

Idaho's Frank Church Proposed Resolution
2/7/12

WHEREAS, The Central Idaho Wilderness Act (CIWA) of 1980 created the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area (FCRNRWA) under unique, specific and legislative mandates differing from other wilderness legislation, i.e., "The Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with the management plan required by this section, clear obstructions from all of the national forest trails within or adjacent to the wilderness on at least an annual basis." Congress's intent is further elaborated in House Report 96-838, which "Directs the clearing of obstructions from all national forest trails within and adjacent to the wilderness on at least an annual basis." The Report goes on to state "The Committee recognizes that this is a relatively large task, and observes that the Secretary can contract with outfitters and other third parties to perform such work. Where necessary, the Committee has no objection to the use of chain saws or other mechanized equipment to perform such tasks ..." This responsibility is also clearly stated in Conference Report 96-1126, and Senate Report 96-414 referenced in the CIWA.

WHEREAS, the USFS has failed to fulfill this legislative mandate over the last 32 years, and

WHEREAS, this lack of maintenance over the last 32 years has resulted in a continuous deterioration of the trail conditions in the FCRNRWA, and inappropriately limited the agency's ability to accomplish the purposes as described in Section 2 (a) of the 1964 Wilderness Act which directs that wilderness areas "shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."

WHEREAS, the catastrophic fires from the beginning in the latter part of the 20th Century have compounded and exacerbated the already deteriorating trail conditions, and

WHEREAS, the USFS maintains that the current trail conditions and failure to meet the requirement of annual trail maintenance set forth in the Central Idaho Wilderness Act (CIWA) is the result of appropriations and budgeting failures of Congress, and

WHEREAS, the USFS maintains that these financial factors will not improve, then

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the USFS, Regions 1 and 4, and the lead Forest of Salmon/Challis develop an action plan to reverse this capital investment loss in the trail system of the FCRNRWA, and that it

BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the USFS, in preparing this action plan, will evaluate use of all the tools and management options and administrative flexibilities that are authorized by the CIWA.

Submitted By: BCH of Idaho