

March 9, 1965

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Mr. Edward F. Cliff, Chief
Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.

MAR 22 1965

My dear Mr. Cliff:

Mrs. Doris H. Milner
Route 1, Box 355
Hamilton, Montana

Dear Mrs. Milner:

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman has asked the Forest Service to acknowledge the copy of your March 9 letter to Chief Edward F. Cliff, urging that the upper Selway River drainage in Idaho be protected as wilderness.

Our reply of March 18, 1965 to your letter to Chief Cliff will also acknowledge the copy which you referred to Secretary Freeman. Copies of this correspondence are being furnished Regional Forester Neal M. Rahn at Missoula, Montana, for his information.

Sincerely yours,

EDWARD F. CLIFF, Chief

By A. W. GREEN

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FOREST SERVICE
Bitterroot National Forest
HAMILTON, MONTANA
MAR 29 1965
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- Landings, etc
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- Fire Control
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- B.M.A.S.
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March 9, 1965

Mr. Edward P. Cliff, Chief
Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Cliff:

Thank you for your replies to our recent letters on the subject of the Selway Wilderness. It is good to be reassured that ordinary citizens can gain the ear of those who are charged with great responsibilities in our government.

I must beg to inform you, however, that most of us who have been writing on this subject already know by heart the text of Secretary Freeman's decision establishing the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area. Our committee was formed because its members shared the conviction that the decision to eliminate Area E from protected status was a most unfortunate decision, made on the basis of poor advice. We persist in believing, since the land in question is not the property of the Department of Agriculture but a joint property of all the people of the United States, that such decisions must always be subject to review when a review is demanded by a significant number of citizens.

We have every confidence in Secretary Freeman's good will and sincere desire to make the best possible decisions. Therefore we believe that he will accede to our request for additional public hearings on this matter before permitting the Forest Service to make timber sales in Area E or to let contracts for roads or to take any other step which might commit our government irrevocably to the "multiple use" development of Area E with its inevitable consequences to our most important remaining wild rivers. We shall abide by the result of democratic process whenever it becomes apparent that these matters have been brought to the attention of a representative sampling of the American people and when these people have been given an adequate opportunity to express their desires. The overwhelming public response to our committee's limited plea for assistance has reinforced our belief that the withdrawal of Area E from protected status is an extremely unpopular action which is wanted only by the very few who stand to gain money or power from it.

I must also tell you that our committee is composed largely of professional people and includes men who have spent distinguished careers both in the Forest Service and in the lumber industry in this particular area. We are, therefore, possibly better informed regarding the nature and

rationale of the multiple use plan for Area E than some of those who have been delegated to try to explain it to us.

We do not agree that sufficient wilderness area has been set aside to meet this particular recreational need in the future. We do not believe that personnel in certain echelons of the Forest Service are in sympathy with the Wilderness concept or that they even understand the importance of the role that Wilderness may play in the future of our society.

We emphatically do not agree that the plan for Area E makes adequate provision for the protection of watershed. We think it most unwise to open further areas of slow regrowth on thin friable soils to logging, when the foreseeable needs for water are so great that there must be grave doubts of our ability to meet those needs. We should like to argue for the proposition that the trees are of greater worth right where they are, for their contribution to water attraction and retention alone, than they could ever be in lumber yards.

We do not agree that extant roads in Area E make this a "roaded area", as has been so frequently asserted by your office. The Nez Perce-Elk City road need only be made the dividing line between two areas of Wilderness. The short spur roads to Paradise Guard Station and Hell's Half Acre, if they must remain, may be surrounded by a few hundred yards of declassified land to take them out of Wilderness and allow for unloading sites, base camps, etc. The Running Creek road is of no present value and should be allowed to return to Wilderness by severing its connection with the Elk City road. There are no other roads in Area E.

The present access road is safe and easily passable for all passenger vehicles and light trucks, an ideal entrance to the Wilderness. The "near-accidents" alluded to mostly involved vehicles which should never have been there in the first place: vehicles involved in "development", laying out of roads, introduction of utilities; a large house trailer being moved to the Magruder Ranger Station, heavy earth-moving equipment which has already been breaking the sod of centuries at Indian Creek and elsewhere.

We find something of unusual interest in the great urge of the Forest Service to build roads. In the present case, considerations of roads appear to outway considerations of trees, and indeed of reason. Simple application of the formula which the Forest Service ordinarily employs to approximate cost of road per section of land logged shows that the estimated annual cut of timber in Area E, at weighted average stumpage prices for the varieties present (\$19/thousand), can not amortize the cost of trunk and spur roads necessary to log the projected 117,000 acres in any reasonable length of time. And this is to disregard the millions of dollars it will cost to make the Nez Perce-Elk City road safe for logging

trucks! Furthermore, that relatively poor stumpage, that has to be trucked so far, is not going to be sold for average prices; nor will average road costs prevail if any real effort is made to protect the streams. We should like very much to know just who is so interested in building all of these roads, and why. We do not believe it to be in the public interest.

The many other objections which we find to the "multiple use" development of Area E will be the subject of succeeding letters. I do regret the tone of irritation which has crept into this letter but, very frankly speaking, the replies we have received from the Forest Service to date have not come to the point and dealt specifically with our questions, charges, and criticisms. We are told merely what we already know about the official policy of the Service in this regard, and are assured that developments are proceeding according to plan. This will not satisfy.

Our group now has the backing of thousands of aroused citizens and the means to bring its viewpoint to a much wider public. Assuredly you will be hearing from us. We have high hopes of hearing from you that the Forest Service has decided to postpone multiple use development in Area E until the problem can be reinvestigated in the light of population trends and recent estimates of imminent water shortages, among other factors. In short, I hope our next letter can be written in better humor. We would much rather cooperate than oppose.

For the committee

Sincerely yours,

Doris Milner, Chairman
Save-the-Upper-Selway Committee
Route 1, Box 355
Hamilton, Montana

cc: The President of the United States
Secretary Udall
Secretary Freeman
Senator Mansfield
Senator Metcalf
Representative Olsen
Regional Forester Rahm

