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Taylor Ranch Wilderness Field Station
c/o WRC

CAMPUS Mail



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Date: February 27, 1995
To: Colleagues
From: John C. Hendee, Director
Subject: February 7, 1995 Workshop at UI to discuss Wilderness Ecosystem Research and Monitoring and the proposed Waterfall Creek Transect in the FC-RNRW

We had an excellent workshop February 7 at the University of Idaho with twenty persons registering their attendance. The workshop convened to discuss our proposal for a "Waterfall Creek Transect", to focus a series of studies in a pristine watershed of the FC-RNRW to develop baseline data addressing natural ecosystem processes, global influences and wilderness management issues.

The workshop began with introductions and then short presentations by persons involved in important related work.

I opened the presentations by describing the expansion of the UI Wilderness Research Center and commitment to leadership in wilderness science and education and fulfilling the potential of Taylor Ranch Wilderness Field Station. I also described findings of the SAF National Wilderness Research Needs Committee report which documented 500 wilderness studies nationwide and recommends much better coordination, communication and university involvement in wilderness research.

Jeff Yeo, Scientist/Manager for the UI-Taylor Ranch Wilderness Field Station, described the field station facilities and ongoing research and education staged from the facility in the FC-RNRW.

Ken Wotring, FC-RNRW Coordinator and **Fred Dauber**, Krassell District Ranger in FC-RNRW on Payette National Forest described the pending move to manage the Frank as one 2.3 million acre administrative unit.

Al Riebau, National Biological Service, Environmental Science and Technology Center (ESTC) described IWAES, the Intermountain Wilderness Area Ecosystem Study, in which data are being collected from 18 BLM wilderness areas, and the paired ecosystems study in which these sites are matched with similar sites around the world. Al reviewed the IWAES data collection protocols, and indicated interest in linking IWAES to the proposed Waterfall Creek effort in FC-RNRW.

Keith Corrigan, National Wilderness Coordinator for BLM (and a member of the SAF National Wilderness Research Needs Committee) noted that IWAES was originally base funded by BLM because of belief in the importance of using wilderness for research and monitoring. He said that linking IWAES to other agency wilderness would be timely.

Chuck Slaughter, new leader of the Ag Research Service -- Northwest Watershed Research Center, described the Reynolds Creek Experimental Watershed in SW Idaho and his previous research in Alaska with transect studies and environmental ecosystem monitoring.

Jim Peek, Professor of Wildlife, University of Idaho, described his extensive research on plant communities and forage relationships in the wilderness.

Other scientists attending gave brief descriptions of their work (see list of attendees).

Absent But Sending Support And Input:

Dave Parsons, Director of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute expressed regrets at being unable to attend but faxed his support for concentrating inter disciplinary work in a few areas; the need for clearly defined questions to guide such research; and commitment to helping provide such direction to the proposed Waterfall Creek effort.

Mike Scott, Leader of the Idaho Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit, expressed his regrets at being unable to attend but stated his support and also urged clear definition of guiding questions.

WORKSHOP AGENDA:

The workshop agenda focused on the following questions.

1. How would the Waterfall Creek effort be valuable?
2. What research questions and objective should guide us?
3. What are the priority actions/studies toward implementation?

4. Commitments for action:
 - a. Administrative protocol
 - b. Executive and scientific oversight
 - c. Financial strategies
 - d. Research and monitoring proposals

WORKSHOP CONCLUSIONS:

The following conclusions emerged around workshop focus questions.

1. **VALUE:** A focused effort in one drainage, such as the proposed Waterfall Creek Transect, would be valuable for several reasons.
 - Besides providing long-term data pertinent to research, monitoring and management needs, it could be a point of reference and calibration for other studies in FC-RNRW and elsewhere (IWAES, paired ecosystems, Reynolds Creek Experimental Watershed) thereby enhancing their value.
 - Several on-going studies in FC-RNRW could be extended into the drainage, which would make them more valuable and help "jump start" the research/monitoring effort.
 - Commitments to a focused effort like Waterfall Creek could enhance coordination and dialogue between science and management in FC-RNRW and provide needed leadership elsewhere.
 - Before committing to Waterfall Creek, other drainages should be explored and weighed against pros and cons of specific criteria. No drainage will be perfect and a focused effort in one drainage won't displace need for data collection elsewhere.
2. **GUIDING QUESTIONS:**
 - Clearly defined research questions, or clear needs for information, are essential to make the effort valuable and to prioritize efforts on global change, ecosystem research and management concerns.
 - One key need is for monitoring information on the values (quality attributes) of wilderness i.e. (1) air quality; (2) water quality; (3) noise; (4) extent of recreation use; (5) recreation impacts; (6) solitude -- (maybe indexed by 3, 4, 5); (7) naturalness of plant communities, animal populations, fire regimes; (8) presence of exotics; (9) cultural sites; (10) solar energy. (FC-RNRW should have exceptional measures reflecting values for most of these wilderness attributes.)
 - Baseline data addressing these wilderness values would also help address questions related to change in wilderness and elsewhere, i.e. global change assessment, forest and range health, health of terrestrial species populations and

habitats -- especially sensitive and vulnerable species of amphibians, passerine birds and others.

3. **PRIORITY ACTIONS:** The following priority actions emerge from my interpretation of the workshop discussions and reactions to the proposal.

- Most important will be commitment to a leadership effort in wilderness ecosystem research and monitoring by key executive leaders for the FC-RNRW and cooperating institutions (an executive steering committee is needed, consisting of USFS R-4; FC-RNRW; Leopold Institute; UI-WRC; ARS--NW Water Research Center; NBS-IWAES; BLM; F&WS; Idaho Fish and Game).
- This Executive Steering Committee (with advice from scientists) should review alternative drainages; select the area for concentrated study -- Waterfall Creek or other; frame guiding questions and priorities (with advice from scientists); establish protocols for institutional cooperation; and develop a financial strategy for cooperation, pooled funding and in-kind support to get started.
- A Science and Management Steering Committee should be appointed by the Executive Steering Committee to establish protocols for research, secure peer review of proposals and advise on management of the study area.
- Highest priorities include: (1) developing a data management/GIS system for the study area and related research and monitoring data in the FC-RNRW (2) arrange to extend on-going research efforts into the study area (3) establish basic resource monitoring characterizing the area and its wilderness values (attributes) i.e., air, water, noise, solar energy, recreation impacts, etc.
- Solicit specific research proposals appropriate for potential funding from the consortium and other external sources.

4. **COMMITMENTS:**

- All parties attending the workshop or sending regrets and input have committed their interest and intellectual support for the ideas and would like to be involved.
- UI (Hendee and Yeo) will re-draft the existing Prospectus for a Waterfall Creek Transect, incorporating input and broadening it to be a "Prospectus for A Wilderness Ecosystem Research and Monitoring System in the Frank Church --River of No Return Wilderness." The proposal will embrace research and monitoring wilderness-wide, as well as providing for establishment of one major, baseline

drainage for a concentrated, interdisciplinary research and monitoring effort.

- When there are executive level commitments and protocols established between the cooperators, UI will host a major forum for presentation and review of research and monitoring efforts in FC-RNRW and development of a research, monitoring and management information agenda for the "Frank".
- I have committed to present the vision of all the above to a meeting of the R-4 Wilderness Policy Council (all the Forest Service staff directors in R-4 Ogden), March 7, 1995.

Attachment: List of attendees

cc: Ruth Monahan
Bob Ross
Dave Parsons
John Twiss

JCH/mjs
C:workshop

WATERFALL CREEK TRANSECT MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1995

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Greg Gollberg	Student	520 W. 1st Street Moscow, ID 83843	208-882-7859	208-885-2268
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Mike Dombeck	Acting Director	BLM Washington, DC	202-208-3801	
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Fred Dauber	District Ranger	Krassel RD POB 1026, McCall	208-634-0600	208-634-0634
Ken Wotring	FC-RNRW Wilderness Coord.	POB 729, Salmon, ID 83467	208-756-5131	208-756-5151
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