

APPENDIX F – SUMMARY of 1978 JET BOAT USE LEVELS ON THE SALMON RIVER

Estimates of 1978 use levels between Corn Creek and Vinegar Creek

An analysis of Forest Service sources dating from 1978 -1982

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The Central Idaho Wilderness Act (CIWA) became law on June 23, 1980 creating the River Of No Return Wilderness and designating the Salmon River as a Wild and Scenic River. The act provides for motorboat use on the "Wild" segment of the Salmon River, between Corn Creek and Long Tom Bar. Public Law 96-312 - July 23, 1980, section 9.(a)(C) states "The use of motorboats (including motorized jetboats) within this segment of the Salmon River shall be permitted to continue at a level not less than the level of use which occurred during the calendar year 1978." The original wording of that section which said "level approximately equal to the level of use which occurred during the calendar year 1978," was amended in action proposed by Senator Frank Church on November 20, 1979. Senator Church noted at that time, "we think it is advisable to change the language in this particular section in order to make clear that the purpose of the section is not to establish a ceiling on motorboat use on the mainstem of the Salmon but rather, to use the year 1978 as a floor."

During, 1978 and 1979, the forest service collected field information and made estimates of power boat use levels. The change of wording from "approximately" to "not less than" gave the 1978 use level increased importance and implied more precise numbers than the Forest Service was using in its management of the river at that time.

So what were the 1978 jet boat use levels? This is a summary of a larger document which pulls together and analyzes the Forest Service sources that indicate the 1978 use levels as recorded and used during the time the Central Idaho Wilderness Act and the 1982 Salmon Wild & Scenic River management plan were being developed. A search of Forest Service files from the North Fork Ranger District, Salmon - Challis National Forest, the Salmon River Ranger District, Nez Perce National Forest, and the Region 4 Office files turned up reports, letters, and memos that provided the information used in this analysis. The analysis assumes that the information in these sources is correct. The complete report, *1978 Jet Boat Use Levels On the Salmon River* is on file in the project record of the 1992 - 2003 Frank Church - River of No Return Wilderness planning effort at the Salmon - Challis National Forest, Salmon, Idaho.

Total Trip Numbers 1978

1600 jet boat trips for 1978 calendar year.

700 jet boat trips during the **control season**, June 20 - September 7.

900 jet boat trips during **the rest of the year**, January 1 - June 19 and September 8 - December 31.

The trips provided about **12,150 Recreation Visitor Days (RVDs) total in 1978**. These numbers include commercial, and private recreationists jet boat use, not private property access use.

Control Season, June 20 - September 7, 1978

Commercial Jet Boat Use:

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11 outfitters operated 18 jetboats - in certain identified types of activity, during the control season.

Three of those boats were authorized only for hunting camp or lodge access.

Calculations indicate total commercial recreational jet boat use could have been about **551 boat days/trips**.

Up to 50 additional non-recreational commercial trips could have occurred.

Private Recreation Jet Boat Use:

Estimates range from a **control season average of 9 boat days use per week to 13 boat days use per week during the peak of the season**. These numbers were expanded to 15 boat days per week in the 1980 EA and Decision Notice, and the 1982 management plan.

Estimates of total private jet boat recreation trips range from **86 to 111 control season boat days/trips**.

Private Property Access:

Approximately 13 private property owners also owned jet boats and used them to access their property. (Private property access trips are not included in the commercial nor non-commercial estimates for 1978).

Corn Creek Numbers:

(Included within the above totals, listed here because the information is more precise, but limited to boats launched at Corn Creek).

Counted use during the control season, June 20 - September 7, 80 days:

1978	1979
103 commercial trips	141 commercial trips
<u>11 private trips</u>	<u>7 private trips</u>
114 total trips	148 total trips

Patterns of Use, 1978

Seasonal:

Most of the total jet boat use occurred in the spring and fall.

Most of the outfitted jet boat use occurred in the spring and fall.

Outfitted use was about 79% of the summer use.

River Sections:

Most of the jet boat use, particularly the private jet boat use, occurred on the west end of the river segment between Vinegar Creek and McKay Bar or Ludwig Rapid.

Use was 3 times greater on west end than on the east end, particularly during control season. The river was basically self-regulating for jet boats, particularly at Ludwig Rapid.

Other 1978 Use Information:

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Most private recreation jet boat trips were one-day trips and multi-day trips were mostly two-day “overnight” trips.

More private use occurred on week ends than on week days - about twice as much use on week- end days.

Primary Sources

The following is a list of the primary Forest Service (FS) sources used in determining the bottom line numbers and statements above. These sources are generally listed in chronological order.

Corn Creek Checker numbers,	Control Season 1978
Corn Creek Summary of Use Table,	1976 - 1979
Western Whitewater Assn. letters to FS (2),	12/29/78, 5/22/79
Northwest Power Boat Assn. letters to FS (2),	12/18/78, 1/16/79
Collection of Jet Boat Use Information, 1978 – 1979,	9/10/79 - 10/31/79
Frank Elder Notes,	11/ 79
Deputy Regional Forester Sirmon letter to the Chief,	11/21/79
Environmental Assessment (EA) and Decision Notice,	1/22/80
Ranger Abbot letter to Northwest Power Boat Assn.,	2/08/80
Chief's letter to Senator Frank Church,	8/09/80
Salmon Wild & Scenic River Management Plan,	3/30/82
Supervisor Hauff's letter to Regional Forester,	6/29/82

Supplemental Sources

An additional ten documents dating from 1977- 1982 contain information that supplements or clarifies information in the primary sources. The sources include letters from private individuals, private jet boat clubs, Forest Service river patrols reports and memos, and a Legislative History of Jet Boat Use in the FC-RONR Wilderness.

Additional sources,

Five additional documents, written after the management plan was completed in 1982, provided information pertinent to the 1978 use levels and jet boat permits. Three former Forest Service employees were interviewed to help clarify information in the primary documents.

Copies of all these source documents can be found in the appendix of the full analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

The Forest Service had reasonable estimates of the 1978 use levels, based on field observations, during the time the CIWA and 1982 Management Plan were being developed. The information

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from the Forest Service files is the best contemporary information available. By comparing various sources of Forest Service information it is possible to cross check and find reasonable correlation for estimated 1978 use numbers. The 1982 Management Plans allows use levels at or above these estimated 1978 numbers.

The 1982 Salmon River Management Plan with a 15 boat use days per week limit on private recreational jet boat use is slightly higher than the 13 boat use days per week estimated for 1978. The management plan was upheld on appeal.