NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK EVALUATION

LITTLE JACKS CREEK RESEARCH NATURAL AREA (IDAHO)

Columbia Plateau Natural Region
Low Sagebrush Theme
Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass Subtheme

November 1989

prepared for
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

by

Idaho Natural Heritage Program
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
600 South Walnut, P.O. Box 25
Boise, ID 83707
Jerry M. Conley, Director

Robert K. Moseley       Date
INTRODUCTION

Daubenmire, in his 1975 theme study, proposed several "zones" that contain low sagebrush (Artemisia arbuscula) and early low sagebrush (A. longiloba) biotic communities. It was proposed in Phase I of the current study (The Nature Conservancy et al. 1989), that all low sagebrush and early low sagebrush communities be treated as a separate Low Sagebrush Theme. To best include the diversity of the Low Sagebrush Theme in the NNL registry, two subthemes were proposed: Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass and Low Sagebrush/Idaho Fescue. This report evaluates a potential NNL site to represent the Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass Subtheme.

In Phase II of the current study (Crawford et al. 1989), a total of four Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass sites from Oregon and Idaho were evaluated on the basis of illustrative character, condition, diversity, rarity, and value for science and education. Sites evaluated were Little Jacks Creek Proposed Research Natural Area (PRNA) (ID), Triplet Butte PRNA (ID), Sutton Mountain (OR), and Shaketable Mountain PRNA (OR). On the basis of this evaluation, Little Jacks Creek PRNA was chosen to be the best example of this subtheme.

Since preparation of the Phase II report, it was learned from the BLM that Little Jacks Creek is an established Research Natural Area (RNA). It was established in the Management Framework Plan for the Bruneau Resource Area of the Boise District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), finalized in 1983.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS

Location

The recommended NNL lies on a plateau south of the confluence of Rattlesnake Creek with Little Jacks Creek, on the Owyhee Plateau, Owyhee County, Idaho (Figure 1). The approximate center of the area lies at a latitude of 42°40'00" N and a longitude of 116°08'00" W. Lands within the proposed NNL boundary lie within Township 9 South, and Ranges 2 and 3 East. U.S. Geological Survey topographic map coverage is available on the Big Horse Basin Gap (1972) and Ox Lake (1972) 7.5' quadrangles. The Triangle Quadrangle Surface Management Status map, 1:100,000-scale series, published by the BLM also provides coverage.

The site lies about 37 km (23 miles) southwest of Bruneau, Idaho. Access to the proposed NNL site is via a complicated series of dirt roads that begin at the intersection of the Shoofly Road and State Highway 51, in Little Valley, about 13 km (8 miles) southwest of Bruneau. Proceed about 2 km (1.25 miles) west on the Shoofly Road, a well-maintained, all-weather, gravel road. Just before passing a gravel pit, turn south off the Shoofly Road. Proceed southwest then south on this fair-weather-only dirt road for about 32 km (20 miles) as it parallels Little Jacks Creek and steadily climbs onto the Owyhee Plateau. Numerous intersections are passed along the way, and the Triangle Surface Management Status map should be consulted frequently.
Figure 1. Location of the Little Jacks Creek Research Natural Area proposed NNL in Owyhee County, Idaho.

T 8 S  T 9 S  R 2 E  R 3 E

Proposed NNL
Eventually, a road takes off due north, and after about 6.5 km (4 miles) ends at the southern edge of the proposed NNL. After leaving the Shoofly Road, a high clearance vehicle is needed to get to the proposed NNL site. Four-wheel-drive is not necessary if the road is traveled in the dry season. More specific directions should be obtained from the Boise District BLM, Boise, Idaho.

Boundary

A boundary was chosen to encompass the range in diversity of the low sagebrush communities in the southern half of the Little Jacks Creek RNA. The boundary is the minimum required to include an adequate representation of features needed in the subtheme. The NNL boundary follows major topographic features (rim of canyon) on the west, north, and east sides. The southern boundary of the proposed NNL coincides with the southern boundary of the RNA, which follows both land survey (section) and point-to-point lines.

The Little Jacks Creek RNA proposed NNL occurs in two parcels, separated by a narrow canyon, and lies in the following sections:

T9S, R2E, Section 12
T9S, R3E, Sections 7, 8, 17

The boundary of the western parcel is as follows: Beginning at the corner common to Sections 7, 8, 17, and 18, T9S, R3E, proceed west along the section line common to Sections 7 and 18, for 1.6 km (1 mile) to the section corner. Proceed south along the section line common to Section 12, T9S, R2E, and Section 18, T9S, R3E, for about 122 m (400 feet) to the corner of Sections 12 and 13, T9S, R2E, and Section 18, T9E, R3E. Proceed west about 244 m (800 feet) along the section line common to Sections 12 and 13, T9S, R2E, to the rim of the small tributary canyon
of the Little Jacks Creek canyon. (From the beginning to this point, the NNL boundary coincides with part of the Little Jacks Creek RNA boundary.) Follow the prominent rim of the canyon in a generally northeasterly, then easterly direction along the Little Jacks Creek canyon, including small tributary canyons, to a point above the confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and Little Jacks Creek, approximately on the section line common to Sections 7 and 8, T9S, R3E. Continue to follow the rim of the canyon south for about 1.5 km (0.9 mile), a short distance along Rattlesnake Creek, then along a tributary, to where the canyon rim intersects the starting point.

The boundary of the eastern parcel is as follows: Beginning at the point where the canyon rim of a southerly-trending tributary canyon of Rattlesnake Creek intersects the section line common to Sections 8 and 17, T9S, R3E, proceed northerly along the canyon rim of the tributary canyon, then southeasterly along the Rattlesnake Creek canyon rim, then southerly and southwesterly along the canyon rim of a small tributary, to the center of Section 17, T9S, R3E. From the center of Section 17, proceed northwest, point-to-point, for about 854 m (2,800 feet) to the canyon rim of the southerly-trending tributary canyon of Rattlesnake Creek (this section of the NNL boundary coincides with part of the southern boundary of the Little Jacks Creek RNA). Proceed northerly for about 122 m (400 feet) to the starting point.

Size

The total area contained within the proposed NNL is estimated to be 319.7 ha (790 acres); 182.1 ha (450 acres) in the western parcel and 137.6 ha (340 acres) in the eastern parcel. Area was computed using a Tamay Planix 5000 digitizing planimeter. The site lies within the 793
ha (1,960 acre) Little Jacks Creek RNA.

Description

The Little Jacks Creek RNA proposed NNL occurs in the heart of the Owyhee Plateau, which is a large volcanic surface encompassing parts of southwestern Idaho, northeastern Nevada, and southeastern Oregon. The Owyhee Plateau is dissected by numerous canyons, of which the canyon cut by Little Jacks Creek is a typical example; it begins abruptly, is narrow, and is from 183 to 305 m (600 to 1,000 feet) deep. The site is located on the gently sloping plateau immediately south of the Little Jacks Creek Canyon.

Geology of the proposed area consists uniformly of Idavada Volcanics of Cenozoic age. All rocks in the area are included within the tuffs of Little Jacks Creek, which were deposited during the Miocene. They comprise a series of densely-welded rhyolitic tuffs, which range in thickness from 20 m (66 feet) to as much as 100 m (328 feet). The source area for the tuffs lies just to the east of 116° W (Ekren et al. 1981).

Climate of the Owyhee Plateau is best characterized as continental modified somewhat by maritime air from the Pacific Ocean. It is semiarid with typical intermountain characteristics of dry, hot summers and cold winters with precipitation occurring principally as snow during the winter and rain during the spring and fall. Summer precipitation is generally sparse and ineffective. These generalizations are borne out by precipitation and temperature records from Grasmere, Idaho, 37 km (23 miles) southeast of the proposed NNL and at a similar elevation (Table 1).
Table 1. Temperatures and precipitation for Grasmere, Idaho, weather station, from 1961 to 1974 (Caicco and Wellner 1983).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Temperature °C (°F)</th>
<th>Precipitation mm (inches)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average Maximum</td>
<td>Average Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>3.8 (38.5)</td>
<td>-7.9 (17.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>6.1 (43.0)</td>
<td>-5.8 (21.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>9.4 (48.9)</td>
<td>-5.5 (22.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>13.5 (56.3)</td>
<td>-2.2 (28.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>20.2 (68.4)</td>
<td>2.7 (36.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>23.0 (73.4)</td>
<td>6.3 (43.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>31.1 (87.9)</td>
<td>9.7 (49.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>30.4 (86.8)</td>
<td>9.5 (49.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>24.3 (75.8)</td>
<td>4.4 (39.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>17.0 (62.6)</td>
<td>-1.6 (29.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>9.2 (48.6)</td>
<td>-3.3 (26.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>3.1 (37.8)</td>
<td>-8.3 (17.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>15.8 (60.5)</td>
<td>-0.2 (31.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two types of soils support low sagebrush (Artemisia arbuscula) communities in the proposed NNL. Underlying the low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass (Agropyron spicatum) association are soils that have a restrictive layer (claypan) in the upper 20–36 cm (8–14 inches). Soils generally have a moderately dark, silt loam to silty clay loam surface horizon that grades into a strongly developed clay B horizon at about 30 cm (12 inches). A strongly calcareous C horizon occurs at approximately 51 cm (20 inches), which overlies bedrock at 81 cm (32 inches). Soil orders include Mollisols and Aridisols (Hironaka et al. 1983).

Soils supporting the low sagebrush/Sandberg bluegrass (Poa sandbergii) association are too shallow to support bluebunch wheatgrass. There is little to no soil development (soil order Entisol) (Hironaka et al. 1983).

The site was chosen to represent the Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass Subtheme of the Low Sagebrush Theme. The two associations included in this subtheme, low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass and low
sagebrush/Sandberg bluegrass (Hironaka et al. 1983), comprise a majority of the vegetation in the proposed area. These two associations occur in a mosaic pattern with each other, on soils having a claypan (Figure 2).

In areas where the soil is a somewhat deeper, with a medium loam texture, the Wyoming big sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis)/bluebunch wheatgrass association (Hironaka et al. 1983) occurs. This association is well-developed only in

Figure 2. Location of biotic communities in the Little Jacks Creek Research Natural Area proposed NNL.

T 8 S           T 9 S         R 2 E           R 3 E

1            1            2

Key to vegetation types:
1. Mosaic of low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass and low sagebrush/Sandberg bluegrass associations.
Plate 1. The canyon of Little Jacks Creek near its confluence with Rattlesnake Creek. The proposed NNL lies on the Owyhee Plateau on the south (right) side of the canyon.

Plate 2. Mosaic of low sagebrush/Sandberg bluegrass (foreground) and low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass (lighter areas in middle ground) associations in the proposed NNL.
Plate 3. The low sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass association in the proposed NNL.

Plate 4. The Wyoming big sagebrush/Idaho fescue association in the Little Jacks Creek canyon, immediately north of the proposed NNL in the Little Jacks Creek RNA.
Plate 5. Riparian vegetation along Little Jacks Creek, immediately north of the proposed NNL in the Little Jacks Creek RNA.

Plate 6. The Owyhee Plateau is dissected by the canyon of Little Jacks Creek near Little Jacks Creek NNL.
that portion of the plateau which lies in the East 1/2 of Section 7 and the extreme western portion of Section 8 (T9S, R3E), where it occurs in a mosaic with the two low sagebrush associations.

Associations occurring north of the proposed area, but within the Little Jacks Creek RNA, are the Wyoming big sagebrush/ bluebunch wheatgrass, Wyoming big sagebrush/Idaho fescue (Festuca idahoensis), basin big sagebrush (A. tridentata ssp. tridentata)/bluebunch wheatgrass (Hironaka et al. 1983) on the canyonsides of Rattlesnake and Little Jacks creeks, and a riparian community along the two streams, dominated by chokecherry (Prunus virginiana), gooseberry (Ribes aureum), and red-osier dogwood (Cornus stolonifera).

Three regional endemics also occur in the RNA, north of the proposed NNL. Two plants, Packard's mugwort (Artemisia packardiae) and Bailey's ivesia (Ivesia baileyi), occur on cliffs and ledges of the canyon, and a fish, the redband trout (Salmo newberryi), inhabits Little Jacks Creek.

Land Use and Present Condition

Natural values of the site are currently being protected due to its inclusion within the larger Little Jacks Creek RNA.

The present condition of the proposed NNL is excellent. The Little Jacks Creek and Rattlesnake Creek canyons have acted as barriers to livestock grazing from the north, and the great distance from water has acted as a barrier to the south. Much of the Owyhee Plateau surrounding the proposed NNL has been grazed by several classes of domestic livestock for over a century.

A dirt road approaches the proposed NNL from the south, but ends near the southern boundary and does not significantly impact NNL values.
Little recreational activity takes place within the site, with most use probably occurring during hunting season in the fall. The Little Jacks Creek area, however, offers spectacular views and the greatest opportunity for primitive recreation and solitude in the Boise District BLM.

No archaeological sites are known to exist within the proposed NNL. A thorough inventory of the area, however, has not been made.

Anticipated Damage to the Area

Natural values of the proposed NNL are currently being protected due to its inclusion within the larger Little Jacks Creek RNA.

No roads exist within the area, and no roads are currently being planned. No ORV usage has occurred on the site, and such usage is unlikely due to generally impassable terrain.

As of August 1983, no mining claims have been established within the area. The geology of the area makes it unlikely that any such claims will be established in the future.

Effects of Publicity

The proposed NNL is not expected to be sensitive to increased publicity. The only effect foreseen of increased publicity is positive, that is, more of the public will learn of the nationally significant values of the area. Any increase in visitor use to the NNL is not expected to be great enough to impact the ecology of the area.

Ownership

All land within the proposed NNL is Federally owned. The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Boise District
Office, Bruneau Resource Area, administers both surface and mineral rights of the area. The Boise District, BLM, office is located at:

Boise District Office  
Bureau of Land Management  
3948 Development Ave.  
Boise, ID 83705  
208/334-1582

ANALYSIS

Significance

The two low sagebrush communities occurring in Little Jacks Creek RNA are outstanding examples of the Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass Subtheme of the Low Sagebrush Theme, as defined in Phase I of the 1989 study (The Nature Conservancy et al. 1989). It is also the best known example of this subtheme in the Columbia Plateau Natural Region, as evaluated in Phase II of the 1989 study (Crawford et al. 1989).

Recommendation

In my opinion, the site appears to be nationally significant and I recommend that it be designated as a National Natural Landmark.

Management Guidelines

Natural values of the site are currently being protected due to its inclusion within the larger Little Jacks Creek RNA. Cattle occasionally wander into the area from the south, but do not remain there long due to lack of water. Although no increase in cattle grazing is anticipated, over and above the incidental use that takes place there now, it should be periodically monitored.

The site is physically protected from most high-impact recreational use, and any increase in other types of recreation is not expected to degrade the integrity of the NNL.
General Background

Evaluator: Robert K. Moseley
Idaho Natural Heritage Program
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25
Boise, ID, 83707
208/334-3402

B.S. Range Resources, University of Idaho, Moscow (1978)
M.S. Botany, University of Idaho, Moscow (1985)


Plant Ecologist, Idaho Natural Heritage Program (1988-present)

Information contained in this report is based on literature cited, interviews with Boise District BLM personnel and members of the Idaho Natural Areas Coordinating Committee, who inventoried and recommended Little Jacks Creek for designation as a RNA, and reconnaissance level field investigations during the summers of 1987 and 1989.

Considerable data was provided by Charles Wellner and Ed Tisdale, Idaho Natural Areas Coordinating Committee, and Steve Caicco, formerly ecologist with the Idaho Natural Areas Coordinating Committee and the Idaho Natural Heritage Program. I relied on their excellent report (Caicco and Wellner 1983) to a considerable degree during preparation of this evaluation. I visited the Little Jacks Creek for the first time in July 1987, as part of a natural areas inventory of BLM lands in Owyhee County. I greatly appreciate the use of a four-wheel-drive truck provided by the BLM's Idaho State Office and Boise District Office. I also visited the Little Jacks Creek area in August 1989. A total of approximately four days was spent researching and writing this NNL site evaluation for Little Jacks Creek RNA proposed NNL.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Common and scientific names of the vascular plant, mammal, reptile and bird species of known or probable occurrence within the recommended boundaries.
Vascular plant species observed in the Little Jacks Creek RNA proposed NNL.

**SHRUBS**
- *Artemisia arbuscula* Low sagebrush
- *Artemisia spinescens* Bud sagebrush
- *Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis* Wyoming big sagebrush
- *Chrysothamnus nauseosus* Gray rabbitbrush
- *Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus* Green rabbitbrush

**GRASSES**
- *Agropyron spicatum* Bluebunch wheatgrass
- *Poa sandbergii* Sandberg bluegrass
- *Sitanion hystrix* Bottlebrush squirreltail

**FORBS**
- *Antennaria dimorpha* Low pussytoes
- *Artemisia packardiae* Packard's mugwort
- *Aster scopulorum* Lava aster
- *Astragalus atratus* Mourning milkvetch
- *Castilleja chromosa* Desert paintbrush
- *Crepis acuminata* Taper-tip hawksbeard
- *Crepis intermedia* Gray hawksbeard
- *Lewisia rediviva* Bitterroot
- *Microseris troximoides* Microseris
- *Phacelia linearis* Threadleaf phacelia
- *Phlox longifolia* Long-leaf phlox

Mammals, reptiles, and birds of probable occurrence within the Little Jacks Creek RNA proposed NNL.

**MAMMALS**
- *Sorex merriamii* Merriam's shrew
- *Brachylagus leucurus* Pygmy rabbit
- *Sylvilagus nuttallii* Nuttall's cottontail
- *Lepus townsendii* White-tailed jackrabbit
- *Lepus californica* Black-tailed jackrabbit
- *Thomomys talpoides* Northern pocket gopher
- *Perognathus parvus* Great Basin pocket mouse
- *Reithrodontomys megalotis* Western harvest mouse
- *Peromyscus maniculatus* Deer mouse
- *Peromyscus crinitus* Canyon mouse
- *Microdipodops megacephalus* Dark kangaroo mouse
- *Onychomys pictus* Northern grasshopper mouse
- *Dipodomys ordii* Ord's kangaroo rat
- *Dipodomys microps* Chisel-toothed kangaroo rat
- *Neotoma cinerea* Bushy-tailed woodrat
- *Neotoma lepida* Desert woodrat
- *Microtus montanus* Montane vole
- *Microtus longicaudus* Long-tailed vole
- *Lemmiscus curtatus* Sagebrush vole
- *Spermophilus beldingi* Belding's ground squirrel
- *Spermophilus townsendii* Townsend's ground squirrel
- *Ammospermophilus leucurus* White-tailed antelope squirrel
Tamias minimus  Least chipmunk
Canis latrans  Coyote
Vulpes macrotis  Kit fox
Mustela erminea  Short-tailed weasel
Mustela freneta  Long-tailed weasel
Taxidea taxus  Badger
Felis concolor  Mountain lion
Felis rufus  Bobcat
Odocoileus hemionus  Mule deer
Antilocarpa americanus  Pronghorn

REPTILES
Gambelia wislizenii  Longnose leopard lizard
Phrynosoma douglasii  Short horned lizard
Sceloporus graciosus  Sagebrush lizard
Sceloporus occidentalis  Side blotched lizard
Uta stansburiana  Western skink
Eumeces skiltonianus  Western whiptail
Chersiodorophus tigris  Western ground snake
Sonora semiannulata  Western terrestrial garter snake
Thamnophis elegans  Western garter snake

Rhinocheilus lecontei
Hypsiglena torquata  Longnose snake
Masticophis taeniatus  Night snake
Charina bottae  Striped whipsnake
Coluber constrictor  Rubber boa
Pituophis melanoleucus  Racer
Crotalus viridis  Gopher snake

BIRDS
Cathartes aura  Turkey vulture
Circus cyaneus  Northern harrier
Buteo swainsoni  Swainson's hawk
Buteo jamaicensis  Red-tailed hawk
Buteo regalis  Ferruginous hawk
Buteo lagopus  Rough-legged hawk
Aquila chrysaetos  Golden eagle
Falco sparverius  American Kestrel
Falco columbarius  Merlin
Falco mexicanus  Prairie falcon
Alectoris chukar  Chukar
Dendragapus obscurus  Blue grous
Centrocercus urophasianus  Sage grouse
Columba livia  Rock dove
Zenaida macroura  Mourning dove
Bubo virginianus  Great horned owl
Asio otus  Long-eared owl
Asio flammeus  Short-eared owl
Aegolius acadicus  Northern saw-whet owl
Chordeiles minor  Common nighthawk
Phalaenoptilus nuttallii  Common poorwill
Aeronautes saxatalis  White-throated swift
Archilochus alexandri  Black-chinned hummingbird
Stellula calliope  Calliope hummingbird
Selasphorus rufus  Rufous hummingbird
Colaptes auratus  
Empidonax oberhoiser  
Sayornis saya  
Myiarchus cinerascens  
Tyrannus verticalis  
Eremophila alpestris  
Tachycineta bicolor  
Pica pica  
Corvus corax  
Salpinctes obsoletus  
Sialia currucoides  
Myadestes townsendi  
Oreoscoptes montanus  
Lanius excunitor  
Lanius ludovicianus  
Vermivora celata  
Passerina amoena  
Pipilo chorurus  
Pipilo erythrophthalmus  
Spizella passerina  
Spizella breweri  
Pooecetes gramineus  
Chondestes grammacus  
Amphispiza bilineata  
Amphispiza belli  
Passerculus sandwichensis  
Zonotrichia leucophrys  
Plectrophenax nivalis  
Sturnella negelecta  
Euphagus cyanocephalus  
Molothrus ater  

Northern flicker  
Dusky flycatcher  
Say's phoebe  
Ash-throated flycatcher  
Western kingbird  
Horned lark  
Tree swallows  
Black-billed magpie  
Common raven  
Rock wren  
Mountain bluebird  
Townsend's solitaire  
Sage thrasher  
Northern shirke  
Loggerhead shirke  
Orange-crowned warbler  
Lazuli bunting  
Green-tailed towhee  
Rufous-sided towhee  
Chipping sparrow  
Brewer's sparrow  
Vesper sparrow  
Lark sparrow  
Black-throated sparrow  
Sage sparrow  
Savannah sparrow  
White-crowned sparrow  
Snow bunting'  
Western meadowlark  
Brewer's blackbird  
Brown-headed cowbird
Location:  37 km (23 miles) southwest of Bruneau, Owyhee County, Idaho.

Natural Region:  Columbia Plateau

Size:  319.7 ha (790 acres)

Owner:  Federal; Administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Boise District Office.

Description:  The site occurs in the heart of the Owyhee Plateau, a large volcanic surface encompassing parts of southwestern Idaho, northeastern Nevada, and southeastern Oregon. The Owyhee Plateau is dissected by numerous canyons, of which the deep, narrow canyon cut by Little Jacks Creek is a typical example. The NNL is located on the gently sloping plateau, immediately south of the Little Jacks Creek canyon, and is within the larger Little Jacks Creek Research Natural Area (RNA).

The NNL represents the Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass Subtheme of the Low Sagebrush Theme. The two associations included in this subtheme, low sagebrush/ bluebunch wheatgrass (Artemisia arbuscula/Agropyron spicatum) and low sagebrush/ Sandberg bluegrass (Poa sandbergii), comprise a majority of the vegetation in the NNL. These two associations occur in a mosaic, on soils having a claypan.

In the eastern portion of the site, where the soil is deeper, the
Wyoming big sagebrush (Artemisia tridentata ssp. wyomingensis)/bluebunch wheatgrass association occurs. This association occurs in a mosaic with the two low sagebrush associations.

Significance: The two low sagebrush communities occurring in Little Jacks Creek RNA are outstanding examples of the Low Sagebrush/Bluebunch Wheatgrass Subtheme of the Low Sagebrush Theme. The NNL is considered the best known example of this subtheme in the Columbia Plateau Natural Region.

Land use: The ecological condition of the site is excellent, due largely to physical barriers that have prevented disturbance. The site is managed as a RNA.

Special conditions: Natural values of the NNL are currently being protected due to its inclusion within the larger Little Jacks Creek RNA.


Designated:

Owner agreement: