

TEACHING/RESEARCH/SERVICE
Office of the Dean
Telephone (208)885-6441



University of Idaho
College of Forestry,
Wildlife and Range Sciences
Moscow, Idaho 83843

April 13, 1977

Honorable Frank Church
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Church:

In response to your letter of April 1, 1977 concerning the future of the Gospel Hump area, I can only give you some observations and statements at this time due to the short notice.

Probably the most discouraging problem for the Forest Service presently is the time-delaying appeals tactic. This has frustrated honest efforts to manage the Gospel Hump and many other areas for over a decade. Until something is done to rectify the appeals system, it will be impossible for professionals to construct a rational working plan for this area.

On April 11, I had two of my staff, Kenneth Sowles and Charles Hatch, meet with Don Biddison and Ed Laven of the Nezperce National Forest to discuss available data and problems in the Gospel Hump controversy. They report to me that the presentation which is being sent to you in the form of maps and overlays is very high quality information and the re-examination of the land use planning for the area in question has been thorough and complete. As to our own resource data for the area, we have relied on the Forest Service to supply that which we have needed from time to time.

When considering a comprehensive resource study, there is considerable information. However, there needs to be more research on some aspects. Data on timber, minerals, and recreation are adequate. However, the intensive management-growth effects on supply projections should be strengthened. Also, there needs to be more data collected on mortality and its effects on future timber availability. There seems to be minimal data on soils, and the amount of data on wildlife is not known presently. We are working on this to identify the information gaps and determine future research needs.

At present, it would be difficult to prepare a comprehensive proposal for classification and management of the Gospel Hump area. However, time being of the essence, I fully support the Nezperce National Forest decision on those areas classified as "Highest Wilderness Value". As you study the overlays, you can see there is little conflict with timber interest. The biggest conflict is with the mineral belts and the off-road vehicle groups.

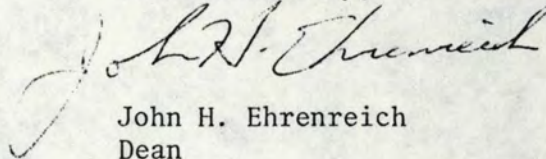
Honorable Frank Church
April 13, 1977
Page 2

I am not convinced any further studies need to be made concerning future wilderness and multiple use areas. It is mainly a matter of getting all interested parties to agree on some realistic and workable plan which will not totally ruin the economy of Idaho County as far as the timber industry is concerned. Allocated timber resources such as the Honker Sale must be released.

As we see it, the problems facing the Forest Service are mainly those of agency constraints created by interpretation of certain laws. The unroaded areas are considered in the multiple use category and are included in the timber supply figures. Also, a conflict exists when applying the nondeclining yield to sustain yield.

In some cases, it would be better for decisions to be made at the Regional level rather than the Washington Office mainly due to the familiarity with local problems in management, interpretation and needs. An inventory of these data needs should be made soon.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John H. Ehrenreich".

John H. Ehrenreich
Dean

JHE:ms