

BOISE CASCADE POSITION ON
IDAHO PRIMITIVE AREA
AGUST 6, 1975

Using approximate figures (detailed figures attached), the current situation regarding the Idaho Primitive area may be summarized as follows:

1.691 million acres	The total acreage of the "Idaho Primitive Area Study" recently completed by the Federal Government.
1.441 million acres	Current acreage of the Idaho Primitive Area and Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area combined.
1.143 million acres	Acreage proposed by the President for consideration by Congress to include into the Wilderness Preservation System.
0.579 million acres	Boise Cascade's proposal for Wilderness designation.

Currently, in Idaho, there are almost 2 million acres of Wilderness and National Recreation Area. In addition, we expect to see another quarter million acres of Wilderness in Hells Canyon together with a surrounding half million acres or so of Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. Also, there are 33 separate roadless "new study" areas scattered throughout the state totaling 1.627 million acres that are being studied by the Forest Service for possible recommendation to Congress for Wilderness designation.

Looking at the national picture, there are currently about 12.3 million acres of Wilderness in 125 areas. There are an additional 3.6 million acres in 18 Primitive Areas. Presently, there are 128 proposals before Congress for new Wilderness areas totaling some 26.5 million acres. The Forest Service is studying another 12.3 million acres for possible recommendation to Congress for Wilderness designation. Considering these current proposals before Congress, studies remaining to be completed by the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Forest Service, we have a potential Wilderness system in this country of about 53 to 86 million acres, depending on whose projections you use, without considering vast acreages of Alaska that will undoubtedly become designated Wilderness. (For perspective, the total acreage of Idaho is about 53 million acres.)

The point in looking at these state and national figures is not to attack or deride this Nation's large and continually developing Wilderness Preservation System-- BCC publicly supports Wilderness designation of appropriate areas. The point is that this Nation has a very representative system of Wilderness, National Parks, and other special use areas, and that we now ought to give very careful consideration regarding further additions to these systems because there are going to be continually increasing demands for benefits from public lands, including types of recreation as well as commodities, that cannot be provided by Wilderness or those other specially designated lands.

Regarding the Idaho Primitive Area, Boise Cascade feels that approximately 587,000 acres of this area is very clearly unique and worthy of total preservation within the Wilderness System. However, we believe that the balance of this area should be allowed to proceed through the very comprehensive land use planning process now being used by the Forest Service, so that all options and considerations can be further explored before a long term management or non-management decision is made. To include the entire area into Wilderness classification would preclude further land use planning and public input as we are suggesting, and we truly believe that this approach is in the best public interest because of the increasing demands that are being placed on uses of the forest that cannot be met by lands classified as Wilderness. And it is not that we will have to do without the intangible but very real values of the Wilderness experience - we already have an extensive Wilderness System and we are suggesting even more acreage be added to this system from the Primitive areas.

The key point that we would like to make is that our position is one that keeps all the options open and allows further rational evaluation of those options. We are saying that over half a million acres in this area very obviously meet the test of Wilderness qualifications in anyone's book. However, there are valid reasons for letting the remainder of this area proceed through the Forest Service land use planning process which will allow the weighing of national needs for all uses from the public forest including commodities, recreation, wildlife management, etc. Even after going through this process,

much of this area would probably be maintained in a Wilderness or near Wilderness type status under administrative supervision of the Forest Service. But classification into the Wilderness System would preclude certain activities to occur as needed in the public interest, whether it be use of mechanized equipment to clear a forest trail for backpackers, an access road for removal of dead and dying timber that poses a fire danger and a harbor for pests and disease that threaten the rest of the entire forest, the use of mechanized equipment to improve habitat for wildlife, or whatever the need may be. In some cases, further land use planning under Forest Service direction and with more public input may simply show that Wilderness or near-Wilderness management for much of this remaining area is in fact in the best interest of the public at any certain point in time. But again, the options could be there for best meeting people's needs in the future.

Some specific reasons why we believe these options really should remain open are as follows:

1. Existing Wilderness acreage in this area, together with this additional 579,000 acres and other special use areas, provides a very substantial and representative Wilderness System for this area, and this should be preserved for all time.
2. The needs of the nation are rapidly evolving. Reliable projections show increased need for wood fiber raw material in the future as well as for recreation opportunities of all types, many of which cannot be supplied by lands classified as Wilderness, a rather rigid and inflexible land use classification.
3. The Forest Service planning process that would eventually determine the management of the area if it were not all immediately classified as Wilderness would allow for consideration of needs and resources in a national perspective as well as on a more regionalized and localized basis.

4. There is a growing body of evidence that certain types of forest management activities, including in some cases timber harvesting, will not only enhance the health of the forest itself but will also provide improvements in habitat for fish, game, and other wildlife. Modern, scientific forest management can improve all forest resources, not just timber alone, without harm to the overall ecosystem.

The Boise Cascade position further gives some suggestion as to what type of management alternatives might be applied to certain portions of this area, from a timber management standpoint. These are simply suggestions as to what the long term management plan might look like following the extensive environmental impact studies and public input stages that would occur through the Forest Service land use planning process. We recognize that much more data, information and study is needed, and we are simply suggesting that this planning process not be prematurely denied at this time.

(Further documentation and factual materials are available to further clarify and support the Boise Cascade position on forest land classification.)