

MAR 29 1996

Taylor Ranch
HC-83
Cascade, ID 83611
March 22, 1996

Dr. John C. Hendee, Director
Wilderness Research Center
College of Forestry, Wildlife, and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83844-1144

Dear John,

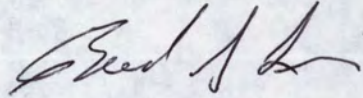
I received your letter asking whether I would be interested in staying on as caretaker at the Taylor Ranch. As it turns out, I have already found employment in Montana starting in July, so will not be able to continue on here at the ranch. I passed this information on to both Jeff Yeo and Jim Peek, so hopefully you have been informed of the situation. I am still waiting to here about a proposal that I submitted to the Forest Service that involves mapping the geology of the lower Big Creek drainage. Dennis Geist, a U of I geology professor, has submitted an SBOE proposal to work in the area west of the Taylor Ranch, and I am down for some salary money on that grant as well. If either proposal is funded, I plan to stay in here until July, but will not be able to act in the capacity of a caretaker.

You also asked me about what needs to be done at the ranch, and potential alternatives for staffing. The ranch itself is in reasonably good shape, and aside from the usual problems of wood supply and general upkeep, should not be a problem. I think the present system, with a scientist/manager position and winter caretakers is workable. However, the scientist/manager needs to spend time here in the winter now and then to get a better feeling for the upkeep that is required. The main problem, as I see it, is the extremely poor relations that exist with several of the state and federal agencies that have an interest in the kind of research work that could be done here. I spent two weeks last summer traveling and talking to individuals in the Forest Service, the Fish and Game Dept., and the Leopold Wilderness Research Institute. My hope was to find some funding for a geologic mapping program that would tie into ecosystem studies in the Big Creek drainage. It came as no surprise that funding was in short supply, but what did surprise me was the cool reception I received. Peter Landres at the Leopold Institute basically told me he was sick and tired of Jeff Yeo sending people over to him to try to siphon off research money. When I mentioned that I would be working with Wayne Minshall (stream ecologist at ISU) he warmed up, but it was clear that relations with the research effort at the Taylor Ranch were poor. The ranch has a similar reputation with the Forest Service and Fish and Game in Idaho, not to mention the outfitters in the area. Basically, I think you have a fairly serious "public relations" problem that needs to be addressed. A good place to start would be to ease up on the hard-sell fund raising efforts and get some one-on-one cooperative work going in areas where the Forest Service and Fish and Game can see some direct benefit to their agencies, not just to the U of I. Once you demonstrate that you can turn out a useful product, fund raising would probably become easier. Perhaps more importantly, the ranch needs to be made available

to people working in the area, regardless of which agency they work for. As it stands, Fish and Game has to beg and plead to stay here, and the Forest Service gives the place a wide berth. In my opinion, the Forest Service should be *encouraged* to use this place, particularly as a base for their trail crews. Not only do the local trails need work (especially Pioneer Creek), but the facilities are the one thing you have to offer in any kind of a cooperative agreement.

I could go on, but I suspect you get the general idea about my feelings regarding the ranch. As an alumnus of the U of I, I don't like to see the University poorly represented. You have quite a challenge ahead to turn this into a well-respected operation. I wish you luck. If you would like to discuss any of these matters further, I will be in Moscow in early May and can be contacted at 102 S. Howard (882-7650).

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Reed S. Lewis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Reed S. Lewis

cc: Jean'ne Shreeve, Vice Provost for Research