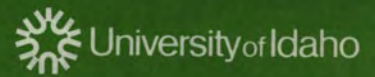


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General
News



News Bureau / Moscow, Idaho 83843 / Phone (208) 885-6291

GOT A SPARE STEREOSCOPE, ANYONE?

MOSCOW -- If you are planning a garage sale soon, set aside a few items badly needed by one of the most remote research centers in the U.S.

The Taylor Ranch, a 65-acre wilderness research center within the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area, is operated by the University of Idaho. The center is made up of several rustic cabins. It is accessible only by an 80-mile airplane trip from Cascade, Idaho, or a 38-mile hike on foot or horseback from the Big Creek Ranger Station in the Payette National Forest.

The wilderness research center was started in 1972 on homesteaded land purchased by the UI. It is open to anyone doing research on wilderness issues, wildlife or prehistoric cultures.

The oldest cabin is being converted into a field laboratory to support research on the ecosystem of one of the nation's largest wilderness areas. Researchers collecting data on mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, moose and mountain lions stay at Taylor Ranch while studying the ecology and animals that inhabit the area.

To supply the field lab, the center is looking for donations of equipment. Needed are a stereoscope, dissecting microscope, bug-proof herbarium cabinet, binoculars, aerial and topographic maps, and two computers -- one hand held computer to use in the field, and one battery operated, to store the extensive data already collected on the area. It must be battery operated, since there is no electricity at the ranch.

"We are trying to develop a complete environmental monitoring program that will collect baseline data on the wildlife that use the Big Creek drainages and the habitat, vegetation, climate and water quality of the area," said Jim Akenson, who manages the ranch with his wife, Holly.

MORE OVER

She has begun an extensive herbarium collection of more than 200 plant species that are indigenous to the rugged mountain area. The plant collection and another of small mammals found in the area will enable researchers and students to identify different species without spending unnecessary hours in the field. A duplicate copy of the plant collection will be stored in the University Herbarium located in the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences.

"We're doing this so people who visit the ranch won't have to start from scratch on their research," Holly explained.

"We hope to get donations of equipment that will help researchers when they come here to work," she said.

The Akensons live at the ranch throughout the year. In the winter they receive mail by ski plane twice a month. Such isolation and solitude provide a perfect backdrop for the Akensons' research on animal use and migration in the area. Holly is investigating the movements of bighorn sheep as they winter and mingle with other game animals.

Anyone interested in donating equipment should contact Edwin Krumpe, director of the UI's Wilderness Research Center at the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho 83843, (208) 885-7911.

"But," the Akensons reminded, "equipment must be small enough to fit into a small plane to get it here."

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