

## ***Wilderness***

The passage of the Wilderness Act on September 4, 1964 led to the designation of thousands of acres of wilderness making the Nez Perce National Forest not just a national forest, but a national treasure. As defined by the Wilderness Act, “A Wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain”. Portions of the Selway-Bitterroot, Frank Church River of No Return, and the entire Gospel-Hump Wilderness comprise 40% of the Forest’s total acreage of 2.2. million acres.

Few places in America, and nowhere outside of Alaska, provide a wilderness experience to match the sheer magnitude of the complex that makes up the Selway-Bitterroot, Frank Church-River of No Return and Gospel Hump Wildernesses. The Selway-Bitterroot is the third largest Wilderness in the Lower 48, surpassed in size only by California’s Death Valley Wilderness and Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.



**South view from Dry Saddle, looking into the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness, 2004.**  
Cindy Schacher photograph.



**Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness from near Indian Hill, 2006.**  
Cindy Schacher photograph.



**Gospel Lake, Gospel Hump Wilderness, 2003.**  
Steve Armstrong photograph.

Only the 600-foot-wide Magruder Corridor, an unimproved dirt road, separates the Selway-Bitterroot from the Frank Church. The Gospel Hump and Frank Church are connected making up the largest Wilderness complex in the lower 48 states.



**Kenneth Cochran, Sid Poppe and an unidentified individual using a broad axe at Bear Creek Ranger Station in 1930.**  
Dick Walker Collection



**Warren Miller performing log work with traditional tools, 1999.**  
Art Seamans photograph.

Today's wilderness management emphasizes traditional tool use, low impact camping and stock use practices, movement of materials and



supplies using traditional animal packing methods rather than aircraft. The wildland fire use for resource benefit program is utilized to allow fire to burn freely within the wilderness when deemed appropriate.

**Left: "Throwing" a diamond hitch, nd.**  
George V. Ring photograph.

The Nez Perce National Forest still relies on the skills of packers to transport materials, supplies, and personnel to remote wilderness areas. The historic art of packing has remained essentially unchanged and remains an important tool in wilderness management in the new millennium.



**Upper left:** Packing bridge materials.  
USFS photograph.

**Upper and lower right:** Moose Creek packstring on the Selway River trail.  
Roger Inghram photograph.

**Middle left:** Unloading at Shissler Peak Lookout.  
Roger Inghram photograph.

**Lower left:** Packstring on the Wind River bridge, 2007.  
Steve Armstrong photograph.