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United States
Department of
Agriculture

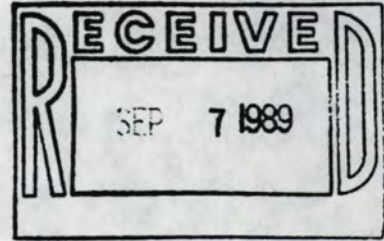
Forest
Service

Region 1

Federal Building
P.O. Box 7669
Missoula, MT 59807

Reply to: 4060/2320

Date: AUG 31 1989



Dr. John C. Hendee
Dean, College of Forestry,
Wildllife and Range Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843

Dear Dr. Hendee:

I am writing in response to your letter concerning Biosphere Reserve Status for the central Idaho Wilderness. I regret the extended time it has taken to develop a consensus on support for your proposal. Based on the information the Idaho Forest Supervisors in the Northern Region and myself have, we are generally supportive. However, we would like to have a consensus from the Intermountain Region and direction from our Washington Office. Biosphere Reserve designation in Wilderness is a topic that will be discussed at the Wilderness Resource Conference, in Minneapolis, this September. Following that conference, we will make a decision and respond to you in a timely manner.

I am assigning Angela Evenden as coordinator for this proposal. Angela is our Regional Botanist/Diversity Ecologist and coordinates the Research Natural Area and Special Interest Area programs, along with other programs of a similar nature. Please contact Angela at (406)-329-3141, for further discussion and information.

Thank you for your patience. We appreciate the work that you, Dr. Mike Scott, and your staffs have done on this proposal.

Sincerely,

f *Christopher Reubudt*
JOHN W. MUMMA
Regional forester

copies to: M. Scott
J. Fazio
E. Krumpke
Leon Neuenschwander
Holly and Jim Akenson

bc: Bruce Wiersma, Maurice Hornocker, Jack Lavin, Mike Scott, Bill McLaughlin,
Mrs. Glenn Janss



July 14, 1988

Office of the Dean

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TEACHING
RESEARCH
SERVICE

Per our telephone discussions on July 11, enclosed is a copy of the draft prospectus titled "Biosphere Reserve Status for Central Idaho's Designated Wilderness". That title could actually be changed to Biosphere Reserve Recognition for Central Idaho's Wilderness since recognition as a member of a worldwide network of outstanding protected areas is really what is conferred. Please note that in the text the word "designation" has been changed (from earlier drafts) to the word "recognition".

The list of names in the prospectus to contact for additional information about the biosphere reserve idea now includes Jack Lavin, forestry consultant (previously Supervisor of the Boise National Forest). The purpose of my call to each of you was to ask: would the Forest Service consider joining as a partner and "contact for additional information" in the prospectus for biosphere recognition for the Central Idaho Wilderness? It would be a major time-saving move because the ultimate purpose of the Centennial Commission's prospectus is to gain Forest Service support for such recognition so it can be proposed to the Man and the Biosphere Program, and be hopefully approved during the state's centennial period. The enclosed information about biosphere reserves gives a better idea of what recognition would mean.

I look forward to your response. Please contact me or any of the contact persons in the prospectus if you desire more information.

Sincerely,

John C. Hendee
Dean

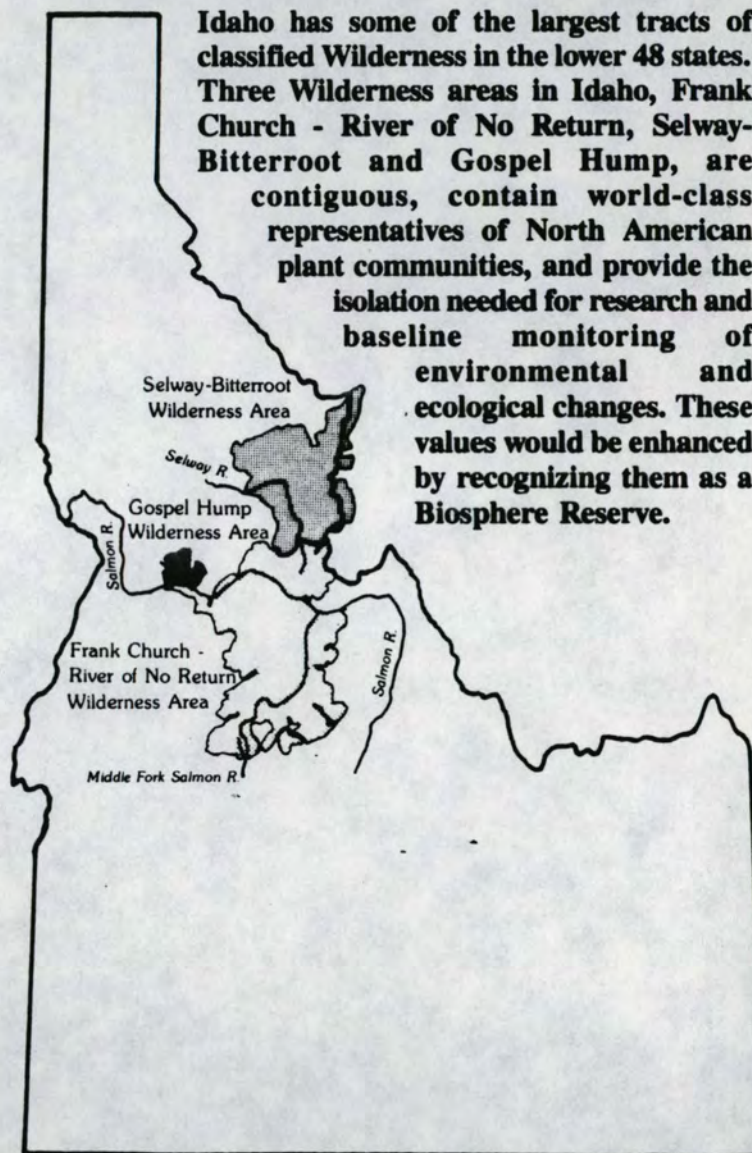
Enclosures

Biosphere Reserve Status for Idaho's Central Wilderness Areas

A Prospectus for a
Centennial Celebration

BIOSPHERE RESERVE STATUS FOR CENTRAL IDAHO'S DESIGNATED WILDERNESS

Idaho has some of the largest tracts of classified Wilderness in the lower 48 states. Three Wilderness areas in Idaho, Frank Church - River of No Return, Selway-Bitterroot and Gospel Hump, are contiguous, contain world-class representatives of North American plant communities, and provide the isolation needed for research and baseline monitoring of environmental and ecological changes. These values would be enhanced by recognizing them as a Biosphere Reserve.



photo

BIOSPHERE RESERVE PROGRAM

The United Nations Man and the Biosphere Program (MAB) was conceived as an international intergovernmental effort focusing on: the general study of the structure and function of the world's ecological regions; the systematic observation of changes brought about by man in those regions; the study of the effects of those changes on plant and animal life; and the need for public education and scientific information on these subjects.

A major part of the MAB Program is officially entitled "The Conservation of Natural Areas and of the Genetic Material They Contain," and concerns the development of an international network of protected areas called Biosphere Reserves. The purpose of these reserves is threefold: (1) to provide areas for ecological research with an emphasis on baseline studies measuring the diversity and the integrity of the region's ecological communities; (2) to provide suitable areas for the long-term monitoring of the impacts and ecological effects of human activities on world ecosystems; and (3) to provide facilities for education and training.

Of the more than 110 countries participating in the MAB program, 70 had biosphere reserves in 1987. Forty-three Biosphere Reserves have been established in the United States.

SUITABILITY FOR BIOSPHERE RESERVE STATUS

The contiguous Wilderness Areas of Idaho and adjacent western Montana are suitable for designation as a biosphere reserve because they

1. are highly representative of the dominant ecological features of the Rocky Mountain biome,
2. contain a high degree of ecological diversity,
3. have experienced little or no modification by man, remain primarily in a natural state, and are managed as wilderness,
4. serve collectively as a natural conservation unit—large enough to be self regulating, protected by natural barriers and containing an adequate buffer zone,
5. have provided for renowned research on fish, wildlife, water quality, natural vegetation and cultural resources.

Nominations for Biosphere Reserve status must have the concurrence of, or be done at the request of the agency that administers the site. The title Biosphere Reserve is an honorary rather than legal designation and does not in any way affect the land uses or management activities that may take place on the area. Because of this, Biosphere Reserves encompass a great diversity of landscapes worldwide, ranging from national parks and true wilderness areas to those areas that are intensively managed for agriculture, timber harvest, wild game, or for domestic grazers. Each area is, however, unique in its own way and adds a further dimension to our understanding of the world's ecological systems.

The purpose in obtaining Biosphere Reserve recognition for The Frank Church-River of No Return, Selway-Bitterroot and Gospel Hump wildernesses is to provide international acknowledgment and visibility to these diverse and unique ecosystems of central Idaho. Their combined 3.8 million acres comprise the largest contiguous wilderness in the lower 48 states. They provide the opportunity for unprecedented baseline ecological and environmental research. Biosphere Reserve recognition would attract researchers from throughout the world and would enhance the already bright reputation of Idaho as an area of high-quality natural resources and outdoor recreation. The University of Idaho Wilderness Research Center field station, at Taylor Ranch in the heart of the area, is an internationally recognized center for wilderness research.

The recognition of Idaho's three largest wilderness areas as a Biosphere Reserve would be a fitting tribute to Idaho's centennial. The concept has been endorsed by the Lasting Legacy Committee of the Idaho Centennial Commission. This proposal urges formal review of the Central Idaho Wilderness complex by the Man and the Biosphere Program during Idaho's centennial period.

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PROPOSED BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Some of the most remote, mountainous country in the nation—the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and the Gospel Hump Wilderness—constitutes 3.8 million acres of practically uninterrupted wildlands in the heart of Idaho. This 6,000 square miles of designated wilderness contains three mountain ranges and is bisected by three Congressionally designated Wild and Scenic Rivers. The Selway River, Salmon River, and the Middle Fork of the Salmon River are known world-wide for their excellent whitewater boating, steelhead and trout fishing, and unexcelled scenic beauty. Considered separately, each is renowned for its natural qualities; considered together, no other park or wilderness in the world offers so many pristine river resources so accessible to the public. The area is inhabited by healthy, natural populations of mountain lion, bear, elk, bighorn sheep, moose, deer, salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout.

Despite the size and remoteness of the combined area, it supports a wide variety of public uses. A large and well-established outfitter and guide industry hosts thousands of people every year for river trips, big game hunting, fishing, backpacking, jetboating, mountain climbing, and outdoor recreation. Crossed by trails, dotted by mountain lakes, traversed by streams, and blessed with natural meadows and forests, the area has been enjoyed by the public for generations.

***Will Biosphere Reserve recognition affect my ability to go hunting, fishing, boating or to participate in other activities I normally do in the area?**

"No, Biosphere Reserve status is an honorary rather than a legal designation and does not in any way affect how the public uses the land or management activities which may take place on the area."

***Will Biosphere Reserve recognition add any additional acres to Idaho's existing wilderness areas?**

"No, all of this spectacular area is already Congressionally designated Wilderness to be protected and managed in perpetuity by the U.S. Forest Service. Only Congress can add to or delete acres from wilderness classification."

***Will Biosphere Reserve recognition harm the outfitter and guide industry?**

"No, outfitters and guides will continue to be licensed by the State and regulated by the U.S. Forest Service. Biosphere Reserve status does not affect those uses which the public presently enjoy, including hunting, fishing, floating, jetboating, backpacking, horse packing, and backcountry flying."

***Will Biosphere Reserve recognition affect the existing state and federal management of the area?**

"No, the state Fish & Game Department and the U.S. Forest Service have legal management authority that will continue unaffected by Biosphere Reserve designation."

***What are the benefits to be gained from Biosphere Reserve recognition of the central Idaho wilderness areas?**

Worldwide recognition for the largest continuous area of classified wilderness in the contiguous United States will generate: publicity for the public uses enjoyed in the area; support for research by Idaho universities and their cooperators; centennial distinction for Idaho for its management and protection of the region.

photo

Photos

We welcome your comments. For additional information, please contact:

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This proposal emerged from the Lasting Legacy Committee of the Idaho Centennial Commission, Mrs. Glenn C. Janss, Chairman.