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Mr. Dale Burke
103 B Sisson
Missoula, Montana 59801

Dear Dale:

We appreciate your interest in the Ten Lakes Scenic Area. Enclosed you will find the handout information booklet available at the Murphy Lake Ranger Station and some photos. In addition, listed below are some facts and problems in management of the area.

Facts

1. The "Ten Lakes Scenic Area" was established by Regional Forester Neal A. Rahm on May 4, 1964 by authority given under regulation U-3a, (code of Federal Regulation, Title 36, section 251.22) with the approved classification and management plan to give management direction.
2. No logging will be permitted.
3. No grazing by transportation stock will be permitted. Food for stock must be packed in. Feeding will be confined to approved location away from camps, trails, meadows, lakes and streams.
4. Season is short in the area. Often the trails aren't open until mid-July and may close in September. Temperatures below freezing can be expected every night of the year.
5. Within the area there are two patented mining claims, a total of 108 acres; these are near Green Mountain.
6. An area of approximately 4,000 acres is currently under consideration for addition to the scenic area. This includes Therriault Pass and Stahl peaks. The area has spectacular cliffs, talus slopes and Alpine Lakes.

Problems

- A. Overuse by horses - Horses have heavily grazed the meadows near more popular lakes and campsites. Mangers were constructed near some of these spots last year and riders requested to carry their own feed. The mangers will be moved each season or sooner if needed to prevent trampling of specific sites. A proposal under consideration is to eliminate overnight stays by horse recreationists. Before this proposal is undertaken, fringe campgrounds with facilities for horse care (mangers, corrals, etc.) are planned. A problem with horse use that exists in many back country areas is also present here. Each horse thinks he can find a better trail through a meadow than the one before, thus we have "spider-webs" of trails disrupting beautiful - fragile mountain meadows.
- B. Misuse by People - In one verified instance, motorized vehicles disrupted vegetation and fragile meadow in the Ten Lakes, near Paradise Lake. Here a motor bike was ridden through the meadow in the early season while still wet. Ruts developed which hardened later in the season. These ruts will be present for many years. The pack-in-pack-out policy has been ignored by many users. Forest Service packers have taken several loads of debris from the more popular areas.

Campfire remains are wide spread in these popular camping areas. Fire rings were built last year in an attempt to concentrate the use of fire. These will be moved and fire remains eradicated when necessary. Shutters were taken from the old special use cabin at Wolverine Lake and used as rafts in the lake. This cabin is under life tenure to an old timer in the Eureka area.

In the past, financing and personnel ceilings deterred use of a back country recreation guard. Most policing was done by the Ranger, fire control officer and trail crews on service and work assignments. A proposal for a seasonal back country recreation guard is under consideration. Also, staggered work weeks and compensation time may be used by District personnel for compliance checks.

- C. Winter Use on District - Snowmobiling is an ever growing recreational activity on the District. Logging roads are used for the most part and these are relatively safe. The District also has a network of two loop trails which have been signed. These trails have a register and handout map dispenser at their origin. They have been planned to give the recreationist an enjoyable, safe and not-too-difficult trip. The "Ten Lakes Scenic Area" is not to be used by snowmobilers. This is covered by the previously mentioned regulations, but also the trip is dangerous. Snowalides are wide spread, some trails are on steep side-slopes and can not be distinguished, some have steep grades - not too much trouble getting in, but getting out is different. In the scenic area, the snowmobiler is 30 odd miles from the nearest plowed road - a long walk and especially long time if medical treatment is required.

Lakes in this high country do not freeze solidly: Snow comes before hard freezing and acts as insulation, thus a condition of relatively thin ice with slush under 5 to 6 feet of snow develops.

- statement
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- D. Future Use - The Ten Lakes Scenic Area, at the present time, is not being considered for addition to the Wilderness system (by the Regional Office.) Management of this fragile back country under regulation U-3a gives us latitude to permit or not permit any use "----in the discretion of the officer making the classification". We can install improvements to direct usage (such as mangers, fire rings or even picnic tables). We can also use chain saws, rock drills, etc. to clear trails or build new ones. Also, we can require only day-use by horses if determined necessary. But most of all, we fear the wide publicity the Ten Lakes area would receive as a Wilderness. The area cannot take heavy use by large groups. We are attempting to encourage back packing as the primary use of the area.
- E. Conclusion - This area is very small as compared to many of our existing Wilderness areas and management as a "Back country" area does give a lot of protective advantages. A new management plan is being completed to better protect the area and prepare it for future increased use. A few violations have occurred from motor bikes and snowmobiles, but the major problem is over use by horses and man in key areas.

I hope this lengthy epistle has given you some insight to the Ten Lakes Scenic Area. If we can help you further on any questions concerning the District please let us know. The door is open at Murphy Lake Ranger Station.

If you would like a trip through the Ten Lakes Area this summer let us know. I'm sure we could both benefit.

Sincerely,

DEAN J. WERDEN
District Ranger

by Arthur S. Briggs
TSI Forester

NOTICE

The Ten Lakes Scenic Area located within the Rexford and Fortine Ranger Districts of the Kootenai National Forest was closed to public use of motorized vehicles on August 26, 1966. This closure has been in effect since that time and will remain in effect until notice to the contrary is posted. The closure is by authority of the Secretary of Agriculture, Regulation U-6 (26 CFR 251.25) and is made in the interest of public safety. Signs are posted at the trail termini informing the public of this closure. Violations of this closure are punishable by law.

George A. Mahit

January 13, 1970