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Chapter 1

Introduction

I. Purpose of the Management Plan

This plan provides program management direction for the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness, also referred to in this document as the FC-RONR Wilderness or the FC-RONRW. Program direction is derived from the provisions of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) and the Resource Planning Act (RPA), and includes Desired Future Conditions, Goals and Objectives, Standards and Guidelines, and Monitoring Requirements with associated Indicators.

Program direction describes activities that may occur in a given area, but does not require that these activities actually occur. It is similar in concept to Planning and Zoning at the city and county level, and does not represent an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. To be effective, program direction for wilderness should tell the land manager what and how much activity a given area of land can support, while still preserving the wilderness character of the area. Program direction must also explain what people want and need from the wilderness.

This management plan retains previous relevant direction while adding new direction for emerging issues where existing direction has been identified as inadequate or in need of refinement and updating. Section 5(a)(1) of the CIWA mandated preparation of a comprehensive management plan. The original plan was completed in 1984, and amended in 1986 and 1994. This plan is a revision of the original plan. Modifications in wording and formatting of the plan have occurred to better reflect planning conventions in use at this time.

II. Relationship of the Management Plan to Other Documents

This plan revision incorporates direction for implementation of the selected alternative displayed in the Frank Church – River of No Return Wilderness Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD).

The direction contained in this plan serves as an “umbrella” for site-specific environmental analysis. Future projects and activities, including those requiring preparation of a Categorical Exclusion (CE), Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), may tier to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Administrative actions and direction shown in this plan are provided for reference and do not require additional environmental analysis prior to change.

This Management Plan supercedes the 1984 Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness Plan, as amended, the 1993 Middle Fork of the Salmon River Wild and Scenic River Plan, as amended, and the “Wild Section” portion of the 1982 Salmon River Wild and Scenic River Plan. Upon final approval, all wilderness activities will conform to this Management Plan, and the Forest Plans on the Bitterroot, Boise, Nez Perce, Payette, and Salmon-Challis National Forests will be amended to reflect these changes.

III. Major Definitions Used by this Plan

Background provides historical context for the direction in this plan. Information on the current condition, trends or management situation is given to provide a context for the program direction.

Desired Future Condition (DFC) is a description of the condition of the wilderness resource to be achieved in the long term, up to 200 years in the future. The DFC results from the cumulative effects of implementing the goals expressed in this Management Plan.

Goals are concise statements that describe a desired condition to be achieved sometime in the future. They are normally expressed in broad, general terms and are timeless in that they have no specific date by which they are to be completed. Goal statements form the principal basis from which objectives are developed.

Objectives are concise, time-specific statements of measurable planned results that respond to pre-established goals. An objective forms the basis for further planning to define the precise steps to be taken and the resources to be used in achieving identified goals. When an objective does not have a time period it is assumed to be during the planning period.

Standards are management requirements or quantifiable thresholds for an indicator that specifies conditions or levels to be achieved.

Guidelines are descriptions of a preferred or advisable course of action.

Monitoring is an activity to determine if plan objectives have been met and how closely management practices should be adjusted.

Indicators are measurements or gauges showing the condition of an ecological or social resource. In management terms, an indicator is linked to a standard that, if exceeded, would trigger a change in management direction or emphasis. Indicators are typically the items monitored during the life of the plan.