NATIONAL WETLAND INVENTORY

PHOTOINTERPRETATION CONVENTIONS

For

Central Idaho – Idaho EPA II

Rocky Mountain Forest Province

Field Work Conducted Week of August 11, 1997

The 1:100,000 Map Units of:

Challis NE, Challis SE, Challis SW

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
Portland, Oregon

March 27, 1998

Photographic Interpretation Conventions

1) Emergents within the work area were found to be predominately seasonally flooded (PEMC). This classification will be used 1) in the major river valleys, 2) along streams with little to no slope at lower elevations (below 5000 feet) and 3) at higher elevations (above 5000 feet) where there is little to no slope accompanied by a dark photosignature indicating standing water. In some cases (for example irrigation created pastures and emergents on higher benches along streams) emergents were temporarily flooded (PEMA).

2) Emergent meadows, regardless of size, at higher elevations (above 5000 feet) will be classified as saturated (PEMB). Photosignature, slope, and treeline will dictate the delineation of, and the upland/wetland boundary of, saturated emergents. PEMB may be used at lower elevations where there is sloping terrain and/or a spring on the topographic map.

3) Visible water and/or other collateral data will be required for delineation of semi-permanently flooded emergents (PEMF). This was an uncommon classification found during ground truthing.

4) Forested wetlands along streams and rivers were found to be predominately temporarily flooded (PFOA). Seasonally flooded, forested wetlands (PFOC) were found in some cases and are usually accompanied by a more open canopy and darker understory signature. Saturated forested wetlands (PFOB) were found at higher elevations and/or on sloping terrain, or in association with springs on the topographic map.

5) Scrub-shrub wetlands found along streams at higher elevations (above 5,000 feet) were predominately seasonally flooded (PSSC). PSSC will be applied to stream channels in these areas when at least 30% or more of the stream is comprised of wetland scrub-shrub vegetation (per Cowardin, et al.). Scrub-shrub wetlands found on sloping terrain and/or in association with springs on the topographic map will be classified as saturated (PSSB).

6) Scrub-shrub wetlands found along streams at lower elevations (below 5000 feet) or in areas of lower annual precipitation were predominately temporarily flooded (PSSA). PSSA will be applied to stream channels in these areas when at least 30% or more of the stream is comprised of wetland scrub-shrub vegetation (per Cowardin, et al.).

7) Unconsolidated shores associated with rivers that have a whitish photo signature will be classified as R3USC. Grayish tones along rivers were generally upland, although grayish photosignatures can be delineated as temporarily flooded (R3USA), based on topography.

8) Streams that are perennial on the USGS topographic maps will be classified as upper perennial, permanently flooded (R3UBH), if water is present on the photo or if the streambed is obscured by a coniferous tree canopy. If the stream is found to be dry during field reconnaissance, the water regime will be

semipermanently flooded (R3UBF). The class rock bottom (R3RBH) will be used when rapids can be seen on the photo or where rock bottom was seen during field reconnaissance. If the stream is covered by wetland deciduous vegetation, use the 5000 foot elevation rule, where the stream will be labeled seasonal (PSSC, PEMC, PFOC) at elevations greater than 5000 feet at their headwaters and temporary (PSSA, PFOA) for streams below 5000 feet.

9) Streams that are intermittent on the USGS topographic maps will be classified as an intermittent riverine streambed that is seasonally flooded (R4SBC), if water is present on the photo or if the streambed is obscured by a coniferous tree canopy. If a white streambed signature is present on the photo, those streams will be classified as temporarily flooded (R4SBA). Intermittent streams will be delineated in areas of high annual precipitation. For example in the Sawtooth Mountain range, the Stanley, Idaho area, and the Garden Valley region, all intermittent streams that appear on USGS topos will be delineated.

It is important to note that not all intermittent streams in the drier, eastern portion of the project area will be delineated, (even if they appear on USGS topos). This will apply to the four quads in Challis NE and the four quads in the eastern portion of Challis SE (Bradbury Flat, Lone Pine Peak, Little Antelope Flat and Antelope Flat). Photosignature will determine whether to pull the stream or not. If the stream is covered by wetland deciduous vegetation, use the 5000 foot elevation rule, where the stream will be labeled seasonal (PSSC, PFOC, PEMC) at elevations greater than 5000 feet at their headwaters and temporary (PSSA, PFOA) for streams below 5000 feet.

10) If 30% of aquatic bed (AB) is seen in any body of water in the project area, the entire body of water will be delineated as an aquatic bed wetland.

11) Ditches will be classified R3UBHx or R4SBCx, unless vegetated. If vegetated they will be classified PSSCx or PEMCx.

12) Sewage treatment ponds or similar facilities will carry the artificially flooded (K) water regime and the excavated (x) modifier, for example PABKx.

13) In all cases, the 5000 foot elevation rule will be used as a guideline. Photosignature of the individual wetland, collateral data, and the surrounding habitat will be utilized for accurate classifications.