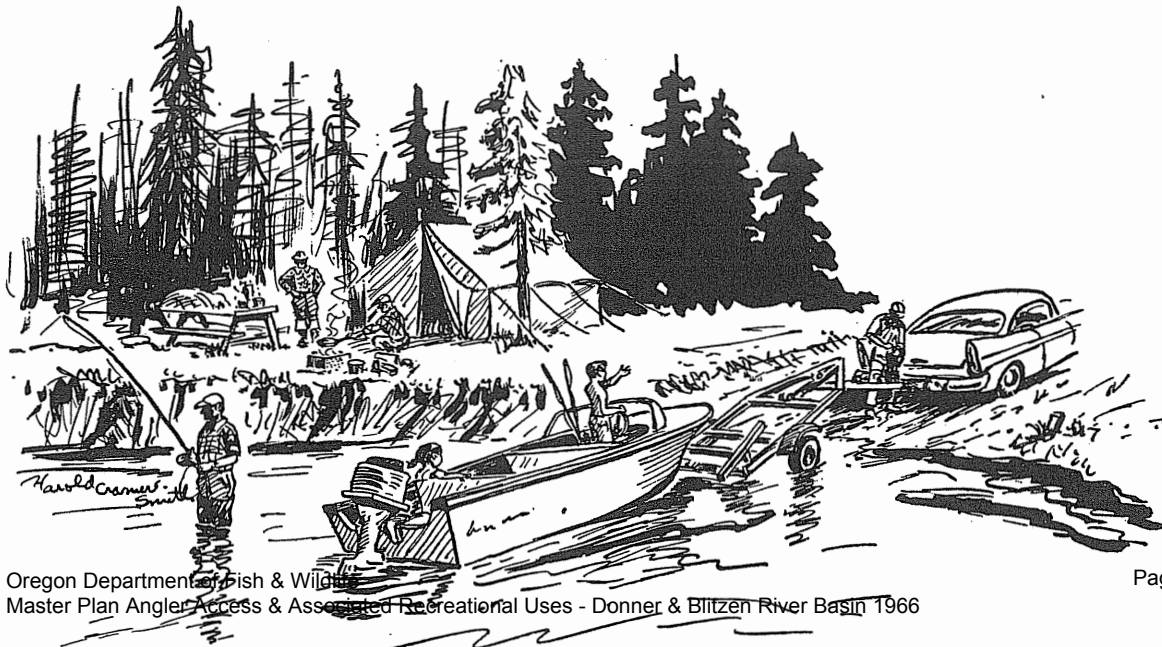


**DONNER und BLITZEN
RIVER BASIN**

**MASTER PLAN
FOR ANGLER ACCESS AND
ASSOCIATED RECREATIONAL
USES**



**Oregon State Game Commission
Lands Division**



DONNER und BLITZEN RIVER BASIN
Master Plan for Angler Access
and
Associated Recreational Uses

By

Oregon State Game Commission
Lands Section
November 1966

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DONNER und BLITZEN RIVER BASIN

Master Plan for Angler Access

and

Associated Recreational Uses

The headwaters of the Donner und Blitzen River originates on the west slope of the Steens Mountains high in the summer range lands where alpine meadow glades and aspen thickets predominate. These high areas are subject to sudden climatic changes and snow is not uncommon even during the summer months if storms develop. Cool temperatures during the hot summer months tend to attract many people from the lower valleys which are experiencing summer extremes. The river flows 14 miles through deep rimrock canyons until it reaches the meadows of the Blitzen Valley, which lies within the boundaries of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The lower 44.5 miles of stream have been diverted into numerous canals and ditches to satisfy the water needs throughout the valley.

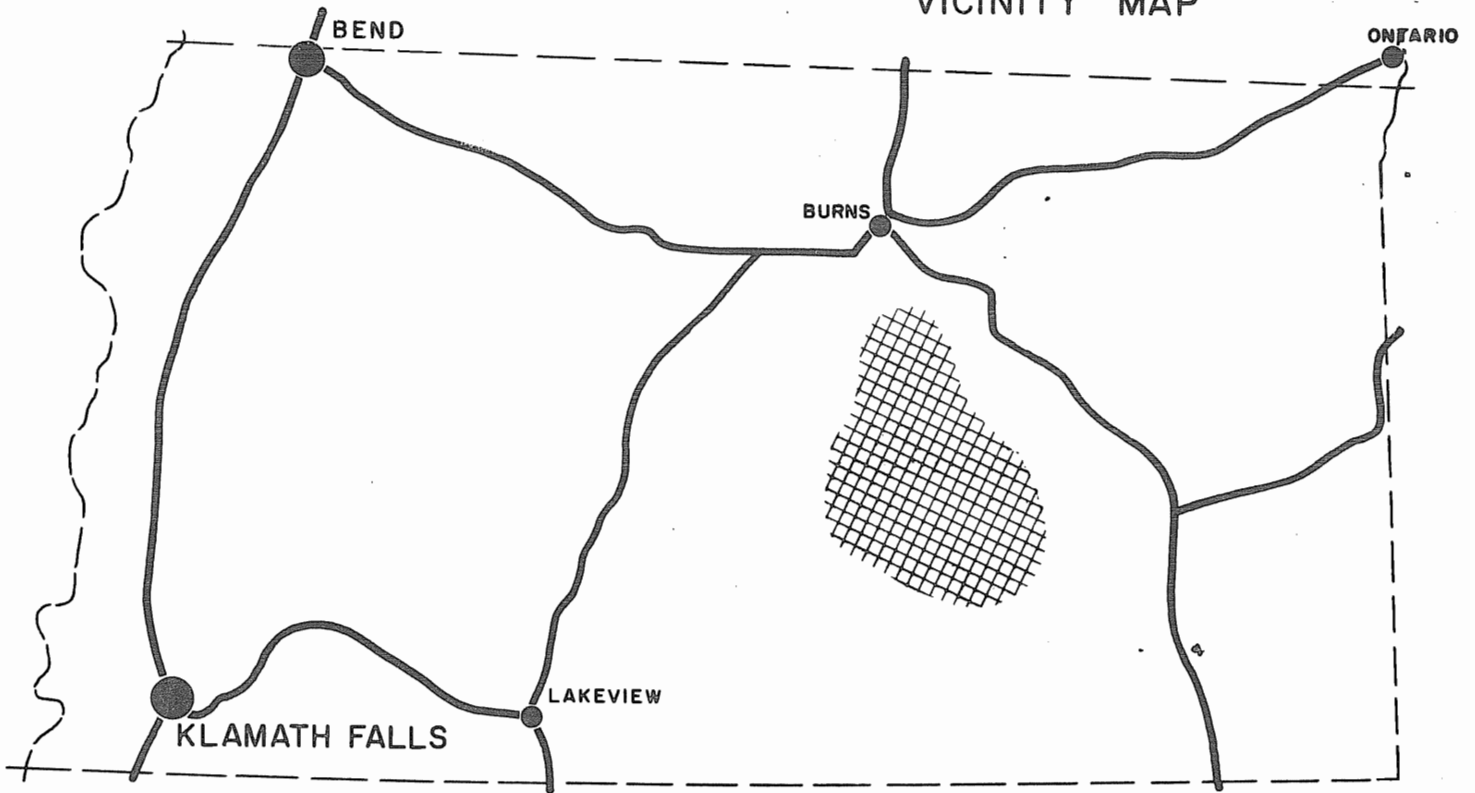
The fishery in the basin is confined to the main river and its tributaries down to the confluence of Bridge Creek with the exception of Krumbo Reservoir, Kiger Creek, and McCoy Creek. The two streams drain into Diamond Valley and eventually enter the Donner und Blitzen through canals and ditches. Both the streams and the reservoir support a good trout fishery. Angling pressure is light throughout the basin with the exception of an eight-mile section of the main river from Bridge Creek upstream.

Access into many of the areas is hindered either by the topography of the basin or by private ownership of key locations. Many of the canyons are blocked at the lower ends, which in many cases is the only means of access.

This report details a plan that we hope can be followed to solve the access problems of the Donner und Blitzen River. Too, we hope that all agencies that are interested in retaining existing water access as well as providing additional facilities, whether they be municipal, county, or state will all join in a cooperative effort to carry out this plan in an orderly manner. It is probable that Land and Water Conservation Funds will be available on a 50-50 matching basis. In order to acquire these funds, it will be necessary to apply through the Oregon State Highway Department.

The Donner und Blitzen Basin has been divided into three sections and each has been handled according to its individual needs. The following sections describe these areas more fully and each access site is described in detail.

VICINITY MAP



The Donner und Blitzen River begins on the west side of the Steens Mountains in southeastern Oregon and flows north into Malheur Lake which is 31 miles south of Burns.

U. S. Highway 20 and State Highway 205 are the main routes from the basin to western Oregon and U. S. Highway 395 and 20 are the main routes to Eastern Oregon.

Mileages to other centers of population from Burns are Ontario 114, John Day 70 and Bend 132.

AREA I

Area I includes the lower portion of the Donner und Blitzen River between Bridge Creek and Malheur Lake. (See map). This section of stream flows through Blitzen Valley which is comprised of small ponds and sloughs interspersed among numerous irrigated meadows. This portion of the stream is within the boundaries of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and, consequently, is closed to fishing. However, the area is extensively used during the summer by visitors to the refuge. Few areas support the variety of wildlife found at Malheur. A total of 248 species of birds and 51 species of mammals has been recorded in the area, many of which can be readily seen. The area is an excellent waterfowl nesting area and sometimes supports sizeable shore bird populations. Archery hunting of mule deer takes place for a period of several days in September in the upper section of the Blitzen Valley. Developments are not recommended within this section, with the exception of the existing Krumbo Reservoir camp site.

A description of the Krumbo Reservoir site is given on the following site evaluation sheets.

WATER ACCESS SITE EVALUATION

Donner und Blitzen System Site No. 1
I Area Priority C
Name Krumbo Reservoir

Location 4 miles east of Burns-Frenchglen Highway, Bank
T 30S, R 32E, Sec. 19 River Mile _____ County Harney

Ownership: Public U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Private _____ Tax Lot No. _____
Number of owners _____

DESCRIPTION

Land type High desert - rimrocks
Cover type Sage and bunch grass
Road access U. S. F. & W. S., Condition Fair - single lane dirt
* High - spring
Flows Low - summer and fall Water quality Excellent

Present stage of development Campground and limited boat launching facilities
* Reservoir is spring fed.

ANGLER NEEDS

Acquisition: _____ Acres, _____ of frontage
Type of conveyance _____

Development:

Boat ramp: Type Improve existing gravel ramp Number of lanes _____
Toilets _____ Trails _____ Roads _____
Parking area _____; For _____ cars or _____ car-trailer units

This site will accommodate trout anglers in Harney County.

AREA II

Area II encompasses the Donner und Blitzen River and its tributaries from Bridge Creek to the headwaters on the Steens Mountains. This portion of the system flows from the high alpine meadows and aspen thickets down through the deep rimrock canyons to the meadows of the Blitzen Valley.

The upper ends of Ankle Creek, Mud Creek, Big Indian Creek, Little Indian Creek, and South Fork Blitzen River are not accessible until late June or early July because of snow. The majority of the land through which these streams flow is in private ownership and public access, in most cases, is denied. Both good fishing and hunting are found in the areas, with rainbow trout ranging to 12 inches in length. Chukar and deer hunting are also very good. Hiking access into these remote regions would be desirable, whereas road access would soon deplete the fishery and would also destroy the esthetic value of the area.

The Little Blitzen River is also blocked on the lower end by private ownership; however, a guide and packer operates from the north rim of the canyon. Both hunting and fishing are good in the area.

The Donner and Blitzen River between Bridge Creek and the forks of Big Indian Creek and South Fork Blitzen River is a good angling area for fish up to 20 inches in length. The only access is by jeep roads from the west rim and by trail from the Page Springs camp site. Hunting is good for both chukar and deer in the area.

The Fish Creek drainage, which enters the Donner und Blitzen River at river mile 49 has good angling on rainbow trout, brook trout, and whitefish. Although public access is not denied, the topography of the area makes it very difficult to reach. A road to the north rim of the main canyon would be desirable.

Six viewpoints are partially developed within this area and are used extensively during the summer months by tourists. The viewpoints upon completion will include information signs, short spur roads or trails, sanitary facilities and parking spaces. The fold-out map depicts the viewpoint locations.

A description of four complete sites and one proposed site can be found on the following evaluation sheets.

WATER ACCESS SITE EVALUATION

Donner und Blitzen System Site No. 1
II Area Priority Complete

Name Page Springs Campground

Location Above the Page Dam on the Blitzen River, East Bank
T 32S, R32 $\frac{1}{2}$ E, Sec. 17: River Mile 45 County Harney
Ownership: Public Bureau of Land Management
Private _____ Tax Lot No. _____ Number of owners _____

DESCRIPTION

Land Type High mountain desert
Cover type Juniper, grass meadow, sage
Road access U.S.F. & W.S. and BLM, Condition Good - two lane gravel
Flows High - spring
Moderate - summer Water quality Good
Present stage of development Complete

ANGLER NEEDS

Acquisition: _____ Acres, _____ Feet of frontage
Type of conveyance _____

Development:

Boat Ramp: Type _____ Number of lanes _____
Toilets _____ Trails _____ Roads _____
Parking area _____; For _____ cars or _____ car-trailer units

This site will accommodate sightseeing, camping, hunting, fishing.

WATER ACCESS SITE EVALUATION

Donner und Blitzen System Site No. 2
II Area Priority Complete

Name Upper Blitzen Crossing Campground

Location Forks of Big Indian and South Fork Blitzen, Northeast Bank
T 34S, R 32 3/4E, Sec. 7; River Mile 4 County Harney
Ownership: Public Bureau of Land Management
Private _____ Tax Lot No. _____ Number of owners _____

DESCRIPTION

Land Type High desert - rimrock
Cover type Sage, bunch grass; creek bottom - dogwood, alder, grass
Road access BLM, Condition Good - two lane dirt
Flows High - spring Water quality Excellent
Good - summer
Present stage of development Complete

ANGLER NEEDS

Acquisition: _____ Acres, _____ Feet of frontage
Type of conveyance _____

Development:

Boat Ramp: Type _____ Number of lanes _____
Toilets _____ Trails _____ Roads _____
Parking area _____; For _____ cars or _____ car-trailer units

This site will accommodate trout anglers, hunters, and sightseers. The
stream is fished lightly in the summer.

AREA II

SITE # 2

FISHERY: Rainbow trout and whitefish

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Heavy				
Medium				
Light	Tr Wf	Tr Wf	Tr Wf	

(Sa - Salmon, St - Steelhead, Tr - Trout,
Sg - Sturgeon, Ww - Warm Water Fishes)
Wf - Whitefish

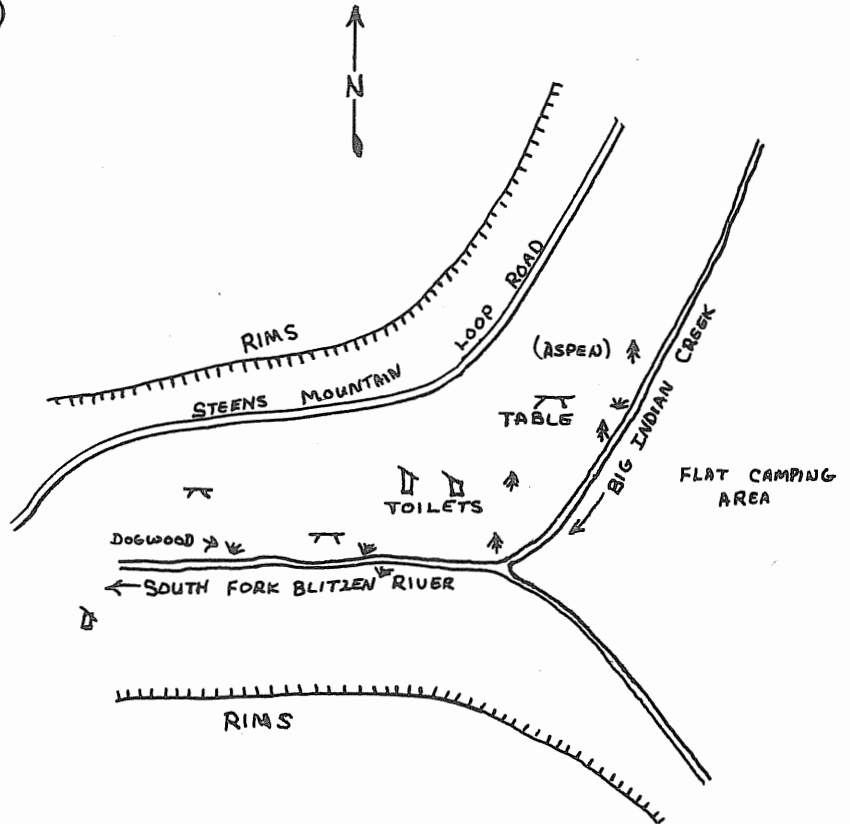
SKETCH

Seasons (Check)

RECREATION
(Check)

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Boating, motor				
Boating, non-motor				
Camping, tent	X	X	X	
Camping, trailer	X	X	X	
Fishing, boat	X	X	X	
Fishing, shore	X	X	X	
Hiking		X		
Horseback riding				X
Hunting, big game			X	
Hunting, upland game				X
Hunting, waterfowl				
Nature study				
Picnicking				
Sightseeing *		X	X	
Skin and scuba diving				
Swimming				
Water skiing				

*Indian artifacts



OTHER

Safety Problems:

Group Facilities: Picnicking, camping

REMARKS Campground is located in the creek bottom surrounded by canyon rims. The only drinking water is from the creek. There is a flat area across the creek which could be improved for a camping area. (No facilities present)
The streams are fished lightly in the summer.
The campground is used extensively by hunters.

WATER ACCESS SITE EVALUATION

Donner und Blitzen System Site No. 3
II Area Priority Complete
Name Jackman Camp

Location Head of Fish Creek off the Steens Mountains Loop Road
T32¹/₂S, R 33E, Sec. 33; River Mile - County Harney
Ownership: Public Bureau of Land Management
Private _____ Tax Lot No. _____ Number of owners _____

DESCRIPTION

Land Type High desert
Cover type Low sage, bunch grass with aspen draws
Road access BLM, Condition Good - two lane dirt
Flows _____ Water quality Springs excellent
Present stage of development Complete

ANGLER NEEDS

Acquisition: _____ Acres, _____ Feet of frontage
Type of conveyance _____

Development:

Boat Ramp: Type _____ Number of lanes _____
Toilets _____ Trails _____ Roads _____
Parking area _____; For _____ cars or _____ car-trailer units
This site will accommodate campers, fishermen, hunters, and picnickers.

AREA II

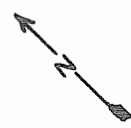
SITE # 3

FISHERY: Rainbow trout

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Heavy				
Medium				
Light		Tr	Tr	

(Sa - Salmon, St - Steelhead, Tr - Trout, Sg - Sturgeon, Ww - Warm Water Fishes)

SKETCH

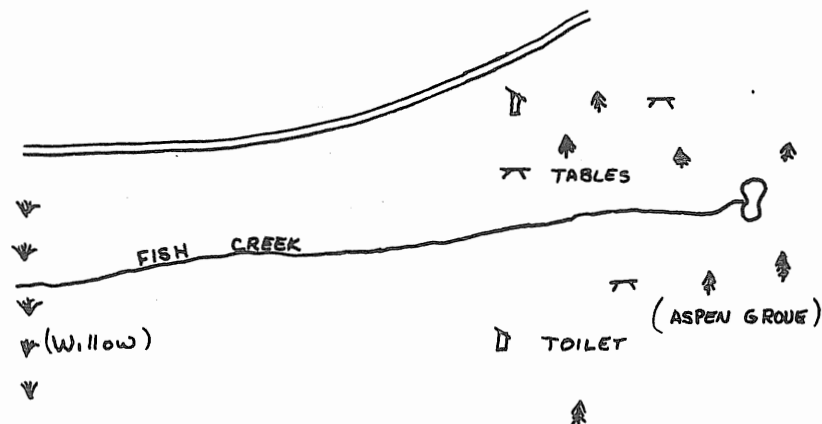


Seasons (Check)

RECREATION
(Check)

- Boating, motor
- Boating, non-motor
- Camping, tent
- Camping, trailer
- Fishing, boat
- Fishing, shore
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Hunting, big game
- Hunting, upland game
- Hunting, waterfowl
- Nature study
- Picnicking
- Sightseeing
- Skin and scuba diving
- Swimming
- Water skiing

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	



OTHER

Safety Problems:

Group Facilities: Picnicking, camping

REMARKS

Springs in camp could be developed. They have water in them on normal years but go dry on dry years. Area can only be reached in early July through mid-October because of snow conditions. Fish Creek below the camp gets very light usage because of access.

WATER ACCESS SITE EVALUATION

Donner und Blitzen System Site No. 4
II Area Priority Complete

Name Fish Lake

Location Head of Lake Creek, 17 miles above Frenchglen, Northwest Bank

T 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ S, R 33E, Sec. 29; River Mile - County Harney

Ownership: Public Oregon State Game Commission

Private _____ Tax Lot No. _____ Number of owners _____

DESCRIPTION

Land Type High mountain desert near summit of Steens Mountains

Cover type Sage and bunch grass with aspen and willow around lake

Road access OSGC - BLM, Condition Good - two lane dirt

Flows _____ Water quality Excellent

Present stage of development Complete

ANGLER NEEDS

Acquisition: _____ Acres, _____ Feet of frontage

Type of conveyance _____

Development:

Boat Ramp: Type _____ Number of lanes _____

Toilets _____ Trails _____ Roads _____

Parking area _____; For _____ cars or _____ car-trailer units

This site will accommodate campers, hunters, fishermen, and picnickers.

AREA II

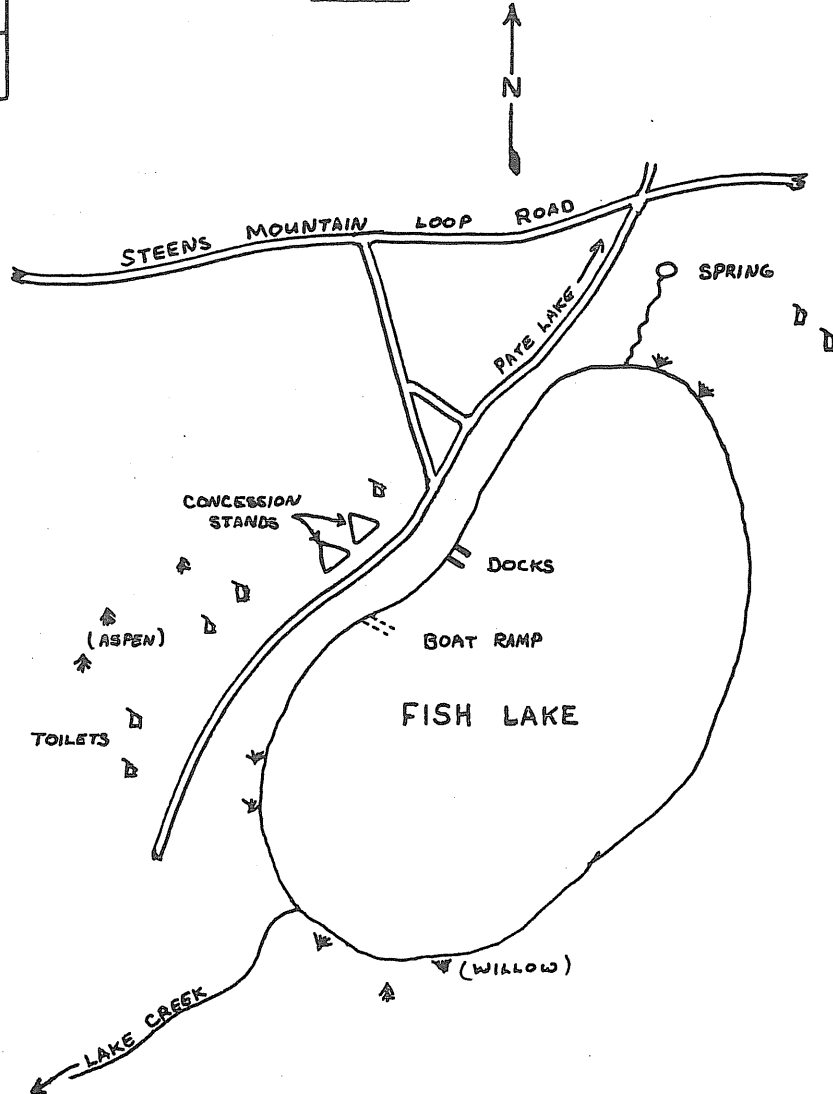
SITE # 4

FISHERY: Rainbow trout and brook trout

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Heavy		Tr		
Medium			Tr	
Light				Tr

(Sa - Salmon, St - Steelhead, Tr - Trout, Sg - Sturgeon, Ww - Warm Water Fishes)

SKETCH



Seasons (Check)

RECREATION
(Check)

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Boating, motor		X	X	
Boating, non-motor		X	X	
Camping, tent		X	X	
Camping, trailer		X	X	
Fishing, boat		X	X	
Fishing, shore		X	X	
Hiking		X	X	
Horseback riding				
Hunting, big game		X	X	
Hunting, upland game		X	X	
Hunting, waterfowl				
Nature study *		X	X	
Picnicking		X	X	
Sightseeing		X	X	
Skin and scuba diving				
Swimming		X	X	
Water skiing				
School classes *				

OTHER

Safety Problems:

Group Facilities: Picnicking, camping

REMARKS Willows surround the lake with aspen throughout campground. The lake is stocked with 7,000 legal rainbow per year.
 Area can only be reached in early July through mid-October because of snow.
 A concession stand is operated during the summer months at the lake.
 Fishing tackle, boat rentals, and food materials are available. Tables are located throughout the area.

WATER ACCESS SITE EVALUATION

Donner und Blitzen System Site No. 5
II Area Priority A

Name Pate Lake

Location Approximately 1/4 mile northeast of Fish Lake, Southwest Bank
T32 1/2 S, R 33 E, Sec. 28; River Mile - County Harney

Ownership: Public _____
Private Tax Lot No. 4 Number of owners 1

DESCRIPTION

Land Type High mountain desert near summit of Steens
Cover type Sage, bunch grass with aspen and willow around lake
Road access BLM and private, Condition Good - two lane dirt
Flows _____ Water quality Poor
Present stage of development 2 garbage cans

ANGLER NEEDS

Acquisition: 5 Acres, Southwest of corner of lake
Type of conveyance Perpetual easement for campground development

Development: *

Boat Ramp: Type _____ Number of lanes _____

Toilets Trails _____ Road Improvement

Parking area _____; For _____ cars or _____ car-trailer units

This site will accommodate overflow campers from Fish Lake campground (1/4 mile to Fish Lake).

* Water development and tables would enhance this area.

AREA II

SITE # 5

FISHERY: None

Spring Summer Fall Winter

Heavy				
Medium				
Light				

(Sa - Salmon, St - Steelhead, Tr - Trout, Sg - Sturgeon, Ww - Warm Water Fishes)

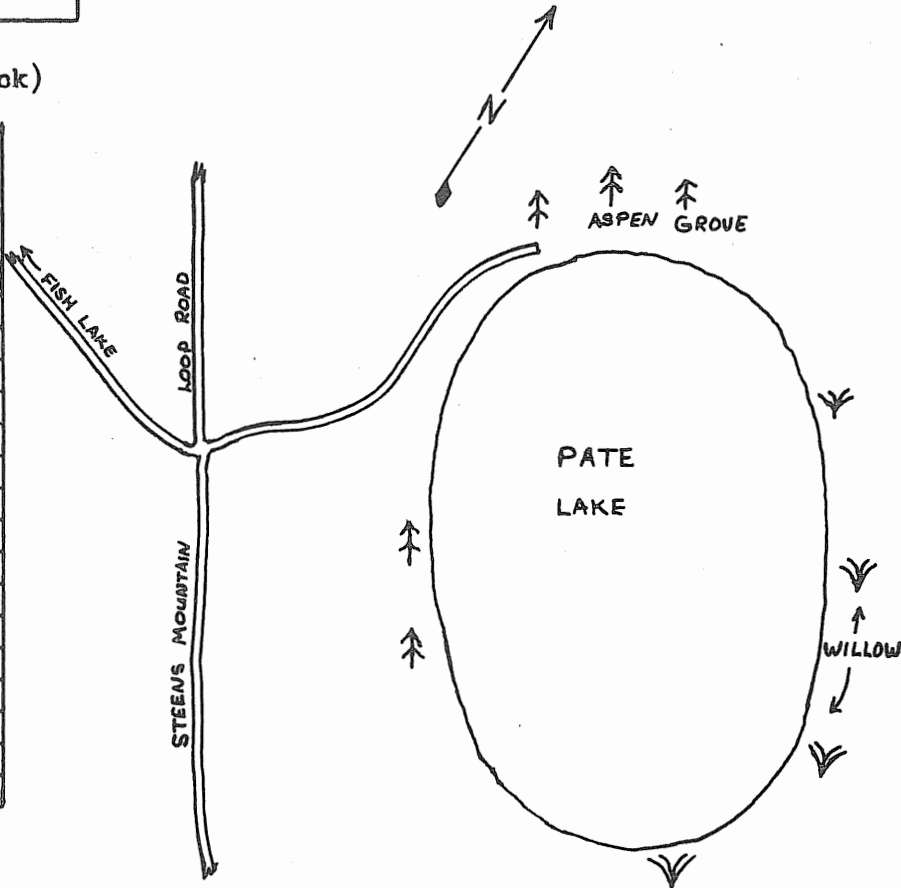
SKETCH

Seasons (Check)

RECREATION
(Check)

- Boating, motor
- Boating, non-motor
- Camping, tent
- Camping, trailer
- Fishing, boat
- Fishing, shore
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Hunting, big game
- Hunting, upland game
- Hunting, waterfowl
- Nature study
- Picnicking
- Sightseeing
- Skin and scuba diving
- Swimming
- Water skiing

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	
		X	X	



OTHER

Safety Problems:

Group Facilities: Picnicking, camping

REMARKS

The lake is too shallow to support a fishery or to be used as drinking water.

AREA III

Area III includes the Kiger Creek and the McCoy Creek drainages. The streams originate in the Steens Mountains and flow down through the deep rim-rock canyons to the Diamond Valley meadows. There is excellent fishing in the middle and upper sections of these streams with rainbow trout ranging from 6 to 18 inches in length. The majority of the land along these creeks is in private ownership and, as a result, the lower ends of the canyons are closed to the public access. The topography of the area would make it impractical to build roads into the upper regions of the drainage, however, public entry to the lower sections and trails to the upper sections would be desirable to properly develop this area.

A description of these areas can be found in the following evaluation sheets.

WATER ACCESS SITE EVALUATION

Donner und Blitzen System Site No. 1
III Area Priority B

Name McCoy Creek Canyon

Location Mouth of the McCoy Creek Canyon, - Bank

T29S, R 32E, Sec. 36; River Mile - County Harney

Ownership: Public _____

Private Tax Lot No. 12,13,17 Number of owners 3

DESCRIPTION

Land Type High mountain desert

Cover type Sage, juniper, and grass meadows

Road access Private, Condition Fair - single lane
dirt

Flows Stable Water quality Excellent

Present stage of development Road up 1.25 miles in canyon

ANGLER NEEDS

Acquisition: _____ Acres, _____ Feet of frontage

Type of conveyance Easement*

Development: * Insured public access into the canyon area for both fishing and hunting.

Boat Ramp: Type _____ Number of lanes _____

Toilets _____ Trails _____ Roads _____

Parking area _____; For _____ cars or _____ car-trailer units

This site will accommodate hunting, fishing, camping, and sightseeing.

AREA III

SITE # 1

FISHERY: Rainbow trout

Spring Summer Fall Winter

Heavy				
Medium				
Light	Tr	Tr	Tr	

(Sa - Salmon, St - Steelhead, Tr - Trout, Sg - Sturgeon, Ww - Warm Water Fishes)

SKETCH

Seasons (Check)

RECREATION
(Check)

- Boating, motor
- Boating, non-motor
- Camping, tent
- Camping, trailer
- Fishing, boat
- Fishing, shore
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Hunting, big game
- Hunting, upland game
- Hunting, waterfowl
- Nature study
- Picnicking
- Sightseeing
- Skin and scuba diving
- Swimming
- Water skiing

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
		X	X	
	X	X	X	
	X	X	X	
	X	X	X	
			X	
			X	
		X	X	

See fold-out map.

OTHER

Safety Problems:

Group Facilities: Picnicking, camping

REMARKS

Access through the lower end of the canyon would open up excellent hunting and fishing areas.

AREA III

SITE # 2

FISHERY: Rainbow trout

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Heavy				
Medium				
Light	Tr	Tr	Tr	

(Sa - Salmon, St - Steelhead, Tr - Trout, Sg - Sturgeon, Ww - Warm Water Fishes)

SKETCH

Seasons (Check)

RECREATION
(Check)

- Boating, motor
- Boating, non-motor
- Camping, tent
- Camping, trailer
- Fishing, boat
- Fishing, shore
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Hunting, big game
- Hunting, upland game
- Hunting, waterfowl
- Nature study
- Picnicking
- Sightseeing
- Skin and scuba diving
- Swimming
- Water skiing

	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
		X	X	
	X	X	X	
	X	X	X	
	X	X	X	
			X	
			X	
		X	X	

See fold-out map.

OTHER

Safety Problems:

Group Facilities: Picnicking, camping

REMARKS

Access through the lower section of the canyon would open up good hunting and fishing areas.

