Huge Primitive Area Is Scheduled for Reclassification

By TED HEWITT

While western Montana sportsmen are busy this summer trying to find enough time for a trip to their favorite fishing stream plans are being made that will affect the fishing and hunting opportunities years from now for their children and generations to come.

These plans are the studies being made by the Forest Service leading to the reclassification of the Selway-Bitter Root Primitive Area to a wilderness area.

And because of so much penetration, the chances are the area will be drastically reduced in size when it is reclassified.

This huge area is the largest of all primitive, wild, wilderness and roadless areas with nearly 3,000 square miles. It features fabulous hunting of elk, with one of the largest elk herds in the country, and deer, bear, moose and mountain goat. Its alpine lakes and high-water streams offer tremendous native cutthroat fishing. The area includes most of two game preserves, the Selway Game Preserve and the Salmon River Game Preserve, both on the Idaho side.

Although Missoula residents are only 13 miles as the crow flies from the border of the Selway-Bitter Root Primitive Area most of them have no idea exactly what a wilderness, wild, primitive or roadless area is, let alone their differences.

The Over-All Concept

To understand the differences of these areas one must first know their over-all concept—which is to guarantee the preservation of rough wild land completely in its natural form, with no encroachments of modern civilization.
Primitive Wilderness Faces Encroachment of Civilization.

(Continued From Feature Page)

part wilderness and three are classified as roadless areas. These 14 areas are all located in northern Minnesota in what is called the Broken Head country in the state. They differ only slightly from other areas in that the regulations governing them are slightly different. In fact, there are three areas total of 314,404 acres.

Wilderness and primitive areas total the following: 3,207 miles of boundary in Wisconsin, 27,392 miles of boundary in Minnesota, 1,958 miles of boundary in Indiana, 1,684 miles of boundary in New Mexico, 1,229 miles of boundary in Washington, 1,091 miles of boundary in Colorado, 776 miles of boundary in Oregon, 713 miles of boundary in Idaho, and 121 miles of boundary in North Carolina, 7,400.

There are nine wilderness, wild and primitive areas in Montana, with 1,563,971 acres in that state.

The establishment of these areas started in the 1930s, when conservation gained a foothold in America and the public began realizing the importance of these areas. The first step was to be taken in the winter destruction of the nation's natural resources and the protection of natural beauty.

Between 1911 and 1959, the Forest Service regulated primarily wilderness areas in the national forests. It is only in recent years and the growth of the roadless areas, logging, mining, and so forth, that the areas were quickly losing their natural beauty.

Regulations Changed

The Forest Service then revoked the regulations for the roadless areas set up in the current and more strict regulations for regulating wilderness and wild areas. The 32 regulations set up were reclassified as wilderness and wild areas and all were designated for their natural beauty and were classified.

The 32 regulations were in present at these areas, classes, and the areas were regulated, technically called primitive areas; and that the regulations and wild areas and primitive regulations have many loopholes allowing clear cuts.

Actually, the reclassification of primitive and wilderness areas started in 1938, with 12 classifications for the roadless areas. The classification of eight areas have been reclassified and the other 24 are still primitive areas.

To get the types of these areas, the Forest Service has been classified. The classification is adequate for the primitive and wilderness areas.

The primitive areas are predominately covered by the current wilderness and wild areas, with more penetrations and more areas being protected by theses areas, than in the wilderness and wild areas.

The primitive areas are protected and regulated as are the wilderness and wild areas.

Forest Service and wilderness areas are often sought out in these areas, and, for the most part, are rejecting them.

Logging - Although commercial logging is prohibited by the current wilderness and primitive regulations, they say that they are not interfering, and although it appears that the regulations are one to control logging and logging and logging and logging and logging, it is difficult to tell what the regulations are.

For a very great number of days, as there are no accesses roads in the area, there are no roads in the area.

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