

# WILDERNESS STATUS

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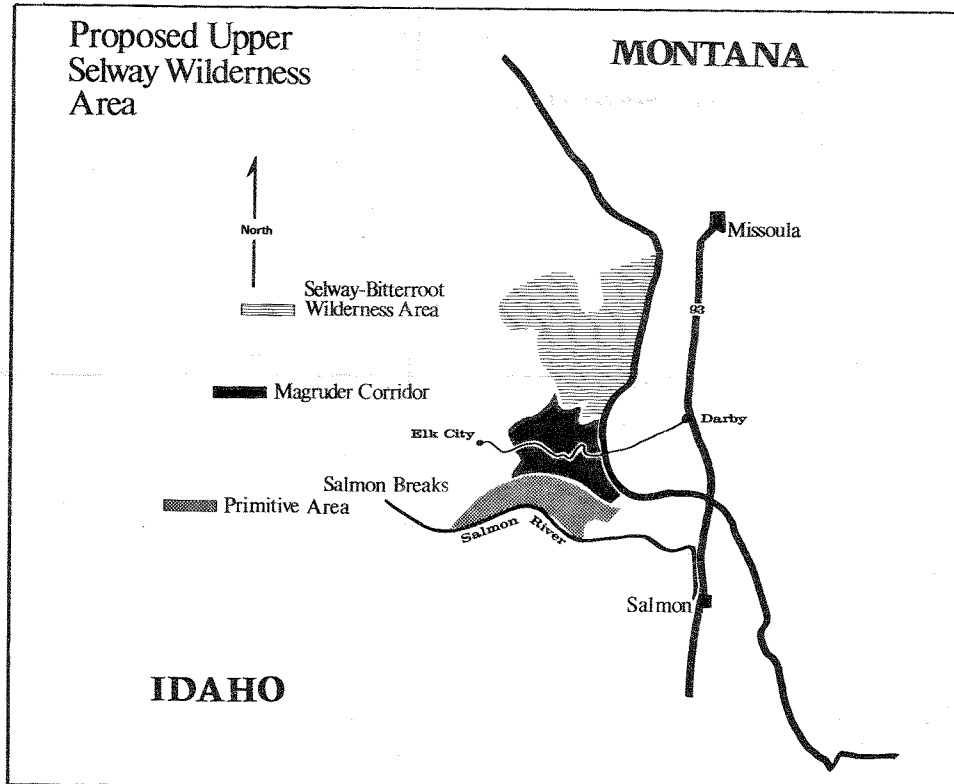
# MAGRUDER CORRIDOR

On August 2, 1971, Senators Frank Church and Lee Metcalf introduced legislation to designate the Magruder Corridor on the Idaho-Montana border as the new Upper Selway Wilderness Area.

Located between the existing Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area on the North and the Salmon Breaks Primitive Area on the South, the Magruder Corridor contains some of the finest wilderness left in the United States. It is here that the Selway River — one of the original Wild Rivers — rises.

By designating the Corridor as wilderness, the legislation would protect the area from ecological damage from road building and logging — now a distinct possibility even though the timber is of negligible value.

Reprinted below, from the *Congressional Record* of August 2 [pp. S 12766 — S 12767], are the remarks of Senators Church and Metcalf upon introduction of their bill.



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#### THE MAGRUDER CORRIDOR

Mr. CHURCH. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and my colleague from Montana (Mr. METCALF), I introduce for appropriate reference, a bill to designate the Upper Selway Wilderness in north-central Idaho. This bill is designed to protect a key wilderness area in the United States, the area known as the Magruder Corridor.

This remote and beautiful mountain area is the upper watershed of the Selway River in Idaho, one of the rivers designated by the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act for immediate, or instant, inclusion in the wild and scenic river system. This corridor, still in wilderness condition, separates two major established wilderness areas, the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness containing most of the Selway River and the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area.

In 1963, then Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman by administrative decree designated the 1,243,659-acre Selway Bitterroot Area as part of the wilderness system. He excluded from this designation, however, 240,000 acres of the primitive area, known as the Magruder Corridor, which contains the Upper Selway watershed, Upper Bargamin Creek and other tracts of land shown on the Forest

Service map of the area as "Area E." The Forest Service subsequently revealed plans to build roads and permit logging in the Magruder Corridor. The justification for the exclusion of the corridor from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness was based on the contention that a road running from Darby, Mont., through Magruder, Idaho, to Elk City, Idaho, had altered the wilderness character of this area.

Many individuals and groups, including local, regional, and national conservation organizations opposed Secretary Freeman's decision to exclude the Magruder Corridor from the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. They organized and submitted petitions urging the inclusion of the Magruder Corridor in the Wilderness area. They asked that the road from Darby to Elk City be treated as the boundary between the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness Area and a new Upper Selway Wilderness Area—comprised of what is now the Magruder Corridor—to the south of the road. They further asked that any development for visitors and hunters be limited to about 2,000 to 3,000 acres along the Elk City-Darby Road.

Aside from the wilderness values inherent in the Magruder Corridor by itself, there are two main reasons for in-

cluding this tract of land in the Wilderness System. The corridor is the heart of a major block of wilderness area and if excluded from the wilderness system would detract from the surrounding wilderness. The corridor also contains the upper watershed of the Selway River, one of the last wild, unspoiled watersheds in the Columbia River Basin. Logging and road building would lead to the pollution of the Upper Selway with silt endangering the spawning beds of the salmon in the Selway, an important fishery resource, and change the character of the area.

The Magruder Corridor is the heart of a large block of wilderness area, possibly the largest single block of national forest land in the United States, excluding Alaska. The corridor forms the southern boundary of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. Flowing through this 1,243,659 acre wilderness area is the Selway River. This river casts a spell upon those who visit it, being one of the last wild, unspoiled rivers in the Columbia River Basin. It sings its way through this vast wilderness to its junction with the Lochsa, also a river in the wild river system. Evergreen forests gird the shorelines of the Selway, sheltering large herds of deer and elk. At its headwaters, the Selway flows out of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness and through the Magruder Corridor, excluded from wilderness designation at present.

The Magruder Corridor also forms the northern boundary of the 200,000 acre Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area which in turn borders on the north edge of the 1.2 million acre Idaho Primitive Area.

The eastern border of these areas is marked by the peaks of the Bitterroot Range, forming here the Continental Divide. On the northern edge of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness, the Lewis and Clark expedition crossed the divide at Lolo Pass in the year 1805. Most of these wilderness areas have not changed since Lewis and Clark passed through almost two centuries ago. In this wilderness, we can discover anew the natural heritage that we first explored under President Jefferson. In this wilderness, we can see the West as Lewis and Clark saw it on their daring expedition.

The Magruder Corridor, originally the trail of the Nez Perce Indians on their treks from western Idaho over the Rockies to the buffalo country in Montana, is the core of this Idaho wilderness.

If the Magruder Corridor is not designated as wilderness, the recently prepared Forest Service management plan indicates that logging and related road building will be permitted in the area. Although the Forest Service recommends that logging be delayed for 5 years in order to determine its possible effects on the Selway fishery, the danger of logging to the Selway seems clear to me. The likelihood of siltation and other forms of pollution pose a real threat to the river. As the Forest Service management plan states it:

Considering the apparently small margin of safety and the economic and intrinsic

value of the anadromous fisheries, the development program for the Corridor should be delayed until more data are available.

The Selway River is an important part of the Nation's fisheries. The Idaho Fish and Game Department, in cooperation with the Federal Government, has been conducting a program of restoring runs of spring and summer chinook salmon in the Selway and more than a million dollars have been invested in this successful project.

I, for one, do not want to gamble on the future of the fishery in the Selway River. The river is now included in the wild river system and under the terms of the act, Congress shall take any necessary steps to prevent the pollution of wild rivers. If there is a "narrow margin of safety" as indicated in the management plan, we should act now to insure the purity and preserve the fish runs of the Selway River by placing its watershed in the national wilderness preservation system.

In reviewing the potential for the Magruder Corridor, I found that the management plan prepared by the Forest Service shows that the long term recreational use and the wild and scenic values of the Magruder Corridor, if designated as the Upper Selway wilderness, far outweigh the negligible returns that might be obtained from logging in the area. The Forest Service estimates that the annual allowable cut of timber would only be 6.4 million board feet per year, most if not all to be milled in Montana. I understand that this amounts to a 4-month supply of logs for one small western Montana lumber mill. So modest a cut cannot possibly justify altering the character of the Magruder Corridor, endangering the Upper Selway and its fishery. In my judgment a comparison of the values argues conclusively for the designation of the Magruder Corridor as the Upper Selway wilderness, making it a permanent part of our wilderness system.

Mr. METCALF. Mr. President, I am pleased to join the distinguished senior Senator from Idaho (Mr. CHURCH) in sponsorship of legislation to place the Upper Selway watershed in the national wilderness system.

This area is referred to as the Magruder Corridor. It is located in Idaho. There are, however, principal points of access to the area from Montana.

Citizens of Montana and Idaho have worked tirelessly for this important addition to the wilderness system. They have challenged opponents, met arguments, and done their homework.

As Senator CHURCH has pointed out, the most recent Forest Service studies show that logging this area would not produce much in the way of revenue or jobs. It could, however, cause serious ecological damage, and diminish the value of a great recreation resource.

I join Senator CHURCH in urging prompt consideration of this legislation which will provide a significant addition to our wilderness system