

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

PN FONSI-01-03

RIRIE RESERVOIR

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

Reclamation has completed a multi-year planning and public involvement program for the purpose of preparing a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Ririe Reservoir and surrounding Reclamation lands. This RMP program is authorized under Title 28 of Public Law 102-575. As part of the planning process Reclamation has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the program in conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The purpose of the RMP is to manage natural and cultural resources, facilities, and access on Reclamation's lands at Ririe Reservoir, the Ririe Outlet Channel, Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA; Tex Creek), and Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Cartier Slough WMA (Cartier Slough).

Alternatives Considered

The National Environmental Policy Act requires Reclamation to explore a range of reasonable alternative management approaches and the environmental effects of these alternatives. Three alternatives are evaluated and compared in this document, including a No Action Alternative and a Preferred Alternative. The impacts of each alternative were evaluated for the affected resource areas: water quality and contaminants; soils; vegetation; wildlife; threatened and endangered species; aquatic biology; recreation; land use; facilities, public utilities, and services; environmental justice; cultural resources; sacred sites; Indian Trust Assets (ITAs); and transportation and access. Air quality, water resources and hydrology, topography, geology, and visual resources were not evaluated in the EA because no impacts occur to these resources.

- # **Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices.**
Reclamation would adopt no additional measures to provide management direction to meet future demand, facility needs, or natural and cultural resource improvements.
- # **Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis.** The focus of this alternative is to allow

a limited amount of expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities, and to increase efforts of protecting and managing natural and cultural resources on Reclamation's lands.

- # **Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis.** The focus of this alternative is to maintain current levels of protecting and managing natural and cultural resources on Reclamation's lands and allow for a moderate level of expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities.

Although the alternatives differ in several ways, the following actions are common to all:

- , Continue to operate and maintain Reclamation lands and facilities in conjunction with existing management partners.
- , Adhere to existing and future Federal, state, and county laws and regulations.
- , Authorize special recreation events on a case-by-case basis.
- , Access and erosion control measures continue as currently managed at Cartier Slough.
- , Bonneville County continues to manage the Ririe Reservoir recreation sites under an agreement with Reclamation.
- , IDFG continues to manage Tex Creek and Cartier Slough under an agreement with Reclamation.
- , For recreation development and management aspects, follow the principles contained in Public Law 89-72, Federal Water Projects Recreation Act of 1965, as amended by Title 28 of Public Law 102-575. Basically, if a non-Federal government entity has agreed to manage recreation on Reclamation lands, Reclamation may share development costs for up to 50 percent of the total cost.
- , Management actions on Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands are consistent with IDFG's Management Plans for Tex Creek and Cartier Slough.
- , Use and management of the Ririe Outlet Channel would remain basically the same.

Recommended Alternative

Reclamation proposes to implement Alternative B which would allow limited expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities, and would increase protection and management of natural and cultural resources on Reclamation's lands.

Under Alternative B, all existing recreation areas would be upgraded to meet Federal accessibility requirements whenever possible. Additional signs would be posted to inform the public of property boundaries and pertinent rules and regulations. Orientation kiosks would be situated at several key

locations to provide visitors with useful information pertaining to the use of the area, including educational materials, maps, and interpretive displays of the area's landscape and biological features. In general, the existing recreation sites at Ririe Reservoir would be modified to better accommodate current and expected future demand and use. This includes creating and expanding swimming areas, developing non-motorized trails, adding parking, enhancing park landscaping, and adding more floating platforms on the reservoir. Except for meeting accessibility requirements, recreation facilities would be upgraded or expanded only after documentation of increased demand. Most of the non-active recreation lands at Blacktail Park would be changed to non-mitigation lands managed as WMA lands.

This alternative would promote management actions that focus on increasing the protection and enhancement of native fish and wildlife and their habitat (vegetation, wetlands, riparian areas, water quality), as well as proactive measures to protect cultural resources and ensure that Tribal treaty rights are protected. For Reclamation's lands not within Tex Creek or Cartier Slough, this would entail implementing strategies to better monitor and control noxious and invasive weeds and survey for protected plants, monitor and address erosion problems, designate buffers and limit access and construction within riparian areas and wetlands, and institute time of year restrictions in areas harboring Federal and state designated species of special concern (including Federally listed rare, endangered, or threatened species). On Reclamation lands within Tex Creek and Cartier Slough, management actions would be implemented to increase support of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) in carrying out their respective management plans. Under Alternative B, native vegetation, fish, and wildlife protection and enhancement on Ririe and Teton mitigation lands at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough and on non-mitigation lands that are not used for recreation facilities would involve a variety of actions, including the following:

- , Designing and constructing facilities within existing disturbed areas to the greatest extent feasible to minimize impacts on native species
- , Minimizing disturbance of all native plant communities during design and construction of all facilities
- , Keeping all new trails and facilities at least 20 feet from wetland and riparian zones except where trails must cross riparian areas
- , Increased efforts to control noxious and invasive weeds including actively searching for and mapping infestations, developing an integrated pest management control program, and increased control efforts involving the use of measures appropriate to the site and situation including herbicides, hand-pulling, spraying, and the use of parasitic or defoliating insects
- , Planting riparian vegetation as needed for habitat improvement or erosion control
- , Actively work with IDFG to identify opportunities to improve habitat conditions for wildlife and native aquatic species

A coordinated effort would be executed under this alternative to work with Bonneville County and IDFG to close Pipe Creek Road during the winter season to better protect wintering big game. This alternative would also support IDFG's efforts to improve non-motorized public access to and use of Tex Creek and Cartier Slough.

Consultation and Coordination

Public Involvement

Reclamation's approach to the RMP and EA was to develop a dialogue with local stakeholder groups and agencies. The goal of the public involvement process was to make sure that all stakeholders, including the general public, had ample opportunity to express their interests, concerns, and viewpoints, and to comment on the plan as it was developed. By fostering two-way communication, Reclamation was also able to use the talents and perspectives of local user groups and agencies during the alternatives development process.

Reclamation's public involvement process involved four key components:

- , **Newsbriefs**—A mailed newsletter was initially sent to more than 600 user groups, nearby residents, and agencies. The mailing list was continuously expanded as more stakeholders were identified.
- , **Public Meetings/Workshops**—Three public meetings were included in the process, two of which were held prior to the release of the draft EA. The final public meeting was held during the public review period of the draft EA.
- , **Ad Hoc Work Group**—This group consisted of approximately 20 representatives from interested groups, Tribes, and agencies. They met throughout the development process to identify issues, and assist with RMP and alternatives development.
- , **Project Web Site**—The newsbriefs, draft materials, and meeting announcements were regularly updated at <http://www.pn.usbr.gov>.

Prior to the release of the draft EA, Reclamation provided five newsbriefs, held two public meetings, and held six Ad Hoc Work Group workshops.

Fish and Wildlife Service Coordination

Coordination on fish and wildlife issues to meet the requirements of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was accomplished by consulting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). Information about this consultation is provided in Appendix B. FWS concurs with the following conclusions.

The evaluation of endangered species contained in the EA is Reclamation's biological assessment of effects to Ute ladies'-tresses orchids, Canada lynx, gray wolf, and whooping crane as required under the ESA. Reclamation has determined that no effects to the Ute ladies'-tresses orchid or Canada lynx would occur due to the implementation of the preferred alternative. For the nonessential experimental populations of gray wolf and whooping crane, Reclamation has determined that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the gray wolf and whooping crane. The biological assessment also analyzed that existing recreation management of the reservoir may be having an effect on bald eagles. Reclamation will collect additional information to determine long term effects to bald eagles from recreation use of the Willow Creek Arm on Ririe Reservoir. Based on a 3-year, bald eagle nest monitoring plan of the Willow Creek Arm nest developed with FWS, Reclamation has determined that implementation of the Preferred Alternative may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the bald eagle. As required by ESA, Reclamation will consult with FWS prior to implementing the bald eagle nest management plan. Additionally, Reclamation will enter into consultations with FWS if any actions taken under this RMP will affect any listed species.

National Historic Preservation Act

Reclamation has completed Class I existing data inventories of the Ririe Reservoir/Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area. That information will facilitate subsequent compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800). Coordination with the Idaho SHPO and the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes over cultural resources and sacred sites aspects of the RMP have occurred in conjunction with public review of the draft Environmental Assessment. (It is understood that specific, future undertakings in response to RMP prescriptions will require specific consultations with the SHPO and Tribes pursuant to the 36 CFR 800 regulations).

Consultation with Tribes

Reclamation met with Council members and staff of both the Shoshone-Bannock and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to discuss the preparation of the RMP and to identify ITAs, TCPs, and Indian Sacred Sites.

A representative from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes participated in the Ad Hoc Work Group, which facilitated close coordination with the Government and helped assure that Tribal interests were integrated with the RMP.

Several meetings were held and correspondence was exchanged between Reclamation and the Tribes.

Reclamation will continue to work with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in the implementation of the RMP through meetings and an annual field trip and in other specific management actions as described in the RMP.

Public Comment Summary

The comment period for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan, Draft Environmental Assessment extended from December 13, 2000, to February 15, 2001. Overall, comments focused on four main subject areas: wildlife habitat, safety, the scuba dive park, and overcrowding at recreation facilities and areas of the reservoir. Several other subjects were also addressed, as listed on Table 1.

Wildlife habitat comments came primarily from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), although other commentors also addressed wildlife habitat. Two primary areas of concern emerged: closure of the Pipe Creek Road to vehicles and snowmobiles during the winter and the bald eagle nest at the Willow Creek Arm. Of those who mentioned the Pipe Creek Road, commentors wanted to close the road during the winter months to protect wildlife. Closures at the Willow Creek Arm for bald eagle protection received more frequent comments, ranging from closing the area entirely to not closing the area at all.

As discussed in the Final EA, Reclamation plans to implement a monitoring program for three consecutive nesting seasons to determine the potential effects of boating activity on the eagles. The monitoring will be developed and conducted in cooperation with Tribes, FWS, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and local boating organizations. Future activities at Willow Creek Arm will be determined by the results of this study.

Safety issues generally concerned traffic and congestion at the ramps and conflicts among user groups. Particularly, Blacktail was reported to be already overcrowded and unsafe because of the number of vehicles at the parking areas and using the ramp. To resolve conflicts among user groups, one commentor suggested that increased enforcement of no-wake zones was needed.

The Preferred Alternative includes provisions to expand parking and either expand or create a new swimming area to increase safety. Reclamation will also conduct a carrying capacity and demand study to determine if the boat ramp, dock, and other facilities need to be expanded for recreation during the next 10 years and if the expansion can be accomplished without damaging the existing natural and cultural resources. Reclamation does not have enforcement authority at the reservoir; this is under the jurisdiction of the Bonneville County Sheriff's Department. Nevertheless, Reclamation will continue to work with the County in efforts to increase enforcement at Ririe Reservoir.

The scuba dive park is important to many area users. Most of the comments addressed the location of the park and asked for assurance that the rest of the reservoir not be off-limit to scuba divers.

Reclamation has not yet determined the exact location of the potential scuba dive park. This will be decided as an action undertaken in the RMP. However, upon further investigation and consultation with Reclamation's regional dive master and dam safety experts, it has been decided that the dam will not likely be considered as one of the locations because of safety issues related to submerging materials adjacent to the dam. Reclamation will continue to work with diving interests to identify a suitable location to submerge materials for a dive park. As has been the case in the past, the remaining areas of the reservoir will remain open to scuba divers.

Many commentors had general concerns about overcrowding on this finite water body. Commentors felt that such overcrowding contributes to resource degradation, and, as noted earlier, was cited as the cause of conflicts among users. One commentor suggested that use limits should be applied to the reservoir through a permit system. Other commentors suggested that expanding facilities only encourages more use, and that facilities should not be expanded.

In some cases, facilities must be expanded to provide additional safety. However, extensive expansions are not planned. Instead, reconfiguration and more efficient use of existing recreation sites is proposed based on the results of the carrying capacity study.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game expressed concern that grooming a cross country ski trail at Cartier Slough would increase the current level of human use during the winter to the point where wintering wildlife would be disturbed and displaced from the area.

Reclamation shares this concern and the groomed cross country ski trail at Cartier Slough has been eliminated from the final EA Preferred Alternative. Cross country skiing will continue to be allowed, but groomed trails will not be developed.

Changes to the Final Environmental Assessment

The final EA was changed to note that any winter closure of the Pipe Creek Road would be subject to cooperation by Bonneville County. Table 3.1.1 in Chapter 3 has been changed to indicate that if the road is not closed, current impacts on wintering elk would continue. Section 3.5.2 has been changed to indicate that the benefits of the proposed road closure would only occur if the closure is implemented.

The final EA has been changed to indicate that areas in the immediate vicinity of the dam will most likely be removed from further consideration for a dive park because of safety and liability considerations.

The groomed cross country ski trail at Cartier Slough has been eliminated from the final EA Preferred Alternative. Cross country skiing will continue to be allowed, but groomed trails will not be developed.

The draft EA showed a large area designated as non-active recreation surrounding Blacktail Park. This area is essentially managed as are adjacent Wildlife Management Area (WMA) lands. Except for a small area to the south of the current active recreation area, these lands will not be developed for recreation in the future. Therefore, those lands formerly designated as non-active recreation and that will not be developed as recreation lands in the future have been changed to a designation of “non-mitigation lands managed as WMA lands”.

Additional minor changes to the final EA include:

- , Clarification concerning wildlife use, noxious weed occurrence, and the location of the bald eagle nest and associated access closure at the Cartier Slough WMA.

- , Addition of information regarding annual seasonal flooding and the one-time deposition of sediment on Cartier Slough as Teton flood waters receded.
- , Addition of information regarding recreational use of Cartier Slough and facilities at Beaver Dick Park.
- , Addition of information describing proactive actions that will be taken to protect and enhance endangered species.
- , Addition of an Appendix with Project Authorization.

Finding

Reclamation's analysis showed that the implementation of the RMP will not affect any threatened or endangered species listed under ESA. However, since a bald eagle nest exists on the Willow Creek Arm of Ririe Reservoir, but no information is available on the nest, Reclamation has embarked on a three year monitoring program to determine if the nest is affected by recreation on the reservoir. If the nesting pair is affected then Reclamation will consult with the FWS and work with Bonneville County to close the Willow Creek Arm or other areas where affects are occurring.

Implementation of the RMP will cause minimal short term impacts on existing resources and in the long term will enhance natural and recreation resources. Reclamation and its contractors and management partners will use "best management practices" when constructing recreation facilities or managing vegetation and habitat and all environmental commitments identified in the final EA will be implemented.

Based on thorough review of the comments received, analysis of the environmental impacts as presented in the final EA, ESA Section 7 consultation, coordination with the various agencies, and implementation of all environmental commitments identified in the final EA, Reclamation has concluded that implementation of the recommended alternative would have no significant impacts on the quality of the human environment or the natural resources of the area. Therefore, this FONSI has been prepared and is submitted to document environmental review and evaluation in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. An environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Approved:

Date:

Snake River Area Manager



Ririe Reservoir
Resource Management Plan:
Finding of
No Significant Impact
and Environmental
Assessment



U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Pacific Northwest Region
Snake River Area Office

November 2001

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCDPR	Bonneville County Department of Parks & Recreation
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BMP	Best Management Practice
B.P.	Before present
BYU	Brigham Young University
Cartier Slough	Cartier Slough Wildlife Management Area
cfs	cubic feet per second
COE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CRMP	Cultural Resources Management Plan
EA	Environmental Assessment
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FWCA	Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act
FWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
IDEQ	Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
IDFG	Idaho Department of Fish and Game
IDPR	Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation
INEEL	Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory
ITAs	Indian Trust Assets
ITD	Idaho Transportation Department
msl	Mean sea level
National Register	National Register of Historic Places
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOI	Notice of Intent
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
ORV	Offroad Vehicle
Reclamation	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
RMEF	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RV	Recreational Vehicle
SH	State Highway
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
TCPs	Traditional Cultural Properties
Tex Creek	Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area

TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
UFAS	Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
WAG	Watershed Advisory Group
WMAs	Wildlife Management Areas

1.0 Introduction and Background

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan: Environmental Assessment

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

This Environmental Assessment (EA) evaluates the proposed Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP was developed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to manage natural resources, facilities, and access on their lands. The study area, which includes Reclamation's lands at Ririe Reservoir, the Ririe Outlet Channel, Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA; Tex Creek), and Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Cartier Slough WMA (Cartier Slough) is shown on Map 1-1, *Location Map*.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 requires Reclamation to explore a range of possible alternative management approaches and the environmental effects of these actions. Three alternatives are evaluated and compared in this document, including a No Action Alternative and a Preferred Alternative. The impacts of each alternative were evaluated for the affected resource areas: water quality and contaminants; soils; vegetation; wildlife; threatened and endangered species; aquatic biology; recreation; land use; facilities, public utilities, and services; environmental justice; cultural resources; sacred sites; Indian Trust Assets (ITAs); and transportation and access. Air quality, water resources and hydrology, topography, geology, and visual resources were also evaluated, but are not included in this document because no impacts occur on these resources.

1.2 Authority

Title 28 of Public Law 102-575, Section 2805 (106 Stat. 4690; Reclamation Recreation Management Act of October 30, 1992) provides Reclamation with authority to prepare resource management plans.

1.3 Proposed Federal Action

For this EA, the proposed Federal action is implementation of the RMP. The intent of the RMP is to serve as a blueprint for the future use, management, and site development of Reclamation lands at the reservoir and the associated WMAs for the next 10 years. The RMP identifies goals and objectives for resource management, specifies desired land and resource use patterns, and explains the policies and actions that would be implemented during the 10-year life of the plan to achieve these goals and objectives. A draft of these goals and objectives is provided in Appendix A.

1.4 Purpose and Need

1.4.1 Purpose of the Environmental Assessment

The purpose of this EA is to assist Reclamation in finalizing a decision on a preferred RMP and to determine whether to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Historical Overview

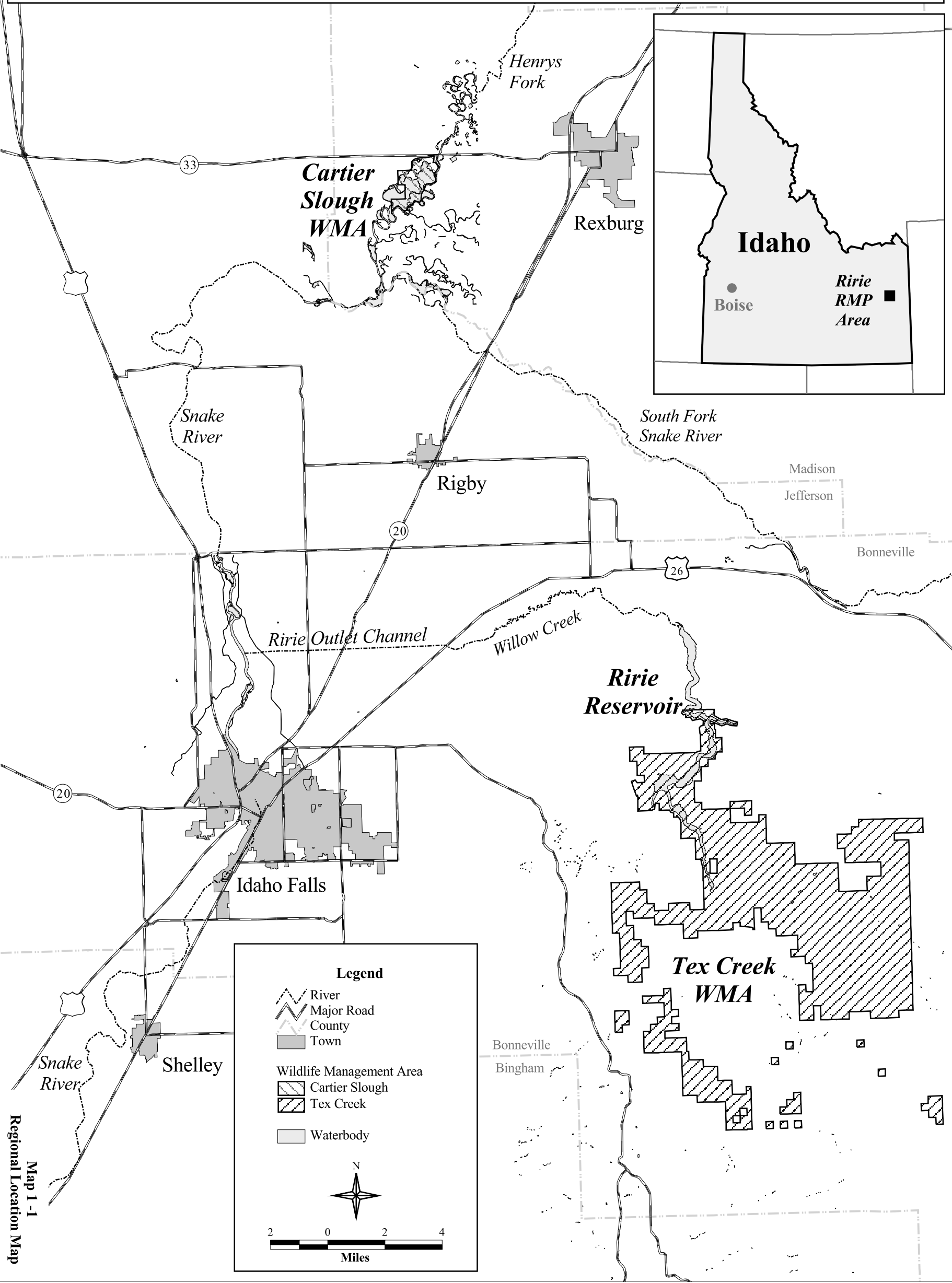
Lands under Reclamation jurisdiction include Ririe Reservoir and adjacent lands; the Ririe Outlet Channel, located north of Idaho Falls; portions of the Tex Creek WMA (Tex Creek), located generally to the southeast of Ririe Reservoir; and the Cartier Slough WMA (Cartier Slough), located on the floodplain of the Henrys Fork of the Snake River about 23 miles north of Ririe Dam. Collectively, these lands and waters associated with Ririe Reservoir under Reclamation jurisdiction will be called **Reclamation lands** throughout this EA.

Construction of Ririe Reservoir, located in southeast Idaho, was completed in 1977 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) for use as a Federal flood control, irrigation, and recreation facility. The reservoir was filled to capacity for the first time in 1978. The project includes a floodway outlet bypass channel that extends directly west 7.8 miles to the Snake River upstream of Idaho Falls.

Reclamation's portion of Tex Creek was purchased by Reclamation and the COE in 1976 as mitigation for habitat losses associated with construction of the Ririe and Teton Projects. Other portions of Tex Creek are owned by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) (Table 1.4-1). Some of the acreage figures shown in Table 1.4-1 vary from numbers generated for previous documents and reports. The figures shown herein are based on survey data entered into a computer-based Geographic Information System (GIS) as of July 2000 and are considered the most current and accurate data available. Tex Creek is managed by IDFG primarily as big game winter range and for other wildlife under agreement with Reclamation and the other landowners. Cartier Slough was purchased by the COE and Reclamation in 1976 and 1977, respectively, as mitigation for wetland and waterfowl losses resulting from construction of Ririe and Teton Projects. Cartier Slough is managed by IDFG primarily as habitat for waterfowl.

Map 1-1
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
Regional Location Map

The information displayed here is based on the best available data at the time of publication.
Neither the authors, Reclamation, or any other party here warrant or represent that the information
is in every respect complete and accurate, and are not held responsible for errors or omissions.



Map 1-1
Regional Location Map

Table 1.4-1. Tex Creek WMA Land Ownership

Land Ownership	Acres
Bureau of Land Management	9,600 ¹
Idaho Department of Lands	648 ²
Idaho Department of Fish and Game	9,215 ¹
Bureau of Reclamation – Teton Mitigation Lands	9,104
Bureau of Reclamation – Ririe Mitigation Lands	2,502
Bureau of Reclamation – Non-Mitigation Lands	2,480 ³
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation	720
Total	34,269

Source: IDFG 1999; Reclamation 2000.

¹Estimate, plus/minus 20 acres.

²Idaho Department of Lands owns one full section of land, however, it is an oversized section containing 648 acres.

³Estimate, plus/minus 5 acres.

The reservoir and Tex Creek, and to a lesser extent Cartier Slough, have become increasingly important for recreation use. The area serves southeast Idaho as well as out-of-state visitors, primarily from northern Utah. Reclamation lands provide valuable fish and wildlife habitat. Approximately 75,000 people visited the reservoir in 1998 for boating, hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing.

1.4.2 Need for Action

Reclamation does not have an RMP for its lands around Ririe Reservoir. A plan is needed to address current and potential future issues to permit the orderly and coordinated use and management of lands and facilities under Reclamation jurisdiction at Ririe Reservoir. The plan would be used as the basis for directing activities on Reclamation lands and the reservoir in a way that maximizes overall public and resource benefits consistent with the purposes of the areas and would provide guidance for managing the area during the next 10 years.

The RMP will be reviewed, reevaluated, and revised to reflect changing conditions and management objectives on an as-needed basis. Opportunities for public involvement would be provided on significant changes that affect the resource or public use. A draft of these goals and objectives is provided in Appendix A.

1.5 Related Activities

The following activities and plans are related to the Ririe Reservoir RMP:

- IDFG manages and operates Tex Creek and Cartier Slough under an existing management plan.
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Targhee National Forest; and BLM, Medicine Lodge Resource Area has jurisdiction of Federal lands near Ririe Reservoir. Some BLM lands are located within the Tex Creek WMA and are managed by IDFG.

1.6 Location and Background

The Ririe Project consists of Ririe Dam and Reservoir, which provides flood control, irrigation, recreation, and habitat for fish and wildlife. Construction on the project began in January 1970. At that time, it was owned by the COE. On October 14, 1976, a Memorandum of Agreement transferred the project to Reclamation. Construction was completed a year later in November 1977. The 12-mile-long reservoir contains about 100,500 acre-feet of water, covering 1,560 acres of surface area.

Tex Creek is a 34,269-acre reserve on the southern part of the reservoir, established to compensate for wildlife habitat lost when Ririe and Teton Reservoirs were constructed. Tex Creek includes lands owned by Reclamation, IDFG, BLM, and private entities. Tex Creek provides important winter range habitat for elk and mule deer, as well as habitat for upland game birds and is managed by IDFG.

Cartier Slough consists of approximately 1,026 acres of Reclamation's Ririe and Teton mitigation lands adjacent to the Henrys Fork of the Snake River west of Rexburg. The area is managed by IDFG and is adjacent to Beaver Dick County Park in Madison County. The Ririe Outlet Channel is located downstream of the dam and north of Idaho Falls. It extends west from Willow Creek to the Snake River for the purpose of controlling flood flows above Idaho Falls.

Only two roads provide direct vehicular access to the reservoir—Meadow Creek Road (at the north end of the reservoir on the east bank near the dam) to Juniper, and Lincoln Road (on the west side of the reservoir just north of Blacktail Creek) to Blacktail. The project is an important recreation resource in the region, especially for residents near Idaho Falls and Rexburg. As the region continues to grow, Reclamation expects that more people will visit the area. This increasing use, along with the potential conflicts with wildlife habitat and use, is an important reason for preparing a management plan for the area's resources. Reclamation currently has an agreement with Bonneville County to manage the three recreation areas at the reservoir.

1.7 Scoping

Two public scoping meetings were held prior to the development of this Draft EA. An initial scoping meeting was held February 9, 1999. The meeting was advertised through media announcements sent to local outlets and a public information newsbrief that was sent to 600 people. The purpose of the initial meeting and the newsbrief was to collect public input on the issues that should be addressed in the alternatives for the RMP and EA. Following this meeting, an Ad Hoc Work Group was formed to assist with alternatives development and participate throughout the process. This group consisted of Tribal, agency, and interest group representatives, and is described in Chapter 4, *Consultation and Coordination*. The second public scoping meeting was held February 15, 2000, and was also announced through local media and an expanded newsbrief mailing list. The purpose of this meeting was to gather comments on the draft alternatives and RMP Draft Goals and Objectives. The public involvement process is described fully in Chapter 4, *Consultation and Coordination*.

1.8 Summary of Issues

The RMP addresses all activities occurring on Reclamation lands surrounding the reservoir, Tex Creek, Cartier Slough, and the Ririe Outlet Channel. Reclamation water operations are based on contractual and flood control requirements. Because of these operational constraints, water operations are not part of the RMP. Reclamation identified several issues that need to be addressed by the RMP. These issues were presented to the public, and the list was expanded through this process. A summary list of issues follows:

- How much recreation use the reservoir, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough can accommodate as demand increases in the region
- Development on land surrounding the reservoir, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough
- Conflicts between recreation use and wildlife habitat
- Conflicts among recreation users, especially motorized versus non-motorized
- Agricultural use and leases
- Protection and conservation of important or sensitive resources, such as wildlife, fisheries, wetlands, riparian vegetation, and cultural resources
- Vegetation management and weed control
- Coordination with IDFG regarding management of Tex Creek and Cartier Slough
- Protect winter range for elk management

- Avoid recreation conflicts with wintering elk and deer
- General expansion of opportunities to meet recreation demands
- Additional or expanded boat ramps, docks and associated facilities
- Improve access to reservoir/recreation sites
- Address overcrowding
- Erosion within and downstream of reservoir
- Creation of a dive park
- Protect or enhance Yellowstone cutthroat trout
- Bald eagle use and habitat
- Impacts of motorized vehicles, such as off road vehicles
- Maintain fishing opportunities, including downstream of reservoir
- Maintain hunting opportunities
- Predator control
- Educate public on reservoir management
- Responsibility for outlet channel management

2.0 Alternatives

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the process used to develop alternatives to the proposed Federal action, describes the alternatives in detail, and provides a summary comparison of the alternatives. The proposed Federal action, implementation of the Ririe Reservoir RMP, was described in Chapter 1, *Introduction and Background*.

Several recreation area improvements are described for each of the alternatives, such as trails, a visitor's center, interpretive signage, boat launching facilities, and parking improvements. Reclamation does not intend to build all of these facilities independently. Rather, Reclamation would allow these developments to occur if a managing partner is involved, cost-share conditions are met, and Reclamation funds are available. For the purpose of comparing the alternatives, it is assumed that all of the facilities would be built. Other actions not related to recreation facility development, such as increased noxious weed control, do not require managing partners or cost-share agreements and would be implemented as described in the alternatives.

2.2 Alternative Development

NEPA requires Federal agencies to evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to a proposed Federal action. The alternatives should meet the purpose and need of the proposal while minimizing or avoiding environmental impacts. The NEPA alternative development process allows Reclamation to work with interested agencies and the public to formulate alternative management plans that respond to identified issues. The EA documents Reclamation's planning and decision process for the RMP.

Reclamation began the public involvement process in January 1999. The purpose of this process was to identify issues at Ririe Reservoir that needed to be considered in the RMP process and addressed in the EA. After the first public meeting, held in February 1999, an Ad Hoc Work Group was formed to assist in addressing issues, identifying goals and objectives, and developing alternatives. The public involvement process is fully described in Chapter 4, *Consultation and Coordination*. Reclamation developed the alternatives based on issues identified during the public involvement process, and refined alternatives with assistance from the Ad Hoc Work Group and in a February 2000 public meeting. The alternatives relate directly to the Goals and Objectives included in Appendix A.

This process resulted in the development of two action alternatives that prescribe a change in resource management. A third alternative analyzed in this EA is the No Action Alternative, which is required by NEPA. Each alternative would result in different future conditions at the reservoir and on other Reclamation lands addressed in the RMP. The three alternatives are summarized below:

- **Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices.** Reclamation would adopt no additional measures to provide management direction to meet future demand, facility needs, or natural and cultural resource improvements.
- **Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis.** The focus of this alternative is to allow a limited amount of expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities, and to increase efforts of protecting and managing natural and cultural resources on Reclamation's lands.
- **Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis.** The focus of this alternative is to maintain current levels of protecting and managing natural and cultural resources on Reclamation's lands and allow for a moderate level of expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities.

Table 2.2-1, presented at the end of Section 2.2, summarizes the elements of the alternatives. The table highlights the differences among the alternatives. Section 2.3, *Alternatives Considered in Detail*, describes each of the alternatives. Although the alternatives differ in many ways, several features are common to all three alternatives:

- Continue to operate and maintain Reclamation lands and facilities in conjunction with existing management partners.
- Adhere to existing and future Federal, state, and county laws and regulations.
- Authorize special recreation events on a case-by-case basis.
- Access and erosion control measures continue as currently managed at Cartier Slough.
- Bonneville County continues to manage the Ririe Reservoir recreation sites under an agreement with Reclamation.
- IDFG continues to manage Tex Creek and Cartier Slough under an agreement with Reclamation.
- For recreation development and management aspects, follow the principles contained in Public Law 89-72, Federal Water Projects Recreation Act of 1965, as amended by Title 28 of Public Law 102-575. Basically, if a non-Federal government entity has agreed to manage recreation on Reclamation lands, Reclamation may share development costs for up to 50 percent of the total cost.
- Management actions on Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands are consistent with IDFG's Management Plans for Tex Creek and Cartier Slough.
- Use and management of the Ririe Outlet Channel would remain basically the same.

Chapter 5 presents Reclamation's environmental commitments that would be implemented as part of the alternatives for this RMP. The section on *Environmental Commitments and Best Management Practices (BMPs)* discusses standard construction and land restoration practices that would be implemented at the site of all land disturbing activities. These actions are intended to avoid or reduce the magnitude and duration of impacts from construction activities by implementing practices, such as aggressive revegetation of disturbed sites or the use of silt fences or other barriers to reduce sediment-laden runoff from construction sites. The description of expected impacts of the RMP actions assumes that the BMPs would be fully and successfully implemented.

The alternatives are described relative to four land categories present in the area. The land categories, and the geographic areas included in each, are briefly described below:

- Non-Mitigation Lands: Reclamation's lands for operation and maintenance of the Ririe Project.
 - Creekside Park and Vicinity
 - Juniper Park and Vicinity
 - Benchlands Area
 - Blacktail Park, Access Road, and Adjacent Reservoir Area
 - Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands (including a 300-foot-wide strip of land surrounding the reservoir and an east side trail)
 - Ririe Outlet Channel
- Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA: Reclamation's lands purchased at Tex Creek to mitigate for the Ririe Project.
 - Willow Creek Arm
 - Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands
- Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA: Reclamation's lands purchased at Tex Creek to mitigate for the Teton Project.
- Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA: Reclamation's lands purchased at Cartier Slough to mitigate for the Ririe and Teton Projects.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Non-Mitigation Lands			
Creekside Park and Vicinity			
Native vegetation protection and enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measures currently in place or practices being implemented and none proposed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect native vegetation during design and construction of recreation facilities. The area will be surveyed for Ute ladies' tresses. 	Same as Alternative B.
Native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measures currently in place or practices being implemented and none proposed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and protect riparian vegetation. 	Same as Alternative B.
Erosion control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measures currently in place or practices being implemented and none proposed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and address erosion problems. 	Same as Alternative B.
Creekside Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area closed to motorized access and facilities have been removed. Ad hoc use continues. 	<p>Reopen and renovate area for day use/camping recreation use, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of loop trail from park to Willow Creek. Day use facilities. Group tent camping, as demand warrants (possibly by reservation or other management). Upgrade facilities/structures. Provide orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, and regulatory 	Same as Alternative B.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
		signage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance park vegetation (i.e., plant shade trees, install irrigation system). 	
East side of Willow Creek below dam	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc parking and trails currently lead to various stream-side areas. 	Formalize existing uses, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make trails accessible as per UFAS². Organize parking area. Add orientation and interpretive displays, and regulatory signage. The area will be surveyed for Ute ladies' tresses. 	Same as Alternative B, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add day use facilities (e.g., picnic tables, trash receptacle, shade structures). Provide porta potty.
Signage and Fencing along Reclamation property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None currently exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install property boundary signage along Reclamation property boundary where needed. 	Same as Alternative B.
Juniper Park and Vicinity			
Dam area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicular access across dam during daylight hours, in conjunction with, and support from Bonneville County law enforcement. Continued ad hoc pedestrian access to reservoir from dam. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of fishing pier off dam face into reservoir that is accessible as per UFAS². Organize parking and access to accommodate use of pier. Provide interpretive displays and regulatory signage. 	Same as Alternative B.
Visitor's Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in current 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reorganize interior of 	Same as Alternative B, plus:

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
and Day Use Area Visitor's Center and Day Use Area (continued)	uses (Bonneville County Parks Headquarters and Sheriff's office).	<p>Visitor's Center as an interpretive, educational, and enforcement facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post "at your own risk" signage for rock climbing and pursue with Bonneville County an ordinance to prohibit cliff diving. Create trailhead and associated day use facilities for non-motorized trail. Provide orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, and regulatory signage at dam overlook and trailhead. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reorganize interior of Visitor's Center as concessionaire/convenience store.
Juniper moorage and shoreline day use site and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of trail from Visitor's Center and Juniper Campground to shoreline. Provide overnight moorage facility for campground users. Create swimming area (i.e., no boating allowed). 	<p>Same as Alternative B, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide fishing pier as part of moorage facility.
Juniper Campground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in current size or uses (i.e., two 40-site loops). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of third loop to accommodate approximately up to 40 additional camping sites or group camping. 	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>
Juniper Boat Launch and Vicinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in current configuration or uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of overflow parking area uphill from current parking area. Explore use of and 	<p>Same as Alternative B, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accommodate winter access for ice fishing.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Juniper Boat Launch and Vicinity (continued)		<p>provision for allowing materials to be submerged in reservoir south of the boat launch ramp or at another suitable site that avoids safety hazards, i.e., not likely at the face of the dam for scuba divers. Include “at your own risk” signage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide orientation and interpretive displays, and regulatory signage at trailhead. 	
Reservoir Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in current uses or facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide at least 3 day use floating platforms within this area of the reservoir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide at least 6 day use floating platforms within this area of the reservoir.
Entrance Gate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in current uses or facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reorganize, better signage. 	Same as Alternative B.
Juniper area trails and shoreline access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad hoc trail use continues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for the development of a 4 to 6 mile long trail beginning at Juniper Visitor’s Center for non-motorized (hike, bicycle) use along the rim and shoreline of the east side of the reservoir. • Trail development to be conducted in two or more phases. • Provide connections between rim and shoreline for fishing and other shoreline activities. • Trail and trailhead to be maintained only during 	Same as Alternative B.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
		Juniper Park's season of use.	
Benchlands Area			
Benchlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in current size or uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand day use facilities within existing maintained area. 	Same as Alternative B, plus:
Benchlands (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restroom facilities to be made accessible as per UFAS² (i.e., existing Reclamation mandate). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create swimming area (i.e., no boating allowed). Restroom facilities to be made accessible as per UFAS². 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow overnight use of area. Remove native vegetation and mow additional area for expansion.
Reservoir Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in current uses or facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide at least 3 day use platforms within this area of the reservoir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide at least 6 day use platforms within this area of the reservoir.
Blacktail Park, Access Road, and Adjacent Reservoir Area			
Moorage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to moorage area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow expansion or renovation of moorage facilities. 	Same as Alternative B.
Reservoir area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in current uses or facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide at least 2 floating day use platforms within this area of the reservoir. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide at least 4 floating day use platforms within this area of the reservoir.
Blacktail Park Day Use Area, Trailhead, and Associated Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in current size, configuration, or uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and/or add new swimming area. Provide orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, and regulatory signage. Enhance existing park vegetation (e.g., plant shade trees). 	Same as Alternative B, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of a new day use area, and associated facilities (i.e., picnic tables, trash receptacle, shade structures, landscaping,

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Blacktail Park Day Use Area, Trailhead, and Associated Parking (continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for the development of non-motorized trail that accommodates equestrians, hikers and bicyclists providing access to the south along Willow Creek and farther into Tex Creek WMA (trailhead structures must meet UFAS²). • Trail and trailhead only maintained during Blacktail Park's season of use. • Allow for additional parking capacity as warranted by demand within the existing park area. • Reorganize (e.g., in-fill) existing day use area and expand to accommodate additional day use, as warranted by carrying capacity/demand study. • Convert management designation of most non-active recreation areas to non-mitigation lands. These will be managed in conjunction and consistent with WMA lands. Small area south of current active recreation area to remain non-active recreation (see Map 2-5). 	<p>and vault toilets) adjacent to the upper (overflow) parking area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow for additional parking capacity.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Boat Launch and Associated Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change in size or current configuration of boat launch and parking area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconfigure and better manage traffic flow and parking at existing boat launch area. Expand existing boat ramp if needed (based on demonstrated demand). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of a new launch facility at the upper (overflow) parking area.
Electrical Power and Concessionaire Facilities Electrical Power and Concessionaire Facilities (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electrical power for concessionaire and site operations and maintenance currently supplied by generator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for increased electrical power capacity at Blacktail via on-site (i.e., solar) power generation. Allow renovation or expansion of concessionaire facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for electrical power to be brought into Blacktail (i.e., through permitting of right-of-way along access road into the park). Allow expansion of concessionaire facilities.
Camping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No camping allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Alternative A. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of tent and/or RV campground and/or group camping adjacent to the upper (overflow) parking area. Camping to be allowed during Blacktail Park season only and open fires not allowed.
Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands			
Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measures currently in place or practices being implemented. Some noxious weed control is ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and protect riparian vegetation. 	Same as Alternative B.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Erosion Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measures currently in place or practices being implemented and none are being proposed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and address erosion control problems along trail. 	Same as Alternative B.
Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures currently in place include noxious weed control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide increased monitoring and interpretive information on noxious weeds, and conduct noxious weed control as needed. 	Same as Alternative B.
Ririe Outlet Channel			
Entire Channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued use as flood control channel with mostly open access on both sides. Formalize grazing through lease if grazing continues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open gates and eliminate any existing grazing along channel roadway. 	Same as Alternative B.
Realty Action on Isolated Parcel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and continue grazing through a lease. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain and manage for wildlife benefits through an agreement with IDFG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dispose of parcel.
Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA			
Willow Creek Arm			
Shoreline Access Restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no shoreline access restrictions currently in place or proposed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No shoreline access zone from April 1 to July 15 within a 1/4 mile distance of bald eagle nest. Reclamation will monitor the eagle nest and activity for three 	Same as Alternative B.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Shoreline Access Restrictions (continued)		<p>consecutive nesting periods in an effort to determine the potential effects on eagle nesting due to boating use in the Willow Creek Arm. Reclamation will seek assistance from FWS, IDFG, Tribes, and local boating organizations to accomplish monitoring activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boating restrictions would be pursued if monitoring results indicate potential effects to bald eagles. The Willow Creek area above the reservoir will be surveyed for Ute ladies' tresses. 	
Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands			
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No trails or shoreline access available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for the development of a non-motorized trail from Blacktail south along west side of Willow Creek with connections to IDFG trail farther into Tex Creek WMA. Include equestrian use/facilities meeting UFAS². 	Same as Alternative B.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Tex Creek Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased noxious weed control. 	Same as Alternative B.
Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Tex Creek Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased riparian habitat improvement efforts. 	Same as Alternative A.
Erosion Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Tex Creek Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and address erosion problems. 	Same as Alternative B.
Realty Action on Agricultural Use Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore exchange for wildlife habitat benefit or formalize existing use through a lease to include wildlife benefit. 	Same as Alternative A.	Same as Alternative A.
Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA			
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipe Creek Road open year-round, however, not plowed in winter for vehicular access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with IDFG and Bonneville County to implement an ordinance to close Pipe Creek Road to motorized use, including snowmobiles, during the winter season. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipe Creek Road to remain open year-round, but with IDFG to provide appropriate informational and regulatory signage alerting users to wildlife sensitivity.
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary activity is hunting; no defined/signed trails. Four designated primitive campsites exist. 	Coordinate with IDFG efforts to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop trails/parking. Provide interpretive displays and regulatory signage on existing trails and other appropriate locations. Allow for the development of four additional primitive campsites as demand warrants. Locations to 	Same as Alternative B.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
		be determined.	
Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Tex Creek Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased noxious weed control. Formalize plan for conversion of former farm lands to native shrub communities. 	Same as Alternative B.
Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Tex Creek Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased riparian habitat improvement efforts. Winter closure of the Pipe Creek Road to vehicles and snowmobiles by Bonneville County, if approved. 	Same as Alternative A.
Erosion Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Tex Creek Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased onsite erosion control efforts as needed. Reclamation leadership in the TMDL process to quantify and substantially reduce sediment entering the area from off-site. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased on-site erosion control efforts as needed.
Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA			
Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Cartier Slough Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased noxious weed control efforts. 	Same as Alternative A.
Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Cartier Slough Management Plan. 	Same as Alternative A, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased noxious weed control efforts. 	Same as Alternative A.

Table 2.2-1. Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan EA Alternatives¹

Area and Topic	Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices	Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis	Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis
Recreation Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued management under the Cartier Slough Management Plan. Continued use of existing gravel parking area and ad hoc trails. 	<p>Support IDFG efforts to improve non-motorized public access to and use of the WMA, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A nature interpretation trail connecting with adjacent Beaver Dick County Park. Photography/viewing blinds. Retriever trials and dog training according to seasonal restrictions. 	Same as Alternative B.

NOTES:

¹ Several recreation area improvements are described for each of the alternatives, such as trails, visitor's centers, interpretive signage, boat launching facilities, and parking improvements. Reclamation does not intend to build all of these facilities independently. Rather, Reclamation would allow these developments to occur if a managing partner is involved, cost-share conditions are met, and Reclamation funds are available. For the purpose of comparing the alternatives, it is assumed that all of the facilities would be built. Other actions, such as increased noxious weed control, do not require managing partners or cost-share agreements and would be implemented as described in the alternatives.

²UFAS = Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards. These accessibility standards apply to all Federal and Federally funded buildings and facilities and will be followed whenever possible. The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines will be used, however, when they are the more stringent of the two regulations.

2.3 Alternatives Considered in Detail

As described in Section 2.2, three alternatives were selected for detailed analysis. As shown on Table 2.2-1, many different actions are included within each alternative. These actions can be grouped into five broad **assessment categories**:

- Native vegetation protection and enhancement
- Erosion control
- Native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement
- Improved or restricted access
- Improved or new facilities or construction including parking and camping, trails, piers and moorage, day use and visitor structures, and miscellaneous items such as realty actions

The alternatives are described in this section in terms of the assessment categories. Within each assessment category, actions are discussed for the affected portions of the RMP study area. If no actions are proposed for a geographic area within an assessment category, that area is not listed. To understand the impacts of the alternatives, see Chapter 3, *Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences*.

2.3.1 Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

Summary of Features

As with all the alternatives, Bonneville County would continue to manage the Ririe Reservoir recreation sites, and IDFG would continue to manage Tex Creek and Cartier Slough under their current agreements with Reclamation. Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not enact additional measures to provide management direction. An RMP would not be implemented. Facilities and land status under the No Action Alternative are shown on Maps 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3. It is summarized on Table 2.2-1.

Table 2.2-1 includes the following statement at several locations under Alternative A: “no measures currently in place or practices being implemented and none proposed.” This means that Reclamation currently has no specific, long-term programs for those actions in those locations. Reclamation is not actively identifying potential problems related to native vegetation protection and enhancement, erosion control, or native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement. Rather, they react to situations or problems as they arise. Under Alternative A, Reclamation would not develop plans or programs involving a change from the current reactive mode to a more proactive mode of operations.

The Tex Creek management plan (IDFG 1998a) focuses management efforts on actions to improve big game and upland game bird habitat. Some of the specific actions that IDFG implements at Tex

Creek, with support from Reclamation, include planting and conversion of former farm land to improve habitat conditions; selective fertilizer application; burning; developing terraces and sediment basins to control erosion; vegetation management to promote health and productivity; noxious weed control using chemical, mechanical, and biological methods; upland shrub and riparian species planting; beaver introductions to control erosion, reduce sediment movement, and provide longer seasonal flows to benefit native fish, wildlife, and vegetation; fence maintenance; and general road maintenance.

IDFG's Cartier Slough management plan (IDFG 1998b) focuses on efforts to provide and improve habitat for waterfowl, non-game birds, and upland game birds. Some of the specific actions that IDFG implements at Cartier Slough, with support from Reclamation, include maintaining and managing waterfowl nesting structures and habitat for optimum productivity, seasonally limiting human access to improve nesting success, vegetation manipulation to achieve desired habitat goals, noxious weed control similar to Tex Creek, fence maintenance, and development of a long-term monitoring plan for vegetation and wildlife.

Site-Specific Actions by Assessment Category

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Non-Mitigation Lands

No long-term measures or practices are currently being implemented by Reclamation to protect native vegetation. As described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*, Reclamation would react to situations or problems as they arise, including endangered species issues. Currently, some noxious weed control is occurring in cooperation with Bonneville County. However, since no program exists to actively search for and eliminate noxious weeds, this occurs when particular problems are identified.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Under the No Action Alternative, only the ad hoc measures described above would be implemented by Reclamation in the Creekside Park area.

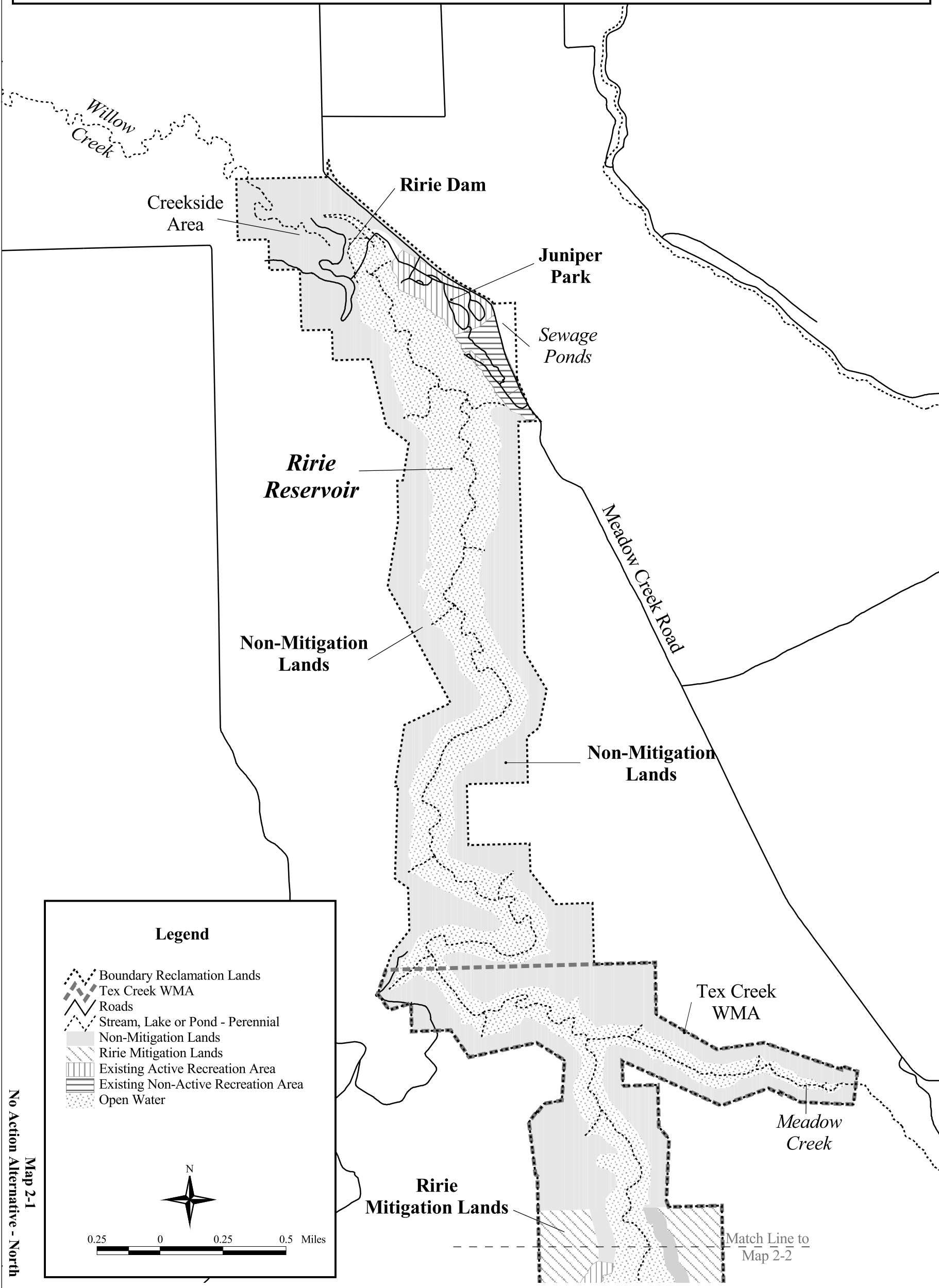
Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Measures would be the same as described for Creekside Park and Vicinity. Some noxious weed control is occurring on Reclamation's Non-Mitigation Lands in cooperation with Bonneville County. This generally occurs when a particular problem is identified. No program currently exists to actively search for and eliminate noxious weeds on Non-Mitigation Lands.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA Native vegetation protection and enhancement measures would continue to be managed under the Tex Creek Management Plan on these lands, including the Willow Arm of Ririe Reservoir. Native vegetation on Ririe mitigation lands at Tex Creek involves Reclamation’s financial support of continued management under the Tex Creek Management Plan, which includes a series of goals and objectives intended to improve vegetation and wildlife habitat as described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Map 2-1
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
No Action Alternative
North Part of Ririe Reservoir Area

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Legend

- Boundary Reclamation Lands
- Tex Creek WMA
- Roads
- Stream, Lake or Pond - Perennial
- Non-Mitigation Lands
- Ririe Mitigation Lands
- Existing Active Recreation Area
- Existing Non-Active Recreation Area
- Open Water



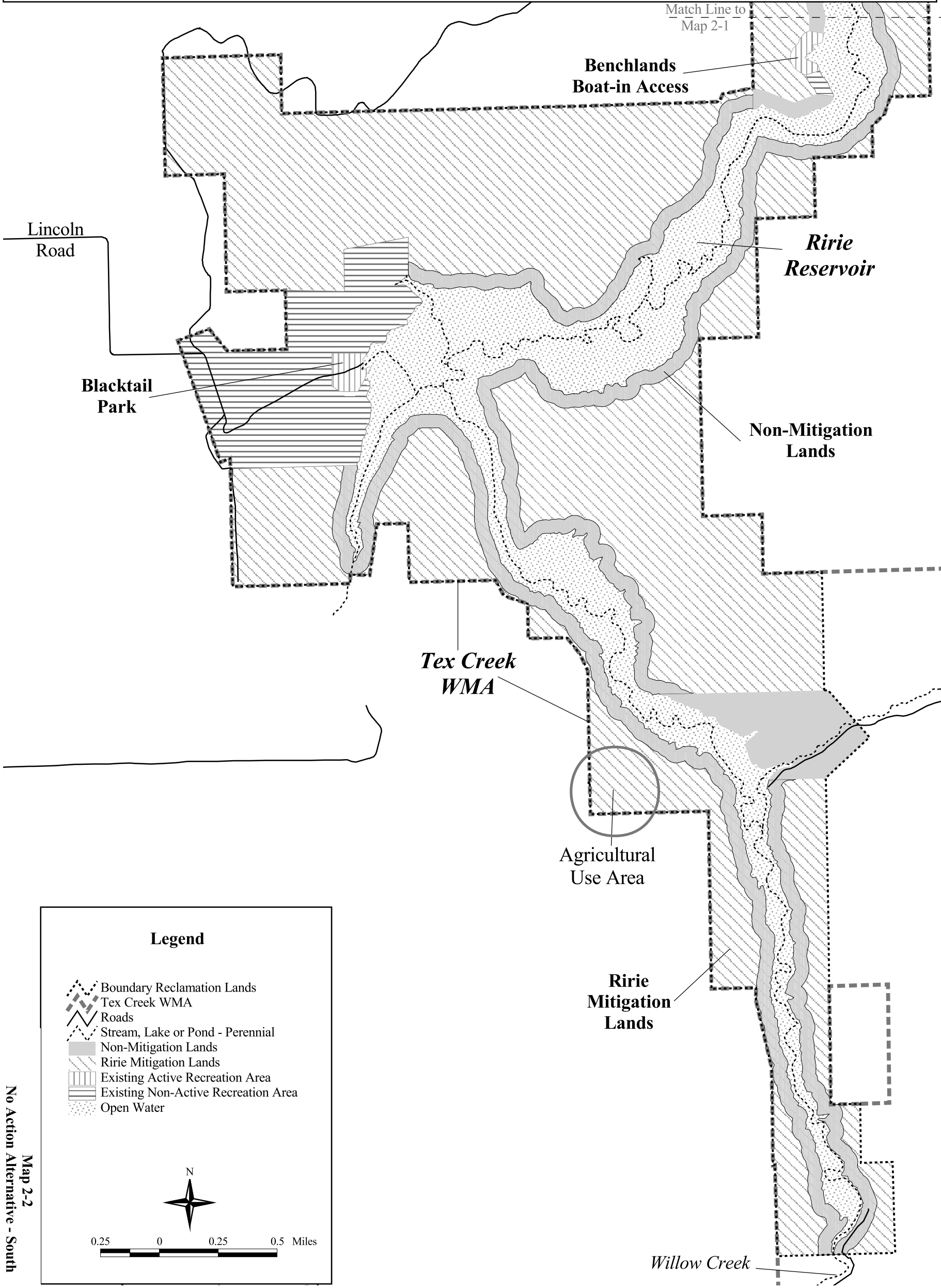
0.25 0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Map 2-1
No Action Alternative - North

Match Line to
Map 2-2

Map 2-2
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
No Action Alternative
South Part of Ririe Reservoir Area

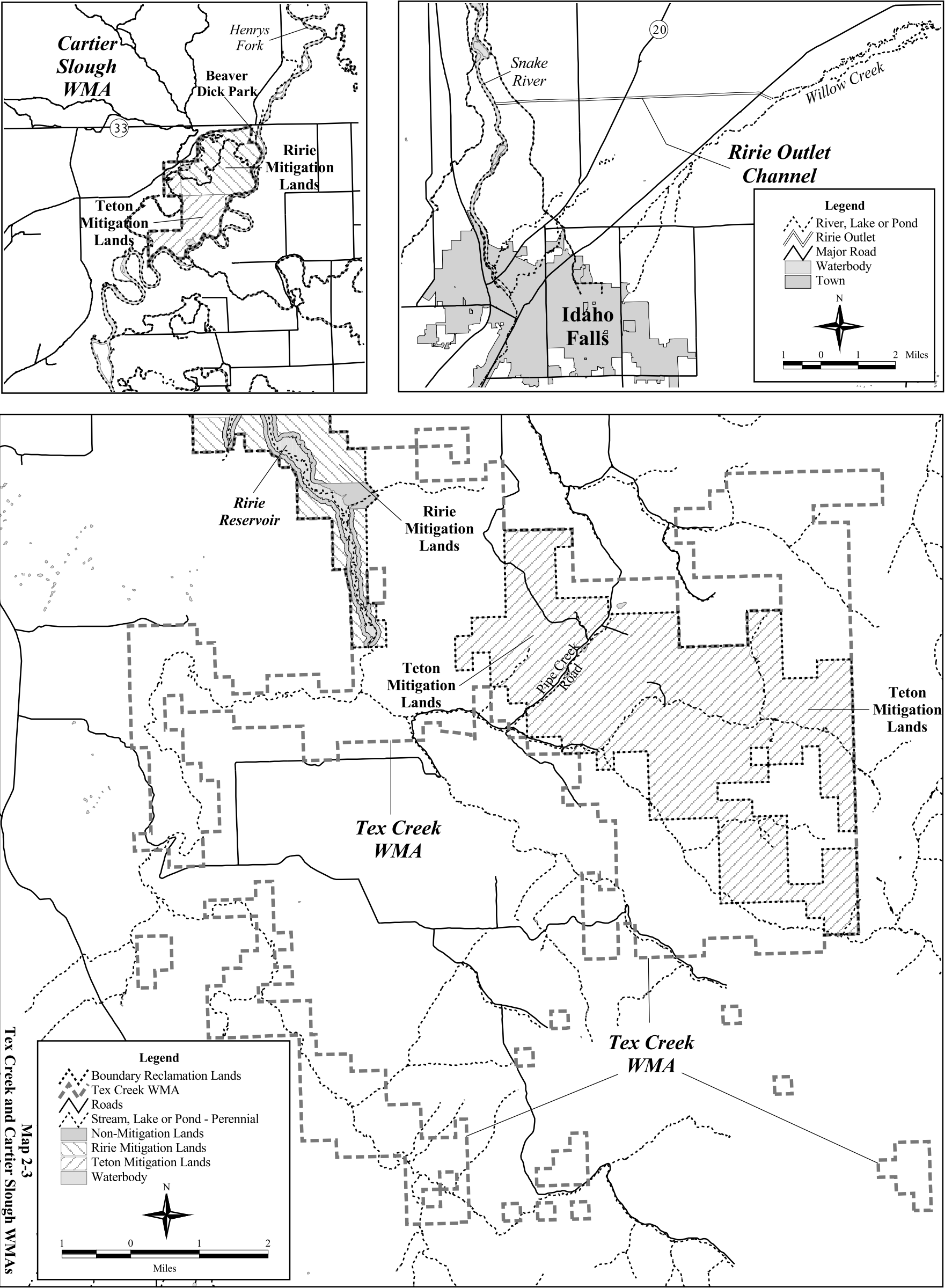
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Map 2-3
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
All Alternatives

Tex Creek and Cartier Slough WMAs and the Ririe Outlet Channel

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Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Management would continue under the Tex Creek Management Plan. IDFG management actions on Tex Creek were described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Management would continue under the Cartier Slough Management Plan as described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Erosion Control

Non-Mitigation Lands

No long-term measures or practices are currently being implemented by Reclamation to control erosion. As described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*, Reclamation is not actively seeking to identify potential erosion problems. Rather, they react to situations or problems as they arise. Under Alternative A, Reclamation would not develop plans or programs involving a change from the current reactive mode to a more proactive mode of operations.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Under the No Action Alternative, ad hoc measures would be implemented by Reclamation as described above.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Erosion control measures would be the same as described for Creekside Park and Vicinity.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Erosion control measures would continue to be managed under the Tex Creek Management Plan. IDFG management actions on Tex Creek were described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Management of erosion would continue as described in the Tex Creek Management Plan. Plan elements regarding erosion were described above.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Management would continue under the Cartier Slough Management Plan. Elements of the plan were described above.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Non-Mitigation Lands

No long-term measures or practices are currently being implemented by Reclamation to enhance native fish and wildlife protection. As described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*, Reclamation currently has no specific programs addressing native fish and wildlife protection on Non-Mitigation Lands. Reclamation is not actively identifying potential problems related to native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement. Rather, they react to situations or problems as they arise. Under Alternative A, Reclamation would not develop plans or programs involving a change from the current reactive mode to a more proactive mode of operations.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Under the No Action Alternative, ad hoc measures would be implemented by Reclamation.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Proactive measures would not be implemented, as described for Creekside Park and Vicinity.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Native fish and wildlife protection measures would continue to be managed under the Tex Creek Management Plan. IDFG management actions on Tex Creek were described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Management of fish and wildlife would continue as described in the Tex Creek Management Plan. Actions were described above for Ririe Mitigation Lands at Tex Creek.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Fish and wildlife protection and enhancement measures would be implemented according to the Cartier Slough Management Plan as described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Improved or Restricted Access

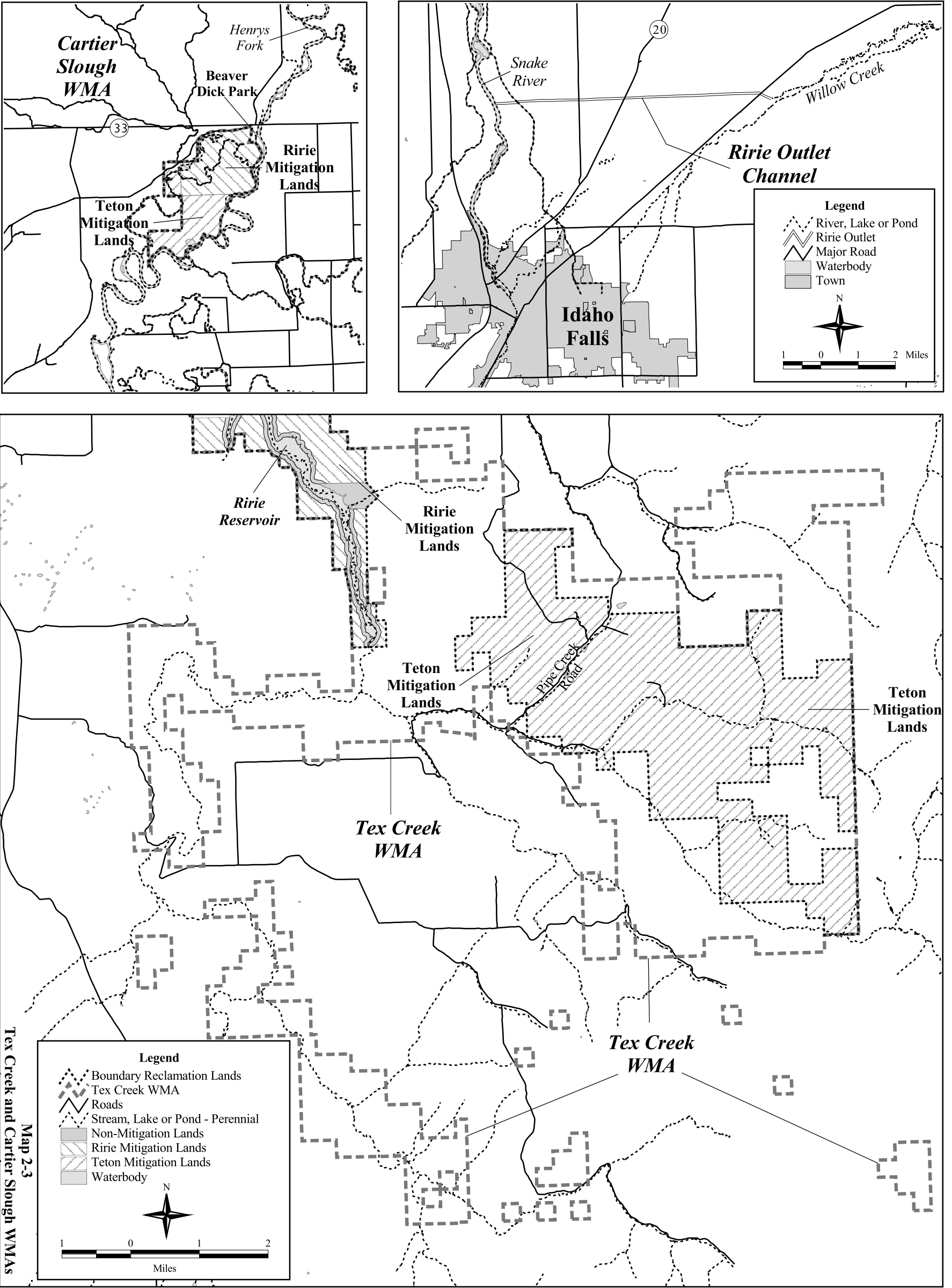
Non-Mitigation Lands

Under the No Action Alternative, access would continue as it is available currently.

Map 2-3
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
All Alternatives

Tex Creek and Cartier Slough WMAs and the Ririe Outlet Channel

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Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Management would continue under the Tex Creek Management Plan. IDFG management actions on Tex Creek were described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Management would continue under the Cartier Slough Management Plan as described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Erosion Control

Non-Mitigation Lands

No long-term measures or practices are currently being implemented by Reclamation to control erosion. As described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*, Reclamation is not actively seeking to identify potential erosion problems. Rather, they react to situations or problems as they arise. Under Alternative A, Reclamation would not develop plans or programs involving a change from the current reactive mode to a more proactive mode of operations.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Under the No Action Alternative, ad hoc measures would be implemented by Reclamation as described above.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Erosion control measures would be the same as described for Creekside Park and Vicinity.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Erosion control measures would continue to be managed under the Tex Creek Management Plan. IDFG management actions on Tex Creek were described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Management of erosion would continue as described in the Tex Creek Management Plan. Plan elements regarding erosion were described above.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Management would continue under the Cartier Slough Management Plan. Elements of the plan were described above.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Non-Mitigation Lands

No long-term measures or practices are currently being implemented by Reclamation to enhance native fish and wildlife protection. As described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*, Reclamation currently has no specific programs addressing native fish and wildlife protection on Non-Mitigation Lands. Reclamation is not actively identifying potential problems related to native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement. Rather, they react to situations or problems as they arise. Under Alternative A, Reclamation would not develop plans or programs involving a change from the current reactive mode to a more proactive mode of operations.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Under the No Action Alternative, ad hoc measures would be implemented by Reclamation.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Proactive measures would not be implemented, as described for Creekside Park and Vicinity.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Native fish and wildlife protection measures would continue to be managed under the Tex Creek Management Plan. IDFG management actions on Tex Creek were described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Management of fish and wildlife would continue as described in the Tex Creek Management Plan. Actions were described above for Ririe Mitigation Lands at Tex Creek.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Fish and wildlife protection and enhancement measures would be implemented according to the Cartier Slough Management Plan as described in Alternative A, *Summary of Features*.

Improved or Restricted Access

Non-Mitigation Lands

Under the No Action Alternative, access would continue as it is available currently.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

At Creekside Park on the east side of Willow Creek below the dam, the area is closed to motorized access. However, ad hoc parking and trails currently lead to various unmanaged streamside areas.

Juniper Park and Vicinity

Ad hoc pedestrian access would also continue at the dam area of Juniper Park, with vehicular access across the dam during daylight hours in conjunction with, and support from, Bonneville County law enforcement. No formal trails or shoreline access would be available in the Juniper area.

Ririe Outlet Channel

The Ririe Outlet Channel would continue to be used as a flood control channel with mostly open access on both sides, and grazing would continue through a lease.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Access would also continue as-is on Ririe Mitigation Lands. Current access to various parcels is via Meadow Creek Road, Lincoln Road, and Pipe Creek Road.

Willow Creek Arm

No shoreline access restrictions are currently in place or proposed at the Willow Creek Arm.

Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands

On Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands, no formal trails or shoreline access would be available.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Current access to various parcels is via Meadow Creek Road, connecting unnamed roads in the WMA, and Pipe Creek Road. On Teton Mitigation Lands, the Pipe Creek Road would be open year-round, but would still not be plowed during the winter for vehicular access. Snowmobile use of this road would continue as snow conditions permit.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Cartier Slough is currently accessed via State Highway 33 (SH-33). No changes in access are proposed under the No Action Alternative.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Under the No Action Alternative, facilities would not be improved and no new amenities would be added at Creekside Park, the area would continue to be closed for recreation use and no facilities, signage, or fencing would be added. Ad hoc use would continue.

Juniper Park and Vicinity

At Juniper Park, current uses and facilities would not be changed. Juniper Campground, which currently has two, 40-site loops, would not be expanded. The Juniper Boat Launch would also not change in size or use. The reservoir area and entrance gate would not be changed.

Benchlands Area

There are no plans to change the current size or uses of the Benchlands or reservoir area. However, the restroom facilities would be upgraded to meet Federal accessibility standards according to the existing Reclamation mandate.

Blacktail Park, Access Road, and Adjacent Reservoir Area

At Blacktail Park, the access road, and adjacent reservoir area, the current facilities and uses would not be changed under the No Action Alternative. This includes moorage facilities; the reservoir area, the Blacktail Park Day Use Area; and the boat launch and associated parking. Electrical power would continue to be provided by a generator and no camping would be allowed.

Ririe Outlet Channel

At an isolated parcel on the Ririe Outlet Channel, Reclamation would retain the parcel and continue grazing through a lease.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands

A small parcel of Ririe mitigation land labeled as an agricultural use area on Table 2.2-1 and Map 2.2 is currently farmed by a local farmer in exchange for the farmer not grazing a valuable piece of critical winter range located outside of Tex Creek. All alternatives would explore a formal exchange of these properties or would formalize the existing use through a lease.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Teton Mitigation Lands, the primary activity is hunting, and no defined or signed trails would be provided.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

At Cartier Slough, recreation uses would continue to be managed under the Cartier Slough Management Plan. Existing facilities include a two- to three-car gravel parking area, informal trails, and an informal small boat launch.

2.3.2 Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Summary of Features

Alternative B would allow limited expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities, and would increase protection and management of natural and cultural resources on Reclamation's lands. The approximate locations of facilities and trails included in Alternative B are shown on Maps 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5. It is summarized on Table 2.2-1.

Under Alternative B, all existing recreation areas would be upgraded to meet Federal accessibility requirements whenever possible. Additional signs would be posted to inform the public of property boundaries and pertinent rules and regulations. Orientation kiosks would be situated at several key locations to provide visitors with useful information pertaining to the use of the area, including educational materials, maps, and interpretive displays of the area's landscape and biological features. In general, the existing recreation sites at Ririe Reservoir would be modified to better accommodate current and expected future demand and use. This includes creating and expanding swimming areas, developing non-motorized trails, adding parking, enhancing park landscaping, and adding more floating platforms on the reservoir. Except for meeting accessibility requirements, recreation facilities would be upgraded or expanded only after documentation of increased demand. The management designation of most non-active recreation lands at Blacktail Park would be changed to non-mitigation lands and managed as WMA to be consistent with actual plan practices.

This alternative would promote management actions that focus on increasing the protection and enhancement of native fish and wildlife and their habitat (vegetation, wetlands, riparian areas, water quality), as well as proactive measures to protect cultural resources and ensure that Tribal treaty rights are met. For Reclamation's lands not within Tex Creek or Cartier Slough, this would entail implementing strategies to better monitor and control noxious and invasive weeds, monitor and address erosion problems, designate buffers and limit access and construction within riparian areas and wetlands, and institute time of year restrictions in areas harboring Federal and state designated species of special concern (including Federally listed rare, endangered, or threatened species). On Reclamation lands within Tex Creek and Cartier Slough, management actions would be implemented to increase support of the IDFG in carrying out their respective management plans.

Under Alternative B, native vegetation, fish, and wildlife protection and enhancement on Ririe and Teton mitigation lands at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough and on non-mitigation lands that are not used for recreation facilities would involve a variety of actions, including the following:

- Designing and constructing facilities within existing disturbed areas to the greatest extent feasible to minimize impacts on native species
- Minimizing disturbance of all native plant communities during design and construction of all facilities
- Keeping all new trails and facilities at least 20 feet from wetland and riparian zones except where trails must cross riparian areas
- Increased efforts to control noxious and invasive weeds including actively searching for and mapping infestations, developing an integrated pest management control program, and increased control efforts involving the use of measures appropriate to the site and situation including herbicides, hand-pulling, spraying, and the use of parasitic or defoliating insects
- Planting riparian vegetation as needed for habitat improvement or erosion control
- Actively work with IDFG to identify opportunities to improve habitat conditions for wildlife and native aquatic species

Increasing noxious weed control efforts may involve additional funding or re-prioritizing management activities supported by Reclamation. Particular attention would be paid to identifying and controlling noxious weeds and erosion along trails.

A coordinated effort would be executed under this alternative to work with Bonneville County and IDFG to close Pipe Creek Road during the winter season to better protect wintering big game. This alternative would also support IDFG's efforts to improve non-motorized public access to and use of Tex Creek and Cartier Slough.

Site-Specific Actions by Assessment Category

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Non-Mitigation Lands

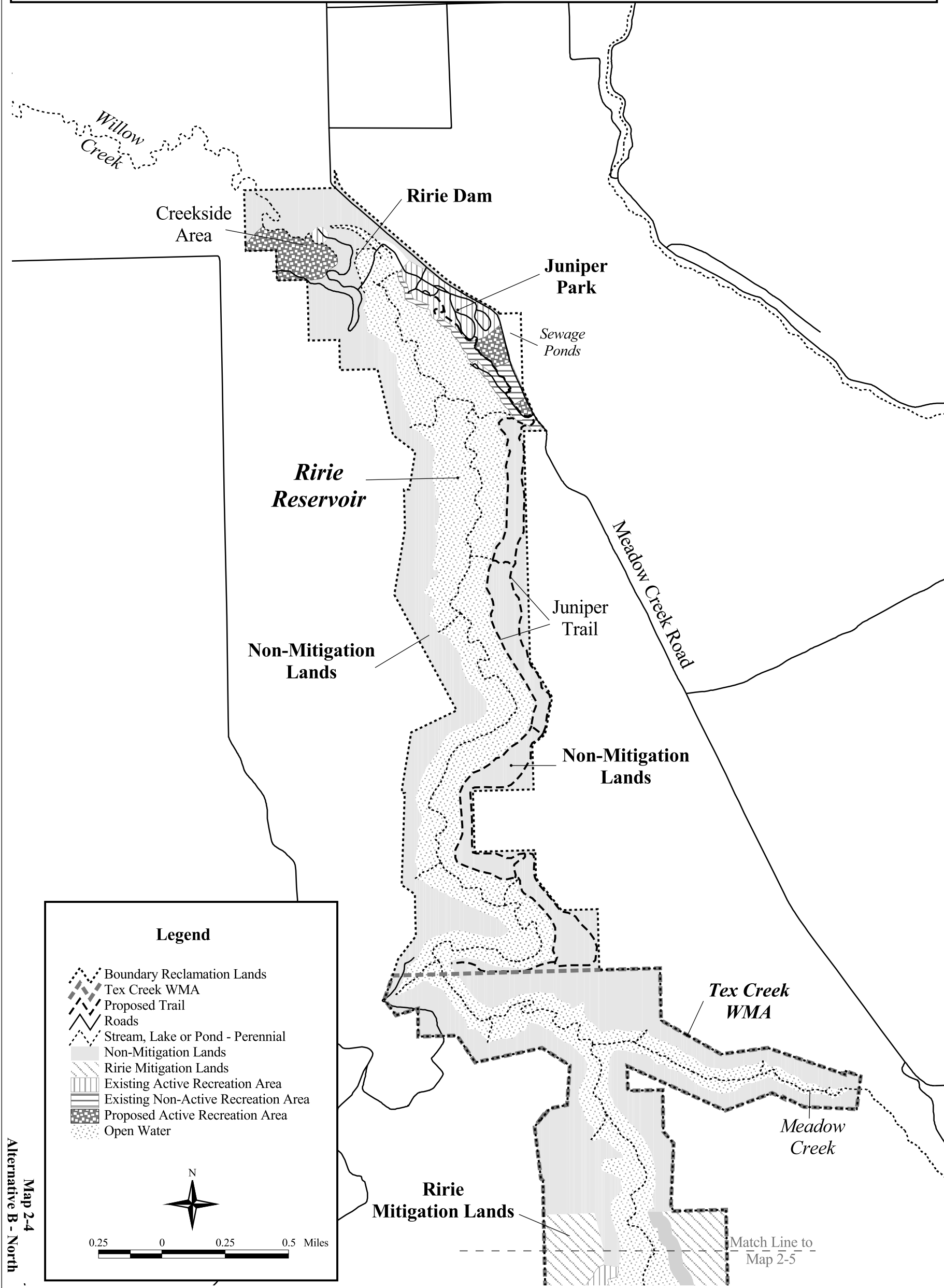
Because Alternative B focuses on increasing natural resource protection, measures are included to enhance native vegetation protection on Non-Mitigation Lands.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Protect native vegetation during design and construction of recreation facilities. The area will be surveyed for Ute ladies' tresses.

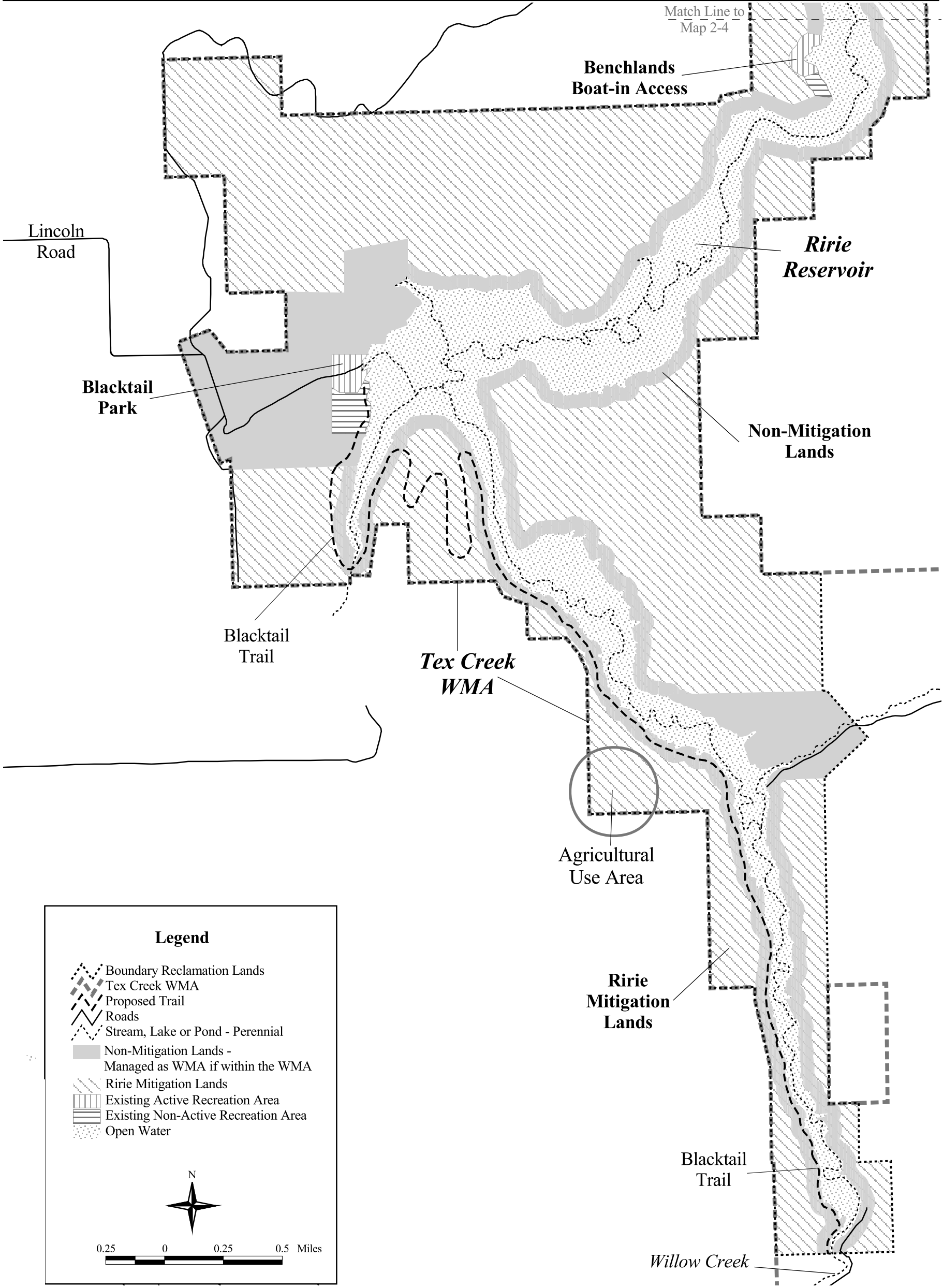
Map 2-4
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
Alternative B
North Part of Ririe Reservoir Area

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Map 2-5
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
Alternative B
South Part of Ririe Reservoir Area

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Blacktail Park

Most of the non-active recreation lands would be changed to a non-mitigation designation and managed as WMA to be consistent with actual land management practices. An area to the south of the current active recreation area would remain as non-active recreation (Map 2-5).

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Provide increased monitoring for noxious weeds and interpretive information on noxious weeds, and conduct noxious weed control as needed. Native vegetation, fish, and wildlife protection and enhancement measures described above under Alternative B, *Summary of Features*, would be implemented. The Willow Creek area above the reservoir high water line will be surveyed for Ute ladies' tresses.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Ririe Mitigation Lands, increased noxious weed control would be provided to support the Tex Creek Management Plan. Native vegetation, fish, and wildlife protection and enhancement measures described above under Alternative A, *Summary of Features*, would be implemented.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Teton Mitigation Lands, native vegetation would be managed under the Tex Creek Management Plan. Native vegetation, fish, and wildlife protection and enhancement measures described above under Alternative B, *Summary of Features*, would be implemented. On Teton Mitigation Lands at Tex Creek, native vegetation protection and enhancement also includes formalizing a plan for conversion of former farm lands to native shrub communities. This is an ongoing IDFG program supported by Reclamation. It involves conversion of farmed lands that are currently dominated by smooth brome, which was originally planted along with other species to stabilize soils and reduce erosion, but has little wildlife value. Terraces are often constructed on these lands to reduce gully erosion. These lands are being cleared and planted with native species to establish shrub/grass communities that have substantially higher value for wildlife. Reclamation would work with IDFG to formalize and implement a plan for this conversion. The plan would describe methods and materials to be used, establish a schedule for completion of planned conversions, and address conversion costs and funding mechanisms.

WMA Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough

Increased noxious weed control would be provided in support of the Cartier Slough Management Plan, as described for the Willow Creek Arm.

Erosion Control

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Erosion problems would be monitored and corrected as needed to protect facilities under Alternative B at Creekside Park and Vicinity.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Erosion would be monitored and addressed as described for Creekside Park.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On the Ririe Mitigation Lands, erosion problems would be monitored and addressed, in addition to the erosion control actions implemented under the Tex Creek Management Plan. Monitoring and addressing erosion problems would involve a more proactive role for Reclamation. Reclamation would develop and implement a plan and program to actively identify and address erosion problems along trails and roads, at recreation sites, and along stream channels. Actions that would be implemented to address erosion problems would depend on the nature and location of the problem. Potential actions include planting riparian vegetation along streams or existing ponds, constructing new catchment ponds, introducing beavers, and constructing retaining walls or other bank/shoreline stabilization measures. Reclamation would also take an active lead role in a future TMDL process that would address general erosion and sediment problems in the Willow Creek watershed.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Teton Mitigation Lands, increased onsite erosion control efforts would be implemented as described for Ririe Mitigation Lands. In addition, Reclamation would take an active leadership role in the future TMDL process to quantify and substantially reduce sediment entering Willow Creek and its tributaries.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

At Creekside Park and Vicinity, measures described under native vegetation protection and enhancement would be implemented to maintain and protect riparian vegetation. These actions would, in turn, enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Protection and enhancement measures would be the same as described for Creekside Park and Vicinity.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Ririe Mitigation Lands, native fish and wildlife protection measures would be managed under the Tex Creek Management Plan, described in Alternative A. Additional enhancement measures adopted by Reclamation would be the same as those described above under Alternative B, *Summary of Features*.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Fish and wildlife protection measures would also be provided on Teton Mitigation Lands as described above under Alternative B, *Summary of Features*. In addition, the Pipe Creek Road would be closed by Bonneville County, subject to their approval, to vehicles and snowmobiles during the winter to protect wintering big game.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

At Cartier Slough, protection and enhancement of native fish and wildlife habitat would be managed under the Cartier Slough Management Plan for the area as described for Alternative A. Enhancement measures would be the same as those described above under Alternative B, *Summary of Features*.

Improved or Restricted Access

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

At Creekside Park on the east side of Willow Creek below the dam, existing ad hoc parking areas and trails would be formalized. Improvements would include upgrading trails to Federal accessibility standards whenever possible, organizing the parking area, and adding orientation and interpretive displays and regulatory signage.

Juniper Park and Vicinity

At Juniper Park near the dam area, Alternative B would allow for the development of an accessible fishing pier off the dam face into the reservoir. Parking and access would be organized to accommodate use of the pier, and interpretive displays and regulatory signage would be provided. In addition, a new 4- to 6-mile-long, non-motorized trail for pedestrians and bicycles would be constructed along the rim

and shoreline of the east side of the reservoir. The trail would be developed in two or more phases and would start at the Juniper Visitor's Center. The purpose of the trail would be to connect the rim and shoreline for fishing and other shoreline activities. The trail would include connections from the rim and shoreline for fishing and other shoreline activities.

Ririe Outlet Channel

A new access point would be provided near where the Ririe Outlet Channel drains into the Snake River (this confluence is shown on Map 2-3). Grazing would be eliminated and dry-land wildlife habitat, consisting of native upland shrubs, grasses, and forbs, would be developed on an isolated parcel adjacent to the outlet channel.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Willow Creek Arm

Shoreline access would be restricted along a portion of the Willow Creek Arm under Alternative B. No shoreline access would be permitted from April 1 to July 15 within 1/4-mile of a bald eagle nest. Reclamation would monitor the eagle nest and activity for three consecutive nesting periods to determine if, and what, the potential effects of unrestricted boating use in the Willow Creek Arm are on the bald eagles nesting there. Reclamation would seek assistance from FWS, IDFG, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and local boating organizations to accomplish monitoring activities. A monitoring plan developed with FWS is included in Appendix B. Reclamation would pursue with the county seasonally implementing boating restrictions if monitoring results indicate potential effects to bald eagles.

Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands

A new non-motorized trail would be developed on Ririe Mitigation Lands, as shown on Map 2-5. The trail would start at Blacktail, extend south along the west side of Willow Creek, and connect to an IDFG trail that extends farther into Tex Creek. Equestrian use and facilities meeting accessibility standards would be included.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Teton Mitigation Lands, Reclamation would work with IDFG and Bonneville County to close Pipe Creek Road during the winter season, thereby eliminating snowmobile use, subject to Bonneville County approval. The expected success of this effort is uncertain, but is likely low at this time.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

At Creekside Park, the area would be reopened and renovated for day use and group camping. Improvements would include a loop trail from the park to Willow Creek, day use facilities, group tent camping as demand warrants (possibly by reservation), upgraded facilities and structures, orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, regulatory signage, and enhanced park vegetation (shade trees and irrigation system). Property boundary signage would be installed as needed along Reclamation property. All facilities except the trail would be constructed in existing disturbed areas.

Juniper Park and Vicinity

At Juniper Park, the entrance gate would be reorganized and better signage would be added. The interior of the Visitor's Center would be reorganized as an interpretive, educational, and enforcement facility. A new, non-motorized trail would be developed from the Visitor's Center and Juniper Campground to a shoreline day use area. At the dam overlook and trailhead day use area, Reclamation, in conjunction with a cost-sharing partner, would pursue providing an orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, and regulatory signage. To improve safety, "at your own risk" signage would be posted for rock climbing, and Reclamation would pursue an ordinance with Bonneville County to prohibit cliff diving. Also at the shoreline day use site, a swimming area would be created where no boats would be allowed. An overnight moorage facility would be provided for overnight campground users. In the vicinity of the Juniper Boat Launch, overflow parking uphill of the current parking area would be developed. Reclamation would analyze provisions for allowing materials to be submerged in the reservoir at a suitable site that avoids safety hazards for scuba divers. Signage indicating that diving is "at your own risk" would be included. In the reservoir area, at least three day use floating platforms would be provided. At Juniper Campground, a third loop would be developed to accommodate approximately 40 additional camping sites or group camping. The development of a new trailhead and 4 to 6 mile non-motorized trail would be allowed along the rim and shoreline adjacent to the east side of the reservoir.

Benchlands Area

Under Alternative B, existing day use facilities would be expanded at the Benchlands area. A swimming area (no boating allowed) would be created, and

restroom facilities would be made accessible whenever possible. At least three floating day use platforms would be provided.

Blacktail Park, Access Road, and Adjacent Reservoir Area

At Blacktail Park, many new and renovated recreation facilities would be allowed. Moorage facilities would be renovated and at least two floating day use platforms would be provided. At the Blacktail Park Day Use Area, the existing swimming area would be expanded or a new area would be provided. An orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, and regulatory signage would be provided, along with improved park vegetation such as shade trees. The day use area would be expanded as infill within existing park area boundaries to accommodate additional day use as warranted by demand. A new non-motorized trail would be developed to accommodate equestrians, hikers, and bicyclists and provide access to the south along Willow Creek and farther into Tex Creek. The trail would be maintained during the Blacktail Park use season. Additional parking capacity would be added to meet demand within the existing park area. The existing boat launch area would be reconfigured to better manage traffic flow and parking. The existing boat ramp would be expanded if needed, based on demonstrated demand. Electrical power capacity at Blacktail would be increased using onsite, solar power generation. Renovation or expansion of concessionaire facilities would be allowed. As with the No Action Alternative, no camping would be allowed.

Ririe Outlet Channel

At the Ririe Outlet Channel, Reclamation would retain an isolated parcel and manage it for wildlife benefits through an agreement with IDFG.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

For a realty action at an Agricultural Use Area in the remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands, shown on Map 2-5, Reclamation would use the same approach as for the No Action Alternative. They would explore an exchange for wildlife habitat benefit or formalize the existing use through a lease to include wildlife benefit.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Teton Mitigation Lands, Reclamation would coordinate with IDFG's efforts to develop trails and parking, and provide interpretive displays and regulatory signage. Reclamation would also allow for the development of four additional primitive campsites as demand warrants. Locations would be determined with IDFG at the time the campsites are needed. Primitive camp sites are grassy areas without facilities. They would have a 2-week camping limit.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Reclamation would support IDFG's efforts to improve non-motorized public access to and use of the Cartier Slough, including a nature interpretation trail connecting with the adjacent Beaver Dick County Park. Photography and viewing blinds would be provided, and retriever trials and dog training would be allowed with seasonal restrictions. Ad hoc cross-country skiing would continue to be allowed in Cartier Slough, but no trail grooming would be allowed.

2.3.3 Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Summary of Features

Alternative C is designed to maintain current efforts of protecting and managing natural and cultural resources on Reclamation's lands and allow for a moderate level of expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities (that is, the maximum level possible given the existing constraints imposed by the WMA designations and management priorities). The general locations of facilities and trails included under Alternative C are shown on Maps 2-3, 2-6, and 2-7. It is summarized on Table 2.2-1.

In addition to the recreation site and facility improvements summarized under Alternative B, this alternative would also increase the amount of camping (including at Blacktail during summer months only), increase the capacity of all day use areas, and provide more floating platforms. In general, all of the existing recreation sites at Ririe Reservoir would be modified or expanded to ensure current and anticipated future demand within carrying capacity limits.

This alternative would maintain but not increase current levels of protection and enhancement for native fish and wildlife, and their habitat (vegetation, wetlands, riparian areas, water quality). For Reclamation's lands not within the WMAs, this would generally not entail implementing any of the specific habitat improvement strategies summarized under Alternative B. On Reclamation lands within Tex Creek and Cartier Slough, management actions would be implemented that continue to support IDFG in carrying out their respective management plans, although not to the same degree as under Alternative B. Pipe Creek Road would remain open during the winter season; however, Reclamation would work with IDFG to provide appropriate informational signage alerting users to wildlife sensitivity. The alternative would support IDFG's efforts to improve non-motorized access to Tex Creek and Cartier Slough by allowing the same measures as described under Alternative B. The proactive measures to protect cultural resources and ensure that Tribal treaty rights are met on all Reclamation lands would be the same as those for Alternative B.

Site-Specific Actions by Assessment Category

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Native vegetation protection and enhancement measures would be the same as under Alternative B.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Native vegetation protection and enhancement measures would be the same as under Alternative B.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Vegetation protection and enhancement measures would be the same as Alternative B in Tex Creek. Efforts to improve and expand native vegetation are not included.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Management would be the same as described for Ririe Mitigation Lands at Tex Creek.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

At Cartier Slough, measures would be the same as the No Action Alternative: management would continue under the Cartier Slough Management Plan for the area. Efforts to improve and expand native vegetation are not included.

Erosion Control

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Erosion control measures would be the same as under Alternative B.

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Erosion control measures would be the same as under Alternative B.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Erosion control measures would be slightly less aggressive than Alternative B and would be continued under the Tex Creek Management Plan. Increased onsite erosion control efforts would be implemented as needed. Reclamation would take a more passive role in the future TMDL process.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

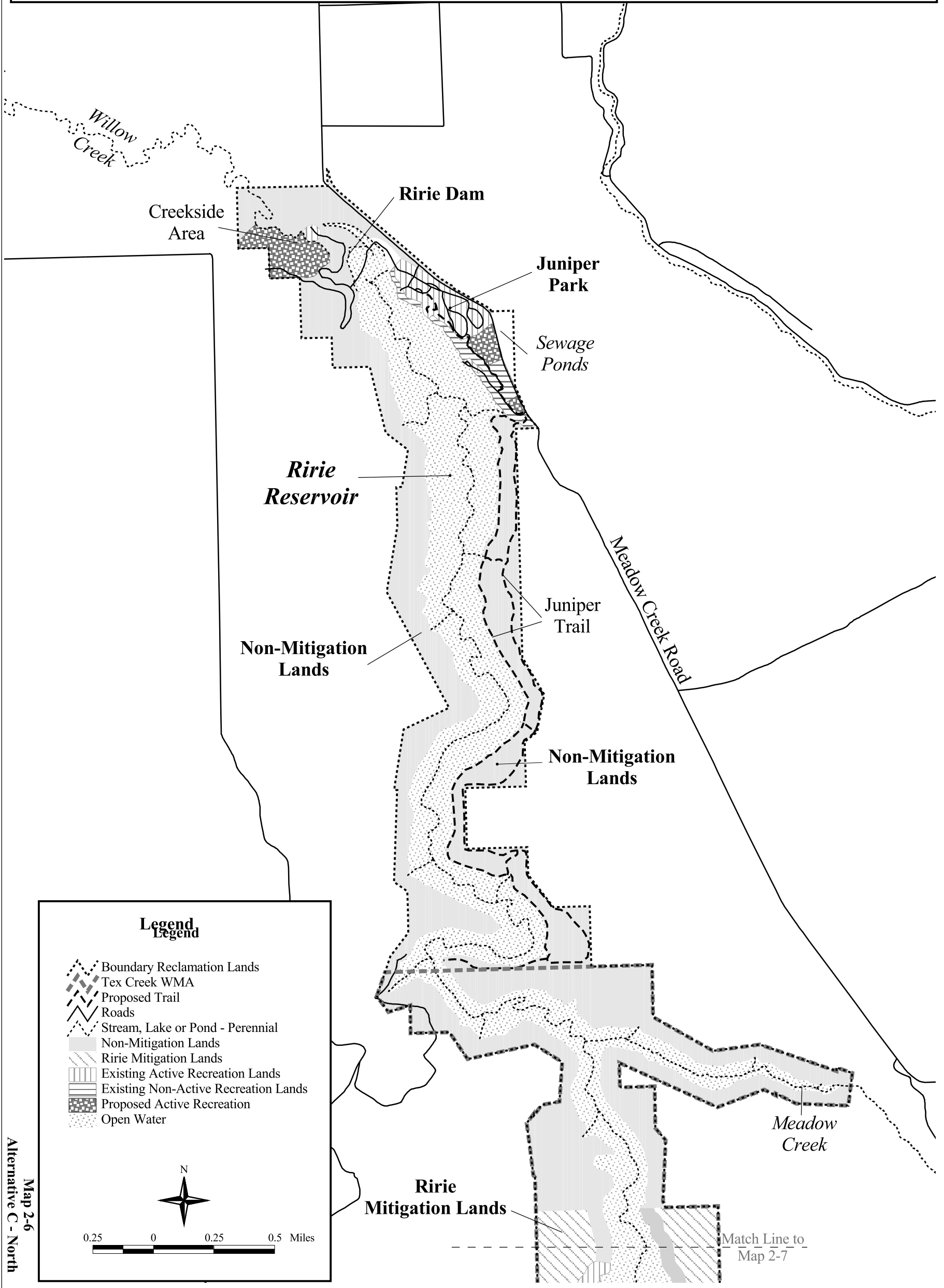
Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

On Reclamation's Non-Mitigation Lands, native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement measures would be the same as under Alternative B.

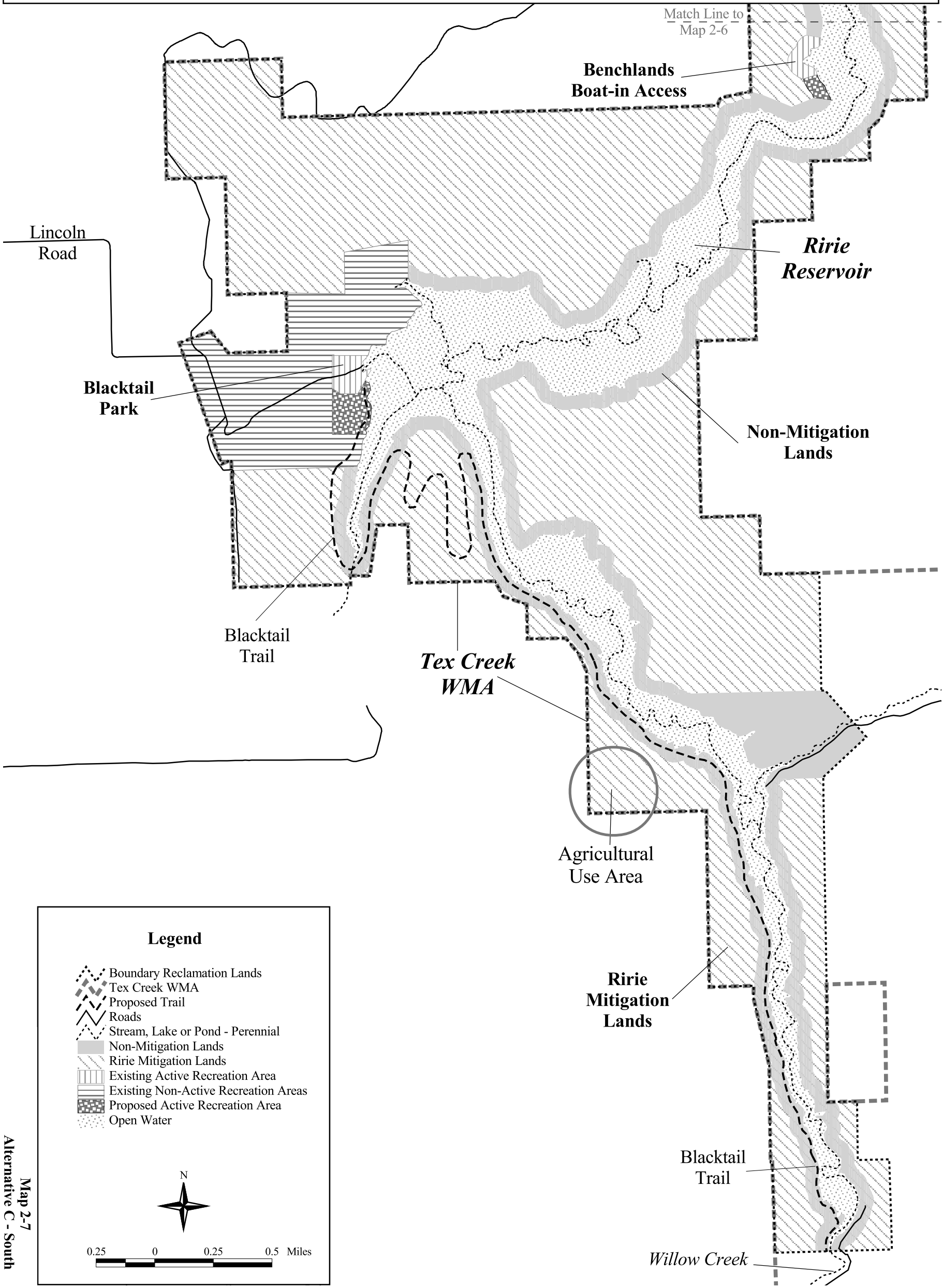
Map 2-6
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
Alternative C
North Part of Ririe Reservoir Area

The information displayed here is based on the best available data at the time of publication.
Neither the authors, Reclamation, or any other party here warrant or represent that the information
is in every respect complete and accurate, and are not held responsible for errors or omissions.



Map 2-7
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
Alternative C
South Part of Ririe Reservoir Area

The information displayed here is based on the best available data at the time of publication.
Neither the authors, Reclamation, or any other party here warrant or represent that the information
is in every respect complete and accurate, and are not held responsible for errors or omissions.



Legend

- Boundary Reclamation Lands
- Tex Creek WMA
- Proposed Trail
- Roads
- Stream, Lake or Pond - Perennial
- Non-Mitigation Lands
- Ririe Mitigation Lands
- Existing Active Recreation Area
- Existing Non-Active Recreation Areas
- Proposed Active Recreation Area
- Open Water



0.25 0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Remaining Non-Mitigation Lands

Measures would be the same as described for Creekside Park and Vicinity.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

No additional fish and wildlife enhancement measures are proposed beyond those included in the Tex Creek Management Plan, the same as described for Alternative A.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Measures would be the same as described for Ririe Mitigation Lands in Tex Creek.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

No additional fish and wildlife enhancement measures are proposed beyond those included in the Cartier Slough Management Plan, the same as described for Alternative A.

Improved or Restricted Access

Non-Mitigation Lands

Access would be expanded slightly under Alternative C as compared to Alternative B, and some Alternative B access restrictions would not apply as described below for specific locations.

Creekside Park and Vicinity

Near Creekside Park on the east side of Willow Creek below the dam, access would be the same as Alternative B, with the addition of day use facilities such as picnic tables, trash receptacles, shade structures, and a porta-potty.

Juniper Park and Vicinity

At Juniper Park, the access and trails development would be the same as described for Alternative B.

Ririe Outlet Channel

At the Ririe Outlet Channel, the gates would be opened and existing grazing would be eliminated along the channel roadway to permit full access.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Willow Creek Arm

Seasonal shoreline access restrictions at the Willow Creek Arm would be the same as described for Alternative B.

Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands

Trails on Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands would also be the same as Alternative B.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Teton Mitigation Lands, the Pipe Creek Road would remain open year-round. Reclamation would work with IDFG to provide appropriate informational and regulatory signage alerting users to wildlife sensitivity.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Non-Mitigation Lands

Creekside Park and Vicinity

On the east side of Willow Creek below the dam, in the vicinity of Creekside Park, improvements would be the same as Alternative B, including the Reclamation property signage. Facilities in addition to those described for Alternative B follow.

Juniper Park and Vicinity

At Juniper park, the Visitor's Center and Day Use Area would be improved as described in Alternative B, plus a concessionaire-operated convenience store would be added to the Visitor's Center. As with Alternative B, an orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, and regulatory signage would be provided at the dam overlook and trailhead. The Juniper moorage facility would also include a fishing pier under Alternative C. At the boat launch, winter access for ice fishing would be added to the Alternative B list of improvements. Instead of three day use floating platforms, six platforms would be provided in the reservoir area under Alternative C.

Benchlands Area

On the Benchlands, overnight use of the area would be allowed in addition to the day use facilities described for Alternative B. Also, native vegetation would be removed and an additional area would be mowed for expansion. Instead of three day use floating platforms, six platforms would be provided in the Mid-Reservoir Area within Tex Creek under Alternative C.

Blacktail Park, Access Road, and Adjacent Reservoir Area

At Blacktail Park, the moorage facilities would be expanded. Instead of two day use floating platforms, four platforms would be provided under Alternative C. In addition, Reclamation would develop a new day use area and associated facilities, such as a picnic table, trash receptacle, shade structures, landscaping, and vault toilets, adjacent to the overflow parking area. Additional parking capacity would be provided. A new boat launch facility would be developed at the upper (overflow) parking area. Electrical power could be brought into Blacktail by a party other than Reclamation, probably by permitting right-of-way along the access road into the park. Concessionaire facilities could also be expanded. Overnight camping facilities would be developed for tent, RV, or group camping adjacent to the overflow parking area. Camping would be allowed only during the Blacktail Park season and open fires would not be allowed.

Ririe Outlet Channel

The isolated parcel on the Ririe Outlet Channel would be disposed of under Alternative C.

Ririe Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Remaining Ririe Mitigation Lands

At an agricultural use area shown on Map 2-7, Reclamation would use the same approach as described for the No Action Alternative.

Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

On Teton Mitigation Lands, recreation improvements would be the same as described for Alternative B.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Recreation uses would be the same as Alternative B in the Cartier Slough WMA.

2.4 Alternative Eliminated from Consideration

An alternative was considered at Ririe Reservoir earlier in the process that was eliminated from consideration. The theme of this alternative would have been very limited recreation development and enhanced natural resource protection. During the public involvement process, however, it was determined that very limited additional recreation development was not feasible because development was already past that point. The current ad hoc parking and trail situation, combined with the current overuse of the reservoir recreation facilities on some weekends and holidays and increasing regional population, would continue to contribute to overall resource degradation if use is not better controlled.

3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 is organized by resource area. Resource areas include the following: water quality; soils; vegetation; wildlife; threatened and endangered species; aquatic biology; recreation; land use; public facilities, utilities, and services; environmental justice; cultural resources; sacred sites; Indian Trust Assets (ITAs); and transportation and access. Climate, air quality, geology, topography, water resources and hydrology, socioeconomics, and visual resources are not discussed because no impacts were identified. Two topics are covered for each of the resource areas discussed: the affected environment and the environmental consequences.

The **affected environment** is addressed first and describes the current conditions for each resource within the Ririe Reservoir RMP study area. This is not a comprehensive discussion of every resource within the RMP study area, but focuses on those aspects that would be affected by the alternatives.

The effects of the alternatives are described next in the **environmental consequences** section for each of these resources. Impacts are discussed relative to actions within five broad assessment categories as described in Chapter 2:

- Native vegetation protection and enhancement
- Erosion control
- Native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement
- Improved or restricted access including shoreline access and seasonal site or road closures
- Improved or new facilities or construction including recreation sites, parking, camping, non-motorized trails, piers and moorage, day use and visitor structures, and miscellaneous items such as realty actions

The types of impacts expected to result from implementation of any actions within the five assessment categories are discussed so that the nature of the impacts are known. Then, under the alternatives subheadings, the specific impacts for each alternative are discussed in terms of the actions that would occur and specific information about the impact. Only impacts that cannot be fully avoided through the application of BMPs are described. BMPs, which are considered to be an integral part of the alternatives, are described in Chapter 5.

The depth of analysis corresponds to the scope and magnitude of the potential environmental impact. This chapter compares the effects of the three alternatives described in Chapter 2:

- Alternative A—No Action Alternative: Continuation of Existing Management Practices
- Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis
- Alternative C: Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Alternatives B and C are the action alternatives. Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, describes the most likely actions to occur in the future if the RMP were not implemented. Environmental consequences are discussed for each of the alternatives with impacts of the action alternatives compared to those of the No Action Alternative. Mitigation measures and residual impacts remaining after implementation of mitigation measures are described for Alternative B only. Mitigation measures are actions to reduce identified impacts. No other projects or actions that would cause cumulative impacts on the RMP study area were identified. Therefore, cumulative impacts are not discussed. A brief comparison of impacts of the alternatives by resource area is provided in Table 3.1-1.

Several recreation improvements are listed for each of the alternatives. Such improvements include trails, boat launching facilities, interpretive signage, and parking facilities. Building these facilities depends on developing cost-share agreements with managing partners. Therefore, the level of development described for each alternative would be allowed to occur, but may not actually occur. For the purpose of the alternatives impact analysis, it is assumed that all of the facilities would be built. At a minimum, the existing facilities would be upgraded to current Federal accessibility standards whenever possible. Actions within the alternatives that are not related to recreation, such as noxious weed control, do not require managing partners and non-Federal cost share and would be implemented by Reclamation as described.

Table 3.1-1. Impacts of Alternatives Comparison Summary

Resource Area	Alternative A—No Action	Alternative B—Preferred	Alternative C
Water Quality and Contaminants	<p>Sediment reduction is expected to occur through the TMDL process.</p> <p>Not expanding recreation sites to meet needs may result in water quality degradation from overuse of riparian areas and lack of sanitation facilities.</p>	<p>Greater sediment reduction may occur through TMDL process than for Alternative A.</p> <p>Minor adverse water quality and contaminant impacts would occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased potential of bacteria from swimming areas • Greater numbers of watercraft on the reservoir resulting in increased unburned fuel <p>Water quality and contaminant impacts described above should be minimized by implementing BMPs.</p>	<p>Fewer measures to enhance water quality are included, and recreation is expanded</p> <p>Water quality may not be as favorable as under Alternative B, but would be improved over Alternative A.</p>
Soils	<p>Current soil loss levels from erosion would continue or accelerate as human use increases.</p>	<p>Streamside soil loss would be reduced through increased native vegetation, closing of ad hoc trails, and Reclamation's lead involvement in the TMDL process. Erosion from new non-motorized trails near Ririe Reservoir could be substantial until vegetation is established on disturbed lands.</p>	<p>Soil erosion would be reduced somewhat as compared to the No Action Alternative, but erosion may be greater than Alternative B because of fewer vegetation enhancement and protection measures. Erosion from non-motorized trails would be the same as Alternative B.</p>
Vegetation	<p>Native vegetation communities may decline, because no additional measures would be adopted for protection and enhancement or control of noxious weeds.</p> <p>Some incidental loss would occur as a result of shoreline erosion and ad hoc parking and trails.</p>	<p>Vegetation would be enhanced through noxious weed control and protection and enhancement of riparian communities for their habitat values.</p> <p>About 34 to 37 acres of native vegetation, including 2 acres of herbaceous riparian vegetation, would be impacted by expanding recreation sites and non-motorized trails.</p>	<p>No aggressive measures to control noxious weeds would be implemented.</p> <p>An additional 20.4 acres of native vegetation may be impacted by recreation improvements than the impact of Alternative B.</p>

Table 3.1-1. Impacts of Alternatives Comparison Summary

Resource Area	Alternative A—No Action	Alternative B—Preferred	Alternative C
Wildlife	<p>If native vegetation communities and noxious weed control are not addressed, wildlife habitat values may decline.</p> <p>Existing recreation facilities would not be upgraded to meet increasing demand and new recreation sites and trails would not be constructed. At some point, capacity would be exceeded and the rate of growth in recreation use of the recreation sites and the reservoir would probably be reduced, thereby limiting future indirect impacts on wildlife. It is not known if these limits would be reached during the 10-year time frame of this RMP.</p>	<p>Increased human use of the reservoir and recreation sites would result in an increase in wildlife disturbance compared to the No Action Alternative.</p> <p>Native vegetation communities would be enhanced and noxious weed control increased which would improve wildlife habitat values.</p> <p>Subject to approval from Bonneville County, the Pipe Creek Road would be closed during the winter. This action would substantially increase the area of Tex Creek that is available for use by elk compared to the No Action Alternative. If the County does not agree to close the road, current impacts on elk would continue.</p>	<p>Habitat loss would occur where recreation sites are expanded because of habitat loss and higher levels of use compared to Alternative B.</p> <p>Allowing the development of a power line to Blacktail could impact wildlife habitat because of the development on private land that a power line would facilitate.</p> <p>The Pipe Creek Road would not be closed in winter and impacts on elk would continue.</p>
Threatened and Endangered Species	<p>The effects of current boating activities on the nesting bald eagles are not known. Future use of the reservoir is expected to increase. No access restrictions or monitoring of potential effects are included in Alternative A. Therefore, implementation of Alternative A may impact the nesting pair of bald eagles by reducing productivity or causing nest abandonment but would not affect the continued survival of the bald eagle.</p>	<p>Surveys would be conducted for Ute ladies' tresses independent of any future developments. Impacts on Ute ladies' tresses would be avoided through changes in facility plans.</p> <p>The conclusion of the biological assessment contained in this document states that there will be no effect on threatened and endangered species from the implementation of Alternative B. A 3 year monitoring program is being conducted to determine if the continuation of existing recreation may affect the production of the Willow Creek eagle nest. If the study finds that there is an adverse affect on the nest area usage or production then Reclamation will initiate consultations with the FWS.</p>	<p>Same as Alternative B.</p>

Table 3.1-1. Impacts of Alternatives Comparison Summary

Resource Area	Alternative A—No Action	Alternative B—Preferred	Alternative C
Aquatic Biology	No changes in operation or facilities are proposed that would impact or benefit the fishery resource of the study area compared to existing conditions.	<p>Erosion control measures and native vegetation protection and enhancement in riparian areas would benefit stream and reservoir fisheries.</p> <p>New roads and non-motorized trails constructed in compliance with BMP guidelines, and closure of existing ad hoc trails and parking, may reduce sediment input and improve fisheries over the long term.</p>	Fisheries resource benefits would be the same as described for Alternative B.
Recreation	Overall visitor satisfaction would likely be low as overcrowded conditions persist. Reclamation would continue work to upgrade facilities to be accessible.	<p>Expansion and development of new facilities would increase the opportunities available to visitors without exceeding the recreation carrying capacity of the area.</p> <p>Closing the Pipe Creek Road in Tex Creek during the winter would have an adverse impact on snowmobiling opportunities along the road. However, many opportunities exist on adjacent USFS lands and snow conditions on Tex Creek are often not adequate for snowmobiling.</p>	<p>The actual developed acreage of some recreation areas would be expanded as compared to Alternative B.</p> <p>A new fishing pier, concession facility, and winter access for ice fishing would be allowed at Juniper Park. Visitors would also have recreational use of the Ririe Outlet Channel (no grazing), and additional day use facilities on the east side of Willow Creek below the dam.</p>
Land Use	No direct or indirect land use impacts are expected to result from this alternative.	Minor positive impacts could indirectly result from quality of life enhancements and directly from erosion control measures.	Recreation development would be maximized, and providing electricity in Blacktail could result in indirect adverse land use impacts.

Table 3.1-1. Impacts of Alternatives Comparison Summary

Resource Area	Alternative A—No Action	Alternative B—Preferred	Alternative C
Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services	Without facility expansion and access improvements, overcrowding could result in user conflicts and accidents that could become a law enforcement issue.	Moderate impacts on utilities and public facilities and services would likely result from recreation improvements. These new and expanded accommodations would result in a proportionate increased demands on water supplies, wastewater treatment, and electricity. The increased visitation facilitated by these improvements would generate a proportional increase in solid waste production and contribute to the need for more police and fire services.	Impacts are generally the same as described for Alternative B. Converting the Visitor's Center into a small store could increase consumption of electricity and water, and increase wastewater production. These concessionaire opportunities would also have a minor positive socioeconomic benefit by expanding employment; however, jobs and income generated are expected to be relatively minor.
Environmental Justice	All three alternatives fully comply with Executive Order 12898 thus no adverse impacts to minority or low income populations would result from any alternative.	Alternative B would likely result in beneficial impacts to these populations through enhancement of low-cost recreation opportunities and improved access.	The beneficial impacts would be the same as described for Alternative B.
Cultural Resources	Identification, protection, and management of cultural resources would continue to occur on a project-specific, ad hoc basis, in a reactive instead of proactive mode.	Construction activities may directly impact significant sites by disturbing artifact deposits, and post-construction impacts would result from more intensive public use and improved public access. Public education would acquaint visitors with the importance of cultural resources and the need to protect them, potentially reducing site looting, illicit digging, and vandalism (the opposite effect could occur by calling attention to such sites). Erosion control measures would have positive effects on cultural resources by arresting or halting potential physical deterioration of such resources.	The impacts would be the same or greater as those described for Alternative B because a larger area would be developed for recreation use.

Table 3.1-1. Impacts of Alternatives Comparison Summary

Resource Area	Alternative A—No Action	Alternative B—Preferred	Alternative C
Sacred Sites	The integrity of sacred sites located near Reclamation facilities could be compromised by actual physical disturbances as well as visual or auditory intrusions resulting in changes in character, feeling, and association of the site. In such cases, their "sacredness" and esteem would be diminished.	Agencies are directed to avoid adverse impacts whenever possible. Reclamation would consult with Tribes to seek means to avoid adverse impacts	Impacts are similar to those described for Alternative B.
Indian Trust Assets	The Tribes right to hunt and fish are not impacted.	Same as alternative A.	Same as alternative A.
Transportation and Access	The existing transportation and access system would stay the same in all areas.	Improvements to site parking and access are generally beneficial. However, improvements and additions to facilities draw more users. Individually the impact of these improvements may not be substantial, but cumulatively, they can adversely impact both the physical condition and the operational ability of the roads and facilities they serve.	Impacts or similar to those described for Alternative B.

3.2 Water Quality

3.2.1 Affected Environment

The erosion potential of the fine soils in the Ririe Reservoir watershed is high; as a result, sediment is the primary pollutant of concern in the reservoir and throughout much of the Willow Creek drainage. Upstream of Ririe Dam, turbidity is high during the late winter and spring runoff and generally remains so until midsummer (IDFG 1996).

Ririe Reservoir and many of the creeks within the boundaries of Tex Creek have been determined to be water quality limited because of high sediment loads. This means that they do not support their designated beneficial uses or exceed water quality standards (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality [IDEQ 1998]). As a result, these water bodies have been listed in the Draft 1998 303(d) List (IDEQ 1998 submitted to EPA January 7, 1999), and are required to have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) submitted to EPA in 2002. Table 3.2-1 lists the water bodies in the vicinity of Ririe Reservoir that are included in the Draft 1998 303(d) List.

Table 3.2-1. Draft 1998 303(d) Listed Water Body Segments in the Vicinity of Ririe Reservoir

Water Body	Boundary	Miles of Listed Stream
Willow Creek	Ririe Dam to the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) boundary	5.38
Ririe Reservoir	N/A	N/A
Willow Creek	Grays Lake Outlet to Ririe Reservoir	16.79
Willow Creek	Headwaters to Sellars Creek	19.09
Meadow Creek	Headwaters to Ririe Reservoir	10.58
Tex Creek	Headwaters to Indian Fork	8.34

Source: IDEQ 1998

According to Idaho Department of Health and Welfare rules, these waters “are to be protected for beneficial uses, which includes all recreational use in and on the water and the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife, wherever attainable.” In August 1997, as part of the IDEQ Beneficial Use Reconnaissance Project, Ririe Reservoir water quality was measured at two stations. One station was located at the mouth of Willow Creek and the other in the Ririe Reservoir forebay (the pool just above the dam). Data from that particular sampling effort indicated intermediate nutrient availability and biological productivity (borderline mesotrophic/meso-eutrophic) and a stratified reservoir consistent with the trophic status determination reported in the Classification of Idaho’s Freshwater Lakes (Milligan et al. 1983). Shallow chlorophyll a and total phosphorus concentrations measured during this particular event were higher in the Willow Creek mouth than in the forebay. A fecal coliform sample collected in the

forebay resulted in less than 10 colonies per 100 mL. This level is considered low and is far below the Idaho water quality criteria for primary and secondary contact recreation.

Cartier Slough gets its water from surface and groundwater flows associated with the Henrys Fork of the Snake River. No specific water quality data are available for Cartier Slough; however, the water would be expected to be of similar quality as that in the Henrys Fork. The Henrys Fork in this reach is not listed in the Draft 1998 303(d) List of impaired water bodies.

The Ririe Reservoir Outlet Channel is dry for most of the year and does not support aquatic life. Therefore, high sediment loads in the channel would have no impacts.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences

The following sections discuss water quality effects that result from erosion and other sources. The effects of soil erosion on water quality include high sediment concentrations in the water column resulting in high turbidities and loss of fish habitat and benthic productivity. Sediment is also a means of transporting phosphorus to the water column that can result in the growth of aquatic plants and algae.

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Possibly faster or improved reestablishment of native plant communities on former farmed lands under Alternative B would benefit water quality in the long term by providing a more permanent vegetative cover that reduces erosion. In the short term, erosion rates would increase over current levels on a localized scale as the conversion proceeds.

Increased efforts to protect native vegetation on all Reclamation lands under Alternative B would reduce site-specific erosion and water quality degradation. Alternative B would also improve riparian habitat on Teton Mitigation Lands and at Cartier Slough under Alternative B. These actions would also reduce ongoing erosion and water quality degradation.

Erosion Control

Efforts to monitor and address erosion problems on all Reclamation lands would increase under Alternatives B and C. Minimizing erosion on Reclamation lands would include erosion control structures, sediment basins, native shrub plantings, riparian vegetation plantings, and strategies to avoid overuse of resources by wintering game and livestock. Erosion control programs would be implemented during all construction and operations and maintenance programs (Chapter 5). Also, under Alternative B, Reclamation would take a leadership role in a future TMDL process for the Willow Creek watershed to quantify the sources of erosion and implement erosion controls. All such actions would benefit water quality by reducing the input of sediment to water bodies.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

All alternatives include continued cooperation with IDFG under their Tex Creek and Cartier Slough Management Plans. Riparian habitat protection would reduce erosion and moderate water temperature by providing shade, both of which promote good water quality and thus a healthy aquatic habitat. More active improvement of riparian habitat would occur under Alternative B on Reclamation lands at Ririe and Tex Creek, further reducing erosion.

Improved or Restricted Access

Non-motorized trails that would be constructed from the Juniper area and, to the south from Blacktail under Alternatives B and C would result primarily in minor removal of native vegetation, thus increasing erosion potential and water quality degradation. Soil erosion potential from these trails is discussed in Section 3.3, *Soils*.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Development of new recreation facilities, including roads, parking lots, and campgrounds, under Alternatives B and C would result in minor short- and long-term water quality and contaminant impacts. Potential impacts include degraded stormwater runoff quality, drainage channel instability and subsequent erosion from increased stormwater runoff quantity, and an increased risk of swimming-associated health effects resulting from bacterial contamination from more numerous swimmers.

As paved surfaces replace vegetation that once intercepted rain and allowed it to infiltrate, the amount of stormwater runoff increases. In addition, stormwater quality is adversely affected as runoff from areas such as parking lots collects and transports pollutants, including nutrients, petroleum products, bacteria from animals, organic chemicals, heavy metals, and sediment.

Where irrigated lawns are created, water quality problems related to over-irrigation and over-fertilization are a potential impact that would likely occur to some degree.

For these reasons, the development of recreation facilities under Alternatives B and C would involve BMPs to collect and treat stormwater runoff (Chapter 5). Successful implementation of BMPs would keep these impacts minor.

Finally, the combination of improved facilities under Alternatives B and C and the general local area population increase (all alternatives) would result in greater numbers of watercraft using the reservoir. This would increase the amount of unburned fuel being discharged to the water, an adverse water quality effect.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

The primary, existing water quality concern under the No Action Alternative is sediment from erosion. Erosion control measures have been implemented in some portions of the Willow Creek watershed, and a future TMDL process would address issues related to sediment such as load capacity, source controls, and load allocation requirements. Assuming a TMDL process is undertaken and successfully implemented, erosion-related water quality issues would be expected to improve.

Ongoing IDFG activities, including conversion of former farm land to native shrub communities at Tex Creek and control of noxious and invasive weeds at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough, would continue more or less at their current levels. Conversion of former farm land would result in short-term increases in erosion and sediment. Noxious and invasive weed control would continue at current levels and infestations of these plants would likely increase because of the dramatic increase in the size and number of infestations of these species throughout the West. The erosion control potential associated with these species would likely be less than a multi-storied canopy associated with a diverse, native species distribution. Any effects of increased noxious weed infestation on water quality would be very minor. Riparian habitat improvements would not be increased over existing activities, resulting in a continuation of current site-specific treatment of erosion problems and current levels of sediment in streams.

Existing recreation facilities would not be upgraded to meet increasing demand and new recreation sites and trails would not be constructed. At some point, capacity would be exceeded and the level of recreation use of the recreation sites and the reservoir would probably flatten out because of over-crowding, thereby limiting future impacts on water quality. It is not known if these limits would be reached during the 10-year time frame of this RMP.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Relatively minor adverse water quality and contaminant impacts would occur under Alternative B. Compared to Alternative A, an increased potential of bacterial contamination in the designated swimming areas would result from more swimmers. Because these areas are designated, there would likely be a higher percentage of swimmers under the age of 15, which elevates the likelihood of feces-contaminated water and water ingestion. Another source of increased bacterial contamination compared to Alternative A would be stormwater runoff from the equestrian trail beginning at Blacktail.

Improved or expanded boating facilities at Juniper and Blacktail (Table 2.2-1) would likely result in greater numbers of watercraft on the reservoir compared to Alternative A. Thus, the amount of unburned fuel discharged to water would increase as well. However, impacts would be localized in high use areas and would be minor on a reservoir-wide scale.

Recreation developments at Creekside and Juniper (Table 2.2-1) would result in minor short- and long-term impacts on water quality as described under the assessment categories. Because Alternative B includes implementation of BMPs, all of the other potential water quality and contaminant impacts described above would be minimized. Water quality benefits would result from the vegetation protection and enhancement actions, improved erosion control efforts, and riparian habitat protection as described in the Assessment Categories. In addition, Reclamation would take a lead role in the TMDL process. This should increase the success of sediment reduction measures required by the TMDL process.

Trails would be constructed from Juniper and Blacktail. Generally, trail construction in steep terrain involves some land clearing and leveling, so construction-related erosion is a potential problem. The water quality impacts associated with erosion, described above, would occur in the short term following trail construction. Although cut and fill slopes would be aggressively revegetated to minimize erosion, some minor water quality impacts would be expected because of the steep terrain and erosive soils. This would only be an impact on water quality where trails are close enough to water bodies for eroded material to enter the water. The BMPs described in Chapter 5, *Environmental Commitments*, to reduce soil erosion and subsequent water quality impacts would be implemented, making this a minor impact.

Horse dung along the equestrian trail in the Blacktail area under Alternatives B and C would be a source of bacteria that could be transported to surface water by stormwater runoff. However, with proper trail maintenance and revegetation as planned, stormwater runoff to water bodies should be minimized, thus making this a minor, but ongoing impact.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Expansion of moorage facilities and construction of a new boat launch facility at Blacktail would promote increased recreation activity on the reservoir, resulting in increased adverse water quality and contaminant affects compared to both the No Action Alternative and Alternative B. This effect would primarily result from unburned fuel discharges to the reservoir. As in Alternative B, impacts would be localized and would be relatively minor on a reservoir-wide scale.

Recreation sites at Creekside and Juniper would be the same as under Alternative B, with impacts as described in the facilities assessment category. Recreation facilities would also be improved or expanded at Benchlands and Blacktail resulting in minor short- and long-term erosion-related adverse impacts or water quality in the immediate vicinity of these facilities. Adverse impacts would be greater than under Alternatives A and B.

Additional day use and parking facilities would be designed and constructed using similar BMPs as required for Alternative B. However, because of the expanded facilities that would be created under Alternative C, the BMPs to control stormwater runoff quantity and quality would have greater capacity than required for Alternative B. Creation of more irrigated areas would increase the likelihood of greater localized water quality impacts than for either the No Action Alternative and Alternative B.

Alternative C does not include increased levels of monitoring and control of noxious and invasive weeds at Tex Creek or Cartier Slough, or increased efforts to improve riparian habitat conditions at Tex Creek. Not implementing these increased levels of effort would result in minor ongoing adverse impacts similar to those of the No Action Alternative, and would not achieve the water quality benefits expected for Alternative B.

Also, Reclamation would not take a leadership role in the future TMDL process under Alternative C. Thus, the sediment reduction benefits expected under Alternative B associated with playing a leadership role may be lower. The outcome would be the same as under the No Action Alternative.

3.3 Soils

3.3.1 Affected Environment

The Torriorthents-Rock Outcrop complex dominates soil in the vicinity of Ririe Reservoir (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] 1981a; formerly the U.S. Soil Conservation Service). The complex is approximately 60 percent Torriorthents and 30 percent rock outcrop and is highly erosive. Certain areas of the Aquic Cryoborolls-Typic Cryaquolls complex are found on level to gently sloping areas under and immediately adjacent to the reservoir. These soils are described in Table 3.3-1.

Table 3.3-1. Affected Soils at Ririe Reservoir, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough

Name	Characteristics	Location	Erosion Hazard	Permeability	Rooting Depth (inches)
Ririe/Tex Creek					
Torriorthents	Formed in colluvium derived from shale, volcanic rock, or sandstone. Slopes of 35 to 65 percent. Rock fragment content from 0 to 80 percent. Mildly to strongly alkaline. Shallow to very deep and well drained.	60% of soil near Ririe Reservoir	High; rapid runoff	Slow to rapid with low to high water holding capacity	20 to 60
Ririe silt loams	Moderately alkaline. Very deep and well drained, with moderate permeability.	South- and west-facing slopes of foothills near reservoir	Moderate; slow runoff. Steeper slopes increase runoff; hazard becomes very high	Moderate	Greater than 60

Table 3.3-1. Affected Soils at Ririe Reservoir, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough

Name	Characteristics	Location	Erosion Hazard	Permeability	Rooting Depth (inches)
Aquic Cryoborolls-Typic Cryaquolls complex	Very deep and somewhat poorly drained adjacent to the reservoir or river. Composed of silt loam to silty clay. Wetland and riparian communities are typically found on these soils.	Near Ririe Reservoir	Slight; slow runoff	—	—
Rin Silt Loam	Neutral, very deep, and well drained.	North-facing slopes in Tex Creek	Moderate; rapid runoff	—	—
Cartier Slough					
Channeled Haplaquolls	Deep, very poorly or poorly drained. Ponds and channels measuring up to 2 feet deep and 15 feet wide are present on the surface.	Floodplains near the Teton and Snake Rivers	Slight	—	20 to 60
Mathon-Rock outcrop-Modkin complex	Formed in sandy eolian deposits. Shallow with bedrock at 20 to 40 inches.	Laid over basalt plains in Cartier Slough	Moderate; slow runoff	Moderately rapid	—
Grassy Butte	Loamy sand formed in sandy eolian deposits. Deep and somewhat excessively drained.	Laid over basalt plains in Cartier Slough	Water erosion hazard is slight to moderate; wind erosion is high	Rapid; low water holding capacity	—

Source: NRCS 1981a and 1981b

Soils at Cartier Slough are primarily channeled Haplaquolls, Mathon-Rock outcrop-Modkin complex, and Grassy Butte loamy sand (NRCS 1981b). The soils are inundated by flooding every spring (IDFG 1998a) but generally have low water erosion potential (Table 3.3-1). A large amount of sediment was deposited on Cartier Slough as Teton flood waters receded.

Soil erosion is a serious problem on Tex Creek and surrounding private lands in the Willow Creek watershed. Removal of bank-stabilizing riparian vegetation, especially in agricultural areas, has left the highly erosive soils vulnerable to serious erosion. Numerous localized measures primarily associated with improving riparian vegetation conditions have been implemented by IDFG to reduce erosion problems on Tex Creek and the NRCS has programs to reduce erosion from agricultural lands. Section 3.3, *Water Quality and Contaminants*, discusses soil erosion, control measures on Tex Creek, and associated water quality problems in greater detail. Soil erosion is

generally not a problem at Cartier Slough because of the flat topography of the site. Some minor erosion does occur along the banks of the Henrys Fork during high runoff events. However, this erosion is related to natural fluvial processes associated with seasonal high flows in the unchannelized river.

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Native vegetation protection and enhancement measures included in Alternatives B and C would beneficially impact soil resources through increased erosion protection. Maintenance or enhancement of native vegetation communities would provide an intact plant canopy cover, which reduces precipitation-induced dislodgment of soil particles from the soil surface. This is particularly true for riparian areas.

IDFG is in the process of re-establishing native shrub communities on areas that were formerly farmed within Reclamation's Teton Mitigation Lands. This would continue under all alternatives but the process would be improved under Alternatives B and C. There would be short-term local increases in soil erosion during conversion and possibly somewhat higher long-term erosion because of more sparse native cover than provided by dense, smooth brome.

An improved noxious weed infestation monitoring and control plan would be developed and implemented by Reclamation and IDFG under Alternatives B and C at both Tex Creek and Cartier Slough and on Ririe Non-Mitigation Lands. This plan would permit better decision-making and would decrease erosion by protecting native plant communities. Native communities tend to be multi-canopied, which would provide better soil protection than weedy communities.

Erosion Control

Alternatives B and C include increased monitoring and control of erosion at recreation sites, along roads and trails, and in riparian areas on all Reclamation lands addressed in the RMP. Actively identifying and addressing specific erosion problems as they arise would keep small problems from getting worse and would reduce erosion from Reclamation lands. Development of future TMDLs, with Reclamation as a lead agency under Alternative B, would be expected to substantially reduce sediment entering water courses on Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands from within Tex Creek and from offsite. Implementation of actions identified during a TMDL process would be expected to reduce the movement of eroded soils into Tex Creek streams and into Ririe Reservoir. Reclamation would take a less active role in the TMDL process under Alternative C, which may reduce the effectiveness of the process in reducing soil erosion.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Actions to improve upland and riparian habitat under native and fish wildlife protection would tend to reduce soil erosion and soil loss. These measures would be implemented in all Reclamation lands under Alternative B and on Non-Mitigation Lands and Teton Mitigation Lands at Tex Creek under Alternative C.

Improved or Restricted Access

Restricting livestock access along a portion of the Ririe Outlet Channel under Alternative B would increase vegetation cover and reduce soil loss and subsequent loss of productivity.

Development of new trails and trailheads at Juniper and Blacktail under Alternatives B and C would concentrate non-motorized offroad use onto trails designed and constructed to prevent erosion and subsequent soil loss. Development of new trails may also result in abandonment (or at least less use) of numerous ad hoc trails. These networks of ad hoc trails have resulted in minor gully formation, accelerated erosion, bank failure, and runoff pathways directly into the reservoir or streams. All these outcomes of undeveloped trails lead to loss of soil; a situation that would likely improve through new trail creation.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Recreation facilities would be expanded or improved at Creekside, Juniper, Benchlands, and Blacktail under Alternatives B and C. These actions would result in short-term increases in soil erosion during construction. Organizing parking areas and increasing parking area lot size would discourage using vegetated areas adjacent to existing parking lots as ad hoc overflow parking areas. This would improve groundcover and reduce soil compaction, which would lessen soil loss and surface runoff.

Expansion of existing facilities under Alternatives B and C would encourage additional visitor days, which would result in minor adverse impacts to natural areas adjacent to the facilities. Examples include expansion of day-use areas, construction of visitor center or kiosks, enlargement of campgrounds, and establishment of additional primitive camping sites. As native vegetation is impacted from increased visitor use, soil loss would accelerate. Expansion of boat ramps would result in increased use on the edges of the ramp. These areas would be compacted and devoid of vegetation, which would increase soil loss and surface runoff directly into the reservoir. Erosion control at facilities would improve compared to current conditions under Alternatives B and C, but not Alternative A.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

No additional effort would be expended to protect or enhance native vegetation under Alternative A. Management activities directed toward erosion and noxious weed control would continue to be reactive rather than proactive. Soil loss from erosion in native vegetation areas, resulting from low

canopy cover levels, would continue. Current levels of noxious weed control would continue, with continued expansion of noxious weed infested areas. The current rate of native shrub establishment on formerly farmed lands would continue within Reclamation's Teton Mitigation Lands.

Erosion monitoring and immediate rectification of problem areas on Reclamation lands at Ririe and Tex Creek would not occur under Alternative A. Current soil loss levels from erosion would continue or accelerate as human use increases. Riparian area improvement and protection would only occur in accordance with the Tex Creek Management Plan and streamside areas would continue to experience soil loss.

Ad hoc trails on Reclamation lands at Ririe and Tex Creek would continue to be used and new ad hoc trails would be established. Gully formation, bank failure, vegetation loss, and surface runoff from ad hoc trails would continue. Cattle trespass would continue along the Outlet Channel and ad hoc trespass grazing would continue at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough. Current cattle management practices would not change under Alternative A.

No new recreation facilities would be developed on Reclamation lands at Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek in this alternative. However, use of these facilities would continue to increase and lead to accelerated soil loss as ad hoc use expands into additional surrounding natural areas.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Increased native vegetation protection and enhancement and improved programs to monitor and control erosion and noxious weeds on all Reclamation lands would improve vegetative cover and reduce soil erosion in the long term compared to Alternative A. Native shrub establishment may improve on Teton Mitigation Lands, resulting in reduced long term soil erosion compared to Alternative A. Soil erosion would also be reduced compared to Alternative A by controlling grazing and grazing access along the Ririe Outlet Channel.

New trails and trailheads would be developed and ad hoc trail use reduced at Creekside Park, reducing soil erosion in the long term compared to Alternative A. New trails developed from trailheads at Juniper and Blacktail would be constructed mostly on highly erosive Torriorthents soils. Soil loss immediately following construction could be substantial. Design, construction timing, construction methods, and revegetation procedures for these trails would involve development and application of specific BMPs in addition to those listed in Chapter 5 to minimize erosion during and after construction. Trail development at Cartier Slough would result in minor soil loss during spring flooding compared to Alternative A.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Impacts that would result from implementation of Alternative C would be the same as those described for Alternative B except as indicated below.

Compared to Alternative B, additional lands would be cleared for construction of facilities at Benchlands and Blacktail. These actions would cause an increase in short-term soil erosion compared to either Alternative A or B. The increased efforts to improve riparian habitat described for Alternative B would not occur, which is the same as Alternative A. Grazing would continue along the Ririe Outlet Channel, but under private ownership. Therefore, impacts on vegetation cover and soil erosion would probably be similar to those of Alternative A. Finally, Reclamation would not take a lead role in a future TMDL process, which would probably reduce the effectiveness of measures to reduce soil erosion that are developed during the process. This is similar to Alternative A.

3.4 Vegetation

3.4.1 Affected Environment

Reclamation's Non-Mitigation Lands and the Tex Creek WMA

Upland Cover Types

The *Tex Creek Management Plan* (IDFG 1998a) defines 12 upland cover types on the WMA. Vegetation on the area is diverse with good interspersions of different cover types. Bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*) shrub-steppe is the largest single natural cover type (about 3,500 acres). Big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), low sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula*), juniper (*Juniperus*), and serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*) shrub fields are common. Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) is the most predominant forest cover type. Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) occupies about 250 acres. Of the nearly 5,500 acres of historical cropland, about 4,700 acres have been converted back to permanent herbaceous cover, which is dominated by smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*) with lesser amounts of perennial forbs such as alfalfa, Lewis blue flax (*Linum lewisii*), small burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*), and bunch grasses such as Sherman bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum*). About 800 acres remain in winter wheat rotation to serve as an attractant and high quality winter and spring forage for mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*). Reclamation lands within the WMA extend from the lowest to the highest elevations and include all of the cover types present in the area. Active vegetation management actions have included planting over 170,000 shrubs.

Wetlands and Riparian Cover Types

The steep sides of the Willow Creek canyon through the reservoir area and fluctuating water levels during the growing season eliminate virtually all potential wetland and riparian cover types from the reservoir shoreline. Wetlands and riparian cover types do occur along all of the major perennial and intermittent drainages and springs on Tex Creek. Riparian communities include about 280 acres of willow-dominated lands and about 300 acres of other riparian cover types. Common overstory and understory species are listed on Table 3.4-1. About 16 acres of ponds have been developed by

IDFG to increase waterfowl production and habitat diversity, control erosion, improve water quality, hasten the recovery of eroded areas, and attempt to raise the water table and sub-irrigation of developed fields. Vegetation around the ponds includes hardstem bulrush (*Scirpus acutus*).

Table 3.4-1. Wetland and Riparian Cover Type Species in Tex Creek

Common Name	Scientific Name
Overstory Species	
Booth willow	<i>Salix boothii</i>
Drummond willow	<i>Salix drummondiana</i>
sandbar willow	<i>Salix exigua</i>
bog birch	<i>Betula glandulosa</i>
red-osier dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>
bearberry honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera involucrata</i>
Understory Species	
several sedges	<i>Carex</i> spp.
Baltic rush	<i>Juncus balticus</i>
western meadowrue	<i>Thalictrum occidentale</i>
starry Solomon-plume	<i>Smilacina stellata</i>
goldenrod	<i>Solidago canadensis</i>
Kentucky bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>

Source: Youngblood et al. 1985

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weeds have been under active control on Reclamation mitigation lands at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough since management agreements between Reclamation and IDFG were completed in the late 1970s. Control efforts are more intensive on Teton mitigation lands at Tex Creek than on Ririe mitigation lands because of access limitations and steep terrain. Control measures include proper land practices, mechanical control, chemical control, and biological control. The four main weed species being controlled are musk thistle (*Carduus nutans*), Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), houndstongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*), and hoary cress or white top (*Cardaria draba*). Leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) has not been identified on the area but is found on adjacent lands. Common burdock (*Arctium minus*) is not classified as a noxious weed but is controlled on Tex Creek because it is considered a wildlife problem. A plan was developed in 1990 to establish guidelines, goals, and objectives for the control of noxious weeds on Tex Creek.

The most common methods of weed movement onto and within Tex Creek are vehicles, animal movements (wildlife, permitted, and trespass cattle), hay brought in to Tex Creek as horse feed by hunters and riders, and wind- or water-borne seed. Weed monitoring plots have been established throughout the area for permanent monitoring of infestations. Stem counts are conducted annually to determine effectiveness of control measures.

The long-term objective is to eliminate chemical control and rely on biological weed control on the area. Biological control was started in the early 1980s by Reclamation and IDFG with the release of the musk thistle seed head weevil around Ririe Reservoir. Starting in the early 1990s, releases of Canada thistle seed head weevils began on Tex Creek. Releases now include Canada thistle stem

mining weevils and defoliating beetles. Chemical control is still used on infestations found along roadways, heavily used areas, and new infestations. Rapid revegetation of disturbed soil prior to noxious weed infestation is the preferred management option. Establishment of desirable plants minimizes weed control requirements.

Cartier Slough WMA

Cartier Slough is located on the floodplain of the Henrys Fork. There are approximately 2.8 miles of riverbank and approximately 4 miles of slough channels (former river meanders). This is an uncontrolled and unchannelized section of the Henrys Fork where seasonal flooding and natural fluvial processes play a critical role in maintaining valuable long-term wildlife habitat. As much as 90 percent of the area is flooded during May and June of high runoff years. This regular flooding exerts a strong influence on the vegetation. The Cartier Slough management plan indicates that the primary plant communities include about 380 acres of floodplain grassland, 295 acres of willow-dominated communities, and about 155 acres of black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) and aspen. There are smaller areas of sagebrush/grassland, wet meadow, irrigated perennial grasses and shrubs, and about 35 acres of open water ponds and sloughs. Common species are listed on Table 3.4-2.

Table 3.4-2. Common Plant Species in Cartier Slough

Common Name	Scientific Name
black cottonwood	<i>Populus trichocarpa</i>
aspen	<i>Populus tremuloides</i>
black hawthorn	<i>Crataegus douglasii</i>
red-osier dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>
snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos alba</i>
sagebrush	<i>Artemisia spp.</i>
rabbitbrush	<i>Chrysothamnus nauseosus</i>
several willows	<i>Salix spp.</i>
common cattail	<i>Typha latifolia</i>
hardstem bulrush	<i>Scirpus acutus</i>
Baltic rush	<i>Juncus balticus</i>
creeping spike-rush	<i>Eleocharis palustris</i>
short-beaked sedge	<i>Carex simulata</i>
reed canary grass	<i>Phalaris asendinaceal</i>
Kentucky bluegrass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>

Source: Youngblood et al. 1985

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weed infestations identified in Cartier Slough include leafy spurge, Canada thistle, musk thistle, spotted knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*), diffuse knapweed (*C. diffusa*) purple loosestrife (*Lythium salicaria*), and plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*). These species have come to be present on the area through a variety of means such as deposition of seed material during high flows, spread from motor vehicles, and past cattle grazing. Control measures include

both chemical and biological controls and reseeded disturbed areas to increase competition by desirable plant species. High spring flows often hamper control efforts.

3.4.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Under all alternatives, Reclamation's continued cooperation in implementing IDFG's Tex Creek and Cartier Slough Management Plans would maintain existing native vegetation communities in all areas not slated for expansion of recreation facilities under Alternatives B and C.

Reestablishment of native shrub communities is being implemented by IDFG on areas that were formerly farmed within the Teton Mitigation Lands. Alternative B would formalize the plan for this conversion and may improve the conversion process, to the benefit of native plants.

Noxious weed infestations at both Tex Creek and Cartier Slough have displaced native vegetation, because they can out-compete native species under most circumstances. Reclamation would increase its efforts to monitor and control noxious weeds on all mitigation and non-mitigation lands at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough under Alternative B. Native vegetation communities would be improved and expanded by preventing infestations or improving control of noxious and invasive weeds. Lack of increased control at Cartier Slough under Alternative C would result in the continued degradation of native plant communities as noxious weeds increase.

Erosion Control

Active identification and repair of erosion along stream channels and trails on all Reclamation lands under Alternative B, and at Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek under Alternative C, would involve planting native plant species in eroded areas. This would improve the extent of native plant communities on these lands, which would also curtail erosion before it has a chance to further degrade existing vegetation. Continuation of the existing level of erosion control efforts on all Reclamation lands under Alternative A would result in loss of additional plant communities. While these losses would be relatively minor, riparian communities would suffer disproportionately higher losses than upland cover types.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Continuing cooperation with IDFG under their Tex Creek and Cartier Slough Management Plans would help to maintain the current condition of native plant communities. Maintaining and protecting riparian habitat on all Reclamation lands under Alternative B would involve actively improving riparian habitat and would benefit native vegetation communities. As described in Chapter 2, managing Ririe non-mitigation lands and Tex Creek to improve wildlife and fish habitat would

involve improvement of native plant communities, in most instances. Enhancement, and protection of riparian communities would enlarge the extent and improve the quality of those communities.

Improved or Restricted Access

Eliminating grazing along the Ririe Outlet Channel under Alternative B would reduce the removal of plant cover by livestock and replace weedy vegetation with upland shrubs, grasses, and forbs. Trail development under Alternatives B and C would negatively affect vegetation by removing plants to build trails, as well as providing a pathway for introduction of noxious weeds. Approximately 1 acre of native vegetation would be lost for each mile of trail developed in flat areas around Ririe Reservoir and at Cartier Slough. In steeper terrain, approximately 1/2 to 1 more acre of land would be disturbed to construct trails because of cut and fill losses. The equestrian trail constructed from Blacktail would result in the loss of about 2 acres of native vegetation per mile. All cut and fill slopes would be immediately revegetated to reduce erosion. However, full reestablishment of vegetation along trails would require several years because of the general lack of summer rain.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

In general, areas where facilities are developed under Alternative C would result in the conversion of native vegetation to managed plant communities. In most instances, development of recreation facilities would result in the total loss of all native vegetation, where the new facilities are expanding into undisturbed vegetation. Trail improvements and resultant increased visitor use would result in greater disturbance and/or displacement of wildlife during periods of use. Trail development would adhere to all pertinent BMPs listed in Chapter 5 and habitat loss would be mitigated as described in Section 3.5, *Wildlife*.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices/Agreements

Current vegetation protection measures contained within IDFG's management plans at Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands and Cartier Slough would continue. These actions would generally maintain native vegetation at the current level of health and development.

The current reactive erosion control activities would continue, which would result in continuing minor loss of native vegetation to erosion at Creekside Park and Vicinity, remaining Ririe Non-Mitigation Lands. Erosion is being addressed in the Tex Creek Management Plan at remaining Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands. These actions would continue.

Native fish and wildlife enhancement measures (riparian vegetation protection and enhancement) at Creekside Park and Vicinity or on remaining Ririe Non-Mitigation Lands would not occur. Current levels of protection for native fish and wildlife (riparian vegetation) by IDFG at remaining Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands, and Cartier Slough would continue. Vegetation conditions would be expected to remain stable or improve slowly on all Reclamation lands.

Facilities would not change at Creekside Park, Juniper Park, Benchlands, and Blacktail Park. Increasing usage at these facilities would further adversely impact nearby native vegetation.

Grazing would continue along the Ririe Outlet Channel. However, it would occur under a lease instead of the current trespass situation. The condition of current vegetation would not change.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Except at recreation sites, native vegetation would continue to be protected on Ririe Non-Mitigation Lands resulting in no change in vegetation condition. Increased noxious weed monitoring and control efforts would be implemented on all Reclamation lands, which would improve native vegetation compared to Alternative A.

Native vegetation would be protected through monitoring and repair of erosion problems on all lands. Native fish and wildlife habitat (for example, riparian vegetation) would be protected and enhanced on all lands. Reclamation would take a lead role in a future TMDL process to reduce erosion and sediment, which impacts native wetland and riparian vegetation on all Reclamation lands.

If implemented, winter closure of the Pipe Creek Road would protect native vegetation adjacent to the road from damage by snowmobiles. Grazing management and livestock access controls may be implemented at the Ririe Outlet Channel and a parcel along the channel would be converted to plants that would benefit local wildlife, an improvement compared to Alternative A.

Six to nine acres of native vegetation would be impacted through development of new trails in the Juniper Park area, including construction of a 4- to 6-mile trail along the east side of Ririe Reservoir. Another trail, with equestrian facilities, would be developed starting at the Blacktail area and extending south along Willow Creek. This trail would impact approximately 8 acres of mostly big sagebrush. Trail development would adhere to all pertinent BMPs listed in Chapter 5 and habitat loss would be mitigated as described in Section 3.5, *Wildlife*.

The footprints of the major proposed recreation sites included under Alternative B are shown as proposed recreation sites on Maps 2-4 and 2-5. Site-specific designs for these areas are not available at this time. For this impact assessment, it is assumed that all of the native vegetation within the footprints would be converted to facilities or non-native vegetation. The only exception is at Creekside, where most facilities would be constructed in disturbed areas. Based on these assumptions, the maximum extent of native vegetation communities that would be impacted by proposed recreation facilities is 36.7 acres. Site by site estimates of vegetation impacts are presented in Table 3.4-3. Nearly half of the affected acreage would be lost along linear features spread out over about 10 miles.

Table 3.4-3 Acres of Native Vegetation Types that Would be Impacted under Alternative B

Area	Vegetation Type/Acres Impacted						
	Aspen	Big Sagebrush	Montane Shrub	Perennial Grass	Agricultural/Lawn	Juniper	Herbaceous Riparian
Creekside Trail	—	1.0	—	—	—	—	—
Juniper Area	—	9.5	—	0.3	0.5	1.4	—
Juniper/East Side Trail	—	6.0 - 9.0	—	—	—	—	—
Blacktail Trail	—	7.5	0.5	—	—	—	—
Teton Mitigation Land Trails	1.0	2.0	2.0	—	—	—	—
Cartier Slough Trail	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.0
Total	1.0	26.0-29.0	2.5	0.3	0.5	1.4	2.0

Mitigation

Design of Creekside Park would avoid the loss of riparian vegetation by placing facilities in existing disturbed areas and keeping all facilities except stream crossings at least 20 feet away from the edge of Willow Creek. No trees would be removed during construction. A wildlife biologist or botanist would be actively involved in site design to assure that impacts to riparian vegetation are avoided. If unplanned losses of riparian vegetation did occur during construction, losses would be replaced on at least a 1:1 basis in the immediate vicinity of the park. Replacement of lost riparian vegetation would occur concurrently with recreation site construction.

Design of other recreation sites would minimize native vegetation losses by locating facilities in existing disturbed areas to the maximum extent possible. For example, parking facilities may be located in existing ad hoc parking areas to minimize loss of native vegetation if these are suitable locations for parking. Kiosks and interpretive centers would be placed within existing developed recreation areas and kept from areas of native vegetation. All construction areas would be revegetated with appropriate native vegetation immediately following construction.

All lost native vegetation that provides critical big game winter range would be mitigated through winter range enhancement on other Reclamation lands at Tex Creek. This action is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5 *Wildlife*.

Residual Impacts

BMPs intended to avoid or reduce losses of native vegetation at all facilities would minimize short-term vegetation loss. Short-term losses of native vegetation in critical winter range areas would persist for several years until mitigation measures compensate for losses. Indirect impacts related to human disturbance cannot be avoided.

Regular monitoring and aggressive control of noxious and invasive weeds is expected to reduce infestations of these plants at disturbed sites. However, some increase in these plants at new recreation sites and along trails is likely in spite of these efforts.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Impacts of Alternative C would be the same as those of Alternative B except as described below. Native vegetation enhancement and protection measures proposed under Alternative B would be implemented with this Alternative, except that more aggressive noxious weed monitoring and control would not occur on Non-Mitigation Lands and at Cartier Slough. This would allow the continued loss of native vegetation to aggressive weed populations. The problem would be expected to worsen with time and increased human use of these areas as described for Alternative B.

Native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement measures proposed in Alternative B would continue, except that riparian habitat improvement on Teton Mitigation Land would not occur. Implementation of the Tex Creek Management Plan would continue. Potential habitat improvements would not be as good as under Alternative B but would be better than under Alternative A.

Native plant communities that would be impacted under Alternative C are shown in Table 3.4-4. A maximum of 57.1 acres of native vegetation would be impacted, with up to 16.5 of these acres occurring along linear trail features.

Table 3.4-4. Acres of Native Vegetation Types that Would be Impacted under Alternative C

Area	Vegetation Type/Acres Impacted							
	Aspen	Big Sagebrush	Low Sagebrush	Montane Shrub	Perennial Grass	Agricultural/Lawn	Juniper	Herbaceous Riparian
Creekside Trail	—	1.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Juniper Area	—	9.5	—	—	0.3	0.5	1.4	—
Juniper/East Side Trail	—	6.0 - 9.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Benchlands	—	2.3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Blacktail	—	12.9	4.7	0.5	—	—	—	—
Blacktail Trail	—	7.5	—	0.5	—	—	—	—
Teton Mitigation Land Trails	1.0	2.0	—	2.0	—	—	—	—
Cartier Slough Trail	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2.0
Total	1.0	41.2-44.2	4.7	3.0	0.3	0.5	1.4	2.0

3.5 Wildlife

3.5.1 Affected Environment

Tex Creek is managed by IDFG primarily as big game winter range and also for other wildlife under agreement with Reclamation and the other landowners. Vegetation management is directed toward providing forage for mule deer and elk (*Cervus elaphus*) and habitat for other wildlife. Riparian habitat improvement along streams within Tex Creek is also a management priority. Cartier Slough is managed by IDFG primarily as habitat for waterfowl and associated wildlife. The most complete and current information regarding wildlife communities at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough is contained in the respective WMA Management Plans (IDFG 1998a and 1998b). Much of the information summarized here is derived from those documents and is not specifically cited again in the text. Wildlife use of weedy areas along the Ririe Outlet Channel is likely limited to a few pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) and some seed-eating songbirds.

Non-Mitigation Lands and Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands at the Tex Creek WMA

Wildlife habitat and use is similar on Non-Mitigation Lands and Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands at Tex Creek. The IDFG mission statement for Tex Creek is stated as follows:

Protect and manage the wildlife resources of the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area, as mitigation for habitat losses elsewhere in the region, to ensure sufficient quantities of high quality and secure habitat for wintering big game and for a wide variety of other game and nongame species. Provide high quality wildlife-based recreational opportunities and nature viewing compatible with this primary mission for the benefit of the public.

The first five of the seven management priorities listed in the Tex Creek Management Plan relate directly or indirectly to wildlife and wildlife habitat. In order of priority, these include the following:

1. Big game winter range for elk and deer
2. Upland game habitat for Columbia sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*)
3. Public hunting
4. Other game and nongame habitat
5. Wildlife based recreation, nature viewing, and education

Mammals

Summer resident big game include about 80 to 100 elk, 200 mule deer, 30 moose (*Alces alces*), and a small number of white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*). An estimated 80 to 100 moose may be present on Tex Creek during the fall rut. Resident elk produce 20 to 30 calves and deer produce 80 to 100 fawns each year.

Reclamation has supported IDFG's habitat improvement programs at Tex Creek during the last 25 years. Primary management activities have focused on improving the condition and expanding the extent of big game winter range. Numbers of elk and mule deer wintering on Tex Creek have increased dramatically during this period from a few hundred of each species when Tex Creek was formed. Tex Creek currently provides critical winter range for an estimated 3,200 elk, 4,000 to 5,000 mule deer, and 20 moose. The south and west facing slopes, and the prevailing southwest wind, tend to minimize snow depths and keep travel routes and foraging areas available most of the winter. Typical critical elk and deer winter ranges are shown on Map 3-1. However, it should be noted that critical winter use areas for elk vary from year to year depending on weather conditions, and include essentially all portions of Tex Creek at one time or another. Occupied winter range also

varies throughout the season as snow accumulation forces elk to use lower elevation areas. The abundant high quality winter range on Tex Creek minimizes elk depredation on adjacent private lands. IDFG also trades uses with a local private landowner to further reduce depredation on private lands. This involves livestock grazing on a portion of Tex Creek in exchange for the landowner not grazing nearby valuable private land that provides critical elk winter range. The secure winter range available on Tex Creek is essential to the survival of these large big game herds. This security is directly related to management activities that minimize human conflicts with big game wintering on Tex Creek.

Elk generally migrate to the southeast from Tex Creek for the summer. The timing of migration from summer range back to the Tex Creek winter range is most affected by snow depth and the timing of fall snowstorms. Migration may begin from mid-November to mid-December, with most elk arriving on the Tex Creek winter range by early January (Brown 1981). Movements along traditional migration corridors of as far as 70 miles between summer and winter range have been recorded.

Critical deer winter range includes all Reclamation non-mitigation lands and adjacent areas, as well as parts of the Meadow Creek drainage to the east of Ririe Reservoir (Map 3-1). The Tex Creek Management Plan indicates that winter wheat grown on fields adjacent to Tex Creek is heavily used by wintering deer. IDFG suspects that this use permits more deer to winter in the Tex Creek area than would be possible on available native range alone. Thomas (1987) found that deer that winter at Tex Creek tend to summer in the same areas as do the elk that winter at Tex Creek. Deer also follow the same general migration corridors as the elk.

The Tex Creek Management Plan indicates that at least 24 other mammal species occur on the area. Some of the other abundant or common small mammal species are listed on Table 3.5-1. Predators include a few mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), and numerous coyotes (*Canas latrans*). A few black bears (*Ursus americanus*) are also present.

Table 3.5-1. Small Mammals Present in Tex Creek

Common Name	Scientific Name
Richardson's and golden-mantled ground squirrels	<i>Spermophilus richardsoni</i> and <i>S. lateralis</i>
red squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>
yellow-bellied marmot	<i>Marmota flaviventris</i>
northern pocket gopher	<i>Thomomys talpoides</i>
beaver	<i>Castor canadensis</i>
bushy-tailed wood rat	<i>Neotoma cinerea</i>
badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>
porcupine	<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>
several rodents	

Source: IDFG 1998b, Groves et al. 1997

Birds

Tex Creek provides habitat for four native grouse species. Habitat management for the Columbian sharp-tailed grouse is the second highest priority for IDFG at Tex Creek. Columbian sharp-tailed

grouse currently occupy less than 10 percent of their original range (IDFG 1990). Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are considered to be a species of concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and a sensitive species by both the USFS and BLM.

Sharp-tailed grouse occur in a variety of foothill and low mountain shrub communities including antelope bitterbrush, three-tip sagebrush (*Artemisia tripartita*), and near shrub riparian areas. At Tex Creek, nests associated with higher shrub densities and taller grass had a substantially higher success rate. Lek or dancing ground counts at Tex Creek have been relatively low in recent years, and most of the leks active in the past 10 years have been abandoned, at least temporarily. However, fall sharp-tailed grouse numbers have been relatively good, suggesting that grouse may not be limited by habitat but rather by spring weather. Cold, wet spring conditions during nesting and for a few weeks after broods hatch is detrimental to good brood survival.

Sage grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) numbers have declined throughout their range, including the upper Snake River area and Tex Creek (Connelly et al. 2000). Sage grouse are also a priority species for IDFG and the BLM. Sage grouse are dependent on sagebrush habitats during both the winter and nesting seasons. A few leks are known to occur on Tex Creek, but no specific surveys or management actions have been undertaken by IDFG. It is not known whether sage grouse using leks on Tex Creek are migratory or non-migratory, which affects general nesting distances from the lek (Connelly et al. 2000). However, it is very likely that most, if not all, sage grouse that use leks on Tex Creek also nest within Tex Creek because most surrounding former sagebrush habitats have been converted to agriculture. The Tex Creek Management Plan speculates that some sage grouse may also move into Tex Creek to winter, making this especially important habitat.

The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), which occurs in the area, was de-listed as an endangered species in July 1999. Twelve peregrine territories are known to occur in southeast Idaho (Levine et al. 1998), although none nest in the immediate Tex Creek area. There are several nests within 25 miles of Tex Creek, and peregrines certainly pass through the area during migration and juvenile dispersal.

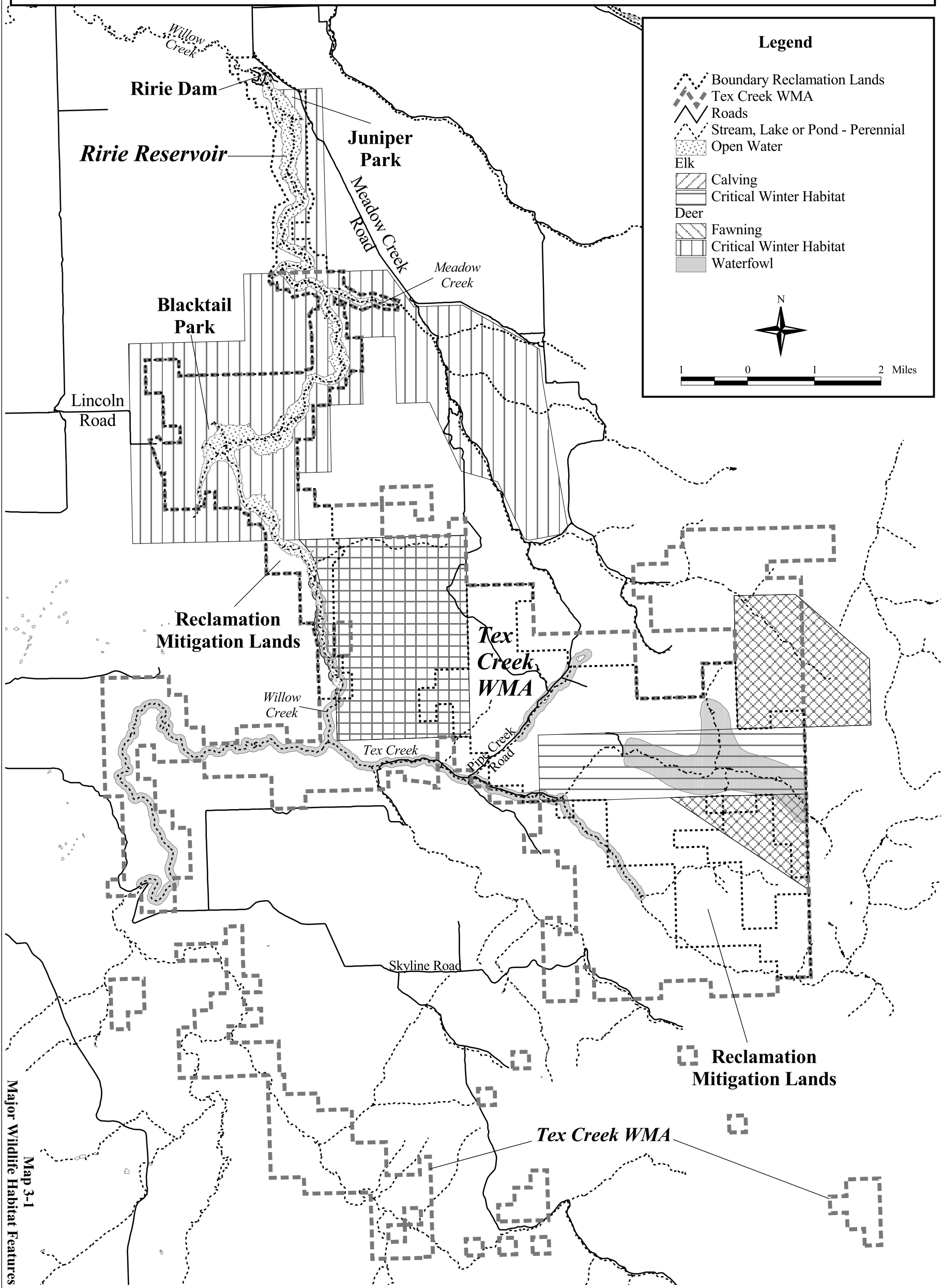
The Tex Creek Management Plan lists 92 species of birds that use Tex Creek. A few of the more common species include those listed in Table 3.5-2 and many neotropical migrants. Numbers of nesting waterfowl are low, with mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) the most common species. Mallards nest along perennial streams in Tex Creek.

Table 3.5-2. Common Bird Species in Tex Creek

Common Name	Scientific Name
golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrsaetos</i>
northern harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
red-tailed hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
American kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>
blue grouse	<i>Dendragapus obscurus</i>
ruffed grouse	<i>Bonasa umbellus</i>
mourning dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>
yellow-bellied sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>
black-billed magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>

Map 3-1
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
Major Wildlife Habitat Features
Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek WMA

The information displayed here is based on the best available data at the time of publication.
Neither the authors, Reclamation, or any other party here warrant or represent that the information
is in every respect complete and accurate, and are not held responsible for errors or omissions.



Amphibians and Reptiles

Some of the more common amphibians and reptiles that occur in Tex Creek include the western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis lutosus*), yellow-bellied racer (*Coluber constrictor mormon*), western terrestrial garter snake (*Thamnophis elegans*), common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus deserticola*), and sagebrush lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus*). Rubber boas (*Charina bottae*) and northern leopard frogs (*Rana pipiens*) are occasionally seen. Populations of many frog species have apparently suffered declines on a global scale in recent years, making all suitable habitat especially important.

Rare Species

Loggerhead shrikes (*Lanius ludovicianus*) occur on Tex Creek. They are classified as a species of concern by FWS and a sensitive species by the BLM.

Cartier Slough WMA

Cartier Slough provides important habitat (forage, shelter, and reproduction sites) for a large number of wildlife species. Among the most crucial, abundant, and sensitive of these habitats are riparian areas and wetlands. The riparian communities and various wetland habitats are critical as nesting feeding and loafing habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, and wading birds. The Cartier Slough Management Plan indicates that there are 197 species of birds, 25 species of medium and large mammals plus many small mammal species, and at least 5 amphibian and reptile species found in Cartier Slough.

Mammals

Common mammals include the coyote, red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), and porcupine. Mule and white-tailed deer numbers are estimated at 25 each throughout the year plus an additional 25 mule deer during the winter. A few moose are also present and beavers and muskrats (*Ondatra zibethicus*) use aquatic habitats along the river and sloughs. River otters (*Lutra canadensis*) are also present in and along the Henrys Fork.

Birds

The diverse mix of wetland and riparian cover types and Cartier Slough's location adjacent to the Henrys Fork result in a diverse and abundant avifauna. Avian use of Cartier Slough is dominated by waterfowl, shorebirds, and other water-related species; 22 species of raptors; and a large number of neotropical migrants. A few of the most abundant species include those listed in Table 3.5-3. Although peregrine falcons, which were recently de-listed as an endangered species in 1999, are not known to nest in the Cartier Slough, there are nests within several miles. Peregrines are probably present throughout most of the year because of the large numbers of waterfowl that use the area.

Table 3.5-3. Abundant Bird Species in Tex Creek

Common Name	Scientific Name
pied-billed grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
great blue heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>
black-crowned night heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
snowy egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
white-faced ibis	<i>Plegadis chici</i>
Canada goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>
mallard and several other dabbling and diving ducks	<i>Anas platyrhynchos and other duck species</i>
red-tailed hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>
northern harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>
sandhill crane	<i>Grus canadensis</i>
six species of swallows	<i>Hirundinidae spp.</i>
several shorebirds	

Source: IDFG 1998b, Groves et al. 1997

Amphibians and Reptiles

Three amphibians and two reptiles are known to occur in Cartier Slough. These include the northern leopard frog, striped chorus frog (*Pseudacris triseriata*), painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*), western terrestrial garter snake, and gopher snake.

Rare Species

Several species listed as species of concern or sensitive by the FWS, BLM, or the USFS occur on the Cartier Slough. These include loggerhead shrike, burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinator*), white-faced ibis (*Plegadis chici*), and long-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*). Trumpeter swans are present year around and up to 75 winter on the Henrys Fork Snake River along Cartier Slough.

3.5.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

The degree of proposed native vegetation protection and enhancement varies by site with generally less emphasis in the immediate vicinity of recreation areas and more emphasis on other non-mitigation lands and on mitigation lands. Areas of non-mitigation lands where recreation takes precedence over wildlife habitat would be expected to have degraded habitat values. This subject is more fully addressed below under *Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous*. Under Alternative A, Reclamation actions on sites not slated for expansion of recreation facilities would be expected to at least maintain current wildlife habitat values through continued cooperation with IDFG in implementing their Tex Creek and Cartier Slough Management Plans.

Noxious weed infestations are an increasing problem at both Tex Creek and Cartier Slough. Noxious weeds and other invasive non-native plants generally out-compete native species and degrade wildlife habitat quality. Reclamation would either continue current weed control efforts under Alternative A, or increase its efforts to monitor and control noxious weeds on mitigation and non-mitigation lands under Alternatives B and C. The current level of effort to control noxious and invasive weeds would probably not keep up with the expected spread of these species and habitat conditions would be expected to degrade. The rate of habitat degradation under current Alternative A control levels is not known but would be expected to increase above current rates because of the invasive and colonizing nature of these species. By avoiding infestations or otherwise better controlling noxious and invasive weeds, the increased efforts of Alternatives B and C would help to maintain wildlife habitat values and avoid the habitat degradation that would occur without these actions.

IDFG is in the process of re-establishing native shrub communities on areas that were formerly farmed within Teton Mitigation Lands. Reclamation assistance in formalizing conversion plans under Alternatives B and C may permit IDFG to increase the rate of conversion from former farmed lands to native shrub communities. A more formal plan and approach to conversion may improve overall wildlife habitat values for big game and other native species at a faster rate than would have been possible without the additional effort.

Erosion Control

Erosion control actions under Alternatives B and C generally would involve increased monitoring and reacting to address specific problems that are identified. This would help to minimize future wildlife habitat losses associated with erosion. Reclamation would take a leadership role in a future TMDL process under Alternative B to quantify and substantially reduce sediment entering Willow Creek drainage streams from Tex Creek and surrounding private lands. Implementation of actions identified during a TMDL process would be expected to reduce sediment input to streams and related aquatic sites and improve habitat conditions for semi-aquatic species, such as amphibians.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Actions that would be implemented specifically for wildlife at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough include continued cooperation with IDFG under their management plans (all alternatives), maintaining and protecting riparian habitat (Alternative B), or actively improving riparian habitat (Alternative B and, on non-mitigation lands, also Alternative C). The expected effects of other actions to modify vegetation for wildlife were discussed above under *Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement*. Continued cooperation with IDFG and protecting and maintaining riparian habitat under Alternative A would generally maintain current wildlife habitat values on affected lands. However, habitat conditions would not be expected to improve substantially. Efforts to actively improve riparian habitat conditions on Tex Creek under Alternative B would be expected to improve habitat for amphibians, neotropical songbirds and other birds, and a variety of small and

medium-sized mammals. Predators would benefit indirectly if prey populations increase in riparian areas.

Improved or Restricted Access

Trails that would be constructed under Alternatives B and C would result in both direct immediate impacts and indirect, long-term impacts. Trails generally involve land clearing and leveling and relatively minor loss of wildlife habitat. In flat areas at Tex Creek and on all of Cartier Slough, construction and maintenance of trails would be expected to result in the immediate loss of about 1 acre of native habitat per mile of trail for a pedestrian trail. The wider equestrian trail beginning at Blacktail would disturb more habitat per mile of trail. In steeper terrain at Tex Creek, an additional ½ to 1 acre of habitat would be lost per mile because of cut and fill slopes. The cut and fill slopes would be aggressively revegetated to minimize erosion and colonization by noxious and invasive weeds, but habitat values along these linear features would be degraded for many years. Use of trails by horses would probably accelerate the establishment and spread of noxious weeds and other exotic invasive plants because of the presence of weed seeds in horse dung. Soil exposed during construction would provide an ideal seed bed for noxious and invasive plants. The combination of exposed soil, the current presence of noxious weeds, and the introduction of more weed seeds from horses would degrade wildlife habitat quality along trails. Mitigation measures intended to reduce this problem are proposed for the Alternative B.

Trails and trailheads and facilities at Ririe Reservoir would not be maintained from late fall through mid-spring. Winter trail use would conflict with wintering big game, although levels of use would be low. Human use of trails would displace nearby deer and elk. Cartier Slough trails, retriever training, and dog training would be closed during the waterfowl nesting season to avoid impacts.

Alternative C includes undefined actions to accommodate winter access for ice fishing in the Juniper boat launch area, where some ice fishing already occurs. The boat launch area lies just to the north of the designated critical mule deer winter range. However, the Juniper Park area and all areas to the south are within critical deer winter range. Additional human activity in this area and on the lower end of the reservoir would displace mule deer from a portion of their traditional winter range. Mule deer would be expected to retreat for some distance from winter human activity on the reservoir. The affected area would vary depending on the location and levels of human use.

The Pipe Creek road bisects Tex Creek, is currently open all year, and is used by snowmobiles when snow conditions are suitable, which varies considerably from year to year and within each winter. Snowmobile access into Tex Creek is not possible during some years or parts of some winters because of lack of snow. Sight distances along many parts of the Pipe Creek road exceed 2 miles. Elk react to human presence, whether on foot or on a snowmobile, by moving away from the occupied area and they often move far enough to get out of sight of the source of the disturbance. Elk more than 1 mile away have been observed to move away from snowmobile activity on the Pipe Creek road (pers. comm., T. Thomas, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, June 17, 1999). The critical elk winter range on Map 3-1 is shown as two distinct parcels bisected by the Pipe

Creek road because the current snowmobile use displaces elk from the area near the road and substantially reduces that value of the winter habitat in the vicinity of the road.

Increased energy expenditure, especially late in the winter, reduces elk survival and long-term herd productivity. Snowmobile activity that precludes elk use of several square miles of what would otherwise be critical winter range causes the remaining available winter range to be more heavily used than if all range were available. This further degrades winter range conditions on the rest of Tex Creek. Snowmobile use is expected to increase at least as fast (and probably faster) as the rate of increase in the general population of the Idaho Falls area.

Alternatives A and C would permit future winter use of the Pipe Creek road and would result in continued elk displacement away from the road. Alternative B includes closure of the Pipe Creek road in the winter, subject to approval by Bonneville County. If the closure occurs, this would permit all of the winter range to be used by elk, reduce over-use or other range, reduce winter mortality, and increase long term herd productivity. If the closure does not occur, current impacts would increase as snowmobile use increases.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Generally, development of new recreation facilities under Alternatives B and C would result in both direct and indirect losses of wildlife habitat and habitat value. Direct impacts would result from conversion of native wildlife habitat to recreation and related facilities including roads, parking areas, trailheads, camp sites, and day use areas. This would occur to a greater extent under Alternative C than Alternative B. Noxious and invasive weeds would also be a problem at all sites where the soil surface is disturbed. Wildlife displacement related to increased levels of human disturbance at all recreation sites would occur under Alternative B, and to a greater extent, Alternative C.

Adding camping at Juniper, expanding Benchlands, and adding facilities at Blacktail under Alternatives B and C would eliminate mule deer winter range located on non-mitigation lands (Tables 3.4-3 and 3.4-4, respectively). These same native shrub communities also provide habitat for a variety of birds, mammals, and reptiles. Permitting overnight use at Benchlands under Alternative C would increase the potential for human-caused range fires, even though fires would be prohibited, especially during the July 4th holiday period. Reopening the Creekside Park area along Willow Creek under Alternatives B and C would result in disturbance of neotropical migrant and breeding birds that use the riparian community below the dam. Mitigation measures intended to avoid the direct loss of riparian habitat at Creekside and to replace any unplanned loss of the habitat are described for the Preferred Alternative.

Alternative C would allow a third party to construct a power line to Blacktail from the east. Reclamation would permit a right-of-way along the current access road to the park. A direct impact of this action would be that Blacktail could accommodate overnight RV use with full hook-ups. This alternative would also allow development of tent and RV camping, resulting in

additional loss of about 18 acres of upland shrub cover types designated as critical mule deer winter range. This loss would occur in non-mitigation lands at Ririe Reservoir. A secondary impact of permitting electric power to be brought into Blacktail relates to housing development that such a line would allow. Electrical power is not currently available to private lands located immediately to the west of Tex Creek. Construction of a power line to Blacktail would allow more economical development of houses in the vicinity of the power line and would hasten this activity. This would increase human disturbance of wildlife on nearby portions of Tex Creek and could render some portions essentially unusable for wintering big game, with adverse effects on over-winter survival and productivity.

Increased recreation site capacity and boat launching facilities under Alternatives B and C, combined with increasing human population, would result in more human activity on Ririe Reservoir, thereby increasing human disturbance of wildlife throughout the reservoir area.

Alternative actions for an isolated parcel along the Ririe Outlet Channel include retaining the parcel and formalizing a permit process for grazing (Alternative A), retaining the parcel and developing dryland wildlife habitat in cooperation with IDFG (Alternative B), or disposing of the parcel (Alternative C). Wildlife habitat values would improve under the habitat development option and remain low under the other options.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

Selection of the No Action Alternative would result in a continuation of the generally slow but steady upward trends in the condition of wildlife habitat on all Tex Creek lands. Reclamation would continue to cooperate with IDFG under the Tex Creek and Cartier Slough Management Plans. Ongoing IDFG activities, including conversion of former farm land to native shrub communities at Tex Creek and control of noxious and invasive weeds at both areas, would continue more or less at their current levels and as currently implemented, which is to react to situations as they become known. Noxious and invasive weed control would continue at current levels and infestations of these plants would likely increase at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough, degrading habitat values. The rate of habitat degradation because of noxious weeds is uncertain but could be substantial over the 10-year RMP time frame. Failure to control noxious weeds during the next 10 years would make future control virtually impossible, with substantial impacts on wildlife habitat quality.

Existing recreation facilities would not be upgraded to meet increasing demand and new recreation sites and trails would not be constructed. Not expanding recreation sites or developing trails would avoid direct habitat loss that would occur under Alternatives B and C.

The Pipe Creek Road would continue to be open for winter use by snowmobiles, thereby reducing the value of critical a substantial area of elk winter range on Tex Creek.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

New facilities and camping sites at Creekside Park, the Visitor's Center, and Juniper resulting in 12.7 acres of mostly sagebrush/grass habitat loss would occur under Alternative B compared to the No Action Alternative. These actions would occur on non-mitigation lands. Trail development in the Ririe Reservoir area would also be implemented under Alternative B, resulting in a loss of 14 to 17 acres of mostly big sagebrush habitat, with all of the loss occurring in critical deer winter range. This loss would occur as a narrow band along about 10 miles of trails rather than in a single block of land. This impact compares to several thousand acres of winter range present on Tex Creek. As described above, development of trails, and especially the equestrian trail from Blacktail along the west side of Willow Creek, would increase noxious and invasive weed infestations in areas disturbed during trail construction. All locations where the land surface would be disturbed would become more susceptible to colonization by noxious weeds, which would facilitate their spread to adjacent lands, thereby degrading habitat values.

Overall, Reclamation's noxious and invasive weed monitoring and control efforts would increase compared to the No Action Alternative. This would likely occur through a change in priority of Reclamation funds with a greater focus on noxious weeds. This would help to maintain wildlife habitat values and facilitate meeting the long range habitat management goals and Reclamation's mitigation requirements for Tex Creek and Cartier Slough. Monitoring and control along trails would be a priority. Trails would not be maintained during the winter but would not be closed. Winter trail use would displace wintering deer and elk.

Alternative B includes permanently closing winter use of the Pipe Creek road, subject to approval by Bonneville County. If this occurs, it would substantially increase the area of Tex Creek that is available for use by elk compared to Alternative A. If the closure does not occur, current impacts would increase as snowmobile use increases. This alternative also includes increased riparian habitat improvement efforts and a leadership role for Reclamation in the future TMDL process, both of which would benefit a variety of wildlife species compared to Alternative A.

Actions proposed for Cartier Slough (Table 2.2-1) would have some adverse direct and indirect effects on wildlife because of trail development and somewhat higher levels of human disturbance. Controlling trespass grazing and actively managing a 20-acre parcel along the outlet channel for wildlife would have minor beneficial effects on upland game birds and non-game wildlife compared to the Alternative A.

Mitigation

Mitigation measures to protect riparian habitat at Creekside Park and to aggressively monitor and control noxious and invasive weeds were described in Section 3.4, *Vegetation*. Residual effects on wildlife and habitat are described below.

Big game winter range habitat losses, including impacts from trail construction, would be mitigated by replacing impacted winter range habitat value through enhancement of existing winter range in Tex Creek. Enhancement needs of nearby winter range would be evaluated for actions that could improve value and mitigate losses. An approach would be developed to assess impacts, evaluate range conditions, determine mitigation needs to compensate for losses, and implement specific actions. Monitoring would be performed to determine if corrective actions are needed to fully meet mitigation needs.

Residual Impacts

Mitigation of deer winter range impacts resulting from recreation site and trail development would require several years to become fully functional. Therefore, minor short-term loss of habitat would occur. Over the long term, there would be no loss of winter range value.

Regular monitoring and aggressive control of noxious and invasive weeds is expected to reduce infestations of these plants at disturbed sites. However, some relatively minor increase in these plants at new recreation sites and along trails is likely in spite of these efforts.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Many of the actions that would be implemented under Alternative C are the same as Alternative B. Only impacts that vary from those of Alternative B are described.

Additional day use facilities would be added east of Willow Creek below the dam, resulting in minor additional wildlife disturbance. Additional access for ice fishing would be accommodated, resulting in displacement of mule deer from portions of their winter range. Upland shrub habitat would be replaced by irrigated lawn at Benchlands and overnight camping would be allowed, resulting in a minor direct habitat loss and increasing the potential for range fires compared to Alternatives A and B.

Expansion of moorage facilities and construction of a new boat launch facility at Blacktail would increase human use of the reservoir with the resulting increase in wildlife disturbance compared to Alternatives A and B. Alternative C would allow a third party to construct a power line to Blacktail and would allow development of tent and RV camping. Additional day use, camping, and parking facilities would eliminate an additional 18.1 acres of upland shrub winter range in this area (Table 3.4-4).

Alternative C does not include improved monitoring and aggressive control of noxious and invasive weeds at Cartier Slough or efforts to improve riparian habitat conditions at Tex Creek. Not implementing these actions would result in adverse impacts similar to those of the No Action Alternative and would not achieve habitat benefits expected for Alternative B. Potential long term impacts from noxious weed infestations would be the same as described for Alternative A.

Alternative C would dispose of the isolated parcel along the outlet channel with similar habitat degradation associated with continued livestock grazing, as the No Action Alternative.

The Pipe Creek road would continue to be open for snowmobile use during the winter. Impacts on wintering big game would be the same as described for the Alternative A.

Reclamation would not take a leadership role in the future TMDL process; the same as under the No Action Alternative.

3.6 Threatened and Endangered Species

3.6.1 Affected Environment

Plants

Ute ladies' tresses (*Sprianthes diluvialis*) is endemic to moist soils in mesic or wet meadows near springs, lakes, or perennial streams within an elevation range of 4300 and 7000 feet. The plant appears to be adapted to regular disturbances caused by flooding on floodplains. The plant seems to occur in areas with shallow water tables where water is near the ground surface (18 inches) throughout the growing season and where the vegetation is relatively open and not overly dense. Mature riparian communities do not provide suitable habitat conditions. The orchid thrives in full sun or partial shade.

Ute ladies' tresses are typically found in two types of plant communities in the RMP area. These communities consist of the spike-rush and the Silverberry/Willow communities. While site specific vegetation surveys have not been conducted, these communities may exist on Willow Creek upstream of the reservoir high water elevation and at the outlet of the dam into Willow Creek. The similar habitats may also occur at Cartier Slough. Ute ladies' tresses have been located on the South Fork of the Snake River upstream of Idaho Falls.

Wildlife

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) is listed as threatened in Idaho. One bald eagle nest is located just upstream of one of the tributaries to Ririe Reservoir near the north end of Tex Creek. The nest is approximately 1,200 feet from the reservoir. The pair produced eggs but did not fledge any young in 1998 (Beals and Melquist 1998). Nest productivity data for 1999 are not available. The nest was occupied in 2000 and 2001, but production of young was not observed.

Bald eagle territories usually include a nest site, perch trees, and foraging areas. Eagles typically nest in isolated, mixed-aged timber in codominant or dominant trees with a clear flight path to feeding areas which, in this case, would be the reservoir. Fish in the reservoir provide the primary prey for the bald eagle. Management for nest protection typically requires a 1/4-mile no disturbance

radius around the nest throughout the breeding season (April through July) but foraging areas may extend throughout the reservoir. Human presence interferes with normal nesting and foraging behavior, although the degree to which their behavior is affected varies for individual eagles.

One bald eagle nest is located 1/4 mile south of Cartier Slough on BLM land, and bald eagles are common in the area all year. The Cartier Slough pair fledged one young in 1998 (Beals and Melquist 1998) and the nest was active in 2000. The abundant fish in the Henrys Fork as well as waterfowl sustain the eagles that use the area.

The FWS letter listing species protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) includes the lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), which was proposed for listing under the ESA during preparation of the draft EA, and is now listed as a threatened species. Idaho is near the southern limits of the lynx range. Mountainous regions supporting stands of spruce (*Picea sp.*) and fir (*Abies sp.*), Douglas-fir, and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) are generally considered to be suitable lynx habitat (Ruggiero et al. 1999). Snowshoe hares (*Lepus americanus*) represent the lynx primary prey (Hall 1981) and red squirrels (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*) are an important alternate prey when hares are scarce (Ruggiero et al. 1999). Higher elevation lands in the southeast corner of Tex Creek and on adjacent USFS lands to the east of Tex Creek may provide suitable lynx habitat based on the tree species present and the relatively undisturbed nature of those areas. Snowshoe hares and red squirrels are probably present in both areas.

Gray wolves (*Canis lupus*) were re-introduced into Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho in the mid-1990s. Wolves in the Yellowstone Management Area (a designation by FWS that includes the Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek areas) are classified as a nonessential experimental population. They now occur widely throughout much of Idaho in both forested and shrub communities. During the winter, wolves are closely associated with wintering big game. Because of the large numbers of deer and elk that winter in the Tex Creek area, wolves could occupy Tex Creek during the winter.

Whooping cranes (*Grus americana*) now occur in portions of southeast Idaho as part of an effort to re-introduce the species at Gray's Lake National Wildlife Refuge, which is located about 20 miles south of Tex Creek. This population is also designated as nonessential experimental. These cranes migrate between southeast Idaho and New Mexico. They use fresh water marshes and wet meadows during the summer and also feed in grain fields (Groves et. al. 1997). Recorded occurrences in Idaho include the Gray's Lake area and the Teton River valley 35 miles northeast of Tex Creek. Both of these areas include large fresh water marshes. No whooping cranes have been reported in the immediate Tex Creek area. Grain fields in the vicinity of Tex Creek probably do not provide very suitable habitat because of the lack of large nearby marshes.

3.6.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

The general impacts in each of the Assessment Categories would be the same as described in Section 3.4, *Vegetation*, and Section 3.5, *Wildlife*.

Alternatives

Plants

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

No facilities would be constructed under Alternative A. Ongoing management activities that involve ground disturbance in areas where Ute ladies'-tresses may occur would not be constructed until appropriate field surveys are conducted. If Ute ladies'-tresses are located, the management activity would be modified to avoid impacts in the vicinity of tresses and the site hydrology would not be changed. Therefore, there would be no effect on Ute ladies'-tresses.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Areas around the reservoir that support habitats likely to contain Ute ladies' tresses would be surveyed using established protocols as part of this alternative. If any Ute ladies'-tresses are located in areas where facilities are to be constructed, the facility would be moved to unoccupied habitat to avoid any possible impacts. Therefore, there would be no effect on Ute ladies'-tresses orchids.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

The same measures described for Alternative B would be implemented to locate and avoid Ute ladies'-tresses orchids. Therefore, there would be no effect on Ute ladies'-tresses orchids from implementation of Alternative C.

Wildlife

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

The effects of current boating activities on the nesting bald eagles are not known. Future use of the reservoir is expected to increase. No access restrictions or monitoring of potential effects are included in Alternative A. Therefore, implementation of Alternative A may impact the nesting pair of bald eagles by reducing productivity or causing nest abandonment but would not affect the continued survival of the bald eagle.

Areas with the highest potential for supporting lynx would not be affected by the continuation of existing activities. Therefore, there would be no effect from implementation of Alternative A.

Alternative A would have no new adverse effects on wintering big game. Elk use would continue to be precluded along the Pipe Creek Road at times during the winter, possibly reducing potential wolf prey. Occasional snowmobile use of the Pipe Creek Road would increase the potential for disturbance if wolves currently use the area use it in the future and could also increase the potential for illegal shooting of wolves. Alternative A is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of gray wolves.

Implementation of Alternative A is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of whooping cranes.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Shoreline access would be restricted under Alternative B by signage within 1/4 mile of an active bald eagle nest from April 1 to July 15 to reduce disturbance. However, enforcement capabilities are limited so the effectiveness of the closure would depend largely on the public's willingness to voluntarily adhere to its conditions. If the public adheres to the shoreline access restriction, it should be effective in reducing disturbance of this nesting pair of bald eagles. The bald eagle nest at Cartier Slough is on BLM land and is subject to the February 1 to July 31 public lands closure to all unauthorized entry to protect nesting bald eagles.

Currently, recreation use on the Willow Creek Arm may be causing adverse impacts to be bald eagles. The implementation of Alternative B would provide for conducting a 3-year monitoring program to collect basic life history data on this nest. Details of this monitoring program are provided in Appendix B. This program would also identify environmental and recreational impacts to the nesting pair so that a nest management plan could be prepared and include proper protection measures. Depending on the findings of the monitoring program, implementation of Alternative B will have no effect or possibly a beneficial effect on the nest area by putting the nest management plan that would avoid future impacts into effect. In accordance with ESA, Reclamation would consult with the FWS prior to taking any action in this regard.

Implementation of Alternative B will not affect the bald eagle; however, in the short term, current recreation in the Willow Creek Arm may continue to affect the nest area. Reclamation finds that overall Alternative B will not immediately reduce recreation affects on the bald eagle; therefore, Alternative B may affect but not adversely affect the bald eagle. Consultation would be carried out under the ESA and involve Reclamation and FWS and other agencies as required to achieve full compliance with ESA.

Areas with the highest potential for supporting lynx, Dave's Mountain, would not be adversely affected by actions that would be implemented under Alternative B. Grazing of domestic livestock, recreation improvements, road construction, winter recreation activities (including snowmobiling, skiing, sledding, snowshoeing, snowboarding, etc.), or vegetation management that would be detrimental to lynx are not part of this RMP. Therefore, there would be no effect on the Canada lynx.

Subject to approval by Bonneville County, Alternative B includes closure of the Pipe Creek Road during the winter, including snowmobile use. This action could benefit wintering elk, and indirectly wolves by potentially increasing the size of the elk herd and reducing human disturbance and possible illegal shooting. These potential benefits would not occur if the Pipe Creek Road is not used. Alternative B is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the gray wolf.

Implementation of Alternative B is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of whooping cranes.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Short- and long-term effects of Alternative C would be the same as those described for Alternative B.

Potential impacts and the effects determinations for the lynx, gray wolf, and whooping crane would be the same as described for Alternative A.

3.7 Aquatic Biology

3.7.1 Affected Environment

Since its creation, Ririe Reservoir has developed into a popular fishery and supports one of the most intensively used salmonid fisheries in the state (IDFG 1996). One of the main reasons for this popularity is the close proximity to Idaho Falls. In addition to the reservoir, several of the larger tributaries upstream of the reservoir, as well as in Willow Creek downstream of the dam, provide recreational fishing opportunities.

Reservoir Fishery

Ririe Reservoir provides a mixed fishery of both cold water and warm water game species. The reservoir also includes many non-game species that compose the majority of the fish biomass in the reservoir. All species are listed on Table 3.7-1.

Table 3.7-1. Game and Non-Game Fish Species Found in Ririe Reservoir

Common Name	Scientific Name
Cold Water Game Species	
rainbow trout	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>
brook trout	<i>Salvelinus fontinalis</i>
brown trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>
Kokanee salmon	<i>Oncorhynchus nerka</i>
cutthroat trout	<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii</i>
Warm Water Game Species	
smallmouth bass	<i>Micropterus dolomieu</i>
yellow perch	<i>Perca flavescens</i>
Non-Game Species	
Utah chub	<i>Gila atraria</i>
Utah suckers	<i>Catostomus ardens</i>
mountain suckers	<i>Catostomus platyrhynchus</i>
reidside shiner	<i>Notropis lutrensis</i>
speckled dace	<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i>
longnose dace	<i>Rhinichthys cataractae</i>
mottled sculpin	<i>Cottus bairdi</i>

Source: Simpson and Wallace 1978

The game fish species were mostly established through stocking by IDFG. The only exception is yellow perch, which were illegally introduced in the 1980s but have established a self-sustaining population. Currently, only rainbow trout and kokanee are maintained by stocking programs, as the other gamefish naturally reproduce within the reservoir or tributaries. Yellowstone cutthroats are largely confined to streams but a few do occur in the reservoir (pers. comm., J. Dillon, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999). The non-game fish are not stocked and are considered to be overabundant, particularly the chubs (pers. comm., J. Dillon, Biologist, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999). Bass were introduced to the reservoir to help control chub populations (IDFG 1996). To date, this effort has not proved successful as chubs and suckers are still abundant (pers. comm., J. Dillon, Biologist, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999). Bass growth rates are very slow because of low water temperatures and the short growing season.

The reservoir fishery is open year-round. Sport fishing is mainly focused on hatchery rainbow trout, as they make up about 70 percent of the fish caught based on recent creel surveys (pers. comm., J. Dillon, Biologist, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999). Yellow perch are the next most sought fish, making up about 20 percent of the sport catch. All the other gamefish account for the remaining 10 percent of the catch. Most of the sport fishing takes place in late spring through early fall. There is little opportunity for ice fishing on the reservoir, as the ice-over period is usually short (1 to 2 months) if at all in some years. When ice fishing is available, yellow perch are the primary species caught.

Spawning conditions for warm water game and non-game fish in the reservoir are generally good. Shoreline gravels, rocks, and vegetation usually remain inundated long enough for spawning, egg development, and fry emergence to occur. The cold water species primarily use the tributaries for spawning.

Rearing habitat conditions within the reservoir are generally good, even with reservoir drawdown operations, and adverse effects on the fishery are not known to occur. The reservoir has not yet become heavily eutrophic (high nutrient levels), and has relatively deep water refuge habitat available near the dam during periods of low pool levels. This, coupled with short or absent ice-over periods, has prevented low dissolved oxygen levels common to many western flood control and irrigation reservoirs. During summer, the pool level is maintained at relatively full levels, allowing stratification of the water column (a warm layer of water on top of a cool layer). This provides refuge habitat for cold water species during the warm summer months. In addition, no significant algae blooms occur during the summer that would contribute to poor water quality conditions.

The primary fishery concern on the reservoir is the overabundance of chubs and suckers. During recent survey work, IDFG found that Utah chubs and suckers comprised almost 90 percent of their sampling catch (IDFG 1996). The problem with this overabundance is that most of the available food supply for young fish, such as zooplankton, is probably being consumed by these non-game species. Therefore, this may be limiting the recruitment or growth of some of the game fish species (pers. comm., J. Dillon, Biologist, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999). In addition, most of the game fish do not appear to be using the chubs and suckers as forage as indicated by recent diet samples (pers. comm., J. Dillon, Biologist, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999). This means that little of the biomass in the reservoir is being translated into the sport fishery.

The only other concern of note is the growing conflict between sport fishing use and other recreational use (personal watercraft) on the reservoir. This issue is addressed in Section 2.16, *Recreation* (pers. comm., J. Dillon, Biologist, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999).

Reservoir Tributary Fishery

About 95 miles of streams are located in the Willow Creek drainage above Ririe Reservoir. All but a few of the major streams in the drainage eventually drain into Ririe Reservoir. Most of the streams are located in narrow canyons, and their flows vary from extremes of several thousand cubic feet per second (cfs) during runoff to becoming intermittent during the late summer and winter (IDFG 1996). The six major streams draining into the reservoir are as follows:

- Willow Creek
- Meadow Creek
- Tex Creek
- Grays Lake Outlet
- Brockman Creek (tributary to Grays Lake Outlet)
- Hell Creek (tributary to Grays Lake Outlet)

Tex Creek contains all or portions of these major streams, with the exception of Brockman and Hell Creeks, which are relatively far upstream in the Grays Lake Outlet system.

Most of the tributaries contain wild populations of Yellowstone cutthroat (*Oncorhynchus clarki bouvier*), brown, and brook trout. Yellowstone cutthroat trout are the species of primary focus for IDFG because they are the only native species of salmonids in the drainage. Native cutthroat trout populations are currently depressed in the drainage, although they are believed to be viable (IDFG 1996). Overharvest and habitat degradation are believed to be contributing to the decline of this species (pers. comm., J. Dillon, Biologist, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, April 28, 1999). Cutthroat and brown trout currently dominate the catch in tributaries, with hatchery catchable rainbow trout found in stocked areas near road access. No wild rainbow trout have been found in the Willow Creek drainage (IDFG 1996). The cutthroat trout harvest limit is a maximum of two per day; all fish that are between 8 and 16 inches must be released. This rule may have begun to restore cutthroat trout populations (IDFG 1996).

As noted, habitat degradation is believed to be a major contributor to the decline of Yellowstone cutthroat in the Willow Creek drainage. Dry land farming and grazing practices have denuded riparian vegetation within the upper watershed (IDFG 1996). As a result, groundwater inflow is virtually nonexistent in some areas and water temperatures vary widely, both daily and seasonally (IDFG 1996). Turbidity is high during the late winter and spring runoff and generally remains so until mid-summer. NRCS has identified the predominant soil series in the Willow Creek drainage area as one of the most erosive in the United States (IDFG 1996). A water quality program has been initiated to reduce loss of topsoil and improve the water quality of Willow Creek above Ririe Dam. Riparian habitat improvement through improved grazing management is a high priority on both state and private lands (IDFG 1996).

Fisheries Management Considerations

Within the reservoir, most of the fisheries management is concentrated on maintaining a viable sport fishery. The emphasis is on maintaining high game fish numbers in conjunction with high angler use and competition with non-game species. This goal is primarily addressed through stocking programs, because habitat in the reservoir is not considered a significant issue by IDFG. In the tributaries, however, habitat is the primary concern. Many of the riparian areas are heavily disturbed, and soil erosion and bank instability are severe along some streams. IDFG has identified objectives and programs to address these issues for Ririe Reservoir and the Reservoir tributaries (IDFG 1996). These programs are listed in Appendix C. Reclamation supports IDFG's objectives.

3.7.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

This section describes the benefits and potential impacts that the alternatives may have on the fishery resources of Ririe Reservoir and some of its tributaries. Most of the actions are not directed specifically at fishery resources (for example, improving a specific portion of known spawning habitat). Instead, they involve indirect improvements such as terrestrial habitat enhancement and BMPs for constructing facilities. The most direct actions that would affect fish are those relating to water quality, erosion, and riparian/shoreline vegetation. These are discussed more fully in Sections 3.2, *Water Quality*; 3.3, *Soils*; and 3.4, *Vegetation*, respectively. The main goals of the RMP for fishery resources (Goal A.2, Appendix A, RMP Draft Goals and Objectives) are to support IDFG in implementing their Fishery Management Plan and the Tex Creek Management Plan, both of which aim to improve habitat conditions.

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

The primary benefits that would be derived from the protection and enhancement of native vegetation for fishery resources would be the reduction of sediment input to the reservoir and tributaries and the maintenance or creation of riparian and shoreline habitat. The No Action Alternative would not provide as many benefits as the other alternatives because vegetation management measures do not extend much beyond noxious weed control. Alternatives B and C would provide more of the benefits to fish through increased vegetation protection measures, as described in Chapter 2 and Section 3.4, *Vegetation*.

If sediment input to tributaries is reduced under Alternatives B and C, then reservoir water quality, and hence, fish habitat would be enhanced. However, most of the reservoir game-fishery is comprised of stocked hatchery fish, so effective in-reservoir benefits would be relatively low.

Enhanced vegetation cover along riparian areas, as a result of measures under Alternatives B and C, would provide the following specific benefits:

- Reduced erosion and sediment input to the reservoir and tributaries, resulting in improved water quality and cleaner spawning substrate.
- Increased potential for more woody debris input along stream corridors, which would enhance cover habitat and stream complexity.
- Increased food production in streams. An increase in the food supply for aquatic insects would be expected to occur, along with an increase in terrestrial insect production.

Erosion Control

Erosion control measures outlined in the No Action Alternative constitute as-needed corrective measures erosion problems. Individually, corrective measures of spot-erosion problems would probably not improve aquatic habitat conditions a substantial amount. However, a programmatic

approach to addressing erosion, such as terracing and creating sediment basins on mitigation lands under Alternatives B and C, would cumulatively improve conditions throughout the reservoir and tributary areas.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

The potential benefits of fish and wildlife protection and enhancement actions are essentially the same as described for the *Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement* assessment category.

Improved or Restricted Access

The improvement of access to the tributaries and portions of the reservoir under Alternatives B and C has the potential to increase angling pressure along with poaching and harvest violations. Improving existing trails and roads, or constructing new ones, would follow all necessary BMPs for minimizing erosion problems during both construction and use (Chapter 5). Short-term increases in sediment following trail construction could have a minor adverse impact on the reservoir fishery in very localized areas. Erosion issues related to trails or roads developed under the two action alternatives are not considered a potential long-term impact on fisheries.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

For the fishery resource impact assessment, the improvement or construction of facilities under Alternatives B and C can be divided into two categories:

- Terrestrial environment facilities, such as campsites and associated parking facilities and access roads, day use facilities, trails, and miscellaneous visitor amenities.
- Reservoir or aquatic facilities, such as fishing piers, boat ramps, swimming areas, and platforms.

The terrestrial improvements would all be planned and constructed under existing BMPs that would minimize erosion potential, hazardous spills from construction facilities, and water quality issues relating to surface water runoff. Implementation of and adherence to these BMPs would eliminate or minimize to the extent practicable any impacts on the aquatic resources.

Expanded facilities, combined with population growth, may increase recreational use by 16 percent over the next 10 years (see Section 3.8, *Recreation*). It can reasonably be assumed, however, that not all of this user increase would translate directly to an increase in angler pressure, only some lesser unknown portion. Given this, angler pressure would not be expected to substantially impact the reservoir or tributary fisheries.

The in- or near-water facilities constructed under the action alternatives would be constructed under BMPs that limit the impact of construction related activities. Also, BMPs would limit the timing of the construction to avoid interfering with gamefish spawning, which occurs in shallow

water along and near the reservoir shoreline. With the exception of boat ramps and swimming areas, all of the planned in-water features (docks and piers) would enhance in-reservoir habitat. These facilities would provide cover, shade, and ambush sites for predatory gamefish. These facilities may also increase predation of gamefish on the over-abundant non-game fish, which is a management goal. However, the overall impact in reducing non-game fish numbers attributable to these habitat improvements would be inconsequential.

Boat ramps and swimming beaches proposed in Alternatives B and C would essentially eliminate minor amounts of near-shore habitat because they are maintained in an artificial state that lacks natural habitat. However, given the extremely small percentage of shoreline area these facilities occupy, their impact on the shoreline habitat would be negligible.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

The No Action Alternative would not propose any changes in operation or facilities that would impact or benefit the fishery resource compared to existing conditions. IDFG is actively managing the fishery resource through the implementation of the State Fishery Management Plan for the reservoir and through the management of Tex Creek. Under the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would continue to support these efforts.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

The natural resources aspect of Alternative B focuses on promoting the protection and enhancement of native fish and wildlife habitat in conjunction with recreational and cultural resources. The primary benefits for fish resources under Alternative B would be improved erosion control and the protection and enhancement of riparian vegetation, as described in Section 3.3, *Soils*, and 3.4, *Vegetation*.

The largest benefits to fisheries from erosion control measures would be derived on Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands because these areas contain many of the upstream tributaries. Reduction in sediment input would generally improve water quality and habitat, especially for Yellowstone cutthroat trout populations.

The greatest benefits to fisheries from vegetation enhancement would be realized in the Willow Creek Arm and on the Teton Mitigation Lands because these areas contain upstream tributaries. Efforts to improve riparian areas in particular would probably have a more immediate benefit for the fishery resources than upland control of noxious weeds or native vegetation plantings or management. However, in the long run, both programs would enhance stream corridor vegetation, and thus instream habitat conditions, compared to current conditions.

Facility construction and improvement, as well as trail development, would occur primarily at Creekside Park, Juniper Park, the Benchlands Area, and Blacktail Park. These improvements would be constructed using BMPs that would minimize impacts to fishery resources. Only a portion of the recreational increase that follows facilities development would result in increased angler pressure. Therefore, increased angling in the reservoir and the tributaries would not be expected to impact fishery resources. This is particularly true given that more than 70 percent of the angler use on the reservoir is for stocked hatchery trout and that most of the fishing pressure in the Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek areas is on the reservoir. Only a slight increase in angling pressure would be expected in the tributaries, and IDFG has aggressive angling and harvest restrictions in place to minimize impacts to Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

The natural resources aspect of Alternative C would be essentially the same as described for Alternative B, along with additional expansion of recreational sites and facilities. Improved erosion control, as well as native vegetation protection and enhancement, would occur in the same areas and to the same degree as under Alternative B. Therefore, the fisheries resources would experience benefits similar to those described for Alternative B. Protection and enhancement of native fish and wildlife habitat would not occur on Ririe and Teton mitigation lands. So the fishery benefits from these activities described under Alternative B would not occur.

The most notable recreational improvements for fish habitat would be the construction of additional floating platforms at Juniper Park, Benchlands Area, and at Blacktail Park, and an additional fishing pier at Juniper Park. Although these structures do provide usable habitat for reservoir gamefish (mostly warm water species), they would occupy a very small area. An access point for winter ice fishing would be provided at Juniper Park under this alternative. Any increase in fishing pressure as a result of this access would have no effect on the fishery because the winter ice fishing season is short and is primarily for yellow perch, which are an abundant and under-used game species.

3.8 Recreation

3.8.1 Affected Environment

Recreation activities in the reservoir area include both land- and water-based activities, with some seasonal opportunities for snow-based winter recreation. Most of the recreational users of this area are Idaho residents and most are on day trips from the Idaho Falls area and surrounding areas of Bonneville County. Because of the different opportunities available at Ririe Reservoir, Tex Creek, Cartier Slough, and the Ririe Outlet Channel, as well as the distinctly different user groups at each site, these four use areas are discussed separately.

Ririe Reservoir

Recreation Activities and Use Levels

Ririe Reservoir provides recreation opportunities serving Idaho Falls, southeastern Idaho, and out-of-state visitors. Its proximity to Idaho Falls makes the reservoir a popular destination for local recreationists, especially day users. It is estimated that approximately 75,000 visitors typically visit the area during the summer season.

A questionnaire administered by the Bonneville County Department of Parks and Recreation during three summer weekends in 1999 identified some of the most popular activities in the area (EDAW and Bonneville County Department of Parks and Recreation [BCDPR] 1999). Visitors indicated that the most important primary activities while on their trip were waterskiing (29 percent), fishing from a boat (19 percent), powerboating (16 percent), and fishing from shore (9 percent). While these reflect the activity that is most important to their trip, visitors also participate in many other activities while on the same trip. The activities engaged in most frequently include swimming (50 percent of visitors), waterskiing (47 percent), resting or relaxing (42 percent), picnicking (38 percent), powerboating (38 percent), and fishing from a boat (36 percent). Other activities in the area include hunting, snowmobiling, hiking, and camping.

Most visitors to the reservoir were on day trips (92 percent), with those trips averaging about 5.3 hours in length (EDAW and BCDPR 1999). Of those who were on overnight trips, the average length of stay was 2.9 days, or roughly the equivalent of a long weekend trip. Few visitors stay overnight near the reservoir because of the large percentage of day users, a relative lack of camping facilities, and the proximity of accommodations in Idaho Falls.

An indication of the inadequacy of current facilities to meet demand is the estimated current use of these facilities (pers. comm., Craig Daniels, Facilities Manager, BCDPR, Idaho Falls, ID, September 22, 1999). During the summer season (May to September), occupancy at the Juniper Park campground is estimated at 95 percent on weekends and 30 percent on weekdays. Use of the parking area at Blacktail Park is estimated at 100 percent (with overflow) on weekends, and 50 percent on weekdays during the summer season. In addition to use figures, data from the visitor questionnaire indicate that over half (55 percent) of visitors had to wait to use a boat ramp while on their trip (EDAW and BCDPR 1999).

Overall, visitors at Ririe Reservoir felt slightly to moderately crowded (EDAW and BCDPR 1999). Over half of all visitors (54 percent) are engaged in recreation activities on the reservoir on any given day. With respect to conditions on the reservoir itself, similar levels of crowding were perceived by reservoir users.

Recreation Facilities

Recreational facilities are currently provided at three developed sites on Ririe Reservoir by BCDPR, including Juniper Park, Blacktail Park, and Benchland Park, as well as dispersed recreation sites at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough operated by IDFG (Maps 2-1, 2-2, and 2-3). Most of the recreation facilities at this site were developed when the project was built in 1975. An additional site—Creekside Park—is located downstream of the dam, but this facility was recently closed to recreational use.

Data on visitor perceptions of the existing facilities shows that most feel that the number of facilities (boat ramps, campgrounds) at the reservoir are about right, with only the slightest indication that the number of boat ramps, shoreline access points, docks, and available parking spaces are too low. Visitor support is limited for the construction of new facilities; however, there is visitor support for better maintenance of existing facilities (EDAW and BCDPR 1999).

Juniper Park, located at the northern end of the reservoir, contains a separate day-use area with an overlook and interpretive facilities, an overnight campground with two loops containing a total of 49 sites and one camp host site, and a boat launch. Access to the water at this location is somewhat limited because of the steeply sloping access road that terminates at a two-lane concrete boat ramp. The steep shore at Juniper Park inhibits other recreational access; however, a small floating dock close to the boat ramp is available for tie-ups. Juniper Park receives the most use of the recreation sites on the reservoir, a function of both its camping facilities and its proximity to Highway 26, which is a main route between Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and Interstate 15 in Idaho Falls. At Juniper Park, universal accessibility (access to visitors with physical disabilities, including wheelchairs) to existing recreation facilities is variable. At the day use area and overlook, accessible facilities include two flush restrooms, visitor center/office, parking stalls, and a paved pathway. At the campground, accessible facilities include a restroom and shower, and one campsite (partially accessible) out of 49 sites. Paved pathways are not accessible at the campground. At the boat launch, only the restroom is accessible. The restroom at the boat launch below Juniper Park is universally accessible. There is also an accessible parking stall being completed here.

Below Ririe Dam is Creekside Park; Bonneville County recently decommissioned this park because of maintenance problems and safety concerns. Access to this park was provided by a road across the top of the dam. Visitors at the top of the dam may also stop at a viewpoint area where a portable toilet is located, as well as parking for approximately 10 vehicles. Park facilities formerly included two parking areas and a paved access road, landscaped areas, a group tent camping area, and a shelter and vista point. Restrooms at Creekside Park have been recently demolished. Visitors to the park were able to access the river below the dam for fishing, wildlife observation, and walking. No universally accessible facilities existed at this park.

Blacktail Park, a day use-only area located at the southern end of the reservoir, contains a boat launch with two large parking areas, a large grassy area, concession stand offering food and beverage items as well as fuel for boats, day use picnic area with covered tables, marina, swimming area, and restrooms. Two of these picnic tables were replaced by Bonneville County with accessible tables. The boat launch here is much larger than that at Juniper Park, and is closer to

many visitors coming from Idaho Falls. This site is closed in the winter to reduce potential impacts on wintering elk and deer. Blacktail Park contains the only designated swimming beach on the reservoir, which is protected from boat traffic by a floating dock demarcating a no-wake zone. At Blacktail Park, universally accessible facilities include two (out of 13) picnic shelters, with asphalt and concrete paving (tables are not accessible), two accessible parking stalls, and one accessible vault toilet.

Benchlands Park, a day use-only area located along the western shore of the reservoir between Juniper and Blacktail, is only accessible from the water by boat, as there are neither road nor non-motorized trail connections to this dispersed site. The park consists of five covered picnic tables with barbecue grills and a pit toilet. The first covered picnic area has a universally accessible picnic table with a gravel path leading up to it. The shoreline consists of a sandy beach, which is close to the picnic sites when the reservoir is at full pool. Vegetation is different from Blacktail because it is mostly sagebrush and other wild grasses, with a small irrigated lawn area. Only one picnic area at Benchlands Park is universally accessible.

Other developed facilities on Ririe Reservoir include scattered floating platforms that are moored close to shore along the length of the reservoir. They are needed because the steep grade of the reservoir shoreline limits the beaching of boats by visitors. These platforms are maintained by Bonneville County and serve as tie-ups for boaters during the day, as well as overnight moorage for those camping on their boat. At seasonal drawdown, most of these docks are beached along the exposed banks. None of these platforms are universally accessible.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Tex Creek is managed by IDFG as critical winter range for elk and mule deer, as well as habitat for upland game birds. It supports high numbers of elk, deer, moose, sharp-tailed grouse, and a variety of non-game species. Recently, bald eagles have once again attempted to nest in the upper end of the reservoir within Tex Creek. Two of the most popular recreational opportunities at Tex Creek are wildlife viewing and hunting for deer, elk, and grouse (pers. comm., P. Faulkner, IDFG, Idaho Falls, ID, November 11, 1998). Opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, and snowmobile riding are also available. No estimate of annual visitation is available for Tex Creek.

The IDFG operates six primitive campsites scattered in different areas of Tex Creek, three of which are on Reclamation land. These sites cater to groups of between 2 and 15 people and are used primarily in the fall for hunting, rather than in the summer when there is little shade and the area is hot and dusty. There is a 10-day limit for dispersed camping at these sites. These sites typically include poles for horse tie-ups, horse trailer pull-throughs, fire rings, and level tent areas. None of these sites are universally accessible. The most popular of these sites, in part because it has summer shade provided by large trees, is an area known locally as Smith Place. The second-most popular area includes two sites along Meadow Creek that are clustered together. This area has a horse corral and chute for group use. Another popular location is Indian Creek Pond. This site has been scheduled for improvement for wildlife viewing opportunities.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Cartier Slough is a 1,026-acre area managed by IDFG as habitat for waterfowl and fur-bearing mammals. A small parking area and boat launch at this site are managed by IDFG. The primary recreational activities include walking, wildlife viewing, hunting (waterfowl, pheasants, deer, moose, and small game), fishing, trapping, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing. Cartier Slough is also used by Rexburg school and scout groups, and by Ricks College as an outdoor classroom. Access includes a small parking lot with a non-motorized trail into the area. None of the facilities are universally accessible. Adjacent to Cartier Slough is Beaver Dick Park, owned and operated by Madison County. This park provides a campground, picnic shelters, restrooms, boat ramp, and an accessible fishing pier. The primary walk-in access to Cartier Slough is through Beaver Dick Park; however, visitors also walk in from the access road along the north boundary of Cartier Slough.

Ririe Reservoir Outlet Channel

This man-made channel extends approximately 8 miles from its confluence with Sand Creek to the Snake River in Idaho Falls. A rough gravel road borders the channel on both sides. These roadways are likely used by local residents for jogging, bicycle riding, and off-road vehicle (ORV) use. No formal facilities are provided. Some public use of this corridor occurs in the last mile nearest the Snake River where visitors access the Snake River for fishing on an ad hoc basis. No estimate of annual visitation is available for the Ririe Outlet Channel.

3.8.2 Environmental Consequences

This section discusses the expected positive and adverse impacts of the RMP alternatives on recreation resources. A general discussion of these potential impacts in each of five assessment categories is presented below, followed by a more detailed discussion of impacts under each of the three alternatives.

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

The degree of proposed native vegetation protection and enhancement varies by location. Recreation facilities and use areas generally have less emphasis compared to undisturbed native vegetation areas. In areas where proposed recreation facilities are to be implemented, impacts to existing native vegetation would be minimized. Removal of native vegetation would be allowed in these areas where the expansion of recreation facilities is needed. However, under Alternatives B and C, native vegetation protection and enhancement measures would be followed in surrounding areas.

Noxious weed infestations are an increasing problem at both Tex Creek and Cartier Slough, although these infestations do not directly affect recreation in these areas. Under Alternatives B and

C, interpretive facilities that provide information about noxious weeds would be provided. Interpretive facilities would identify common noxious and invasive weeds, discuss problems that they pose, and request support in avoiding the spread of these species.

Erosion Control

Erosion control measures could impact recreation use if erosion problems were identified in existing or proposed recreational facilities or use areas. Adverse effects on recreation could also occur in response to a Reclamation-supported IDEQ TMDL process. In general, erosion control efforts under Alternatives B and C would not have an adverse impact on recreation and would enhance the visitor experience, with the exception of specific erosion problem areas at recreation sites that may be identified in the future and require remediation that may limit recreation use.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Actions that would be implemented that relate to recreation under Alternative B and to a slightly lesser extent, Alternative C include maintaining and protecting riparian habitat, actively improving riparian habitat, winter closure of some areas, and permanent closure of some areas. In most cases, these proposed actions would have an adverse impact on recreation use and opportunities. Actions related to nest protection would have the potential for limiting use of a small section of the shoreline within the Willow Creek Arm. Under Alternative B, winter closure of Pipe Creek Road would limit use of the area. This measure would allow for continued use of closed areas by sensitive wildlife species without the detrimental impacts that now result from concurrent recreational use. The closure as proposed by Alternative B could have the effect of shifting existing recreational use to nearby adjacent areas.

Improved or Restricted Access

Potential actions related to public access involve either improving access, such as providing additional non-motorized trails, or restricting access to protect habitat or wildlife. Actions related to restricting access were discussed above under Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement. However, several actions under Alternatives B and C would result in both improved access and a positive impact on recreation and the visitor experience. One specific group of actions proposed under both Alternatives B and C involves developing additional non-motorized trails that would serve distinct recreational user groups. Potential non-motorized trail developments that would improve access include hiking trails, groomed cross-country ski trails, and interpretive pedestrian trails. A separate action that would improve access to recreational users would involve permanently opening specific areas to recreation use, such as the outlet channel as proposed by Alternatives B and C.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Many actions under both action alternatives would result in the improvement of recreation facilities, which would have a positive impact on recreation and increase day use. Potential actions focus on the improvement, expansion, or construction of facilities associated with day use, overnight, or boating facilities. Most of these actions would result in improved opportunities for recreation and a higher quality recreation experience. However, adverse impacts associated with increased recreation include the increased operations and maintenance costs associated with additional trash removal, human waste disposal, and law enforcement. Specific actions as they relate to alternatives and a discussion of the more specific impacts of these actions on recreation are presented in more detail below.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

All recreation sites and facilities currently available would be operated at their current level of service, with a few exceptions. One exception is Benchlands Park, where restroom facilities would be upgraded to be made universally accessible as part of an existing Reclamation mandate. This alternative would also result in a continuation of current management regarding the closure of Creekside Park. This alternative would result in continued closure of the area to motorized access with no facilities provided.

While few immediate direct effects on recreation would result from this alternative, several indirect effects could impact recreation in the future. Current use trends suggest that recreational visits to the area would continue to increase. With a continuance of current recreation management operations into the future, no mechanism would exist to relieve higher levels of use that would likely fill the day and overnight use areas to capacity on summer weekends. There is also a perception among some users that additional boat launch facilities are necessary to eliminate long waiting periods. Thus, one effect of this alternative on recreation would be more crowded conditions resulting in a higher density recreation experience. Increased crowding would negatively impact the visitor experience and likely result in lower overall satisfaction.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

This alternative would allow for an increase in recreation development, principally at Ririe Reservoir. This increase would include additional day use and overnight facilities, as well as additional non-motorized trails and increased access in some areas. In general, this alternative would have a positive impact on the recreational experience in the area, with a few exceptions discussed below. Expansion and development of new facilities would increase the opportunities available to visitors without exceeding the carrying capacity of the area.

The most considerable positive impacts on recreation allowed under this alternative would result from proposed improvements at Juniper Park and Blacktail Park. New recreation development at Juniper Park would result in many new recreational opportunities that would greatly increase the capacity for visitor participation in camping, fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, shoreline access, and interpretation and education. This alternative would allow the capacity of the campground to be doubled and would greatly increase the total acreage of the park devoted to active recreation. A similar expansion in recreation opportunities would be allowed under this alternative at Blacktail Park; however, the actual developed acreage of the park would not increase. The capacity of existing day use facilities would essentially be doubled, with new facilities allowed related to fishing, boating, interpretation and education, and visitor services. This alternative would permit a 4- to 6-mile long non-motorized trail on the reservoir's eastern shoreline and rim; and a new trailhead and trail leading from Blacktail Park to Tex Creek WMA. Other improvements would include new and expanded swimming areas, additional parking, and floating platforms on the reservoir, as well as new regulatory and informational signage.

Additional recreation development would also be allowed at several other areas. Creekside Park would be reopened, with the development of new day use facilities, hiking trails, and interpretive facilities. A group tent camping area would also be allowed and used as demand warrants. This alternative would slightly increase the total developed acreage of this park. Developments along the east side of Willow Creek below the dam would formalize existing recreation uses here. Day use facilities at Benchlands Park would be expanded; however, no additional acreage would be added to this site. Formalization and new development of non-motorized trails, increased interpretation and education, and increased public access opportunities would also be allowed at the Ririe Outlet Channel, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough.

Two actions under this alternative would have minor adverse impacts on recreational access in two specific areas. Under this alternative, wildlife restrictions on the Willow Creek Arm would restrict seasonal public use of approximately 1/4 mile of the reservoir shoreline. However, since this zone represents a very small portion of the total shoreline available to public use, the adverse impact of this closure on recreational access is considered minor. A second action under this alternative would close the Pipe Creek Road at Tex Creek during the winter because of concerns for recreation impacts on wildlife. This would have an adverse impact on opportunities available for snowmobiling in the immediate area. However, USFS lands immediately east of Tex Creek are open to snowmobile use and have more reliable snow conditions.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

This alternative would allow for additional recreation development beyond those actions allowed under Alternative B. Alternative C would also greatly expand the actual developed acreage of some recreation areas. In general, this alternative would have a positive impact on the recreation experience in the area, with a few exceptions discussed below. Expansion and development of new facilities would increase the opportunities available to visitors without exceeding the physical carrying capacity of the area.

In most cases, this alternative allows for recreation development similar to that outlined in Alternative B, with the notable exceptions of Blacktail Park and Benchlands Park. At Blacktail Park, the area devoted to active recreation would more than double with the development of a new day use area and a new campground. Blacktail Park would remain a day use area under Alternative B, but would be expanded for overnight use under Alternative C. While no change would result from the No Action Alternative, other improvements not listed under the previous alternative would include expanded moorage facilities, a new boat launch facility, and the potential availability of electrical power brought in from offsite. The active recreation area at Benchlands Park would also greatly increase in size under Alternative C by allowing overnight use at this location. Under Alternative C, Benchlands Park would also become an overnight facility; in Alternative B, it is a day use site only. Other than compliance with Federal accessibility requirements, no change would be made to Benchlands Park under Alternative A. In the case of both Benchlands Park and Blacktail Park, the development of overnight facilities would create additional operations and maintenance concerns not involved in the operation of the existing day use facilities.

Other recreation areas and facilities would not increase in size under Alternative C, but the development of additional recreation facilities and access routes would be allowed. A new fishing pier, concession facility, and winter access for ice fishing would be allowed at Juniper Park, and additional floating day use platforms would be added under this alternative. Other positive impacts to recreation under this alternative include the additional day use facilities on the east side of Willow Creek below the dam.

One minor adverse effect on recreation under Alternatives B and C remains the same. Restricted public shoreline access for a 1/4-mile zone along the Willow Creek Arm of the reservoir would be implemented.

3.9 Land Use

3.9.1 Affected Environment

This section provides an overview of existing land status and management issues; agreements, easements, and leases; and encroachment and trespass issues, as well as a brief discussion of surrounding land uses.

Existing Land Status and Management

Reclamation's land holdings consist of approximately 1,564 acres of submerged lands beneath the reservoir itself, as well as most of the canyon, large portions of Tex Creek, most of Cartier Slough, and the Ririe Outlet Channel (see Table 3.9-1). Reclamation lands are composed of mitigation and non-mitigation lands. Mitigation lands at Tex Creek and Cartier Slough are those lands that were specifically set aside to compensate for the loss of wildlife habitat from the development of the Ririe and Teton dam and reservoir projects. Management of the Ririe and Teton mitigation lands at Tex

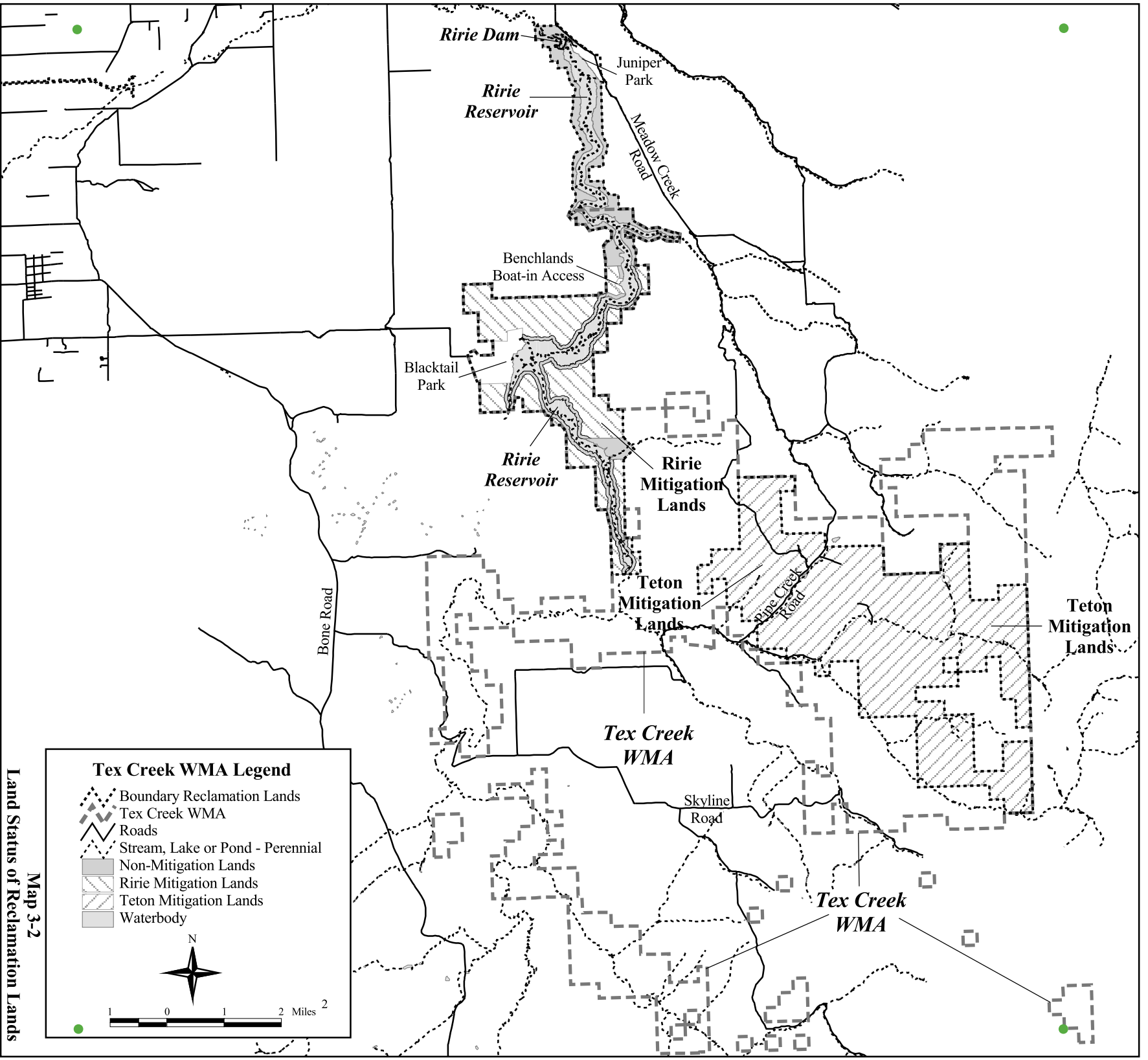
Creek is first and foremost for the conservation and protection of habitat for big game species, particularly elk and deer. All other uses of the mitigation lands (for example, recreation) are considered secondary. Management of mitigation lands at Cartier Slough is directed toward waterfowl. Non-mitigation lands comprise all other Reclamation-owned lands. Maps 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, and 3-2 show the extent of Reclamation's ownership and the specific areas covered by the Ririe and Teton mitigation lands, as well as the non-mitigation lands. Table 3.9-1 provides a breakdown of Reclamation's land ownership as it relates to mitigation and non-mitigation lands for all Reclamation lands.

As shown on Map 3-2, not all lands within Tex Creek are mitigation lands. Lands surrounding the Benchlands recreation site, Blacktail Park, and a drainage on the north side of the Willow Creek Arm are non-mitigation lands, as well as a 300-foot wide zone extending around the reservoir (within the WMA) from the reservoir's high pool level. These non-mitigation lands are not encumbered by any agreements or plans related to Tex Creek. However, since Tex Creek was established, they have been managed as part of the overall WMA.

Land surrounding the northern half of the reservoir is managed by Reclamation, while the IDFG manages Tex Creek and Cartier Slough. The Bonneville County Department of Parks

Map 3-2
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan
Land Status of Reclamation Lands

The information displayed here is based on the best available data at the time of publication. Neither the authors, Reclamation, or any other party here warrant or represent that the information is in every respect complete and accurate, and are not held responsible for errors or omissions.



and Recreation manages the three recreation sites at the reservoir. However, as the landowner, Reclamation has ultimate authority and responsibility over the management of all Reclamation lands.

Table 3.9-1. Bureau of Reclamation Land Ownership (in Acres)¹

Reclamation Lands	Tex Creek WMA	Cartier Slough WMA	Outside of WMAs	Total
Ririe Mitigation Lands	2,502 ¹	560	NA	3,062
Teton Mitigation Lands	9,104	468	NA	9,572
Non-Mitigation Lands within WMAs ²	1,407 ³	0	NA	1,407
Non-Mitigation Lands Outside of WMAs Adjacent to Ririe Reservoir ²	NA	NA	646 ⁴	646
Other Non-Mitigation Lands Outside of WMAs (Ririe Outlet Channel)	NA	NA	167	167
Total	13,013	1,028	813	14,854

Source: Reclamation 2000

¹Original mitigation lands minus the 567 acre reservoir buffer.

²Does not include submerged lands of about 1,073 acres for the reservoir in the WMA.

³Original non-mitigation lands plus the 567 acre reservoir buffer.

⁴Does not include the submerged lands of about 491 acres for the reservoir not in the WMA.

Ririe Reservoir

Ririe Reservoir was created by the COE in the early 1970s when Willow Creek, a tributary of the Snake River, was dammed. The reservoir was authorized under the Ririe Project in 1962. Authorized purposes include flood control, irrigation, and recreation. Fish and wildlife protection measures also were included in the Ririe authorization. The 12-mile-long reservoir contains 100,500 acre-feet of water retained for flood control and irrigation comprising 1,560 acres of surface area (Reclamation 1974).

Management of recreation has been contracted to the Bonneville County Department of Parks and Recreation since 1995. The county has managed the reservoir surface and three adjacent recreation sites since this time, maintaining recreational and administrative facilities and providing staffing and visitor services.

Tex Creek WMA

Most of Reclamation's lands (11,606 of 13,013 acres) within Tex Creek were acquired for the purpose of mitigation of fish and wildlife habitat losses caused by the construction and operation of the Ririe Reservoir Project and the Teton Project. Tex Creek is comprised of a patchwork of

Reclamation, IDFG, BLM, and private lands. The IDFG manages the entire Tex Creek with priority for big game winter habitat. Reclamation owns approximately 11,606 acres of the 28,750-acre Tex Creek (Reclamation 2000), including approximately 2,502 acres surrounding the southern portion of the reservoir (Ririe mitigation lands) and 9,104 acres located in a non-contiguous parcel southeast of the reservoir in the Indian Fork, Pipe Creek, and upper Tex Creek drainage (Teton mitigation lands).

Cartier Slough WMA

Reclamation's lands within Cartier Slough were also acquired for the purpose of mitigating fish and wildlife habitat losses caused by the construction and operation of the Ririe and Teton Projects. The WMA is composed of approximately 1,028 acres of Reclamation land, which are managed by IDFG. Primary management priorities for Cartier Slough are to provide habitat for waterfowl, threatened and endangered species, and other game and non-game wildlife. Secondary management priorities are to provide for wildlife-related recreation. Although Cartier Slough is entirely composed of the Reclamation Ririe and Teton mitigation lands, there are parcels of BLM-owned lands (located along the Henrys Fork of the Snake River) that IDFG includes in the management activities of the WMA. However, no agreement currently exists between the IDFG and BLM related to their management activities on these lands.

Ririe Outlet Channel

Below the dam, water is discharged from Ririe Reservoir into Willow Creek, which flows in its natural stream channel for approximately 6 miles through private property. Where Sand Creek branches from Willow Creek, an outlet channel owned and operated by Reclamation connects Willow Creek to the Snake River to the west. This 7.8-mile-long channel provides overflow capability, preventing flooding in Idaho Falls. The channel is about 50 feet wide at the surface and ranges in width from approximately 30 feet to 200 feet on either side.

Existing Agreements, Easements, and Leases

Agency Agreements

Ririe Reservoir

The Ririe Reservoir and Project-related lands were transferred to Reclamation from the COE by a Memorandum of Agreement (contract #DACW68-75-C-0124) on October 14, 1976.

Ririe Mitigation Lands

A tri-party agreement (contract #DACW68-75-C-0091) between Reclamation, the COE, and IDFG was signed by all three agencies on August 18, 1976, establishing the Ririe mitigation lands adjacent to Ririe Reservoir, at Tex Creek, and at Cartier Slough. The

purpose of establishing the mitigation lands was to mitigate for the loss of fish and wildlife habitat caused by the construction and operation of the Ririe Reservoir Project. This 100-year agreement designates the IDFG as the manager of these lands.

Teton Mitigation Lands

A 25-year agreement (contract #1-07-10-L0450) between Reclamation and IDFG established the Teton mitigation lands south of Ririe Reservoir and at Cartier Slough. The purpose of establishing the mitigation lands was to mitigate for the loss of fish and wildlife habitat caused by the construction and operation of the Ririe and Teton Projects. The agreement designated the IDFG as the manager of these lands and will expire on October 1, 2006 (that is, within the life of the 10-year RMP).

Ririe Reservoir Recreation Sites

Reclamation has an agreement with Bonneville County (MOA #1425-5-MA-10-01120) authorizing the county to provide management, operation, maintenance, development, and replacement of all recreation facilities. The agreement included financial cost sharing by Reclamation for the first 3 years of the agreement (1995 to 1997). This 2-year agreement, renewable for up to 20 years, began in 1997 and was last renewed in 1999.

Related Agreements

The IDFG and Madison County Parks and Recreation have a cooperative agreement for the development and maintenance of a windbreak on Cartier Slough through their Habitat Improvement Program. The agreement requires the county to develop and maintain a 1.24-acre, five-row windbreak adjacent to the county's Beaver Dick Park on Cartier Slough. The 10-year agreement is effective from May 1, 1994 until May 1, 2004.

Agricultural Leases

There is one agricultural lease (contract #1-07-14-L0201) for 14 acres of land along the canyon rim near the northwest corner of the reservoir. The lease does not include water rights, nor can the lessee restrict hunting and fishing by the public on leased lands. This one-year renewable lease began in 1998 and would be extended at the lessee's discretion, if conditions of the lease are met, until 2003.

Crossing Agreements/Rights-of-Way/Easements

Numerous utility crossings are authorized for utilities and public service agencies including Utah Power (also known as PacifiCorp), the City of Ucon, Mountain Bell Telephone, Idaho Irrigation District, Progressive Irrigation District, and Bonneville County. These arrangements allow pipes, roads, and power and communication lines to cross Reclamation lands.

Existing Encroachments and Trespass Issues

Natural barriers, limited services, and ownership of adequate buffer land prevent encroachments around Ririe Reservoir. Tex Creek, Cartier Slough, and the Ririe Outlet Channel are more subject to livestock trespassing but have little physical encroachment.

Ririe Reservoir

Encroachments have not generally been a problem around Ririe Reservoir. Because Reclamation's land is located within the canyon surrounding the reservoir, this barrier generally protects the lands from encroachment. In addition, its relatively remote location and lack of public services inhibit development.

Tex Creek WMA

The Tex Creek WMA boundaries are fenced and residential encroachments are not an issue. However, cattle trespass is a frequent problem within Tex Creek and generally results from cattle entering the area through broken fences. IDFG's WMA staff regularly repair fences after notifying adjacent ranchers that cattle have crossed into the WMA.

Cartier Slough WMA

Encroachments have not been a problem near Cartier Slough. However, cattle trespass does occur occasionally.

Ririe Outlet Channel

Most of the Ririe Outlet Channel is protected from encroachment by roads and fences. However, cattle trespass had been occurring on about 15 acres for several years. This trespass activity was terminated in 1999.

Surrounding Land Use

A variety of land uses occur near Reclamation's lands. These include traditional uses such as crop and pasture lands, as well as more recent uses such as urban development and lands managed for conservation purposes. In general, the intensity of surrounding land uses is determined by proximity to water, transportation, and other infrastructure.

Ririe Reservoir

Most of the property surrounding Reclamation lands is privately owned and used for agriculture. Farmland near the downstream end of the reservoir slopes gently to the north and is accessible from Highway 26. These lands are irrigated and planted in rotations of potatoes, wheat, and alfalfa.

Agricultural structures such as pivot circles and potato sheds can be seen from Juniper Park. Scattered houses are associated with the adjacent farms.

Much of the land bordering Reclamation's property is flat or gently sloping. Lands west of the reservoir slope gently downward to the west, planted in dryland wheat. Grazing is common on other adjacent land, particularly in the more remote areas farther south.

With the exception of a large home overlooking the dam immediately south of the Juniper campground, there is currently no residential use close to the reservoir. The only other noticeable private construction consists of a large shelter for potato crops on the canyon rim above the former Creekside Park area below the dam.

Tex Creek WMA

Most of Tex Creek is bordered by private ranches and farms with cattle grazing being the predominant use of these lands. Additional land is cultivated in wheat and other dryland crops, while some is planted in forage crops, under the NRCS Conservation Reserve Program. In general, the lowland areas of Tex Creek border grazing or agriculture, while upland areas border pasture, Conservation Reserve Program land, and forested lands such as the Caribou National Forest along the eastern boundary. Residences near Tex Creek include ranches and several rural home sites.

Cartier Slough WMA

Wetland areas extend to the north and south of Cartier Slough and are mostly privately owned; however, some land is owned by the BLM. Surrounding uses generally consist of grazing and farming. In addition, Beaver Dick Park, a small public recreation area owned and operated by the Madison County Department of Parks and Recreation, is located at the northeast corner of Cartier Slough.

Ririe Outlet Channel

The outlet channel is almost entirely bounded on either side by privately owned pasture and irrigated farmland.

3.9.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

No direct impacts on land use are expected from actions to enhance vegetation, wildlife habitat, and natural resources on Reclamation lands under any of the alternatives. An indirect beneficial impact would result from the realty action proposed under all alternatives related to the agricultural

use area on the Ririe mitigation lands at Tex Creek. This action calls for pursuing a land exchange or sharecrop agreement to acquire or develop habitat that benefits wildlife.

Erosion Control

The majority of erosion control measures proposed under Alternatives B and C would involve monitoring and reacting to address specific problems that are identified. These measures would have positive impacts on land use by protecting land from erosion.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Actions that would be implemented in support of native fish and wildlife enhancement that relate to land use under all of the alternatives, especially Alternative B, include maintaining and protecting riparian habitat, actively improving riparian habitat, winter closure of some areas, and permanent closure of some areas. These potential actions would not have a direct impact on land use.

Improved or Restricted Access

Road closures proposed under Alternative B could potentially have an indirect impact on land use if roads to be closed provide unique access to private property. Since the Pipe Creek Road is not used for this purpose, access changes would have no impact on land use.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Facility improvements proposed by Alternatives B and C would generally result in positive land use impacts by enhancing one of the region's major water-based recreation attractions and thereby improving the local quality of life.

Allowing electrical power to be brought into Blacktail as proposed under Alternative C could indirectly result in adverse land use impacts at Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek by modifying land uses adjacent to the reservoir and the Ririe mitigation lands at Tex Creek. Access to electricity could make land overlooking the reservoir and the Ririe mitigation lands at Tex Creek highly desirable residential real estate. Land use impacts could result if the availability of electrical power fosters new residential development on properties west of Reclamation-owned lands.

Alternatives

The following section discusses the expected impacts of each of the three alternatives on land use in the area. This section addresses the relative magnitude of the impacts and provides a brief description of how the proposed recreation development comprising each alternative would affect land use. Except as otherwise noted, none of the alternatives would have a direct impact on regional land use.

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

No direct or indirect land use impacts are expected to result from this alternative.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

No direct or indirect adverse land use impacts are expected to result from this alternative. Minor positive impacts could indirectly result from quality of life enhancements and directly from erosion control measures.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

This alternative would allow recreation development to be maximized within the constraints imposed by existing agency commitments. Although this would not have direct land use impacts, providing electricity in Blacktail could potentially result in indirect adverse land use impacts on adjacent private lands as discussed above.

3.10 Public Facilities, Utilities, and Services

This section addresses impacts associated with both action alternatives and the No Action Alternative on the area's public facilities, utilities, and services.

3.10.1 Affected Environment

The limited public facilities at Juniper Park, Blacktail Park, Benchlands, and Beaver Dick Park are operated by agencies other than Reclamation. Police and fire services are provided by local counties.

Ririe Reservoir

Public facilities at Ririe are very limited. Juniper Park is the most developed of the three recreation sites. Water is pumped from onsite wells to a 15,000-gallon storage tank. Potable water is chlorinated and piped to the visitors' center, washrooms, and campsites. Well water is also used for lawn sprinklers and fire fighting purposes. Wastewater is treated by Reclamation's own treatment system adjacent to the Juniper recreation site, allowing for restrooms with flush toilets and showers. Most of the 49 RV sites have water and electrical hookups, but only a few in the A Loop have full hookups. A dump station is available for RVs. Juniper is the only recreation site at Ririe with electricity, which is available at the visitors' center and RV sites from a power line on the county road.

Water at Blacktail Park is supplied by wells. Water is used at the day use site and to irrigate the grass-covered lawn areas. Electricity is produced by a generator used by the concession to operate

the fuel pumps and by the county for park maintenance. High summer temperatures reduce the generator's reliability, challenging the concession's operations. Vault toilets provide the only sanitation facilities.

Benchlands, accessible only by boat, has no services or facilities other than pit toilets and covered picnic tables.

Creekside Park, a small under-used day use area below the dam, contains a small grass-covered area, trees, and parking. The site was recently closed and the facilities removed after vandalism and beaver damage made management of the area difficult.

Solid waste is stored temporarily at Ririe in dumpsters maintained by a private waste hauling contractor for disposal in the Bonneville County Landfill.

Fire protection at the west side of Ririe is Bonneville County's responsibility. The Jefferson County Fire Department is responsible for the eastern side of the site. The Bonneville County Sheriff provides law enforcement.

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Tex Creek WMA

Tex Creek has few developed facilities. The most developed public facilities include numerous unimproved roads and non-motorized trails. No roads within Tex Creek are paved, and many become slick and unpassable after precipitation. Thus, access is somewhat limited to dry summer weather and by snowmobile during the winter. Directional signage is limited or non-existent. Six individual primitive campsites are located within the WMA and are accessible by road near Trail Creek and Meadow Creek. The campsites contain no facilities other than fire rings and feeding bins and hitching rails for horses. The Tex Creek headquarters has three house trailers with several storage sheds, water from a well, electricity by generator, two Quonset huts, and a workshop.

Consistent with its mission, most projects at Tex Creek have emphasized habitat restoration and enhancement. Fences have been removed, new fencing to exclude livestock installed, old farmsteads cleaned up, and buildings removed. Over 170,000 shrubs have been planted. Springs have been developed for livestock as part of land trades that benefit wintering big game. Terracing and water and sediment basins have been constructed on Ritter Bench, in the Pipe Creek and Indian Fork drainages, and Bull's Fork to control erosion. They are also intended to increase the water table and sub-irrigation of developed fields, and to aid in the recovery of eroded areas (IDFG 1998a).

Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA

Most facilities at Cartier Slough are directly or indirectly related to wildlife management and protection, including water control and irrigation structures, fencing, and nest structures.

The main public access to Cartier Slough is Beaver Dick Park, which is owned and managed by Madison County. Secondary visitor access is from the primitive road, which more or less follows the northern boundary of Cartier Slough. This road also accesses the primitive boat ramp in one of the slough channels, and ultimately leads to the water control structure at the west end of Cartier Slough. There is an unimproved two-track road running through much of Cartier Slough that is restricted to administrative motorized use only. Most visitors use this two-track road as a trail for walking, horseback riding, or cross country skiing. This two-track road is not accessible during high water periods. Beaver Dick Park has limited facilities, which are described in Section 3.8, *Recreation*, of this EA. Police and fire protection at Cartier Slough and Beaver Dick Park are the responsibility of Madison County.

Ririe Outlet Channel

No public facilities are provided along the Ririe Reservoir Outlet Channel.

3.10.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

No direct impacts of native vegetation protection and enhancement measures would occur to public facilities, utilities, and services under any alternative.

Erosion Control

Erosion control measures should not have direct impacts on public facilities, utilities, and services under any alternative.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Actions that would be implemented in support of protection and enhancement of native fish and wildlife that relate to public facilities, utilities, and services under Alternatives B or C include the following: maintaining and protecting riparian habitat, actively improving riparian habitat, winter closure of some areas, and permanent closure of some areas. In most cases, these potential actions would not have a direct impact on public facilities, utilities, and services other than recreation impacts discussed in Section 3.8, *Recreation*, of this EA. Seasonal or permanent closures of areas, under Alternatives A and B, would limit public access to certain areas that would have positive impacts on local law enforcement agencies by reducing the size of the patrol area. Reduced human access would also reduce opportunities for wildfires, resulting in positive impacts on local fire departments.

Improved or Restricted Access

In some cases, increased public access proposed under Alternatives B and C would increase opportunities for crime and nuisance behavior, adding to existing demands on law enforcement agencies. For example, overnight moorage proposed at Juniper under Alternatives B and C would create crime targets that may require increased policing.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Many actions under Alternatives B and C (described in Chapter 2) would focus on the improvement, expansion, or construction of facilities associated with day use, overnight, or boating facilities that could increase demands on public facilities and services. For example, new overnight use of Benchlands and at Blacktail under Alternative C would increase demands on public services provided by the county such as police, trash removal, and maintenance. Depending on facilities, new campsites could also increase demands on water, sewage handling, and electricity. The proposed prohibition of open fires would help mitigate additional demands of fire departments, but increased public use could potentially increase the likelihood of fire. Nevertheless, the moderate scale of proposed facility improvements and access enhancement is not expected to be great enough to result in measurable negative impacts.

Alternatives

The following section discusses the expected impacts of each of the three alternatives on public facilities, utilities, and services in the area. This section addresses the relative magnitude of the impacts and provides a brief description of how the proposed recreation development comprising each alternative would affect public services and utilities.

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

This alternative would result in demands on utilities and public facilities and services that are similar to those that currently exist. All recreation sites and facilities currently available would be maintained at their current level of service. One exception is at the Benchlands area, where restroom facilities would be upgraded to be made accessible as part of an existing Reclamation mandate. This alternative would also result in a continuation of current management practices, one of which is the continued closure of Creekside Park.

While there would be few, if any, direct effects on utilities and public facilities and services resulting from this alternative, there would be several indirect effects that could impact public services in the future. Current use trends suggest that recreational visits to the area would continue to increase. Without facility expansion and access improvements, there would be no mechanism to relieve high levels of use that often fill the day use and overnight use areas to capacity on summer weekends. Overcrowding could result in user conflicts and accidents that could become a law enforcement issue.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

This alternative would allow for recreation development that would increase the facilities available to visitors in the area. This would include additional day use and overnight facilities, as well as additional non-motorized trails and increased access to some areas. This alternative would moderately increase demands on utilities and public facilities and services as discussed below.

Moderate impacts on utilities and public facilities and services would likely result from improvements to Juniper Park and Creekside Park. Recreation development at Juniper Park would result in 40 additional campsites. Creekside Park would be re-opened with the development of day use recreation facilities and potentially a group tent camping area. Developments along the east side of Willow Creek below the dam would formalize existing recreation uses. These new and expanded accommodations would result in a proportionate increased demands on water supplies, wastewater treatment, and electricity depending on the number and type of RV hook-ups and other facilities provided. The increased visitation facilitated by these improvements would generate a proportional increase in solid waste production and contribute to the need for more police and fire services to some degree.

Expanded recreation opportunities would occur under this alternative at Blacktail Park and Benchlands, both of which would expand the capacity of existing day use facilities which would have a slight impact on law enforcement and solid waste.

This alternative also includes provisions for better coordination with the IDFG, which would have positive impacts on public facilities and services, especially transportation and law enforcement.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

This alternative would allow recreation development to be maximized within the constraints imposed by existing agency commitments. As a result, Alternative C and its resulting public facilities, utilities, and services impacts are very similar to Alternative B in the northern portions of the Ririe Reservoir, outside the mitigation lands. Farther south within Tex Creek, the level of recreation development intensifies in a number of locations under this alternative. In general, increased development correlates to proportionately larger impacts on public services and utilities. Specific examples of increased impacts resulting under this alternative are discussed below.

Depending on the nature and scale of business, conversion of the Visitor's Center into a concession/convenience store could increase consumption of electricity and water, and increase wastewater production.

Overnight use of Benchlands and Blacktail could require a moderate degree of additional response from local law enforcement and emergency medical agencies. Campers could also generate additional utility demands depending on the level of services offered. In addition, expansion of day

use facilities at Blacktail would increase water consumption from irrigation of the additional lawn areas and landscaping.

3.11 Environmental Justice

This section addresses impacts associated with both action alternatives and the No Action Alternative on environmental justice issues in the vicinity of the Ririe Reservoir, Tex Creek, Cartier Slough, and the Ririe Outlet Channel.

3.11.1 Affected Environment

In February 1994, the President issued Executive Order 12898 that requires all Federal agencies to seek to achieve environmental justice by “identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations” (Executive Order 12898).

This resource management planning and NEPA environmental review process complied with Executive Order 12898 by identifying minority and low-income populations early in the process and incorporating the perspectives of these populations into the decision-making process.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines low income as 80 percent of the median family income for the area, subject to adjustment for areas with unusually high or low incomes or housing costs. Southeastern Idaho is a predominantly rural area with a lower than national average annual per capita income of approximately \$15,339. Based on the HUD standard, Bonneville County (with an average 1994 per capita income of \$18,933) would not be considered a low-income population. With an average per capita income of \$11,085, however, Madison County would be considered a low-income population as defined by HUD (HUD 2000). In addition to being low income, Madison County’s per capita income is well below the national poverty threshold. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes were identified as a potentially affected minority population in this region.

3.11.2 Environmental Consequences

Adverse impacts would be limited to potential fee increases, but this would be offset by enhancement of low-cost recreation opportunities and improved access.

3.12 Cultural Resources

3.12.1 Affected Environment

Evidence of human occupation in southeastern Idaho dates as early as 14,500 years before the present (B.P.). Three major prehistoric cultural periods have been identified for southeastern Idaho: the Early Prehistoric Period (15,000 to 7,500 B.P.), the Middle Prehistoric Period (7,400 to 1,300 B.P.), and the Late Prehistoric Period (1,300 to 150 B.P.). Sites excavated in the Ririe Reservoir area have yielded diagnostic tools that indicate the study area was occupied for at least portions of the Middle and Late Prehistoric Periods.

A total of 35 cultural resource sites (including isolates) within the boundaries of the Ririe/Tex Creek RMP study area have been previously recorded on forms filed at the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The sites include 29 archaeological sites and 6 historic structures or features. An archaeological site and several historic structures (the red granary, the headquarters granary, and possibly others) exist within the boundaries of Tex Creek, but have not been officially documented on site forms. These sites are not included in the above count of historic structures.

Most of the archaeological sites are deposits of prehistoric artifacts, usually obsidian, ignimbrite, and cryptocrystalline silicate (chert, jasper, or chalcedony) flakes produced in tool manufacture. Sometimes these artifacts are found associated with other stone tools (for example, manos, bifaces, and hammerstones), pieces of animal bone, or ceramic potsherds. Prehistoric site types include open prehistoric sites (lithic scatters), a toolstone quarry, rock shelters, and a surface depressions resembling house pit features common at prehistoric village sites. Diverse cultural activities and widespread use of the study area in prehistoric times is reflected in the range of site types, site location/environmental association, and variability in site size. Excavations at the Blacktail Park site, which yielded deeply stratified cultural deposits, indicate intensive prehistoric utilization of the study area over time.

Explorers and fur trappers first entered southeastern Idaho in the early 19th century. The major east-west travel route of the early Euroamerican explorers passed south of the Ririe/Tex Creek RMP study area at Fort Hall and later became the Oregon Trail. Settlement in southeastern Idaho began in 1860. During the 1870's, gold discoveries brought miners to southeast Idaho. Although mining was not a significant factor in the Ririe/Tex Creek RMP study area, settlers in the area worked in and provided supplies to the Caribou Mountain mining district about 45 miles to the southeast. Agriculture was and is the primary industry of settlers in southeastern Idaho, and irrigation systems were of signal importance to agricultural development of the area. Federal programs, including the Minidoka Project begun in 1904 by the Reclamation Service (later renamed the Bureau of Reclamation) provided a system of reservoirs for water storage, flood control and power. The historic resources in the study area are represented by farmsteads and farm-related equipment and structures such as silos, sheds, corrals, dumps, cabins, and barns. Some of these sites have associated archaeological deposits.

Cultural affiliations of ethnohistoric groups in the study area are Northern Shoshone and Bannock. These two groups spoke different dialects of the Numic language, and lived together in winter villages on the upper Snake River. Shoshone and Bannock territory consisted primarily of southern Idaho, including the study area, with bands congregating along the Snake and other rivers. After acquiring the horse, they ranged north into southern Alberta and east to the Black Hills to hunt bison and trade. The Fort Hall reservation was established in 1867. The length of time the Shoshone and Bannock Tribes have occupied southern Idaho is a subject of long-standing debate among scholars.

A Class I cultural resources inventory of the Ririe/Tex Creek RMP study area indicates that these lands are rich in cultural resources. Only 5,000 to 7,000 acres of the estimated 30,000 acres in the study area have been previously surveyed. Of the cultural resource sites known for the study area, six are considered eligible for the National Register:

- Willow Creek Cabin (10BV181)
- Two lithic scatter sites (10BV24/69 and 10BV179)
- Meadow Creek Rockshelter (10BV22)
- Willow Creek Rockshelter (10BV32/36)
- Blacktail Park site (10BV48)

These sites (as well as a number of other sites that remain to be identified and evaluated for the National Register) have the potential to address research questions relating to early occupation of the study area. For example, questions of chronology, prehistoric/historic settlement, natural resource use, and prehistoric affiliations could be answered by investigations here.

Locations exist in the study area that may have traditionally served as plant and other resource collection areas, and as such, could constitute places of traditional cultural importance to the Shoshone-Bannock, Shoshone-Paiute, and possibly other Tribes. Tex Creek in particular contains draws and valleys that could have served as collecting areas for aboriginal peoples; these areas harbor willow, mint, choke cherries, sagebrush, and other collectible resources.

3.12.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Measures to control noxious weeds through spraying projects have the potential to adversely affect archaeological sites by chemical contamination of radiocarbon samples and possibly other organic remains, if all or a portion of the site is on the ground surface. Conversion of former farm lands to

native shrub communities involves removing the existing vegetation through burning, grazing, and/or mowing, plowing, and disking—all measures which can adversely affect archaeological sites by disturbing the horizontal and vertical context of artifacts or, in the case of burning, by contaminating or altering organic material such as wood or bone.

Erosion Control

Methods to control erosion around roads or trails, or water channels (for example, with sediment traps) that would involve the use of heavy machinery or equipment, have the potential to adversely affect cultural site deposits. Vehicle operation or road grading in association with erosion control can destroy or damage cultural deposits by compaction causing breaking and dissociation of artifacts, or soil movement and churning causing horizontal or vertical mixing of cultural levels and overall loss of context.

Improved or Restricted Access

Improving access to recreation areas by means of increased or improved roads or trails can physically destroy scientifically valuable depositional data. Road or trail construction and subsequent use by vehicles or pedestrians can damage intact cultural deposits, break artifacts, and mix together artifacts from different episodes of occupation. A secondary effect of improved access is an increase of surface erosion once the road or trail is established, especially on soft, sandy soils which are very vulnerable to damage from increased vehicle access or recreational use. Repeated use strips vegetation that serves to hold sandy soils in place, leading to soil destabilization. Destabilized soils cause vertically distinct cultural layers, representing different occupations, to be deflated into a single, disturbed layer. An indirect effect of improved access for recreational and other purposes is greater potential for site looting. Relic collection reduces the scientific value of a site by removing artifacts that can be used to date when a site was used and to interpret its function and organization.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

There is a direct correlation between impacts to cultural resources and improved facilities, land development, and other encroachments that modify the surface of the land. Construction activities associated with recreational and other improvements can cause impacts to archaeological, historical, and traditional cultural properties by directly disturbing or damaging artifacts, features, and structures comprising the site. In addition, such improvements can invite or attract more visitors or tourists to an area, thus causing indirect impacts from increased vandalism and looting.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

Because only a small portion of the RMP study area has been intensively surveyed for cultural resources, the discussion of effects is general. Identification, protection, and management of cultural

resources would continue to occur on a project-specific, ad hoc basis, in response to individual Reclamation undertakings. The management of cultural resources would continue to be reactive instead of proactive.

Under existing management, exposed archaeological deposits, in general, would continue to be degraded by erosive forces within and away from the Ririe reservoir pool, by vandalism and relic collecting, and by Reclamation-sponsored or initiated actions within the study area. The effects would be cumulative, annually affecting the integrity of the cultural property and its potential eligibility to the *National Register of Historic Places*. To the extent that Alternative A retains the status quo in terms of recreational improvements, management of natural resources, and other actions that affect or modify the land surface, Alternative A would result in fewer impacts to cultural properties than either Alternative B or C. However, for actions proposed under the action alternatives that manage erosion and visitor use, those alternatives would afford better protection for cultural properties than Alternative A.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

It is Reclamation's policy to preserve significant cultural resources **in situ**, and to avoid impacts to these sites whenever possible. However, avoidance is not always feasible or possible. Future actions under Alternative B could impact known significant sites as well as unrecorded cultural resources.

Construction activities related to Alternative B include new trails, trailheads, parking areas, day use facilities, camping areas, and other surface-disturbing actions at Blacktail, Juniper, Creekside Parks, and other locations in proximity to Ririe Reservoir, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough. If Register-quality archaeological sites are located in the area of potential effect for these activities, construction actions could directly physically impact significant sites by disturbing artifact deposits and destroying the horizontal and vertical context of the artifacts, severely diminishing the information value of the site. In the case of traditional cultural properties, the resource would be lost or compromised. Post-construction impacts of these same areas would result from more intensive public use and improved public access, exposing cultural sites to potentially greater levels of relic collection and vandalism, thus reducing their scientific value. Conversely, monitoring erosion and addressing erosion control problems at Ririe Reservoir, and formalizing grazing in the Ririe Outlet Channel, would have positive effects on cultural resources by arresting or halting physical deterioration of such resources. The placement of regulatory signs and interpretive displays in Juniper Park, Blacktail Park, and other locations, would provide the opportunity to acquaint visitors with the importance of cultural resources and the need to protect them, potentially reducing site looting, illicit digging, and vandalism, although the opposite effect could occur by calling attention to such sites.

Mitigation

Mitigation under Alternative B (or any alternative) would occur if cultural resources are present that are eligible for the National Register, and if they are being adversely impacted by reservoir operations or land uses or are being damaged by natural agents. If an action is planned that could adversely impact an archaeological, traditional, or historic resource, then Reclamation would investigate options to avoid the site. Cultural resource management actions for impacted sites would be planned and implemented in accordance with consultation requirements defined in 36 CFR 800, using methods consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines.

Residual Impacts

Some level of relic collection and site looting may occur following the mitigation of a site.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Under Alternative C, there is increased emphasis on recreational developments, with greater potential disturbances to cultural resources, than under Alternative B. Development of additional day use areas and associated facilities, parking, tent and RV campgrounds in the Juniper Park, Blacktail Park, or Willow Creek areas could directly impact archaeological or traditional cultural properties that might be in proximity to the developments. Indirect impacts resulting in vandalism and illegal artifact collecting would be expected to occur as a result of increased visitation and public use of these areas. The physical nature of the direct and indirect impacts would be the same as those described above under Alternative B.

3.13 Sacred Sites

3.13.1 Affected Environment

Sacred sites are defined in Executive Order 13007 as “any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on Federal land that is identified by an Indian Tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion....”

Although no specific sacred sites have been identified in the study area, there are various natural features and locations on the study area landscape that would have held spiritual or religious significance to aboriginal Tribes. These places include mountains, foothills, buttes, springs, lakes, rivers, and rock shelters, among others. Specific site types in the study area that might require special attention by Reclamation in the future management of the RMP area include altars; vision quest sites; water sources, springs, and headwaters; burial sites; and historical places, for example, battlegrounds, rendezvous sites, sites where ceremonies occurred, and routes traveled by important persons; and others.

3.13.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Conversion of former farm lands to native shrub communities involves removing existing vegetation through burning, grazing, and/or mowing, plowing, and disking. These are actions that can adversely affect Indian sacred sites by physically disturbing or damaging the site or its environment. If the site is an archaeological site such as a human burial, its exposure could further subject it to erosion and looting.

Erosion Control

Same effects as described under “Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous.”

Improved or Restricted Access

Improving access to recreation sites by means of increased or improved roads or trails can adversely affect sacred sites by disturbing or destroying their physical and spiritual context. Any activities which result in an increase of visitors to an area is likely to adversely impact sacred sites—directly, by causing a physical change in the character of the site, and indirectly, by introducing intrusive elements such as noise and changes in viewshed and setting.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

Construction and development associated with expansion and improvement of recreation facilities (as well as other land development) is likely to compromise the physical and spiritual integrity of Indian sacred and religious sites. If the site is an archaeological site such as a human burial, its contents could be physically damaged or destroyed. Improved facilities are often associated with increased visitor use, which can introduce elements discordant with a sacred site and its “sacredness”—for example, noise, refuse, site looting, vandalism, or simply a greater number of people into a given area. An aspect of “sacredness” likely to suffer because of improved facilities and other encroachment is the physical “setting” of the sacred site—the character of that location and how that site is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. A compromised setting is likely to diminish the spiritual qualities of the site from the perspective of Tribal members and practitioners.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action Alternative: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

Possible impacts to Indian sacred sites from a continuation of existing management practices in the area of the RMP (or from new management practices) cannot be clearly determined since the specific location of sacred properties is unknown. If sacred sites are located in the area of potential effect of a Reclamation facility, their integrity could be compromised by actual physical disturbances as well as visual or auditory intrusions resulting in changes in character, feeling, and association of the site. In such cases, their “sacredness” and esteem as a religious or sacred site would very likely be diminished.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Impacts would be the same as those described for Alternative A.

Mitigation

Although Executive Order 13007 does not require agencies to mitigate for the impacts of their actions upon sacred sites, it does direct them to avoid adverse impacts wherever possible. For future Reclamation actions in the RMP area that could impact Indian sacred sites, Reclamation would consult with Tribes in conjunction with any 36 CFR 800 consultations. Under these consultations, Reclamation would seek means to avoid adverse impacts.

Residual Effects

Residual impacts cannot be determined since the presence of sacred sites is unknown.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Impacts would be the same as those described for Alternative A.

3.14 Indian Trust Assets

3.14.1 Affected Environment

Indian Trust Assets (ITAs) are legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian Tribes or individuals. The Secretary of the Interior, acting as the trustee, holds many assets in trust for Indian Tribes or Indian individuals. Examples of trust assets include lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights. While most ITAs are on-reservation, they may also be found off-reservation.

The United States has an Indian trust responsibility to protect and maintain rights reserved by or granted to Indian Tribes or Indian individuals by treaties, statutes, and executive orders. These are sometimes further interpreted through court decisions and regulations.

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, a Federally recognized Tribe located at the Fort Hall Reservation in Southeastern Idaho, have trust assets both on- and off-reservation. The Fort Bridger Treaty was signed and agreed to by the Bannock and Shoshone headman on July 3, 1868. The Treaty states in Article 4 that members of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe “shall have the right to hunt on the unoccupied lands of the United States....” The Tribes believe their right extends to the right to fish. The Fort Bridger Treaty for the Shoshone-Bannock has been interpreted in the case of *State of Idaho v. Tinno*, an off-reservation fishing case in Idaho. The Idaho Supreme Court used the canon of construction to determine the Shoshone word for “hunt” also included to fish. Under *Tinno*, the Court affirmed the Tribal Members’ right to take fish off-reservation pursuant to the Fort Bridger Treaty. (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes 1994 Treaty Rights Seminar (booklet) Pocatello Idaho May 18-20; Publisher, The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Treaty Rights Seminar Planning Committee).

Other Federally recognized Tribes, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation do not have recognized treaty rights outside their Executive Order Reservation (pers. comm., V. Peterson, DOI Regional Solicitors Office, 3/12/97) but may have cultural and religious interests in the area of the Ririe Reservoir. Certain interests of the Tribes may be protected under historic preservation laws and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). See Sections 3.12, *Cultural Resources*, and 3.13, *Sacred Sites*, for a discussion of other Tribal interests.

3.14.2 Environmental Consequences

Potentially impacted trust assets are Tribal hunting rights and fishing rights. The Tribes’ right to hunt or fish are not impacted and remains the same under all alternatives. The impact to resources associated with ITAs is discussed in Section 3.5, *Wildlife*, and Section 3.7, *Aquatic Biology*.

3.15 Transportation and Access

3.15.1 Affected Environment

Recreation use is focused on two main areas: Blacktail and Juniper parks. Juniper Park is accessed from State Highway 26 (SH-26). SH-26 is the main arterial connecting Idaho Falls to the recreation areas in Wyoming. This two-lane highway is a popular travel route for visitors going to Palisades Reservoir and the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. SH-26 is maintained by the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). In general, it is a typical rural, mountain highway with a speed limit of 65 mph and a standard paved width of approximately 24 to 28 feet with 2- to

6-foot gravel shoulders. Meadow Creek Road is paved to Juniper Park. During winter, the road is plowed to the visitor center.

Blacktail Park is a popular area for fishermen, boaters, and picnickers on weekday afternoons as well as on weekends. It is accessed by Lincoln Road, a paved county road that connects the neighboring towns of Iona, Ammon, and Lincoln and terminates approximately 10 miles from Idaho Falls at the Blacktail Park. Lincoln Road is not plowed during winter.

No roads completely circle the reservoir, although access is possible from the north and east by Meadow Creek Road and the west by Lincoln Road. A number of minor roads leave Meadow Creek Road and provide access to creeks, campsites, and other recreational areas in Tex Creek.

Actual parking facilities are identified only at Juniper Park and the Blacktail Access. Parking can be inadequate at both these sites on busy weekends. Isolated occurrences of driving and parking off the designated roads throughout Tex Creek have been noted. It is estimated that about 75,000 people visit the Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek areas annually.

Cartier Slough is not physically connected to Tex Creek and is accessed by SH-33. This two-lane highway runs east-west between Interstate 15 and U.S. 20. Direct access to the slough is through the Beaver Dick County Park. No actual transportation system is provided in this mitigation area. Access from Beaver Dick Park is pedestrian. An informal parking lot at the edge of the mitigation land, in the park, provides parking for the slough. No other formal roads or trails pass through the slough. Rexburg, to the east on SH-33, is the nearest town of significant size. Cartier Slough is roughly 15 miles to the north and east of Ririe Reservoir.

The main access to Tex Creek is along the paved Meadow Creek Road. Numerous accesses are available from this road into Tex Creek. Only one access road—the Pipe Creek Road—bisects Tex Creek. Pipe Creek Road is a primitive, dirt road that becomes impassible during wet weather conditions in the spring and fall. This road is graded periodically but no further maintenance is conducted.

The transportation and access system consists of two parts: the physical condition of the accesses and roads, and the operational ability of those roads and accesses. In general, the current transportation system in Tex Creek, Cartier Slough, and Ririe Reservoir is adequate for the traffic levels experienced. Peak traffic events occur during holiday weekends that stress the level of service of the transportation and access system, but these are not benchmark numbers.

Current visitation at Ririe is about 75,000 per year. Approximately 71 percent of those visitors come from Bonneville County. If Bonneville County's predicted population increase at 16 percent from 2000 to 2010 occurs, it is reasonable to assume a 16 percent increase in visitors to the Ririe area, which would result in a potential increase to 87,000 visitors per year.

The Bonneville County Parks Department estimates that 20,000 to 24,000 vehicles per year use the Juniper and Blacktail Accesses. In addition, another 6,000 to 7,000 vehicles use the

campgrounds at these locations. Therefore, the estimated total vehicles using Juniper and Blacktail Accesses range from 26,000 to 31,000 vehicles per year.

No detailed traffic volumes are available at this time, so specific comments on level of service and average daily traffic cannot be prepared. Based on observations by county employees, the existing transportation system adequately handles the volume of traffic currently using the area. Additional observations suggest weekend and holiday traffic is heavy at specific recreation sites and accesses. A more detailed evaluation of traffic in the area cannot be conducted without further study.

3.15.2 Environmental Consequences

Assessment Categories

Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement

Depending on the degree of protection proposed for native vegetation under Alternatives B and C, limitations on vehicular access could vary. However, no impacts on transportation are expected from such measures.

Erosion Control

Roads and trails are sources of erosion, and maintenance activities conducted to reduce that erosion would improve the physical condition of the road or trail, increasing its longevity and serviceability. Road and trail maintenance would continue to occur on an as-needed basis under all alternatives. New trails proposed under Alternatives B and C would follow BMP guidelines described in Chapter 5 to reduce erosion.

Native Fish and Wildlife Protection and Enhancement

Native fish and wildlife protection and enhancement measures proposed under Alternatives B and C would not be expected to impact the transportation and access system, as described under *Native Vegetation Protection and Enhancement*.

Improved or Restricted Access

The transportation and access system would benefit from any access improvements and may be impaired by any restrictions proposed in Alternatives B and C. Access would not change under Alternative A, because impacts on the transportation and access system are site-specific, they are discussed in more detail under each of the alternatives.

Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous

If parking and circulation improvements are included with expanded facilities in Alternatives B and C, results to the transportation and access system associated with these facilities would benefit

visitors. However, if the facility is improved beyond the capacity of the access road to the facility, the overall result would be a detriment to the transportation and access system. Exceeding the capacity of the access roads would be unlikely, considering current use levels within the area.

Alternatives

Alternative A—No Action: Continuation of Existing Management Practices

The existing transportation and access system would remain the same in all areas. Presently, ad hoc parking and trails are used throughout much of Tex Creek and Ririe Reservoir.

Creekside Park and the area east of Willow Creek below the dam are currently closed to motorized access, although the east side below the dam has a fairly heavy use from ad hoc trails and parking. Up to a certain level of traffic, ad hoc access is sufficient; however, there is a point where an informal transportation system is not adequate. Because the Creekside area is not accessible by vehicle now, access impacts to this area under this alternative are likely minor.

No formal trails are provided at Juniper, but an informal trail traverses from the dam to the reservoir and along the shoreline. Under the No Action Alternative, the size or circulation of the current transportation and access system would not be changed at the Visitor Center facility and day use area, the Juniper Campground, or the boat launch area.

Access to the Blacktail area is by Lincoln Road. This area is heavily used on weekends and holidays, mostly by Idaho Falls residents. No walking trails are currently designated at the Blacktail Access. Under Alternative A, no walking trails would be added. No changes would be made to the current transportation and access system for the boat ramp and day use areas and Lincoln Road would not be improved. As use of the area increases, negative impacts to the transportation and access system would develop. No current traffic studies indicate current volumes of traffic and level of service on Lincoln Road. This access could potentially reach its traffic capacity more quickly than the other major accesses.

The Ririe Outlet Channel, currently used as a flood control channel, would remain unchanged with mostly open access on both sides. As use increases, uncontrolled accesses could become undesirable because of potential trespass issues with adjacent land owners.

On Ririe Mitigation lands in Tex Creek, shoreline access is not restricted at the Willow Arm of Ririe Reservoir. No trails or shoreline access are currently provided on remaining Tex Creek mitigation lands, and none would be proposed.

Several designated walking trails extend through the Teton Mitigation lands in Tex Creek. Although it is not plowed in the winter, Pipe Creek Road is open year-round. Such seasonally maintained access can result in increased maintenance because of excessive deterioration during the late fall and early spring when the road is susceptible to damage from moisture.

In general, if no changes are made to the transportation and access system of Ririe Reservoir, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough, and if visitation continues to increase, eventually the impact on the transportation and access system would be negative. The system would deteriorate both physically and operationally. However, without more detailed traffic studies, it is not possible to predict when traffic would increase enough to negatively impact the system.

Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis

Alternative B increases recreation facilities in the area while improving the transportation and access system.

This alternative would reopen Creekside Park to recreation. With this increase in use of the area, improvements to the access may be necessary depending on the volume of use estimated and the remaining capacity of the existing transportation system.

In general, recreation improvements at the Juniper Access area include more formal parking and overflow parking. Improvements to parking and access would benefit the transportation and access system as long as they are constructed and designed appropriately to the type and magnitude of use anticipated. For example, the addition of a fishing pier off of the dam may increase the need for parking.

In the Benchlands area of the reservoir, Alternative B would expand day use facilities. Because access to this area is only by boat, no impacts are expected on the transportation and access system.

At the Blacktail Access, recreation improvements include additional parking as needed at both the day use area in general and the boat launch. With improvements to the circulation at the boat launch, the impact to the transportation and access system would be positive, as long as special design needs, such as trailers for horses and boats, are considered. Compared to the No Action Alternative, improvement to this already heavily used area would draw more visitors down Lincoln Road.

Creation of a non-motorized trail at Blacktail is intended to improve pedestrian and equestrian access along the shore of the Willow Creek Arm as well as further south into Tex Creek, connecting to some of the existing trails. This action would benefit the transportation and access system.

The “mostly open” access at the Ririe Outlet Channel would be modified to “fully open,” which would benefit access. Potential use of this area is not anticipated to increase beyond that described in the No Action Alternative.

Proposed modifications in the Tex Creek Teton Mitigation Lands include development of parking to accommodate improved recreation facilities as warranted by demand. Because the anticipated

The first public meeting was held February 9, 1999. The purpose of this meeting was to conduct public scoping of the issues at Ririe Reservoir. Approximately 40 people attended the meeting. Reclamation provided information about the RMP planning process, then the participants broke into small work groups to discuss important issues and opportunities the RMP should address. The second public meeting was held February 15, 2000. Approximately 80 people attended the meeting. The meeting followed a similar format, beginning with presentation of the alternatives and RMP Draft Goals and Objectives, and followed with small group discussions. The third public meeting was held on January 30, 2001, during the public comment period for the draft EA. The purpose of the meeting was to present the contents of the draft EA, hold an informal workshop to discuss specific issues, and encourage one-on-one dialogue. The 60-day public comment period extended from December 13, 2000, to February 15, 2001. Public comments are summarized in Appendix E of this document.

The Ad Hoc Work Group met in April, July, September, October 1999, January and March 2000, and February and June 2001. The 20 members were of considerable assistance in the alternatives development process. A wide variety of viewpoints were included in the group. The Preferred Alternative was arrived at through public comments from the second public meeting, Ad Hoc Work Group discussions, and the recommendations of agency scientists and planners. The following entities were represented in the Ad Hoc Work Group:

- Adjacent owner
- Alpine Club
- BLM
- Bonneville County Commissioners
- Bonneville County Waterways Committee
- City of Idaho Falls Parks and Recreation Department
- City of Ririe/South Fork Watershed Advisory Group
- Eagle Rock Bass Masters
- FWS
- Greater Yellowstone Coalition
- IDFG
- IDPR
- Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce
- Madison County Parks
- NRCS
- Jefferson County Pheasants Forever
- Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
- Shoshone-Bannock Tribes
- Trout Unlimited
- Willow Creek Watershed Group

increase in traffic volume is low, and assuming the parking is designed appropriately to meet the needs of the trail and campsite users, the impact to the transportation system is minor.

Proposed modifications to Cartier Slough include constructing a nature trail that connects with Beaver Dick County Park and grooming the cross country ski trails in winter. These additions improve access for different seasons, but unless the parking areas used in conjunction with these modifications are improved, the overall impact to the transportation and access system may be negative.

A detailed analysis of each modification, including the number of users anticipated, type of use, and volume of traffic estimated, would be necessary to properly identify the required improvements to the roads and accesses supporting the recreation opportunities. Master planning of the entire area would account for the cumulative effects of facility improvements and allow for appropriate modification to the transportation and access system.

Alternative C—Recreation Development/Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis

Alternative C has similar impacts to the transportation and access system as Alternative B; only the differences are described in this section.

At Creekside Park, only a few day use facilities beyond those included in Alternative B are added. These additional facilities draw more users, but the additional access described in Alternative B would also be implemented and should accommodate the users.

In addition to the improvements proposed in Alternative B at Juniper Access, Alternative C improvements consist of a reorganization of the Visitor's Center to include a concessionaire and convenience store, addition of a fishing pier as part of the moorage facility, and accommodation of winter access for ice fishing. Winter access would not require any physical additions to the transportation and access system, but would require additional maintenance during the off season to keep the access area open for users. This would benefit users by providing additional seasonal access.

The proposed additions to Blacktail under Alternative C would increase visitation to the area, especially during holiday weekends. This would be expected to increase the traffic volume on Lincoln Road. The increased traffic could become a negative impact, depending on the volume.

4.0 Consultation and Coordination

4.0 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

4.1 Public Involvement

Reclamation's approach to the RMP and EA was to develop a dialogue with local stakeholder groups and agencies. The goal of the public involvement process was to make sure that all stakeholders, including the general public, had ample opportunity to express their interests, concerns, and viewpoints, and to comment on the plan as it was developed. By fostering two-way communication, Reclamation was also able to use the talents and perspectives of local user groups and agencies during the alternatives development process.

Reclamation's public involvement process involved four key components:

- **Newsbriefs**—A mailed newsletter was initially sent to more than 600 user groups, nearby residents, and agencies. The mailing list was continuously expanded as more stakeholders were identified. A sixth newsbrief will be mailed when the RMP is released.
- **Public Meetings/Workshops**—Three public meetings were held during the process, two of which were held prior to the release of the draft EA. The final public meeting was held during the public review period of the draft EA.
- **Ad Hoc Work Group**—This group consists of approximately 20 representatives from interested groups, Tribes, and agencies. They met throughout the development process to identify issues, and assist with RMP and alternatives development.
- **Project Web Site**—The newsbriefs, draft materials, and meeting announcements were regularly updated at <http://www.pn.usbr.gov>. The draft EA was available for review on the web site, with a public comment form to submit comments.

Prior to the release of the draft EA, Reclamation provided five newsbriefs, held two public meetings, and held six Ad Hoc Work Group workshops.

In January 1999, the first newsbrief introduced the RMP process, announced the first public meeting, and provided a form for submitting issues and initial comments on the management and facilities at Ririe Reservoir, and Reclamation lands in the Tex Creek WMA and at Cartier Slough. The results of the mail-in form and the issues raised at the first public meeting were summarized in the second newsbrief, mailed June 1999. The issues were listed in a table with the number of responses for each issue. A total of 157 responses were included. The third newsbrief was mailed in November 1999 and provided an update of the Ad Hoc Work Group process. The fourth newsbrief in February 2000 announced the second public meeting, summarized the draft goals and objectives of the RMP, and summarized the alternatives being considered. A fifth newsbrief was mailed in November 2000 that described the alternatives in the draft EA, who to contact to receive a copy of the draft EA, and announced an upcoming public meeting where the draft EA was discussed.

4.2 Agency Consultation and Coordination

Reclamation consulted with several Federal and local agencies throughout the RMP process to gather valuable input and to meet regulatory requirements. This coordination was integrated with the public involvement process.

4.2.1 Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

Coordination on fish and wildlife issues to meet the requirements of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) was accomplished by consulting with the FWS. Information about this consultation is provided in Appendix B. The FWS provided comments on the draft EA and Reclamation has made the appropriate changes in the document. Specific information in answer to each comment is provided in Appendix E.

4.2.2 Endangered Species Act

The evaluation of threatened and endangered species contained in this EA is Reclamation's biological evaluation of effects to Ute ladies'-tresses orchids, bald eagles, Canada lynx, gray wolf, and whooping crane as required under the ESA. Reclamation has determined that the proposed RMP will *not affect* the Canada lynx and Ute ladies' tresses. *It is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence* of the gray wolf and whooping crane. FWS has concurred with Reclamation's findings. Reclamation and FWS have agreed to a 3 year, bald eagle nest monitoring plan of the Willow Creek Arm nest; therefore, the proposed RMP *may affect* but *is not likely to adversely affect* the bald eagle. As part of this monitoring plan, Reclamation will provide a detailed report on the observations and findings to FWS. Reclamation and FWS agree to meet annually to discuss these findings and plan next year's activities. If it is determined that recreational activities are causing nest failure, Reclamation and FWS agree to meet and jointly discuss how these impacts can be mitigated. Reclamation will also consult with FWS if any new species are listed.

4.2.3 National Historic Preservation Act

Reclamation has completed a Class I existing data inventory of the Ririe Reservoir/Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area. That information will facilitate subsequent compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and its implementing regulations (36 CFR 800). Coordination with the Idaho SHPO and the Shoshone-Bannock and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes over cultural resources and sacred sites aspects of the RMP has occurred in conjunction with public review of the draft Environmental Assessment. (It is understood that specific, future undertakings in response to RMP prescriptions will require specific consultations with the SHPO and Tribes pursuant to the 36 CFR 800 regulations).

4.3 Tribal Consultation and Coordination

4.3.1 Consultation with Tribes

Reclamation met with Council members and staff of both the Shoshone-Bannock and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to discuss the preparation of the RMP and to identify ITAs, TCPs, and Indian Sacred Sites.

A representative from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes participated in the Ad Hoc Work Group, which facilitated close coordination with the Government and helped assure that Tribal interests were integrated with the RMP.

Several meetings were held and correspondence was exchanged between Reclamation and the Tribes. The dates for the meetings and correspondence are provided in Appendix D.

In addition to input on all draft goals and objectives included in the RMP, the following reflect specific Tribal input and concerns that were incorporated into the planning process.

- ***GOAL NAT 1: Protect, conserve, and enhance wildlife habitat and natural resources on Reclamation lands.***
 - S Objective NAT 1.4: Recognize the interest of the Tribes and other agencies in long-term management of resources on Reclamation lands.
- ***GOAL CUL 1: Protect and conserve cultural resources (including prehistoric, historic, and traditional cultural properties), sacred sites, and paleontological resources.***
 - S Objective CUL 1.1: Ensure protection of sensitive cultural and paleontological resources for all Reclamation undertakings in accordance with all applicable Federal and State laws.
 - S Objective CUL 1.2: In accordance with Section 110 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and other cultural resource and legal mandates, accomplish proactive management of cultural and paleontological resources, including inventory, identification, evaluation, and protection.
 - S Objective CUL 1.3: Generate awareness of cultural resources compliance and protection needs among State and County personnel who interact with Reclamation in the RMP study area.
 - S Objective CUL 1.4: Provide opportunities for public education on cultural and paleontological resources, including the importance of, and requirements for, protecting these resources within the parameters of various laws and regulations.

- ***GOAL CUL 2: Protect and conserve Indian Trust Assets as specified in applicable Secretarial Orders.***
 - S Objective CUL 2.1: Within the scope of Reclamation authority, ensure that the RMP is consistent with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' adopted Snake River Basin Policy through conservation, protection, and/or enhancement of natural resources.
 - S Objective CUL 2.2: Avoid any action that would adversely impact Tribal Indian Trust Assets.
- ***GOAL ACI 5: Ensure continued coordination and cooperation with involved agencies and the public as needed to implement the RMP and associated IDFG WMA Management Plans.***
 - S Objective ACI 5.7: Continue to coordinate with involved Tribes in implementing RMP Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions.

The RMP and EA will be distributed to representatives from the Tribes. Tribal representatives that received the draft EA are listed in Chapter 7, *Distribution List*.

4.3.2 National Historic Preservation Act

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) (as amended through 1992) requires agencies to consult with Indian Tribes if a proposed Federal action may affect properties to which the Tribes attach religious and cultural significance. The implementing regulations of the NHPA, 36 CFR 800, addresses procedures for consultation in more detail.

4.3.3 Indian Trust Assets

Reclamation met with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to identify their interests, including ITAs. These are discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.14, *Indian Trust Assets*.

4.3.4 Other Laws and Regulations

The relationship between Federal agencies and sovereign Tribes is defined by several laws and regulations addressing the requirement of Federal agencies to notify or consult with Native American groups or otherwise consider their interests when planning and implementing Federal undertakings. Among these are the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act
- Archeological Resources Protection Act

- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
- Executive Order 12875, Enhancing the Intergovernmental Partnership
- Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations
- Presidential Memorandum: Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments
- Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites
- Executive Order 13175 of November 6, 2000, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (EO 13175 revokes EO 13084 issued May 14, 1998)

5.0 Environmental Commitments

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

Although not listed here, the management actions identified in the preferred alternative as needed for proper stewardship resources are also considered to be environmental commitments.

5.1 Best Management Practices

The following best management practices (BMPs) will be implemented to avoid or offset potential effects to the resources within the Ririe Reservoir RMP study area that could occur if the preferred alternative were implemented. BMPs are intended to avoid or minimize impacts.

5.1.1 Landscape Preservation and Impact Avoidance

1. Developed facilities will complement the surrounding landscape and follow strict design and construction criteria, guidelines, and standards.
2. Disturbed areas resulting from any construction will be aggressively revegetated.
3. To the maximum extent practicable, all trees, native shrubs, and other vegetation will be preserved and protected from construction operations and equipment except where clearing operations are required for permanent structures, approved construction roads, or excavation operations.
4. To the maximum extent practicable, all maintenance yards, field offices, and staging areas will be arranged to preserve trees, shrubs, and other native vegetation.
5. Clearing will be restricted to the minimum area needed for construction. In critical habitat areas—including, but not limited to, wetlands, riparian areas, and big game winter range—clearing may be restricted to only a few feet beyond areas required for construction.
6. Stream corridors, wetlands, riparian areas, steep slopes, or other critical environmental areas will not be used for equipment or materials storage or stockpiling; construction staging or maintenance; field offices; hazardous material or fuel storage, handling, or transfer; or temporary access roads, in order to reduce environmental damage.
7. Excavated or graded materials will not be stockpiled or deposited on or within 100 feet of any steep slopes (defined by industry standards), wetlands, riparian areas, or stream banks (including seasonally active ephemeral streams without woody or herbaceous vegetation growing in the channel bottom), or on native vegetation.
8. To the maximum extent possible, staging areas, access roads, and other site disturbances will be located in agricultural or disturbed areas, not in native vegetation.

9. The width of all new permanent access roads will be kept to the absolute minimum needed for safety, avoiding wetland and riparian areas where possible. Turnouts and staging areas will not be placed in wetlands.

5.1.2 Erosion and Sediment Control

1. The design and construction of facilities will employ Best Management Practices to prevent possible soil erosion and subsequent water quality impacts.
2. The planting of native grasses, forbs, trees, or shrubs beneficial to wildlife, or the placement of riprap, sand bags, sod, erosion mats, bale dikes, mulch, or excelsior blankets will be used to prevent and minimize erosion and siltation during construction and during the period needed to reestablish permanent vegetative cover on disturbed sites.
3. Final erosion control and site restoration measures will be initiated as soon as a particular area is no longer needed for construction, stockpiling, or access. Clearing schedules will be arranged to minimize exposure of soils.
4. Cuts and fills for relocated and new roads and trails will be sloped to prevent erosion and to facilitate revegetation.
5. Slope instability in reservoir areas will be identified through surveys conducted during final design of new facilities. The identified areas will be stabilized or protected to prevent mass soil movement into reservoir pools to the extent practicable.
6. Soil or rock stockpiles, excavated materials, or excess soil materials will not be placed near sensitive habitats, including water channels, wetlands, riparian areas, and on native vegetation, where they may erode into these habitats or be washed away by high water or storm runoff. Waste piles will be revegetated using suitable native species after they are shaped to provide a natural appearance.
7. Especially restrictive BMPs will be developed and employed to prevent soil erosion during and after construction on highly erosive soils.

5.1.3 Biological Resource Site Clearances

1. Rare and sensitive species clearances described below will be conducted.
2. If native plant communities must be used for access roads or staging areas, site clearances at the appropriate time of year for the species involved will be conducted by qualified biologists to ensure sensitive species are not impacted. Established search protocols will be followed where these exist.
3. Construction activities that could impact fish will be undertaken during non-spawning periods.

5.1.4 Site Restoration and Revegetation

1. Construction areas, including storage yards, will be free of waste material and trash accumulations at all times.
2. All unused materials and trash will be removed from construction and storage sites during the final phase of work. All removed material will be placed in approved sanitary landfills or storage sites and work areas will be left to conform to the natural landscape.
3. Upon completion of construction, grade any land disturbed outside the limits of permanent roads, trails, and other permanent facilities to provide proper drainage and blend with the natural contour of the land. Following grading, revegetate using plants native to the area, suitable for the site conditions, and beneficial to wildlife.
4. Where applicable, consult with the following agencies to determine the recommended plant species composition, seeding rates, and planting dates:
 - Idaho Department of Fish and game (IDFG)
 - U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
 - U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
5. Grasses, forbs, shrubs, and trees appropriate for site conditions and surrounding vegetation will be included on the revegetation plant list. Species chosen for a site will be matched for site drainage, climate, shading, resistance to erosion, soil type, slope, aspect, and vegetation and erosion management goals. Wetland and riparian species will be used in revegetating disturbed wetlands. Upland revegetation shall match the plant list to the site's soil type, topographic position, elevation, aspect, and surrounding natural communities.

5.1.5 Pollution Prevention

1. All Federal and state laws related to control and abatement of water pollution will be complied with. All waste material and sewage from construction activities or facilities will be disposed of according to Federal and state pollution control regulations.
2. Construction contractors may be required to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit as established under Public Law 92 500 and amended by the Clean Water Act (Public Law 95 217).
3. Construction specifications shall require construction methods that will prevent entrance or accidental spillage of pollutants into flowing or dry watercourses and underground water sources. Potential pollutants and wastes include refuse, garbage, cement, concrete, sewage effluent, industrial waste, oil and other petroleum products, aggregate processing tailings, mineral salts, drilling mud, and thermal pollution.

4. Eroded materials shall be prevented from entering streams or watercourses during dewatering activities associated with structure foundations or earthwork operations adjacent to, or encroaching on, streams or watercourses.
5. Any construction wastewater discharged into surface waters will be essentially free of settling material. Water pumped from behind cofferdams and wastewater from aggregate processing, concrete batching, or other construction operation shall not enter streams or watercourses without water quality treatment. Turbidity control methods may include settling ponds; gravel-filter entrapment dikes; approved flocculating processes not harmful to fish or other aquatic life; recirculation systems for washing aggregates; or other approved methods.
6. Any riprap shall be free of contaminants and not contribute significantly to the turbidity of the reservoir.
7. Appropriate controls to reduce stormwater pollutant loads in post-construction site runoff shall be selected from the *State of Idaho Catalog of Storm Water Best Management Practices for Idaho Cities and Counties* (IDEQ 1997). The appropriate facilities shall be properly designed, installed, and maintained to provide water quality treatment for runoff originating from all recreational facilities.

5.1.6 Noise and Air Pollution Prevention

1. Contractors will be required to comply with all applicable Federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning prevention and control of noise and air pollution. Contractors are expected to use reasonably available methods and devices to control, prevent, and reduce atmospheric emissions or discharges of atmospheric contaminants and noise.
2. Contractors will be required to reduce dust from construction operations and prevent it from damaging dwellings or causing a nuisance to people. Methods such as wetting exposed soil or roads where dust is generated by passing vehicles will be employed.

5.1.7 Cultural Resource Site Protection

1. Cultural resource personnel, or other land management personnel sensitized to cultural resource management concerns, will periodically monitor the RMP area to determine if operations, natural erosion, or land use is damaging cultural resources. If significant sites are being damaged, management actions will be implemented. If the site cannot be protected, mitigation may be considered.
2. If there are significant cultural resource sites that may be affected by a Reclamation undertaking (including TCPs), Reclamation will consult with the SHPO and Tribes about appropriate actions to take to protect those sites.

3. Prepare a cultural resource management plan (CRMP) for these lands which outlines actions and methods to protect cultural resources. The CRMP will include descriptions of the consultation processes; enforcement strategies; resource protection actions, including vehicle access management, monitoring, site stabilization, and public education; and data recovery actions in the case of adverse effects to sites from agency actions or uncontrollable natural conditions. The CRMP will also identify procedures to address Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) issues of burial protection and custody of cultural materials.
4. Obtain location-specific cultural resource clearances when the agency acts to enhance recreation or wildlife. Avoid adverse effects to significant cultural resource sites by relocating or redesigning any proposed development.
5. Stabilize or protect cultural sites when avoidance is not possible. Test excavations will be conducted as necessary to determine if the sites are eligible for the National Register. Consultations, per 36 CFR 800, will also be conducted to determine site eligibility, project effect, and appropriate treatment of adversely affected Register-eligible sites.
6. Initiate actions to protect human burials as soon as possible if they are reported to be exposed or endangered by reservoir operations, natural erosion, or land use. Unless the burials are clearly non-Indian, the Tribes will be consulted upon the discovery of a burial and procedures for protection, treatment, and disposition of the remains will be worked out with the Tribes in accordance with NAGPRA.
7. Curate archaeological collections, in most cases at the Southeastern Idaho Regional Archaeological Center. Exceptions will be human burials, grave goods associated with a burial, and items that are sacred to or of cultural patrimony to American Indian Tribes (NAGPRA items). When NAGPRA items are recovered, procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 10 for consultation and custody will be followed.
8. If consultation with Indian Tribes determines that Indian sacred sites are present and are being adversely affected by land use, Reclamation will implement actions to reduce or avoid such impacts.

5.1.8 Miscellaneous Commitments

1. Reclamation-issued land use licenses, leases, and permits will contain sufficient language and stipulations to help protect existing resources and help mitigate possible conflicts among the various users and between visitors and adjacent land owners.
2. Carrying capacity limits and user demand will be properly determined before any major facility development occurs.

3. A 3-year monitoring plan will be carried out to determine life history data and assess recreation effects on the Willow Creek bald eagle territory.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

Mitigation measures are environmental commitments intended to compensate for impacts that cannot be avoided through implementation of BMPs.

5.2.1 Soils

All roads, trails, and new or upgraded facilities would employ designs that would not contribute to short- or long-term soil loss during and following construction and revegetation.

5.2.2 Vegetation

Design of Creekside Park would avoid the loss of riparian vegetation by placing facilities in existing disturbed areas and keeping all facilities except stream crossings at least 20 feet away from the edge of Willow Creek. No trees would be removed during construction. A wildlife biologist or botanist would be actively involved in site design to assure that impacts to riparian vegetation are avoided. If unplanned losses of riparian vegetation did occur during construction, losses would be replaced on at least a 1:1 basis in the immediate vicinity of the park. Replacement of lost riparian vegetation would occur concurrently with recreation site construction.

Design of other recreation sites would minimize native vegetation losses by locating facilities in existing disturbed areas to the maximum extent possible. For example, parking facilities may be located in existing ad hoc parking areas to minimize loss of native vegetation if these are suitable locations for parking. Kiosks and interpretive centers would be placed within existing developed recreation areas and kept from areas of native vegetation. All construction areas would be revegetated with appropriate native vegetation immediately following construction.

All lost native vegetation that provides critical big game winter range would be mitigated through winter range enhancement on other Reclamation lands at Tex Creek. This action is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5 *Wildlife*.

5.2.3 Wildlife

Mitigation measures to protect riparian habitat at Creekside Park and to aggressively monitor and control noxious and invasive weeds were described in Section 3.4, *Vegetation*. Residual effects on wildlife and habitat are described below.

Big game winter range habitat losses would be mitigated by replacing impacted winter range habitat value through enhancement of existing winter range in Tex Creek. Enhancement needs of nearby winter range would be evaluated for actions that could improve value and mitigate losses. An approach would be developed to assess impacts, evaluate range conditions, determine mitigation

needs to compensate for losses, and implement specific actions. Monitoring would be performed to determine if corrective actions are needed to fully meet mitigation needs.

5.2.4 Cultural Resources

Mitigation under all alternatives would occur if cultural resources are present that are eligible for the National Register, and if they are being adversely impacted by reservoir operations or land uses or are being damaged by natural agents. If an action is planned that could adversely impact an archaeological, traditional, or historic resource, then Reclamation would investigate options to avoid the site. Cultural resource management actions for impacted sites would be planned and implemented in accordance with consultation requirements defined in 36 CFR 800, using methods consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines. Some level of relic collection and site looting may occur following the mitigation of a site.

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Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan: Environmental Assessment

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7.0 DISTRIBUTION LIST

7.1 Overview

The Ririe RMP EA is a public document. Therefore, it has been sent to the tribes, government officials, agencies, organizations and businesses, libraries, and individuals named in the following distribution list. As noted, the EA is available for review at several libraries; it is also available for viewing (and downloading, if desired) on Reclamation's web site pn.usbr.gov. The list below indicates who has received a copy of the EA. Those who submitted comments are marked with an asterisk (*).

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8.0 Glossary

8.0 GLOSSARY

Accessibility Standards	Federal standards for universal accessibility. All Federal and Federally funded buildings and facilities must comply with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards; however, Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines will be used if it is the more stringent of the two standards.
Acre-foot	Volume of water (43,560 cubic feet) that would cover 1 acre land, 1 foot deep.
Action alternative	A change in the current management approach.
Affected environment	Existing biological, physical, social, and economic conditions of an area subject to change, both directly and indirectly, as the result of a proposed human action. Also, the chapter in an environmental document describing current environmental conditions.
Algae	Mostly aquatic single celled, colonial, or multicelled plants, containing chlorophyll and lacking stems, roots, and leaves.
Algal bloom	Rapid and flourishing growth of algae.
Alternatives	Courses of action that may meet the objectives of a proposal at varying levels of accomplishment, including the most likely future conditions without the project or action.
Amphibian	Vertebrate animal that has a life stage in water and a life stage on land (for example, salamanders, frogs, and toads).
Aquatic	Living or growing in or on the water.
Archeology	Related to the study of human cultures through the recovery and analysis of their material relics.
Archeological site	A discrete location that provides physical evidence of past human use.
Artifact	A human-made object.
Assessment categories	Categories used to compare the effects of the alternatives in this EA.
Best Management Practices	Activities that are added to typical operation, construction, or maintenance efforts that help to protect environmental resources.

Carrying capacity	The ability of a resource to accommodate a user population at a reasonable threshold without negatively affecting the resource.
Community	A group of one or more interacting populations of plants and animals in a common spatial arrangement at a particular point in time.
Concentration	The density or amount of a substance in a solution (water quality).
Critical winter range	That portion of big game winter range used during the most severe winter conditions and critical to survival.
Cubic foot per second (cfs)	As a rate of streamflow, a cubic foot of water passing a reference section in 1 second of time. A measure of a moving volume of water.
Cultural resource	Cultural resources are prehistoric, historic, and traditional properties that reflect our heritage.
Drawdown	Lowering of a reservoir's water level; process of releasing reservoir storage.
Endangered species	A species or subspecies whose survival is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.
Erosion	Refers to soil and the wearing away of the land surface by water, wind, ice, or other physical processes.
Eutrophic	A body of water with high nutrient levels.
Exotic species	A non-native species that is introduced into an area.
Facilities	Manmade structures.
Fish and Wildlife Service Species of Concern	Species identified by the FWS for which further biological research and field study are needed to resolve these species' conservation status.
Forebay	The water behind a dam. Also, a reservoir or pond situated at the intake of a pumping plant or power plant to stabilize water levels.
Habitat	Area where a plant or animal lives.
Hydrologic	Pertaining to the quantity, quality, and timing of water.
Indian Trust Assets	Legal interests in property held in trust by the United States for Indian Tribes or individuals, such as lands, minerals, hunting and fishing rights, and water rights.

Intermittent streams	Streams that contain running water longer than ephemeral streams but not all year.
Juvenile	Young animal that has not reached reproductive age.
Mitigation lands	Lands designated for preservation to mitigate for construction of Reclamation projects, such as dams.
Mitigation measures	Action taken to avoid, reduce the severity of, or eliminate an adverse impact. Mitigation can include one or more of the following: (1) avoiding impacts; (2) minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of an action; (3) rectifying impacts by restoration, rehabilitation, or repair of the affected environment; (4) reducing or eliminating impacts over time; and (5) compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments to offset the loss.
<i>National Register of Historic Places</i>	A Federally maintained register of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and properties that meet the criteria of significance defined in 36 CFR 63.
Neotropical migrant	Birds that breed in North America and winter in tropical and subtropical America.
No Action Alternative	The outcome expected from a continuation of current management practices.
Perennial	Plants that have a life cycle that lasts for more than 2 years.
Precipitation	Rain, sleet, and snow.
Public involvement	The systematic provision for affected publics to be informed about and participate in Reclamation decision making processes. It centers around effective, open exchange and communication among the partners, agencies, organizations, and all the various affected publics.
Raptor	Any predatory bird, such as a falcon, eagle, hawk, or owl, that has feet with sharp talons or claws and a hooked beak.
Reptile	Cold-blooded vertebrate of the class Reptilia, comprised of turtles, snakes, lizards, and crocodiles.
Resident	A wildlife species commonly found in an area during a particular season: summer, winter, or year round.

Resource areas	The components of the natural and human environment that could be affected by the alternatives, such as water quality, wildlife, socioeconomics, and cultural resources.
Resource management plan	A 10-year plan developed by Reclamation to manage their lands and resources in the study area.
Riparian	Of, on, or pertaining to the bank of a river, pond, or lake.
Runoff	That part of precipitation that contributes to streamflow, groundwater, lakes, or reservoir storage.
Sediment	Unconsolidated solid material that comes from weathering of rock and is carried by, suspended in, or deposited by water or wind.
Songbird	Small to medium-sized birds that perch and vocalize or "sing," primarily during the breeding season.
Spawning	Laying eggs directly in water, especially in reference to fish.
Species	In taxonomy, a subdivision of a genus which (1) has a high degree of similarity, (2) is capable of interbreeding only in the species, and (3) shows persistent differences from members of allied species.
Threatened species	Any species that has the potential of becoming endangered in the near future and is listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.
Traditional cultural property	A site or resource that is eligible for inclusion in the <i>National Register of Historic Places</i> because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community.
Total Maximum Daily Load	The total amount of pollutants that can be discharged to a water body, per day, and not exceed water quality standards.
Water quality limited	A water body that exceeds water quality standards or does not support its designated beneficial use, such as cold water habitat or primary contact recreation.
Wetland habitat	Habitat provided by shallow or deep water (but less than 6 feet deep), with or without emergent and aquatic vegetation in wetlands.
Wetlands	Lands transitional between aquatic and terrestrial systems where the water table is usually at or near the land surface or the land is covered by shallow water. Often called marshes or wet meadows.

Wildlife Management
Area

A category of land use. An area of Reclamation-owned land that is managed for wildlife habitat and preservation. The goal is to ensure that wildlife values are preserved as recreation use, residential use, and commercial development increases near recreation sites.

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Appendix A

Ririe Reservoir RMP Goals and Objectives

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan: Environmental Assessment

Reclamation is required to comply with a number of legal mandates in the preparation and implementation of the RMP. The following is a list of the environmental laws, executive orders, and policies that may have an effect on the RMP or Reclamation actions in the implementation of the plan:

Law, Executive Order, or Policy	Description
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities – Reclamation Policy (November 18, 1998)	Established a Pacific Northwest regional policy to assure that all administrative offices, facilities, services, and programs open to the public, utilized by Federal employees, and managed by Reclamation, a managing partner, or a concessionaire, are fully accessible for both employees and the public.
American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978	Provides for freedom of Native Americans to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religion, including access to important sites.
Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) of 1979, as amended	Ensures the protection and preservation of archaeological sites on Federal land. ARPA requires that Federal permits be obtained before cultural resource investigations begin on Federal land. It also requires that investigators consult with the appropriate Native American groups before conducting archaeological studies on Native American origin sites.
Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974	Provides for the preservation of historical buildings, sites, and objects of national significance.
Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1974, as amended*	Provides for protection of water quality.
Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1970	Provides for protection of air quality.
Department of Defense (DoD) American Indian and Alaska Native Policy, October 20, 1998	The policy supports Tribal self-governance and government-to-government relations between the Federal government. It specifies that DoD will meet its trust responsibilities to Tribes and will address Tribal concerns related to protected Tribal resources, Tribal rights, and Indian lands.
Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended	Provides for protection of plants, fish, and wildlife that have a designation as threatened or endangered.
Executive Order 12875, Enhancing the Intergovernmental Partnership, October 26, 1983	Establishes "regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with state, local, and Tribal governments on Federal matters that significantly or uniquely affect their communities."

Law, Executive Order, or Policy	Description
Executive Order 12898, February 11, 1994, Environmental Justice	Requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of its programs and policies on minority and lower income populations.
Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands	Directs all Federal agencies to avoid, if possible, adverse impacts to wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.
Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, May 24, 1996	Provides for access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands used by Indian religious practitioners.
Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Government, November 6, 2000 (revokes EO 13084)	The EO builds on previous administrative actions and is intended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular and meaningful consultation and collaboration with tribal officials in the development of Federal policies that have tribal implications. • Strengthen government- to-government relations with Indian tribes; and • Reduce the imposition of unfunded mandates upon Indian tribes.
Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA) of 1958	Requires consultation and coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Indian Trust Assessts Policy (July 1993)	Requires that Reclamation provide protection and continuation of Tribal hunting, fishing, and gathering Treaty Rights.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended	Provides protection for bird species that migrate across state lines.
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969	Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA specify that as part of the NEPA scoping process, the lead agency "...shall invite the participation of affected Federal, State, and local agencies, any affected Indian tribe,... (1501.7[a]1."
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended	Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to consider the effects of any actions or programs on historic properties. It also requires agencies to consult with Native American Tribes if a proposed Federal action may affect properties to which they attach religious and cultural significance.

Law, Executive Order, or Policy	Description
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990	Regulations for the treatment of Native American graves, human remains, funeral objects, sacred objects, and other objects of cultural patrimony. Requires consultation with Native American Tribes during Federal project planning.
Presidential Memorandum: Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments, April 29, 1994	Specifies a commitment to developing more effective day-to-day working relationships with sovereign Tribal governments. Each executive department and agency shall consult to the greatest extent practicable and to the extent permitted by law, with Tribal governments prior to taking actions affecting Federally recognized Tribal governments.
Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title V, Section 504	Provides for access to Federal or Federally assisted facilities for the disabled. The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), whichever is the more stringent, are followed as compliance with Section 504.
Title 28, Public Law 89-72, as amended	Provides Reclamation with the authority to cost-share on recreation projects and fish and wildlife enhancement facilities with managing partners on Reclamation lands.

*A permit may need to be required for construction related activities.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION

A set of draft RMP Goals and Objectives were prepared as part of the RMP alternatives development and analysis process and included as Appendix A in the Draft EA. The draft Goals and Objectives were derived from: (1) the public involvement process (especially Ad Hoc Work Group discussions); (2) ongoing coordination with Reclamation decision-makers regarding the scope of the RMP and Reclamation's mission/authority related to RMP preparation and implementation; (3) preliminary findings of the RMP resource inventory; and (4) input from specialists on the RMP Planning Team.

These final Goals and Objectives were further refined as a result of public, agency, and Tribal comments on the Draft EA and are included in the RMP. They reflect the full range of issues and opportunities that are addressed in the RMP (as presented and discussed in the separate Problem Statement document included in the RMP).

NATURAL RESOURCES (NAT)

Wildlife and Vegetation Management

GOAL NAT 1: Protect, conserve, and enhance wildlife habitat and natural resources on Reclamation lands.

Objective NAT 1.1: Avoid or minimize impacts of RMP actions on Federal and State designated species of special concern, including Federally listed rare, endangered, or threatened species.

Objective NAT 1.2: Minimize long-term impact to wildlife and vegetation values in all actions undertaken to accommodate public demand at recreation sites or on the surface and shoreline of Ririe Reservoir; and utilize management practices that protect and enhance resource values of and for native species (plants and animals) in all decisions related to habitat management and land use.

Objective NAT 1.3: Support IDFG in implementing species-specific and WMA management plans as these apply to Reclamation lands, including IDFG's vegetation restoration, management, and monitoring efforts.

Objective NAT 1.4: Recognize the interest of the Tribes and other agencies in long-term management of resources on Reclamation lands.

Objective NAT 1.5: Establish a process to ensure that Reclamation lands are managed to meet their original mitigation intent with existing management agreements.

Objective NAT 1.6: Work with IDFG to protect and enhance habitat for wintering big game and other native species on Ririe Reclamation lands outside of the Tex Creek and Cartier Slough WMAs.

Objective NAT 1.7: Support IDFG efforts to expand the Tex Creek WMA, where necessary for meeting the resource-management objectives of the WMA.

Objective NAT 1.8: Encourage and support Bonneville County planning efforts to retain winter habitat values on private lands surrounding the Tex Creek WMA and surrounding Ririe Reservoir.

Objective NAT 1.9: Minimize human disturbance in the Tex Creek WMA during the winter season, including snowmobile or other vehicular access.

Objective NAT 1.10: Effectively manage noxious weeds on all Reclamation lands.

Objective NAT 1.11: Adhere to Reclamation's directives and standards as per the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Fishery Resources

GOAL NAT 2: Maintain and enhance both native and sport fishery resources in Ririe Reservoir and its watershed.

Objective NAT 2.1: Support IDFG in implementing the State's Fishery Management Plan for Ririe Reservoir, while protecting and enhancing the native fishery upstream of the reservoir.

Objective NAT 2.2: Support IDFG in accomplishing the Tex Creek WMA Management Plan objective and strategies for maintaining and enhancing Yellowstone cutthroat trout spawning and rearing habitat.

Erosion and Water Quality

GOAL NAT 3: Minimize erosion on Reclamation lands to protect wildlife habitat and water quality and to avoid adverse impacts from and to private lands.

Objective NAT 3.1: Cooperate with IDFG in implementing the erosion control strategies contained in the Tex Creek WMA and Cartier Slough WMA Management Plans.

Objective NAT 3.2: Work with surrounding landowners, as appropriate, to control erosion and protect water quality in the RMP Study Area.

Objective NAT 3.3: Implement an effective erosion control program in all construction, operations, and maintenance programs on Reclamation lands.

GOAL NAT 4: Protect water quality in Ririe Reservoir and its tributaries.

Objective NAT 4.1: Minimize the potential for pollutant spills into the reservoir associated with boat/watercraft fueling services.

Objective NAT 4.2: Provide adequate sanitation and waste management facilities at recreation sites (e.g., restrooms, trash containers, RV and boat dump stations, as appropriate) to protect water quality.

Objective NAT 4.3: Manage the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides on Reclamation lands in a manner that does not adversely affect water quality.

Objective NAT 4.4: Participate with IDEQ in assessing and implementing TMDLs for stream reaches in the RMP Study Area, including Ririe Reservoir.

Objective NAT 4.5: Minimize the potential for pollutants to enter Ririe Reservoir and its tributaries, Cartier Slough, and along the Ririe Outlet Channel from construction-related activities.

**CULTURAL RESOURCES, SACRED SITES, AND INDIAN TRUST ASSETS
(CUL)**

GOAL CUL 1: Protect and conserve cultural resources (including prehistoric, historic, and traditional cultural properties), sacred sites, and paleontological resources.

Objective CUL 1.1: Ensure protection of sensitive cultural and paleontological resources for all Reclamation undertakings in accordance with all applicable Federal and State laws.

Objective CUL 1.2: In accordance with Section 110 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and other cultural resource and legal mandates, accomplish proactive management of cultural and paleontological resources, including inventory, identification, evaluation, and protection.

Objective CUL 1.3: Generate awareness of cultural resources compliance and protection needs among State and County personnel who interact with Reclamation in the RMP study area.

Objective CUL 1.4: Provide opportunities for public education on cultural and paleontological resources, including the importance of, and requirements for, protecting these resources within the parameters of various laws and regulations.

Indian Trust Assets

GOAL CUL 2: Protect and conserve Indian Trust Assets as specified in applicable Secretarial Orders.

Objective CUL 2.1: Within the scope of Reclamation authority, ensure that the RMP is consistent with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes' adopted Snake River Basin Policy through conservation, protection, and/or enhancement of natural resources.

Objective CUL 2.2: Avoid any action that would adversely impact Tribal Indian Trust Assets.

RECREATION (REC)

Boating and Other Water-Based Recreation

GOAL REC 1: Provide adequate shoreline support facilities at Ririe Reservoir to address demand for boating/water craft uses consistent with natural and cultural resource management objectives.

Objective REC 1.1: Establish a program for collecting adequate recreation use and demand data to help determine the need and timing of new facilities.

Objective REC 1.2: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1 (i.e., Recreational Carrying Capacity Study results), and working with the managing partner (i.e., Bonneville County), reduce peak period congestion at the existing Blacktail boat launch site through improvement of facilities or other feasible means.

Objective REC 1.3: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1 and working with the managing partner, reduce peak period congestion at the Juniper boat launch through improvement of facilities or other feasible means.

GOAL REC 2: Manage the Ririe Reservoir water surface to accommodate a variety of different user groups and minimize conflicts among users.

Objective REC 2.1: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1, implement actions with Bonneville County that reduce conflicts between motorized and non-motorized water craft, as needed.

Objective REC 2.2: Work with Bonneville County to achieve needed enforcement of the 100-foot no-wake zone established by State law (i.e., 100-foot no-wake zone near shoreline structures, other boaters/recreationists, and swimmers).

Objective REC 2.3: Develop and/or improve shoreline swimming areas at Ririe Reservoir in conjunction with managing partner.

Objective REC 2.4: Allow the establishment of a scuba diving park with appropriate submerged items at a suitable site that avoids safety hazards.

Shoreline and Other Land-Based Recreation

GOAL REC 3: Accommodate demand for land/shoreline-based recreational uses at Ririe Reservoir, consistent with natural and cultural resource management objectives.

Objective REC 3.1: Work with managing partners (Bonneville County and IDFG, as appropriate) to provide expanded opportunities for hiking, equestrian, and bicycling around the reservoir.

Objective REC 3.2: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1 and working with managing partner, improve day use facilities within the existing “active” recreation area (for summertime use only) at Blacktail Park without compromising the values and intent of the WMA.

Objective REC 3.3: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1 and working with managing partner, provide additional facilities at Juniper Park and the Visitors Center.

Objective REC 3.4: Manage conflicting uses at the dam overlook (cliff area) adjacent to the Visitors Center.

Objective REC 3.5: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1 and working with managing partner, implement improvements at Creekside Park and area adjacent to Willow Creek.

Objective REC 3.6: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1 and working with managing partner, enhance shoreline fishing uses at the north side of the dam.

Objective REC 3.7: In conjunction with Objective REC 1.1 and working with managing partner, continue to maintain the Benchlands recreation site for boat-in use only and expand recreation use (summer only) facilities without compromising the values and intent of the WMA.

GOAL REC 4: Work with IDFG to provide appropriate recreation opportunities on Reclamation’s lands in the Tex Creek WMA, consistent with natural and cultural resource objectives.

Objective REC 4.1: Support IDFG efforts (as defined in the IDFG Tex Creek WMA Management Plan) to improve public access to and opportunity for wildlife appreciation unrelated to hunting, and consistent with the purposes of the WMA.

Objective REC 4.2: Cooperate with IDFG, as needed, in providing hunting opportunities, consistent with the mission of the WMA.

GOAL REC 5: Provide appropriate recreation opportunities in the Cartier Slough WMA.

Objective REC 5.1: Support IDFG efforts (as defined in the Cartier Slough WMA Management Plan) and Madison County (as appropriate) in efforts to improve public access and opportunities for wildlife appreciation unrelated to hunting and consistent with the mission of the WMA.

Objective REC 5.2: Cooperate with IDFG, as needed, in providing hunting opportunities, consistent with the mission of the WMA.

ACCESS, COORDINATION, AND IMPLEMENTATION (ACI)

Access

GOAL ACI 1: Provide adequate vehicular and non-motorized access to recreation sites at Ririe Reservoir.

Objective ACI 1.1: Work with Bonneville County to continue to provide and maintain adequate vehicular access to and parking at recreation facilities at the Blacktail and Juniper recreation areas, as these will continue to be the primary recreation sites at the reservoir. Primary access will be provided during the summer recreation seasons, as well as winter access for ice fishing at Juniper.

Objective ACI 1.2: Continue to allow vehicular access to recreation activities at and below the dam, if vandalism, public safety, dam safety concerns, and issues regarding operations and maintenance of the dam can be resolved and in coordination with the Bonneville County Sheriff's Department providing law enforcement services.

Objective ACI 1.3: Maintain pedestrian access to recreation opportunities at and below the dam, consistent with public safety, dam safety concerns, and issues regarding operations and maintenance of the dam.

GOAL ACI 2: Provide appropriate vehicular access to the Tex Creek WMA.

Objective ACI 2.1: Support IDFG in providing and maintaining adequate vehicular access to recreation and hunting opportunities in the WMA during the spring, summer, and fall seasons, consistent with IDFG's Tex Creek WMA Management Plan.

Objective ACI 2.2: Minimize human disturbance of wildlife in the Tex Creek WMA during the winter, including snowmobile and other vehicular traffic.

GOAL ACI 3: Provide appropriate vehicular access to the Cartier Slough WMA.

Objective ACI 3.1: Cooperate with IDFG in resolving any ownership issues related to Cartier Slough Road.

Objective ACI 3.2: Provide assistance, as appropriate, in constructing needed improvements to Cartier Slough Road.

GOAL ACI 4: Ensure that all facilities and activities, as well as access to these, are accessible to persons with disabilities, as appropriate.

Objective ACI 4.1: Incorporate Federal accessibility standards in the design and construction of new

and renovated facilities and trails, including: the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines. The latter will be used when they are the more stringent of the two regulations. Coordination

Coordination

GOAL ACI 5: Ensure continued coordination and cooperation with involved agencies and the public as needed to implement the RMP and associated IDFG WMA Management Plans.

Objective ACI 5.1: Cooperate with and support IDFG in implementing adopted management plans for the Tex Creek and Cartier Slough WMAs, as well as the fishery plan for Ririe Reservoir and any applicable species-specific plans.

Objective ACI 5.2: Work with the FS, Bonneville County, and IDFG to enforce winter vehicular restrictions in the Tex Creek WMA

Objective ACI 5.3: Work with Bonneville County in achieving the necessary enforcement of use restrictions and safety regulations at Ririe Reservoir, both on the water surface and at shore-side recreation locations.

Objective ACI 5.4: Coordinate with Bonneville County in conjunction with IDFG regarding future land use patterns on lands surrounding Ririe Reservoir and the Tex Creek WMA.

Objective ACI 5.5: Work with surrounding private landowners to achieve the goals and objectives of the RMP.

Objective ACI 5.6: Work with surrounding landowners to minimize impacts from RMP implementation on private lands, including management of access to or from Reclamation lands so that such access does not impact private lands.

Objective ACI 5.7: Continue to coordinate with involved Tribes in implementing RMP Goals, Objectives, and Management Actions.

Objective ACI 5.8: Provide appropriate public information and education regarding RMP Goals, Objectives, Management Actions, and Guidelines.

Objective ACI 5.9: Continue to contract with the BLM for fire suppression requirements.

GOAL ACI 6: Ensure that Reclamation land ownership and property interests are adequate and appropriate to fulfill Project purposes and agency responsibilities.

Objective ACI 6.1: Through limited acquisition, exchange, or disposal, resolve irregular property boundaries to improve management efficiency. Implementation

Implementation

GOAL ACI 7: Ensure RMP Implementation.

Objective ACI 7.1: Establish and maintain a clear phasing schedule and list of priorities for RMP implementation and update on an annual basis.

Objective ACI 7.2: Program adequate funding and/or implementation assistance to managing partners to accomplish RMP implementation according to established schedule, priorities, and monitoring factors.

Objective ACI 7.3: Maintain user fees at reasonable levels, consistent with facility operation and maintenance funding needs, and retain flexibility to adjust fee levels within reasonable levels as conditions change.

Appendix B

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coordination and Consultation

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan: Environmental Assessment

APPENDIX B U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE COORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

The following items are included in this appendix:

1. Letter from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on threatened and endangered species list.
2. Reclamation responses to FWS recommendations
3. Ririe Reservoir Bald Eagle Nest Monitoring Plan
4. Letter from FWS on fish and wildlife consultation concurrence

Appendix C

IDFG Fishery Management Goals

APPENDIX C: IDFG FISHERY MANAGEMENT GOALS

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) has identified objectives and programs for managing the fishery at Ririe Reservoir in their Fisheries Management Plan (IDFG 1996). The objectives, listed below, apply to Ririe Reservoir and to the reservoir tributaries.

Ririe Reservoir

Objective: Maintain a satisfactory salmonid fishery through the following programs:

- Continue stocking hatchery rainbow trout at a size and on a schedule which provides high quality fishing and maximum economic efficiency.
- Stock other salmonids such as brown trout, lake trout *Salvelinus namaycush*, or splake for non-game fish control and fishery diversity if trials prove the efficacy of such actions and risk to cutthroat trout in the drainage is deemed acceptable.
- Work to improve habitat and streamflow protection and/or enhancement to provide adequate spawning area for reservoir salmonids.

Objective: Maintain a satisfactory smallmouth bass fishery through the following programs:

- Monitor the bass population, primarily with data provided by organized tournament bass anglers and regularly scheduled creel surveys.
- Implement management actions (regulations such as more restrictive rules) if the actions are determined to have a high probability of significantly improving some aspects of the bass population and/or fishery and the actions are acceptable to the public.
- Work with organized bass anglers to minimize the biological and social impacts of bass tournaments.
- Develop bass habitat in cooperation with bass angler clubs.

Objective: Increase utilization of and appreciation for abundant yellow perch through the following program:

- Continue a comprehensive effort to educate the public about the positive aspects of having what is now a very well established yellow perch population in the reservoir, (quality table fare, catchability, and a numerical abundance well suited to consumptive angling).

Reservoir Tributaries

Objective: Restore native fluvial cutthroat trout populations through the following programs:

- Phase out put-and-take hatchery rainbow trout stocking which could be deleterious to cutthroat trout through competition, hybridization, and by attracting elevated levels of consumptive angling pressure.
- Maintain restrictive harvest rules for cutthroat trout and a late (July 1) season opener in principal spawning tributaries.
- Critically evaluate both agency and private stockings of fish in the drainage for possible negative effects on native cutthroat, restrict and/or comment on accordingly.
- Work to improve habitat and streamflow protection and/or enhancement.

Objective: Restore put-and-grow brown trout fishery, particularly in the Gray's Lake Outlet, as possible without harming the native cutthroat trout stock through the following programs:

- Continue stocking of fingerling brown trout in the outlet area, maintain fish quality and stocking conditions to maximize utility.
- Work to improve habitat and streamflow protection and/or enhancement.

Appendix D

Tribal Consultation and Coordination; Letters and Meetings with Tribes

APPENDIX D: TRIBAL CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION; LETTERS AND MEETINGS WITH TRIBES

1998

- September 22, 1998 Letter to the Chairman of the Fort Hall Business Council, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes asking if the Tribes are interested in completing a Traditional Cultural Property Inventory for Ririe Reservoir/Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area
- December 4, 1998 Meeting with the Tribal Council of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to discuss several projects including Resource Management Plans
- December 17, 1998 Meeting with staff of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to discuss interest in completing a Traditional Cultural Property Inventory for Ririe and Cascade Resource Management Plans
- December 28, 1998 Letter to the Chairman of the Fort Hall Business Council, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes requesting January 7, 1998 meeting to discuss several important initiatives

1999

- January 7, 1999 Meeting at Fort Hall with the Chairman and Council Members of the Fort Hall Business Council, and Staff of Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to discuss several important initiatives
- February 17, 1999 Meeting with the Tribal Staff of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to discuss potential Tribal issues in the Ririe Resource Management Plan study area
- March 9, 1999 Letter to the Chairman of the Tribal Council, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes Summarizing the December 4, 1998, meeting where several projects were discussed, including Resource Management Plans
- April 30, 1999 Letter to the Chairman of the Fort Hall Business Council of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Summarizing the January 7, 1999 meeting where several important projects were discussed including Resource Management Plans
- June 10 & 11, 1999 Field Trip to Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek WMA and meeting with Tribal Staff of the Shoshone Bannock Tribes to discuss potential Tribal issues in the

Ririe Resource Management Plan Study Area

September 8, 1999	Letter to Chairman of the Fort Hall Business Council of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes requesting a meeting to discuss several important projects
September 9, 1999	Letter to the Chairperson of the General Council of the Burns Paiute Tribe, requesting a meeting to discuss several important projects
September 9, 1999	Letter to the Chairman of the Tribal Council of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, requesting a September meeting to discuss several important projects including Resource Management Plans
September 24, 1999	Letter and Agenda to Chairman of the Fort Hall Business Council of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes concerning a tentative meeting date set for October 15, 1999
October 15, 1999	Meeting with the Fort Hall Business Council and Staff of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes to discuss several important projects including Resource Management Plans
November 30, 1999	Meeting with the Executive Committee of the Nez Perce Tribal Council Members and Staff to discuss several important issues

2000

February 29, 2000	Meeting with Commission Members, Director of the Department of Fisheries and staff of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes concerning the Ririe and Cascade Resource Management Plans
March 17, 2000	Meeting with the Tribal Council of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to discuss Tribal issues and Reclamation projects including Ririe and Cascade Resource Management Plans
July 17, 2000	Meeting with the Tribal Council of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes to discuss Tribal issues. The status of Ririe and Cascade Resource Management Plans was reported
October 6, 2000	Government to Government Meeting with Shoshone-Bannock Business Council and staff to discuss several important issues including Ririe and Cascade RMPs
December 5, 2000	Letter to Chairman of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribal Council Transmitting the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management

Plan, requesting comments and a meeting to discuss the RMP

December 5, 2000 Letter to Chairman of the Shoshone-Bannock Business Council Transmitting the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan, requesting comments and a meeting to discuss the RMP

December 5, 2000 Letter to Chairman of the Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee Transmitting Draft Environmental Assessment for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan and requesting comments.

2001

February 7, 2001 Meeting with Tribal Council of Shoshone-Paiute Tribes and staff to discuss Ririe and Cascade RMP Draft EAs and other Reclamation projects and proposals

February 15, 2001 Meeting with the staff of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes concerning the Draft EA of the Ririe and Cascade RMP's

February 17, 2001 Letter from the Habitat, Parks, Fish & Game Department of the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes commenting on Draft EA of the RMP (see Appendix E)

February 20, 2001 Letter from Fish & Wildlife Coordinator, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes commenting on the Ririe and Cascade Reservoir RMP's (see Appendix E)

Appendix E

Responses to Public Comments

E.1 Summary of Public Comments

The comment period for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP), Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) extended from December 13, 2000, to February 12, 2001. Reclamation thanks all of those who provided comments. The public comments, along with responses, are provided in Section E.2, *Public Comments and Responses*. Overall, comments focused on four main subject areas: wildlife habitat, safety, the scuba dive park, and overcrowding at recreation facilities and areas of the reservoir. Several other subjects were also addressed, as listed on Table E-1.

Wildlife habitat comments came primarily from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), although other commentors also addressed wildlife habitat. Two primary areas of concern emerged: closure of the Pipe Creek Road and the bald eagle nest at the Willow Creek Arm. Of those who mentioned the Pipe Creek Road, commentors wanted to close the road to protect wildlife. Closures at the Willow Creek Arm for bald eagle protection received more frequent comments, ranging from closing the area entirely to not closing the area at all. Reclamation plans to implement a monitoring program for three consecutive nesting seasons to determine the potential effects of boating activity on the eagles. The monitoring will be developed and conducted in cooperation with Tribes, FWS, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and local boating organizations. Allowable activities at Willow Creek Arm will be determined by the results of this study.

Safety issues generally concerned traffic and congestion at the ramps and conflicts among user groups. Particularly, Blacktail was reported to be already overcrowded and unsafe because of the number of vehicles at the parking areas and using the ramp. The Preferred Alternative includes provisions to expand parking and either expand or create a new swimming area to increase safety. Reclamation will also conduct a carrying capacity and demand study to determine if the boat ramp, dock, and other facilities need to be expanded for recreation during the next 10 years and if the expansion can be accomplished without damaging existing natural and cultural resources. To resolve conflicts among user groups, one commentor suggested that increased enforcement of no-wake zones was needed. Reclamation does not have enforcement authority at the reservoir; this is under the jurisdiction of the Bonneville County Sheriff's Department. Nevertheless, Reclamation will continue to work with the County in efforts to increase enforcement at Ririe Reservoir.

The scuba dive park is important to many area users. Most of the comments addressed the location of the park and asked for assurance that the rest of the reservoir not be off-limits to scuba divers. Reclamation has not yet determined the exact location of the scuba dive park. This will be decided as an action undertaken in the RMP. However, upon further investigation and consultation with Reclamation's regional dive master and dam safety experts, it has been decided that the dam will not likely be considered as one of the locations because of safety issues. As has been the case in the past, the remaining areas of the reservoir will remain open to scuba divers.

Finally, many commentors had general concerns about overcrowding on this finite water body. Commentors felt that such overcrowding contributes to resource degradation, and, as noted earlier, was cited as the cause of conflicts among users. One commentor suggested that use limits should be applied to the reservoir through a permit system. Other commentors suggested that expanding facilities only encourages more use, and that facilities should not be

expanded. In some cases, facilities must be expanded to provide additional safety. However, extensive expansions are not planned. Instead, reconfiguration and more efficient use of existing Recreation sites is proposed.

Table E-1. Ririe Reservoir Draft EA—Comment Summary

T = Tribal comment, A = federal, state, or local agency comment

Issue	No. of Comments	Summary of Comments
Scuba park	17 (1A)	Current access is inadequate. Do not restrict diving use elsewhere. Isolate dive park from boat traffic. Desire 30-foot depth for the dive park. Location near the dam is preferred.
Scuba park	1 (T)	Would there be any adverse effects on the fishery?
Juniper/eastside trails	1 (T)	Trails cause riparian habitat fragmentation.
Safety at Blacktail boat ramp	3	The ramp is too narrow for today's wider boats. A breakwater is needed. No wake zone/enforcement is inadequate and better law enforcement is needed. Improve facilities.
Blacktail	1	Limit the number of vehicles at Blacktail. Move mooring area south of swimming area. Night lights on the ramp would help.
Blacktail	2	Overcrowded and will get worse; don't bring in power as this will only make it worse.
Blacktail area trail	2 (1T)	Trails cause habitat disruption over a large area. Close trails in winter to avoid wildlife conflicts.
General access concern	1	Continue access as it is currently allowed.
Native vegetation and wildlife	1	Protect resources, like the plan.
Creekside Park opening	1	Control deer flies if this area is to be used. Better security needed to control parties.
Creekside	1 (T)	Consider impacts of reopening Creekside on riparian vegetation and erosion.
Cultural resources	1 (A)	Support BMPs and Goals and Objectives and development of cultural resources management plan.
Cultural resources	3 (T)	Develop a cultural resources management plan.
Sailing/kayaking/swimming	1	There is a big conflict between these uses and jet skis. Large no-wake zone around swimming, picnic, and fishing areas needed to control motor boats and jet skis.
Water-based recreation	6	There is a severe conflict between finite supply and increasing demand that will only get worse.
Willow Creek Arm closure	1	Don't close this area to boating.

Table E-1. Ririe Reservoir Draft EA—Comment Summary

T = Tribal comment, A = federal, state, or local agency comment

Issue	No. of Comments	Summary of Comments
Fire rehabilitation	1	Re-seed burned areas quickly to reduce erosion. Erosion is a big problem in this area.
Cartier Slough	1 (A)	Groomed X-C track will attract too many people and conflict with wintering wildlife. Nature trail—area under water with strong currents for 1-2 months—expect erosion and will require annual maintenance.
Threatened and Endangered Species	1 (A) 1 (T)	Inadequate coverage for bald eagle, lynx, and tress; grazing conflicts and predator control conflicts not adequately addressed.
Close Pipe Creek road	2 (1A)	Close the road in winter to protect wildlife, which is the purpose for the WMA.
Project authorization documents	1 (T)	Add Ririe project authorization documents to the EA.
Water management	1 (T)	Address reservoir water management in the EA.
RMP implementation	1 (T)	Include Tribes in this process.

E.2 Public Comments and Responses

Letters of comment received as a result of the review of the Draft EA and Reclamation's response to specific comments are included in this appendix. All of the letters received are listed below. Letters that required a response follow, along with the responses. Letters that did not require a response are not attached.

Comments Requiring a Response	Page
Tribes (T)	
T1—Carol C. Perugini, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Owyhee, Nevada	7
T2—Chad Colter, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Fort Hall, Idaho	11
Federal Agencies (F)	
F1—Deb Mignogno, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Chubbuck, Idaho	14
State and Local Agencies (A)	
A1—Susan Pengilly Neitzel, Idaho State Historical Society, Boise, Idaho	20
A2—Lee Staker, Bonneville County Board of Commissioners, Idaho Falls, Idaho	21
A3—David Christiansen, City of Idaho Falls Parks and Recreation Division, Idaho Falls, Idaho	22
A4—Kim Ragotzkie, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho Falls, Idaho	23
A5—Karl Casperson, Bonneville County Sheriff, Idaho Falls, Idaho	25
Organizations and Businesses (O)	
O1—Dr. Roger Tall, Bonneville County Waterways Committee, Idaho Falls, Idaho	26
O2—Gary E. McConnell, AquaNutz Dive Club, Idaho Falls, Idaho	27
O3—Keith Christensen, Inland Scuba, Inc., Idaho Falls, Idaho	31
Individuals (I)	
I1—Jeff and Pam Shearer, Idaho Falls, Idaho	32
I2—Harry Reilly, Idaho Falls, Idaho	34
I3—Harold Winther, Idaho Falls, Idaho	35
I4—Shane Olson, Idaho Falls, Idaho	37
I5—Tom Rowley, Idaho Falls, Idaho	38
I6—Lynn Shearer, Idaho Falls, Idaho	40

Comments that Did Not Require a Response

Organizations and Businesses

Jen Woodie, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Bozeman, Montana
 Garth Nelson, Ricks College Scuba Club, Rexburg, Idaho

Individuals

Anthony K. Perkins

The following individuals commented on the scuba dive park. All of these comments were captured in comment letter O2, Gary E. McConnell, AquaNutz Dive Club; letter O3, Keith Christensen, Inland Scuba, Inc.; and letter A5, Karl Casperson, Bonneville County Sheriff. Individuals below are referred to those letters for responses to comments on the scuba dive park.

- Michael Adams, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Carol Baldwin, Rigby, Idaho
- Karla Bryan, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Steven Bryan, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Doug Conway, Rexburg, Idaho
- Garn Herrick, Roberts, Idaho
- Michael Jensen, Paris, Idaho
- Paul McCarthy, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Allen and Lynn Moore, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Garth Nelson, Rexburg, Idaho
- Kathy Parker, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Perry Solis, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Chris Trubl, Idaho Falls, Idaho
- Georgina Zatylny, Tempe, Arizona

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Draft Environmental Assessment
December 2000**

Page #	Area	Topic	Proposed Action	Concerns		
2-5 3-45	Creekside Park and vicinity	Creekside Park	Reopen and renovate area for day use/camping recreation use, including: *Allow for the development of loop trail from park to Willow Creek *Day use facilities *Group tent camping, as demand warrants *Upgrade facilities/structures *Provide orientation kiosk, interpretive displays, and regulatory signs *Enhance park vegetation	Have issues that led to closure of park been adequately addressed and/or corrected? Another concern is that development of the area for concentrated use may increase occurrence/severity of soil erosion, degradation of riparian area and sediment dumping into stream below dam. Per NRCS (p. 3-45) predominant soil series in Willow Creek drainage area is one of most erosive in U.S.	T1-1 T1-2	<p>T1-1: These issues will be addressed more thoroughly in the RMP. Reclamation understands that these issues include facilities and vandalism. Because these issues do not affect the overall intent and impact of the proposed action, addressing them in more detail in the RMP is considered sufficient for this analysis.</p> <p>T1-2: Erosion as a result of building trails will be offset by enhancing the park vegetation surrounding the trails. Best Management Practices (BMPs), listed in Chapter 5 of the Final EA, will be used to minimize erosion and avoid and reduce potential impacts on riparian vegetation.</p>
2-7	Juniper Park and vicinity	Boat launch and vicinity	Explore use of and provision for allowing materials to be submerged in reservoir south of the boat launch ramp for scuba divers	What types of materials will be submerged and how large of an area will be affected? Have impacts on fishes been considered?	T1-3	<p>T1-3: The types of materials to be submerged would be evaluated for their compatibility with environmental concerns. This EA concluded that facilities enhancement near Juniper Park would not significantly impact fisheries (Section 3.7.2). Submerged materials would not include any items that would degrade water quality and would, most likely, improve fish habitat.</p>

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan - Page 2

Page #	Area	Topic	Proposed Action	Concerns		
2-8	Juniper Park and vicinity	Juniper area trails and shoreline access	Allow for the development of a 4-6 mile long trail beginning at Juniper Visitor's Center for non-motorized (hike, bicycle) use along the rim and shoreline of the east side of the reservoir	Construction of "looping" trails may cause fragmentation of riparian habitat which could negatively impact birds and small mammals	T1-4	<p>T1-4: The impact of trails on wildlife habitat is described in Section 3.5.2. Because of BMPs and mitigation measures, the trail was found to not have a significant impact. Habitat fragmentation was considered to be a minor impact because of the large size of the Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and the small area affected by trails. Furthermore, trails might cross riparian areas at a few locations but would not run parallel to and within riparian areas.</p> <p>T1-5: Please see response to comment T1-4. Trails and trail heads will only be maintained during the late spring, summer, and early fall season, thereby avoiding most impacts during the critical winter period for big game.</p>
2-9	Blacktail Park, Access Road, and Adjacent Reservoir Area	Blacktail Park Day Use Area, Trailhead, and Associated Parking	Allow for the development of non-motorized trail that accommodates equestrians, hikers, and bicyclists, providing access to the south along Willow Creek and farther into Tex Creek WMA	Beyond issues of proximity to shoreline, erosion risk, horse dung inputs and soil compaction there is risk of disruption of riparian bird and mammal species over an extensive area	T1-5	
2-13	Teton Mitigation Lands - Tex Creek WMA	Access	Work with IDFG and Bonneville County to implement an ordinance to close Pipe Creek Road to motorized use, including snowmobiles, during the winter season	We support this proposal as it will reduce disturbance of wintering elk, deer, moose and other wildlife species		

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan - Page 3

Page #	Area	Topic	Proposed Action	Concerns		
	Entire management area			The Ririe Reservoir area is historically and culturally important to the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes. During the 2/7/01 meeting it was suggested that the Tribes collaborate with the BOR to draft an Integrated Cultural Resource Management Plan for the Ririe Reservoir Area. Culturally significant sites would be identified as well as a protocol established that would detail how cultural artifacts, sacred sites, etc. should be treated to ensure that the interests of the Shoshone-Paiute and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes will be adequately protected	T1-6	T1-6: Reclamation will prepare a draft cultural resources management plan (CRMP) and coordinate its review with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, and the State Historic Preservation Office, among others. The CRMP would include discussions of the consultation process, resource protection actions, actions to deal with adverse effects to sites, and procedures addressing NAGPRA issues of burial protection and custody of cultural materials. To craft a credible plan, Reclamation will solicit suggestions and information from the tribes at the early stages of plan development.

February 20, 2001

Ms. Carolyn Burpee Stone,
PN 3902, Bureau of Reclamation
1150 N. Curtis Road, Suite 100
Boise, ID. 83706-1234

RE: Comments to the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan

Dear Ms. Burpee Stone:

After a review of the Draft Environmental Assessments (EA) for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan I have the following technical comments and questions that need to be addressed. Overall, I thought the EA was well written, but heavily driven by the needs of recreation. My comments on some issues involve multiple sections of the EA. However, I have attempted to make specific comments on specific sections where possible.

T2-1 I would recommend that the BOR initiate a formal Government to Government Consultation with the governing body of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes before the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan is allowed to be finalized. The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), as well as other federal agencies, have a long history of implementing projects without consulting and addressing the negative impacts that these projects have on the tribes.

T2-2 1.4.1 Historical Overview
I would suggest that the Dams Authorizing language and mitigation plans be an appendix to the EA and be reference in the overview.

1.4.2 Need to Action Pg.1-5;
"A plan is needed to address current and anticipated future issues to permit the orderly and coordinated development and management..."

T2-3 The language "development" implies that further development is what is needed, it should be struck out and replaced with "use".

2.3.2 Summary of Features Pg. 2-29;
Last sentence of 2nd paragraph: "Except for meeting accessibility requirements, recreation facilities would be upgraded or expanded only after documentation of increased demand."

T2-4 I would suggest having some discussion pertaining to Tribal participation in the decision making process when determinations are being made to expanded or modified recreation facilities to better accommodate demand and use.

T2—Chad G. Colter, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Fort Hall, Idaho

T2-1: Reclamation has sought to include the Tribes in the development of the RMP by communicating with Tribal Governments and staff through letters, meetings, a field trip, and involvement in the Ad Hoc Working Group. (See EA Appendix D.) Reclamation will continue to work with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in the implementation of the RMP through meetings and an annual field trip and in other specific management actions as described in the RMP.

T2-2: The Project Authorizations have been added as Appendix F and referenced in the overview in response to your comment. Mitigation plans for the Ririe and Teton Projects consist of the agreements between Reclamation, IDFG, and the Corps of Engineers. These agreements reference a Master Plan, dated 1974, prepared by Reclamation in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers. These documents are too lengthy to include in the EA. Copies of the agreements have been made available previously to the Tribes and additional copies can be provided. Copies of the Master Plan can also be made available.

T2-3: The text has been changed in section 1.4.2 according to your suggestion.

T2-4: Reclamation, the Tribes, IDFG, and Bonneville County will be involved in the recreation carrying capacity and demand study to determine if recreation facilities will be expanded over the next 10 years and if the expansion can be accomplished without damaging the existing natural and cultural resources. Tribal involvement will be noted as a specific management action in the RMP.

	<p>3.2.1 Affected Environment Pg. 3-9, last Paragraph "The Ririe Reservoir Outlet Channel is dry for most of the year and does not support aquatic life. Therefore, high sediment loads in the channel would have no impacts."</p>	T2-5: Reclamation believes the statement in the document to be correct. You may be referring to the natural streambed of Willow Creek, between the dam and the Outlet Channel, which is on private lands and Reclamation does not manage. We do recognize there are aquatic resources in this stream segment.
T2-6	<p>I would not agree with this statement. Seepage through the dam and the possibility of other springs contributing to the channel below the dam would lead me to believe that aquatic life of some form does exist in the area and high sediment loads may have negative effects. Furthermore, there is no discussion of cumulative impacts due to management of the reservoir and its possible affects on downstream cold water aquatic biota (e.g., Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion).</p>	T2-6: Water operations of the reservoir is outside the scope of the RMP. No actions taken in the RMP will change the reservoir water management.
	<p>3.5.2 Environmental Consequences Alternative B- Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development... Mitigation Pg. 3-37 "Big Game winter range habitat losses would be mitigated by replacing impacted winter range habitat value through enhancement of existing winter range in Tex Creek."</p>	T2-7: The management designation of most of the non-mitigation lands at Blacktail Park has been converted from non-active recreation to non-mitigation lands that will be managed in conjunction and consistent with WMA lands. This is referred to in section 3.5.2.
T2-7	<p>Although, enhancement of existing winter range should continue to be completed, it is difficult to assess proper crediting levels for habitat improvement that can take many years to be realize. Other alternatives for replacing lost habitat be should assessed, such as the conversion of lands designated for recreation to wildlife habitat. Losses to wildlife habitat should be replaced on at least a 1:1 basis through out the mitigation area.</p>	T2-8: The monitoring plan that will be implemented in the RMP will determine if the nest on Willow Creek is a productive nest. Currently, there is no information available on this nest. Eagles have highly individualistic behavior patterns and nest management plans need to be designed specifically for each nest. Authority available to enforce whatever actions necessary will be part of a nest management plan, based on the outcome of the monitoring.
T2-8	<p>3.6.2 Environmental Consequences Wildlife Alternative B- Preferred alternative... Scientists have provided sufficient research to establish that human presence does effect Bald Eagle nesting and foraging patterns. It is unclear as to how further study will provide us with any different management solutions than those already required. The plan needs to address the required enforcement of management actions.</p>	T2-9: You are correct in stating that the analysis reflects the economic impacts. We are not assuming that the low cost recreational opportunities would substitute for impacts to subsistence, hunting, gathering, and fishing for the Tribes. While it is apparent from your comment any impact to resources would affect these items, no information is available to document that the Tribes depend upon these resources for subsistence. However, Reclamation recognizes the importance of all the natural and cultural resources to the Tribes and the one of the purposes of the
T2-9	<p>3.11.2 Environmental Consequences "Adverse impacts would be limited to potential fee increase, but this would be offset by enhancement of low-cost recreation opportunities and improved access."</p> <p>The opinion viewed in this sentence appears to be a very narrow view of what is expected of Executive Order 12898. It is clearly being expressed as an issue that revolves around currency, and the assumption that Tribal members would be better served by low-cost recreational opportunities than they would by subsistence gathering, hunting and fishing. At a time when Tribal unemployment rates reach 70% and the change in Tribal member diets over a relatively short time have caused disease such as diabetes to be present on the reservation in numbers higher than the national average. It is important that we maintain a currency that is important to</p>	

RMP is to protect these resources.

T2-9 (cont) | the Tribes. This includes the restoration of component resources to conditions which most closely represent the ecological features associated with a natural riverine ecosystem.

T2-10 | 3.12 Cultural Resources
I did not get an official Tribal definition of Cultural Resources, but as I understand it, the Tribes hold a much larger view of the definition of "Cultural Resource". It includes not only those tangible remains of occupation, but also the natural resources that supported the occupation. The air, water, land, plants, and animals are all view as components of "Cultural Resources".

T2-11 | 3.12.1 Affected Environment Pg. 3-73
3rd paragraph; "These two groups spoke mutually unintelligible Numic Languages, but lived together in bilingual winter villages..."
The Tribes would suggest striking the words "mutually unintelligible and bilingual" from this sentence. It does not add anything and gives perception that the Tribes were not intelligent enough to communicate through anything other than the spoken language.

T2-12 | I would like to suggest that the RMP be inclusive of a process to involve the Tribes with decision making and implementation of the plan. I would also like to express our support for the Shoshone-Paiute's technical comments on both the Ririe and Cascade Reservoirs RMP.

Sincerely,

Chad G. Colter
Fish & Wildlife Coordinator

cc: Fort Hall Business Council (7)
Billie Appenay, SBT Adm. Sec.
files

T2-10: Reclamation's use of the term "cultural resources" (as it appears in the glossary to the EA) is governed by specific historic preservation statutes and regulations under which Federal agencies must work. The Federal Government addresses "cultural resources" in a more restrictive way than the Tribes do, with Federal management and protection of archaeological, historic, and traditional cultural properties being integrally tied to the more restrictive definition of cultural resources. We are aware that the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes incorporate resources such as land, water, air, plants, and animals into their definition and that this more inclusive definition is culturally more meaningful to the Tribes. In recognizing the larger Tribal view of "cultural resources," Reclamation is agreeable to inserting an official Tribal definition in an appendix to the EA, if you so desire and can provide us with appropriate wording.

T2-11: The text has been changed in section 3.12.1 according to your suggestion.

T2-12: Reclamation will continue to work with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in the implementation of the RMP through meetings and an annual field trip and in other specific management actions as described in the RMP.

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Telephone (208) 237-6975 Fax Number (208) 237-8211

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February 15, 2000

Subject: Draft Environmental Assessment for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management
Plan FWS Ririe 546; File # 111.1008; FWS # 1-4-01-1546

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Draft EA, dated December 2000, was received by the Service on December 14, 2000. The Service, under authority of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, provides the following comments on the proposed project.

General Project Description

The Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) is responsible for the administration and management of those lands acquired or withdrawn for the initial construction and operation of the Ririe Reservoir. The proposed BOR RMP will serve as a blueprint for the future use, management, and site development of BOR lands at Ririe Reservoir, Outlet Channel, Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Tex Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), and Ririe and Teton mitigation lands within the Cartier Slough WMA, which combine to provide flood control, irrigation, recreation, and habitat for fish and wildlife. Ririe Reservoir is approximately 12 miles long and covers 1,560 acres of surface area. Tex Creek is a 34,269 acre reserve on the southern part of the reservoir which includes lands owned by BOR, Idaho Department of Fish and Game,

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Appendix E

Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and private entities. Cartier Slough consists of approximately 1,026 acres of the BOR's Ririe and Teton mitigation lands adjacent to the Henrys Fork of the Snake River. These lands occur in Madison, Jefferson, and Bonneville counties.

The purpose of the subject EA is to assist the BOR in finalizing a preferred RMP and to determine whether to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Currently, the BOR does not have a RMP for its lands around Ririe Reservoir.

Proposed Alternatives

The BOR began the public involvement process to develop reasonable alternatives in January 1999, in conjunction with an Ad Hoc Working Group (interested groups, Tribes, and agencies). Three Alternatives were developed for the RMP. Alternative A (No Action) is a continuation of existing management practices, in which the BOR would adopt no additional measures to provide management direction to meet future demand, facility needs, or natural and cultural resource improvements. Alternative B (Preferred Alternative) would focus to allow a limited amount of expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities, and to increase efforts of protecting and managing natural and cultural resources on BOR lands. Alternative C (Recreational Development / Maintain Natural Resource Emphasis) would focus to maintain current levels of protecting and managing natural and cultural resources on BOR lands and allow for a moderate level of expansion and development of recreation sites and facilities.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Bald Eagles. The bald eagle is listed as threatened. Two bald eagle nests are located in the proposed RMP area. One nest is located in the Willow Creek Arm, which is a tributary to Ririe Reservoir near the north end of Tex Creek. The nest is about 500 feet from the reservoir. The eagle pair produced eggs, but did not fledge any young in 1998. Nest productivity data for 1999 are not available. The nest was active in 2000, but no data are available regarding success. Another bald eagle nest is located near the south end of Cartier Slough. The Cartier Slough pair fledged one young in 1998. Nest productivity for 1999 and 2000 are not available.

F1-1

Currently, we are aware of no bald eagle management plan that exists for these nest sites. The Draft EA presents deficient and sporadic survey data for occupancy and productivity. Detailed information about the nest trees, eagle pairs, occupancy dates, fledgling dates, habitat use, home range, foraging habits, perch trees, nest failures, and direct or probable reason for nest failures has not been provided.

The Draft EA, under Environmental Consequences, Sect. 3.6.2, Alternatives, Wildlife, presents the following information under Alternative A - No Action: "The effects of current boating activities on the nesting bald eagles are not known. Future use of the reservoir is expected to increase." No access restrictions or monitoring of potential effects are included in Alternative A. Further, the document recognizes that BOR's existing management practices may impact nesting bald eagles by reducing productivity or causing nest abandonment.

F1-1: No management plan has been prepared for the Willow Creek Arm nest because nest occupancy and productivity has been sporadic. Planned monitoring efforts will result in preparation of a management plan if the nest is occupied by a nesting pair. The bald eagle nest at Cartier Slough is actually on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land and is subject to a public lands closure from February 1 to July 31.

Alternative B - the Preferred Alternative states, "Shoreline access would be restricted under Alternative B by signage within 1/4 mile of an active bald eagle nest from April 1 to July 15 to reduce disturbance. However, enforcement capabilities are limited so the effectiveness of the closure would depend largely on the public's willingness to voluntarily adhere to its conditions. If the public adheres to the shoreline access restriction, it should be effective in reducing disturbance of this nesting pair of bald eagles." "Alternative B does not include boating restrictions in the Willow Creek arm of Ririe Reservoir near the bald eagle nest. Whether boating activities near the nest disturb nesting activity and reduce productivity is unknown. A 3-year monitoring program would be implemented to determine if boating or other human activity is the cause of the low productivity at this nest. A seasonal boating closure would be pursued if boating is shown to disrupt normal eagle behavior." Alternative C effects are described as the same as for Alternative B.

Human activities are known to disrupt eagle activity patterns and in some cases can cause reproductive failure as described in the Bald Eagle Management Plan for Greater Yellowstone (1996). Ririe Reservoir and the BOR's Draft EA proposal area fall within the Snake Idaho Management Unit of the Bald Eagle Management Plan for Greater Yellowstone. This plan was finalized on January 31, 1996. The Snake Idaho Unit includes the Snake River watershed from the Wyoming line downstream to Idaho Falls. Interstate 15 comprises the entire western boundary, the southern boundary is the Bonneville-Bingham County line, and the eastern boundary is the Idaho - Wyoming line. The Snake Idaho unit contains portions of the Snake, Henry's Fork, Teton, and Falls Rivers, and Grey's Lake Outlet. Major reservoirs are Palisades, Ririe, and Grey's Lake.

F1-2: Boating restrictions may be implemented pending the findings of the planned monitoring program. Monitoring results would be discussed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in determining the need for boating or other access restrictions.

For the Greater Yellowstone bald eagles, the Service recommends the following guidelines for bald eagle nest sites to restrict human disturbance at eagle use areas. Though many types of human disturbances are compatible with eagles, regulation of human activity near the nest site is a critical part of eagle habitat management. The Service recommends that the BOR establish buffer zones around the nest sites from land and water access points. These buffer zones should be established for individual nest territories based on the location of nest trees, perch trees, and flight paths, as well as stand characteristics, known individual tolerances, and weather patterns. The recommended buffer zones are described below.

Zone 1: Occupied Nesting Zone. Zone 1 is an area within a 400 meter radius of an occupied nest. Critical nesting periods vary throughout the recovery area, but generally fall between 1 March and 31 August. Human activity should not exceed minimal levels during the period from first occupancy of the nest site until two weeks following fledging. Habitat alterations should be restricted to projects specifically designed for maintaining or enhancing bald eagle habitat and conducted only during September through January. Human activity restrictions for Zone 1 may be relaxed during years when a nest is not occupied. During the nesting period, exclude all activities such as logging, construction, habitat improvement, and others which may negatively impact critical periods of nest use. Traffic by boats that continue travel at the rate of the main current and at a frequency which results in no boat traffic for at least 30% of the daylight hours (fishing from boats with such movement rates and frequency is acceptable). Jet ski or excessive motor boat disturbance is not acceptable. These activities should also be regulated up to 800 meters from nests and roosts where eagles have line-of-sight vision.

F1-2
cont)

Zone II: Primary Use Area. Zone II includes the area within an 800 meter radius of the active nest and of all known alternate nests. Intensive study of a nesting pair for several years should allow for the boundaries of this zone to be altered to include the area where over 75% of adult foraging and loafing activity occurs during the nesting season. Habitat alterations should be carefully designed and regulated to insure preferred nesting habitat characteristics and foraging habitat are not degraded. Developments that may increase human activity levels and use patterns should not be allowed. Structures that have the potential for increasing mortality due to collision should not be constructed (power lines and telephone lines). Existing lines should be modified to minimize collision or electrocution.

Zone III: Home Range. Ideally, the home range should be delineated by monitoring eagle movements during nesting and brood rearing for several years. Lacking such data, this zone should include all potential foraging habitat with a 4 km (2.5 miles) radius of the center of Zone II. The primary purposes of this zone are to maintain adequate foraging conditions and aid in maintaining the integrity of Zones I and II. This zone encompasses the area that should be protected through purchase, easements or cooperative agreements.

Nest management plans for the Ririe Reservoir bald eagle nests (Willow Creek arm and Cartier Slough) should be developed to account for all life history needs, including nest and roosting habitat, foraging, and protection from disturbances.

Bald Eagle Winter Use

F1-3

The Ririe Reservoir, Tex Creek, and Cartier Slough areas are important wintering areas for bald eagles. The Draft EA only describes bald eagles as being common all year in the Cartier Slough area. The EA should be expanded to discuss management of bald eagle seasonal habitat and winter use areas. This should focus on the following three habitat components and human disruptions of each. Presence and abundance of food usually associated with open water, availability and distribution of foraging perches, and availability of secure night roost sites and freedom from human harassment dictate amount and extent of use of specific wintering grounds and areas used during migration. Wintering elk and mule deer in the Tex Creek area provide bald eagles with winter forage associated with late ungulate harvests and big game wintering grounds. Closure of Pipe Creek Road during the winter season would further protect bald eagles from motorized disturbances.

Gray Wolves

Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek are included in the Yellowstone Management Area for gray wolves. Within this area, wolves are classified as an "experimental / non-essential population." At this time, wolves are not known to occupy the area near Ririe Reservoir. The closest known pack, the Wild Horse Pack, currently occupies a range north and west of Mackay. However, because of large wintering herds of elk and deer in the Tex Creek area and the great success of wolf recovery in Idaho, the Tex Creek area may become occupied in the very near future.

F1-4

Alternatives B and C, offer the most protection for wolves, should they occur in the Tex Creek area, by closing winter access roads, such as Pipe Creek Road. Such road closures may offer

F1-3: According to Reclamation, Ririe Reservoir and Tex Creek are not known to winter bald eagles. While no consistent winter use areas have been identified eagles have been seen in the area during the winter months.

F1-4: Livestock grazing does not occur on Reclamation lands, and no predator control efforts occur or are planned. If predator control were to be proposed at a future date, Reclamation would require that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services conduct a full National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis of the action.

- F1-4 cont)** protection from snowmobiles, incidental shooting, and accidental trapping and snaring of wolves.
- If livestock grazing occurs on these BOR lands and federal predator control programs such as Wildlife Services (WS) become operational for livestock protection, BOR should develop management plans which include mitigating measures for protection of gray wolves. These plans are developed in conjunction with WS, BOR, and FWS.

Canada Lynx

The Draft EA should be updated to reflect the Service's March 24, 2000 published final rule to list the Canada lynx as threatened in the contiguous 48 States. This rule became effective on April 24, 2000.

- F1-5** The Draft EA characterizes the higher elevation lands in the southeast corner of Tex Creek and adjacent FS lands to the east as suitable lynx habitat based on the vegetative species present and the relatively undisturbed nature of those areas. Under Alternative B, the document concludes there would be no effect on the Canada lynx. This conclusion is not supported by information provided in the document.
- The Caribou-Targhee National Forest mapped Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU) #36 directly adjacent to the BOR's eastern boundary along the head of Tex Creek from Peterson Creek and north to Mount Baldy. LAUs are intended to provide the fundamental or smallest scale with which to begin evaluation and monitoring of the effects of management actions on lynx habitat. The BOR should take measures to identify vegetative types on BOR lands which may provide suitable lynx habitat. If lynx habitat or key linkage areas are identified, the BOR should coordinate with the FWS on approaches to conserve lynx. The Canada Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy (LCAS) provides detailed descriptions and approaches to develop lynx conservation measures.

Whooping Cranes

Whooping cranes in eastern Idaho are classified as an, "experimental / non-essential population." Whooping cranes are presently not known to use the Cartier Slough, Ririe Reservoir, or Tex Creek areas. Recently, the Gray's Lake re-introduction efforts have been termed as "failure" in the Pacific flyway. Only one bird from these efforts is known to currently survive. However, the surviving whooping crane returned last spring to the Teton River area within 20 miles of Ririe Reservoir. Under the Draft EA's proposals, Alternatives A, B, and C should have little to no potential impacts or adverse affects to whooping cranes.

Ute ladies' - tresses

- F1-6** The threatened Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) (SPDI) may occur in all three counties within which the proposed RMP would be implemented. SPDI was first discovered in Idaho in 1996 along the South Fork of the Snake River in eastern Idaho. All known occurrences of SPDI in Idaho are found generally from Palisades Dam downstream to the confluence with Henry's Fork, which are near the proposed area. The Draft EA, under Wetlands and Riparian Cover Types, describes several species which are associated with SPDI, such as *Carex spp.* and *Salix*

- F1-5:** The EA concludes no effect on lynx because none of the lands that may provide suitable habitat would be altered in any way by actions addressed in this EA.
- F1-6:** A search for Ute Ladie's-Tresses Orchid is not warranted because no actions that would alter suitable habitat are proposed. The EA states that searches following established protocols would be conducted prior to any land disturbing activities in potentially suitable habitat and that land disturbance would not occur in areas where tresses are found, thereby avoiding direct impacts. Day use activities, such as picnicking, typically do not occur in wetlands so the potential for impacts is remote at best. Herbicide application is done on an as-needed basis by hand so suitable habitat is avoided. Permitted grazing does not occur on Reclamation lands.

F1-6
(cont)

spp. The Draft EA states that no searches for this species have been conducted on BOR lands. If appropriate habitat for SPDI occurs within the RMP, the Service recommends that the BOR conduct SPDI surveys during the blooming season, usually from early August through mid-September, depending upon microsite and climatic conditions. The Draft EA does not consider threats to SPDI under the proposed Alternatives. The effects to SPDI from grazing, hydrology changes, recreation, exotic species, herbicide and pesticide use, as well as, indirect impacts from day use activities such as picnicking, hiking, boating, rafting, and fishing should be considered in this document.

General Comments

F1-7

Grazing is not adequately addressed in the document. The RMP briefly discusses restricting livestock access along a portion of the Ririe Outlet Channel to increase vegetation cover and reduce soil loss. The document should discuss specific grazing locations, the number of acres and seasonal use patterns of current and proposed livestock grazing. The reader lacks information on developed watering sites and information addressing current and proposed livestock access to lake, stream, and channel banks. The document also does not address unique or sensitive areas and their relationship to livestock grazing.

F1-8

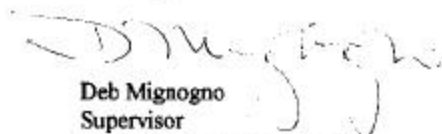
The Draft RMP should address predator control. If livestock operators have requested an ongoing predator control program on BOR lands, we recommend an analysis of predator density and an estimate of predator impacts on livestock, wild ungulates, or upland game bird species. Threatened and endangered species such as bald eagles, gray wolves, and Canada lynx may be injured or killed from traps, snares, or M-44 devices if used by WS employees. We recommend the BOR develop a predator management plan in conjunction with WS and the FWS, if these activities may occur.

F1-9

The above discussion outlines the potential for adverse impacts to listed species from present management practices and the proposed Alternatives: A, B, and C. We recommend that the BOR continue discussions with the Service through the Section 7 process to determine if the proposed RMP alternatives could be modified such that adverse impacts to listed species may be avoided and/or minimized.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the biological assessment and provide comments. If you have any questions, please contact Larry Dickerson at the Snake River Basin Sub-Office in Chubbuck at (208)237-6975.

Sincerely,


Deb Mignogno
Supervisor
Snake River Basin Sub-Office

cc: FWS-ES, Boise

F1-7: Permitted grazing does not occur on Reclamation lands at Tex Creek or Cartier Slough. The outlet channel consists of a ditch and ditch banks and does not provide suitable tress habitat.

F1-8: Please see response to comment F1-4.

F1-9: Reclamation believes that impacts have been avoided and will continue to coordinate with FWS concerning the bald eagle monitoring plan.



Our mission: to educate through the identification, preservation, and interpretation of Idaho's cultural heritage.

Dirk Kempthorne
Governor of Idaho

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Boise, Idaho 83702-7695
Office: (208) 334-3120
Fax: (208) 334-4059

Historic Preservation Office
210 Main Street
Boise, Idaho 83702-7764
Office: (208) 334-3861
Fax: (208) 334-2775

Historic Sites Office
2443 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, Idaho 83712-8254
Office: (208) 334-3844
Fax: (208) 334-3225

Library/Archival and
Genealogical Collection
450 North Fourth Street
Boise, Idaho 83702-6027
Office: (208) 334-3355
Fax: (208) 334-3198

Oral History
450 North Fourth Street
Boise, Idaho 83702-6027
Office: (208) 334-3863
Fax: (208) 334-3198

Stewardship and
Outreach and Development
1109 Main Street, Suite 200
Boise, Idaho 83702-5642
Office: (208) 334-3986
Fax: (208) 334-2774

Publications
450 North Fourth Street
Boise, Idaho 83702-6027
Office: (208) 334-3428
Fax: (208) 334-3198

State Archives/Memorabilia
2203 Old Penitentiary Road
Boise, Idaho 83712-8230
Office: (208) 334-2620
Fax: (208) 334-2636

January 31, 2001

Mr. Jerrold D. Gregg
Bureau of Reclamation
Snake River Area Office
214 Broadway Ave.
Boise, Idaho 83702-7298

RE: Draft Environmental Assessment for the Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan

Dear Mr. Gregg:

A1-1

Thank you for requesting our views on the draft environmental assessment for Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan. We find that Section 3.12 is well prepared and accurately describes the types of cultural resources known to exist within the project area. All managing agencies should recognize, however, that only a small portion of the study area has been surveyed for archaeological and historical properties. Therefore, many additional sites may exist that have not been identified.

A1-2

With regard to the alternatives, we feel that Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, will provide the best long term protection for historic properties. We also support the Best Management Practices and draft Goals and Objectives that relate to cultural resources. To achieve these goals, we strongly urge the Bureau of Reclamation to develop a cultural resource management plan, in coordination with other involved federal and state agencies, and initiate Section 110 efforts to identify and evaluate historic properties within the study area. We also advocate early integration of Section 106 Review during the planning stages for any proposed development. Finally, we recommend incorporating information on early EuroAmerican and Native American use of the area, as appropriate, in interpretive displays planned for several of the recreational sites.

A1-3

We appreciate your cooperation. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 208-334-3847.

Sincerely,

Susan Pengilly Neitzel
Susan Pengilly Neitzel
Deputy SHPO and
Compliance Coordinator

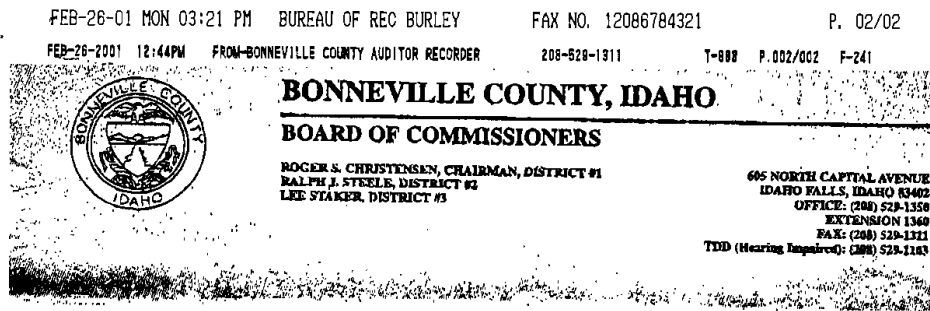
cc: Ray Leicht, Bureau of Reclamation



The Idaho State Historical Society is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

A1—Susan Pengilly Neitzel, Idaho State Historical Society, Boise, Idaho

- A1-1:** As stated in Section 5.2.4 of the Final EA, BMPs will be used to avoid impacts to cultural resource sites.
- A1-2:** A cultural resource management plan will be developed. Please see response to T1-6, letter from Shoshone-Paiute Tribes.
- A1-3:** Such information will be included on interpretive displays and kiosks, as appropriate, when these displays are developed in accordance with other facilities improvements.



February 26, 2001

Comments in Regard to the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for the Ririe/Tex
Creek Resource Management Plan

- A2-1 I wish to reemphasize my statements in regard to the Blacktail area. This area should not be reduced in size, and I believe that we should continue to expand this area as the Bureau of Reclamation originally had planned with the addition of a campground and renovation of the boat ramps and parking area.
- A2-2 I also feel that the addition of a heritage center would address some of the concerns the tribes might have. This center could address the cultural issues and history of the tribes in the Willow Creek Drainage area.

Sincerely,


Lee Staker, Commissioner
Bonneville County Board of Commissioners
Ad Hoc Work Group Member

Is ad hoc work gpy dea staker.doc

**A2—Lee Staker, Bonneville County Board of
Commissioners, Idaho Falls, Idaho**

- A2-1: The size of the active recreation area at Blacktail has not been changed. An area in which future additional development may occur is shown on Map 2-5. The future additional development will be based on the results of a carrying capacity/demand study to determine recreation demand and how/if this can be met without damaging natural and cultural resources.
- A2-2: Please see response to comment A1-3, letter from Susan Pengilly Neitzel, Idaho State Historical Society.

From: <IUSR_IBR1PNRW@ibr1pnw.pn.usbr.gov>
To: <Public_Comment@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: Fri, Feb 9, 2001 10:14 AM
Subject: Ririe Public Comment Form

.....
T1: Christiansen
T2: David
T3: City of Idaho Falls Parks and Recreation Division
T4: PO Box 50220
T5: Idaho Falls
T6: Idaho
T7: 83405
T8: 208-529-1482
B1: Mail Comments

S1:

- A3-1** EA - Creekside Park - A suggestion regarding alternative B regarding Creekside Park. During the period of time that Creekside Park is accessible for recreational purposes the area has had a past history with a abundance of deer flies making the day use a misserable experience for the recreationalist. If this area is to be reopened than measures to insure a more pleasurable experience may need to be looked at. Also in the past this area has experienced extreme vandalism. More patrolling and security of the area might be needed.
- A3-2**

A3—David Christiansen, City of Idaho Falls Parks and Recreation Division, Idaho Falls, Idaho

- A3-1:** Insect control would not be undertaken as part of the operation of Creekside Park.
- A3-2:** Vandalism concerns at Creekside Park will be addressed through law enforcement agreements with Bonneville County.

January 30, 2001

To: Steve Schmidt

From: Kim Ragotzkie 

Subject: Cartier Slough / Ririe Reservoir RMP Draft E.A. comments

I have the following comments, corrections, and clarifications regarding the Draft EA prepared by U.S. BOR. I only reviewed the portions pertaining to Cartier Slough WMA.

Overall comments:

- A4-1 • I am concerned that groomed ski trails are being considered in the two action alternatives. Currently, Cartier receives a moderate amount of winter use by walkers, snowshoers, and XC-skiers. It also used lightly by trappers and rabbit hunters. Most visitors use the administrative two-track through the WMA as a trail, which works very well. I am concerned a groomed trail might encourage additional human activity to the point wildlife is disturbed and displaced on a daily basis. Cartier provides a small but important wintering area for a number of moose, deer, bald eagles, and increasingly trumpeter swans. I do not think Cartier is an appropriate place for a groomed ski trail.
- A4-2 • Development of a 'nature' trail south of Beaver Dick Park. This always sounds like a good idea in late summer, but we need to remember most of this area is underwater 1-2 months each spring, with strong currents scouring any exposed soil. It will be a challenge to develop a 'flood-resistant' trail, and will require considerable annual maintenance to clear debris. But more importantly, it should be noted that most of the land in this particular area is actually BLM land, not BOR. The small parking area at the Beaver Dick entrance to Cartier is (I believe) on county land, and was developed by the county.

Specific comments:

- A4-3 • p.3-14: Soils – there should be some mention of the effects of the Teton flood on the soils at Cartier, as a tremendous amount of sediment was deposited in this area when the floodwaters slowed.
- A4-4 • p.3-20: Noxious Weeds: include plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*) and diffuse knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) in the list of noxious weeds. Correct the latin spelling for purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*).
- A4-5 • p.3-21: Improved or Restricted Access section: add a statement such as: "Trail improvements and resultant increased visitor use would result in greater disturbance and/or displacement of wildlife during winter and summer."
- A4-6 • p.3-32: Rare Species: Include white-faced ibis, they are seasonal residents at Cartier. add: "Trumpeter swans are present yearlong and up to 75 winter on the Henrys Fork Snake River along Cartier Slough."
- A4-7 • p.3-37: 4th paragraph: I do not agree that actions proposed for Cartier (trail developments) would have 'very minor' adverse impacts. Maybe the term 'some' or 'moderate' would be more accurate.
- A4-8 • p.3-39: Wildlife, 3rd paragraph: suggested rewording: "A bald eagle nest is located ¼ mile south of Cartier Slough on BLM land, and bald eagles are common in the areas all year. The Cartier Slough pair fledged one young in 1998 (Beals and Melquist 1998), and the nest was still active in 2000. The abundant fish"
- A4-9 • p.3-40: 3rd paragraph: Teton Valley is actually 35 miles northeast of Tex Creek.

A4—Kim Ragotzkie, Idaho Department of Fish and Game,
Idaho Falls, Idaho

- A4-1: The groomed ski trail proposed at Cartier Slough has been deleted from the Preferred Alternative.
- A4-2: Addition of interpretive signs would likely occur along the existing trail and would only be done in cooperation with Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG).
- A4-3: This comment has been incorporated in Section 3.3.1 of the Final EA.
- A4-4: Diffuse knapweed and plumeless thistle have been added, and the scientific name for purple loosestrife was corrected in Section 3.4.1 under the heading *Noxious Weeds*.
- A4-5: The text has been changed to reflect your concern in section 3.4.2, under the heading *Improved Facilities and Miscellaneous*.
- A4-6: Your comments have been incorporated in Section 3.5.1, within the *Cartier Slough WMA* section, under the heading for *Rare Species*.
- A4-7: The text has been changed to reflect your concern in section 3.4.2, under the heading *Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis*.
- A4-8: The text was corrected according to your suggestion in Section 3.6.1, under the heading *Wildlife*.
- A4-9: The text was corrected according to your suggestion in Section 3.6.1, under the heading *Wildlife*.

- A4-10 • p.3-41: Wildlife, 1st paragraph: add: "The bald eagle nest near Cartier Slough is on BLM land and is subject to the Feb 1-July 31 public lands closure to all unauthorized entry to protect nesting bald eagles."
- A4-11 • p.3-53: Cartier Slough WMA: delete the 3rd sentence '...low-lying swampy...' Reword the next sentence: "The primary recreational activities include walking, wildlife viewing, hunting (waterfowl, pheasants, deer, moose, and small game), fishing, trapping, snowshoeing, and XC-skiing. Cartier Slough is also used by Rexburg school and scout groups, and by Ricks College as an outdoor classroom." reword the last couple sentences: "This park provides a campground, picnic shelters, restrooms, boat ramp, and an accessible fishing pier. The primary walk-in access to Cartier Slough is through Beaver Dick Park, however visitors also walk in from the access road along the north boundary of Cartier Slough."
- A4-12 • p.3-68: last paragraph: 1st sentence OK, replace the 2nd and 3rd sentences with: "Secondary visitor access is from the primitive road which more or less follows the northern boundary of Cartier Slough. This road also accesses the primitive boat ramp in one of the slough channels, and ultimately leads to the water control structure at the west end of Cartier Slough. There is an unimproved two-track running through much of Cartier Slough which is restricted to administrative motorized use only. Most visitors use this two-track as a trail for walking, horseback riding, or XC-skiing. This two-track is not accessible during high water periods." The last two sentences are OK.

Kim Ragotzkie
Wildlife Mitigation Specialist, Cartier Slough
Idaho Department of Fish & Game
1515 Lincoln Road
Idaho Falls, ID 83401

A4-10: The suggested sentence has been added in Section 3.6.2, under the heading *Alternative B—Preferred Alternative: Recreation Development Compatible with Increased Natural Resource Protection Emphasis*.

A4-11: The text has been re-written to reflect your comment in Section 3.8.1 under the heading *Ririe and Teton Mitigation Lands—Cartier Slough WMA*.

A4-12: The text has been re-written to reflect your comment.

From: <IUSR_IBR1PNRW@ibr1pnrw.pn.usbr.gov>
To: <Public_Comment@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: Wed, Feb 14, 2001 11:15 AM
Subject: Ririe Public Comment Form

T1: Casperson
T2: Karl
T3: Bonneville County Sheriff
T4: 605 N Capital
T5: Idaho Falls
T6: Idaho
T7: 83402
T8: 208-529-1310
B1: Mail Comments

S1:

I am the coordinator of the Bonneville County Sheriffs Office Aquatic Rescue Team. The following is my feelings regarding the use of Ririe Reservoir. The dive rescue team uses the reservoir for training both from shore and from the water. There are ten members and four alternates. We use the area at the dam because of the availability of parking and access to the water. The rock bottom allows for better visibility when repeating exercises with several divers. We use this area for safety and have not had any conflict with anyone else. This is also where a lot of other activities occur and we feel by being familiar with the area we can do our job better if a problem occurs.

The idea of a dive park would be a great advantage for us. The park could be used for training in boat accident, underwater crime scene investigations, search and recovery and well as other scuba related training. Again, safety is a big issue and a area set aside for scuba is important. This dive park would be a great benefit for us but we need to be able to use the whole area to conduct a wide range of training.

A5—Karl Casperson, Bonneville County Sheriff, Idaho Falls, Idaho

A5-1: A scuba park will be allowed in the RMP. However, the location has not been determined and will be based on safety considerations. The park would not likely be located near the dam. Other uses will not be restricted and divers would continue to have access to the entire reservoir. Reclamation will work with local dive interests and Reclamation O&M, dive, and safety staff to determine an appropriate location.

A5-1

Carolyn Burpee Stone - RMPAHWG

Chiles
Page 1

From: "Roger H. Tall, M.D." <rtall@qwest.net>
To: <cstone@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: 2/22/01 10:01AM
Subject: RMPAHWG

Dear Carol,

So sorry to have missed last night's meeting. Conflicts with patients with obstructed ureters and trips to Phoenix mad me unreliable once again. My attendance failures have not been due to apathy or lack of interest, just conflicting obligations.

Here is a brief summary of what I had intended to contribute:

O1-1

Our 10 year plan will fall short if we do not form a solid basis for the 20 to 30 year plan. This resource is finite with an expanding number of recreation users. Conflicts among users are already destroying the recreation experience to the point that the Blacktail area is being avoided. The motorized user group contributes the largest financially to the recreation area through stickers, taxes, day fees. This group also contributes the largest number of recreation area users. This group whose recreation user numbers are greater than all the other recreation user groups combined was represented by one AHWG member. The motorized users have also been poorly represented due to my being absent secondary to intense and chaotic conflicts of interest. Despite the poor motorized user representation, the RMP seems to reflect the general concerns of those seeking to preserve the total quality of the recreation area.

O1-2

The interests and concerns of the native Americans, government agencies, farmers, ranchers, hunters, hikers and conservationists have been carefully considered in painful detail. Conflicting perspectives have been noted. More than adequate opportunity for public input has been provided. The problem of an expanding number of recreation user numbers within a finite resource remains unanswered. From my perspective, the increasing number of users will eventually crush the recreation experience. Although no agency wants the political fallout of quotas or high day fees, this may ultimately be the solution. I realize that BLM cannot mandate how Bonneville County manages the recreation area.

You have been fair and thorough. Thank you for the opportunity for input and for allowing my intermittent participation.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Tall, M.D.

208-529-0633 office
208-529-0634 home

O1—Dr. Roger Tall, Bonneville County Waterways Committee, Idaho Falls, Idaho

O1-1: The RMP process is managed for a 10-year planning horizon. The Final EA contains projections for recreation increases in Section 3.8, *Recreation*. Planned recreation carrying capacity and demand studies will determine the need for additional facilities during the next 10 years and how/if this can be met without damaging existing natural and cultural resources.

O1-2: The planned recreation carrying capacity and demand study will determine how and if facilities will be expanded and try to assure an appropriate number of users without damaging existing natural and cultural resources.

cfiler✓

From: "Gary E. McConnell" <gem@ieee.org>
To: 'Carolyn Burpee Stone' <CSTONE@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: 2/12/01 8:02AM
Subject: Comments on Ririe RMP Draft EA

Comments on the Ririe RMP Draft EA, provided by:
 Gary E. McConnell
 PO Box 3128
 Idaho Falls, ID 83403-3128
 (208) 526-1778 (W), (208) 523-3508 (H)

The 15 comments below are on behalf of the AquaNutz dive club of Idaho Falls.

Our comments fall into four broad groups: continued use, dive park creation, role of the Club, and comments on specific sections of the EA.

CONTINUED USE:

O2-1 Comment #1. We would like to make sure the RMP does not have negative impact on our continued use of the reservoir for diving.
 Over the years we've found that the dam area is the best place for diving because:

- a. Access by car is convenient,
- b. Sufficient parking is available, and
- c. Access to the water is good.
- d. Underwater, the bottom is rock (most other sites have a mud bottom), and
- e. A large area is available at reasonable depths (most other sites drop off quickly).
- f. Boaters generally don't use the area, so there is little conflict.
- g. Only a few people fish from the dam, and we get along well with them.

O2-2 We have had good relations with the fishermen in the area and we believe that the dam can provide both accessible diving and fishing without conflict. It is important that current proposals of the RMP such as the handicap-accessible fishing dock at the dam do not impact existing SCUBA diving activities at the dam.

DIVE PARK CREATION

Comment #2. We believe that submerging objects in the reservoir will improve the SCUBA diving experience and improve fish habitat by providing an artificial reef environment.

O2-3 Comment #3. We request reconsideration of placing the dive park near the dam. We believe careful placement can eliminate current BOR concerns. The best place for a dive park is at the dam, for the same reasons that we dive there: access, good underwater characteristics, and lack of conflict with other reservoir users.

The proposed location south of the Juniper boat ramp falls short of the dam location due to the mud bottom, difficult access, and potential conflict with boating users at the already-crowded boat ramp area. We are quite

O2—Gary E. McConnell, AquaNutz Dive Club, Idaho Falls, Idaho

O2-1: Scuba diving is included as an acceptable use in the RMP and is not restricted.

O2-2: Scuba diving is not restricted at the dam. However, for safety reasons, a future scuba park will not likely be located at the dam. Please see response to comment A5-1, letter from Karl Casperson, Bonneville County Sheriff, Idaho Falls, Idaho.

O2-3: Because of safety and liability concerns, the proposed scuba dive park will not likely be located at the dam. However, scuba diving is not restricted at the dam.

O2-3 (cont) concerned about access and congestion. However, the Juniper location is probably the best among the less attractive places.

O2-4 **ROLE OF THE DIVE CLUB IN IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN**
 Comment #4. The dive club would like to set up a cooperative arrangement with BOR, State, and County to implement diving-related aspects of the RMP. We have a large group of volunteers eager to maintain and improve diving at the reservoir. The Club can serve as the focal point for organizing and carrying out volunteer activities.

COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC SECTIONS OF THE DRAFT EA

Comment #5. Chapter 2, Table 2.2-1, Juniper Park and Vicinity section, Alternative B (preferred), Dam area: Vehicular access across dam during daylight hours
 [It is important to retain existing vehicular access to the dam.]

Comment #6. Chapter 2, Table 2.2-1, Juniper Park and Vicinity section, Alternative B (preferred), Dam area: Continued ad hoc pedestrian access to reservoir from dam.
 [It is important to retain existing access to the reservoir from the dam.]

O2-5 Comment #7. Chapter 2, Table 2.2-1, Juniper Park and Vicinity section, Alternative B (preferred), Dam area: Allow for the development of fishing pier off dam face into reservoir that is accessible as per UFAS.
 [The pier should not impact existing scuba diving activities conducted at the dam.]

O2-6 Comment #8. Chapter 2, Table 2.2-1, Juniper Park and Vicinity section, Alternative B (preferred), Dam area: Organize parking and access to accommodate use of pier.
 [Parking and access should also accommodate existing diving use.]

O2-7 Comment #9. Chapter 2, Table 2.2-1, Juniper Park and Vicinity section, Alternative B (preferred), Juniper Boat Launch and Vicinity: Explore use of and provision for allowing materials to be submerged in reservoir south of the boat launch ramp for scuba divers.
 [We request that the BOR reconsider the location. As described in our comments #1 and #3, the dam is a much better site. We have concerns with accessibility, parking, and conflict with boaters at the already-crowded Juniper boat launch area.]

O2-8 Comment #10: Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2, Alternative B (preferred), page 2-37, improved or restricted access: Juniper Park and Vicinity: At Juniper Park near the dam area, Alternative B would allow for the development of an accessible fishing pier off the dam face into the reservoir. Parking and access would be organized to accommodate use of the pier, and interpretive displays and regulatory signage would be provided.
 [We suggest adding clarification that existing diving use would not be impacted.]

O2-4: We appreciate your past efforts and will continue to coordinate development of a scuba dive park with your group.

O2-5: Reclamation does not believe that the pier will adversely impact scuba diving activities.

O2-6: Improvements at the pier would also accommodate scuba diving activities; however, no special provisions for diver parking are included.

O2-7: The preferred site for a scuba dive park has not been identified. Please see response to comment O2-3.

O2-8: Please see response to comment O2-6.

- O2-9** Comment #11: Section 2.3.2, pages 2-38 and 2-39: improved facilities and miscellaneous:
Juniper Park and Vicinity: ... In the vicinity of the Juniper Boat Launch, overflow parking uphill of the current parking area would be developed. Reclamation would analyze provisions for allowing materials to be submerged in the reservoir near the overflow parking area for scuba divers.
[The proposed overflow parking area is at the top of the hill. As such, the proposed diving area would not be near the parking area. Access would have to be via the boat launch area. We are concerned with the conflict this would create with boaters. The Juniper boat launch is already quite crowded.]
- O2-10** Comment #12: Appendix A - Draft Goals and Objectives, B. Recreation, Goal B.2: Manage the Ririe Reservoir water surface to accommodate a variety of different user groups and minimize conflicts among users, Objective B.2.4: Accommodate the establishment of a scuba diving park at or near the dam which incorporates appropriate safety, liability, and use conflict avoidance considerations.
[We do not believe there are any special liability considerations for scuba diving. It is no different than boating, water skiing, jet skiing, fishing, or swimming.]
- Comment #13: Appendix A - Draft Goals and Objectives, B. Recreation, Goal B.2: Manage the Ririe Reservoir water surface to accommodate a variety of different user groups and minimize conflicts among users, Objective B.2.4: ... (Note: Consider potential for adding submerged items as part of park development; and consider use of the park for search and rescue training, as well as recreational activities).
[The dive club, in cooperation with Bonneville County Search and Rescue, has used the reservoir in the past for search and recovery training. Submerged items could improve the training.]
- O2-11** Comment #14: Appendix A - Draft Goals and Objectives, C. Management, Coordination, and Implementation, Access, Objective C.1.2: Provide vehicular access to recreation activities at and below the dam, consistent with public safety and operations and maintenance concerns. Potential activities requiring such access: Reservoir fishing at the north side of the dam, particularly proposed ADA compliant facilities; Scuba diving activities in the vicinity of the dam; and Fishing along Willow Creek below the dam.
[First, reservoir fishing is at the south side of the dam. Second, it is important that these activities do not conflict with one another.]
- O2-12** Comment #15: Appendix A - Draft Goals and Objectives, C. Management, Coordination, and Implementation, Other Uses; General Management and Coordination, Goal C.5: Ensure continued coordination and cooperation with involved agencies and the public as needed to implement the RMP and associated IDFG WMA Management Plans, Objective C.5.8: Provide appropriate public information and education regarding RMP goals, objectives, policies and management actions. Potential topics: ... Locations and purposes of needed use restrictions and safety regulations, possibly including: vehicle use closures, reservoir no-wake or non-motorized use zones, specialized reservoir use areas (such as authorized scuba diving and rock climbing

- O2-9:** Reclamation will continue to work with local diving interests in locating the potential dive park, access, and parking based on safety concerns and minimizing conflicts with other users of the reservoir.
- O2-10:** Please see response to comment A5-1, letter from Karl Casperson, Bonneville County Sheriff, Idaho Falls, Idaho.
- O2-11:** Please see response to comment O2-9.
- O2-12:** General scuba diving will not be limited to certain areas.

O2-12
(cont)

areas), etc.
[We would like clarification that diving would not be restricted to specified areas. It is reasonable to limit diving in certain areas, but we believe existing water use regulations address this topic adequately.]

We thank you for your consideration of these comments.
--Gary

cfile

From: <IUSR_IBR1PNRW@ibr1pnrw.pn.usbr.gov>
To: <Public_Comment@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: Mon, Feb 12, 2001 2:44 PM
Subject: Ririe Public Comment Form

T1: Christensen
T2: Keith
T3: Inland Scuba, Inc.
T4: 551 South Capital
T5: Idaho Falls
T6: Idaho
T7: 83402
T8: 208 529-2636
B1: Mail Comments

S1:

- O3-1** As a owner of Inland Scuba, Inc. I would like to submit the following comments. The Ririe Reservoir is used by our club we sponsor which is Inland Scuba Aqua Nutz. We have been pursuing a place on the reservoir that divers could use to dive. Thus, the dive park. A area set aside where scuba diving could be promoted and activities could be done. This area could be used to provide more experiences in advanced skills like navigation, wreck, night and boat diving plus more. A place where objects could be submerged to improve the diving experience. This would improve the fishery in the area by creating a artificial reef. Even in fresh water this could occur. This area would be somewhat protected from the boaters that use the water but not limited to just boat traffic. The area selected should have a water and land (beach) access.
- O3-2** We do not want to be limited to a single area. The reservoir has many other places to dive and be enjoyed by divers. Not one area provides everything however, some areas are better than others. The Aqua Nutz dive club has gone every year and cleaned up the reservoir in the fall. The club promotes the International Coastal Cleanup which is a world wide event. Thus, another reason to not have just one area.
- O3-3** The dive park area will have more functions than just recreational diving. The Aqua Nutz dive club has provided divers for K-9 training for the Bonneville Sheriffs Search and Rescue team. This is known as the Water Workout Weekend. The purpose is to provide training of K-9's used by search teams to locate drowned or deceased victims. This could be from any type of water accident or investigation. The dive park could be used for training of Sheriffs Departments Aquatic Rescue Teams from Eastern Idaho. This would be a perfect place to conduct advanced training for the above mentioned skills as well as Search and Recovery of large items lost in the reservoir. Again, advanced training in boat accident investigations and other underwater crime scene investigations could be completed. The area that is currently been selected is protected and out of the way of boaters. However, it lacks access from shore. Provisions need to be addressed to provide a walkway from the Juniper parking area. A shore area needs to accomodate several people and dive equipment. Sometime in the future a picnic area could be constructed for full day use activities.
- O3-4** When we look for a area to use we look for a rock bottom that is fairly shallow and is easy to reach by everyone. I wish that the committee also review the use area by the dam. This area has a rock bottom that slopes off rather than falls off. There is sufficient parking and access to the water. The boaters rarely come near the shore but use the big area provided behind the dam to turn around. There are a few people who fish on the dam but we haven't had any conflicts with them. The underwater dive park would improve fishing in the area.
- O3-5** The most important note is that we don't want to limited to a single use area. We boat and dive to many places on the reservoir and wish to continue.

O3—Keith Christensen, Inland Scuba, Inc., Idaho Falls, Idaho

- O3-1:** Please see response to comment A5-1, letter from Karl Casperson, Bonneville County Sheriff, Idaho Falls, Idaho.
- O3-2:** The RMP does not restrict diving access to certain portions of Ririe Reservoir.
- O3-3:** The location of the potential dive park has not been determined. However, your concerns with the steepness of slopes for access will be taken into consideration when selecting potential sites.
- O3-4:** The area by the dam was considered for the scuba dive park, but eliminated because of safety and liability concerns.
- O3-5:** General scuba diving will not be limited to one area.

From: <IUSR_IBR1PNRW@ibr1pnrw.pn.usbr.gov>
To: <Public_Comment@pn.usbr.gov>
Date: Thu, Feb 8, 2001 3:40 PM
Subject: Ririe Public Comment Form

 T1: Shearer
 T2: Pam
 T3:
 T4: 1015 Pescadero Place
 T5: Idaho Falls
 T6: ID
 T7: 83404
 T8: 208-523-7317
 B1: Mail Comments

S1:

February 8, 2001

I1—Jeff and Pam Shearer, Idaho Falls, Idaho

- I1-1:** Facilities improvements to accommodate additional usage are described throughout the Final EA, particularly in Section 3.8.
- I1-2:** Law enforcement is currently provided by Bonneville county through an agreement with Reclamation. The agreement is reviewed annually to ensure adequate enforcement efforts are provided.
- I1-3:** According to the RMP, existing facilities will be improved before new facilities are built.

I1-1

Our first and foremost important thoughts on these issues, whether or not this is concerning safety, are the safety issues on over crowding and over usage that already exist at Ririe Reservoir. Yes we want to make sure that this area remains beautiful and that we do not completely ruin the environment, but we also want it to be a safe place to take our families and friends to enjoy this place that we are lucky to have.

We don't want to make so many improvements so that it harms the environment, but we do need some improvements as to accommodate the people and thus make it a safe place to go. IMPROVEMENTS THAT INCREASE SAFETY DO NOT NECESSARILY INCREASE USAGE, BUT INHANCE EVERYONES EXPERIENCE!!

Some improvements that would not add to usage but enhance experience would be:

1 – Better and safer loading ramps with signs to make people aware of “No Wake Zones” and no swimming around loading ramps and docks.

2 – Better signs showing the “No Wake Zones”

3 – New and repaired docks for day use and mooring. The docks are aging every year.

Some docks need maintenance and some just need replaced. We keep our boat at Blacktail moorage and some of these docks are full of nails, slivers and are in need of replacement for safety reasons and to insure that our boats will not be damaged.

I1-2

4 - More law enforcement (This would only require an occasional ticket issued to violators to that everyone would realize the importance of the safety laws.) How many recreation areas that attract this many people go without law enforcement? We hardly ever see an officer and if we do they mostly sit in their cars and watch from above. This does not encourage people to be lawful because they haven't experienced much enforcement.

No matter how much improvement or non – improvement you have more and more people are still going to purchase recreational vehicles and come up to Ririe Recreation area, thus we need to accommodate this increase and make the necessary improvements to enhance safety and enjoyment.

I1-3

We would like to see improvements to the already existing facilities before any new facilities. As we said before improving existing facilities or adding for safety does not necessarily increase usage, there has to be a balance, the environment yes – but also safety.

We truly enjoy our time at the lake and know what we would be missing if we could not continue to go there. We want to go there enjoy the scenery the animals and the experience, hopefully we can do it in a safe and environmentally aware way. We would also be willing to donate time to help with safety issues and improvements. Anything that we can do let us know.

Thank You,
Pam & Jeff Shearer
1015 Pescadero Place
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83404

17352
LND-800-MIN
OFFICIAL FILE COPY
3067 Gustafson Circle
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
January 25, 2001
3902 CBS 2/08/01

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
PN Regional Office PN-3902
Attn: Carolyn Burpee Stone
1150 North Curtis Rd, Suite 100
Boise, ID 83706-1234

Dear sirs:

I will probably be gone during the Public Workshop, so am mailing my comments on the Ririe Reservoir RMP/Draft EA.

My interests in the subject RMP are those of a recreationist: principally sailing, kayaking and swimming in the reservoir.

I2-1 I agree in general with the Draft EA and the selection of Alternative B as the preferred option. In regards to swimming in the reservoir, I have usually found the West side to be preferable since there one is sheltered from the prevailing winds. However, I can understand the need to have swimming areas near the campground and boat docks.

I2-2 In my view, one of the biggest problems in terms of safety, environmental impact, and conflicts with other recreation users, will be "personal watercraft" (jet skis). At Island Park Reservoir, I have seen them speed right through squadrons of waterfowl sitting on the water. I have seen them spray water onto people sitting on docks (not anyone known to the skiers). Here in Idaho Falls they often will drive endlessly in circles offshore so that fishermen are afraid to cast their lines and swimmers are afraid to go in the water. Of course, they also make a lot of noise when doing this, which many people find annoying. I don't suppose it will be possible to keep them off the reservoir. But perhaps it would be possible to have large no-wake zones around swimming, fishing and picnic areas.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Yours truly,

Harry Reilly

Harry Reilly

I2—Harry Reilly, Idaho Falls, Idaho

I2-1: The swimming area was chosen for safety and convenient location near existing facilities.

I2-2: The no-wake zones around/in water structures (docks, morrage facilities, etc.) or people in the water (swimmers, water skiers, etc.) is 100 feet, which is standard for the State of Idaho boating regulations.

LND-8.00-
MIN

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan Draft Environmental Assessment

1-1105

18174

Ririe RMP Reservoir Public Meeting
January 30, 2001 - Idaho Falls

OFFICIAL FILE COPY
CBS 2/16/01

Name (required) Harold Winther
Address (required) Rox 396 Iona Id 83427

Please write your comments below:

The Ririe Reservoir is a small reservoir with a high population of people in the surrounding area and the population is increasing at a rapid pace. Therefore, the more we make it accessible to people, the more congested it will become. At some point we have to realize that enough is enough.

A hiking trail along the lake would be enjoyed by many but unless it will be closed during the winter months and the closure is enforced, it will have to much of an impact on wildlife which must be our number one priority in this area.

We must make rules that can and will be enforced.

Power is another thing that should not be put into Blacktail. It would encourage to much development thereby increasing congestion and decreasing habitat.

Before the CRP program started the Willow creek drainage run straight mud into the Reservoir every spring and everytime it rained. It was just a matter of years that the reservoir would have filled up with silt. As these lands come out of CRP this problem will again become

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I3—Harold Winther, Idaho Falls, Idaho

- I3-1:** Reclamation will post the trail advising against winter use for wildlife protection. However, Reclamation does not have the authority to enforce the closure.
- I3-2:** Easements for power lines to Blacktail will not be allowed on Reclamation lands. Instead, on-site (solar or generator) power at Blacktail is provided to meet facility needs.

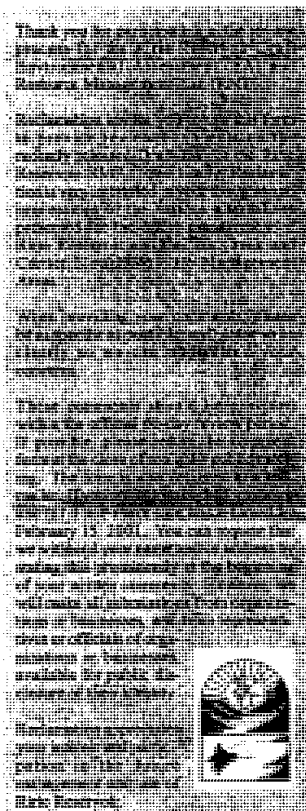
Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan Draft Environmental Assessment

Ririe RMP Reservoir Public Meeting
January 30, 2001 - Idaho Falls

Name (required) _____

Address (required) _____

Please write your comments below:



evident.

If we wait for the problem of erosion and sediment to increase before implementing a plan it will be to late. It is a lot easier to stop it before it starts. If we wait for the problem to start we will be to late.

We either need to keep the CRP program going to protect our environment and wildlife or find another alternative before it is to late

This is another reason the Pipe creek road should be closed. Wildlife should be given top priority. We are taking away to much habitat and not replacing it which forces them to areas where they cause problems

I3-3

I3-4

I3-3: The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is administered through the USDA. Reclamation agrees that CRP is an important component of maintaining water quality at Ririe Reservoir, but can only advise USDA regarding the benefits of the program for controlling erosion and sediment.

I3-4: The Pipe Creek Road would be closed during the winter if approved by Bonneville County.

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Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan Draft Environmental Assessment

Ririe RMP Reservoir Public Meeting
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Name (required) SHANE OLSON
Address (required) 1734 PEGGY'S LANE
IDAHO FALLS, ID. 83402

Please write your comments below:

MY CONCERN IS WITH THE CLOSURE
OF THE WILLOW CREEK ARM.
ESPECIALLY IF THE CAMPING,
DAY USE AND MOORAGE IS IMPROVED
AT EITHER END OF THE
RESEVOIR, THAT WOULD ADD
BOATS AND TAKE AWAY ALOT
OF WATER, THAT PORTION OF
THE RESEVOIR HAS SMOOTH
WATER AND IS VERY NEAR
THE LAUNCH RAMP. THE RAMP AREA
GETS CONGESTED AND CAN BE
UNSAFE. WITHOUT THE WILLOWCREEK
ARM THE BOAT TRAFFIC WOULD
GET WORSE ON THE OTHER AREAS.

MANY EAGLES CO-EXIST VERY
WELL IN AREAS WITH MUCH
HIGHER USE. THEY CAN BE OCCUPIED.

ALSO, I THINK THAT ACTION SHOULD
BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY IN REGARDS TO
RE-SEEDING THE BURNED AREAS.
IF IT TAKES BEYOND THIS UPCOMING
SUMMER, 2001, TO FIX THAT, I WOULD
QUESTION THAT IT MIGHT BE TOO
LITTLE TO LATE. THE EROSION
NOW IS INCREDIBLE.

THANK YOU FOR THE
MEETING

MS-8 1-30-01

Visit Reclamation and the
Ririe Reservoir RMP on
the World Wide Web

www.pn.usbr.gov

I4—Shane Olson, Idaho Falls, Idaho

- I4-1:** The need for closing part or all of the Willow Creek Arm during the spring and early summer would be evaluated based on the results of planned monitoring. Appropriate protection measures will be taken if threats to bald eagle nesting exist, in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. For more information, please see response to comments F1-1 and F1-2 in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comment letter.
- I4-2:** Bald eagle behavioral response to human activity varies in each situation. Therefore, the planned monitoring program will be implemented. Please see response to comments F1-1 and F1-2 in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comment letter.
- I4-3:** The newly burned areas will be seeded by winter 2001. A fire management plan, including future fire restoration plans, will be developed for the study area as part of the RMP implementation.

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan Draft Environmental Assessment

Ririe RMP Reservoir Public Meeting
January 30, 2001 - Idaho Falls

Name (required) TOM ROWLEY
Address (required) 1166 HOJAVE IF 83404

Please write your comments below:

Thank you for participating in the review process for the Ririe Reservoir Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) and Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Reclamation invites you to use this form to provide review comments on the recently released Draft DEA for the Ririe Reservoir RMP. Specifically, Reclamation is very interested in your thoughts and impressions of the various alternatives presented for the future management of Ririe Reservoir and the Lost Creek and Cartier Slough Wildlife Management Areas.

When providing your comments, please be as specific as possible, and please write clearly so we can understand your concerns.

These comments should be provided within the official 60-day review period. If possible, please return this form to the project manager.

Reclamation will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure of their identity. Reclamation appreciates your interest and participation in the future management and use of Ririe Reservoir.



although the plan has merit I believe it has one shortfall - SAFETY - Blacktail boat ramp and Juniper boat ramp are in dire need of updating & they will be a danger to anyone using them. Juniper is especially dangerous especially for larger craft. The concrete ramp is unusable for any boat larger than 21'. The concrete tubes are far enough apart one could get a foot lodged between and serious injury could result. It is so steep it makes handicaps access nearly impossible.

Blacktail is by far the more used ramp. Boaters are increasing in numbers and boats themselves have increased dramatically since the construction of that ramp. Boats have not only increased in number but also in size. It is a real nightmare with the water it becomes a navigational nightmare. It is certainly impossible for a new boater. People have had yards, lost, and fingers misplaced trying to have their craft. Every year the injury count increases. Just look at quality recreation. Suggestion: widen the ramps Blacktail & Juniper & move them with a dock separating each ramp with a short term dock to the north and south.

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as well as promote safety. Juniper - Re Construct Sweden update especially if added impact equals from additional Camp sites. You can improve land facilities and avoid water needs.

15—Tom Rowley, Idaho Falls, Idaho

- 15-1: Reclamation does not plan to mandate a boat size limitation in the RMP. However, the RMP does allow for expanding the dock facilities based on demonstrated demand.
- 15-2: If Reclamation finds that the dock needs to be expanded to meet use demand, we will consider your suggestions.
- 15-3: The RMP does provide for improvement of water facilities at Juniper Park, including an overnight moorage facility for campground users. As with Blacktail, the docks would be improved based on demonstrated demand and available cost-share funding with non-federal managing partners.

Additional Comments:

Research "must" be conducted on
a viable breakwater system for the
marina at Blacktail. Please contact me for
a floating breakwall which is safe, easy
and cost effective.

I5-4

I5-4: A breakwater is not being considered for Blacktail
as a part of this RMP.

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan Draft Environmental Assessment

FAX # 208 328 5305

Ririe RMP Reservoir Public Meeting
January 30, 2001 - Idaho Falls

Name (required) LYNN SHEARER
Address (required) 623 CEDAR RIDGE DR. 2F 2D
83404

Please write your comments below:

Thank you for participating in the review process for the Ririe Reservoir Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Reclamation invites you to use this form to provide review comments on the recently released Draft EA for the Ririe Reservoir RMP. Specifically, Reclamation is very interested in your thoughts and impressions of the various alternatives presented for the future management of Ririe Reservoir and the Tex Creek and Cartier Slough Wildlife Management Areas.

When providing your comments, please be as specific as possible, and please write clearly so we can understand your concerns.

These comments should be provided within the official 60-day review period. If possible, please return the comment form at the close of tonight's public meeting. The form is also designed as a self-mailer. If you prefer to take the form home and fill it out, make sure it is returned by February 15, 2001. You can request that we withhold your name and/or address by stating this prominently at the beginning of your written comments. However, we will make all submissions from organizations or businesses, and from representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, available for public disclosure of their identity.

Reclamation appreciates your interest and participation in the future management and use of Ririe Reservoir.



Possible monitoring at Blacktail with a limit of vehicles up to 1000 vehicles and replaced down power and sign counters. This would eliminate parking along side road.

Possible mooring area south of swimming area to protect from wind mooring boaters would be out of way. I don't know if water depth is enough for low level conditions.

Could have to get no wake zone around mooring area. Ventilation would probably be available to do this.

Clean up boat ramp access when it hot and windy. ASB

become a bottle neck w/ fixed irrigation. That won't take time / access route only.

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I6—Lynn Shearer, Idaho Falls, Idaho

- I6-1: At Blacktail, the boat launch and associated parking may be reconfigured to better manage traffic flow and parking.
- I6-2: A new mooring area is not proposed for Blacktail at this time pending the results of the demand and capacity study.
- I6-3: A levee is not in the RMP for Blacktail.
- I6-4: Please see response to comment I6-1.

Additional Comments:

like idea of other types
of access being a day later also.
Blacktail could also use a solar
powered loading ramp light to
do during a new moon.

I6-5

- I6-5:** A loading ramp light may be considered and the suggestion passed on to Bonneville County as Reclamation's managing partner.

Appendix F

Ririe Project Authorization Documents

Ririe Reservoir Resource Management Plan: Environmental Assessment