

Wilderness Center Looks Back and Ahead



KEN SOWLES — Manager of the Taylor Ranch.

By DAVID JOHNSON

The first annual report for the University of Idaho Wilderness Research Center has been released six years after the center was established. According to the 12-page report, university administrators are calling 1975 a year of "organization" and "unprecedented growth" at the center.

"After nearly a decade of uncertainty, policy evolution and attempts at staffing," the report states, "the Center has achieved a point of solid beginning."

"I think they're getting off on the right track now. I mean they seem to be wound up and getting some coordination," said Jess Taylor, Boise, former owner of the Taylor Ranch.

The Taylor Ranch was bought by the university in 1969 for \$100,000 as a center for wilderness research. The 65-acre ranch is located in the heart of the Idaho Primitive Area on the Big Creek drainage some 80 miles east of McCall and is accessible only by foot-trail or air.

Taylor, in the past, has said he sold



his ranch to the university to ensure the ranch's future. But he has also expressed discontent with the university's inability to establish a viable program of research at the back-country facility.

Problems surrounding the Taylor Ranch have been termed "political" in nature by university officials and up until last year, most of the money and time spent on the facility was channeled into maintenance and salaries of the "storm-tossed" director's position, a secretary and a caretaker, according to university records.

Now, in an effort to settle upon a better conceptual framework, the university says the Wilderness Research Center is housed on campus at the College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Sciences. The Taylor Ranch has been designated a "research station" of the Center.

The shift has enabled the college to bring a number of studies under the "auspices" of the Center in addition to ones started at the Taylor Ranch less than one year ago.

"Of course I'm on the outside looking in and essentially neutral," said Taylor, who visits the ranch often, "but it just seemed that they couldn't get things wheeling in the past."

Taylor was referring to administrative problems with the center, problems the university now says are cured.

He said things are moving ahead now.

One of the skeletons not in a closet is Newby, currently working at the Washington State University Department of Forestry and Range Management as a consultant in the wildland recreation management program.

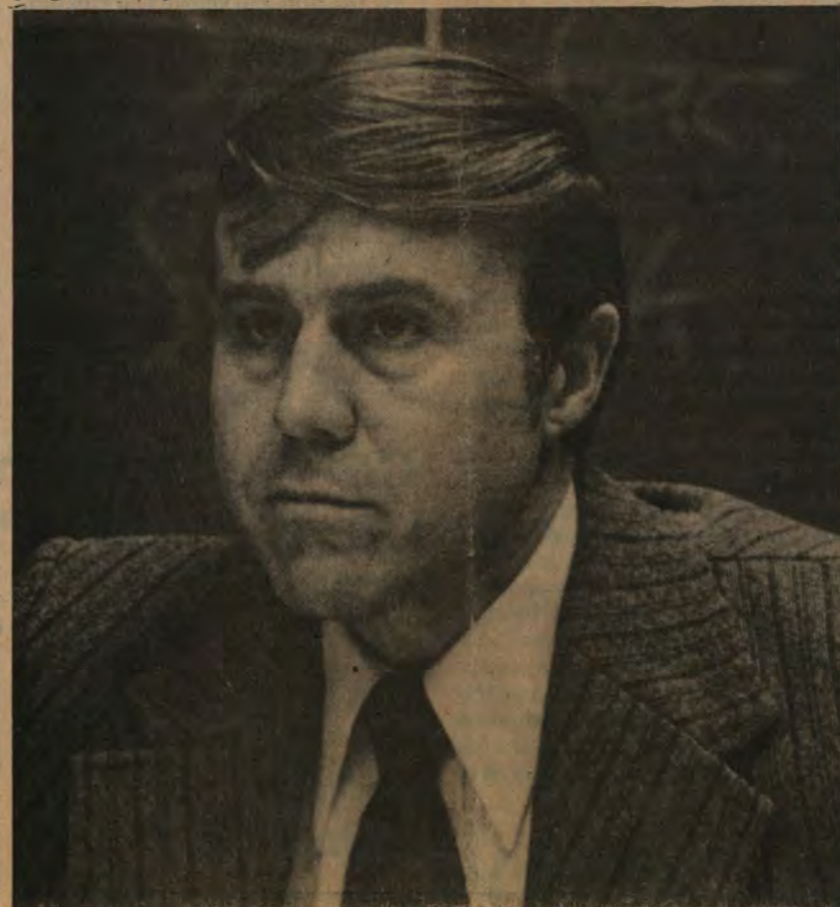
But Newby, a year after his controversial dismissal, doesn't take shots at the wilderness center. He offers a relatively positive comment on new claims of a bright future for the center.

"I sincerely hope that the Center will become a viable and credible part of the university's research and educational programs," said Newby Wednesday. "The potential is still there, waiting to be realized."

Newby's firing grated on many people close to the situation at the time, and left many questions, still unanswered.

Left hanging are reports of 68 criminal acts alleged against Newby, claims of secret meetings called by the forestry college administration to secure enough faculty votes for dismissal of Newby, student requests for an airing of the situation, and the reasons Newby elected to call off a scheduled appeal hearing at the last minute.

At any rate, according to a letter from university Vice President Robert Coonrod to Newby, dated March 4, 1975, the official reason for Newby's firing was: "because in the judgement of your dean, you have not



ADMINISTRATION — The directorship of the Wilderness Research Center will remain with Ehrenreich. Ehrenreich said a nation-wide search is currently being made for an assistant director who will assist in the daily administration of the center. He would not make names public but said a number of people are being considered and a decision will be made by July 1.

Ken Sowles, assistant to the dean at the college, will continue in the important role as manager of the Taylor Ranch, a job he has held for the past few years. Sowles, also a member of the technical board, is listed in the annual report as having "international experience in the establishment of funding of new programs." His other credential is listed as being an "experienced backcountry pilot."

In addition to Sowles, the technical board includes:

Dr. Paul Dalke, professor emeritus of wildlife management at the university, listed as a founder of the Wilderness Center in the annual report. Dalke is also acting assistant director.

Dr. James Fazio, academic chairman of the college's wildland recreation program. Fazio did his doctoral research on wilderness and is conducting additional wilderness research.

Dr. Jerran T. Flinders, professor of Wildlife resources. Flinders is listed as having research interest and experience in wildlife habitat and



JESS TAYLOR — The first time Jess Taylor went exploring in Idaho's Big Creek country back in the 30s, he met a trapper named Cougar Dave Lewis. Years later Lewis sold Taylor his back-country ranch. Taylor owned the ranch for some 20 years. He then sold it to the University of Idaho as a center for wilderness research. Approaching 70, Taylor still makes visits to the ranch, especially in the fall during the hunting season. Here, he packs up a quarter of venison shot near the ranch.

The ranch will be operated in a "simple but efficient manner," the statement says.

CURRENT RESEARCH — There are 10 studies, according to the annual report, the center "could" list under its auspices.

Seven of these studies are wildlife-related, two deal with wilderness recreationists and the other study deals with aquatics of upland lakes.

Most of these studies originated outside the "auspices" of the Wilderness Research Center, according to college sources, but have now been brought under the Center canopy.

"One purpose of the Center," the annual report states, "has been to synthesize (research) results and make them available under the unique heading of wilderness studies that in actuality they represent."

Four undergraduate student projects conducted at the Taylor Ranch last summer on pocket gophers, small mammals, cutthroat trout and blue grouse, were funded with center money. Cost of these projects is reported to have been \$600 each.

One study closely related to wilderness but not listed in the annual

According to the annual report, several new research proposals were developed in the past year and are "waiting to be funded." More are in the planning stage, the report adds.

EDUCATION — The Center has also, according to a recent university news release, begun a new "educational thrust."

The annual report lists the undergraduate Taylor Ranch student projects as part of the thrust along with a back-pack trip members of a wildland recreation class took across the Idaho Primitive Area with Fazio and Schomaker to view wilderness management problems first hand.

Schomaker, the report also states, established the university's first wilderness management course. Fazio said a similar course on wilderness management created by Newby and his assistant last year was a "special topics" class and could not be considered an established course.

THE FUTURE — The Center's personnel structure will continue to be strengthened, according to the report. What the university calls a "com-



DR. FLOYD NEWBY — Former director of the Wilderness Research Center.

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But when I heard he was a football player—he won't be around long. He takes things too seriously. He gave me some looks. Like a quarterback giving those defensive line stares." More seriously, he added: "Nolan is one of the best young hurdlers I've seen."

The race was without current world record holder Jim Bolding, a teammate of Mann's in the Pacific Coast Club. Bolding, former Oklahoma State star, holds the world mark at 48.1 but withdrew here because of a death in his family.

Heavy showers fell during the morning. "Nolan needs lots of work on his hurdle form," Mann grinned. "Just like me five years ago."

Englishman Nick Rose and Kenyan Mike Bolt each set records in the Drake Relays opening here, while former Brigham Young collegian Ralph Mann only wanted to set the record straight.

Mann is a super-smooth hurdler, a former world record holder and Olympic silver medalist. He has that comfortable kind of confidence that winners exude.

"Then he impulsively shakes the image, saying, 'You've got to be mentally deficient to be a hurdler.'"

Still perspiring, Mann was pleased. He'd just turned back a challenge by Kansas football quarterback Nolan Cromwell. It was their first meeting.

Ralph Mann Wins Hurdle Race



DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Saturday, April 24, 1976—Moscow, Idaho—IDAHONIAN

The university's current optimistic prognosis comes from administrators and faculty at the forestry college where a five-member technical board has been formed by Dean John E. Ehrenreich "to share in the responsibility of formulating and guiding the efforts of the Center," according to the annual report.

"Unfortunately, the Center's first years were accompanied by a series of personnel problems," and "obscured definition," said the report.

The report goes on to say that the spring of 1975 was a "turning point" when Ehrenreich assumed directorship of the center. Ehrenreich's self-appointment came shortly after the firing of Dr. Floyd Newby, who was hired as Center director in 1974. Newby was the second director to be fired.

University administrators now say they are looking to the future, hoping to build public support needed for future funding, and they won't bring skeletons out of the closet.

"I think we've got a good future," said Ehrenreich Wednesday morning.

DR. JOHN EHRENREICH — Director of the Wilderness Research Center.

made adequate progress toward defining a philosophy, a program, and a structure for the Wilderness Research Center."

Today, Newby says he still doesn't agree with the justification. He said the ills at the Center ran much deeper than one man.

"I have a great deal of respect for the professional ethics and competency of many of the faculty who are loosely associated with the Wilderness Research Center," Newby said, "and I hope they are able to achieve that which previous colleagues were denied."

And so, with Newby, one other director, hundreds of thousands of dollars spent and a shaky past they hope is behind them, university officials say they are looking to the future.

Here's a look at their new set-up: **PURPOSE OF CENTER** — According to the annual report, the purpose of the center is "to foster research and educational activities which will lead to a broader understanding of the structure and function of natural ecosystems, man's relationship to them, and their perpetual protection in the wilderness context."

The Center's working definition of "wilderness" is taken from the 1964 Wilderness Act, according to the annual report.

FUNDING — According to 1974-75 university records, \$39,641 in State-appropriated funds were earmarked for operation of the Center. Future operating funds will presumably come in this same manner. Other funding would depend on research grant money from outside sources and private donations to a foundation-like setup.

wildlife behavior research.

Dr. John Schomaker, assistant professor of wildland recreation management. Schomaker did his doctoral research in wilderness and co-authored management plans and guidelines in primitive areas.

"Policy formulation," for the Wilderness Research Center, "is the joint responsibility of the director, assistant director and technical board," the annual report states.

"Administration" of the Center, however, is "ultimately the responsibility of the director," the report states.

The technical board will eventually be broadened, according to the report, to include members outside the forestry college and an advisory council will be created to gain "creative input" from "leading individuals across the nation who are concerned with the future of wilderness," the report states.

Fazio told the Idahonian that no firm time thetable for expansion of the technical board or creation of advisory board has been set, but he looks to the end of this year as a target date.

TAYLOR RANCH MANAGEMENT POLICIES — Use of the Taylor Ranch is for research and education, according to a one and one half page policy statement supplied to the Idahonian by the university. Use of the facility for personal or other non-official business is specifically prohibited.

Current ranch facilities, which include four cabins, a tack house, workshop, an airstrip, corrals, and an outfitter's camp, are "considered adequate for current and proposed activities at the field station," according to the policy statement.



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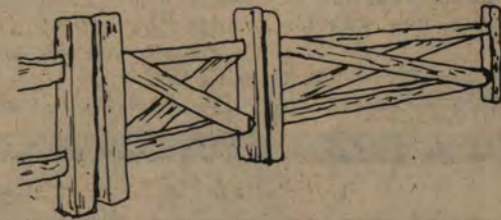
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patentized wilderness bibliography will be in service by the end of this year. And a publicity campaign, including a newsletter, descriptive brochure and a "mechanism to facilitate public contributions" will be launched, according to the annual report.

report is a timber inventory project in the Chamberlain Basin initiated by Sowlles last spring. Questionable funding for that project was reported in a series of articles by the Idahonian. Results from the \$23,711 effort have not been released.