

plan into other planning mechanisms such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans which will include public participation through scheduled hearings and meetings.

The overall goal of this plan is to reduce the frequency of wildfires spreading from city or private property to public lands and from spreading from public lands to municipal property. Fire fighter safety will always come first. This goal will be achieved by reducing fuels in high risk areas and conducting public education and training programs throughout the county.

3.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT AREA

Camas County was established February 6, 1917 with its county seat at Fairfield. It encompasses 1,075 square miles. Camas County is predominately made up of rural and forested areas. The areas around Fairfield have experienced some growth and development. Development has mostly occurred within the low lands associated with Highway 20, which runs east to west through the southern extent of the county. Most of the industries within the county are related to agriculture products, their production, harvest or shipping. The only urban center in the county is the town of Fairfield. Smaller communities include Soldier, Corral, and Hill City located along Highway 20.

Landownership

Camas contains approximately 687,997 acres divided among four landowners (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Table 1. Land Status of Camas County, Idaho

Owner	Acres	Percent
BLM	118,715	17
USFS	317,744	45
Water	2,421	2.5
Private	227,456	33
State	22,258	2.5
Total	688,594	100

Population and Demographics

There are 991 people (Idaho's least populated county), 396 occupied households, and 287 families in Camas County (2000 Census). The population density is >1 persons per square mile. In general the population is light throughout the county with the densest populations occurring in the towns and communities. Due to farming, ranching, and recreation there are numerous individual home sites scattered throughout the rural areas of the county. The city of Fairfield has the largest population of 395 persons, with the remaining 596 persons being scattered throughout the communities of Soldier, Hill City, and Corral as well as farms and ranches located throughout the county.

Topography and Vegetation

The topography of Camas County is combination of high mountain desert with elevations from 5,055 feet in the valley bottoms where the topography is flat or gently rolling to mountainous areas with peaks rising above 10,000 feet. Steep slopes and narrow canyons characterize the mountainous areas. Some of the more common plant species found in the lower elevation mountain desert and prairies of Camas County include Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata* spp. *wyomingensis*), alkali sagebrush (*Artemisia longiloba*), low sagebrush (*Artemisia arbuscula arbuscula*), bluebunch wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegneria spicata*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), Sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), arrowleaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*), and Thurber needlegrass (*Achnatherum thurberianum*) (Figure 2). The agricultural areas have been developed for seed crops such as alfalfa and summer and spring wheat crops. At the higher elevations areas are a mixed coniferous forest primarily on the north facing slopes and sagebrush and mountain shrub communities on the south facing aspects. The mixed conifer areas are comprised of species such as Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*), and subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*), on north aspects and along steeper canyon bottoms and the southern aspects are dominated by basin big sage (*Artemisia tridentata tridentata*), Wyoming big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata wyomingensis*) bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), and pockets of snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*), and serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*). Many of the draws contain aspen and cottonwood communities (Figure 2).

Climate

Climate in Camas County is generally consistent with other counties located along the northern edge of the Snake River Plain. In winter the average temperature is 20°F and the average daily minimum is 9°F. In summer the average temperature is 63°F and the average daily maximum temperature is 82°F. In general the summer days are hot and the nights are fairly cool. Precipitation during the summer months is limited to isolated showers and thunderstorms that produce localized precipitation. Months of July through October represent the lowest average total precipitation recorded and coincide with the peak fire season when summer storms likely occur. Winter conditions usually arrive between late October and early November. Snowfall is the primary source of precipitation for the county making up approximately 90-95 % of the annual moisture. Mountainous area within the county receive greater than 95 inches of snow, and the lower elevation around Fairfield receive an average of 71 inches of snowfall annually.

Tables 2 and 3 summarize long-term climatic data for Fairfield and Hill City. Data from these weather stations provide a good cross-section of the lower portions of Camas County's weather patterns.

Camas County FMP

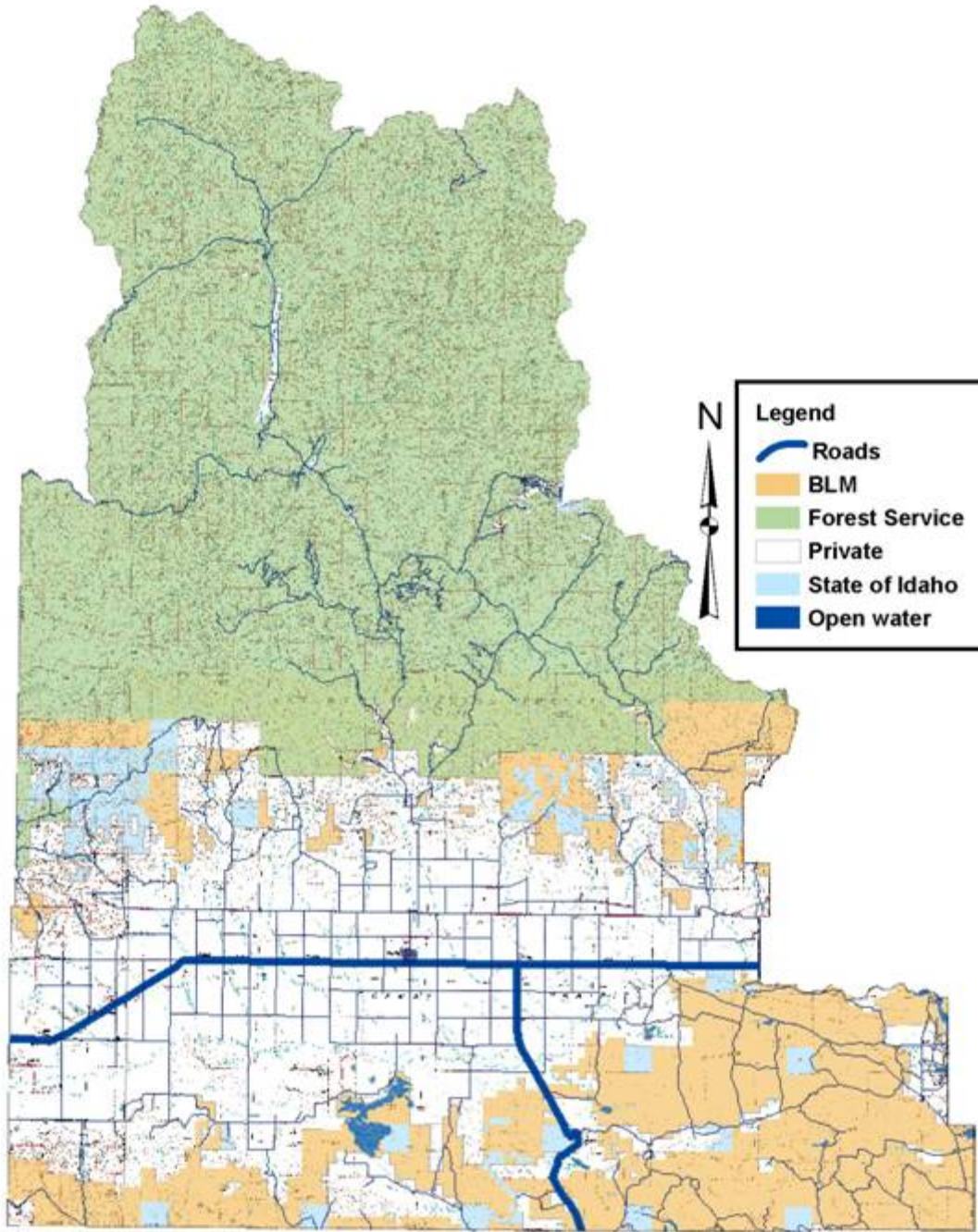


Figure 1. Camas County land ownership and county roads.

Camas County Land Cover

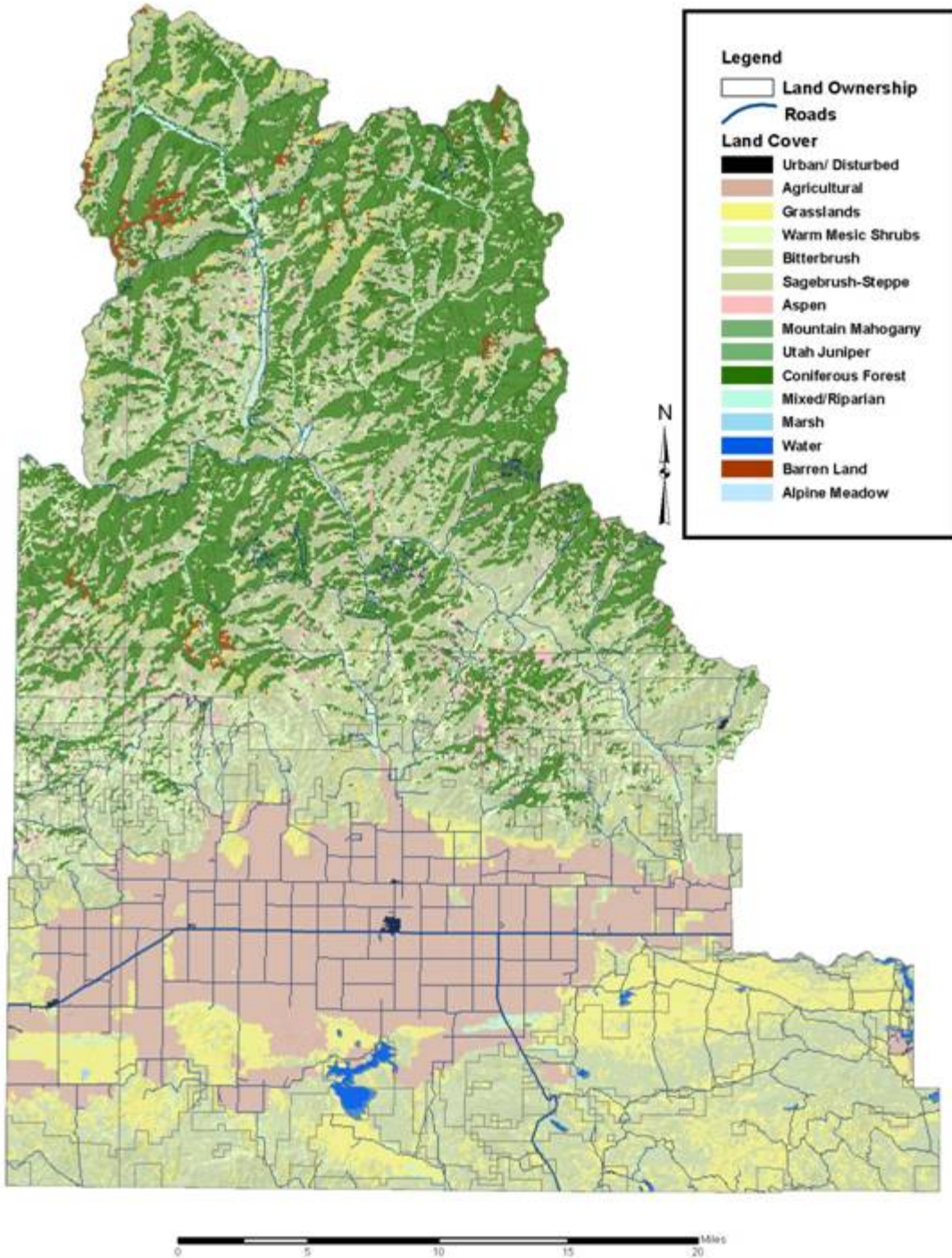


Figure 2. Camas County vegetation map.

Table 2. Monthly Climate Summary for Fairfield, Idaho for years 1948 to 2003

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max. Temperature (°F)	29.1	34.6	42.1	55.0	66.6	75.5	85.4	84.2	74.9	63.1	43.8	32.0	57.2
Average Min. Temperature (°F)	5.2	8.1	16.6	27.4	34.8	40.4	45.9	43.8	35.3	26.9	17.8	8.2	25.9
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	2.35	1.72	1.30	1.05	1.22	0.96	0.46	0.43	0.66	0.77	1.85	2.30	15.08
Average Total Snowfall (in.)	21.5	12.3	6.9	2.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.7	7.7	19.5	71.4
Average Snow Depth (in.)	15	19	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	5

Table 3. Monthly Climate Summary for Hill City, Idaho for years 1931 to 2003

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Average Max. Temperature (°F)	28.7	33.2	40.3	53.8	65.4	73.7	85.4	84.7	74.8	61.8	42.9	31.7	56.4
Average Min. Temperature (°F)	5.9	8.9	16.9	27.7	34.9	39.9	45.3	43.3	35.2	27.0	18.8	9.5	26.1
Average Total Precipitation (in.)	2.29	1.59	1.27	1.00	1.16	0.96	0.36	0.36	0.57	0.94	1.71	2.20	14.42
Average Total Snowfall (in.)	22.0	14.3	7.5	1.4	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.5	7.0	20.8	73.8
Average Snow Depth (in.)	16	16	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	8	5

4.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS AND RESOURCES

This section focuses on wildland fire issues and how they impact current conditions in Camas County. Existing conditions and resources were determined by: (1) interviews with all local fire chiefs, as well as local, state, federal employees, and county residents. (2) surveying and photographing subdivisions within a WUI that were identified by fire chiefs as areas of concern, (3) documenting and photographing fuel loads within these subdivisions and along subdivision access roads, (4) recording all information on specific forms (see Field Assessment Forms and Ratings - Tables 8, 9, and 10) and in accordance with a Assessment Ignition Model (Cohen, 1995) and, (5) locating potential fire fighting water sources such as hydrants, ponds, live streams, and irrigation mainline access points (Figures 5 and 10).

Risk of Fires and Fire Frequency

Wildfire risk within and around Camas County is generally moderate due to the proximity of large areas of agricultural land. Areas adjacent to and south of the Sawtooth National Forest (SNF) are high risk due to fuel loads, lack of survivable space around structures, and higher population density during the fire season. Areas within SNF have experienced mostly natural fires of high frequency and low acreage (less than 10) along ridgelines. Figure 3 shows fuel loads and historical fire perimeters and Table 4 shows a number corresponding to the location of a particular fire seen on Figure 3; fire years; individual fires; and, acres burned (10 or more) for years 1995 to 2003. These data represent only wildland mutual aid fires on BLM and does not include grass and brush fires, structural or other types fires or SNF data. Contact fire department chiefs and/or SNF in Fairfield for additional fire history data. Overall, the highest fire frequency occurred on national forest coniferous and sagebrush-grassland vegetation types and will continue to be high in these types due to the accumulation of flammable fuels over the past decade combined with drought.