

## **XVII. Research**

### **A. Background**

The Wilderness Act recognizes that scientific values in wilderness and the gathering of information regarding their use and enjoyment is an appropriate activity in wilderness. Scientific study of the wilderness is also a purpose articulated in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (Appendix B).

The FC-RONR Wilderness' vast array of diverse ecosystems, topography, geology, fire history, wildlife populations, and cultural history provides an excellent tapestry for study and observation in a near-natural environment. There has been considerable research activity in the past; more is expected in the future.

The University of Idaho maintains a wilderness research center on the 65-acre Taylor Ranch in lower Big Creek. The University uses this facility for a wide range of wilderness-related research.

The CIWA specifically provides that management shall encourage scientific research into man's past use of the wilderness and the Salmon River corridor (Section 8(a)(3)(A)).

### **B. Desired Future Condition**

Wilderness-dependent research will continue following the intent of the Wilderness Act. The wilderness resource will continue to be shaped by natural forces and processes, while providing an opportunity to further the state of our knowledge of ecosystems and social aspects of wilderness management.

### **C. Goals**

1. Wilderness and its ecosystems will continue to be valuable as benchmarks. The benchmarks provide a basis where managers and scientists can better understand and compare natural processes and systems.

### **D. Objectives**

1. Provide for and encourage scientific study that:
  - a. Depends on the wilderness setting or upon natural systems not readily found outside wilderness.

- b. Seeks to explain or understand ecosystems found in wilderness or resolve wilderness management problems to provide managers with knowledge needed to better manage wild lands.
- c. Is conducted in a non-obtrusive manner consistent with preserving the wilderness character and minimizes conflicts between wilderness users and researchers.

## **E. Standards and Guidelines**

### **General**

1. Research projects that benefit the protection objectives of the FC-RONR Wilderness will be given highest priority. (S)
2. Research projects not dependent on wilderness will be directed to alternative areas outside the wilderness. (S)
3. Research methods that temporarily infringe on the wilderness resource should be limited or restricted, with the adverse effect(s) mitigated to the extent possible. (G)
4. All proposed research structures will be analyzed through the Minimum Requirements Analysis process. If approved, these research structures shall be situated and constructed to be as unobtrusive as possible. (S)
5. Data collected for management purposes, such as use figures and resource inventories, should be made available to scientists for research purposes. (G)
6. The use of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft for research purposes outside of public airstrips will be analyzed through the Minimum Requirements Analysis process. (S)
7. Aircraft use, including helicopters, outside of the public airstrips should be considered only when other methods are not possible and not appropriate for the research objectives. If aircraft use is approved, time of day, season of year, elevation, route of flight, and location of landings will be considered to minimize impacts. (G)
8. Research projects must be approved by the Forest Supervisor and authorized by special use permit. (S)

### **Research Proposals**

1. Proposed research projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the managing unit as to the project's desirability, priority, and compatibility. Project proposals that extend across administrative boundaries will be jointly reviewed with a coordinated response. (S)

2. Research projects on wildlife and fish resources, recreational use, human carrying capacities, cultural resources, and methodologies for monitoring ecological and sociological carrying capacity, will be permitted in the Wild River corridor. (S)
3. Written research proposals should be submitted to the Forest Service at least 6 months before anticipated fieldwork. (G)

### ***Specimen Collection***

1. No personal flora or fauna collection is permitted. Collections are for scientific or educational purposes only, dedicated to public benefit, and may not be used for personal or commercial profit. (S)
2. All collections for scientific purposes must be approved. (S)
3. No archaeological or vertebrate paleontological materials may be collected. Upon location of any historical or archaeological remains, fieldwork will cease and the site shall be reported immediately. No disturbance of such a site is permitted. (S)

### ***Marking Samples and Locations***

1. Measuring and recording methods must be sensitive to the generally undisturbed character of the area and leave as few signs of disturbance as possible. Field measurements in the FC-RONR Wilderness will follow the guidelines in the Forest Inventory and Assessment and Wilderness Program MOA, namely:
  - a. The practice of painting or scribing trees will not be used. Instead, marked nailed tags will be used.
  - b. Marking tags/nails may be used minimally, if painted an approved color, and faced away from obvious trails and roads.
  - c. Tags/nails may only be used at the base of the tree. Markers may not protrude from the ground more than one inch.
  - d. Flagging may not be attached to the marker.
  - e. Any flagging used to facilitate entry and exit from the plot area will be removed upon completion of the plot measurements.
  - f. Boring or drilling will be done on representative non-tally trees and only when absolutely necessary to estimate site, age, or growth.
  - g. Destructive sampling will not be done.

**Site Condition**

1. All refuse associated with field operations will be removed from the site and returned to the condition in which it was found, except as authorized by the project work plan. (S)
2. Soil disturbance is prohibited, except as specifically authorized in the project work plan. (S)
3. Temporary markers, such as flagging, may not remain in place for more than one week when study teams are not present on a site. (S)
4. Paint, or similar semi-permanent markers, may not be applied to rocks, plants, or other natural surfaces. (S)

**F. Monitoring**

No monitoring identified