

Clearwater National Forest Initiates Study To Determine Best Use Of Pot Mountain Area

Let. 1/7/71

OROFINO — The Clearwater National Forest has begun studies of the 57,000-acre Pot Mountain area to determine its best long-term use, Richard J. Pfilf, Orofino, forest supervisor, said Wednesday. The virtually undeveloped area is inside the large loop formed by the North Fork of the Clearwater River south of Quartz Creek.

Pfilf invited public comment by March 1, if possible. A public meeting will be conducted at Orofino some time in April to review reports of study teams and to discuss alternative methods of land management.

The forest supervisor said he realizes that because the Pot Mountain area is inaccessible during winter, "it will be difficult for anyone not familiar with the area to comment by March 1. Therefore, comments will be welcome after that date and

during the period the land use alternatives are being reviewed."

Hunting, fishing and hiking are the main recreational uses of the area now. The North Fork river road traverses the lower boundary and a one-lane forest road follows the northeastern edge.

Elevations

Elevations range from 2,000 feet near the mouth of Quartz Creek to 7,175 feet at the top of Pot Mountain. The terrain varies from steep slopes rising above the river to basins in the Jackknife Meadows - Squaw Creek area to rugged, glaciated lands surrounding Pot Mountain.

According to the U. S. Forest Service, man's use of the Pot Mountain country started with early Indian tribes. They were followed by trappers and gold prospectors in the 1860s. Later nearby settlers came to

explore, hunt and fish.

Much of the Pot Mountain area has been burned by forest fires in 1919 and in the 1930s and lower burned areas now provide a large part of the North Fork deer and elk winter range, the Forest Service said. It said the area is considered an important forest watershed but repeated fires have removed vegetation in some portions, resulting at times in severe surface erosion.

Wildlife Variety

Wildlife includes deer, elk, bear, mountain goat, grouse, a variety of fur bearers and fish in lakes and streams. Three primary lakes — Pot Lake, Mush Lake and Jack Lake in the upper reaches of the area — have been planted with trout.

Merchantable timber stands, estimated at 35 million board feet, occur in the Jackknife Meadow area and along Moscow Bar Ridge. Some logging has been done along the northeast edge of the area.

Forest Service specialists assembling resource data include soil scientists, geologists, landscape architects, range and wildlife specialists, foresters, forest watershed experts and engineers.

Pfilf said the Forest Service believes other valuable ideas by those familiar with the area should be brought into the study.

Public Review

He said comments by individuals, groups and agencies will be combined with information gathered by Forest Service resource specialists. Alternative land uses developed from this will be presented for public review.

"The Forest Service hopes that the combination of resource skills and public participation will result in well-grounded, long-range land use plans," Pfilf said.

Comments may be directed to him or to Earl Reinsel, district ranger, Bungalow Ranger District, Orofino.