

BIOLOGICAL EVALUATION
and
DETERMINATION OF IMPACTS
TO FEDERAL AND STATE-LISTED SPECIES

McCall Municipal Airport Improvements Project

McCall, Idaho
Valley County, Idaho

Report submitted to:

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| Biological Evaluation: McCall Airport Improvements Project | |

This report has been prepared for use by WHPacific, Inc., and their agents. I am qualified to delineate and analyze terrestrial and wetland ecosystems. I have used the site information and proposed development plans as referenced herein. The findings in this report are based on information gathered in the field at the time of investigation, and data from the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Idaho Conservation Data Center. If necessary, all appropriate regulatory agencies should be contacted to verify the findings of this report and to obtain required approvals and permits.

I have provided professional services in accordance with the degree of care and skill generally accepted in the nature of the work performed.

Tom Duebendorfer M.A.

At the request of WHPacific, Inc., I completed this Biological Evaluation for the McCall Municipal Airport Improvements Project (Figures 1 and 2). The site is located in McCall, Valley County, Idaho (Township 18 North, Range 3 East, portions of Sections 16 and 21— elevation 5,000 feet). The work will be performed and constructed with financial assistance from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and the City of McCall.

Project Description (more detail is provided in the Construction Methods Section)

The City of McCall, in cooperation with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), is proposing to move a taxiway to become at least B-II compliant. The runway/taxiway separation is 200'. The standard for the current airport class (B-II) is 240'. The master plan, adopted in 2007, suggests moving toward C-II or even C-III. The separations for these are 300' and 400' respectively.

Action Area

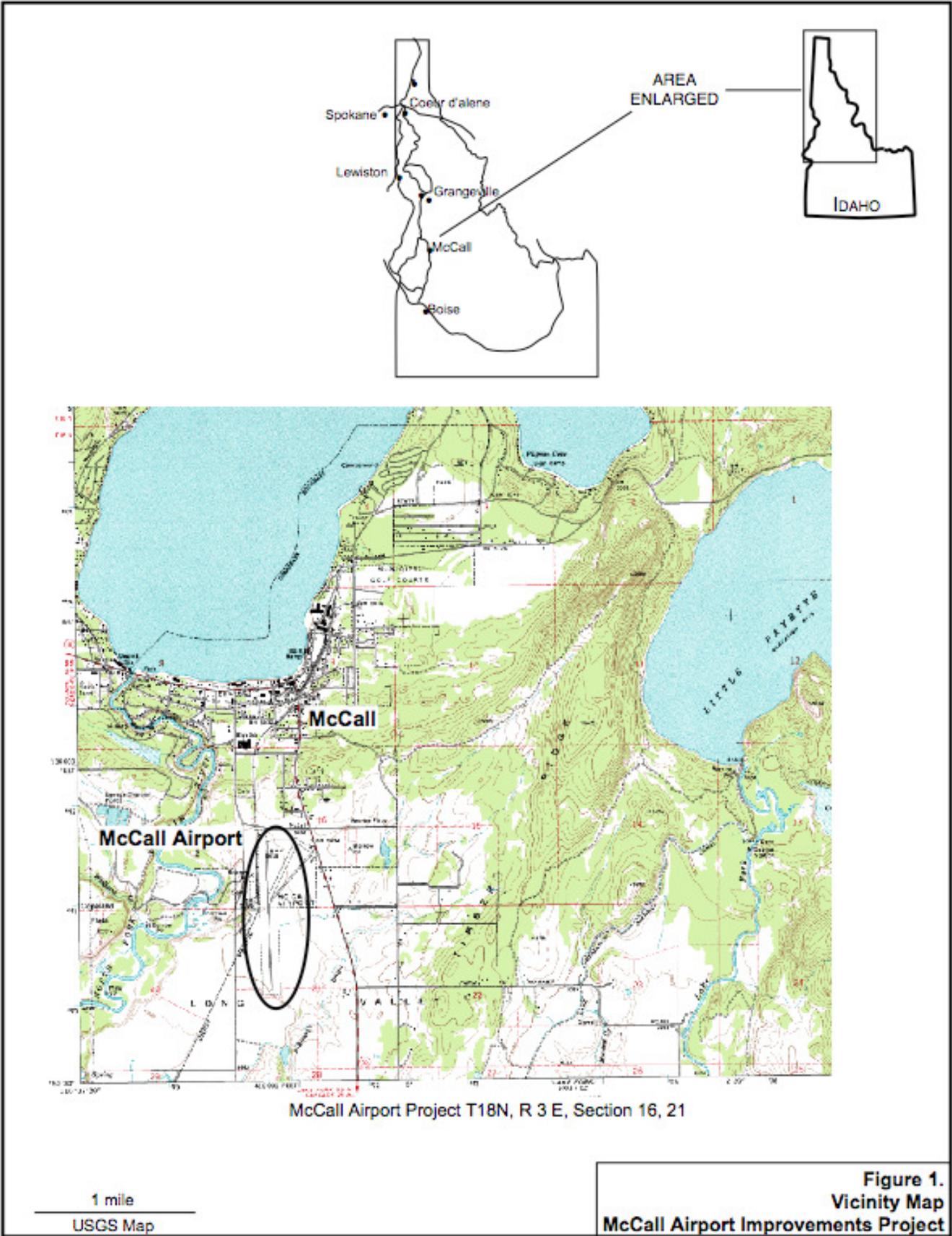
The action area is considered to be the immediate vicinity of the proposed taxiway construction as well as a “noise” area which extends approximately five miles in all directions.

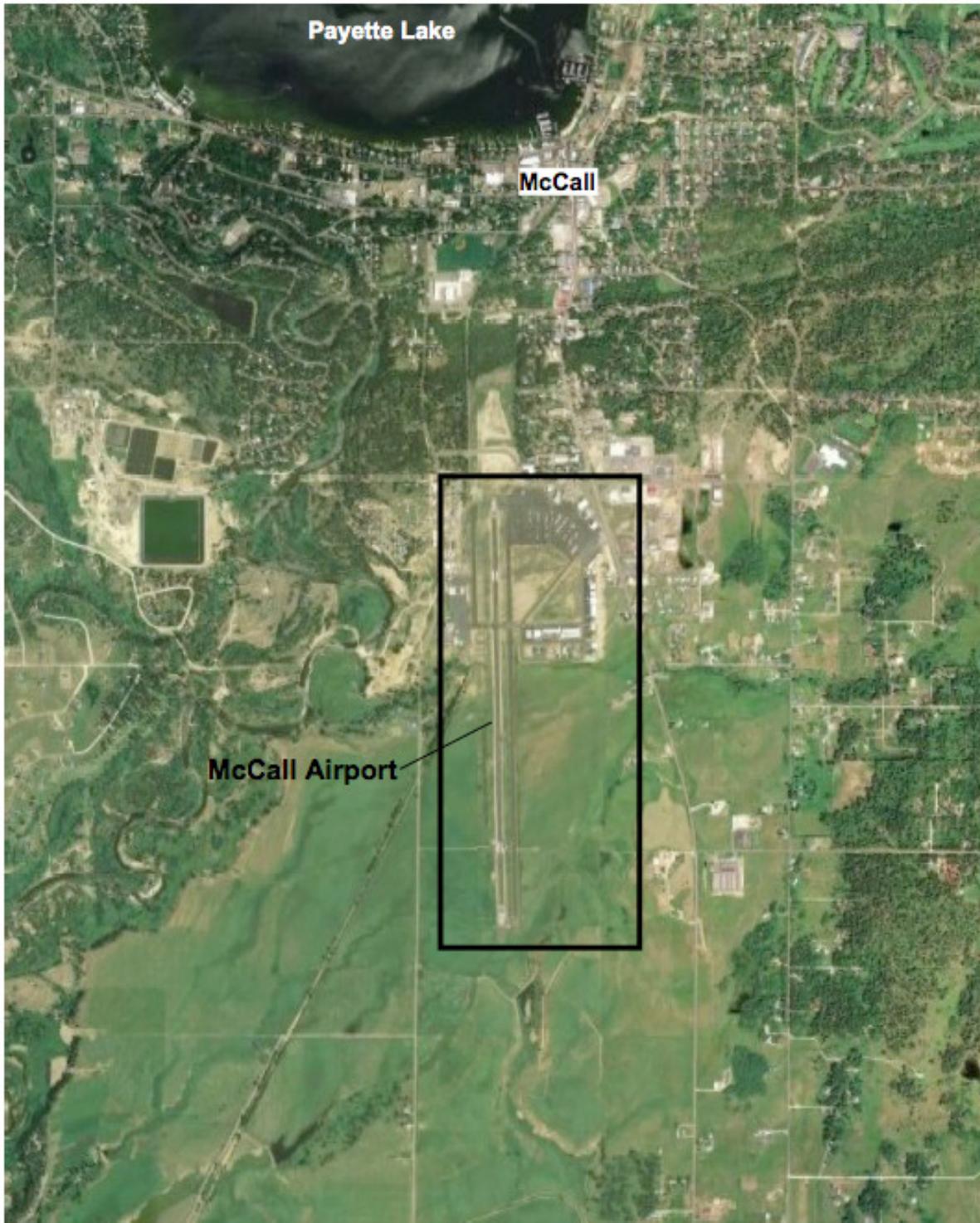
I investigated the site on October 6 and 7, 2008 to observe current environmental conditions, vegetation information, and researched known threatened and endangered species locations, habitat information, and potential for occurrence within the action area.

Vegetation at the airport site would be considered “Non-native Herbaceous Habitat: Disturbed and Invasive Grass and Forb”. There are several ditches that contain wetland plant species (both native and non-native), however, the majority of the area proposed for the taxiway is highly grazed open “pasture”. Dominant plant species in the ditches includes sedges (*Carex nebrascensis*, *C. X stipata*, *C. utriculata*, and *C. spp.*); rushes (*Juncus tenuis congesta*, *J. ensifolius*, and *J. spp.*); water hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*); canarygrass (*Phalaris arundinacea*); cattail (*Typha latifolia*); cudweed (*Gnaphalium sp.*).

The open field contains ruderal (or weedy) species including: orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*), smooth brome (*Bromus inermis*), bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), ox-eye daisy (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), English daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), sheep sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera*), toadflax (*Linaria vulgaris*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), willow-leaf dock (*Rumex salicifolius*), thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), quackgrass (*Elytrigia repens*), horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*), and cinquefoil (*Potentilla gracilis*). Most of these species are non-natives and typical of highly disturbed, grazed open fields and pastures.

The project area is underlain by soils of the Donnel sandy loam (a very deep, well drained soil); Gestrin loam (very deep, moderately well-drained soil) ; and Melton loam (a very deep , poorly drained soil).





McCall Airport Project T18N, R 3 E, Section 16, 21

no scale

Figure 2.
Aerial Photograph
McCall Airport Improvements Project

The layout of the proposed taxiway is shown in the Engineer's Design Report.

Federal

The United State Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) species list for Valley County include: gray wolf (experimental/non-essential), Northern Idaho ground squirrel; Canada lynx; bull trout, spring/summer chinook salmon; steelhead trout (all threatened [+ designated critical habitat for chinook and steelhead]); and yellow-billed cuckoo (candidate) (14420-2009-SL-0041). However, a project specific request resulted in the identification for potential impacts to only two species: bull trout and the Northern Idaho ground squirrel (Appendix A).

Bull trout

Since there are no streams or creeks in the project area that harbor or could potentially harbor bull trout, there will be no further discussion relating to this species.

Northern Idaho ground squirrel (NIDGS)

Because modeled NDIGS habitat is present within the vicinity of the project area, field studies for its presence/absence will be undertaken with representatives of the IDFG, and/or regional experts in spring 2009.

State

“Species of Special Concern” are now replaced by “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” (sometimes referred to as at-risk species) as defined by the Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) which was approved by the USFWS in 2005. Table 1 list the common and scientific names and (protection) rankings of the Species of Greatest Conservation Need provided by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG); Fish and Wildlife Information System (FWIS), that have been reported to occur within a 5 mile radius of the McCall airport (see also Appendices A and B). Figure 4 shows the locations of these species relative to the airport. Unless cited otherwise, the species information discussed in this section is from the IDFG website of publications.

Table 1.
Species of Greatest Conservation Need that occur within a 5 mile radius of the McCall airport

| Common Name | Scientific Name | CWCS | Global | State | BLM | USFS R4 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------|--------|---------|--------|---------|
| A spur-throat grasshopper | <i>Melanoplus payettei</i> | 1 | G2G4 | SNR | | |
| Bald eagle | <i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> | 1 | G5 | S3B,S4N | Type 1 | T |
| Black-backed woodpecker | <i>Picoides arcticus</i> | 0 | G5 | S3 | Type 5 | |
| Blue Grosbeak | <i>Guiraca caerulea</i> | 1 | G5 | S1B | | |
| Columbia Spotted Frog* | <i>Rana luteiventris</i> | 0 | G4 | S3S4 | Type 1 | S |
| Common Loon | <i>Gavia immer</i> | 1 | G5 | S1B,S2N | | S |
| Flammulated Owl | <i>Otus flammeolus</i> | 1 | G4 | S3B | Type 3 | S |
| Gillette's Checkerspot | <i>Euphydryas gillettii</i> | 1 | G2G3 | SNR | | |
| Great Gray Owl | <i>Strix nebulosa</i> | 0 | G5 | S3 | Type 5 | S |
| Merlin | <i>Falco columbarius</i> | 1 | G5 | S1B,S2N | | |
| Mountain Quail | <i>Oreortyx pictus</i> | 1 | G5 | S2 | Type 3 | S |
| Northern Goshawk | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i> | 0 | G5 | S4 | Type 3 | S |
| Pristine Pyrg | <i>Pristinicola hemphilli</i> | 1 | G3 | SNR | | |
| Pygmy Nuthatch | <i>Sitta pygmaea</i> | 1 | G5 | S2S3 | Type 5 | |
| Shiny Tightcoil | <i>Pristiloma wascoense</i> | 1 | G3 | SNR | | |
| Thinlip Tightcoil | <i>Pristiloma idahoense</i> | 1 | G2G3 | SNR | | |
| Upland Sandpiper | <i>Bartramia longicauda</i> | 1 | G5 | S1B | Type 4 | |
| Western Toad | <i>Bufo boreas</i> | 0 | G4 | S4 | Type 3 | |
| White-headed woodpecker | <i>Picoides albolarvatus</i> | 1 | G4 | S2B | Type 4 | S |

* the Great Basin population of this species is also considered a "Candidate" for federal listing (candidate species have no protection under the Endangered Species Act [ESA]).

A Spur-throat Grasshopper (*Melanoplus payettei*)

The IDFG information for this species identifies the location for this species as "McCall on Big Payette Lake". The observation date was 1910, cited in a 1936 report. The species has not been collected since 1961. It is included in the CWCS list because of lack of essential information pertaining to status. Its habitat is "dry grasses". Based on this scanty habitat information, the McCall airport site could potentially harbor this species.

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Relative to recovery population goals set in 1986 (4 breeding pairs; USFWS 1986) numbers of nesting eagles in Zone 15 ($n = 38$) exceeds target numbers by 950% – the greatest margin of any zone in the state (IDFG 2006). Although Table lists the bald eagle as threatened under the ESA, it has been de-listed, but still is afforded protection by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA).

Bald eagles are well documented in the McCall area. The proximity of the lakes and rivers in the area coupled with relatively natural riparian vegetation along banks of the waterbodies provides excellent habitat for nesting, roosting, and feeding for this species. Observations of wintering bald eagles has been clearly documented for years. There is an active bald eagle nest within 1.5 miles (nest site ##15I01802) of the airport, and the nest has been active for numerous past years (Figure 4).

Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*)

This species is ranked S3 which indicates it is “vulnerable” and at moderate risk because of restricted range, few populations, declines, or other factors that make it vulnerable to rangewide extinction or extirpation.

Black-backed woodpecker habitat includes coniferous forests (primarily spruce/fir), especially in windfalls and burned areas with standing dead trees. It is found less frequently in mixed forests, and rarely in deciduous woodlands in winter. The nearest locations observed of this species relative to the McCall airport are in the Ponderosa State Park (in the peninsula of Payette Lake, 4 miles northeast of the airport), in 1975; and at Little Ski Hill, in Adams County (3.8 miles northwest of the airport), in 1985. Due to its mobility, it is likely that this species could move through the airport area from one forested habitat to another.

Blue Grosbeak (*Guiraca caerulea*)

This species is listed as “critically imperiled for breeding” (S1B). This species inhabits open country, found in thickets and stretches of underbrush at the edges of fields and pastures. It may nest in hayfields or thickets adjacent to sagebrush foothills. The nearest documented observation of this species (1985) relative to the airport is within 0.6 miles of the proposed project as one individual (probably) as a part of a migrating group. This sighting was not of one of the “imperiled” nest sites. There are no “thickets” on the east side of the airport near the location of the proposed taxiway; however west of the runway there are scrub-shrub habitats. Therefore, due to its mobility, it is likely that this species could move across the airport area from one preferred habitat to another.

Columbia Spotted Frog (*Rana luteiventris*)

Although not on the CWCS list, this species is listed as BLM Type 1 (the most protected ranking). The current BLM Type 1 listing is probably the result of the prior attempt to federally-list this species. After a determination that listing the species is not warranted, the proposed listing was removed by the FWS in August 2002 (Fed Reg. Vol 67, No. 169). However, the Great Basin population of this species being a “candidate” for federal listing under the ESA.

The spotted frog (formerly *Rana pretiosa*) was recently shown to consist of two distinct species, the Columbia spotted frog (*R. luteiventris*) and the Oregon Spotted Frog (*R. pretiosa*) (FWS Mountain-Prairie website). The Columbia spotted frog is closely associated with water, including the marshy edges of ponds, lakes, slow-moving cool water streams and springs. The frogs are aquatic specialists and more dependent on permanent aquatic habitats than other frog species (the majority of sightings and captures have occurred while the frogs were submersed in water) (Fed Reg 67:169). It does not regularly frequent ponds and lakes where water is warm enough to allow for extensive growth of emergent vegetation, such as cattails.

The closest documented observation of this species to the airport is 1.3 miles northeast. The location is vague (use of the name “McCall”) and the observation was made in 1918. The observation location is very close to Payette Lake. Since then no other observations have been documented. Although ditches (and disturbed creeks) exist in the proposed taxiway area, there is no permanent water habitat that this species favors for breeding.

Common Loon (*Gavia immer*)

The common loon winters along coasts, coastal waters, and may be found in inland lakes, rivers, and large reservoirs. In Idaho, loon nests have never been confirmed—however birds with breeding plumage have been observed in northern Idaho Panhandle and southeastern Idaho lakes. The State includes both breeding and non-breeding rankings, and the common loon is considered sensitive in Region 4 of the USFS.

Near the project area, there have been two sightings in Little Payette Lake (in 1976 and 1985); three sightings in Payette Lake (in 1978). No observations were made at the airport location—however, it is likely if the birds were found in the nearby lakes, they could potentially cross the airspace over the airport en route to other preferred open bodies of water.

Flammulated Owl (*Otus flammeolus*)

Listed for State vulnerable breeding and USFS Region 4 sensitive, this species is highly migratory. This nocturnal owl breeds in montane forests and winters in central Mexico and south. In summer, it is considered relatively abundant in certain localized habitats in Idaho. Flammulated owls are “obligate” cavity nesters, using cavities often made from other woodpeckers. They prefer mid-elevation old-growth or mature stands of open Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir.

Relative to the McCall airport location, in 2005, there was one confirmed vocalization “observation” about 4.2 miles northwest of the airport in the Goose Creek area. The airport area is not preferred habitat, however, it is possible that flammulated owls could pass over the airport en route to other habitats.

Gillette's Checkerspot (*Euphydryas gillettii*)

This butterfly is considered Globally imperiled/vulnerable (G2G3), but Statewide is unranked (SNR) due to lack of essential information. In montane parts of the northern Rockies, it occurs in isolated populations which fluctuate greatly in abundance from year to year. It is associated with open clearing in mesic habitats often near small streams or marshes. The primary host larval plant is honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*), with valerian (*Valeriana occidentalis*), lousewort (*Pedicularis* sp.), speedwell (*Veronica wormskjoldii*), and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos*) as alternate host plants. Except for snowberry, these species were not observed near the airport site—however these host plants may not be all-inclusive and other host plants may be utilized by the butterfly.

Locations in the proximity of the airport include one observation (in 1960 by a non-expert) and one specimen taken by an expert in 1983 at a location near the junction of State Route 55 and Forest Road 451, (about 3 air miles northwest of the airport).

Great Gray Owl (*Strix nebulosa*)

Although not listed by the CWCS, this owl is an USFS sensitive species. It is the largest owl in North America, and mostly nests in forest habitat types (lodgepole pine/Douglas fir/aspen zones) in broken-topped snags, vacated stick nests, and man-artificial nest structures. It has been noted that great gray owl nesting attempts have been associated with open and often wet meadows (Atkinson, 1989). Mortality is often caused to non-flying young by great horned owl and northern goshawks. The primary prey of great gray owls includes ground squirrels, voles, pocket gophers, and hares.

Besides numerous observations of one to three individuals (from the early 1980's to late 1990's), there are three reports of nests occupied by great grays: one (found in 1989) is located 2.3 miles due east of the airport (south of Little Payette Lake on an artificial nest platform), and the other two (found in 1994 and 1998) are 4.4 and 3.6 miles (respectively) northwest of the airport in the Bear Basin area. To facilitate breeding, numerous artificial nest platforms have been erected by the Raptor Research Center of Boise State University in the Bear Basin area (Atkinson, 1989).

Due to these recent observations, it is highly likely that great gray owls use the adjacent forests for nest sites as well as the open ground in the lower areas surrounding McCall and the vicinity for feeding.

Merlin (*Falco columbarius*)

This species is ranked Statewide as S1B, S2N indicating breeding and nonbreeding populations are imperiled. In Idaho, the merlin is a common migrant and locally abundant winter resident but a rare breeder. They hunt in open country and feed on small to medium-sized birds, rodents, insects, and bats. Nesting habitat is shrub-steep dominated by sagebrush with nests usually in junipers. They may also use abandoned nests from other birds.

Although specific nesting habitat described above is lacking in the McCall airport area, one individual was sighted in 1983, from a vague location (simply “Payette Lake”), with the coordinates about 4.7 miles north-northeast of the airport on the Payette Lake peninsula.

Thus while the bird is wide-ranging during its wintering habits, it is probably unlikely that merlins frequent the project area.

Mountain Quail (*Oreortyx pictus*)

Although secure, common and widespread globally (G5), in Idaho, the Mountain quail is imperiled due to restricted distribution and low population size (S2). It is a year-round resident in the mountains of western North America with primary range in the Sierra Nevada and Cascades. In Idaho, they are restricted to a few scattered sites ranging from Lewiston to Riggins, primarily adjacent to the Salmon River (IDFG 2006).

Dramatic declines in numbers have been documented in these eastern populations. However, the amount of riparian and agricultural habitat suitable for quail appears stable—the reasons for long-term declines are unclear (IDFG 2006). Transplant studies have been undertaken by IDFG in attempt to rejuvenate population numbers.

Mountain quail breed and winter in xeric to mesic shrub-dominated communities both of which occur within a 5 miles radius of the airport site. Nearby observations include sightings of up to 20 individuals, 0.8 and 1.6 miles southwest of the runway, and 2 birds found 2.8 miles due east of the airport in 1990. Because habitat is present and sightings of these birds has occurred relatively recently, it is likely that Mountain quail are in the vicinity of the airport project.

Northern Goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*)

Although not listed by the CWCS, and with a Statewide rank of “apparently secure” (S4), this species is listed by Region 4 of the USFS as sensitive. It is a large raptor of northern forests, and the largest North American accipiter. It maneuvers well through dense woods, taking prey such as squirrels, grouse, crows, and rabbits. Its habitat is varied, though apparently prefers mature forests.

Local sightings include a nest (located 2.8 miles west-southwest of the airport) with an adult and juvenile in 1980 and again in 1994) and a sighting 4.2 mile due west of the airport. Both observations are in forested areas. Since goshawks can utilize numerous types of habitat and have been observed breeding and occupying areas within 5 miles of the airport, it is likely that goshawks would be intermittently present in the project area.

Pristine Pyrg (*Pristinicola hemphilli*)

This is an aquatic snail which inhabits small springs, seeps, outflow channels, and spring-influenced stream reaches located in semiarid sagebrush-dominated habitat with basalt substrates. Occasionally sites are in dense Douglas fir forests. Most of the sites are undisturbed, with cobble substrates, and shallow, cold clear water. Although the

CWCS lists this species as “unranked” (SNR), it is listed on the website as “imperiled” S2. Thus information regarding the distribution and status of populations is limited.

One sighting (in 1993) has been documented approximately 3.4 miles northwest of the McCall airport. While it is possible that this species could be found in the vicinity of the airport, its preferred habitat does not appear to be present at the location of the proposed taxiway.

Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*)

The IDFG website and the CWCS list this species as “critically imperiled” (S1); however, the FWIS status indicates “imperiled” and “vulnerable” (S2S3). It is a year-round resident of ponderosa pine forests, and in Idaho the populations have been in decline for the last 40 years. They nest in dead pines and live trees with dead sections. Unlogged forests are preferred. Loss of habitat (i.e., ponderosa pine forests are likely contributors to the observed population declines.

Two sightings (one in 1993 at the Payette National Forest headquarters building in McCall) and one (west of Bear Basin, south of Forest Service Road 452 in 1995) are about 1.5 mile north and 3.3 miles northwest of the airport, respectively. One vocalization (documented in 1999) is located about 2.8 miles southeast of the airport northeast of Lake Fork, near Hatties Creek. Since this species has been shown to be present in the vicinity of the airport, it is likely that pygmy nuthatch individuals may be present near the project area at intermittent times.

Shiny Tightcoil (*Pristiloma wascoense*)

This terrestrial snail is Statewide unranked (SNR), although the IDFG website identifies the ranking as “possibly extinct” (SH). Information pertaining to the status of this species is lacking in Idaho. Very little is known about its habitat requirements except that records indicate it occurs in mid to high elevation Douglas fir and ponderosa pine forests.

One poorly described observation (a specimen; no date) was logged as occurring in the peninsula of Payette Lake about 3 miles north of the airport. It appears unlikely that the species would occur at the airport project area.

Thinlip Tightcoil (*Pristiloma idahoense*)

This terrestrial snail is Statewide unranked (SNR), although the IDFG website identifies the ranking as “critically imperiled” (SH). Rangewide its populations numbers are low and declining. Its habitat is moist valleys, ravines, gorges, and talus sites in low elevation Douglas fir and ponderosa pine forests.

One poorly described observation (a specimen; in 1901) was logged as occurring in the peninsula of Payette Lake about 3 miles north of the airport. Due to its apparent specific habitat requirements, it appears unlikely that the species would occur at the airport project area.

Upland Sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*)

This sandpiper is listed as “critical imperiled breeding” (S1B). There is a lack of essential information pertaining to its Idaho populations. Most of the breeding populations are in the Great Plains. Breeding is suspected in Valley County, but there have been no recent records of upland sandpiper in Idaho. Feeding and nesting habitat is upland prairie habitat, including croplands, pastures, wet or high-elevation meadows, very often near forest edges.

One upland sandpiper was observed in 1986 in the Copeland Flats area (approximately 2.5 miles west of the airport).

Western Toad (*Bufo boreas*)

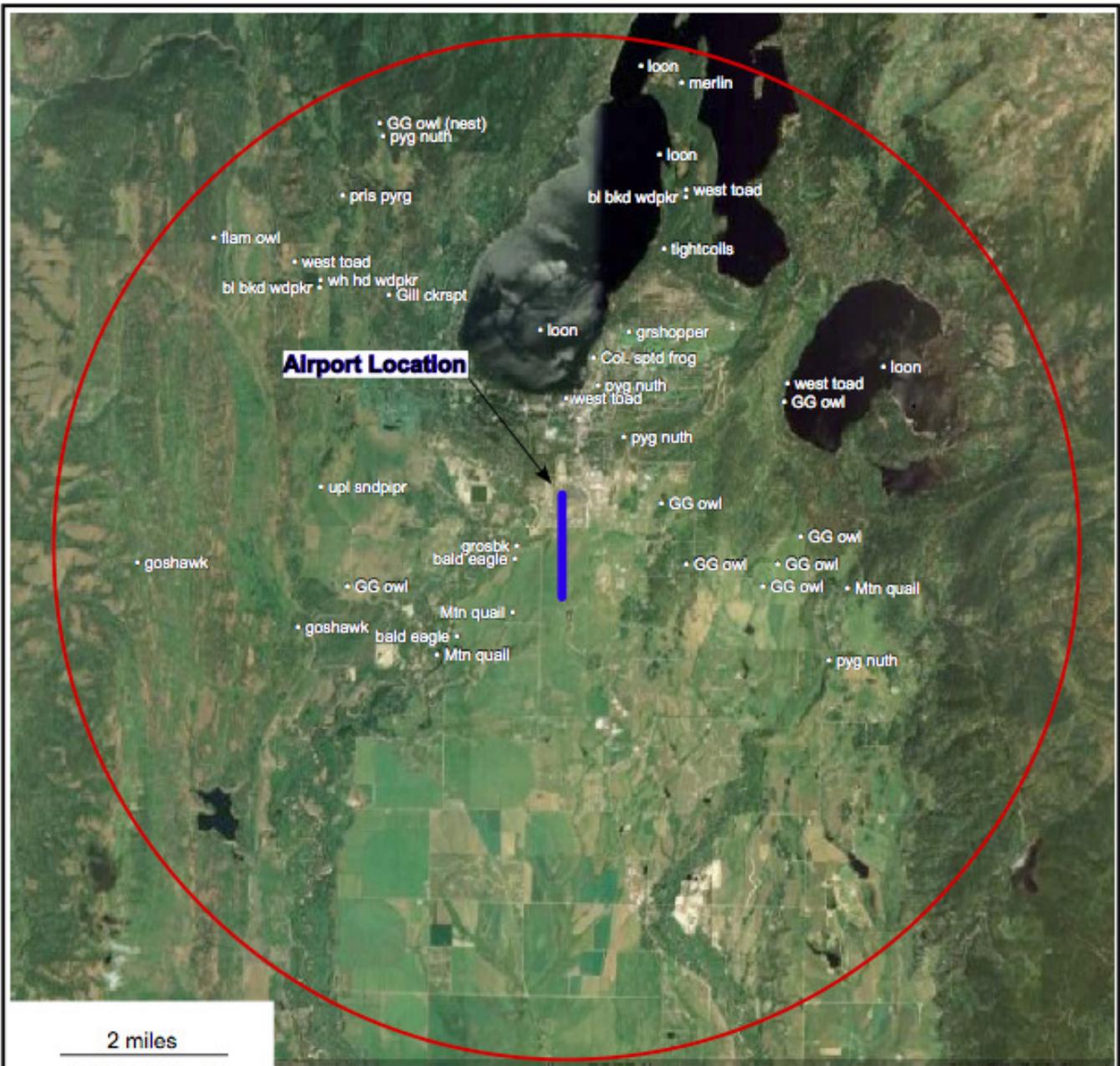
Although not on the CWCS list, this species is listed as BLM Type 3 (regional/state imperiled) whereas the Statewide rank is “apparently secure” (S4). Western Toads are primarily terrestrial but can generally be found within a fair proximity to water. Their habitats range from mountain meadows to brushy desert flats.

Within 5 miles of the airport, four occurrences of western toad were reported by the FWIS: one located in 1932, about 3.7 miles northwest of the airport; two (1916 and 1918) on the peninsula of Payette lake (3.5 miles north of the airport); one (in 1983) on the west shore of Little Payette Lake (2.7 miles east of the airport); and one in McCall (along the shoreline of Payette Lake (in 1920) about 1.3 miles north of the airport. Thus it is possible that individuals of western toad may occur within the vicinity of the airport, and there may be sufficient duration open water in the wetland ditches located at the south end of the proposed taxiway that could allow for breeding.

White-headed woodpecker (*Picoides albolarvatus*)

Imperiled due to low breeding in Idaho (S2B), the USFS sensitive woodpecker is a resident of the mountains of the west, preferring mature to old growth ponderosa pine-dominated forests. This species essentially requires an abundance of large-diameter trees, open canopy, and availability of snags and stumps for nesting. It is a poorly studied woodpecker and there is considerable lack of knowledge of its life history.

Within 5 miles of the project area, two sightings have been reported: one (in 1980) about 3.4 miles northwest of the airport at the Little Ski Hill; and one (in 2007) in a McCall backyard, (about 1.2 miles northeast of the airport). Thus it appears likely that this woodpecker travels through the area to forage, but breeding habitat does not appear to be nearby.



red circle is 5 mile radius

| Species Identifier | Species Name | Sighting Dates |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------|
| bald eagle | bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) | 1996 to present |
| bl bkd wdpr | black-backed woodpecker (<i>Picoides arcticus</i>) | 1975, 1983 |
| Col. spcd frog | Columbia spotted frog (<i>Rana lateriventris</i>) | 1918 |
| flam owl | flamulated owl (<i>Otus flammeolus</i>) | 2005 |
| GG owl | great gray owl (<i>Strix nebulosa</i>) | 1976 to 1998 |
| Gill ckrsp | Gillette's checkerspot (<i>Euphydryas gilletii</i>) | 1960, 1983 |
| goshawk | northern goshawk (<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>) | 1980 to 1994 |
| grshopper | a spur-throat grasshopper (<i>Melanoplus paysoni</i>) | 1910 |
| grosbk | blue grosbeak (<i>Gairaca caerulea</i>) | 1985 |
| loon | common loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>) | 1976, 1978, 1985 |
| merlin | merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>) | 1983 |
| Mtn. quail | mountain quail (<i>Oreortyx pictus</i>) | 1990, 1991 |
| pris pyrg | pristine pyrg (<i>Pristinicola hemphilli</i>) | 1993 |
| pyg nuth | pygmy nuthatch (<i>Sitta pygmaea</i>) | 1993, 1995, 1999 |
| tightcoils | thinlip and shiny tightcoil (<i>Pristiloma idahoense</i> and <i>P. wascoense</i>) | 1901 |
| upl sndpipr | upland sandpiper (<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>) | 1986 |
| west toad | western toad (<i>Bufo boreas</i>) | 1916, 1918, 1920, 1932, 1983 |
| wh hd wdpr | white headed woodpecker (<i>Picoides albolarvatus</i>) | 1980, 2007 |

Figure 4.
Documents Locations of
State-listed Species
McCall Airport Improvements Project

Table 2.
Likelihood of Impacts to Species of Greatest Conservation Need

| Common Name | Last or Most Recent Sighting | Possible Occurrence within 5 miles of airport | Impact?* |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|---|------------|
| A spur-throat grasshopper | 1961 | yes, but unlikely | no |
| Bald eagle | recent and on-going | yes | yes |
| Black-backed woodpecker | 1985 | yes | no |
| Blue Grosbeak | 1985 | yes | no |
| Columbia Spotted Frog* | 1918 | yes | no |
| Common Loon | 1978 | yes, but only in lakes | no |
| Flammulated Owl | 2005 | yes | no |
| Gillette's Checkerspot | 1983 | yes | no |
| Great Gray Owl | 1998 | yes | yes |
| Merlin | 1983 | possible | no |
| Mountain Quail | 1990 | yes | yes |
| Northern Goshawk | 1994 | yes | no |
| Pristine Pyrg | 1993 | yes | no |
| Pygmy Nuthatch | 1999 | yes | no |
| Shiny Tightcoil | no date | possible | no |
| Thinlip Tightcoil | 1901 | possible | no |
| Upland Sandpiper | 1986 | possible | no |
| Western Toad | 1983 | possible | yes |
| White-headed woodpecker | 2007 | yes | no |

* impacts determined based on potential for occurrence within project area; however these species can move and may move through area. **No** determinations are based on unlikely effect of airport improvements on species habitat or feeding and nesting requirements. **Yes** determinations are based on clear signs the species uses the airspace (bald eagles, great gray owls, mountain quail), or could potentially use the wetland/ditch areas east of the airport in the taxiway zone (western toad).

Conclusion

Based on the lack of presence, lack of suitable habitat, or impacts to nesting/feeding grounds, there should be no impacts to: a spur-throat grasshopper, black-backed woodpecker, blue grosbeak, Columbia spotted frog, common loon, flammulated owl, Gillette's checkerspot, merlin, northern goshawk, pristine pyrg, pygmy nuthatch, shiny tightcoil, thinlip tightcoil, upland sandpiper, or white-headed woodpecker.

Wintering **bald eagles** are commonly observed in the area from late October to mid-March to perch and feed along the banks of the river and near the lakes, however, construction for the airport improvements is not scheduled to take

place during these months—thus there will be *no impacts to bald eagle wintering habits* as a result of the project. No nest sites or potential roosting, or nesting trees will be affected by the project.

Great gray owls are known to frequent the area and have been sighted in open field areas east of the airport. However, the taxiway construction should not affect the owls or their potential nesting sites. There is always the potential that airplane/bird strikes could occur. However the owls are largely nocturnal and day use of the new taxiway should not adversely affect their use of the field areas.

Mountain quail have been documented in the areas west of the taxiway - their preferred habitat use, however, appears to be in shrubs areas (which are present west of the airport, but not east where the proposed taxiway is proposed to be constructed).

Western toads are known to utilize both upland and wetland areas. There are wetland areas south and east of the existing taxiway that could potentially be habitat for this species. Any wetland habitat impacted by the taxiway will be re-constructed and/or mitigated in some manner to offset the potential loss of habitat for this species.

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APPENDIX A - Letter from USFWS

Will be getting an updated FWS list soon

APPENDIX B - RANKING/STATUS

(relevant rank labels for species in this report are listed in *ITALICS*)
(refer to Table 1 in text)

G (global) Ranks are assigned by NatureServe; S (state) ranks assigned by the Idaho Conservation Data Center

“Species of Special Concern” are now replaced by “Species of Greatest Conservation Need” (sometimes referred to as at-risk species) as defined by the Idaho Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS) which was approved by the USFWS in 2005.

CWCS

I indicates on CWCS list, 0 indicates not on list (however, I chose to include several species not listed by CWCS that have BLM and USFS ratings)

Global (G) or State (S) Ranking

G1 or S1 Critically imperiled: at high risk because of extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer occurrences), rapidly declining numbers, or other factors that make it particularly vulnerable to rangewide extinction or extirpation.

G2 or S2 Imperiled: at risk because of restricted range, few populations (often 20 or fewer), rapidly declining numbers, or other factors that make it vulnerable to rangewide extinction or extirpation.

G3 or S3 Vulnerable: at moderate risk because of restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors that make it vulnerable to rangewide extinction or extirpation.

G4 or S4 Apparently secure: uncommon but not rare; some cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors.

G5 or S5 Secure: common, widespread, and abundant.

B Breeding: conservation status refers to the breeding population of the species.

N Nonbreeding: conservation status refers to the non-breeding population of the species.

SNR: Not ranked, conservation status not yet assessed

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

no species included in this Biological Evaluation are federally-listed

USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Type 1 Threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate: species listed by the FWS or NMFS as threatened or endangered, or proposed or candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

Type 2 Rangewide/Globally imperiled: species that are experiencing significant declines throughout their range with a high likelihood of being listed in the foreseeable future due to their rarity and/or significant endangerment factors.

Type 3 Regional/State imperiled: species that are experiencing significant declines in population or habitat and are in danger of regional or local extinctions in Idaho in the foreseeable future if factors contributing to their decline continues.

Type 4 Peripheral: species that are generally rare in Idaho with the majority of their breeding range largely outside the state (includes sensitive species that have an S1 or S2 ranking, but are peripheral species to Idaho)

Type 5 Watch list: these species are not considered BLM sensitive species and associated sensitive species policy guidance does not apply. Watch list species include species that may be added to the sensitive species list depending on new information concerning threats, species' biology or statewide trends. Includes species with insufficient data on population or habitat trends or the threats are poorly understood.

USDA United States Forest Service (USFS) Region 4

S Sensitive Species. Animal species identified by the Regional Forester for which population viability is a concern, as evidenced by significant current or predicted downward trends in population numbers or significant current or predicted downward trends in habitat capability that would reduce a species' existing distribution.