

BENEWAH COUNTY, IDAHO

Inventoried Roadless Area Recommendations

**A summary of Benewah County Inventoried Roadless Areas,
public involvement and comments, and
recommendations of the Board of County Commissioners**



Version: March 1st, 2006

BENEWAH COUNTY, IDAHO

Inventoried Roadless Area Recommendations

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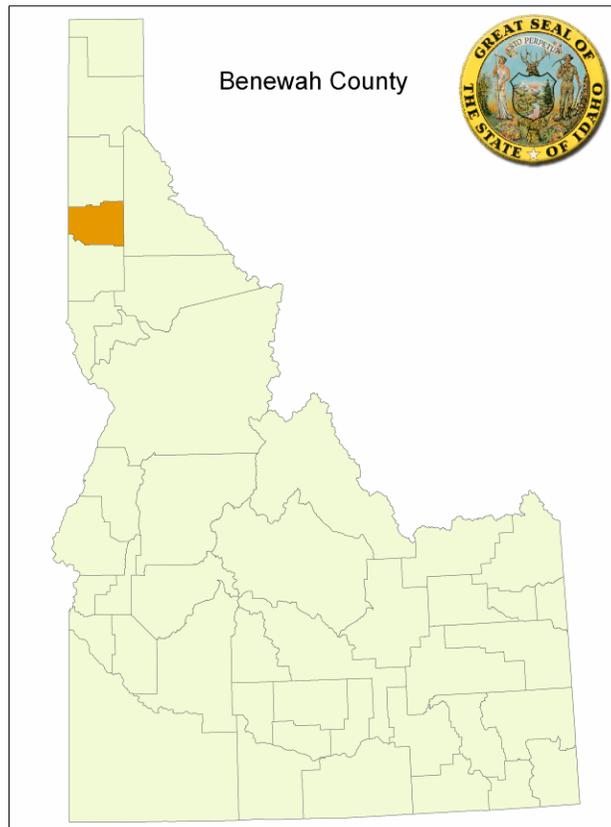
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Purpose of this Document

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA) are summarized in this chapter including specific information by IRA, maps of each IRA and additional information needed to allow the reader to understand the IRA forest plan recommendations in the county.

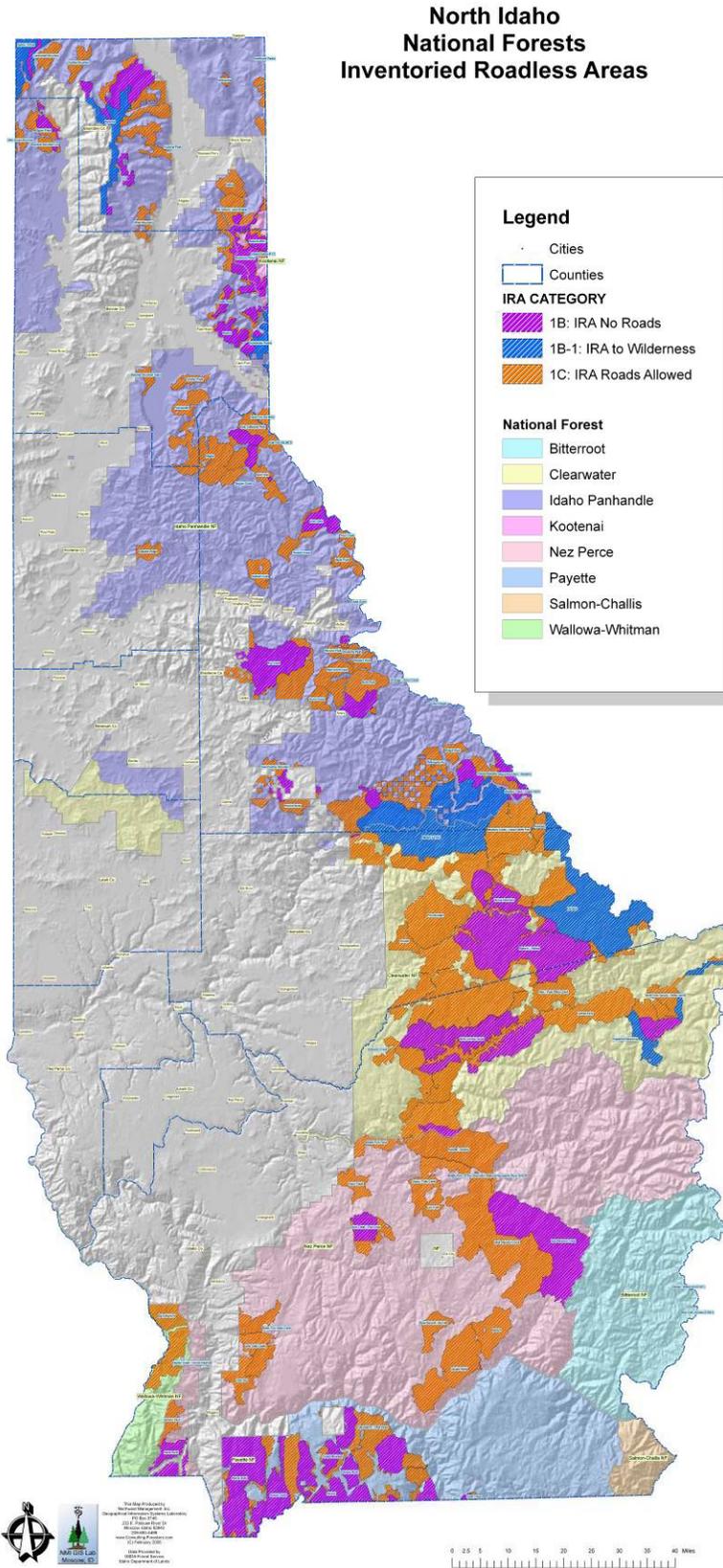
Benewah County is located in the Idaho Panhandle and borders the state of Washington to its west, and the counties of Latah, Kootenai, and Shoshone (Figure 1.1). Benewah County has developed a Wildland Urban Interface Wildfire Mitigation Plan and has adopted a formal Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) boundary (Figure 1.3). There are no Inventoried Roadless Areas located within Benewah County (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.1. Location Map of Benewah County.



INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREA SUMMARY

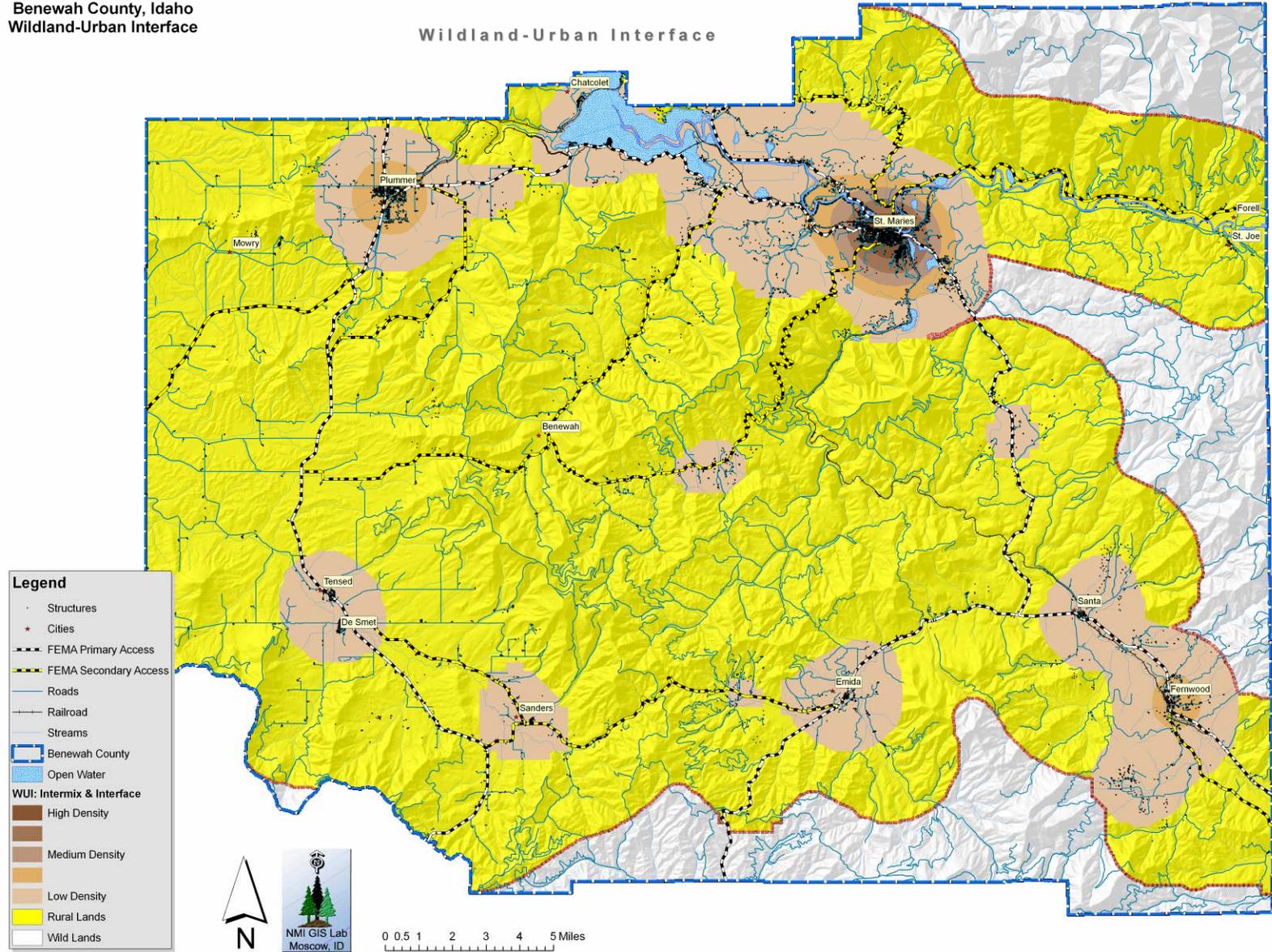
Figure 1.2. Inventoried Roadless Areas in Northern Idaho.



INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREA SUMMARY

Figure 1.3. Wildland-Urban Interface of Benewah County.

Benewah County, Idaho
Wildland-Urban Interface





Public Involvement and Comments

In order to facilitate public input on Inventoried Roadless Areas in Idaho, Counties containing or affected by the management of Inventoried Roadless Areas were asked to hold a public information meeting as well as collect written public comment. Summaries of those meetings and the written public record follow. In addition, the draft of this document was available at the County Courthouse for public review approximately two weeks prior to the County Commission's formal adoption of their recommendations to Governor Kempthorne.

Public Meetings

Benewah County held a public meeting to facilitate information regarding the Inventoried Roadless Areas in Benewah County. Formal information was presented by Benewah and Shoshone County Commissioners. There was also time allotted at the meetings for members of the public to make oral statements. Attendees were encouraged to provide written comment to the County.

December 13th, 2005 Public Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Jack Buell called the meeting to order. He announced that the "Notice of Public Hearing" had been properly published. Introductions were made including Commissioners Cantamessa and Krulitz from neighboring Shoshone County; both serve on the Public Lands Committee for the Idaho State Association of Counties.

After a brief background presentation by Shoshone County Commissioner Cantamessa, attendees at the meeting were given the floor to make statements that would be included as part of the public record in Benewah County. Their comments are summarized below.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMENTS

Summary of Oral Comments

The following is a full summary of the oral comments received by the Benewah County Commissioner’s Office. There were no written comments received by the Benewah County Commissioner’s Office. Copies of the full public record of comments are available at the Benewah County Courthouse and the Office of Species Conservation in Boise, Idaho.

Summary of general comments received by Benewah County

Table 2.1 summarizes comments received by Benewah County that are not specific to a national forest or an Inventoried Roadless Area. These comments typically focus on the commenter’s general opinion on the management of roadless areas in Idaho.

Table 2.1. General public comments received by Benewah County.

Name	Comment Origin	Organization	Received By	Summarized Comment
Bryce Coulter	Public Meeting in Benewah County	St. Joe Snowriders, St. Joe Snowmobile Club	Benewah County	Not many people in the west support making more wilderness areas in the west. Keep the management options for roadless area flexible. Keep access to the forest open.
Mike Minier	Public Meeting in Benewah County	St. Joe Cycle Club, St. Joe Snowriders	Benewah County	In favor of access. Forest currently have a lot of flexibility in management, they should stay that way. Do not support setting aside large blocks of land for wilderness. Need more public education on forest stewardship and tread lightly programs.
Jim Bentick	Public Meeting in Benewah County		Benewah County	Don't need more wilderness. Fish and game habitat is better when clearcuts are made. Thinks the Fish and Game isn't doing a good job making this happen with support of timber management for wildlife benefit.
Paula Spooner	Public Meeting in Benewah County		Benewah County	Does not want anymore roadless areas.
Chuck Mark, District Ranger	Public Meeting in Benewah County	St. Joe National Forest	Benewah County	Hopes the public/County process ends up with similar conclusions as the Forest process.



Recommendations of the Board of County Commissioners

The Bush Administration has invited states to petition the federal government regarding the management of Inventoried Roadless Areas. Governor Kempthorne has taken up the offer and will submit recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture to be placed in the Federal Register.

Once a state has developed and submitted its petition, and the petition is accepted by the Secretary, the Forest Service will work with the state to develop and publish a subsequent state-specific rulemaking for Inventoried Roadless Areas that addresses management requirements proposed by the petitioning state.

The Governor tasked each county to come up with recommendations for Inventoried Roadless Areas in the county and submit those recommendations to his office by March 1st 2006.

After holding public meetings, taking public comments and reviewing the current management plans for roadless areas, the Benewah County Commissioners have drafted recommendations for the Governor regarding the desired future conditions of Inventoried Roadless Areas in the county.

Benewah County Commission Recommendations

Benewah County Commissioners held a public meeting on December 13, 2005, to hear comments and recommendations for (or against) any changes to the Forest Plan direction for management of inventoried roadless areas (IRA's). Most comments pertained to areas in Shoshone County with Shoshone County Commissioners Jon Cantamessa and Sherry Krulitz present.

Public comments were primarily general to all roadless areas in the St. Joe River and North Fork of the Clearwater River drainages with some specific comments on individual IRA's. Almost all comments received revolved around access issues and having a management plan that was flexible, as both forests and the people that use the forest change over time.

Benewah County is a believer in Multiple-Use planning. This includes managing resources for use such as timber, mining, fish & wildlife, as well as recreation. Active timber management is the only way to ensure good forest health. Waiting for catastrophic events to react to should not be the plan.

Idaho has over (4) million acres of designated wilderness that receives limited use. IRA's are not wilderness and should not be managed as wilderness.

We believe in access to the forest for all people and think roads and trails should be open and maintained, with only seasonal closures for environmental or wildlife reasons.

Many of the IRA's in the St. Joe Drainage were devastated by the 1910 fire and were not actively managed for timber production because timber stands were young or just getting established. As those stands now mature these areas need to be reviewed for access to address forest health issues, including fuels reduction, along with improves wildlife habitat.

The 1987 Idaho Panhandle Forest Plan was developed with many of the existing IRA's having plans for significant development and timber production in future decades. We cannot ignore that forest change over time and we cannot preserve any forest to remain the same forever. With this in mind we have attempted to address individual or groups of IRA's in the following pages, but some general ideas apply to most areas.

We are thankful to have the opportunity in creating a rule to guide the future management of the IRA's that involve local community and government. Any rule developed for Idaho IRA's should be structured to provide flexibility and be proactive in management.

Specific Inventoried Roadless Area Recommendations

Areas North of the St. Joe River and Avery - Stevens Peak, Big Creek, Storm Creek, Hammond Creek, Wonderful Peak, Roland Point, and North Fork

We recommend these areas to be managed as follows:

1. The forest land be actively managed for timber as a tool to improve forest health.
2. Existing trails and roads remain open to motorized use.
3. Open previously existing trails which have been closed.
4. Allow motorized access to existing mining claims so they can be worked as intended.

We feel our recommendation would conserve roadless area values and characteristics, reduce hazardous fuels and restore essential wildlife habitats and provide reasonable access to public and private property.

Mosquito-Fly, Midget Peak, Meadow Creek, Sheep Mountain, and St. Line

We recommend that these areas be managed as follows:

1. Existing trails and roads remain open to motorized use.
2. Open previously existing trails which have been closed.
3. Allow motorized access to existing mining claims so they can be worked as intended.
4. Accessible areas should be managed for timber production in conjunction with prescribed burning when it will contribute to forest health.
5. Timber management should be allowed in conjunction with fire when it is a benefit in cases of bug kill, disease, wind damage, fire kill, overstocking, and other forest health issues.

We feel our recommendation would conserve roadless area values and characteristics, reduce hazardous fuels and restore essential wildlife habitats and provide reasonable access to public and private property.

Mallard – Larkins

We recommend that the original Mallard – Larkins Pioneer area be managed as follows:

1. Recognize the special nature of the original Mallard – Larkins Pioneer area.
2. Recognize non-motorized recreation uses for the Pioneer Area, while maintaining the flexibility to utilize motorized equipment for trail maintenance activities.

We recommend that areas outside the original Pioneer Area be managed as follows:

1. Existing trails and roads remain open to motorized use.
2. Open previously existing trails which have been closed.
3. Allow motorized access to existing mining claims so they can be worked as intended.
4. Accessible areas should be managed for timber production in conjunction with prescribed burning when it will contribute to forest health.
5. Timber management should be allowed in conjunction with fire when it is a benefit in cases of bug kill, disease, wind damage, fire kill, overstocking, and other forest health issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

We feel our recommendations would conserve roadless area values and characteristics, reduce hazardous fuels, and restore essential wildlife habitats and provide reasonable access to public land private property.

Grandmother Mountain – Pinchot Butte (excluding areas in the 1987 Wilderness Study Area (WSA))

We recommend the area be managed as follows:

1. The forest land be actively managed for timber as a tool to improve forest health.
2. Existing trails and roads remain open to motorized use.
3. Open previously existing trails which have been closed.
4. Allow motorized access to mining claims so they can be worked as intended.

We feel our recommendation would conserve roadless area values and characteristics, reduce hazardous fuels and restore essential wildlife habitats and provide reasonable access to public and private property.

Resolution of Adoption

Resolution of the Commissioners of Benewah County, Idaho

2006-03

This resolution adopted by the Benewah County Board of Commissioners declares support of the Benewah County Inventoried Roadless Area Recommendations, which includes a summary of the National Forest Inventoried Roadless Areas in the County, a summary of public involvement and comments, and recommendations by this Board of County Commissioners.

Whereas, The Benewah County Board of Commissioners have held public informational meetings and recorded oral public statements and comments,

Whereas, The Benewah County Board of Commissioners have collected and reviewed written public comment on future proposed management of inventoried Roadless Areas in surrounding areas,

Whereas, The Benewah County Board of Commissioners have reviewed the management prescriptions of inventoried Roadless Areas detailed in current National Forest Plans and summarized in the Benewah County Inventoried Roadless Area Recommendations document.

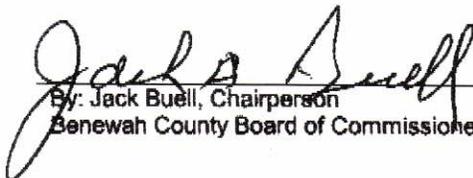
Whereas, The Benewah County Board of Commissioners have developed and reviewed the recommendations made in the Benewah County Inventoried Roadless Area Recommendations document,

Whereas, The Benewah County Board of Commissioners believe in sound forest management practices to perpetuate healthy and sustainable forests for future generations.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Benewah County Board of Commissioners do hereby adopt and support the Benewah County Inventoried Roadless Area Recommendations, as the Benewah County recommendations to the Governor of the State of Idaho, for a State of Idaho petition to the USDA Secretary for rulemaking regarding inventoried Roadless Areas in Idaho.

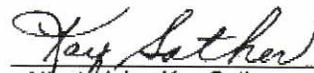
Passed and approved this 31st Day of February 2006

Board of County Commissioners, Benewah County, Idaho


By: Jack Buell, Chairperson
Benewah County Board of Commissioners


By: Terry Doope
Benewah County Board of Commissioners

By: N.L. McCall
Benewah County Board of Commissioners


Attested by: Kay Sather
Benewah County Clerk



Supporting Information

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Terry Doupe, District II

N. L. “Bud” McCall, District III

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Northwest Management, Inc.

The following personnel participated in the formulation, compilation, editing, and analysis of this report.

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Vaiden E. Bloch, M.S.	Northwest Management, Inc.	GIS Analyst, Resource Appraiser
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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This document was developed by Northwest Management, Inc., under contract with the Idaho Association of Counties, working with the Board of County Commissioners in Benewah County.

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