



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Wallowa-Whitman  
National Forest

P.O. Box 907  
Baker City, OR 97814

Reply To: 1920/1950/2320/2550

Date: January 13, 1995

Dear Forest Plan Reviewer:

Enclosed is a Decision Notice which announces our (sixteenth) Forest Plan amendment. This amendment adds additional direction to the plan dealing with the management of the Eagle Cap Wilderness and the Minam Wild and Scenic River.

The Forest Plan provides direction for management of the Eagle Cap Wilderness. The Wilderness Act and Forest Service policy require periodic monitoring of conditions and Implementation of management actions to protect and preserve the wilderness. Results of monitoring conducted in 1993 indicated the need for revising the Forest Plan direction for the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

When Congress designated the Minam Wild and Scenic River under the Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988, it directed the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a management plan for the river. The Forest Plan provided interim direction for this river until the management plan could be completed.

Since the designated river corridor lies entirely within the Eagle Cap Wilderness, the Forest decided to combine both planning efforts to better address the similar issues and concerns and thus more effectively manage the areas.

The Wilderness Stewardship Plan and the Minam Wild and Scenic River Management Plan and their combined Environmental Assessment have been completed. This amendment replaces the Forest Plan direction for the Eagle Cap Wilderness with the Eagle Cap Stewardship Plan, and the Forest Plan interim direction for wild and scenic rivers with the Minam Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. These plans provide for non-degradation of wilderness conditions due to recreation use and impacts, and the protection and enhancement of the Minam River free-flow, water quality, and Outstandingly Remarkable Values.

The Environmental Assessment, upon which these decisions are based, is available here at the Forest Supervisor's Office. If you have questions concerning the Eagle Cap Wilderness, or would like to receive a copy of the Stewardship Plan or Environmental Assessment, please contact Tom Carlson at the Eagle Cap Ranger District, 88401 Highway 82, Enterprise, OR 97828, or phone (503) 426-4978.

If you have questions concerning the Minam Wild and Scenic River, or would like to receive a copy of the Minam Wild and Scenic River Management Plan or Environmental Assessment, please contact Gay Brockus (503-523-1250) or Steve Davis (503-523-1316) at this address.

Sincerely,

R. M. RICHMOND  
Forest Supervisor



Enclosure

DECISION NOTICE  
AND  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
FOR THE  
EAGLE CAP WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP PLAN  
AND THE  
MINAM WILD AND SCENIC RIVER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Forest Plan Amendment No. 16

USDA Forest Service  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
Eagle Cap, Pine, and La Grande  
Ranger Districts

Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties, Oregon

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Eagle Cap Wilderness Stewardship Plan (ECW Plan) and the Minam Wild and Scenic River Management Plan (Minam W&SR Plan) on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is available for public review at the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office in Baker City, Oregon. The EA analyzes alternatives for managing the ECW and Minam W&SR in accordance with the Wilderness Act and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The selected alternative described below amends the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan).

DECISION

As Forest Supervisor for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, it is my decision to implement Alternative G of the EA for the ECW Plan and Minam W&SR Plan.

Alternative G prescribes the following activities for the Eagle Cap Wilderness:

Adopts a Stewardship Plan for the Eagle Cap Wilderness to preserve and protect the wilderness resources by providing direction for the management of recreation use and impacts.

Provides a detailed monitoring plan to ensure the intent of the Act and management plan are being met.

Changes the Wilderness Resource Spectrum for many zones to move the wilderness to a more pristine condition.

Alternative G prescribes the following activities for the Minam Wild and Scenic River:

Adopts a Management Plan for the Minam Wild and Scenic River to emphasize water quality and free-flow and to protect and enhance the Outstanding Remarkable (OR) values.

Modifies the Management Area boundary for MA-7 surrounding the Minam River to better protect and enhance the OR values. It is also my decision to recommend this boundary change to the Regional Forester as the final boundary for the Minam Wild and Scenic River corridor in accordance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Provides a detailed monitoring plan to ensure the intent of the Act and management plan are being met.

Changes the Wilderness Resource Spectrum from Semi-primitive to Primitive for the entire river corridor.

My decision also includes the following changes to the Forest Plan to further clarify management direction:

*For the Eagle Cap Wilderness -*

On page 4-4, under the heading Wilderness, delete the first sentence in the paragraph and substitute: **The Eagle Cap Wilderness is managed under the Eagle Cap Wilderness Stewardship Plan on file at Forest Headquarters.**

*For the Minam Wild and Scenic River -*

On page 4-75, add a new heading: **"#28. Minam Wild and Scenic River." Followed by: The Minam Wild and Scenic River corridor, within National Forest Lands will be managed according to the Minam Wild and Scenic River Management Plan on file at Forest Headquarters.**

## ALTERNATIVES

I considered six other alternatives before selecting Alternative G.

- Alternative A (Current Management) consisted of managing the wilderness in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines of Management Area 4 in the Forest Plan, with other Forest wide Standards and Guidelines, with Forest Service manual and policy direction, according to the Environmental Assessment for Interim Management of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, and with current management actions to recreation use and impacts. Alternative A provided no change from current direction and did not provide adequate guidance to managers.

Alternative A consisted of managing the river corridor in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines of Management Areas 4 and 7 in the Forest Plan and with other Forest wide Standards and Guidelines and Forest Service manual and policy direction. The river corridor boundary would be a quarter mile either side of the river as specified by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. Alternative A provided little direction for managing the corridor to protect and enhance the OR Values nor did it provide guidance for private landowners.

- Alternative B consisted of preserving and protecting the wilderness resource with an emphasis on recreation opportunities, especially near lakes.

Alternative B consisted of protecting and enhancing the wild and scenic river OR values with an emphasis on including the Blue Lake headwaters area and additional adjacent private land in the expanded corridor and a second emphasis on cooperating with private landowners within the corridor.

This alternative was not selected due to its lack of protection for the water resource and inadequate group size limits.

- Alternative C consisted of an emphasis on preserving and protecting the wilderness resource near lakes, streams, wetlands, and in high altitude and high use destination areas while limiting recreation opportunities in these areas.

Alternative C consisted of protecting and enhancing wild and scenic river values in the same manner as Alternative B.

This alternative was not selected due to its unnecessary restrictions on visitor freedom.

- Alternative D consisted of an emphasis on maximum preservation and protection of the wilderness resource near lakes, streams, wetlands, and in high altitude areas including the Lakes Basin Management Area. The group size limits were also reduced dramatically, and the fish stocking program was adjusted.

Alternative D consisted of protecting and enhancing wild and scenic river values in the same manner as Alternative B.

This alternative was not selected due to its unnecessary restrictions on visitor freedom.

- Alternative E consisted of an emphasis on limited preservation and protection of the wilderness resource near streams and wetlands and an emphasis on visitor freedom and recreation opportunities including a larger group size limit and a continuation of the fish stocking program.

Alternative E consisted of protecting and enhancing wild and scenic river OR values with an emphasis on including only the Blue Lake headwaters area in the expanded corridor and a second emphasis on cooperating with private landowners within the corridor.

This alternative was not selected due to its lack of protection for the wilderness resource and failure to include any additional private lands in the corridor.

- Alternative F consisted of an emphasis on preservation and protection of the wilderness resource near lakes, streams, and in some high use areas, while allowing larger groups, balancing the need for outfitter operations to support management objectives in the wilderness, and adjusting the fish stocking program.

Alternative F consisted of protecting and enhancing wild and scenic river values in the same manner as Alternative B.

This alternative was not selected due to its lack of protection for wetlands and because the group size limit is excessive.

## REASONS FOR THE DECISION

I selected Alternative G because it prescribes the best mix of activities to attain the desired condition for the wilderness and the river corridor.

Of the seven alternatives, Alternative G provides for the best opportunity to preserve and protect the wilderness resource, while still providing outstanding opportunities for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Of the seven alternatives, Alternative G provides for the best opportunity to emphasize water quality and to protect free flow, while still protecting and enhancing the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the wild and scenic river corridor.

Expanding the wild and scenic river boundary to include an additional 470 acres in the headwaters area near Blue Lake, would provide additional protection for free-flow, riparian vegetation, water quality, sensitive visual areas, and the OR values.

Expanding the wild and scenic river boundary to include an additional 25 acres of National Forest in the recently acquired Red's Horse Ranch tract would place the entire acquisition and all improvements in the corridor and provide additional protection for riparian vegetation, water quality, sensitive visual areas, and the OR values.

Expanding the wild and scenic river boundary to include an additional 5 acres of private land would provide additional protection for riparian vegetation, water quality, sensitive visual areas, and the OR values through excellent opportunities for cooperation with private landowners.

## SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public has been involved throughout the process. Initially, 5 public meetings were held in northeastern Oregon, Portland Oregon, and Clarkston, Washington to discuss and concerns. An additional 4 public meetings were held in northeastern Oregon to discuss the proposed action and identify issues. Letters were also sent to acquire additional information from public and private landowners and to inform the public on the progress of the management plan.

## ISSUES

Several issues were identified for both the wilderness and the wild and scenic river corridor during the scoping process. Seven significant issues were identified by the interdisciplinary team for analysis in the EA:

- **Crowding:** How should recreation visitor use be managed so that the carrying capacity is not exceeded in the wilderness.
- **Campsites, Recreation Livestock, and Campfires:** How should the impacts of these recreation activities be managed to protect the wilderness resource and Minam W&SR OR values, but provide for primitive and unconfined types of recreation.
- **Group Size:** How should the biophysical and social values of wilderness and the Minam W&SR corridor be protected from the impacts of large groups.
- **Outfitter Group Size:** Should the group size limit be the same for outfitted and non-outfitted groups.
- **Trail Class and Use Type:** How many miles of system trails should be managed for hikers only and/or in the More Difficult or Most Difficult category and how should these trails be identified and/or regulated.
- **Fish Stocking:** Does fish stocking play a role in preserving and protecting the wilderness values.
- **Outfitters:** How many outfitter operations and what type of services are needed to contribute to the management objectives.

Issues were also identified which pertain only to the wild and scenic river corridor during the scoping process. Two significant issues were identified by the interdisciplinary team for analysis in the EA:

- **Minam W&SR Boundary:** Should the boundary be expanded to include some additional private lands and the headwaters area around Blue Lake.
- **Private Lands Within the Minam W&SR Corridor:** How to protect and enhance the OR values in the corridor while minimizing the impacts on, and acquisition of easements from, private landowners.

Management of each of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values were also addressed in the EA. The Outstandingly Remarkable Values are Recreation, Scenery, Fisheries, Geology, and Wildlife.

## MONITORING

Monitoring will be in accordance with the monitoring plan outlined in the Forest Plan and in the ECW Plan and Minam W&SR Plan. This includes the monitoring for the protection and enhancement of the OR values, free flow, and water quality.

## SPECIFICALLY REQUIRED DISCLOSURES

There are no unavoidable, adverse effects associated with Implementing Alternative G that are not already identified in the Final EIS for the Forest Plan.

There are no short-term uses proposed in the project. Promoting long-term protection and preservation of the wilderness resource and protection and enhancement of the OR values is a project objective.

There are no irreversible or irretrievable losses from implementing Alternative G that are not already identified in the Final EIS for the Forest Plan.

There are no unusual energy requirements associated with implementing Alternative G.

Wetlands and floodplains do exist within the river corridor. There are no major projects planned within the wetlands or floodplains. There is however routine, ongoing maintenance of trails and dispersed campsites within the river corridor. These maintenance activities are designed to prevent soil erosion and protect resource values within the Minam River floodplain. A site specific Environmental Analysis would be completed before any new construction or major reconstruction of any facility could take place.

The management plan will cause no adverse effects on any Threatened or Endangered species or critical habitat; prime farmland, rangeland, or forest land; cultural resources; or civil rights, women, and minorities not already identified in the Final EIS for the Forest Plan.

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment, I have determined that the Eagle Cap Wilderness Stewardship Plan and the Minam River Management Plan and Forest Plan Amendment #16 are not major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. The direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts discussed in the EA have been disclosed within the appropriate context and will have little intensity. My determination is based on the incorporation of mitigation measures and monitoring requirements associated with Alternative B and the following factors from Title 40 CFR 1508.27:

1. The beneficial and adverse environmental effects described in the EA for Alternative G were considered independently to determine if the project would significantly affect the human environment. No significant impacts were identified.
2. Public response to the project has indicated that the project is not likely to cause effects that are highly controversial. Refer to Chapter I of the EA for a description of the public scoping process.
3. The project causes no highly uncertain effects and no effects that involve unique or unknown risks.
4. There will be no significant adverse cumulative effects from implementing the plan in conjunction with past, present, and foreseeable future actions.
5. The plan will not adversely affect any sites or features listed or eligible to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or any significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
6. The effects of the plan on Threatened and Endangered species were analyzed in a Biological Evaluation (BE). There will be no risk of adversely affecting these species with the plan as described in the EA. The plan will have no adverse effects on Threatened and Endangered species habitat. Over time, the plan is expected to have positive effects on Threatened and Endangered species.
7. The plan is consistent with all known Federal, State, and local laws. Regulations related to the National Forest Management Act and the Endangered Species Act have been incorporated into the project. Environmental Protection Agency herbicide application requirements will be followed.



FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

I have determined that this amendment is not significant in relation to the National Forest Management Act of 1976. Adoption of this amendment will not significantly alter Forest Plan goals, objectives, standards, guidelines, or management direction. Indeed, this amendment will enable managers to better meet the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and existing Forest Plan objectives, standards, guidelines, and management direction.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of this decision shall not occur within 30 days following publication of the legal notice of the decision in the Baker City Herald.

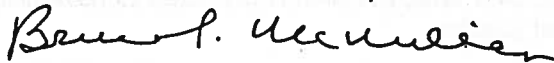
APPEAL RIGHTS

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Any Notice of Appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of a Notice of Appeal) and must be filed with John Lowe, Regional Forester, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, Oregon 97208 within 45 days of the date legal notice of this decision appears in the Baker City Herald.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information regarding the Eagle Cap Wilderness Stewardship Plan, contact Tom Carlson at the Eagle Cap Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, 88401 Highway 82, Enterprise, Oregon 97828 or at (503) 426-4978.

For further information regarding the Minam River Management Plan Plan, contact Steve Davis at the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office, P.O. Box 907, Baker City, Oregon 97814 or at (503) 523-1316.



*for*  
R. M. RICHMOND  
Forest Supervisor  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

# EAGLE CAP WILDERNESS VICINITY MAP

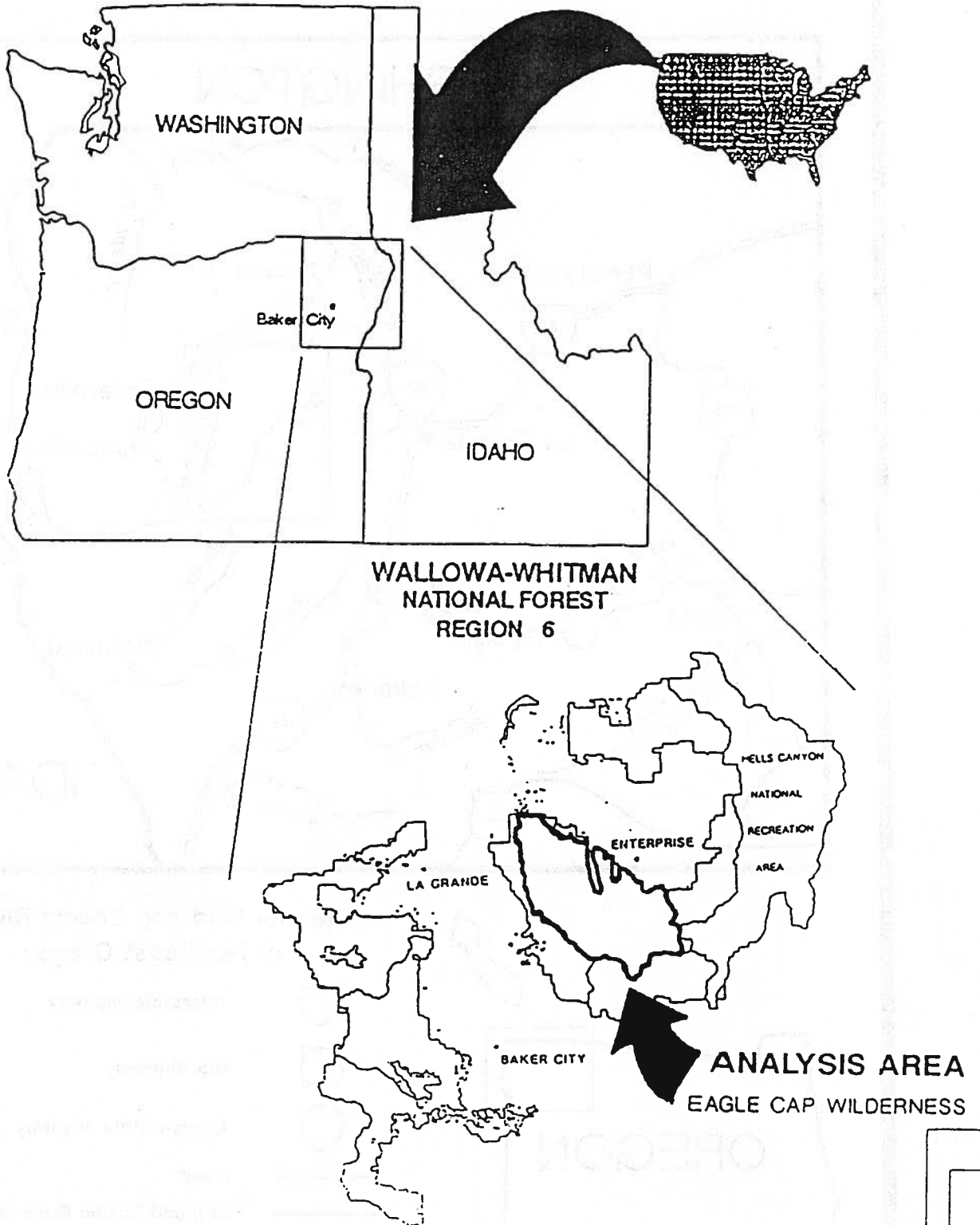
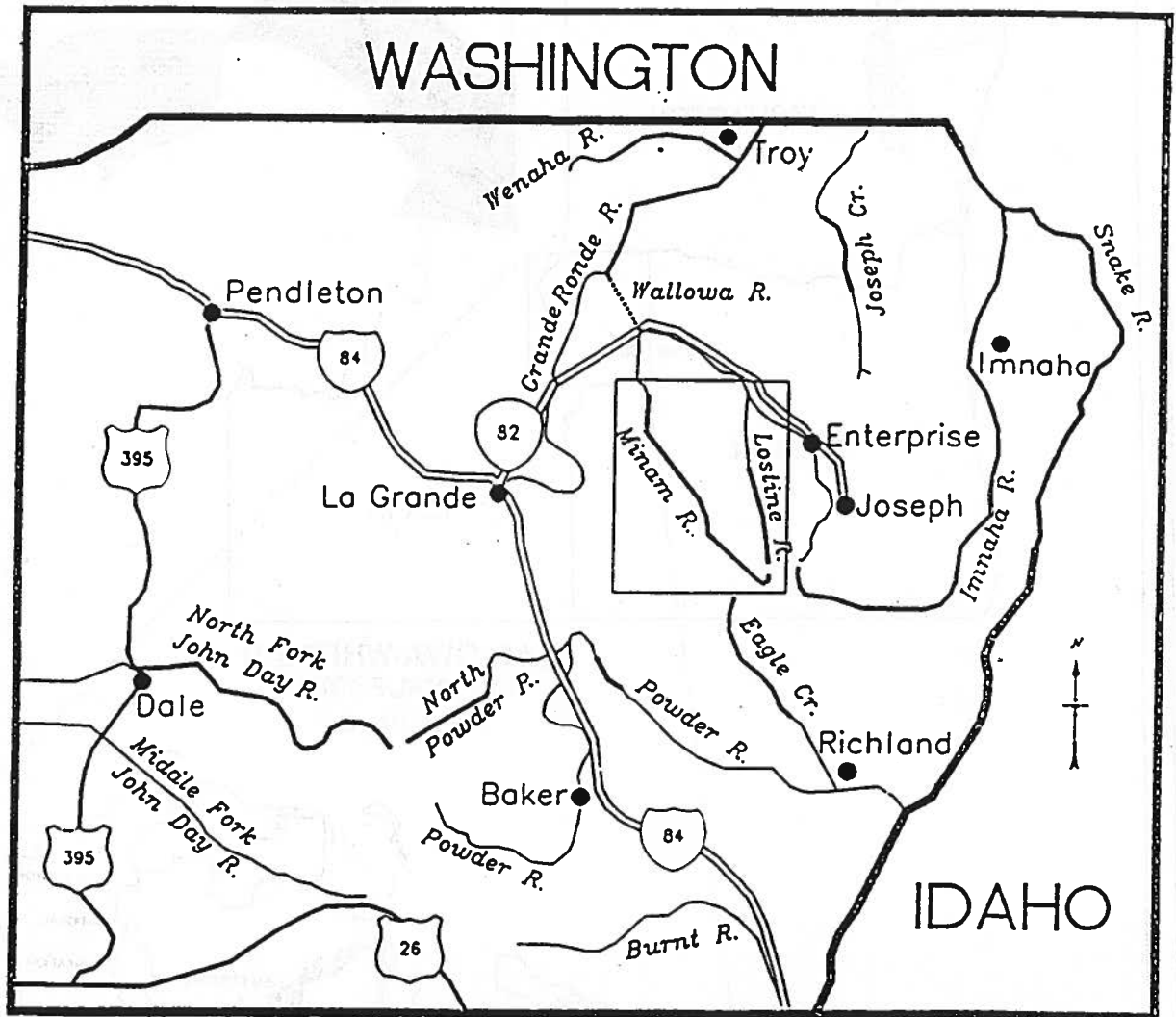








FIGURE 1

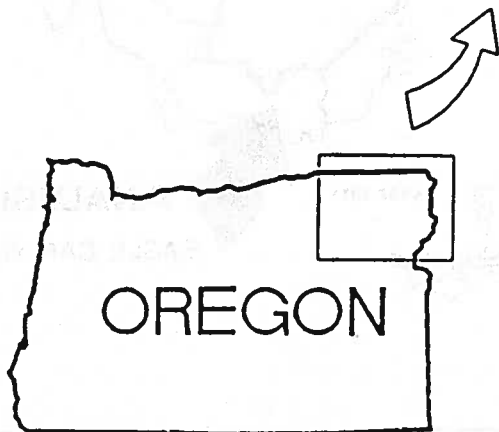
# MINAM WILD AND SCENIC RIVER

## Vicinity Map

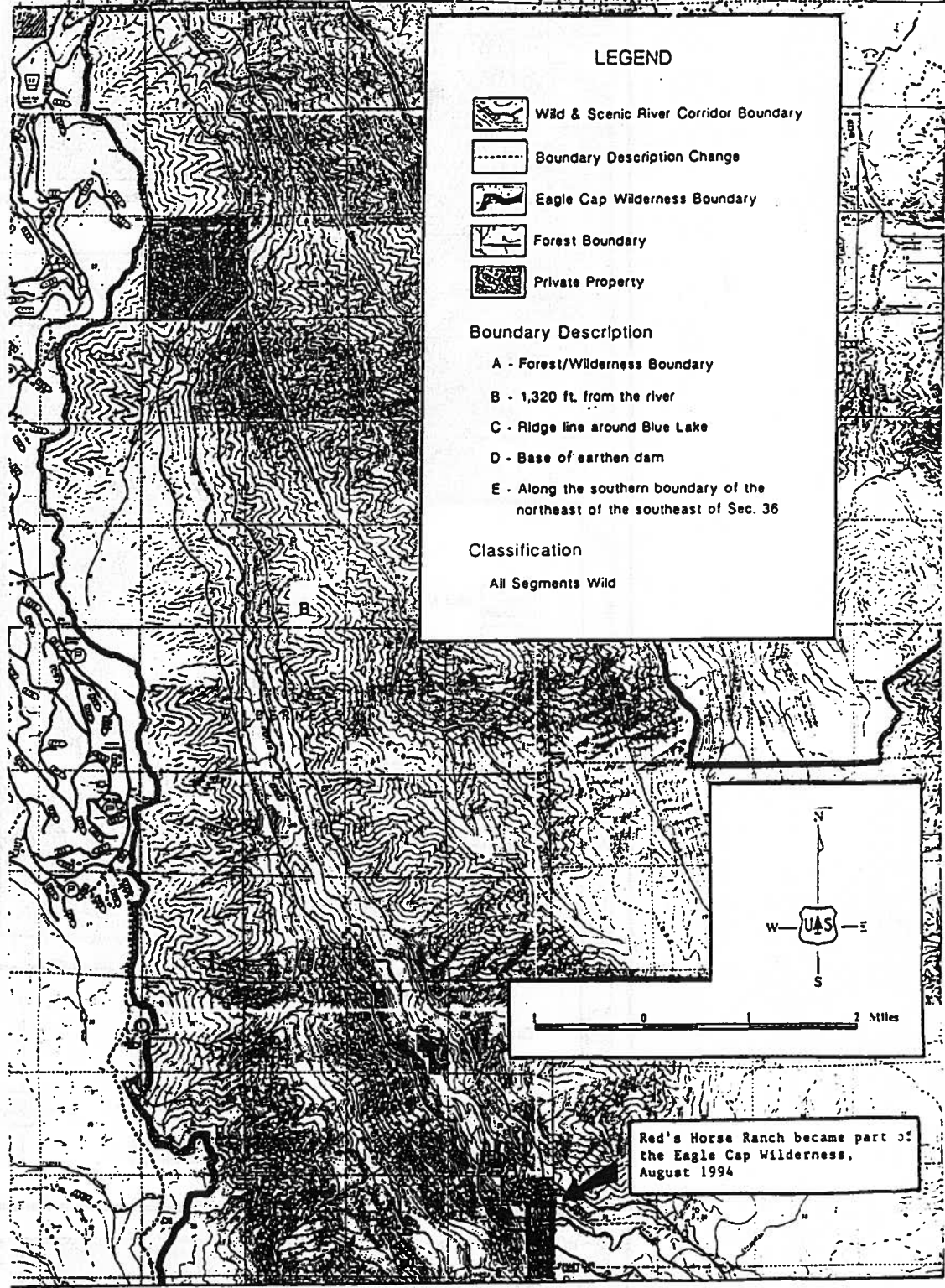


### National Wild and Scenic Rivers of Northeast Oregon






-  Interstate Highway
-  U.S. Highway
-  Oregon State Highway
-  River
-  Wild and Scenic River Area
-  Wild and Scenic Study River Area



# MINAM WILD & SCENIC RIVER CORRIDOR



## LEGEND

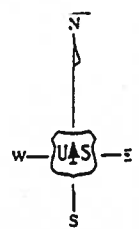
-  Wild & Scenic River Corridor Boundary
-  Boundary Description Change
-  Eagle Cap Wilderness Boundary
-  Forest Boundary
-  Private Property

## Boundary Description

- A - Forest/Wilderness Boundary
- B - 1,320 ft. from the river
- C - Ridge line around Blue Lake
- D - Base of earthen dam
- E - Along the southern boundary of the northeast of the southeast of Sec. 36

## Classification

All Segments Wild








0 1 2 Miles

Red's Horse Ranch became part of the Eagle Cap Wilderness, August 1994

# MINAM WILD & SCENIC RIVER CORRIDOR

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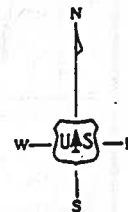
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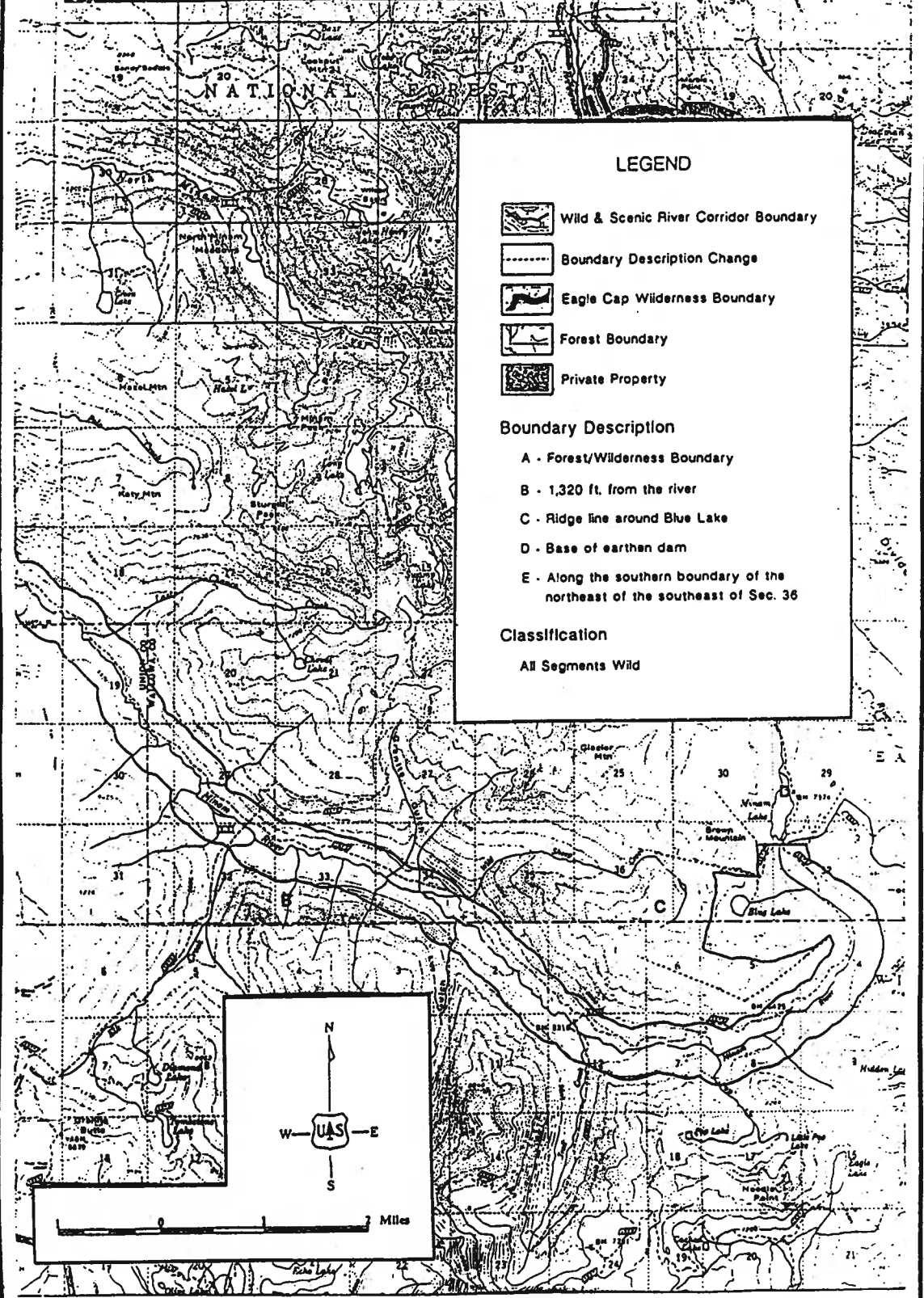
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



0 1 2 Miles

# MINAM WILD & SCENIC RIVER CORRIDOR



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