



Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Land Management Plan

Appendix E: Recommended Wilderness Inventory, Evaluation, and Analysis

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests



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Final Environmental Impact Statement for 2023 Land Management Plan for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests

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Abstract: This Final Environmental Impact Statement documents the analysis of the Preferred Alternative and four additional action alternatives developed for programmatic management of the four million acres of National Forest system lands administered by the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. The purpose is to provide land management direction for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, combining the 1987 Nez Perce National Forests Land Management Plan and the 1987 Clearwater National Forest Land Management Plan into one plan for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, now managed as one administrative unit.

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Introduction

The Forest Service Handbook directs forests to follow a five-step process for examining lands within Nez Perce-Clearwater as potentially recommended wilderness. The following are the steps as outlined in Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 Chapter 70:

1. Inventory
2. Evaluate
3. Analyze
4. Recommend
5. Manage

Inventory

The primary function of the identification and inventory step is to identify all lands within the plan area that may have wilderness characteristics as defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964, using a transparent process. Lands included in the inventory are documented and identified on a map and carried forward for further evaluation. The draft methodology paper for the identification and inventory of lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System went through an approximate ninety-day public comment period. In addition, an interactive map was made available on the Nez Perce-Clearwater's website displaying an initial identification and inventory of lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The wilderness inventory area, comprised of 1,481,637 acres, was separated into thirty-four named areas. The methodology specifically looked at inventoried roadless areas managed by the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

In the inventory step we used the most recent roadless inventory, using the names and boundaries of areas as described in the Idaho Roadless Rule. Although some of these areas had different names and configurations in the past, we will be referring to the names and acreages from the Idaho Roadless Rule. Table 1 shows the names and acreages of each roadless area.

Thirty-three out of the thirty-four wilderness inventory areas went through a wilderness evaluation, which is documented by a wilderness evaluation worksheet for each area. Lolo Creek roadless area has a total acreage of 17,500 acres but only one-hundred acres are managed by the Nez Perce-Clearwater with the remainder managed by the Lolo National Forest. For this reason, the Lolo Creek roadless area will be managed consistent with the prescriptions decided upon by the Lolo National Forest.

Table 1 also shows the Idaho Roadless Rule theme(s) for each area. These themes are used in this evaluation only as a description of the existing condition and as a factor in the manageability of the area. Idaho Roadless Rule themes do not constrain or pre-determine the evaluation other than being one of several factors in the manageability portion of the evaluation.

Table 1. Idaho Roadless Areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater and their current management themes

Name	Nez Perce-Clearwater Acres	Wild Land Recreation	Primitive	Backcountry Restoration non-CPZ	Backcountry Recreation CPZ	Special Areas of Historic or Tribal Significance	Land Management Plan Special Areas
Bighorn-Weitas	254,800	0	0	246,400	0	8,000	400
Clear Creek	9,200	0	0	6,800	2,400	0	0
Dixie Summit-Nut Hill	13,000	0	0	11,500	500	0	1,000
East Meadow Creek	96,800	0	96,300	0	0	0	500
Eldorado Creek	6,800	0	0	5,500	0	1,300	0
Gospel Hump	46,300	0	0	29,700	16,600	0	
Gospel Hump adjacent to wilderness	2,400	0	0	2,400	0	0	0
Hoodoo	153,900 ¹	151,900	0	0	0	2,000	0
John Day	10,300	0	0	10,300	0	0	0
Lick Point	6,900	0	0	4,600	2,300	0	0
Little Slate Creek	12,200	0	0	12,200	0	0	0
Little Slate Creek North	5,900	0	0	4,300	400	0	1,200
Lochsa Face	76,000	0	27,400	39,300	1,100	100	8,100
Lolo Creek	100 ²	0	0	100	0	0	0
Mallard	19,600	0	0	16,000	3,600	0	0
Mallard Larkins	126,300 ³	59,100	31,600	35,600	0	0	0
Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork	43,200 ⁴	0	42,800	400	0	0	0
Moose Mountain	22,000	0	14,000	7,300	700	0	0
North Fork Slate Creek	10,400	0	0	10,400	0	0	0
North Fork Spruce-White Sand	35,800	9,500	5,800	20,500	0	0	0
North Lochsa Slope	117,700	0	82,500	15,100	0	14,300	5,800
O'Hara-Falls Creek	33,200	0	0	23,800	0	0	9,400
Pot Mountain	51,100	0	0	50,900	0	0	200
Rackliff-Gedney	90,000	0	0	84,400	0	0	5,600

EIS Appendix E: Recommended Wilderness Inventory, Evaluation, and Analysis

Name	Nez Perce-Clearwater Acres	Wild Land Recreation	Primitive	Backcountry Restoration non-CPZ	Backcountry Recreation CPZ	Special Areas of Historic or Tribal Significance	Land Management Plan Special Areas
Rapid River	21,000 ⁵	16,700	0	0	0	0	4,300
Rawhide	6,000	0	5,100	0	900	0	0
Salmon Face	9,200	0	0	9,200	0	0	0
Selway-Bitterroot	600	0	600	0	0	0	0
Silver Creek-Pilot Knob	21,000	0	0	0	0	21,000	0
Siwash	9,000	0	0	9,000	0	0	0
Sneakfoot Meadows	23,300	0	9,600	6,500	5,200	0	2,000
Weir-Post Office Creek	22,000	0	0	19,600	0	1,900	500
West Fork Crooked River	9,500	0	0	4,000	5,500	0	0
West Meadow Creek	115,600	0	0	112,500	3,100	0	0
TOTAL	1,481,100	237,200	315,700	798,300	42,300	48,600	39,000

Source: Nez Perce-Clearwater GIS data.

¹The total Hoodoo Roadless Area is 252,000 acres. The remainder of it is on land administered by the Lolo National Forest

²The total Lolo Creek Roadless Area is 17,500 acres and is on land administered by Lolo National Forest

³The total Mallard Larkins Roadless Area is 255,700 acres. The remainder of it is on land administered by the Idaho Panhandle National Forests

⁴The total Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area is 56,400 acres. The remainder of it is on land administered by the Idaho Panhandle National Forests and the Lolo National Forests.

⁵The total Rapid River Roadless Area is 78,700 acres. The remainder of it is on land administered by the Payette National Forest and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

⁶All acreage rounded to nearest hundred.

Evaluate

This evaluation is based on the wilderness characteristics described in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12 Land Management Handbook, Chapter 70- Wilderness, Section 72.1 Evaluation of Wilderness Characteristics (01/30/2015), which are as follows:

- Apparent Naturalness
- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation
- Areas of at least 5000 acres or sufficient size to make preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.
- Contains ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.
- Degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Within each wilderness characteristic the Land Management Plan Interdisciplinary Team developed several factors to measure. Part of the consideration is based on what comprehensive data sources or models could best be used to consistently evaluate each area. The tables below show these factors and the data source available to populate the values. Below each table is some background info on why these criteria are used. This document shows what we intended for each factor. A separate accompanying spreadsheet includes the populate data for each factor.

These factors are preliminary, subject to change through public input, collaboration, interdisciplinary team discussions and Responsible Official decisions. The Clearwater Basin Collaborative, The Wilderness Society, Idaho Conservation League, Montana Wilderness Alliance, The Great Burn Study Group, Friends of the Clearwater, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation and others provided suggestions for what to include in evaluating each characteristic.

The factors we are using below are intended to describe the current conditions in roadless areas. In addition to this document and its accompanying spreadsheet we are writing a narrative description for each roadless area to put the evaluation information in better context.

Apparent Naturalness

Evaluate the degree to which the area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable (apparent naturalness). Consider such factors as:

- The composition of plant and animal communities. The purpose of these factors is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural (for example, past management activities have created a plantation style forest with trees of uniform species, ages, and planted in rows);
- The extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention; and
- The extent to which improvements included in this area (sec. 71.22 of this Handbook) represent a departure from apparent naturalness (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70)

Table 2 shows the factors and data the team used to address the factors suggested in FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70, shown above.

Table 2. Factors used for assessing apparent naturalness and their data sources and measurement indices

Apparent Naturalness	Factor	Data Source	Measurement Indices
Composition of plant and animal communities	Authorized livestock grazing	Forest records and GIS	percent of roadless area in active or vacant grazing allotment
Composition of plant and animal communities	Noxious weeds	Forest weed inventory	Acres inventoried noxious weeds
Area reflects ecological conditions	Ecological conditions	Haugo and Benton (2014)	percent departure from natural range of variability
Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness	Level 1 and 2 roads	Infrastructure database and GIS	Miles
Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness	Forest Service administrative structures such as lookouts and guard stations.	Infrastructure database and GIS	Actual number
Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness	Forest Service structures used as recreation rentals	Forest inventory, Infrastructure database, www.recreation.gov	Actual number
Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness	Trail bridges	Infrastructure database and GIS	Actual number
Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness	Community Protection Zones fuels reduction	NEPA decisions	Acres
Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness	Constructed fire lines	GIS	Miles
Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness	Roadside hazard trees	NEPA decisions	Acres

Source: Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest team decision as to how to measure and evaluate FSH direction.

Composition of Plant and Animal Communities

Livestock Grazing: Existing roadless and wilderness areas do not prohibit grazing. Cows are a domestic species which are obvious to visitors. Management for grazing may include developed springs, dams, corrals, and fences, which reduce the apparent naturalness of an area (Landres et al. 2009).

Currently, there are 32 livestock grazing allotments that have at least partial overlap with roadless areas. Twelve roadless areas have active allotments and another two have vacant allotments. We are not attempting to quantify the number of cattle in a specific area, but the likelihood of seeing them. Grazing allotments overlap with approximately 10 percent of roadless area acreages on the Nez Perce-Clearwater. These are predominantly on the southern portion of the Nez Perce-Clearwater within eight roadless areas, where approximately 80 percent of the allotments are located within roadless area.

Noxious weeds: extensive areas of noxious weeds can be obvious to the forest visitor. For example, the presence of extensive knapweed along a trail is a sign of human disturbance. Minor infestations can be treated but larger ones become unmanageable and detract from the wilderness character. We initially considered using a model to project weed infestation likelihood but were cautioned by several of our collaborators against projecting the future instead of measuring the current condition. We planned to

measure this by percentage, but since the range was small, most areas with less than 3 percent we decided to measure actual acres instead based on actual inventories. The North Fork Slate Creek roadless area has 15 percent known weed populations.

Area reflects ecological conditions

To account for how well the *area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention*, we compared existing vegetation to conditions within the Natural Range of Variation (NRV). The Clearwater Basin Collaborative (CBC) commissioned a study by Ryan Haugo of The Nature Conservancy and Travis Benton of Ecosystem Research Group to identify restoration needs based on the difference between current conditions and NRV. This work was completed in 2014 (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The same data that was used for analysis by Haugo and Benton in 2014 was also used to identify departure from the natural range of variation for roadless areas. The percentage given in the column for each watershed indicates the percentage of the roadless area that is considered outside of NRV, see Table 8. Thus, a lower number in this column indicates that a roadless area is closer to being within conditions that would be found *without human intervention* and a higher number indicates that a roadless area is further from being within conditions that would be found “without human intervention.” Departure from NRV in these areas was likely caused by fire suppression and the introduction of the exotic disease, white pine blister rust (*Cronartium ribicola*).

Extent to which improvements depart from apparent naturalness

Level 1 and 2 Roads: Most roads were excluded or cherry-stemmed in the Idaho Roadless rule mapping. Table 3 shows the number of road miles for maintenance levels 1-2 (low standard) roads. In some cases, these low standard roads form the boundary between portions of two roadless areas such as East Meadow Creek and West Meadow Creek. Some roadless areas such as Pot Mountain and Weir-Post Office Creek have no roads within their border while others such as Rackliff-Gedney and West Meadow Creek and East Meadow Creek have several roads.

Forest Service administrative structures such as lookouts and guard stations: Forest Service buildings vary from historic lookouts on mountain tops, to guard stations and other administrative structures. This affects five of the roadless areas- Bighorn-Weitas, Lochsa Face, Mallard-Larkins, North Lochsa Face and Rackliff-Gedney. In some cases, the access roads and the structures are cherry-stemmed from the roadless area.

FS structures used as recreation rentals: Some wilderness advocates do not think it is appropriate to manage for recreation rentals in recommended wilderness since these uses are commercial uses that are inconsistent with designated wilderness. We have shown the current recreation rentals that are present in roadless areas. This affects 3 of the 34 roadless areas since Bighorn-Weitas has several recreation rentals either within the area or at the end of cherry-stemmed roads in to the roadless area. East Meadow Creek includes the Meadow Creek Guard Station which is currently in the reservation system but may or may not be a rental in the future. The southern end of Mallard-Larkins includes the Cold Springs Cabin, currently used as a recreation rental.

Trail Bridges: The presence of large constructed features like trail bridges can affect the undeveloped character of the area. We considered but did not include in the analysis the other trail features such as puncheons and rock walls and determined that these are more natural-appearing and blend into the landscape in a way that bridges do not. Although many visitors appreciate the access that bridges may

provide, they are obvious signs of man. About one third of the roadless areas include trail bridges, mostly the larger roadless areas that include a greater number of larger streams.

Structures permitted under special use authorizations: In addition to Forest Service structures some roadless areas have special use permits for various constructed features including domestic water lines, U.S. Geological Survey SNOTEL snow monitoring sites and electronic communications sites. Additionally, there are research plots from universities, but these generally do not have noticeable structures associated with them, so they are not included.

Timber Cutting: We reviewed google earth imagery within the roadless areas to look for signs of obvious logging and confirmed that the roadless area boundaries were primarily drawn to exclude logged areas. We then looked at timber cutting that happened since the Idaho Roadless Rule was signed in 2008. Most of the timber cutting within roadless areas since 2008 have been related to fire or post-fire activities including the construction of fire lines during fires and roadside hazard tree reduction post-fire. Since many roadless areas are bordered by roads, hazard trees have been cut along some of these roads for public safety. In addition, two community protection projects have been implemented to reduce fuels adjacent to communities in two separate roadless areas.

Community Protection Zone fuels reduction: projects have been completed in the West Fork of Crooked River roadless area, adjacent to Orogrande and in Rackliff- Gedney Roadless area, adjacent to Lowell.

Constructed Fire lines: Fire lines may be constructed in any year to protect people or resources. Some of the larger more obvious ones have been constructed in the Gospel Hump, Mallard, O'Hara-Falls Creek, Rackliff-Gedney, and West Meadow Creek during the 2015 fire season.

Roadside hazard trees: may be removed intermittently as part of ongoing road maintenance. When more extensive roadside areas are cleared of hazard trees following fire. This has affected about half of the roadside portions of roadless areas in recent years and can affect others in the future to maintain road access on open roads.

Table 3. Idaho Roadless Areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater and their apparent naturalness

Name	Administrative structures	Recreation Rentals	Level 1 and 2 Road Miles	Trail Bridges	Inventoried noxious weed acres	Community Protection Zone Project acres ¹	Fire lines in miles ^{1, 2}	Roadside hazard trees removed acres ¹
Bighorn-Weitas	2	3	4.5	4	1,868	0	0	132
Clear Creek	0	0	0.7	0	29	0	0	
Dixie Summit-Nut Hill	0	0	0.4	0	4	0	0	9
East Meadow Creek	1	1	19	4	517	0	0	15
Eldorado Creek	0	0	0.4	0	3	0	0	4
Gospel-Hump	0	0	6.2	0	242	0	5.9	43
Gospel-Hump adjacent to wilderness	0	0	0.4	0	18	0	0	0
Hoodoo	0	0	0.5	1	9	0	<0.1	69
John Day	0	0	0	0	3	0	<0.1	<1
Lick Point	0	0	0.9	0	9	0	00	0
Little Slate Creek	0	0	1.3	3	13	0	<0.1	0
Little Slate Creek North	0	0	0.2	0	8	0	0	41
Lochsa Face	1	0	0.1	5	750	0	1	27
Mallard	0	0	2.1	0	12	0	0	34
Mallard Larkins	2	1	1.1	2	714	0	0	14
Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork	0	0	0.3	0	4	0	0	0
Moose Mountain	0	0	0.4	0	616	0	0	0
North Fork Slate Creek	0	0	0	0	1,639	0	0	0
North Fork Spruce-White Sand	0	0	0	2	288	0	0	260
North Lochsa Slope	0	0	0.1	5	677	0	1.5	78
O'Hara-Falls Creek	0	0	1.2	0	739	0	0	50
Pot Mountain	0	0	0	0	1,444	0	0	0
Rackliff-Gedney	1	0	11.5	2	1,884	93	4.5	197
Rapid River	0	0	0	4	229	0	0	0
Rawhide	0	0	0	0	63	0	0	0

EIS Appendix E: Recommended Wilderness Inventory, Evaluation, and Analysis

Name	Administrative structures	Recreation Rentals	Level 1 and 2 Road Miles	Trail Bridges	Inventoried noxious weed acres	Community Protection Zone Project acres ¹	Fire lines in miles ^{1, 2}	Roadside hazard trees removed acres ¹
Salmon Face	0	0	0	0	87	0	0	0
Selway-Bitterroot	0	0	0.2	0	0	0	0	0
Silver Creek-Pilot Knob	0	0	4.5	0	22	0	0.2	0
Siwash	0	0	0.1	0	153	0	0	0
Sneakfoot Meadows	0	0	0.1	0	95	0	0.2	29
Weir-Post Office Creek	0	0	0	0	154	0	0	0
West Fork Crooked River	0	0	0.7	0	0	280	0	0
West Meadow Creek	1	0	10.7	3	459	0	11.0	192

Source: Nez Perce-Clearwater GIS data, Infrastructure database, Forest Service records and NEPA decisions.

¹Timber harvests since 2008 as allowed under the Idaho Roadless Rule

²Widths of fire lines may vary

³Lolo Creek Roadless Area is not included because it is administered by the Lolo National Forest.

Opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation

Forest Service Handbook (FSH) direction says to evaluate the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The word *or* means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor’s opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area. Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitors’ ability to feel a part of nature. Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70). Table 4 shows the factors and data we used to address the factors suggested in FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70, shown above.

Table 4. Factors used for assessing opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation and their data sources and measurement indices. ROS = Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Apparent Naturalness	Factor	Data Source	Measurement Indices
Impacts to solitude	Primitive recreation opportunity	ROS inventory	Acres as a percent of roadless area acres
Impacts to solitude	Semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity	ROS inventory	Acres as a percent of roadless area acres
Impacts to solitude	Semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity	ROS inventory	Acres as a percent of roadless area acres
Impacts to solitude	Roaded natural opportunity	ROS inventory	Acres as a percent of roadless area acres
Primitive and unconfined recreation	Recreation activities such as boatable and fishable waters	Forest information, wild and scenic rivers evaluation, Idaho Department of Fish and Game fishable waters database	Describe in individual roadless area narratives

Source: Forest team decision as to how to measure and evaluate FSH direction.

Impacts to solitude

The presence of roads and trails open to motorized use can have pervasive effects on the opportunity for solitude in roadless areas. Most roadless areas are bordered by roads, while some include roads or trails open to motorized use within their interiors.

The recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) provides a basis to measure existing conditions based on roads and trails that are open to motorized use. The higher on the primitive scale currently is more desirable for wilderness while roaded natural is the least. The ROS model includes effects from outside the roadless areas, that are adjacent or nearby. For example, Highway 12 borders several roadless areas. The highway noise and sights and sounds of the highway can affect solitude. The ROS model includes buffering one-half mile from roads and motorized trails.

Primitive and unconfined recreation

This category is based on what the landscape of the roadless area provides and is therefore best described in a narrative form. A narrative description of this category can be found within each roadless area’s narrative. It is based on what the land and waters of the roadless area provide inherently. References will be made to Nez Perce-Clearwater recreation information, Wild and Scenic Rivers eligibility recreation evaluation and Idaho Department of Fish and Game fishable water database. Table 5 below shows the percentage of each roadless area by Recreation opportunity spectrum class.

Table 5. Idaho Roadless Areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater and their opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation

Name	Primitive Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage	Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage	Semi-Primitive Motorized Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage	Roaded Natural Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage
Bighorn-Weitas	0	59.5	34.9	5.7
Clear Creek	0	74.7	8.8	16.4
Dixie Summit-Nut Hill	0	31.3	36.9	31.8
East Meadow Creek	28.6	55.7	0.4	15.3
Eldorado Creek	0	0	67.1	32.9
Gospel Hump	2.4	64.1	0	33.4
Gospel Hump adjacent to wilderness	0	15.9	0	84.1
Hoodoo	28.4	58.5	7.8	5.3
John Day	0	23.7	52.9	23.3
Lick Point	0	66.3	0	33.7
Little Slate Creek	0	19.8	44.5	35.7
Little Slate Creek North	0	0	19.0	81.1
Lochsa Face	11.5	69.9	2.1	16.5
Mallard	14.3	75.1	0	10.6
Mallard Larkins	11.7	64.5	14.5	9.3
Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork	3.9	77.1	11.8	7.1
Moose Mountain	0	67.2	4.4	28.4
North Fork Slate Creek	0	29.1	25.7	45.2
North Fork Spruce-White Sand	0.1	63.1	21.6	15.3
North Lochsa Slope	0	48.4	39.8	11.8
O’Hara-Falls Creek	0	57.5	0.0	42.5
Pot Mountain	0	58.7	22.2	19.1
Rackliff-Gedney	0.9	56.7	32.1	10.2
Rapid River	23.3	69.3	0	7.5

Name	Primitive Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage	Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage	Semi-Primitive Motorized Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage	Roaded Natural Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Percentage
Rawhide	0	53.8	0	46.2
Salmon Face	0	63.6	10.4	25.9
Selway-Bitterroot	0	51.5	0	48.5
Silver Creek-Pilot Knob	0	68.2	0	31.8
Siwash	0	30.0	44.3	25.7
Sneakfoot Meadows	0	72.0	27.4	0.5
Weir-Post Office Creek	0	70.2	11	18.8
West Fork Crooked River	0	69.2	0	30.8
West Meadow Creek	9.2	58.2	23.1	9.5

¹Lolo Creek Roadless Area is not included because it is administered by the Lolo National Forest. (Source: Nez Perce-Clearwater GIS data)

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

The Forest Service Handbook asks to “evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.” (FSH 1909.12, chapter 70)

The roadless inventory includes three areas of less than 5,000 acres- Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness, Lolo Creek and Selway-Bitterroot roadless areas. Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness roadless area is 2,400 acres, sharing 44 percent of its border with the Gospel Hump Wilderness and could be considered as an addition. Lolo Creek roadless area is adjacent to a 17,400-acre roadless area located in Montana on the Lolo National Forest. Lolo Creek is only 100 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. It is bordered by private land on one side. The Lolo National Forest does not currently recommend this area for wilderness. The 100-acre area is too small to be evaluated for wilderness on its own as part of this Land Management Plan. It could be considered in the future in conjunction with the Lolo National Forest’s roadless area. The Selway-Bitterroot roadless area is 600 acres in size but shares 59 percent of its boundary with the designated Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and could be considered for addition. See Table 1 for the size of each roadless area.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value

The Forest Service Handbook asks to “Evaluate the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist” (FSH 1909.12, chapter 70). Such features or values may include:

6. Rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems. Rare can be determined locally, regionally, nationally, or within the system of protected designations.
7. Outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies or geologic features.
8. Historic and cultural resource sites (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25U.S.C. 3056))
9. Research natural areas
10. “High quality water resources or important watershed features” (FSH 1909.12, chapter 70)

Table 6 shows what data we used to address the suggested factors from FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70, above.

Table 6. Factors used for assessing ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value and their data sources and measurement indices

Ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value	Factor	Data Source	Measurement Indices
Rare plant communities or ecosystems	Ecological Representation at national scale	The Wilderness Society paper, (Dietz et al. 2015)	Acres contributed to <20% represented as a percent of roadless areas.
Rare plant communities or ecosystems	Whitebark pine	(Landguth et al. 2017)	Acres
Outstanding landscape features	Designated wild and scenic rivers	IFF and Forest records	Acres of designated WSR corridors
Outstanding landscape features	Waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies or geologic features	Forest records, WSR inventory	Describe in each roadless area narrative
Historical and cultural sites	Occurrence of Potential National Register Districts or known sacred sites	Forest heritage records	Yes or no
Historical and cultural sites	Number of historic themes	Forest heritage records	Actual number
Research Natural Areas	Existing RNAs	Idaho Roadless Rule and forest records	acres
High Quality water resources and important watershed features	Water quality	State of Idaho IDEQ data	Categories 4A and 5A stream miles per roadless area.
High Quality water resources and important watershed features	Watershed Condition Class	Watershed Condition Framework	Class 1,2 and 3 watersheds

Source: Forest team decision as to how to measure and evaluate FSH direction.

Rare plant communities or ecosystems

Underrepresented ecosystems: We considered using specific habitats for various individual species, but data on some species are limited. The exception to this is whitebark pine which we did call out as a specific species. We chose to consider a more comprehensive review of whether an area includes

ecosystems that are underrepresented in the National Wilderness System. Consideration of ecosystem representation as a criterion for designating wilderness dates back to the Forest Service' second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) in 1978 (Cordell 2012).

The Wilderness Society paper (Dietz et al. 2015) on underrepresented ecosystems in the Wilderness Preservation System evaluates how well a variety of ecosystems are represented nationally, regionally and at the forest level. This new science, developed for Forest Planning, models how many acres each roadless area could contribute to each ecosystem. Of particular concern are areas represented at less than twenty percent nationally. We measured how much each roadless area could contribute to increasing representation of an underrepresented ecosystem.

The following is a list of the twenty-four ecosystems that are nationally underrepresented and found on the Nez Perce-Clearwater based on The Wilderness Society data.

- a. Columbia Basin Foothill and Canyon Dry Grassland
- b. Columbia Basin Foothill Riparian Woodland and Shrubland
- c. Columbia Plateau Steppe and Grassland
- d. Harvested Forest - Grass and Forb Regeneration
- e. Harvested Forest - Northwestern Conifer Regeneration
- f. Harvested Forest-Shrub Regeneration
- g. Inter-Mountain Basins Aspen-Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland
- h. Inter-Mountain Basins Big Sagebrush Steppe
- i. Inter-Mountain Basins Curl-leaf Mountain Mahogany Woodland and Shrubland
- j. Inter-Mountain Basins Montane Sagebrush Steppe
- k. North American Arid West Emergent Marsh
- l. Northern Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest
- m. Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane Riparian Woodland and Shrubland
- n. Northern Rocky Mountain Lower Montane, Foothill and Valley Grassland
- o. Northern Rocky Mountain Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest
- p. Northern Rocky Mountain Montane-Foothill Deciduous Shrubland
- q. Northern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland and Savanna
- r. Open Water (Fresh)
- s. Rocky Mountain Aspen Forest and Woodland
- t. Rocky Mountain Foothill Limber Pine-Juniper Woodland
- u. Rocky Mountain Lodgepole Pine Forest
- v. Rocky Mountain Lower Montane Riparian Woodland and Shrubland
- w. Rocky Mountain Subalpine-Montane Fen
- x. Rocky Mountain Subalpine-Montane Riparian Woodland

Whitebark pine: We specifically called out whitebark pine because of its ecological importance and its value in scenery. It is also a species at risk. Since we don't have site specific data specifically for this species, we used a model developed by Zachary Holden, a Forest Service ecologist that is accurate in predicting where whitebark pine can grow (Landguth et al. 2017). There is currently a national debate within the Forest Service of how to best continue the presence of this species on the landscape due to disease.

Outstanding landscape features

Designated Wild and Scenic: River corridors are present in portions of seven roadless areas. All of the designated wild and scenic rivers (WSR) on Nez Perce-Clearwater include an outstandingly remarkable value of scenery. WSR corridors extend approximately one-quarter mile on each side of the river or approximately 320 acres per mile of WSR. The Rapid River roadless area encompasses all of the Rapid River WSR, with 4,300 acres running through the core of the roadless area. Lochsa Face, North Lochsa Slope and Post Office-Weir Creek roadless areas include scenic portions of the Lochsa River WSR corridor. O’Hara Falls Creek, Rackliff-Gedney and West Meadow Creek roadless areas include portions of the Selway River WSR corridor. Other landscape features will be described in the individual narratives for each roadless area.

Waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features: These features will be described in each roadless area narrative where outstanding examples of these features occur.

Historical and Cultural Sites

Two factors were used to identify potential historic values inherent within each roadless area. These factors were meant to capture significance associated with the human story of each roadless area regardless of cultural affiliation. These two factors are:

- Occurrence of potential national register district(s), or known sacred sites, and
- Number of historic themes

Each of the aforementioned are defined as:

National register district: A national register district possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development; examples include industrial complexes, rural villages, large farms or ranches, or large grouping of themed sites.

Sacred site: is any specific, discrete, narrowly delineated location on federal land that is identified by an Indian tribe, or Indian individual determined to be an appropriately authoritative representative of an Indian religion, as sacred by virtue of its established religious significance to, or ceremonial use by, an Indian religion.

Historic theme: is a given subtopic of the larger human story resulting from similar activities, or common ways in which the landscape was used or developed.

Table 7 lists historic themes typical of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Table 7. Historic themes on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and the potential site types associated with them

Historic Theme	Potential Site Type
American Indian Use	Artifact scatters, lithic procurement sites, rock-art, camps, villages, fishing sites, rock cairns, areas of traditional importance, peeled tree groves, trails etc.
Back Country Aviation	Airstrips and crash sites
Chinese Sojourners	Habitation features, artifact scatters and mining features
Civilian Conservation Corps	Ranger stations, camps, public campgrounds, bridges, roads, trails, and fire lookouts

Historic Theme	Potential Site Type
Conflict - Western Frontier	Camp sites along the Lolo Trail
Exploration and Fur Trade	Camp sites along the Lolo Trail
Fire Detection	Fire lookout stations
Forest Service Administrative History	Administrative sites, smoke jumping, and telecommunication lines
Homesteading and Ranching	Buildings, structures, orchards, and artifact scatters
Hydroelectric Development	Dams
Incarceration	Internee camps and prison camps
Lands	Boundary/survey markers
Logging and Lumbering	Railroad grades, flumes, splash dams, camps, middens, and artifact scatters
Mining	Townsites, placer mines, load mines, ditches, mills, building, structures, dams, cemeteries etc.
Missionary Period	Camp sites along the Southern Nez Perce Trail
Outdoor Recreation	Developed or dispersed camps, motorways, and artifact scatters
Range Management	Cabins, stock driveways, corrals, and watering stations
Settlement - Local	Schools and middens
Transportation	Roads, trails, bridges, and waystations
Trapping	Martin sets, cabins and line shacks

Source: Heritage resource managers on Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Five roadless areas have either a potential national register district or known sacred site. They include Bighorn-Weitas; North Lochsa Slope; North Fork Slate Creek; Rackliff-Gedney; and Silver Creek-Pilot Knob.

Most of the roadless areas have at least one theme except for three of the smaller roadless areas- Clear Creek, Gospel Hump adjacent to Wilderness and Rawhide which have no historic themes. North Lochsa Slope roadless area has eight themes, the greatest number while Bighorn-Weitas has seven themes and Rackliff-Gedney has five themes.

Detailed information concerning the nature and location of historic properties is considered confidential and not for public disclosure (36 CFR 296.18).

Research Natural Areas

The Idaho Roadless Rule (IRR) includes a designation of Land Management Plan Special Areas. These are primarily research natural areas and designated wild and scenic areas. Research Natural Areas represent unique habitats within the national forest that are designated for study. Generally, these are relatively small areas of several hundred to several thousand acres. The locations of these are displayed on the roadless areas maps and described in the individual narrative describing each roadless area.

High Quality water resources or important watershed features

Water Quality

Water Quality is fundamentally important to wilderness, so we thought it was important to understand the current condition of water quality. The status of Idaho's waters is documented in the State of Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) 303(d) and 305(b) 2014 Integrated Report. This report

rates each stream reach into one of five categories from 1-5 with one having the best water quality. Since most streams on Nez Perce-Clearwater have high water quality, we focused on how many miles are not supporting beneficial uses. Category 4A streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses but have a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plan in place. Category 5 streams are considered “303(d)” listed and do not meet applicable water quality standards for one or more pollutants and therefore do not support beneficial uses. A TMDL plan must be developed to address pollutants of concern. All of the impaired streams in roadless areas are due to high water temperatures. Fourteen of the thirty-four roadless areas include one or more stream reaches in category 4A and three roadless areas included stream reaches in category 5. For more detailed information see *Water Quality Assessment for Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Roadless Areas* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed Condition Class

Watershed Condition is the state of the physical and biological characteristics and processes within a watershed that affect the hydrologic and soil functions supporting aquatic ecosystems. Watershed condition reflects a range of variability from natural pristine, functioning properly to degraded (severely altered state or impaired). Watershed condition classification is the process of describing watershed condition in terms of discrete classes that reflect the level of watershed health or integrity. The three watershed condition classes are:

1. Class 1: Functioning properly
2. Class 2: Functioning at risk
3. Class 3: Impaired function

Watershed condition class was identified for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds located within roadless areas. Class 1 condition ratings were found in nine of the roadless areas: East Meadow Creek, Mallard Larkins, Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork, Moose Mountain, Pot Mountain, Rackliff-Gedney, Rawhide, Selway-Bitterroot, and Sneakfoot Meadows. A Class 1 watershed in properly functioning condition has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes and is resilient and able to recover to the desired condition when disturbed by large natural disturbances or land management activities (Yount and Niemi 1990).

The other roadless areas had portions of subwatersheds with Class 2 ratings. A Class 2 watershed is in fair condition, but functioning at risk for one or more indicators, such as impaired waters, water quality problems, poor channel conditions, stream flow departure, large wood debris, riparian vegetation condition, aquatic invasive species, open road density and road miles in close proximity to water outside of the roadless, roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area, soil erosion, soil contamination, terrestrial invasive plants, and high tree mortality from insects and disease.

Silver Creek-Pilot Knob and Dixie Summit-Nut Hill had portions of subwatersheds with Class 3 ratings. A Class 3 watershed has impaired function because a threshold of one of the indicators has been exceeded.

Table 8 summarizes the data that was compiled related to ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical values.

Table 8. Idaho Roadless Areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater and their ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Name	Ecosystem under-representation percent	RNA acres	Whitebark pine acres	NRV departure percent	Potential National Register district or known sacred sites	Historic theme numbers	WSR acres	4A Stream Miles	5A Stream Miles	WCF ³ 1	WCF ³ 2	WCF ³ 3	Not Class
Bighorn-Weitas	62.7	400	1,100	39	Yes	7	0	35.4	0	35	5	0	0
Clear Creek	99.5	0	0	61	No	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Dixie Summit-Nut Hill	20.8	1,000	11,334	8	No	1	0	11.9	0	2	5	1	0
East Meadow Creek	67.7	500	24,722	29 ²	No	2	0	0	0	15	0	0	2
Eldorado Creek	79.6	0	0	62	No	1	0	9.1	0	3	4	0	0
Gospel Hump	73.9	0	4,570	36	No	3	0	9.7	0	4	1	0	2
Gosepel Hump adjacent to wilderness	70.3	0	426	44	No	0	0	1.5	0	3	1	0	1
Hoodoo	41.8	0	17,409	27	No	4	0	18.4	0	15	5	0	0
John Day	53.8	0	2,841	28	No	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0
Lick Point	98.3	0	0	59	No	1	0	18.9	0	1	1	0	0
Little Slate Creek	61.8	1,200	1,927	54	No	2	0	0	0	1	4	0	0
Little Slate Creek North	98.2	200	0	74	No	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
Lochsa Face	62.0	0	5,550	57	No	3	8,000	0	41.4	20	5	0	0
Mallard	38.5	0	9,319	31 ²	No	1	0	0.2	0	3	1	0	0
Mallard Larkins	56.6	0	2,159	33	No	4	0	5.6	0	25	0	0	4
Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork	41.4	0	1,159	29	No	3	0	0	0	9	0	0	0
Moose Mountain	54.5	0	571	24	No	3	0	0	0	7	1	0	0
North Fork Slate Creek	92.4	0	0	31	Yes	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0

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Name	Ecosystem under-representation percent	RNA acres	Whitebark pine acres	NRV departure percent	Potential National Register district or known sacred sites	Historic theme numbers	WSR acres	4A Stream Miles	5A Stream Miles	WCF ³ 1	WCF ³ 2	WCF ³ 3	Not Class
North Fork Spruce-White Sand	66.0	0	4,776	36	No	1	0	0	0	13	3	0	0
North Lochsa Slope	72.8	1,300	25	37	Yes	8	4,500	0	6.1	32	5	0	0
O'Hara-Falls Creek	97.3	0	241	57 ²	No	1	2,900	0	0	8	2	0	0
Pot Mountain	70.8	6,500	808	41	No	4	0	2.4	0	5	0	0	0
Rackliff-Gedney	86.0	100	757	41 ²	Yes	5	5,500	0	29.9	30	2	0	0
Rapid River	74.7	0	0	21	No	3	4,300	0	0	2	3	0	2
Rawhide	41.4	0	106	13	No	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
Salmon Face	61.3	0	0	33	No	1	0	0	0	2	3	0	0
Selway-Bitterroot	31.7	0	404	5	No	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Silver Creek-Pilot Knob	89.8	0	371	56	Yes	4	0	53.2	0	2	5	1	0
Siwash	84.9	0	0	52	No	3	0	1.7	0	2	1	0	0
Sneakfoot Meadows	36.4	2,000	5,446	35	No	1	0	0	0	14	0	0	0
Weir-Post Office Creek	62.4	0	327	48	No	3	500	0	0	8	2	0	0
West Fork Crooked River	64.0	0	3,519	53	No	1	0	16.5	0	2	1	0	0
West Meadow Creek	78.3	0	13,772	43	No	4	300	50.6	0	13	6	0	0

1Lolo Creek Roadless Area is not included because it is administered by the Lolo National Forest.

2These roadless areas were largely affected by fires in 2013 and 2015. The extent to which these fires changed departure from NRV is unknown.

3Watershed Condition Framework

Source: Various data sources discussed in Table 6

Manageability to preserve its wilderness characteristics

The Forest Handbook asks the Nez Perce-Clearwater to “evaluate the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics”. Consider such factors as:

1. Shape and configuration of the area;
2. Legally established rights or uses within the area;
3. Specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics;
4. The presence and amount of non-Federal land in the area; and
5. Management of adjacent lands.

Table 9. Factors used for assessing manageability and boundaries and their data sources and measurement indices

Manageability and Boundaries	Item	Source	Measurement Indices
Boundary shape	Ratio of boundary to area	GIS calculation	Linear feet of boundary: square feet of area
Legally established rights or uses	Mining claims	BLM minerals database	# of mining claims per roadless area
Specific federal or state Laws precluding wilderness	Laws	Laws	# of laws identified
Presence and amount of non-federal lands and adjacent lands management	--	GIS calculation	% bordering wilderness % bordering roadless % bordering front country, including other Federal lands % bordering state or private
History of motorized use ¹	Over-snow	Forest records, cooperatively managed groomed routes, Idaho State Snowmobiling Association Maps	Yes or no Describe in narrative
History of motorized use ¹	Wheeled motorized	Forest records	Trail miles open to motorized use prior to travel planning H=High (41+ miles) M=Medium (21-40 miles) L=Low (6 to 20 trail miles) VL=Very Low (0 to 5 trail miles)
Emerging mountain bike use ¹	Mountain biking	Public comment	Yes or no Describe in narrative

¹These factors were added by the forest based on its local importance. It was not listed in FSH 1909.12 chapter 70 in the suggested list of factors to consider.

Source: Forest team decision as to how to measure and evaluate FSH direction.

Shape and configuration of the area

We developed this factor to compare the length of the perimeter of the boundary to the size of the area. Our assumption that a more irregular boundary is more difficult to manage. Where there are roads cherry-stemmed or an inholding, we included as part of the total boundary. Our assumption is that larger areas

would have lower ratios than smaller areas would have higher ratios. Also, areas with irregular boundaries with many convolutions or with cherry-stemmed roads would have increased boundary length and higher ratios. We measured this in ft. /sq. ft. The ratios varied from a low of 4:1 to a high of 50:1. Bighorn-Weitas, the largest roadless area on Nez Perce-Clearwater has the lowest ratio 4:1. Pot Mountain, an average-sized roadless area has a very regular, almost circular boundary and despite its modest size, has a 5:1 ratio. Smaller areas such as Clear Creek, Salmon Face, and Little Slate Creek have much higher ratios due to their smaller sizes and irregular boundaries. The overall shape and configuration of the areas will be displayed on the map and described in text in the narrative for each roadless area.

Legally established rights or uses within the area

Mining Claims: There are numerous unpatented mining claims on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. Patented mining claims are those that have become private lands and are included below. The areas that have a high density of claims are likely to have ongoing assessment work related to the claims. The 1872 Mining Law allows for exploration and development of minerals. Areas with a high density of claims tend to be in historic mining districts, which continue to be open to mineral entry. A recent review found a total of 318 total mining claims in seven of the roadless areas. The Gospel Hump Roadless Area has 177 mining claims and West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area has 82 claims. More than 80 percent of the mining claims located in these two roadless areas to the east of the Gospel Hump Wilderness. Five other roadless areas have a small number of mining claims including Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Hoodoo, Moose Mountain, Bighorn-Weitas and Mallard-Larkins.

Specific federal or state laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics

No federal or state laws have been identified by the Forest Service or the public which would preclude a specific roadless area from being recommended for wilderness. We considered other laws and uses, such as the 1872 Mining Law described above. Additional claims could be staked while an area is managed under interim management. The Wilderness Act provides for management by State Fish and Game agencies in designated wilderness. Interim management under the Land Management Plan components for recommended wilderness would also provide for Idaho Department of Fish and Game management.

There are approximately 250 existing water rights within roadless areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater. Wilderness designation does not affect existing water rights. A wilderness bill signed into law in the future bears that future priority date, junior to all existing water rights. Thus, wilderness water rights do not supplant other, more senior rights. In addition, wilderness water rights apply only to unappropriated water. A wilderness water right only ensures that when water is available, wilderness gets its fair share. Wilderness water rights are in-stream flow rights. They are not consumptive water rights, meaning that the water flows through wilderness, and then flows out, unpolluted, and available for other uses. In sum, wilderness water rights fully respect other water rights on the stream. They cannot disrupt existing rights, facilities, or project operations. Water quality is generally high in roadless areas and would be expected to remain so in recommended wilderness. Diverting water on the National Forest generally requires authorization under special use authorities.

Presence and amount of non-federal lands and management of adjacent lands

We considered these two factors together to consider how much of each roadless area shares boundaries with other ownerships, including private lands. Management of adjacent lands can be a key factor in manageability for wilderness and measured this by percent of boundary with adjacent lands. We initially considered a point factor with high ratings for adjacent to wilderness or recommended wilderness and

lower points for adjacent to front country or private lands. We decided to simply show the percentage for each type of adjoining lands bordering each of the roadless areas in the inventory.

Percent designated wilderness or currently recommended wilderness bordering the roadless area

A recommended wilderness boundary that adjoins an existing wilderness does not create additional manageability challenges. Likewise, if it adjoins another forest's recommended wilderness such as Hoodoo and Mallard-Larkins. If there is an open road in between, there is not a benefit to manageability.

Percent of other roadless areas bordering the roadless area

Management of adjoining roadless areas are more similar than other federal lands but may likely involve some motorized use. They are less similar in management than designated wilderness or recommended wilderness.

Described in text in the individual recommended wilderness reports are descriptions of the current Idaho Roadless Rule Area theme. These themes are used in this evaluation only as a description of the existing condition and as a factor in the manageability of the area. Idaho Roadless Rule themes do not constrain or pre-determine the evaluation other than being one of several factors in the manageability portion of the evaluation. Current Idaho Roadless Rule Themes are not weighted higher in the evaluation than any other factor.

Percent of front country roaded and other federal lands bordering the roadless area

Management of general front country forest or BLM lands can have effects because of the sights and sounds of managed forest areas, more developed and more frequent roads, and more aggressive firefighting to protect other resource values.

Percent of private or state lands bordering the roadless area

Sharing a boundary with private or state lands increases manageability challenges, because of the obligation to protect adjacent lands and forests from wildfires. Private lands particularly when they are subdivided into smaller parcels may increase the demand for National Forest System lands for access and utilities. When the Idaho Roadless Rule areas were mapped, most private lands were excluded from the interior of roadless areas, although some private lands border roadless areas, particularly where the roadless area extends to the National Forest boundary. We determined there was only one true inholding that is completely enclosed within a roadless area boundary. That is in the Meadow Creek Upper North Fork Roadless Area which will be described in the narrative description for that roadless area.

History of motorized use

The current travel planning decisions were made to conform to the requirements of the 1987 Forest Plans for the Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests. The Land Management Plan may reconsider some of the assumptions of the previous plans and may recommend different roadless areas for recommended wilderness. This could set up a different framework for future travel management decisions. Once motorized uses are established in an area it is difficult to change recreational access through management. Although established motorized use does not preclude consideration it presents a management challenge.

Snowmobiling: Much of the motorized over-snow recreational use on Nez Perce-Clearwater is associated with high elevation parking areas and groomed snowmobile trail systems. Three well-established grooming programs on the national forest operate in partnership with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho, Clearwater and Missoula counties and local snowmobile clubs in areas adjacent to or

near roadless areas. These areas are near Pierce, at Lolo Pass and the Elk City or Dixie area. Generally, there are not groomed snowmobile trails within roadless areas, but the groomed routes form the boundaries of roadless areas and access meadows and other open areas. Not all riders follow groomed trails, but these tend to be located in areas with dependable snow. People may begin on groomed routes and span out to other areas that are accessible for their technical level and that of their machines. Extensive forest fires have created more open areas along some of these routes. There are generally not restrictions on cross country travel by snowmobiles as there are for wheeled vehicles. Some of the use is opportunistic and limited by terrain.

At the North end of Nez Perce-Clearwater, snowmobilers have traditionally accessed the Hoodoo Roadless Area from the Montana side of Hoodoo Pass, near Superior, Montana. The Lolo Motorway, FR500, is a groomed trail that accesses the high country of both the Bighorn-Weitas and North Lochsa Slope roadless areas. In the Lolo Pass area, snowmobilers have traditionally accessed the south end of the Hoodoo roadless area plus the North Fork Spruce-White Sand and Sneakfoot Meadows roadless areas. In the Elk City and Dixie vicinity, groomed routes allow access to open areas in the Dixie-Summit Nut Hill, Gospel Hump, Mallard Creek, Lick Point, O'Hara-Falls Creek and Pilot Knob roadless areas. Although the groomed areas form the nucleus of this use, snowmobilers may ride other places depending on snow conditions, terrain, and forest cover.

Wheeled vehicles: Motorized travel has been established in a number of roadless areas over time. Much of this travel is single track with a relatively small amount of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail use. ATV and utility terrain vehicle (UTV) use tends to be associated more with lower standard roads, since fewer trails in roadless areas have been designed for ATV and UTV use. For this section we looked at the pre-travel planning trail miles and categorized the historical motorized opportunity as very low (0-5 miles), low (6-20 miles), moderate (21-40 miles) and high (41+ miles) based on miles of trail opportunity, not on use. Because trail use by motorcycles and to a lesser extent ATVs has been widespread throughout the national forest, we do not have site-specific use data to consider. Using a range of past motorized trail opportunity provides some reflection of this use. Some areas have very few trails overall.

Emerging mountain bicycle use

This factor was added based on public comment requesting that mountain bicycles be considered separately from motorized uses. Although mountain bicycles may be considered in recommended wilderness areas, they are a non-conforming use in designated wilderness. They are noted in Table 10 with a subjective ranking from very low to high. Specific locations are described in the individual narratives.

Table 10 shows the data for the manageability and boundaries criteria.

Table 10. Idaho Roadless Areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater and their manageability and boundaries evaluation

Name	Adjacent Lands: Wilderness	Adjacent Lands: Roadless	Adjacent Lands: Front Country	Adjacent Lands: State or Private	Ratio of boundary to area in feet per square feet	Legally established uses: Mining claim numbers	Legally established uses: Percentage of area in grazing allotment	Known Motorized Use: Over-snow	Known Motorized Use: Wheeled
Bighorn-Weitas	0%	42%	58%	0%	4:1	3	0%	yes	H
Clear Creek	0%	0%	93%	7%	14:1	0	97%	no	VL
Dixie Summit-Nut Hill	0%	0%	100%	0%	7:1	27	0%	yes	L
East Meadow Creek	61%	39%	0%	0%	5:1	0	0%	no	L
Eldorado Creek	0%	14%	88%	0%	19:1	0	2%	no	L
Gospel Hump	20%	20%	60%	0%	10:1	177	19%	yes	VL
Gospel Hump adjacent to wilderness	44%	25%	31%	0%	50:1	0	0%	no	VL
Hoodoo	0%	58%	42%	0%	5:1	7	0%	yes	H
John Day	0%	15%	60%	25%	12:1	0	100%	no	L
Lick Point	0%	17%	83%	0%	12:1	0	98%	yes	VL
Little Slate Creek	0%	23%	77%	0%	23:1	0	81%	no	L
Little Slate Creek North	0%	32%	68%	0%	16:1	0	1%	no	L
Lochsa Face	45%	31%	24%	0%	6:1	0	0%	no	L
Mallard	48%	8%	45%	0%	8:1	0	63%	yes	VL
Mallard Larkins	0%	39%	58%	3%	6:1	1	0%	no	M
Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork	0%	57%	43%	0%	5:1	0	0%	no	VL
Moose Mountain	0%	65%	35%	0%	8:1	21	0%	no	VL
North Fork Slate Creek	0%	14%	74%	12%	12:1	0	100%	no	L
North Fork Spruce-White Sand	47%	17%	36%	0%	12:1	0	0%	yes	L
North Lochsa Slope	6%	55%	39%	0%	5:1	0	0%	no	H
O'Hara-Falls Creek	0%	19%	81%	0%	10:1	0	14%	no	L
Pot Mountain	0%	51%	49%	0%	5:1	0	0%	no	M
Rackliff-Gedney	39%	36%	25%	0%	5:1	0	0%	no	M

EIS Appendix E: Recommended Wilderness Inventory, Evaluation, and Analysis

Name	Adjacent Lands: Wilderness	Adjacent Lands: Roadless	Adjacent Lands: Front Country	Adjacent Lands: State or Private	Ratio of boundary to area in feet per square feet	Legally established uses: Mining claim numbers	Legally established uses: Percentage of area in grazing allotment	Known Motorized Use: Over-snow	Known Motorized Use: Wheeled
Rapid River	28%	23%	49%	0%	7:1	0	100%	no	VL
Rawhide	0%	75%	25%	0%	15:1	0	0%	no	VL
Salmon Face	30%	2%	68%	0%	16:1	0	99%	no	VL
Selway-Bitterroot	59%	0%	41%	0%	41:1	0	0%	no	L
Silver Creek-Pilot Knob	0%	0%	100%	0%	8:1	0	100%	no	L
Siwash	0%	38%	62%	0%	13:1	0	0%	no	L
Sneakfoot Meadows	37%	49%	14%	0%	8:1	0	0%	yes	L
Weir-Post Office Creek	0%	31%	69%	0%	8:1	0	0%	no	L
West Fork Crooked River	31%	0%	69%	<1%	12:1	82	0%	no	L
West Meadow Creek	6%	36%	57%	1%	6:1	0	17%	yes	H

¹Lolo Creek Roadless Area is not included because it is administered by the Lolo National Forest.

² As a percentage of boundary miles

Source: Various data sources discussed in Table 9.

Idaho Roadless Rule Area Evaluations

Bighorn-Weitas Roadless Area

General Description

The Bighorn-Weitas Roadless Area spanning 254,800 acres is the largest roadless area lying entirely within the boundary of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. It is located between the North Fork Clearwater on the north to the ridge that divides the North Fork from the Lochsa River. The west boundary is about 70 air miles east of Lewiston, Idaho, and the east boundary is approximately 50 air miles west of Missoula, Montana. Except for two major intrusions of roads and timber sales, the roadless area is relatively contiguous extending about 35 miles east west and averaging about 14 miles wide.

Access to the area is good. Along the north side, access is via the graveled Pierce-Superior Road #250 and the Kelly Creek Road #255. Access along the northeast and south side is from the low-standard, Toboggan Ridge Road #581 and the Lolo Motorway #500. These roads are open generally from July to early October. The Lean-to Ridge/Cook Mountain Road #555 is also a very low-standard, dirt road accessible only during good weather July through September.

Interior access is via upwards of 300 miles of low-standard, fire control and administrative trails. Many of these trails, because of low use and limited funding, receive only light, intermittent maintenance.

The area lies within two major drainages, Weitas Creek and Cayuse Creek, as well as a number of streams draining into the North Fork of the Clearwater River and Kelly Creek. Both major drainages have some sections of narrow but flat stream bottoms with some meandering sections in Cayuse Creek. Many of the smaller streams have steeper gradients, V-shaped channel bottoms, and extremely steep side slopes. The Cook Mountain area, lying between Weitas and Cayuse Creek consists of generally rolling upland landforms with wide ridges. Scenic views, while not necessarily outstanding, are pleasing.

Elevations are midrange varying from 7,100 feet at Rock Garden to an average of 5,500 feet for most other peaks. Stream bottom elevations range from 2,400 feet at the mouth of Weitas, but generally average about 3,200 to 4,000 feet in elevation.

The area is underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho batholith. Included in the area are small, isolated blocks of gneiss belonging to the Precambrian Wallace formation and smaller blocks of rhyolite and border zone gneiss. Mountain tops are rounded and deeply weathered with few exceptions such as Lunde Ridge. There are relatively few, large areas of exposed rocky and barren ground.

The area is dominantly cedar-hemlock-pine forest with a small interior section of western spruce-fir between Cook Mountain and Raspberry Butte. Vegetation varies from carex and beargrass on high elevation, south slopes to grand fir and western red cedar types at lower elevations. Large forest fires in the early 1900's had a major influence on the present vegetation with much of the area being covered with even-aged stands of lodgepole pine at higher elevations and mixed stands of other conifers at lower elevations. Large areas of brush fields and grass meadows still exist within the conifer stands. Many of the brush fields are below 4,000 feet elevation where they are used by big game as winter forage.

The area is used by people for dispersed recreation, primarily hunting and fishing. Elk is the predominant big game species. Fishing, especially for westslope cutthroat trout in the Cayuse drainage under a catch-and-release regulation, is another major attraction.

The cultural history of the Lolo Trail, Lewis and Clark route and Lolo Motorway forming the southern boundary is a key attraction for history buffs and provides access to the high country of the roadless area.

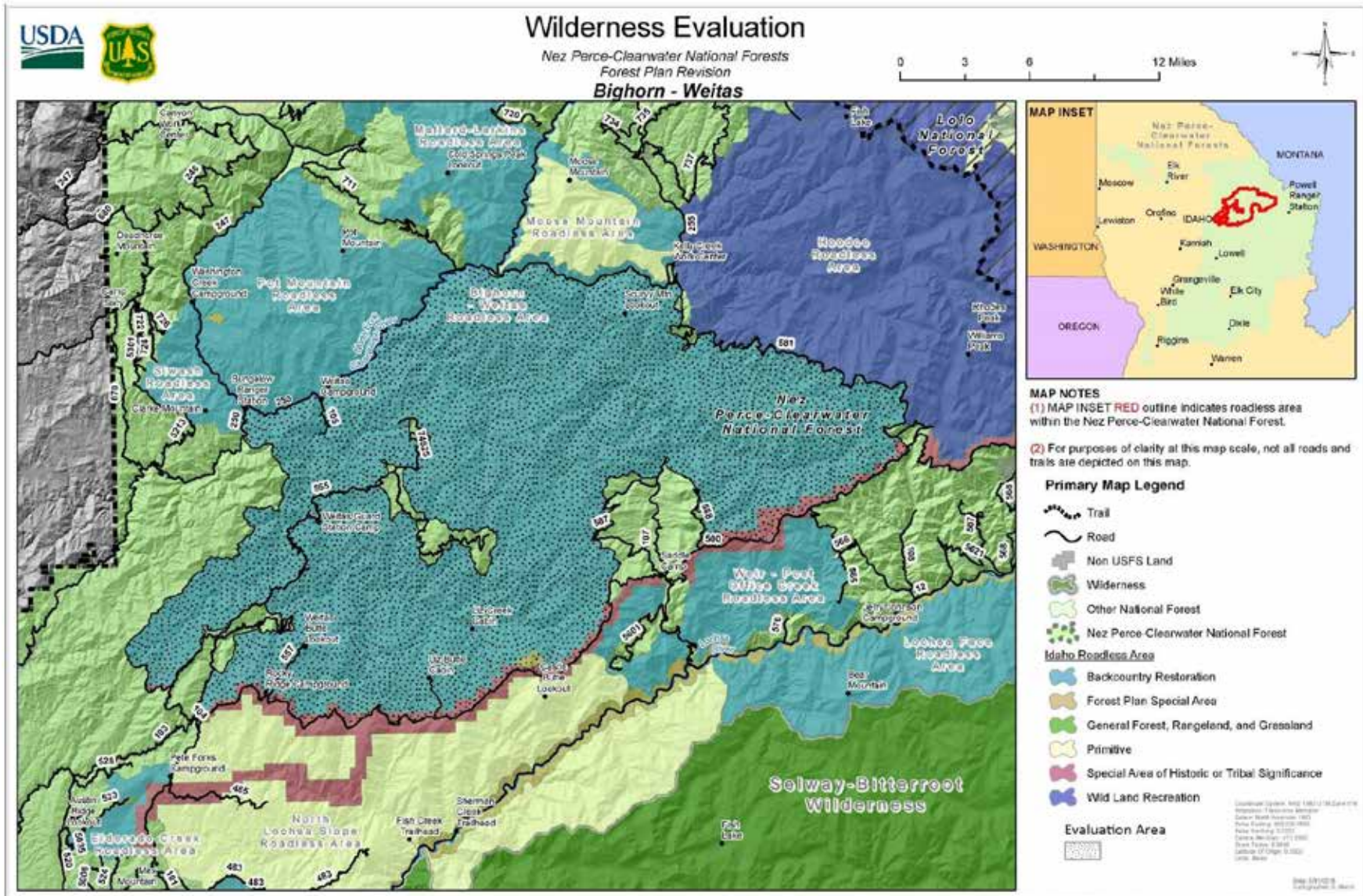


Figure 1. Roadless Area Map

Apparent Naturalness

With a few exceptions, the natural integrity and appearance of the Bighorn-Weitas areas have not been altered.

There are no grazing allotments that overlap the roadless area. The national forest weeds inventory shows 1,868 acres of known weeds in this area. This is primarily spotted knapweed along roads and trails. Additionally, one acre of yellow toadflax and 4.5 acres of diffuse knapweed are present with a management objective of eradication. The remainder are miscellaneous weeds primarily along roads and trails.

The vegetation in most of the area (61 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).



Figure 2. Weitas Butte Lookout

The Lean-to-Ridge Road separates the Hemlock Creek drainage from the rest of the area. Three, short, low-standard fire lookout roads totaling 4.5 miles penetrate the area from the Lolo Motorway. There are three historic lookout towers and two other cabins. Other than Scurvy Mountain, the tallest, they are not visible from a great distance due to topography and vegetation. See Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, and Figure 5.



Figure 3. Liz Butte Cabin



Figure 4. Scurvy Mountain Lookout



Figure 5. Liz Creek Cabin

There are four trail bridges along Weitas Creek and its tributaries. These are obvious structures built by man which some people view as intrusions and others accept as a necessary part of a trail system. They function both for user convenience and resource protection. Without bridges people may ford streams, cross wet areas, or avoid areas at higher water levels.

The roadless area boundary was drawn in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule to exclude most past timber harvest, but this area is within the exterior boundary of the roadless area. Since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule, 132 acres of post-fire roadside hazard tree cutting has occurred up to 200 feet either side of roads. This would be obvious to forest visitors in those areas.

Special Use permitted structures- A SNOTEL site, Crater Meadows, Figure 6 operated by U.S. Geological Service (USGS) is located within the boundaries of the roadless area. This site is obviously human made, but small in scale and fairly unobtrusive except at close range. See Figure 6.



Figure 6. Crater Meadows SNOTEL site

Opportunities for Solitude & Primitive & Unconfined Recreation

Although the area has cherry-stemmed roads and intrusions, the very large size of the roadless areas provides for semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities in 59 percent of the area in the core of the roadless area. The network of trails opens to motorized travel, mostly two-wheeled, provides a semi-primitive motorized opportunity in 35 percent of the area. These same trails are increasingly popular for mountain biking. Figure 7 shows the relative proportions of the recreation opportunity spectrum classes in the area.

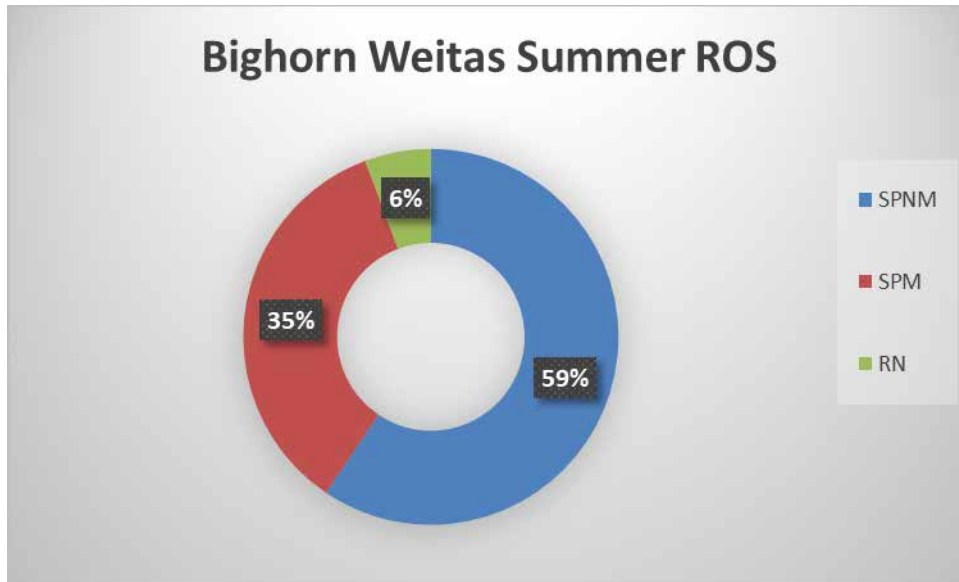


Figure 7. Bighorn Weitas Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum. SPNM = semi-primitive non-motorized recreation, SPM = semi-primitive motorized, RN = roaded natural

The size and rectangular shape of the area tends to promote solitude. The two major drainages and six tributary systems and generally wide and rounded ridges isolate users effectively. There are numerous trails in creek bottoms and on ridges which tends to disperse people. Additional dispersion is gained because access to these trails is good from the many miles of road surrounding the area.

The great diversity of topography and extensive areas of dense vegetation of trees and shrubs further isolates visitors from each other. Once the visitor is a short distance from a heavily used trail or an adjacent or intruding road, there is a definite feeling of being in a natural area.

Because of the moderate elevations in comparison to higher surrounding areas, outside viewing opportunities are very limited thereby minimizing visual disturbances from adjacent activities. The Cayuse airstrip (officially a backcountry emergency field) near the boundary accommodates fly-in fishermen and hunters during the summer and early fall resulting in noise and visual distraction up to a mile away.

Hiking, backpacking, primitive camping, photography, horseback riding, hunting, stream fishing and mountain biking are the key dispersed recreation. Trails, even though many are low standard, provide the major means of access since cross-country travel is very difficult due to dense vegetation and rugged terrain. Several outfitters pack big-game hunters into the area each fall to hunt elk, deer, and bears. The Bighorn Weitas Roadless area includes five high mountain lakes- Junction, Rocky Ridge, Scurvy, Bald Mountain and Cayuse Lakes. In addition to ecological and wildlife values, lakes are a natural destination for people whether for fishing, camping and scenic views. All are relatively small nondescript lakes, less than 5 acres. Junction Lake is the only lake that is routinely stocked with fish, most recently with cutthroat trout in 2015. Rocky Ridge Lake is just off Road #500 - the Lolo Motorway. Junction Lake and Scurvy Lakes are located at the headwaters of Junction Creek and Scurvy Creeks both tributary to the North Fork Clearwater River. Bald Mountain Lake at the headwaters of Fro Creek, tributary to Weitas Creek was last stocked with fish in 1982 with arctic grayling, a non-native fish. Rocky Ridge Lake was last stocked in 1982 with cutthroat trout. There are no historical fish stocking records for Cayuse or Scurvy Lakes. Cayuse Lake is located just off Road 581 - Toboggan Ridge Road - a low standard road

which forms the boundary between the Bighorn–Weitas and Hoodoo Roadless Areas. Figure 8 shows Rocky Ridge Lake, on the edge of the roadless area.

Cayuse Creek and Weitas Creek are the two major streams in the Bighorn Weitas Roadless Area. The Cayuse Creek drainage is part of a catch-and-release fishery area of the Kelly Creek drainage which has resulted in a local and regional reputation for a quality fishery. Both Cayuse and Weitas Creeks were identified in the recent Wild and Scenic Rivers eligibility review, as documented in Appendix F, as having outstanding values for both fish habitat and high-quality recreational fishing opportunity. Cayuse Creek is a well-known stream for fly fishing.



Figure 8. Rocky Ridge Lake

Areas of at least 5,000 Acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 254,800 acres this is the largest roadless area in the inventory which is completely located on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, minimum size is not a barrier to maintaining wilderness characteristics. This is well above the 5,000-acre minimum that is generally considered a minimum

Ecological, Geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 63 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. A 400-acre Research Natural Area is also located in this roadless area. Vegetation in the area includes 1,100 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landguth et al. 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There is at least one potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Seven historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area. Of the Roadless areas on the national forest, only North Lochsa Slope has more historic themes than Bighorn-Weitas.

The Lolo Trail forms the southern boundary of the roadless area. It is both a registered National Historic Landmark and National Historic Trail. This trail was a major travel route between the Columbia Basin and the Montana country prehistorically. Lewis and Clark traveled over sections of the trail in journeys of 1805-06. Chief Joseph, a Nez Perce Indian Chief, helped lead the non-treaty Nez Perce over this

traditional route during the Nez Perce war of 1877. The trail was expanded to a low standard road in the early 1930's.

There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers or notable scenic features in this roadless area. There are five small lakes as described in the *Opportunities for Solitude and Primitive Recreation* section.

The water quality in the Bighorn-Weitas Roadless area is generally high, although a total of 35.4 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Felix Creek, Flame Creek and Rocky Ridge Creek are not supporting the *salmonid spawning* beneficial use, while stretches of Beaver Dam, Cold Springs, False, Grass, Gravey, Marten, Middle, Mire, Orogrande and Shin Tangle Creeks are not supporting either *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Bighorn-Weitas Roadless Area contains portions of twenty-six HUC 12 subwatersheds. Twenty-two subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 99 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). Four subwatersheds (less than 1 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The roadless area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. There are currently no mining claims in the Bighorn-Weitas Roadless Area.

Bighorn-Weitas Roadless Area borders both front country (58 percent) and other roadless areas (42 percent). It does not border any state or private lands or wilderness areas. The ratio of its boundary to area is 4:1 (4 ft. of boundary to 1 sq. ft. of interior). This is the lowest ratio of any roadless area. Managing less total boundary for the same-sized area is generally easier so a lower ratio is more manageable than a higher one.

An established history of motorized use can make a change in management challenging. Road #500 which borders the roadless area to the south, is a groomed snowmobile route under a long-term partnership with the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Clearwater County, and the local snowmobile club. The groomed route out to 12-mile, provides relatively easy access to the high country of Bighorn-Weitas and open areas adjacent to the groomed route may be snowmobiled. The density of forest vegetation in Bighorn-Weitas limits this use. Grooming also occurs out Lean-To ridge and out to Liz Butte. Wheeled motorized trail use is established and has traditionally provided a high opportunity (41 plus miles) within the roadless area.

Mountain biking or mechanized use is an emerging use on some of the trails in this roadless area. Trail #20 -Weitas Creek, trail #191 - Junction Mountain, trail #531 - Windy Bill and trail #167 - Windy Ridge

and Road #250 allow for a unique large loop that connects the North Fork to the Lolo Motorway and back.

Except for the narrow Hemlock Creek area, the large size and rectangular shape contribute significantly to the wilderness qualities. The area is large enough to be virtually unaffected by exterior sights and sounds. The Pierce-Superior Road, Kelly Creek Road, Toboggan Ridge Road and Lolo Motorway would be logical wilderness boundaries. Moving the boundary to Weitas Creek from its mouth to the Weitas Work Center would eliminate several short creeks draining into Weitas Creek and the larger Hemlock Creek drainage and make a more logical wilderness boundary. Other possible adjustments to exclude moderate timber values would put the boundary along Weitas Creek from the Work Center upstream to Windy Creek, up Windy Creek to Young Creek, up Young Creek to Monroe Butte, along Windy Ridge to Lookout Peak, down Trail #638 across Monroe Creek, up Trail #593 to Raspberry Butte then east to Gravey Creek.

Clear Creek Roadless Area

General description

The Clear Creek Roadless Area is approximately 9,200 acres and is located at the head of the Clear Creek drainage along the western boundary of the Nez Perce National Forest (see Figure 9). Private property adjoins this area on the northwestern boundary. The nearest roads are spurs of Road #1842 on the north, Road #650 on the west, Road 1855 on the south and Road #286 on the east (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Elevation ranges from 2,000 feet on Clear Creek at the Nez Perce-Clearwater boundary to 4,600 feet at China Point Ridge and the headwaters of Solo and Kay Creeks. Topography is mountainous with steep slopes, commonly over 70 percent, paralleling the drainages. Ridgetops are relatively flat.

Most of the acreage in the Clear Creek Roadless Area has burned twice, once in 1870 and again in 1931, leaving about 7,000 acres covered with brush fields in the South Fork and Middle Fork Clear Creek drainages. Previous conifer forests have never reestablished themselves (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Vegetation in the area ranges from very moist, warm cedar habitat types, to drier, warm Douglas-fir habitat types. Shrub coverage in the brush fields is primarily maple, willow, serviceberry, and various other shrubs. Bordering the brush fields are patches of young (approximately 70 years old) timber, a mix of grand fir, Douglas-fir, and western red cedar. Understories are sparse but contain a variety of moist-site plants. There are also some natural meadows in upper Kay Creek in Section 28 (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).



Wilderness Evaluation

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
Forest Plan Revision
Clear Creek

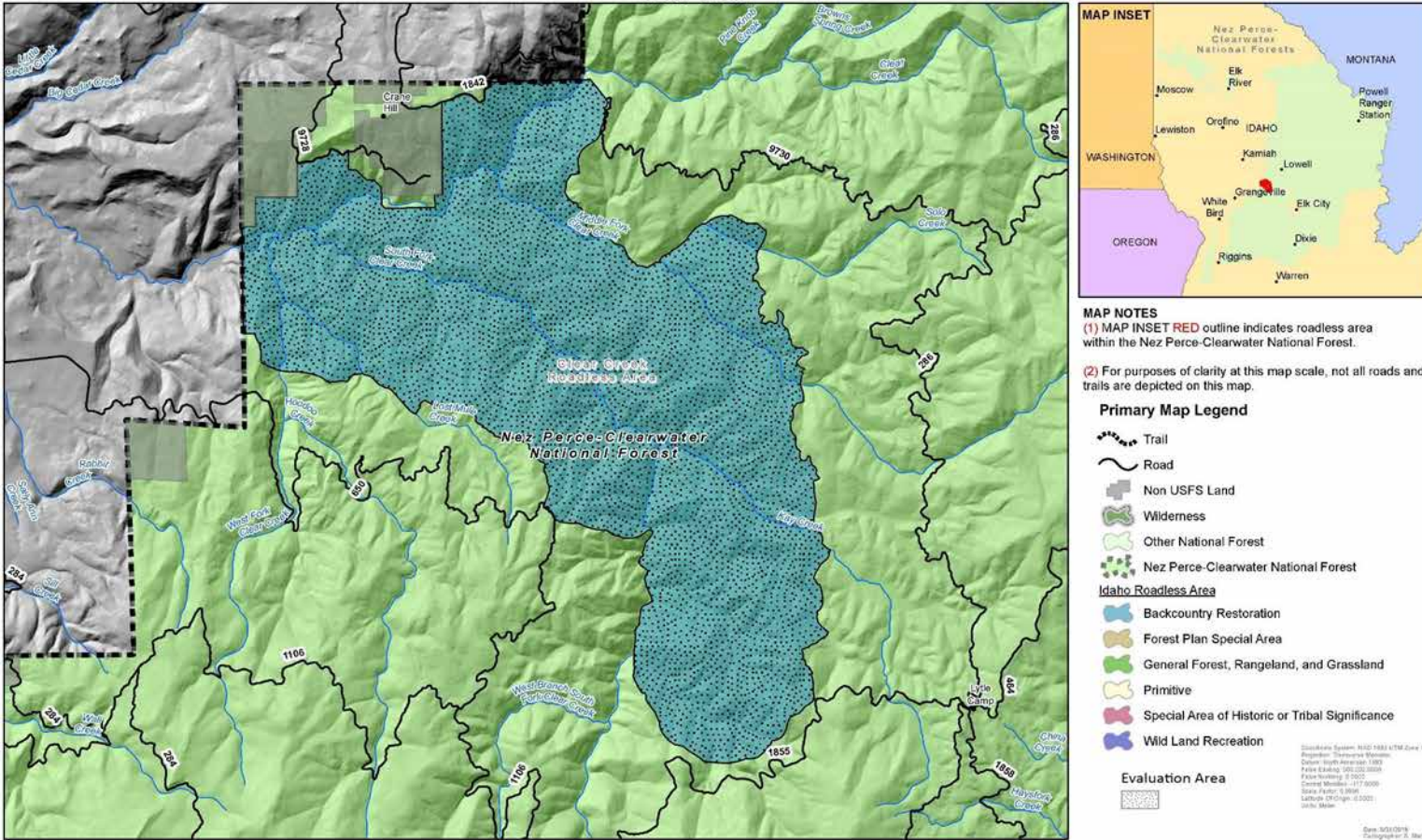
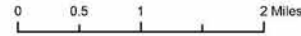


Figure 9. Wilderness Evaluation, Clear Creek

Apparent naturalness

Within the roadless area, there is little disturbance to natural integrity. Past wildfires in Clear Creek and the resulting vegetative succession are some of the natural processes that have occurred (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008). The area does not include Forest Service administrative structures, or recreation rentals. The entire area (97 percent) is within domestic grazing allotments, primarily for transitory range so sights and sounds of cattle may be obvious to people travelling through the area. Most of the available forage is transitory, being generated from the large brush fields in the South Fork and Middle Fork Clear Creek drainages. The remainder of the area is covered with old-growth cedar and grand fir stands with little available forage underneath except in the natural meadows and stream bottoms (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 29 acres of known weed locations. This includes ten acres of yellow star thistle located on open southern exposures and roadside. Spotted knapweed is found on 12 acres roadside. Dalmatian toadflax is found along trails and is expanding to the slopes. A few other miscellaneous weeds are found primarily along roads and trails. Approximately 39 percent of the area is functioning within the natural range of variability. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). The area has not had timber cutting since prior to the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule decision. At that time, the boundary of the area was drawn to exclude previously logged areas. There are no structures associated with special use permits.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The relatively small size and narrow shape of the area provide for limited solitude adjacent to private lands and front country areas with evidence of roads and past logging. Vegetative screening is high due to the density of brush fields. There are no trail bridges in this roadless area and few trails. Most travel is cross country since trails are limited and low standard. Recreation use is mostly big game hunting and horn hunting. There are no river-based boating opportunities or distinctive fishing opportunities. The area includes the headwaters of the South Fork of Clear Creek. Although it is a relatively small roadless area close to the Nez Perce-Clearwater boundary it provides some potential for solitude since it is lightly visited, and you cannot see out. It is common to hear motorized vehicles on roads to the north. The area currently provides a mix of recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes, with 75 percent semi-primitive non-motorized, 9 percent semi-primitive motorized and 16 percent in roaded natural (These ROS classes are based on the distance of lands from roads and trails open to motorized use both inside and outside the roadless area). Figure 10 shows the relative amounts of each ROS class.

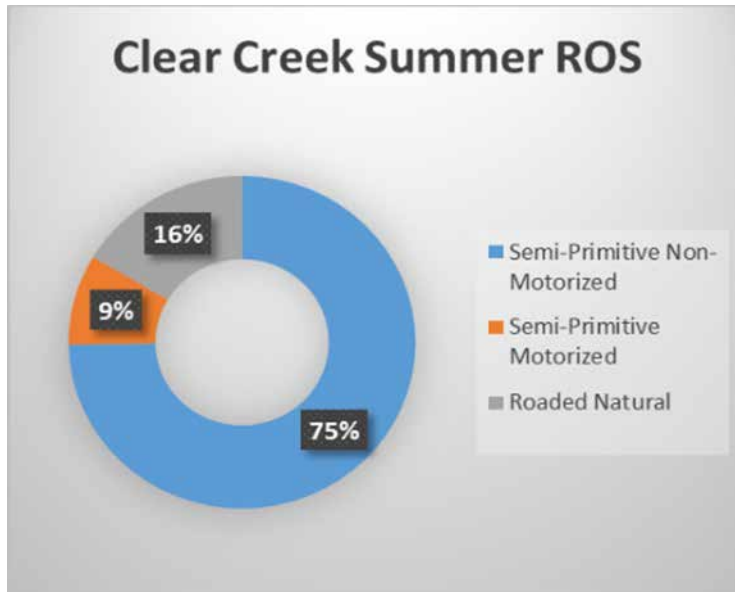


Figure 10. Clear Creek Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 9,200 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is one of the smallest roadless areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest that does not adjoin designated wilderness or other roadless areas.

Ecological, geological, or other features or scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Nearly all (99.5 percent) of the Clear Creek Roadless Area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. Vegetation in the area does not include any whitebark pine modeled habitat (Landguth et al. 2017) or research natural areas.

There are no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers or other unique scenic features. The historic value is limited, with no known potential National Register Districts, sacred sites or historic themes associated with the Clear Creek Roadless Area.

The water quality in the Clear Creek Roadless Area is generally high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Clear Creek Roadless Area contains portions of three HUC 12 subwatersheds. The South Fork Clear Creek subwatershed is categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompasses 63 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

The Upper and Lower Clear Creek subwatersheds (37 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating

due to low amounts of large wood debris in streams and riparian areas; a large percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area; and terrestrial invasive species infest more than 25 percent of the subwatershed and their range is expanding. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability and boundaries

The area is currently managed under the backcountry restoration theme (6,800 acres) and Community protection zone (2,400 acres), a subtheme of backcountry restoration of the Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal; road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. There are currently no mining claims within the Clear Creek Roadless Area.

The area boundary is imprecise except where it coincides with the Nez Perce-Clearwater boundary. It has been drawn to exclude existing roads from the remainder of the area. The boundary is irregular, with a relatively long and narrow shape. The area primarily borders front country (93 percent) and private lands (7 percent). The Forest Service policy to protect adjacent lands from fire makes it difficult to allow natural fire to play its natural role in the roadless area. This area is not adjacent to groomed snowmobiling routes. The steepness of the landscape and the brushy vegetation makes motorized travel very difficult. Motorized travel is minimal with a history of less than 5 miles of motorized travel in the roadless area. Trail #723 allows motorized single-track use.

This is one of the smallest roadless areas on Nez Perce-Clearwater and its convoluted boundary and adjacency to front county and private lands would make management difficult. The need to protect off-National Forest System lands and adjacent timbered lands from fire make it difficult to allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem over time.

Dixie Summit-Nut Hill Roadless Area

General description

The 13,000-acre Dixie Summit-Nut Hill Roadless Area, despite its name, does not include either Dixie Summit or Nut Hill within area boundaries. See Figure 11 Moose Butte, at 7,100 feet, is the most prominent topographical feature. A ridge runs south from Moose Butte through the roadless area. The east Side of this ridge drains into Red River, a part of the South Fork Clearwater River drainage and the west side runs into Big Creek and then Crooked Creek, in the Salmon River drainage.

The roadless area can be reached by Road #311, which parallels the area on the west, and Road #9535 from the east. The elevation ranges from 5,400 feet at West Fork to 7,100 feet at Moose Butte. Although some of the slopes are steep, much of the country is relatively gentle. Quite a lot of this area is a mountain meadow environment. Big Creek Meadows covers most of the western portion of the area and extends up the tributaries. The rest of the area ranges from pure lodgepole pine stands on southern slopes at moderate elevations to alpine fir and Engelmann spruce in draws and higher elevations. The predominant species is mature lodgepole pine. As in other lodgepole stands in this locality, mountain pine beetles are causing increasing damage and mortality.

Trail #207 runs south from Moose Butte to Burpee. It is not heavily used. Traditional recreation uses include fishing, hunting, camping, horseback riding and snowmobiling. One outfitter operates in this area.

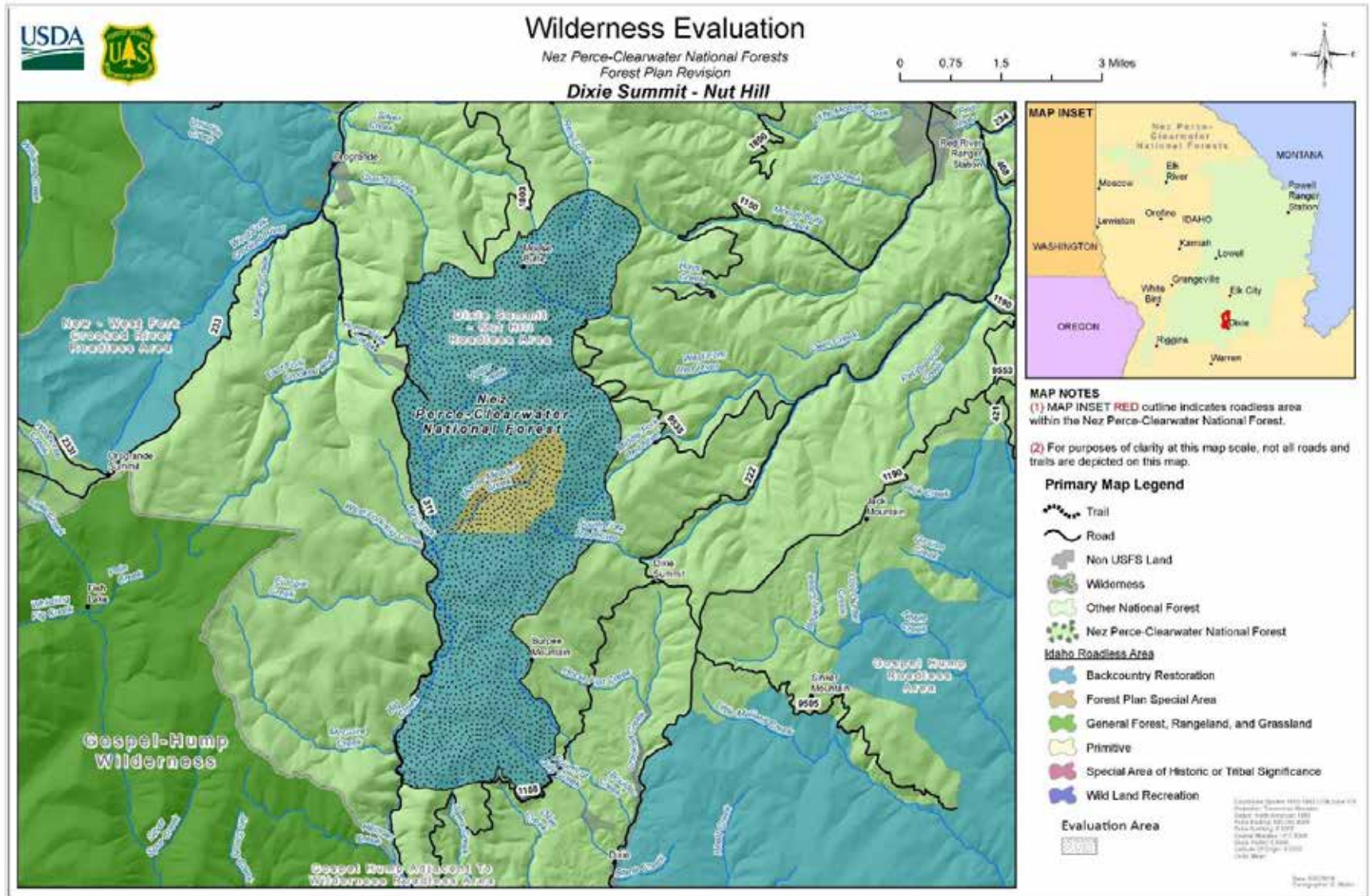


Figure 11. Wilderness Evaluation Dixie Summit - Nut Hill

Apparent naturalness

The area does not include any Forest Service administrative buildings, recreation rentals or trail bridges. A road 0.4 miles in length is included in the roadless boundary. There is a closed road to the south of Burpee Mountain. The vegetation in most of the area (91 percent) is within the natural range of variation due to wildfires in recent years. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows four acres of known noxious weed populations. This includes meadow hawkweed along trail #508 and rush skeletonweed along the road to Mackay Bar and spotted knapweed along roads and trails.

Previously logged areas were generally excluded when the roadless area boundary was drawn. Since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule, timber has been cut on approximately nine acres of the roadless area. This was the removal of roadside hazard trees, following wildfire. The strip is adjacent to Road #311 which borders the roadless area.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The relatively small size and narrow configuration, together with nearby roads and logging activity, limits opportunities for solitude. Off-site intrusions are apparent in many places. Ranches in Red River Valley and past timber management are visible from the ridge top. Primitive recreation opportunities are also limited. The area is small, and evidence of man's activities is not far away. The topography is not challenging, and there is little diversity. Most users are hunters and fishermen with camping and horseback riding. Snowmobiling has increased in the area which is located between the small communities of Orogrande to the north and Dixie to the south.

About a third of the area provides settings for semi-primitive non-motorized based on distance from open roads and trails open to motorized use. The remaining two-thirds is influenced primarily by roads and split between a semi-primitive motorized setting and roaded natural setting as shown in Figure 12.

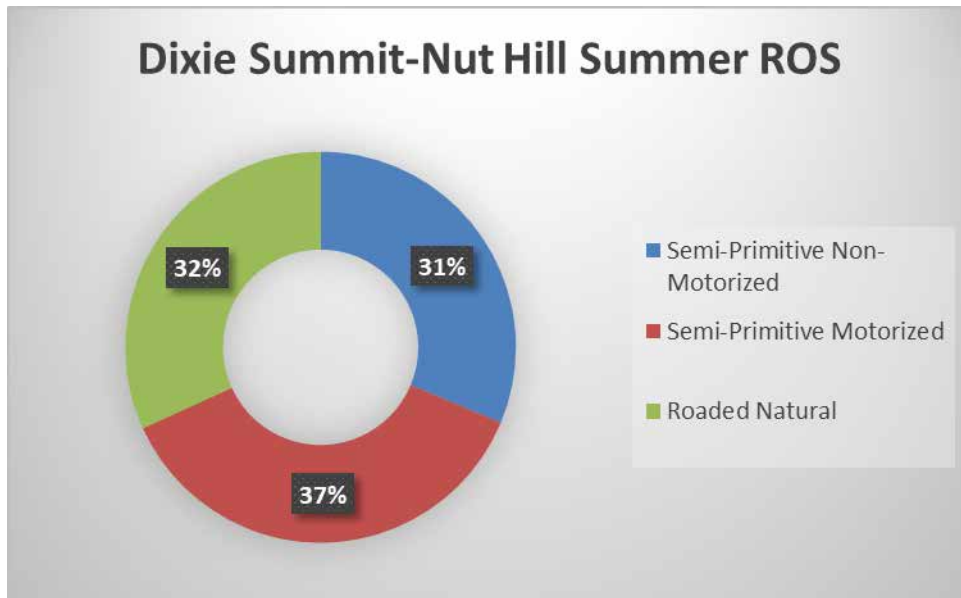


Figure 12. Dixie Summit-Nut Hill Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 13,000 acres this roadless area meets the minimum size requirements to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, Geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 21 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. A 1,000-acre Research Natural Area is located in the wet meadows along Moose Meadow Creek and its tributaries. It includes the stream network itself, and the nearby forest of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce. The Research Natural Area in Moose Meadow Creek, a tributary of Big Creek, was approved by the Chief of the Forest Service in 1982 and is completely within the Dixie Summit-Nut Hill Roadless Area. Vegetation in the area includes 11,334 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area. There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers or notable scenic features in this roadless area. It does not include any lakes or waterfalls.

The water quality in the Dixie Summit-Nut Hill Roadless area is generally high, although a total of 11.9 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Short segments of Boulder Creek, Fourth of July Creek, Olive Creek, and Sams Creek are not supporting the beneficial use of *cold water aquatic life* but are fully supporting *secondary contact recreation*. Short segments of Middle Fork Red River, Quartz Creek, Relief Creek, Silver Creek, South Fork Red River, West Fork River and several unnamed waters are not supporting the beneficial use of either *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Dixie Summit Roadless Area contains portions of six HUC 12 subwatersheds. The Big Creek subwatershed is categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompasses 47 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

Upper Crooked Creek, South Fork Red River, Middle Red River, and Upper Crooked River subwatersheds (50 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; alteration of physical, biological, or chemical impacts to water quality; altered stream channel features, low amounts of large wood debris in streams and riparian areas; over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; extensive areas of soil contamination, primarily from historic mining; and more than 40 percent of the subwatershed anticipated to or currently experiencing tree mortality from insects and disease.

Lower Crooked River subwatershed (3 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function. It received a lower rating due to the same causes as the WCC 2 subwatersheds, but with the addition of stream flow departure; roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area; and accelerated surface soil erosion (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

This roadless area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale and removal, road construction and reconstructions and mineral activities. Approximately 500 acres of the area is managed as a community protection zone which allows additional permissions and exceptions for timber cutting and roads to reduce fuels near private lands. A research natural area of 1,000 acres in the Moose Meadows area is included within the roadless area boundary and is currently managed as a Land Management Plan Special Area.

There are twenty-seven mining claims currently located in the Dixie Summit-Nut Hill Roadless area. Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed in Idaho Roadless Areas. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction is allowed only if it is incidental to any activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The Dixie-Summit Nut Hill roadless area is completely surrounded by front country lands and does not adjoin any wilderness areas or other roadless areas. Managing this area as wilderness would be challenging due to the need to protect the nearby communities of Orogrande and Dixie-Comstock from wildfire and the Forest Service policy to protect adjacent multiple use lands.

Road #311 is a groomed snowmobile route adjacent to the roadless area and the communities of Orogrande and Dixie are hubs for snowmobiling. Idaho County maintains plowed roads to both Orogrande and Dixie since both communities have year-round residents. The long-standing grooming program is a partnership that includes the Forest Service, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho County, and the local snowmobile club. Easy access via groomed snowmobile routes and the proximity of this roadless area to the small communities, make this area a natural draw for snowmobilers in the open meadows and other open areas from recent fires. This recurrent activity would be challenging to restrict.

Wheeled motorized use has traditionally had a low (6–20 miles) opportunity in this area due to the relatively small size of the area, and small number of roads and trails within its boundaries. The proximity to the community of Dixie has increased use in the area.

The western boundary is easily defined by Road #311 while the other boundaries are irregular based on drawing boundaries to exclude past roading and timber cutting.

East Meadow Creek Roadless Area

General description

East Meadow Creek Roadless Area at 96,800 acres is one of the larger roadless areas. It joins the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness on the east and is separated from the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness by a road corridor on the south. It is located on the east side of Meadow Creek, a principal tributary of the Selway River, and includes the headwaters of Running Creek, a tributary to the Selway which flows into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and Bargamin Creek, which flows into the Salmon River in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

The area can be reached by Indian Hill Road #290, which ends at the northern boundary; Running Creek Road #257 and Elk Mountain Road #285, which enter the area from the west; and the "Montana" Road 468, which is the southern boundary. These roads are not surfaced and can be hazardous when wet. The Elk Mountain Road forks within the area. One fork runs 17 miles and dead ends near Elk Mountain; the other dead ends at Warm Springs Bar, 12 miles from the junction. Driving time from Grangeville to most trailheads is three to four hours.

Elevation ranges from 2,420 feet on Meadow Creek to 8,200 feet at Burnt Knob. This area is similar in topography and vegetation to the adjacent wildernesses. Slopes are characteristically steep throughout the area, especially toward the lower end of Meadow Creek, but there are exceptions. For example, the country opens up in the headwaters of some of the larger side drainages such as Schwar Creek; and Disgrace Ridge, between Buck Lake Creek and Schwar Creek, is almost flat for over 5 miles.

This area contains lakes, talus slopes, avalanche chutes, hot springs, rocky peaks, open alpine meadows, varied stream bottoms, and other features commonly associated with wilderness. Vegetation runs from cedar and grand fir in the creek bottoms to Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir on mid-slopes to lodgepole pine and subalpine fir at higher elevations.

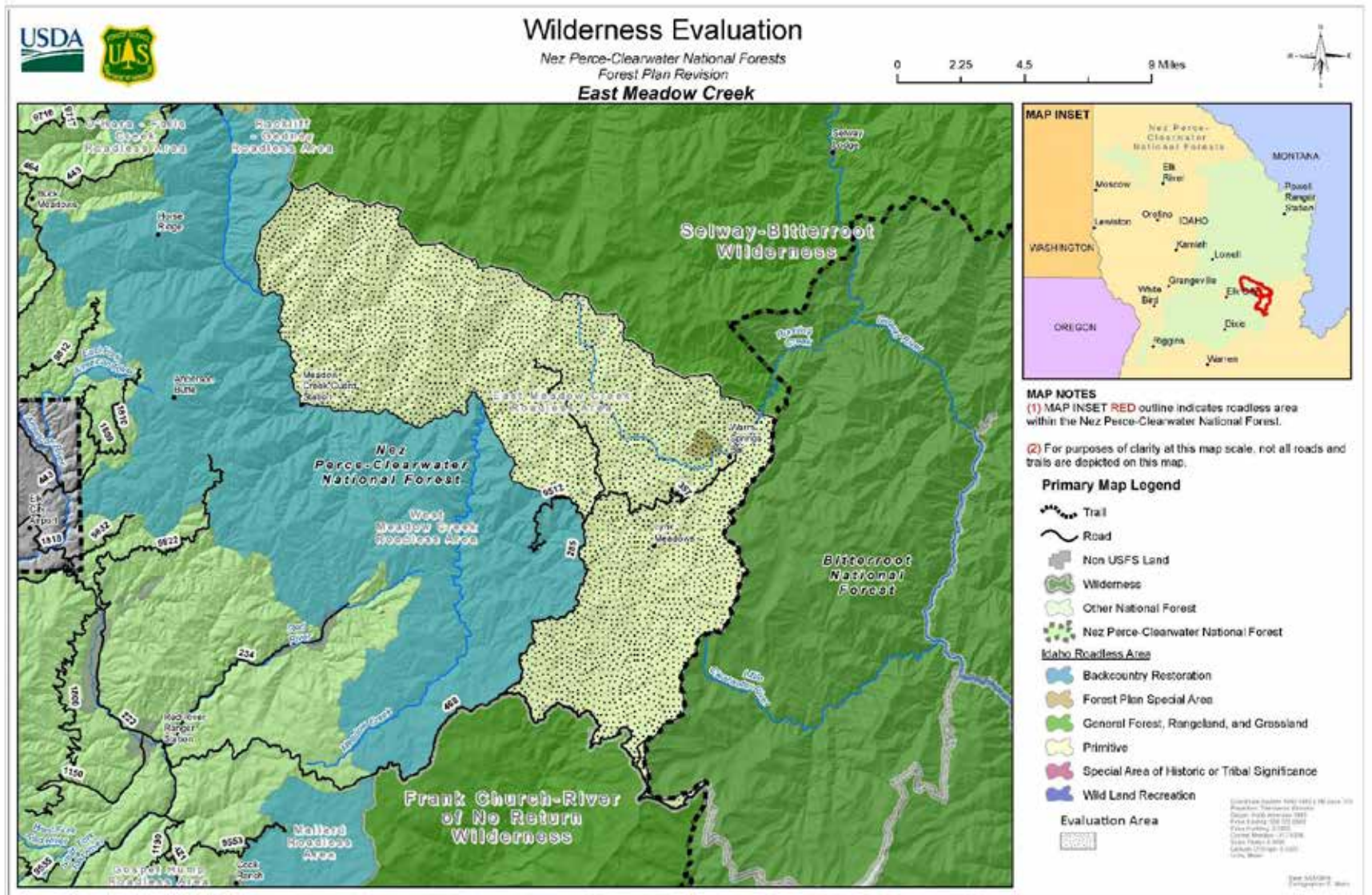


Figure 13. Wilderness Evaluation East Meadow Creek

Apparent naturalness

The Elk Mountain Road #285 is located on the divide between Meadow Creek and Running Creek. Another low standard spur road #357 splits from road #285 provides access the Running Creek headwaters ending at the Warm Springs Bar Trailhead. This road includes one road bridges within the roadless area. Since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule, timber cutting has occurred on approximately 15 acres of the roadless area as part of a post-fire hazard tree removal project along existing roads within or adjacent to the roadless area. The effects of wildfire are readily apparent over much of this area. See Figure 16, Figure 17, Figure 18, and Figure 19.

The area includes Elk Mountain Road #285 which is located on the divide between upper Meadow Creek and upper Running Creek. Another low standard road #357 splits from road #285 and provides access to a trailhead at Warm Springs Creek. A third road #290 provides access to the Indian Hill Lookout just north of the roadless area. The four-unit Poet Creek Campground is located directly adjacent to the roadless area and serves as an entry point for the trail to Upper Bargamin Creek. The Meadow Creek Ranger station Figure 14 is located in this roadless area and consists of several historic cabins and outbuildings. It is used intermittently as a recreation rental. Access to the ranger station is by trail, and rental use is light. The historic nature of the buildings blend with the surroundings east of Meadow Creek. There is one road bridge across Running Creek on the #357 road. This low standard road is cherry-stemmed into the roadless area and provides access to the trailhead at Warm Springs Bar. There are four trail bridges in the roadless area. These are obviously man-made structures and are necessary part of a trail system. They function both for user convenience and resource protection. Without bridges people may ford streams, cross wet areas, or avoid trails at higher water levels.



Figure 14. Meadow Creek Ranger Station; now a recreation rental

The vegetation in most of the area (71 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 517 acres of known weeds in the roadless area. Since this is a high elevation area, few weeds have been inventoried. Approximately 76 acres of scattered weeds

are found along roads and trails. About 160 acres in Section 23, T 29N, R 11E, has been impacted by past mining activity.

Human impacts on this area have been very light except for site specific areas. The area generally appears natural. Overall, long-term ecological processes are intact and operating naturally.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Due to the size and remoteness of the area, and its location adjacent to designated wilderness, the East Meadow Creek Roadless Area provides mostly primitive and semi-primitive recreation settings. A small amount (15 percent) provides roaded natural recreation settings near the Magruder road, Road #285 and Road #357 in the southern end of the roadless area. The ratio of summer recreational opportunity spectrum (ROS) settings is shown in Figure 15.

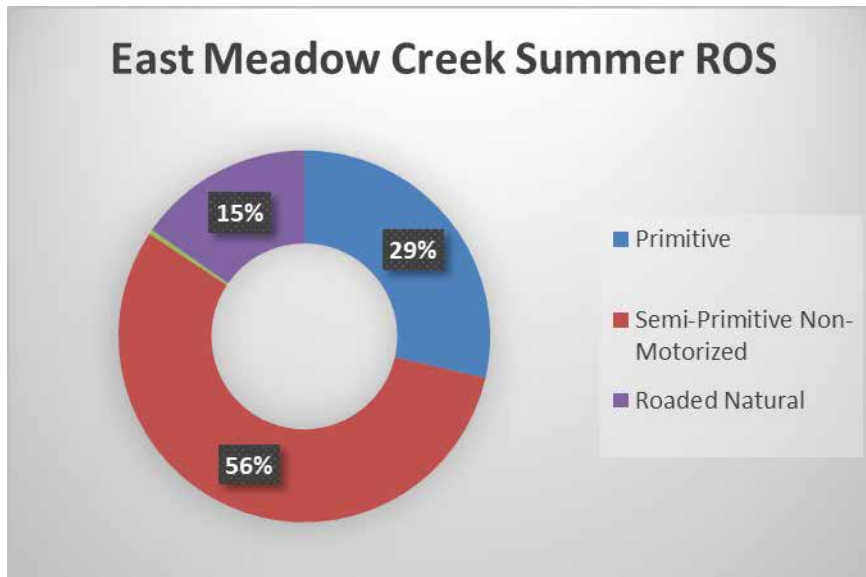


Figure 15. East Meadow Creek Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

East Meadow Creek Roadless Area connects the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses and together, offers an opportunity for solitude possibly unmatched in the lower 48 states. Although other people can be encountered on trails and at popular camping spots, there are many places where the probability of encountering others is almost zero. There are no comfort and convenience facilities in this roadless area except a few undeveloped campsites and the already-mentioned trails. This area and the neighboring wilderness make up an undeveloped roadless expanse of over three million acres. There is plenty of diversity of opportunity and challenge once the visitor leaves the established trails. Vegetation, terrain, lakes, streams, and climate vary markedly. Meadow Creek and some of the larger tributaries are difficult and hazardous to cross except when the water is very low. Throughout, the opportunity for risk-taking is significant.

Current primitive unconfined recreational uses of the area include hiking, fishing, horseback riding, hunting, and backpacking, three outfitters operate in the area. A trail network built in the 1920s and 1930s exists in the area. Some of these trails are reconstructed stock driveways dating back to 1900 to 1915. Fifteen miles of Trail #726, which follow Meadow Creek upstream from the mouth, have been designated a National Recreation Trail. It is popular with backpackers early in the season to reach from the Selway

River (north end of the roadless area) when high country trails are still blocked with snow. It is often used by fishermen and is sometimes used by motorcyclists in the summer, and snowmobilers in the winter.



Figure 16. Hiking in post-fire area of Bargamin Creek.

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 96,800 acres the East Meadow Roadless Area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It adjoins both the Selway Bitterroot and Frank Church Wilderness Areas.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 70 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. A 500-acre Research Natural Area is also located in this roadless area. Vegetation in the area includes 24,722 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline. The remains of past fire lookouts include a few burned nails and melted glass on some mountain tops. About 160 acres in Section 23, T 29N, R 11E, has been impacted by past mining activity.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts and no known sacred sites in the roadless area.

Two historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

East Meadow Creek includes hot springs along Warm Spring Creeks, a tributary to Running Creek. There are approximately 300 hot springs in Idaho, so this is a notable, though not unique geologic feature. The East Meadow Creek roadless area includes three high mountain lakes in the Running Creek headwaters. Running Lake is the largest at 20 acres. The Idaho Fish and Game last stocked it in 2006 with Tiger Muskie, a sterile fish meant to eliminate non-native brook trout from the lake. MacArthur Lake, 4.8 acres and Stillman Lake, 2.9 acres have both been stocked with cutthroat trout, last in 1987 and 2005 respectively.

Burnt Knob and 3 Prong Ridge are scenic features (alpine glaciation) visible from most points in the area. Other scenic or special features in this area include areas along Meadow Creek, alpine larch stands, and the Meadow Creek National Recreation Trail. Meadow Creek was noted as having an “outstandingly remarkable value” for recreation in the 2017 Wild and Scenic Rivers eligibility review.

The water quality in the East Meadow Creek Roadless Area is generally high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The East Meadow Creek Roadless Area contains portions of thirteen HUC 12 subwatersheds. Eleven subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 99 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The remaining two watersheds were not evaluated (less than 1 percent of roadless area). There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).



Figure 17. Bargamin Creek area post-fire.

Manageability

The roadless area is currently managed under the *primitive* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule, the second most restrictive theme, which includes very limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction or reconstruction and mineral activities. Management is primarily to maintain roadless characteristics. A Research Natural Area is located in Sections 11, 14, and 15, T 29N, R 12E. This 500-acre area, in the vicinity of Warm Springs near Running Creek, represents hot springs and associated vegetation and is managed as a Land Management Plan Special Area.

East Meadow Creek Roadless Area shares borders with both wilderness (Selway-Bitterroot to the east and Frank Church to the south) and roadless (West Meadow Roadless Area) to the west. Approximately 61 percent of the border is adjacent to wilderness and 39 percent along roadless. The East and West Meadow Creek areas are separated in part by a low standard road at the south end and by Meadow Creek itself at the north end.

There are currently no mining claims or grazing allotments that overlap with the East Meadow Creek Roadless Area.

The groomed snowmobile trail system reaches Granite Springs along road #468. From Granite Springs snowmobilers recreate on the east side of Meadow Creek following road #285 as far north as Elk Mountain. People also snowmobile in the Upper Bargamin Creek and Running Creek areas . Wheeled vehicle opportunity has been low in terms of miles (6-20 miles) in the past and is mainly associated with low standard Roads #285 and #357 that are cherry-stemmed into the roadless area.

Boundaries are well-defined and follow major topographical features such as streams and ridges. With few exceptions, boundaries would be fairly easy to locate on the ground, especially since much of the area is bounded by trails. A considerable portion of the East Meadow Creek Roadless Area is adjacent to wilderness or another large roadless area, so manageability would not be difficult.



Figure 18. Fire effects, natural processes at work, Upper Bargamin Creek.



Figure 19. Lodgepole pine regenerates quickly after fire.

Eldorado Creek Roadless Area

General description

The 6,800-acre Eldorado Creek Roadless Area is centered in the headwaters of the Eldorado Creek drainage approximately 50 miles from Orofino, Idaho. The area is accessible by numerous, mostly graveled Forest roads. The interior is accessed by about eight miles of low-standard trails with approximately 2.75 miles of trails in the middle of the RA open to motorcycles year long. The area is about five miles long and one-half to two miles wide.

Rolling uplands are the dominant landform of the area. It includes the Eldorado Creek drainage and the headwaters of six other lesser streams. The area is totally underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Idaho batholith. The Miocene Columbia River basalt occurs as a cap over the quartz monzonite producing a stable landscape.

Eldorado is in a cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem. This ecosystem has a dense stand of trees consisting mainly of western redcedar, western white pine, grand fir, Douglas-fir, Englemann spruce, and lesser amounts of subalpine fir, lodgepole pine, larch, Ponderosa pine, and mountain hemlock. The Boundary Fire and the Pete Forks Fire in recent years have created large openings between Mex Mountain and Pete Forks Campground along the 500 road which provide views into the roadless area.

Surrounding areas are managed for timber production, except for a roadless strip of land in Fish Creek (North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area) adjacent to the Lolo Motorway which forms the east boundary.

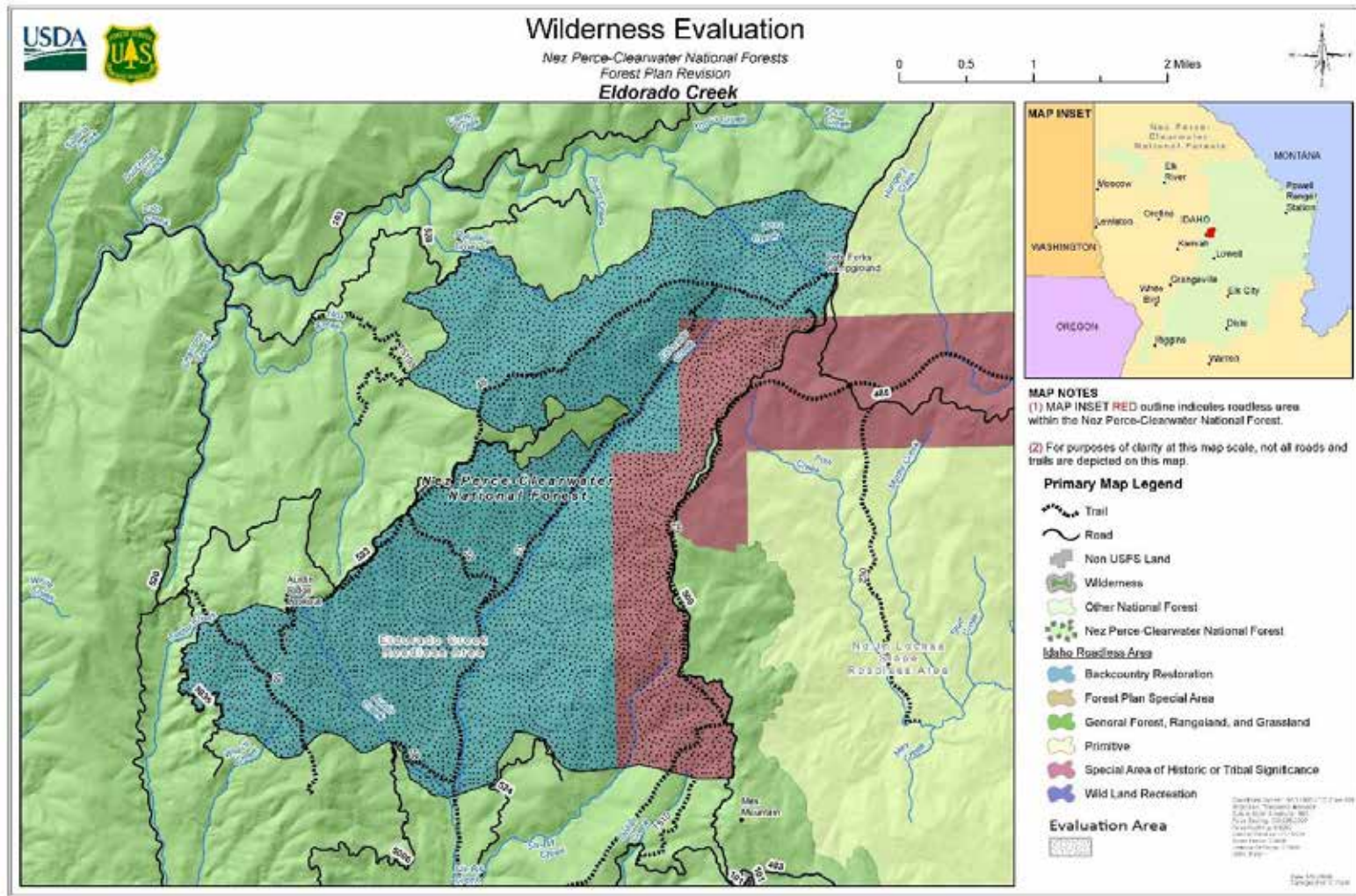


Figure 20. Wilderness Evaluation Eldorado Creek

Apparent naturalness

Even though the area is small, the natural appearance has not been altered. The integrity may be somewhat compromised because of the small size.

There are no Forest Service administrative sites or recreation rentals. It does not have any trail bridges that affect naturalness. The vegetation in about one-third of the roadless area (38 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce–Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows nineteen acres of known weed locations, primarily knapweed along adjacent roads. Timber has been cut on approximately four acres of the roadless area as part of a roadside hazard tree reduction following a wildfire adjacent to the area. Areas logged prior to the establishment of the current boundaries in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule have been excluded from the boundary.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The area is very much affected by surrounding roads and interior and adjacent trails and does not provide primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity settings. As shown in Figure 21, the area provides mostly semi-primitive motorized settings (67 percent) and roaded natural settings (33 percent).

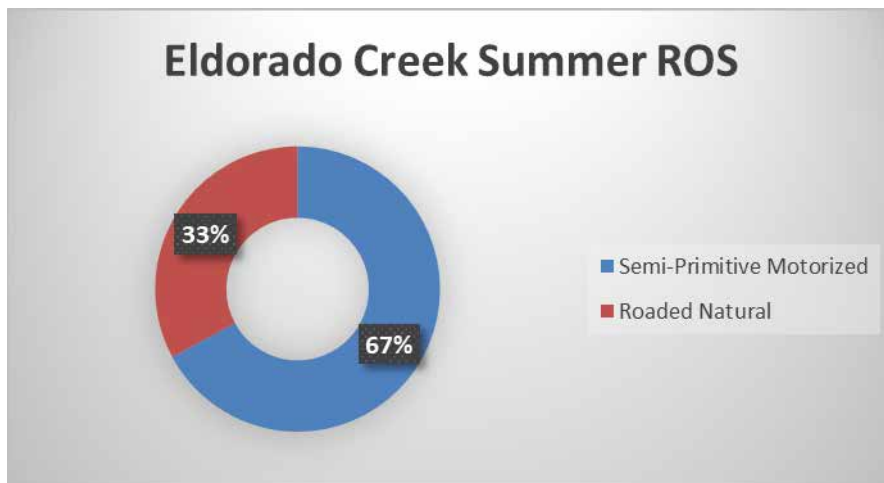


Figure 21. Eldorado Creek Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Solitude is virtually nonexistent because of small size and narrow shape of the area. A trail open to motorized use crosses the southern portion of the area. Recent fires (Boundary Fire and Pete Forks Fire) have contributed to reduced solitude due to greater visibility across the area. The area is surrounded (88 percent) of its border by front country lands and associated roads and adjacent timber harvesting activities. Because of this lack of solitude and other characteristic values associated with wilderness, experiences are also very limited.

Big game hunters and huckleberry pickers are the most prominent users. There are no boatable waters, no notable fishable water, and no lakes. Eldorado Creek is the major stream in the area.

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 6,800 acres the area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is one of the smallest roadless areas on the Nez Perce National Forest that is primarily surrounded by front country lands.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 80 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas, and vegetation in the area does not include any modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area. The Lolo Trail/Lewis and Clark Trail traverses the area along the east side parallel to the Lolo Motorway.

There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers or notable scenic features in this roadless area.

The water quality in the Eldorado Creek Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 9.1 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Austin Creek, Eldorado Creek, Six-Bit Creek, Wapiti Creek and an unnamed water body are not supporting *salmonid spawning or cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses, but are fully supporting the beneficial use of *secondary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Eldorado Creek Roadless Area contains portions of four HUC 12 subwatersheds. Upper Fish Creek and Hungry Creek subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass only 1 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

The Upper Lolo Creek and Eldorado Creek subwatersheds (99 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; and roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The roadless area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme in the Idaho roadless rule which includes limited permission and exceptions for timber cutting, sale and removal, road construction and reconstruction and minerals activities.

The Eldorado Roadless area borders primarily front country (88 percent). It shares a border (12 percent) with the North Lochsa Slope Roadless area to the east of road #500 the Lolo Motorway. Much of the adjacent land is managed for timber production and active fire management will continue to be used to limit the spread of fires from the roadless area to surrounding lands. This practice will limit the ecological role of fire in the Eldorado roadless area.

The ratio of the boundary to the interior area is 19:1 (19 ft. of boundary to 1 sq. ft. of interior area). This is one of the highest of any roadless area on the Nez Perce-Clearwater and indicates a small area with a convoluted boundary that would be difficult to manage.

The small size and irregular narrow shape of the Eldorado Creek Roadless Area effectively limits its wilderness attributes. The only identifiable boundary is the Lolo Motorway. At one point the area is roughly ½ mile across. There is virtually no logical way the rest of the boundaries could be adjusted to end up with a manageable wilderness.

A minor amount (2 percent) is mapped within a range allotment and there are no mining claims in the area. The #500 road is a groomed snowmobile route that borders the area to the east, but the Eldorado Creek roadless area has not been identified as an area travelled by snowmobilers. It has some history of wheeled motorized use at a low (6-20 miles) opportunity with a low number of trails due to its small size.

Gospel-Hump, Adjacent to Wilderness, Roadless Area

General description

The Gospel-Hump, Adjacent to Wilderness Roadless Area is a 2,400 acres piece of land adjacent to the Gospel-Hump Wilderness which was not included in the wilderness legislation. This is a strip of land ranging from 200 feet wide along road #222 to approximately 0.8 miles wide. This area that currently provides a transition zone between Roads #311 and #222 and the Gospel-Hump Wilderness boundary.

This roadless area is located above the Salmon River breaks and has a long common boundary with the Gospel-Hump Wilderness on the west side. Roads #222 and #311 border this area on the east and south. Generally, exposures are southeast and all streams in the area flow into the Salmon River. Major creeks include the forks of Crooked Creek.

This is a high, rolling, forested country, with meadows along some of the creeks. The ecosystem type ranges from lodgepole pine dominated stands to Engelmann spruce-alpine fir in the higher elevations and cold air drainages.

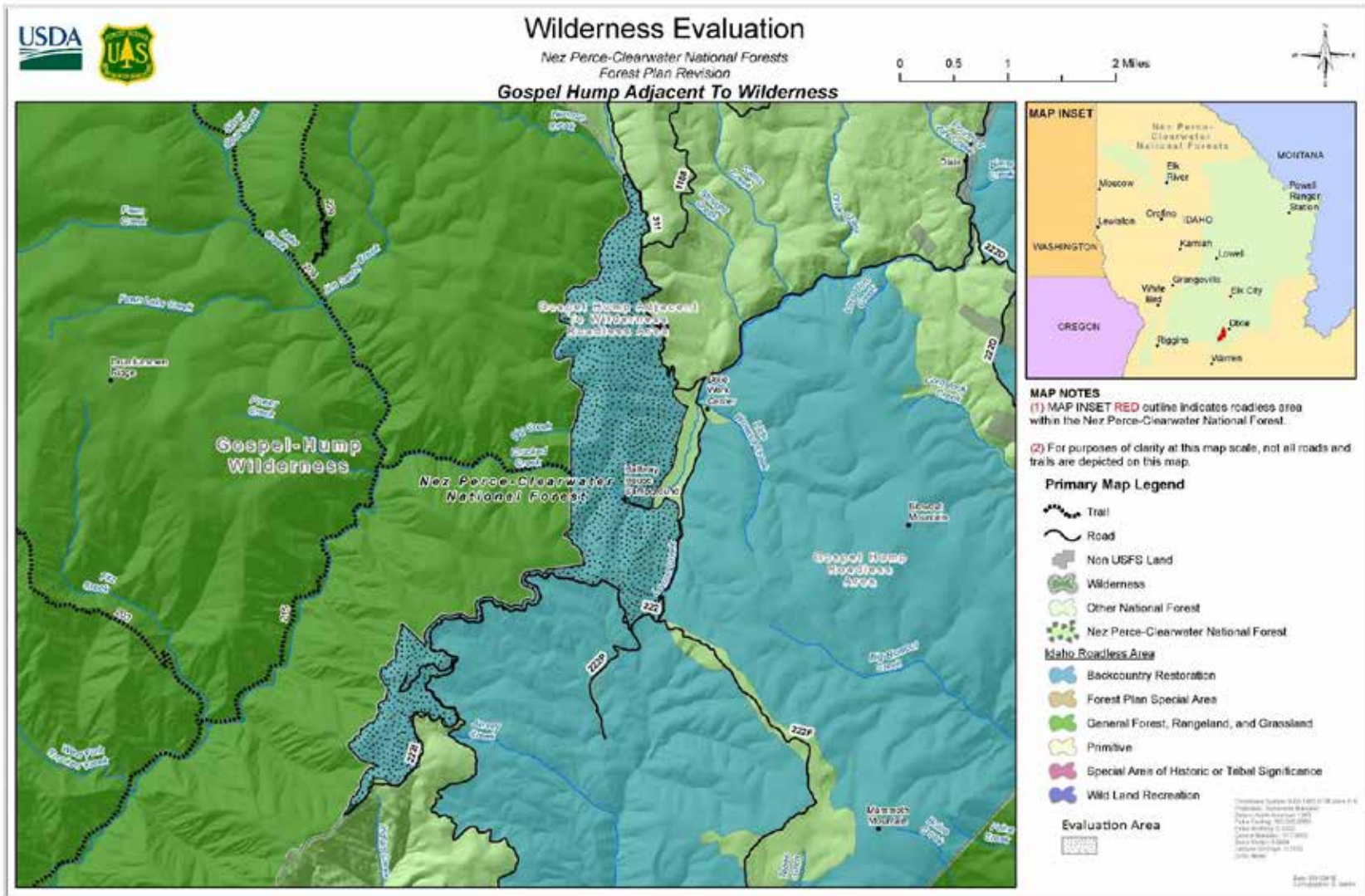


Figure 22. Wilderness Evaluation Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness

Apparent naturalness

Most impacts are confined to small areas. Overall, long-term ecological processes are intact and operating due to the proximity to the Gospel-Hump Wilderness. A low standard spur road is 0.4 miles long and provides access to the top of Jersey Mountain which provides a sweeping view into Crooked Creek and Lake Creek in the Gospel Hump designated wilderness.

There are no Forest Service administrative facilities or recreation rentals. The Dixie airstrip and Dixie Work Center are directly to the east of the roadless area and are visible from adjacent lands. There is one trail bridge - Big Creek bridge on Trail #215, which connects the roadless area to Gospel-Hump Wilderness.

There have been no major constructed fire lines and no timber harvest since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule established the current roadless area boundaries.

The vegetation in 56 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the areas without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 18.5 acres of known weed locations. This is primarily spotted knapweed scattered along the Mackay Bar road and along the Dixie airstrip. Additionally, common tansy is found at the campground near the Dixie Guard Station, on the edge of the roadless area boundary.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

This roadless area has a common boundary with the Gospel-Hump Wilderness. Vegetative screening is moderate to dense. The area by itself is not diverse and offers few challenges. Topography is mostly rolling hills. The forest cover is uniform, almost monotonous, and the main challenge is a lack of topographical features for orientation.

Most of the roadless area is affected by roads, primarily Road #222 and Road #311 that define the eastern boundary. Although the forest is dense in many places, the sights and sounds of vehicles affect the opportunity for solitude. Approximately 84 percent of the area provides a roaded natural recreation setting with only a small portion providing a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation as shown in Figure 23, below. The sights and sounds from use of the Dixie airstrip and Dixie work Center, which can become a hub of activity during fire season, also affect the solitude of the area.

There are no lakes or outstandingly remarkable recreation values. Crooked Creek has been identified by several river advocacy groups as boatable water for kayakers from Dixie, through the roadless area, through the wilderness, to the Salmon River, although this use is rare.

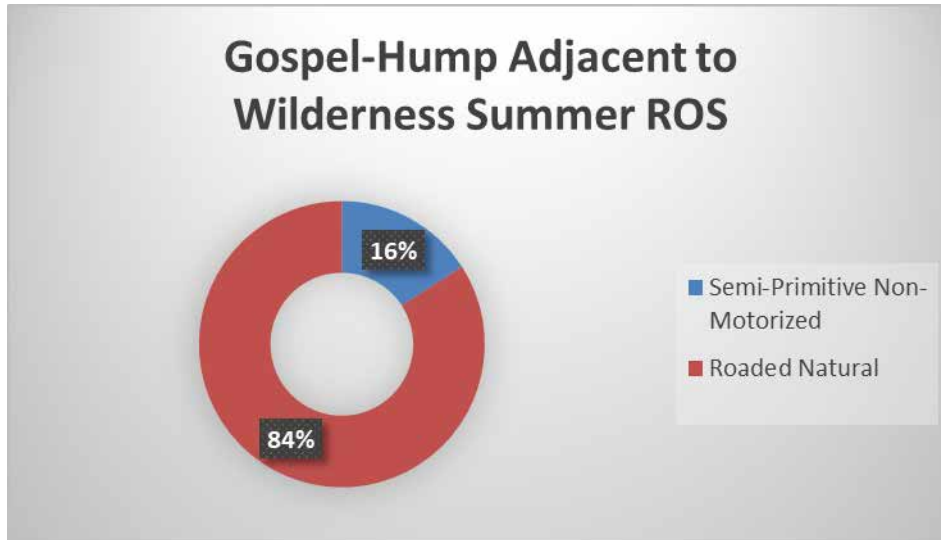


Figure 23. Gospel-Hump Adjacent Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 2,400 acres this roadless area does not meet the minimum size requirements as wilderness on its own. It is a long, narrow strip, in places only 200 feet wide, between roads #311, #311A #222 and #222I and the boundary of the Gospel Hump Wilderness. Often when wilderness areas are established the boundaries are buffered from roads to allow road maintenance.

Ecological, ecological, or other features or scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 30 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas, and vegetation in the area includes 426 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places District or known sacred sites in the roadless area. None of the twenty historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest are represented in the area.

There are no designated Wild and Scenic rivers in the roadless area. Jersey Mountain, located in the roadless area, near the border to the Gospel-Hump Wilderness, provides a scenic view into Lake Creek and Crooked Creek and a sense of the vastness of the Gospel-Hump Wilderness.

The water quality in the Gospel-Hump Adjacent to Wilderness Roadless Area is generally high, although 1.5 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Crooked Creek do not support *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses, but does support *secondary contact recreation*. Lemon Creek does not support *cold water aquatic life* beneficial use, but does support secondary contact recreation (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Gospel-Hump Adjacent to Wilderness Roadless Area contains portions of five HUC 12 subwatersheds. One watershed (less than 1 percent of roadless area) was not classified. Three subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 42 percent of the roadless area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

The Upper Crooked Creek subwatershed (58 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. This subwatershed received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; low amounts of large wood debris in streams and riparian areas; a large percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; extensive areas of soil contamination, primarily from historic mining; and more than 40 percent of the subwatershed anticipated to or currently experiencing tree mortality from insects and disease. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow for road construction except for some limited circumstances approved by the Regional Forester. This includes the possibility of road construction outside a community protection zone where there is a significant risk that a wildland fire could affect an at-risk community. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels near communities, to improve threatened, endangered, proposed or sensitive habitat or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure or process (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed in Idaho Roadless areas. There are currently no unpatented mining claims located in the area. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction is allowed only if it is incidental to an activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The Gospel-Hump, Adjacent to Wilderness Roadless Area shares 44 percent of its boundary with wilderness, 25 percent bordering the Gospel-Hump Roadless Area (across Road #222), and the remaining 31 percent bordering front country lands, including the Dixie Guard Station complex. This Guard station is used as a fire camp and includes an airstrip. The variation in fire policies between front country and wilderness make it challenging to allow wildfire to play its natural role in the ecosystem.

Boundaries of this area are well defined by roads on the east, north and south by roads and by the wilderness boundary to the west. The roadless area currently serves as a transition zone between the front country and the wilderness.

Snowmobiling is not a major factor since most of the roadless area is too densely vegetated to allow equipment to leave roads. Wheeled motorized use is limited to the 0.4-mile-long Road #222I that leads to the top of Jersey Mountain and the short spur road to Halfway House trailhead.

Gospel-Hump Roadless Area

General description

The 46,300 Acre Gospel-Hump Roadless Area, a portion of what was previously called “Jersey-Jack”, is immediately above the Salmon River breaks, and has a long common boundary (southeastern) with the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness along those breaks. Road #222 borders this area on the southwest; Road #421, Jacks Creek, and Big Mallard Creek make up the northeastern boundary; and Roads #222 and #1190 border on the northwest.

Generally, exposures are southeast and all streams in the area flow into the Salmon River. Major creeks within the area include all of Little Mallard Creek, Big Blowout Creek, Jersey Creek, and Noble Creek. Access is by way of Road #222 and its spurs on the north and west, Road #421 on the east, and Road #1190 on the north. Road #222 ends at Mackay Bar and Road #421 ends at Whitewater Ranch, both on the Salmon River. This area includes several mountains, including Blowout Mountain, Blue Ridge, Sinker Mountain, and Cove Mountain. The elevation ranges from 2,402 feet at Whitewater Ranch to 6,680 feet at Sinker Mountain.

This is a high, rolling, timbered country, with meadows along some of the larger creeks. The ecosystem type ranges from extensive lodgepole pine dominated stands in the Lower Mallard Creek, Lower Noble Creek, Jack Creek, Rhett Creek, and Mammoth Mountain areas to climax Ponderosa pine in the Vista Point and Whitewater areas to Engelmann spruce-alpine fir in the higher elevations and cold air drainages. Some larger meadows exist along Jacks Creek, Noble Creek, and Little Mallard Creek. The Gospel-Hump Roadless Area adjoins the small town of Dixie, which has a history of mining activity dating back to 1864.

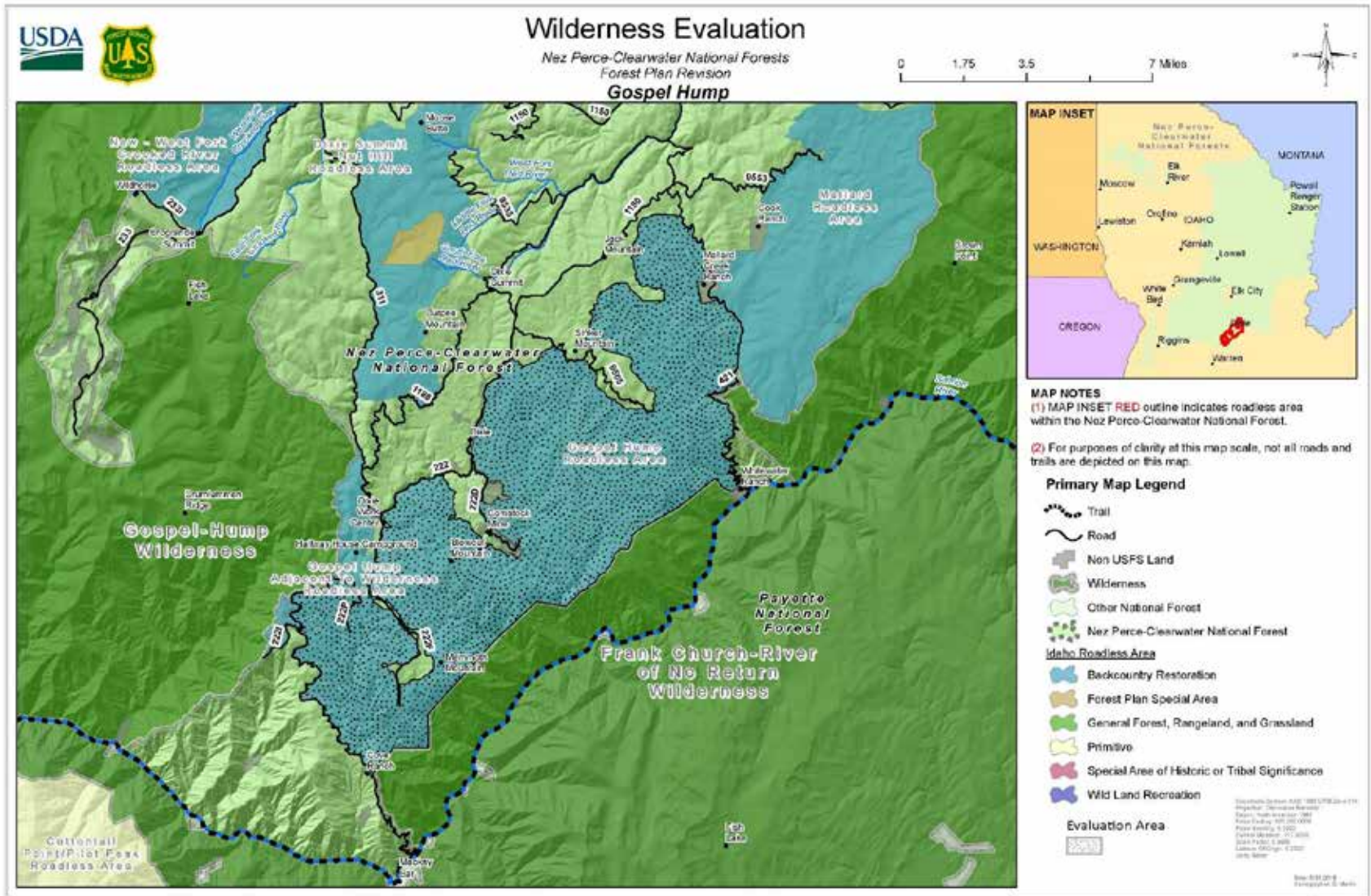


Figure 24. Wilderness Evaluation Gospel Hump

Apparent naturalness

Overall, long-term ecological processes have operated through fires. However, the Forest Service policy to limit the spread of fires to private lands have affected apparent naturalness by creating straight lines in the landscape where fuel breaks have been constructed to the north and east of the private lands. The vegetation in the majority of the roadless area (64 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The long history of mining and minerals exploration is evident in the headwaters of Little Mallard Creek and the Robinson Creek area. The mining activity is on the perimeter of the area and could be excluded. About 100 acres west of Mammoth Mountain are affected by past mining activity and have been excluded from the area boundary with a cherry-stem.

There are no Forest Service administrative buildings, recreation rentals or trail bridges in the roadless area.

Special Use Permits- There are four special use permits for domestic water lines (<12” diameter) in the roadless area near the community of Dixie that provide water to several cabins there. These are associated with State of Idaho water rights for use of the water.

There are approximately 6.2 miles of maintenance level 1 and 2 roads, including Road #222F and #222P. Since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule established the current boundaries, approximately 5.9 miles of constructed fire lines were established to the east of private lands at Dixie and Comstock during the 2015 fire season. This fire line is approximately 200 feet wide and very obvious to people who see it. The location of this fire break on ridgetops adds to its visibility. Approximately 43 acres of roadside hazard trees were cut within 200 feet of Road #222 on the northwestern edge of the roadless area.

Livestock grazing allotments overlap about 19 percent of the Gospel-Hump Roadless Area. Grazing is primarily in the meadows along Noble, Grouse, Jack, and Little Mallard Creek. This would be obvious to visitors in this roadless area.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows approximately 242 acres of known weed locations. This consists of Yellow toadflax and meadow, orange and tall hawkweeds at the Big Mallard Campground and Mallard Creek Road. The management objective is to eradicate these while the populations are manageable. Rush skeletonweed, spotted knapweed and sulfur cinquefoil are located along roads and trails. In addition, annual bromes are present, but were not inventoried.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

This roadless area has a common boundary with the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness and at one point is separated from the Gospel-Hump Wilderness by a road corridor. When taken together with these wildernesses, this area offers very high opportunities for solitude. Vegetative screening is moderate to dense except in areas of recent fires. The area, by itself, is not diverse, and offers few challenges. Topography is mostly rolling hills. The forest cover is uniform, almost monotonous, and the main challenge is a lack of topographical features for orientation. When the area is taken together with the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness, however, primitive recreation opportunity increases. Recreation uses include fishing, hunting, camping, horseback riding, hiking, snowmobiling, motorcycling and ATV riding along adjacent and cherry-stemmed roads.

With the increased cabin development at Dixie and Comstock, use of the Mackay Bar Road #222 to reach the Salmon River has increased, particularly with ATVs. The sights and sounds of motorized vehicles driving along this road is obvious in the adjacent roadless area.

Approximately two-thirds of the area provides a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting, as shown in Figure 25. Approximately 2 percent along the shared boundary with the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness provides a primitive recreation setting with the remainder roaded natural due to adjacent and cherry-stemmed roads.

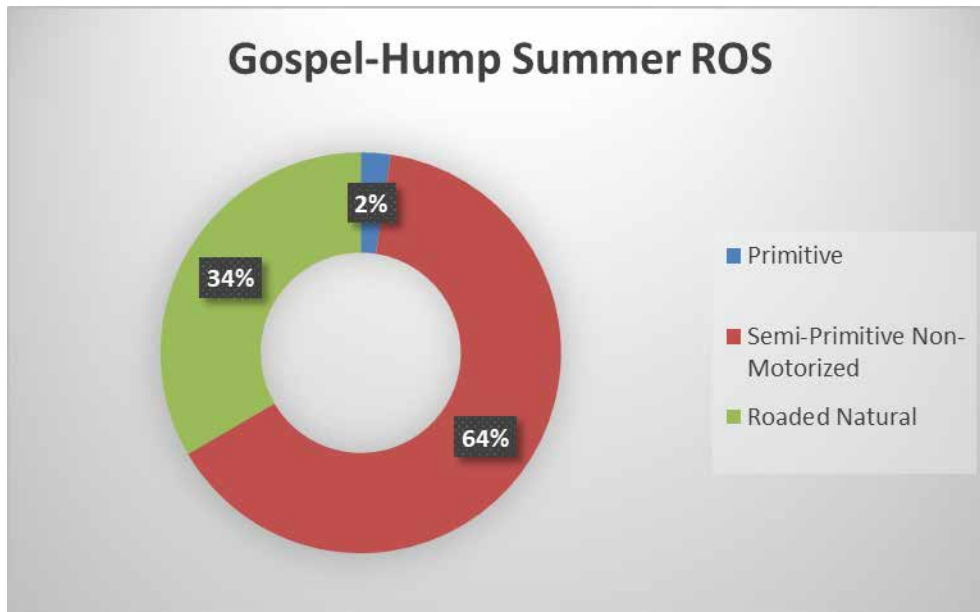


Figure 25. Gospel-Hump Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 46,300 acres, the roadless areas meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 74 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas, and vegetation in the area includes 4,570 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Three historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

The water quality in the Gospel-Hump Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 9.7 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Short segments of Blane Creek, Crooked Creek,

Lemon Creek, Little Blowout Creek and an unnamed water body do not support either *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses, but fully support *secondary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Gospel-Hump Roadless Area contains portions of seven HUC 12 subwatersheds. Four subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 89 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Upper Crooked Creek subwatershed (10 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. The remaining two watersheds were not evaluated (less than 1 percent of roadless area). There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 impaired function rating (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow for road construction except for some limited circumstances approved by the Regional Forester. This includes the possibility of road construction outside a community protection zone where there is a significant risk that a wildland fire could affect an at-risk community. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels near communities; to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive habitat; or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure or process (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Since approximately 500 acres of the roadless area is within the community protection zone for private lands in the Dixie and Comstock areas, the responsible official may authorized temporary road construction for community protection zone activities if activities can't be accomplished without road access (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed in Idaho Roadless areas. The roadless area includes 177 unpatented mining claims, the most of any roadless area on Nez Perce-Clearwater. Most of the claims are located in the area south of Dixie. Private lands resulting from patented mining claims are excluded from the roadless area boundary. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction is allowed only if it is incidental to any activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The area primarily shares a boundary with front country lands to the north and west along Road #222. Approximately 20 percent of the boundary is shared with wilderness, primarily directly adjacent to the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, with a small amount bordering the Gospel-Hump Wilderness across Road #222. The area is adjacent to the Mallard Roadless Area to the northeast. Although the private lands have been excluded from the roadless area boundary, extensive areas of private lands are within less than ½ mile of the roadless area boundary. These private lots were established from patented mining claims and consist of numerous small lots, with 50+ cabins in the area. The community also includes an airstrip.

The area is adjacent to groomed snowmobile routes managed as a long-term partnership between the Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho County, and a local snowmobile club. Recent wildfires have created new openings near these groomed routes, which coupled with gentle

to rolling terrain attract snowmobilers. The Mammoth Mountain area attracts snowmobilers. Idaho County plows snow to the Silver Spur in Dixie providing year around access to the community.

Wheeled motorized opportunity is very low (less than five miles of opportunity) within the roadless area. However, this is primarily because the roadless area has been drawn to exclude roads, resulting in several larger exclusions that extend far into the surrounding roadless area. The adjacent Mackay Bar road provides popular access to the Salmon River

Boundaries of this area are well defined by roads on the east, north, west, and southwest sides. The southeastern boundary of the roadless area is the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness.

Hoodoo Roadless Area

General description

The 252,000-acre Hoodoo Roadless Area is located on the Idaho-Montana border, about 30 air miles west of Missoula, Montana. The Idaho portion, totaling 153,900 acres, is in parts of Clearwater, Idaho, and Shoshone Counties in the Clearwater National Forest. In Montana, the area is in the Lolo National Forest, totaling 98,100 acres and is within portions of Missoula and Mineral Counties. An older and more common name for the area is the "Great Burn", which denotes the catastrophic fire in 1910. The sheer force of the fire is evidenced by the long span of time to restore tree cover.

The area may be accessed by vehicle from numerous forest roads paralleling the boundaries or from dead-end roads. The northeast corner-boundary is within four miles of a major Federal highway, Interstate 90. The graveled Pierce-Superior Road #250 forms a boundary along the northwest side which also joins with the main divide trail at Hoodoo Pass. The Toboggan Ridge Road #581, a low-standard dirt road, connects the North Fork Clearwater Basin to the Lochsa Basin, eventually reaching Highway 12. It is the southwest boundary providing numerous access points to the roadless area. The Lake Creek and Goose Creek roads along with the Kelly Creek Work Center all provide trail heads for interior trail access to the Idaho side.

From an aerial perspective, the Hoodoo area is viewed as a long, high mountainous hydrologic divide running north-south about 40 miles. From the divide on both sides emanate large and small fast-moving streams draining into the Clearwater River system in Idaho and into the Clark Fork River system in Montana.

Topography is varied with elevations as low as 3,200 feet at the mouth of Moose Creek to 7,930 feet at the top of Rhodes Peak. Except for the saddles (where two drainages start), much of the divide is above 6,500 feet with the prominent peaks especially in the southern half, ranging from 7,300 to 7,400 feet.

Although little detailed geologic mapping has been done, extrapolation from other studies and field reconnaissance indicate that most of the area is underlain by the Wallace formation, a unit in the Precambrian Belt supergroup. The major lithologies associated with the Wallace formation include limestones, dolomites, and carbonaceous argillites. The extreme southeastern portion contains granite rocks of the Cretaceous Age, Idaho Batholith, and volcanic rhyolites.

While this "high divide country" portion of the area is not considered true alpine, it exhibits relatively few trees, grassy mountain meadows, considerable barren land with numerous rocky outcrops, cliffs, and jagged peaks. Mountain heather and other alpine-type species are found intermingled where the thin soils have enough moisture to support plant growth (See photos 3 and 5).

Annual precipitation ranges from 30 inches near the eastern border to near 100 inches along the Idaho-Montana divide. Snow depths of 10 to 14 feet are not uncommon in the higher country lasting well into the summer and providing water to the Clearwater and Clark Fork River systems.

The name "Great Burn" has been attached to the area by several groups and stems from the large and devastating wildfires which denuded much of the area during the early 1900's, primarily on the Idaho-side. Except for upper Moose, Pollack, and Swamp Creeks, much of the area north of Kelly Creek is still primarily covered with shrubs with scattered individual and small groups of trees. The area south of Kelly Creek has regenerated largely to lodgepole pine. Most of the drainages in Montana capable of supporting vegetation are tree covered.

Three ecosystems are found within the area, 1) cedar-hemlock-pine, 2) western spruce-fir, and 3) alpine meadows and barren terrain. The cedar-hemlock-pine group represents the lower elevations. Where trees are found, it is represented primarily by western redcedar, grand fir, Douglas-fir, and larch with very small amounts of western white pine on the Idaho-side. Ponderosa pine is found at the lower and drier elevations. The spruce-fir system is represented on the Montana-side by Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, mountain hemlock, and the seral lodgepole pine on the burned over areas. Very small amounts of whitebark pine are found above 6,500 feet.

The outstanding scenery, the variety and abundance of wildlife species (elk, black bears, mountain goats and moose), and the high quality westslope cutthroat trout fishery in Idaho are major attractions. There are 33 mountain lakes, most of which are located near the Idaho-Montana divide, with 15 on the Idaho side. The lakes range in size from one acre to the 114-acre Fish Lake. The area includes a variety of vegetative types interspersed with the numerous streams, barren terrain, and subalpine rocky peaks that contribute to the visitor's enjoyment.

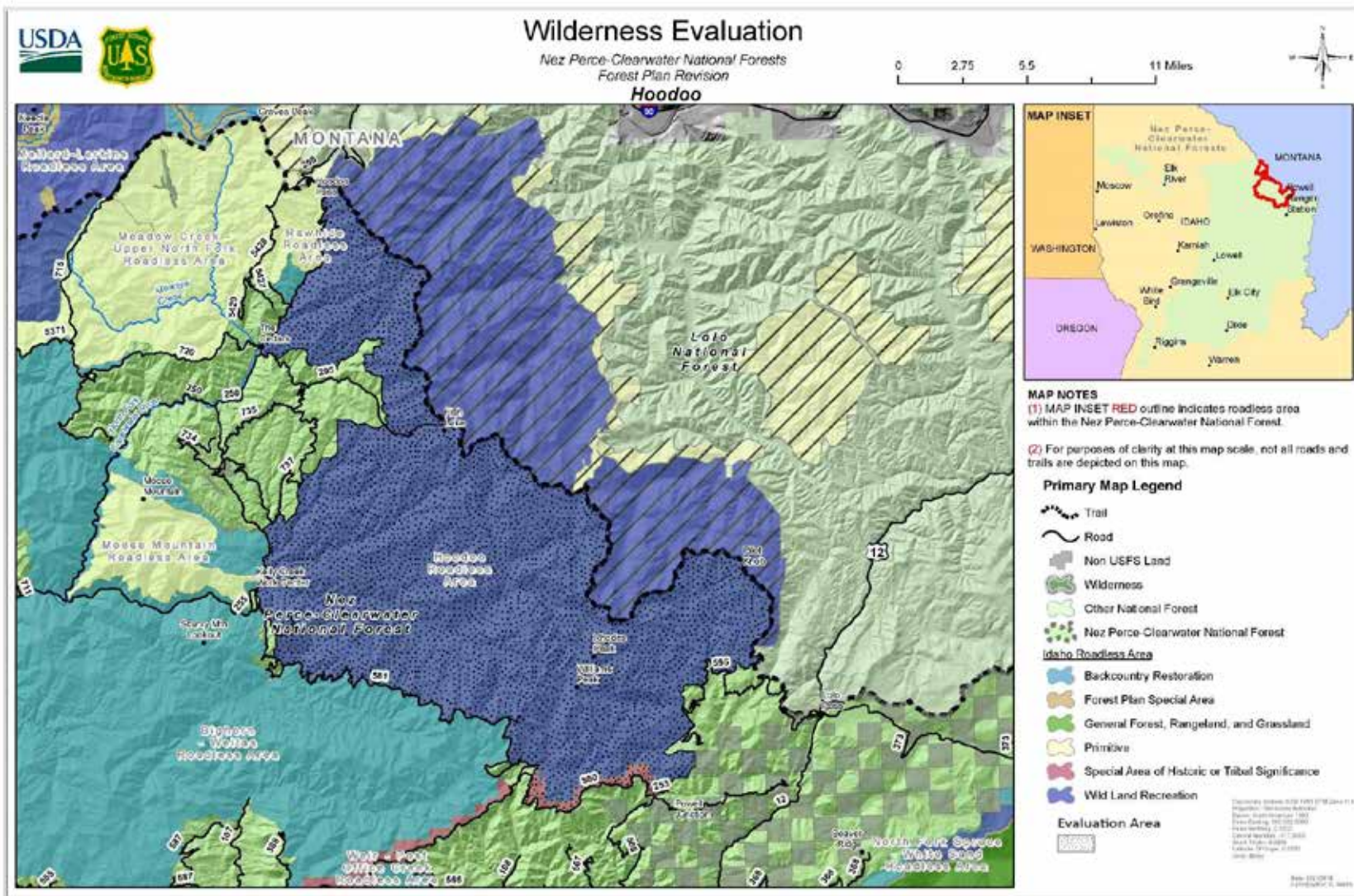


Figure 26. Wilderness Evaluation Hoodoo

Apparent naturalness

The area retains a high degree of natural integrity and appearance. Human activities have resulted in relatively minor and isolated impacts. The vegetation in 73 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).



Figure 27. Trail #419 to Fish Lake on a bench parallel to Lake Creek.

The Idaho Roadless Rule removed areas with past timber harvesting from roadless area boundaries. Since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule, 69 acres of trees have been cut as part of a post-wildfire roadside hazard tree reduction project. This would be obvious to visitors but are located on roads that border the roadless area.

Concentrated use around some of the larger, more popular lakes, such as Fish Lake, see Figure 30 and Heart Lake (Montana), and use on several of the main trails are the only real detractions from the natural integrity and appearance of the area. An old road which provided access to Fish Lake was converted to an ATV Trail #419. Trail #419 is located on a bench above Lake Creek, Figure 27, Figure 28 and Figure 29.

Old wooden corduroy crossings were removed from the road at two of the larger tributaries of Lake Creek, Siam Creek, and Japanese Creek and ATVs ford these creeks (Figure 28). Both crossings are located on a section of land formerly owned by the Diamond Match Company. These lands plus other sections were exchanged by Forest Service in the Beaver Cedar land exchange.



Figure 28. Trail #419 at Siam Creek crossing.

About three miles of a very primitive, closed mining road as well as the hard rock mining site is noticeable near Kid Lake. Evidence of other early mining is very minor.

The area does not include Forest Service Administrative sites or recreation rentals. There is one trail bridge on Trail #567 that crosses the Middle Fork of Kelly Creek. Some visitors may view trail bridges as obvious man-made features that detract from naturalness while others see them as a necessary part of a trail by providing a stream crossing. The presence of bridges allows access to an area at higher water instead of having to ford a stream.



Figure 29. View from trail #419 near Fish Lake towards the State line.



Figure 30. Bollards placed to control motorized use of Fish Lake.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The vastness of the area, covering approximately 252,000 total acres (153,000 acres in Idaho) along with its rectangular shape extending approximately 40 miles north-south provides excellent opportunity for solitude. The 40-plus streams dissect the area, effectively isolating visitors from each other. The trees and shrubs plus the varied mountainous terrain further screen visitors from each other.

External influences of sight and sound are minimal. The only regular motorized use adjacent to the area is over FR #250 - Pierce-Superior Road. Sounds from logging activity and other occasional motorized, public use near the periphery can be heard up to a mile inside the roadless area in only a few places.

Solitude may be somewhat affected from certain viewpoints along the divide or on steep slopes above developments. Timber harvest units and associated roads on both the Idaho and Montana sides may be viewed in several areas although usually these distractions are in the far distant or background viewing area. The size and diversity of the area, the variety of vegetative types and landforms, the abundance of wildlife, streams and lakes all contribute to virtually unlimited primitive setting for recreation. Primary activities are hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, lake fishing, big-game hunting, primitive camping, outdoor photography, and sightseeing. Snowmobiling has been a popular activity in portions of the roadless area for many years, primarily in the northern end from Hoodoo Pass to Fish Lake and in the south near Black Lead Mountain. Mountain biking is also popular, primarily along the Stateline Trail #738 and trails in the Goose Creek/Goose Ridge area.

Some excellent opportunities exist for fishing in the major streams of Kelly and Cayuse Creek. River access by small craft is possible at some water levels. Kelly Creek, including all its tributaries, has been a catch-and-release-stream since 1970. The purpose of this Department of Idaho Fish and Game regulation was to enhance the westslope cutthroat trout fishery since the completion of Dworshak Dam in 1970 blocked migration of steelhead trout. This fishery has improved to the point that the stream is nationally known. Fishermen from all over the country come to catch and release 12 to 15 inch or larger trout.

Some limited mountain climbing opportunities are available along the divide. Several outfitters operate in the area to provide recreational services to the public, particularly with hunting.

Most (87 percent) of the area provides a primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting due to the vast size of the area (over 250,000 acres when combined with the Montana side). One notable semi-primitive motorized opportunity is the six-mile ATV trail to Fish Lake. Trail #419 provides a rare opportunity for motorized travel to a large lake while still providing a semi-primitive setting. See Figure 31 for the ratio of the recreation opportunity spectrum settings.

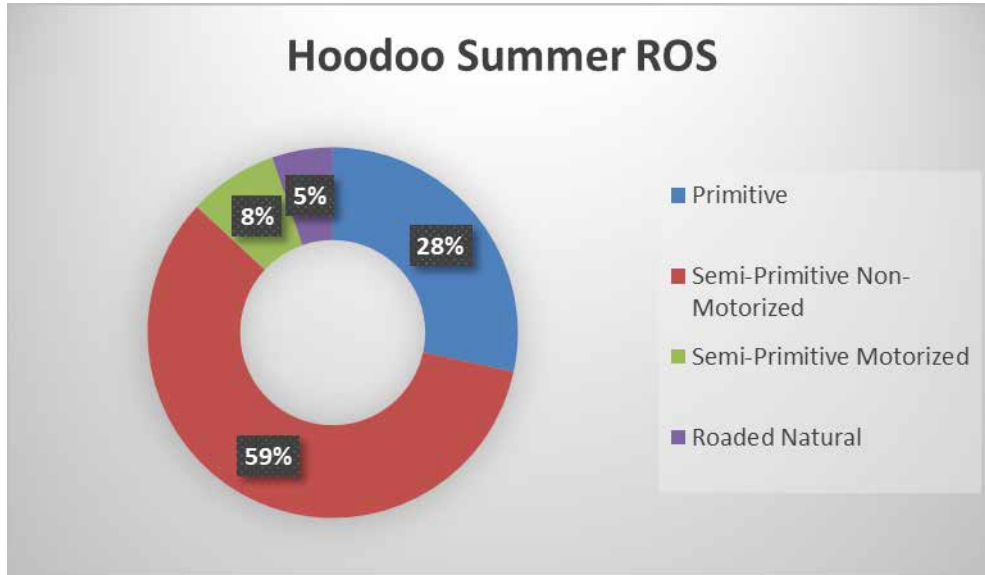


Figure 31. Hoodoo Roadless Area Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum.

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 252,000 acres, (the Idaho portion totals 153,900 acres) the Hoodoo Roadless Area spans the Idaho-Montana border. It is one of the three largest roadless areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and is much larger than the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres for all or part of this area to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 42 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas located within the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 17,409 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Four historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

Many pointed rocky formations are located along the higher ridges, especially in the vicinity from William's Peak to Shale Mountain. The rocky formations are thin and irregular. These formations are known locally as "dinosaur rocks" because they resemble the back of some prehistoric animals. Rocky pinnacles are also in abundance along these ridges.

There are no wild and scenic river corridors in the Hoodoo Roadless area. Kelly Creek and its North, Middle and South Forks flow through this roadless area and have been noted as having high scenic value

in the Nationwide Rivers inventory and reaffirmed as having “outstandingly remarkable” scenic value in the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic River eligibility review.

This roadless area includes scenic Fish Lake, notable for its size, Figure 32 and Figure 33. Fish Lake is the largest lake, 114 acres, in any roadless area on the national forest and one of the largest on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest overall. This lake is thought to be one of the only lakes with a natural fishery because of the size of the lake and its direct connection to Lake Creek, its outflow. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game does show one fish stocking record of cutthroat trout back in 1972, but no record of stocking non-native fish.

Three high mountain lakes are located in the Goose Creek headwaters- Goose Lake, Upper Steep Creek Lake (5.6 acres) and Lower Steep Creek Lake (6.0 acres). The Idaho Fish and Game stocking records show that both Steep Creek Lakes were last stocked with California golden trout, a non-native in 1990. The practice of stocking high mountain lakes with non-native fish has been discontinued.

The headwaters of Kelly Creek include Kid Lake (11.5 acres), Smokey Lake (2.8 acres) and Leo Lake (10.7 acres). The Idaho Department of Fish and Game last stocked Kid Lake with cutthroat trout in 2015 and the other two lakes in 1991.

The remaining eight high mountain lakes are in Upper Cayuse Creek. Goat Lake (8 acres) was last stocked with cutthroat trout in 1990 and Monroe Lake (2.4 acres) in 1994. The other lakes are smaller, and no stocking records are shown with the exception of Horseshoe Lake (2.9 acres) which was stocked with brook trout in 1972.

Hoodoo is one of three roadless areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest where Mountain Goats are known to exist and inhabit the high country along the Stateline divide (IDFG). These are unusual in the area and are scenic and wild to view.

The water quality in the Hoodoo Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 18.4 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Laundry Creek, Osier Creek, Pollock Creek, Sugar Creek, Swamp Creek and an unnamed water body are not supporting the *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses, but are fully supporting *secondary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Hoodoo Roadless Area contains portions of seventeen HUC 12 subwatersheds. Thirteen subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 93 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). Four subwatersheds (7 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. There are no class 3 watersheds in the roadless area (Lucas 2017).



Figure 32. Fish Lake



Figure 33. Fish Lake viewed from Stateline Trail

Manageability

The Hoodoo Roadless Area is currently managed under the *Wildland Recreation* theme (151,900 acres), the most restrictive theme of the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule. Approximately 2,000 acres are managed as a Special Area of Historic or Tribal Significance (SAHTS) in the corridor of the Lolo Trail. The area was

recommended for Wilderness in the 1987 Clearwater Forest Plan. The current Lolo National Forest Plan also recommends the Montana portion for wilderness.

The area shares boundaries with mostly other roadless areas (58 percent) and front country (42 percent). There are no adjacent private lands. The management of boundaries shared by other roadless areas is generally not challenging, since management is similar. Managing recommended wilderness adjacent to front country timber lands can be challenging, because of the need to try to protect forest from fire in the front country versus the desire to let fires burn in wilderness.

There are seven mining claims in the Nez Perce-Clearwater portion of the Hoodoo Roadless Area. No grazing allotments overlap with the area.

Recurrent motorized use (snowmobiling) was long established in the Idaho side of the roadless area until it was banned with the 2012 Clearwater Travel Plan decision. Part of the rationale for this decision was made in part since the area was recommended for wilderness in the 1987 Clearwater Forest Plan. Access to four keys area of high elevation bowls has been from near Powell on the east and from Hoodoo Pass from the west. Snowmobilers cite the unique opportunity, solitude, beauty, and high challenge level for this type of remote snowmobiling experience.

Past opportunities for wheeled motorized use provided a high (41+ miles) trail opportunity. The 2012 Clearwater Travel Plan decision kept the ATV trail (6 miles) to Fish Lake open but closed other trails to wheeled motorized use. Trying to eliminate the long-established motorized travel to Fish Lake would present a management challenge. Keeping long-established snowmobiling use from occurring is a current management challenge.

Mountain biking occur on the Divide trail and in the Goose Creek area. Mountain biking, as a mechanized use is not allowed under the Wilderness Act. Although this use may be considered in interim management, these users would likely be displaced if the area becomes designated wilderness.

At its narrowest point, the Hoodoo Roadless Area is nine air miles across: otherwise, the area averages between 15 and 20 air miles wide and over 40 air miles long. Except for some background views of several timber harvest and road activities, the potential wilderness values and attributes of the area are virtually unaffected by external influences. Most of the boundaries are well defined on major terrain or other recognized features. In a few locations however, terrain features are less prominent, and boundaries are difficult to locate on the ground.

John Day Roadless Area

General description

The 10,300-acre John Day Roadless Area is located on a high ridge between the Salmon River and Little Slate Creek. The headwaters of Allison Creek and John Day Creek are also located within this roadless area. Road #441, the Nut Basin Road on the top of the ridge separates this roadless area from Little Slate Creek Roadless Area to the north. Access is from the north, south, and west on Roads #441, #221, and #263.

The elevation ranges from 3,800 feet at the National Forest boundary to 7,450 feet at John Day Mountain and 7,814 feet at Southwest Butte. Slopes are very steep with hardly any flat benches. This area contains a north-south ridge with perpendicular ridges and draws. On the slopes facing the Salmon River canyon, vegetation runs from non-forested land to an alpine zone. The east side of the main ridge is not as steep as the west, and vegetation is more uniform. South slopes contain mostly grasses with scattered trees at the

higher elevations. The north slopes are timbered. The major species are white bark pine, Douglas-fir, and a small amount of Ponderosa pine.

The principal topographic features are Southwest Butte and John Day Mountain. The current major uses are livestock grazing and hunting.

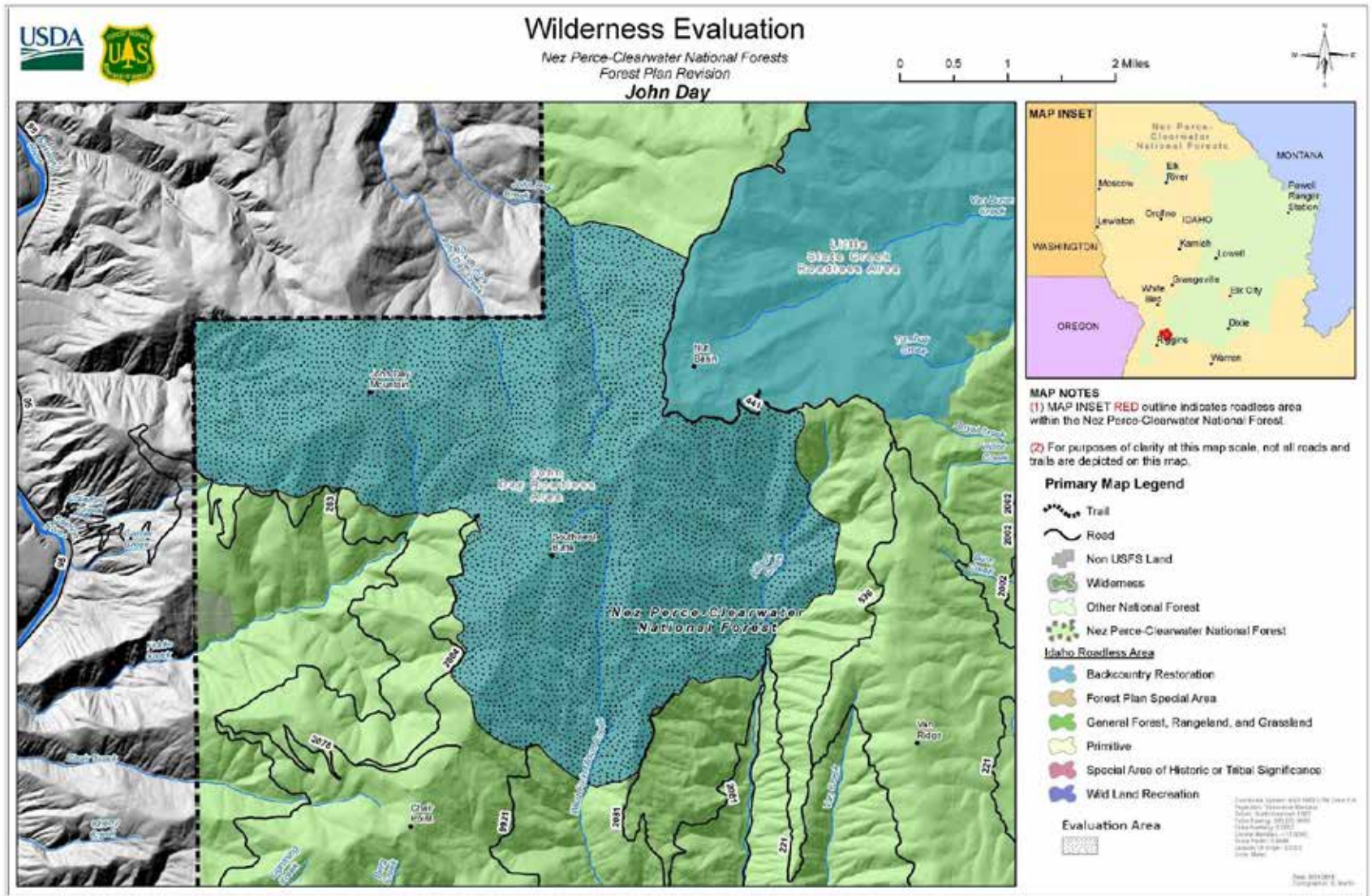


Figure 34. Wilderness Evaluation John Day

Apparent naturalness

On the whole, natural processes are intact and operating, although there are effects on some sites. The thin soils around Southwest Butte and southwest of Nut Basin are locally damaged from off-road vehicle use. These areas still show soil and vegetative impacts from past livestock grazing. Human activities are not far away from this area as it is located on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest boundary. The impacts noted above are noticeable, as are off-site intrusions listed below. Roads or logging on adjacent lands are visible from nearly all viewpoint. A jeep trail runs from Nut Basin to Chair Point via Southwest Butte, causing locally heavy impacts. Off-road vehicles use affect other parts of the area.

A small amount of timber has been cut since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Ruled established the current John Day roadless area boundary. Less than 0.1 miles of constructed fire lines was established during the 2015 fires and less than one acre of roadside hazard trees were cut post fire. The vegetation in the majority of the roadless area (72 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

There are few trees below 4,500 feet on south slopes and below 3,000 feet on north slopes. All of the roadless area overlaps with livestock grazing allotments. The primary range is generally located below 4,500 feet with transitory range occurring over 4,500 feet. The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows three acres of known weed locations, primarily spotted knapweed occurring along roadsides.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The location along the top of a ridgeline, coupled with open vegetation with few trees, limit the opportunity for solitude. Hunting is the major recreational use of the area.

There are no lakes or boatable waters in the roadless area. There are no streams within the roadless area with outstandingly remarkable recreation values.

The recreation opportunity setting for most of the area is roaded natural or semi-primitive motorized as shown in Figure 35 below. This is due to the proximity of roads and trails open to motorized use. Approximately 24 percent of the core of the area provides a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting.

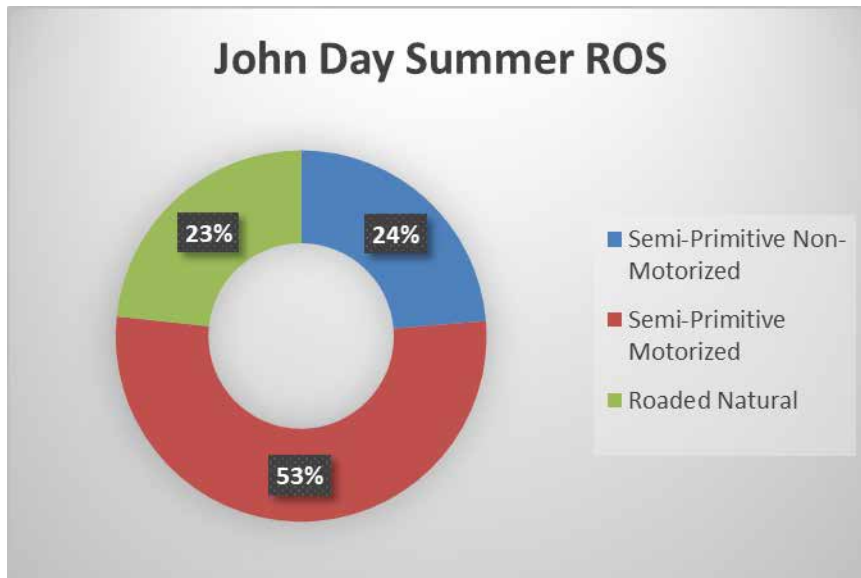


Figure 35. John Day Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition.

With a total size of 10,300 acres the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is mostly surrounded by front country and non-Forest Service lands.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 54 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas, and vegetation in the area includes 2,841 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no designated Wild and Scenic rivers. No rivers or streams in the roadless area have outstandingly remarkable scenic values. There are distance scenic views from the high points at John Day Mountain and Southwest Butte.

The water quality in the John Day Roadless Area is generally high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The John Day Roadless Area contains portions of five HUC 12 subwatersheds, all of which have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the

roadless area; and accelerated surface soil erosion. There are no subwatersheds with a Functioning Properly WCC 1 rating or WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow road construction except for some limited circumstances approved by the Regional Forester. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels near communities; to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive habitat; or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure, or process.

Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are allowed in Idaho Roadless Areas. There are currently no unpatented mining claims located in the roadless area. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction is allowed only if it is incidental to an activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The John Day Roadless Area shares much of its boundary with front country (60 percent) and other ownership, primarily BLM land, plus state and private lands (25 percent). Approximately 15 percent of the area shares a boundary with the Little Slate Creek Roadless Area to the northwest. The location of the roadless area on the national forest boundary to the north and west creates a straight-line boundary that does not follow any logical topography.

The area is not adjacent to groomed snowmobile routes and does not have a history of snowmobiling. Wheeled vehicle opportunity has traditionally been low (6-20 miles), with primarily ATV trails on the ridges.

Other than the portion of the western boundary that overlaps the national forest boundary, avoidance of existing roads has been a guiding factor in establishing the perimeter of the area. Managing this area as a wilderness would be difficult due to irregular boundaries and relatively small size.

Lick Point Roadless Area

General description

The 6,900-acre Lick Point Roadless Area contains Lick Creek and the head of American River. It is between 5,000 and 6,000 feet in elevation and is completely surrounded by roads.

Meadows are found along the creek bottoms. The rest of the area is rolling hills and homogeneous. Over half of the area is covered with brush fields. The remaining portions are covered by either patches of old growth mixed with alder glades or stands comprised of various age classes. Lodgepole pine is the main species.

Cattle, horses, elk, and deer utilize much of the area, especially the meadows. Grazing by these animals causes most of the impacts, which are especially heavy near the salt lick at Lick Point and along the trails. About five acres at the salt lick have been fenced to reduce impacts. There are also semi-permanent enclosures on this range, as well as a number of drift fences. Trails cover the area - some are not on the Forest Service trail system but have resulted from game and stock use over the years. The meadows along Lick Creek and the American River are very heavily used for calving and calf rearing.

Current major uses include hunting and livestock grazing. One hundred forty-five acres of private land adjoin this area on the south.

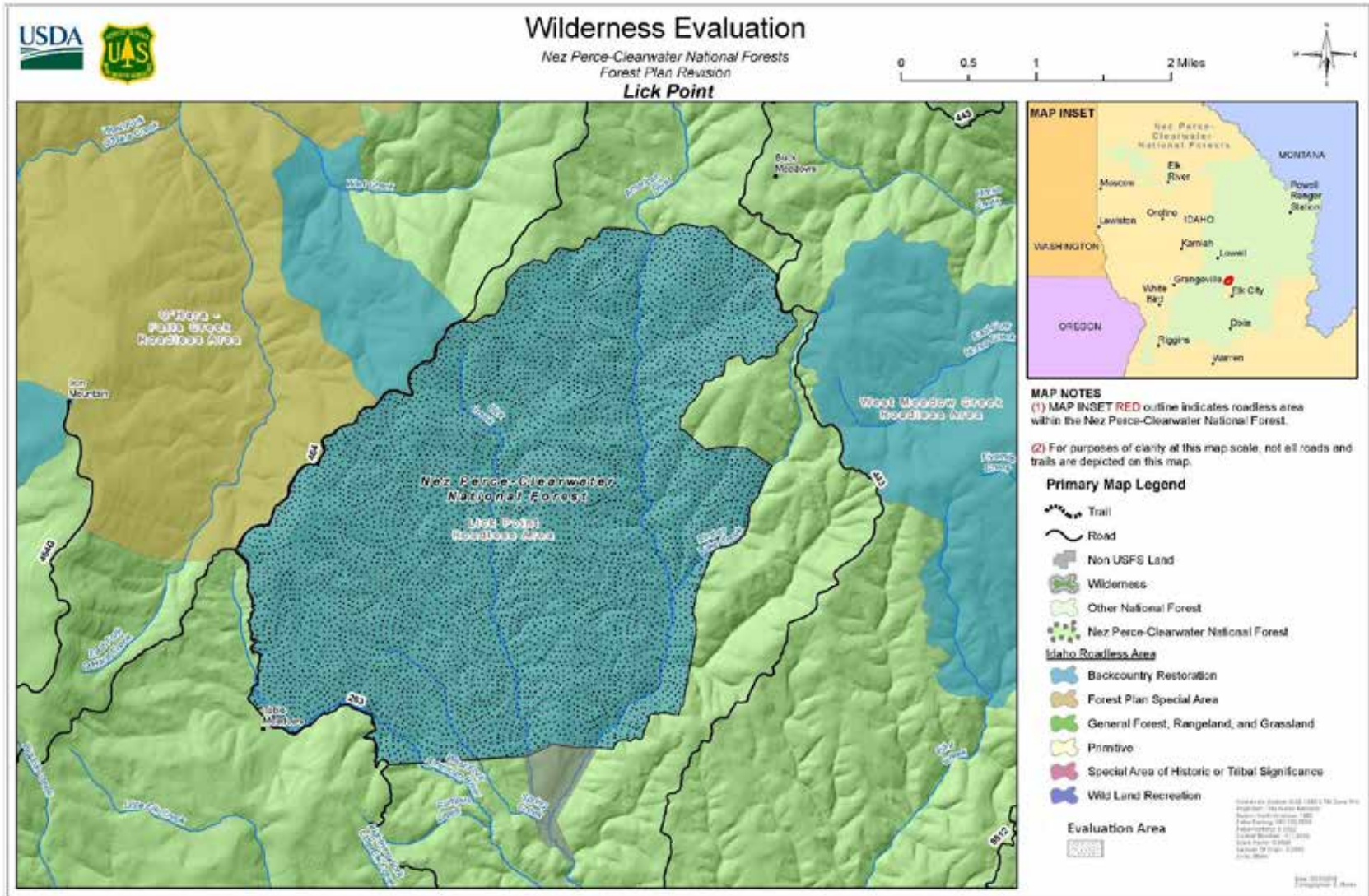


Figure 36. Wilderness Evaluation Lick Point

Apparent naturalness

Impacts on natural processes are moderate. Trails and streambanks in the area are used by stock and game and 99 percent of the area is within a livestock grazing allotment. Cattle are present and noticeable along with fences and exclosures.

There are no Forest Service administrative buildings or recreation rentals in the roadless area.

Timber has not been cut since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule established the current roadless area boundary. The vegetation in 41 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows nine acres of known weed locations. The largest component is meadow hawkweed (5 acres) along Road #464 along the northwestern boundary of the area. Miscellaneous weeds are found along roads and trails.

Noise by vehicles on roads is apparent near the edges of the area.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

This is one of the smallest roadless areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. Although vegetation is sometimes dense, both on-site and off-site intrusions seriously restrict the isolation required for a feeling of solitude. There is little diversity in the area, and few challenges are present.

The area does not contain any lakes or boatable waters. No outstandingly remarkable recreation values have been identified in the 2018 Wild and Scenic Rivers Evaluation as documented in Appendix F to this Final Environmental Impact Statement.

The area provides recreation opportunity settings of semi-primitive non-motorized (66 percent) and roaded natural (34 percent) as shown in Figure 37 below. The area is encircled by a road, which is also part of a groomed snowmobiling route. The outer third of the area is influenced by the sights and sounds from the road while the inner core of the area includes semi-primitive settings.

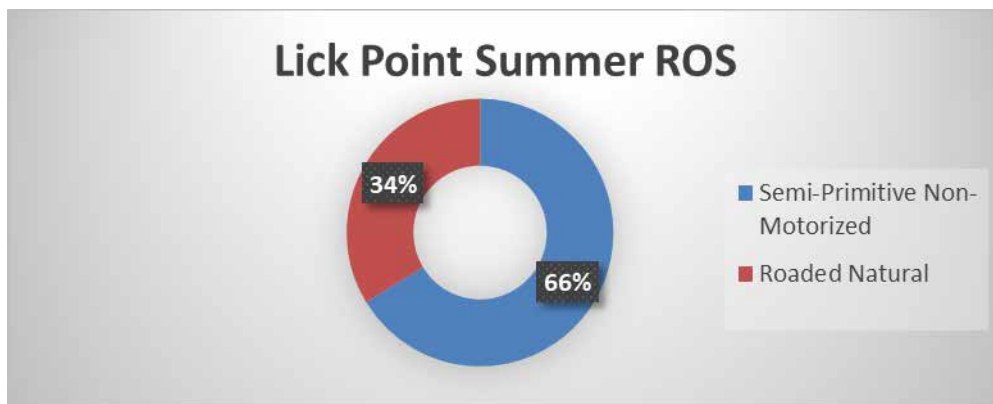


Figure 37. Lick Point Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 6,900 acres this is one of the smallest of the roadless areas on Nez Perce-Clearwater. It meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 98 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas, and vegetation in the area includes no modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area. There are no designated wild and scenic rivers other notable scenic features in this roadless area.

The water quality in the Lick Point Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 18.9 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Segments of the American River, Lick Creek, Limber Luke Creek, Spring Creek, West Fork American River and an unnamed water body are not supporting the beneficial uses of *cold water aquatic life* and *salmonid spawning*, but are fully supporting *primary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Lick Point Roadless Area contains portions of two HUC 12 subwatersheds. O'Hara Creek subwatershed is categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompasses only 1 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). Upper American River subwatershed (99 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. It received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; alteration of physical, biological, or chemical impacts to water quality; altered stream channel features; and extensive areas of soil contamination, primarily from historic mining. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow road construction unless approved by the Regional Forester. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels near communities; to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive habitat; or to maintain or restore the characteristics or ecosystem, composition, structure, or process. Approximately one-third of the area or 2,300 acres is in a community protection zone and allows the responsible official to authorize temporary road construction or reconstruction for community protection zone activities if these can't be reasonably accomplished without road access.

Mineral activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed in Idaho Roadless areas. There are no unpatented mining claims within the boundaries of the Lick Point Roadless area. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction is allowed only if it is incidental to an activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The entire area (98 percent) overlaps with the boundaries of livestock grazing allotments. Grazing primarily occurs in the meadows. Although grazing is allowed in wilderness under the Wilderness Act, it can make management more challenging. The Lick Point Roadless Area shares most of its boundary with front country (83 percent) with the remainder adjoining the O'Hara Falls Creek Roadless Area.

A groomed snowmobile route encircles the roadless area and provides access for snowmobiling in meadows and other open areas. The grooming is conducted under a long-time agreement with the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho County, and the local snowmobile club. Wheeled vehicle opportunity has traditionally been very low (<5 miles) since there are few recreation trails in the area.

Roads form a natural boundary around this area. Due to the relatively small size and narrow shape, the majority of the area is influenced by the surrounding roads.

Little Slate Creek North Roadless Area

General description

The 5,900-acre Little Slate Creek North Roadless Area was split from the Little Slate Creek Roadless Area during the Idaho Roadless rule EIS analysis due to the amount of development. They are separated by a road corridor located along Slate Creek. Principal drainages are Little Van Buren Creek, No Business Creek, and Waterspout Creek. All are part of the Slate Creek drainage. This roadless area is bordered by Slate Creek and Road #354 on the north, Road #9303, and Road #441 on the southwest.

The elevation ranges from 2,100 at Slate Creek where it meets the national forest boundary to 7,291 feet at Slate Point. The area contains very steep side slopes and tributary draws. The area is generally too steep for hunting. This area is also winter range habitat for deer and elk.

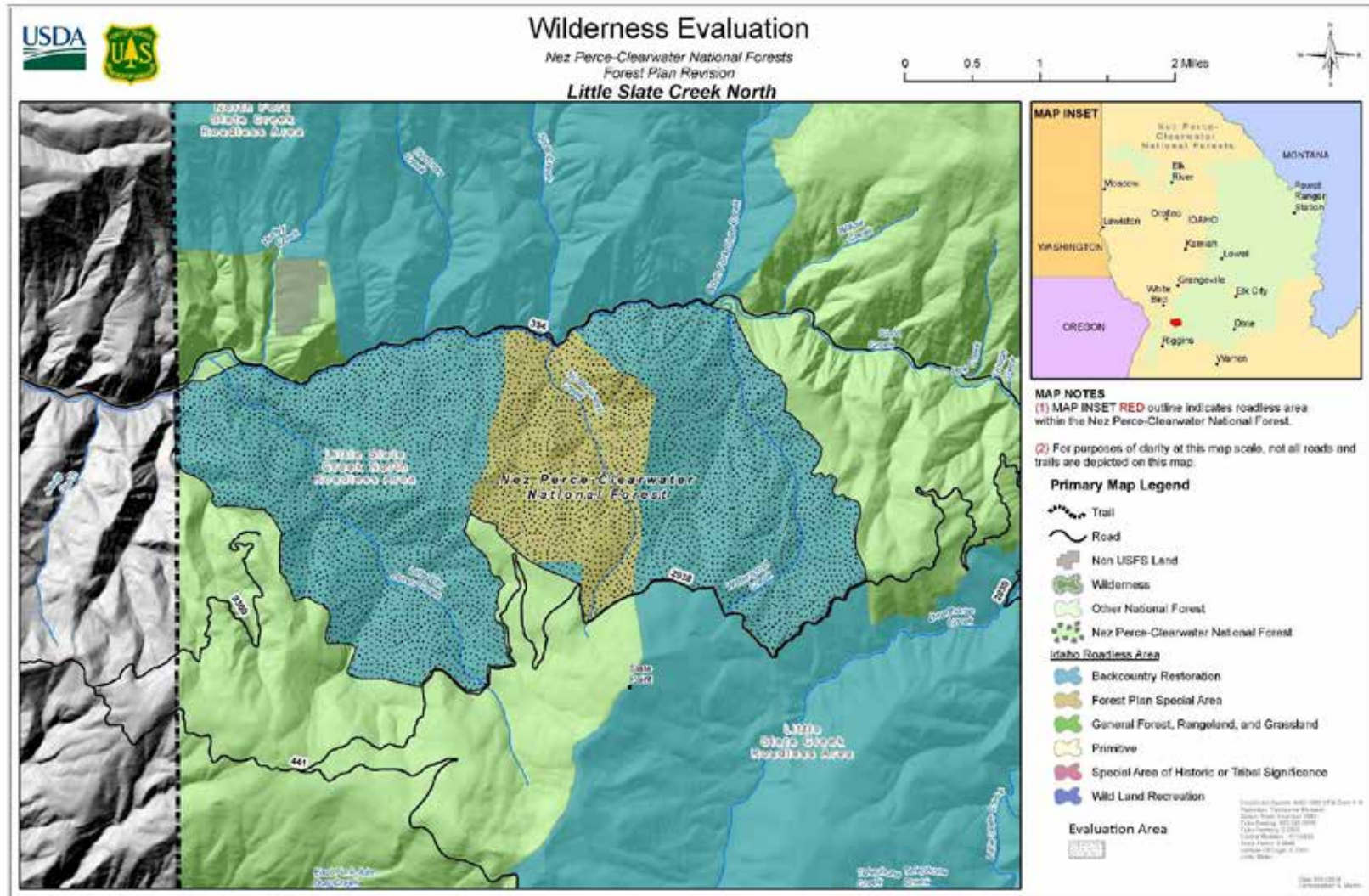


Figure 38. Wilderness Evaluation Little Slate Creek North

Apparent naturalness

Despite the small size of the area, it has not been significantly impacted. Except for the roads near the boundaries, the area would appear natural to most people.

There are no Forest Service administrative buildings or recreation rentals in the roadless area. There is one trail bridge at Waterspout Creek. Since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule established the current roadless area boundaries, 41 acres of timber have been cut along adjacent roads, as part of a roadside hazard tree reduction project which cut trees up to 200 feet from roads.

The vegetation in 26 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 8.5 acres of weeds including yellow star thistle, rush skeletonweed and spotted knapweed adjacent to roads and trails. The management objective is to try to eradicate these weeds while the populations remain relatively small.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Topographic and vegetative screening is moderate. There are few drainages and a few miles of trail available for extensive travel. Management activities are present on almost every side. Primitive recreation opportunity is moderate. Although there is some diversity in the Slate Creek breaks, the area is too small for a significant range of opportunity. Cliffs and bluffs on the breaks would offer challenges.

There are no lakes and no boatable water within the roadless area and none of the streams were found to have outstandingly remarkable values for recreation in the 2017 Wild and Scenic Rivers evaluation.

The recreation opportunity setting for most (81 percent) of the area is roaded natural as shown in Figure 39, below. This is due primarily to the proximity of main Forest roads and the relatively small size of the area providing limited opportunity to get very far from the influence of roads.

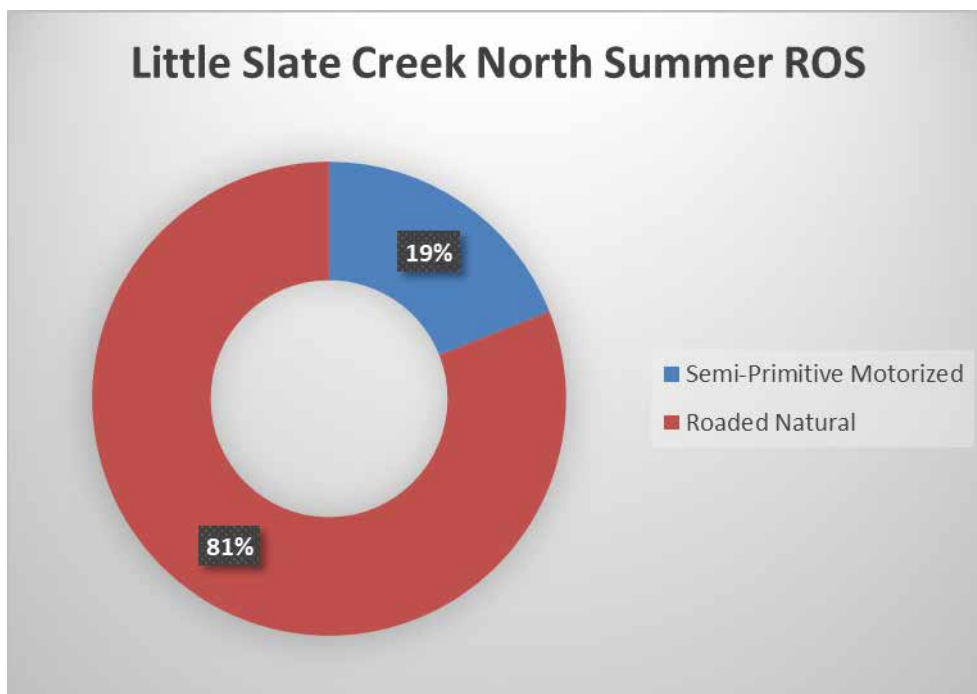


Figure 39. Little Slate Creek North Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 5,900 acres the roadless area is one of the smallest roadless areas on the national forest. It meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 98 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. A 1,200 acres Research Natural Area is located in No Business Creek. Maidenhair fern grows in this drainage, which is near the southern extreme of this plant's range. The area does not include any modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Two historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no designated Wild and Scenic Rivers or other notable scenic features in the roadless area. Scenic viewpoints include Slate Point, Dead Point, and Nut Point.

The water quality in the Little Slate Creek North Roadless Area is generally high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Little Slate Creek North Roadless Area contains portions of two HUC 12 subwatersheds. The Lower Little Slate Creek subwatershed is categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass only 1 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Lower Slate Creek subwatershed (99 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. It received a lower rating due to over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; and roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

This area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow road construction, except for some limited circumstances approved by the Regional Forester. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels in a community protection zone; to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat; or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure, or process.

Approximately 1,200 acres is managed as the No Business Creek research natural area in the center of the roadless area.

Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction are allowed only if incidental to an activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008). There are currently no unpatented mining claims in the area. Approximately 1 percent of the area is overlapped by a livestock grazing allotment.

The Little Slate Creek North shares most of its boundary (68 percent) with front country area. The remainder of the boundary (32 percent) is shared with North Fork of Little Slate Creek to the north and Little Slate Creek roadless area to the southeast. The area is near the western boundary of roadless area is within one mile of private lands and part of a community protection zone.

The northern boundary of this area is Slate Creek. The remaining boundary is irregular, drawn mostly to exclude existing roads and timber sale areas.

The area is not adjacent to groomed snowmobile routes and does not have a history of snowmobile use. Wheeled vehicle opportunity has traditionally been low (6-20 miles) of opportunity since there are few trails that cross the area.

Little Slate Creek Roadless Area

General description

The 12,200-acre Little Slate Creek Roadless Area is located on the divide between the Salmon River and Little Slate Creek. Principal drainages are Van Buren Creek, Little Van Buren Creek, No Business Creek, Waterspout Creek, and Deadhorse Creek. All are part of the Slate Creek drainage. This area is bordered by Slate Creek and Road 354 on the north, and Road 441, which traverses the Slate Point-Nut Basin ridge, on the south and west.

The elevation ranges from 2,100 feet where Slate Creek crosses the National Forest boundary to 7,370 feet just below Nut Basin. This area has very steep side slopes and tributary draws, with some flat benches along the mid-elevations. Deadhorse Creek is hidden in the middle of the area and has solitude qualities. The area contains many springs and intermittent streams. There is one small lake, Nut Basin Lake, at the head of Van Buren Creek beneath Nut Basin. Marsh vegetation is present on the shoreline, making the lake hard to fish. This area is almost completely forested. It lies on north to east slopes, or high enough south slopes for the climax vegetation to be trees. The major species is Douglas-fir.

Trail 307, which crosses the area from west to east, is a part of the old gold miners' route to Florence. The major current uses are grazing and hunting. This area contains deer and elk summer and winter range.

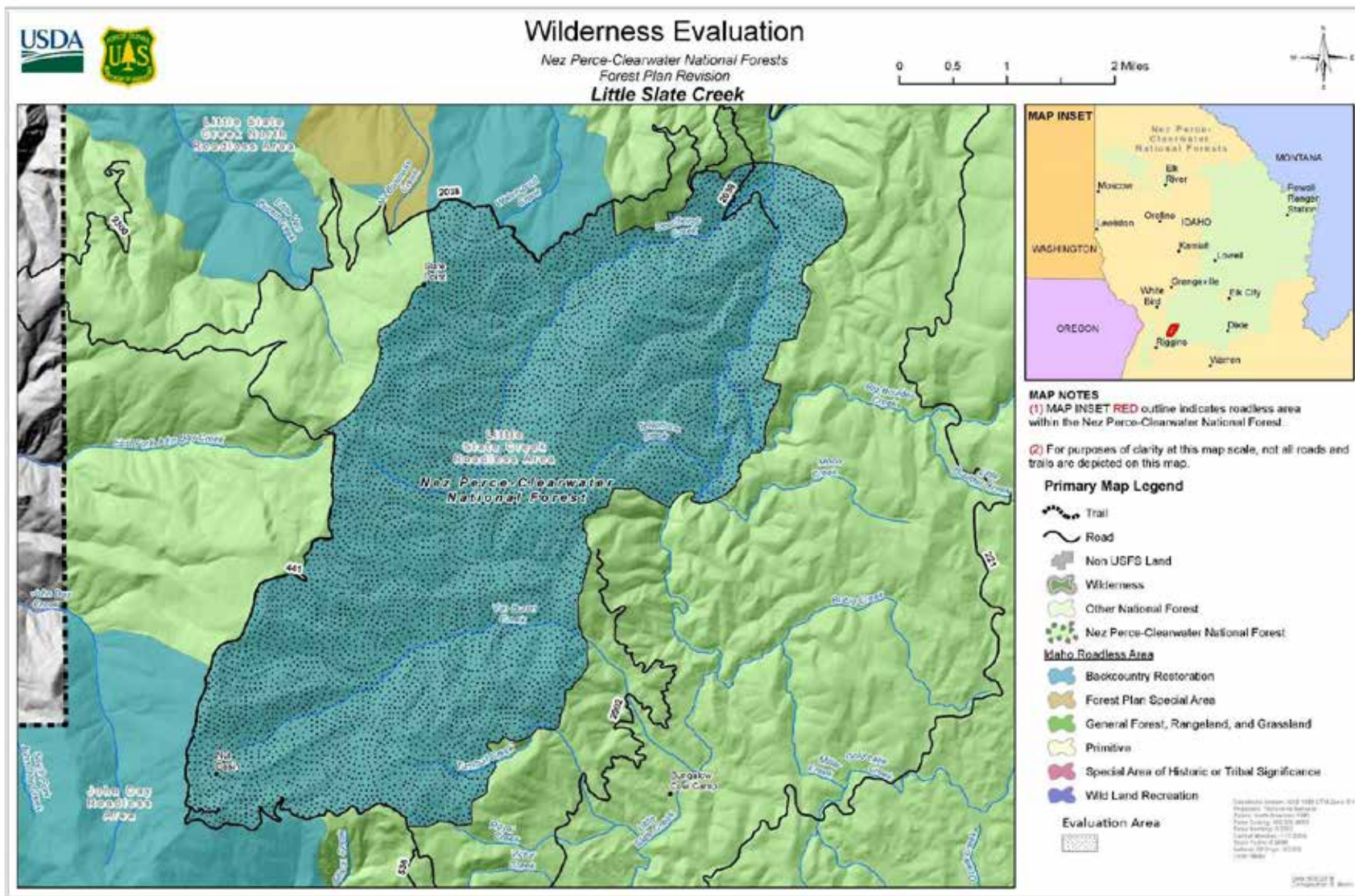


Figure 40. Wilderness Evaluation Little Slate Creek

Apparent naturalness

The area itself appears natural. There are two grazing allotments that overlap with 81 percent of the roadless area. Primary range is on south slopes below 4,500 feet and on north slopes below 3,000 feet. Transitory range is above 4,500 feet and on ridgetops. The sights and sounds of cattle and the associated range improvements are obvious to people in the roadless areas. Other than trails and grazing, the area has been little impacted.

There are no Forest Service administrative buildings or recreation rentals in the roadless area. Little Slate Creek Lookout and its access road border the area immediately to the west. There are three trail bridges in the roadless area.

Timber has not been cut since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule established the current roadless area boundary. The vegetation in 46 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 13 acres of known weed locations. This consists of eight acres of orange hawkweed located along open roads and decommissioned roads. Also, there are five acres of rush skeletonweed and spotted knapweed along roads and trails.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The area offers little opportunity for solitude. It is almost impossible not to notice off-site intrusions such as lookout towers, roads, old clearcuts, and present logging activity from most parts of the area because these impacts are an integral part of it. Although topographic and vegetative screening are moderate over most of the area, there is little diversity and challenge.

A two-acre lake, Nut Basin Lake is located in the headwaters of Van Buren Creek. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game last stocked this lake in 2017 with cutthroat trout in 2017. In the past rainbow trout were stocked but this last occurred in 2005. There are no boatable waters within the roadless area. None of the streams were found to have outstandingly remarkable values for recreation in the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic Rivers Evaluation.

Use is light except for hunting. Impacts are light, except along the roaded parts of Slate Creek and Little Slate Creek.

The recreation opportunity setting for most of the area is roaded natural or semi-primitive motorized as shown in Figure 41 below. This is due to the proximity of main Forest access roads and secondary roads. A relatively small portion (20 percent) of the interior is far enough from the sights and sounds of roads to provide a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting.

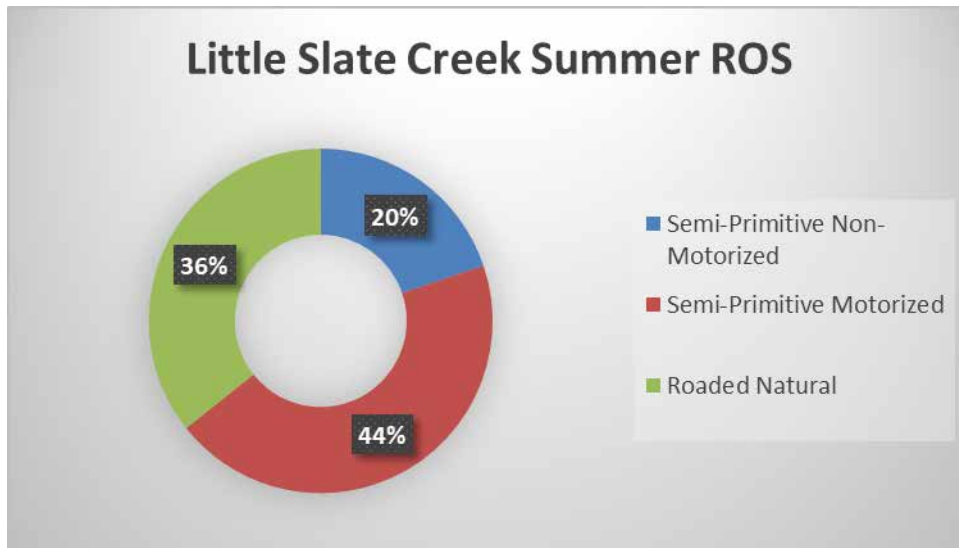


Figure 41. Little Slate Creek Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 12,200 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 62 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas, and vegetation in the area includes 1,927 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Two historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no designated wild and scenic rivers other notable scenic features in this roadless area. Scenic points include Slate Point, Dead Point, and Nut Point.

The water quality in the Little Slate Creek Roadless Area is generally high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the NPCLW were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Little Slate Creek Roadless Area contains portions of five HUC 12 subwatersheds. The Lower Little Slate Creek subwatershed is categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompasses 42 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

Allison Creek, Upper Little Slate Creek, Lower Slate Creek and John Day Creek subwatersheds (58 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but

Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area; and accelerated surface soil erosion. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow road construction except for some limited circumstances approved by the Regional Forester. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels near communities, to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive habitat or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem compositions, structure or process.

Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed in Idaho Roadless area. There are no unpatented mining claims located in the area. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction is allowed only if it is incidental to an activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The Little Slate Creek Roadless Area shares most of its boundary (77 percent) with front country and 23 percent with other roadless area to the north and south. The area is a few miles from the National Forest boundary. The difference in fire management policies between front country and wilderness and the relatively small size of the roadless area, would make it challenging to allow fire to play a natural role in the ecosystem.

Approximately 81 percent of the area is in a grazing allotment. Although grazing is allowed in designated wilderness under the Wilderness Act, the presence of allotments can make management more challenging.

The area is not adjacent to groomed snowmobile routes and is not generally accessible to snowmobiling. Wheeled vehicles opportunity has traditionally been low (6-20 miles).

The northern boundary of this area is Slate Creek which is easy to locate. The remaining boundary is irregular, drawn mostly to exclude existing roads and timber sale areas.

Lochsa Face Roadless Area

General description

The 76,000-acre Lochsa Face Roadless Area is located on the south side of the Lochsa River drainage approximately 77 miles east of Orofino, Idaho, and 60 miles west of Missoula, Montana, via U.S. Highway 12. The area's northern boundary is the Lochsa River. U.S. Highway 12 is located immediately north of the Lochsa River and parallels the area's northern boundary for most of its length. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness forms the southern and western boundaries. The eastern boundary parallels the Tom Beal Peak Road.

The Idaho Roadless Rule themes for this area are 53 percent Backcountry Restoration, 36 percent Primitive and 11 percent Special Area and Area of Tribal Significance associated with the Lochsa W&SR. Primitive themes allow for primitive and unconfined recreation while allowing limited forest health activities. Backcountry provides for a variety of recreation activities and allows limited forest health activities to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure. Prescribed fire

and managed wildland fire have been used in this area in the past and there are current plans for additional burning.

Access is limited along the northern boundary to foot and horse trails connected to U.S. Highway 12 by three pack bridges and one bridge suitable for motorized travel. Access to the eastern portion is provided by the Tom Beal Peak Road, a low-standard, dirt road. Access from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is provided by foot and horse trails. A total of 12 Forest Service system trails cross the interior and enter the Wilderness.

The western two-thirds of the Lochsa Face are characterized by steep, stream breaklands dissected by relatively steep side-drainages. There are also a limited number of alluvial terraces along the Lochsa River. Above 5,000 feet in this section, rolling upland mountain landforms dominate. In the Stanley Creek drainage, there are also some scoured cirque basin, glaciated landforms.

In the eastern one-third of the roadless area, from the Warm Springs Creek drainage to the area's eastern boundary, more alluvial terraces along the river can be found. The breaklands along the river become less pronounced and are not as steep as in the western portion. The gradient of the side-drainages also become gentler, and the rolling mountain upland landforms become more dominant. The Robin, Jay, and Cliff Creek drainages, located near the area's eastern boundary, consist of glacial-scoured and glacial-trough bottom landforms.

The area is mostly underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho Batholiths. Smaller localized blocks of border zone gneiss, granite, and rhyolite occur. Weathered rock and soil from the quartz monzonite bedrock is highly erosive and unstable especially on the steep slopes.

Although the topography is rugged throughout the area, no unique or sharply defined features exist that would classify the area as being visually outstanding except that area adjacent to the Lochsa River. Here steep cliffs, rocky outcrops, and steep gradient streams, in conjunction with the river, create some very scenic views. Elevations range from near 2,000 feet on the Lochsa River to 7,500 feet at Tom Beal Peak.

Except for a narrow band of western spruce-fir ecosystem along the main ridge and a lower section from Cliff-Cooperation Creek to the Tom Beal Road, most of the area is within the cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem. Existing vegetation patterns are mainly a result of large fires that burned in the early 1900's. The steep breaklands west of Warm Springs are characterized by large brush fields with scattered stringers of various sized trees. The higher elevation, mountain-upland and scoured glaciated landforms have scattered stands of lodgepole pine, Englemann spruce, subalpine fir, and whitebark pine. Scattered meadows along stream courses also occur at the higher elevations.



Figure 42. Cedar stand along Warm Springs Creek

The gentler stream-breaklands and mountain-upland landtypes located in and east of the Warm Springs Creek drainage contain stands of mature larch, white pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, Ponderosa pine, and western red cedar, Figure 42 and Figure 43. Because of the fire history, these stands of mature trees are scattered in a mosaic of fully stocked stands of sapling and pole-sized trees of the same species.

Remnants of large, mature western redcedar stands are located on the alluvial flats south of the Lochsa River. These are also more prevalent along the river from Warm Springs Creek east to the area's eastern boundary. Daubenmire habitat types represented include western redcedar and lady fern, western redcedar and pachistima, grand fir and pachistima, subalpine fir and pachistima, subalpine fir and menzeisia, subalpine fir and beargrass, and subalpine fir and grouse whortleberry.

Because of its proximity to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, many people think of the area as “defacto wilderness.” The area is, however, not used as wilderness, but merely as access to the Selway-Bitterroot. Big game hunters are one of the primary user groups, utilizing the river corridor as their base. Some use is made also by day hikers in the vicinity of the bridges crossing the Lochsa River. Most use is passive, that is, scenic viewing of the river and the immediate foreground by motorists on the highway.



Figure 43. Warm Springs Creek

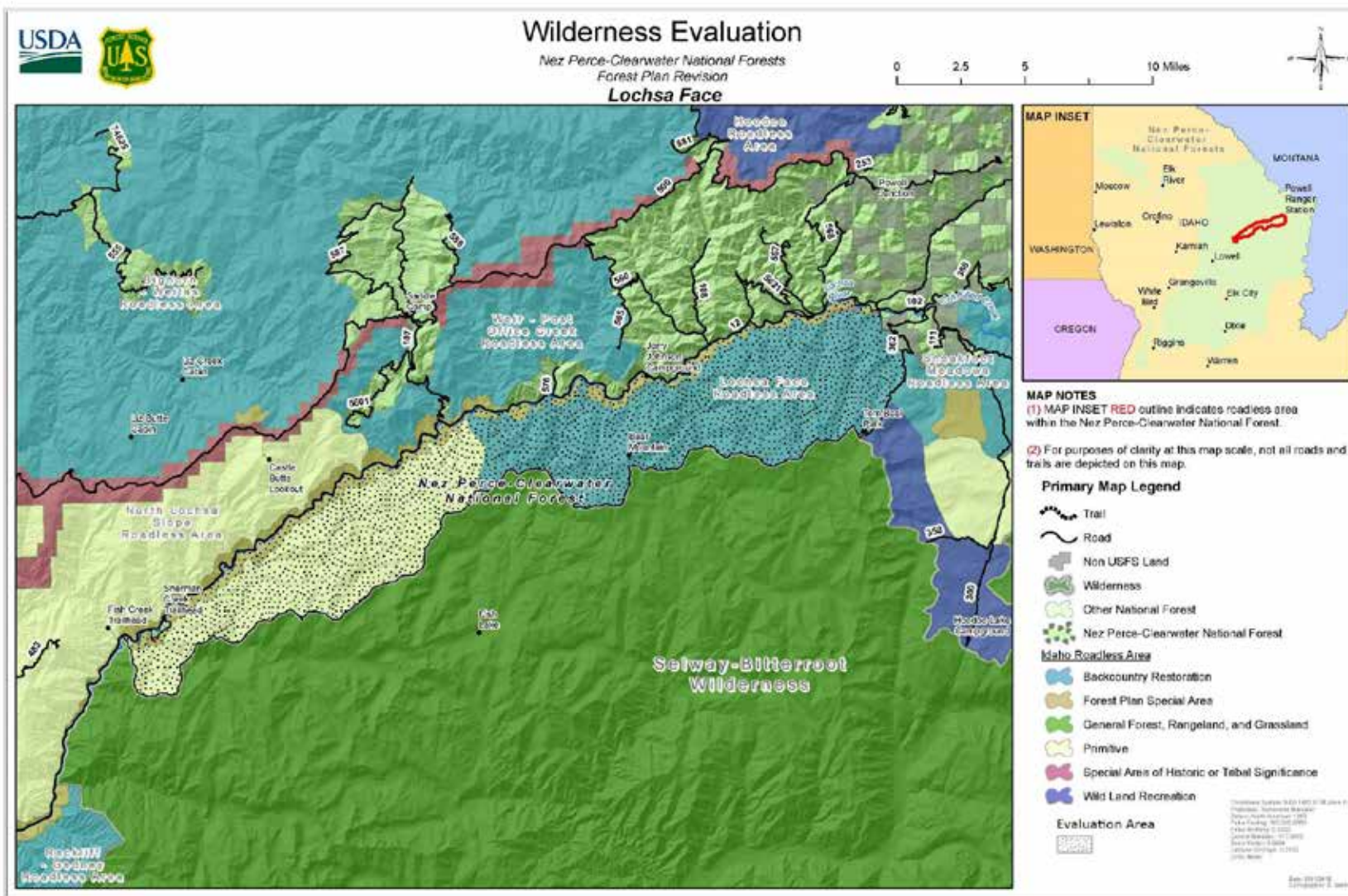


Figure 44. Wilderness Evaluation Lochsa Face

Apparent naturalness

Because of its inaccessibility, the area has been lightly impacted by past human activity. Overall, it appears undisturbed and natural. The majority of trails were constructed in the early 1900's by the Forest Service to provide access for wildfire control. In addition to the three previously mentioned pack bridges that cross the Lochsa River, just outside the roadless area, there is another such bridge in the Warm Springs Creek drainage. The Bear Mountain fire lookout is still manned during the summer months. The Gold Meadows Cabin is located in this area and was approved in 2017 to be added to the recreation rental program. A number of outfitter camps are located throughout the area but do not contain any permanent improvements, so evidence is minor.



Figure 45. User made pools at Jerry Johnson hot springs

Most of the area is inaccessible for summer motorized use because of access limited by crossing the river. This roadless area is a fairly narrow strip between the Lochsa River and Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary. Over-the-snow travel including snow bikes has increased with newer technology and over-the-snow travel is used to access areas at Tom Beal, Eagle Mountain west to Warm Springs Creek. The roadless area boundaries were revisited during the development of the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule. Since 2008, approximately 27 acres of timber has been cut adjacent to roads as part of a post-wildfire roadside hazard tree reduction.

The vegetation in 43 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 862 acres of known noxious weed locations. This is primarily spotted knapweed, with 777 acres along roads and trails along with other miscellaneous weeds along roads and trails. Yellow toadflax (1 acre) and diffuse knapweed (4.5 acres) both have a management objective for eradication while the populations remain relatively small.



Figure 46. User impacts at Jerry Johnson hot springs

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The major side-drainages and higher elevation, mountain-upland landforms in the western portion of the roadless area provides visitors with relatively high solitude. Existing trails in this area follow main ridges. The side-drainages are screened from activities and noise coming from the U.S. Highway 12/Lochsa River corridor. The view looking out of these areas is towards the undeveloped North Lochsa Face Roadless Area located immediately north of U.S. Highway 12. The more exposed ridges and faces on the steeper breaklands in the western part of the area have lower solitude due to the lack of vegetation and views of U.S. Highway 12.

Located east of the Warm Springs Creek drainage, solitude is relatively high because of dense vegetation, gentler sloped stream bottoms, and larger proportion of mountain-upland and scoured glacial landforms. Noise from heavy truck traffic on U.S. 12 is noticeable along the steep breaklands south of the Lochsa River in the western portion of the roadless area. Because of the narrow canyon, this noise can be heard up to 1 to 2 miles from the highway on exposed faces and ridges. This distance is significantly reduced in the side drainages. Those areas of stream breaklands located east of Warm Springs are not affected as greatly by highway noise as the steeper areas because of gentler topography and denser timber cover.

Those areas previously discussed that have high solitude also provide a high degree of challenge for visitors wishing to be isolated from development and human activity. The majority of the side drainages, with the exception of Warm Springs Creek, currently receive extremely light use because of their isolation and difficult access. The mountain-upland landforms receive more use than these areas and provide better visitor dispersion because of more favorable vegetation, topography, and access.

The area by itself does not give an impression of vastness, but in association with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, it does. The visitor does not usually separate the two areas as it appears as one very large roadless area.

The main dispersed recreation includes big-game hunting, camping, hiking, horseback riding, and fishing. Only two small unnamed lakes are located in the area. Trails are the only permanent recreational features.

Most of the area provides either primitive (11 percent) or semi-primitive non-motorized (70 percent) recreation settings due to the border it shares with the vast Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. A strip of land along the river is influenced by the sights and sounds from Highway 12 and provides a roaded natural setting. See Figure 47 for the ratios of each recreation opportunity spectrum class.

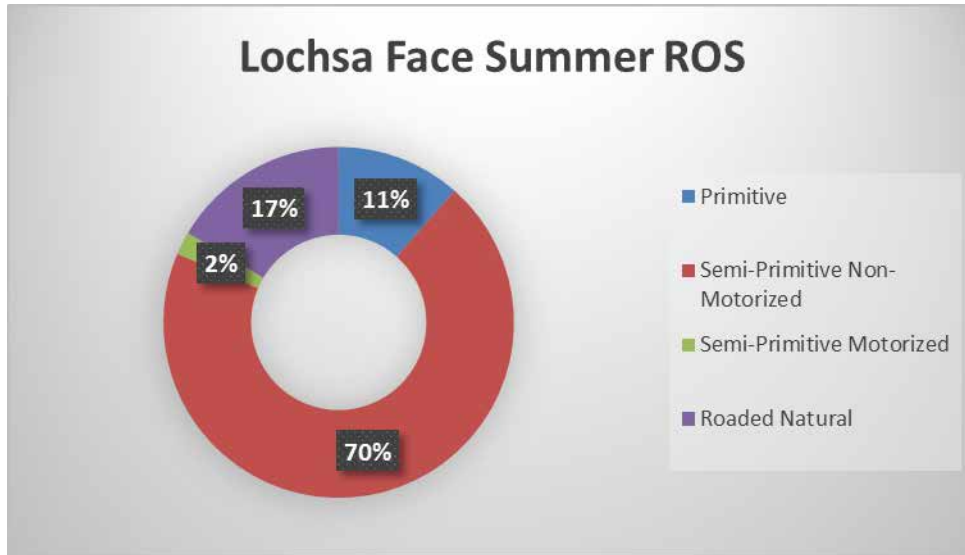


Figure 47. Lochsa Face Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 76,000 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It shares its eastern border with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and its western boundary with Highway 12.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 62 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. About 200 acres of the Dutch Creek Research Natural Area are located within the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 5,550 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Three historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are 8,000 acres of the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River corridor in the Lochsa Face Roadless Area, south of Highway 12. Scenery is one of the “outstandingly remarkable” values for which the river was designated.

Jerry Johnson hot springs is noted as a unique and exemplary geologic feature in the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, wild and scenic rivers eligibility review. It is also noted for its recreational value, see Figure 45, Figure 46, Figure 48 and Figure 49. There are close to 300 documented hot springs in Idaho, but this is one of the most popular, visited year around due to easy access from Highway 12.

The water quality in the Lochsa Face Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 41.4 miles of the Lochsa River are listed as impaired (class 5) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho

Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are 303(d) designated and not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures higher than State of Idaho standards. The river fully supports the beneficial uses of salmonid spawning and primary contact recreation but does not fully support cold water aquatic life. An EPA-approved Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan is needed to address water quality concerns (Lucas 2017).



Figure 48. Jerry Johnson hot springs

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Lochsa Face Roadless Area contains portions of nine HUC 12 subwatersheds. Eight subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 84 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Wendover Creek-Lochsa River subwatershed (16 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).



Figure 49. Jerry Johnson hot springs

Manageability

The Lochsa Face Roadless Area is currently managed under several different Idaho Roadless Rule themes. The area in the designated Lochsa Wild and Scenic River corridor is managed under the management plan for the Lochsa River noted in the Idaho Roadless Rule as a *Forest Plan Special Area* (8,100 acres). A core area adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is managed under the *primitive* theme (27,400 acres) of the Idaho roadless rule which has very limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale and removal, road construction and reconstruction and minerals activities. Most of the remainder is managed as *backcountry restoration* theme (4,300 acres) with a small amount (400 acres) as a community protection zone, which allows additional measures for reducing fuels near private lands.

The Lochsa Face Roadless Area shares a boundary (45 percent) with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, 31 percent with other roadless areas and 24 percent with front country. Sharing a boundary with wilderness would not cause a management challenge. The boundaries shared with front country can present management challenges due to the desire to protect forested lands from wildfire on front country lands and the desire to let fires take their natural course in wilderness.

The current boundaries would lend themselves to a logical and manageable wilderness since it is between the Lochsa River and the Wilderness boundary it is easy to identify.

Two outfitters provide big-game hunting services during the spring and fall, and guide school and pack trips during the summer. Seven camp locations have been assigned to them through outfitter and guide special use permits. The campsites do not contain permanent improvements. Both outfitters also provide the same services in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

There are no mining claims or grazing allotments in this roadless area.

The area is not adjacent to any groomed snowmobile routes. Snowmobilers travel at the east end of the roadless areas from Tom Beal, west to Cooperation Point on the Wilderness boundary. Wheeled motorized use has some history at low opportunity (5-20 trail miles) and is not a major issue in this area.

Mallard Roadless Area

General Description

The 17,600-acre Mallard Roadless Area is located immediately above the Salmon River breaks, and includes most of Big Mallard Creek. The Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness borders this area on the south and east. Road #468, also known as the Magruder Road, forms part of the north boundary, while Road #421 forms part of the western boundary.

Idaho Roadless Rule Themes are 83 percent Backcountry Restoration and 17 percent General Forest. Backcountry provides for a variety of recreation activities and allows limited forest health activities to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition and structure. General Forest areas are managed to allow for a variety of goods and services and resource conservation.

The Mallard Roadless Area consists of rolling hills, lightly to moderately dissected, with fairly low stream gradients until nearing the Salmon River breaks. Big Mallard Creek is the principal drainage. Elevation ranges from 5,200 feet at the East Fork of Mallard Creek to 7,648 feet at Boston Mountain. There is evidence of glaciation in the northeast portion of the roadless area.

The ecosystem type ranges from Engelmann spruce-alpine fir in the wet areas and draws in the upper Slide and Mallard Creek areas to Ponderosa pine-Douglas-fir in the lower Mallard and Cup Creek areas. Lodgepole pine dominates drier ridges and exposed aspects across the entire roadless area, and high mountain meadows occupy sites along Big Mallard Creek.

Recreation uses include fishing, hunting, camping, horseback riding, hiking, and snowmobiling. One outfitter operates in the area. The area is also used for livestock grazing in the meadow areas.

Two private ranches, the Mallard Creek Ranch and the Cook Ranch (141 acres), are located near the western boundary of the roadless area. The roadless area boundary excludes both these ranches, but they are located within a ¼ mile of the roadless area. Cook Ranch includes the Big Mallard Creek Meadows.

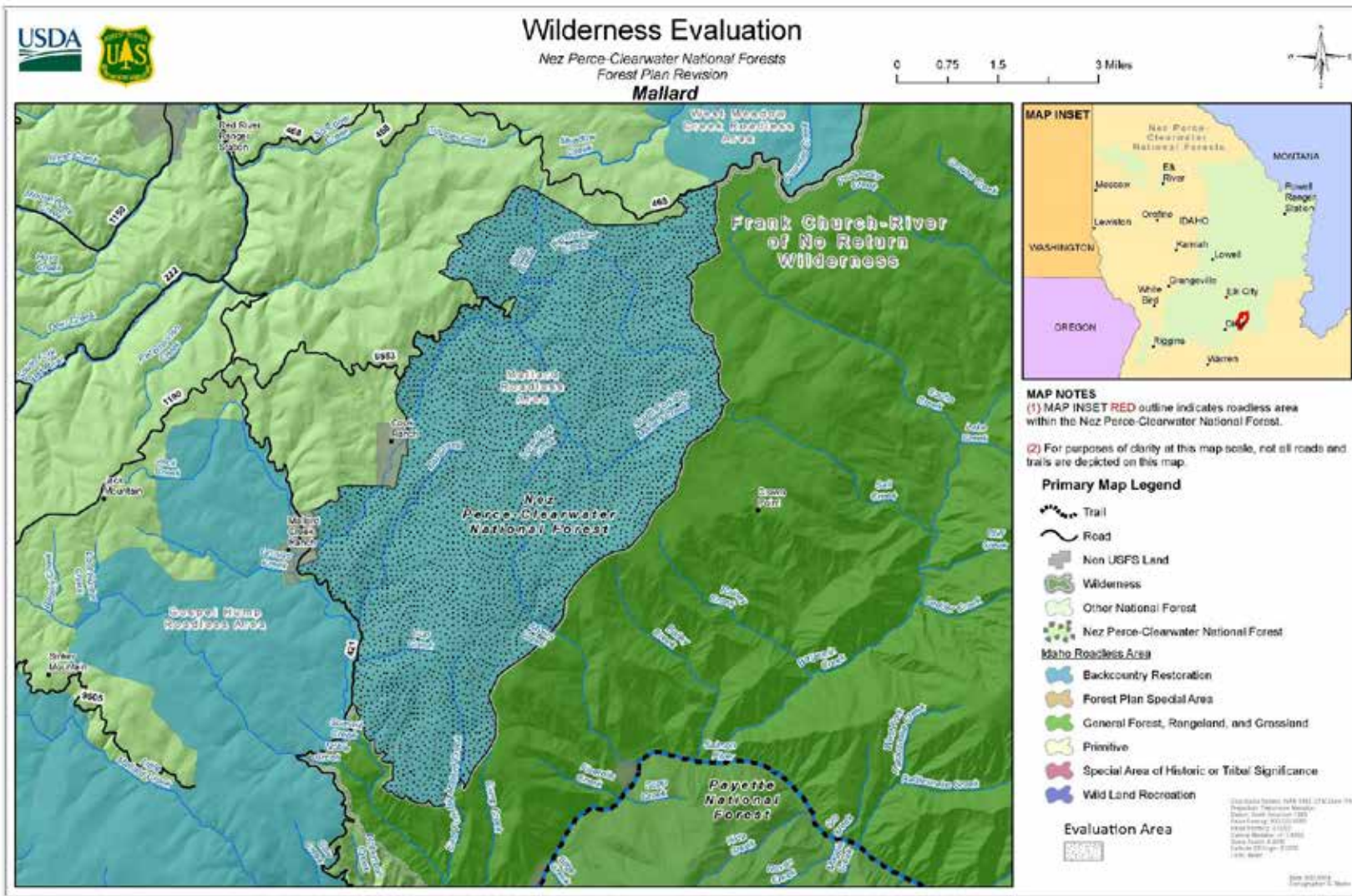


Figure 50. Wilderness Evaluation Mallard

Apparent naturalness

The area does not contain Forest Service administrative structures, recreational rentals, or trail bridges. Timber harvest that has occurred in the area since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule boundary designation has been related to fire and post-fire hazard tree removal. About 1 mile of constructed fire line and 34 acres of roadside hazard trees have been cleared.

Parts of two livestock grazing allotments overlap with 63 percent of the roadless area. Livestock are grazed in this area under a term permit. Livestock grazing is apparent within the meadows located in the area and would be obvious to people travelling through the area.

The vegetation in 69 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. Recent fires have likely increased this number. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 12 acres of known weed locations, primarily tall hawkweed along roads, and small scattered populations along roads and trails.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

When this area is taken together with the adjacent Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness, opportunities for solitude are outstanding, even though there are off-site intrusions near the boundary in the forms of roads, and on-site intrusions caused by airplanes and other activities at the Cook Ranch.

Recreation activity in this area is associated mainly with big-game hunting, with some fishing in the summer. There are no lakes in the area and no boatable waters. Recreational motorized use is established in areas.

Much of the area provides a semi-primitive or primitive recreation setting, due to the location of the area next to the Frank Church Wilderness. The remainder of the area that is located near roads to the north and south provides a roaded natural summer recreation setting as shown in Figure 51. The recent fires in the roadless area have opened up new terrain that attracts snowmobilers.

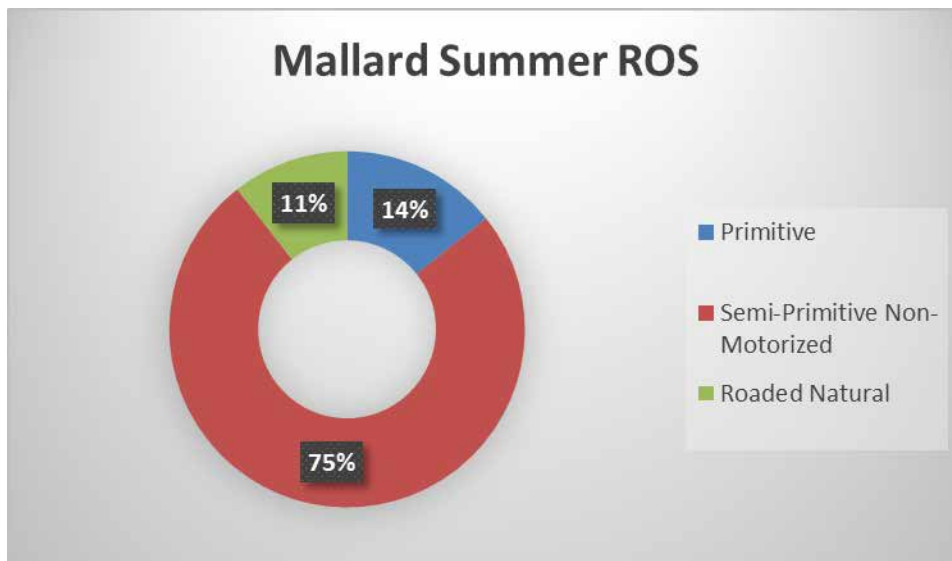


Figure 51. Mallard Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 17,600 acres this roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness and it adjacent to the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 38 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas located within the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 9,319 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area.

There are no Wild and scenic River corridors in the Mallard Roadless Area. Views are possible from the roadless area to the Salmon River canyon, an adjacent designated Wild and Scenic River.

The water quality in the Mallard Roadless Area is generally high. A short 0.2-mile segment of an unnamed waterbody is listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). It is not supporting *cold water aquatic life* or *salmonid spawning* beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards. The stream is included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Mallard Roadless Area contains portions of five HUC 12 subwatersheds. Three subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 89 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The South Fork Red River subwatershed (less than 1 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function. The remaining watershed (10 percent of roadless area) is not evaluated (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

This area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow road construction except for some limited circumstances approved by the Regional Forester. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels in a community protection zone; to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat; or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure, or process.

The area currently has no unpatented mining claims. Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction are allowed only if incidental to an activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Mallard Roadless Area shares nearly half of its boundary (48 percent) with the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. Close to half of the boundary (45 percent) is adjacent to front country and 8 percent is adjacent to the Gospel Hump Roadless Area. Although not directly bordering the roadless area, both the Mallard Creek and Cook Ranch properties are located within ¼ mile of the boundary. The Forest Service fire policies to protect private land from fire make it difficult to allow fire to play its natural role in the ecosystem.

The roadless area is close to a groomed snowmobile trail system (Road #468, the Magruder Corridor) which passes just north of the roadless area. Due to recent fires and the relatively gentle topography, snowmobiling has increased in the Mallard Roadless Area since there is more open country. The area has a history of very low (<5 miles) opportunity for wheeled motorized use.

Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area

General Description

The 255,700-acre Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area extends west from the Bitterroot Mountain Range generally along the divide between the St. Joe River and the Clearwater River drainages, with 126,300 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and 129,400 acres on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. It is situated approximately 36 miles southeast of Avery, Idaho; 60 miles northeast of Orofino, Idaho; and 20 miles southwest of Superior, Montana. Mallard-Larkins is in Clearwater and Shoshone Counties on the Clearwater and Idaho Panhandle National Forests.

The area is generally accessible by moderate to low standard gravel and dirt roads. Access along the north side is provided from several dead-end roads extending south to and into the interior from the main St. Joe River Road and Road #320 from Red Ives Work Center to the east. Access to the east side is possible from the Pierce-Superior Road #250, the Fly Hill Road #720, and the Pot Mountain Ridge Road #715. Access to the south side is from numerous logging roads in the Cold Springs, Quartz, and Skull Creek drainages, and the North Fork Clearwater River Road #249. The southwest corner is accessed by the Dog Ridge Road #700.

Interior access, with some exceptions, is provided over a network of approximately 280 miles of low standard, fire control and administrative trails (between the two forests). The roadless area is large and complex, composed of generally steep, rocky ridges, and deep canyons. The taller major peaks include Mallard Peak (6,870 feet), Larkins Peak (6,661 feet), Crag Peak (6,879 feet), Heart Peak (6,870 feet), Black Mountain (7,077 feet), East Sister (7,043 feet), The Nub (6,924 feet), Cold Springs Peak (6,731 feet), and Five Lakes Butte (6,713 feet).

Flowing through the area are parts of three river systems and numerous large and small, fast moving but mostly crystal-clear streams. The three river systems include most of the headwaters of the St. Joe River, a large section of the Little North Fork of the Clearwater River, and the main North Fork Clearwater. A major divide separates the Little North Fork and St. Joe Rivers from the land draining into the main North Fork of the Clearwater. Major streams draining into the Little North Fork include Sawtooth Creek, Canyon Creek, and Foehl Creek. Major streams draining into the main North Fork of the Clearwater (which is outside the roadless area boundary) include Isabella Creek, Collins Creek, Skull Creek, and Quartz Creek on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. There are 38 mountain lakes large enough to be named with 21 of them on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. The lakes on the Nez Perce-Clearwater occur in four major groupings- the headwaters of Lost Pete Creek, the Five Lakes Butte area, Elizabeth Lakes and Pete Ott Creek. These lakes range in size from one to seven acres.

Geologically, most of the area is underlain by metamorphosed rocks of the Precambrian Belt supergroup consisting of rocks from the Wallace Formation, Ravalli Group, and Prichard Formation. These units contain interbedded layers of quartzite, schists, and gneiss. The extreme southeastern portion contains some rocks of the Idaho batholith consisting mainly of granite. Much of the granite is rapidly decomposing (in geologic terms), resulting in very unstable landscapes with sensitive soil mantles. Exposed in the northwest one-third of the area are anthracites, gneisses, and schists which are older than the Belt supergroups.

Although there are numerous rock outcroppings, talus slopes, and barren areas, a large proportion is heavily vegetated, ranging from mountain grasslands and meadows to dense mixtures of large varieties of trees and shrubs. Two vegetative ecosystems are present: a cedar-hemlock-pine forest at elevations generally below 6,000 feet and a western spruce-fir forest above 6,000 feet.

Approximately 80 percent of the land was burned over in 1910 and much of it again in 1919, 1920, and 1924. Where conditions are favorable, vast stands of lodgepole pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, Engelmann spruce, larch, western red cedar, western white pine, and mountain hemlock exist, some escaping the fires but most regenerating afterwards. Where the soils are thin and conditions severe, such as on the higher ridges and steep south facing slopes, shrubs still dominate the sites. The lands above 6,000 feet are subalpine in character, supporting mountain hemlock, subalpine fir, and lodgepole pine.

There are three major attractions within the Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area: (1) the original Mallard-Larkins Pioneer Area, which is a highly scenic area along the major divide between the Little North Fork and the main North Fork River systems. It contains a large concentration of high peaks and mountain lakes and is relatively accessible by a good trail system; (2) the Five Lakes Butte area along the upper northeast side of the roadless area bounded by the Fly Hill-Gospel Hill road. Its main attraction is the open mountain grasslands, barren ground, and a cluster of lakes within easy walking distance of each other; and (3) Elizabeth Lakes area in the southeast corner above the main North Fork of the Clearwater River. It also is composed of several mountain peaks and a cluster of eight small lakes, all within two miles of each other.

The area includes three dramatic waterfalls in Cliff Creek, Falls Creek and Lost Pete Creek that were noted in the 2017 Wild and Scenic Rivers Evaluation as unique and exemplary geologic features.

Wildlife, especially elk, deer, and mountain goats, attract numerous hunters each year.

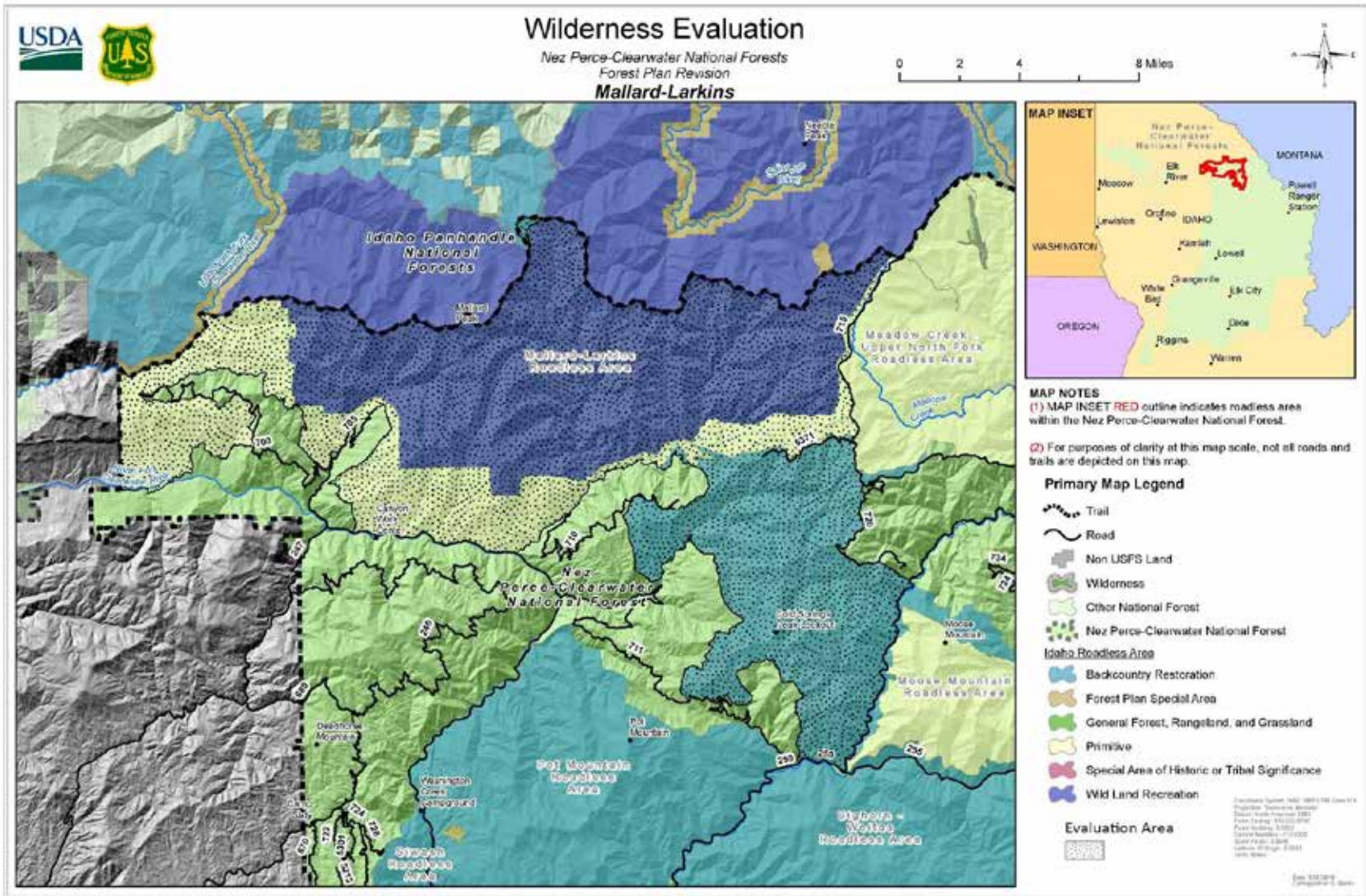


Figure 52. Wilderness Evaluation Mallard-Larkins

Apparent naturalness

Visitors to the Mallard-Larkins area will probably not be aware of any improvements or alterations by man due to the vastness of the area. Large areas ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 acres exist which are undisturbed except by trails. There are two Forest Service administrative sites, both fire lookouts at Black Mountain and Mallard Peak. There is one recreation rental cabin, Cold Springs, Figure 53, that is located on a ridgetop, at the southern end of the roadless area. It is quite small and rustic, tucked behind a large rock and would not detract from naturalness for most visitors. There are 1.1 miles of low standard road in the area and two trail bridges.



Figure 53. Cold Springs cabin

Special Use permitted structures- A SNOTEL site, Cool Creek, operated by U.S. Geological Service (USGS) is located within the boundaries of the roadless area near the southwestern border of the roadless area. This site is obviously human made, but small in scale and unobtrusive except at close range. See Figure 54.



Figure 54. Cool Creek Snotel site

Past timber harvesting activities can be seen on adjacent lands and are found in many drainages adjacent to the area along the southern boundary. With the Idaho Roadless Rule in 2008, delineation primarily excluded past timber harvest from roadless area boundaries. Since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule, 14 acres of timber cutting has occurred as part of a post-fire, roadside hazard tree reduction project along roads on the border of the roadless area.

The vegetation in 67 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 714 acres of known weed populations in the roadless area. The majority of this is spotted knapweed, 497 acres along roads and trails. The remainder is a mix of miscellaneous weeds also along roads and trails,

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The area has a high degree of solitude. The varied terrain and the vastness of it enable the visitor to experience complete solitude in many areas. Concentrations of people around the lakes and along the major trails may tend to disrupt the solitude at certain times. Screening by both vegetation and topographic features is high in most of the area.

Viewing of activities outside the area, such as logging and roads, is possible from numerous high ridges along the northern and southern boundaries. Large scale logging activity is especially evident in the middle-ground-viewing area from the Black Mountain-Nub area and the Flat Mountain area. Most views, however, are background views.

Noise may penetrate short distances in the vicinity of the two major roads bordering parts of the area: the Pierce-Superior Road (FS Road #250). Noise from road building and logging activity could be evident in some areas. Opportunities for solitude also vary by season. The access roads are blocked by snow from

November to May, so use is extremely low. Hunting season brings many individuals to the area for a quality roadless hunt.

The Black Mountain Lookout is currently manned and serviced via helicopter, which detracts from the solitude in a small portion of the area. The lookout is approximately eight miles from the nearest road over a very steep trail.

Hiking, primitive camping, outdoor photography, lake and stream fishing, horseback riding, and to a very limited extent, mountain climbing opportunities are available. Except for the Five Lakes Butte area, cross-country travel is a definite challenge involving a certain degree of risk over the rugged terrain, steep narrow canyons, and densely vegetated slopes.

Current recreation uses include primarily hiking, horseback riding, hunting, and fishing. Mountain biking takes place in the Cold Springs and Pot Mountain Ridge area in the southern part of the area. Several outfitters operate in the roadless area.

A remote, scenic, several day kayak or raft trip is possible on the Little North Fork River (American Whitewater) ending in the high pool of Dworshak Reservoir.

The area provides mostly primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized recreation settings, due to the large size of the area and minor number of interior roads. The area provides roaded natural settings near adjacent roads. For the relative amounts of each recreation settings, see Figure 55.

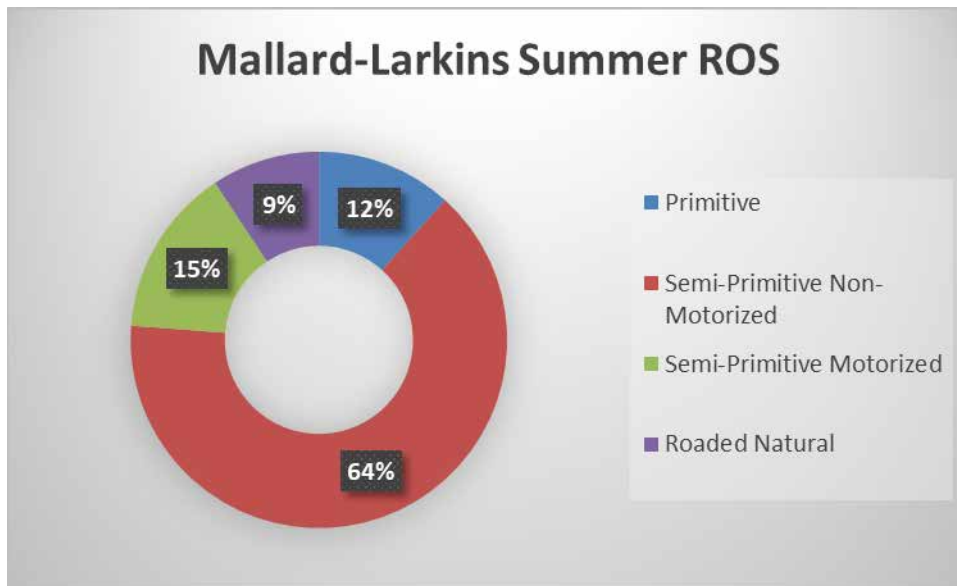


Figure 55. Mallard-Larkins Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 255,700 acres (126,300-acre on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest) the area easily meets the minimum criteria of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 57 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently under-represented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas located within the

roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 2,159 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

The Heritage Cedar Grove, which is a large stand of very large and old western cedar located near the junction of Elmer Creek and Jug Creek, is another attraction for visitors. Access is by trail two miles up Isabella Creek.

Isabella Creek, Beaver Creek, Elmer Creek, lower North Fork Clearwater, and the Little North Fork Clearwater Rivers were identified as exhibiting characteristics that best exemplify core coastal refugia, a unique vegetation. This is described as an “outstandingly remarkable value” in the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic River eligibility review.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Four historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no wild and scenic river corridors in the Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area. There are four major groupings of scenic high mountain lakes in the Nez Perce-Clearwater portion of the area. These are in the Black Mountain/Nub portion of the Pioneer area in the Lost Pete watershed, Elizabeth Lakes and the lakes in the Five Lakes Butte area. The lakes range in size from one to seven acres. This is by far the largest number of lakes of any roadless area on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest (The Mallard-Larkins Pioneer Area, which encompasses the Mallard-Larkins, on the Idaho-Panhandle, and Black Mountain-Nub Peak group of lakes and peaks, was designated by the Regional Forester in 1969 as a special administrative unit. The special area was set aside for its outstanding scenic, roadless, and primitive recreational qualities.). Although most of these lakes did not naturally contain fish, they have been periodically stocked with fish by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. In the past, rainbow trout were stocked in some lakes, but the practice of stocking non-native fish was discontinued. In recent years only cutthroat trout have been stocked.

The Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area supports one of the largest Rocky Mountain goat populations in northern Idaho. Mallard, Heart, Snow, and Isabella Peaks and Black Mountain offer unique viewing and photographing opportunities of these animals during the spring and summer months.

This roadless area includes three dramatic waterfalls, some of the largest on Nez Perce-Clearwater, located in Cliff Creek, Lost Pete Creek and Falls Creek. They were identified as “outstandingly remarkable” geologic features in the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic Rivers Eligibility review.

The water quality in the Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 5.6 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Cold Springs Creek, Cool Creek, Cougar Creek, Grizzly Creek, Isabella Creek, and an unnamed water body fully support *secondary contact recreation* but are not supporting *cold water aquatic life and salmonid spawning* beneficial uses (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of

watershed functionality or integrity. The Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area contains portions of fourteen HUC 12 subwatersheds. Thirteen subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 99 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function. The remaining subwatershed (less than 1 percent of roadless area) was not evaluated (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The Nez Perce–Clearwater National Forest portion of the roadless area is managed under three different roadless themes from the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule. These are- *Wildland Recreation*, *Primitive* and *Backcountry Restoration*. Of these, the core area up to the Divide with the Idaho-Panhandle National Forest is *Wildland Recreation*, the most restrictive theme. This represents the area recommended for wilderness in the 1987 Clearwater Forest Plan. The *Primitive* theme, the next most restrictive is how the areas adjoining the core are managed. The remainder is managed as *backcountry restoration* theme, which has the most permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale and removal, construction and reconstruction of roads and minerals activities of any of the themes on the national forest.

The 2015 Idaho Panhandle Forest Plan Decision recommends their portion of the area for wilderness. Most of the southern boundary borders front country (58 percent), with 39 percent bordering other roadless areas and 3 percent bordering state or private lands.

There is one mining claim in the Nez Perce–Clearwater portion of the roadless area and the area does not overlap with any grazing allotments.

Recurrent motorized use can present challenges for recommending wilderness in an area. The Mallard-Larkins Roadless Area is not adjacent to any groomed snowmobile routes that would provide easy winter access to this area. Mallard-Larkins has traditionally provided motorized access on a medium (21-40 miles) amount of trails. The trails in the southern portion of the roadless area in the Cold Springs and Pot Mountain Ridge areas are travelled by mountain bikers and provide loop opportunities.

The roadless area boundary of Mallard-Larkins varies from major Forest roads to cross-county, undefinable lines. In general, it is bounded on the north and east sides by dirt roads, the west side by Forest boundaries, parts of the south and southeast side by relatively high use graveled roads and the rest by timber cutting boundaries and logging roads. The convoluted nature of the southeastern boundary provides some opportunity to consider portions of the area for recommended wilderness and not others, as has been recommended in the past. The vastness of the area would still allow for a viable area, considering matching boundaries with the Idaho Panhandle recommended wilderness area.

Meadow Creek–Upper North Fork Roadless Area

General description

The 56,400-acre Meadow Creek–Upper North Fork Roadless Area is situated on the Idaho–Montana border, approximately 40 air miles west of Missoula, Montana. Approximately three quarters of the roadless area is managed by the Nez Perce–Clearwater National Forest (43,200 acres) and Idaho Panhandle National Forest (6,000 acres). The Montana portion is in Mineral County within the Lolo National Forest (7,200 acres).

Accessibility is provided from several directions. From the east, it is 16 miles from Superior, Montana, via Cedar Creek Road #320 or 24 miles via Pierce–Superior Road #250. From the northwest, it is 35 miles

from Avery, Idaho, via St. Joe River Road #320. From the south, it is 100 miles from Orofino, Idaho, via Fly Hill Road #715 and Pot Mountain Ridge Road #720.

Interior access is provided over 54 miles of relatively low standard fire control and administrative trails. Cross-country travel is very difficult over most of the area because of rugged terrain and dense, low vegetation. Access along the state line divide is easier over barren and sparse vegetation areas.

Topography changes from narrow, flat valley bottoms to very narrow, flat, and U-shaped valleys at higher elevations. Sharp, rugged relief above 7,000 feet occurs along the Bitterroot Divide, which separates Idaho from Montana.

Several cirque basins containing four small lakes are also found near the Bitterroot divide. Two other small lakes are found at lower elevations. Topography becomes less steep in the North Fork Clearwater River drainage, dropping down to 3,800 feet in elevation where the river exits the area. Geologically, the area is composed of Belt Series bedrock which is made up of schists and gneiss. These rocks are generally more stable and less erosive than those within the batholith.

The area contains three major vegetative ecosystems: (a) cedar-hemlock-pine forest encompassing the lower elevations in the North Fork Clearwater River and Meadow and Chamberlain Creeks; (b) western spruce-fir forest at the higher elevations up to 6,000 feet; and (c) alpine meadows and barren land in a band along the Bitterroot Divide above 6,000 feet.

Vegetation varies from carex and beargrass on high elevation south slopes to grand fir and western redcedar types at lower elevations. Large forest fires in the late 1800s and early 1900s had a major influence on the present vegetation, with much of the area being covered with even-aged stands of lodgepole pine averaging six to ten inches in diameter. Most of the area is reforested, with the exception of south slopes having thin soils. Other species present include subalpine fir, western larch, mountain hemlock, grand fir, and some white bark pine.

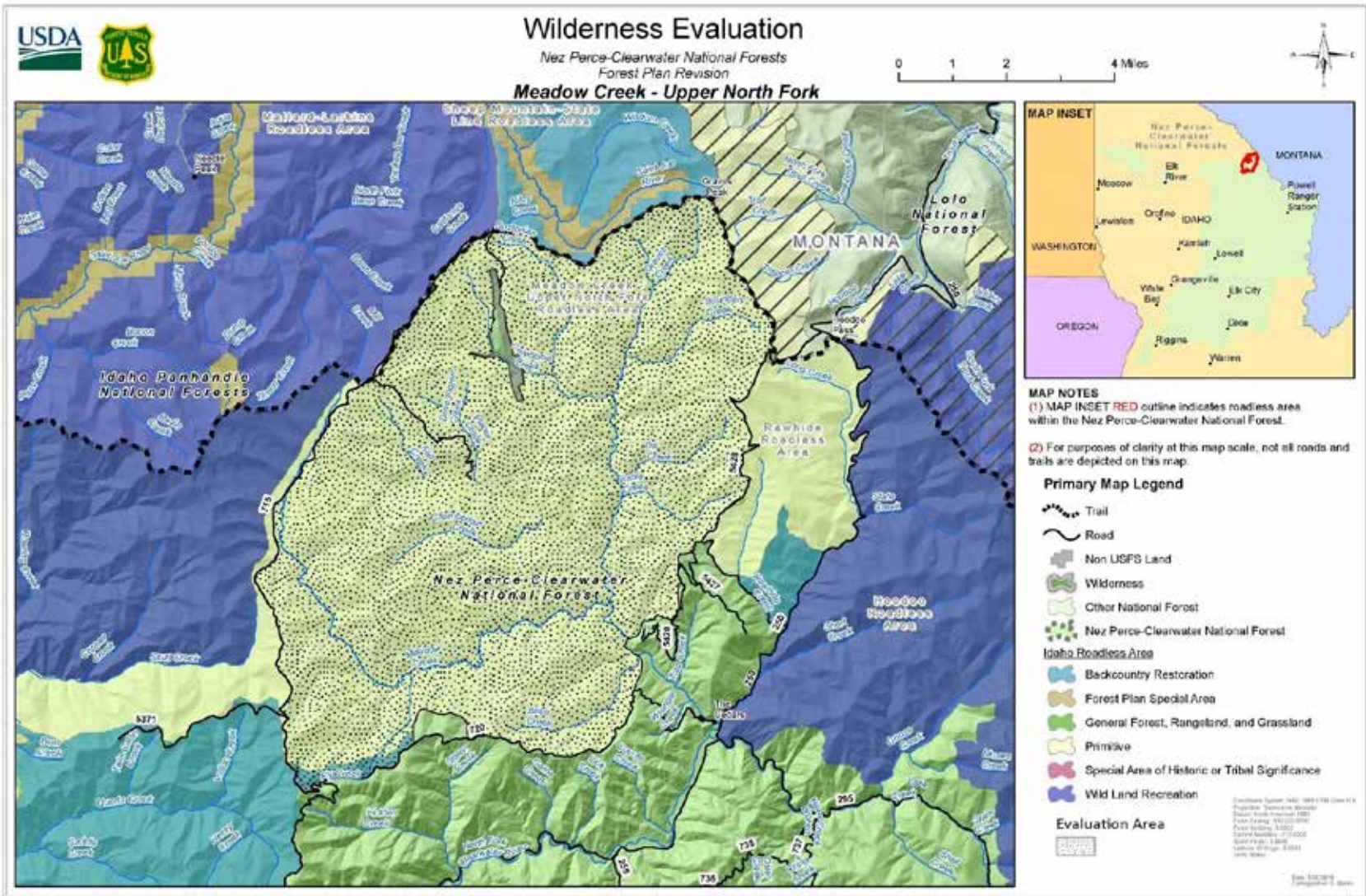


Figure 56. Wilderness Evaluation Meadow Creek - Upper North Fork

Apparent naturalness

Human activities have had a moderate impact in the headwaters of the North Fork Clearwater River. Rock tailing piles along streams, diversion ditches, remains of cabins, and access roads are the principal human effects, even though much of it has softened over the years through natural vegetation and erosion. The remainder of the area would appear natural to most people.

There are no Forest Service administrative structures or recreational rentals. No road bridges or trail bridges. No timber cutting has occurred in the area since the boundaries were established in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule.

The vegetation in 71 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. Recent fires have likely increased this number. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows four acres of known weed locations described as miscellaneous weeds along roads and trails.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area provides a high opportunity for solitude because of its rectangular shape and large size encompassing over 56,400 acres (43,200 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater). Screening from broken and varied topography and dense vegetation are a big factor in reducing visual contact with others as well as minimizing noise levels and possibilities of observing discordant features outside the area.

The boundary is nine miles from a major highway on the east side and is adjacent to the Pierce-Superior road on the south side. Sounds from logging activity near the periphery of the area have the potential of penetrating upwards to a mile into the roadless area. Sounds from mining activity inside the area also have the potential to be heard for a mile or so. Some very distant roads and timber harvest areas are visible in Montana and Idaho from the highest points along the Idaho-Montana Divide.

The opportunity for solitude also varies by season. Except for lower elevations in the North Fork, most land is inaccessible due to snow from November until July. Moderate to high use is experienced during elk hunting season in October. Because of the high degree of solitude, dispersed recreation occurring in primitive and semi-primitive settings are excellent. The only improvements are the access trails which provide opportunities for hiking and horseback riding.

Big game hunting, stream and lake fishing, hiking, backpacking, photography, scenic viewing, camping, prospecting, and horseback riding, all in primitive or undeveloped settings, are the primary attractions. Except in places along the Bitterroot Divide, cross-country travel is difficult because of dense vegetation. Fly Lake is the only high mountain lake in the area and is less than five acres in size. There are no records of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game stocking this lake.

The Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area provides a predominantly semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting with 77 percent of the area as shown in Figure 57. The size of the area combined with the regular shape of the boundary and the relative lack of roads and trails one road and one trail within the area also for solitude in a large part of the interior.

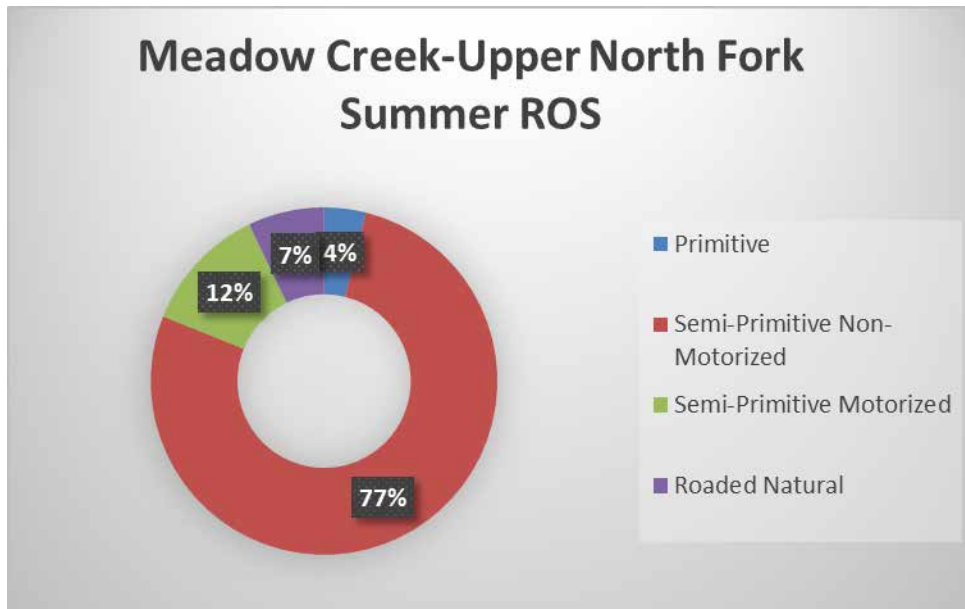


Figure 57. Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 43,200 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and 56,400 total acres the roadless areas meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 41 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas located within the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 1,159 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Three historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no wild and scenic river corridors in the roadless area. The North Fork Clearwater River was determined to have “outstandingly remarkable” scenic value in the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic River eligibility review. Stateline Trail #738, which extends north from Hoodoo Pass along the Bitterroot Divide, has been designated as a National Recreational Trail.

The water quality in the Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area contains portions of six HUC 12 subwatersheds. All six subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 100 percent of the roadless area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning

Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The roadless area spans three national forests, with the bulk of it on the Nez Perce Perce-Clearwater National Forest. Neither the Idaho Panhandle nor the Lolo Forest Plan currently recommend wilderness for their portions. Limiting the northern boundary to the major divide between the Clark Fork and the North Fork Clearwater Rivers, and excluding the Lolo and IPNF portions, provide a viable area.

The portion of the Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest is currently managed under the *primitive* theme of the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule, with a small amount 400 acres managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme. This management sets limited permissions and exceptions for road construction and reconstruction, timber sale, cutting and removal and minerals activities.

Because of the relatively uniform rectangular shape of the area, external adverse effects are minimal. The isolated nature, as well as the relatively low standard roads and short season, also contribute to very low use, resulting in even less effect on the wilderness attributes. Existing roadless area boundaries follow low standard roads along the southern, western and northwestern sides and well-defined ridges and creeks along most of the east side.

The roadless area is bordered primarily by other roadless areas (57 percent of the boundary) with Mallard-Larkins to the west and Rawhide to the east. The remainder of the area is bordered by front country to the south and north. The Rawhide Roadless Area, an area of 6,000 acres, is for all practical purposes contiguous to this area. The boundary between these two areas was established on the basis of the abandoned Rawhide Road, which provided the first road access to the Clearwater Forest over Hoodoo Pass. This road was replaced with the Pierce-Superior Road #250 in the early 1950s. Although evidence of the road remains in places, it is unusable except for a short stretch near the pass.

Mining and prospecting (placer and hardrock) for silver and gold has been an important use in the past. There are currently no unpatented mining claims in the area. A narrow strip of 400 acres of patented mining claims (private land) is present in Caledonia Creek and Niagra Gulch. There are no other private lands in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest portion of the roadless area. The area does not overlap with any livestock grazing allotments.

The area is not adjacent to any groomed snowmobile routes and is not known to have snowmobile use. Wheeled motorized use has historically provided a low opportunity with less than 5 miles of opportunity on Road #723.

Moose Mountain Roadless Area

General description

The 22,000-acre Moose Mountain Roadless Area is in the northeast portion of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest within Clearwater County. It lies between Kelly Creek and the North Fork Clearwater River and is readily accessed from either the Pierce-Superior Road #250 or the Kelly Creek-Deception Road #255. The roadless area is a very compact shaped triangle.

Moose Mountains (a series of peaks and ridges about 4 miles long) extends north-south across the west side of the area, and Moose Creek Buttes extends south-east from Moose Mountains. Elevations drop rapidly from the peaks of up to 6,700 feet to the North Fork and Kelly Creek averaging 2,800 feet within a horizontal distance of one to two miles. The area is underlain by the metasediments of the Wallace and Revett formations. The dominant lithologies of the Belt Super group rocks are quartzites, argillites, dolomites, and limestones. These metamorphosed rocks have been sheared and faulted making them very susceptible to weathering.

Although the entire area falls within the cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem, most of the land above 6,000 feet is barren rock or very sparsely covered with low vegetation, mostly shrubs and perennials. Most all of the southerly facing slopes, all the way to Kelly Creek, are covered with shrubs. Trees, many of them lodgepole pine, are found on the northeast side and on north-facing slopes in the Black Canyon area along the North Fork Clearwater River. Here, also, are found Douglas-fir, grand fir, western redcedar, western white pine, larch and some Englemann spruce.

Wildlife, along with the rugged glaciated mountainous terrain, is the principal features which attract users. Most current users are primarily big-game hunters trailing along the North Fork Clearwater River.

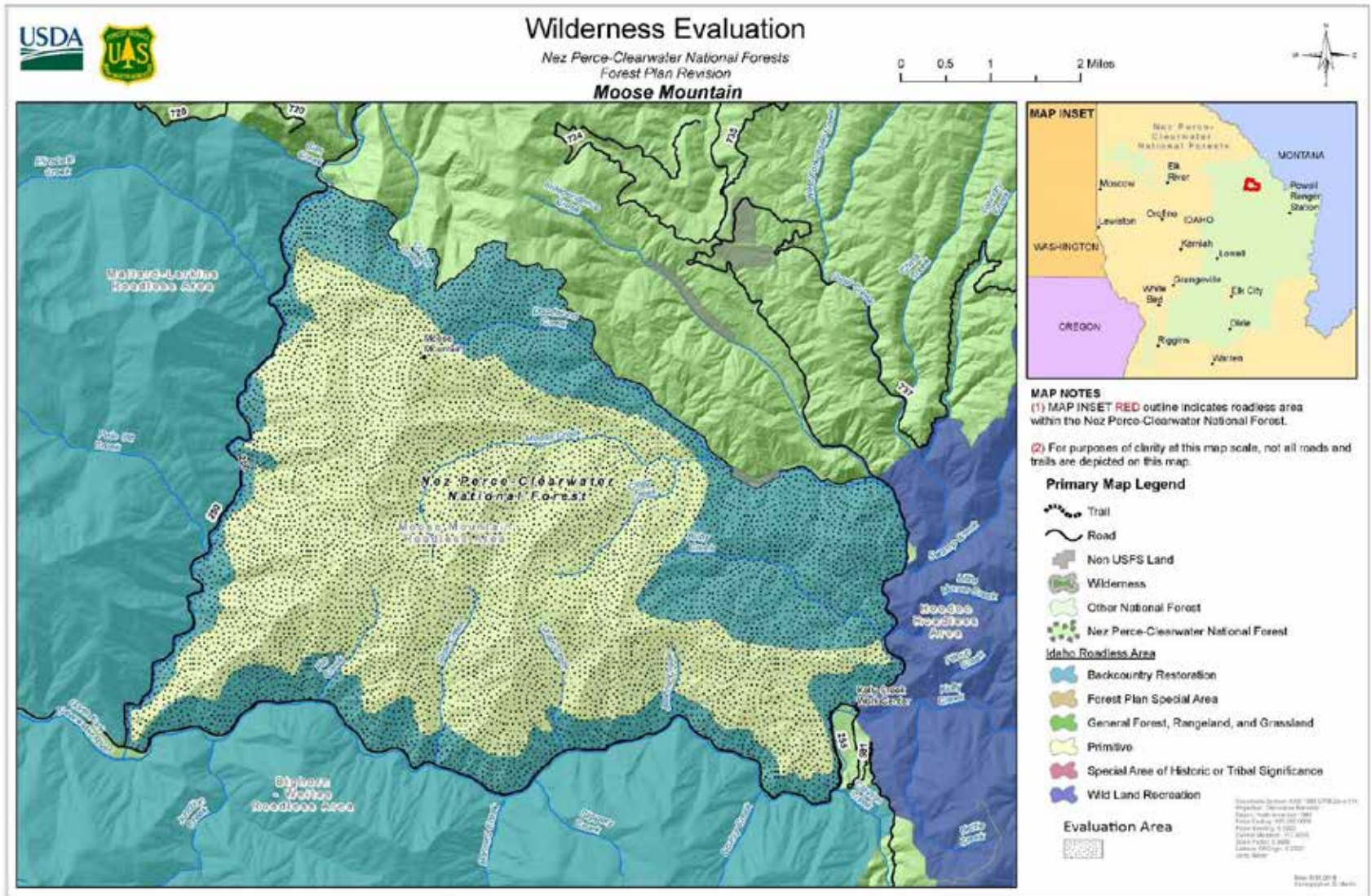


Figure 58. Wilderness Evaluation Moose Mountain

Apparent naturalness

Other than early day mineral prospecting which is largely unnoticed and some recent active mining near the northern boundary near Deadwood and Moose Creek, Moose Mountain has retained its natural integrity and appearance. Two fire control trails are low standard and access only a small portion of the area. The rest of the area does not have trails.

There are no Forest Service administrative sites, recreational rentals, or road or trail bridges. There has been no recent timber cutting in the area. Previously logged areas to the northeast were excluded when the roadless area boundaries were drawn in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule.

The vegetation in 76 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory includes 616 acres of weeds. This is primarily spotted knapweed (493 acres) found along adjacent roads and trails. The remainder are scattered miscellaneous weeds along roads and trails.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The opportunity for solitude is fairly low because of the small size and the fact that it is surrounded on two sides by roads and on one side by extensive timber harvesting. Viewing of these developments, as well as the sounds of vehicles and timber harvesting activities, is possible throughout much of the area.

Elk hunting, scenic viewing and photography are major recreational activities. There are no lakes in the roadless area. The Black Canyon section of the North Fork Clearwater River is just within the Moose Mountain Roadless Area adjacent to Road #250 that forms the western boundary. This section provides fishing opportunities and limited kayaking.

Although the area is relatively small at 22,000 acres, the absence of trails in the interior helps provide a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting in 67 percent of the area as shown in Figure 59, below. The sights and sounds of the major forest roads to the south and west influence the recreation settings of 28 percent of the roadless area.

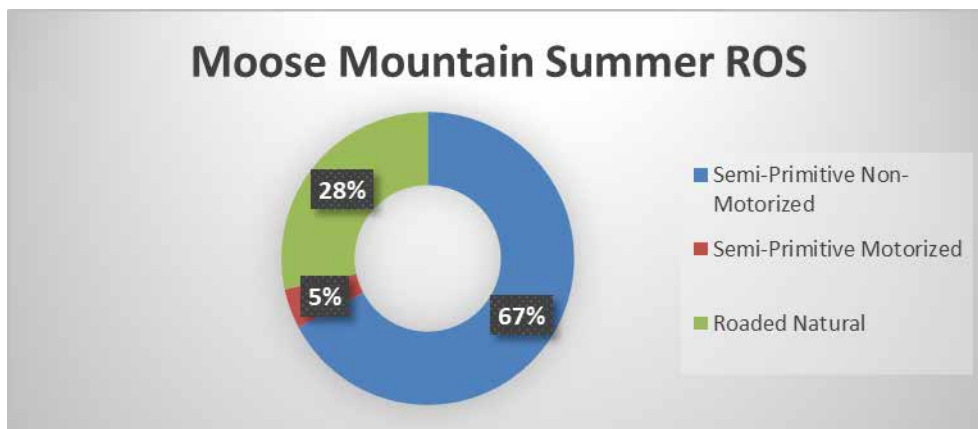


Figure 59. Moose Mountain Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 22,000 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 54 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas located within the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 571 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Three historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no wild and scenic river corridors in the roadless area. The North Fork Clearwater on the western boundary of the roadless area and Kelly Creek on the southern boundary were both found to have an outstandingly remarkable values for both recreation and scenery in the 2018 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic River evaluation as documented, with revision, in this Final Environmental Impact Statement, Appendix F. Both rivers were also found eligible under previous river evaluations.

Moose Mountains near the center of the roadless area, is a series of peaks along a ridgeline, above timber line that provides vistas of mountain scenery.

The water quality in the Moose Mountain Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Moose Mountain Roadless Area contains portions of three HUC 12 subwatersheds. All three subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 100 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under two Idaho Roadless Rule themes- *primitive* (14,000 acres) and *backcountry restoration* (8,000 acres) with approximately 700 acres in a community protection zone due to the proximity to private lands. These themes include limited permissions and exceptions for road construction and reconstruction, timber cutting, sale and removal and minerals activities.

Moose Mountain Roadless Area currently has 21 unpatented mining claims. mostly along Moose Creek along the northeastern edge of the roadless area. All of the Idaho Roadless Rule themes allow minerals activities managed under the General Mining Law of 1872. Claimants need access to the area to work their claims.

The Moose Mountain Roadless Area shares a boundary with other roadless areas- Mallard Larkins to the northwest, Bighorn-Weitas to the south and Hoodoo to the east which totals 65 percent of its boundary. The area is bordered by two major roads in the North Fork drainage, #250 and #255. To the north and the northeast, the remaining 35 percent of the boundary borders front country lands. Although there are no state or private lands directly adjacent, there are nearby private lands along Moose Creek and Independence Creek. Additional private lands are located further north and east, near Deception Saddle.

The area could be managed for wilderness with little modification of existing boundaries. It is already well defined by Road #250 to the west and Road #255 to the south and east boundary. A ridgetop boundary along the northeast side would be easy to locate. The areas along Moose Creek that include mining claims could be excluded.

The area is not located near any groomed snowmobile routes that would provide winter access to the area. Wheeled motorized use has very little history (less than 5 miles) due to steep rugged landscape and lack of trails.

North Fork Slate Creek Roadless Area

General description

The 10,400 acres North Fork Slate Creek Roadless Area is bounded by Road #354 from the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest boundary upstream to the North Fork Slate Creek Campground making up the southern boundary of the area. The National Forest boundary is the area's western boundary. Approximately two-thirds of the northern and eastern sides are bordered by Roads #463, #243, and #398. The remaining boundary was drawn to eliminate existing roads and timber harvest sites. Principal streams are the headwaters of McKenzie Creek, which drains into the Salmon River, and North Fork Slate Creek. Exposures are west, south, and southwest. Road access is principally by way of Roads #354 and #463.

The elevation ranges from 2,100 at Slate Creek where it meets the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest boundary to 6,480 feet at Dairy Mountain. The area contains very steep side slopes and tributary draws with some flat benches in the northeastern portion. The western and southern portions are open grass slopes with sparse timber, the northern portion below Dairy Mountain is typical rimrock, and the remainder is timbered hillsides. Grasslands, scattered timber, and rimrock cover the steep south and west slopes in the western half of this area. The east half of the area has more timber cover, with scattered grassy openings.

The major current uses are livestock grazing and mining. The area is generally too steep for hunting. This area is also winter range for deer and elk. About 110 acres of private property is located adjacent to the southwest border of the roadless area next to Hurley Creek.

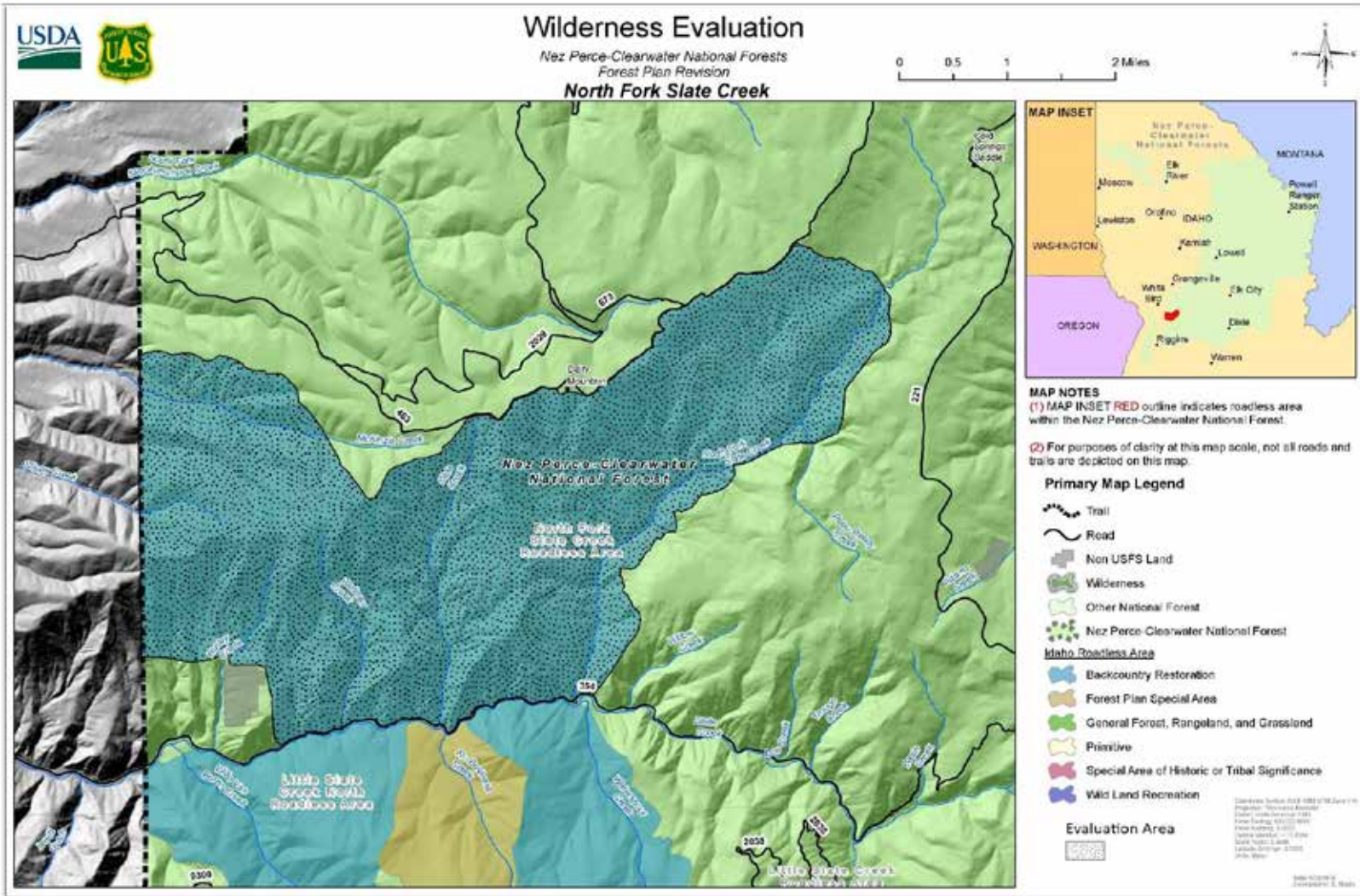


Figure 60. Wilderness Evaluation North Fork Slate Creek

Apparent naturalness

Effects to apparent naturalness are primarily related to grazing and livestock management structures and invasive weeds. The entire roadless area is part of a livestock allotment. The sights and sounds of cattle and the associated range improvements are obvious to people in the roadless area. The roadless area does not include Forest Service administrative facilities, recreation rentals or trail bridges.

There has been no timber harvest since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule established the roadless area boundary. The vegetation in 69 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater weeds inventory shows 1,639 acres of known invasive weeds, approximately 15 percent of the roadless area. This consists primarily of common curpina, (1191 acres) found on canyon breaks with a southern exposure with one large infestation of >1000 acres. Yellow star thistle is found in scattered infestations totaling 444 acres also on southern exposure canyon breaks.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Topographic and vegetative screening is moderate. There are a few drainages and a few miles of trail available for extensive travel. Management activities are present on almost every side. Primitive recreation opportunity is moderate. Although there is some diversity in the Slate Creek and Salmon River breaks and the ridge tops around North Fork Slate Creek, the area is too small for a significant range of opportunity. Cliffs and bluffs on the breaks would be challenging to cross.

The trail network in the area is little used except by hunters and livestock grazing permittees. The area does not contain any lakes or boatable waters. No outstanding fishing opportunities are noted here.

The recreation opportunity settings are influenced by Road #354, a primary Forest access route, which forms its southern boundary. Most of the area provides a motorized setting, based on distance from roads and trails open to motorized use. Approximately 29 percent of the interior of the area provides a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting as shown in Figure 61.

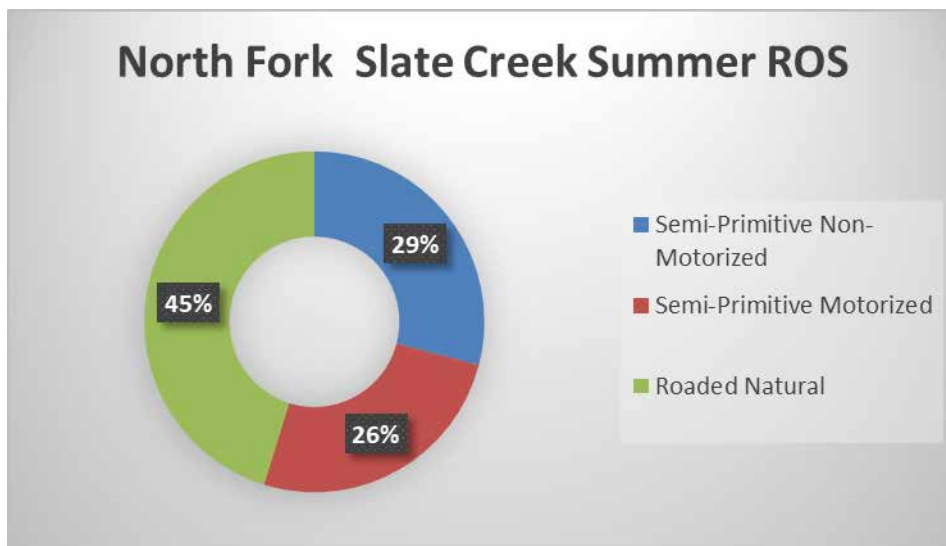


Figure 61. North Fork Slate Creek Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 10,400 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 92 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas located within the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes no modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area. There are no wild and scenic river corridors in the roadless area and no notable scenic features.

The water quality in the North Fork Slate Creek Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The North Fork Slate Creek Roadless Area contains portions of three HUC 12 subwatersheds. All three subwatersheds (100 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; and roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area. There are no subwatersheds with a Functioning Properly WCC 1 rating or WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This allows for limited permissions and exceptions for road construction and reconstruction, timber cutting, sale and removal and minerals activities.

The area is bordered primarily by front country (74 percent) with 12 percent bordering private lands and 14 percent sharing a border with Little Slate Creek North Roadless Area to the south, across Road #354. Proximity to private land and front country lands requires a more managed approach to fire-fighting to protect private land and forest resources. The boundary is well defined by roads on every side except the west, which borders private land along the Nez Perce-Clearwater boundary.

There are no mining claims in the roadless area. The entire roadless area is located within a livestock grazing allotment. Although grazing is allowed in designated wilderness under the Wilderness Act, it can make the area more challenging to manage.

There is no groomed snowmobile trail system that provides winter access to the area and the area does not have a history of snowmobiling. There is a history of wheeled motorized use with some trails that have traditionally provided a low level (6-20 miles) of motorized travel opportunity.

North Fork Spruce–White Sand Roadless Area

General description

The 35,800-acre North Fork Spruce-White Sand Roadless Area is located in the Bitterroot Mountain range adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in Idaho County. The nearest access point is via the Beaver Meadows Road #368 which is approximately 60 miles southwest of Missoula, Montana, and approximately 130 miles east of Orofino, Idaho, via U.S. Highway 12.

In addition to the Beaver Meadows Road, the area is also accessed by the Elk Summit and Colt Creek Roads #360 and #359, parts of which are old native surface Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) roads. A portion of the Elk Summit Road and a six-mile section of road #111 have been graveled. Interior access is by a well-dispersed trail system of approximately 30 miles.

The roadless area is a band of land approximately 14 miles long varying from a quarter mile to five and a half miles in width and bounded on the east side by the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. It encompasses highly diverse land types ranging from colluvial and frost churned uplands to steep rocky stream breaklands and alpine glacial cirque basins. The main drainage is Colt Killed Creek (formerly called White Sand Creek, but legally changed to acknowledge a reference in the Lewis and Clark Journals.) Colt Killed Creek has its source in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Elevations range from 3,500 feet in Colt Killed Creek to over 7,000 feet south of Beaver Ridge Lookout near the boundary of the roadless area. Except for the stream bottoms, most lands are above 5,500 feet.

The area is mostly underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho batholith. Other rock types found in the area as localized blocks include a talc-silicate gneiss belonging to the Wallace formation and outliers of granite and granodiorite. Weathered rock and soil in this area is highly erosive, and much of the land is unstable and located on steep slopes.

The roadless area is entirely within the western spruce-fir forest ecosystem except for a small section of cedar-hemlock-pine forest in the lower Colt Killed Creek. Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, western larch, and lodgepole pine are the most common tree types, although grand fir and western redcedar habitats occur at elevations generally below 5,000 feet. Most of the area supports a mixed stand of trees and shrubs. *Menzeisia* (false huckleberry) and beargrass are common shrubs.

Because of the configuration of the area, recreation patterns vary greatly. A few hikers and some anglers fish the five small lakes in the Beaver Ridge area while people stream fishing are attracted to Colt Killed Creek. The remainder of the area is used primarily by hunters. The areas immediately adjacent to the roads are probably used the most by campers and people just traveling the roads.

The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is contiguous to the east boundary, and the Sneakfoot Meadows roadless area is adjacent on the west side of Elk Summit Road. Except for the Beaver Ridge section, this area was once part of the Elk Summit Roadless Area.

One attraction is the possibility of seeing moose in this area. The other major attraction is the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Visitors pass over the trails in this area to reach portions of the Wilderness.

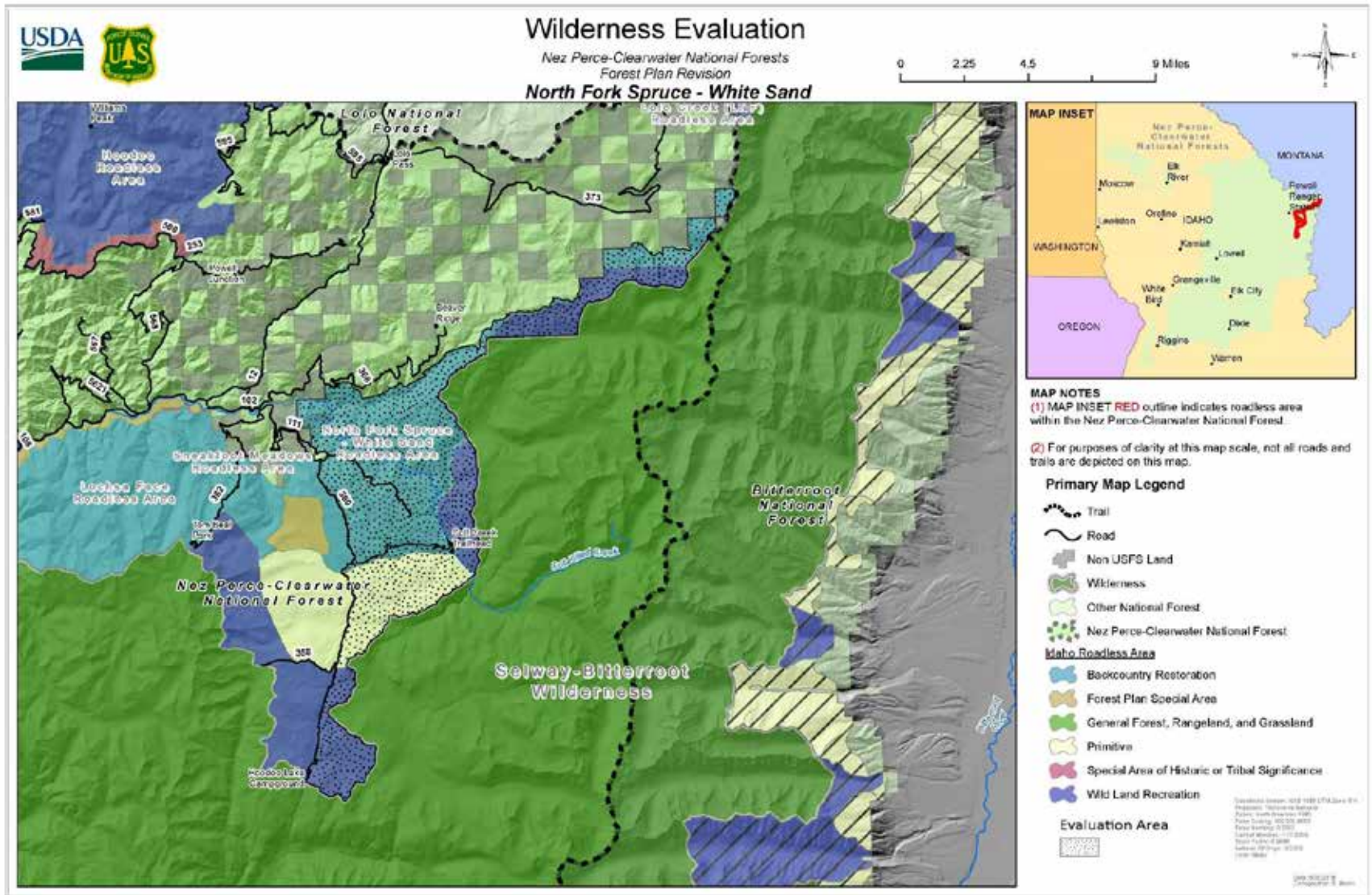


Figure 62. Wilderness Evaluation North Fork Spruce - White Sand

Apparent naturalness

Elk Summit Road #111 and Colt Creek Road #359 are the two major intrusions affecting the natural integrity. The Elk Summit Road, which includes one road bridge, is approximately five miles long across Savage Ridge and was constructed as a level 3 Forest Road to access planned timber units. Although the timber was not logged, the road remains. Efforts to obliterate this road have been controversial since recreation use has developed on this road. Road #359 is a lower standard road of similar length and provides access to the Colt Creek Trailhead near the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary. Trails for this trailhead include Trail #50 which parallels Colt Killed Creek across the roadless area. Two trail bridges occur in this roadless area, one on the Colt Killed Creek Trail and the other on the Storm Creek Trail. These are fairly large streams and navigating across them can be difficult or impossible at some water levels. Some people view trail bridges as an intrusion while others may view them as an important part of a trail system. The constructed trails are less distracting although they are evident and do create unnatural disturbances in some cases. Minor evidence of an old lookout at Savage Ridge may still be seen if one passes the site, otherwise the overall natural integrity and appearance are well intact.

Roadless area boundaries were reviewed during the development of the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule and areas with past timber cutting were removed. Since the Roadless Rule 280 acres of timber have been cut following wildfires as part of a roadside hazard tree reduction project.

The vegetation in 64 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater invasive weeds inventory shows 288 acres of known noxious weed areas in the roadless areas. This is primarily spotted knapweed, 180 acres, at trailheads and along roads and trails. Smaller populations of kingdevil, field bindweed, and tall buttercup are found. The management goal is for eradication while the populations remain relatively small. The kingdevil is found along roads, the bindweed at the Colt Creek campground and along roads while the buttercup is found trailside. Miscellaneous weeds are found roadside and trailhead.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Disruption of solitude within the area is minimal, generally confined to concentrations of people near the major lakes and streams that are accessible by trails. Logging activities in the Beaver Creek drainage are the major current disturbance to solitude. Vehicles traveling over the Elk Summit and Colt Creek roads and the associated recreation result in some minor noise and visual disturbance. It is minimal because of heavy vegetative screening near the roads and the fact that use is relatively light except for a few weeks during the fall hunting season. Approximately 63 percent of the interior of the area provides a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting, see Figure 63.

Big game hunting, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing (lake and stream), scenic viewing, and photography (especially in the vicinity from Beaver Ridge Lookout) are the major dispersed activities available. Except in the vicinity of the lakes east of Beaver Ridge Lookout, cross-country travel by foot is very difficult because of dense vegetation and many steep stream breaklands.

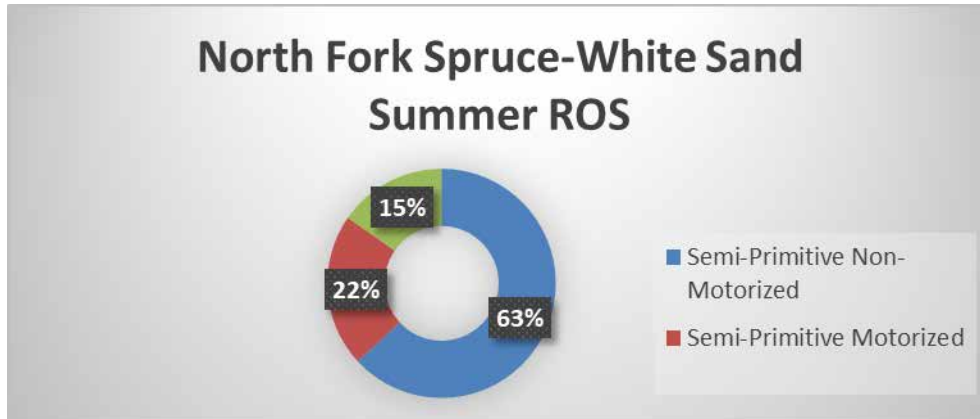


Figure 63. North Fork Spruce-White Sand Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 35,800 acres the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is adjacent to the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness so portions of the area could be smaller portions of the area could be considered also.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 66 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas located within the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 4,776 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area.

There are no wild and scenic river corridors in the roadless area. Five scenic high mountain lakes are located in the area, the largest, South Spruce Creek Lake is 10.5 acres. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game most recently stocked North and South Spruce lakes with cutthroat trout in 1997.

Colt Killed Creek was identified as having outstandingly remarkable recreation and scenery values in the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic rivers eligibility review. Trail #50 parallels this stream and provides a high-quality fly-fishing opportunity and scenic appeal.

The water quality in the North Fork Spruce-White Sand Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The North Fork Spruce-White Sand Roadless Area contains portions of nine HUC 12 subwatersheds. Seven subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 89 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi

1990). The Spruce Creek and Lower Brushy Fork Creek subwatersheds (11 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The Roadless area is currently managed under the permissions and exceptions of the Idaho Roadless Rule for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction or reconstruction and minerals activities. The area is managed in three different Roadless Rule themes- *Wildland Recreation* (9,500 acres), *Primitive* (5,800 acres) and *Backcountry Restoration* (20,500 acres). The Wildland recreation section is the most restrictive and corresponds with the area recommended for wilderness in the 1987 Clearwater Forest Plan.

The area shares most of its boundary with wilderness (47 percent) or the adjoining Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area (31 percent). This roadless area is separated from Sneakfoot by the low standard Elk Summit road which provides access to a trailhead and FS cabin. The remaining 36 percent of the boundary to the north borders the front country. There is a significant checker boarding (alternating sections of private and national Forest System lands) to the north of the roadless area. Fire management in these mixed ownership lands can be challenging due to different management objectives for different land ownerships.

The Lolo Pass and Powell areas are popular for snowmobiling due to reliable snowpack that lasts into April and a paved and routinely plowed parking area at Lolo Pass. A groomed snowmobile trail system is located just north of the roadless area. . Fires in recent years have created more open, rideable areas off the groomed system. Road #360 to the west of the roadless area is a popular route off the groomed system. Snowmobiling also occurs along Savage Ridge and Beaver Ridge is a destination for snowmobilers. The area does have a very low amount (0-5 miles) of past summer motorized opportunity but is more of a winter recreation area.

Sharing a boundary with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness negates any effect of size and shape on wilderness attributes with two exceptions. The extension of the Elk Summit Road #111 has created an isolated unit of land of about 3,500 acres that does not lend itself to wilderness. The other exception is the narrow stringer of land that extends north of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and lies between private land and developed land on the Lolo National Forest.

With some adjustments, much of the existing area would be easily managed as wilderness. The east boundary contiguous to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness would, of course, be no longer valid since the area would just become a part of the existing wilderness.

The existing low-standard, Elk Summit Road from Hoodoo Lake north to Colt Creek campground would be a logical boundary. The south side of the Colt Creek Road would also be a logical boundary up to the Colt Creek cabin. The semi-enclosed area created by the Elk Summit Road and road #111 could easily be excluded. A feasible and identifiable boundary from Colt Creek cabin north would be Colt Killed Creek, to its junction with Trail #47. Trail #47, which follows the ridge between Colt Killed Creek and Beaver Creek, would also make a logical and identifiable boundary.

The boundaries of this roadless area, except for a section along the Beaver Ridge road, are undefinable since they are located either along private land lines or timber sale activity.

There are no unpatented mining claims in this roadless area. The area does not overlap with any grazing allotments.

North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area

General description

The 117,000-acre North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area is located in the Lochsa River drainage approximately 70 air miles east of Lewiston, Idaho. It is located entirely within the boundary of the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho County. Access is provided by U.S. Highway 12, an all-weather highway on the south. The Lolo Motorway and two other low-standard, dirt surfaced roads provide access on the northwest sides of the roadless area. The Indian Graves Road #107, a low-standard, graveled road parallels the area near its eastern boundary and provides a north-south connection with the Lolo Motorway. A sparse network of trails maintained at minimal standards crosses the roadless area. Most trails are suitable for both foot and stock use. Some are suitable for foot traffic only.

Two major types of drainages flow through this area: The large (53,900 acre) Fish Creek drainage and a series of relatively short (one to six-mile-long) streams draining directly into the Lochsa River. The southwest and northeast portions are characterized by steep, stream breaklands dissected by steep side drainages. The central portion in the Upper Bimerick and Fish Creek drainages have a more broken topography consisting of moderate relief uplands and low relief. Figure 2 Weitas Butte Lookout dissected by meandering streams with relatively low gradients and flat bottoms. The southern portions of these drainages are also located on steeper breaklands.

Almost all the area is underlain by a gray, coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho batholith. Isolated blocks of rhyolite, border zone gneiss and schist, and gneiss of the Wallace formation of the Belt series also occur in the area. Elevations range from near 1,500 feet along the Lochsa River to 6,600 feet at Castle Butte. Large areas of bare rocky outcroppings are visible from U.S. Highway 12 in those portions of the steep breaklands located east of Sherman Creek.

Vegetation ranges from western redcedar and grand fir on north slopes, to large brush fields on south and west slopes, to lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and bear grass at higher elevations. Other tree species include western white pine, Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce, larch, Ponderosa pine, and mountain hemlock.



Figure 64. View from Fish Creek trail looking downstream

Large forest fires in the early 1900's had a major influence on the existing vegetation creating a mosaic of large brush fields with scattered concentrations of various sizes of trees. Trees are beginning to re-establish themselves in brush fields, especially on north slopes.

Although generally surrounded by roads, the adjacent areas to the south and north are also roadless. Areas to the west and east allow for timber harvest.

Key attractions within the area include an anadromous fishery (steelhead trout and summer Chinook salmon) in the Fish Creek drainage. Big game hunting for elk, deer, and bears is probably the most popular current use. Most of the use from the south side off of U.S. Highway 12 is day use while many of those hunting from the Lolo Motorway or the roads around the Fish Creek drainage prefer to use stock or off-road vehicles to get further away from the roads.

The cultural history of the Lolo Trail and the Lolo Motorway forming the northern boundary, as well as a roadless portion of the Lewis and Clark route, appeals to history buffs.

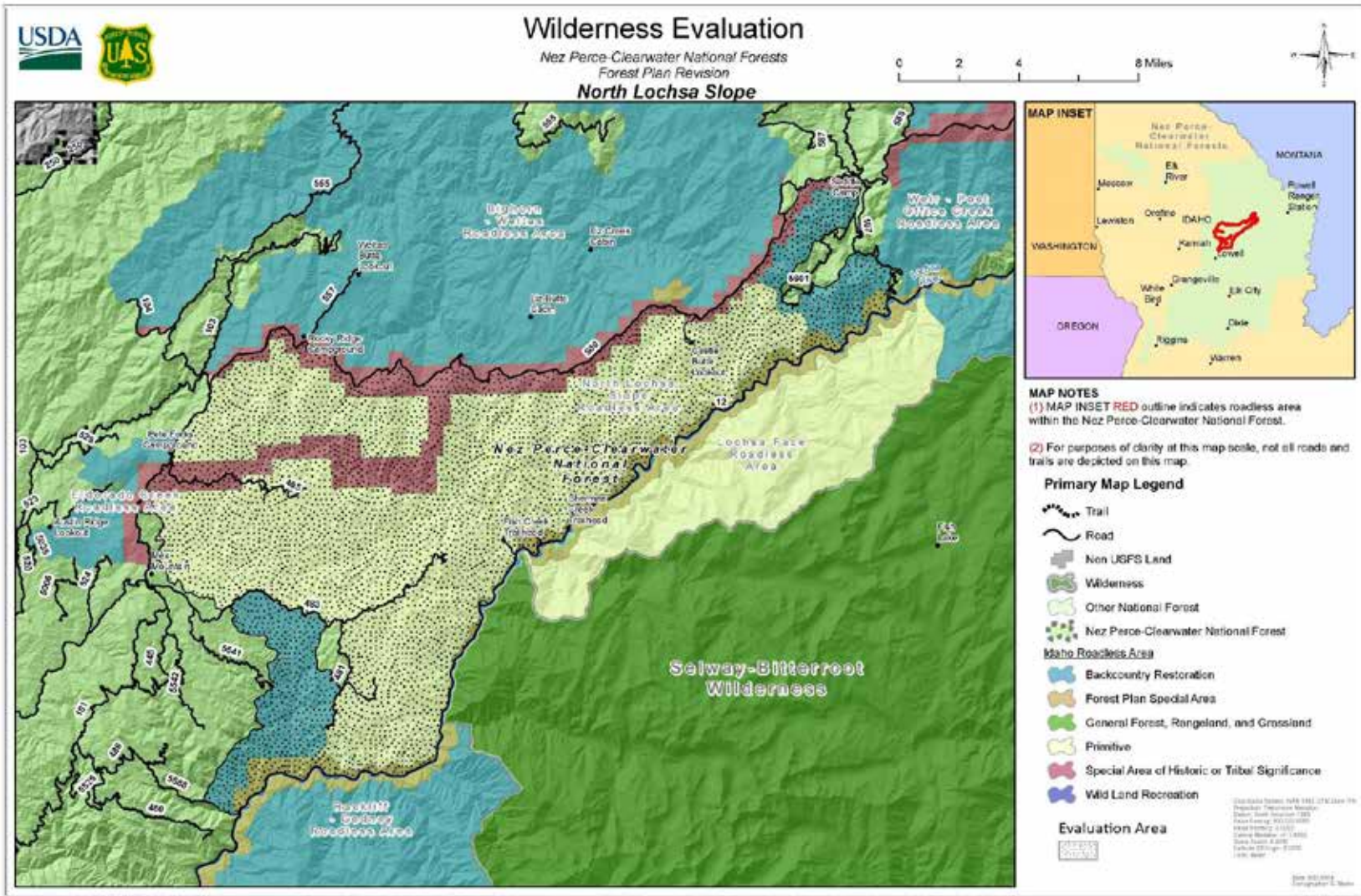


Figure 65. Wilderness Evaluation North Lochsa Slope

Apparent naturalness

Even though physical evidence of human activities are obvious, their impacts are considered relatively minor to the overall natural integrity of the area. Most of the land as viewed from both within and from the boundary and intruding roads offers a diversity of vegetative types and openings that appear natural.

Road #485 to Boundary Peak, road #483 to Fish Butte and road #481 to and #5545 to Bimerick Meadows were constructed in the 1930's by the Forest Service. These roads mostly follow the ridgelines in the area

The area includes the Castle Butte Lookout which is currently used as a recreation rental with an access road that extends approximately one mile into the roadless area. A small Forest Service structure called Obia cabin is located at the mouth of Hungry Creek. The area includes five trail bridges, one is shown below.

Past Timber harvest activities have been confined to three areas adjacent to existing roads: the extreme northwest part of the Fish Creek drainage, the Pete Forks area along the Boundary Peak Road, and the East Deadman Creek area along the Bimerick Meadows Road. Most past timber harvest was excluded when the roadless area boundaries were established in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule. Since then, a total of 78 acres of timber has been cut in the roadless area as part of a post-fire roadside hazard tree removal project.

The vegetation in 63 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater inventory indicates 1,185 acres of known invasive weed locations. This is primarily spotted knapweed (1,039 acres) along roads and the Fish Creek trail. In addition, smaller amounts of hawkweeds and other miscellaneous weeds are found along roads and trails. Both leafy spurge (0.2 acres) and scotch broom (14 acres) are found near Highway 12. Both have a management objective to eradicate these weeds while the populations are relatively small.



Figure 66. Trail bridge along Fish Creek trail

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Solitude varies within the North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area. The 60,000-acre Fish Creek drainage provides the best opportunity for solitude. Its broken topography, relatively flat-bottomed streams, and diverse vegetation effectively screen out the sights and sounds of man's activities. Within one half-mile of the existing access roads, a person has a feeling of being in a relatively large area that has had very little development. It also provides excellent opportunities for visitor dispersion. Concentrations of people currently occur along existing access roads to the north and western portions of the area primarily during the fall big-game hunting season. Looking out of the drainage to the east and southeast, the higher ridges of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness are visible.

The presence of roads on the ridgetops reduces the opportunity for solitude. The steep breaklands on the southern portion of the roadless area offer views of the undeveloped Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and other roadless areas to the southwest. However, U.S. Highway 12 is a major visual focal point from these areas, and traffic noise from the highway also detracts from giving one a feeling of solitude.



Figure 67. Riparian vegetation in Fish Creek

Stream fishing, hiking, backpacking, and horseback riding in the main Fish Creek and Hungery Creek drainages are becoming more popular each year. Motor biking and mountain biking also occur on the Fish Creek and Sherman Creek trails. These trails provide a connection from Highway 12 along the Lochsa River to the divide to the North Fork of the Clearwater River along the 500 road. Kayakers run the lower part of Fish Creek at high water as an add-on to the Lochsa River. A key attraction is the natural beauty of Fish Creek; with a parallel trail running alongside it.

The North Lochsa slope provides a mix of recreation opportunities as shown in Figure 68. The portions of the area closest to Highway 12 are the most affected by the sights and sounds of traffic. The 500 road which borders the roadless area to the north also influences solitude.

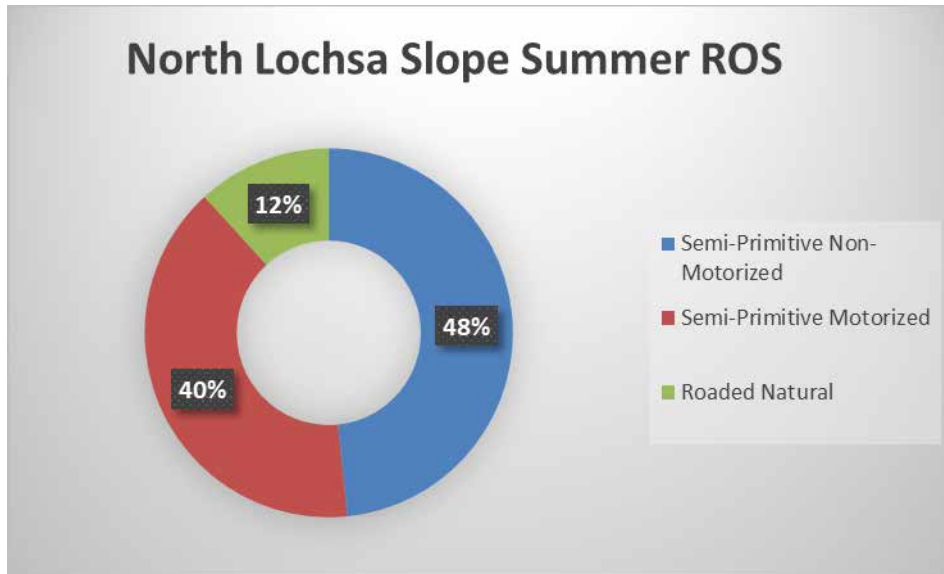


Figure 68. North Lochsa Slope Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 117,700 acres this roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 73 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. The vegetation in the area includes 25 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

The area also contains the 1,300-acre Lochsa Research Natural Area established by the Chief of the Forest Service in 1977. The Research Natural Area was established to protect and study the unique Pacific coast vegetation (coastal disjunct species) that occurs within its boundaries. Flowering dogwood and 14 other plant species that are not normally found west of the Cascades Mountains or further east in the Continental U.S. grow in the Research Natural Area.

There is one potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred site in the roadless area. Eight historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area. This roadless area includes more historic themes than other roadless area on the national forest.

The Lolo Trail forms the southern boundary of the roadless area. It is both a registered National Historic Landmark and National Historic Trail. This trail was a major travel route between the Columbia Basin and the Montana country prehistorically. Lewis and Clark traveled over sections of the trail in journeys of 1805-06. Chief Joseph, a Nez Perce Indian Chief, helped lead the non-treaty Nez Perce over this traditional route during the Nez Perce war of 1877. The trail was expanded to a low standard road in the early 1930's.

There are 4,500 acres of the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River corridor in the Lochsa Face Roadless Area, north of Highway 12. Scenery is one of the “outstandingly remarkable” values for which the river was designated.

The water quality in the North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 6.0 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 5) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). Segments of Apgar Creek, Deadman Creek, Glade Creek and unnamed water body are 303(d) designated and not supporting *cold water aquatic life* beneficial use, which is related to water temperatures higher than State of Idaho standards. Deadman Creek and the unnamed water body are fully supporting *secondary contact recreation*. An EPA-approved Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan is needed to address water quality concerns (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The North Lochsa Slope Roadless Area contains portions of seventeen HUC 12 subwatersheds. Fourteen subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 99 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). Three subwatersheds (less than 1 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The roadless area is currently managed primarily under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. A portion of the area is within the corridor of the Wild and Scenic Lochsa River and managed under specific management direction to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values. The north end includes a portion of the Lolo Motorway corridor which is managed under Land Management Plan direction specific to that corridor.

The area is bordered by other roadless areas (55 percent), currently recommended wilderness (6 percent) with the remaining 39 percent adjoining front country. Sharing a boundary with front country can be challenging especially a boundary with a highway. The differences in fire management can also be difficult because of the need to manage fire in front country to protect resources.

Although the area is large (117,700 acres), the narrow and irregular shape of all lands draining directly into the Lochsa River severely detracts from many wilderness attributes, principally solitude (sight and sound from the Highway). The Fish Creek drainage, including Hungery Creek on the other hand, is an enclosed landscape where most wilderness attributes are unaffected.

Because of the irregular shape and narrow stringers of roadless land along the Lochsa River from Rye Patch Creek to the mouth of Fish Creek, a more logical boundary would exclude that area from wilderness. The same would be true from Skookum Creek northeast. The boundaries of the remaining area, that is, Fish Creek and the Lochsa Face from Fish Creek to Skookum Creek, would result in a manageable wilderness, although the wilderness qualities on the face are questionable, as noted previously. The Boundary Peak Road #485 could be left as a road or closed. Either way would have little effect on wilderness values.

There are no unpatented mining claims in the roadless area. The area does not overlap with any grazing allotments.

Outfitter and guides currently run a spring and fall big-game hunting operation. One has an assigned campsite in the Willow Creek drainage; the other has an assigned campsite in the Holly Creek drainage. A radio relay station on Castle Butte Lookout is under permit to the State of Idaho and Idaho County. A

highway maintenance station near Bald Mountain Creek, located adjacent to U.S. Highway 12 is also under permit to the State of Idaho.

Road #500 border the roadless area to the north. This route is groomed for snowmobile travel as part of a long-term agreement with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, the Forest Service, Clearwater County and the local snowmobile club. Open areas adjacent to the groomed routes are accessible for snowmobiling as seen in Figure 69 below. There is a history of wheeled motorized travel in the area at a high level (41-60 miles) of motorized travel opportunity predominantly because of the number of roads into the areas and some trails that have been historically open to motorized use.



Figure 69. Open area accessible to snowmobilers off the FR500

O'Hara-Falls Creek Roadless Area

General description

The 33,200-acre O'Hara-Falls Creek Roadless Area contains all of the O'Hara Creek drainage and the southside breaks of the Selway River for about 10 miles upstream from the mouth of O'Hara Creek. The name of this area is somewhat misleading since the major part of Falls Creek is no longer included. The area is almost completely surrounded by roads. Principal access is by Roads #651, #464, and #356.

Topography is typical of the lower Selway country - steep slopes, but not highly dissected. Elevations range from about 1,600 feet on the Selway River to 6,056 feet at West Fork Point and 6,185 feet at Iron Mountain.

Vegetation is dense in some portions of the area, but the country opens up near the top of Iron Mountain. The west side of O'Hara Creek is heavily timbered with mixed species. Cedar is common in the creek bottom and lodgepole pine prevails on the ridge tops. On the east side of the area, Saddle Ridge has dense brushfields, which are the result of past fires. Recent fires have occurred in the Selway River breaks portion of the roadless area.

Large, blackened cedar snags, the result of past fires, are also found in the area. From Saddle Creek on, the trail along O'Hara Creek becomes difficult to find. The tread is almost gone and in some of the wet, shady draws, the ferns are often over the hiker's head. The middle section of the creek cascades through a steep, rocky gorge, with waterfalls and pools. The canyon opens up in the upper section of the creek where there are meadows and beaver ponds. Major current uses of this area include hiking, hunting, big-game winter range, and outfitter and guide businesses.

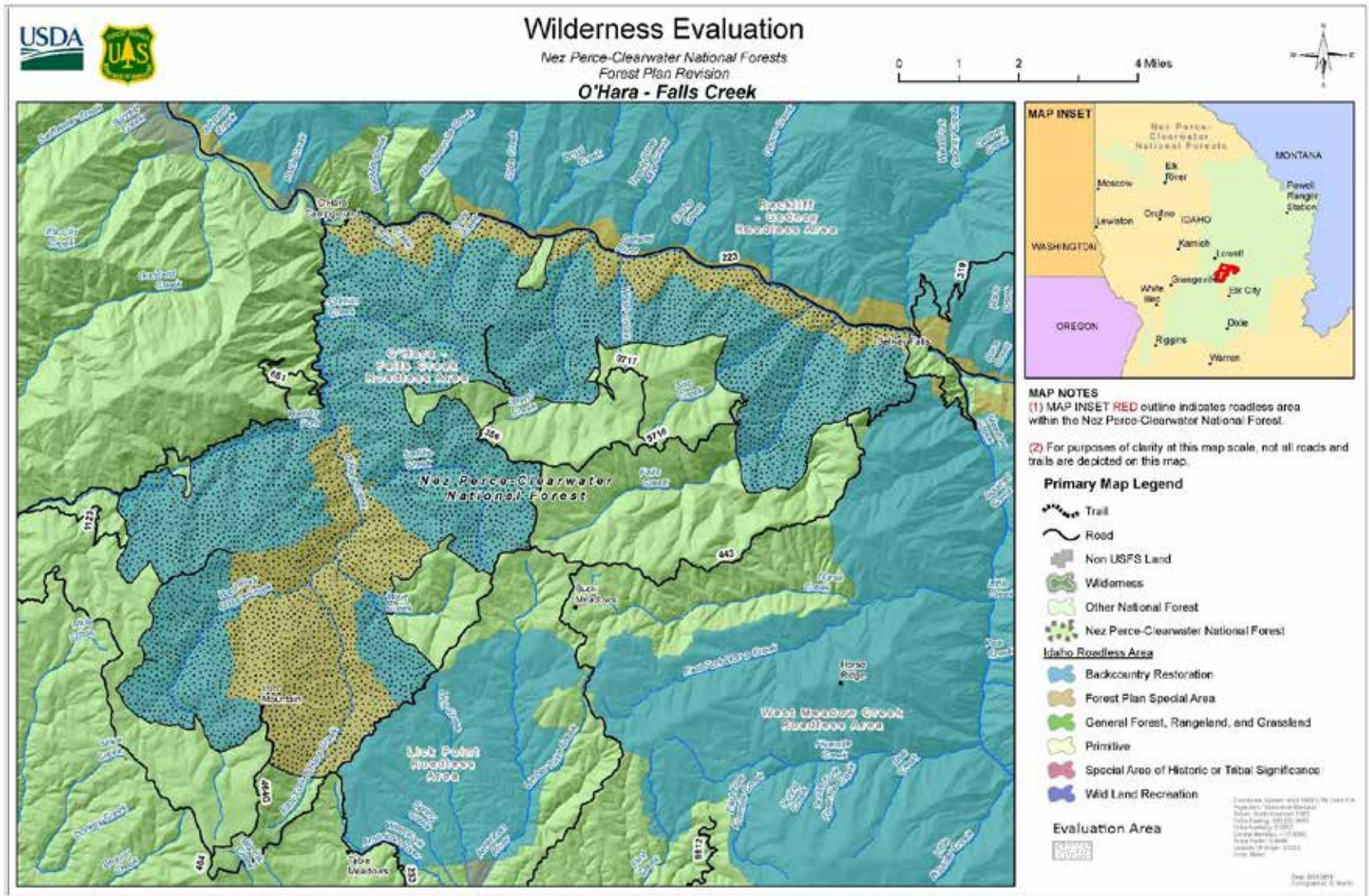


Figure 70. Wilderness Evaluation O'Hara - Falls Creek

Apparent naturalness

Long-term ecological processes are operating with only low impacts from development activities on lands surrounding the area. The area has a very convoluted boundary with roads ending in adjacent front country areas.

The 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule boundaries excluded most past roading and timber harvest. Since the 2008 Rule, timber cutting has occurred on 50 acres of the roadless area, as part of post-fire roadside salvage. A fire line up to 1.5 miles long was constructed during the recent 2015 wildfire and is still visible.

There are no Forest Service administrative facilities, recreation rentals or trail bridges in the area. Approximately 14 percent of the roadless area overlaps with the boundaries of a livestock grazing allotment. The presence of cattle and range structures are obvious to people visiting the roadless area.

The vegetation in 43 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). (This roadless area has been affected by recent wildfires. It is unknown how much the NRV has been affected.)

The Nez Perce-Clearwater weeds inventory shows 739 acres of known invasive weed locations, primarily spotted knapweed (430 acres) in polygons adjacent to roads. In addition, yellow star thistle is present on 11.5 acres along roads and meadow hawkweed is found in 2 acres along roads. Both have a management objective for eradication since the current populations are relatively small. The remainder is scattered populations of miscellaneous weeds mostly along roads and trails.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

O’Hara-Falls Creek Roadless Area offers limited potential for solitude due to adjacent roads and activities. The area includes almost all of the O’Hara Creek drainage, one of the largest on the lower Selway, and opportunities for solitude are highest in and near the stream bottoms.

The Selway River Road is visible from about half of the Selway Face portion of the area, and the Hamby Road is visible from other parts. A telephone microwave relay and a Forest Service radio remote station atop Iron Mountain are visible from some parts of the area. Potential for primitive recreation opportunity is limited. Although the area is very diverse in plants, it is less so in fish, wildlife, and terrain. The area does not include any particular challenge. It has no lakes or boatable waters that provide primitive recreation opportunities.

A full-service, paved 34-unit campground is located at O’Hara Bar, just outside of the roadless area. This campground is in a dense cedar grove. There are many fishermen and floaters on the Selway River in the summer that draw visitors. The sights and sounds from the campground and the road would affect the solitude in the adjacent parts of the roadless area.

The area provides a considerable amount (43 percent) of roaded natural recreation opportunity setting, due to the many roads that forms its boundaries. The remainder of the area, mostly the interior that is less affected by adjoining roads provides semi-primitive recreation settings, Figure 71.

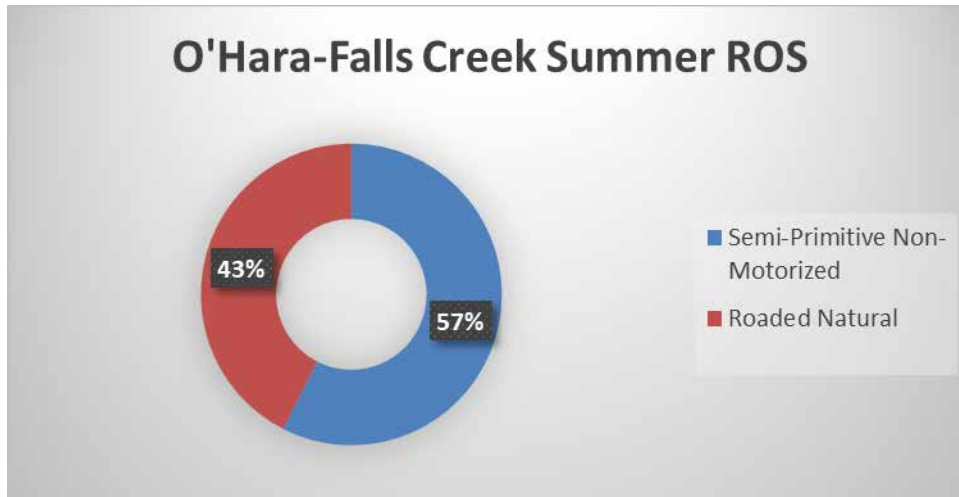


Figure 71. O'Hara-Falls Creek Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition.

With a total size of 33,200 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 97 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. The vegetation in the area 241 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species currently in decline.

All of the 6,600-acre O'Hara Research Natural Area, established in 1980, is contained within this roadless area. Three rare plant species and one threatened species have been located in this Research Natural Area.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred site in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area.

There are 2,900 acres of the Selway Wild and Scenic River corridor in the O'Hara-Falls Creek Roadless Area. Scenery is one of the "outstandingly remarkable" values for which the river was designated.

The water quality in the O'Hara-Falls Creek Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The O'Hara-Falls Creek Roadless Area contains portions of five HUC 12 subwatersheds. Four subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 99 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Upper American River subwatershed (less than 1 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which

indicates it is in Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

Most of the O'Hara-Falls Creek Roadless Area is managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule which provides limited permissions and exceptions for road construction and reconstruction, timber cutting, sale and removal and minerals activities.

The most unique portion is being managed as a Research Natural Area and, as such, must be protected against activities which modify ecological processes. Unique scenic qualities of the Selway River Wild and Scenic Rivers are protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the management plan for the river.

There are no unpatented mining claims in this roadless area.

The roadless area borders primarily front country which forms 81 percent of its boundary. The remainder (19 percent) borders the Lick Point Roadless Area. About half of the boundary follows roads, trails, and the Selway River. The overall boundary is very irregular, and the width of the area varies greatly due to numerous mid-slope roads and past timber units on adjacent front country lands. The relatively small size and convoluted boundary of this roadless area would make the boundary difficult to manage. With most of its boundary shared with front country lands, fire management would focus on suppression and not wildland fire use.

O'Hara-Falls Creek is accessible via a groomed snowmobile trail. Snowmobiling occurs in the Iron Mountain Area, in the highest part of the O'Hara watershed. Wheeled motorized travel within the roadless area has been low (6- 20 miles) of motorized travel history in the area.

Pot Mountain Roadless Area

General description

The Pot Mountain Roadless Area covers 51, 100 acres and is located about 36 air miles northeast of Orofino, Idaho along the North Fork of the Clearwater River. Graveled roads bordering the area include Beaver-North Fork Road #247 and the Pierce-Superior Road #250 along the North Fork of the Clearwater River connected by the Mush Saddle Road #711. Interior access is by trail. About 40 miles of Pot Mountain Trail #144 along Pot Mountain ridge bisect the area from north to south, Figure 72.



Figure 72. Scenery from the top of Pot Mountain



Figure 73. Mountain hemlock at higher elevation

Pot Mountain is a very compact, almost round shaped roadless area of land laying like a huge inverted bowl on the landscape with the North Fork of the Clearwater River at the bottom edge of the bowl. Numerous first-and second-order streams, starting at the higher ridges and dropping very rapidly, give the "bowl" a fluted effect. The most prominent topographic feature is Pot Mountain ridge angling southwest-northwest across the area. Seven major peaks dot the center of the area ranging in elevation from Cave Point at 5,600 feet to Pot Mountain at 7,139. The river elevation along the boundary drops down to 1,830 at the mouth of Quartz Creek. There are four mountain lakes in the area, and each is less than 10 acres in size (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The area is underlain by coarse-grained to porphyritic light gray granite of the Cretaceous Bungalow pluton associated with the Idaho Batholith. The major ecosystems are two-thirds cedar-hemlock-pine forest and one-third western spruce-fir mainly along Pot Mountain ridge. Where trees are found, a wide variety of trees are found typical of much of the Clearwater National Forest. The higher elevations support dense stands of mountain hemlock as well as the subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce, Figure 73. The lower elevations are western red cedar, Douglas-fir, and grand fir habitat types (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Large forest fires in the early 1900's had a major influence on the area burning large stands of timber. As a result, vast brush fields with scattered tree seedlings and saplings are found on the steep mostly southern-facing slopes from Bar Creek to past Cave Creek.

The high mountain scenery, Figure 74, along with relatively easy access from the northeast side, and the system of interior trails make this a locally popular area for hiking, hunting, some lake fishing, primitive camping, and sightseeing in general. The area is also well known locally for spring black bear hunting. Cross-country travel by foot is extremely difficult because of the steep terrain and dense undergrowth (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).



Figure 74. Brush fields on the southside of Pot Mountain

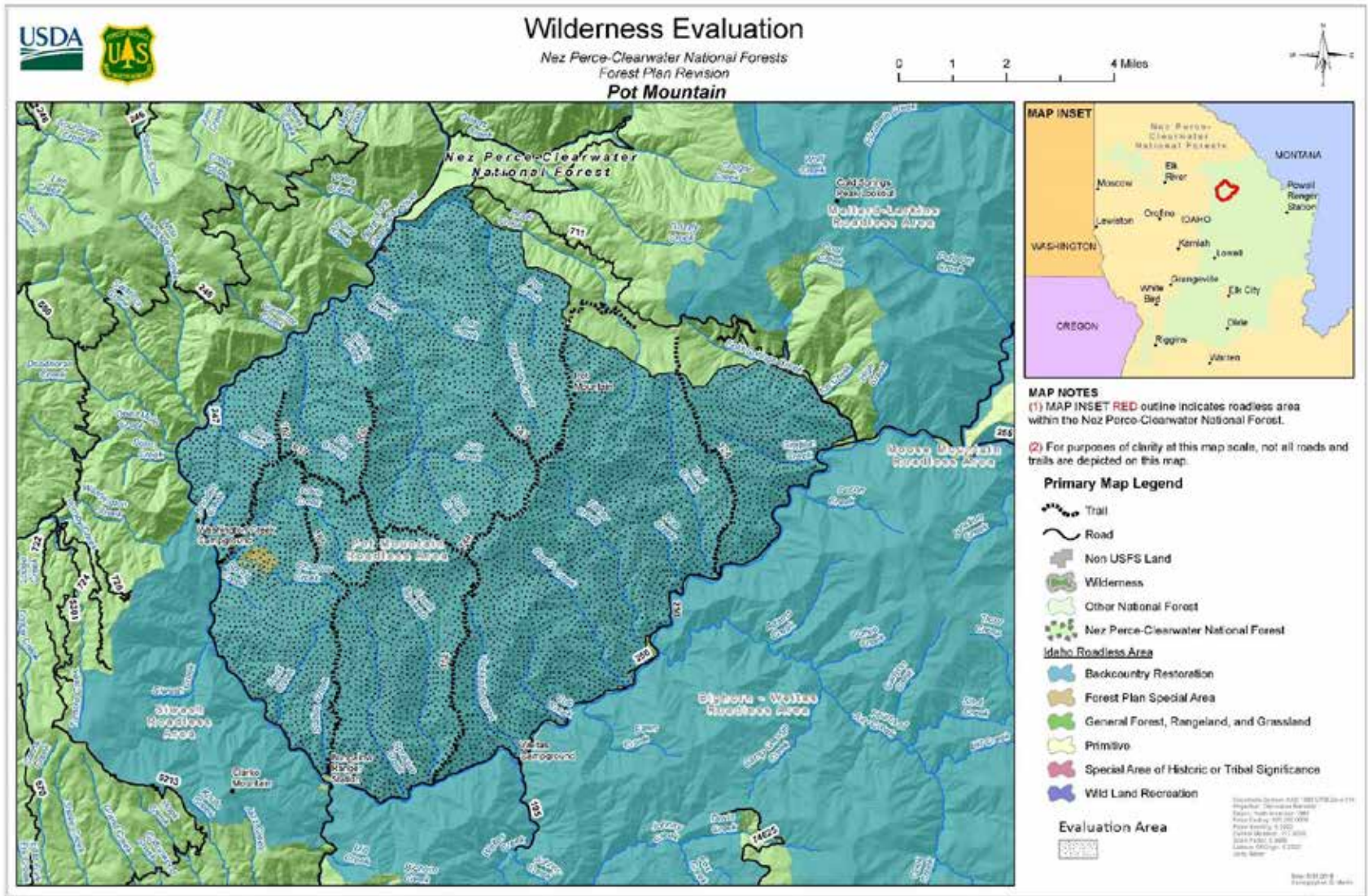


Figure 75. Wilderness Evaluation - Pot Mountain

Apparent Naturalness

Except for several old lookout sites and minor trail and campsite use, there is very minor disturbance to the natural integrity and appearance of the area, Figure 76 (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008). The area does not include Forest Service administrative structures, or recreation rentals, structure, permitted in special use authorization, any private lands or domestic grazing allotments.

The majority of the area (59 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the [roadless] area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). Inventoried noxious weeds totaling 1444 acres are present in 2.8 percent of the roadless area. Most the noxious weed issue is spotted knapweed (*Centaurea diffusa*) and are located near roads that encircle the roadless area. Past timber harvest to the southwest of road #711 were excluded when the roadless area boundary was drawn. No timber cutting has occurred since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule.



Figure 76. Trailside vegetation

Opportunities for Solitude & Primitive & Unconfined Recreation

The shape of the area along with the size (51,100 acres) and the dissected topography and vegetation contribute to a relatively high degree of solitude (IRR, 2008). The major trails through the area are open to motorcycle use in the current travel plan, while other trails are non-motorized. In recent years, mountain bike use of these trails has been increasing. Cross country travel is challenging due to the steepness and ruggedness of the landscape. The area currently provides a mix of recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes, with 59 percent semi-primitive non-motorized, 22 percent semi-primitive motorized and 19 percent roaded natural, Figure 77 (These ROS classes are based on the distance of lands from motorized roads and trails both inside and outside the roadless area. ROS classes are a continuum from primitive to roaded natural with primitive the furthest from roads and motorized trails).

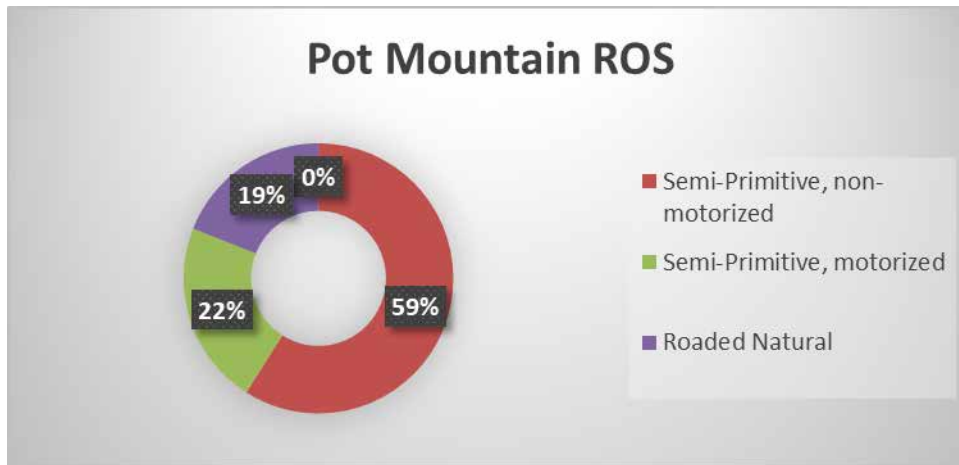


Figure 77. Pot Mountain Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Elevations in the Pot Mountain Roadless area range from 1,830 feet at the Mouth of Quartz Creek along the North Fork Clearwater to a high point of 7,139 feet at the top of Pot Mountain which provide a range of vegetation and interest. Pot Mountain Ridge, a rocky ridge, above timber line is a hiking destination that allows for an expansive, nearly 360-degree view. There are no trail bridges that detract from unconfined recreation.

No river-based boating opportunities were identified in our 2017 Wild and Scenic Rivers evaluation. The area includes four small lakes less than 10 acres each which may be fished for cutthroat trout. The IDFG periodically stocks Pot Lake with cutthroat trout, most recently in 2015. Mountain goats may be seen on the Pot Mountain ridge (Idaho Department of Fish and Game 2019).

Users are well screened from each other except at campsites and along main trails. Sights and especially motorized sounds within one mile of the boundaries are evident to a moderate degree. The sight of logging and road building activity especially to the north and west as viewed from the higher ridges and trails tends to affect the solitude, although most views are middle and background landscapes (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a size of 51,100 acres this roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, Geologic, or other features or scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Most of the roadless area (71 percent) consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. Vegetation in the area includes 808 acres of whitebark pine modeled habitat (Landgruth, 2017) a high elevation species favored by hikers for its scenic value (This species is currently in decline in its range due to a white pine blister-rust, a fungal disease.)

Chateau Falls Research Natural Area consists of the lower reaches of Chateau Creek, which joins Cave Creek just before its confluence with the North Fork Clearwater River. Both streams include several scenic waterfalls which flow over pink granite bedrock. The waterfalls and the related aquatic ecosystem were the reason the area was. Grasslands, shrublands, and early successional forests in a steep mountainous area with waterfalls on Chateau Creek (Northern Region research natural area spreadsheet).

The waterfalls in Chateau and Cave Creek were also identified as a scenic outstandingly remarkable value in the wild and scenic rivers evaluation.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts no known sacred sites in the roadless area. Four historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

The water quality in the Pot Mountain Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 2.4 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). Cold Springs Creek does not support one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Cold Springs Creek does not support either *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses, but does support *secondary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the NPCLW were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Pot Mountain Roadless Area contains portions of four HUC 12 subwatersheds. All four subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 100 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). There are no subwatersheds with a Functioning at Risk WCC 2 rating or WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability and Boundaries

The area is currently managed under the backcountry restoration theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. There are currently no grazing allotments or mining claims within the Pot Mountain Roadless Area.

Pot Mountain roadless area borders both front country (49 percent) and other roadless areas (51 percent) with the #250 road and #247 roads along the North Fork Clearwater River form a majority of the boundary. The roadless area boundary excludes the Pot Mountain and Noe Creek Trailheads along road #250. The northeastern side is formed by road #711 road from the mouth of Quartz Creek to the mouth of Cold Springs Creek (a portion of this boundary is west of road #711 to exclude past timber harvest.) A major landslide has closed this road to through traffic but it is accessible from the south. The ratio of the boundary to area is 5:1, one the lowest of all roadless areas. This reflects a very regular, easily defined boundary, without intrusions or cherry-stemmed roads.

The relatively large size of the area buffers many external distractions. However, the shape of the area, such as the high mountainous ridges dropping off rapidly on three sides to the Clearwater River, provides the visitor with numerous views of logging and other motorized activities on adjacent landscapes (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

There are no plowed roads no groomed snowmobile routes that provide winter access to the roadless area so there is not a history of snowmobiling. Motorized trail bike use is established and has traditionally provided a moderate opportunity (21-40 miles).

Mountain biking occurs on the Pot Mountain trail #144 and other nearby trails.

Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area

General description

The 90,000-acre Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area is generally the lands between the Lochsa and Selway Rivers from their confluence eastward to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary. The area's northern boundary is the Lochsa River, and the southern boundary is located a quarter mile above the Selway River, Figure 78. This river corridor, established under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, contains the Selway River road, several parcels of private property, Forest Service facilities, and numerous recreational developments. Although both the Lochsa and Selway are Wild and Scenic classified rivers, only the Lochsa corridor is included in the roadless area because there is very little development there.

Coolwater Road #317, an unsurfaced, primitive road built in the 1930s, traverses the ridgeline that forms the Lochsa and Selway River divides, and dead ends at Roundtop Mountain - 16 miles from the Selway River. This road furnishes access from the west. Fog Mountain Road #319 enters the area from the south and dead ends at Big Fog Saddle, 13 miles from the Selway River. Both are routes to Selway Bitterroot Wilderness trailheads. U.S. Highway 12 parallels the northern boundary of the area along the Lochsa River. A pack bridge at Split Creek furnishes access from the North.

Slopes are steep throughout and the country is rugged. Such topographical features as Knife Edge Ridge are appropriately named. The river canyons range from 1,500 to 1,900 feet in elevation, and the highest point in the area, Coolwater Lookout, is 6,926 feet.

Vegetation in the area is largely a result of past wildfires. Although trees have reestablished themselves on some sites, much of the area consists of extensive brushfields with islands of unburned trees and snags. Mixed conifer species occupy the lower elevations, and brush and meadows the upper elevations.

Uses of the roadless area include hunting, fishing, hiking, sightseeing, horseback riding, berry picking, outfitter and guide services, and trapping. One outfitter operates in the roadless area.

The parts of the roadless area near Andy's Lake, Coolwater Lake, and Fire Lake have been glaciated, and contain landforms and cirque basins commonly found in the adjoining wilderness.

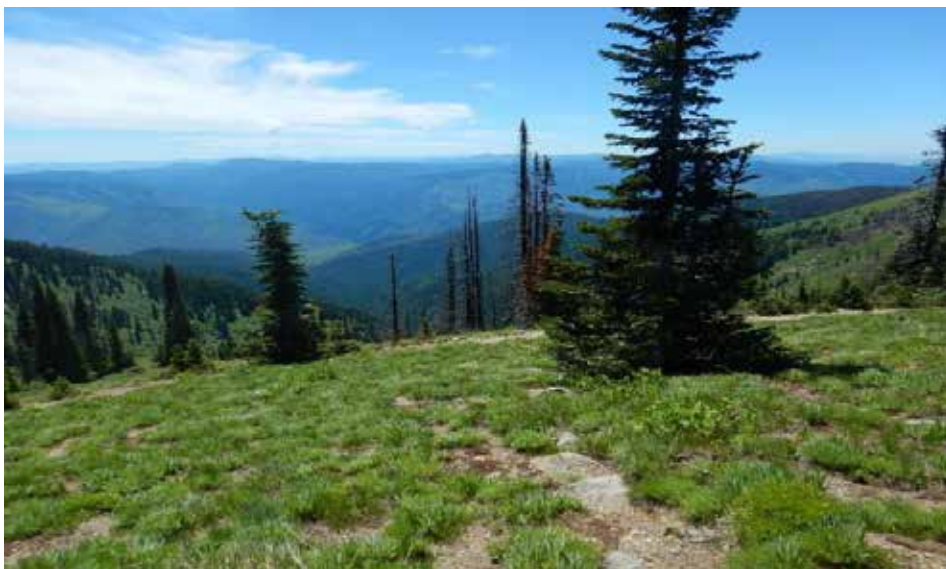


Figure 78. View from Coolwater Ridge across the Selway River

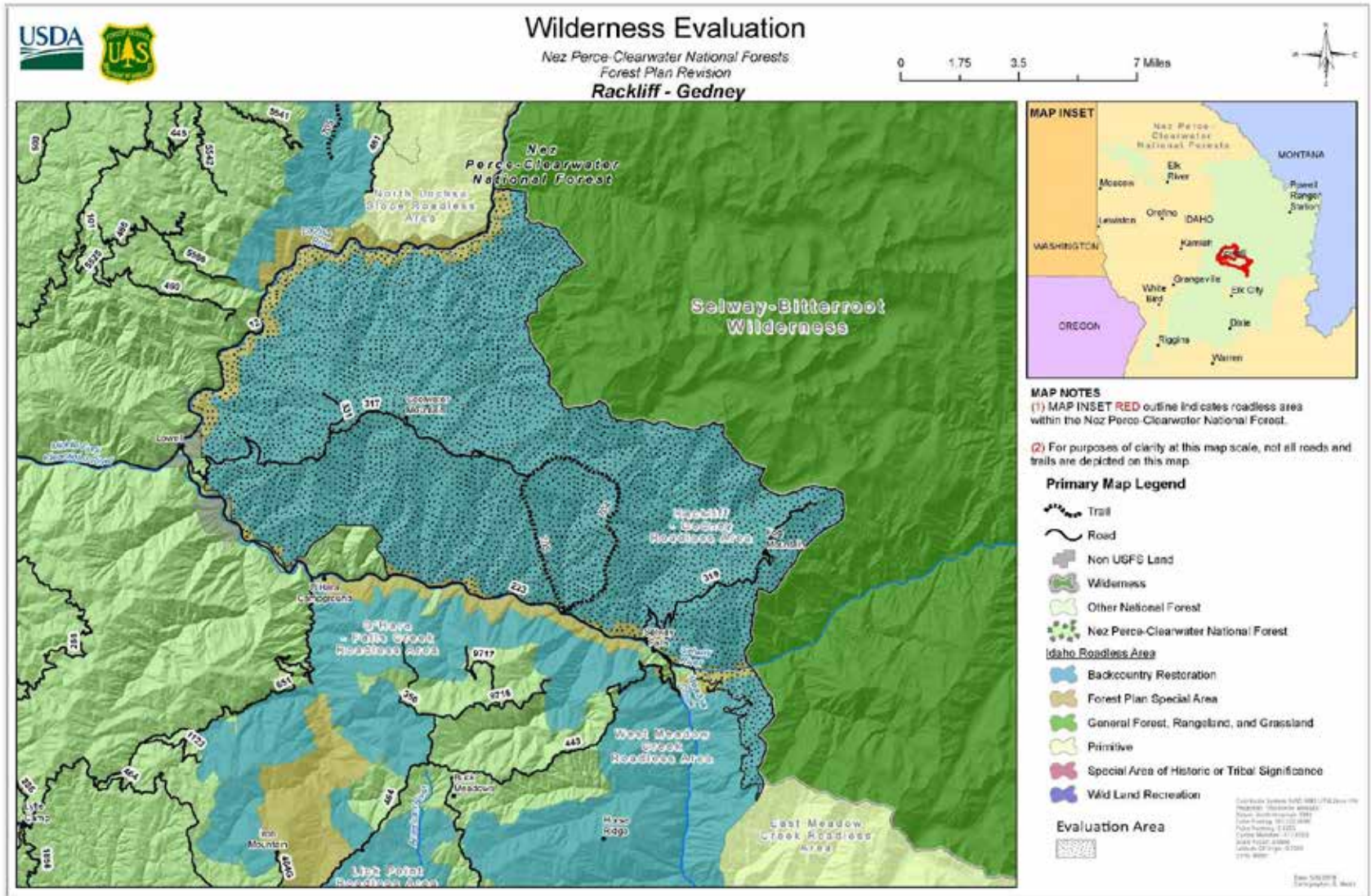


Figure 79. Wilderness Evaluation Rackliff - Gedney

Apparent naturalness

Impacts on apparent naturalness are caused mainly by facilities and activities along the roads. The main access route is Coolwater Road #317, which enters the area from the West and bisects the roadless area for 16 miles, Figure 80. It is not surfaced and becomes difficult to traverse in years of heavy rain and snow during hunting seasons. It is usually impossible to drive to the end of this road before July 4 because of snow. The Fog Mountain Road in the southeastern portion of the area is another low standard road that provides wilderness access. The trailhead at Big Fog Saddle is a 4-5 unit dispersed site with constructed hitching rails. Three trails lead from this trailhead into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.



Figure 80. The Coolwater road crosses the roadless area on the Selway River side of the Selway/Lochsa Divide. The Coolwater Lookout is at the top of the hill in the background

The area includes one Forest Service administrative building, Coolwater Lookout, Figure 81 and Figure 82. In addition to the Coolwater road, there are two trail bridges that provide access to the roadless area but are not within its boundaries. A short spur road leads from Coolwater Road to Idaho Point. A snow-measuring installation owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is located along this road. A television receiving installation with antennas and a small block house is located near the Idaho Point Junction. There is a short spur road at Remount that leads to an outfitter camp, which is occupied during the summer and fall. Coolwater Lookout is located on the highest pinnacle in the area and is visible from most of the higher elevations. Trenches dug by bulldozers in the early 1960s to control erosion below the lookout are still visible though they have mostly revegetated.



Figure 81. Coolwater Lookout is visible at a distance

Along the Selway River road which borders the area to the south includes a trailhead and toilet at Gedney Creek within the roadless area. The roadless area boundaries were defined in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule. Recent timber cutting in the area is related to fuels reduction, fire suppression or post-fire hazard tree removal. A planned community protection project adjacent to the community of Lowell, near the mouth of the Selway includes 93 acres of timber cutting in the roadless area. A total of 4.5 miles of fire lines were constructed in the 2015 fires season and 197 acres of roadside hazard trees were removed.

The vegetation in 59 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). (This roadless area has been affected by recent wildfires. It is unknown how much the NRV has been affected.) The Nez Perce-Clearwater weeds inventory shows 1,884 acres of known invasive weed locations, the highest of any roadless area on the national forest. Most of this is spotted knapweed (2,800 acres) or perennial pea (829 acres), both of which are found along roads and trails along with other miscellaneous weeds. Yellow star thistle has been found on 95 acres. Scotch broom is located at an old homesite. Yellow and Dalmatian toadflax and meadow hawkweed are found in small sites. Eradication is the management goal for the star thistle, broom, toadflaxes and hawkweed to reduce their spread. In addition, some Japanese knotweed is found along Highway 12 and scotch thistle at a trailhead.



Figure 82. Coolwater Lookout

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Opportunities for solitude vary throughout the area. Traffic noise from U.S. Highway 12 is apparent in many parts of the Lochsa face, and the highway is visible from much of it. The view from the Coolwater ridgetop gives one an impression of vastness, due to its proximity to extensive wilderness. Although the Coolwater Road receives light use much of the year, there is more use during the hunting season. The vastness of the area allows for mostly non-motorized recreation settings near the adjoining Selway Bitterroot Wilderness and in the interior of the roadless area as shown in Figure 83. Areas near Highway 12, and Selway Road are influenced by sights and sounds of traffic in 10 percent of the area, while areas near the Coolwater Road and other lower standard roads provide semi-primitive motorized settings.

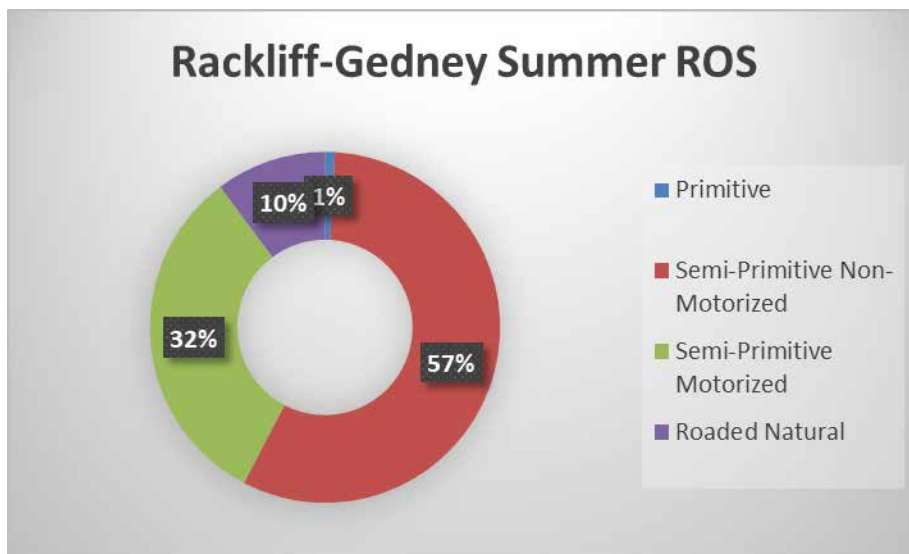


Figure 83. Rackliff-Gedney Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

The Boyd-Glover Roundtop trail (#704) is a National Recreation trail open to motorcycle use. Mountain biking is an emerging use in this roadless area. The cherry-stemmed roads provide access to the high country and loops with trails area possible.

The mid-slope areas, especially those in the larger drainages, offer the highest opportunities for solitude. Topographic and vegetative screening is highest here, and few off-site intrusions are visible, especially in the stream bottoms, away from the ridgetop trails.

Overall, primitive recreation opportunities are available away from the road corridors with considerably more trails located on the south side of Coolwater ridge. Topographic and vegetative cover is significant over much of the area, and trails tend to concentrate visitors on ridgetops. North of the Coolwater road (#317) trails are limited and cross-country travel is challenging. The area is not without challenge and risk, there are cliffs and very steep slopes. Cross-country travel is often difficult; and it is sometimes a challenge to follow the trails. The area adjoins the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness on the east, offering an additional million acres of solitude and primitive recreation opportunity.

There are three lakes in the roadless area, the largest is Coolwater Lake, below Coolwater Ridge most recently stocked with cutthroat trout in 1971. Fire Lake, at 2.7 acres, is located below Coldwater Ridge and was most recently stocked with cutthroat trout in 2016 according to Idaho Department of Fish and Game stocking records. There are not boatable waters noted in the roadless area.

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 90,000 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness and is adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 86 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. About 100 acres of the Lochsa Research Natural Area are located in this roadless area. The vegetation in the area 757 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There is one potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred site in the roadless area. Five historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area.

There are 5,500 acres of the Selway Wild and Scenic River corridor in the Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area. Scenery is one of the “outstandingly remarkable” values for which the river was designated. In addition, the 2017 Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic Rivers Evaluation found Gedney and West Fork Gedney Creek to have outstandingly remarkable values for scenery. Scenic landmarks include Coolwater Ridge and Big Fog Saddle.

The water quality in the Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 29.9 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 5) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are 303(d) designated and not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures higher than State of Idaho standards. An EPA-approved Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan is needed to address water quality concerns. Portions of the Lochsa

River, Apgar, Cat, Chance, Glade, Handy, Hellgate, and Lottie Creeks, and an unnamed stream do support the beneficial use *cold water aquatic life* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Rackliff-Gedney Roadless Area contains portions of twelve HUC 12 subwatersheds. All twelve subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 100 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). There are no subwatersheds with a Functioning at Risk WCC 2 rating or WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The roadless area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This allows for limited permissions and exceptions for road construction and reconstruction, timber cutting, sale and removal and minerals activities. The area is shown in the Idaho Roadless Rule as split between the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests. This distinction is no longer relevant since the two forests are now administratively combined.

The area is bordered by designated wilderness along 39 percent of its border. Approximately 36 percent of the roadless area adjoins other roadless areas and 25 percent borders front country. Although it does not directly border private land, they are nearby especially along the lower Selway River and the Lochsa River. Proximity to private land and front country requires a different management approach to firefighting to protect resource values and homes outside wilderness.

For the most part, the boundaries follow well-defined topographical features. Some surveying and marking might be necessary to establish a wilderness boundary along the private property on the west and south sides. Boundaries would probably have to be adjusted near the roads in this area to allow for some activities using motorized equipment.

There are no unpatented mining claims in the roadless area. The roadless area does not overlap any active or vacant livestock grazing allotments.

There is no groomed snowmobile trail system that provides winter access to the area and encourages snowmobiling. There is no easy high elevation access to this area, however snowmobiling occurs in the area when conditions permit and in conjunction with trapping. There is a history of wheeled motorized travel in the area, especially with the Coolwater and Fog Mountain roads providing important access to wilderness trailheads. The area has traditionally provided a moderate level (21-40 miles) of motorized travel opportunity for wheeled vehicles primarily associated with the Big Fog and Coolwater roads.

Mountain biking is an emerging activity using the Coolwater Road and trails #702, #703, #704 and #734 to connect to the Selway River Road (Trail #704 is the East Boyd Glover Roundtop National Recreation trail.)

Rapid River Roadless Area

General description

The 78,700-acre Rapid River Roadless Area encompasses the corridor of Rapid River, a Wild and Scenic River, and is contiguous to the Hells Canyon Wilderness along the area's western boundary. Rapid River

is a tributary to the Little Salmon River. The Rapid River, Black Lake, Bear Creek, Whitebird Ridge, and Smokey-Boulder Roads, and several trails provide access to the edge of the area, and a network of trails provides good access within the area. Approximately 57,700 acres are managed by the Payette National Forest and 21,000 acres by the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest.

The area is quite rugged with craggy peaks, glacial cirques, hanging valleys, steep forested slopes, and deep river canyons, Figure 84. Elevations range from 2,200 to 8,747 feet.

The area is generally forested with Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, grand fir, and western larch at lower elevations, and Engelmann spruce, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir at higher elevations. Pacific yew is also present. Several low brush and grass species such as pinegrass, wheatgrass, fescue, ceanothus, snowberry, ninebark, serviceberry, and willow grow on the steep and dry west and south exposures. Elk sedge, huckleberry, meadow rue, mountain maple, pinegrass, violet, alder, and beargrass occur in cooler and moister areas.



Figure 84. Rugged landscape of lower Rapid River

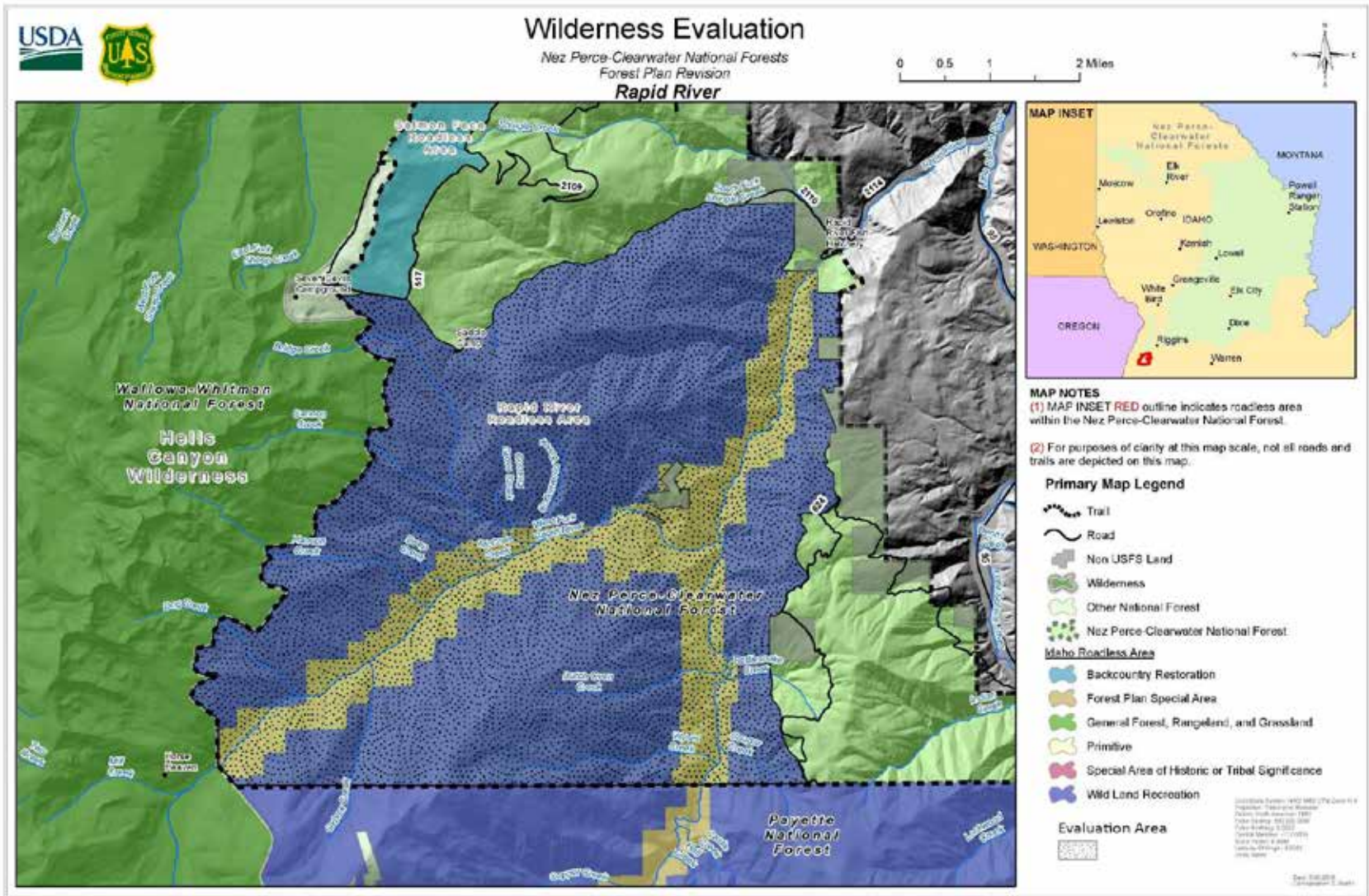


Figure 85. Wilderness Evaluation Rapid River

Apparent naturalness

The natural integrity and appearance for this area is high. There are an estimated 5.8 miles of non-system road and 0.1 mile of forest road within the boundary, mostly in the Payette National Forest portion. Mining, grazing, and prescribed fire activities have had little impact (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008). All of the roadless area is located within a grazing allotment. Cattle and the associated range structures would be obvious to visitors to the roadless area.

The Rapid River roadless area on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest does not include any fire lookouts or recreation rental cabins. The Payette portion includes the Lick Creek and Pollock Mountain lookouts.

The main Trail #113 includes two major trail bridges crossing Main Rapid River, one crossing the West Fork and two other trail bridges at Bridge Creek and Wyant Camp. The larger structures provide access across the creek and are obvious man-made structures, Figure 86.

There has been no recent timber cutting or the construction of large fire lines in the roadless areas since the Idaho Roadless Rule established the boundaries in 2008. The Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest weed inventory shows 229 acres of known invasive weed locations including 137 acres of curvseed butterwort near the main Rapid River trailhead. Yellowstar thistle (0.5 acres) has been identified. Since the population is currently small, attempts are being made to eradicate it before it spreads. A miscellaneous variety of weeds may be found, primarily along trails. The area includes scattered infestations of rush skeletonweed which continue to expand.



Figure 86. Hiker pauses on Rapid River Trail Bridge #2

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Due to its substantial size, terrain, and moderate accessibility, the area has a high opportunity for solitude and a moderate opportunity for primitive recreation. The topography and climate provide challenging backpacking and hiking (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008). The deepness of the river canyon and the sounds of fast moving water muffle sounds from the surrounding landscape, Figure 88.

Most of the area provides for primarily primitive (23 percent) and semi-primitive non-motorized (69 percent) recreation opportunities as shown in Figure 87. A small amount at the eastern edge is influenced by the access road and adjacent fish hatchery.

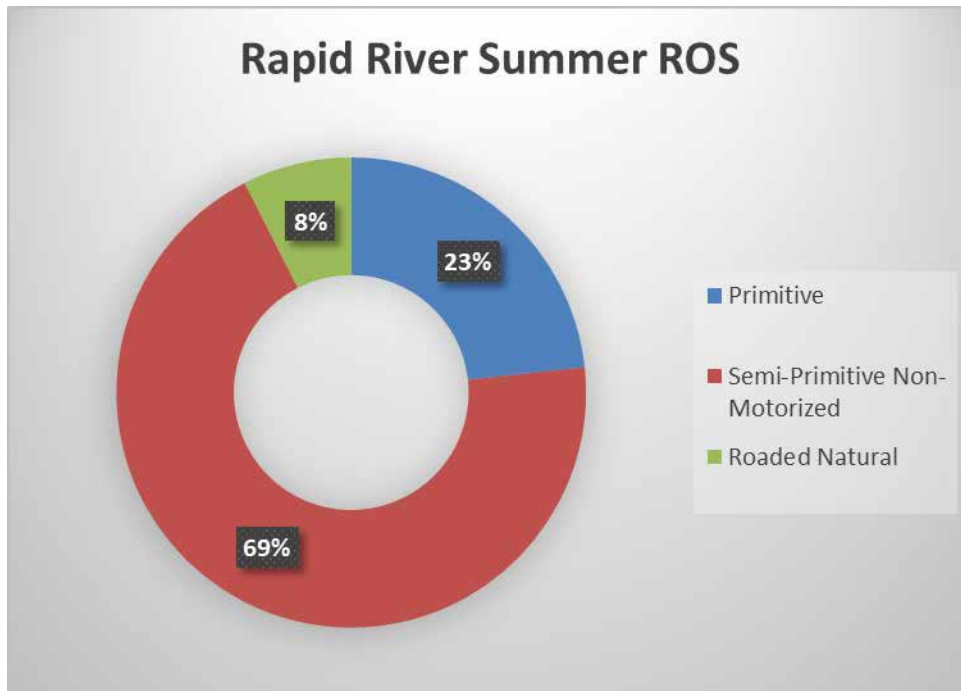


Figure 87. Rapid River Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

The trailhead for Trail #113 is readily accessible from Highway #95 for most of the year via an approximately 2.5 miles drive on a paved road. The Rapid River portion of the area provides an easy day hike or trail run in the winter and spring when other areas are difficult to access, Figure 89.

The area does not contain any lakes, but Rapid River provides trail access to Rapid River for fishing and a through trail to the Hells Canyon Wilderness. Rapid River is generally not boated due to steepness and access by trail.

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 78,700 acres (21,000 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest) the roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is also adjacent to the Hell Canyon Wilderness.

Ecological, ecological, or other features or scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 75 percent of the Rapid River Roadless Area (Nez Perce-Clearwater portion) consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. Vegetation in the area does not include any whitebark pine modeled habitat. Most of the area, approximately 79 percent is within the range of natural variation.



Figure 88. Rapid River canyon in winter

Rapid River, a designated Wild and Scenic River, lies within the roadless area and provides salmonid spawning and rearing habitat. There are 13.1 miles of Rapid River and 8,400 acres of land in the Wild and Scenic River System within the area. One Research Natural Area (Pony Creek) lies within the Payette National Forest portion of the area (1,900 acres).

The area does not have potential National Register (of Historic Places) Districts or known sacred sites. Three different historic themes are represented in the roadless area.

The Rapid River Roadless Area includes 4,300 acres of the designated Rapid River Wild and Scenic River, which includes outstandingly remarkable values for scenery, fisheries, and water quality. The dramatic rocky canyon with fast moving, cascading water provide scenic appeal. The views are generally close up with an occasional view of the craggy peaks on the western edge of the roadless area.

The water quality in the Rapid River Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Rapid River Roadless Area contains portions of four HUC 12 subwatersheds. West Fork Rapid River subwatershed is categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompasses 50 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Lower Rapid River and Sheep Creek-Little Salmon River subwatersheds (30 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; low amounts of large wood debris in streams and riparian areas; over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; and roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function. The remaining watershed (20 percent of roadless area) is not evaluated (Lucas 2017).



Figure 89. Hiking along Rapid River in winter

Manageability

The total roadless area is 78,700 acres with 21,000 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and the larger portion of 57,700 acres on the Payette National Forest. The current Payette National Forest Plan, released in 2003, does not recommend the Payette portion of the Rapid River Roadless area for wilderness. The 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule established a management theme of *wildland recreation* for this roadless area, the most restrictive theme in the Rule, which allows for very limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal; road construction and reconstruction and minerals activities.

The entire roadless area overlaps with livestock grazing allotments. There are currently no mining claims in the Rapid River Roadless Area.

The roadless area borders the Hells Canyon wilderness (28 percent of the border) to the west, and the Payette portion of the roadless area (23 percent) to the south. The remainder (49 percent) of the roadless area borders front country lands. A fish hatchery and a small community developed from a subdivided ranch are located near the roadless area boundary, just downstream to the east.

Conflicts with recurrent motorized use is minimal on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest with no groomed snowmobile access in the wintertime and very low (less than 5 miles) two-wheeled motorized use. Mountain biking is currently not allowed on the main Rapid River trail.

The area has some irregular and complex boundaries, largely along its southern perimeter, on the Payette National Forest. The western boundary is contiguous with the eastern boundary of the Hells Canyon Wilderness. Limited access and the relative ease of control at access points should also contribute to manageability of the area. Private land within the roadless area (on the Payette National Forest portion) could also complicate management (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Rawhide Roadless Area

General description

The 6,000-acre Rawhide Roadless Area is situated in the Rawhide and Long Creek drainages of the Upper North Fork Clearwater River within Clearwater and Shoshone Counties, Figure 90 and Figure 92. The area is bounded by and accessed from the Pierce-Superior Road #250. It is approximately 22 miles from Superior, Montana, and 100 miles from Orofino, Idaho, via the Pierce-Superior road.



Figure 90. View from FR250 to Long Creek Ridge in the background. All of Rawhide Roadless Area lies in between the viewer and the ridge

The west boundary is the original Rawhide Road (#5428) which provided the early access over Hoodoo Pass from Montana into Idaho. This road was eventually replaced by the graveled Pierce-Superior Road in the early 1950's. The original road is usable as a trail. There are no other trails in the interior.

Rawhide is a small, compact, one and one-half mile wide roadless area comprised of steep glacial lands near the state line to narrow flat creek bottoms in the Rawhide and Long Creek drainages. Elevations range from 6,000 feet at Hoodoo Pass to 4,200 feet at the mouth of Rawhide Creek. The area is underlain by fairly stable Belt rocks of the Wallace formation. The major lithologies are limestones, quartzites, dolomites, and argillites.

Although much land was burned in the early 1900's, the land suitable for trees has regenerated. Vegetation varies from the higher elevation, mountain meadows and low shrubs typical of an alpine-barren ecosystem to lodgepole pine, subalpine fir and Douglas-fir representing the lower elevation western spruce-fir ecosystem.

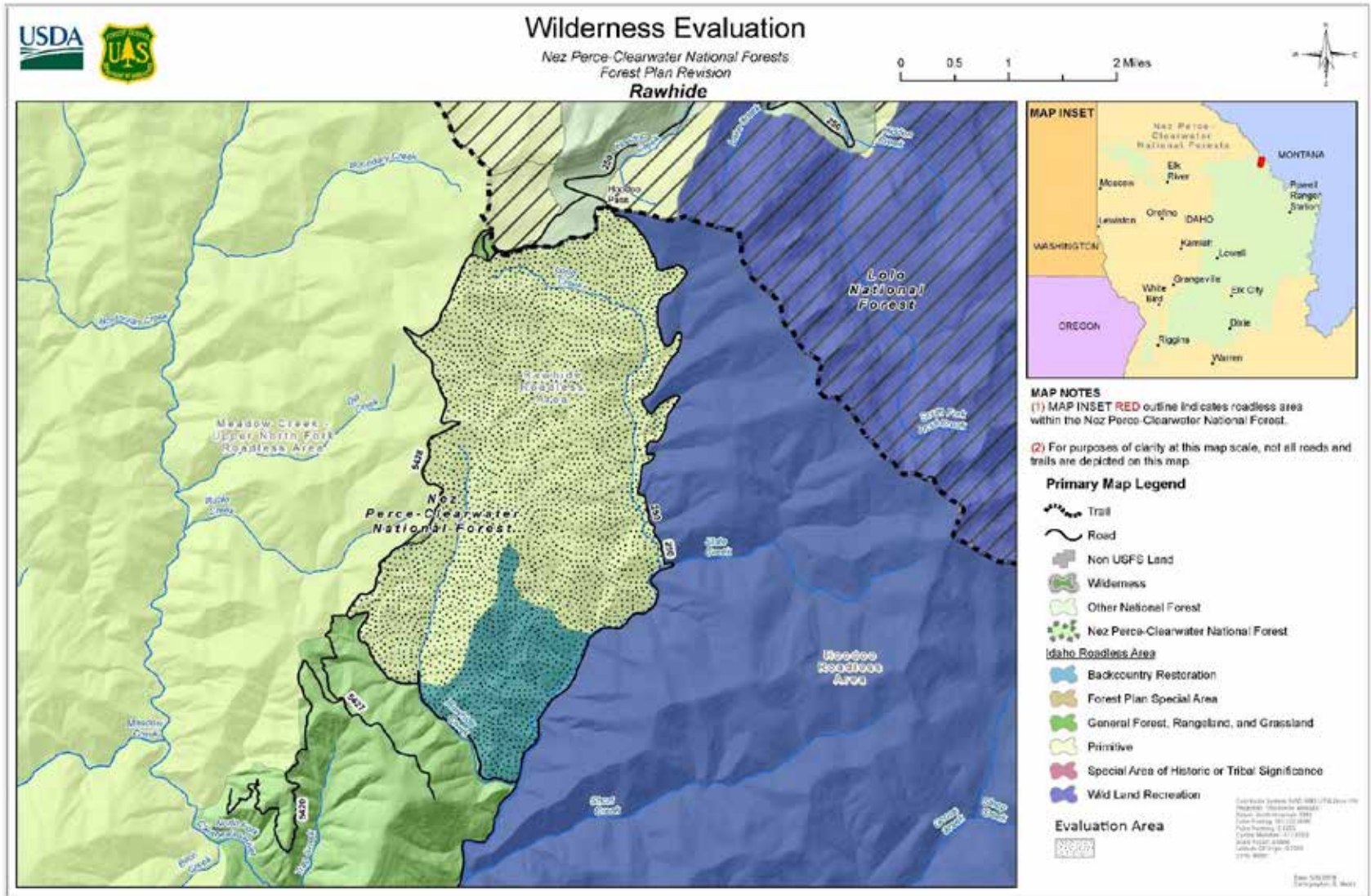


Figure 91. Wilderness Evaluation Rawhide

Apparent naturalness

A one-half mile section of logging road extends into the area from the original Rawhide Road. The remainder has no visible evidence of activity or disturbance. There are no Forest Service administrative structures, recreation rentals, or trail bridges.



Figure 92. View from FR250 to the Idaho-Montana state line

The vegetation in most of the area (87 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater inventory shows 63 acres of known invasive weeds, primarily spotted knapweed, located along roads and trails at the borders of the roadless area.

The Idaho Roadless Rule mostly removed logged areas when roadless area boundaries were established. The area has not had timber cutting since the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The east side of the Rawhide Roadless Area is adjacent to the more developed road to Hoodoo Pass. About half of the area (46 percent) provides a roaded natural setting. The remainder (54 percent) provides a semi-primitive non-motorized setting based on distance from roads and motorized trails as shown in Figure 93. However, the sights and sounds of the road are pervasive in most of the roadless area because there are no intervening ridges or dense vegetation.

The potential for solitude in the area is minimal due to the adjacency with a semi-paved road (#250) which parallels Long Creek. This is the main route into the North Fork from Interstate 90 from Superior, Montana. Half of the roadless area is within ½ mile of a road, primarily Road #250. The roadless area is between Long Creek Ridge (the old #5428 road) and Road #250. The sights and sounds of Road #250 are evident throughout much of the roadless area. The open stand conditions from past fires further limits solitude.

External influences of sight and sound negate any opportunities for solitude. The Pierce-Superior Road (#250) can be viewed from most places, and the sounds of traffic can be heard throughout the area. Cross-country foot travel and hunting are the two major and possibly only real dispersed recreation available. Current major use is by big-game hunters in the fall.

There are no lakes, boatable waters or distinctive fishing opportunities in the Rawhide Roadless Area.

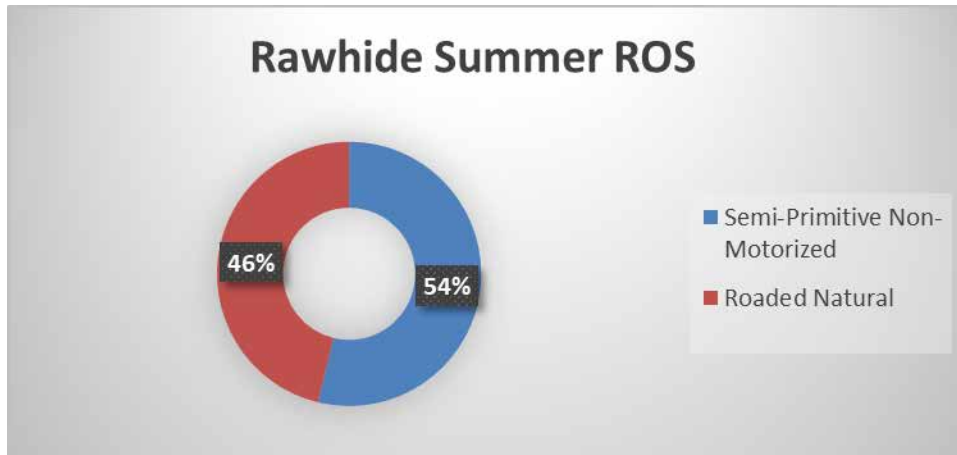


Figure 93. Rawhide Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 6,000 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is one of the smallest roadless areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 41 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. Vegetation in the area includes a small amount of 106 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts and no known sacred sites in the roadless area. No historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

No scenic or special geologic features are present in this area.

The water quality in the Rawhide Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Rawhide Roadless Area contains portions of three HUC 12 subwatersheds. All three subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 100 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

There are no subwatersheds with a Functioning at Risk WCC 2 rating or WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The roadless area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permission and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. There are no mining claims and no grazing allotments that overlap this roadless area.

The Rawhide Roadless area borders other roadless areas along 75 percent of its boundary and front country lands along 25 percent of its boundary. The Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork area is directly to the west, with an old closed road in between. However, to the east, the high-speed road to Hoodoo Pass separates this area from the much larger Hoodoo Roadless Area.

This area has little motorized use. It is not adjacent to groomed snowmobile routes to provide easy access. Wheeled motorized use is limited by lack of trails in this small area. Traditionally motorized trail opportunities have been very low (0-5 miles).

The small size and narrow shape effectively detract from most wilderness attributes. However, the Rawhide Road, which is now nothing much more than a trail, separates this area from the 40,700-acre Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Roadless Area, so in effect the two could actually be considered as one large roadless area. The east boundary which is the Pierce-Superior Road #250 is a logical boundary. Because of the deteriorating Rawhide Road along the west side, the Rawhide Roadless Area could be linked with the Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork area.

Salmon Face Roadless Area

General description

The 9,200 acre-Salmon Face Roadless Area is high on the east side of the divide between the Snake and Salmon Rivers. It joins the Hells Canyon Wilderness at the ridge top on the west side. Squaw Creek, Race Creek, and Papoose Creek, which flow into the Salmon River, originate within the area. Road #517 borders on the south side. Other access roads are Roads #487, #9901, #2052, and #205 on the east side.

The elevation ranges from 3,500 feet to 8,429 feet at Heaven's Gate Lookout. The area is made up of very steep side slopes and tributary draws with a few flat benches. This area contains mostly heavy timber with underbrush. Less brush grows on the south slopes than on the north slopes. The major tree species are Douglas-fir and grand fir.

The current major uses include grazing, hunting, and spelunking. The Papoose livestock grazing allotment is divided into four pastures which are rotated, and the area contains numerous developed springs, dams, corrals, and fences. Big game animals also use the area as summer range. The key grass species is bluebunch wheatgrass.

Two east-west trails cross the area and connect to Trail #101, the old Boise Trail. This trail, used since prehistoric times, follows the ridgetops which, for the most part coincides with the boundary of this roadless area. Two small lakes, which both support fish, are also present high on the ridge.

Scenery from within the area is spectacular to those who hike or ride horseback on the trails. On clear days, one can see four states from the summit, and view the Snake River and canyon.

The area contains one or more limestone caves that are unique to the region.

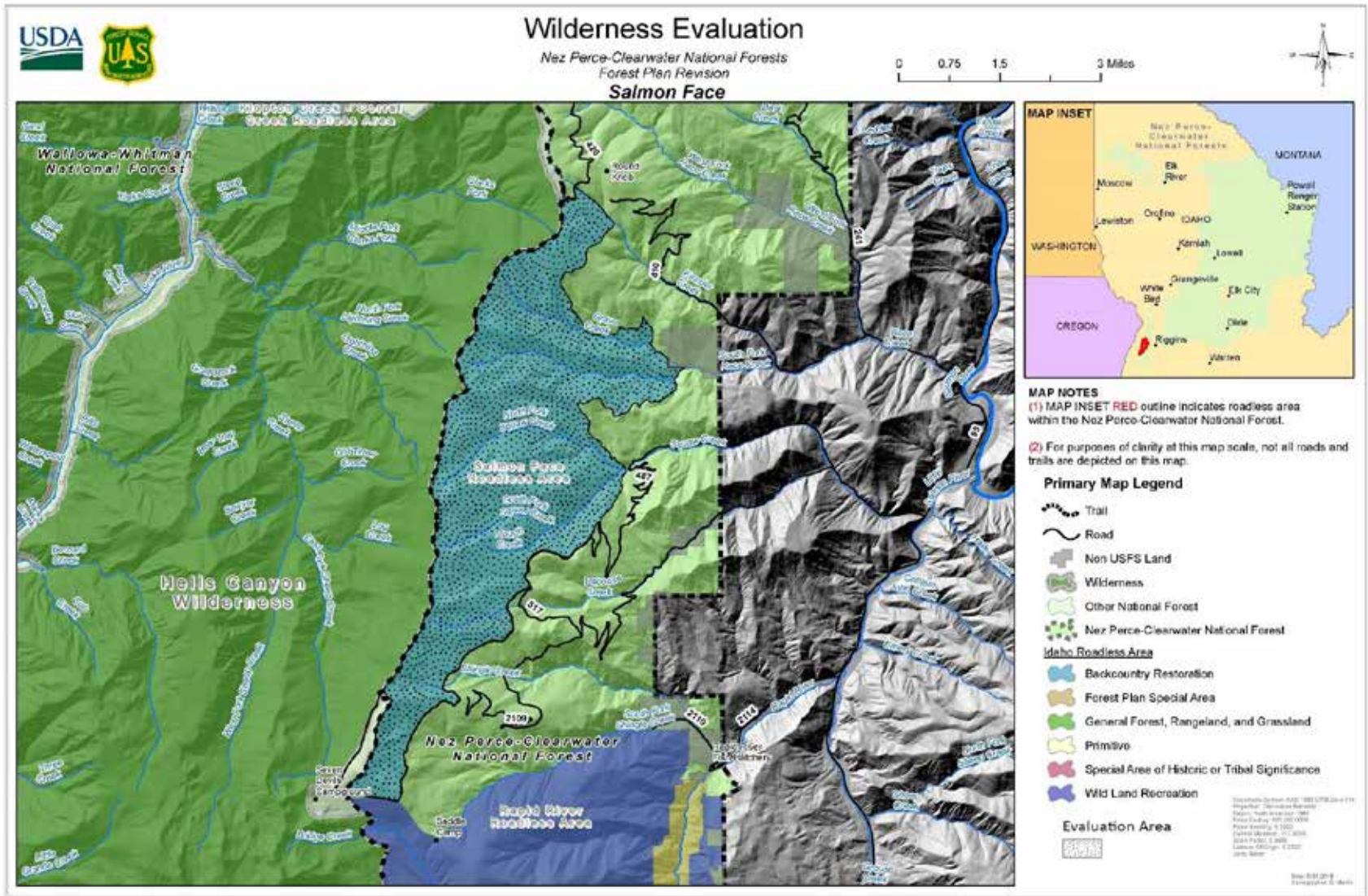


Figure 94. Wilderness Evaluation Salmon Face

Apparent naturalness

Livestock grazing, and facilities such as stock tanks and fences associated with livestock management are the greatest effects to naturalness in the roadless area. Much of the area contains on-site intrusions that result from grazing livestock and range-related, manmade structures (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

There are no roads, trail bridges, recreation rentals or forest administrative structures within the roadless area. There has been no recent timber harvest (since the Idaho Roadless Rule established boundaries for the roadless area in 2008).

The vegetation in 67 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). The Nez Perce-Clearwater weed inventory shows 87 acres of known invasive weed locations, all spotted knapweed, located along roads that border the roadless area.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Solitude opportunities are good when the area is considered together with the Hells Canyon Wilderness. A ridgeline which forms the divide between the Snake and Salmon Rivers separates them. Trail #101, separates Salmon Face and the Hells Canyon Wilderness, providing access to both. Topographic and vegetative screening is both moderate due to the steepness of the terrain. There are roads, and noises associated with roads, and cutting units are visible near the roadless area.

The trails are mainly used by hunters and livestock. Other recreational activity, such as berry picking and mushroom gathering, occurs in season. A limited amount of caving takes place in limestone caves found in the roadless area.

Crater Lake, a small (2.3 acre) high mountain lake (and a smaller unnamed lake) is located in the headwaters of Grave Creek and provides fishing opportunity. There are no known boating opportunities in the roadless area.

Figure 95 shows the relative distribution of recreation opportunity classes with much of the area (64 percent) in areas that provide a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting. This is along the border with the Hells Canyon Wilderness and the interior of the area. The roads along the eastern boundary influence the recreation settings and the remaining portion of the roadless area (36 percent) provides motorized settings.

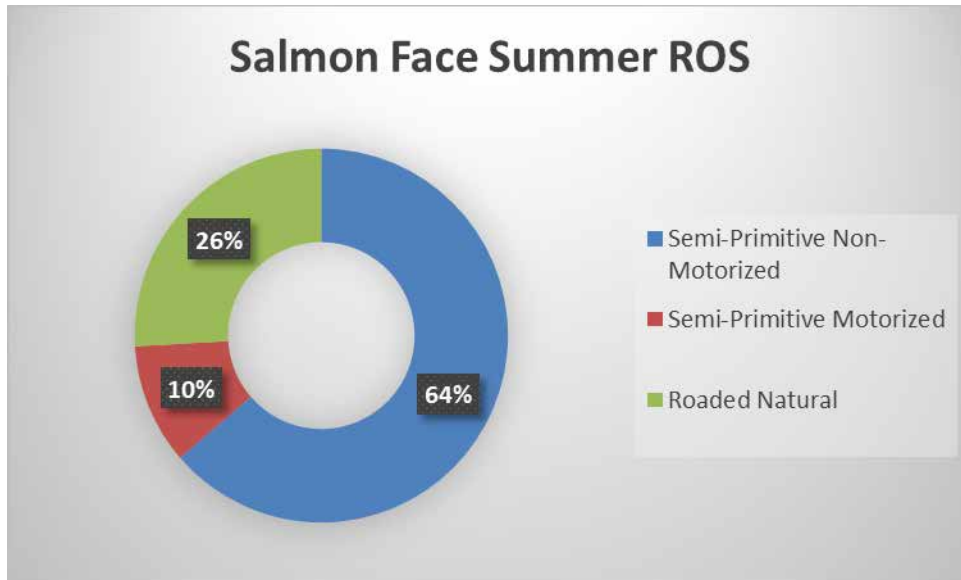


Figure 95. Salmon Face Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 9,200 acres the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 61 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. The vegetation in the area does not include any modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline. The vegetation in 67 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014). There are no research natural areas in this roadless area.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area.

There are no designated wild and scenic rivers in the roadless area. The view from the adjacent Heaven’s Gate Lookout and along Trail #101 are very scenic providing distant views.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic Rivers eligibility review noted a limestone cave with a stream, Papoose Creek, flowing from it as a unique and exemplary river dependent geologic feature.

The water quality in the Salmon Face Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Salmon Face Roadless Area contains portions of five HUC 12 subwatersheds. Two subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass approximately 1 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Race Creek, Lower Rapid River, and Squaw Creek subwatersheds (99 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; and roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under an Idaho Roadless Rule theme of *backcountry restoration* which allows limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and minerals activities. The boundary is well defined by roads on every side except the west, which borders the Hells Canyon Wilderness. This area could be added to the Hells Canyon Wilderness even though it was originally left out when Congress established the wilderness in 1975, choosing to establish the wilderness boundary along the ridgeline separating the Snake and Salmon Rivers.

The Salmon Face Roadless Area borders primarily front country (68 percent of its boundary) and wilderness (30 percent on its western boundary), with the remaining 2 percent bordering other roadless. Managing adjacent front country lands can be challenging especially with a convoluted boundary that follows the road system. The differences in fire management can also provide challenges and limit the ability to allow fires to play their natural role in recommended wilderness.

There are no unpatented mining claims in this roadless area. The entire roadless area overlaps with livestock grazing allotments. Although grazing is allowed in designated wilderness under the Wilderness Act, it can make management more challenging.

There are no groomed snowmobile routes that provide access to the area. There is some limited snowmobile activity between Bald Mountain and Heaven's Gate. There is a very low (less than 5 miles) history of wheeled motorized travel since there are few trails in this small roadless area.

Selway Bitterroot Roadless Area

General description

The area is a small, 600-acre roadless area adjacent to the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. The area is accessible from Lost Horse Creek Road #429 on the Bitterroot National Forest. The road ends just south of Bear Creek Pass with a six-unit campground and trailhead that is partially located in the roadless area. The roadless area is in Idaho on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and in the headwaters of Bear Creek, tributary to the Selway River. The area contains Lower Bear Lakes and several smaller unnamed lakes near the boundary with the wilderness. A previous decision had been made to defer action on this area until the Bitterroot National Forest makes a determination for management of their adjacent area.

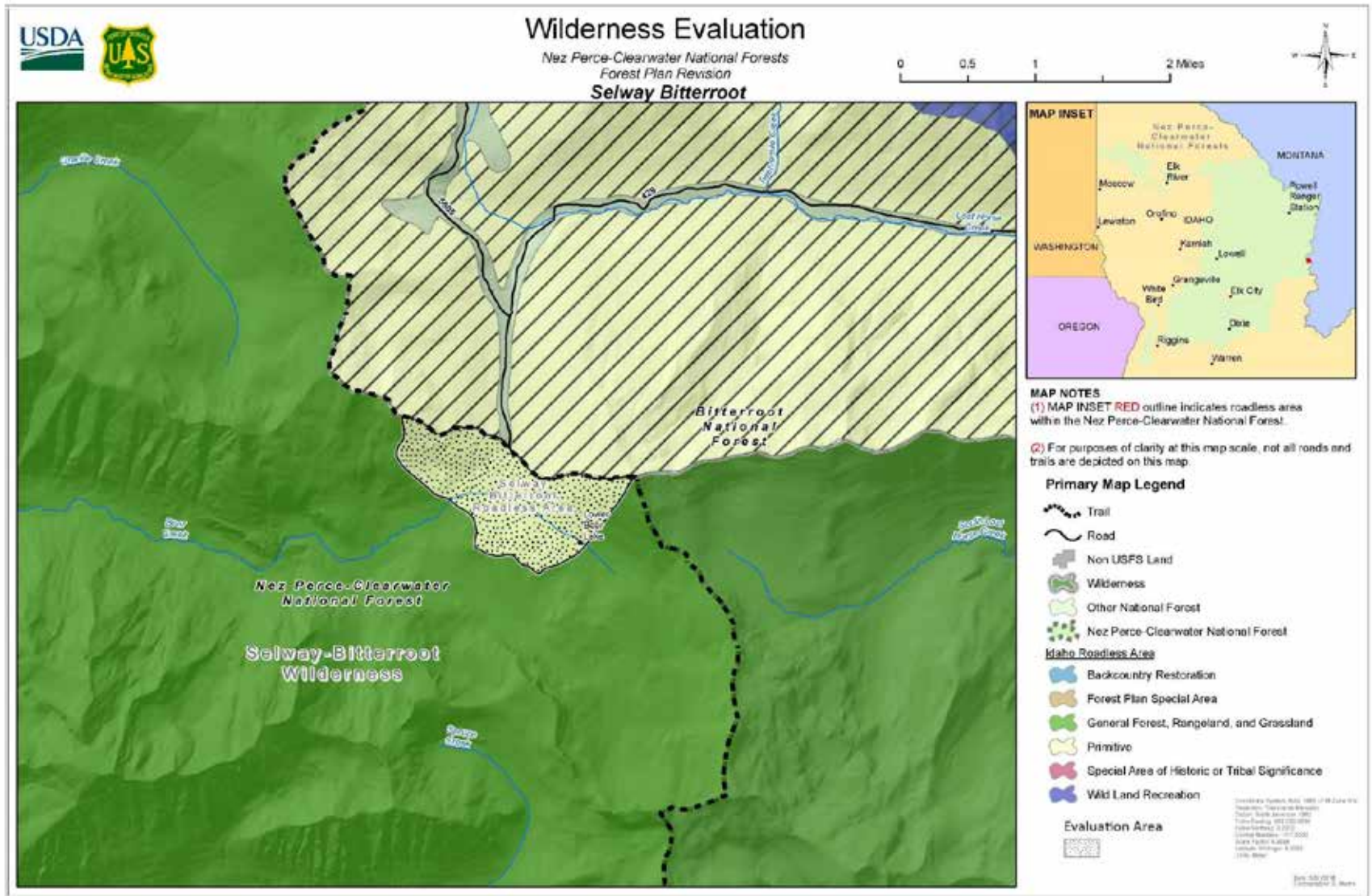


Figure 96. Wilderness Evaluation Selway Bitterroot

Apparent naturalness

Natural processes have received little impact and there is evidence of past wildfires in the northern portion of the area. There is an earthen dam at Upper Bear Lake. There are no Forest Service administrative structures or recreation rentals in the area. There is no evidence of timber harvest in the roadless area. The vegetation in 95 percent of the roadless area was calculated as within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

No invasive weeds are noted in the Nez Perce-Clearwater inventory. The trailhead spans the boundary between the Bitterroot and Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and includes approximately 500 feet of road in the roadless area. Except for the roads and the campground and trailhead near the boundaries, the area would appear natural to most people.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The adjacency of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness along with this area offer good possibility for isolation once you leave the Lost Horse Creek road and campground and trailhead. Two trails (#516 and #613) cross the area and continue into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness for foot and horseback travel. There are some reports of people accessing Bear Creek for kayaking into the wilderness from below Bear Creek Pass.

The area is evenly split between providing semi-primitive non-motorized and roaded natural recreation opportunity settings as shown in Figure 97, below. The adjacency of the Lost Horse Creek Road, a major access route on the Bitterroot National Forest influences the area.

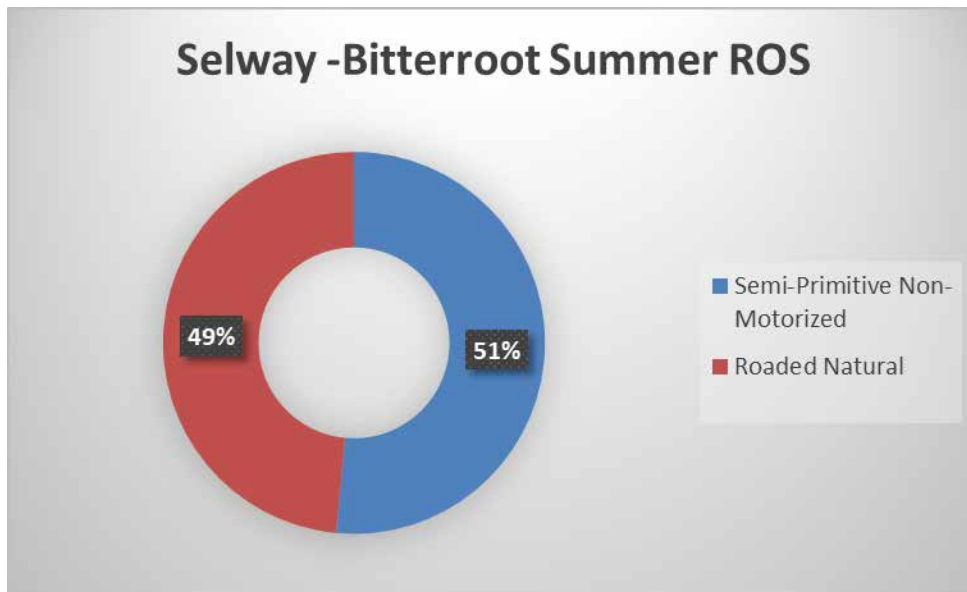


Figure 97. Selway Bitterroot Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 600 acres, the roadless area does not meet the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres. However, since it is adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness it can be considered.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 32 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no research natural areas in this roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 404 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is represented in the area.

There are no designated wild and scenic rivers in the roadless area. Lower Bear Lake is a scenic high elevation lake near the state divide. Bear Creek up to its headwaters was evaluated as eligible for scenery outstandingly remarkable value in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Wild and Scenic Rivers evaluations

The water quality in the Selway Bitterroot Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Selway Bitterroot Roadless Area contains one HUC 12 subwatershed. Upper Bear Creek subwatershed is categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompasses 100 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). There are no subwatersheds with a Functioning at Risk WCC 2 rating or WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The Selway Bitterroot Wilderness boundary is not easily pinpointed. The remainder of the area is bordered by a creek and roads. Although the roadless area is only 600 acres in size, 59 percent of its boundary is adjacent to wilderness and could be incorporated, so the size less than 5,000 acres is not a factor in this case. The remaining 41 percent of the boundary borders front country areas on the Bitterroot National Forest.

There are no unpatented mining claims in the roadless area. The roadless area does not overlap with any livestock grazing allotments.

There are no groomed snowmobile routes that provide access to the area. There is some history of wheeled motorized use on the roads and trails in the area.

Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Roadless Area

General description

The 21,000-acre Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Roadless Area includes the upper two-thirds of Silver Creek and several small tributaries of Newsome Creek. Roads #1853, #244, #284, #1858, and #1834 border this area on all of the north side and parts of the east and west sides. Road #466 enters the area from the north and runs 4.5 miles to Pilot Knob Lookout. Two short spurs extend from this road, one to an old mine.

The elevation ranges from approximately 4,000 feet at the lowest point in Newsome Creek to 7,000 feet at Pilot Rock. Topography is uniformly rolling with uniform forest cover. The Pilot Knob/Pilot Rock Ridge is a highly visible landmark in the center of the area with rock outcrops, meadows, and timber providing a visually pleasing mosaic. Drainages form a dendritic pattern.

Vegetation types are diverse. Old-growth grand fir stands are prevalent next to Newsome Creek. Subalpine fir habitat types, currently dominated by lodgepole pine, are found near Nellie Mountain and Reed Mountain. Moist grand fir and subalpine fir types cover the majority of the area. Small, wet openings dominated by Sitka spruce and alder are scattered throughout the Silver Creek drainage.



Figure 98. Rock formations

A key visual attraction in this area is Pilot Rock, a massive, bare rock formation almost in the center of the area, Figure 98. There is easy walking access from the lookout to the top of this formation. Pilot Rock and the surrounding area is very important culturally for the Nez Perce Tribe. Other attractions include several large, natural meadows below China Point and at Mountain House site. There are also a few remnants of early day gold mining along Newsome Creek. There are active mining claims along Newsome Creek, but these are not included in the roadless area boundary.

Current uses of the area include livestock grazing, mining, big-game hunting, sightseeing, special use electronics sites, and fishing.

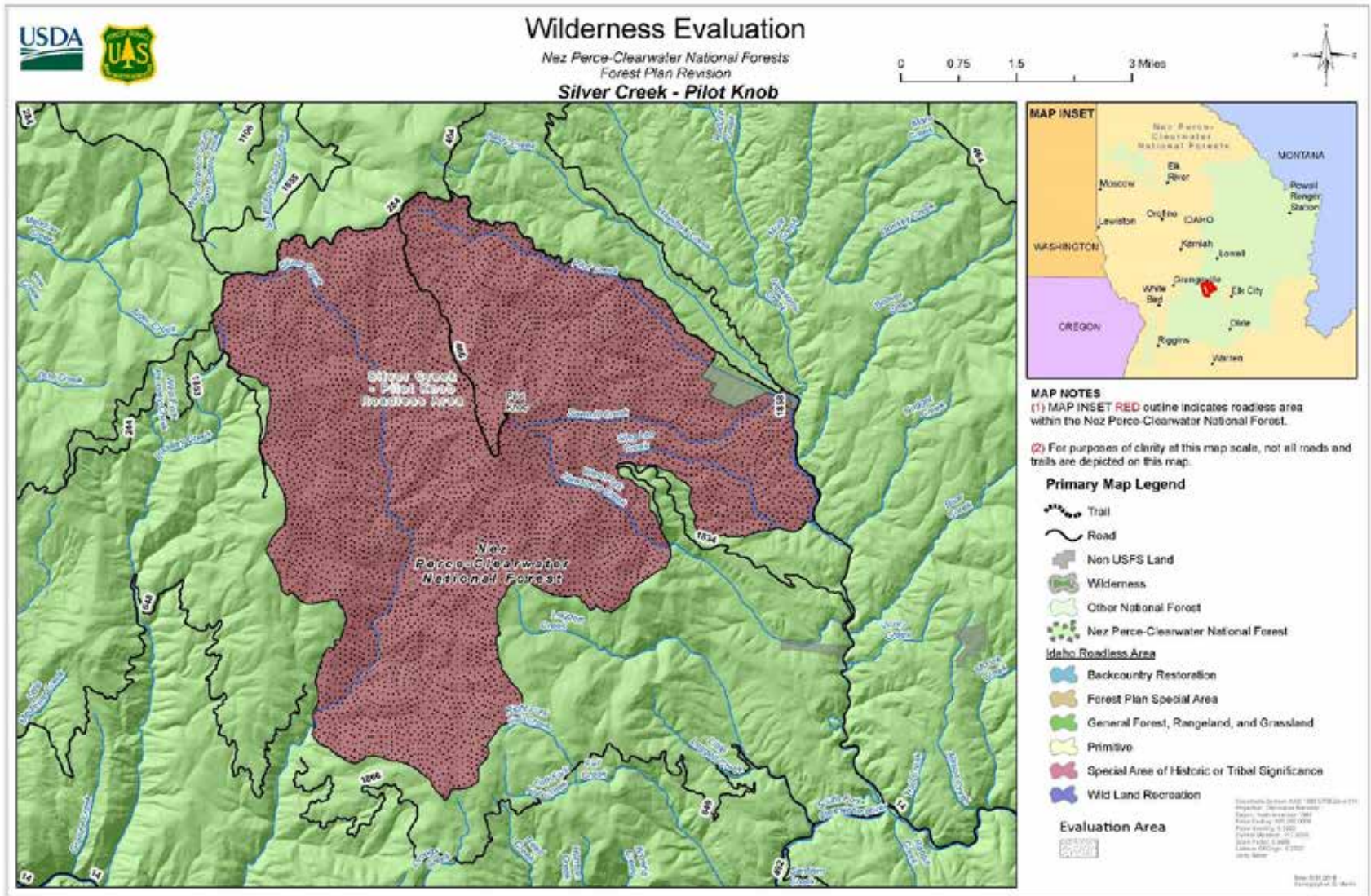


Figure 99. Wilderness Evaluation Silver Creek - Pilot Knob

Apparent naturalness

The largest impact to apparent naturalness is Road #466, which enters the area from the north, and climbs the ridge to Pilot Knob, where a lookout and electronic site are located, Figure 100. This road is 4.5 miles long but its presence near a prominent ridgeline and through grassy area make it more apparent. Elsewhere in the area, there are signs of grazing and past mining activity.



Figure 100. FR466 enters the roadless area from the north

The Forest Service Lookout and adjacent electronics communications site operated under special use permits are very obvious. There are several buildings and towers at the site. There are no other administrative sites, recreation rentals, trail bridges or other obvious structures in the roadless area.

There have been no recent timber sales since the current roadless area boundaries were established in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule. The boundaries were designed to exclude past areas of timber harvest. Although there have been recent fires in the area, a minor amount of constructed fire line (0.2 miles) were constructed.

The vegetation in much of the area (44 percent) is not within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

All of the area is within the boundaries of livestock grazing allotments. The majority of the available forage is from low brush and forbs found in the understory and along stream courses. There are a few small natural meadows along the streams and some small open grass areas along the ridges.

The Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest invasive weeds inventory shows a total of 22 acres of known weed locations, primarily spotted knapweed (17.5 acres) located in scattered locations along roads. In addition, smaller populations of meadow hawkweed (3.5 acres) and Dalmatian toadflax (1 acre) have been identified roadside. Current management is to try to eradicate the hawkweed and toadflax before they spread.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

About two-thirds of the area offers a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting as shown in Figure 101. The perimeter roads and more significantly the low-standard Road #466 that accesses the fire lookout and electronics site affects the recreation settings for the surrounding area. The location of this road near a ridge top affects solitude in a larger area. The sights and sounds from motorized use on both the adjacent Elk City Wagon Road #284 and road #466 to the Lookout are both popular with ATV riders.

The size of this area offers limited opportunity for solitude. The road to Pilot Knob almost divides the area in half. Topographic and vegetative screening is both moderate, and there are off-site intrusions in the form of visible clearcuts, roads, and sounds from logging activity. Opportunities for solitude are limited due to the roads surrounding the area and Road #466 bisecting the roadless area at its highest points. Silver Creek may provide the best opportunity for solitude in the area due to the steepness of the drainage and the density of vegetation.

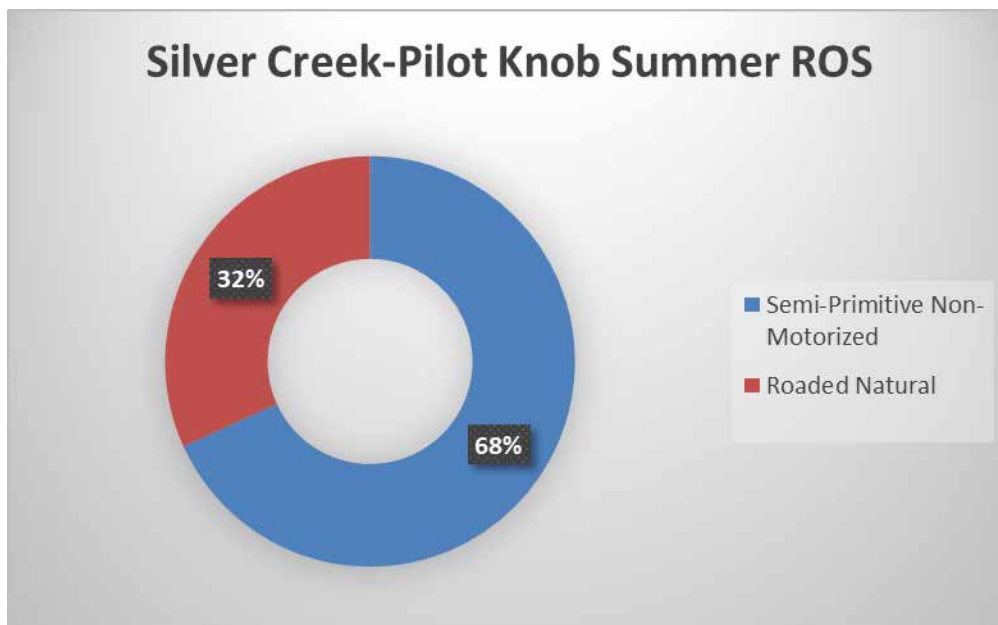


Figure 101. Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Recreation use is light except for fall hunting. A couple of trails cross the area but receive only very light use. A trail into Silver Creek is lightly used, see Figure 102 below. Challenges are limited to the rocks and cliffs around Pilot Rock and Pilot Knob. There are no lakes or notable fishing streams in the roadless area. The area does not provide boating opportunities.



Figure 102. Trail into upper Silver Creek

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 22,000 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 90 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. Vegetation in the area includes a small amount of 371 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts in the roadless area. This roadless area is a known sacred site. The Nez Perce Tribe is very interested in the management of this area. It will be considered as a geographic area in the Land Management Plan to allow for specific management that may be unique to this area. The Tribe identified Silver Creek as a stream important for Nez Perce Culture in the 2017 Wild and Scenic Rivers Evaluation. Four different historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

In addition to past mining, the northeastern boundary of the Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Roadless Area is the historic Nez Perce Trail, which was used by Indians long before the time of mountain men and miners. This trail was the main access route to Idaho County mines of the 19th century, later as the Elk City Wagon Road, and still later improved to accommodate motor vehicles (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Pilot Rock is a dramatic, scenic geologic feature with importance to the Nez Perce people, Figure 103.



Figure 103. Pilot Rock viewed through recently burned landscape

The water quality in the Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 53.2 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Beaver Creek, Newsome Creek, Peasley Creek, Pilot Creek, Sawmill Creek, Silver Creek, Sing Lee Creek, West Fork Newsome Creek and several unnamed streams are not supporting *cold water aquatic life* or *salmonid spawning* beneficial uses (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Roadless Area contains portions of eight HUC 12 subwatersheds. Two subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 55 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

Five subwatersheds (19 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. Upper Newsome Creek subwatershed (26 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; alteration of physical, biological, or chemical impacts to water quality; altered stream channel features; low amounts of large wood debris in streams and riparian areas; over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area; extensive areas of soil contamination, primarily from historic mining; accelerated surface soil erosion; and more than 40 percent of the subwatershed anticipated to or currently experiencing tree mortality from insects and disease (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The entire roadless area is currently managed under a *Special Area of Historic or Tribal Significance* in the Idaho Roadless Rule due to the cultural importance of the area to the Nez Perce Tribe. This theme includes very limited permissions and exceptions for road construction, timber cutting, sale or removal and minerals activities. The area is currently proposed as a geographic area in the Land Management Plan so Forest staff can work with Nez Perce Tribal staff to develop more site-specific components for this roadless area, Figure 104.

The roadless area is surrounded by front country for 100 percent of its boundary. There are no private lands directly adjacent to the roadless area, but there are private lands near the border to the northeast. Silver Ridge, on the west edge of the roadless area, and the entire Silver Creek drainage are hotspots for lightning strikes and resultant fires.

There are no current mining claims within the roadless area boundary. There are mining claims near the roadless area boundary at Newsome Creek.



Figure 104. Grassy ridge and view along the road to the Lookout

The Silver Creek-Pilot Knob Roadless Area is bordered by the Elk City Wagon Road (#284) to the south. This is a historic route was an important part of Elk City gold mining history. It is currently popular for ATV travel. The roadless area has been restricted for wheeled motorized travel having provided low opportunities (6-20 miles) of wheeled motorized travel in the past. Road #466 which bisects the area is popular for ATV travel to the Pilot Knob Lookout. Although there are no adjacent groomed snowmobile routes, snowmobilers recreate on the northern end of the roadless area.

Siwash Roadless Area

General description

The 9,000-acre Siwash Roadless Area is located approximately 60 road miles northeast of Orofino, Idaho in the drainage of the North Fork Clearwater River. It is easily accessible by Road #247. Trail #600 from

Washington Creek Campground follows the western boundary of the area. A trail crosses the southwest portion of the roadless area, extending from the site of the old Bungalow Ranger Station to Clarke Mountain and on through to Elk Mountain just outside the area. A jeep road accesses the Clarke Mountain Lookout near the edge of the area. A trail from Elk Mountain to the North Fork Clearwater River follows the ridge along the northwest boundary.

Siwash Roadless Area is a typical Clearwater National Forest steep, streambank landscape. Siwash Creek, near the center of the roadless area is the mainstream, which is a tributary to the North Fork Clearwater River. South of Clarke Mountain, several unnamed streams drain into Orogrande Creek.

The area is underlain by coarse-grained to porphyritic light gray granite of the Cretaceous Bungalow pluton associated with the Idaho batholith. Elevations vary from 2,200 feet along the North Fork of the Clearwater River rising rapidly to 5,285 feet on Clarke Mountain. Because of the relatively low elevations, only one vegetative ecosystem is found, the cedar-hemlock-pine forest. Western redcedar, western white pine, grand fir, Douglas-fir, Engelmann spruce, subalpine fir, and lodgepole pine are the most common tree species.

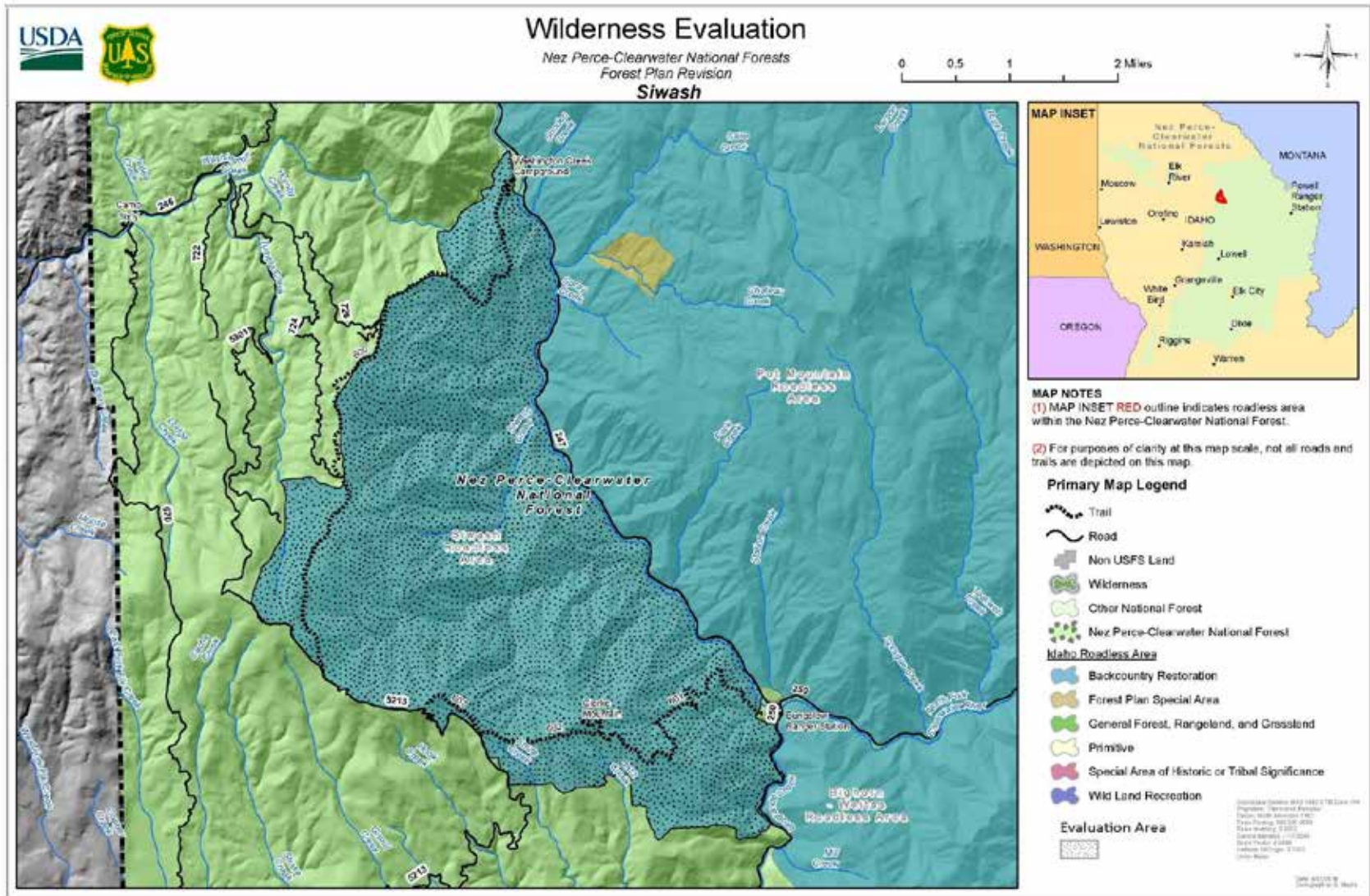


Figure 105. Wilderness Evaluation Siwash

Apparent naturalness

Other than the Jeep trail to Clarke Mountain and the lookout itself, which is currently inactive, the area has no unnatural or adverse impacts to integrity or appearance. There are no other structures such as administrative structures, recreation rentals or trail bridges.

Forest records indicate 153 acres of known invasive weed populations. This is primarily spotted knapweed (101 acres) which border roads and trails as well as other miscellaneous weeds. There have been no timber cutting, constructed fire lines or major roadside hazard tree removal projects in the roadless area since the boundaries were defined in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Solitude is at a minimum, because of the small size of the Siwash Roadless Area, traffic on the main river road, and logging activity on two sides. Views of activity outside the area also detract from opportunities for solitude. Elk hunting is the main recreational use. There are no boating opportunities, lakes, or notable fishing opportunities in the Siwash Roadless area. Most of the area is affected by the sights and sounds of adjacent roads and 30 percent of the interior provides semi-primitive non-motorized class of the recreation opportunity spectrum as shown in Figure 106.

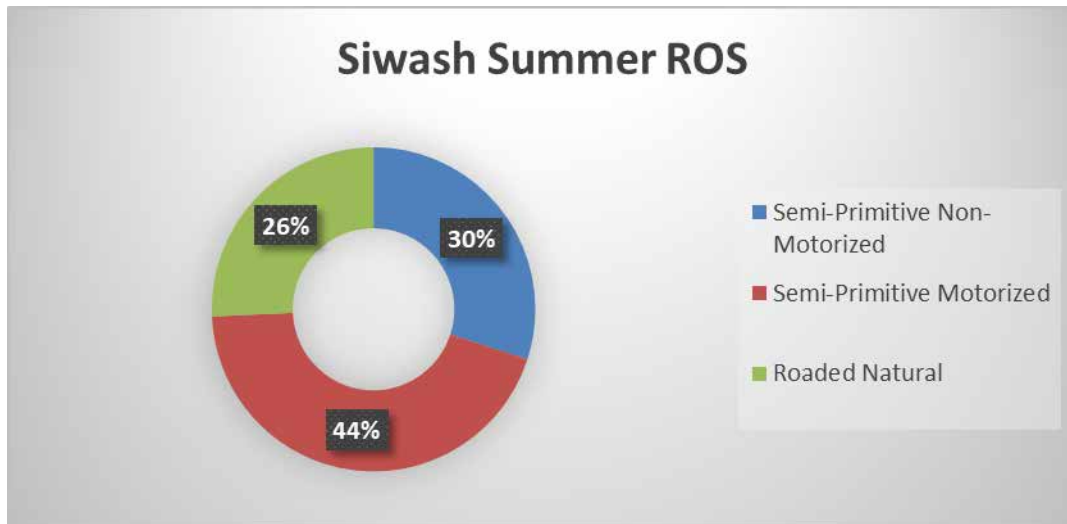


Figure 106. Siwash Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 9,000 acres the roadless area meets the minimum requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is one of the smallest roadless area on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest that does not adjoin designated wilderness or other roadless areas.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 85 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. No research natural areas are found in this roadless area. The area does not include any modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline. The vegetation in 48 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological

conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. Three historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no designated wild and scenic rivers other notable scenic features in this roadless area.

The water quality in the Siwash Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 1.7 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Knute Creek and an unnamed stream are not supporting *cold water aquatic life* or *salmonid spawning* beneficial uses but are fully supporting *secondary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Siwash Roadless Area contains portions of three HUC 12 subwatersheds. Two subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 84 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Lower Orogrande Creek subwatershed (16 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but is Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. There are currently no unpatented mining claims within the Siwash Roadless Area. The roadless boundary does not overlap with any livestock grazing allotments.

Siwash Roadless Area borders both front country (62 percent) and other roadless areas (38 percent). However, the eastern boundary adjoins Pot Mountain Roadless Area, with the main North Fork Clearwater River Road in between. Sharing so much of a boundary with front country forested lands to the north, west and south would make managing for wildland fire use difficult. The ratio of the boundary to area is 13:1, about average for roadless areas due to its small size.

Siwash Roadless Area is not adjacent to a groomed snowmobile trail network and is not known to have a history of snowmobile use. It does have a low amount (6-20 miles) of trails with a history of motorized use. The Clarke Mountain area is increasingly popular for ATV use.

Mountain bikers use trail #600 from Washington Creek campground and connect to Clarke Mountain, along the edge of the roadless area.

The small size of the area surrounded by roads and timber management activities significantly affects the wilderness attributes. Two sides of this triangular-shaped roadless area are well defined by a river and a main ridge. The south side boundary is less distinct.

Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area

General description

The 23,300-acre Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area is located just west of the Bitterroot Mountain range near the southeast corner of the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho County. It is approximately 60 miles southwest of Missoula, Montana, via Highway 12 and Elk Summit Road #360.

It is bounded and accessed by the low-standard, Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Elk Summit Road #360 on the east and another low-standard, CCC Road #362, (the Tom Beal Road) along the northwest side. The interior is accessed by five separate trails, most of which are low-standard, fire control trails. The west side is bounded by the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and the north side by private land. A primitive road intrudes about 1 and a half miles off the Elk Summit Road toward Kooskooskia Meadows. At one time it extended all the way to the meadows but since has been blocked and is now used as a trail.

Except for the private land at the north end, the area is surrounded by other roadless land. To the west is the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, to the east is the North Fork Spruce-White Sand Roadless Area, and to the northwest is the Lochsa Face Roadless Area.

The Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area is a complex landscape with a dominance of gentle, rolling terrain with high water tables, wet meadows, and meandering streams. Also, it has high elevations generally above 6,000 feet, glacial rocky slopes and peaks with several large cirque basins, enclosed lakes, and fast-moving crystal-clear streams. Peaks average above 7,000 feet with a top elevation of 7,900 feet.

The area is underlain by a coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho Batholith. In the northern portion the area is underlain by highly metamorphosed rocks of the Precambrian Wallace formation consisting of calc-silicate gneiss and schist. Glacial till material was deposited over much of the area by Pleistocene Alpine glaciation resulting in poor drainage.

All but one of the major creeks drains into White Sand Creek. Walton Creek, at the north-end, drains directly into the Lochsa River. Five lakes are contained within this area; the two largest are the Walton Lakes.

Ninety percent of the area is within the western spruce-fir ecosystem. The major habitat type is subalpine fir with some grand fir and possibly some western redcedar in lower Walton Creek. Major species include subalpine fir, Englemann spruce, and lodgepole pine. Shrub areas are dense with menzeisia, alder and willow; the latter two occurring in wetter areas. Major attractions are the scenery, such as, meadows (Sneakfoot, Marion, and Kooskooskia); the wildlife, especially moose particularly near the Elk Summit Road; and the streams and lakes. Probably the most significant attraction is the access to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

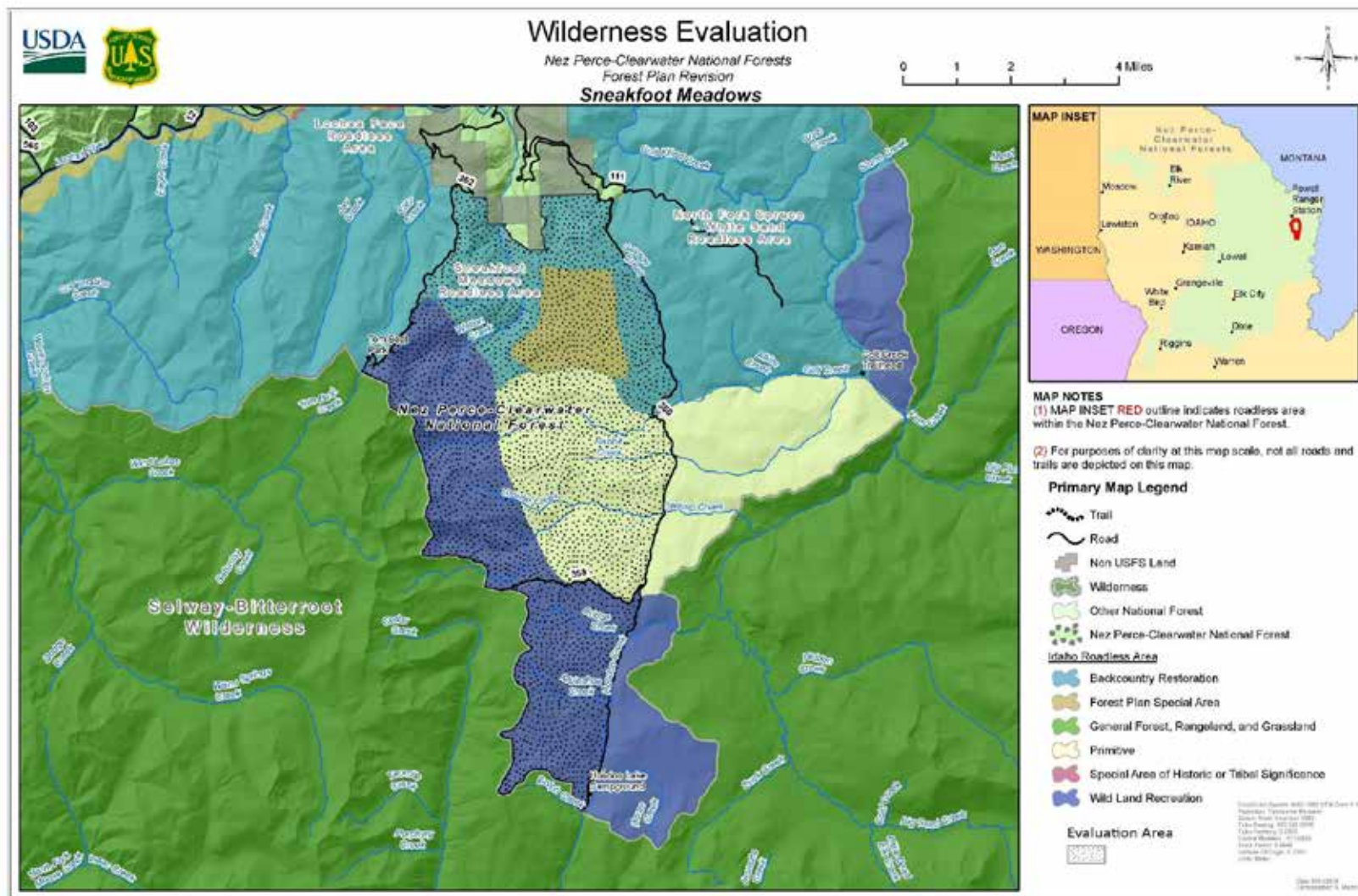


Figure 107. Wilderness Evaluation Sneakfoot Meadows

Apparent naturalness

With the exception of the primitive Kooskooskia Meadows Road, the area has very low impairments to natural integrity and appearance. Several of the trails, notably the trail from the Tom Beal Road to Walton Lakes, are very evident on the landscape. There is also some evidence of overuse around Walton Lakes but, overall, the effects are insignificant. The area resembles the adjacent Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, as the boundaries between the two areas are indistinguishable.



Figure 108. Savage Pass SNOTEL site

The Sneakfoot Meadows area does not include Forest Service administrative sites, recreation rentals or trail bridges (Hoodoo Lake campground is excluded from the roadless area).

Special Use permitted structures—A SNOTEL site, Savage Pass, operated by U.S. Geological Service (USGS) is located within the boundaries of the roadless area near the northeastern border of the roadless area. This site is obviously human made, but small in scale and fairly unobtrusive except at close range. See Figure 108 below.

The vegetation in 65 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater inventory shows 110 acres of invasive weeds. Kingdevil has become established on 3.5 acres along existing roads. Since the population was discovered while it was small, the management goal is to eradicate it before it spreads. The remainder is a mix of weeds primarily along roads and trails. Since the roadless boundaries were established in the 2008 Idaho Roadless Rule, there has been a small amount of timber cutting, with 0.2 miles of constructed fire line and 29 acres of post-fire roadside hazard tree removal. Fire suppression was done in the northern portion of the roadless area to protect the interagency fish hatchery, the nearby administrative site at Powell, private lands, and residences in the vicinity and two campgrounds near the roadless area boundary.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

Noise from traffic on the Tom Beal and Elk Summit Roads is probably the only external disturbance to solitude and is limited to less than half a mile because of terrain and vegetation. Visually, there is virtually no disturbance from vehicles or activity along the roads because the landscape is not very steep. Within

the area, potential disturbance is even less than from without, although brief encounters with hikers or horseback riders on the trails or at the lakes are possible.

The Tom Beal Road is the only area from which some activity outside the area may be viewed, and all of it is distant views. Hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, scenic and wildlife viewing, and photography, hunting, and lake and stream fishing are the major primitive recreation. Cross-country travel by foot or horseback is very difficult at best with the result that much of the interior area receives very little use.

As identified in the Idaho Department of Fish and Game Historical Stocking Records, Walton Lakes have periodically been stocked with fish, most recent with cutthroat trout in 1997 .

Most of the interior of the area and the border with the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness do not provide summer motorized recreation opportunity spectrum class settings with 72 percent of the area providing semi-primitive non-motorized recreation settings as shown in Figure 109. Snowmobiling has occurred in the area for many years and is increasing in popularity. More recently, mountain biking has become popular, particularly on the boundary Roads # 360 and #362 and trails in the Tom Beal Park area that create loop opportunities. These activities have continued despite administrative restrictions through the 2017 Travel Planning Decision.

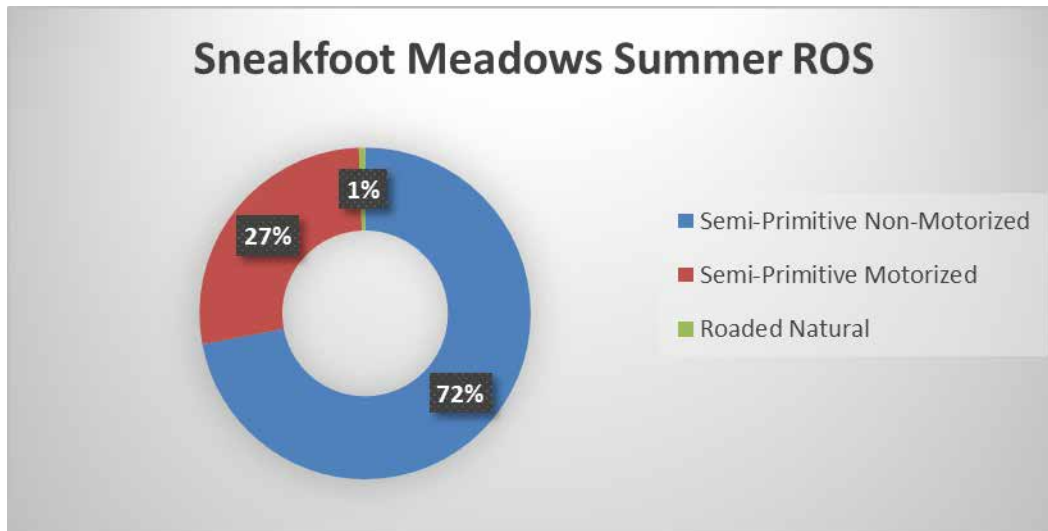


Figure 109. Sneakfoot Meadows Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 23,300 acres, the roadless area meets the minimum size requirement of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. Since it is adjacent to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary a smaller portion of the area could also be considered.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 36 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. The roadless area includes the 2,000-acre Sneakfoot Meadows Research Natural Area. The aquatic ecosystems, as well as the surrounding subalpine fir habitat, with a dense stand of old-aged Engelmann spruce are the key features. The vegetation in this area includes 5,446 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landguth et al. 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no designated wild and scenic rivers in this roadless area. The three Walton Lakes are scenic features of the area. The largest lake is 32 acres, the second largest of all lakes in inventoried roadless areas on the national forest (only Fish Lake in the Hoodoo Roadless Area is larger). The Idaho Department of Fish and Game last stocked these areas with cutthroat trout in 1997. The Elk Summit moose herd can be observed during the summer months throughout the area, especially near meadows.

The water quality in the Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area contains portions of seven HUC 12 subwatersheds. All seven subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 100 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). There are no subwatersheds with a Functioning at Risk WCC 2 rating or WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

Since the area is contiguous to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, the size and shape are sufficient. Being contiguous to an existing wilderness, surrounded on two sides by well-defined but low-standard roads, makes the area easily manageable as part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness with very little change.

The area is currently managed under a mix of Idaho Roadless Rule themes from *wildland recreation* (9,600 acres), *primitive* (6,500 acres), *backcountry restoration* (5,200 acres) and 2,000 acres of special area for the research natural area. Each theme includes limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. Wildland recreation is the most restrictive while backcountry restoration is the least.

There are currently no unpatented mining claims within the Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area. The roadless boundary does not overlap with any livestock grazing allotments.

Sneakfoot Meadows Roadless Area borders primarily wilderness (37 percent of its boundary) and the North Fork Spruce-White Sand Roadless Area (49 percent of its boundary) with a small amount (14 percent) bordering front country lands to the north of the roadless area. Although not directly adjacent to the roadless area boundary the interagency fish hatchery, the Powell administrative site, private lands, and residences and two campgrounds are located in the vicinity and are protected during wildfires.

The ratio of the boundary to area is 8:1, one the lowest of all roadless areas. This reflects a fairly regular, easily defined boundary, without intrusions or cherry-stemmed roads.

The Lolo Pass and Powell areas are popular for snowmobiling due to high elevation parking, and reliable snow. A groomed snowmobile trail system is located north of the roadless area. There has been recurrent snowmobile use in the area. Fires in recent years have created more open, rideable areas off the groomed

system. Road #360 to the east of the roadless area is a popular route off the groomed system. It does have a low amount (6-20 miles) of past summer motorized opportunity but is more of a winter motorized recreation area.

Weir-Post Office Creek Roadless Area

General description

The 22,000-acre Weir-Post Office Roadless Area is located in the south central part of the Clearwater National Forest in Idaho County. It can be accessed from the east via U.S. Highway 12 and is approximately 78 air miles from Missoula, Montana. It can also be accessed from the west via the same highway from Orofino, Idaho, about 100 miles away. The area is bounded on the south by U.S. Highway 12, the only paved road near the roadless area. Gravel roads border the rest of the area. The Lolo Motorway, which generally parallels the Lolo Trail, is the northern boundary. Access to the Lolo Motorway is provided by the Saddle Camp Road on the west side of the roadless area and the Wawwalamanine/Doe Creeks Road to the east. For all practical purposes, interior access is nonexistent with only two low standard, short trails.

The area consists of steep river breaklands extending from 2,800-3,000 feet along U.S. Highway 12 up to 7,000 feet along the Lolo Motorway. In addition to the two major streams, Weir Creek and Post Office Creek, numerous other smaller first-and second-order streams drain directly into the Lochsa River. A large cirque basin containing two lakes is located at the headwaters of Post Office Creek. Almost all the area is underlain by a gray, coarse-grained quartz monzonite of the Cretaceous Idaho batholith. Isolated blocks of Border Zone gneiss and schist, gneiss and schists of the Wallace formation, and outcrops of quartz diorite and granite occur in the area.

The lower half of the area, generally below 5,000 feet, is made up of the cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem while the higher elevations are principally western spruce-fir forest. Large forest fires in the early 1900's had a major influence on the present vegetation. Much of the area, especially on south and west aspects, still consists of brush fields. Unburned areas and land that has regenerated are comprised of a wide variety of western red cedar and grand fir habitat types at the lower elevations and subalpine fir types at the higher elevations.

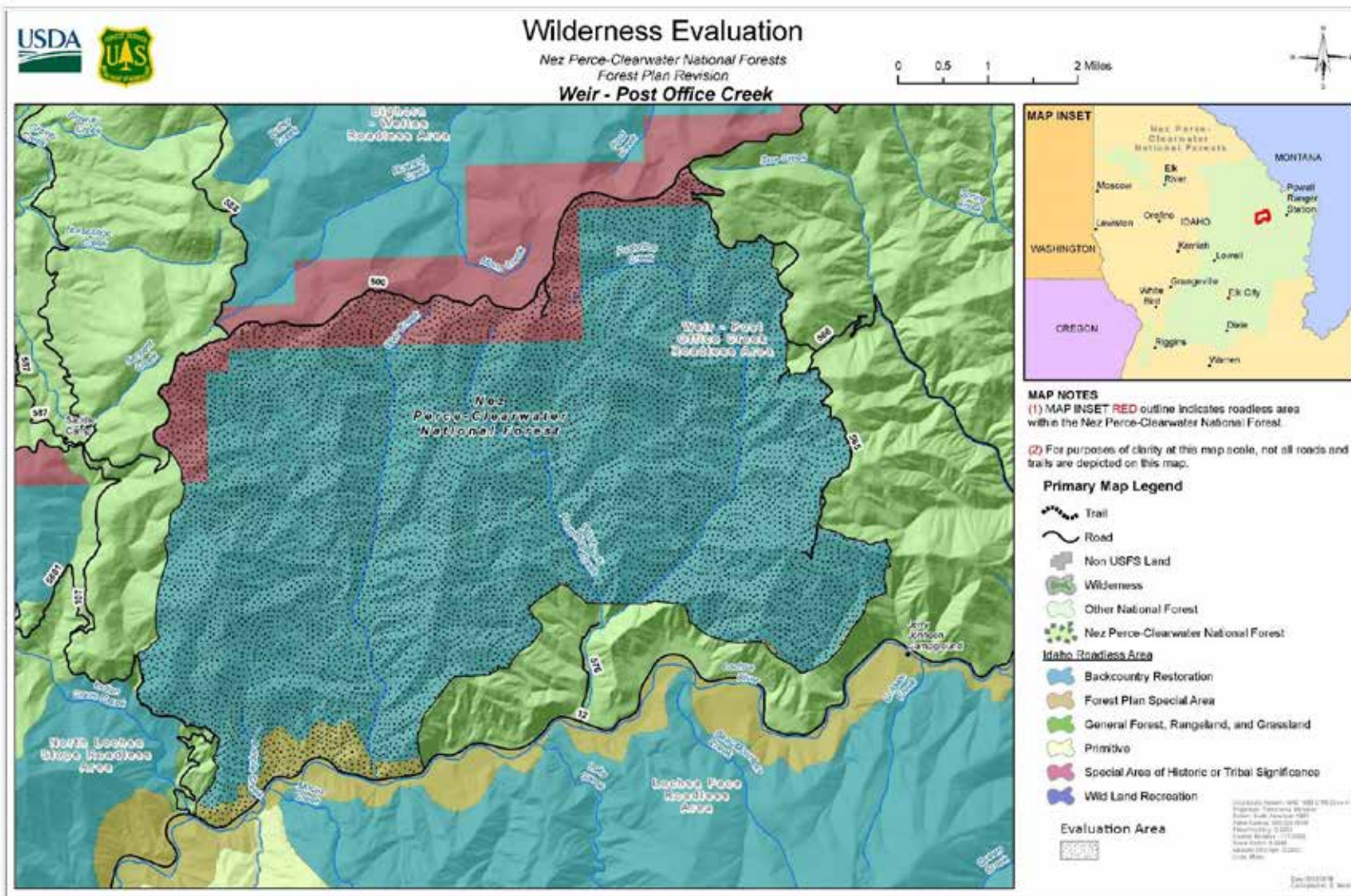


Figure 110. Wilderness Evaluation Weir - Post Office Creek

Apparent naturalness

There is little physical detracting from natural integrity and appearance with a few exceptions. The popular Weir Creek Hot Springs is located adjacent to Weir Creek, a short walk from Highway 12. User-made structures manage water flow and have impacted natural streamside conditions. A toilet building was recently added near the hot springs to contain human waste and reduce sanitation problems.

There are no other Forest Service administrative buildings, no recreation rental cabins or trail bridges and few trails. There has been no timber cutting, constructed fire lines or roadside hazard tree removal since the Idaho Roadless Rule mapped the boundaries of the area in 2008.

The vegetation in the majority of the area (52 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater inventory shows 154 acres of known invasive weeds populations within the roadless area boundary, primarily located along existing roads and trails. This is mostly spotted knapweed (146 acres), with the remainder as other miscellaneous weeds.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

With limited access, use is minor except for high use at Weir Creek Hot Springs. Indian Post Office Lake, an 11-acre lake near Road #500, attracts occasional anglers and solitude within the area is high. Because of the rugged terrain and tree and shrub canopy over much of the area, viewing opportunities outside the area are very limited. Noise from vehicle use on Highway 12 and logging activity along the east and west boundaries may be more evident than actual visual detracting. The relatively small size of the roadless area may be the most limiting factor from a solitude standpoint. Cross-country foot travel, big-game hunting, and lake fishing are the primary dispersed recreation available. There are not boatable waters in the roadless area.

The area provides mostly semi-primitive non-motorized recreation settings due to a core area without roads or trails. The portion of the roadless areas closest to Highway 12 is very influenced by the sights and sounds of the 50 MPH paved highway and provides a roaded natural opportunity. The remainder provides semi-primitive motorized settings along the low-standard #500 road. The ratio of recreation settings is shown in Figure 111.

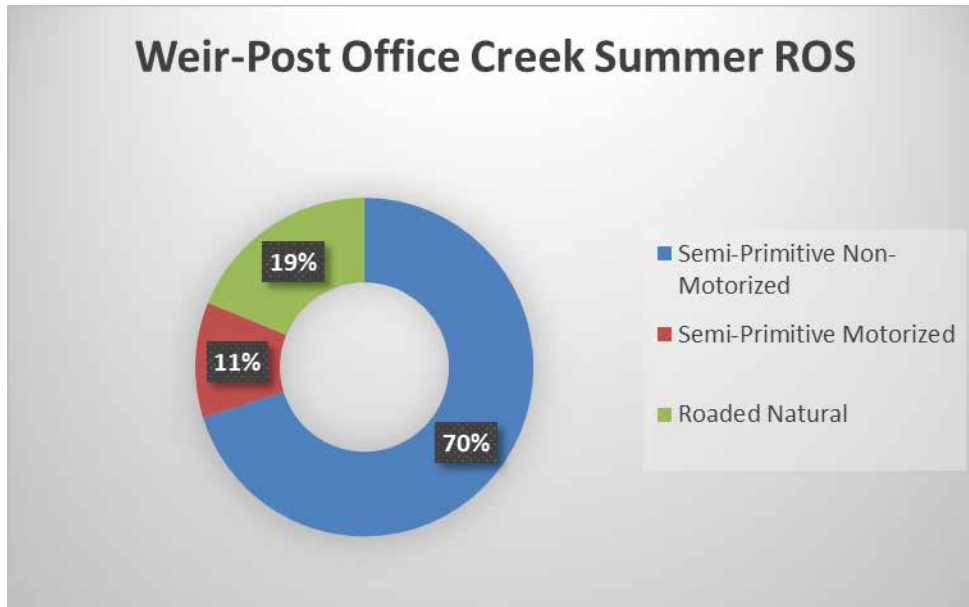


Figure 111. Weir-Post Office Creek Summer Recreation Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 22,000 acres the roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 62 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. Vegetation in the area includes 327 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts and no known sacred sites in the roadless area. Three historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

The Wild and Scenic Lochsa River adjoins the roadless area, with 500 acres of the river corridor included within the roadless area. Scenery is one of the “outstandingly remarkable values” for which the river was designated. There are no other notable scenic features. An approximate quarter mile wide corridor within an unmarked boundary of the Middle Fork-Lochsa Recreation River established under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1969 runs the full length of the roadless area north of Highway 12. This 500-acre corridor is managed under a Special River Management Plan, which emphasizes the scenic values of the river environment. A National Recreation Trail is also located within the corridor starting at Colgate Warm Springs salt lick, an interesting geologic feature with historic context.

An unusual rock formation known as the Devils Chair (located along the Lolo Motorway) is an attraction of local interest. Weir Creek Hot springs is also located in the roadless area and is an interesting geologic feature with high recreation use. Indian Post Office Lake, an 11-acre lake near Road #500, was last stocked by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game in 2006. They stocked tiger muskie, a fish that cannot reproduce, but eats non-native brook trout in an attempt to rid the lake of brook trout.

The Lolo Trail forms the northern boundary of the roadless area. It is both a registered National Historic Landmark and National Historic Trail. This trail was a major travel route between the Columbia Basin and the Montana country prehistorically. Lewis and Clark traveled over sections of the trail in journeys of 1805-06. Chief Joseph, a Nez Perce Indian Chief, helped lead the non-treaty Nez Perce over this traditional route during the Nez Perce war of 1877. The trail was expanded to a low standard road in the early 1930's.

The water quality in the Weir-Post Office Roadless Area is high. All streams meet water quality standards and beneficial uses. There are no streams listed as impaired in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The Weir-Post Office Roadless Area contains portions of six HUC 12 subwatersheds. Five subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 99 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990). The Fishing Creek subwatershed (less than 1 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

This roadless area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the

Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permissions and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. The area includes 1,900 acres of the Lolo Trail corridor, managed as a Special Area of Historic or Tribal Significance, and 500 acres of the Lochsa Wild and Scenic River corridor.

There are no mining claims and none of the roadless area overlaps with livestock grazing allotments.

Weir-Post Office Creek borders other roadless areas (31 percent) to the north, front country (69 percent), and a small amount less than 1 percent of state or private lands. The area to the south is considered front country due to the presence of Highway 12. The need to protect surrounding lands from wildfire makes it more challenging to allow for natural ecological processes to occur in this area.

There are no groomed snowmobile routes adjacent to the roadless area, but snowmobilers do ride road #500 as a secondary snowmobile route but are not known to ride within the roadless area. Wheeled motorized use has traditionally been at a low level (6-20 road or trail miles.). Motorized use in the area is not a major factor for this area.

The relatively small size of the Weir-Post Office Roadless Area would have some effect on wilderness attributes. Disturbance from the noise of traffic on Highway 12 and from logging activity along the east and west boundaries could interfere with the feeling of solitude. Shape is not a factor since the area is almost square. Except for some deviations, the roads surrounding 90 percent of the area serve as logical boundaries of any recommended wilderness. The area is compact, extending about eight miles east to west and four and one-half miles north to south. There is no private land within or adjacent to the area.

West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area

General description

The 9,500-acre West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area adjoins the Gospel Hump Wilderness Area. The roadless area is reached by Road #233 from the north, which also forms the western and southern borders. The western border is the Gospel Hump Wilderness and Five-mile Creek forms the northern border. Elevations in the area range from 4,500 feet along West Fork Crooked River to 7,000 feet at the Gospel Hump wilderness border.

The West Fork Crooked River is the major river in the roadless area flowing to the northeast through the area. Umatilla Creek and Five-mile Creek, tributaries to Crooked River also flow through the area. Vegetation cover types range from pure lodgepole pine stands on southern slopes at moderate elevations to alpine fir and Engelmann spruce in draws and higher elevations. The predominant species is mature lodgepole pine. There is whitebark pine and some mountain parklands at the higher elevations.

Apparent naturalness

Natural processes have received little impact, except near the road corridors along the west and south boundaries. Some past mining activity between Umatilla Creek and Five Mile Creek is noticeable. A recent fuel reduction project in the roadless area includes the construction of a temporary road and cutting and removing timber on approximately 280 acres, near the town of Orogrande. The temporary road will be obliterated following the completion of the project.

The vegetation in 47 percent of the roadless area is within the natural range of variation, Figure 113. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

There are no constructed features such as forest administrative structures or recreation rentals or trail bridges. The Nez Perce-Clearwater inventory shows nine acres of invasive weeds consisting of spotted knapweed along roads adjacent to the roadless area.



Figure 113. Natural processes at work. Gospel Hump wilderness is in the background

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The solitude of the area varies across the roadless area with the greatest opportunities in the higher elevations near the wilderness boundary and the interior of the area, away from the sights and sounds of the Orogrande community and Forest Road #233. The distribution of the recreation opportunity spectrum reflects this with 69 percent providing semi-primitive non-motorized opportunities and the remaining 31 percent is roaded natural based on distances from open roads and trails as shown in Figure 114.

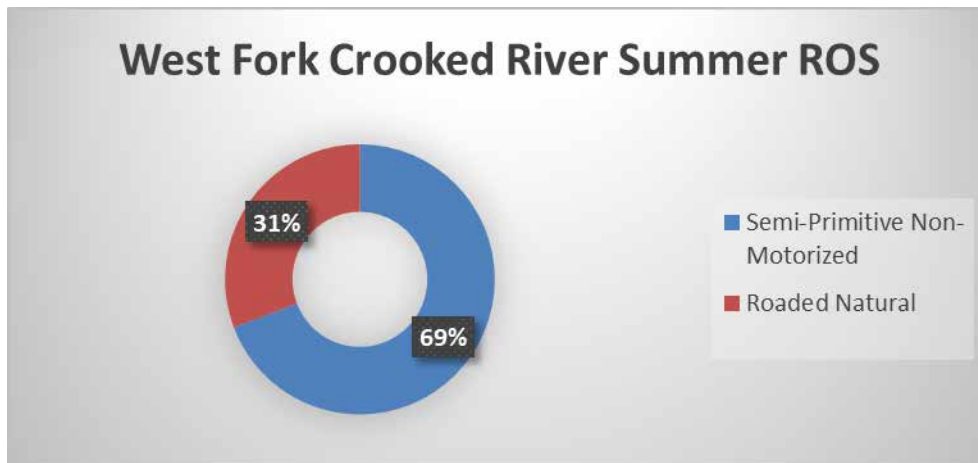


Figure 114. West Fork Crooked River Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 9,500 acres the roadless area meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness and it adjoins the Gospel Hump Wilderness area.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 64 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. There are no Research Natural Area in the roadless area. The vegetation in the area includes 3,519-acre of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Holden, 2016), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts or known sacred sites in the roadless area. One historic theme, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

There are no designated Wild and Scenic River corridors in the roadless area. The 11-acre sized Rainbow Lake, located in the southwestern end of the roadless area, is a scenic, high mountain lake.

The water quality in the West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 16.5 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan. Portions of Fivemile Creek, Mulcahy Creek, Umatilla Creek, West Fork Crooked River, and an unnamed water body are not supporting *cold water aquatic life* or *salmonid spawning* beneficial uses (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area contains portions of three HUC 12 subwatersheds. Two subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 5 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

The Upper Crooked River subwatershed (95 percent of roadless area) has a WCC 2 rating, which indicates it is in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; alteration of physical, biological, or chemical impacts to water quality; altered stream channel features; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; extensive areas of soil contamination, primarily from historic mining; and more than 40 percent of the subwatershed anticipated to or currently experiencing tree mortality from insects and disease. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme (4,000 acres) of the Idaho Roadless Rule. The area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. This generally does not allow for road construction except for some limited circumstances approved by

the Regional Forester. This includes the possibility of road construction outside a community protection zone where there is a significant risk that a wildland fire could affect an at-risk community. Timber cutting is prohibited except under limited circumstances to reduce hazardous fuels near communities, to improve threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive habitat or to maintain or restore the characteristics of ecosystem composition, structure or process (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The adjacent Orogrande community is an “at-risk community” under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. The Idaho Roadless rule allows for temporary road construction and removal of timber to reduce hazardous rule conditions near “at risk communities” in an area called a *community protection zone* which comprises 5,500 acres, more than half, of the roadless area.

Since approximately 500 acres of the roadless area is within the community protection zone for private lands in the Dixie and Comstock areas, the responsible official may authorize temporary road construction for community protection zone activities if they can’t be accomplished without road access (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The western boundary is adjacent to the Gospel Hump Wilderness and manageability of that boundary would not be a concern since the roadless area could be added to the wilderness. The northern, eastern, and southern boundaries of the roadless area are defined by Forest roads and easily located.

There are 82 unpatented mining claims within the West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area, mostly between Five Mile Creek and Umatilla Creek. This roadless area has the 2nd highest density of mining claims compared to the rest of the roadless areas. As the community’s name suggests the area has a history of exploration and mining for gold (oro).

Minerals activities under the General Mining Law of 1872 are currently allowed in Idaho Roadless areas. The sale of common variety minerals and associated road construction is allowed only if it is incidental to any activity otherwise allowed in the roadless area (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

The roadless boundary does not overlap with any livestock grazing allotments.

The West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area borders the Gospel Hump Wilderness along 31 percent of the roadless area border, with 69 percent bordering front country and less than 1 percent bordering private lands. The ratio of the boundary to roadless area is 12:1 ft. / Sq. ft., about average for the roadless areas. This is a measure of boundary to roadless area acres. This is primarily due the relatively small size (9,500 acres) of the roadless area. It would not be difficult to manage the border with the Gospel Hump Wilderness. However, the boundary that borders front country would be challenging to manage for wilderness due to the proximity to the Orogrande community and the need to protect the community from wildfires and provide for firefighter safety.

West Fork Crooked River Roadless Area is located adjacent to the community of Orogrande. Idaho County plows Road #233 to just south of Orogrande where a wintertime parking area is available. A groomed snowmobile route heads south towards Dixie Summit and snowmobilers travel on the road to Orogrande Summit and into the Buffalo Hump area. Snowmobilers recreate in the West Fork Crooked River roadless area to the east of Orogrande Summit in the higher elevations. The area does have a low amount (6-20 miles) of trails that have provided wheeled motorized opportunities.

West Meadow Creek

General description

The West Meadow Creek Roadless Area, at 115,900 acres, is one of the largest roadless areas on Nez Perce-Clearwater. Meadow Creek is a principal tributary of the Selway River which enters about a mile above Selway Falls. West Meadow Creek Roadless Area is essentially the west side of the Meadow Creek drainage, although a few small streams drain into American River, a tributary of the South Fork of the Clearwater (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

This area joins the East Meadow Creek Roadless Area on the east and is separated by a road corridor from the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness on the south. The western boundary is, for the most part, the divide that separates the Selway and South Fork of the Clearwater drainages. Road access is by way of Road #443 on the north and west sides, and Roads #468 and #285 on the south.

The entire main stem of Meadow Creek above the junction with the East Fork is included in this area. Elevations range from about 1,800 feet at the Slims trailhead, just south of the Selway River to 7,232 feet at Granite Peak. Slopes are steep, mostly facing east and north. As is characteristic of north and east exposures, vegetation in most parts of the area is dense, especially in the stream bottoms. Pacific yew is common, and thick. The headwaters of Meadow Creek are open, however, with the meadows that give the creek its name (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).



Figure 115. Mountain Meadows, adjacent to Magruder Road

Virtually all of the upper Meadow Creek drainage burned in 1919, and much of it is now covered with dense timber, except where large recent fires have burned. There are some stands of fir and spruce on lands that have survived historic and recent fires. Lodgepole pine and subalpine species are common at higher elevations (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

Scenic areas include Anderson Butte and Meadow Creek itself, a large, wild tributary of the Selway River. Other special features are Green Mountain Lookout, which is one of the older lookout locations on the national forest, Figure 86; Horse Point Lookout site, evidence of glaciations in the upper Meadow-Fourmile area; Meadow Creek and Anderson Butte National Recreation Trails; and the Nez Perce Trail (U.S. Department of Agriculture 2008).

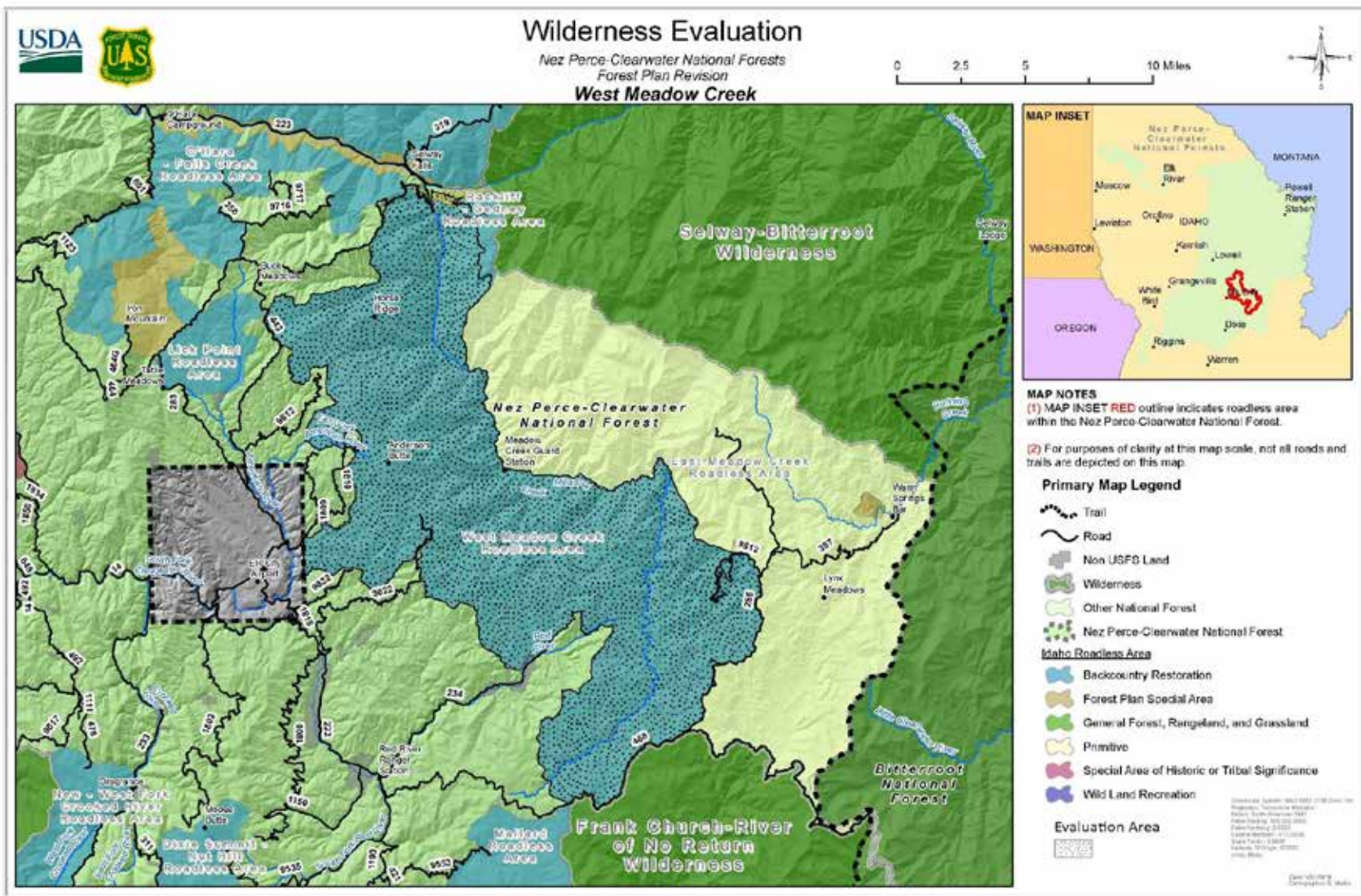


Figure 116. Wilderness Evaluation West Meadow Creek

Apparent naturalness

Long-term ecological processes have been only slightly impacted in the West Meadow Creek Roadless Area. The area does have a history of livestock grazing. At one time, there were many sheep grazing allotments in the East and West Meadow Creek Roadless Areas. Stock driveways are shown on forest maps as early as 1911, and large sheep allotments first appeared on forest maps in 1920.

Although the effects of past sheep grazing have largely vanished, the effects of the stock driveways have not. They can be identified in the Meadow Creek Roadless Area and in the adjoining Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness because they go almost straight down one side of a hill and straight up the other side and are cleared to a width of 50 feet. Erosion has left its mark on these sites, despite reconstruction of many of the driveways into graded trails. Grazing today is much less extensive, concentrated mostly along the western boundary and around the meadows in the head of Meadow Creek, Figure 115. Approximately 17 percent of the roadless areas is in a grazing allotment.

Anderson Butte and Green Mountain Lookouts, Figure 117, are both noticeable from parts of the area and area accessed from low-standard roads. Several other lookouts were present, but they have been removed. There are a few drift fences in the upper end of Meadow Creek.



Figure 117. Green Mountain Historic Lookout

Trails, especially the old stock driveways and an old jeep trail from Blackhawk Mountain to Anderson Butte, have caused impacts. A few of these trails are heavily used, especially during hunting season. Motorcycle use is also common on some of the better maintained trails.

Past mining activity on the ridge between Three Prong Creek and the East Fork Meadow Creek on the ridge that separates East and West Meadow Creek Roadless Areas, has resulted in about 100 acres of roads and pits.

The vegetation in the majority of the area (57 percent) is within the natural range of variation. This number addresses the “extent to which the roadless area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention” (Haugo and Benton 2014).

The Nez Perce-Clearwater inventory shows 458 acres of known invasive weed locations. This is primarily spotted knapweed with 430 acres found scattered along trails. A patch of Dalmatian toadflax (less than one acre) has been identified in the roadless area along the Magruder Road. Approximately 16 acres of yellow star thistle has been identified along roads on the northern boundary of the area. The management objective is to eradicate the toadflax and the star thistle while the populations are relatively small.

Opportunities for solitude & primitive & unconfined recreation

The West Meadow Creek Roadless Area currently provides the full range of recreation settings. The vastness of the area, with few intrusions allows for a core of mostly primitive and semi-primitive non-motorized settings. The roads and trails along the south and west sides provides more motorized recreation settings. Figure 118 shows the ratio of recreation opportunity spectrum settings across the area.

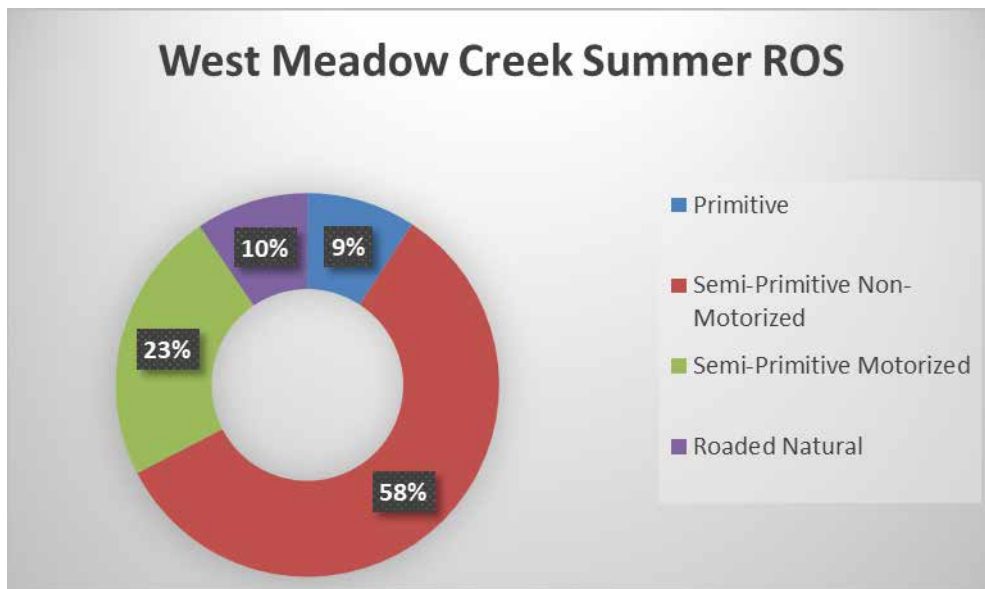


Figure 118. West Meadow Creek Summer Recreational Opportunity Spectrum

This area, along with the East Meadow Creek Roadless Area, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness on the east and north, and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness on the south, offers excellent opportunity for solitude. Topographic and vegetative screening is also significant. This area is not as diverse as East Meadow Creek Roadless Area across the creek.



Figure 119. Kayaker hiking down trail #541 to float Meadow Creek (photo courtesy of American Whitewater, 2017)

Current primitive or unconfined recreation uses are predominantly hiking and backpacking along the Meadow Creek along with hunting and fishing and rarely kayaking, Figure 119 and Figure 120. Travel by horse is not common due to challenging trail conditions.



Figure 120. Kayaking Meadow Creek (photo courtesy of American Whitewater 2017)

One small high mountain lake, Elk Lake is located in the roadless area. It is less than 2 acres in size and the Idaho Fish and Game Records show it was last stocked with cutthroat trout in 1983. Meadow Creek provides challenging boating with class 4-5 whitewater and a multi-day kayaking opportunity that ends at the Selway River.

Trails #830 and #835 together make up the Anderson Butte National Recreation Trail and furnish access from the west side of the area. Trail #809 from Anderson Butte to Meadow Creek is heavily used during the hunting season. A 55-foot native timber bridge built across Meadow Creek at the end of Trail #809 is the only trail bridge across Meadow Creek.

Areas of at least 5,000 acres or sufficient size to maintain characteristics in unimpaired condition

With a total size of 115,900 acres this roadless areas meets the minimum size requirements of 5,000 acres to be considered for wilderness. It is one of the larger roadless areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater and is adjacent to both the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and the Frank Church Wilderness areas.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value

Approximately 78 percent of the area consists of ecological types that are currently underrepresented in the national wilderness preservation system. Vegetation in the area includes 13,772 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat (Landgruth, 2017), a high elevation species currently in decline.

There are no potential National Register of Historic Places Districts and no known sacred sites in the roadless area. Four historic themes, out of 20 historic themes identified on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, are represented in the area.

Other scenic or special features in this area include areas along meadow creek, alpine larch stands, and the Meadow Creek National Recreation Trail. The northern end of Meadow Creek includes a small portion of the Selway Wild and Scenic River corridor.

The water quality in the West Meadow Creek Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 50.6 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature in the EPA approved Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 303(d) and 305(b) Integrated Report (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). These streams are not supporting one or more beneficial uses related to water temperatures being higher than the State of Idaho standards and are included in a water quality improvement strategy known as a Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Plan (State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality 2014). Portions of East Fork American River, Box Sing Creek, Bridge Creek, East Fork Trail Creek, Flint Creek, Kirks Fork, Limber Luke, Otterson Creek, Red Horse Creek, Red River, Shissler Creek, Siegel Creek, Trail Creek, Wigwam Creek and several unnamed waterbodies are not supporting *cold water aquatic life* or *salmonid spawning* beneficial uses. These creeks are tributaries to American River and are concentrated in the portion of the roadless area south and west of Anderson Butte and east of Elk City township (Lucas 2017).

Watershed conditions for each of the HUC 12 subwatersheds within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest were assessed in 2011 and categorized into three classes directly related to the degree or level of watershed functionality or integrity. The West Meadow Creek Roadless Area contains portions of sixteen HUC 12 subwatersheds. Ten subwatersheds are categorized as Watershed Condition Class (WCC) 1 and encompass 77 percent of the Roadless Area. A Class 1 watershed is Functioning Properly and has minimal undesirable human impact on natural physical or biological processes (Yount and Niemi 1990).

Six subwatersheds (23 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses; alteration of physical, biological, or chemical impacts to water quality; stream flow departure; altered stream channel features; over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition; aquatic invasive species are present on over 50 percent of the streams; a high density and distribution of roads outside of the roadless area; roads located on mass wasting areas outside of the roadless area; extensive areas of soil contamination, primarily from historic mining; terrestrial invasive species infest more than 25 percent of the subwatershed and their range is expanding; and more than 40 percent of the subwatershed anticipated to or currently experiencing tree mortality from insects and disease. There are no subwatersheds with a WCC 3 rating, indicating impaired function (Lucas 2017).

Manageability

The roadless area is currently managed under the *backcountry restoration* theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule which includes limited permission and exceptions for timber cutting, sale or removal, road construction and reconstruction and mineral activities. Approximately 3,100 acres of the area, in the American River drainage, are managed as a community protection zone under the Idaho Roadless Rule. This allow for additional permissions and exceptions for temporary roads and timber cutting to reduce fuels near private lands.

West Meadow Creek Roadless Area borders mostly front country (57 percent), the adjoining East Meadow Creek Roadless Area (36 percent), the Frank Church Wilderness (6 percent) south of the Magruder Road and <1 percent private lands in the American River watershed. Bordering private lands and front country lands can be challenging with allowing fires to burn, because of Forest Service policy to protect adjacent private lands and front country lands from fire. The American River portion could be removed from the area by staying within the Meadow Creek drainage. The area is also adjacent to Red River Hot Springs which is a private facility operating under a special use permit on the National Forest.

Boundaries for the most part follow definite topographic features. The majority of the area is relatively uninfluenced by roads and other factors that would decrease the wilderness attributes. Manageability as wilderness would depend in part on the classification of East Meadow Creek Roadless Area to the east; that is, whether this area would be managed as a part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, or as an independent wilderness.

Although there is some evidence of mineral exploration, there are currently no mining claims in the area.

The Magruder Road (as far as Granite Springs) is part of a groomed snowmobile route, as part of a partnership with Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho County, and a local snowmobile club. Open meadows such as Mountain Meadows, Figure 85, adjacent to this route are inviting to snowmobilers and would be difficult to restrict if this area was recommended for wilderness. Snowmobilers currently ride in upper Meadow Creek, Three Prong Creek, and road #285 to Green Mountain Lookout. The area has a tradition of wheeled motorized travel with a high amount (41+ miles) of motorized trail use. Wheeled motorized travel was debated extensively in this area during travel planning and is popular in this area.

Analysis

Resource specialists analyzed the data and reviewed the narrative in the Wilderness Evaluation Report that addresses each of the factors of the five wilderness characteristics. This review was used to assess whether to move an area forward for recommendation or to drop it from further consideration. Upon

review it became clear that all of the areas have various strengths and weaknesses when compared to the factors and to each other. We analyzed all of the factors collectively, for each area, to gain a clear understanding of the totality of the character that the area possesses and the subsequent contribution the area would bring as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System. This analysis was used to compare characteristics between roadless areas to identify those areas that best exemplify wilderness character rather than simply moving all roadless areas forward for recommendation because they possess some level of a wilderness characteristic. The Forest Supervisor reviewed and concurred with the recommendations.

Apparent Naturalness

Few of the areas have little to no constructed features. Those few features that are present are generally not readily apparent, except in close proximity, such as administrative structures and cabins, some provide historical or cultural character, and some are generally accepted by most wilderness visitors such as foot or stock bridges. Bighorn-Weitas is an exception with three historic lookout towers, two rental cabins, an administrative site and four trail bridges.

Most of the areas have less than one percent of their area inhabited by noxious weeds. A notable exception is the North Fork Slate Creek at 15.75 percent.

Most areas have had little to no significant timber cutting. Exceptions to this include Gospel Hump, Rackliff-Gedney and West Meadow Creek which have had significant amounts of fire line construction and roadside hazard tree removal since 2008.

Nineteen of the areas have no grazing allotments. Another four areas have 6 percent or less of their area in grazing allotments. These are Eldorado Creek, Little Slate Creek North, O'Hara-Falls Creek, and West Meadow Creek. Three areas have a significant portion of their area in grazing allotments. They are North Fork Slate Creek at 100 percent, Rapid River at 75 percent and Mallard at 63 percent. The remaining seven areas have between 20 percent and 50 percent of their area in allotment. They include Clear Creek, Gospel Hump, John Day, Lick Point, Little Slate Creek, Salmon Face and Silver Creek-Pilot Knob. Besides the presence and evidence of domestic animals, management for grazing includes developments such as springs, dams, corrals, and fencing that reduce the apparent naturalness of an area.

Opportunity for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

The presence of motorized use can have a direct effect on the opportunity for solitude. Many roadless areas are bordered by roads and a few have roads into their interior (cherry stems). The sights and sounds from these motorized corridors can impede opportunity for solitude within an area. However, an area's size, configuration and topography can reduce impacts from external sources. The recreation opportunity spectrum provides a basis for examining the potential to experience motorized activity. The higher on the primitive scale the less likely motorized activity would impact opportunity for solitude. A majority of the roadless areas have a significant portion of their area in non-motorized or primitive recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) classes. These areas would present ample opportunity for solitude. Notable exceptions include Eldorado Creek and Little Slate Creek North which are fully open to motorized use by their ROS class. Additionally, six areas have more than 70 percent of their area open to motorized use. These areas include Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness, John Day, Little Slate Creek, North Fork Slate Creek and Siwash. These areas would present more limited opportunity for solitude if motorized activity is occurring in the open areas. Generally speaking, the larger an area the more opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation. However, depending on where a visitor might venture, all of the roadless areas provide some opportunity for this type of recreation experience.

Areas of at least 5,000 Acres

Three roadless areas are less than 5,000 acres in size. They are Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness—2400 acres, sharing 44 percent of its boundary with the Gospel Hump Wilderness; Selway-Bitterroot—600 acres, sharing 59 percent of its boundary with the Selway-Bitterroot wilderness, and; Lolo Creek—100 acres, not adjacent to existing wilderness, was dropped from further consideration early in the analysis. The Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness area is 84 percent in Roded Natural Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) and Selway Bitterroot is 48 percent Roded Natural ROS. Given their size, configuration and established motorized use it would be difficult to maintain their wilderness characteristics in an unimpaired condition.

Ecological, geologic, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historic value

While there is no requirement for wilderness to encompass all ecosystems, it is recognized that designated wilderness is one way to help ensure continued existence of a broad array of ecological conditions. In response to a recommendation by the Wilderness Society, we measured roadless area contribution to representation of underrepresented ecosystems. All of the roadless areas include some percentage of underrepresented ecosystems and those ecosystems may differ between areas. Areas average 66 percent in underrepresented ecosystems. Seven areas would contribute less than 50 percent of their area to underrepresented ecosystems. They are Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Hoodoo, Mallard and Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork, Rawhide, Selway-bitterroot and Sneakfoot Meadows.

Most roadless areas provide some habitat for and support the existence of whitebark pine. Four areas contain 10,000 acres or more of whitebark pine habitat—Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, East Meadow Creek, Hoodoo and West Meadow Creek. Conversely; and eight areas have no whitebark pine habitat—Clear Creek, Eldorado Creek, Lick Point, Little Slate Creek, North Fork Slate Creek, Rapid River, Salmon Face and Siwash.

Although all thirty-three roadless areas have some departure from the natural range of variability, seven areas have suffered significant disturbance, in excess of 50 percent of the area not within NRV. They are: Clear Creek, Eldorado Creek, Lick Point, Little Slate Creek, Little Slate Creek North, Lochsa and O'Hara-Dalls Creeek.

Five areas have either a potential national register district or known sacred site. These consist of: Bighorn-Weitas, North Lochsa Slope, North Fork Slate Creek, Rackliff-Gedney and Silver Creek-Pilot Knob. Seven areas contribute historical or tribal significance as identified in the Idaho Roadless Rule. They are Bighorn-Weitas, Eldorado Creek, Hoodoo, Lochsa Face, North Lochsa Slope, Silver Creek-Pilot Knob and Weir-Post Office Creek. Twenty-four areas have been identified as having no potential national register districts, no known sacred sites nor were identified in the Idaho Roadless Rule as a special area.

The water quality review focused on how well river reaches are supporting beneficial uses. Fifteen areas contain rivers that were found not to support at least one beneficial use. They include Bighorn-Weitas, Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Eldorado Creek, Gospel Hump, Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness, Hoodoo, Lick Point, Mallard Larkins, Lochsa Face, Pot Mountain, Rackliff-Gedney Silver Creek-Pilot Knob, Siwash, West Fork Crooked River and West Meadow Creek.

Watershed condition was reviewed to assess watershed health and integrity. All of the roadless areas generally have healthy watershed conditions with properly functioning condition and minimal human

impact. However, two areas were found to have at least some river reaches with impaired function, including Silver Creek-Pilot Knob and Dixie Summit-Nut Hill.

Manageability and Boundaries

An area's shape, juxtaposition to other areas, boundary features and size can affect impacts on wilderness character and agency ability to manage the area as wilderness. Roadless areas large in size or adjacent to other wilderness and roadless areas present the best opportunity to maintain wilderness character and facilitate management of an area as wilderness. Areas adjacent to agency-administered front country provide the next best opportunity for successful wilderness management, but still could pose management challenges. Areas small in size or adjacent to state or private lands can pose management difficulty as the Forest Service has no control of activities on those lands that may impact wilderness character. Eighteen areas have a preponderance of their boundary either adjacent to USFS front country or state or private lands. They are; Bighorn-Weitas, Clear Creek, Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Eldorado Creek, Gospel Hump, John Day, Lick Point, Little Slate Creek, Little Slate Creek North, Mallard Larkins, North Fork Slate Creek, O'Hara-Falls Creek, Salmon Face, Silver Creek-Pilot Knob, Siwash, Weir-Post Office Creek, West Fork Crooked River and West Meadow Creek.

There are numerous unpatented mining claims throughout Nez Perce-Clearwater. Areas with a high density of claims tend to be in historic mining districts which continue to be open to mineral entry. Seven roadless areas contain mining claims. These include Bighorn-Weitas, Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Gospel Hump, Hoodoo, Mallard Larkins, Moose Mountain and West Fork Crooked River. Four of these areas contain 97 percent of the mining claims and present the highest likelihood of continued mining related activity. These include Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Gospel Hump, Moose Mountain and West Fork Crooked River.

Motorized trail use is ubiquitous throughout the national forest. However, site-specific data is lacking to present an accurate assessment of that use. There are over 400 miles of motorized trails scattered through the roadless areas on the national forest. While an attempt was made to use pre-travel planning trail miles, this metric proved to provide little value to the evaluation. Likewise, the public requested analysis of mountain bike use on Nez Perce-Clearwater. Anecdotally, mountain bike use is known to be increasing on the national forest. Unfortunately, no data exists to accurately account for where and how much use is occurring. There are also numerous groomed snowmobile trails in proximity to several roadless areas and snowmobile play areas adjacent to and within several of the areas. Once motorized uses are established in an area it is difficult to change recreational access through management. Although established motorized use does not preclude consideration it presents a management challenge. Nine areas have established snowmobiling near groomed trail systems. They are Bighorn-Weitas, Dixie Summit-Nut Hill, Gospel Hump, Hoodoo, Lick Point, Mallard, North Fork Spruce-White Sand, Sneakfoot Meadows and West Meadow Creek.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Following are the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the evaluation process.

Bighorn-Weitas – Recommend moving forward in analysis

This area has the most constructed features of all the roadless areas. However, most of these structures and cabins are being excluded from the area via cherry stems, and a majority of the other structures are trail bridges. No grazing occurs and very little of the area is impacted by noxious weeds, firelines or tree harvest. Over 60 percent of the area is within the natural range of variability (NRV), which is about

average for all the areas. Approximately 63 percent is in underrepresented ecosystems, about average. A 400-acre Research Natural Area is located in the area. A portion of the area has been identified as having historical or tribal significance. Generally, this portion is associated with the Nez Perce Trail. Much of the area is adjacent to USFS front country but the ratio of boundary to area is very small indicating that boundary management will not be a critical issue. Natural integrity occurs when high ecological processes are functioning with little human impact. The large size contributes to wilderness character and opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. Over snow and summer motorized use are established on portions of the area and mountain biking is increasing on some trails. If this area is recommended for wilderness this use will present management difficulties.

Clear Creek – Recommend dropping from further consideration

This relatively small area with an irregular, imprecise, boundary is bordered by private land and front country and is within domestic grazing allotments. The sights and sounds of past and current activities are prevalent, reducing opportunity for solitude through much of the area, particularly in the northern portion. Evidence of cattle grazing, adjacent past harvest activity and presence of a variety of noxious weeds affect the apparent naturalness. Lack of large wood debris, poor riparian vegetation condition, road-related impacts and wide-spread terrestrial invasive plants are impacting two streams, 37 percent of the area, to the point that they are functioning at risk. While the vast majority of this area includes underrepresented ecosystems, approximately 60 percent of the area is outside of the natural range of variability, reflecting the extent of human intervention. Additionally, with approximately 25 percent of the area in a Community Protection Zone, agency responsibility to protect adjacent lands from fire would make it difficult allow fire to play its natural role, further impacting the natural integrity of the area. In consideration of the generally reduced wilderness character and current uses of the area I feel management of this area consistent with Idaho Roadless Rule MA2, Backcountry Restoration direction will best meet the goals, objectives and desired condition of the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

Dixie Summit-Nut Hill - Recommend dropping from further consideration

The relatively small size and narrow configuration, together with nearby roads and logging activity, limits opportunities for solitude in this area. Sights and sounds of adjacent activities are apparent in many places. Ranches in Red River Valley and past timber management are visible from the ridge top. Although it is small, it has a large number of active mining claims (27) in an historic mining district.

Opportunities for unconfined recreation are limited. Most use in the area is hunting and fishing in association with camping and horseback riding. However, winter and summer motorized recreation use is increasing in the general area with some incursions into the IRA. Easy access via groomed snowmobile routes and the proximity of this roadless area to the small communities, make this area a natural draw for snowmobilers in the open meadows and other open areas from recent fires. Motorized recreation provides a significant contribution to the economic health and lifestyle of Dixie, Orogrande, and other nearby communities. This recurrent activity would be challenging to restrict.

A 1,000-acre Research Natural Area is located in the wet meadows along Moose Meadow Creek and its tributaries. It includes the stream network itself, and the nearby forest of lodgepole pine, subalpine fir, and Engelmann spruce. This special area provides opportunity for observation, research and protection of natural processes in this ecosystem.

Watershed condition is functioning at risk or impaired in a majority of the watersheds in the area. Due, in part to mining activity, nearly 12 miles of stream are no longer supporting beneficial uses and at least some river reaches have impaired function.

Water quality problems, poor channel conditions, stream flow departure, insufficient large wood debris, riparian vegetation condition, open road density, road miles in close proximity to water, roads located on mass wasting areas, soil erosion, soil contamination, and high tree mortality from insects and disease contribute to the lower ratings.

This area has a narrow configuration, gentle topography, and reduced wilderness characteristics as discussed here and in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. The area is nearby and accessible to local communities that are largely dependent on motorized recreation for economic stability and there is a well-established agency supported snowmobile use adjacent to the area. Collectively, this demonstrates this is an area appropriate for uses and activities in non-wilderness. Additionally, managing this area as wilderness would be challenging due to the need to protect the nearby communities of Orogrande and Dixie-Comstock from wildfire. For these reasons, the Dixie Summit-Nut Hill IRA is not well suited as a recommended wilderness area. Management of this area consistent with Idaho Roadless Rule MA2, predominantly Backcountry Restoration direction will best meet the goals, objectives and desired condition of the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

East Meadow Creek - Recommend moving forward in analysis

East Meadow Creek has no grazing and little impact from noxious weeds, firelines, or timber harvest. Two thirds of the area support underrepresented ecosystems and it has a significant amount of whitebark pine habitat. Virtually all of the area is in an IRR Primitive theme with 500 acres in a Research Natural Area. A majority of the area (71 percent) is within the NRV. Water quality and watershed condition are high. The Meadow Creek Ranger Station is in this area. It is accessed by trail and adds historic as well as aesthetic character. There are four trail bridges that provide user convenience as well as resource protection. A majority of the area is in primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) and there is no established snowmobile use. However, there are two roads that intrude into the area. They have been cherry-stemmed out, so they are not technically in the roadless area. Sights and sounds along these road corridors could affect opportunity for solitude in the area. Impacts on this area have been very light and the area appears natural. Natural integrity and ecological processes are intact and operating naturally.

Eldorado Creek - Recommend dropping from further consideration

Eldorado Creek is one of the smallest roadless areas on the Nez Perce National Forest and is primarily surrounded by front country lands. The area is affected by roads and motorized trails surrounding it, with minor interior use, and does not provide primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity settings. Solitude is virtually nonexistent because of the small size and narrow shape of the area. A trail open to motorized use crosses the southern portion of the area. Recent fires (Boundary Fire and Pete Forks Fire) have contributed to reduced solitude due to greater visibility across the area. Eighty-eight percent of the area is adjacent to front country lands and associated roads and timber harvesting activities. Because of this lack of solitude and other diminished values associated with wilderness character, opportunity for primitive and unconfined experiences are also very limited.

The water quality in the Eldorado Creek Roadless Area is generally high, although a total of 9.1 miles of stream are listed as impaired (class 4A) for water temperature and do not support beneficial uses. Additionally, portions of Austin Creek, Eldorado Creek, Six-Bit Creek, Wapiti Creek and an unnamed water body do not support *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses, but are fully supporting the beneficial use of *secondary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017). Ninety-nine percent of the area has a Watershed Condition Class 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk.

There are numerous roads and motorized trails adjacent to and within the area. Cultural and historic values are present with the Lolo Trail and Lewis and Clark Trail that traverse the area along the east side parallel to the Lolo Motorway. The historical nature of the area, ample roads and trails along with vehicle-accessible campsites, provide a high-quality setting and opportunity that draws motorized and non-motorized recreationists consistent with a semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) class.

Eldorado Creek is in a cedar-hemlock-pine ecosystem, a mesic mixed conifer ecosystem. This particular species combination was very common on the Clearwater National Forest up to the 1970's. A unique feature of these stands is that they were dominated by large western white pine. However, with logging and, more importantly, the arrival of white pine blister rust, these stands were impacted to the point that this condition no longer exists. Without this western white pine component, there is nothing unique about western red cedar-hemlock stands outside of old growth stands. Although 80 percent of the area is in underrepresented ecological types, the pronounced absence of western white pine and altered vegetative conditions make the area a poor representative of this type. Reestablishing western white pine is a large part of the restoration strategy on Nez Perce-Clearwater.

Given the summation of these conditions, Eldorado Creek IRA is lacking in high quality wilderness character. Solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, ecological conditions, and boundary management are all compromised. The surrounding area is popular for motorized and non-motorized recreation and draws outdoor enthusiasts that enjoy the access provided by a well-established road and trail system. With the area practically surrounded by Management Area 3, the sights and sounds of management and recreational activities can be expected to continue to impact this area into the future.

The Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark, Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Nez Perce National Historic Trail bring special significance to this area. As such the area draws history seekers and cultural practitioners. The corridor around these features is managed with emphasis given to these exceptional cultural and historic values as well as providing opportunity for the public to enjoy them.

For the above stated reasons, the Eldorado Creek IRA is not well suited as a recommended wilderness area. Management of this area consistent with Idaho Roadless Rule MA2, Backcountry Restoration direction, along with special considerations within the Lolo Trail National Historic Landmark, will best meet the goals, objectives and desired condition of the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

Gospel Hump - Recommend dropping from further consideration

The Gospel Hump Roadless Area joins the Frank Church—River of No Return Wilderness boundary along the Salmon River breaks for approximately 20 percent of its boundary. Areas proximate to this shared boundary and portions of the interior offer opportunity for solitude and unconfined recreation. However, much of the boundary of this IRA is formed by roads, and four road corridors intrude into the area providing roaded access for fishing, hunting, camping, horseback riding, hiking, snowmobiling, motorcycling and ATV riding. Portions of the IRA in proximity to these roaded corridors have reduced opportunities for solitude and quiet recreation. The area is adjacent to groomed snowmobile routes managed as a long-term partnership between the Forest Service, the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Idaho County and a local snowmobile club. Recent wildfires have created new openings near these groomed routes, which, coupled with gentle to rolling terrain, provide desirable conditions and attract snowmobilers. The Mammoth Mountain area is a popular snowmobiling area. With 4,570 acres of modeled whitebark pine habitat this area could provide an opportunity for restorative work for this declining species.

The area has 177 mining claims, a majority of the mining claims in roadless areas on Nez Perce-Clearwater and is a well-established mining district. Evidence of past fire suppression activities, and intrusions into the area including domestic waterlines, grazing, a variety of noxious weeds, as well as the sights and sounds from adjacent roads. These activities and impacts reduce the apparent naturalness of the area, opportunity for solitude.

The Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980 designated more than 2 million acres of roadless lands as the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Through that legislative process an additional 1 million adjacent acres were considered but not designated. The Gospel Hump roadless area was part of that area. While no legislative language addresses these acres, the Committee Report indicates that the intent for the land surrounding the proposed wilderness was to be managed for multiple use and not be further considered for wilderness.

Although the area is generally ecologically healthy with 64 percent within the natural range of variation and high water quality, it does not represent the best of wilderness character with its lack of geologic, scientific, educational, scenic or historical value. It also provides limited opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. This is in large part due to the popularity of the surrounding area for motorized recreation, mining activities, fire suppression activities in the community protection zone and, generally, the sights and sounds associated with use of adjacent roads that border, and intrude into, much of the area.

For these reasons, the Gospel Hump Roadless Area is not best suited as a recommended wilderness area. Management of this area consistent with Idaho Roadless Rule MA2, predominantly Backcountry Restoration direction will best meet the goals, objectives and desired condition of the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness – Recommend dropping from further consideration

The Gospel-Hump, Adjacent to Wilderness Roadless Area is a 2,400-acre piece of land adjacent to the Gospel-Hump Wilderness which was not included in the wilderness legislation. This is a strip of land ranging from 200 feet wide along road #222 to approximately 0.8 miles wide. This area currently provides a transition zone between Roads #311 and #222 and the Gospel-Hump Wilderness boundary.

Overall, long-term ecological processes are intact and operating in this IRA. There is little noxious weed infestation and water quality is generally high in 40 percent of the area. Thirty percent of the area consists of underrepresented ecological types. However, 44 percent of the area is outside the natural range of variation, in large part due to fire suppression which has altered the balance of species. Fifty-eight percent, Upper Crooked Creek, has a watershed condition class 2 rating, indicating it is functioning at risk and 1.5 miles of other streams are listed as impaired for water temperature. Portions of Crooked Creek and Lemon Creek do not support *salmonid spawning* or *cold water aquatic life* beneficial uses, but do support *secondary contact recreation* (Lucas 2017).

Most of the roadless area is affected by roads, primarily Road #222 and Road #311 that define the eastern boundary, providing a roaded natural recreation setting. Although the forest is dense in many places, the sights and sounds of vehicles on these roads affect the opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined experience. This includes the sights and sounds from residents and visitors to Dixie and the use of the Dixie airstrip and Dixie work center, which can become a hub of activity during fire season. Boundaries of this area are well defined by roads on the east, north and south by roads and by the wilderness boundary to the west.

Given its size, narrow configuration and juxtaposition to open, well-traveled roads the Gospel Hump Adjacent to Wilderness provides little opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. There are no lakes or outstandingly remarkable recreation values, although Crooked Creek is seasonally floatable for some. There are no outstanding ecological, geological or other features or scientific, educational, scenic or historical value. With a preponderance of lodgepole pine along with spruce and alpine fir at higher elevations, the area offers little diversity from the surrounding area.

Given the lack of distinguishing features, and noise and visual intrusions from external activities, that impede solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and apparent naturalness, the Gospel-Hump Adjacent to Wilderness is lacking in wilderness character sufficient to warrant recommending for wilderness. Management of this area consistent with Idaho Roadless Rule MA2, Backcountry Restoration direction will best meet the goals, objectives and desired condition of the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

Hoodoo - Recommend moving forward in analysis

This area has no grazing, very little noxious weed infestation and minimal fireline construction or timber harvest. Ninety-nine percent of the area is in IRR Wildland Recreation theme indicating little evidence of human-caused disturbance and natural conditions and processes are predominant. Eighty-six percent of the area is in Primitive or Semi-primitive Non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS). A portion of the area has well established snowmobile use and some summer motorized use. Seven mining claims are known to exist in the area. Approximately 42 percent of the area is in underrepresented ecosystems and the area provides over 17,000 acres of whitebark pine habitat. Seventy-three percent of the area is within the NRV, suggesting ecological processes and natural integrity are intact and functioning. A portion of the area has been identified as having historical or tribal significance associated with the Nez Perce Trail. Water quality and watershed health are both high. Fifty-eight percent of the boundary adjoins other roadless areas and forty-two percent abuts USFS front country. Due to its size and configuration the boundary to area ratio is very low, minimizing opportunity for external activities affecting opportunity for solitude in the interior of the area. However, snowmobiling and summer motorized use occurs either within the recommended area or adjacent to it. This use would reduce opportunity for solitude for visitors in proximity to the activity. The established motorized use will present boundary management challenges to prevent trespass into the recommended area. Natural integrity, apparent naturalness and opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation are high in a majority of the area.

John Day - Recommend dropping from further consideration

Human activities are not far away from this area as it is located on the Nez Perce-Clearwater national forest boundary. The impacts from motorized use are noticeable, as are off-site intrusions. Roads and logging on adjacent lands are visible from nearly all viewpoints. A jeep trail runs from Nut Basin to Chair Point via Southwest Butte, causing locally heavy impacts. Off-road vehicle use affects other parts of the area. The location along the top of a ridgeline, coupled with open vegetation with few trees, limit the opportunity for solitude. Hunting is the major recreational use of the area.

All of the roadless area overlaps with livestock grazing allotments. The primary range is generally located below 4,500 feet with transitory range occurring over 4,500 feet. All of the HUC 12 sub-watersheds in the area have a watershed condition class rating of 2, indicating fair condition but functioning at risk. Although a majority of the area is within the natural range of variability and 54 percent of the area consists of underrepresented ecological types. There are no significant ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic or historical values and the area generally provides little in wilderness character.

Lick Point - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This is a small area that is predominantly adjacent to front country and is bounded by roads that are part of a groomed snowmobile route that provides snowmobile access into the area. Ninety-nine percent of this area is within a grazing allotment (47 percent active, 51 percent vacant). Evidence of this activity is obvious from trails, fences, exclosures and seasonal presence of cattle. Opportunity for solitude is limited due to this allotment activity as well as external sights and sounds from the adjacent roads. Ninety-eight percent of the area is in underrepresented ecosystems, however fifty-nine percent of the area is outside the natural range of variation and the major watershed in the area has a watershed condition class 2 - fair condition, functioning at risk. With these impacts, wilderness characteristics are compromised and do not reflect high wilderness character.

For these reasons, the Lick Point Roadless Area is not a strong candidate for a recommended wilderness area. Management of this area consistent with Idaho Roadless Rule MA2, predominantly Backcountry Restoration direction will best meet the goals, objectives and desired condition of the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

Little Slate Creek - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This area has two grazing allotments that overlap with 81 percent of the roadless area. Primary range is on south slopes below 4,500 feet and on north slopes below 3,000 feet. Transitory range is above 4,500 feet and on ridgetops. The sights and sounds of cattle and the associated range improvements are obvious to people in the roadless area. Other than trails and grazing, the area has been little impacted and appears natural.

The area offers little opportunity for solitude. It is almost impossible not to notice off-site intrusions such as lookout towers, roads, old clearcuts, and present logging activity from most parts of the area because these impacts are an integral part of it. Although topographic and vegetative screening are moderate over most of the area, there is little diversity and challenge.

The recreation opportunity setting for most of the area is roaded natural or semi-primitive motorized. This is due to the proximity of main Forest access roads and secondary roads. A relatively small portion (20 percent) of the interior is far enough from the sights and sounds of roads to provide a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation setting.

The Little Slate Creek Roadless Area shares most of its boundary (77 percent) with front country and 23 percent with other roadless area to the north and south. The area is a few miles from the National Forest boundary. The difference in fire management policies between front country and wilderness and the relatively small size of the roadless area, would make it challenging to allow fire to play a natural role in the ecosystem. The northern boundary of this area is Slate Creek which is easy to locate. The remaining boundary is irregular, drawn mostly to exclude existing roads and timber sale areas.

The area is currently managed under the backcountry restoration theme of the Idaho Roadless Rule. Given the fact there is little opportunity for solitude, grazing occurs over most of the area, the sights and sounds of external activities are prevalent this area does not provide high wilderness character. Additionally, wildfire would likely not be allowed to play its natural role which would likely further reduce its naturalness. For these reasons Little Slate Creek IRA would best meet Forest objectives through management under the backcountry restoration theme.

Little Slate Creek North - Recommend dropping from further consideration

The 5,900-acre Little Slate Creek North Roadless Area was split from the Little Slate Creek Roadless Area during the Idaho Roadless rule EIS analysis due to the amount of development. Timber harvest has occurred on a small portion of the area along adjacent roads, as part of a roadside hazard tree reduction project which cut trees up to 200 feet from roads.

The recreation opportunity setting for most (81 percent) of the area is roaded natural. Management activities are present on almost every side and apparent from much of the area. With its small size and proximity to primary forest roads, there is limited opportunity to get very far from the influence of roads so the opportunity for solitude is limited.

A 1,200-acre Research Natural Area is located in No Business Creek that affords protection for Maidenhair fern, which is near the southern extreme of this plant's range. Seventy-four percent of the area is outside the natural range of variability. This is due in large part to fire suppression and the progression of stands towards a species composition with more Douglas-fir and grand fir on sites typically dominated by open Ponderosa pine. Therefore, while the area may appear to be in a natural condition, it is in fact severally altered from would naturally occur on these sites.

For these reasons, Little Slate Creek North does not possess high wilderness character and would not be a strong candidate for wilderness. Management of this area consistent with Idaho Roadless Rule MA2, predominantly Backcountry Restoration direction, along with the protections and opportunities of the Research Natural Area, will best meet the goals, objectives and desired condition of the Nez Perce-Clearwater.

Lochsa Face - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This area is about average in underrepresented ecosystems but contains 5,500 area of whitebark pine habitat. Because of its configuration the area has a large boundary to area ratio. However, only 24 percent of the boundary is adjacent to USFS front country, and that is the Lochsa W&S River. Therefore, boundary management would not be an issue. However, noise from Highway 12 penetrates deep into this area reducing opportunity for solitude except in the deeper side drainages. No mining claims or grazing occur in the area, however over the snow travel, including snow mobiles and snow bikes is increasing. This use would present management challenges. There is some infestation of noxious weeds and some roadside timber harvest, but overall the area is high in apparent naturalness. Although less than half of the area is within the NRV, the area has been lightly impacted by past human activity. More recent, there has been use of management fire to maintain vegetation composition and structure for wildlife. Much of the area is popular for hunting and the Warm Springs Creek drainage is heavily used and impacted by visitors to the hot springs.

With the pervasive noise from Highway 12 that penetrates into much of the area, and high levels of recreational use associated with the hot springs on Warm Springs Creek, this area offers limited opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience. With the Idaho Roadless Rule themes of Backcountry Restoration, Primitive and Special Area of Historic and Tribal Significance, and lower portions in a recreational classified Wild and Scenic River, along with the high recreational use of the area, presence of a manned lookout tower and recreation rental cabin and suppression wildfire response tactics, the area requires management actions inconsistent with wilderness character, the area offers transition from the busy Highway 12 and Lochsa River corridor to the wildness of the Selway

Bitterroot Wilderness. Therefore, it is more appropriate for this area to be managed under its Idaho Roadless Rule themes than as recommended wilderness.

Mallard – Recommend dropping from further consideration

Almost half of this area abuts the FCRNR Wilderness with the other half adjoining front country. Additionally, a small area of residences and ranches adjoin the area. Grazing occurs in the meadows in the area. The southern boundary is one of the few roads that provides year-round access to the Salmon River and a popular outfitter ranch. There is high potential for external activities intruding into the interior of much of this area. Opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is compromised by sights and sounds of these external activities. Wildfires are common and there has been significant fireline construction and some roadside harvest associated with past wildfire suppression and protection of adjacent private land. Snowmobiling is well established and increasing as fire opens more terrain in the area and summer motorized use is increasing as well. Road #468 - Magruder Road and Road #421 are popular routes for access to the Salmon River and into Montana. Vegetation and terrain are very typical of the surrounding area, with rolling hills with Engelmann spruce in wetter areas and lodgepole dominating the drier ridges in a mosaic of age classes as a result of regular fire activity. There is little that distinguishes this area from the surrounding area. Its wilderness character is compromised by the motorized activities that occur around and within the area. Fire management activities will continue to be focused on protection of the nearby residences and ranches including vegetation management to reduce fire behavior and its impacts. For these reasons this area would best meet the goals for the Nez Perce-Clearwater if it stays in an IRR Backcountry and General Forest theme landscape.

Mallard Larkins – Recommend moving forward in analysis

Most of this area is primitive and semi primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS), however there is known incursions from summer motorized use. The southern boundary abuts front country, but the remainder of the boundary adjoins an IPNF recommended wilderness area. Forty-seven percent is in an IIR theme of Wild Land Recreation and 25 percent in a Primitive theme. Natural integrity and ecological processes are high and functioning with little human influence. About half of the area is in underrepresented ecosystems and it contains 2,159 acres of whitebark pine habitat. It is 75 percent within NRV, this is above average as compared to the other roadless areas. There is no grazing, no snowmobiling and one mining claim. There is high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation and high in apparent natural naturalness.

Meadow Creek – Upper North Fork - Recommend moving forward in analysis

Eighty-one percent of this area is primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized. Eighty-one percent of the area is within the NRV and it has a small amount whitebark pine habitat. Ninety-nine percent of the area is in an IRR Primitive theme. This area adjoins front country along 43 percent of its boundary. The remainder abuts IPNF recommended wilderness or other roadless areas. Due to its configuration, topography and high boundary to area ratio there is high opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation and reduced boundary management concerns. There is some summer motorized use but there is no known recurring snowmobiling activity. There is no grazing, no fireline or timber harvest and no mining claims. Considering all of this, apparent naturalness is high in this area, ecological processes are functioning, and natural integrity is high.

Moose Mountain - Recommend moving forward in analysis

Two thirds of this area is primitive or semi-primitive non-motorized, and 28 percent is roaded natural due to its west boundary close proximity to and paralleling FR 250 and southern boundary along FR 255. With its small size and proximity to roads there is reduced opportunity for solitude. However, interior access to this area is limited thereby providing a high opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation. There are no structures or cabins, no grazing, no snowmobiling and minimal summer motorized incursions. There is a high number of mining claims and evidence of past mining activity, but little recent activity. There is little departure from the NRV (24 percent) and approximately half of the area is in underrepresented ecosystems. Except for some evidence of past human activity, apparent naturalness and natural integrity are high and ecological processes are functioning naturally.

North Fork Slate Creek - Recommend dropping from further consideration

Two thirds of this area adjoin front country and another 12 percent abuts private land. The entire area is in an active grazing allotment and fifteen percent of the area supports noxious weeds—the highest of all the roadless areas. The recreation opportunity settings are influenced by Road #354, a primary Forest access route, which forms its southern boundary. Most of the area provides a motorized setting, based on distance from roads and trails open to motorized use. This along with its small size and configuration reduces the opportunity for solitude, primitive and unconfined recreation, and apparent naturalness. While 95 percent is in underrepresented ecosystems, nearly a third is outside the NRV. There are no mining claims, no structures and no snowmobiling. Impacts from human activity, primarily grazing, has affected the apparent naturalness and natural integrity of the area. For these reasons the area would best serve the national forest managed under MA2 direction of the IRR Backcountry Restoration theme.

North Fork Spruce – White Sand - Recommend moving forward in analysis

Two thirds of this area abut wilderness or other roadless areas and one third adjoins front country. There are no structures, no mining claims, no grazing. There is a history of snowmobiling in the area and a minimum of summer motorized incursions into the area. Mountain biking is also increasing in popularity in the area. Two roads intrude into the area that affect natural integrity, solitude in areas proximate to them. With some boundary adjustment to address the intrusive roads, due to its configuration and adjacency to wilderness, boundary management would pose little problem and opportunity for solitude would be improved. Two thirds of the area is in underrepresented ecosystems and 63 percent is within the NRV. The area has 4,776 acres of whitebark pine habitat. Natural integrity is generally high, opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is high and apparent naturalness is high.

North Lochsa Slope - Recommend moving forward in analysis

Approximately 40 percent of the area is adjacent to front country with the rest adjoining other roadless areas or wilderness. Seventy percent of the area is in the IRR Primitive Theme and 12 percent in Special Area—Historical and Tribal Significance. Several low standard roads intrude into the area. The Highway 12 corridor provides the southern boundary and the Lolo Motorway provides much of the northwest boundary. There are no mining claims, no grazing and no snowmobiling, although there is a groomed snowmobile trail along the north boundary. There are 14,300 acres of historical or tribal significance associated with the Lolo Trail, Lolo Motorway and Lewis and Clark route. Physical evidence of man's activities is present, however their impacts are relatively minor to the natural integrity of the area. While there are areas that provide opportunity for solitude, the presence of roads on the ridgetops and noise from

highway 12 reduces this opportunity. Boundary management concerns could be reduced and opportunity for solitude could be increased by boundary adjustment to address impacts from interior roads, but this would greatly reduce the size of this area. Sixty-three percent of the area is within the NRV and 73 percent is in underrepresented ecosystems. There is a 1,300-acre research natural area within the area. Natural integrity is high and ecological processes are functioning naturally.

O'Hara – Falls Creek - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This relatively small area is surrounded by roads and 80 percent of its boundary is adjacent to front country. The northeast boundary is along the roaded portion of the Selway W&SR with a popular campground located just outside of the roadless area. Noise and activity along these roads and from the campground limit the opportunity for solitude in this area. Fourteen percent of the area is within an active grazing allotment. Fifty-seven percent is outside the NRV. Noxious weeds are prevalent on a small portion of the area and fire line construction and roadside timber harvest reduce the apparent naturalness of some of the area.

The 6,600-acre O'Hara Research Natural Area (RNA), established in 1980, is contained within this roadless area and provides protection for tree rare plant species and one threatened species that have been located in this RNA. No areas of historical or tribal significance are present. The impacts associated with the surrounding activities and grazing within the area compromise the apparent naturalness, solitude and opportunity for primitive and unconfined recreation. The rare and threatened plant communities are protected within the RNA and need no further protection afforded through recommendation for wilderness. For these reasons the area would best meet the desired condition, goals, and objectives of Nez Perce-Clearwater if it remains under management in accordance with MA2, under the IRR Backcountry Restoration theme.

Pot Mountain - Recommend moving forward in analysis

This area is a very compact, almost round shaped roadless area. About half the area abuts roadless areas and half abuts front country. The low boundary to area ratio and lack of motorized use in the area reduces boundary management issues. There are no structures, no mining claims, no grazing and no snowmobiling in the area. There is minor disturbance to the natural integrity of the area. Configuration and topography provide increased opportunity for solitude. Fifty-nine percent is within the NRV and 71 percent of the area is in underrepresented ecosystems. There are 1,444 acres of noxious weeds along road corridors around the perimeter of the area that presents management concerns. There are no firelines or timber harvest. Despite the roadside noxious weed infestation, natural integrity and apparent naturalness are high.

Rackliff – Gedney - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This area is bounded by Highway 12 to the west and FR 223—Selway River Road to the south. Additionally, two roads intrude extensively into the area—FR 317 - Coolwater Road and FR 319 - Fog Mountain Road. The Boyd-Glover Roundtop trail is a National Recreation Trail open to motorcycle use. About four miles of fire line and 200 acres of roadside hazard tree removal are present. Noxious weeds cover about 2 percent of the area. The area includes one administrative building, Coolwater Lookout—a snow-measuring installation and repeater site. Collectively, these improvements and impacts reduce apparent naturalness and opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation. With these many intrusions the area is a poor candidate for recommended wilderness and best meets the Nez Perce-Clearwater desired conditions managed under the IRR Backcountry Restoration theme.

Rapid River - Recommend moving forward in analysis

This roadless area is adjacent to Hells Canyon Wilderness and surrounds the Rapid River W&S River. The total roadless area is 78,700 acres with 21,000 acres on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and 57,700 acres on the Payette National Forest. The Payette National Forest does not recommend that portion for wilderness. Eighty-seven percent of the portion of the area on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest is in active grazing allotments. There are no cabins or lookouts but there are two stock bridges across Rapid River. There is no mining, no firelines and no timber harvest. Ninety-three percent of the area is in semi-primitive non-motorized or primitive recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS). Seventy-five percent is underrepresented ecosystems and 79 percent is within the NRV, although there is no whitebark pine habitat. Except for the evidence of grazing, the apparent naturalness and natural integrity are generally high and the area has a high opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation.

Rawhide - Recommend moving forward in analysis

This 6,000-acre roadless area lies between two other roadless areas, sharing 75 percent of its boundary with them. Much of the area burned in the early 1900's and ecological processes have continued with little impact from human activity. Eighty-seven percent of the area is within the NRV and the area provides a small amount of whitebark pine habitat. There are no structures, mining claims, fire lines, timber harvest or grazing. Apparent naturalness is high. About half of the area provides a roaded natural setting. The remainder provides a semi-primitive non-motorized recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS). The eastern boundary is adjacent to a high speed, well-traveled road. Sights and sounds from this road impact most of the area and reduce the opportunity for solitude. However, its juxtaposition between two other roadless areas warrants further consideration.

Salmon Face - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This roadless area is adjacent to the Hells Canyon Wilderness to the west but the majority of its boundary is adjacent to front country. Ninety-nine percent of the area is in an active grazing allotment and contains several developed springs, dams, corrals, and fences. Apparent naturalness is greatly reduced by these developed facilities. Other than these range improvements, there are no structures, mining claims, fire lines or timber harvest. There are some minor noxious weed infestations. Sixty-eight percent of the boundary is with front country and its shape creates a moderate boundary to area ratio. Because of its topography, configuration and location much of the area suffers impacts from nearby roads and other external sights and sounds that reduce the opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation across much of the area. The Race Creek, Lower Rapid River, and Squaw Creek subwatersheds (99 percent of roadless area) have a WCC 2 rating, which indicates they are in Fair Condition, but Functioning at Risk. These subwatersheds received a lower rating due to some of its streams being impaired for water quality and not meeting beneficial uses and over 25 percent of native vegetation attributes along stream corridors and wetland areas in poor condition. For these reasons, overall wilderness character and wildness is reduced and the area would better serve the Nez Perce-Clearwater managed under MA2 direction with an IRR Backcountry restoration theme.

Selway-Bitterroot - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This is a small, 600-acre, area adjacent to the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. Ninety-five percent of the area is within the NRV with a small amount of whitebark pine habitat. Less than a third is in underrepresented ecosystems. No structures, mining, grazing, fire lines, timber harvest or motorized use in the area. With natural processes in place and lack of developments in the area apparent naturalness is high. The area is evenly split between providing semi-primitive non-motorized and roaded natural ROS.

The portion of the area in proximity to the Lost Horse Creek Road suffers reduced opportunity for solitude. Although the area doesn't meet the minimum size requirement for recommended wilderness, its adjacency to existing wilderness and high wilderness character suggests it is a reasonable addition to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. While the area has wilderness characteristics, a previous decision had been made to defer action on this area until the Bitterroot National Forest makes a determination for management of their adjacent area.

Silver Creek-Pilot Knob - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This roadless area is surrounded by Forest Service front country. It has a road in its interior that accesses a lookout and electronic site containing several buildings. This road and ridgetop structures are readily apparent within the area. Two thirds of the area are in semi-primitive non-motorized ROS. However, sights and sounds from perimeter roads and the one interior road greatly reduce the opportunity for solitude through much of the area. Fifty-seven percent of the area is in active grazing allotments and forty-three percent in vacant allotments. Over half the area is outside the NRV. There are no structures, mining or motorized use of the area but there has been a minor amount of fire line construction. The area has the most miles of impaired streams of all the roadless areas on Nez Perce-Clearwater. The area has tribal significance as a sacred site and the northeastern boundary is the historic Nez Perce Trail and later as the Elk City Wagon Road. Wilderness character and wildness are significantly compromised by the roads, ridgetop developments and grazing activity. The area best meets Forest desired conditions, goals and objectives under current management under MA2, IRR Special Area of Historic or Tribal Significance theme.

Siwash - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This relatively small area shares 38 percent of its boundary with the Pot Mountain Roadless Area. The remainder is front country. A jeep trail goes through a portion of the area to the Clarke Mountain lookout which is inactive either as an administrative facility or rental cabin. There are no mining claims, grazing, firelines or timber harvest. Seventy percent of the area is either semi-primitive motorized or roaded natural recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS). Due to its small size, configuration and proximity to a major road and management activities in the adjacent front country, most of the area is affected by external sights and sounds that greatly reduce the apparent naturalness, opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. There are no areas of historical or tribal significance. Nearly half the area is within the NRV but there are no outstanding ecological or geological features. This area does not possess high wilderness character nor would it make a significant or quality contribution to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The area would best meet the Nez Perce-Clearwater desired condition, goals and objectives under current management as MA2, IRR Backcountry Restoration theme.

Sneakfoot Meadows - Recommend moving forward in analysis

This area shares 49 percent of its boundary with other roadless area, 37 percent with wilderness. Fourteen percent abuts front country and a very small piece of private land. Sixty-five percent of the area is within the NRV and there are over 5,000 acres of whitebark pine habitat. Apparent naturalness and natural integrity are high. The area resembles the adjacent Selway-Bitterroot wilderness. There are no administrative structures, cabins, mining or grazing but there is a minimal amount of fireline construction and roadside timber harvest. There is a SNOTEL site at Savage Pass under a special use permit to the USGS. This site is small in scale and not readily apparent. The area is 72 percent semi-primitive non-motorized and 27 percent semi-primitive motorized. Some snowmobile use occurs in the area. The area

has high water quality and watershed condition. Because of topography and vegetation external sights and sounds do not impact far into the area. The opportunity for solitude and primitive recreation is high.

Weir-Post Office Creek - Recommend dropping from further consideration

This area shares 69 percent of its boundary with front country and the remainder adjacent to a roadless area. The area is bounded on the south by Highway 12. The Lolo Motorway is the northern boundary. Gravel roads border the rest of the area. A portion of the area along the Lolo trail has historical and tribal significance and is managed as a special area. There are no structures, mining, grazing, firelines or timber harvest in the area. There are some small areas of persistent noxious weeds. Weir Creek hot springs is located in the roadless area and is an interesting geologic feature with high recreation use. The area provides mostly semi-primitive non-motorized ROS. About half of the area is within NRV and there are a few hundred acres of whitebark pine habitat. Apparent naturalness is generally high. Snowmobile use occurs along the Lolo Motorway but is not known to occur within the roadless area. Disturbance from the noise from Highway 12 and logging activity in the surrounding front country reduces opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in much of the area. The area best meets the Nez Perce-Clearwater desired condition, goals and objectives under management direction of MA2, IRR Backcountry Restoration theme.

West Fork Crooked River - Recommend dropping from further consideration

About 69 percent of this area is boundary with front country with the remainder adjacent to the Gospel Hump Wilderness. With 82 mining claims, the area has the second highest density of mining claims compared to the rest of the roadless areas. There is a long history of mining and recent activity in the surrounding area and there is ample evidence of past mining activity in this roadless area. There are no structures, grazing or firelines. However, a recent fuel reduction project in the roadless area included a temporary road and timber harvest on approximately 280 acres. The Idaho Roadless Rule theme of this area is Backcountry Restoration. About a third of the area is roaded natural recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) because of adjacent roads and the sights and sounds associated with them. This reduces opportunity for solitude over portions of the area. About 47 percent of the area is within the NRV and the area has about 3,500 acres of whitebark pine habitat. Sixty-four percent is in underrepresented ecosystems. About 16 miles of stream are impaired. The recent fuels management activities reduce the apparent naturalness of the area. With active mining, recent timber harvest and disturbance from external roads and activities this area possesses little wilderness character and best meets the Nez Perce-Clearwater desired condition, goals, and objectives managed under MA2 direction for IRR Backcountry Restoration theme.

West Meadow Creek - Recommend moving forward in analysis

At 115,600 acres, this roadless area is the fifth largest roadless area on Nez Perce-Clearwater. It has a long, irregular shape with 57 percent of its boundary adjacent to front country. Much of the area burned in 1919 and long-term ecological processes have just been slightly impacted since then. There has been historical sheep grazing of much of the area but today only two percent of the area is in an active grazing allotment and 15 percent is in a vacant allotment. Two lookout towers remain in the area and are visible from various locations in the area. They are accessed by low-standard roads. Fuel reduction projects, about 10 miles of fireline and nearly 200 acres of roadside hazard tree removal reduces the apparent naturalness of portions of the area. Fifty-seven percent of the area is within the NRV, 78 percent is in underrepresented ecosystems and 13,700 acres of whitebark pine habitat is present. The vastness of the

area along with topography and vegetative screening provides ample opportunity for solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. However, roads and trails along the boundary with the front country provide a more motorized recreation setting and sights and sounds from these areas can reduce the opportunity for solitude. Snowmobiling and summer motorized use is established in portions of this area and will present management challenges if this area is recommended wilderness.

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