

February 1, 2004

Steven Daley Laursen
CNR Dean and
Richard Bottger
CNR Director of Administrative Services
University of Idaho
PO Box 441138
Moscow, ID 83844-1138

Dear Steve and Dick:

Taylor Ranch Field Station has shown significant growth in its programs, use, and income in the last 5 years. This growth has occurred despite the difficult financial times for the University, the lack of operations funds to match increased use, and the added burden in manpower and expenses to recover from forest fire damage and new hazards at the field station. If this positive momentum of development of the Taylor Ranch Field Station can be maintained it will lead to high-profile recognition of the scientific value of the University of Idaho's wilderness research station.

Creating program growth entails finding unique solutions to financial and programmatic obstacles. We are committed to address these challenges by finding new avenues for program growth, such as developing cooperative endeavors and by seeking financial resources through grants and donor contributions. We need your help to eliminate some constraints on our ability to fully utilize our professional capability. First, our job title needs to be changed to Field Station Director to more accurately reflect our current job responsibilities, operating level, and experience. Second, salary inequity must be alleviated, since our job responsibility level has greatly outpaced our salary level. Third, we need a maintenance employee in order to handle the increased workload and free time for us to work on program development and funding.

We have assumed the responsibilities of a field station director. Now, we want our job title and salary to reflect our operating level. Many of our current responsibilities are at a much higher level than the job description under which we were hired. We appreciate the flexibility inherent in our position and permitted by our supervisors, which has allowed us to expand our skills and professional growth to benefit the development of Taylor Ranch research and educational programs. Our longevity at Taylor Ranch has been due to these opportunities for professional growth and intellectual stimulation. We are able and willing to continue to take on these tasks that will increase the value of Taylor Ranch Field Station, but we would like fair compensation.

Enclosed are several documents about our job performance: 1) a list of our contributions and special attributes we bring to Taylor Ranch Field Station, 2) a salary comparison/analysis we used to determine an appropriate salary range for our responsibilities and experience. We believe an equitable salary range is \$49,000-\$61,000 for each full time position. Please use these materials and our annual performance evaluations and Taylor Ranch annual reports to appraise our requests for a change in job title and salary.

Taylor Ranch maintenance and administrative workloads have increased significantly and part time help has decreased during the last few years. We have personally taken on an extra workload in order to keep the facilities operational and be able to develop new programs at the same time. There is an immediate need to hire assistance. Recent facility upgrades, such as the hydroelectric power system, computer internet/wireless network, and mechanized equipment require frequent technical attention. The year 2000 forest fire increased maintenance demands for cleanup and safety enhancements and caused sediment problems for water and electric systems. Cabin replacement planning continues to be a drain on our limited time. Annual use has grown from an estimated 180 user days in the 1990s to an average of 900 user days in the last 3 years. Meanwhile during the same period, maintenance/caretaking labor has decreased from 12 months in the 1990s to 4 months of wages in recent years. The Wilderness Research Center Director and Secretary positions could have been used to ease some of the workload at Taylor Ranch, but they remain vacant.

We have devised several ideas about how our needs can be accomplished within the confines of the current financial situation at University of Idaho. We would like to offset some of our salary inequity next year by working $\frac{3}{4}$ time for the same annual salary. We would do this by working full time 9 months and taking off 3 months. Lodging fees in the past 3 years have generated \$15,433 in income. While we had planned to use this money to upgrade cabin furnishings, these funds could be used to pay for additional maintenance help.

University of Idaho benefits from our upgrade to Field Station Directors. As Directors we can bring projects, funding, and recognition to Taylor Ranch and UI. These goals cannot be accomplished without the work of a director. Having a maintenance person do maintenance tasks is more cost effective than paying our rate of pay for that same job.

We have a powerful vision of Taylor Ranch Field Station being a premiere field research site, due to its unique location within the largest unaltered environment in the continental United States. This vision is what drives us to work toward developing and promoting the potential for Taylor Ranch Field Station. Please help us in this mission.

Sincerely,

Holly Akenson
Manager/Scientist

Jim Akenson
Manager/Scientist