

A Position Statement of the
Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society
re
Management of the Gospel-Hump Roadless Area, Idaho

The Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society (ICTWS) is a staunch supporter of the legislation, an amendment to the pending Endangered American Wilderness Bill, introduced into Congress on 5 August 1977 by Senator Frank Church, Democrat-Idaho, which seeks to implement a management plan for the Gospel-Hump roadless area in Idaho County, Idaho. We support the legislation because it provides for an objective investigation of the fish and wildlife resources resident of the area under consideration. Past and on-going fish and wildlife resource inventories conducted by the United States Forest Service in this area as a function of the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE I), and land use planning process, provide an inadequate data base for the harmonious integration of fish and wildlife resources into land management decisions.

ICTWS supports the provision in the legislation that authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to cooperate with the State of Idaho and the Department of Interior in conducting a comprehensive fish and game research program within the Gospel-Hump area and surrounding Federal lands. This research program would involve the investigation of resident and anadromous fish populations; and the status, distribution, and movements of game populations.

ICTWS also applauds the provision that requires integrating the findings of the fish and wildlife research program as well as other data on soils, watershed, timber volume and productivity, etc., into a multipurpose resource development plan for 78,000 acres within the Gospel-Hump area scheduled for timber harvest and development. Another provision of Amendment No. 826 presently makes a 45,000 acre area immediately available for timber harvest, to

help reduce the timber supply problems anticipated for the very near future in Idaho County. The legislation indicates this area would not be affected by the resource management plan, but by relevant Forest Service land management plans. This implies the area may be developed without the management constraints necessary to adequately protect and/or enhance the fish and wildlife resources. We request that the this additional 45,000 acres, also referred to as "Development Areas", be included under the multipurpose resource development plan.

ICTWS believes that the provision of the amendment which authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to appoint a seven-member Advisory Committee on the Management of the Gospel-Hump Area is deficient. This provision states that the Committee "shall advise the Secretary as to the progress of the fish and game research program...and shall appraise the results of the research program on an on-going basis." We approve this section of the provision. However, ICTWS requests that two representatives be added to the Committee membership-- a wildlife and a fishery biologist--so that an accurate appraisal of the progress and findings of the fish and game research program can be made on an on-going basis.

And finally, the ICTWS recommends that language be incorporated into the amendment which would recognize the use of prescribed burning as a legitimate tool for improving wildlife habitat within the entire 343,000 acres affected by this Amendment No. 826.