

APPENDIX H

REGIONAL RIVER RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Providing for a variety of river recreation opportunities is an important aspect of managing rivers on a regional basis. Due to the variety of opportunities provided by the Snake River setting, recreational demand for these opportunities and specific guidelines of the HCNRA Act, managing for the intended recreation experience has become a significant issue. Alternatives for similar river recreation opportunities for established uses is a component of determining levels of access. The Forest Service has determined, from a regional perspective, it is desirable to provide a spectrum of river recreation opportunities (reference analysis file).

In comparing the availability of recreation opportunities within the Snake River corridor with other rivers in the region, the comparison should be based on the availability of a similar type of experience in order to meet visitors expectations including the following:

- River classification
- Degree of difficulty (class) of rapids
- Accessibility for established user groups (float, powerboat, trail, aircraft) including river recreationists who are physically challenged

The analysis area for determining regional river recreation opportunities is the Pacific Northwest including Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Montana. While British Columbia may provide additional river recreation opportunities, it was not considered in this analysis since it lies outside of the United States. A more location-specific area for analyzing opportunities for river recreation was based on using Pittsburg Landing as a focal point since it approximates a centralized point on the river on which to examine regional opportunities for access to Federally classified rivers.

As a result of this analysis, several factors were identified including:

- User origin. The majority of private floaters that are applicants and/or trip leaders for float launches on the Snake River are from within the region. A zip code analysis for private powerboaters shows an identical trend (reference analysis file). Although not analyzed, recreation involving commercial floating and powerboating is known to include local, regional, national, and international clientele. An assumption is that a high percentage of recreationists who are trail users and aircraft users are of local and regional origin.
- Within approximately 100 air miles of Pittsburg Landing are the launch and takeout locations not only for the Snake River but for the Main Salmon, Middle Fork of the Salmon, and the Selway Rivers. These four major rivers are among the most popular whitewater rivers in the country for float use, which has resulted in a limited launch allocation to address recreational demand. These rivers represent one of the best examples of providing a range of river recreation opportunity on a regional basis from a true wilderness opportunity (Selway - one float launch per day) to motorized access (Snake). They collectively provide one of the best examples on a regional basis of the intent of Congress that rivers classified as wild encompass a very broad spectrum of uses and access in areas with adjoining wilderness.
- Within approximately 150 air miles of Pittsburg Landing are the major population centers of the region that provide a majority of private powerboating use to Hells Canyon. These population centers include:

- Lewiston, ID / Clarkston, WA
- Spokane, WA / Coeur d'Alene, ID
- Pasco-Richland-Kennewick, WA (Tri-Cities)
- Boise, ID
- Missoula, MT

- The above population centers are generally located within approximately 200 road miles of Pittsburg Landing which is indicative of the maximum distance the majority of private power-boaters travel one way for whitewater recreation on the Snake River.

For reviewing regional river recreation opportunities, the Snake River was used as a baseline for comparison. Only rivers with components similar to the Snake River were included in the analysis as follows:

SNAKE RIVER COMPONENTS

Federal classification Wild/Scenic
Difficulty of rapids Class III-IV
Float recreation Yes
Powerboat recreation Yes
Paralleling trails Yes
Airstrips Yes

Some rivers or types of activities in the following analysis may have been unintentionally omitted. However, this analysis does provide a good representation of river recreation opportunity within the region.

Analysis for IDAHO

Number of Federally Classified Wild Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 5*

Number available for floating 5
Number available for powerboating 2 (Snake, Salmon)
Number with paralleling trails 5
Number with public airstrips 4

*Snake, Selway, Main Salmon, Middle Fork of the Salmon, St. Joe.

Number of Federally Classified Scenic Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 2**

Number available for floating 2
Number available for powerboating 1 (Snake)
Number with paralleling trails 1
Number with public airstrips 1

**Snake, Lochsa. The Lower Salmon, while being considered for Scenic classification, has not yet been added to the national river system.

Analysis for MONTANA

Number of Federally Classified Wild Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 2*

Number available for floating 2
 Number available for powerboating . . . 0
 Number with paralleling trails 2
 Number with public airstrips 1

*Middle Fork of the Flathead, South Fork of the Flathead.

Number of Federally Classified Scenic Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 0

Analysis for OREGON

Number of Federally Classified Wild Rivers with Class III-IV Rapids: 12*

Number available for floating 12
 Number available for powerboating . . . 1 (Rogue: Grave Cr - Foster Bar)
 Number with paralleling trails 9
 Number with public airstrips 1

*Chetco, Grande Ronde, Illinois, North Fork John Day, Metolius, Minam, Owyhee, Rogue (Upper), Rogue (Grave Cr - Foster Bar), Salmon, Sandy, North Fork Smith

Number of Federally Classified Scenic Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 10**

Number available for floating 10
 Number available for powerboating . . . 0
 Number with paralleling trails 9
 Number with public airstrips 0

**Chetco, Clackamas, Upper Deschutes, Illinois, North Fork John Day, Metolius, Upper Rogue, Salmon, Sandy, North Fork Smith.

Analysis for WASHINGTON

Number of Federally Classified Wild Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 1*

Number available for floating 1
 Number available for powerboating . . . 0
 Number with paralleling trails 0
 Number with public airstrips 0

*Suiattle

Appendix H

Number of Federally Classified Scenic Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 3**

Number available for floating 3
Number available for powerboating . . . 0
Number with paralleling trails 0
Number with public airstrips 0

**Sauk, Suiattle, White Salmon

Analysis Summary for the PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Total Number of Federally Classified Wild Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 20

Number available for floating 20
Number available for powerboating . . . 3*
Number with paralleling trails 16
Number with public airstrips 6

*Snake, Salmon, Rogue (Grave Cr to Foster Bar)

Total Number of Federally Classified Scenic Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 15

Number available for floating 15
Number available for powerboating . . . 1*
Number with paralleling trails 10
Number with public airstrips 1

*Snake

Total Number of Federally Classified Wild and Scenic Rivers with Class III-IV rapids: 35

Number available for floating 35
Number available for powerboating . . . 4
Number with paralleling trails 26
Number with public airstrips 7

Source: McCoy, et.al, Ed. 1992. **River Information Digest**. American River Management Society, Western Region. 204 pages.