



IDAHO CHAPTER  
**THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY**

March 3, 1977

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
SUITE 5176  
3900 WISCONSIN AVE. N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016

Forest Supervisor  
Clearwater National Forest  
Route 4, Ahsahka Road  
Orofino, Idaho 83544

Dear Sir:

The Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society, a group of wildlife professionals in Idaho, wishes to make the following comments regarding the Draft E.I.S. for Big Game Habitat Improvements (DES Adm. R 1-77-4).

In general, we believe that your proposal for range improvements should be much larger than 32,000 acres over the next six years. It is questionable whether the increases in browse from the program will even keep up with forage attrition because of plant succession that is occurring on the remainder of the winter range. We would hope that your objective in habitat management would be to substantially improve a winter range that is widely acknowledged to be producing far below its potential.

Alternative No. 8, letting natural wildfires burn within the winter range, is a sound method to use in conjunction with a prescribed burning program to accomplish the most range improvement at the least cost. Dave Devet\* on the Francis Marion N.F. is using this technique now. Perhaps you could be instrumental in changing your regional policy since a working precedent has been set.

Your value of \$150 per live elk appears low. The elk values derived in Colorado and Montana are much higher and seem more in line with what elk are now worth. An economic evaluation devised by Young\*\* (1976) in Washington would also give a much higher value for an elk than what is indicated in the E.I.S.

Sincerely,

Jerry Thiessen  
Vice President

cc: Mike Zagata

\*Devet, D.D. 1976. Deson:utilizing benign wildfires to achieve land management objectives. Proc. Tall Timbers Fire Ecology Conf. 14:33-43.

\*\*Young, C. 1976. Economic valuation of wildlife resources. Wash. Game Department, Bulletin No. 9.