

G  
Fish & Game - Bitterroot  
Cooperative Show-Me Trip

Moose Creek R. S.  
August 10, 1937

MEMORANDUM FOR SUPERVISOR:

July 12 to 23 another Show Me Trip was conducted for a small number of local Idaho sportsmen. The trip covered portions of the Nezperce, Clearwater, Lolo and Bitterroot Forests, and Forest Officers from each of the Forests contacted the party at some time during the trip.

The personnel of the party was as follows:

Sportsmen

I. J. Longeteig, Craigmont, Chairman of the Big Game Committee of the Five County Conservation League; Glen F. Davidson, Stites, Chairman of the Fish Committee of the Five County Conservation League; and Dr. A. B. Hatch, Moscow, Chairman of the Bird Committee of the Five County Conservation League, and also head of the Wildlife Management course at the University of Idaho.

State of Idaho

Jess Robertson, Central Idaho District Deputy, and William R. McIntyre, Idaho State Game Warden. Mr. McIntyre spent only July 12 to 18 with the party, but he saw samples of all the problem areas and participated in the discussions which covered all the problems.

Forest Service

P. E. Melis, July 12 to 18, Regional Office; A. E. Fry and C. A. McGregor, July 12, and J. A. Parsell July 12 to 18 and July 23, Nezperce; Ed Mackay, July 18, Lolo; George W. Case, Bitterroot, entire trip. Jesse McPherson from the Bitterroot was again Chief Cook and the packing was done by the party members.

The party left Kooskia, Idaho at 8:00 A.M. on July 12, and travelled by car to the Deadman winter concentration area where Parsell explained the damage, past and potential, for

F.S.

which the large number of game, mostly elk, are responsible. In this explanation he was ably supported by District Deputy Robertson who has made several winter trips into the area and also by Dr. Hatch and I. J. Longeteig who made one examination with Parsell last winter.

The party returned to Pete King for dinner, then travelled by car up the Fog Mt. road to examine an area which is definitely understocked. Here Parsell and Fry explained why it was good game management to encourage more hunting on the areas from which winter migrations feed into the Deadman area, while at the same time closing to hunting areas such as the one from the Fog Mt. divide to the mouth of the Selway, which carry an abundant surplus of winter game feed.

The party then returned to the Boyd Creek Hatchery, which has just been completed and was in operation with about a half million of newly hatched fish. The foreman there told the party of their operations to date, and showed much concern over the fact that the water temperature had reached as high as 78 degrees and that the supply was beginning to diminish.

The party then proceeded to Pete King R. S. for supper, after which they drove to the old remount station near Roundtop and camped. Fry and McGregor left the party at this point.

### July 13

Left the remount at 6:30 A.M. by saddle horse and travelled through summer range to Oldman Lake. This is an old time trail, built originally by a railroad survey party. It is very steep and very rough. There was much discussion by the party as to what was more desirable, wipe the trail off the map and call this a real wilderness where only the hardest lovers of the mountains could hope to enjoy a trip, or to reconstruct the trail to a good standard so that people who were only moderately adventurous might ride a horse without fear and enjoy the rugged scenery which nature has provided for those with eyes to see. In the end the good trail faction won out, for the rugged individualists admitted that while they had families whom they believed would enjoy a trip through the area, yet it would be an impossibility until better routes of travel were provided.

At the lake the party caught sufficient Eastern Brook trout for supper and breakfast. They needed no guidance from Game Department officials or Forest Officers to dwell on the merits of planting a variety of fish, which would stay in such

F. S.

places as are cut off by falls from the regular run of native trout.

#### July 14

Left at 7:00 A.M. for Two Lakes via Oldman Creek meadows. En route much evidence of Deputy Warden Lowe's game salting in high country was seen. Here the advantages to be gained by proper salting in the managing of big game was demonstrated and discussed. All members of the party being farm raised, it was not difficult to put over the point; but State Game Warden McIntyre contended that every license holder is a fisherman, while few license holders hunt big game; therefore very little time or money should be put into big game management. Deputy Robertson explained that checking station records showed that 10% of the license holders in Idaho hunted big game within the Clearwater drainage.

At Two Lakes the party again fished and caught enough fish for their needs, besides a nice supply for the following day's camp, which was to be several miles from fishing water.

Here Assistant Regional Forester Melis, who had been previously delayed, joined the party.

#### July 15

7:00 A.M. to Barren Hill by way of Wounded Doe Licks. At these licks, which are the largest on the Clearwater drainage, a large herd of elk were seen. To use the words of I. J. Longteig, "There were so many that looking at their legs under the trees reminded me of nothing so much as the stubble on a magnified wheat field."

The game in this area had not been salted, and therefore had been giving these licks excessive use, thus making them a lake of filthy mud. Here it was demonstrated and explained why such places as this were spawning grounds for disease and parasites, thus often causing epidemics to run through the game herds much the same as the plague through the cities of medieval Europe. There was much comment among the party about it being too bad that as noble a game animal as the elk should have to sip water from such foul morass in order to obtain his salt requirements.

When the party arrived at Barren Hill the Game Warden called his purchasing agent at Boise and instructed him to honor requisitions for additional salt purchases.

R. S.

At Barren Hill, Lookout-Fireman Kimberley had just returned from a fire, but after supper he gave a demonstration of the use of his working tools to the interested members of the party.

### July 16

7:00 A.M. via Rhoda Creek Cabin and Blum's Ranch to Moose Creek R. S. This day's trip started in winter range and progressed through winter range of optimum use into somewhat over-used winter range along the last seven miles of the trip. At the upper edge of the winter range a winter salt ground was inspected and its use in holding the game on the better feed later in the fall and causing them to return earlier in the spring was explained. The effects of improved salting last winter were explained, but no positive claims of solving game distribution problems in the winter time were made. Instead, it was stated that another winter like that of 1931-32 would have to occur before a definite check could be made on the effects of proper salting on winter distribution.

At the Rhoda Creek Cabin the party was able to observe a conversation between the ranger and maintenance foreman, Phil Stadtman, concerning the problems encountered on the various trail projects.

At Blum's Ranch the party had lunch and discussed with Mr. Blum hunting and recreation in general from the standpoint of the commercial packer and guide. Mr. Blum expressed the opinion that a road into the area should be the last resort to obtain control of the game herd, since he believed it would be difficult to prevent over-hunting and over-fishing if a road ever penetrated the area.

At Moose Creek R. S. Jack Parsell left the party to return to his duties on the Nezperce.

### July 17

To Elbow Bend via Crew Creek ridge. The side trip up Crew Creek ridge was selected because it has had positively no use by domestic stock of any kind, yet shows considerable dead brush caused by over-browsing and considerable sheet erosion, as well as some gullying from the trampling out of the fine grasses and weeds which were its normal cover. It was explained that the factor causing this serious condition in an otherwise but slightly over-used area was the location of a large natural lick at the base of the ridge. Previous to 1936 elk had used

F. 3.

this area both summer and winter, since what salt that was placed for game was put at the lick. The party found no evidence of recent use on the area, and Mr. Blum stated that the elk quit using the lick this spring within three days after the Game Department and Forest Service started salting the high spring and summer ranges.

At Elbow Bend the party got a real thrill from the excellent cut throat fishing available. This caused considerable discussion of the dearth of game fish in the lower reaches of the middlefork of the Clearwater. While a general decline had been noted with the advent of good roads in that area, the sportsmen felt that the practical extinction of game fish followed the 1934 burn.

This brought up again the subject of the warm and depleted water at the Boyd Creek Hatchery. Davidson wanted to know why some streams which were seen on Moose Creek that were completely burned, (1910) were cold enough to support fish life and seemed to maintain a good flow of water, while Boyd Creek had increased in temperature and decreased in volume. It was explained that these streams tributary to Moose Creek had revegetated to brush and grass, thus binding the soil and partially shading the water. He then wanted to know why some action had not been taken to revegetate the headwaters of Boyd Creek which is mostly barren. It was explained that the Boyd Creek Hatchery was a state project and the Forest Service had believed that the Game Department would take care of all phases of the job.

Deputy Robertson stated that the Game Department had no funds for such work and if it were undertaken at all, some cooperating agency would have to finance it.

Davidson then stated that the land being within National Forest that the Forest Service would be the logical agency to carry on the work, and that there was a big ERA crew at Pete King building a road into a country that already had some roads; and a C.C.C. camp at O'Hara building houses for personnel already occupying buildings that were too good to abandon; therefore, it would be good business to abandon these projects and concentrate the work of these crews on revegetating the Boyd Creek watershed.

It was pointed out to Davidson that the majority of ERA men were not physically fit to do the strenuous work required by a revegetating job, and that E.C.W. programs were laid out six months in advance and all spare money put into materials. Outside of fire this money and man hours could not be diverted. In addition, and more to the point, it would certainly be poor

F. S.

business to spend a lot of time and money trying to revegetate such a large area without first trying a variety of shrubs and grasses on the various sites to determine which would give the desired cover.

Davidson agreed that this was the proper approach to such a project, but wanted to know if a contingent of man days and dollars was not held from each E.C.W. work period to provide for unforeseen work items. When he was informed that this was probably true, he stated that Supervisor Phillips would get no rest until he started the necessary investigative work this season.

July 14

Left Elbow Bend at 8:00 A.M. for Elk Summit. Travelled through winter range for seven miles and summer range the remaining six miles. The discussion centered around Forest Service game studies, and the information so obtained used in the preparation of management plans, the objective of which were to make the land produce the maximum sustained bag of all forms of desirable wild life. McIntyre took an attitude which implied that the State Game Department was not particularly interested in any plan that had merit only from its good effects on wild life, or maximum productivity of the land. A plan must above all else, be what the sportsmen wanted, and if it were incidentally good wild life management, and good land use management, so much the better.

During this discussion, Longoteig brought out that sportsmen were still concerned about the possibility of the Forest Service taking over the ownership and active management of wild life on National Forest lands. Melis explained that this had been done in some states where there was no active attempt to manage wild life. However, in all the states embraced by Region One and in all other states where an organized game administration was functioning, it was Forest Service policy to strengthen the state's hand by helping with study, preparation of plans and enforcement, rather than weaken the state's position by a division of authority. Melis illustrated this so vividly that there was no doubt of wisdom of the policy in the minds of the party.

At Elk Summit Ranger Ed Mackay met the party and discussed the big game situation on the Powell District. There was also considerable discussion as to where, and estimates on, the number of out throat which could be planted and the number that would be available for planting.

Here State Game Warden McIntyre and Assistant Regional Forester Melis left the party.

F. S.

July 19.

7:30 A.M. via Big Sand Lake to East Moose Creek at the mouth of Dead Elk Creek. From here on up East Moose is barren of fish on account of falls in the creek, yet most of it is ideal trout water. This occasioned much discussion by the party as to whether eastern brook should be stocked to stay in these waters or whether natives should be stocked so that, as they became of sufficient size to drift downstream, they would furnish more legal size for the more heavily used waters. The preponderance of opinion was that it would always be possible to plant eastern brook, but once planted hard to get rid of. Therefore, in view of the extreme need for legal fish in the lower country, it was believed best to do whatever stocking possible in this stream with natives.

July 20.

7:30 A.M. to Wahoo Creek Camp, where Hank Webber had a big dinner prepared. Hank had spent the last two winters on game study on the Moose Creek District and was able to give the party first hand information about what the man on the job saw and thought.

They also inspected a piece of reconstruction which is changing a piece of old time fire trail to a new recreation horse route.

From here the party went on to Indian Lake where some more fishing was done. After supper the party discussed the vast amount of summer range they had seen during the past two days.

July 21

7:30 A.M. via Pettibone Ridge to Bear Creek Ranger Station. At Pettibone Ridge Lookout the party went through an inspection of lookout routine; then were served cookies and coffee by Lookout-Fireman John Frenor.

After leaving the lookout the party soon came to a section of the worst over-used winter game range on the Clearwater drainage. For four miles most of the best browse species such as deciduous ceanothus, willow and Douglas Fir reproduction was dead. The only shrubbery showing anywhere near normal growth were such unpalatable species as nine-bark and ocean spray. Even the bunch grasses, which are only available to game a part of the winter, were almost entirely grazed and trampled out. The

F. S.

party gathered many samples and took several pictures to show their fellow sportsmen on their return to civilization.

#### July 22

8:30 A.M. - to North Star Creek. The entire trip this day was through over-used winter range, but not so badly damaged as that inspected the previous day. En route the party stopped at the ranch of Alvin D. Renshaw, who is a commercial packer and guide. They asked him when he expected to get a road to his place and he said he hoped he never saw one there, for he did not believe the good hunting and fishing could survive a road. Some members of the party asked him if he thought there was enough commercial pack stock in the country to pack out the surplus game in this area, and he said not all in one year; but if a policy of a longer season was definitely established and sufficient publicity given, that he didn't doubt the ability of the commercial packers to meet the requirements of the job in two or three years time.

At North Star Creek the party inspected the work the Forest Service has done to provide summer forage for their pack stock and thereby reduce this drain on winter game forage. They also inspected a rock dam used to prevent fish getting into the irrigation ditch. Here was explained the primitive area policy of cancelling grazing privileges when the present owners become inactive.

#### July 23

7:00 A.M. - left for the end of the Running Creek road where Jack Parsell met the party again and took them by car to Grangeville, from where they scattered to their various homes.

#### July 24.

A meeting of the Big Game Committee of the Five County League was called at Cragmont by I. J. Longeteig. In addition to the committee members, he also invited all sportsmen who had participated in the Show-Me Trips through this area as well as Forest Officers and Game Wardens representative of the area.

Mr. Longeteig made an opening talk, in which he stated that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the information obtained by the Show-Me party and take the action then deemed necessary to alleviate the problems. He then called for short talks by each member of a Show-Me party and from Deputy Jess Robertson. He then asked for talks from P. E. Melis, R. A. Coster,



F. S.

W. E. Fry, Jack Parsell and George Case of the Forest Service. After these talks he threw the meeting open for discussion.

There was an incipient agitation for the Forest Service to undertake building a road to Moose Creek as a solution to the over-stocked problem on the Selway. However, Melis very cleverly got around this by stating that the Forest Service could not consider building a \$750,000 road, when the State had a large part of the area closed to all hunting, and only a five week season on the balance.

After this the meeting settled down to business and passed the following resolutions:

"WHEREAS, there is a heavy concentration of elk in the upper Selway district which cannot be properly reduced in the regular hunting season,

"AND WHEREAS, there is no automobile road to said territory,

"AND WHEREAS, the herd is entirely too large and concentrated to be supported on its winter range,

"AND WHEREAS, the winter forage is being gradually depleted by overuse,

"AND WHEREAS, such conditions are bound to result in heavy losses to said herd in severe winters,

"NOW THEREFORE, we recommend to the Game Warden of the State of Idaho that he declare an emergency on the Selway game preserve and also an area south of the game preserve and east of the Selway river to Bear Creek Ranger Station and north of the divide between the watersheds of Cub Creek and White Cap Creek and west of the Montana-Idaho state line, and open said territory to a special hunt, September 1 to November 30, open to everyone who wishes to apply.

"We further recommend that the area south of the Coolwater road, bounded on the south by the Selway river, be closed to all hunting up to and including Gedney creek drainage.

"Be it further resolved that a copy of these resolutions be sent to the Clearwater Wild Life Federation and one to the State Game Warden.

"These resolutions were prepared by the Big Game Committee of the Clearwater Wild Life Federation and approved by representatives of the forestry officials, the Game Department, and Sports-

F. S.

men's organizations.

"Dated at Cragmont, Idaho, the 26th day of July, 1937.

/s/ I. J. Longeteig  
Chairman of Big Game Committee"

These resolutions were forwarded to the State Game Warden and resulted in a special three month season to take out an extra thousand head of elk from the area most damaged by over stocking.

/s/ George W. Case  
George W. Case,  
District Forest Ranger.