

## Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness

**OBJECTIVE:** Review management activities and conditions in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

**DATA SOURCE:** On-the-ground reviews.

**FREQUENCY:** Annually

**REPORTING PERIOD:** 1997

### **EVALUATION:**

Currently there are 43 problem areas on the Bitterroot NF portion of the wilderness which are approaching or do not meet Forest Plan recreation standards. The standards are defined by "Opportunity Class" in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness General Management Direction (Forest Plan Amendment 7). Monitoring occurred on approximately 25 percent of the identified problem areas. Future planning efforts will determine the appropriate management and priorities for bringing these areas up to standard. We are treating the problems as funds become available.

### **MONITORING RESULTS:**

Extensive monitoring occurs in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness (SBW) each year as wilderness rangers, staff, and the public track and report on the maintenance of natural conditions within the wilderness.

Noxious weed surveys were done in drainages adjacent to and within the SBW. The surveys covered most of the west side trail corridors. A few drainages had fairly continuous coverage of spotted knapweed along the trails, but most had scattered patches of various weeds which have been present for several years. The most common weeds found were spotted knapweed, goatweed, and sulfur cinquefoil. Much of the survey data is being entered into GIS layers.

Research continued on bird responses to wildfire. Lake surveys were conducted on two lakes on the Bitterroot portion of the SBW by wilderness rangers. Researchers from several universities are studying linkages between fire, climate, and ecosystems in the SBW. This project is funded by the National Science Foundation.

Level I maintenance was accomplished on 647 miles of trail. Level I includes minimal clearing and drainage to allow use. Level II maintenance, which provides an intermediate level of clearing, drainage, and some reconstruction, was completed on 27 miles. Nearly 20 miles received Level III maintenance, heavy maintenance was accomplished on 15 miles, and new construction was completed on 4 miles. Construction contracts were awarded for Scimitar Trail #36 and Rock Creek Trail #580. These two contracts will be undertaken in 1998 to correct safety and resource problems. Survey and design was completed on Watchtower Trail #699. Reconstruction, by Forest Service crews, will take place in 1998. Trail work associated with Bass Creek Dam reconstruction was completed.

Young adult education presentations were made on 15 occasions and reached about 700 people. Presentations included hands-on field activities as well as classroom lectures and interpretive exhibits. Adult education activities were presented on 10 occasions to approximately 150 people. In-service education activities were presented on 10 occasions to approximately 150 personnel at all levels.

Wilderness employees administered 17 outfitter and guide permits.

Wilderness dam maintenance and repair continue to raise issues. Wilderness personnel and others spent a considerable amount of time with dam inspections, checking dam-related activities in the field, and doing NEPA analysis as it related to dam reconstruction.

Law enforcement activity included writing several tickets, warning notices, and numerous incident reports.

Field personnel partially or fully naturalized over 100 sites this field season. Naturalizing involves obliterating signs of human use, such as fire rings. Approximately 200 pounds of garbage were removed from the wilderness.

