



Eagle Creek Canyon in Fall - Carol Waller

Introduction

Vision

We are a world-class rural resort county that protects our pristine natural features as one of our highest priorities. We treasure our open undeveloped hillsides, agricultural lands, clean air and water, wildlife, and unparalleled recreational opportunities. We are proud of our success in directing new growth into our cities, keeping the County rural in nature. We will continue to build on our high quality of life for our permanent and visiting population by providing efficient and effective public services, and maintaining state-of-the-art standards for new growth. We will succeed in retaining and growing our diversified economy, which includes partnerships with the cities for job and housing opportunities. We have a strategic eye on the future, and are nimble in responding to a changing world around us. We value above all the special character of Blaine County, and aim to protect that character for future generations.

The Key Guiding Principles

Blaine County places the highest possible value on its natural environment, including the scenic vistas, the hills and mountains, the clean water and air, and the abundant fish and wildlife that share our waters and our lands. This pristine environment defines Blaine County. It is the heart and soul of our community. Our natural environment is the source of the community's economic sustainability, including the agricultural, recreational and tourism industries. We recognize that our economic and cultural sustainability is wholly dependent upon the carrying capacity of the County's natural environment and the conscientious stewardship and conservation of it. Thus, preservation of our natural environmental heritage is of paramount importance. All land-use planning decisions in Blaine County are required to protect and enhance these priceless assets through careful regulation.

Regarding the built environment, the community has identified important principles that reduce the human footprint, protect the County's financial capability to provide services, foster a sense of community, preserve the historic character of rural and open-space environments and promote economic strength and security for all who live, visit and work in Blaine County.



Big Wood River Winter Snow – Carol Waller

Natural environmental attributes, including scenic vistas, public open space, healthy forests, clean water and air, and abundant fish and wildlife are the heart and soul of our community.

In addition to contributing to our high quality of life, these natural environmental assets are the driver of our local and visitor economies. Conservation and stewardship of these assets are therefore more important than extraction of resources (e.g., timber production and mining). Understanding the carrying capacity of the County's natural environment, based upon reliable scientific study and analysis, enables our leaders to make sound decisions that will help to protect it.

The hills and mountains of our community are to be preserved in their natural state, and land uses on them shall be strictly regulated.

The County's Mountain Overlay District is intended to preserve the beauty and integrity of our mountains and foothills. Primary purposes of the County's strict hillside regulations include preserving the natural character and aesthetic values of our hillsides, protecting wildlife habitat, maintaining slope and soil stability, and preventing unsafe development in areas at risk from wildfire and avalanches or debris flows.

Land uses in hazardous areas and sensitive areas shall be closely regulated.

Development in hazardous areas such as avalanche zones, floodways and floodplains, and wildland-urban interface locations leads to higher public costs and greater risk to human safety. These include provision of emergency services, as well as potential loss of property or life. Development in sensitive areas like critical habitat and movement corridors for wildlife, wetlands, and riparian zones is in direct conflict with the preservation of valued natural environmental assets.

Recreation is the centerpiece of the local and visitor life experience.

Activities that enhance the public recreational experience, while recognizing and upholding other values such as the protection of the natural environment, are goals of our community. Balancing the needs and desires of multiple user groups becomes more challenging as population and visitor numbers increase. Important factors in future development are responsibly adding to recreational facilities in proximity to the people who need to be served, maintaining our existing assets, and preserving access to public lands and waters.

Agricultural land uses are an important historic and community heritage and an important economic resource for our community. The County intends to preserve productive agricultural lands.

Blaine County's history is closely tied to its agricultural lands. Farming and ranching continue to contribute to our economy through the production of high quality crops, local produce, and livestock. In addition, its working landscapes have contributed to today's open space, bird and wildlife habitat and corridors, and wetland sanctuaries throughout the County. Preserving eco-systems and sustaining the health of the land benefit both agriculture and the environment. These goals support the economic contribution agriculture provides to the County, while recognizing and upholding other critical values such as the protection of the natural environment. Land use regulation should encourage Best Management Practices (BMPs) in partnership with farmers and ranchers on the land.

Terms used in this plan

Vision - A vision is a mental picture of what we want our community to look like tomorrow. It incorporates our highest standards and values. It's our ideal and unique image of the future for the common good.

Key Guiding Principles - These are guidelines for the development of the Plan and will serve as the foundation for ordinances and policies. They represent those common beliefs we share as a community and reflect community concerns, needs and priorities.

Setting - The setting is an overview of current conditions, which "set the stage" for our desired outcomes and policies.

Desired Outcomes - Desired outcomes (aka "goals") are the intended result of our planning efforts. They are statements that respond to relevant community needs. Each Plan component will establish a reasonable number of outcomes that directly support the County's visions. Desired outcomes address the most critical and/or relevant issues facing the community.

Action Plans

Action plans make outcomes tangible and therefore should have the following "SMART" characteristics:

- **Specific:** indicate exactly what result is expected so that the performance can be judged accurately.
- **Measurable:** something that can be measured and reported in quantitative and/or clear qualitative terms.
- **Accountable:** "owned" by a specific department or entity.
- **Results-oriented:** track an important value or benefit needed to advance the community vision and achieve the end results.
- **Time-bound:** set a specific time frame for the results to be produced.

Several other terms are defined in the glossary.

Development in remote areas creates higher costs and significant time challenges for the provision of public and emergency services and is discouraged by existing zoning.

Housing and other development in proximity to infrastructure and emergency services is appropriate and cost-efficient. Costs and times for delivering services increase as distance from incorporated cities increases, especially in locations off the main transportation corridors. Response times for emergency services are longer and depletion of sufficiently trained responders becomes a concern. Low-density zoning makes economic and safety sense for remote areas, and requirements for adequate mitigation are appropriate for development there.

Most commercial and institutional uses belong in the incorporated cities.

Businesses such as retail stores, banks and offices help to create a vibrant downtown core for cities. Such uses outside the cities can compete with and detract from the vitality of a city's downtown. Commercial, institutional and urban-type land uses also create the need for many public services, especially emergency services, and therefore should not be located in remote areas. Commercial uses in the unincorporated County should be limited to activities such as agricultural businesses, clean and light industries that require larger land areas, home occupations and other uses that do not require significant services or detract from the cities' commercial areas. These generally are allowable only with a conditional use permit. The County does not want to compete with its cities for commercial uses, but does want to be able to consider commercial and institutional uses that need more physical space than cities can provide. Future ordinance or zoning amendments that would allow schools, institutes, and light industry should take many factors into consideration. These include proximity to services, impact on water resources, access and parking

needs, land-area needs, feasibility of annexation into incorporated areas, and other relevant criteria.

A balanced and diverse economy is necessary for a sustainable community.

Managing growth was a priority for the County and its communities in the last decades of the 20th century and the first few years of this century. Since the Great Recession, however, efforts to create a more diverse economy – one that is not reliant only on population and tourism growth and related construction activity – have gained visibility. The County should do its share in supporting economic opportunity that upholds its values of conservation and responsible use of public funds, while contributing to a business environment that has supported the County's residents in the past and will nourish the economic drivers of the future. Blaine County has fine public, private and alternative education systems that are important assets to our current and future economy. Balancing our priorities for a healthy economy requires thoughtful planning tools and supporting infrastructure.

Social and cultural diversity and historic preservation are community goals.

Stated objectives of County leaders have included honoring the County's heritage and being mindful of its legacy to future generations. Our County has a rich history. Preservation of historic buildings and sites helps us remember our heritage, and tells the story of our past. Blaine County's history also includes a diverse culture that continues and evolves today. A wide range of ideas, customs, culture, and wisdom enrich community life. Quality community services, both public and private, are important to support our diverse population.

A variety of housing types, prices and locations is required for the community's long-term viability.

Housing that is available to all income levels is critical to a healthy and vibrant society. An important County goal is to ensure the provision of housing

that is affordable to those with low and moderate incomes, including seniors. The availability of a variety of housing prices and types (single- and multi-family dwellings, including rental units) means that households have choices and that our residents can continue to live in Blaine County.

Integrated multi-modal transportation is necessary to maintain and enhance our quality of life.

Our transportation system will provide excellent mobility for citizens, visitors, and the workforce. A network of integrated countywide roads, transit routes and pathways will ensure a safe and efficient system for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, automobile and truck drivers, transit riders, and air travelers. Multi-modal transportation helps to mitigate traffic, is good for the economy, and puts less strain on the environment than the current automobile-oriented system.

Cooperation between jurisdictions enhances our quality of life and contributes to sound and effective land use planning and implementation.

Regional planning becomes possible when the County, its incorporated cities, government agencies and non-governmental organizations cooperate. Many influencing factors know no “municipal” boundaries — watersheds, aquifers, transportation “travel sheds,” and trade areas, to name a few.



The “Old County Courthouse,” still in use today

Working together on regional issues is smart and cost-effective.

Sound land-use decisions benefit the general health, welfare, and safety of the public and the local economy.

Clear and unambiguous ordinance language leads to defensible decisions on land-use applications and promotes responsible development. The Comprehensive Plan must lay a solid foundation for land-use ordinances, including zoning and subdivision regulations as well as public policies. Blaine County recognizes and supports private property rights, which include the property rights of applicants as well as neighbors and the larger community. All land use policies, regulations, and land use decisions are made in accordance with these national and state constitutional protections.

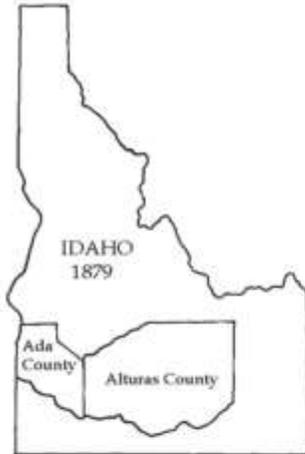
Climate-adaptation planning and strategies will increase our resiliency.

Blaine County recognizes that predicted changes in climate will impact Blaine County significantly in many ways. The Intermountain West may see impacts such as reduced mountain snowpack levels, earlier spring runoff, increased wildfires, and more insect damage in our forests. Planning for climate change is a new and critical challenge, and Blaine County will work in partnership with other entities to help educate decision-makers and the public about the potential climate effects in our region and devise adaptation strategies for coping with those effects.

History

Blaine County has a long and fascinating history, beginning some 4,000 years ago when Native American tribes followed big game into southern Idaho. See the timeline of highlights on the following page and the Appendix for additional historical context and interesting details.

Blaine County Timeline



1863-1864 – Idaho Territory is formed. Alturas County becomes the largest territorial county, including most of southern Idaho from the mouth of the Bruneau River to the Little Lost River.



1883 – The Union Pacific Railroad (originally the Oregon Short Line) makes its first stop in Hailey; and in 1884 it is extended to Ketchum. Also in 1884, the Ketchum & Challis Toll Road Company builds the original wagon road to Trail Creek Summit to connect mining and grazing lands with the Union Pacific railhead at Ketchum.



1907 – The Hayspur Fish Hatchery is constructed on Loving Creek near Picabo. It is the first hatchery operated by Idaho's Fish & Game Commission.

1905 – The Sawtooth National Forest is established.

1914 – Sawtooth Park Highway construction begins from the Lincoln County line north through the Wood River Valley.



1865 – The mining boom begins. Lead and silver lode discoveries spawn numerous mining camps and supply centers throughout the Wood River Valley.

1890-1900 – The sheep industry booms in Idaho, growing to an estimated 2.1 million head. Basque immigrants are hired as sheepherders and come to the Wood River region.

1895 – Blaine County is created, formed out of portions of Alturas County and named after former congressman, James G Blaine. Hailey is the county seat.

1920 – The sheep industry becomes the wealth of Wood River Valley, due to the drop in value of silver after not being tied to the US currency.

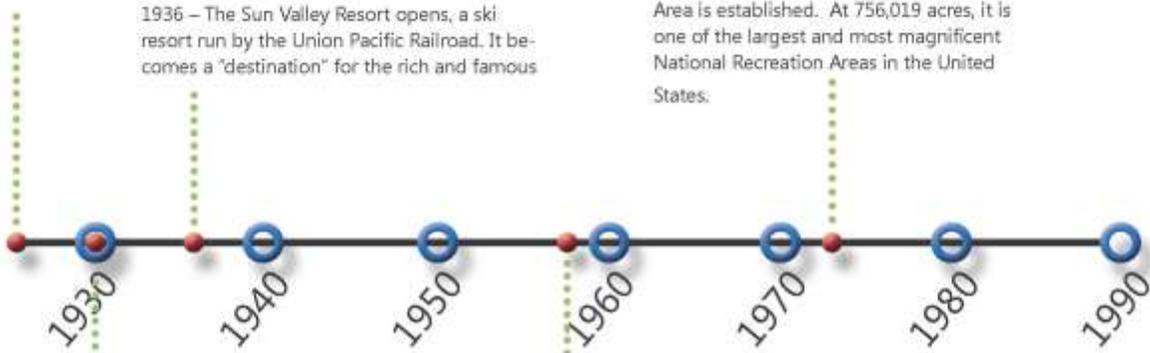




1927 – The Triumph Mine between Hailey and Ketchum reopens. A flurry of redevelopment at old mining sites begins and ends after World War II.



1972 – The Sawtooth National Recreation Area is established. At 756,019 acres, it is one of the largest and most magnificent National Recreation Areas in the United States.



1936 – The Sun Valley Resort opens, a ski resort run by the Union Pacific Railroad. It becomes a "destination" for the rich and famous

1930's – During the Great Depression, federal public works programs help construct numerous roads, bridges, public buildings and Forest Service recreation sites throughout Blaine County

1958 – In the First Wagon Days Parade, "The Big Hitch" and a few dozen Lewis Ore Wagons roll down Ketchum's Main Street.



Appendix - Introduction

History

Approximately 4,000 years ago... The Shoshoni and Bannock tribes moved into southern Idaho, following large game. In general, the Shoshoni and Bannock lived in the valleys during the winter and traveled into the mountains throughout the spring and summer. As more European-American settlers migrated west, tensions rose with the indigenous people. Wars occurred throughout the second half of the 19th century.

- 1819** Trapper and trader Andrew Henry (one of the founders of the Missouri Fur Company) explores the area between Little Lost River and Camas Prairie. Donald Mackenzie of Hudson's Bay Company's Snake River Brigade also traverses the lower Wood River region.
- 1824** Alexander Ross of the Snake River Brigade travels over Trail Creek Summit and the area between Wood River and the future site of Little Camas Reservoir.
- 1852** A wagon road is established from Fort Hall through the southern area of future Blaine and Camas counties.
- 1860s** After the 1860s mining discoveries in Boise Basin and Rocky Bar, a few former Oregon Trail emigrants settle in Camas Prairie and Wood River Valley.
- 1862** Trapper/trader Tim Goodale takes emigrant wagons on a cutoff route through the southern half of future Blaine County to the Salmon River gold rush. The cutoff was located approximately 2 ½ miles north of the present-day crossroads of Idaho highways 20 and 75.
- 1863** Idaho Territory is officially organized on March 4, 1863, by Act of Congress and signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln. Alturas County becomes the largest territorial county, including most of southern Idaho from the Bruneau River's mouth to the Little Lost River. Alturas has an area of over 19,000 square miles, or larger than Vermont and New Hampshire combined. Alturas is a word of Spanish origin signifying heights or mountains, which was sometimes given the more figurative interpretation of "heavenly heights."
- 1864** The mining camp of Rocky Bar, located about eight miles north of Featherville, becomes the county seat of Alturas. It is known today as a Ghost town, and part of Elmore County.
- 1865** Big Camas and Black Cinder are the earliest recorded mining claims in what is known today as Blaine County. The Wood River hills were full of high grade silver and lead ores.
- 1873** Prospector Warren Callahan discovers gold south of the future Bellevue townsite near Goodale's Cutoff.

- 1878** Bannock Indian War. Regional Native American tribes, angry over broken treaties and settlers' agricultural disturbance of their traditional camas grounds, start the "Bannock Indian War." Part of the war took place on the Camas Prairie and in the Wood River Valley. Federal troops put an end to the war and moved tribes to smaller reservations in southeastern Idaho and southeastern Nevada.
- 1879** Levi Smiley- a prospector discovers the riches of ore. In November mining camps opened in, Sawtooth City of Beaver Canyon & Vienna of Smiley's Canyon.
- 1880** Lead and silver lode discoveries spawn numerous mining camps and supply centers in the Wood River area, including Galena to the north and Jacob City (later called Broadford) to the south.
- Originally the smelting center of the Warm Springs mining district, Ketchum is first named Leadville in 1880. The postal department decided that was too common and renamed it for David Ketchum, a local trapper and guide who had staked a claim in the basin a year earlier.
- Development of hot springs begins near Ketchum (Guyer Hot Springs) and Croy Gulch (Croy/Smith/Hailey Hot Springs) for medicinal and recreational purposes.
- Construction of the Galena Toll Road started from Ketchum north to Stanley Basin.
- The town of Bellevue is platted. Owen Riley, merchant and first postmaster, erected the first building in the town. Approximately 2,000 mineral patents were located in the hills west of town.
- 1881** Townsite of Hailey is platted, named after John Hailey, a stage-line operator and territorial delegate to the U.S. Congress. It wins the Alturas county seat designation over Bellevue in a controversial election.
- Sarah (Mrs. Lafe) Griffin starts a store near what is later called Timmerman Hill Stage Station.
- Wood River Times is founded by T.E. Picotte
- 1882** John Hailey and his business partners sell most of the Hailey townsite to the Idaho-Oregon Land Improvement Company, a subsidiary of the Union Pacific Railroad.
- The Philadelphia Smelter, located on Warm Springs near Ketchum, begins production. It becomes the largest smelter in the region.
- 1883** The Philadelphia Smelter doubles in size and the first electric light plant in Idaho is established there.
- A group of Mormon colonists settle in the southeastern corner of present-day Blaine County. First called "Marysville," their settlement was renamed "Carey" in 1884.

The Oregon Short Line (OSL) railroad tracks reach Picabo from Blackfoot in 1883. A spur was built to Hailey by mid-1883. The OSL was later consolidated into the Union Pacific Railroad.

1884 The Union Pacific Railroad is extended from Hailey to Ketchum.

The Ketchum & Challis Toll Road Company builds the original wagon road to Trail Creek Summit to connect mining and grazing lands with the Union Pacific railhead at Ketchum.

1885 This date marks the apex of mining development in the Wood River area. Later, falling silver prices cause "busts" in production during 1888 and again in 1892.

The agricultural industry, especially ranching, becomes an important part of the area's economy.

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound is born in Hailey Idaho. He became an expatriate American poet and critic who was a major figure of the early modernist movement.

1886 Alturas Hotel (later Hiawatha Hotel) opens to the public in May with a grand ball. It was said to have cost \$35,000; furniture \$8,000, not including the \$5,000 bar and fixtures connected with the billiard hall. Hailey Hot Springs (about two and a half miles west of town) is piped in and the hotel is heated throughout with this water which has a temperature of 136 degrees F.

1888 Union Pacific Railroad promoter Robert Strahorn acquires the hot springs in Croy Gulch and builds The Hailey Hot Springs Hotel. It became a favorite resort for railroad magnate Jay Gould and his family, who also owned interests in several area mines. It burned down seven years later.

First National Bank of Hailey, with a capital stock of one hundred thousand dollars, is founded by W.B. Farr of St. Louis, Missouri.

1889-1890 Many cattle herds are decimated during a harsh winter, and hardy sheep became the main livestock raised in the Wood River and Little Lost River valleys.

1895 Blaine County is formed out of portions of Alturas County on March 5 and named after former congressman, James G Blaine, the "plumed knight from Maine", Secretary of State in the Garfield and Harrison administrations. Hailey remained the county seat.

1890-1900 The sheep industry booms in Idaho, growing from an estimated 614,000 head in 1890, to 2.1 million head. Basque immigrants are hired as shearers and come to the Wood River region.

1905 The Sawtooth National Forest is established.

1907 Hayspur Fish Hatchery is constructed on Loving Creek; it is the first hatchery operated by Idaho's Fish & Game Commission.

1909-1911 The mining industry tapers off in the Wood River region.

- 1914** Sawtooth Park Highway construction begins from the Lincoln County line north through the Wood River Valley.
- 1910-1920** Ketchum becomes one of the largest stock shipping centers in the United States.
- 1915-1920** James McDonald, a Standard Oil heir, builds a house in Hailey and a vacation compound at Petit Lake. He produced films to help develop tourism in the Wood River and Stanley basins. McDonald also provided money for fish eggs to be placed in Hayspur Hatchery and helped transport fingerlings to local mountain lakes.
- 1920** Sheep Herding becomes the wealth of Wood River Valley, due to the drop in value of silver after not being tied to the US currency.
- 1925** The State of Idaho establishes the Warm Springs Game Preserve near Bald Mountain.
- 1927** The Triumph Mine between Hailey and Ketchum reopens; a flurry of redevelopment at old mining sites begins and ends after World War II.
- 1930s** During the Great Depression, federal public works programs help construct numerous roads, bridges, public buildings and Forest Service recreation sites throughout Blaine County.
- 1934** Taylor Grazing Act limits stock grazing access to public lands. The sheep and cattle industry in Idaho, which suffered from poor markets since WWI, went into decline.
- 1936** Averill Harriman, son of Union Pacific Railroad president E. H. Harriman, buys the Brass Ranch east of Ketchum and in less than a year develops it into a ski resort run by the Union Pacific Railroad. The world's first alpine skiing chairlift located in Sun Valley was built on Proctor Mountain. Built by Union Pacific Railroad engineers, it was designed after a banana-boat loading device. The 1936 fee: 25 cents per ride. Sun Valley becomes a "destination" resort for the rich and famous.
- 1937** Sun Valley International Open Harriman Cup is held, the first major international ski competition in North America. It was held in the Boulder Mountains north of Sun Valley until 1939.
- 1939** Ernest Hemingway arrives in Sun Valley to work on his novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Idaho offered wide open spaces for Hemingway to indulge in his passions for hunting, skiing, fishing, and other outdoor activities.
- 1940** Bald Mountain and the base River Run lift areas are developed, expanding the Sun Valley resort's recreational services.
- 1941** Sun Valley is featured and promoted in the movie Sun Valley Serenade.

- 1941-1946** Sun Valley Lodge closes during World War II and is used as a convalescent hospital by the U.S. Navy. The Moritz Hospital facility was named after Dr. John Moritz when he retired in 1973.
- 1946-1949** Warren Miller winters in Sun Valley, first living in a small teardrop trailer in the River Run parking lot. Miller later rented an unheated garage for \$5 per month and sublet floor space to friends to pitch their sleeping bags (at 50 cents per night). One of these friends was Edward Scott, the future inventor of the lightweight aluminum ski pole. This extra cash helped Miller purchase his first rolls of 16 mm movie film, jump-starting his motion picture career.
- 1958** In the First Wagon Days Parade, "The Big Hitch" and a few dozen Lewis Ore Wagons roll down Ketchum's main street.
- Ed Scott invents the first ski pole made of aluminum. He is the founder of Scott USA, now Scott Sports headquartered in Switzerland.
- 1961** Hemingway is buried in Ketchum, Idaho where he died on July 2.
- 1964** Union Pacific sells Sun Valley Resort to the Janss Investment Company of Southern California. During this Janss era of ownership, the north-facing Warm Springs area was developed, as well as Seattle Ridge, and condominium and home construction increased significantly. Seven chairlifts were added, and the number of trails increased from 33 to 62. The first two double chairs on Warm Springs were installed in series in 1965; the upper "Limelight" had a 2,200-foot (670 m) vertical rise, the greatest in the U.S. at the time for a chairlift.
- 1969** Sun Valley Center for the Arts & Humanities is initiated by Mrs. Glenn Cooper, a non-profit focused on ceramics, photography and fine arts.
- 1972** The 756,019-acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA) is designated by federal law, banning mining within it. Its headquarters are established eight miles north of Ketchum. As part of this legislation, the Sawtooth Primitive Area became the Sawtooth Wilderness covering 217,088 acres and part of the National Wilderness Preservation System under the Wilderness Act of 1964. The SNRA is one of the largest and most magnificent National Recreation Areas in the United States. The SNRA contains four mountain ranges with 40 peaks over 10,000 feet high. There are more than 1,000 high mountain lakes, as well as the headwaters of four of Idaho's major rivers, including the world famous "River of No Return" - the Salmon River.
- 1977** Earl Holding purchases Sun Valley Resort through his company, Sinclair Oil. He was chief of operations until April 2013. His family now runs the resort.

Interesting Historical Facts:

The odd shape of Blaine County, with its projection south to Lake Walcott and the Snake River Plain, was engineered in 1890 so that the mainline of the Union Pacific railroad would pass through the county, so as to send tax revenue into the county. Mining interests controlled early Idaho politics.

Variant names of the Big Wood River, according to the USGS, include Malad River, Malade River, Wood River, Poisonous Beaver River, and Sickley River

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