, and Twentymile. The Lake Fork, Brush Creek, Fall Creek, and Twentymile allotments have a deferred rotation grazing system, and the North Fork Lick Creek and Victor Loon allotments have a seasonal (fall) system. All allotments have a low level of structural improvements. An estimated 10,214 acres of land within the area have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep. There is also some limited recreational stock grazing allowed in the eastern part of the roadless area.

Timber: The area includes an estimated 1,896,009 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 3,794,962 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 165,500 acres (67 percent) of the Secesh IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. There are 89,962 acres considered to have low timber productivity; 116,393 acres, moderate productivity; and 21,834 acres, high productivity. Fringes of the area have been entered for salvage timber harvest in the last decade. The western edge was impacted by 1991 spruce beetle salvage efforts and the 1994 wildfire post-fire salvage. A small area along the northern boundary was also entered with the 1994 wildfire post-fire salvage.

Minerals: Most of the Secesh IRA has little history of mining-related activity and limited potential for future development. Past mining activity occurred in Ruby and Willow Basket Creeks, and around Secesh Meadows. Most active mining claims are in the eastern portion of the area near Yellow Pine and Edwardsburg, and in the northern portion near Warren. The potential for future mineral development in these areas is relatively high.

Heritage: This vast area has had limited heritage resources inventories; however, prehistoric and historic heritage resources have been identified within the area. Indians have used the Secesh River area for the harvesting of summer chinook and sockeye salmon, leaving evidence of their activities through 1924. Historically, there is a 1943, B-23 Bomber crash site at Loon Lake, a recreational destination within this roadless area. Evidence of gold and cinnabar mining is visible in the Ruby drainage.

Landownership and Special Uses: The IRA area surrounds three privately owned parcels totaling 306 acres. There are also an estimated 600 acres of unpatented mining claims in which the claimants hold surface occupancy rights. These claims lie south of Warren Wagon Road, near Steamboat Summit. There are also an estimated 1,280 acres of State of Idaho public school endowment lands within the area.

An estimated 1,800 acres of NFS lands along the western boundary of the area, east of McCall, are under consideration for long-range land exchange proposals with the State of Idaho, Department of Lands. These same lands are also subject to consideration for mutual road systems under the assured ingress and egress provisions of the State of Idaho - Forest Service Cooperative Road Agreement (Cost-Share).

Special use permits have been issued for several outfitter and guide services involving rock climbing, backpacking, llama packing, trail rides, sight-seeing, fishing, and big game hunting. Special use permits have also been issued for several domestic/irrigation waters systems near private land around Big Creek. There is one exempted hydropower system within the IRA, also in the Big Creek area. Box Lake has a rock-faced dam approximately 300 feet long with a corrugated steel siphon, and concrete headwall with a head gate. Blackwell Lake has a concrete dam and head gate. Both deliver water via a natural drainage as opposed to a ditch, and users have applied for Ditch Bill Easements. There are several other ditch bill applications pending for water diversions from within the roadless area.

Disturbances: Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area ranges from high in the North Fork Payette drainages and lower elevations of the South Fork Salmon River to moderately low in the upper elevations of the Secesh drainages. Mean fire return intervals range from frequent (25-75 years) to very infrequent

(151-300 years). Major wild fires within the last 30 years include the 1985 Savage Creek Fire, the 1994 Chicken Fire, the 1989 Steamboat Complex, and the 1994 Corral/Blackwell Complex. An estimated 94,322 acres burned between 1960 and 2000.

Most of the major areas of spruce bark beetle activity burned in the 1994 wildfires, although some beetle activity still occurs throughout the area wherever spruce is found. Douglas-fir bark beetles are at near epidemic levels in some areas burned in the 1994 wildfires.

Botanical Characteristics: No federally listed species are known to occur in this roadless area. Region 4 sensitive species known to occur in the IRA are puzzling halimolobos and Tobias' saxifrage. Region 4 proposed sensitive species include wolf's currant (*Ribes wolfii*), Sierra sanicle (*Sanicula graveolens*), and short-style tofieldia. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness adjoins the east boundary, the Hells Canyon Wilderness is 28 air miles west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is about 14 air miles north. The area is less than 10 road miles from McCall and about 100 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Cascade, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively high public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Nine concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act. The Payette National Forest recommended this area for wilderness in its original Forest Plan (1988).

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 165,500 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 1,896,009 MBF or 3,794,962 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. Portions of this area are identified as having high potential for mineral development. The area has an internationally recognized mountain bike trail and several other heavily used mountain bike trails, the use of which would be foregone. The area also has a high degree of motorized trail and snowmobile use, which would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Nine concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. The Payette Natinal Forest recommended this area for wilderness in its original LRMP (1988).

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	115,400	115,400	115,400	245,400*	0	115,400	115,400
Maintain undeveloped character	2,900	2,900	2,900	2,900	119,400	132,900	2,900
Potential low levels of development	116,600	129,300	126,200	0	9,900	0	130,000
Available for full range of development	13,400	700	3,800	0	119,000	0	0

*Recommended Wilderness areas do not include acreages for Research Natural Areas within them.

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	1,219	0	0	0	21,739	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	7,858	7,484	42,043	0	33,641	0	19,167
Total	9,077	7,484	42,043	0	55,380	0	19,167

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	L	L	M	N	H	N	M

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative recommends 115,432 acres of the Secesh IRA for wilderness. Another 2,838 acres, including the Pony Meadows and Circle End Creek RNAs, would retain its undeveloped character. The remainder of the IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

Sheep Gulch
Roadless Area No. 0412017
5,815 Acres

DESCRIPTION

Located on the west side of the Forest, the Sheep Gulch IRA lies just east of Brownlee Reservoir. Lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Idaho Department of Lands, as well as National Forest System lands, surround the area. The West Fork Brownlee Creek Road (085) and several foot and horseback trails provide access.

Large plateau summits and dry ridge tops characterize the area. Soils are derived from volcanic parent materials and are generally dark colored, medium textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 3,600 to 5,600 feet. Sagebrush, grass and shrub/brush cover a large portion of this area, with mature to overmature coniferous timbered stands limited to west to northwest aspects, composed of Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine trees with extremely scattered western larch. Where the sagebrush and timber meet, there is often tall brush with young single and clumped conifers encroaching on the sagebrush/grass vegetative types.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: The natural integrity is generally unaffected and the natural appearance is high despite the presence of some range developments (stock tanks) and intruding primitive two-track roads, such as those near Box Springs and Sheep Camp Gulch. There is an estimated 2.8 miles of unclassified road within the boundary. Vegetation and topography provide some natural screening and minimize the effects of these developments.

Opportunity for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Light use gives the area a high opportunity for solitude and a moderate opportunity for primitive recreation experiences such as big-game hunting.

Special Features: No special features have been identified in this IRA.

Manageability and Boundaries: Except for the cherry-stem intrusion of 4-wheel drive road 023 into interior tree plantations, the roadless area boundaries would be fairly regular. However, excluding the centrally located developments would be difficult. A significant reduction in size would be likely to result when defining a boundary around the cherry-stem intrusion. When combined with the overall small size of the area, opportunities for logical alternative boundaries do not exist.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Use is mainly dispersed recreation and includes hiking, hunting, horseback riding, trail bike riding and wildlife viewing. There are three system trails within the IRA totaling 17 miles. All of these trails are open for motorized use. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	0%	0%
Roaded Modified	23%	2%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	77%	0%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	0%	98%

Fisheries: Rainbow trout and introduced brook trout occur within the roadless area. Limited fish habitat is available due to the high stream gradient and intermittent nature of most streams within the roadless area.

Wildlife: The lower elevations along the Snake River breaks are winter/spring range for deer and elk. Because of the unroaded character of the area, human interaction with wildlife species is very low during most of the year, and the area acts as a security area. There is no potential habitat for lynx in this IRA. Habitat for several Region 4 sensitive species is also found in the roadless area, including Townsend's big-eared bat, northern goshawk, white-headed and northern three-toed woodpecker, flammulated owl, and spotted frog.

Water: The roadless area lies within the Brownlee Reservoir watershed and is mostly drained by Cottonwood and West Brownlee Creeks and their tributaries. The closest identified water body is the Snake River with Brownlee, Oxbow, and Hells Canyon Reservoirs. Current beneficial uses include domestic water supply, agricultural water supply, cold-water biota, salmonid spawning, and recreation. The entire area drains into the Snake River, which is listed as a Special Resource Water and is an important source of hydroelectric power.

Range: All or portions of two cattle allotments and one sheep allotment cover 100 percent of the roadless area. The cattle allotments are managed under a deferred rotation system while the sheep allotment is managed under a seasonal (fall) system. One allotment has a moderate level of structural improvements, while two have low levels. There are an estimated 1,998 acres of land within the roadless area that have been classified as capable for grazing by cattle and 500 acres that have been classified as capable for grazing by sheep.

Timber: The area contains 15,627 thousand board feet of standing timber, equivalent to 32,751 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 1,500 acres (26 percent) of the Sheep Gulch IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 129 acres are considered to have low productivity; 637 acres, moderate productivity; and 778 acres, high productivity.

Minerals: There are no mining claims and no approved plans of operation in the Sheep Gulch IRA. The potential for mineral or energy development in the reasonably foreseeable future is very low.

Heritage: Several prehistoric activity areas have been previously identified in this upland environment. There is a low to medium probability for finding additional prehistoric sites. Domestic livestock grazing was introduced into this area as early as 1880.

Landownership and Special Uses: There are no inholdings or other ownership or permitted special uses within the roadless area at this time.

Disturbances: There have been no major fires within the roadless area between 1960 and 2000. Prescribed burns were conducted on 154 acres at Box Springs and 1,269 acres in the Cherry Creek area in 1986. There were several small debris slides (less than 1 acre) inventoried within this roadless area after the January 1997 storm event.

Botanical Characteristics: No known threatened, endangered or Region 4 sensitive plant populations occur in the area. Inventoried noxious weed species found within the area include Canada thistle and Scotch thistle. This area has Scotch thistle in the northeast portion along the West Fork of Brownlee Creek. Minor amounts of Canada thistle occur on the higher elevations in the southern portion of the area. Overall, noxious weed infestation is estimated to occur on about 2 percent of the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness is 45 air miles to the east, Hells Canyon Wilderness is 20 air miles north, Eagle Cap Wilderness is 25 miles northwest, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is 100 air miles northeast. The area is less than 35 road miles from Council and 90 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve local communities of McCall, Weiser, and Council, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: An estimated 53 percent of this IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses. The remainder of the IRA (47 percent) lies within the M342 Ecoregion (Intermountain Semi-desert Province), which is minimally represented in existing wildernesses.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been little public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY

Capability Summary:

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	Moderate
Special Features	None

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 1,500 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 15,627 MBF or 32,751 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. However, the area is identified as having very low potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. All the trails in the area are open to motorized use, which would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion portion (53 percent of IRA) is well represented in designated wildernesses, and M342 Ecoregion (47 percent of IRA) is minimally represented. Only one concerned individual specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	5,800	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	5,800	0
Potential low levels of development	0	0		0	0	0	5,800
Available for a full range of development	5,800	5,800	5,800	0	5,800	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	1,218	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	1,238	1,238	0	1,238	0	1,238
Total	1,218	1,238	1,238	0	1,238	0	1,238

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	H	H	H	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Sheep Gulch IRA for wilderness. The IRA would be available for low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Smith Creek
Roadless Area No. 0412007
2,285 Acres**

DESCRIPTION

Located on the Krassel Ranger District, the Smith Creek IRA lies between Smith Creek and the FC-RONR Wilderness. Forest Road 371 and two primitive trails provide access. The Placer Creek IRA adjoins the Smith Creek IRA to the south and west.

Steep, southwest-facing slopes, with rocky outcrops at the higher elevations, typify the area. Soils derive from Idaho batholith granitic parent materials and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,400 feet to 8,400 feet. Dense stands of Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine cover the area. Common understory species include elk sedge, tall huckleberry, ninebark, meadow rue, thimbleberry, mountain maple, pinegrass, and buffaloberry.

CAPABILITY

Natural Appearance and Integrity: There is an estimated 0.3 mile of unclassified road and 0.1 mile of classified road within the boundary. One mining claim in the southern tip and roads along the western boundary do little to detract from the area's high natural integrity or its high natural appearance.

Opportunity for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: The opportunity for solitude is low; the area is small, so the visitor is always near a road. Primitive recreation opportunity is high in conjunction with the adjacent wilderness. No roads or maintained trails intrude, but the entire area is accessible by perimeter roads. The area offers challenging big-game hunting.

Special Features: McFadden Point is a prominent landmark.

Manageability and Boundaries: The only boundary option considered, because of the area's small size, is as an addition to the FC-RONR Wilderness. Past, present, and future mining activities could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Use is light (approximately 300-500 recreation visitor days annually) because of the steep terrain and lack of a trail system. Recreation activities consist of non-motorized activities such as hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking. About 1/2 mile of the Smith Creek Cutoff Trail (Forest trail 003) passes through this area. This short piece of trail is used as access from the Smith Creek Road to the Mosquito Ridge trailhead. There is an abandoned Forest Service trail that still receives some use from lower Smith Creek to McFadden Point. There are also some old mining exploration trails in the area and a frequently used ridge route between Pueblo Summit and McFadden Peak that are used by recreationists. Along the road following Smith Creek that borders the area on the west are some short spurs used to access camping and woodcutting areas. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	29%	0%
Roaded Modified	0%	0%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	10%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	71%	90%

Fisheries: The area is within the Smith Creek subwatershed, which provides spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened chinook salmon and steelhead trout. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for spring/summer chinook salmon.

Wildlife: Deer and elk occupy the area during the summer and light winters when snow accumulations are below average, and elk use the area for calving. The area also contains habitat for boreal owl, bear, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, spotted frog, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about two thirds of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for lynx, wolverine, and fisher.

Water: The area contains a few small, unnamed streams that are tributary to Smith Creek. There are no wetland areas or lakes. The entire area eventually drains into Big Creek, an important anadromous fishery.

Range: There are no livestock grazing permits or capable grazing lands within the IRA.

Timber: The area contains an estimated 23,641 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 45,153 hundred cubic feet (CCF). The IRA contains an estimated 1,300 acres (57 percent) of tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 976 acres are considered to have low timber productivity; 1,138 acres, moderate productivity; and 778 acres, high productivity.

Minerals: There are numerous mining claims in the area. The approved Plan of Operations for one small mining and milling operation includes an access trail to a mine portal and waste dump in the roadless area. The mineral potential in this area is high.

Heritage: There has never been a formal heritage resources inventory within this roadless area. The probability of finding resources is rated as low in most of the area and high elsewhere.

Landownership and Special Uses: No state or private land is found within this IRA. There are no special use permits associated with this area.

Disturbances: Wildland fire occurrence in this area remains low. Since 1960 there have been no wildfires of any size. Mean fire return intervals are classified as infrequent (76-150 years). Natural fuel loading is slowly increasing primarily from blow down and bug kill. Opportunities for natural fuels treatment are limited and considered low priority. Minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle and mountain pine beetle exist.

Botanical Characteristics: No known populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants are known. Few botanical surveys have been done for the area. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the roadless area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness adjoins the east boundary. Hells Canyon Wilderness lies about 37 air miles west and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is about 18 air miles to the northwest. The area is 40 air miles from McCall and 150 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, the area would serve the local communities of McCall and Edwardsburg, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Only two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is recommended for wilderness designation in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

This IRA area is a portion of the roadless area complex studied by Congress during the passage of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980. When Congress finalized the boundaries of the FC-RONR Wilderness, it did not include this roadless area in the designated Wilderness.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY**Capability Summary:**

Apparent Naturalness	High
Opportunity for Solitude	Low
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 1,300 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 23,641 MBF or 45,153 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. The area is identified as having high potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone. There are minimal portions of the area open to snowmobiling, which would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest hundred. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	2,300	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	2,300	0
Potential low levels of development	2,300	2,300	2,300	0	0	0	2,300
Available for a full range of development	0	0	0	0	2,300	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	0	0	0	1,176	0	1,176
Total	0	0	0	0	1,176	0	1,176

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	N	N	N	N	H	N	H

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any of the Smith Creek IRA for Wilderness. The IRA would be available to low levels of development. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.

**Sugar Mountain
Roadless Area No. 0412014
10,340 acres**

DESCRIPTION

Located on the Krassel Ranger District, the Sugar Mountain IRA lies between FC-RONR Wilderness to the north and east, and the Profile Gap and Monumental Summit Roads (Forest Roads 340 and 412) on the west and south. These roads provide access to the edge of the area, but no interior trails exist. The area also adjoins the Secesh and Horse Heaven IRAs.

Generally steep, rugged slopes typify the area. Soils derive from granitic rock of the Idaho batholith and are mostly light-colored, coarse-textured, and rocky. Elevations range from 5,300 to 8,738 feet. Lower elevation tree species include Douglas-fir, lodgepole pine, and ponderosa pine, which then grade into spruce, subalpine fir, and whitebark pine at the higher elevations. Common lower-elevation ground cover includes pinegrass, Idaho fescue, ceanothus, bluebunch wheatgrass, snowberry, ninebark, serviceberry, tall huckleberry, mountain maple, and thimbleberry. Higher-elevation understory is mostly forbs and low shrubs, such as elk sedge, low huckleberry, and woodrush.

CAPABILITY

Natural Integrity and Appearance: Natural integrity and appearance have been somewhat affected by past mining exploration and excavation activities, but still remain moderate to high overall. There is an estimated 1.1 miles of unclassified road within the boundary.

Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation: Opportunities for solitude and primitive recreation are high in conjunction with the FC-RONR Wilderness. Steep, rugged, and remote, the area is seldom used. Big-game hunting provides challenging experiences.

Special Features: Sugar Mountain and Missouri Ridge are prominent landmarks. A big-game migration route passes near Sugar Mountain.

Manageability and Boundaries: No boundary options were considered. The entire area is considered for wilderness designation. Past or future mining activity could complicate managing this area as wilderness.

AVAILABILITY

Recreation: Due to the steep terrain and lack of a trail system, recreation is light, mostly non-motorized, and consists of such activities as hunting, hiking, and huckleberry picking. No Forest Service maintained trails occur in this roadless area. However, there are some access routes used by recreationists, including an old route taking off at the mouth of Salt Creek and heading up to Sugar Mountain, and the abandoned Missouri Ridge Trail taking off from the Profile Gap Road on the west edge at the area. One outfitter-guide provides mainly fall big-game hunting opportunities for clients. Inventoried ROS classes are as follows:

ROS Class	Summer	Winter
Roaded Natural	33%	0%
Roaded Modified	14%	3%
Semi-Primitive Motorized	0%	1%
Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized	53%	96%

Fisheries: The roadless area encompasses two tributaries of the East Fork South Fork Salmon River (Sugar Creek, Salt Creek). These tributaries provide or may potentially provide spawning and/or rearing habitat for threatened chinook salmon and steelhead trout. Salt Creek probably provides rearing habitat for chinook salmon and/or steelhead. Salt and Sugar Creeks probably support resident populations of rainbow trout. Limited area may support bull trout, another listed species. The entire area lies within designated critical habitat for spring/summer chinook salmon.

Wildlife: Habitats exist for elk, deer, bear, boreal owl, northern goshawk, flammulated owl, great gray owl, spotted frog, northern three-toed and white-headed woodpecker, grouse, and gray wolf (considered an experimental, non-essential population in this area). Potential habitat for lynx, a threatened species, occurs in about two thirds of the area. Suitable habitat and travel corridors are found for wolverine and fisher.

Water: The area contains several streams, but no wetland areas or lakes. Portions of the area drain into the East Fork South Fork Salmon River, which flows into the South Fork Salmon River. Both provide important anadromous fish habitat. The East Fork South Fork has been designated as a water quality limited water body under the Clean Water Act.

Range: There are no livestock grazing permits or capable grazing lands within the IRA.

Timber: The area includes an estimated 80,176 thousand board feet (MBF) of standing timber volume, equivalent to 154,339 hundred cubic feet (CCF). An estimated 8,900 acres (86 percent) of the Sugar Mountain IRA contains tentatively suited timberlands. An estimated 3,842 acres are considered to have low productivity; 5,619 acres, moderate productivity; and no acres of high productivity.

Minerals: There are numerous mining claims in the roadless area. Although significant exploration and some development occurred in the past, there is no activity at present. Most of the area has moderate potential for future mineral development.

Heritage: The area has not had a cultural resource inventory. The Predictive Model for Cultural Resource Management rates most of the area as low and one-fifth as high.

Landownership and Special Uses: Numerous mining claims exist within and around the IRA. There is one permitted special use for an outfitter-guide.

Disturbances: Historic wildland fire occurrence in this area is rated as low. Mean fire return intervals are infrequent (76-150 years) to very infrequent (151-300 years). There have been no major fires within this area since 1960, with only 206 acres burned. There are minor infestations of Douglas-fir bark beetle, western pine beetle, and mountain pine beetle.

Botanical Characteristics: No populations of threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants are known to occur in the IRA. There are no inventoried locations of noxious weeds within the area.

NEED

Proximity to Designated Wilderness and Population Centers: The FC-RONR Wilderness adjoins the area. The Hells Canyon Wilderness is about 45 air miles to the west, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness is approximately 20 air miles north. The area lies about 35 air miles from McCall and 130 road miles from Boise and the Treasure Valley. As a designated wilderness, this area would serve the local communities of McCall and Cascade, and population centers such as Boise and Salt Lake City.

Biological: This IRA lies within the M332 Ecoregion (Middle Rocky Mountain Steppe-Coniferous Forest-Alpine Meadow Province), which is well represented in existing wildernesses.

Public Interest: There has been relatively low public interest in this area becoming wilderness. Only two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation in response to the DEIS. This IRA is not recommended for wilderness in the most recent wilderness bill, HR 488, the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

This roadless area is a portion of the roadless area complex studied by Congress during the passage of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980. When Congress finalized the boundaries of the River of No Return Wilderness, it did not include this roadless area.

WILDERNESS EVALUATION SUMMARY**Capability Summary:**

Apparent Naturalness	Moderate
Opportunity for Solitude	High
Opportunities for Challenge and Adventure	High
Special Features	Present

Determination of Availability or Unavailability: The IRA does not meet any of the criteria listed in FSH 1909.12.7.22a. Therefore, the IRA is available for wilderness designation.

Values Foregone With Wilderness Designation: The economic values associated with 8,900 acres of tentatively suited timberlands containing 80,176 MBF or 154,339 CCF would be foregone. Values from future mineral development would likely be foregone, although rights to valid existing claims might be retained. The area is identified as having high potential for mineral development. While trails are not currently used to any degree by mountain bikers, potential mountain bike use would be foregone.

Biological and Social Need: The M332 Ecoregion is well represented in existing wildernesses. Two concerned individuals or organizations specifically suggested this IRA for wilderness recommendation.

ALTERNATIVES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

IRA Disposition by Alternative: The following table displays IRA management disposition for each alternative in acres rounded to the nearest thousand. These values represent the potential, long-term outcomes of managing the IRA based solely upon its MPC assignments.

IRA Management Disposition	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Recommended Wilderness	0	0	0	6,700	0	0	0
Maintain undeveloped character	0	0	0	0	0	10,300	0
Potential low levels of development	10,300	10,300	10,300	3,600	1,500	0	10,300
Available for full range of development	0	0	0	0	8,800	0	0

Potential Future Development: Potential future development is represented by combinations of management emphasis/direction (MPCs), and existing conditions that are likely to become priority areas for development activities over the course of the next two or three decades. The development activities chosen for this estimation are timber harvest, vegetation restoration, and fuel reduction. Development potential is expressed in acres in the table below.

Potential Development	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
Timber activities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Restoration/fuel reduction activities	0	0	5,169	0	4,045	0	0
Total	0	0	5,169	0	4,045	0	0

Effects on Wilderness Characteristics: The following table displays the effects on wilderness characteristics for each alternative. The effects on wilderness characteristics are based on the estimation of potential future development.

Effects on Wilderness characteristics	Alt 1B	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Alt 5	Alt 6	Alt 7
	N	N	H	N	H	N	N

N = No change; slight change or less than 1 percent of the area potentially affected.

L = Light impact; 1-5 percent of the area potentially affected.

M = Moderate impact; 5-20 percent of the area potentially affected.

H = High impact; greater than 20 percent of the area potentially affected.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The preferred alternative does not recommend any portion of the Sugar Mountain IRA for wilderness. The IRA would be available for development activities, primarily for watershed and habitat restoration. Before any activity is approved that would have a significant impact on the undeveloped character of the roadless area, it would be preceded by an environmental analysis following NEPA procedures and public involvement.