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Wild and Scenic Snake River

Recreation Management Plan



Hells Canyon National Recreation Area
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Cover photograph by Jane Rohling, U. S. Forest Service

USDA, Forest Service
Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Oregon
Nez Perce and Payette National Forests, Idaho

Hells Canyon National Recreation Area

Wild and Scenic Snake River Recreation Management Plan

Forest Plan Amendments 12 and 20

County of Wallowa in Oregon
Counties of Nez Perce, Idaho, and Adams in Idaho

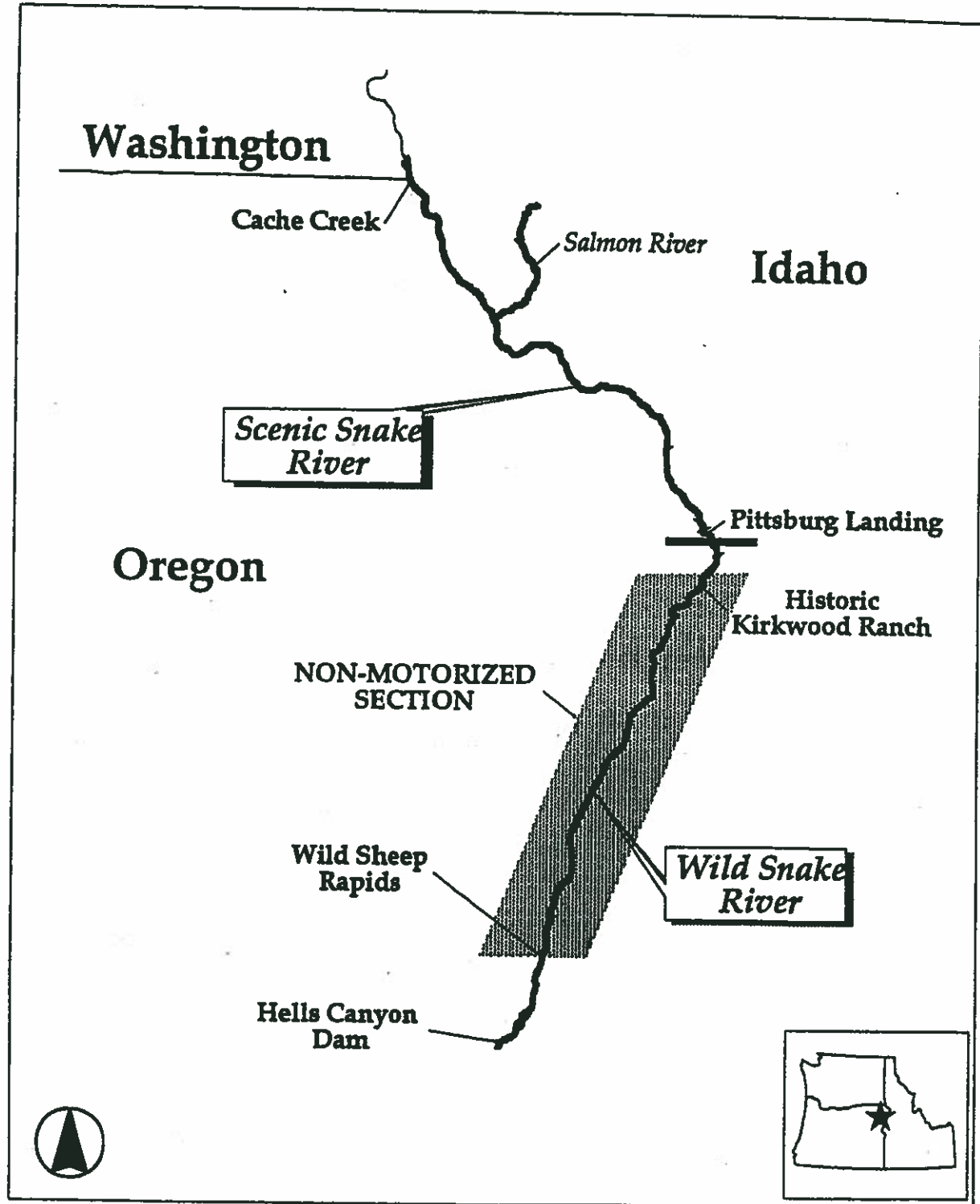
January 1999

Based on 1994 Record of Decision
Final Environmental Impact Statement
for the Wild and Scenic River Recreation Management Plan
as amended by 1996 Decision Notice for the
Outfitter and Guide Environmental Assessment
Executed by R. M. Richmond, Forest Supervisor
and Regional Forester Appeal Decisions

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	1
DESCRIPTION OF AREA	1
MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES	1
DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS	2
MANAGEMENT DIRECTION	4
WATERSHED	4
RANGE	4
RECREATION	4
General Management Direction	4
Use Seasons	5
Allocations for Rivercraft Use	5
Valid Motorized, Nonmotorized Craft	6
Private Powerboat Use	6
Commercial Powerboat Use	7
Private Floatcraft Use	8
Commercial Floatcraft Use	8
Salmon River Coordination and Management	9
Disposal of Solid Human Waste	9
Camping	10
Campsite Reservations	10
Party Size	10
Stay Lengths	10
Management of Upland Use	11
Facilities and Improvements	11
Grazing Allotment and Permittee Facilities	12
Aircraft Use	12
SCENERY MANAGEMENT	13
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT	13
TRANSPORTATION (ROAD AND TRAIL)	13
INSECTS AND DISEASE	13
FISH AND WILDLIFE	13
Appendix A - Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Act	
Appendix B - Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	
Appendix C - Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Characteristics	
Appendix D - Monitoring Plan	

Wild & Scenic Snake River



Recreation Management Plan for the Wild and Scenic Snake River

Introduction

This plan (River Plan) provides direction for administration of Management Area 8, Wild and Scenic Snake River corridor, within the HCNRA (Hells Canyon National Recreation Area) for the next ten to fifteen years.

*Management direction for **recreation use** in the Wild and Scenic Snake River corridor has been consolidated into this document and replaces the **recreation management** direction in the Forest Plan and the HCNRA CMP (Comprehensive Management Plan). It replaces the 1983 Revised Snake River Recreation Management Plan and the portions of Forest Plan Amendment 5 that relate to Cache Creek.*

This plan reflects direction from the 1994 Wild and Scenic Snake River FEIS (Final Environmental Impact Statement); the record of decision for that FEIS as amended by the appeal decisions of July, 1995; the 1996 Outfitter and Guide EA (Environmental Assessment); the decision notice for the EA as amended by the appeal decisions of July, 1997. Administrative management decisions based on monitoring and changed conditions will be updated on an annual basis, if necessary, and made a part of this plan by documentation and a notice to users.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA

The Wild and Scenic Snake River runs north from the Hells Canyon Dam to the Oregon-Washington border and forms the northern portion of the boundary between Oregon and Idaho. The Act establishing the HCNRA designated 67.5 miles of the Snake River as wild and scenic. The river corridor is approximately a quarter-mile on each side of the high water mark.

This area is located on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest in Oregon and portions of the Nez Perce and Payette National Forests in Idaho.

MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Maintain or enhance the values for which the river was designated under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Maintain or enhance the values for which the HCNRA was established including the protection of cultural resources, fish and wildlife, unique biological communities, scientific values, and scenery.

Provide for a wide range of recreation uses compatible with the provisions of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the HCNRA Act.

Manage for semi-primitive, motorized recreation opportunities with seasonal, nonmotorized periods on a portion of the wild river.

Resources in the management areas within the river corridor will be managed pursuant to the management area direction established in the Forest Plan (pages 4-76 through 4-91) and the CMP except for the changes described in this plan.

Individual resources will be managed pursuant to the applicable Forest-wide standards and guidelines established in the Forest Plan (pages 4-18 through 4-56) except for the changes described in this plan.

All management practices and developments within the river corridor will ensure the protection and enhancement of the river's identified ORVs (outstandingly remarkable values) and ROS (recreation opportunity spectrum) characteristics.

Management direction for river use will be compatible with upland river corridor uses, such as hiking and horsepacking, and access to private inholdings.

DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS

DFCs (desired future conditions) set parameters and provide a vision for how the wild and scenic corridor will be managed for the next decade. The DFCs are not required actions to be achieved at a specific time in the future but are a framework for site-specific projects and programmatic planning for the river corridor.

A Unique Blend of Whitewater Boating Opportunities

A blend of motorized and nonmotorized whitewater boating provides diverse user groups a variety of recreation opportunities in a unique setting within a major river environment.

Travel by Powerboat

Powerboaters travel and camp in a river setting that includes major rapids for a premier four-season whitewater adventure.

Travel by Floatboat

Hells Canyon provides one of the best whitewater floating experiences in the Pacific Northwest with a variety of trip lengths, usually one to six days in duration.

A Year-Round Diverse Sport Fishery

The Snake River provides habitat for a diverse and productive mix of cold water species. The river provides year-round fishing that includes white sturgeon during the summer and steelhead during the fall and winter. The rainbow trout fisheries remain extremely popular with anglers.

Horsepacking/Backpacking in a Remote River Setting

Due to the favorable canyon/river climate, people enjoy backpacking and horsepacking during the spring and fall. The canyon provides a variety of challenges and scenery in a large diverse backcountry setting centering on the river. In addition, trail users access the adjacent wilderness from the river to a variety of elevations.

A Diversity of Interpretive, Sightseeing, and Wildlife Viewing Opportunities

The Snake River corridor provides an environment rich in cultural and natural history. There are unsurpassed concentrations of prehistoric sites; a colorful history of exploration, mining, and settlement; and numerous national historic sites. These combine to support the entire area as the Hells Canyon Archaeological District.

Rugged topography, fascinating geologic formations, and unique geographical features provide a diverse, appealing landscape for sightseers.

The variety of wildlife create year-round viewing opportunities. The opportunity to observe peregrine falcons, bald eagles, big horn sheep, and many other wildlife species in their natural habitat is a unique experience for many visitors to the corridor.

River travel in Hells Canyon allows adventurous, physically-challenged individuals to visit remote prehistoric sites and to view wildlife and unique plant life in a natural setting.

Protection and Enhancement of Outstandingly Remarkable Values

The following values of the Snake River have been determined to be outstandingly remarkable: scenic, recreational, geologic, wildlife, fisheries, cultural resources (both historic and prehistoric), vegetation/botanical, and ecological.

The Snake River of Hells Canyon provides for great contrasts of landform, vegetation, color, climate, and sound.

Geology of the canyon provides research potential and portrays the complex geological history of the Canyon and western North America.

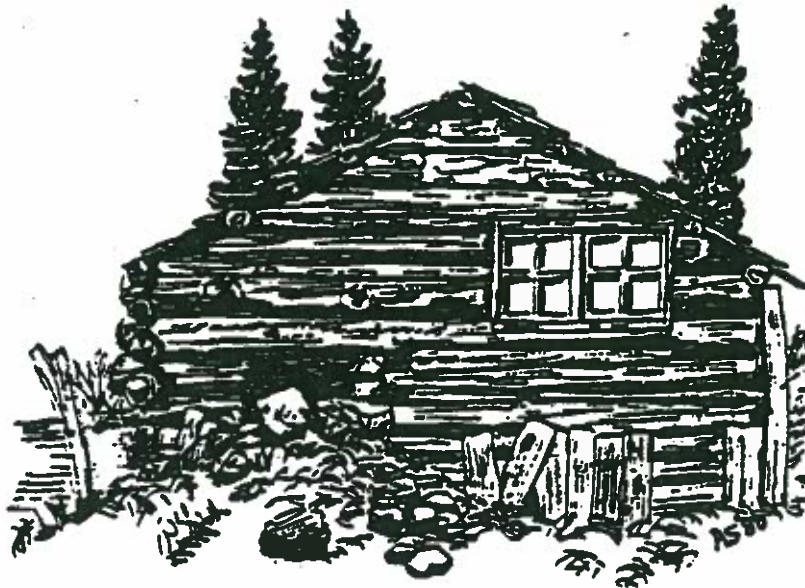
Diverse wildlife species inhabit the corridor and affirm its importance as wildlife habitat. Wintering and year-round habitat for numerous species is maintained and provides opportunities for human interaction with these creatures.

There are several stocks of anadromous fish, including spring, summer, and fall chinook salmon, sockeye salmon, summer steelhead, trout, and Pacific lamprey, as well as several other resident species of native fish. Nationally and regionally, the Snake River is known for its abundant, unique, and diverse sport fishery. The protection of the diverse aquatic resources ensures the existence of these important species.

One of the richest accumulations of riverine archaeological resources in western North America is enjoyed by visitors and provides unlimited research potential for the historic and prehistoric cultural resources of the canyon.

Populations of MacFarlane's four-o'clock are preserved, as well as the concentration and number of other rare or endemic plant species found within the canyon.

The Snake River of Hells Canyon provides protection and special designation by including certain sites in the research natural area system. The canyon's special environment fosters unusual and specific relationships in the flora and fauna that make the ecological aspects of the corridor an outstandingly remarkable value.



MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

See the Forest Plan and HCNRA CMP for additional direction on management and administration of other resources and activities. Refer to the final environmental impact statement for definitions.

WATERSHED

Construction of any dam, water conduit, reservoir, powerhouse, transmission line, or other project work under the Federal Power Act will not be permitted, except for improvements required or used in connection with the operation and maintenance of projects in existence, or under construction, on the date that the HCNRA was established.

Construction of water impoundments, diversions, straightening, riprapping, and other modification of the waterways will generally not be allowed. Exceptions will include protection of major improvements (such as an existing bridge) and then only to the extent that they do not diminish the values that caused the river to be designated as wild and scenic and are consistent with the act establishing the HCNRA (Public Law 94-199). Instances where any construction activities are permitted are expected to be very rare and of small scale.

All extra fuel transported on the river must remain onboard the vessel transporting it at all times. No staging of fuel at campsites or beaches. Address staging and handling of fuel or other petroleum products at Management Area 16 sites in site operation and maintenance plans.

In the event of spillage of petroleum products used in association with recreation activities within the river corridor, immediately implement the Hazmat Spill Prevention and Response Plan.

RANGE

Livestock grazing will be permitted to the extent that it is compatible with range and river management objectives.

RECREATION

General Management Direction

The Wild and Scenic Snake River corridor will be managed as semi-primitive, motorized area pursuant to the ROS characteristics displayed in Appendix C. The river section between the Hellis Canyon Dam and Upper Pittsburg Landing will be managed as **wild river**; the river section from Upper Pittsburg Landing to Cache Creek will be managed as **scenic river**.

Permitted recreation use in the **scenic river** is managed differently for weekends (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) than it is for weekdays (Monday through Thursday), except that legal holidays are always treated as weekend days.

During the **primary season** (see **Use Seasons**), launch reservations are required seven days a week for all river users in the **wild river**.

In the **scenic river**, launch reservations are required for all river users Friday, Saturday, Sunday and holidays during the **primary season**. Launch reservations will not be required for private motorized or nonmotorized trips on Monday through Thursday unless monitoring indicates that daily limitations are being utilized more than 50 percent of the days during the season.

During the **secondary season**, use levels will not be regulated for either motorized or nonmotorized users within the entire **wild and scenic river**, but self-issued permits will be required.

Boat registration numbers on motorized watercraft must be displayed pursuant to State and Federal requirements to qualify for issuance of permits.

Floatcraft reservation identification tags are required and must be attached to, and displayed by, each floatcraft in a launch party.

The launching of inflatable watercraft from private powerboats is prohibited year-round anywhere in the **wild river** and year-round in the **scenic river** on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Launching of inflatables from private powerboats is permitted in the **scenic river** on Monday through Thursday under provision of a self-issued permit.

Launching of inflatable watercraft in conjunction with transportation of people and equipment will be allowed from commercial powerboats providing the customer has a valid float reservation. For the two commercial outfitters with temporary one-day float permits, using a powerboat to launch permitted inflatable watercraft trips will count against the boat day allocation of the commercial powerboat permit. This applies only during the restricted **primary season**.

Administrative and developed recreation sites are designated "no-wake" zones. Through the user education program, proper river etiquette will be emphasized to minimize boat wakes when encountering other parties.

Motorized "kickers" may be mounted on floatcraft but used only in emergencies in the **wild river**, year-round. Motorized kickers can be used in the **scenic river**, year-round.

Organized competitive sporting events are not allowed at any time in any part of the corridor.

Commercial powerboat and administrative use by other government agencies will be monitored using a system similar to that required of other river users.

Organized outdoor recreation program trips sponsored by institutions and semi-public outfitting and guiding organizations are considered to be commercial outfitting activities. These organizations must obtain outfitter and guide special use permits within the allowable ceiling of motorized or nonmotorized special use permits available.

An active and timely education program at all river portals will be used to increase recreation users' awareness of acceptable social river etiquette and understanding of management practices.

Use Seasons

Regulations for managing the corridor are defined in accordance with two set seasons. The **primary season** is from the Friday before Memorial Day through September 10, inclusive. The **secondary season** is from September 11 through the Thursday before Memorial Day. During the **secondary season**, there are no use level restrictions on watercraft in the **wild and scenic river**. When monitoring for one or more of the use allocation categories, on a weekly basis, indicates daily averages of private and commercial motorized and nonmotorized watercraft in the **secondary season** exceed those established for the **primary season** in two out of three consecutive years, the control period for the **primary season** will be expanded in weekly increments, a maximum of one week per year.

Allocations for Rivercraft Use

The number of rivercraft permitted to launch into the **wild and scenic river** will be regulated to meet management objectives for the river corridor. A powerboat launch is the equivalent of one trip taken by one boat. A float launch is the equivalent of eight or less floatcraft launching as a party. For one-day commercial powerboat trips, one boat launch occurs when the boat leaves a portal, travels to a destination, and returns. A commercial powerboat launch does not allow multiple round trips from a portal to river locations. Consecutive day launches are required for overnight use by commercial powerboaters.

Motorized craft will not be permitted access to the section of **wild river** between the top of Wild Sheep Rapid and the upper landing at Kirkwood Historic Ranch, Monday through Wednesday, every other week, starting the first Monday of June for a maximum of 21 days. When the nonmotorized period falls on a 4th of July weekend (i.e., July 4 is on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday), the nonmotorized period is moved to the following week, and will alternate every other week until the end of that **primary season**.

Motorized and nonmotorized administrative use of the river corridor by cooperating management agencies (above the allocations for private and commercial users) is permitted with prior approval from the Area Ranger. Use must be consistent with other permitted use, i.e., powerboats will not be permitted into the nonmotorized section of the wild river during the nonmotorized period.

Valid Motorized, Nonmotorized Craft

Valid motorized and nonmotorized rivercraft shall be allowed within the wild, scenic, and study corridor sections as defined below. Nonvalid motorized and nonmotorized watercraft shall be restricted from use within the wild and scenic corridor sections and in the study river corridor from the north scenic river boundary downstream to Snake River mile 177.0 at Cache Creek Ranch. Valid and nonvalid watercraft definitions as adopted from the LAC (Limits of Acceptable Change) recommendations are defined as follows:

Valid Motorized Craft: Valid motorized rivercraft will be defined as rigid hull watercraft with water-cooled exhaust (inboard engines shall have through the hull exhaust) that are driven by propellor(s) or jet pump(s), equipped with mufflers and/or other noise reduction devices.

Valid Nonmotorized Craft: Valid nonmotorized rivercraft shall be defined as sweep boats, pontoons, cat-a-rafts, inflatable rafts, rigid hull and inflatable kayaks, canoes, dories, and drift boats. Craft must be controllable by paddles, oars, sweep, or outboard motors limited to 15 hp (if motors are used, they (boats) must meet State and Coast Guard licensing specifications). Motors are restricted to downstream propulsion and maneuverability. Crafts are not capable of being mechanically propelled through rapids.

Nonvalid (Motorized and Nonmotorized) Craft: Nonvalid nonmotorized rivercraft shall include wind surf boards/sail boards, sailboats, or crafts that are not under maneuverable control. Nonvalid motorized rivercraft shall include water-skis, air boats, motorized surf boards, hover craft, winged watercraft, any powerboats not equipped with a water-cooled exhaust, amphibious craft, mini-submarines, powerboats under 12 feet in length, and watercraft that must be straddled when ridden by the operator/passenger. Personal water vehicles such as jetskis are defined as nonvalid in the wild river corridor and in the scenic river corridor.

New and different watercraft not included in the previous definitions will be reviewed by the Forest through an interactive public involvement process to determine the suitability of the craft as valid or nonvalid. New and different watercraft defined as valid shall be included within the current use allocations of motorized or nonmotorized rivercraft.

Private Powerboat Use

A reservation system for private powerboat launches will be used during the **primary season**. In the **secondary season**, there is no limitation on private powerboat use, but self-issued permits are required.

Private powerboats are limited to 39.6 feet in overall length.

Private Powerboat Use in the Wild River

A maximum of six private powerboat launches per day will be permitted to travel and/or camp in any part of the **wild river**, except that during the nonmotorized periods, powerboats are not allowed to operate between the top of Wild Sheep Rapid and Kirkwood Historic Ranch.

During the nonmotorized periods, private powerboat launches are limited to five per day between Kirkwood Historic Ranch and the upper landing at Pittsburg. A maximum of two private powerboat launches per day for day-use only can be issued at Hells Canyon Creek for use between Hells Canyon Dam and the top of Wild Sheep Rapids during the nonmotorized periods.

Private Powerboat Use in the Scenic River

A maximum of 18 private powerboat launches per day on weekends and legal holidays, for overnight or day-use, are allowed to be launched to destinations between Pittsburg Landing and Cache Creek.

On weekends and legal holidays, a maximum of five additional private, day-use only, powerboat launches will be available from Cache Creek to the mouth of the Salmon River.

Use is unlimited from the Oregon-Washington border to the Cache Creek Administrative Site, year-round.

Commercial Powerboat Use

During the **primary season** (up to a maximum of 112 days from the Friday before Memorial Day through September 10), commercial operations for each powerboat outfitter permit will be managed to maintain acceptable social encounters with other competing river uses.

In the **secondary season** (up to a maximum of 253 days from September 11 through the Thursday before Memorial Day), there is no limitation on commercial powerboat use, but commercial manifests will be required.

Commercial powerboats will be limited to 42 feet overall length (to prevent negative visual appearance of double-decked, large boats and potential boat wake effects on other recreationists). Commercial powerboats that exceed this length requirement at the time of this decision (ROD, September 9, 1996) will be allowed to continue using them until the boat is replaced.

Allocation of Use

Commercial powerboat maximum total capacity (cumulative boat days for all permittees) is 1,506 boat days for a 112-day **primary season**. There is no maximum total capacity during the **secondary season**. However, the **primary and secondary seasons** may be adjusted based on monitoring of use levels (page 21 in the ROD, and **Use Seasons** above).

The outfitter and guide operation guidelines in FSM 2700 (Forest Service Manual, supplement to Chapter 2700) will be used to manage commercial powerboat use. The guidelines will be revised as necessary to accommodate changes in conditions but will remain within the allocations of this plan.

Holders of Copper Creek and Sheep Creek facility permits will be allowed 16 and 4 cargo trips per **primary season**, respectively. These trips are for the sole purpose of supplying the facilities and cannot be used for carrying passengers. Trips will not count against the outfitter's share of the maximum total boat day capacity. The trips will be tied to the permits for the facilities and will transfer to the new permit should the business holding the permit change ownership. Cargo trips can occur any day of the week except that cargo trips to Sheep Creek may not occur on nonmotorized days.

Commercial operators are allowed to run jetbacks or jetouts for commercial or private float parties within their allocation of launches.

During the **primary season**, overnight use by commercial outfitters requires consecutive day launch allocations.

During the **primary season** each commercial outfitter-guide's use allocation will be managed as noted in their outfitter and guide special use permit.

During the nonmotorized period, no commercial powerboat operation will be permitted between the top of Wild Sheep Rapid and the upper landing at Kirkwood Historic Ranch.

Maximum and Minimum Numbers of Permits and Launch Point Locations

Commercial powerboat permits will be managed to assure the continuation of business competition on the river. Maintain a variety of powerboat recreational services with quality experiences to visitors by establishing a maximum and minimum number of powerboat outfitter permits. Maintain a maximum of 19, and minimum of 10, special use permits for commercial powerboat outfitters (including land-based outfitters who provide ferrying and camp supply services). Minimum and maximum permit per portal are shown in the following table:

<u>Portal</u>	<u>Minimum Number of Permits</u>	<u>Maximum Number of Permits</u>
Heils Canyon Creek	*2	*2
Pittsburg Landing	3	4
Cache Creek	6	13
Total	10	19

*Based on a voluntary split of the business authorized by the existing special use permit at the option of the permit holder.

NOTE: An exception to the launch point location limitation will be allowed for Snake River Adventures, the only permittee who has regularly launched commercial trips from both Pittsburg Landing and Cache Creek portals. This activity will continue to be authorized. When considering existing outfitters, this business is included in the maximum for the Cache Creek portal only.

Private Floatcraft Use

Private floatcraft use during the **primary season** will be managed using a reservation system. In the **secondary season**, there will be no limitation on private floatcraft use, but self-issued permits will be required.

Private float parties will be limited to a maximum of eight floatcraft per party in all river sections, year-round.

Private Floatcraft Use in the Wild River

Three launches per day will be allowed during the **primary season**.

Private Floatcraft Use in the Scenic River

Two launches per day on weekends (Friday - Sunday) and legal holidays will be allowed from either Pittsburg Landing or Dug Bar during the **primary season**. There are no float limitations in the **scenic river** on week days (Monday - Thursday).

Commercial Floatcraft Use

The number of commercial float permits will be managed to assure the continuation of business competition on the river. A variety of recreational float services with quality experiences to visitors will be maintained by authorizing a maximum of 14, and a minimum of 10, commercial float special use permits with priority use. See the outfitter and guide operations in FSM 2700 for description of priority use.

Commercial floatcraft use during the **primary season** will be managed using a reservation system and will be limited to 224 launches from Heils Canyon Creek. All float permits will authorize operation of multi- and one-day float trips. In the **secondary season**, there is no limitation on commercial floatcraft use, but self-issued permits will be required.

in order to reduce encounters in the **scenic river** in the **primary season**, commercial float trips can only originate upstream from Pittsburg Landing. There will be no restrictions on launch point locations in the **secondary season**.

Use the outfitter and guide operation guidelines in FSM 2700 to manage commercial floatcraft use. The guidelines will be revised as necessary to accommodate changes in conditions but will remain within the allocations of this plan.

Two one-day, temporary use commercial float permits will be authorized from Hells Canyon Dam to Pittsburg Landing (see outfitter and guide operation guidelines in FSM 2700 for conditions of the permits).

Commercial float parties will be limited to a maximum of eight floatcraft per party in all river sections, year-round. Maximum party size, year-round, is 24 persons (including guides).

Reservations will be required during the **primary season** for commercial float trip launches in the **wild river** between Hells Canyon Dam and Pittsburg Landing.

Commercial Floatcraft Use in the Wild River

An initial allocation of two launches per day will be allowed during the **primary season**. Float permittees will be allowed to use a **multi-day** trip permit for the purpose of a **one-day** float, providing the permittee can secure jetbacks or jetouts from the existing daily allocation of commercial motorized use. One-day floats are not permitted during the three-day, nonmotorized periods.

Commercial Floatcraft Use in the Scenic River

During the **primary season**, there will be no commercial launches from Pittsburg Landing or Dug Bar. Commercial trips within the **scenic river** will be a continuation of trips originating at Hells Canyon Creek or from the Salmon River. There will be no restrictions on launch point locations in the **secondary season**.

Salmon River Coordination and Management

Coordinate with the Bureau of Land Management to evaluate the effects of the lower Salmon River recreational use on meeting the DFC established for the **scenic** section of the Snake River.

Consistently manage the impacts of boaters originating on the Salmon River with the impacts of Snake River boaters with consideration given to management strategy on the Salmon River.

Beginning with the 1998 **primary season**, coordination with the BLM should assure that Salmon River launches which enter the Snake River comply with the 1982 Lower Salmon River Plan.

Groups with more than 24 persons per party could camp between the confluence of the Salmon River and Salmon Bar and at the first three large beaches within the HCNRA.

Boaters originating on the Salmon River must comply with all other applicable standards and guidelines including possession of a valid Lower Salmon River permit by private float groups which allows access to the Snake River.

Disposal of Solid Human Waste

All solid human waste will be carried out of the **wild and scenic river** corridor. Pit toilets are prohibited. Coordinate user education through a public information plan regarding the human solid waste carryout program.

Maintain toilet facilities at specified administrative and developed recreation sites and manage them according to site development plans and State regulations.

Commercial powerboat operators are required to have adequate onboard or carryout waste facilities.

Backpackers and aviators will be required to use a "cat hole" method for disposal of solid human waste, year-round, regardless of where they camp. Cat holes should be a minimum of 200 feet from dispersed campsites, water courses, and trails.

Horsepackers who camp within designated high use sites will be required to carry out solid human waste, year-round. High use sites area as follows:

Battle Creek
Saddle Creek
Salt Creek
Two Corral

Tryon/Camp Creek
Bob Creek
Bernard Creek
Sheep Creek

Additional sites may be designated as high use and in need of protection through Area Ranger approval based on monitoring of use levels and potential social and/or resource conflicts.

Horsepackers who camp outside designated high use sites will be required to use the cat hole method for disposal of solid human waste, year-round. Cat holes should be a minimum of 200 feet from dispersed campsites, water courses, and trails.

Camping

Camping outside of designated dispersed campsites and developed recreation sites will be prohibited for water-based users. Horsepackers, backpackers, and aviators may camp outside designated dispersed campsites and developed recreation sites.

During the **primary season**, neither private powerboat users nor public upland users, are allowed to use drop camps anywhere in the river corridor. During the **secondary season**, drop camps will be permitted; self-issued permits are required and stay lengths apply.

Campsite Reservations

Although campsite reservations are not currently required, a reservation system will be implemented for the **wild and/or scenic rivers** if monitoring indicates a need to resolve conflicts resulting from campsite competition and additional mitigation does not adequately resolve the conflict.

Party Size

Party size for day and overnight use for all rivercraft users (with the exception of commercial powerboat day-use) will be limited to a maximum of 24 people per party (including guides) in all river sections, year-round. Commercial powerboat day-use party size will continue to be regulated by U. S. Coast Guard vessel certifications.

Party size for backpackers will be limited to a maximum of 24 people per party (including guides) in all river sections, year-round. For horsepackers, a maximum of 16 people per party and 16 stock per party will be permitted in the **wild** section and a maximum of 24 people and 24 stock per party will be permitted in the **scenic** section.

Stay Lengths

During the **primary season**, stay lengths of three days and two nights per campsite in the **wild section**, and four days and three nights in the **scenic section**, will be permitted within 1/4 mile of high watermark. Shorter stay lengths will be implemented at individual campsites if monitoring indicates a need to manage campsite competition. Trip lengths will be monitored to assure adequate turnover of campsites.

During the **secondary season**, stay lengths of 14 days and 13 nights per campsite will be permitted within 1/4 mile of high watermark. Shorter stay lengths will be implemented at individual campsites if monitoring indicates a need to manage campsite competition.

Commercial powerboat overnight use of the following segments of the river is prohibited unless specifically provided in the outfitter/guide special use permit:

Cache Creek to Salmon River confluence
Kirkwood to Pittsburg, inclusive, except for Kirby Creek (private land)
Wild Sheep Rapid to Hells Canyon Creek

Management of Upland Use

Self-issued permits are required for trail users between Pittsburg Landing and Kirkwood Historic Ranch to monitor trail and camping impacts. If monitoring indicates use levels are affecting the ROS setting and the recreation ORV, establish limits to protect them.

Require self-issued permits at the following major access points: Freeze Out, Hat Point, Warnock Corral, Imnaha, Dug Bar, PO Saddle, Pittsburg Recreation Site, Hells Canyon Creek, and Windy Saddle.

Packstock management within the river corridor will comply with established low impact wilderness standards, year-round.

Backpackers and hikers transported to trailheads from Hells Canyon Creek by powerboat will be required to obtain a self-issued permit prior to launch.

Facilities and Improvements

Manage the following sites in accordance with Management Area 16, Administrative and Recreation Sites (Forest Plan, pages 4-91 through 4-93), the approved individual site plans, and characteristics listed in the ROS tables in Appendix C:

Hells Canyon Creek Recreation Site
Sheep Creek
Sand Creek
Temperance Creek Ranch Headquarters
Salt Creek Administrative Site
Kirkwood Historic Ranch

Pittsburg Landing Recreation Site
Pittsburg Administrative Site
Tryon Creek Administrative Site
Copper Creek
Dug Bar Recreation Site
Cache Creek Administrative Site

Existing docks located at Management Area 16 sites will remain in place. Tie rings are allowed at all Management Area 16 sites.

Pursuant to Forest Plan S&Gs (standards and guidelines) 21 for Management Area 16, complete site plans for all administrative sites during the life of this plan.

There will be no navigation/survey markers upstream from Kirkwood Historic Ranch.

Picnic tables in campsites in the **wild river** except at Sheep Creek Ranch and Kirkwood Historic Ranch will be prohibited. Picnic tables at campsites in the **scenic** section may be maintained.

The metal shed upstream from the Pittsburg administrative site and the newer of the two metal grain silos at the Kirkwood Historic Ranch will be dismantled and removed following the appropriate level of analysis. The remaining silo may be used to interpret an era in the history of the canyon.

Design, construct, and manage recreation facilities according to the architectural design S&Gs of the "Hells Canyon Scenic Byway Management Plan."

Ground-based fueling tanks, barrels, and facilities will be eliminated except for the administrative fueling facilities at Pittsburg Landing, which will continue to meet Environmental Protection Agency requirements.

Grazing Allotment and Permittee Facilities

Access to grazing allotments and permittee facilities during the **primary season** will be managed in accordance with the limitations indicated below. In the **secondary season**, there will be no restrictions on river access to these sites.

The Temperance Creek S&G Allotment will be allocated one trip per day during the **primary season** from Pittsburg Landing to Temperance Creek. For conformance during the Monday through Wednesday nonmotorized period in July and August, there will be no motorized use except for emergency use approved by the Area Ranger. River crossings between the ranch headquarters and Big Bar airstrip for necessary, permitted commercial sheep grazing operations at the Temperance Creek Ranch will not be regulated.

No use will be authorized for the Sheep Creek allotment during the **primary season**.

Access to Sheep Creek Ranch (historic site) during the **primary season** will be included in the commercial allocation for the permittee who is authorized to use and maintain the facility. For conformance during the Monday through Wednesday nonmotorized period in July and August, there will be no motorized use except for emergency use approved by the Area Ranger.

For the **primary season**, motorized access to the outfitter's facilities at Copper Creek will be included in the daily maximum of commercial powerboat use.

One trip per day will be allowed through special use permits to allotments during the **primary season**, providing they have historically been accessed by river.

Aircraft Use

Recreational aircraft (fixed wing and rotary) landings are limited to designated public airstrips in the river corridor, exclusive of private lands.

Self-issued permits are required at public strips.

Big Bar landing strip will remain open, year-round, for private and commercial aircraft. When monitoring of aircraft use levels indicates ORVs are being impaired, an allocation system will be implemented. Sluice Creek will remain closed.

Dug Bar, Pittsburg, and Salmon Bar landing strips will be open, year-round, to private and commercial aircraft use. Cache Creek airstrip will be open, year-round, to private aircraft use only. When monitoring of aircraft use levels indicates ORVs are being impaired, an allocation system will be implemented.

Except for aircraft landings at Big Bar in support of the grazing operations at the Temperance Creek Ranch, incidental commercial aircraft use of airstrips within the river corridor will be allowed with the following guidelines:

- Temporary annual use permits will be issued to those commercial aviators who can demonstrate previous commercial use of the airstrips through the period of 1988 through 1992.
- Temporary use levels will be calculated based on an average of demonstrated use through the period of 1988 through 1992.
- Use must be demonstrated through the pilots' logs. Failure to adequately demonstrate use will result in nonissuance of a temporary annual use permit.
- Temporary annual use permits issued will specifically define which airstrips are permitted for such use with an emphasis on **secondary season** use, resulting in limited permitted use in the **primary season**.
- Temporary annual use permits will be considered for priority use during the CMP adjustment process.

With the exception of administrative and emergency use, all other commercial aircraft landings and/or operations at airstrips will be prohibited, year-round.

SCENERY MANAGEMENT

Manage visual resources pursuant to Forest Service Manual 2354.42 whereas the **wild** section is managed for preservation and the **scenic** section for retention.

Conduct a scenery survey to guide management activities in achieving naturalness/visual quality ROS settings defined for the **wild and scenic** sections in conjunction with the overall scenery management systems for the entire HCNRA.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

The cutting and/or burning of on-site live or dead vegetation and woody material is prohibited year-round within 1/4 miles of the high water mark.

Fuelwood must be packed in to dispersed and developed campsites, in compliance with fireplan requirements and seasonal fire closures. If monitoring indicates inadequate compliance and detrimental impacts on the vegetation/botanical and ecology ORVs, manufactured fuels will be required.

The entire river corridor will be closed to chainsaw use except for administrative and emergency use as approved by the Area Ranger.

Removal of hazard trees or blowdown within administrative or developed recreation sites outside of riparian areas will be permitted through approval of the Area Ranger. In these circumstances, hazard trees or blowdown may be used as firewood at these sites, providing the felled tree is not needed to meet riparian management objectives.

No standing trees may be felled (dead or alive) except as necessary, in the judgment of the Forest Service, for safety purposes.

This management area does not contribute to the Forest's allowable sale quality.

TRANSPORTATION (Road and Trail)

Consider road and trail construction on a case-by-case basis to insure compatibility with **wild and scenic river** values.

INSECTS AND DISEASE

Apply Forest-wide standards and guidelines.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

In addition to the S&Gs of this River Plan, apply Forest Plan S&Gs and BMPs (best management practices) to the activities to reduce, alter, or eliminate potential adverse effects on threatened and endangered fisheries.

To reduce the potential for boating activities to disturb existing fall chinook redds, educate boaters on the importance of protecting listed salmon. Establish no-entry zones where known fall chinook redds exist and are known to be at risk from possible damage from powerboats. Criteria to determine whether the area of redds is in need of a no-entry zone for protection include:

- The redd is within the main channel of the river. If the redd is in a regularly travelled path of the river, a directional sign could be used to shift traffic away from the spawning fish in order to reduce the possibility of disturbance.

- The depth of the redd may be within a shallow enough depth to warrant protection. Sites where mechanical damage to spawning gravel is apparent, or where boats are known to operate in less than 18 inches of water, will warrant protection.
- The location of the redd is in a high use area such as a popular stopping place or easily accessible beach. If a redd is discovered in a popular area, this site may be closed to boats from time of discovery until spawning is complete. If the concern is for disturbance of sediment which may enter the redd, the time of restriction will be extended till March to prevent potential adverse affects to developing embryos.
- Fall chinook seem to be congregation spawners. If an area within the river corridor is found to be a high use area for several redds, this area may warrant marking as a no-entry zone or as a no-wake zone to reduce the possibility of disturbance.

Reserve the marking of redds for only those redds in critical need of such protective measures. Marking of redds may result in increased activity around spawning sites from curious boaters thereby increasing the possibility to harass spawning fish. Coordinate the actual method of marking redds with State fisheries agencies, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Actively educate visitors on the needs of sockeye and chinook salmon. Visitor introductions and information brochures will include information on the presence of threatened and endangered fish species, and the sensitivity of the populations to possible disturbance from jetboats or floatboats. Key information to be emphasized should include:

- Status of spring/summer and fall chinook salmon as threatened, status of sockeye salmon as endangered, and the sensitivity of these fish populations to human interaction.
- Boaters should be aware of potential areas and times the fall chinook spawn. Once recognized, these areas should be avoided to reduce the possibility for interaction between boaters and spawning chinook salmon.
- When spawning areas are recognized, boaters should proceed through the area as quickly and quietly as possible without causing any excessive disturbance. They should also pass by the redd sites with as great a distance as possible, preferably 30 feet or more.
- Dragging or running boats and walking or wading over actual redds can be detrimental to eggs or embryos in the gravel.

During fishing seasons, participate in visitor education in the identification of chinook salmon, and proper handling and release if one is caught.

