



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Idaho State Office

3380 Americana Terrace

Boise, Idaho 83706

IN REPLY  
REFER TO:

1788 (912)

August 7, 1985

Mr. Jay Gore  
The Wildlife Society, Inc.  
Idaho Chapter  
10658 Winterhawk  
Boise, Idaho 83709 .

Dear Jay:

We are pleased to announce that the Idaho BLM will host the next meeting of our National Public Lands Advisory Council, to be held August 22-24, 1985, in Boise.

The Council has existed in various forms since 1940 and consists of 21 members who provide advice and counsel to the Secretary of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management on public land management issues.

The opening session on Thursday will consist of a visit to the Boise Interagency Fire Center and a helicopter tour of southern Idaho. Tour highlights include wildfire rehabilitation efforts, BLM wilderness study areas, agricultural development of desert lands, and rangeland management. Due to flying restrictions and limited seating capacity, the helicopter tour has been limited to Council and immediate staff members.

We would like to invite you to the Friday and Saturday sessions, to be held in the Rainier Ballroom of the Owyhee Plaza, 1109 Main Street, in Boise. Both sessions begin at 8:00 a.m. A detailed agenda is enclosed. You may elect to attend all or portions of the meeting.

On Friday afternoon, a public comment period will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. If you wish to address the Council, we encourage you to submit a written copy of your remarks at the meeting. Comments should be directed to the national issues on the agenda.

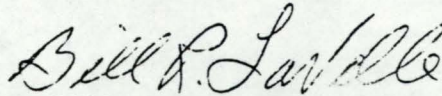
We would also like to invite you to a Western-style steak barbecue Friday evening beginning at 7:00 p.m. in Julia Davis Park at the picnic shelter near the "Fun Spot." Cost is \$7.00 per person payable at the park. We owe a special thanks to the Idaho Cattle Association for

Jerome  
Signe  
Rich

donating the steaks and fresh-picked corn-on-the-cob. This should provide you an excellent opportunity to visit informally with Council members.

If you plan to attend the barbecue or if you should have questions about the Council meeting, please call Kris Long of our Public Affairs Office (208) 334-1770.

Sincerely yours,



Bill R. LaVelle  
Acting State Director

1 Enclosure

Encl. 1 - Agenda for Advisory Council Meeting

AGENDA

Meeting of the  
National Public Lands Advisory Council

August 23 and 24, 1985

Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street  
Boise, Idaho

Friday, August 23

- 8:00 a.m. Call to Order and Announcements  
David Schaenen, Council Chairman  
James Parker, Associate Director, BLM  
Delmar Vail, Idaho State Director, BLM
- 8:15 a.m. Remarks by Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Leona A. Power, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Lands  
and Minerals Management
- 8:30 a.m. BLM/Forest Service Grazing Fee Study Analysis  
Bill Templeton, Rangeland Resources Division Chief, BLM
- 9:30 a.m. Panel Discussion of BLM's Wilderness Program  
  
Moderator: Louise Shadduck, Former Director, Idaho  
Department of Tourism and Industrial Development  
  
Panel Members: Frank Edwards, Assistant Director for Land  
Resources, BLM  
Tom Robinson, The Wilderness Society  
Eugene Davis, Rancher and Chairman of BLM's  
Boise District Grazing Advisory Board
- 10:30 a.m. Meeting of Council Subcommittees  
Renewable Resources Subcommittee  
Energy and Minerals Subcommittee  
Lands Subcommittee  
Administrative/Legislative Subcommittee
- 12:00 noon LUNCH
- 1:00 p.m. Public Statement Period  
This period provides an opportunity for members of the  
public to address the Council regarding national public  
lands issues on the meeting agenda. Speakers are asked to  
submit a copy of their written testimony prior to oral  
delivery so that the Council will be prepared to respond or  
answer questions. Written statements alone may also be  
filed with the Council. Depending on the number of people  
who wish to address the Council, it may be necessary to  
limit the length of oral presentations.

*Send  
over and  
to talk  
to later  
on this  
The Idaho  
Chapter  
could present  
Statement on  
value of  
riparian areas  
Bord. et Prev.  
etc.  
Grazing*

Encl. 1-1

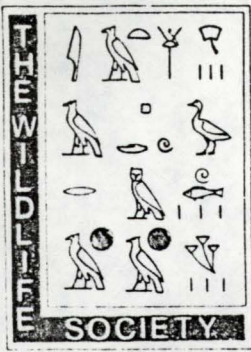
Friday, August 23 (cont'd)

- 2:30 p.m. Council Old and New Business
- a. Report on resolutions adopted at Klamath Falls, Oregon, meeting
  - b. Update on interchange proposal
  - c. Cooperative management agreements (CMAs): riparian management initiatives
  - d. Inventory of Federal land withdrawals: status report
  - e. Discussion of agenda for future Council meetings
  - f. Other
- 3:00 p.m. Meeting of Council Subcommittees
- 5:00 p.m. Recess until Saturday Morning

Saturday, August 24

- 8:00 a.m. Public Land Management in Idaho—the State View —  
Idaho Lieutenant Governor David Leroy
- 8:30 a.m. Meeting of Council Subcommittees
- 10:00 a.m. Report from Subcommittees to Full Council;  
Consideration of Council Resolutions
- 12:00 p.m. ADJOURN

(Supplemental Information: The August 23-24 Council meeting will be preceded on August 22 by a field tour of BLM-managed lands in western Idaho. Because of travel and other logistical arrangements, the field tour will be limited to Council Members and accompanying government representatives.)



IDAHO CHAPTER  
**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
SUITE 611  
7101 WISCONSIN AVE. N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20014

Presented to the National Public Lands Advisory Council, August 23, 1985

Good Afternoon,

The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society is a professional society for wildlife biologists. The Idaho Chapter currently has over 150 members located throughout the state. The Idaho Chapter would like to thank the Bureau of Land Management for the opportunity to express our views on public land management issues to the National Public Lands Advisory Council.

This meeting and subsequent opportunity to comment comes at a critical time, as potential legislative and policy changes affecting the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) can have long term effects on wildlife on public land in the years ahead.

The Public Rangeland Policy Act is currently undergoing revision. Changes are planned in the distribution of grazing fee monies (range betterment funds) for district level management. Currently, 37.5 percent of all grazing fees collected go to the national treasury. Another fifty percent is returned to the district where the fees originated, congressionally intended for various watershed, wildlife, and livestock improvements. In Idaho, the remaining 12.5 percent is returned to the district grazing advisory boards, which is available for additional livestock improvements. The trend across most BLM land has been for a disproportionate amount of the range betterment funds to go to range improvements, which benefit primarily livestock, while little, if any, money has been left for actual onground wildlife habitat improvements.

Under new amendments, the 37.5 percent of the funds previously allocated to the national treasury will now go back to the district. It will be split into two new allocations, including 12.5 percent for range improvements, maintenance, or wildlife, and 25 percent for range improvements, maintenance, or riparian.

With wording of this type, the Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society feels that the new amendments will result in more funds being spent on livestock improvements and subsequent grazing increases while wildlife and riparian habitat improvements will continue to take a backseat.

With that scenario in mind, the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society recommends that as a BLM policy, at least 25 percent of the annual range betterment funds for each BLM district should be allocated directly for wildlife and riparian habitat improvements. This funding would provide a stable base for planning and implementing wildlife and riparian habitat improvement projects on BLM lands. At the same time, it will help the Bureau meet the requirements of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which authorizes that fish and wildlife management on Federal Lands are on an equal footing with other traditional land uses.

The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society cannot stress enough the importance and value of riparian areas on BLM lands across the west. Although they occupy less than one percent of the land surface in Idaho, these lands are some of the most productive habitats for wildlife. They are a critical source of diversity in an otherwise dry environment. Most wildlife species inhabiting rangelands are either directly or indirectly dependent upon these areas.

Because they are located adjacent to water, riparian areas are often heavily used. Historically, many acres of riparian areas on BLM lands in the west have been destroyed by overgrazing with heavy concentrations of livestock. With destruction of riparian areas comes greatly increased erosion and sedimentation and subsequent losses to fish and wildlife.

Along with physical destruction of riparian areas comes economic losses. The American Fisheries Society estimated that in 1983, the cost of fisheries resources lost and opportunities foregone on Forest Service lands as direct result of over-grazing of riparian areas totalled \$112,000,000. In addition, there were unquantified costs of flood damage, water quality deterioration, soil erosion, and other lost recreational values associated with

hunting and viewing wildlife. Although actual values may differ on BLM land, the potential economic losses are drastic and very real.

Conceptually, the Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society supports the BLM's new commitment and direction to manage riparian areas as unique public land resources. The Chapter feels that the allocation of at least 25 percent of the annual range betterment funds for wildlife and riparian habitat improvements is imperative to provide for successful implementation of this program.

The Chapter has a keen interest in the fire occurrence and fire rehabilitation program on BLM lands. The Chapter supports the Bureau's present policy of no prescribed burning in areas with less than 20 percent sagebrush cover. The 20 percent figure was arrived at through years of wildlife and plant research. This amount of cover is essential in sagegrouse nesting and wintering areas. This particular species has suffered extensive losses of suitable habitat in Idaho due to a massive assault and reduction of sagebrush. Other species such as mule deer and antelope are also dependent upon sagebrush for food and cover. The Chapter feels that in many large shrubless areas, now too common in Idaho, the establishment of sagebrush plantings can be an important mitigation tool for past overzealous shrub extermination.

The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society supports the Bureau's efforts to control wild horses on public rangelands to acceptable levels, thereby alleviating additional impacts to native vegetation. The Bureau spends millions of dollars annually in the care of captured and penned wild horses. The Chapter feels that the Bureau should be able to hold penned animals for a specified amount of time. If horses are not claimed during this time period, the Bureau should develop an acceptable procedure for humane disposal of the animals.

The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society has long been interested in the plight of the California bighorn sheep and other wildlife species which have suffered reduced ranges and populations due to direct and indirect conflicts with man. Because of the continuous pressure on public land for development and increased human supported activities, the Idaho Chapter supports the wilderness designation for several key areas on BLM land in Idaho. One example would be the proposed Owyhee Canyonlands Wilderness in southern Idaho. Designation of this area as wilderness would be a positive step towards assuring protection of the native California bighorn sheep, which is sensitive to increased levels of livestock grazing and other human disturbances.

The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society has recently reviewed and commented on the Draft Management Plan for the Snake River

Birds of Prey Area. The Chapter was disappointed in the contents and direction within the draft management plan. Whereas the major portion of the plan deals with recreation goals and plans and managing for other uses of the area, only one page is reserved for ecosystem monitoring, research, and studies.

Public Land Order 5777 clearly states that the purpose of the Birds of Prey Area is to "protect and maintain the ecosystem necessary to support and perpetuate the densest and most diverse populations of eagles, hawks, falcons, owls, and other birds of prey ever recorded."

The Chapter feels that if implemented, the proposed plan may have long-term adverse impacts to wildlife populations, especially raptors in the Birds of Prey Area. The Idaho Chapter would like to point out the national and international importance of the Snake River Birds of Prey Area. The Chapter feels that the welfare of the raptors in the Birds of Prey area must come before any other concern. We hope that all management actions on the Birds of Prey area are consistent with the intent of Public Land order 5777.

This concludes our comments to the National Public Lands Advisory Council. The Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society did not come here today with the intent of criticizing past management activities on Public lands. Rather, we are here because of our concern for the future of wildlife and their habitats on public land.

We offer you with this timely epigraph, composed by E.O. Wilson, renowned sociobiologist, and quoted in the Harvard Magazine, January 1980.

A timely epigraph: "What event likely to occur in the 1980s will our descendants most regret, even those living a thousand years from now? My opinion is not conventional, . . . The worst thing that can happen -- will happen -- is not energy depletion, economic collapse, limited nuclear war, or conquest by a totalitarian government. As terrible as these catastrophes would be for us, they can be repaired within a few generations. The one process ongoing in the 1980's that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us."

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Presented by Mr. Charles Blair, Idaho Chapter of The Wildlife Society.