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Student continues his work in primitive area

MOSCOW — While some 7,200 University of Idaho students were enrolling for fall semester on the Moscow campus, Jim Bennett continued his studies where he is — in the heart of the Idaho Primitive Area.

Bennett, a graduate student working toward a doctoral degree in wildlife ecology, has spent the summer hiking the mountain country of the Big Creek drainage tracking bands of bighorn sheep.

Eventually he will be capturing individual sheep in order to equip the animals with transmitter collars. He will then be able to follow individual bands to study bighorn sheep behavior, find lambing grounds and determine the importance of the dominant rams in the bands.

The Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep is a potentially endangered species, according to Bennett, who indicated several theories have been proposed for the recent decline in sheep numbers. One theory suggests the decline is the result of cattle summer grazing the mountain pastures which are used by the wild sheep in the winter.

Bennett indicated his work is based on the ideas of Valerius Geist, a faculty member at the University of Calgary and author of "Mountain Sheep." Geist suggests that current hunting regulations provide for removal of trophy animals — the old dominant rams who may be the ones who teach the bands migration routes and maintain stability of the bands.

For the next two years — summer and winter — Jim and his wife Carol will be



Tent was home

Four University of Idaho undergraduate students did wildlife and fisheries research this summer in the heart of the Idaho Primitive Area. Their headquarters was the Taylor Ranch, a field station of the UI Wilderness Research Center. Purchased by the University of Idaho in 1969 from Jess and Dorothy Taylor, the ranch is located on Big Creek, a main tributary of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Among the students who called a platform tent home were wildlife majors Steve Anderson, left, Rockford, Ill., and Al Steuter, West Point, Neb.

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will be gathering baseline data on bighorn sheep that will be used by other researchers who will complete a six-year study of the bighorns. They tentatively plan to live trap and remove several dominant rams, and then monitor the behavior of the bands to determine the effects removal of the leaders has on migration patterns, social stability and reproductive success. Bennett is working under the guidance of Dr. Jerran T. Flinders, associate professor of wildlife resources.

Interviewed after several days living out on the trail,

have to care about the animals you are studying. You spend hours developing a research proposal and writing study methods. Then you go out in the field and things don't work as you had them planned. It can be very frustrating."

Jim and Carol are living in the original cabin built on the ranch by Cougar Davis Lewis, who came into the Big Creek country around 1879 and patented the homestead in 1924. Also on the ranch are the Taylors' cabin, a guest cabin and a variety of platform tents.

Calling a big tent home this

dergraduate students whose research proposals earned them a chance to spend a summer doing wildlife studies in the primitive area as well as receive a \$600 honorarium. A total of 15 students submitted proposals this spring.

Steve Anderson, a senior wildlife management major from Rockford, Ill., studied the wilderness ecology of pocket gophers. According to the undergraduate researcher, pocket gophers are the number one cause of damage to young trees in tree plantations in the Northwest. The gophers tunnel underground eating roots, or tunnel under the snow and strip the bark of young trees, he said.

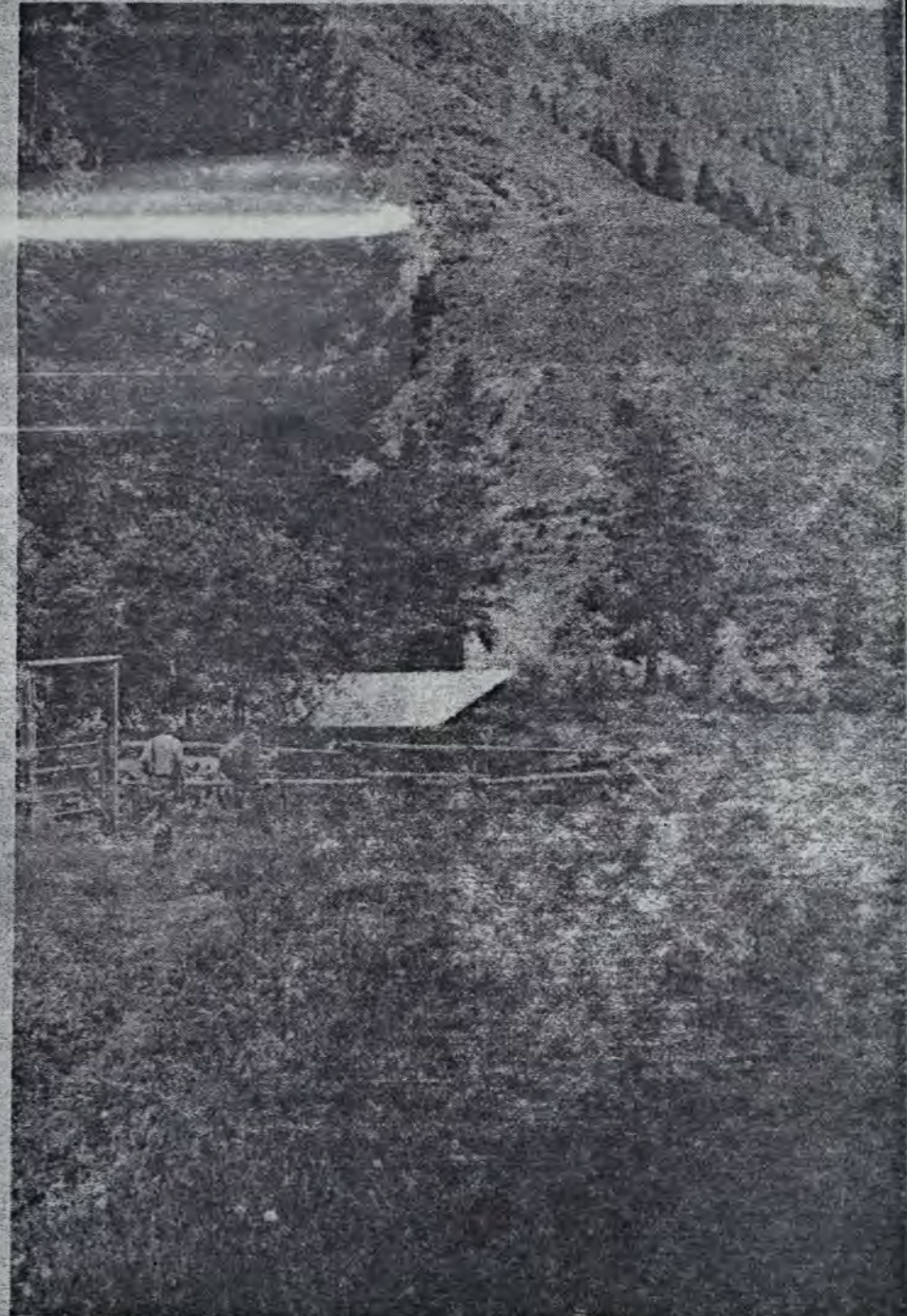
"But there isn't much information on pocket gophers in the wilderness," Anderson said, noting his aim was to determine the population density and how the animals spread out in a natural area.

Chuck Elliott, a sophomore wildlife major from Katzmill, Md., also spent the summer studying small animals. Every day he hiked up part of Cliff Creek trail to his series of small animal traps where he caught primarily deer mice. Throughout the summer, he set his traps at increasingly higher elevations along the three-mile trail.

"There is a theory that litter size for small mammals increases at higher elevations but few individuals live to maturity, possibly because of the extremes of conditions at higher elevations," Elliott said.

His summer work appeared to confirm these theories, he said.

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U of I student 'doing own thing' in Primitive

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Bases Ideas

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the primitive area, headquartered at the Taylor Ranch on Big Creek, a tributary of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Purchased by the University of Idaho in 1969 from Jess and Dorothy Taylor, the ranch is now a field station for the UI's Wilderness Research Center. The ranch also served as headquarters for the well-known cougar or mountain lion studies of Maurice Hornocker, leader of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit housed in the UI College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range Science.

Baseline data

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Interviewed after several days living out on the trail, Bennett said, "You really have to care about the animals you are studying. You spend hours developing a research proposal and writing study methods. Then you go out in the field and things don't work as you had them planned. It can be very frustrating."

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country around 1879 and patented the homestead in 1924. Also on the ranch are the Taylors' cabin, a guest cabin and a variety of platform tents.

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Wilderness ecology

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turity, possibly because of the extremes of conditions at higher elevations," Elliott said.

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Allen Steuter, a senior wildlife major from West Point, Neb., studied the brood ecology of blue grouse. He captured and banded females with broods of chicks in order to observe the relationships between the broods.

"Some herbivores including deer don't have any terri-

toriality as they are just keeping ahead of

The blue grouse is a herbivore and may be territoriality," Steuter noted that he hopes to find some evidence of defense of territory females with chicks.

The fourth undergraduate student, John Steuter, studied the spotted cut-throat trout. A junior wildlife resources major in N. Y.

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Primitive Setting Used for Studies

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Coeur d'Alene Could Lose \$200,000 in Sewer Funds

COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho (AP) — About \$200,000 in state and federal money may be withheld from the city of Coeur d'Alene because the Fernan Village area isn't part of its new sewer system, the Environmental Protection Agency says.

Federal officials, in a letter to the city engineer, said waste water problems at the village, on the east end of the city at Fernan Lake, have not been solved.

"In view of the fact that the EPA grant was based on inclusion of the village waste treatment needs, we may with-

hold further payments until we receive assurance that some arrangements are proceeding satisfactorily," EPA Project engineer Warren McFall said.

But City Administrator John Stoll said the village has not been a part of the EPA grant, which is reimbursement for the project serving the city's northern section.

He said that in January, 1972, the city was told by EPA that the project to Fernan Lake wasn't an eligible item under the grant program.

McFall said that the village is ready to build sewage systems at no cost to the city.

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