

Airstrip Management Plan

Cold Meadows Airstrip

Payette National Forest

Introduction

This management plan covers annual routine operations and maintenance needs for Cold Meadows Airstrip. This facility is located within the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. For non-routine activities or emergency actions, reference the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide – Airstrip Maintenance, for the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness (FCRNRW Plan, Standard E-6, pg 2-12; FEIS, Appendix).

Location

Cold Meadows Airstrip is located adjacent to the Cold Meadows Forest Service Work Station, in the Cottonwood Creek drainage within the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. It is administered by the Krassel Ranger District, Payette National Forest, Intermountain Region. The airstrip is located at Township 23N, Range 12E, Section 35, with a Latitude of 45° 17.49' and a Longitude 114° 56.97'. Its' FAA identifier is U81 and it lays at an elevation of 7,030 feet.

History of the Airstrip

Cold Meadows was originally named Upper Cottonwood Meadows and was supposedly renamed because of the persistent "cold" temperatures the area experiences throughout the year. By 1924 the USFS built a permanent ranger station on the southeast end of the meadow. To the main dwelling over the next several years were added a commissary, bunkhouse, and fly shed. In 1955 a washhouse was built. The remote post functioned as the main headquarters for the original Cold Meadows Ranger District, which was later combined with the Chamberlain District, then the Big Creek District, and eventually the Krassel District.

In 1932 the airfield stretched north of the ranger station, and measured 1800'. However, the width was inconstant and at certain spots narrowed to an almost unusable size for planes with long wingspans. This problem was fixed the same year along with relocating the telephone line that extended from the ranger station to Pilots Knob Lookout across the south end of the meadow. Drainage pipe was buried to prevent washouts and soft spots. Stones larger than a man's fist were removed and the field was leveled with a log drag powered by two horses. In addition to the leveling and drainage changes, a windsock was added to the site, along with the runway end markers built of rock.

An original construction date for the Cold Meadows Airstrip is unknown, but 1933 agency documents showed a runway had been previously constructed using Forest funds. The original runway was 800' X 150'. From 1955 through 1957 construction continued when a D-7 bulldozer was walked into site from the Chamberlain Forest Service Work

Station. The majority of the work was done on the upper end of the runway and documents at the time of completion listed the runway as 3400' long.

- Current listed dimensions of the airstrip, and management intent for maintenance:
 - Runway 16/34 = 4550' X 90'
 - 15' – 20' dirt strip down the center of the surface is usable

- A search of the National Transportation Safety Board's Accident Database identifies three known aviation accidents at the airstrip.
 - (1) 08/06/1985 – Piper/PA-28-235 – Private pilot was attempting to land on the airstrip when the density altitude was 9,000'. Unable to climb above terrain on the go-around, the aircraft stalled into the trees. Post-impact fire destroyed the aircraft. Only two minor injuries occurred.
 - (2) 10/08/1982 – Cessna/206 – Air Taxi operator began takeoff from a runway covered w/ about six inches of wet snow and slush. Aircraft veered into deeper snow and subsequently departed the runway, damaging the aircraft. No injuries or fatalities occurred.
 - (3) 09/30/1982 – Piper/PA-12 – Private pilot was attempting to takeoff from a runway covered w/ hard packed snow. 200' into the takeoff roll, the aircraft encountered a deep area of snow/slush, lost directional control, veered off the runway and came to a stop inverted. No major injuries or fatalities occurred.

- Characterization of past maintenance or projects:
 - Re-installation of water bars and culverts - 1988.
 - Digging out and opening up drainage ditches along runway-2000.
 - Leveling of the runway by contract -2011.

- Cold Meadows' proximity to other airstrips:
 - Lemhi CO (KSMN) 46nm to the E
 - McCall (KMYL) 55nm to the W
 - Root Ranch (Private) 5nm to the NW
 - Chamberlain (U79) 12nm to the NW
 - Cabin Creek (I08) 9nm to the S

Objectives for Management of the Airstrip

- Maintain the airstrip to a safe operating standard but not enhanced over conditions typical at the time of the passage of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act and in compliance with the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Management Plan.

- Cold Meadows Airstrip will be managed for unrestricted public and commercial use until use levels and evaluations dictate a need to establish use limits.
- Recognize the needs and values of multiple users while ensuring the overall goal of maintaining these facilities to a safe operational standard is accomplished.

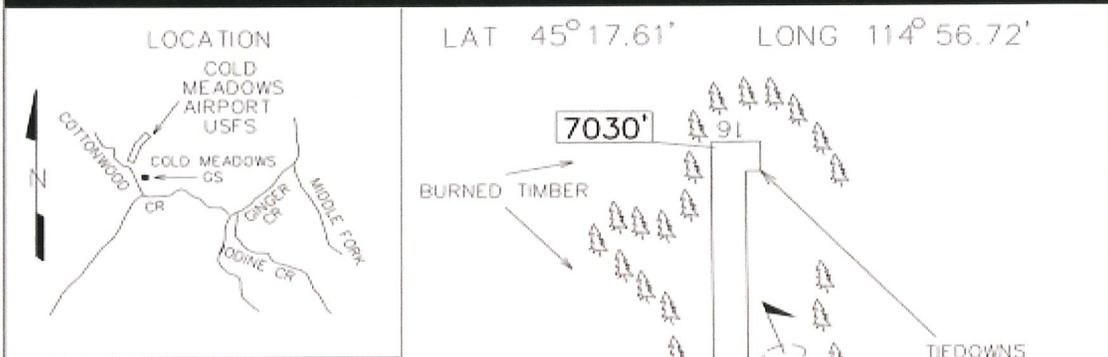
Physical Description of the Airstrip

- The airstrip is located within the Cottonwood drainage, adjacent to the Cold Meadows Forest Service Station, approximately 10 nm south of the Main Salmon River.
- Elevation of the airstrip is 7030'
- Runway Dimensions / Information:

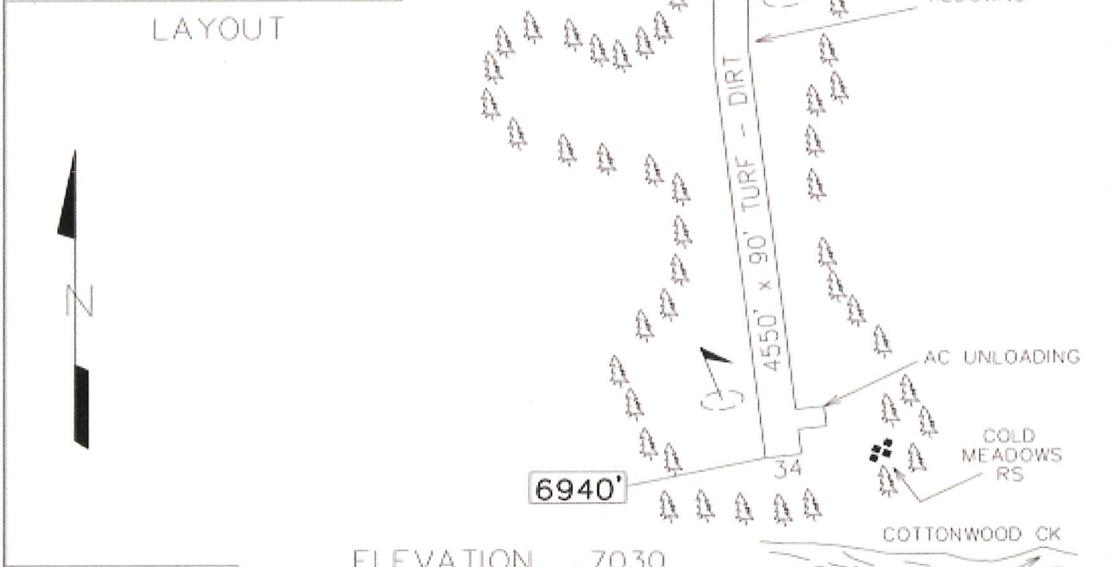
Runway 16/34			
Dimensions		4550' X 90'	
Surface		Turf/Dirt	
Alignment		North - South	
End Markers		Faded white / unpainted	
Side Markers		N/A	
Runway 16		Runway 34	
Gradient	1.7%	Gradient	1.7%
Traffic Pattern	Left	Traffic Pattern	Left

- Obstructions:
 - Runway 16:** 25' trees 60' right of centerline, +15' trees at 10' on centerline, +25' trees at 5' and 50' left
 - Runway 34:** 100' trees 450' from runway, 4:1 slope to clear, 125' ridge at 350' and 200' left
- The airstrip is grass turf/dirt in fair condition, but does contain some rocks. The center 15' to 20' of the runway is dirt.
- There is no winter maintenance. The airstrip may be snow covered in the winter months and soft in the early spring.
- Be aware of rodent activity on and in the vicinity of the runway.
- Big game animals and livestock can be on and in the vicinity of the runway.
- +60' trees are adjacent to both sides of the runway.
- The airstrip may be wet and soft in the spring.
- VERY HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE DURING SUMMER MONTHS.

COLD MEADOWS USFS U81



LAT 45° 17.61' LONG 114° 56.72'



CTAF 122.9 ELEVATION 7030

<u>LOCATION</u> ADJACENT NW OF G.S.				<u>FUEL</u> NO	
<u>VOR</u> LKT	<u>FREQ</u> 113.5	<u>RAD</u> 275°	<u>NM</u> 40.0	<u>SERVICES</u> TIEDOWNS	
<u>COMMUNICATIONS</u> CTAF 122.9				<u>MANAGER</u> 208-634-0700	
<u>NAV AIDS</u> NO				<u>FBO(s)</u> NO	
<u>LIGHTS</u> NO					
<u>ATTENDED</u> NO					

REMARKS
LAND RUNWAY 34, TAKEOFF RUNWAY 16. RECOMMEND LEFT TURN DOWN COTTONWOOD CREEK AFTER DEPARTING RWY 16. RODENT ACTIVITY ON AND IN VICINITY OF AIRPORT. CHECK AIRCRAFT PERFORMANCE FOR HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE. NO WINTER MAINTENANCE. SOUTH HALF OF RUNWAY BUMPY AND ROUGH. RUNWAY THRESHOLD MAY BE UNDEFINED.

6/09

COLD MEADOWS USFS U81

Airstrip Surface Improvements

- Tie-downs are available in the aircraft parking areas on the east side of the runway at midfield and on the north end.
- An aircraft loading and unloading area is located on the southeast side of the runway. This area is not intended for aircraft parking.
- A windsock and standard is located on the west side of the runway near the beginning of 34 and a second windsock is on the east side of the runway near the dogleg. Current dimensions of the windsocks and frames are 24" diameter.
- Rubber water bars and box culverts traverse the runway surface across much of the airstrip to reduce erosion.

Airstrip Facilities

- There is one pit toilet, hitch rail, message signboard and a trail registration box adjacent to the strip. These facilities are maintained by Forest Service personnel stationed at Cold Meadows.

Use of the Airstrip

- The FAA designation is public ownership, public use.
- The Forest Service listing per FC-RONRW direction is: "The seven (7) designated public use airstrips operated and maintained by the Forest Service will be managed for unrestricted public and commercial use until use levels and evaluations dictate a need to establish use limits." (FC-RONRW Ch. 2-11)
- The IAN current classification is "Primitive."
- General season of use is May through October
- The Forest Service utilizes the airstrip to move personnel and supplies into the backcountry to support a variety of agency activities.
- Private pilots use the airstrip for wilderness access, camping, hunting and fishing. Pilots must be experienced in backcountry flying and particular attention needs to be given to density altitude in the summer months.
- The airstrip is utilized by a variety of aircraft makes and models. Due to the density altitude experienced at Cold Meadows during summer months, higher performance aircraft are required. Aircraft ranging in size from small single engine to high performance twins like the Islander and Twin Otter have historically used the airstrip.
- Commercial use of the airstrip is prevalent to deliver people and supplies for hunting, fishing, camping, research, state and federal agency administration and hiking trips.
- Outfitters in past years have had base operations near the airstrip in the fall.
- An estimated 137 landings per field season occur at Cold Meadows (5 year average of sampling efforts from 2006 - 2011).
- Several trails intersect near Cold Meadows Guard Station adjacent to the airstrip.

Restrictions and Requirements for Use of the Airstrip

- Generally open from May – October, depending on snow.
 - Use at own risk – Very high density altitudes during summer months
 - Recommended for use by mountain proficient pilots using high-performance aircraft.
 - Runway has potential surface water present in the spring.
 - Be aware of rodent activity on and in the vicinity of the runway.
 - Multiple airstrips are located within a 15 nm of Cold Meadows. Standard backcountry announcement procedures on 122.900 MHz should be employed.
 - Big game animals and livestock may be on and in the vicinity of airstrip.
 - No winter maintenance.
- Cold Meadows Airstrip lies within the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Pilots and passengers must practice appropriate Leave No Trace ethics at the airstrip and surrounding areas.

General Operating Procedures for Landing, Take-off, and Parking

- Announce intentions on 122.900 and watch for other traffic
- When wind conditions permit pilots should land runway 34 and depart runway 16.
- It's recommended to turnout left down Cottonwood Creek after departing Runway 16.
- The airstrip is potentially soft in the early spring and two accidents have occurred in the fall due to snow on the runway.
- Park aircraft in approved areas and utilize loading/unloading areas appropriately.
- Be aware of closures communicated through NOTAM's and/or by use of yellow X's placed on both ends of the runway.

Wilderness Education/Visitor Contact

- When the Cold Meadows Station is staffed, Forest Service employees perform visitor contacts and conduct use surveys. This occurs in the spring, summer and fall.
- Information boards are also available at the airstrip for sharing information and education materials.

Law Enforcement/Search Rescue/LifeFlight

- There are no routine or scheduled federal Law Enforcement activities planned involving the use of Cold Meadows Airstrip.
- Search and rescue (SAR) or life-flight activities would follow standard communication protocols on 122.9 during airstrip use.

- If agency aircraft are missing or known to have had an accident, Payette Dispatch is to be notified of the incident immediately and will coordinate the rescue/search according to the Interagency Aviation Mishap Response Guide and Checklist.
- If non-agency aircraft are involved in an accident or missing in the vicinity of the airstrip, Payette Dispatch should be notified and they will contact the Idaho Division of Aeronautics and/or the Idaho County Sheriff's Department who will then coordinate the response.

Support to Other Forest Service Programs

- Multiple Forest Service disciplines, such as recreation, wildlife, fisheries and fire utilize the Cold Meadow Airstrip in support of agencies mission and goals.

Maintenance Needs for the Airstrip

Maintenance will be dependent on the availability of funding and be appropriate with the minimum necessary needs for the administration of the area. All maintenance will be conducted by non-motorized/non-mechanized means unless authorized by the Forest Supervisor and supported by a Minimum Requirements Decision Guide recommendation of the District Ranger. Maintenance will be commensurate with keeping the airstrip free of known hazards and maintaining the condition the airfield was in at the time of Wilderness designation. The matrix below defines what items will be addressed. The Management Plan will be updated as needed to provide the level of maintenance required to meet the plans objectives.

Recent Cold Meadows Airstrip inspections have identified following areas in need of attention:

2013

- Portions of the metal covered water breaks have sharp edges exposed and rodent holes next to the structures.
- The airstrip surface needs to be leveled (filling in major holes and removing larger rocks which have worked their way to the surface of the airstrip).
- Rodent activity.

Due to the remote location at least one overnight stay will be needed to accomplish any significant amount of maintenance work. Work parties could vary from two to 10+ personnel depending on the project needs.

NOTE: If maintenance which could affect aviation operations is scheduled to occur, Payette Dispatch must be notified in advance so a NOTAM can be issued.

Action Area	Specific Need or Location	Type of Action (standard)	Action Frequency, How often completed	Time of Year	Quantity, Amount, or Area Treated	Estimated Cost (for reference only, costs may change)
Mowing	none	na	na	na	na	
Leveling	a. Entire airstrip as needed	Maintain a rut free level surface (+/- 2%)	As needed during the season Estimate every 3-5 years.	Beginning of season	Airstrip surface	Wilderness: \$8,000 per event (2 person team, 2-3 days; stock drawn equipment)
	b. Spot leveling ruts and holes	Fill holes and level ruts when aircraft safety is compromised	As needed	As needed	Entire airstrip	
Seeding	Bare areas	Seed bare areas with native seed as needed to prevent windborne erosion	If needed	As needed	As needed. Use 2 lbs seed per 100 sq ft:	
Drainage	Water Bar Maint.	Replace if damaged or in non-serviceable condition	As needed per inspection	As needed	Only as needed to maintain current numbers	
Painting	a. Windsock pole	Keep windsock pole paint in good condition	Every 3 years or as needed	As needed	One pole	
	b. Runway markers	No Mtnc – landing surface recognition is adequate				

Action Area	Specific Need or Location	Type of Action (standard)	Action Frequency, How often completed	Time of Year	Quantity, Amount, or Area Treated	Estimated Cost (for reference only, costs may change)
Vegetation Control	a. Clear vertical approaches	Remove vegetation that intrudes on approach glide slope	Annually as needed, typically once every 5 years	Pre-season	Maintain 5% glide slope for 300' from runway end markers terrain permitting	
	d. Clear encroaching vegetation on runways	Remove vegetation that encroaches on runway dimensions	Annually as needed	Pre-season	Remove any woody vegetation within runway dimensions	
Clearing obstructions	Remove obstructions (fallen logs, rolled rocks)	Remove obstructions from runway surface	Annually, as needed	Pre-season and as needed	Entire airstrip	
Rock removal	Remove rocks	Remove rocks of size that pose hazard	Annually, as needed	Pre-season and as needed	Entire airstrip	
Navigation Marker Maintenance	a. Maintain windsocks	Ensure windsocks turn freely and are in fair or better condition	As needed; typically replace every 2-3 years	Pre-season	Two windsocks	
	b. Runway markers	Trim grass and brush around markers to maintain visibility	Annually, if needed	Pre-season and as needed	4 End markers 4 Side Markers	

Action Area	Specific Need or Location	Type of Action (standard)	Action Frequency, How often completed	Time of Year	Quantity, Amount, or Area Treated	Estimated Cost (for reference only, costs may change)
Weed Control	Control invasion and spread of noxious weeds	Remove noxious weeds, thru handpulling or spraying	Annually, as needed	Spring, prior to seed set.	Entire airstrip	
Rodent Control	Control rodents (gophers, badgers, etc.) threatening runways (pesticides not permitted)	Eliminate rodent dens (holes and castings) within the runway surface	Annually, as needed	As needed to reduce impacts to runways	Entire Airstrip	
Airplane Tie-downs	Maintain airplane tie-downs	Repair, replace and/or trim around airplane tie-downs	Annually inspect, Repair or replace as needed	Pre-season	Two tie-down areas with tie-downs	Replacement = \$50 each per tie-down; \$10 per tie-down maintenance
Inventory and Monitoring	Annual inspection of airstrip conditions and facilities	Annual inspection of facilities, airstrip conditions and monitoring of plans	Annually	Pre-season	Each airstrip	

Annual Budget

Will be assessed based on annual maintenance needs and funding allocation. Funding comes from Forest allocation, primarily Recreation and Wilderness funds unless other project management funding is used during a project or incident. No other funding sources plan for airstrip maintenance.

Identify Tools for Maintenance

Cold Meadows Station is an occupied work center during summer months. There are hand tools at the station. If larger, more specialized tools are needed for a specific project, they will need to be brought to the site.

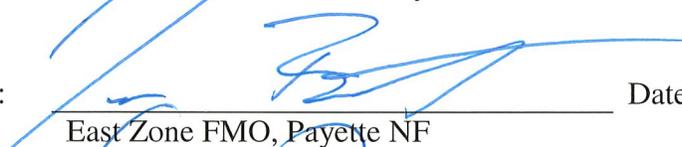
Inspections and Monitoring

- Annually, the Forest Service and State of Idaho will coordinate and conduct scheduled inspections for all 7 designated public use airstrips operated and maintained by the Forest Service (FCRONRW Plan page2-11)
- Inspections will be sent to the Forest Aviation Officer and Krassel District Recreation Branch.
- Forest Service personnel stationed at Cold Meadows Station will continue to monitor use levels occurring at this airstrip.

Contacts

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Approved by:  Date: 3/20/14
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