

Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness

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

DATA SOURCE: On-the-ground reviews.

FREQUENCY: Annually

REPORTING PERIOD: 1996

EVALUATION:

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.

Currently there are 43 "problem areas" on the Bitterroot NF portion of the wilderness which are approaching or do not meet Forest Plan standards. For more detail on these sites, refer to the State of the Wilderness Report or previous years' monitoring reports. Many of these problems are being improved through trail maintenance and/or naturalizing site impacts. These "problem areas" are monitored over time, trends are noted, and rehabilitation efforts are prioritized in annual work plans. 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.

Noxious weed surveys were done within 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. Many of these areas have been scheduled for treatment with herbicides in FY 1997.

Research was done on bird responses to wildfire. The research project will continue in future years. Lake surveys were conducted on two lakes on the Bitterroot portion of the SBW by wilderness rangers. A research project which will sample salamander populations at various lakes within the wilderness was approved in 1996.

MONITORING:

Trail maintenance was accomplished on 238 miles of trail in Opportunity Class 2, 128 miles in Opportunity Class 3, and 82 miles in Opportunity Class 4.

Young adult education presentations were made on 15 occasions and reached approximately 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 14 outfitter and guide permits.

Two wilderness dams were repaired successfully with public input and participation. One of the repair projects included extensive rehabilitation of a wilderness trail which was not within Forest Plan standards.

Law enforcement activity included writing two incident reports and one warning notice. The incident reports involved littering, damage to a natural feature, human waste disposal, abandonment of property, and exceeding numbers in party. The warning notice was issued for littering.

Field personnel partially naturalized a total of 72 sites this field season, and 10 sites were fully naturalized. Naturalizing involves obliterating signs of human use, such as fire rings. Approximately 200 pounds of garbage were removed from the wilderness.

Upcoming activities for the SBW include:

- ◆ Compile an integrated approach to weed management through the Magruder Corridor weed treatment plan.
- ◆ Reconstruct Trail #326, One Horse Lake; #580, Rock Creek; #36, Scimitar Ridge.
- ◆ Complete trail work relative to Bass Creek Dam reconstruction.
- ◆ Initiate public contacts and scoping on proposed actions to bring the Rock Creek problem area closer to meeting Forest Plan standards.

