

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE

Establishment Record

*Gerald S Strickley* For  
GOVERNMENT-DRAW RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

La Grande Ranger District

Union County, Oregon



SIGNATURE PAGE

for

Research Natural Area Establishment  
Government Draw Research Natural Area  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
Union County, Oregon

Prepared by: James J. Barrett Date: 1-11-2000  
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La Grande Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman NF

Recommended by: Jeff Hammer Date: 1/11/00  
for Robert P. Rainville, District Ranger  
La Grande Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman NF

Recommended by: Karyn L. Wood Date: 1-18-00  
Karyn L. Wood, Forest Supervisor  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Concurrence of: Fred A. Holmes Date: 3/7/00  
for Station Director, PNW Research Station

## ESTABLISHMENT RECORD

for the

### GOVERNMENT DRAW RESEARCH NATURAL AREA WALLOWA-WHITMAN NATIONAL FOREST UNION COUNTY OREGON

#### INTRODUCTION

The Government Draw Research Natural Area contains approximately 178 acres (72 ha) of mixed-conifer forest (ponderosa pine, grand fir, Douglas-fir, western larch, and lodgepole pine) and associated shrub and grass-dominated openings that are typical of the vegetation mosaic of the Blue Mountains in eastern Oregon. Four contrasting vegetation types occur: (1) grand fir-dominated forests on northerly slopes and flats on ash soil, (2) Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine on southerly slopes on residual soils, (3) Sandberg bluegrass-onespike danthonia grasslands, and (4) stiff sagebrush-bluebunch wheatgrass shrubland on very shallow residual soils of ridge and gentle slope sites.

#### 1. Land Management Planning

Government Draw RNA was proposed as a candidate RNA by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest to meet an unfilled natural area cell need for stiff sagebrush and Sandberg's bluegrass. It was included as a candidate RNA in the FEIS for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (USDA Forest Service 1990a), in the Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1990b), and in the Record of Decision (USDA Forest Service, 1990c).

Establishing this area as an RNA would preserve one example of a significant natural ecosystem, and fulfill scientific study needs for two plant community types.

#### OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Government Draw RNA is to preserve in an undisturbed (by humans) condition, the associated forest, brush and grass types which constitute the research focus of the RNA. The RNA will serve as a reference area for study, as a baseline area for determining long-term ecological changes, and as a monitoring area to determine effects of management techniques and practices applied to similar ecosystems.

#### JUSTIFICATION

The Government Draw Research Natural Area (RNA) was originally selected to meet two primary terrestrial cell needs in the Blue Mountains of eastern Oregon for (1) the Sandberg bluegrass-onespike oatgrass community and (2) the stiff sagebrush grassland community (Dyrness et al. 1975; Oregon Natural Heritage Plan 1993). It also provides additional representation of ponderosa pine/pinegrass (S.A.F. Type 237), Douglas-fir-ponderosa pine/pinegrass (S.A.F. Type 214), and grand fir/thinleaf huckleberry (S.A.F. Type 213) communities.

The area was reconsidered for Research Natural Area designation by the Pacific Northwest Natural Area Committee in 1971 following an inspection report by Robert W. Harris. Initially considered and rejected as being too small, the committee agreed it was the best available site having the mosaic of major soil and plant communities found in the Blue Mountains and recommended the Wallowa-Whitman prepare an Establishment Report for the proposed RNA.

## PRINCIPAL DISTINGUISHING FEATURES

Besides providing a representation of the vegetation mosaic of the terrestrial cells described above, the proposed site has several other features equally important to its value as a Research Natural Area. First, the site has been protected from livestock grazing since 1954. Therefore, the plant communities have had 40 years of recovery from a long history of cattle and sheep use. This is particularly important for the stiff sagebrush communities; this period of protection is unknown for these eastern Oregon shrublands.

Second, the establishment of and measurements taken from 46 permanent macroplots in 1954 provide baseline data on understory plant species composition, cover, and biomass of all plant community types. These data were measured every three years until 1966 and some (biomass) to 1977. In addition, annual species utilization and daily use by big game, and forest canopy and regeneration density are available for intermittent periods beginning in 1954. All measurement data are on file at the Range and Wildlife Habitat Laboratory, La Grande, Oregon.

## LOCATION

### 1. National Forest

The Government Draw Research Natural Area is located on the La Grande Ranger District of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The RNA is adjacent to the northern boundary of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range, and is 40 miles (65 km) west of La Grande, Oregon (figure 1 and figure 2). It is located in Union County, Oregon, 45° 19' N and 118° 33' W in Sections 9 and 10, T. 3 S., R. 34 E., Willamette Meridian.

### 2. Boundary

The boundaries of the RNA are located along cultural and topographic features (figure 3). Beginning where Forest Road 2120100 leaves the north boundary of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range (the Section line between Sections 9 and 16 at the Starkey elk fence) the boundary parallels Forest Road 2120100 about 0.5 mile (0.8 km) northeast to its junction with the McDonald Spring jeep road; from this junction along a line north 60° east for 0.13 mile (0.2 km) to a point on the ridge; thence east 0.4 mile (0.6 km) along the ridge to a small grassland opening where a southeast trending spur of the ridge begins (the jeep track of McDonald Spring road, which follows this part of the boundary, continues east of this point); thence dropping south 40° east down the spur ridge for approximately 0.25 mile (0.5 km) to the north boundary fence of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range; then west along the Starkey elk fence for 1.25 miles (2 km) to the beginning point on Forest Road 2120100. The boundary as described is fenced. (See Appendix I for Legal Description).

### 3. Area

Total area for the Government Draw RNA is approximately 178 acres (72 hectares).

4. Elevations

Elevations range from 4220 feet (1286 meters) on the southern boundary where the north branch of Government Draw leaves the RNA, to 4565 feet (1391 m) at a point on the western boundary.

5. Access

The Government Draw RNA is in the western corner of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, approximately 40 miles west of La Grande, Oregon. It is accessible by travelling west eight miles (13 km) on Interstate 84 to the Ukiah exit and State Highway 244 (figure 1); thence west 22 miles (35 km) on State Highway 244 to its junction with Forest Road 21; thence northerly 19.73 miles (31 km) on Forest Road 21 to its junction with Forest Road 2120100; thence south 0.8 miles (1.27 km) on Forest Road 2120100. Note that there is a gate approximately 0.5 miles up the 2120100 road. A road permit for administrative access can be acquired through the La Grande District Ranger.

Access is also available from the west via State Highway 244 from Ukiah, Oregon (figure 1). From Ukiah proceed east on State Highway 244 approximately 20 miles to its junction with Forest Road 21, then travel northerly along the same route as described above.

6. Maps

Government Draw RNA is located on the Bally Mountain USGS 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle map. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Recreation Map, 1991, is also useful for ownership and general access information, and shows the fenceline that bounds the RNA. However, this map does not designate this area as an RNA.

## VEGETATION

The vegetation of the RNA has been mapped into six plant communities:

Type & Map No. <sup>3</sup>	Plant Association by Johnson and Clausnitzer (1992)		Acres	Hectares
	Kuchler Type (1966)	SAF Type (forest types only) (Eyre 1980)		
<u>Shrub</u>				
1	Stiffsage scabland SD-91-11 ( <u>Artemisia rigida/Poa sandbergii</u> ) Kuchler Type - K55		30	12.1
<u>Grass</u>				
5	Sandberg's bluegrass one spike oatgrass GB-91-11( <u>Poa sandbergii</u> - <u>Danthonia unispicata</u> ) Kuchler Type - K51		13	5.3
7	Bluebunch wheatgrass - Sandberg's bluegrass GB-49-11 ( <u>Agropyron spicatum</u> - <u>Poa sandbergii</u> ) Kuchler Type - K51		4	1.6
<u>Forest</u>				
4	Grand fir/twinflower (ash soil) CW-F3-12 ( <u>Abies grandis</u> - <u>Linnaea borealis</u> ) Kuchler Type - K14 SAF Type - 213		31	12.5
6	Grand fir/elk sedge CW-G1-11 ( <u>Abies grandis</u> - <u>Carex geyeri</u> ) Kuchler Type - K14 SAF Type - 213		90	36.4
2 & 3	Grand fir - big huckleberry (ash soil) CW-S2-12 ( <u>Abies grandis/Vaccinium membranaceum</u> ) Kuchler Type - K14 SAF Type - 213		10	4.0
<u>Total</u>			178	71.9

Mapped units (numbers) shown in figure 4.

These plant communities are typical of the grassland-forest mosaic encountered on the residual and ash soils at mid-elevations in the Blue Mountains. Some characteristics of the mapped communities (figure 4) are given in table 1.

Table 1 - Plant community designation and some vegetation characteristics of mapped habitat units on the Government Draw Research Natural Area, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Oregon.

Mapping Unit No. <sup>1</sup>	Dominant Species	Tree Density <sup>2</sup> per Acre (Hectare)	D.B.H. (dominant) ---cm---
1	stiff sagebrush	--	--
5	Sandberg bluegrass	--	--
7	Sandberg bluegrass	--	--
2	Douglas-fir	120 (296)	36 - 53
3	Grand fir	320 (790)	53+
4	Grand fir	290 (716)	36 - 53
6	Douglas-fir	370 (914)	53+

<sup>1</sup> Mapped units shown in figure 4.

<sup>2</sup> Data for stems 60 feet (18 meters) or more in height.

## PHYSICAL AND CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

### Physical Conditions

The topography of the RNA has developed from dissection of basalt rock flows at the head of the north branch of Government Draw, a tributary of McCoy Creek. McCoy Creek drains a major watershed of the Grande Ronde River system.

The relief ranges from flat to gentle slopes along the west and north boundaries to sharply dissected terrain in the central portion and along the southern boundary. General slope directions are northeast and southwest with drainage southeast. Elevation ranges from 4220 feet (1286 m) on the south boundary where the north branch of Government Draw leaves the RNA to 4565 feet (1391 m) at a point on the west boundary. Government Draw has a water flow from snow melt in late winter and early spring. There are no springs or surface water impoundments within Government Draw.

### Climatic Conditions

The climate is semi-humid. Annual precipitation at the Starkey Range Headquarters, 6.2 miles (10 km) south at 4150 feet (1265 m) is 20 inches (500 mm) and is bimodal, the peaks in December (2.68 inches) and May (2.32 inches). About 50 percent of annual precipitation is received as snow and the remainder in spring and fall rains; the mid-summer season is hot and dry. The growing season is approximately 120 days but frost can occur in any month. Maximum snow depth averages 20 inches (508 mm) but can range from zero to 42 inches (1066 mm) on March 1.

The nearest climatological station records are from Meacham, Oregon, 15 miles (24 km) north-northeast of the RNA at 3800 feet (1158 m). Personnel are no longer at the station, however, the U.S. weather service still collects temperature and precipitation data from the Meacham station. This station has been collecting data since the early 1930's. The long-time records, except for precipitation, are applicable to this area. They are:

Mean annual temperature	52.8 F	10.3 C
Mean January temperature	26.2 F	-3.0 C
Mean January minimum	20.1 F	-6.5 C
Mean July temperature	63.6 F	17.5 C
Mean July maximum	77.2 F	25.1 C
Mean annual precipitation	32.7	830 mm
Mean winter (Dec.-Mar.) precipitation	15.4	390 mm

\* U.S. Weather Service Data - Pendleton, Oregon

## DESCRIPTION OF VALUES

### 1. Flora

There are no known exceptional floral features in the Government Draw RNA. Species identifications that follow were determined from Hitchcock and Cronquist (1973).

The RNA has never been logged and, with fencing, has been protected from livestock grazing for 40 years. This period of protection is unknown for other Artemisia rigida (stiff sage) shrublands in eastern Oregon.

In the shrub and grass communities, the major forbs, graminoids, herbs and shrubs, by scientific and common names are summarized in Appendix II.

#### A. Shrub and Grass Communities:

In the shrub and grass communities, the major forbs are Achillea millefolium, Erigeron chrysopsidus, Grindelia nana, Antennaria luzuloides, and Sedum stenopetalum. A lush spring (vernal) flora is present in these communities in May and June. Fritillaria pudica, Sisyrinchium inflatum, Hesperiochiron pumila, Brodia douglasii, Allium tolmei, A. acuminatum, Mertensia longiflora, Lomatium cous, L. leptocarpum, L. gormanii, Delphinium depauperatum, Dodecatheon conjugens, Microseris nutans, and Lithophragma bulbifera are the more abundant species in this group.

Agropyron spicatum and Festuca idahoensis are present in the Artemisia dominated shrub communities and grow primarily beneath the shrubs where they escaped historical overgrazing. Other graminoids include Koeleria cristata and Stipa lettermanii in the bunchgrass communities and Danthonia californica, Deschampsia danthonioides, Agrostis diegoensis and Poa leibergii on "seep" sites of bunchgrass communities. These "seep" sites are commonly encountered on grassland slopes in the Blue Mountains where ground water surfaces from between basalt flows and maintains soil moisture into the summer season. Juncus tenuis is commonly the dominant species on these sites. Camassia quamash, Wyethia amplexicaulis, Allium fibrillum, and Besseyia rubra are the most common forb associates. Several "seep" sites occur within the RNA.



## B. Forested Communities

Trees that dominate the forested communities are grand fir, Douglas-fir, and ponderosa pine.

Major herbs in all forested communities are Calamagrostis rubescens, Festuca occidentalis, Carex geyerii, Carex concinnoides, Fragaria species, Hieracium species, Arnica cordifolia, and Lupinus species. In open canopied stands Calamagrostis, Festuca, Fragaria vesca, Hieracium albiflorum, Lupinus polyphyllus burkeii, and Carex concinnoides are commonly more abundant on the ash soils and Carex geyerii, Fragaria virginiana, Lupinus leucophyllus, and Hieracium albertinum on the residual soils. On the latter soils Calochortus elegans, Luzula campestris multiflora, Sedum stenopetolum, and Festuca idahoensis are locally abundant. As canopies become more dense on ash soils Pyrola secunda, Chimophilla umbellata, and Viola orbiculata are commonly encountered.

Arctostaphylos nevadensis, Symphoricarpus albus, Spireaea betulifolia and Vaccinium scoparium are the major shrubs. The first two are commonly more abundant on residual soils and the latter two on ash soils but all are present in one or more stands of each forest community in the RNA. Other shrubs commonly encountered are Vaccinium membranaceum, Berberis repens, Rosa gymnocarpa, R. nutkana, and Salix scouleriana.

### 2. Fauna

Animal populations of the RNA are unknown. Tentative lists of birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals observed or reported on the adjacent Starkey Experimental Forest and Range are given in the Appendices III-V.

### 3. Geology

The topography of the RNA has developed from dissection of basalt rock flows at the head of the north branch of Government Draw, a tributary of McCoy Creek. McCoy creek drains a major watershed of the Grande Ronde River system. Government Draw is on rock of the Columbia River Basalt Formation extruded during the Miocene.

### 4. Soils

Soils are derived from basalt residuum or colluvium or from volcanic ash deposited during the late Pleistocene over the basalt rock or residual soil. The soils of the area have been mapped. (Data and maps on file at the PNW Forestry and Range Sciences Lab at La Grande, Oregon). The Anatone very stony silt loam series (Lithic Argixeroll) is a very shallow residual soil supporting the grass and shrub communities. Three slope and aspect phases of this series are mapped. The Klicker silt loam series (Ultic argixeroll) is a deeper basalt-derived soil under forest vegetation. Two phases reflecting stoniness occur in the area. The Tolo silt loam series (Typic Vitrandept) are derived from volcanic ash. Within this series, two slope phases over buried soil have been mapped in Government Draw.

## 5. Lands

Government Draw RNA is completely surrounded by lands which are managed by the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Surrounding the RNA on three sides are Timber Production emphasis lands (Management Area 1) which are in various stages of harvest (USDA Forest Service 1990b). The goal of timber production lands is to emphasize high levels of wood production using a variety of treatments and investment levels. Past timber harvest focused on selective cutting of larger ponderosa pine, western larch and Douglas-fir. More recent cutting has emphasized the salvage of Douglas-fir and grand fir.

The southern boundary of the Government Draw RNA runs along the northern boundary of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range (Management Area 14). The area is allocated to research use and will be managed to protect existing research projects and provide for future research needs. This area also provides a variety of other benefits including timber and livestock forage when compatible with research uses and plans.

## 6. Cultural

There are no known cultural resources located within the Government Draw RNA.

## 7. Other Features of Importance

Historical grazing by sheep and cattle had a major impact on the RNA prior to 1954 when the site was fenced to exclude livestock. Livestock grazing began about the middle of the 19th century. In 1907, records from the adjacent Starkey Experimental Forest and Range show 1313 head of cattle and horses annually grazed six months to year-long resulting in a stocking rate of 1.5 acres (0.6 ha)/head/month. Proper stocking today is 12.15 acres (3.2 ha)/head/ month for a four-month summer season. The RNA was also most likely used by sheep in the early 1900's. It lies adjacent to the route annually traveled by sheep bands to and from summer range in the Elkhorn Mountains south of the RNA. Following the fencing in 1954, sampling indicated grassland community plant composition and production was below potential as a result of this historical pressure.

Human impact has been light since 1954. The purpose of the fencing was to maintain the RNA as a protected unit without livestock utilization of vegetation, yet allow measurement and observational research. Eighteen and 28 plots approximately 1/4 acre (0.1 ha) in size were established in grassland and forested communities, respectively (figure 5). Measurements of tree regeneration, growth and cover, understory plant composition, cover, biomass, and utilization by elk and deer, and days use by elk and deer were begun in 1956 and continued intermittently until 1966. Some biomass data was collected in 1977.

Big game hunting has been active on the RNA since the mid-1930's. Some damage to plant communities has been done by hunter vehicles driving over wet soils to retrieve harvested game. Annual herbage utilization by elk and deer is light, their use of the RNA mostly occurring during spring and fall migrations to and from the higher elevation summer range to the south.

## IMPACTS AND POSSIBLE CONFLICTS

### 1. Mineral Resources

There are no known mineral deposits on the area nor is there any evidence of geothermal activity. The area will be recommended for withdrawal from mineral entry following RNA approval.

### 2. Grazing

The RNA is adjacent to the Ensign Unit of the Dark Canyon-Ensign Cattle Allotment and borders the Starkey Cattle Allotment on the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range. Cattle trespass on the RNA from these allotments has historically been minor; however, a fence maintenance and rebuilding schedule will be required to maintain protection of the RNA from more recent and future trespass. Maintenance of the fence is critical for protection of the RNA values. Establishment will not hinder management of the two allotments but will, in fact, benefit the management of both by providing comparative data of ungrazed plant communities for range condition and trend analysis.

### 3. Timber

The establishment of the RNA will have minimal impact on timber production of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The RNA is small with a large population of low (V and VI) timber sites. Based on a calculated annual growth of 0.47 cubic meters (200 board feet) per year over the cutting cycle for the 131 forest acres (53 ha), this would reduce the 16MM board feet (39M cubic meters) annual cut of the La Grande District approximately 26,200 board feet (62 cubic meters) or 0.16 percent. Establishment will not hinder forest management activities or road system development of adjacent forest lands.

### 4. Watershed Values

There are no substantial watershed values present within the Government Draw RNA. Government Draw has a water flow from snow melt in late winter and early spring, but there are no springs or surface water impoundments within the RNA.

### 5. Recreation Values

Past recreation has been confined to big game hunting and such use is expected to continue. Posting of RNA boundary markers and removal of gates in the boundary fence along Forest Road 2120100 will deter hunters from driving on the RNA. Otherwise, hunting and other recreational use (hiking) will not interfere with the scientific and educational use of the RNA.

### 6. Wildlife and Plant Values

No known threatened or endangered wildlife or plant species occur within the RNA. The establishment of the area as an RNA will have no effect on wildlife or plant values.

### 7. Special Management Area Values

The RNA is adjacent to the boundary of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range. Location of the RNA will not impact the purposes or management for which the area was established.

8. Transportation Plans

Posting of RNA boundary markers and removal of gates in the boundary fence along Forest Road 2120100 will deter vehicle traffic within the RNA. The gate along the 2120100 road will also deter vehicle traffic. The transportation in the area will not be affected.

### MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTION

The objectives of protection and management of the RNA are to (1) maintain the unlogged nature of the RNA and to improve the condition of the vegetation and (2) ensure protection of the permanent plots established in 1954 for continuation of scientific studies.

Government Draw RNA is included, along with other RNAs, in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Plan in Management Area 12, Research Natural Areas (USDA Forest Service, 1990b). Standards and guidelines for management are noted in the Forest Plan by Management Area.

1. Vegetation Management

Standards and guidelines for RNAs, Management Area 12, address vegetation management under several different headings (USDA Forest Service, 1990b). The overall management direction for all RNAs is to preserve the naturally occurring physical and biological processes at the site.

Wildfire suppression activities will minimize site disturbance. The minimum acceptable suppression response will be "confine". Prescribed fires will be used only in conjunction with approved research projects (USDA Forest Service, 1990b).

Timber harvest will not occur. Grazing is not a planned use within the RNA. Maintenance will be limited to fence repair and replacement. Maintenance will be the responsibility of the La Grande Ranger District.

Monitoring forest health in the RNA and the surrounding forest is recommended. Introduced species and weedy native species are also a concern, and monitoring in the form of annual surveys should be conducted to detect invasions.

### ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS AND PROTECTION

The administration and protection of the RNA is the responsibility of the:

District Ranger  
La Grande Ranger District  
3502 Highway 30  
La Grande, OR 97850

1. Signing

Metal signs designating the research area will be posted on the fence boundary in accordance with Forest Service standards. Posting and maintenance of the signs and monuments will be

the responsibility of the La Grande Ranger District. After establishment, the boundary of the RNA will be shown on resource maps of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest and the La Grande Ranger District.

2. Archiving

The Forest and Range Habitat Laboratory (PNW) located in La Grande, Oregon will be responsible for maintaining the Government Draw research data file and list of herbarium and species samples collected.

3. Public and Scientific Use

Public (recreational) use will not be prohibited unless it becomes detrimental in maintaining the natural conditions or results in undue vandalism of research installations.

## REFERENCES CITED

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- Johnson, Charles G. Jr. and Rodrick R. Clausnitzer. 1992. Plant Associations of the Blue and Ochoco Mountains. USDA Forest Service R6-ERW-TP-036-92. 164 p.
- Kuchler, A.W. 1966. Manual to accompany the map, potential natural vegetation of the conterminous United States. American Geographical Society Special 36. (152 pages, 2nd edition. Map, 1975) New York.
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- USDA Forest Service, 1978. Species list: birds, mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians for the Forest Service. USDA Forest Service, Northern Region. 82 p.
- USDA Forest Service, 1990a. Final Environmental Impact Statement, Land and Resource Management Plan. Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Pacific Northwest Region.
- USDA Forest Service, 1990b. Land and Resource Management Plan. Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Pacific Northwest Region.
- USDA Forest Service, 1990c. Land and Resource Management Plan, Record of Decision. Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Pacific Northwest Region.

# GOVERNMENT DRAW RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

## APPENDIX I

### BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

La Grande Ranger District  
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

#### Definition of Intent

The legal description of the Government Draw Research Natural Area is as shown on the map dated 3-3-95 on file in the office of the Forest Land Surveyor, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. The approximate courses of the map boundaries are identified in the following legal description. Where the boundary is described as following a topographic or cultural feature, the actual location of the feature will control the approximate course identifying that part of said boundary.

The courses in the description are shown as grid bearings and grid distances. And are based on Oregon State Plane coordinate grid system, zone 3601, Oregon North zone, NAD 27. These courses were derived by digitizing the Government Draw Research Natural Area boundary, as drawn on the Bally Mountain quadrangle published by the U.S. Geological Survey, dated 1967, photorevised 1984, with additional information added in 1986 by U.S. Forest Service, Regional Office, Portland, Oregon. In addition, this particular quadrangle has been labeled "GOVERNMENT DRAW RESEARCH NATURAL AREA, Map 1 of 1, 3-3-95, ROG."

Government Draw Research Natural Area is located in a portion of the south 1/2 sec. 9, south 1/2 sec. 10, north 1/2 sec. 15 and the north 1/2 sec. 16, T. 3 S., R. 34 E., W.M., Union County, Oregon. More particularly described as follows:

GOVERNMENT DRAW RESEARCH NATURAL AREA  
Legal Description

ANGLE POINT	BEARING	DISTANCE IN FEET	DESCRIPTION
1			Beginning at a point, which is the intersection of the eight foot high Starkey elk fence (extending easterly and westerly) and a range fence (three strands of barbed wire, extending northeasterly), said intersection is approximately 700 feet westerly of the 1/4 sec. cor. of sec. 9 & 16, T. 3 S., R. 34 E., W.M., approximate State Plane coordinates of 605,417.19 North, 2,498,484.91 East,
2	N44/44/42.6E	1,107.67	thence along the range fence,
3	N43/01/30.5E	1,021.63	thence continuing along the range fence,
4	N81/54/13.8E	322.52	thence continuing along the range fence,
5	S82/06/54.1E	806.51	thence continuing along the range fence,
6	N60/46/34.1E	635.62	thence continuing along the range fence,
7	S75/11/14.4E	665.33	thence continuing along the range fence,
8	S88/29/58.2E	941.08	thence continuing along the range fence,
9	N73/44/35.4E	228.07	thence continuing along the range fence,
10	S55/01/57.3E	1,334.85	thence continuing along the range fence,
11	S65/34/35.1E	1,218.31	thence continuing along the range fence,
12	S41/07/10.5E	341.57	thence continuing along the range fence,
12			to the intersection of the range fence (three strands of barbed wire, extending northwesterly) with the eight foot high Starkey elk fence (extending easterly and westerly), said intersection has approximate State Plane coordinates of 605,538.90 North, 2,505,865.36 East,
13	S89/03/18.7W	3,837.43	thence along the Starkey fence,
13	S89/03/18.7W	3,544.03	thence continuing along the Starkey fence, to the point of beginning,
1			Angle Point #1, previously described. Containing 192 acres more or less.



LEGAL DESCRIPTION REVIEW

Case Name/Number GOVERNMENT DRAW

Forest, District WALLOWA-WHITMAN, La GRANDE

Type of Case Research Natural Area

This documents that the attached legal descriptions for the case referenced above were reviewed by me for use in a conveyance or area designation.

X The legals are acceptable as presented, and no potential problems were noted during my review.

       The legals have potential problems as noted below, however the risk appears minor and conveyance or area designation may proceed.

       The legals have potential problems and should not be used in a conveyance or area designation. The following errors and/or concerns need to be corrected/addressed before this description may be used:

Other Comments:

Reviewed by: Roger Green  
Roger Green  
FOREST LAND SURVEYOR

Date: 3-31-95

Professional Registration Number/State: 2211 Oregon

GOVERNMENT DRAW

APPENDIX II

Tentative list of Flora of the Government Draw RNA Forested Plant Community:

References: E.L. Little (1979) and Hitchcock, C.L. and A. Cronquist (1973)

Scientific Name	Common Name
<u>Abies grandis</u> (Dougl.) Forbes	grand fir
<u>Acer glabrum</u> Torr.	mountain maple
<u>Achillea millefolium</u> L.	yarrow
<u>Arctostaphylos nevadensis</u> Gray	kinnickinnick
<u>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</u> (L.) Spreng.	bearberry
<u>Arnica cordifolia</u> Hook.	heart-leaf arnica
<u>Balsamorhiza sagittata</u> (Pursh) Nutt.	arrow leaf balsamroot
<u>Berberis repens</u> Lindl.	creeping Oregon grape
<u>Calochortus elegans</u> Pursh	northwest cats-ear or mariposa
<u>Carex concinnoides</u> Mack	northwest sedge
<u>Carex geyeri</u> Bott	elk sedge
<u>Calamagrostis rubescens</u> Buckl.	pinegrass
<u>Chimaphila umbellata</u> (L.) Bart	prince's pine
<u>Cirsium arvense</u> (L.) Scop.	creeping thistle
<u>Cirsium vulgare</u> (Savi) Tenore	bull thistle
<u>Cynoglossum officinale</u> (L.)	hound's tongue
<u>Festuca idahoensis</u> L.	Idaho fescue
<u>Festuca occidentalis</u> Hook	western fescue
<u>Fragaria vesca</u> L.	woods strawberry
<u>Fragaria virginiana</u> Duchense	strawberry
<u>    platypetala</u> (Rydb.) Hall	broadpetal strawberry
<u>Frasera speciosa</u> Dougl.	giant frasera
<u>Galium</u> L.	bedstraw
<u>Geum triflorum</u> Pursh	prairie smoke
<u>Goodyera oblongifolia</u> Raf.	western rattlesnake plantain
<u>Heuchera cylindrica</u> Dougl.	alumroot
<u>Hieracium albertinum</u> Farr	western hawkweed
<u>Hieracium albiflorum</u> Hook	white flowered hawkweed
<u>Holodiscus discolor</u> (Pursh) Maxim.	oceanspray
<u>Larix occidentalis</u> Nutt	western larch
<u>Linna borealis</u> L.	twinflower
<u>Lupinus</u> L.	lupine
<u>Lupinus leucophyllus</u> Dougl.	velvet lupine
<u>Lupinus polyphyllus</u> var.	
<u>    burkei</u> (Wats) Hitch.	large-leaved lupine
<u>Luzula campestris</u> var.	
<u>    multiflora</u> (Ehrh.) Celak.	field woodrush
<u>Osmorhiza chilensis</u> H. & A.	sweet-cicely
<u>Pinus contorta</u> Dougl.	lodgepole pine
<u>Pinus ponderosa</u> Dougl.	ponderosa pine

Polystichum munitum (Kaulf.) Presl.  
RNA Forested Plant Community Continued.

sword fern

Potentilla L.  
Prunella vulgaris L.  
Pseudotsuga menziesii(Mirbel) Franco  
Pyrola secunda L.  
Ribes cereum Dougl.  
Rosa gymnocarpa Nutt.  
Rosa nutkana Presl.  
Salix scouleriana Barratt  
Sidalcea oregana (Nutt) Gray  
Spirea betulifolia Pall  
Syphoricarpus albus (L.) Blake  
Thermopsis montana Nutt  
Trautvetteria caroliniensis (Walt.) Vail  
Urtica dioica L.  
Vaccinium membranaceum Dougl.  
Vaccinium scoparium Leiberg  
Viola L.  
Viola orbiculata Geyer  
Zigadenus venenosus Wats.

Cinquefoil  
self-heal  
Douglas-fir  
sidebells pyrola  
wax current  
wild rose  
nootka rose  
scouler willow  
checker-mallow  
spirea  
snowberry  
golden pea  
false bugbane  
stinging nettle  
big huckleberry  
grouse huckleberry  
violet  
darkwoods violet  
meadow death camas

Tentative list of Flora of the Government Draw RNA Grassland and Shrubland Communities:

Scientific Name	Common Name
<u>Achillea millefolium</u> L.	yarrow
<u>Agropyron spicatum</u> (Pursh) Scribn. & Smith	wheatgrass
<u>Agostis diegonesis</u> Vasey	thin bentgrass
<u>Allium acuminatum</u> Hook	tapertip onion
<u>Allium fibrillum</u> Jones	fringed onion
<u>Allium tolmiei</u> Baker	Tolmie's onion
<u>Antennaria</u> sp. Gaertn.	pussy-toes, everlasting
<u>Antennaria luzuloides</u> T. & G.	woodrush pussy-toes
<u>Artemesia rigida</u> (Nutt.) Gray	stiff sage
<u>Besseyia rubra</u> (dougl.) Rydb.	red Besseyia
<u>Brodiaea douglasii</u> Wats	Douglas brodiaea
<u>Bromus brizaformis</u> Fisch. & Mey.	rattlesnake grass
<u>Bromus mollis</u> L.	soft brome or chess
<u>Bromus japonicus</u> Thunb.	Japanese brome or chess
<u>Bromus vulgaris</u> (Hook.) Shear	Columbia brome
<u>Camassia quamash</u> (Pursch) Green	common camas
<u>Castilleja oresbia</u> Greenm.	pale, Wallowa paintbrush
<u>Collomia grandiflora</u> Dougl.	large flowered collomia
<u>Collomia linearis</u> Nutt.	narrow-leaf collomia
<u>Danthonia californica</u> Boland.	California oatgrass
<u>Delphinium depauperatum</u> Nutt.	dwarf larkspur
<u>Delphinium nuttalianum</u> Pritz.	larkspur

RNA Grassland and Shrubland Communities Continued.

<u>Deschampsia danthonioides</u> (Trin.) Munro (Airad.)	annual hairgrass
<u>Dodecatheon conjugens</u> Green	desert shooting star
<u>Draba verna</u> L.	draba, whitlow-grass
<u>Epilobium minutum</u> Lindl.	small flowered willow-herb
<u>Erigeron</u> L.	daisy, fleabane
<u>Erigeron chrysopsidis</u> Gray	dwarf yellow fleabane
<u>Erythronium grandiflora</u> Pursh	yellow fawn-lily
<u>Fritillaria pudica</u> (Pursh) Spreng.	yellow bell
<u>Geum triflorum</u> Pursh	prairie smoke
<u>Grindelia nana</u> Nutt.	low gumweed
<u>Haplopappus</u> Cass.	bristleweed; goldenweed
<u>Hesperochiron pumilus</u> (Griseb.) Porter	dwarf hesperochiron, eveningstar
<u>Iris missouriensis</u> Nutt.	western blue flag
<u>Juncus tenuis</u> Willd.	rush
<u>Koeleria cristata</u> Pers.	prairie Junegrass
<u>Lewisia rediviva</u> Pursh	bitterroot
<u>Lithophragma bulbifera</u> Rydb.	rocketstar, prairie star
<u>Lomatium cous</u> (Wats.) Coult. & Rose	cous biscuit-root
<u>Lomatium leptocarpum</u> (T. & G.) Coult. & Rose	slender-leaf lomatium
<u>Lomatium gormanii</u> (Howell) Coult. & Rose	Gorman's lomatium or desert parsley
<u>Lomatium grayi</u> Coult. & Rose	Grays lomatium or desert parsley
<u>Lomatium macrocarpum</u> (Nutt.) Coult. & Rose	large fruit lomatium
<u>Lupinus polyphyllus</u> Lindl.	big-leaf lupine
<u>Lupinus sulfureus</u> Dougl.	sulfur lupine
<u>Madia</u> Mol.	tarweed
<u>Mertensia longiflora</u> Greene	small bluebells, long-flowered b.
<u>Microseris nutans</u> (Geyer) Schultz-Bip.	nodding microseris
<u>Microseris troximoides</u> Gray	false agoseris
<u>Myosotis discolor</u> Pers.	yellow & blue forget-me-not
<u>Navarretia</u> R. & P.	navarretia
<u>Orobanche</u> L.	broomrape; cancer-root
<u>Orthocarpus</u> Nutt.	owl-clover
<u>Penstemon deustus</u> Dougl.	hot-rock penstemon
<u>Poa</u> L.	bentgrass
<u>Poa leibergii</u> Scribn.	Leiberg's bluegrass
<u>Polygonum douglasii</u> Green	Douglas' knotweed
<u>Potentilla gracilis</u> Dougl.	cinquefoil
<u>Sedum stenopetalum</u> Pursh	wormleaf sedum
<u>Selaginella watsonii</u> Underw.	Watson's selaginella
<u>Silene</u> L.	catchfly, wild pink
<u>Sisyrinchium inflatum</u> (Sukod.) St. John	purple-eyed grass
<u>Sitanion hystrix</u> (Nutt.) Smith	bottlebrush squirrel-tail
<u>Stipa lettermanii</u> Vasey	Letterman's needlegrass
<u>Tragopogon dubius</u> Scop.	yellow salsify
<u>Wyethia amplexicaulis</u> Nutt.	northern w. or mule's-ear

<sup>1</sup>C.L. Hitchcock and A. Conquist (1973), FLORA OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. Seattle, WA.:  
University of Washington Press, 1973.

APPENDIX III

Tentative list of birds on the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range.

<u>Scientific Name 1/</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
<u>Branta canadensis</u>	Canada Goose
<u>Anas platyrhynchos platyrhynchos</u>	Mallard
<u>Mergus merganser americanus</u>	American Merganser
<u>Cathartes aura</u>	Turkey Vulture
<u>Accipiter cooperi</u>	Coopers' Hawk
<u>Astur atricapillus</u>	Goshawk
<u>Buteo swainsoni</u>	Swainson's Hawk
<u>Buteo borealis</u>	Red-tailed Hawk
<u>Falco sparverius</u>	Sparrow Hawk
<u>Aquila chrysaetos canadensis</u>	Golden Eagle
<u>Haliceetus leucocephalus</u>	Bald Eagle
<u>Bonasa umbellus</u>	Ruffed Grouse
<u>Dendragapus obscurus richardsoni</u>	Blue Grouse
<u>Bartramia longicauda</u>	Upland Plover
<u>Actitis macularia</u>	Spotted Sandpiper
<u>Capella delicata</u>	Wilson's Snipe
<u>Zenaidura macroura marginella</u>	Mourning Dove
<u>Bubo virginianus</u>	Great Horned Owl
<u>Asio flammeus flammeus</u>	Short-eared Owl
<u>Scotiaptex nebulosa nebulosa</u>	Great Grey Owl
<u>Cryptoglaux acadica acadica</u>	Saw-whet Owl
<u>Glaucidium gnoma</u>	Pygmy Owl
<u>Asio wilsonianus</u>	Long-eared Owl
<u>Chordeiles minor</u>	Nighthawk
<u>Chaetura vauxi</u>	Vaux's Swift
<u>Megaceryle alcyon</u>	Belted Kingfisher
<u>Ceophleus pileatus picinus</u>	Pileated Woodpecker
<u>Colaptes auratus luteus</u>	Yellow-shafted Flicker
<u>Colaptes cafer</u>	Red-shafted Flicker
<u>Dryobates villosus</u>	Hairy Woodpecker
<u>Picoides arcticus</u>	Black-backed Three-toed Woodpecker
<u>Empidonax oberholseri</u>	Dusky Flycatcher
<u>Empidonax hammondi</u>	Hammond's Flycatcher
<u>Otocoris alpestris</u>	Horned Lark
<u>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</u>	Rough-winged Swallow
<u>Hirundo erythrogaster</u>	Barn Swallow
<u>Perisoreus obscurus griscus</u>	Gray Jay
<u>Cyanocitta stelleri</u>	Steller's Jay
<u>Pica pica hudsonia</u>	Magpie
<u>Nucifraga colombiana</u>	Clark's Nutcracker
<u>Corvus corax</u>	Raven
<u>Penthestes gambeli</u>	Mountain Chickadee
<u>Penthestes atricapillus</u>	Black-capped Chickadee
List of Birds, Continued.	

Scientific Name 1/Common Name

Cinclus mexicanus unicolor  
Sitta carolinensis  
Sitta canadensis  
Nannus hiemalis pacificus  
Certhia familiaris  
Turdus migratorius  
Ixoreus naevius  
Hylocichla guttata  
Sialia currucoides  
Sialia mexicana  
Myadestes townsend  
Regulus satrapa olivaceus  
Sturnus vulgaris vulgaris  
Vireo solitarius  
Dendroica auduboni  
Wilsonia pusilla  
Dendroica aestiva  
Oporornis tolmiei  
Sternella neglecta  
Euphagus cyanocephalus  
Agelaius phoeniceus  
Molothrus ater  
Piranga ludoviciana  
Spinus pinus pinus  
Carpodacus cassinii  
Loxia curvirostra  
Passerculus sandwichensis  
Poaetes gramineus  
Spizella passerina arizonae  
Melospiza melodia  
Junco oreganus  
Selaspaorus rufus

Dipper  
White-breasted Nuthatch  
Red-breasted Nuthatch  
Winter Wren  
Brown Creeper  
Robin  
Varied Thrush  
Hermit Thrush  
Mountain Bluebird  
Western Bluebird  
Townsend's Solitaire  
Golden Crowned Kinglet  
Starling  
Solitary Vireo  
Audubon's Warbler  
Wilson's Warbler  
Yellow Warbler  
MacGillivray's Warbler  
Meadowlark  
Brewer's Blackbird  
Redwing Blackbird  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Western Tanager  
Pine Siskin  
Cassin's Finch  
Red Crossbill  
Savannah Sparrow  
Vesper Sparrow  
Chipping Sparrow  
Song Sparrow  
Oregon Junco  
Rufus Hummingbird

1/ Nomenclature follows USDA Forest Service 1978.

## APPENDIX IV

Tentative list of amphibians and reptiles on the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range. 1/

<u>Scientific Name 1/</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
<u>Ambystoma macrodactylum</u>	Long-toed Salamander
<u>Rana pretiosa luteiventris</u>	Great Basin Spotted Frog
<u>Hyla regilla</u>	Pacific Tree Frog
<u>Bufo boreas boreas</u>	Boreal Toad
<u>Thamnophis elegans vagrans</u>	Wandering Garter Snake
<u>Thamnophis sirtalis fitchi</u>	Valley Garter Snake
<u>Eumeces skiltonianus</u>	Western Skink
<u>Sceloporus occidentalis</u>	Western Fence Lizard
<u>Charina bottae</u>	Rubber Boa
<u>Crotalus viridis oregonus</u>	Northern Pacific Rattlesnake

1/ Nomenclature follows USDA Forest Service 1978.



Appendix V

Tentative list of mammals on the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range.

<u>1/</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>
ORDER		
Artiodactyla	<u>Cervis canadensis</u> <u>Odocoileus h. hemionus</u>	Elk or Wapiti Mule Deer
Carnivora	<u>Canis latrans</u> <u>Felis concolor</u> <u>Lynx Rufus</u> <u>Mustella erminea</u> <u>Mustella frenata</u> <u>Mustella vison</u> <u>Procyon lotor</u> <u>Taxidea taxus</u> <u>Ursa americanus</u>	Coyote Cougar Bobcat Short-tailed Weasel Long-tailed Weasel Mink Raccoon Badger Black Bear
Rodentia	<u>Castor canadensis</u> <u>Clethrionomys gapperi</u> <u>Erethizon dorsatum</u> <u>Eutamias amoenus</u> <u>Glaucomys sabrinus</u> <u>Microtus longicaudus</u> <u>Microtus montanus</u> <u>Neotoma cinerea</u> <u>Peromyscus maniculatus</u> <u>Spermophilus columbianus</u> <u>Spermophilus lateralis</u> <u>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</u> <u>Thomomys talpoides</u> <u>Zapus princeps</u>	Beaver Gapper Red-backed Vole Porcupine Yellow-pine Chipmunk Northern Flying Squirrel Long-tailed Vole Montane Vole Bushy-tailed Woodrat Deer Mouse Columbian Ground Squirrel Mantled Ground Squirrel Red Squirrel Northern Pocket Gopher Western Jumping Mouse
Lagomorpha	<u>Lepus americanus</u> <u>Sylvilagus nuttalli</u>	Snowshoe Hare Mountain Cottontail
Chiroptera	<u>Astroozous pallidus</u> <u>Eptesicus fuscus</u> <u>Lasionycteris noctivagans</u> <u>Lasiurus cinereus</u> <u>Myotis californicus</u> <u>Myotis evotis</u> <u>Myotis lucifugus</u> <u>Myotis volans</u> <u>Plecotus townsendi</u>	Pallid Bat Big Brown Bat Silver-haired Bat Hoary Bat California Myotis Long-eared Myotis Little Brown Myotis Long-legged Myotis Townsend Long-eared Bat
Insectivora	<u>Sorex obscurus</u> <u>Sorex palustris</u> <u>Sorex preblei</u> <u>Sorex vagrans</u> <u>Sorex orarius</u>	Dusky Shrew Northern Water Shrew Malheur Shrew Wandering Shrew Coast Mole

1/ Nomenclature follows USDA Forest Service, 1978.



**CLASS 8**

**Public Notices 8**

### Notice of Decision

On May 16, 2000, USDA, Forest Service, Regional Forester for the Pacific Northwest Region (Portland, Oregon) made a decision to establish a 192 acre Government Draw Research Natural Area on the La Grande Ranger District of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in Union County, Oregon. This decision will be implemented after May 26, 2000.

A copy of the Decision Notice/Designation Order and Finding of No Significant Impact is available upon request from the Regional Office, Environmental Coordination, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, Oregon 97208.

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulation 36 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 217. Any written notice of Appeal must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (content of a Notice of Appeal) and must include the reasons for appeal. Any written appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer, Chief Mike Dombeck, USDA - Forest Service, ATTN: NFS Appeals, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090 within 45 days of the date of this legal newspaper notice.

For further information regarding Government Draw RNA, contact Jim Barrett, Landscape Ecologist, La Grande Ranger District, 3502 Highway 30, La Grande, Oregon 97850, phone 541-962-8535.

DECISION NOTICE / DESIGNATION ORDER  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

For

**Government Draw Research Natural Area**  
(Forest Plan Amendment No. 27)

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
La Grande Ranger District  
Union County, Oregon

Introduction

Research natural areas (RNA's) are designated for research and educational opportunities, to maintain biological diversity on National Forest System lands, and are selected to complete a national network of ecological areas.

Each RNA is designated based on three major objectives: (1) to preserve examples of all significant natural ecosystems for comparison with those areas influence by humans; (2) to provide educational and research areas for ecological and environmental studies and monitoring; and (3) to preserve gene pools for typical and rare and endangered plants and animals.

Government Draw was originally proposed for RNA designation by the USDA, Pacific Northwest Natural Area Committee in 1971, with an Establishment Report prepared in 1980 and revised in 1994. The Government Draw area still maintains all the qualities unique for RNA designation. The proposed area will contribute to the national network of RNA's by provide an example of two important plant communities for scientific research in the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon. Those communities are: (1) the Sandberg bluegrass-onespike oatgrass community; and (2) the stiff sagebrush grassland community. In addition, it provides representation of Ponderosa pine/pinegrass, Douglas-fir-Ponderosa pine/pinegrass, and grand fir/thinleaf huckleberry communities. The Government Draw proposed RNA would therefore preserve one example of a significant natural ecosystem, would preserve gene pools for this community type, and provide an educational and research area for study of these unique ecosystems.

Decision

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Chief of the Forest Service, in Forest Service Manual 4063, I hereby select Alternative A and establish, as surveyed, the 192 acre (77 hectare) Government Draw RNA. The Forest Plan is hereby amended to change the Government Draw RNA from a "proposed" RNA to an "established" RNA. This is a non-significant amendment (Amendment No. 27) to the 1990 Wallowa-

Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). This RNA is approximately 40 miles west of La Grande, Oregon [T.3S., R.34E., Sections 9 and 10, in Union County] [See Maps 1 and 2].

Alternative A is selected because it provides long-term protection and recognition of the Sandberg bluegrass-onespike oatgrass community and the stiff sagbrush grassland community. Besides fulfilling scientific study needs for two plant community types the following elements make this RNA an unique value: (1) It has been protected from livestock grazing since 1954, has never been logged, and plant communities have had forty years of undisturbed successional development. This is particularly important for the stiff sagebrush community as this period of protection is rare for these Eastern Oregon shrub lands. (2) Forty-six permanent macro plots were established in 1954 and measured every three years until 1966, with some measured until 1977. These macro plots provide baseline data on under story plant species composition, cover, and biomass. In addition, other baseline data on big game use, wildlife use, forest canopy, and regeneration density are available for intermittent periods beginning in 1954.

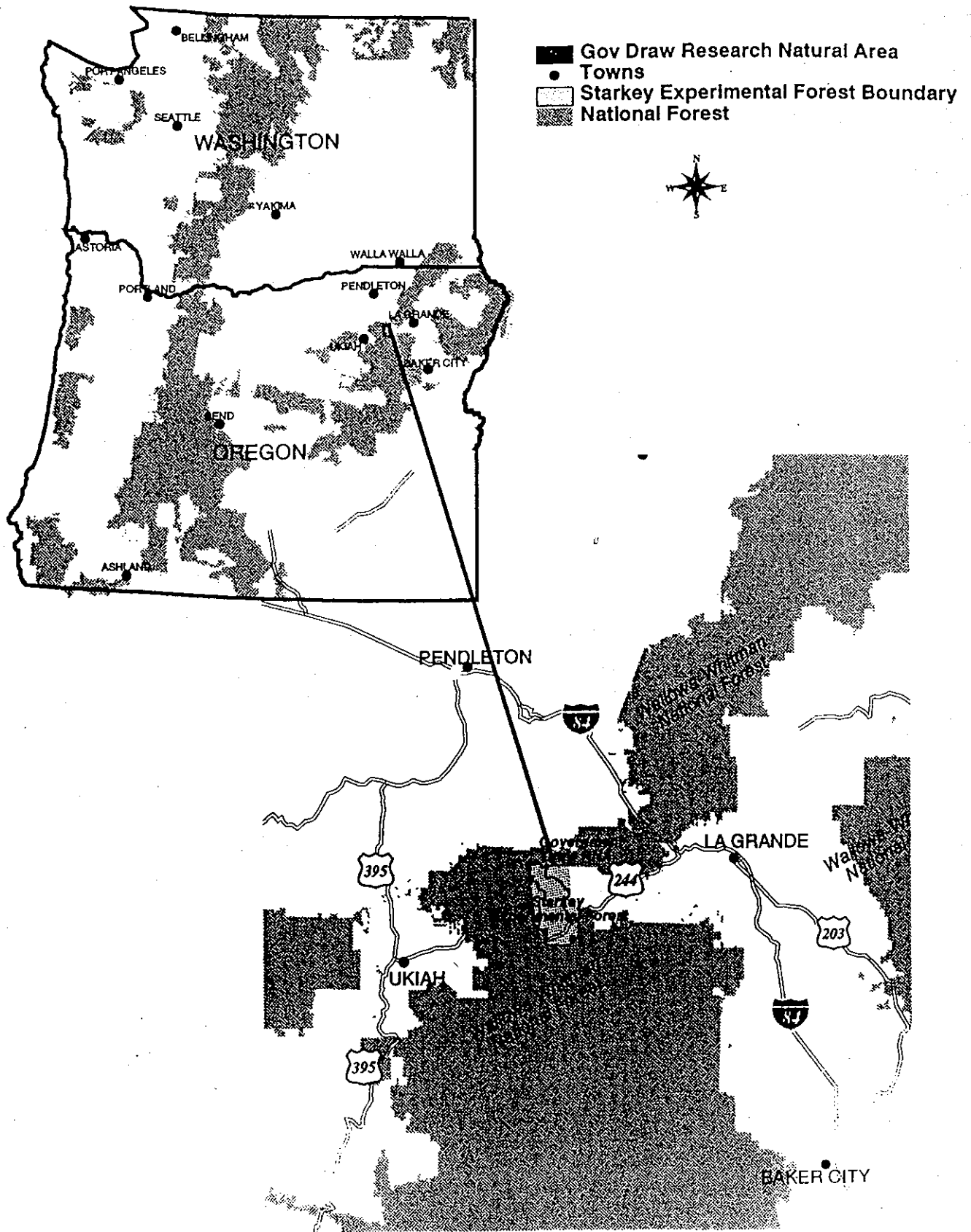
Once designated as a RNA, management of the area will be followed as outlined in the Forest Plan [pp. 4-83 – 4-85]. The objective is to maintain the natural condition of the area. No forest products or minerals will be removed, livestock will continue to be excluded, fire activity will be limited to suppression only, off road vehicles will be excluded, and recreation use will be managed at a low intensity level.

There are no known major mineral resources within the area. Recreation use is light, consists of big game hunting that is expected to continue. Loss of timber utilization is minimal due to the small acreage involved. There are no threatened or endangered plants or animals known in the area, and there are no roads or trails nor is the need for roads and trails expected in the RNA. Environmental effects as disclosed in the final environmental impact statement [EIS] for the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan [LRMP] are still valid [FEIS, pp. 61, 72, 78, 83, and 85].

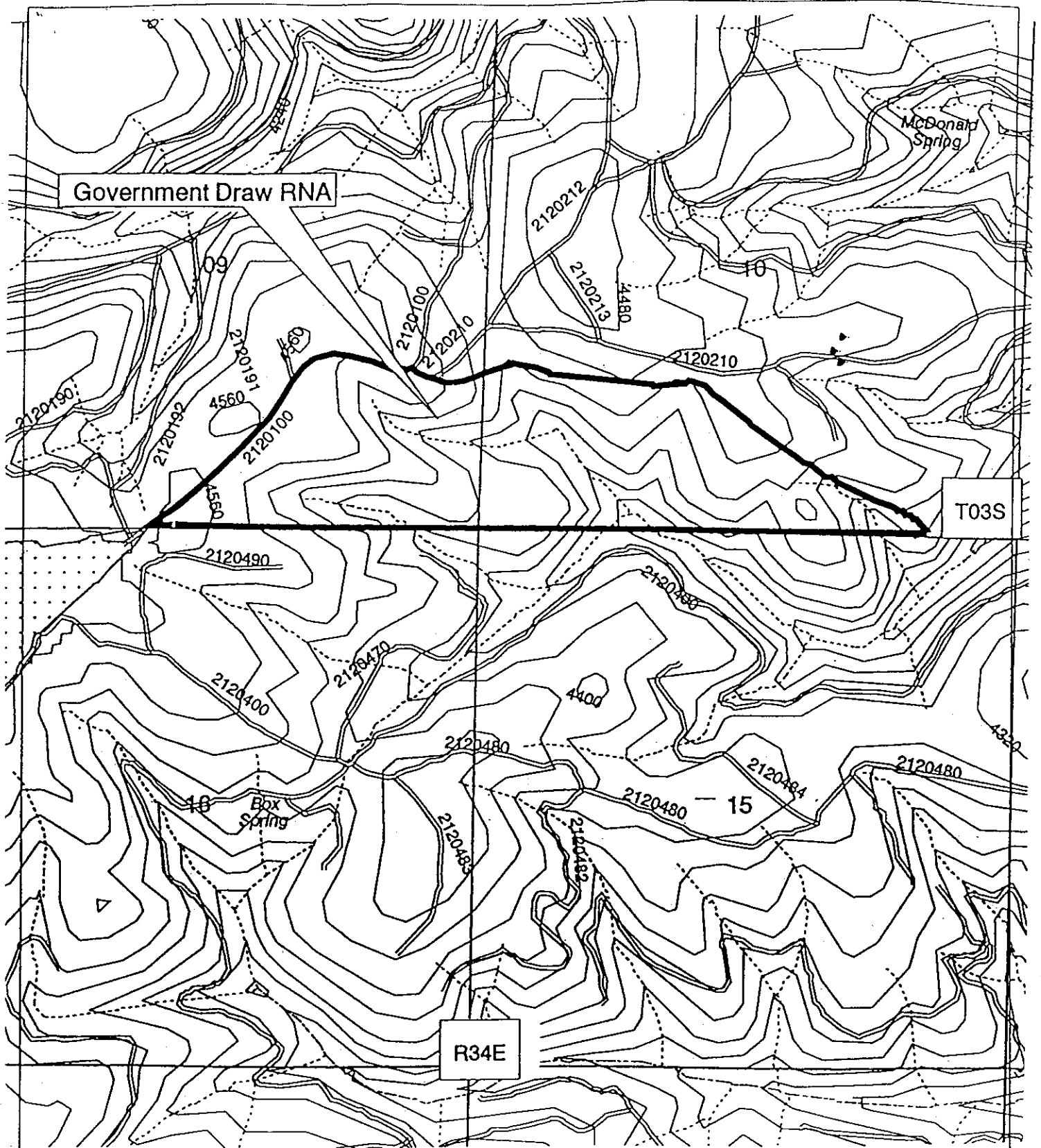
### Public Involvement

The proposal to establish the Government Draw RNA was considered during the development of the 1990 final LRMP and Forest Plan. Comments received from interested and affected members of the public supported establishment of this RNA.

The environmental analysis to establish Government Draw RNA was announced in both the July 15, 1994 and October 15, 1994 La Grande Ranger District quarterly publication—"Schedule of Proposed Actions" (SOPA). A "scoping letter" that identified and explained this RNA proposal was mailed to the public in September 15, 1994. No comments were received during the 30-day review period of the Environmental Assessment.



Map 1 - Map of the locality of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range and Government Draw RNA in northeast Oregon.



Map 2 - Map and topographic detail of the Government Draw Research Natural Area, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Oregon

## Other Alternative Considered

**Alternative B—No Action.** Under this alternative the Government Draw area proposed for RNA status would remain as a “proposed RNA”. This alternative was not selected because it would not provide long-term protection of the area’s unique features.

## Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the environmental analysis documented in this environmental assessment, this decision is not a major federal action that would affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. This determination is based on the following factors (40 CFR 1508.27).

### Context

\*Although this is an addition to the national network of RNAs, both short-term and long-term physical and biological effects are limited to the local area (Establishment Report, pp 4-10). The area affected is small in proportion to the forest as a whole. This decision will require a non-significant amendment to the Forest Plan [36 CFR 219.10(f)].

### Intensity

\*There are no known effects on public health and safety.

\*There are no known effects on historical or cultural resources, actual or eligible National Register of Historic Places, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers. No significant adverse effects are anticipated to any environmentally sensitive or critical area [Establishment Report, pp. 8-10; EA, p.2]. This designation is not an “understaking” [36 CFR 800.2(o)]. See district archaeologist letter, 9/21/94, EA appendix.

\*Effects on the human environment are not uncertain, do not involve unique or unknown risks, and are not likely to be highly controversial.

\*The actions is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects

\*No significant direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to the natural resources or other components of the human environment are anticipated. There are no known irreversible or irretrievable resource losses from this decision.

\*The decision will not adversely affect any federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species or regionally sensitive species of plants or animals or their critical habitat [Establishment Report, pp. 6-9].

\*The proposed action is consistent with Federal, State, and local laws and requirements for the protection of the environment.

Implementation

Implementation of this decision shall not occur within seven days following publication of the legal notice of the decision in the newspaper of record—The Oregonian.

The Forest Supervisor of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest will notify the public of this decision and mail a copy of the Decision Notice/Designation Order to all persons interested in or affected by the decision.

Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 217. A copy of the Notice of Appeal must be in writing and submitted to:

Chief, USDA Forest Service  
ATTN: NFS Appeals  
14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue, S.W.  
P. O. Box 96090  
Washington, D.C. 20090-6090

Any written Notice of appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 [Content of a Notice of Appeal] must include the reasons for appeal and be submitted within 45 days from the date of legal notice of this decision in The Oregonian.

Contact Person

For more information on Government Draw RNA, contact Jim Barrett, Landscape Ecologist, La Grande Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, phone [541] 962-8535.



HARV FORSGREN  
Regional Forester  
Pacific Northwest Region

May 16, 2000

Date

(For) Nancy Graybeal  
Deputy Regional  
Forester



Environmental Assessment  
For Designation of

Government Draw Research Natural Area

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
La Grande Ranger District  
Union County, Oregon

Purpose and Need for Action

Research natural areas (RNA'S) are designated for research and educational opportunities, to maintain biological diversity on National Forest land, and are selected to complete a national network of ecological areas. Establishment of research natural areas has been sanctioned in the code of federal regulations (CFR) in sections 7 CFR 2.42, 36 CFR 251.23, and 36 CFR 219.25. Direction for establishment is provided in Forest Service Manual 4063 and in "A Guide for Developing Natural Area Management and Monitoring Plans" written by the Pacific Northwest Interagency Natural Area Committee. As stated in this guide each RNA is designated based on three major objectives: 1) To preserve examples of all significant natural ecosystems for comparison with those areas influence by humans; 2) to provide educational and research areas for ecological and environmental studies and monitoring; and 3) to preserve gene pools for typical and rare and endangered plants and animals.

Government Draw was originally proposed for RNA designation by the Pacific Northwest Natural Area Committee, USDA, in 1971, with an establishment report prepared in 1980 and revised in 1994. The Government Draw area still maintains all the qualities unique for RNA designation. The proposed area will contribute to the national network of RNA's by providing an example of two important plant communities for scientific research in the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon. Those communities are: 1) The Sandberg bluegrass-onespike oatgrass community and 2) the stiff sagebrush grassland community. In addition, it provides representation of ponderosa pine/pinegrass, Douglas-fir-ponderosa pine/pinegrass, and grand fir/thinleaf huckleberry communities. The Government Draw proposed RNA would therefore preserve one example of a significant natural ecosystem, would preserve gene pools for this community type and provide an educational and research area for study of these unique ecosystems.

Besides fulfilling scientific study needs for two plant community types the following elements make the proposed RNA of unique value:

- 1) It has been protected from livestock grazing since 1954, has never been logged, and plant communities have had forty years of undisturbed successional development. This is particularly important for the stiff sagebrush communities as this period of protection is rare for these eastern Oregon shrublands.
- 2) Forty-six permanent macro plots were established in 1954 and measured every three years until 1966, with some measured until 1977. These macro plots provide baseline data on understory plant species composition, cover, and biomass. In addition, other baseline data on big game use, wildlife use, forest canopy, and regeneration density are available for intermittent periods beginning in 1954.

There are no known significant mineral resources within the area. Recreation use is light, consists of big game hunting, and is expected to continue. Loss of timber utilization is minimal due to the small acreage involved. There are no threatened or endangered plants or animals known in the area, and there are no roads or trails nor is the need for roads or trails expected in the RNA.

#### Proposed Action

The proposed action is to establish a 192 acre parcel on National Forest land as the Government Draw Research Natural Area. This parcel was proposed for establishment as an RNA in the April, 1990, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). Once established, a management plan would be developed for the Government Draw RNA to maintain or enhance the plant communities represented within this area. The proposed action and formal designation of the RNA by the Regional Forester will amend the Forest Plan.

#### Alternatives and effects of implementation

##### Alternative A, Proposed Action:

This alternative will designate in perpetuity 192 acres of National Forest land near Bally Mountain as the Government Draw Natural Research Area. The location of the proposed area is on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, approximately 40 miles west of La Grande, OR, in T.3S., R.34E., Sec. 9 & 10 (see Fig. 1 & 2). Once established, a management plan specific to the Government Draw area will be written. Interim management of the area will be followed as outlined in the Forest Plan, pages 4-84 and 85. The objective is to maintain the natural condition of the area. No forest products or minerals will be removed, livestock will continue to be excluded, fire activity will be limited to suppression only, off road vehicles will be excluded, and recreation use will be managed at a low intensity level. Environmental consequences disclosed in the Forest Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement are still valid and conditions and effects have not changed.

The effects of establishing the Government Draw RNA are described in the Forest Plan, pages 4-84 and 85. Management strategies will change under the establishment, however no adverse or irreversible environmental consequences are expected.

##### Alternative B, No Action:

Under this alternative the Government Draw area proposed for RNA status would remain as a proposed RNA and continue to be protected from uses which would reduce its suitability for RNA designation. This management direction is listed in the Forest Plan, pages 4-84 to 85, and will remain in effect until there is a new Forest Plan or there is an amendment to this portion of the Forest Plan.

#### Consultation with others

The proposed to establish the Government Draw RNA was considered during the development of the 1990 final Land and Resource Management Plan and Forest Plan. Comments received from interested and affected members of the public supported establishment of RNA's.

The environmental analysis to establish (designated) the Government Draw RNA's was announced in both the July 15, 1994 and October 15, 1994 La Grande Ranger District quarterly publication-- "Schedule of Proposed Actions". A "scoping letter" that identified and explained this RNA proposal was mailed to members of the public in September 15, 1994. No comments were received during the 30 day review period of the Environmental Assessment.

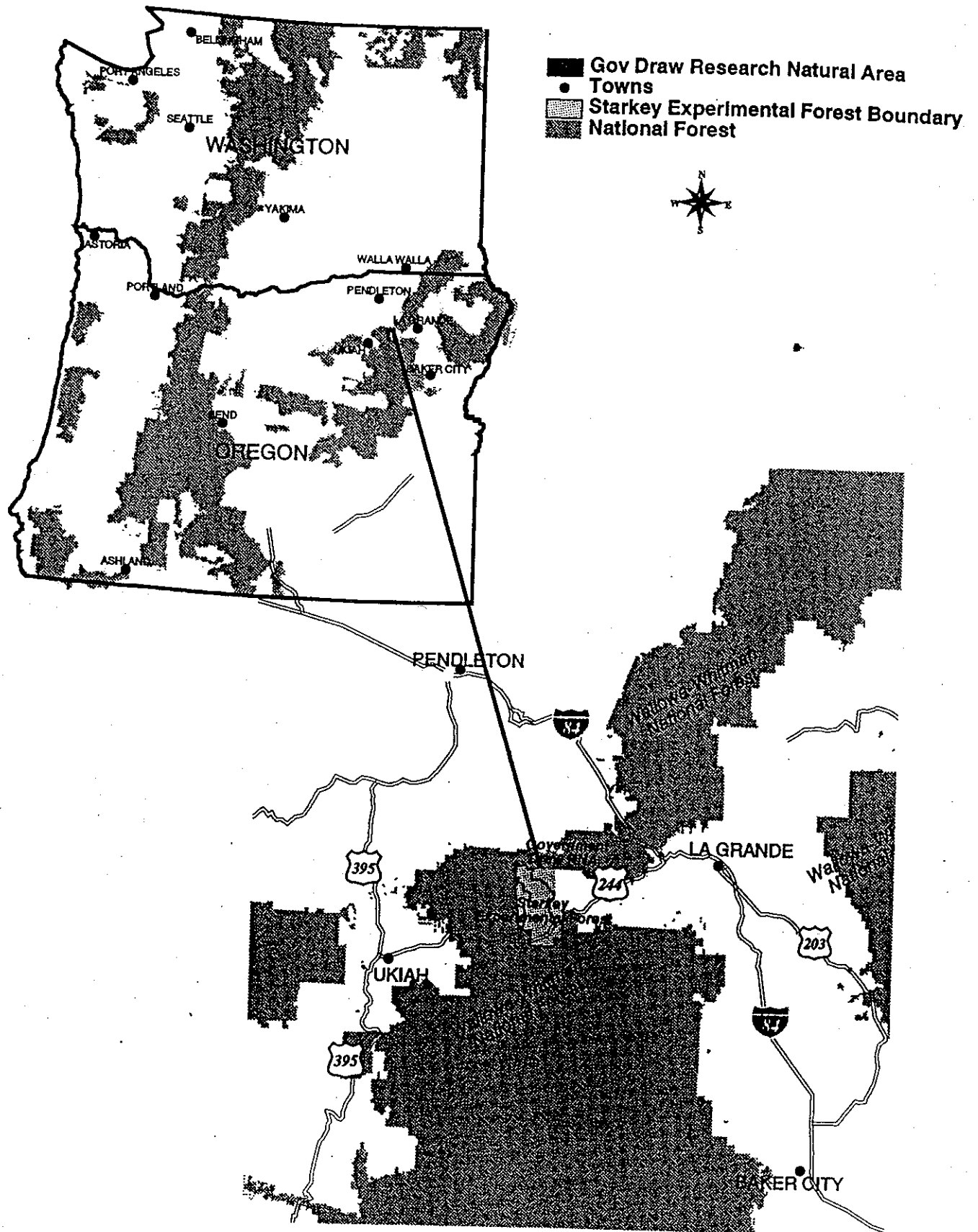


Figure 1. Map of the locality of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range and Government Draw RNA in northeast Oregon.

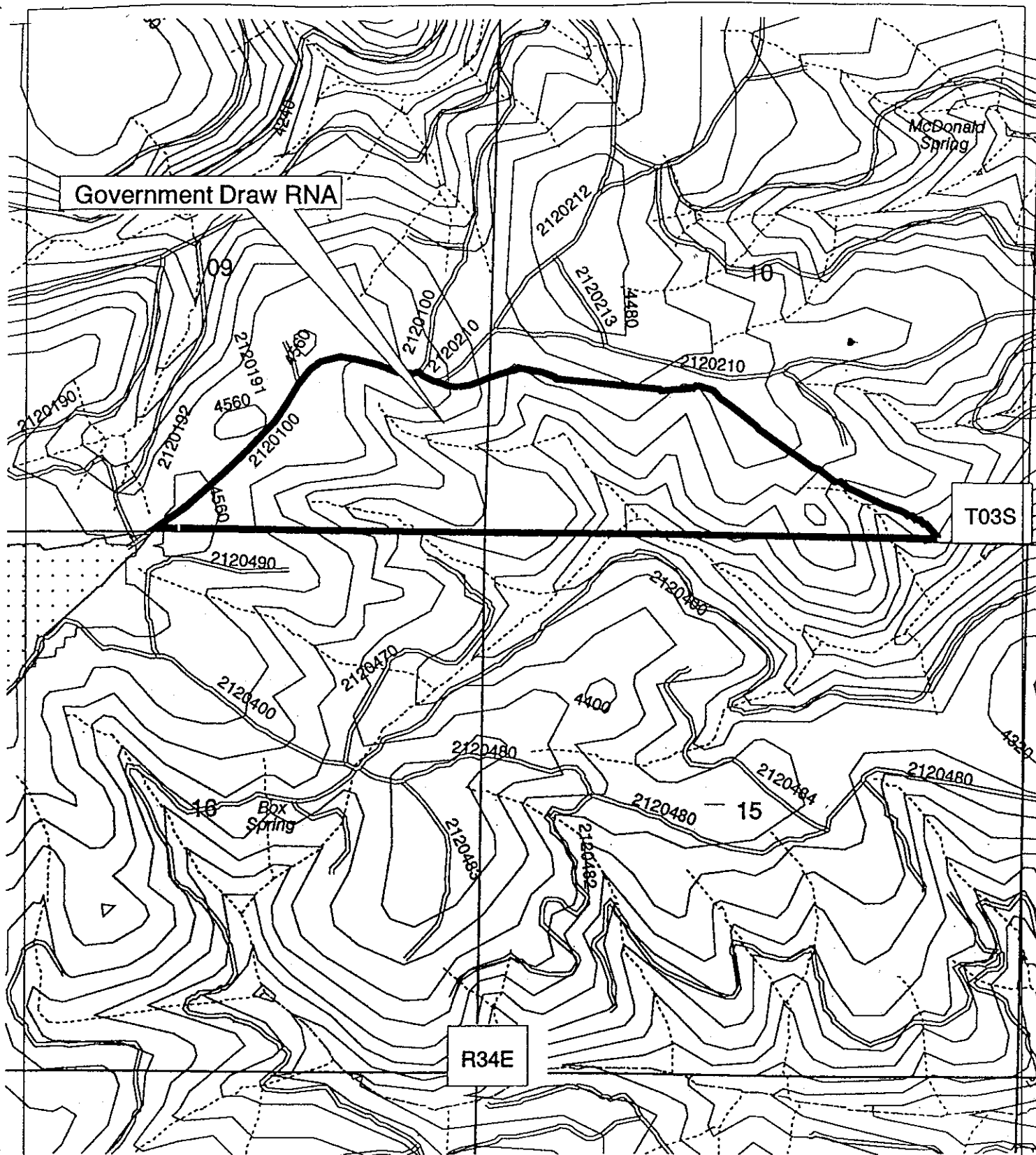


Figure 2. Map and topographic detail of the Government Draw Research Natural Area, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Oregon

APPENDIX

PROJECT NAME: GOVERNMENT DRAW RNA DESIGNATION/ESTABLISHMENT

DATE: 21 September 1994

Project Description: this project proposes to establish the Government Draw Research Natural Area (RNA). At this time, there are no proposed undertakings involved in this project other than the act of designation itself.

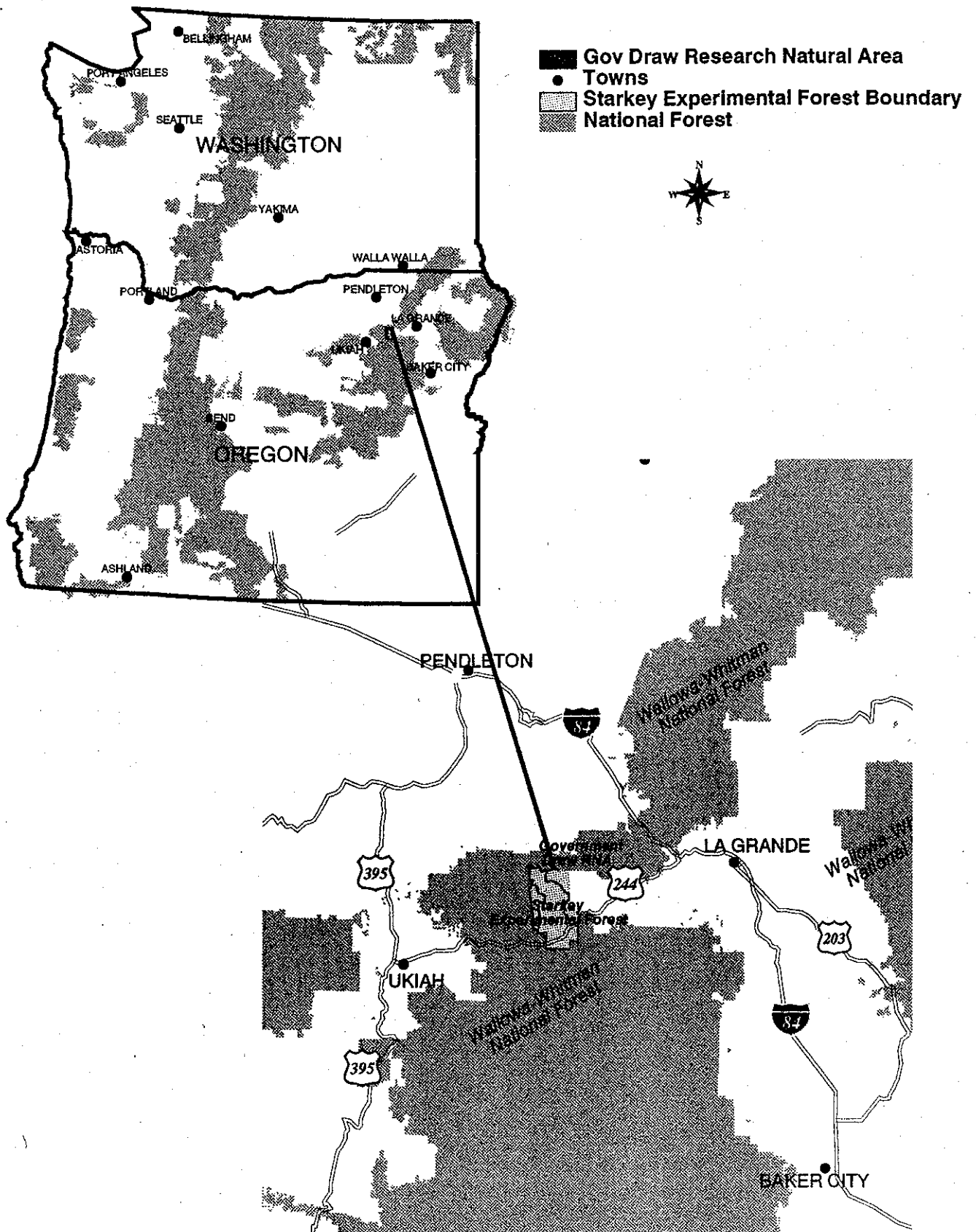
Two tests are basic in determining whether an action is an undertaking [36 CFR 800.2(o)]:

1. Is the action "under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency or licensed or assisted by a Federal agency"?
2. Is the action a "project, activity, or program that can result in changes in the character or use of historic properties"?

The proposed project is not an undertaking and does not require cultural resource input beyond that included in this letter.



George R. Mead  
District Archaeologist



**Figure 1. Map of the locality of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range and Government Draw RNA in northeast Oregon.**



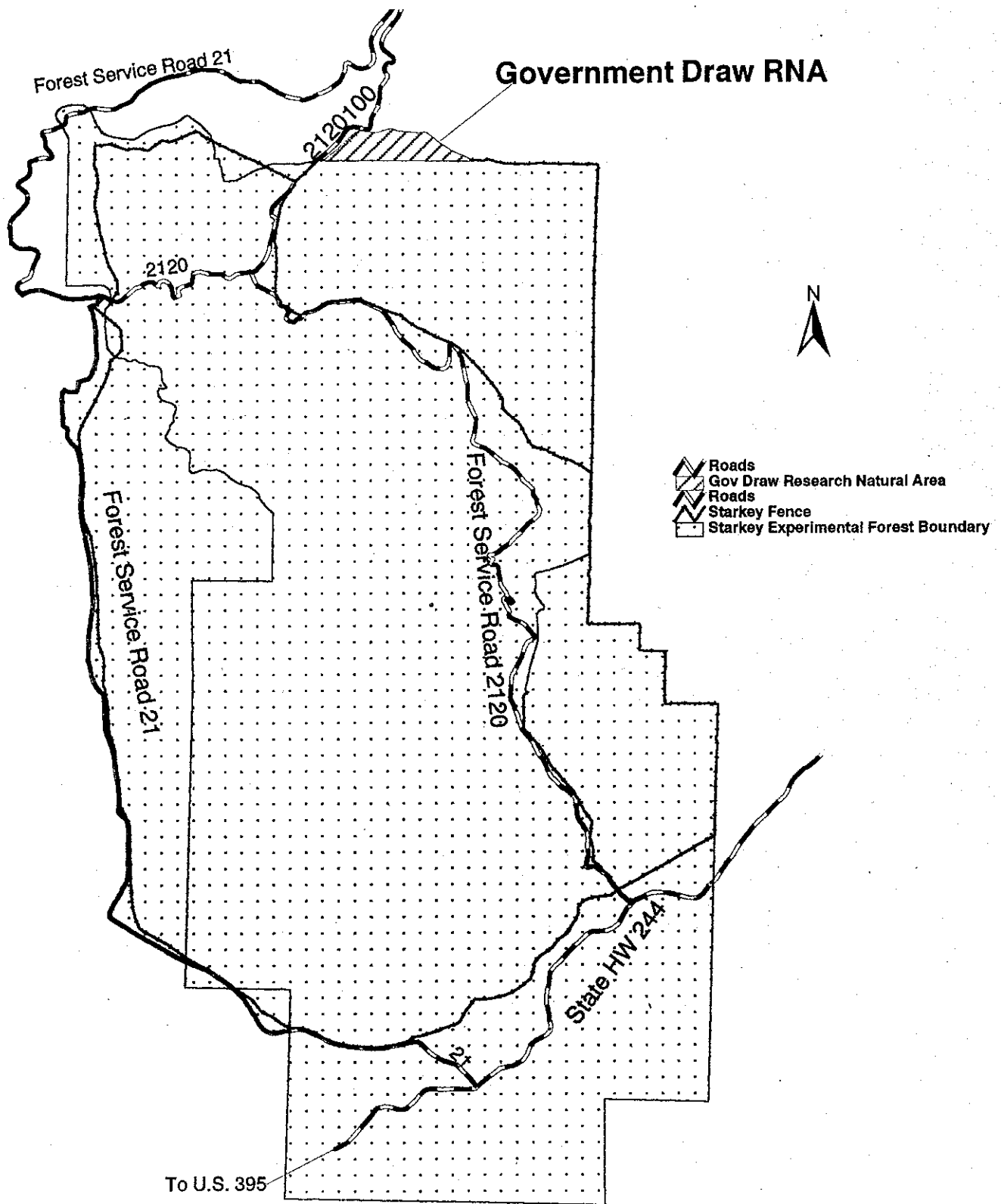
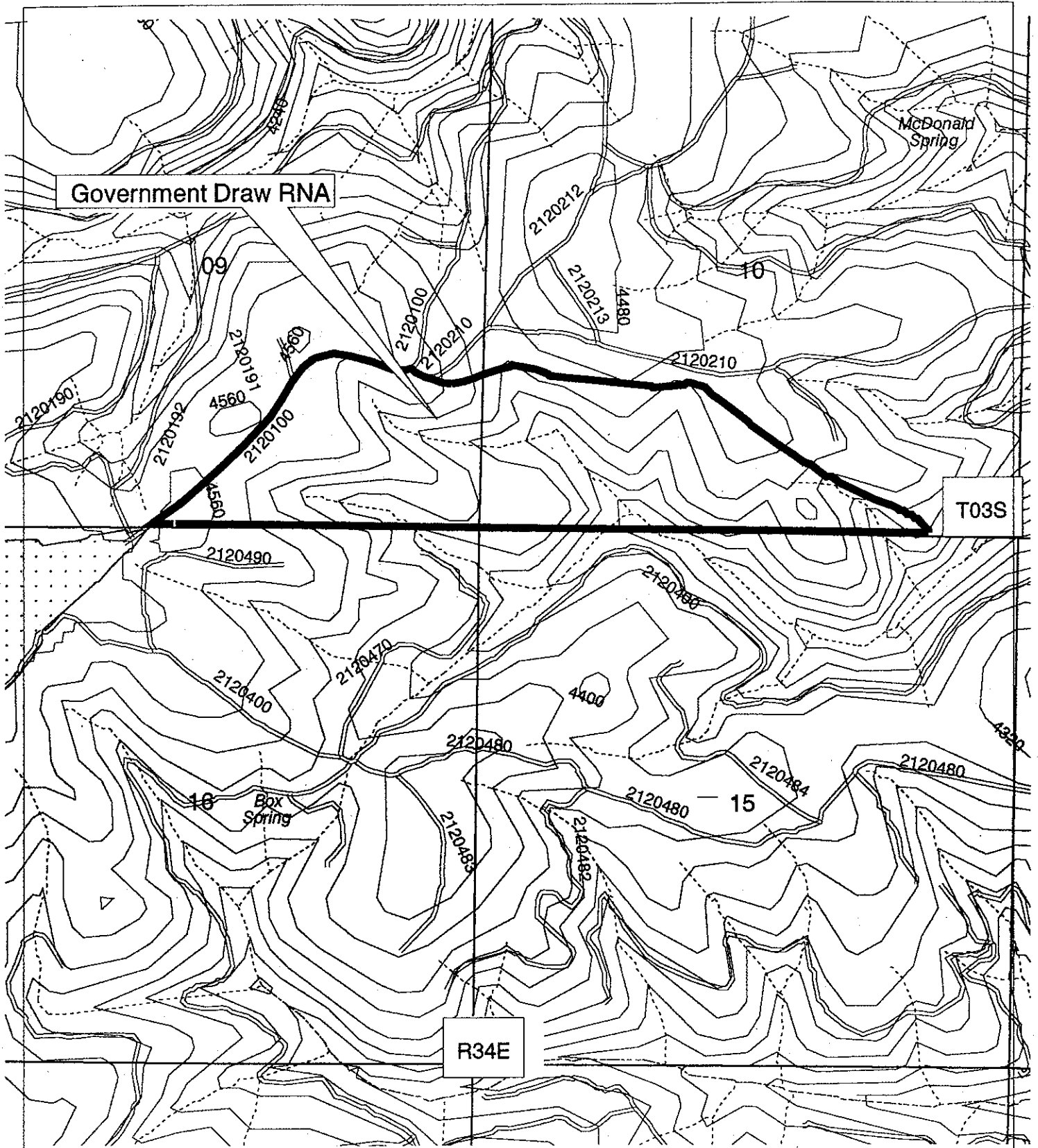


Figure 2. Location of the Government Draw Research Natural Area on the north boundary of the Starkey Experimental Forest and Range.

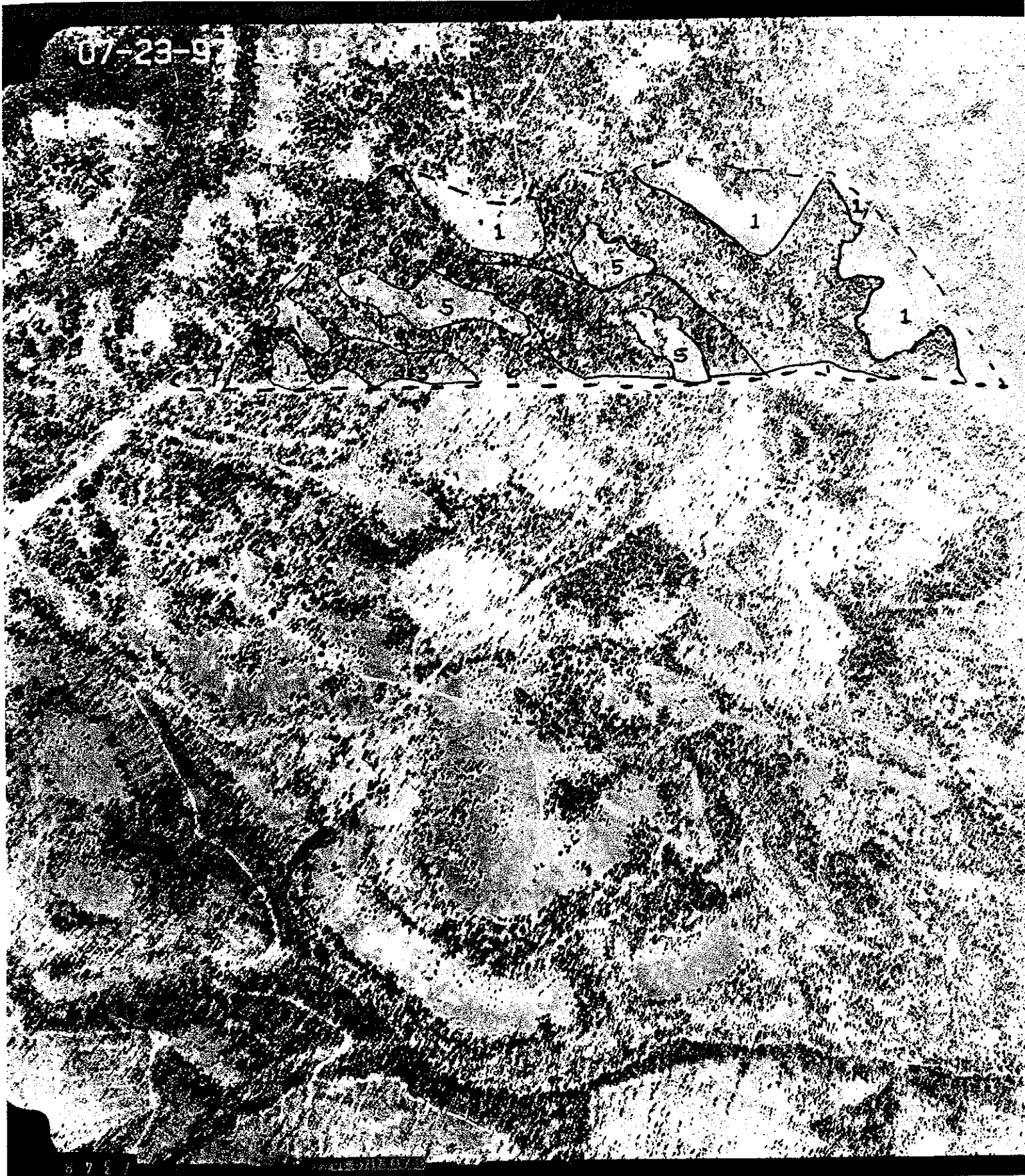


0 0.2 0.4 0.6 Miles



Figure 3. Map and topographic detail of the Government Draw Research Natural Area, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Oregon

Figure 4. Mapped Communities on the Government Draw R.N.A., W-W Nat. Forest



See Table 1 For Community designation and characteristics.

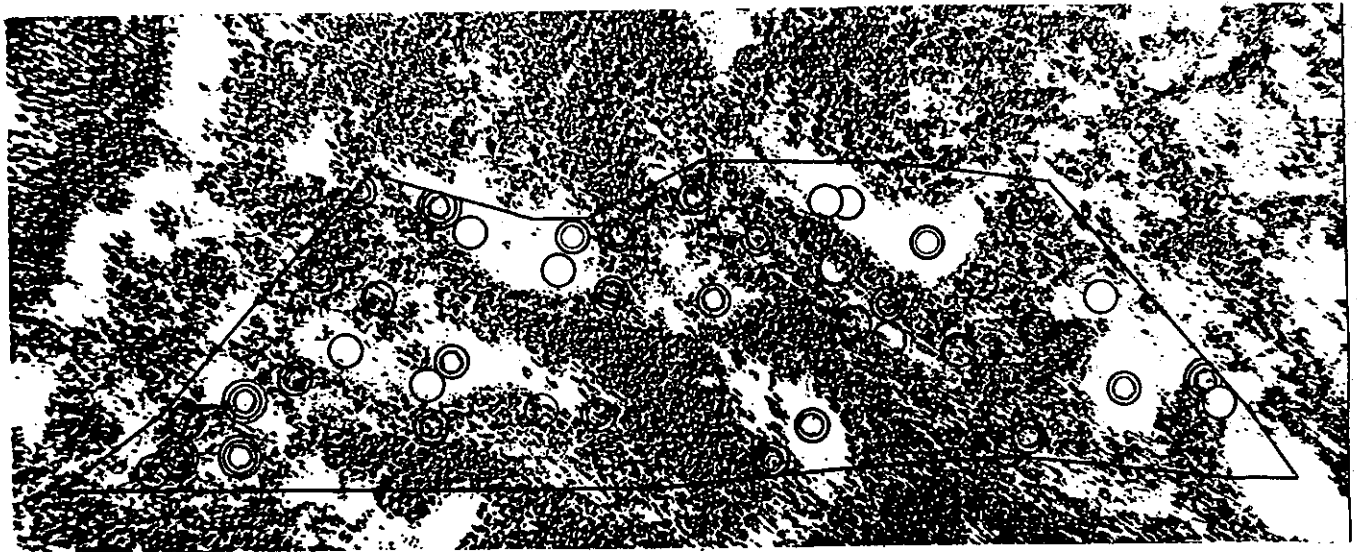


Figure 5. Map of Government Draw Research Natural Area showing location of permanent 0.25 ac (0.1 ha) macroplots. Double-circled permanent plots are used for deer and elk utilization measurements; triple-circled permanent plots have permanent photo points.