

# Idaho Environmental Council

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Open Letter to

Congressman Orval Hansen  
320 A St.  
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401

August 17, 1971

Upper Selway

Dear Mr. Hansen;

Your response to the recent introduction of the Upper Selway Wilderness bill by Senators Church and Metcalf is incredible. To claim that this action on their part is premature reflects either ignorance concerning the history of the issue, or a propensity to side with involved timber interests and the Forest Service against conservationists and the protection of this magnificent remnant of the American Wilderness.

The Magruder Corridor issue has been smoldering ever since 1963, when the Secretary of Agriculture deleted it from the former Selway Bitterroot Primitive Area. Conservationists contend that this was an administrative mistake and the the Forest Service has chosen to defend its plan to sell the small amount of timber available in the fragile headwaters of the wild Selway River, rather than admit any error. Senators Church and Metcalf, responding to cries of desparation from those who knew the area and the need to protect it, asked the Secretary of Agriculture to appoint an independent committee to study the situation.

If you really believe that the present action by the Senators is premature, I suggest that you read the following items:

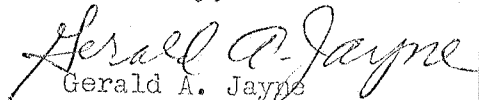
1. "Report of the Magruder Corridor Review Committee" to the Secretary of Agriculture, April 17, 1971. This study included public hearings, at which strong sentiment was expressed for putting the Corridor back into a wilderness classification.
2. "Statement by Secretary Freeman on the Report of the Review Committee for the Magruder Corridor"; June 1, 1967. Secretary Freeman agreed with the finding of the Committee that the Magruder Corridor is outstanding from the standpoint of watershed-fisheries values, historic values, and important existing and potential recreational values. He said that "...all land management should reflect and maintain wild land conditions consonant with these primary values."
3. Master's Thesis by William Cunningham, 1967, School of Forestry, University of Montana. This thesis gives an interesting account of the controversy.
4. "Magruder Corridor Resource Inventory" (supplement), March, 1971, Bitterroot National Forest.
5. "Management Proposal for the Magruder Corridor", June 1, 1971, Bitterroot National Forest. If there was any hope up to this point that the Forest Service intended to protect the Upper Selway as wilderness, it is quickly dispelled by this report. About 65,000 acres is proposed for timber cutting, and an insultingly small tidbit of some 6000 acres is proposed for wilderness study.

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The introduction of the Church-Metcalf bill should have come as no surprise to you. Senator Metcalf had introduced it late last year. You know that the bill has been supported by conservationists, and by the Idaho Fish and Game Department. John Woodworth, then-Director of the Department, wrote in May of this year to Congressman James McClure, in whose district the Magruder Corridor lies, asking him to support the bill; he sent copies of the letter to you and the Idaho Senators.

Conservationists have been hoping that you and Congressman McClure would co-sponsor a similar bill in the House, but your recent reaction to the Upper Selway bill is hardly encouraging.

Sincerely,



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