INTRODUCTION

In 1988, the Idaho Legislature passed legislation amending state water planning requirements and providing for the development of a comprehensive State Water Plan (Chapter 17, Title 42, Idaho Code). The Comprehensive State Water Plan is developed in stages by developing comprehensive plans for each river basin, drainage area, river reach, aquifer, or other geographic considerations in the State. The law provides for a two-year period of interim protection while the Idaho Water Resource Board formulates a component plan.

On September 28, 1989 the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation jointly petitioned the Water Resource Board to provide interim protection for the main Boise River, and the Middle and North Forks of the Boise River from the backwaters of Arrowrock Reservoir to their headwaters. The petition by the two agencies was largely a response to renewed interest in hydroelectric development at the Twin Springs site on the main Boise river by several Boise Valley irrigation districts. On April 6, 1990, the Board granted interim protection to all three river segments for a two year period. Idaho Code, Sec. 42-1734D (6) states that if a waterway is designated as an interim protected river, the Board must proceed to prepare a comprehensive state water plan for the waterway. The Board elected to prohibit all activities (see following page for natural river prohibitions) within the waterways over which they have authority, during the interim period.

The resources to be described in each plan are:

-navigation
-power development
-energy conservation
-fish and wildlife
-recreational opportunities
-irrigation
-flood control
-water supply
-timber
-mining
-livestock watering
-scenic values
-natural or cultural features
-domestic, municipal, commercial, or industrial uses
-other aspects of environmental quality and economic development

A summary of the various existing and planned uses of these resources is presented in the Basin Overview and Resource Summary. A supporting Technical Report (Appendix C, p. C-1) provides an in-depth description of the resources of the basin.

The 1988 law also provides for the designation of protected rivers, based on determination by the Board that the value of preserving a waterway outweighs that of developing the waterway for other beneficial uses. The protected designations are either as a natural or recreational river. A natural river is a waterway that possesses outstanding fish and wildlife, recreation, geologic, or aesthetic values, which is free of substantial existing man-made impoundments, dams or other structures, and where the riparian areas are largely undeveloped, although accessible in places by trails and roads [Idaho Code, Sec. 42-1731(7)]. A recreational river also must possess outstanding fish and wildlife, recreation, geologic or aesthetic values, but the segment might include some man-made developments within the waterway or within the riparian area of the waterway [Idaho Code, Sec. 42-1731(9)].

In designating a natural river, the Board shall prohibit the following activities within the streambed [Idaho Code, Sec. 1734A-(5)]:

-construction or expansion of dams or impoundments;
-construction of hydropower projects;
-construction of water diversion works;
-dredge or placer mining;
-alteration of the streambed, and
-mineral or sand and gravel extraction within the streambed.

In designating a recreational river, the Board shall decide which of the activities listed above shall be prohibited and may specify the terms and conditions under which activities that are not prohibited may go forward [Idaho Code, Sec. 42-1734A-(6)].

The identification of outstanding natural and recreational waterways in the basin involved an initial screening of those waterways that were potentially eligible for protection. The screening utilized a geographic information system (GIS) methodology to facilitate the process.

PLANNING PROCESS

Process Steps

The process used in preparing this plan is illustrated in Figure 2. Each step is described in the following sections.

Data Collection

Collection and scoping of data occurred concurrently for the following resources: navigation; power development; energy conservation; fish and wildlife; recreational opportunities; irrigation; flood control; water supply; timber; mining; livestock water; scenic values; natural and cultural features; domestic, municipal, commercial and industrial water uses. Information was obtained through review of literature, field reconnaissance, and contact with agency personnel and the public during the scoping process. A summary of this data is in the Basin Overview and Resource Summary section and in the Technical Reports (Appendix C).

Scoping and Public Input

Scoping involved the identification and assessment of local problems and issues. Rules and regulations of the Board require formation of a local advisory group to "inform the Board of local concerns" (Rule 5,1,2). An advisory group representing local interests was selected from a number of applicants for the upper Boise River plan (Appendix B, p. B-1). The Advisory Group met on several occasions to review and provide input on data collection, resource evaluation, and alternatives analyzed during the suitability analysis. Additionally agencies and other interested parties were contacted to review and provide input for appropriate sections of the plan.

Resource Maps

Maps of resource data were prepared at a scale of 1:100,000 using a geographic information system (GIS). Resource data were reviewed for accuracy by the Advisory Group, agencies, and interested public.

Screening

The objective of screening was to identify stream segments in the basin that are potentially eligible for protected designation because they possess outstanding fish, wildlife, recreational, scenic or geological values pursuant to Idaho code, Sec. 42-1731 (7) and (9). This process required

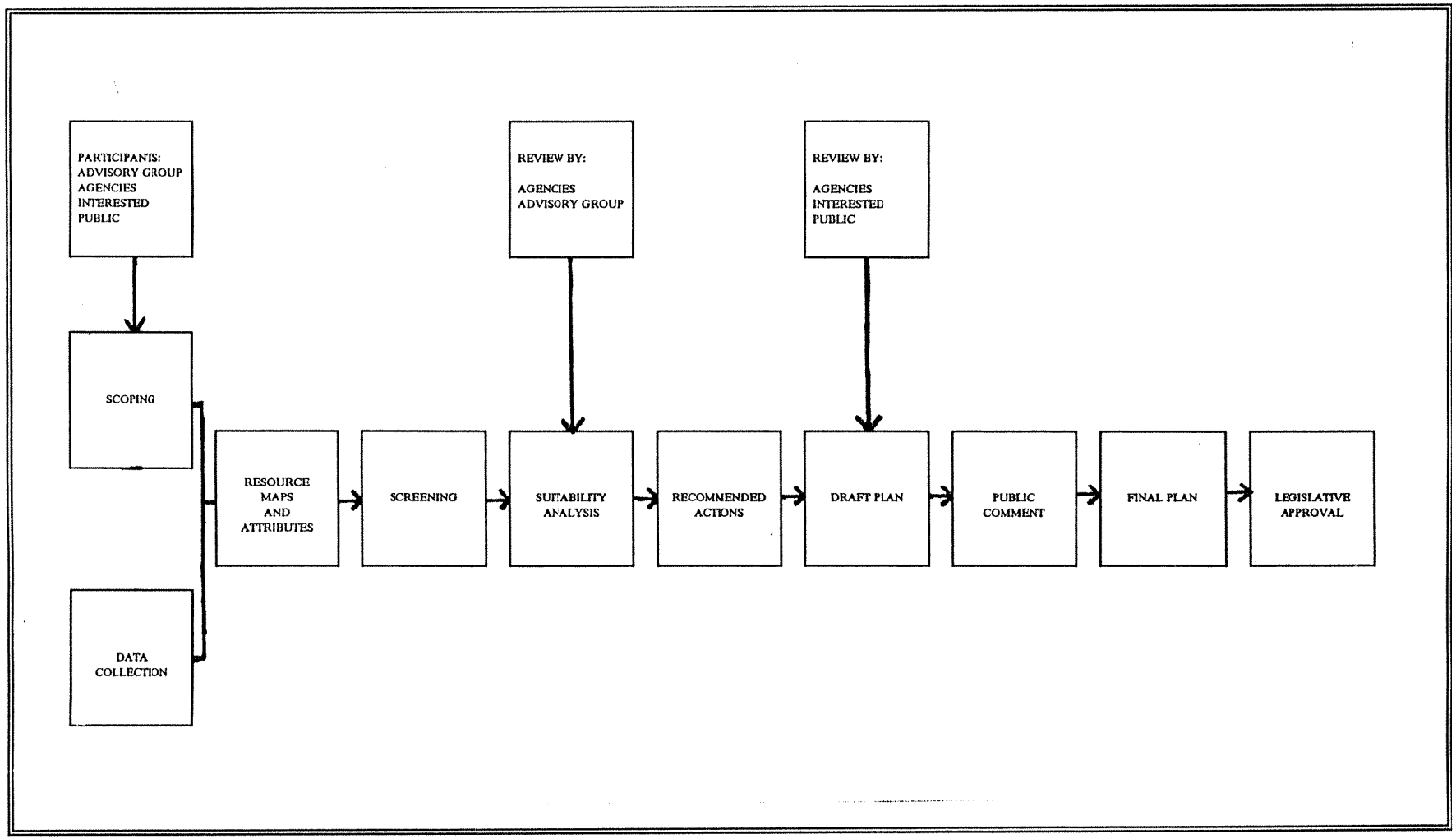

Figure 2: Basin Planning Process Flow Chart

evaluation of aesthetic (includes natural, cultural and geological features), biologic (fisheries and wildlife) and recreation data to identify which river segments possess these outstanding resource values.

The evaluation considered the uniqueness, rarity or significance of the resource from a national, regional and/or local perspective; the degree of protection accorded the resource through statute, regulation, rules, or agency management policy; and the potential for resource impact or opportunity to mitigate.

Aesthetic, biologic and recreational resources evaluated as very high are unique, rare, or highly-valued by the public. Agency management designations or policy frequently provides protection of these resource values prohibiting or restricting development. Further, these resources are sensitive to disturbance with little possibility of mitigating impacts.

High values suggest resource characteristics that may be common to the region, but are still highly valued by the public. Although agency management may not prohibit development, the resource is sensitive to disturbance. Frequent opportunities exist to mitigate these affects to some extent.

Resources with moderate to low values may still experience adverse impacts, but are not legally protected and/or highly-valued by the public. Often opportunities exist to mitigate adverse impacts.

River segments with <u>at least one</u> very high resource value for aesthetic, biologic or recreation resources were determined to have outstanding values, and therefore, eligible for consideration as possible state protected rivers. Specific criteria for aesthetic, biologic and recreation resources to decide resource values in the Upper Boise River Basin Plan are described in the Screening Evaluations section (p. 40).

Suitability Analysis

Rivers with outstanding resource values identified during screening were considered for protection in the management alternatives. A full spectrum of alternatives were considered ranging from no recommended actions to protection of all outstanding river segments. Alternatives were developed considering the effects that recommendations, such as a protection designation or recommendation for a minimum instream flow, might have on identified resources and resource uses. This involved an evaluation of the existing and potential water constraints and public issues for each stream reach, including: (1) water allocations and projected uses; (2) water quality; (3) power

development; (4) flood control; and, (5) water and energy conservation. Alternatives were revised after consideration of agency and Advisory Group input. Alternatives considered are described in the Management Alternatives section, p. 47 and Appendix D.

Recommended Actions

The Board's management alternative was based on Advisory Group, public, and agency input, and included actions and recommendations for the management of water and related resources in the river basin. These include designations as state recreational or natural rivers, applications for minimum stream flows, and recommendations for additional special studies, special designations (i.e., Northwest Power Planning Council protected areas), and other basin management issues.

Draft Plan

A draft plan was completed documenting the planning process, resource information collection and recommended actions, and was distributed to the public and agencies for review.

Public Comment

Upon Board approval, a legal announcement was made on August 17, 1992 of the availability of the draft plan for public review. Pursuant to Idaho code and the Board's rules and regulations, a sixty (60) day period was allowed for public comment. During this period, information meetings were conducted, and public hearings were held providing opportunity for oral testimony. Written comments were accepted throughout the sixty day period.

Final Plan

The draft plan was revised by the Board, based on public and agency comments on the draft plan. The Board adopted a final plan containing its management recommendations on December 3, 1992.