

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Intermountain and  
Northern Regions



# A User's Guide Frank Church— River of No Return Wilderness



Revised December 2001

## FRANK CHURCH (1924-1984)

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Frank Church was born and raised in Boise, Idaho. After high school, he entered Stanford law school, but he soon enlisted in the service. After his military service during World War II, he returned to Stanford. He married Bethine Clark in 1947 and that fall he started law school at Harvard, but he transferred back to Stanford where he received his law degree in 1950 despite his bout with cancer. The Churches returned to Boise where Frank started a private law practice, and he became active politically. He successfully ran for the senate in 1956. During his career as a Senator (1957-1980), Frank Church served on the Foreign Relations Committee, the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, and the Special Committee on Aging.

Frank Church had a record as a strong liberal and favored legislation in areas of environmental protection. As floor manager, he played a major role in passage of legislation creating the National Wilderness System in 1964, and in the creation of the River of No Return Wilderness in 1980.

“Through knowing it (River of No Return Wilderness Bill) jeopardized his re-election (in 1980) Church never wavered in his support for protecting the area” according to Representative John Seiberling (D-Ohio) who at the time chaired the Interior sub-committee on public lands. Seiberling also called Church one of the “premier wilderness champions.”

In introducing the legislation naming the largest wilderness in the contiguous United States after Frank Church, Senator James McClure (R-Idaho) said, “I recognize that Frank Church performed with sincerity and skill the very difficult task of getting the River of No Return Wilderness, as well as other wilderness legislation passed through Congress.”

President Reagan signed the legislation in March 1984. In a statement released shortly after, Frank Church said, **“In signing the act adding my name to the River of No Return Wilderness, President Reagan does me and my family a great honor. Honored, as I am, the real meaning for me today is to reaffirm our magnificent heritage in preserving some 2.2 million acres of Idaho wilderness for ourselves, and our children, and our children’s children. For this I am eternally grateful.... For the countless thousands who will enter and enjoy the River of No Return Wilderness, it will open their eyes like an Idaho sunrise on a summer morning.”**

Frank Church died of cancer April 7, 1984, a few weeks after congress officially changed the name of the Wilderness.

**A USER’S GUIDE**  
**THE FRANK CHURCH–RIVER of NO RETURN WILDERNESS**  
(Revised 12/2001)

**CONTENTS**

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	Page
Frank Church-----	2
Welcome-----	4
Maps-----	5
A Brief Tour of the Wilderness-----	6
Vicinity Map-----	7
Early People-----	9
The Sheepeater War-----	10
The White Men-----	11
The Boatmen-----	12
Understanding “Legal” Wilderness-----	13
What Specifically Is Allowed-----	15
What Is Prohibited in the FC-RONRW-----	15
Minerals-----	16
Wilderness Travel-----	16
Floating the Rivers-----	18
Protecting River Resources-----	18
River Hazards-----	19
The Middle Fork-----	20
Special Regulations on the Middle Fork-----	21
The Salmon-----	21
Special Regulations for the Salmon-----	22
Traveling the Trails-----	22
Trailess Area Map-----	24
Hints for Hikers and Horsemen-----	25
Stock Use-----	26
Smoke Elser on “Packin’ In”-----	28
Air Access-----	28
Airfields Map-----	30
Fire-----	31
Natural Hazards-----	32
Wildlife-----	33
The Long Circle-----	34
For More Information-----	37



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## WELCOME

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...to the rugged and remote mountains, and the rivers of central Idaho, Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness. Congress established this Wilderness in 1980; the Wilderness encompasses the old Idaho Primitive Area, and the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area, plus additional wild lands totaling 2,361,767 acres. It is the largest contiguous National Forest Wilderness in the lower 48 states.

The long name, which is fitting for this Wilderness, has two roots. First, the main Salmon River that was called “The River of No Return” back in the early days when boats could navigate down the river, but could not get back up through the fast water and numerous rapids. The romantic name lives on today, even though jet boats can navigate upstream.

Second, the name Frank Church that was attached to this Wilderness, a fitting memorial to honor a man who did so much to help preserve this wild central core of Idaho. Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness, a name fitting for such a large wilderness. Some predicted the name eventually would be shortened to the “Frank Church Wilderness,” but in this User’s Guide we abbreviate it using the initials “FC–RONRW,” or simply the “Wilderness,” with a capital “W.”

The purpose of this User’s Guide is to provide basic information to travelers intending to float or jet boat the rivers, hike, ride or fly into the backcountry of the FC–RONRW. The User’s Guide will be most valuable to the reader when used in conjunction with the (Reprint 1999) Forest Service two-map set of the FC–RONRW.

To find, *Frankly Speaking*, the newsletter that reports of the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness, on the Internet go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/fcronr>.

## **MAPS**

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Available from the Forest Service is a two-map set of the Wilderness (south half and north half). The maps are \$14 for the set or \$7 each. Also available, a river map of the Salmon River and of the Middle Fork of the Salmon, \$7 each. You can purchase these maps by mail or in person from the Forest Service offices listed on the back cover. These maps also have an index showing the topographic maps covering the Wilderness.

Topographic maps are available by mail, \$4, plus \$3.50 p & h per map, from the U.S. Geological Survey, Box 25286, Denver, Colorado 80225. Fax number (303) 202-4693. An index of topographic maps for Idaho is available free upon request from the USGS. Topographic maps also available on Web site (<http://www.topozone.com>)



## **A BRIEF TOUR OF THE WILDERNESS**

The FC–RONRW is a wilderness of steep, rugged mountains, deep canyons, and wild, Whitewater Rivers.

The Salmon River Mountains, located south of the Main Salmon and west of the Middle Fork, are the most massive range, and dominate the Wilderness. North of the Main Salmon River are the Clearwater Mountains, east of the Middle Fork are the Bighorn Crags.

The two famous whitewater rivers that traverse the Wilderness, and the third that begins there:

### Middle Fork of the Salmon

Begins at the confluence of Bear Valley and Marsh Creeks, near the southern boundary of the Wilderness, and flows north for 104 miles, near the east side of the Wilderness, to its confluence with the Salmon 38.6 Miles downstream from the community of North Fork, Idaho.

### Main Salmon

Flows west across the north portion of the Wilderness.

### Selway River

Begins in the extreme northeast corner of the FC–RONRW, then flows north across the Magruder Corridor and into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. (See figure 1.1 Vicinity Map next page.)

Frank Church--River of No Return Wilderness

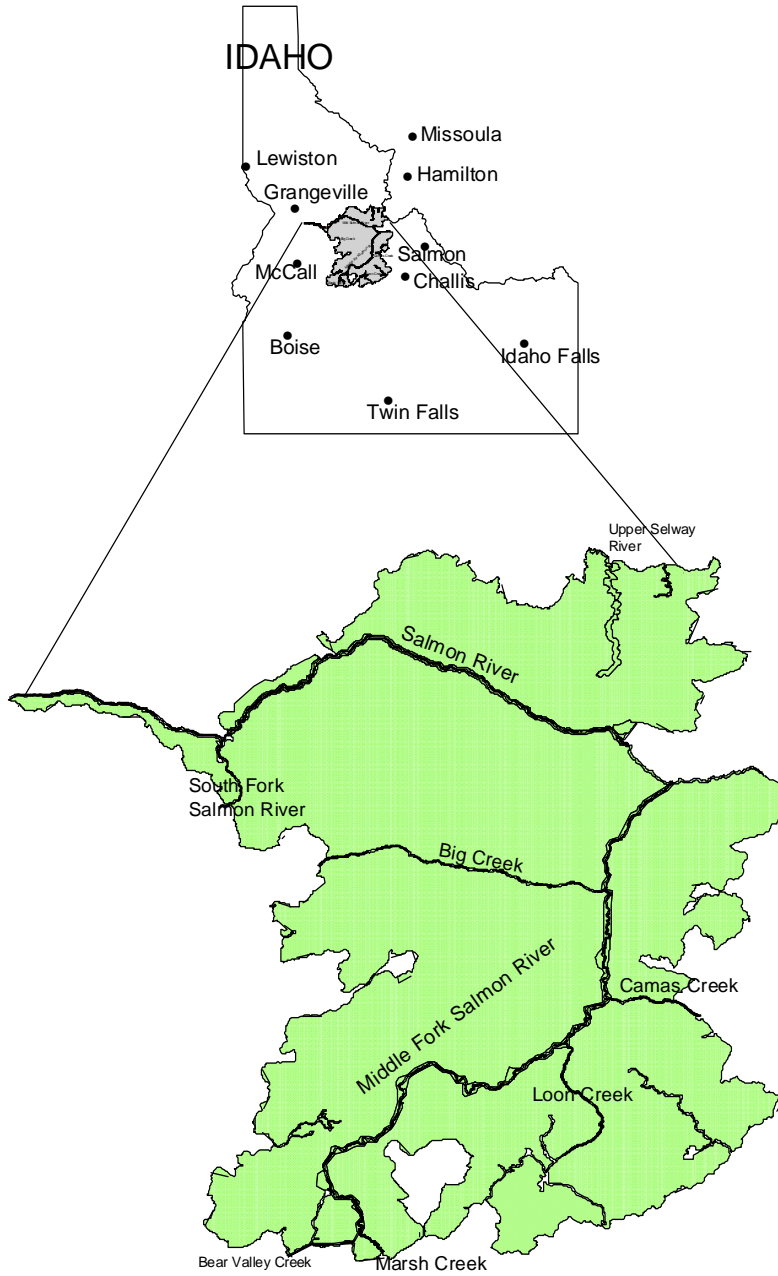


Figure 1.1 Vicinity Map

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The mountains and canyons were carved by erosion from a 100- by 200-mile mass of granite (Idaho Batholith), which dates over 100 million years old. The Salmon River Mountain's rugged terrain has sharp ridges cresting at elevations between 7,000 and 9,000 feet, and with narrow canyons 3,000 to 4,000 feet deep. The upper reaches of canyons above 8,000 feet are glaciated "U" shaped canyons, while the lower canyons are "V" shaped. Slopes are steep and range from nearly bare to heavily timbered with most of the canyon bottoms choked by brush.

Unlike other western mountains, the Salmon River Mountains do not separate into distinct ranges, are not arranged in lines, and have no trend or dominating crest, only a multitude of minor crests running in all directions; the elevation of the crests decline gradually from southeast to northwest. Mountain summits are wide, and the slopes are more gradual in the central portion of the mountains than around the edges.

While not generally thought of as alpine country, there are 14 groups of high mountain lakes in the Wilderness. One such area is the Bighorn Crags, a high, rugged area with cirque lakes at or above 8,000 feet and peaks topping 10,000 feet. In contrast, the relief of Chamberlain Basin is low and rolling and contains alluvium-filled valleys, marshes, and open meadows.

The Salmon River Canyon is one of the deepest gorges in North America, deeper even than the famous Grand Canyon of the Colorado in Arizona. In fact, only Hells Canyon on the Snake River is deeper. But in contrast to the Grand Canyon, the Salmon River Canyon is not noted for sheer walls and towering heights, but instead for the variety of landscapes visible from the river; wooded ridges rising to the sky, huge eroded monuments and bluffs and slides, picturesque castles and towers, and solitary crags.

The elevation changes are extreme. The General, astride the southern boundary, is 10,329 feet above sea level. The mouth of the Middle Fork, about 55 air miles north, is 3,015 feet elevation. The highest point in the Wilderness is Twin Peaks, 10,340 feet, and is located on the southeast boundary. The Wind River Packbridge, where the Salmon River leaves the Wilderness, is the lowest point at 1,970 feet elevation.

The climate varies with the elevation and topography of an area. The river bottoms receive as little as 15 inches of annual precipitation while mountain peaks get as much as 50 inches. Temperatures also vary dramatically. Along the rivers, it can reach over 100 degrees on a hot summer day, while some places in the high mountains reach -50 degrees in the winter. Most of the annual precipitation, particularly in the high county, falls as snow in the winter.

Great forests of conifers, broken by scattered meadows and dry mountain slopes, dominate the Wilderness. Douglas fir is the major tree, followed by lodgepole pine. Ponderosa pines grow at low elevations, and Engelmann spruce and subalpine fir at high elevations. A variety of grasses occupies the opening at all elevations and some alpine plants grow on



the highest peaks and ridges. Shrubs, such as sagebrush, ninebark, and bearberry, are common at mid and lower elevations.

Two hundred and fifty-eight (258) wildlife species are in the area: 72 mammals 173 birds 23 fish, 7 reptiles and 6 amphibians. Several non-species of upland game, including chukar and gray partridge, were introduced into the area before wilderness designation. Eight species of big game are found: mule deer, whitetail deer, elk, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, black bear, mountain lion, and moose.

The area supports 23 species of fish including both resident and anadromous fisheries. Steelhead trout and Chinook salmon (spring and summer runs) utilize spawning and rearing habitat of the Wilderness. The indigenous game fish include cutthroat, Dolly Varden, rainbow trout, rocky mountain whitefish, and white sturgeon. Brook trout, California golden trout, and Arctic grayling, planted in lakes of the area some time ago have been established long enough to be considered native.

Numerous artifacts are evidences that humans have long been a component of the Wilderness. They are the artifacts of the Shoshone and Nez Perce Indian occupations, journals of early fur trappers and missionaries, and remnants of early miner and homesteader settlements. The historic and prehistoric heritage of the area is a valuable Wilderness component.

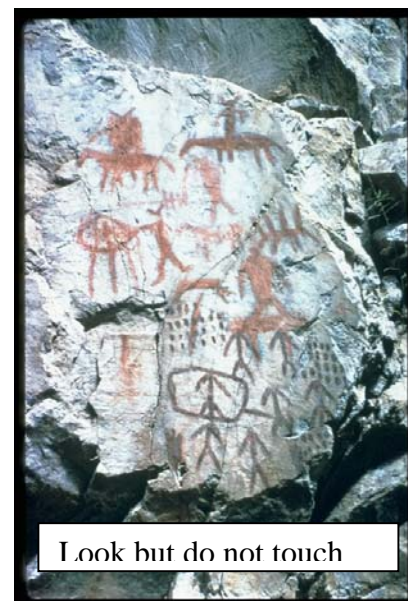
## **EARLY PEOPLE**

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### **Indians**

Caves and rock shelters along the Middle Fork and its tributaries hold artifacts that show Native Americans used this area for 12,000 years. The two Indian groups that ranged this region most recently, the Nez Perce and Shoshone, left only yesterday in terms of archaeological time. Remnants of the Shoshone group, or Sheepeaters as they came to be called by white men, avoided the military roundup of their people in 1879 and remained in isolated parts of this wild country until near the start of this century.

Those cultural resources related to Indians include stone and bone tools, remnants of clothing and basketry, remains of stone dams and weirs used in fish traps, depressions that were once pit houses, rocks stacked to form shelters, storage bins, and ambush sites for Indian hunters. There are Indian signs and symbols chipped and



painted on rock walls throughout this wild canyon country. Many cultural sites remain undiscovered by professional archaeologists and much found not well understood. Travelers in the area should remember that the Antiquities Act prohibits collection of artifacts by the public.

Both the Shoshone and Nez Perce used a wide array of hunting and fishing strategies that required highly specialized tools and skills. They fished with communal traps and weirs and established semi-permanent platforms where they dipped out with long-handled nets migrating salmon. Hooks, spears, and seines were common. They knew how to formulate poisons to use for stunning fish, and for use on arrow or spear points. Hunters used decoys, blinds, snares, pits, and deadfalls. When snow was deep, the hunters used snowshoes to hunt elk, and in some pursuits used trained dogs.

### **The Sheepeater War**

In 1879, the Sheepeater Indians were accused of murdering five Chinese miners on Loon Creek. There was no evidence that Indians were actually involved in the crime. However, it was convenient at the time to blame Indians for any unexplained violence against whites.

Brigadier General O.O. Howard, Commander of the Department of Columbia, ordered troops to the Middle Fork in 1879. Cavalry Captain Reuben F. Bernard was in charge of the field operation. The diary of private Edgar Hoffner, who rode with Bernard and his junior officers throughout the Sheepeater War, explained it in much more detail.

Private Hoffner summed up the campaign as follows: “We marched (and rode) 1,258 miles through sections where no human beings had ever set foot before. A number of animals (horse and mules) were made useless and men badly used up.”

In his diary, Private Hoffner’s tells of pack mules tumbling over cliffs, of saddle animals shot after they played out, and of food and blankets that was lost when pack animals were swept downriver in the many dangerous crossings. The soldiers were often lost, frequently hungry, commonly wet and cold. The Indians they sought were as elusive as wolves – and at home among the peaks and canyons, which were always the major enemy of the military.

The “war” ended with two brief exchanges of fire between soldiers and Indians. One soldier, Private Harry Eagan, was killed and buried in a marked grave on what is now named Soldier Bar on Big Creek. The Indians, who fired from ambush and moved on, were seldom seen and had no known casualties.

The Indians seemed puzzled, and finally bored, by the dogged pursuit of the soldier. They surrendered to Lieutenant Edward S. Farrow and his troop of Umatilla Indian scouts on October 1, 1879. The Indians were eventually settled on the Ft. Hall Reservation in eastern Idaho. A few of the Indians missed the surrender gathering and remained in the mountains for many more years.

General Howard felt much better about the Sheepeater War than did Private Hoffner. His letter to the Adjutant General in San Francisco says the expedition was “handsomely completed,” with the forced surrender of the entire band, and the capture of their camp, stores, and stock.

The soldiers, however their campaign is judged, left their marks and relics on the Middle Fork. They left Private Eagan buried on Soldier Bar, and they left mule packer Dave Lewis – later locally famous as “Cougar” Dave Lewis – alive and well as a new Middle Fork settler.

## **The White Men**

The written record of white men in the Salmon River country starts with the arrival of the Lewis and Clark expedition near the North Fork of the Salmon River in 1805. After some exploratory probes, and discouraging reports from friendly Indians, they abandoned their plan to travel the Salmon River drainage and detoured north to the Clearwater. In doing so they set a pattern, which for more than 100 years had the mainstream of white pioneers circling north or south to avoid what became known as the River of No Return – now the FC–RONRW.

Gold was first discovered near Florence, Idaho in 1860. Then came strikes in the Boise Basin and on the Salmon River in 1862. By 1866, gold was found west of the present city of Salmon and some 7,000 miners soon occupied that area. By 1870, a community named Leesburg, west of Salmon, had more than 100 stores, saloons, hotels, and other places of business. On the southern edge of the Wilderness, gold strikes quickly spawned such boomtowns as Bonanza and Custer. The “gold rush” days left a legacy of interesting stories. A short one follows:

Years ago, a miner had a mining claim on the Salmon River. He was trying to peddle it to a prospective buyer. The old prospector had rolled some gold dust up in his cigarette. When he panned a sample from the claim, he smoked the cigarette and flicked the ashes into the pan, making it a rich sample. The mine sold.

A few of the miners sifted over the divides and down the drainages into the Middle Fork. There they found enough placer gold to lure them on. Some found enough gold to build cabins and to work the same claims for years. They planted gardens, put out winter trap lines. Horses, mules, burros, and cattle came into the Middle Fork with miners and packers who supplied them. A few miners who settled on flat land with water gradually built up substantial livestock operations, raising enough hay to winter their stock.

“Cougar” Dave Lewis was born in 1844 in New Orleans, Louisiana. In 1881, after the Sheepeater War (Lewis handled the ammunition train and two mules for the army) he moved to Slate Creek near Riggins to raise horses. Later he built a cabin on Goat Creek. Finally, he settled on Big Creek and largely supported himself by hunting cougar. He is said to have taken more than 600 of the big cats. Other income was from packing for

miners and for the Forest Service during fire season. He was a Civil War veteran, who survived the siege at Vicksburg and a scout with Captain Benteen, who arrived at the Little Big Horn just after the Custer massacre. *The New York Times* told his story before he died at age 92. Cougar Dave was one of many picturesque pioneers in the area. Another was Charlie Norton.

Charlie Norton described in a Pocatello, Idaho newspaper at the time of his death as “essentially a man of nerve.” Charlie an early settler in the mining territory near Custer and noted as a bear hunter, one who finally got too close to a grizzly. The grizzly crushed Norton’s face and mangled most of his body. A companion found Norton, still alive, made him as comfortable as he could then went to get help which was 60 miles away at Challis. When Norton’s companion got back with help, they had to take a quart of maggots from Norton’s wounds. At the hospital, the doctor removed his shattered lower jaw. He lived and went on prospecting. However, what was left of his mouth grew shut repeatedly and had to be cut open, without anesthetic. Once he even cut open his own mouth with his pocketknife and a hand mirror when his prospector pals refused to help him. Cancer developed in Norton’s face and had to be cut out four times in five years, always without anesthetic, which he refused to take. He died August 27, 1898, complaining at the last that he was “getting to be a damned baby” because he was beginning to flinch at the thought of additional operations. Norton Creek and Norton Ridge are named after him.

Another picturesque pioneer was Earl Parrott. When Parrot returned from the Klondike gold rush, he found his intended married to another. Parrott not only disappointed in love, but lost faith in men and the world of commerce when the bank that held all his savings failed. In 1908, he filed on homestead on Rock Creek (later known as Rushton Place - Parrot sold to Rushton in 1916) a tributary of the South Fork of the Salmon. Later Parrot settled in an area of the Middle Fork know as Impassable Canyon where he built his cabin on a high bench reached only by a trail that involved several cliff-scaling ladders. He would mine a little placer gold for his necessities: salt, tea, matches, and bullets. He raised an extraordinary garden, and lived off the land. He remained there in hermit status for about 30 years. He died at the Silbaugh nursing home August 15, 1945. Parrot Creek is named after him.

Another is “Buckskin Bill” (Sylvan Hart) who lived on the Salmon River for 40 years. He graduated from the university of Oklahoma; he went to live on the Salmon River during the depression. During World War II, he worked on Norden bombsight for the Air Force after which he returned to the Salmon River. Buckskin known for living off the land, his skill in crafting tools, cooking utensils, furniture, guns, knives, and for making his shoes and buckskin clothes. Buckskin Bill’s place is located about 3.5 miles upriver from Mackay Bar. Today the site is known as Fivemile Bar.

### **The Boatmen**

Captain Harry Guleke, who made his whitewater reputation as a sweepboat pilot on the Salmon River, probably made the first run of the Middle Fork in the early 1900’s. He died in 1944 and left only a verbal report of that trip which he had made with a homemade raft.

No one who knew Guleke questioned his story in which he says he was sometimes on his raft and sometimes under it.

Mr. Weidmer and his son may have run most of the Middle Fork in a canoe about 1928 according to a skimpy report from Dr. Russell Frazier, who then was of Bingham, Utah, and who made a successful run in 1936. Frazier was part of a river-running crew that at times included Cap Mowrey, Bill Fahrni, Al and Bus Hatch, Dr. Wallace Calder, Frank Swain, and Blackie Marshall.

Swain and Frazier ran the river again in 1939. Hack Miller of the Utah newspaper, *Deseret News*, was along that time, and Amos Burg accompanied the party in a rubber boat or raft. That same year Woodie Hindman, a Eugene, Oregon, boat builder, made the run in a McKenzie River drift boat of his own design. His wife Ruth was his crewperson. A year later, Hindman was back on the Middle Fork with Oregon white-water men, Prince Helfrich, Harold Dobyns, and George Godfrey. They had three boats similar to Hindman's and they all made the run. L.L. (Andy) Anderson started the first commercial river running business in 1945 by hauling boats and equipment on horseback from Meyers Cove to the Tappen Ranch via Camas Creek.

Today river runners leave no "relics" in the way that the Indians, miners, and ranchers did in the past. Now that they are the mainstream of modern Middle Fork and Salmon River culture, rafters and Kayakers are guided by the slogan "Leave No Trace."

The majority of wilderness visitors are float boaters on the Salmon and Middle Fork rivers. A survey in 1995 revealed the reason people visit the FC – RONRW: to enjoy nature, fish, hunt, solitude, physical fitness, and photography. (Hunger & Watson 1966).

## **UNDERSTANDING "LEGAL" WILDERNESS**

The following Acts of Congress and administrative actions of the Forest Service led to the creation of the present FC–RONRW.

1931 – The Forest Service designated 1,090,000 acres in central Idaho as the Idaho Primitive Area. Additional lands were added in 1937 bringing the total to 1,224,350 acres.

1936 – The Forest Service established the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area including most of the land between the Main Salmon and Lochsa Rivers.

1963 – The Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area was divided into three units by the Forest Service: The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area (north of the Main Salmon River), and an undesignated piece of country between the two areas known as the Magruder Corridor.

1964 – The Wilderness Act (PL 88-077): This Act created a National Wilderness Preservation System, designated existing National Forest Wilderness as “official” Wilderness (such as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness), directed that existing National Forest Primitive Areas (including the Salmon River Breaks and Idaho Primitive Areas) be reviewed for their suitability as Wilderness, and defined uses and activities allowed in the Wilderness.

The purpose of Wilderness, as stated in the Wilderness Act, is “to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States.” Further, land management agencies are charged with administering Wilderness “for the use and enjoyment of American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as Wilderness and to provide for the protection of these areas (and) the preservation of their Wilderness character.”

1968 – Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (PL 92-906): This Act added both the Middle Fork of the Salmon and Selway Rivers to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, to be preserved in a free-flowing condition for the benefit and enjoyment of the present and future generations. Congress further recognized the Middle Fork as a premier example of a “wild river”. It also required that the Salmon River between the town of North Fork and its confluence with the Snake River be studied for its potential as a Wild and Scenic River.

1980 – Central Idaho Wilderness Act (PL96-312): Congress established a 2.4 million acre River of No Return Wilderness from the Idaho and Salmon River Breaks Primitive Areas and surrounding roadless lands, added 105,600 acres from the Magruder Corridor to the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness, and 125 miles of the Salmon River to the National Wild and Scenic River System. The act also created a special mining management zone in the Clear Creek area, and allowed certain existing uses to continue, such as motorboats on the Main Salmon and the use of established airstrips.

1984 – (PL 98-231): Congress honored Senator Frank Church by renaming the area the “Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness.”

Two Forest Service Regions (Northern and Intermountain), four National Forests, and six Ranger Districts administer the FC–RONRW. To coordinate management among these various administrative units, a comprehensive wilderness management plan was completed in 1985 and a Wilderness Coordinator position was established in 1990. In addition, there are separate management plans for the Middle Fork and the Salmon Rivers.

Wilderness Act Sec.4 (b) ...wilderness areas shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use.

Hunting and fishing allowed under State regulations  
Commercial guides and outfitters authorized by special use permits allowed.  
Access to private land, valid mining claims, or occupancies allowed.  
Grazing of domestic livestock under permit allowed.

## **WHAT SPECIFICALLY IS ALLOWED IN THE FC–RONRW**

Boating is allowed on the Salmon and Middle Fork of the Salmon and some tributaries, under a permit system (see pages 19 through 22). Party sizes are controlled and leave no trace techniques are required.

General backcountry visitation is allowed with a maximum party size of 20 and a length of stay up to 14 days.

Stock use is allowed with a maximum party size of 20 and 20 head of stock.

Mining and prospecting for cobalt and related minerals in the special mining zone allowed subject to certain restrictions (see PL 96-312).

Jet boats are allowed on the Salmon.

Continued use of established airfields is allowed.

Future construction and maintenance of small hydroelectric generators, domestic water facilities, and related facilities in Three Mile and Jersey Creek drainages is allowed.

If you visit the Salmon River, you will likely see recreationist in rafts and jet boats.

## **WHAT IS PROHIBITED IN THE FC–RONRW**

Timber harvesting is not allowed.

New permanent or temporary roads and new landing strips are not allowed.

Motorized or mechanized transport of any kind, including motorcycles, mountain bicycles, game carts, jetskis, and hang gliders is not allowed.

Motorboats (except on the Salmon River) are not allowed.

Dredge or placer mining in the Salmon, Middle Fork, and tributaries of the Middle Fork is not allowed.

Prospecting for minerals (except in the special mining zone) is not allowed.

New permanent structures or an installation is not allowed. (Existing structures may be maintained for administrative or historic purpose.)

Commercial enterprises (other than guides and outfitters) not allowed.

NOTE: There are 60 parcels of state and private land totaling over 1,700 acres. As non-Federal land, these are not considered “Wilderness,” however some are subject to “scenic easement” restrictions regarding future development.

## **MINERALS**

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The Wilderness Act of 1964 established that, effective January 1, 1984; all Wilderness Areas are closed to mineral entry and location except for those mining claims that were valid before January 1, 1984. However, the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980 (CIWA) provides special stipulations for a Special Mining Management Zone (SMMZ) located in the northeast quadrant of the Wilderness. The SMMZ was established to allow for the exploration and development of cobalt, a strategic mineral.

Claimants who have valid existing right on mining claims prior to January 1, 1984, may develop their claims under an approved plan of operations. Proposed mining operations within the Wilderness are carefully evaluated. Access and mining activities are strictly controlled and stringent reclamation measures are required. Currently there is no active mining in the Special Mining management Zone.

The CIWA prohibits dredge and placer mining within the perceptible banks and beds of the Salmon River, the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, and the Middle Fork tributary streams in their entirety.

Throughout the FC–RONRW, Wilderness travelers may notice evidence of old mining claims and prospecting activity. Nearly 2,100 mining and millsite claims were located in or immediately adjacent to the Wilderness. As of November 8, 1995 (BLM records), only 25 mining claims remain within wilderness. An additional estimated 490 mining claims exist close to or within wilderness exclusion areas.

Mining is part of the history of this rugged central Idaho country; historical evidence of man’s activity will be visible in many parts of the Wilderness.

## **WILDERNESS TRAVEL**

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There are a number of ways to travel through the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness: by floatboat down the Middle Fork and Salmon Rivers, by jetboat on the Salmon River, by aircraft, foot or by horseback on the extensive trail system.

Each mode of travel is managed differently. River travel is managed under a permit system to control the number and size of float parties. Campsites are assigned on the Middle Fork but are not assigned on the Salmon River. Visitors outside the Salmon River corridors are essentially free to travel as they please.



More important than regulations is the responsibility each traveler has to protect the Wilderness. In the past years, we used to speak of wilderness survival as the ability of people to survive the Wilderness. Now we speak of wilderness survival as the land's capability of surviving people. In many of the most popular National Park backcountry areas, BLM primitive areas, and National Forest Wilderness Areas, we are literally "loving the Wilderness to death."

With increased leisure time, more disposable income, and revolutionary advances in lightweight gear, people are going down the rivers and into the Wilderness in unprecedented numbers. What was accepted wilderness traveling and camping practices 20 years ago are simply unacceptable today if we are to preserve the Wilderness. It is necessary for ALL users of the FC-RONRW to practice minimum impact camping techniques. The motivation to do this derives from a respect for the land and water and consideration and courtesy for those who will follow after you.

The slogan today is "Leave No Trace!" Specific techniques of "Leave No Trace" may differ depending on when, where, and how you travel, but the underlying philosophy has just a few key elements:

- Travel in small groups; be quiet and unobtrusive. Respect solitude one of the most valuable wilderness resources.
- Camp out of site and sound of other campers, and where possible, at least 200 feet from rivers, streams, and trails.
- Select a camp that has already been impacted, if you have a larger group, more than six (>6)). This will slow down the development of new camps in "W."
- Pick up and pack out all litter and trash. If you have camped in a popular area, leave the campsite in the best possible condition for the next users. If you have camped in a little-used area, leave absolutely no evidence that you have been there. For more information see no-trace camping .
- Be responsible for human waste. When traveling overland, bury feces. When floating the rivers, use the available pit toilets or pack it out in sealed containers.

Commercial outfitters and guides offer people without the time, skill, or equipment the opportunity to enjoy the Wilderness. There are 91 outfitters offering a variety of Wilderness activities in the Wilderness backcountry plus float trips down and jet boat activities on the rivers. For a complete list of commercial outfitters and guides, write:

Idaho Outfitters & Guides Assoc.  
P O Box 95  
Boise, ID 83701

## **FLOATING THE RIVERS**

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The permitted rivers of the Wilderness—the Middle Fork and Salmon – are two of America’s premier white water float trips. Both are National Wild and Scenic Rivers, classified as follows:

- Salmon River, North Fork to Corn Creek, 46 miles, National Recreational River.
- Salmon River, Corn Creek to Long Tom Bar, 79 miles, National Wild River.
- The Middle Fork Salmon, from its source at the confluence of Bear Valley and Marsh Creeks to its confluence with Salmon (except for one mile Scenic River segment in the vicinity of Dagger Falls), 104 miles, National Wild River.
- Middle Fork Salmon, one mile in vicinity of Dagger Falls, National Scenic River.

Over 10,000 people recreate on each river annually. The Middle Fork and Salmon Rivers are both under permit systems to manage them for a wild river experience. You can choose a private trip or a outfitted commercial trip. Private River runners can apply for an application to get a permit from December 1 to January 31. People floating with commercial guides and outfitters need not apply for a permit; however, each outfitter is regulated under a special-use permit issued by the Forest Service. Information on River permits can be found on the Internet:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/recreation/app\\_cover\\_ltr.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/recreation/app_cover_ltr.html)

## **PROTECTING RIVER RESOURCES**

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Many of the current campsites are historic and prehistoric camps and have cultural significance. To protect these heritage resources:

1. The Antiquities Act PROHIBITS the collection of archeological artifacts.
2. Wood fires permitted only in firepans and ashes packed out.
3. Firewood is in short supply. River runners should carry charcoal, propane, or white gas stoves for cooking.
4. All micro trash material (especially small pieces of plastic, glass, wire, aluminum, nylon rope) must be packed out. Leave the campsite in better condition than you found it.

5. Pitch tents in places where tents have been pitched before. Avoid trampling a fresh site where there is undamaged vegetation.
6. No soaps or detergents allowed in the hot springs, rivers, or side streams. Wash and rinse well away from water sources and camp areas, using pans or buckets. Dispose of water at least 200 feet from rivers or streams.
7. Obey State fish and game regulations.
8. There are numerous private land holdings, which are off limits to floatboaters. Please respect the rights of these landowners.
9. Human feces from campsites without pit toilets must be hauled out.

Some of the more heavily used campsites are being restored and other campsites may have restricted use of some portion of the camp to protect resource values.

## **RIVER HAZARDS**

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Nonoutfitted river runners who are properly prepared, are experienced boat handlers, and exercise good judgment, should have no difficulty floating the Middle Fork or Salmon Rivers.

The ratings by class indicate the difficulty of a rapid:

Class I –very easy- small regular waves and riffles; few or no obstacles; little maneuvering.

Class II – easy- small waves with some eddies, low ledges, and slow rock gardens; some maneuvering required.

Class III – medium- numerous waves that are high and irregular; strong eddies; narrow, but clear passages that require expertise in maneuvering; scouting from the shore necessary.

Class IV – difficult- long rapids with powerful, irregular waves, dangerous rocks, and boiling eddies; precise maneuvering and scouting from the shore imperative; take all possible safety precautions.

Class V –very difficult- long rapids with wild turbulence and extremely congested routes that require complex maneuvering; a danger to your life and boat and near the limits of navigation.

Class VI –limits of navigation- rarely run; a definite hazard to your life.

One variable to closely watched is the peak run-off, usually in June. The high water levels calls for the utmost caution while running the river. A second early-season hazard is rain and cold weather. To prevent hypothermia, wetsuits are recommended. Hypothermia can be a hazard ANY TIME during the spring, summer, or fall; especially during cold weather. By mid-August, the rivers have usually dropped to low levels, presenting a new set of hazards. Rapids that are essentially rock bands or drop-offs, such as Velvet and Tappan

Falls on the Middle Fork, are particularly hazardous at low water and require that boatmen pick the correct line when running them. Canoeing is not recommended on either river. Kayakers should be at least competent intermediates and have the ability to “Eskimo roll” in rough water.

## **THE MIDDLE FORK**

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For information on applications for permits to float or run the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, contact:

Middle Fork Ranger District  
Salmon-Challis National Forest  
P O Box 750  
Challis ID 83226  
Phone: (208) 879-4101

After receiving your inquiry, the district will mail you an application card and information on how to apply for a permit. Applications, for the following summer, accepted between October 1 and January 31.

During the heavy use season, June 1 through September 3, permits and reservations for launch dates are required for all Nonoutfitted parties. Launch dates are assigned by a lottery drawing, and seven launches per day are allowed (generally four Nonoutfitted party launches and three outfitter launches). Cancelled or unconfirmed launch dates are available on a first-come, first-served basis during the heavy use season.

Before and after the heavy use season permits are still required, but issued on a first-come first-served basis. The seven launches per day limit is still in effect. Applications for these launches should be made at least a month in advance.

Two boat launching ramps are on the Middle Fork: Boundary Creek and Indian Creek. The take-out ramp is on the Salmon at Cache Bar, three miles below its confluence with the Middle Fork.

An excellent river map of the Middle Fork, depicting rapids, campsites, and other features, is available from the Forest Service.

## **SPECIAL REGULATIONS ON THE MIDDLE FORK**

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The maximum trip length is 8 days. Maximum group size is 24 Private or 30 Commercial including boatmen.

Designated campsites assigned to each party

Only one overnight camp allowed below Big Creek during the heavy use season.

Open fires allowed only in approved fire pans and all ashes packed out.

## **THE SALMON (Wild River Section)**

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The river and the adjacent area are popular recreation areas, shared by floatboaters, jet boats, backpackers, horse packers, and commercially guided parties. Please show respect for all other recreational users you may encounter.

For information or permits for **floating** the Salmon River, contact:

North Fork Ranger District  
P O Box 180  
North Fork, ID 83466  
Phone: (208) 865-2700

For information or permits for **Jet boating** the Salmon River, contact:

Salmon River Ranger District  
Slate Creek Ranger Station  
HC 01, Box 70, Whitebird, ID 83554  
Phone: (208) 839-2211

During the heavy use season, June 20 through September 7, permits and reservations for launch dates are required. Applications for the following summer are accepted between December 1 and January 31 each year.

There are opportunities for obtaining unassigned or unconfirmed launch dates on a first-come, first-served basis during the heavy use season. April is the best month to apply for a cancelled reservation. However, boaters are welcome to call-in after April. The procedure for doing this is explained in the information packet on floating the Salmon sent out by the North Fork Ranger District or can be found on the Internet at:

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/recreation/app\\_cover\\_ltr.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/recreation/app_cover_ltr.html)

Before and after the heavy use season, river runners should obtain voluntary permits either from the North Fork Ranger Station or at the launch sites.

The two developed boat-launching ramps for the Salmon are Corn Creek and Vinegar Creek. The takeout ramps are at Carey Creek and Spring Bar.

The Central Idaho Wilderness Act requires that motorboat use shall be permitted to continue at a level not less than the 1978 use level. The majority of jet boat use on the Salmon happens as “jet-backs” during the summer months, as transportation on the lower reaches to lodges such as Mackay Bar, and as fishing during the fall season.

## **SPECIAL REGULATIONS FOR THE SALMON**

### Floaters and Jet boaters

Maximum group size is 30 including boatmen, during the reservation season.  
Maximum trip length is 10 days.

Campsites are not assigned, but are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Smaller parties should use smaller campsites.

All parties are REQUIRED to have portable toilets or other means for packing out human waste. A dumping station is provided in Riggins and at Newland Ranch. Any fire must be contained in a fire pan and ashes packed out.

## **TRAVELING THE TRAILS**

A network of trails totaling approximately 2,446 miles link the various airfields, rivers, trailheads, and perimeter access roads in the Wilderness. Most of the trails were built before 1930. Many are steep, rocky, eroded, poorly located, and poorly drained. Four hundred miles of trail are in very primitive condition.

The Central Idaho Wilderness Act requires that trails in the Wilderness be cleared of obstructions annually. Maintenance is usually limited to clearing downed trees and trail tread worked done when trails become impassable. Limited funds for maintaining trails have resulted in a general decline in trail conditions over the years.

Indians or early settlers used four trails –the South Nez Perce, Three Blaze, Thunder Mountain, and Sheepeater Trails.

Trails along the major rivers and into some of the lake basins are the most popular and heavily used. Trails along tributary streams and through the wooded uplands are less used, offer outstanding scenery, and provide access to hunting areas.

There are more than a 100 bridges in or adjacent to the Wilderness. The bridges provide foot and horse travelers' passage over watercourses too deep or swift to ford.

The best opportunities for solitude are in the trailless areas. The following map shows the location of trailless areas over 10,000 acres, which total 1.5 million acres in the Wilderness. Plans call for leaving the trailless areas "as is," and not constructing new trails into them.





Thirty-nine Forest roads provide access to 66 trailheads. The condition of the roads is highly variable. Some roads are not passable to vehicles towing trailers, while others are suitable for four-wheel drive vehicles only. Inquire at Ranger Stations for current conditions. A few roads within the FC–RONR Wilderness are for access to valid mining claims only and not open to the public such as the one down Big Creek.

## **HINTS FOR HIKERS AND HORSE PACKERS**

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Under the slogan of “Leave No Trace,” we offer a few suggestions of ways of traveling and camping in the Wilderness:

- Travel in small groups, usually no more than 10 to 12 people. The maximum group size is 20, without prior approval.
- When traveling the trails, stay on the trails to avoid widening them and causing erosion. Do not cut switchbacks.
- Select campsites that are already impacted, preferably out-of-sight of (and at least 200 feet away from) lakes, streams, trails, and other campers. Along the Middle Fork and the Salmon River, some campsites are within 200 feet of the river due to the topography. Campsites on the Middle Fork are assigned to boating parties, and hikers or horsemen should expect to share sites in this heavily used area.
- Keep soap and detergent out of hot springs, lakes, and streams. Wash and rinse using buckets or pans, and dispose of water at least 200 feet from lakes or streams. Use biodegradable soap only. Even biodegradable soap must percolate through the soil.
- Pack out all unburnable trash (cans, bottles, aluminum foil). Pick up trash left by others.
- Carry a small shovel or trowel to help dispose of human feces. For individuals, dig small latrines in the top 6 to 8 inches of soil at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. A narrow trench several feet long may be needed for a group. After each use, cover fecal matter and toilet paper with dirt to discourage flies from gathering. Urine need not be buried but should be kept well away from the camp or water. Cover your latrine thoroughly with soil, rocks, needles, and twigs to “Leave No Trace” before heading home.
- Do not build facilities like lean-tos, fire circles, bough beds, and gear racks.
- Fires are not permitted in some heavily used areas or during times of very high fire danger. Inquire about fire restrictions at the nearest Ranger Station before starting your trip.

- Use an existing fire circle, if fires are permitted, rather than building a new one. Rings of rocks are not necessary. Use only rocks needed and scatter them when leaving. Build small fires and use only dead or down wood of small diameter. Burn charred wood and garbage to a white ash, extinguish the fire with water, and remove bits of garbage that will not burn and pack out. Leave a clean fire circle for the next campers.
  
- If you need a fire here are some rules to follow:
  1. Portable propane stoves are a good way to “Leave No Trace.” They provide fast, clean heat for cooking, even above timberline where wood is scarce. Stoves “leave no trace” when you move on.
  
  2. When camping in little-used area, you may not find an old fire circle. To build a fire, select a spot away from trees and shrubs. Remove twigs and needles or sod until you reach cool soil, piling them a safe distance from the fire for later use. You may want to use a small rock or two to support cooking pots, but a fire circle is not needed and does not prevent fire from spreading. After the fire is dead out, scatter ash and charcoal and camouflage the site with twigs and needles.
  
  3. Never build a fire against a large rock where smoke will blacken it for all to see or in a meadow where the scar will stand out and will take years to heal. Select a sandy spot or hard ground where the scar can be hidden afterwards.
  
- Do not ditch around your tent. Ditches start erosion and leave long-lasting scars. Occupancy is limited to 14 days, but try to stay in one place no more than 4 days to minimize waste accumulation and injury to plants around the campsite.
  
- When purchasing new equipment, select earth tone colors and tents that do not require trees for poles. Never cut green trees for poles.

## **STOCK USE**

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Permits are not required for using horses, mules, or other riding or pack stock in the Wilderness. However, stock users are expected to adhere to the following conditions:

- Locate camps at least 200 feet from trails, lakes, and streams where terrain permits.
  
- Grazing for several days in one location must be approved in advance.

- Feed must be “Weed Seed Free” Supplemental feed, when needed, and should be alfalfa hay, processed pellets, and grain (preferably rolled oats), in order to prevent non-native plants from getting established in the Wilderness. (Also, no straw is permitted in the Wilderness; it leaves too much trace.)
- Salt should be mixed with grain. Otherwise, it must be in block form, secured off the ground, located away from camps, trails and live water, and removed when you leave.
- Stock should not be tied to trees for more than two hours to minimize damage to soil and roots.
- Stock must be ridden or led and not permitted to run loose on trails.
- Only stock necessary for each trip are permitted. No cripples, colts, or unbroken stock are permitted, except for short periods if animal becomes crippled during trip.
- Whenever horses or other animals are used for riding and packing, special care must be taken to “Leave No Trace.” Pack lightweight foods and camp gear to reduce the number of pack animals needed.

Following are some suggestions for tying, grazing, and cleanup:

- Tying: When you unpack, saddle up, or stop for a rest, tie horses to stout trees at least 8 inches in diameter. Smaller trees are tender and easily damaged by restless animals and abrasive ropes. Select a dry spot to avoid trampling tender vegetation and wet soil.
- If horses must be tied for a long time, stretch a rope (well above the horse’s head) between two large trees in a dry spot. Tie horses to the rope hitch rail so they can move about freely reducing the tendency to paw the ground and scar trees and other vegetation. Nervous stock can also be hobbled to prevent excessive trampling.
- Grazing: Rather than tying livestock consider picketing or hobbling. Select a dry spot to avoid trampling vegetation and soil. Move the animal before overgrazing occurs, and pull picket pins out when you leave. Hobbling is best as it allows the horse to graze over a large area.
- Grazing animals and those tied for long periods should be kept well away from lakes, streams, and camp to avoid water pollution and unpleasant conditions created by manure, urine, and trampling.
- Cleanup: Wherever manure accumulates, scatter it with a stick to speed decomposition and make the area look better.

## **SMOKE ELSER ON “PACKIN IN”**

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Smoke Elser, a renowned outfitter stated, “What separates good packers from bad packers is no longer who can throw a faster diamond hitch. Today, two things set apart the good packer – the way he cares for and uses his stock, and the way he treats the land. You do not have to tear up the country to have a comfortable camp. The more you modify your campsite, the further you push back the very Wilderness you came to experience.”

“As a horse packer, you are equipped to leave the mountains cleaner than you found them. It costs almost nothing in time and effort to pack out trash you find in you camps and along the way. Yet, there is more to Wilderness degradation than trash, and more to clean camping than cosmetics. Packing unavoidably has a great impact on the country simply because horses and mules are big animals who trample things and have to eat. Packers have to accept this and make every effort to minimize the effects of their passing. How to do this without degrading the unique character of the pack trip experience is the most pressing question facing packers, both amateur and professional, today,”

“Packers must accept the dictum ‘take only pictures, leave only footprints’ with the same fervor and unanimity as those who coined it. In addition, they must extend courtesy, consideration, and tolerance to other Wilderness users. All this will mean the demise of some traditional practices still in use, but these need not be replaced by technological substitutes. To the greatest extent possible comfort and amenity must depend on skill rather than equipment or exploitation. The alternative is to be registered, regulated, allocated, and ultimately unsatisfied.”

- From “*Packin’In on Horses and Mules*” by Smoke Elser and Bill Brown, Montana Packers. (See “FOR MORE INFORMATION”)

## **AIR ACCESS**

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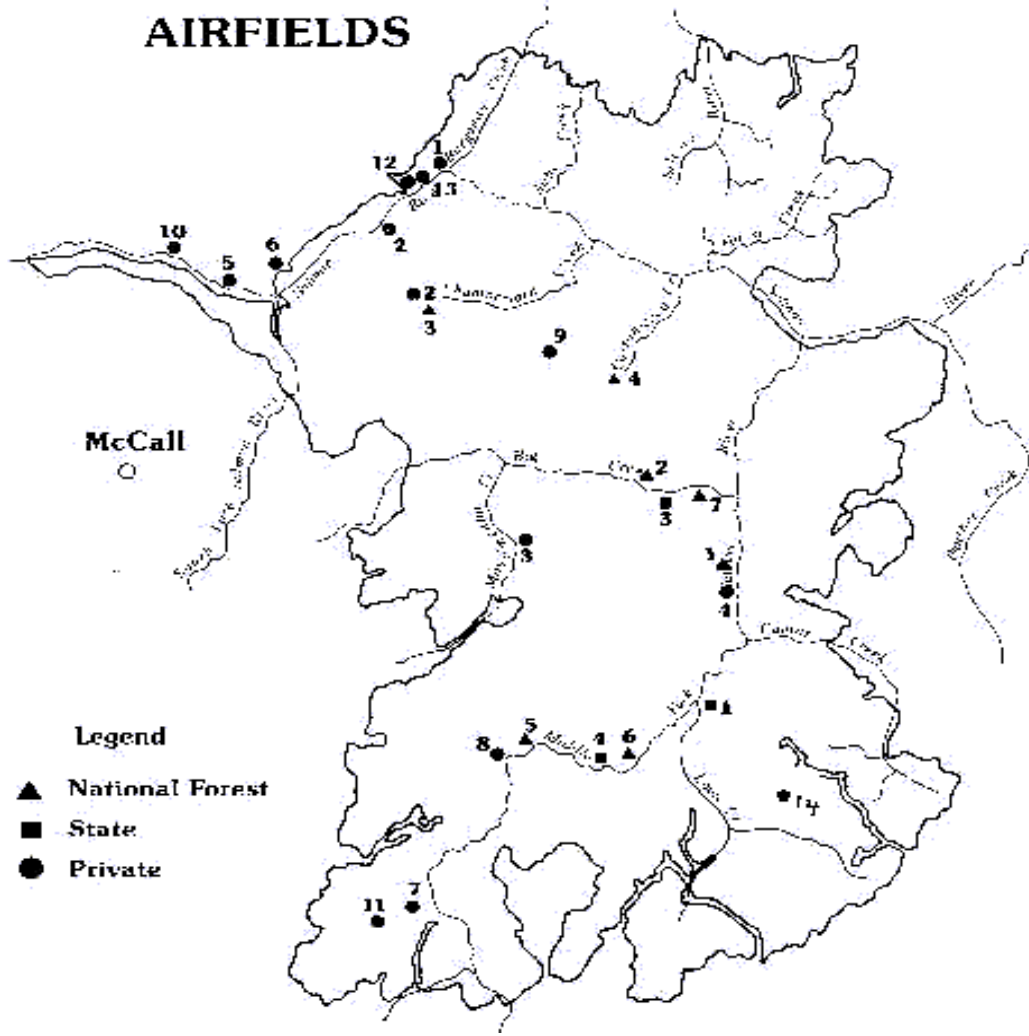
Aircraft have been flying into remote landing strips in the mountains of Idaho for over 50 years, and the Central Idaho Wilderness Act allowed this use to continue. Established landing strips will not be closed, other than temporarily for maintenance and similar situations, unless they are unsafe.

There are 26 active landing strips in the Wilderness: depicted on the sketch map on page 30. The private strips are open to the public for emergency use only or on a charge basis with prior approval.

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More than 5,500 aircraft land within the area each year. The Chamberlain and Indian Creek landing strips are two of the larger maintained landing strips but not considered to be particularly demanding from the standpoint of backcountry flying skill. The Indian Creek landing strip is heavily used in connection with floatboating on the Middle Fork. When water levels on the Middle Fork drop in late summer it is no longer desirable to launch boat trips from Boundary Creek, so many visitors fly into Indian Creek and start their float trip from there.

# AIRFIELDS



**Legend**

- ▲ National Forest
- State
- Private

**FOREST SERVICE**

1. Bernard
2. Cabin Creek
3. Chamberlain Basin
4. Cold Meadows
5. Indian Creek
6. Mahoney
7. Soldier Bar
8. Wilson Bar

**STATE OF IDAHO**

1. Lower Loon Creek
2. Stonebraker Ranch
3. Taylor Ranch
4. Thomas Creek

**PRIVATE**

1. Allison Ranch
2. Campbells Ferry
3. Dovel (Monumental Ranch)
4. Flying B
5. James Ranch
6. Mackay Bar
7. Morgan Ranch
8. Pistol Creek
9. Root Ranch
10. Shepp Ranch
11. Sulphur Creek
12. Whitewater Ranch
13. Yellowpine Bar
14. Foster

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There are a number of smaller landing strips, and they are extremely demanding of the highest degree of mountain flying skills. Pilots familiar with canyon and short-field operation should only attempt these landing strips. The Idaho Airport Facilities Directory published by the Idaho Transportation Department provides details. The Division of Aeronautics in the State Department of Transportation has responsibility for search and rescue of lost or downed aircraft.

## **FIRE**

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Fire is a natural ecological agent that has influenced vegetation over thousands of years. The historic fire pattern on warm sites at lower elevations was low intensity surface fires at about 20-year intervals. Fires were less frequent on north slopes and at higher elevations. Because of these fires, conifer stands were relatively open and uneven aged.

Fire suppression seems to have interrupted the historic fire frequency. A large majority of the Wilderness has not burned since 1919. This long fire interval is unprecedented over at least the past 200 years. The absence of fire had resulted in a buildup of fuels. This has increased the likelihood of intense wildfires.

The Wilderness user may observe a fire in progress. Fires are either suppressed or allowed to burn to achieve the resource benefits as forth in the FC-RONRW Fire Management Plan. This plan allows lightning-caused fires to play, as nearly as possible, their natural ecological role. The purpose of this is to reestablish the role of fire in perpetuating natural ecosystems within the Wilderness. Fire mosaics resulting from these fires will enhance wildlife habitats and esthetics over the long term.

Forest visitors are asked to be extremely careful with campfires during hot, dry periods. Suppress campfires by thoroughly soaking hot embers. Mix ashes with soaked soil and stir with a shovel or stick. Be sure all materials are cold and dead out before leaving your site.

The 65,000-acre Mortar Creek Fire in 1979, one of the largest in the history of the State of Idaho with suppression costs of almost \$6 million, was started by a visitor's abandoned campfire. Please be careful!

In 2000, Central Idaho experienced its most severe fire season; over 550,00 acres burned within the FC-RONR Wilderness. From a wilderness standpoint, these fires were neither "good" nor "bad" but merely fire playing its natural role in the ecosystem.

## **NATURAL HAZARDS**

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Wilderness travel involves an element of risk. Your best defense is knowledge and preparedness. Wilderness travelers may be a long way from outside help if an accident, sudden illness, or other emergency should occur and should be prepared to be self-reliant in such situations. Reduce the risk of serious injury by:

- Being supplied with proper equipment and clothing;
- Being armed with first-aid knowledge and supplies; and
- Be aware of changing weather conditions and other natural hazards.

The county sheriff has the responsibility for search and rescue efforts and the Forest Service may assist. Communications may be difficult in the backcountry especially during seasons of little use. Forest Service crews do carry radios and can assist in emergencies, however, many portions of the wilderness do not have radio or cell phone coverage. Be aware that individuals may be billed for the cost of search, rescue, and evacuation efforts.

Following are some of the natural hazards present in the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness (see also RIVER HAZARDS):

**GIARDIA:** Giardia lamblia, an intestinal parasite that can, if ingested, cause diarrhea, abdominal cramps, bloating, fatigue, and weight loss, may be present in any surface water source in the Wilderness. The symptoms may take a few days or several weeks to develop. Relief usually requires prescribed medication from a physician. The most effective prevention measure is to treat all drinking water by boiling. Some commercially available filters may be effective in removing Giardia. Chlorine and Iodine are both effective in killing Giardia providing the proper dosage is used.

**TICKS:** Ticks are small insects that tenaciously cling to, and then burrow into, the skin or scalp. Ticks may transmit Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and Colorado Tick Fever, both serious diseases. Ticks are common early in the season. As summer progresses ticks become less common.

**POISONOUS SNAKES:** Rattlesnakes live in the Wilderness below about 5,000 feet elevation. This includes the Middle Fork downstream from Indian Creek and all of the Salmon.

**POISON IVY:** Poison ivy is common along the lower 15 miles of the Middle Fork, all along the banks of the Salmon, and in the side canyons at lower elevations.

**HOT SPRINGS:** Some of the hot springs along the Middle Fork and at other locations in the Wilderness are hot enough to cause burns. Caution should be exercised around hot water, especially if children are in the group.



**FIRES:** Lightning and man-caused fires are common within the Wilderness. At times extreme fire behavior can cause fires to travel several miles an hour. Recently burned areas are known to have hazards such as rolling materials, falling trees and debris torrents even after the fire is extinguished.

**WILDLIFE:** There is no recent reported sightings of grizzly bear in the Wilderness. The black bears that live there are rarely seen, and when seen, usually run from humans unless wounded or cornered. The exception is a female bear with cubs that may become aggressive if she feels her cubs are threatened, or bears that learn that human campsites are an easy place to find food.

Many people associate dangerous wildlife with bears, but all wildlife must be respected. For example, a cow moose with calves often exhibits aggressive behavior and can inflict painful injury or even death if their space is invaded.

## **WILDLIFE**

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### **A Land of Diversity**

The Wilderness, with its abundant and varied habitats, provides homes for a broad diversity of fish and wildlife. Rainbow, steelhead and cutthroat trout, Chinook salmon, otters, coyotes, blue grouse, golden-mantled ground squirrels, marmots, Canadian geese, and black-capped chickadees are just a few for example. The fish and wildlife resource provides people with an opportunity for fishing, hunting, bird watching, photography, and much more.

Some of the most spectacular animal residents are the big game species such as elk, deer, bighorn sheep, and mountain goat.

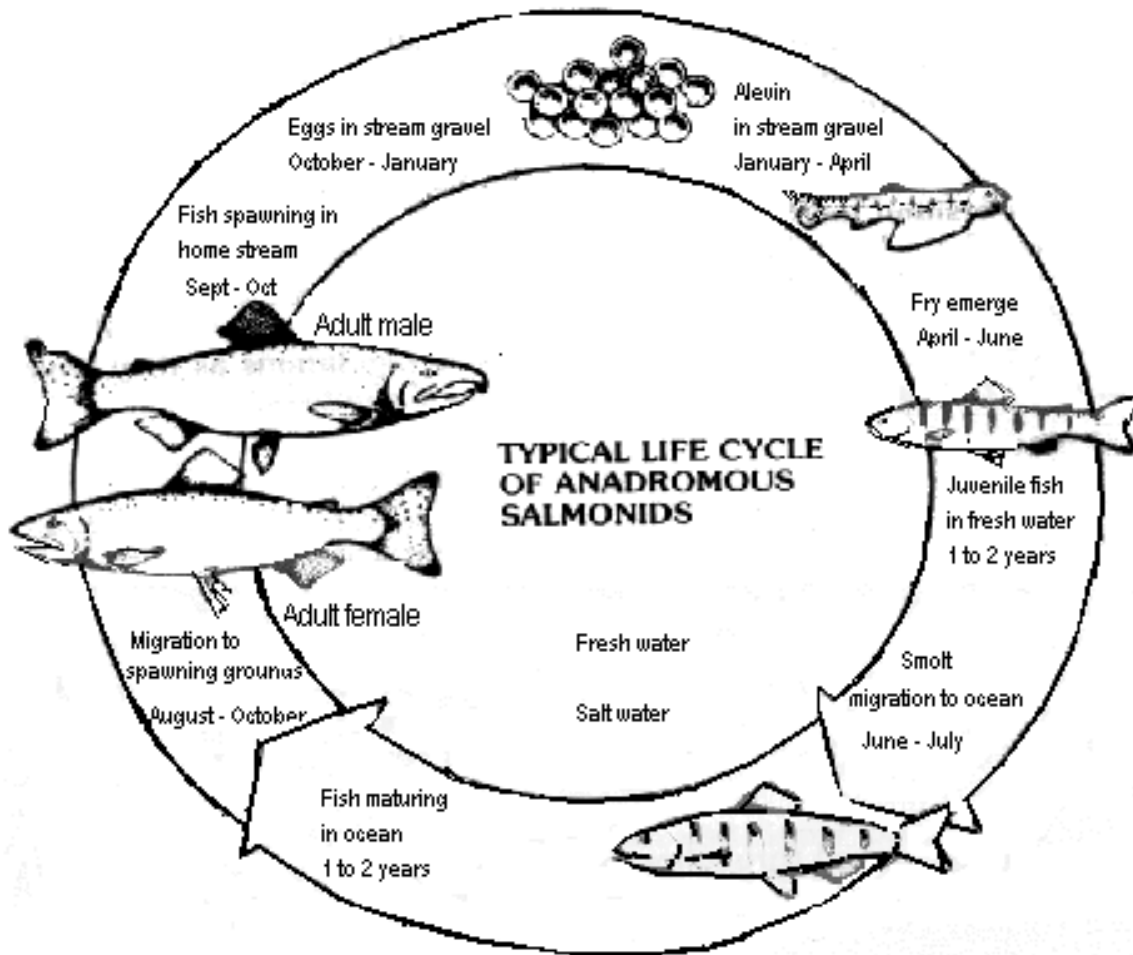
Elk and deer are throughout the Wilderness in a variety of habitats with the exception of extremely rocky areas, and common places to see them are along the edge of forested and open areas, or near stream bottoms. Bighorn sheep are sure-footed climbers who inhabit cliffs and upland slopes near rocky areas where they can easily elude their enemies. During the winter, they may be force down to lower slopes, but will still try to stay close to rugged escape areas. Mountain goats, one of the best rock climbers in the animal world, inhabit the most rugged and rocky terrain. Special adaptations allow them to thrive in this harsh environment. For example, their hooves act as “suction cups” that enable them to climb places where an experienced mountain climber would not dare to venture without a rope, and their white fur, conspicuous in summer, serves as excellent camouflage and insulation in the snow that covers these areas much of the year.

Management of wildlife is a cooperative effort between the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Forest Service. Under this arrangement, the State directly manages the fish and wildlife, while the Forest Service manages the habitat.

## **The Long Circle**

The waters of the Wilderness are valuable habitat for several species of fish. Some, like the rainbow trout and westslope cutthroat trout, remain in the streams and lakes of the Wilderness throughout their entire life. Others, such as steelhead trout and Chinook salmon, have a complex life cycle, which requires two habitats – freshwater streams and the saltwater of the ocean.

Sockeye salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout are listed as T/E species. Recently, a proposed anadromous fisheries (salmon & steelhead) recovery plan (the 4-H Plan) has been released by federal caucus agencies, as well as recovery recommendations of the governors of Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.



The sea-run or anadromous salmon and trout, born in the streams of this area, spend the first part of their lives there. As juveniles, they migrate downstream to the ocean where they spend most of their adult life growing and maturing. Once mature, they begin their long and difficult journey back upstream.

True to the name salmon, which means “to leap,” these fish leap their way upstream through rapids and sometimes over small waterfalls enroute to their birthplace. Those that survive the long migration will die once they complete a mating ritual vital to the survival of the species. Through their efforts, a new generation will be born to begin the cycle again.

Steelhead, which are actually ocean-going rainbow trout, also travel upstream to the place of their birth to spawn. Unlike salmon, however, they do not die naturally after spawning though it is extremely unlikely that they will complete a second spawning run due to the rigors of the journey.

Fishing is a very popular activity in the Wilderness and each fisherman can play a role in conserving and protecting our valuable fisheries resources.

First, it is important to obtain an Idaho fishing license and to read and understand the State fishing regulations. Second, all of the Middle Fork from Boundary Creek to the mouth has been designated as “catch and release” to conserve westslope cutthroat trout and other sensitive species. In addition, a single barbless hook is required and use of bait is prohibited. Please obey these regulations as they have already resulted in improved cutthroat trout numbers.

### **A Recovering Species**

Wolf – just the word wolf strikes images and stirs emotions in many people. Perceptions of the wolf range from the archenemy of Little Red Riding Hood to an efficient and important predator. Some admire the beauty of the wolf and value its role in nature, and others condemn its predatory instincts and attacks on livestock. There is some truth in both portraits.



Wolves once ranged throughout nearly all of Idaho. In the mid-1980's, researchers estimated that there were less than 15 wolves remaining in central Idaho, and that led to the classification of the wolves as endangered species.

Four wolves captured near Hinton, Alberta -- two male and two female -- were released at Corn Creek on the Main Salmon January 14, 1995. Today the wolf population is encouraging according to the *International Wolf* publication. “The late 1999 estimates for central Idaho are also encouraging. ... 10 packs are believed to inhabit central Idaho, ...” *International Wolf*, the quarterly publication of the International Wolf Center Vol.10 No. 2 Summer 2000 can be located on Internet site.

<http://www.wolf.org/learn/iwmag/2000/smr2000/smr2000d2.shtml>

Many people feel that the wolf represents a symbol of wilderness – a symbol of what is natural, wild, and free. The opportunity to see or hear one of these animals is a rare and exciting experience. If you were fortunate enough to see or hear a wolf, the Forest Service

and State Fish and Game Office would appreciate it if you reported it to either of the offices for your assistance would help to preserve this symbol of the Wilderness.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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*“The Farthest Frontier of All: A Cultural Resource Overview of the River of No Return Wilderness, Idaho,”* by Leslie E. Wildesen; Cultural Resource Report No. 8, USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Region, Ogden, Utah, 1982

*“The River of No Return,”* by Johnny Carrey and Cort Conley, copyright 1978; Buckeddy Books, Box 301, Cambridge, Idaho 83610.

*“The Middle Fork and the Sheepeater War,”* by Johnny Carrey and Cort Conley, copyright 1977; Buckeddy Books, Box 301, Cambridge, Idaho 83610.

*“Handbook to the Middle Fork of the Salmon River,”* by James M. Quinn, James W. Quinn, Terry L. Quinn, and James G. King, Educational Adventures, Inc., P.O. Box 445, Redmond, Oregon 97756.

*“Idaho Airport Facilities Directory,”* 15<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1981, published by Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Aeronautics and Public Transportation, Boise, Idaho.

*“The Middle Fork of the Salmon River – A Wild and Scenic River,”* Forest visitor map and guide are available by writing to Salmon-Challis or Boise National Forests or the Regional Office in Ogden; seven dollars per copy.

*“Trails of the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness,”* by Margaret Fuller, Signpost Book, 8912 192<sup>nd</sup> St. SW, Edmonds, Washington 98020, 1985, \$10.95.

*“Packin In On Mules and Horses,”* by Smoke Elser and Bill Brown, Montana Press Publishing Co., Missoula, Montana, 1980.

*“The Middle Fork - a guide”* by Johnny Carrey and Cort Conley, Third Edition Copyright 1992, Buckeddy Books, P O Box 301, Cambridge, Idaho 83610

**For More Information – Write or Call**

**FC-RONR Wilderness Coordinator**

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kwotring@fs.fed.us

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Intermountain Region**

Federal Building  
324 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Ogden, UT 844

**Regional Office  
Northern Region**

Federal Building  
P O Box 7669  
Missoula MT 59807

**NORTHERN REGION:**

**Nez Perce National Forest**

Red River Ranger District  
Elk City, ID 83525  
(208) 842-2255

Salmon River Ranger District  
Slate Cr. Ranger Station  
HC 01 Box 70  
White Bird, ID 83554  
(208) 839-2211

**Bitterroot National Forest**

West Fork Ranger District  
6735 West Fork Road  
Darby, MT 59829  
(406) 821-3269

**INTERMOUNTAIN REGION:**

**Payette National Forest**

Krassel Ranger District  
500 N. Mission  
P.O. Box 1026  
McCall, ID 83638  
(208) 634-0600

**Salmon-Challis National Forest**

Middle Fork Ranger District  
Hwy 93  
P O Box 750  
Challis, ID 83226  
(208) 879-4101

North Fork Ranger District  
Highway 93N  
P.O. Box 180  
North Fork, ID 83466  
(208) 865-2700

