



St. Joe Geographic Area

St. Joe Geographic Area (GA) lies predominantly within Benewah and Shoshone counties in Idaho, with small portions in Kootenai, Latah, and Clearwater counties. Of the 1,449,000 acres within this GA, 722,000 (50%) are administered by the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNFs). National Forest System (NFS) lands in this GA comprise most of the St. Joe National Forest.

Unique features within this GA include:

- **St Joe Wild and Recreational River**
- **Mallard Larkins Pioneer Area**
- **Hiawatha Trail**
- **Emerald Creek Garnet Area**
- **Marble Creek Historic Area**
- **Hobo Cedar Grove Botanical Area**

The St. Joe Geographic Area includes the St. Joe River Basin, which is a primary source to Coeur d'Alene Lake; and the Little North Fork of the Clearwater River, which is part of the North Fork Clearwater River. The Clearwater Mountains on the south and the St. Joe Mountains on the north form the area.

On the lands administered by the IPNFs, the dominant vegetation is mixed conifer, mostly grand fir/hemlock, Douglas-fir at low/mid elevations and subalpine fir/spruce/mountain hemlock/lodgepole pine at higher elevations. Since 1980, approximately 5% has been harvested to regenerate trees and are currently under management as plantations or naturally regenerated stands. These areas are now dominated by small to medium size trees. An additional 2% was partially cut and these areas are generally composed of medium to large size trees. Currently 11% is old growth forests, where large, old trees are a significant component of the forest.

The St. Joe has a rich fire history. Vast areas were burned in wildfires between the late 1800's and 1934. Approximately ½ the St. Joe River Basin burned in 1910, and included some of the biggest patches of that famous historic fire. Substantial parts of the 1910 fire re-burned once or more in the next three decades. As a result of the 1910 fire and prior fire history, there are very large areas of even-aged lodgepole pine forests in the upper St. Joe. As a result of the re-burns, there are still some large areas of shrub fields on the north side of the St. Joe River. With the advent of modern fire suppression, there have been few large fires in the St. Joe drainage since 1934.

A wide variety of recreational activities occur in this GA with the major attraction being the St. Joe River. This river is heavily fished and a popular one to float. The river corridor receives heavy recreational use. The Mallard Larkins Pioneer Area is popular with back-country enthusiasts and receives a fair amount of non-motorized use.

Current road and trail access for this area is portrayed on the 2002 Travel Plan Map for the St. Joe Ranger District.

Water quality is generally good and beneficial uses are well supported, especially in the Upper St. Joe and Little North Fork Clearwater River watersheds. Water Quality Limited Segments exist in all three sections of the St. Joe River.

Bull trout and other native salmonids have historically occupied most of the waters of the area; however, their numbers and range have been limited for many reasons including watershed conditions that affect water quality, loss or degradation of habitat, and competition from introduced fish species. Important bull trout habitat is currently limited to the Upper St. Joe River. The St. Joe River above Avery is a popular catch-and-release cutthroat trout fishery. The Little North Fork Clearwater River also contains some stronghold westslope cutthroat trout populations.

Two Threatened and Endangered species are known to occur in this GA; gray wolf and lynx. Mountain goats inhabit the Snow Peak area, which is managed for wildlife in cooperation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Two additional species of interest known to occur in this GA are fisher and wolverine. Sensitive species which occur here, include Harlequin duck and Coeur d'Alene salamander.

This area contains all or portions of 15 Inventoried Roadless Areas totaling approximately 364,000 acres or 50% of National Forest System lands in this GA on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The Mallard-Larkins proposed wilderness area is located in the southeast corner of this GA.