

# UI Research Center: Who's Responsible?

By DAVID JOHNSON

Who is calling the shots on the Wilderness Research Center at the University of Idaho?

"I think the shots on the Wilderness Research Center are being called by President Hartung," university regent Butch Alford told the Idahoian yesterday.

Hartung, contacted shortly after, said administration of the center was

## Opinion

in the hands of Dr. John Ehrenreich, dean of the forestry college who is also acting director of the center.

In the past six years, the center has had two directors. Both were fired.

The Idahoian called Ehrenreich. He was in conference.

Ken Sowles, assistant to the dean was then contacted and said, "I don't have any comment on anything."

Sowles, who administers the Taylor Ranch, bought by the university in 1969 as a center for wilderness research, has been somewhat reluctant to talk to the press. Yesterday, he said he would grant an interview if was given written questions in advance so that he could prepare for them.

He said he thought that was fair since the press gets time to prepare their questions.

Ehrenreich, reached later yesterday, said that because of his job demands as dean, he has formed a committee to direct operation of the wilderness center.

The committee hasn't met since last September, he said.

"I've been meaning to hold a meeting every week," said Ehrenreich, but he pointed out that he has been swamped with reports and other college business.

Asked if the meeting he intends to call of the wilderness group will be open to the press, Ehrenreich said, "It depends. If I can. If it's convenient and we can do it, I'll see what we can do on that."

Presumably, the five-member wilderness committee, made up of forestry college faculty, is calling the

shots on the UI Wilderness Research Center.

It's time everyone involved with the university wilderness research center be held accountable to the public.

The Taylor Ranch was bought with \$100,000 in taxpayer money.

At the time it was bought, there was much coverage in the media about the purchase and the unique opportunity the University of Idaho had to be a leader in wilderness research.

But things went sour. The first director was fired, the ranch became dormant from a research aspect, and for four years nothing was heard about the Wilderness Research Center.

Last year, Dr. Floyd Newby, head of recreation for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management out of Washington D.C., was hired to rebuild the center. But Newby was fired amidst a flurry of controversy.

Research activity was immediately channeled into the Taylor Ranch after Newby's dismissal. But some experts around the Pacific Northwest suggest that the research is not really the kind that is needed in wilderness areas.

Lack of funding, lack of knowledge about wilderness, lack of direction, lack of definition of a program and perhaps lack of commitment on the part of some people close to the program have all contributed to the problem.

A new director, or some sort of administrative framework, should be settled upon. The scope, a philosophy and direction of the center should be defined.

Future "development" of the Taylor Ranch should be closely watched to make sure any improvements fall within the concept of wilderness under the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Finally, the wilderness center should be opened up to the entire university, and not locked up in the forestry college as it has been in the past.

Wilderness research is unique and lends itself to the broad expertise available in disciplines across the entire university.

# Out Of Season

The state of Idaho needs more out-of-season hunters. These illegal hunters would provide more fine money for Idaho Fish and Game biologists to illegally hunt legally.

I am referring to the article "Let's Stop This Absurd Slaughter," by George Dovel in the *Outdoorsman*, (January issue, page 10). I believe this article is true because the Fish & Game Department is not denying these facts. We do not need highly educated men to play peek-a-boo in a helicopter with our wild game. As long as the Fish & Game Department pays the helicopter expense, any dumb bunny would do this job free if he enjoyed chasing wild game until they drop dead from exhaustion.

Quote from the *Outdoorsman*; "A Rocky Mountain bighorn ewe was chased by a biologist in a helicopter until she dropped from exhaustion. A tranquilizer gun was not used. She was run to death, less than two weeks before lambing season."

Another study involving cougar is but another example of the thousands of dollars wasted, many game animals destroyed and the same foregone conclusions emerging each year of the study.

In December of 1966, I stopped by the study ranch with a pack outfit, for the purpose of photographing ewe-lamb ratios in declining bighorn sheep herds. The lion study biologist (who now holds a doctor's degree and a university position with a high federal salary) was raising a pair of pet cougars in a pen there. When I asked whether or not he intended to feed them wild game, he assured me that they would be fed three horses that he had purchased for that purpose.

On subsequent trips to the ranch during the next three months, my companions and I found only big game animals in the lions' cage. A department biologist and I saw 12 horse quarters still hanging there three months later, but two freshly killed deer were in the cougars' pen . . .

I am glad George Dovel has the guts to state the true facts about our wildlife. Will we have more out-of-season hunters to provide money for our highly educated biologists or shall we all hunt legally and have good men with common horse sense in our game department? With a little education man can be dangerous.

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