

BITTERROOT NF

Action

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Gen. Inv.	
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Bitterroot

R-1

Missoula, Montana 59801

2150 Special Planning Areas

Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area Study

Group Leader, Multiple Use Coordination -
Area Studies Group

August 21, 1970

On August 17 and 18 I accompanied Ray Hunter, Bitterroot National Forest Study Coordinator, to Red River Ranger Station to attend a meeting on the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area study. The objective of the meeting was to review the progress made in carrying out the actions outlined in the study plan of January 8, 1970, and the details of the work letter of June 24, 1970. Those attending the meeting were, in addition to Ray and me, Don Lyons from the Magruder District, Gene Norby and Gerald Magera from the Red River District and Jim Harvey from the Nezperce S.O. The Salmon Forest had been invited to participate but were unable to attend. Ray Hunter said he would make a followup contact with the Salmon to discuss how they were progressing with the resource inventory.

August 17 was spent at the ranger station. Hunter reviewed, in detail, each planned resource inventory. Comments were made by those in attendance on how they were progressing and dates they would be completed with each inventory item. Agreement was reached on due dates for various inventories and the form they were to be submitted in to Hunter. My general impression on the status of inventory work is that the two Forests are progressing nicely in the planned FY 1971 program. There appears to be no insurmountable obstacles to completing the planned work except for the archeological survey. This survey was planned as a combined survey with Region 4 and fall through at the last minute due to lack of funds in Region 4. The survey will have to be scheduled for June - September 1971. This delay will not create any major problems. The base maps for use in developing inventory data were made available to each of the Districts. The approach Hunter has developed in his letter of June 24 to gathering data and displaying it was accepted by the group. This letter forms the basis for their resource collection.

The other elements of the study have not progressed quite to the extent of the resource inventory element. An interagency meeting was held in June and Hunter is currently following up on this meeting with letters to agencies and personal contacts. The public and political involvement is now planned for mid-October. This delay was due to the need to better coordinate the meetings with Region 4 and also it was felt better attendance could be expected in the fall. The study people recognize the relationship between each of

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the study elements and well understand the dangers of getting too far ahead of one element in relation to the others. Ray felt an in-Service briefing in the late fall at the Regional Office to branch chiefs on the status of the inventory work would be helpful. The Area Studies Group can arrange this meeting when Hunter is ready.

The question of study boundaries came up during Monday's session. The answers to the questions raised were not completely resolved. A map is attached which better outlines the study boundary problem. On November 3, 1969, Bitterroot and Nezperce personnel presented to full staff their study plan for the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area. Part of this presentation was a discussion of study area boundaries. The red line on the attached map shows the Initial Forests' proposals on boundaries. As a result of the staff discussion, adjustments were made in the boundary. This appears as the blue line on the map. Early this year, Ray Hunter sent out a map with the boundaries as he understood them. This appears as a black line. On July 20 Supervisor Sanderson sent a map to Brock Evans which showed a line within which "we defer any resource management activity which could cause any change in resource condition." This line shows on the attached map as a green line.

Herein lies the problem. The Nezperce has planned activities within parts of the study area (dependent on which study area you accept) which would alter the resource condition and consequently the options available upon completion of the study. Timber sales are planned in the general areas shaded brown on the map. Some of these sales are in advanced stages of preparation with advertisement scheduled in three months.

It seems the problem boils down to one of planning. Are some resource use plans, developed I'm sure after some long, hard looks at the land, in complete harmony with the study of the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area for possible inclusion in the wilderness system?

We have indicated in a number of places our intentions to study contiguous undeveloped lands in connection with the primitive area study. This thought is brought out in joint Region 1 and Region 4 Regional Forester news releases, the study plan objectives and meetings on record in which we indicated our willingness to discuss additional areas. The blue boundary was shown at the interagency meeting in June as the study boundary.

The point becomes just what is contiguous undeveloped land and the propriety of undertaking actions which may reduce the options available to the study. On Tuesday Ray Hunter, Jim Harvey, Gene Harby (part of day) and I went into the field and looked over some of the

country to ascertain the extent of developments. I have cross-hatched those areas which in my judgment already possess considerable development. The unshaded areas are basically undeveloped. A more thorough look is needed to ascertain this judgment is correct.

Agreement between the Districts, Forests and Regional Office on a firm study boundary is a must in the near future. Jim Harvey suggested it might be well to wait until after the October public meetings to set a boundary. In light of current planning taking place in close proximity to the primitive area boundary, I feel a tentative boundary should be set now and this decision reviewed in relation to the public inputs in the fall.

I would propose the following actions to resolve the study boundary problem:

1. Set up a meeting with the objective of reviewing the study boundary impasse and establishing a tentative study boundary. The boundary would be finalized after the fall public meetings.
2. Define the meaning of a study boundary and the management restrictions imposed by such a line.
3. Attendance might be yourself, a Division of Recreation and Lands representative, a Division of Timber Management representative, Ray Hunter and representatives from the Nezperce S.O. and Red River Ranger District.
4. Red River Ranger Station would be a handy place to hold the meeting. You would have the opportunity of viewing the nature of the contiguous areas firsthand. The party from Missoula could fly into the airstrip at Red River or Dixie.

Some past correspondence pertaining to study boundaries is attached for clarification.

~~JOHN A. LEASURE~~

JOHN A. LEASURE
Multiple Use Coordination -
Area Studies Group

Attachments

cc: 2300
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Bitterroot