WILDLY CONTENTIOUS: THE BATTLE FOR NORTH CENTRAL
IDAHO’S ROADS, RIVERS, AND WILDERNESS

By

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During the twentieth century, the rivers and mountains of North Central Idaho opened to resource extraction, outdoor recreation, and economic development. Government agencies charged with carrying out federal natural resource policy built roads, dammed rivers, and drew boundary lines in the region’s forests. In August, 2013, the environmental, political, and economic implications of these actions were revealed when the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee and environmental activists protested the transport of mega-loads through the Clearwater River Valley.

Three specific postwar federal interventions in the North Central Idaho landscape - the completion of US Highway 12, authorization and construction of Dworshak Dam, and reclassification of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness - elicited local, state, and national responses. “Wildly Contentious” locates these responses, favorable and otherwise, within the related contexts of postwar consumption and consumer culture, intensified resource extraction required to fuel consumer culture and the roots of twentieth century environmentalism. This dissertation will explore how these three interventions and the debates surrounding them worked in concert to transform this remote space into a place so hotly contested and rife with conflict.
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INTRODUCTION

At 12:40 a.m. on August 6, 2013 a 255-foot long, 21-foot wide shipment – a “mega-load” – ground to a halt on US Highway 12 near the Nez Perce Clearwater River Casino. A crowd of 200, including Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee members, Nez Perce tribal members, and protesters, formed a human blockade to the 640,000-pound water evaporator bound for the tar sands of Alberta, Canada.\(^1\) Seated and standing protesters held signs reading “Mega Loads of Death,” “Climate Killers,” and “Grammas Against Megaloads” reflected the flashing lights of Idaho State Police and Nez Perce Tribal Police cruisers escorting the massive cargo. Traditional Nimi’ipuu songs and drum beats reverberated across the walls of the Clearwater River canyon, as the showdown at the border of the Nez Perce Indian Reservation began. Protesters lobbed shouts of “Trespassers” and “This is our land! This fight will never end” at police officers and the mega-load. The standoff lasted two hours until Nez Perce Tribal Police arrested 20 individuals including eight of the nine members of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Oil is extracted from tar sands in two ways. One way is to strip-mine the tar-bearing sand and process the sand in a mill to remove the oil. The second way, Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage (SAGD), involves injecting steam underground to mobilize the oil, then pumping the condensed water/oil mixture to the surface and separating the oil from the oil. Following the separation, residual oil and other material contaminants remain in the water. The evaporators are used to further clean the water and upon exiting the evaporator, the water is discharged into the environment or reused in the mining process. Basically, the evaporators turn the process water into steam thus separating out contaminants, then cooling the steam into water condensate. This water is often fed into high-pressure drum boilers powering refining processes. Kevin Lewis, email message to author, October 14, 2013. Moving an evaporator requires two trucks, one pushing and one pulling, with twenty axles along multiple trailers. Email communication between author and Kevin Lewis, Conservation Director, Idaho Rivers United.

\(^2\) “Omega Morgan Megaloads at Nez Perce border, August 5\(^{th}\) 2013…”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gzu73gTEEeo, “Nez Perce Tribe Omega Morgan Blockade”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=b2ykSReO9Z4
Since 2010, US Highway 12 has been the epicenter of battles between opponents of industrial equipment shipments to the Alberta tar sands, in which the Nez Perce Tribe and environmental activists have faced off with corporations Conoco-Phillips, ExxonMobil, General Electric, and these corporations’ subsidiaries and contractors. Conoco-Phillips and ExxonMobil each transported or attempted to transport mega-loads via the highway with tensions building until August 2013 when Oregon-based heavy haul transport company Omega Morgan submitted a proposal to the Idaho Transportation Department to move two evaporators across the Idaho segment of US Highway 12. Resources Conservation Company International, a subsidiary of General Electric and producer of the evaporator, argued that US Highway 12 was the route with the fewest environmental impacts and “the most environmentally-friendly route to get this equipment to the customer.” Locals disagreed.

The portion of US Highway 12 that Omega Morgan intended to transport the water evaporator over stretches 177 miles from the port of Lewiston to the Montana border at Lolo Pass. As it winds across Idaho, the highway bisects approximately 70 miles of the Nez Perce Reservation, passes through the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, and parallels two federally-designated Wild and Scenic Rivers: the Middle Fork of the Clearwater and the Lochsa

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3 In 2010, Imperial Oil and ExxonMobil Canada moved the first mega-load across US Highway 12. The module, produced in South Korea by Sungjun Geotec, was to be the first of 207 loads, with potential for some 1,000 more modules produced in South Korea and transported to the Kearl oil sands of Alberta, Canada via the Port of Lewiston and US Highway 12.

Rivers. Using federal funds and with special use permits from the United States Forest Service (USFS) Clearwater National Forest allowing the project, the State of Idaho constructed the highway between 1914 and 1962. In 1997, a Highway Easement Deed granted the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) right-of-way, in perpetuity, for the operation and maintenance of US Highway 12 through the Clearwater National Forest. Following the July 2013 USFS review of Omega Morgan’s permit application, the Forest Service rejected the hauler’s proposal pending further review of the mega-load’s potential environmental impacts and formal consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe. The Forest Service then requested that the State of Idaho delay granting of the permit until completion of the review and consultation. Idaho Transportation Department ignored the request and on August 2, 2013, granted Omega Morgan permission to proceed with the shipment, and directed the company to seek an additional permit from USFS. ITD issued this directive with the knowledge that that USFS had no such permit-granting system in place. At 10:45 PM on Monday, August 5, 2013, Omega Morgan towed the evaporator from the Port of Wilma. Permitted to travel only between the hours of 10:00 PM and 5:30 AM, at a speed of less than 15 miles per hour, the mega-load reached the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and the Wild and Scenic River corridor on August 8, 2013, passing through the Middle Fork of the Clearwater and Lochsa Rivers.

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5 The 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Public Law 90-542, designated “certain selected rivers of the Nation which, with their immediate environments, possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.” In the case of the Middle Fork of the Clearwater and Lochsa Rivers, responsibility for protection of these rivers falls upon the United States Forest Service.

through these spaces unencumbered by any Forest Service action to protect the Wild and Scenic River Corridor.\footnote{Ibid.}

On the night of August 5, 2013 and in days prior, the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC) expressed its opposition to the evaporator’s passage through reservation lands and to subsequent transport of mega-loads on the grounds that the loads could potentially transform US Highway 12 into an industrial “high and wide” transport corridor.\footnote{US Highway 12 is the desired route for oversized industrial shipments because it is free of the low overpasses found on interstate highways under which mega-loads cannot pass. Producers and transport companies argue that US Highway 12 would save the cost of shipping the loads through the Panama Canal to overland routes accesses at the ports of Houston or New Orleans.} As elected representatives of the Nez Perce Tribe, NPTEC asserted a two-fold objection, local and global in scale, to Omega Morgan’s permit application to ITD and later its shipment of the evaporator across tribal lands. The tribe’s primary objection lay in the loads’ potential damage to spaces within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and on the Middle Fork of the Clearwater, Lochsa, and Selway Rivers in which the tribe retains treaty-guaranteed rights to hunt, fish, and gather, and to practice traditional religious and cultural ceremonies.\footnote{\textit{Nez Perce Tribe and Idaho Rivers United v. United States Forest Service and Resources Conservation Company International}. Although the tribe ceded these lands in the 1863 Treaty, it retains treaty rights in “usual and accustomed places” within the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest and other spaces delineated in the 1855 Treaty.} The tribe’s opposition to the mega-loads reaches beyond its interest in protecting tribal “usual and accustomed places” for exercise of treaty rights; NPTEC members stood in the way of the mega-load as an expression of solidarity with Canadian First Nations impacted by the Alberta oils sands development and to the
Sioux Nation and the Oklahoma and Nebraska tribes opposed to the Keystone XL pipeline. In a press conference before the protest, NPTEC Chairman Silas Whitman pronounced:

> Even if we were supportive of the very idea of the transshipping of the megaloads in the wilderness corridor, the wild and scenic corridor, into Montana, then on into the Athabasca tar sands. We oppose the very delivery of that product because of the problems it creates for the first natives of Canada, and Alberta and the position its put them at environmentally, healthwise…If we are able to be successful in halting the megaload shipments that go into support and continue extractions the tar sands product, the Athabascan tar sands in Canada, then we’ll have launched a major battle as far as helping our brothers and sisters among the he Sioux Nations, all of the Oklahoma tribes that are supporting our initiatives.  

The battle between the State of Idaho, the United States Forest Service, and opponents of mega-load transport across US Highway 12 that played out in the summer of 2013 is one of the most recent debates involving North Central Idaho’s land and natural resources and one of many controversies within the highway’s path since its 1962 completion. While the controversy revealed by the mega-load protests of 2013 continues to play out in Idaho Federal District Court, one wonders how this geographically isolated, sparsely populated, and seemingly wild place became so contentious a space.

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11 For purposes of this dissertation, North Central Idaho will be geographically defined as consisting of Clearwater County, Nez Perce County, Idaho County, Latah County, and Lewis County. The Clearwater River Basin or Clearwater Drainage will also serve as a term of reference when discussing North Central Idaho.
Following World War II, a series of developments in North Central Idaho and the Clearwater Drainage worked to set the stage for the mega-load standoff of 2013. Three of these developments, and the increasingly contentious public debates accompanying each of the developments, are antecedents to the mega-load protests. This dissertation will explore how the completion of US Highway 12, the authorization and construction of Dworshak Dam, and the battle over exclusion of the Magruder Corridor from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and debates surrounding these interventions worked in concert to transform this remote space into a place so hotly contested and rife with conflict.

The federal policies initiating these measures and the disputes arising therefrom played out in places that even for Idaho are considered “the sticks.” However remote the space though, these events did not transpire in an economic and political vacuum. This dissertation locates US Highway 12, Dworshak Dam, and the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness within three closely-related postwar developments in the United States: the rise of consumer culture, increased pressure upon raw materials and resources required to fuel that consumer culture, and the roots of twentieth century environmentalism. Following World War II, the United States experienced three decades of unprecedented economic growth. A combination of federal expenditures for military production and civilian public works projects, expanding export markets, pent-up consumer demand, consumer purchasing power strengthened by higher wages and veterans’ benefits coalesced to forge what historian Lizabeth Cohen has coined a “consumer’s republic.” Americans’ postwar mass consumption worked in two ways – to bring material goods into American households but also to drive the nation’s political economy and political culture. In

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the case of postwar North Central Idaho and the examples cited in this dissertation, federal natural resource policy worked to open up the Clearwater drainage for consumption of the region’s raw materials and scenic spaces. As these federal mandates manifested themselves in the form of highway construction, river development, and wilderness designation, consumers of these spaces – extractive industries, outdoor enthusiasts, early environmental activists, and the United States government – struggled to determine whether this consumption would proceed in the form of extraction and sale or as preservation of the resources in question.

Cohen’s assessment of postwar consumption, however, does not speak to the environmental dimensions of consumer culture in the United States. War mobilization pushed the nation to near-full employment and steadily improved standards of living; the longer-term consequence of this trend being the permanent enlargement of resource extraction and manufacturing industries. Wartime manufacturing and production of durable goods required increased energy consumption and extraction of raw materials. Despite the war’s end, resource extraction and production did not subside. Manufacturing of durable goods along with generation and consumption of electricity nearly doubled between 1939 and 1947. Postwar suburban housing development opened up national forests and public lands to intensive commodity extraction, with timber extraction also doubling from two to four billion board feet per year.¹³

As Americans enjoyed the nation’s postwar economic prosperity and improved standards of living via twentieth century consumerism, they did so to the detriment of the nation’s natural

resources. While the nation consumed these resources at unsustainable rates, Americans simultaneously took to the country’s roads in their automobiles in increasing numbers, to engage in outdoor recreation and tourism. Camping families, hikers, anglers, and hunters opted to spend their leisure time in the very spaces yielding the natural resources and raw materials required to support their participation in postwar consumer culture. In these spaces then, largely middle-class recreators came to view nature as amenity rather than a commodity, and as such began to press for protection of these spaces.14

With the long-awaited completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway (US Highway 12) in 1962, the near trans-continental highway opened the hills and valleys of North Central Idaho to automobile traffic.15 Cars carrying vacationing families and sportsmen to the Clearwater River and montane playgrounds of Idaho’s Bitterroot Mountains, and trucks transporting timber and wheat from throughout the Inland Empire, traversed the river grade highway beside the Lochsa and Middle Fork of the Clearwater Rivers. Once difficult-to-reach small towns along the


15 US Highway 12 stretches 2,483 miles from Aberdeen, Washington to Detroit, Michigan. The 1959 completion of the Saint Lawrence Seaway, connected Atlantic ports with Great Lakes shipping lanes; at Detroit cargoes could be transferred to ground transport systems and travel west on US Highway 12 and later Interstate 94. This combination of river and highway transport effectively created a trans-continental shipping and transportation route.
highway clamored for economic development and increased access to markets beyond the Clearwater River drainage and Pacific Northwest. West of the drainage, dam construction on the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho promised the opening of slack water navigation all of the way inland to Lewiston, Idaho. Business leaders and boosters predicted that the combination of US Highway 12 and the Lower Granite Dam below Lewiston would “pour forth a flood of grain, minerals, and forest products to the markets of the World.”

Having utilized the prime dams sites on the Snake River, engineers of the Snake River dams, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, began proposing dams within the Upper Snake River basin. Following intensive survey of Snake River tributaries, the Corps proposed a bevy of dams on the Main, Middle, and North Fork of the Clearwater River, the Lochsa, and the Selway Rivers. Advocating dams as necessary components of flood control and prevention, the Corps eventually won Congressional and Presidential approval for Bruces Eddy Dam on the North Fork of the Clearwater River. Two years following the authorization of construction for the Bruces Eddy Dam, the Wilderness Act became law on September 3, 1964 designating 1,239,840 acres of USFS land as Idaho’s Selway Bitterroot Wilderness.

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16 The four Lower Snake River dams – Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite – facilitate barge traffic possible to Lewiston, Idaho. These four dams, combined with Columbia River dams make Lewiston is Idaho’s only seaport and the farthest inland port on the west coast of the United States.


18 Bruces Eddy Dam was renamed Dworshak Dam in 1962 in honor of the late United States Senator from Idaho, Henry C. Dworshak.

Passing through the Lochsa River Canyon on US Highway 12 today, towering stands of Lodgepole pine and the Lochsa’s crisp, clear waters parallel to the route awe motorists. To visitors immersed in this space, the complexity of the narrative described in the previous paragraph is easily lost in the actual and proverbial forest. The stunning views provide river rafters, hikers, fly fishers, and Lewis and Clark Trail enthusiasts, aka “Clarkies” or “rut nuts” with few or no hints of how the highway came to be, what the North Fork of the Clearwater looked like before Dworshak Dam, or the immensity of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness laying just south of the Lochsa; even more obscure are the bitter public conflicts associated with each of these spaces.\textsuperscript{20} The outcomes of these conflicts are plainly visible features of North Central Idaho’s landscape – Dworshak Dam soars over the junction of the North Fork and Middle Fork of the Clearwater Rivers and the Magruder Corridor winds between the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church – River of No Return Wildernesses as a federally-protected part of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The human narratives that these landscapes are unable to tell are of the battle over the use of these spaces. This dissertation looks to resurrect those narratives and demonstrate how during the latter half of the twentieth century, through these debates, this geographically isolated and seemingly wild space became nationally and internationally significant.

Within the Clearwater River drainage, these three federally-initiated and sponsored interventions – the completion of US Highway 12, the construction of Dworshak Dam, and the designation of the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness – prompted a gradual flood of increasingly acrimonious discord among interested groups and individuals. Boosters, industrial and business

\textsuperscript{20} The term “rut nut” refers to individuals traveling the Lewis and Clark Trail and Lolo Trail Corridor in search of segments of original trail tread of the Northern Nez Perce Trail.
interests, conservationists and early environmental activists all faced off in a series of struggles to determine how exactly federal natural resource and public land management policy should or should not be enacted in North Central Idaho. Protection of North Central Idaho’s forests and wildlife versus the region’s utilization of these resources via extractive industries formed the core of these conflicts.

The first of the three interventions, the completion of US Highway 12, elicited no documented objections from residents of North Central Idaho. In chapter 1, I explore the opening of isolated North Central Idaho and the Clearwater River Valley via the highway’s construction over the Bitterroot Mountains and through the Lochsa and Middle Fork of the Clearwater River canyons. As one of four longitudinal routes across Idaho, running through federally managed lands of the Clearwater National Forest, chapter 1 chronicles Idaho’s push for highway access to the natural resources and recreational spaces of the Clearwater River Valley – a push void of opposition – and serves as an example of Idaho’s dependence upon federal funding of infrastructure projects in the state.\textsuperscript{21}

The push to complete the Lewis-Clark Highway continues in chapter 2 wherein highway boosters’ promotion efforts worked slowly, even in light of urgent calls for the highway’s necessity to Cold War national defense and regional commerce. In pressing for the highway, promoters unanimously supported its completion and felt that federal funds should bear this responsibility. Chapters 2 and 3 overlap temporally – as post-war highway construction resumed in North Central Idaho, the United States Army Corps of Engineers began surveying the river canyons through which US Highway 12 passed for potential dam sites. In chapter 3, these

\textsuperscript{21} Idaho’s other three other longitudinal routes are Interstate 94 and US Highway 2 in Northern Idaho, and US HWY 20 in Southern Idaho.
surveys and proposed dam projects elicited diverging public reactions to dam construction, both in support and opposition to, and establish conflicting discourses of economic development versus wildlife protection and river preservation in the Clearwater Drainage. These clashing discourses then drive the narrative of chapter 4, wherein the local debate over the authorization and construction of Dworshak Dam draws national attention. What began as a local and regional issue described in chapter 3, drew in national advocacy groups including the Izaak Walton League, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Wilderness Society to line up in opposition to the dam and its potential adverse impacts to the North Fork of the Clearwater River, the river’s wildlife, and adjacent land.

Local and national critics of the United States Army Corps of Engineer’s plan to dam the North Fork of the Clearwater River ultimately lost the battle when President Kennedy authorized construction of then-named Bruces Eddy Dam on October 23, 1962. When the dam’s reservoir reached full capacity in July 1973, it had inundated 59 miles of the once free-flowing river and 16,970 acres of wildlife habitat.22 While Kennedy penned his approval of the river’s irreversible transformation, congressional action moved the nearby million-acre plus Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area closer to its 1964 designation as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. As the discord at Dworshak Dam grew to include national protest, the debate over defining the boundaries and character of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness drew comment from Idahoans and national voices alike. Chapter 5 examines the controversy surrounding the United States Forest Service’s exclusion of a primitive road, the Magruder Corridor, from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness as defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act. The Forest Service, to the satisfaction of

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timber companies, held that the Magruder Corridor, being a man-made feature, did not meet the measure of pristine quality required for wilderness classification. Local environmental activists, with the support of the Wilderness Society countered that despite the road being a road, the Magruder Corridor’s proximity to the ecologically fragile Upper Selway River watershed warranted wilderness classification and accompanying protections. By the time Congress legislated federal protection of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in the 1964 Wilderness Act, the Magruder Corridor controversy still lacked resolution; resolution did not come until 1980 when, due in large part to the efforts of local and national activism, the corridor finally achieved wilderness designation and protection.

In the case of lands and resources managed by the federal government within North Central Idaho postwar consumption exerted concurrent and fundamentally oppositional pressures to both exploit and preserve the region’s rivers and forests. These diverging pressures thus frame the debates explored in this dissertation. In turn, the debates’ outcomes help to explain why eight of the nine members of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, in an act of civil disobedience and solidarity, stood in front of a 644,000-pound piece of equipment on its way to the energy-intensive and highly-polluting Alberta tar sands fields.
CHAPTER 1

THE “MISSING LINK”

On August 8, 1953, nine men departed the Lochsa Ranger Station on a 38-mile trek of the uncompleted stretch of the Lewis-Clark Highway, now US Highway 12. Calling their sojourn the “Wash-Ho-Tana Trek,” the group sought to draw attention to the “missing link,” a winding strip of the highway that once complete, would connect Washington, Idaho, and Montana, to the rest of the United States. At the highway’s eastern terminus, the men waved goodbye to a bulldozer operator and ambled westerly down a trail. The trail ended quickly and for the next two and a half days, the group scrambled and bushwhacked along the north bank of the Lochsa River with the sense that “there was no physical evidence that man had ever traveled this route before.”

The trek’s participants included nine local men from throughout North Central Idaho and eastern Washington, ranging in age from 18 to 70, each carrying a 40-pound pack. Henry Lyons, age 70 of Kamiah, Idaho, the group’s eldest member and a “veteran hunter and mountain man” was according to group member, L.W. Randall, “the only man in the group who knew what we were headed for, but he said little about it when we started.”

Setting forth on the Wash-Ho-Tana Trek, trek participants sought to familiarize themselves with the terrain of the incomplete highway. Self-described as “physically soft and unaccustomed to this kind of hiking over the roughest possible terrain” the men called five minute rest periods every half hour. A break exceeding five minutes resulted in stiffness and a

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24 Ibid.
longer rest period “would have been disastrous.” 25 As the trek proceeded easterly along the Lochsa River, the group encountered perpendicular rock ridges, with faces descending from mountainsides directly into the river. At points where these vertical granite obstacles met the deeper stretches of the Lochsa and prevented the group from wading forward, the men ascended the rocky inclines, crossed ridges, and then descended back down to their river-directed course.

On the second day, Wayne Snyder, the youngest group member took sick; group members suspected appendicitis. 26 Despite Snyder’s condition, the group continued, and at noon on the third day reached Post Office Creek and picked up a United States Forest Service trail. A sign at the trailhead indicated 18 miles to the Powell Ranger Station, the terminus of the Wash-Ho-Tana Trek. By noon on the fourth day, the group reached the Forest Service’s Jerry Johnson Ranger Station, where they phoned the Powell Ranger Station and discovered the Forest Service had dispatched three airplanes to look for them. The group ate their last meal on the trail at Jerry Johnson and set forth on the final four hours of the trek. Upon their arrival at the Powell ranger Station, the eastern end of the missing link, Forest Service rangers met the hikers with “food galore, coffee, and cold drinks.” In total, the trekkers walked 55 miles in 53.5 hours; Wayne Snyder made it out fatigued, but alive. 27 At the highway’s completion nine years later in 1962, Harold Coe, a trek participant from Clarkston, Washington reflected, “It was a much tougher trek than any of us had anticipated, and a longer one. But we believe our walk revived interest in the

25 Ibid.


27 Ibid.
early completion of the Lewis & Clark Highway. The customary delays followed, through 
congressional hearings and red tape, but now, nine years later, the highway is a finished 
reality."  

When the Wash-Ho-Tana Trek began in 1953, construction of the Lewis & Clark 
Highway had been underway since 1916. In the intervening 34 years, residents of North Central 
Idaho and surrounding states steadily pressed for the highway’s completion, making fits of 
progress at just three miles or less per year. As the highway’s construction progressed, its 
proponents’ visions and hopes for the highway evolved from seeing the highway as an access 
artery to the Clearwater, Nez Perce, and Lolo National Forests to the highway’s use as a 
commercial and tourist throughway. This chapter will chronicle the Lewis-Clark Highway’s 
early history and development, from its 1916 designation by the Idaho Highway Commission, to 
the 1956 election of Idaho Senator Frank Church. During this forty-year period, the highway 
slowly opened North Central Idaho to motorized traffic, with the highway’s plod toward 
completion impeded by the region’s rugged topography, construction funding quarrels between 
the State of Idaho and the Federal government, and a lack of comprehensive construction 
planning. Despite these impediments, boosters, business interests, and state and national elected 
officials deployed a variety of schemes and strategies aimed at advancing the highway’s 
construction through the Clearwater Valley, over the Bitterroot Mountains, and into western 
Montana. In the early part of the twentieth century, as the rest of the United States looked to 
highways as conduits of economic development, so did North Central Idaho; the region’s 
economic dependence upon extractive industry required it. Despite the highway’s slow advance, 
this chapter demonstrates North Central Idaho’s unanimous support for the Lewis-Clark 

\[28 \text{Ibid.}\]
Highway - support that the region did not impart to future federally-funded projects in the Clearwater River Basin.

**Early Routes**

The origins of the Lewis-Clark Highway and the desire to connect western Montana with Lewiston, Idaho reaches back to the Idaho’s territorial years. In 1858, Captain John Mullan, directed by the War Department, explored and later established the Mullan Road – located 100 miles north of the Lolo Trail and the Lewis-Clark Highway. Mullan’s assessment of the Lolo Trail described the topography of North Central Idaho as “…one immense bed of rugged, difficult, pine-clad mountains, that can never be converted to any purpose for the use of man.”

Mullan ultimately rejected the Lolo route in favor of a route over Lookout Pass, paralleling the Coeur d’Alene River; Mullan’s route over the crag-dense peaks of the Bitterroots proved almost unusable by wagons. In 1865, Congress appropriated $50,000 to survey and construct a wagon road over the Lolo Trail, to open a more direct route between the gold camps of Virginia City, Montana, and the territorial capital and commercial center at Lewiston. The appropriation barely covered the cost of surveying the trail and bushwhacking out a pack train trail. Development of the Lolo Trail as a northern route between Montana and Lewiston remained dormant until 1900, when the Clearwater Short Line Railway Company and Union Pacific Railroad conducted a survey for a railroad between Missoula and Kooskia, Idaho. The companies never completed

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the rail line but serviceable wagon roads laid in conjunction with the railroad survey provided limited access to sections of the proposed route. Subsequent railroad construction beside the Lochsa River by rivals Union Pacific and Northern Pacific railroads ended in 1909 following mutual attempts at sabotage and destruction of trails led to compromise wherein neither company would run rail lines along the Lochsa River.

As progress on a passable route over the Bitterroots stalled during the 1915 – 1916 federal fiscal biennium the recently formed Idaho Highway Commission designated six new state highways. The Lewis-Clark Highway, also known as Idaho State Highway No. 9 and Idaho Forest Highway Route 16, from Kooskia, Idaho to Lolo Pass and the Idaho-Montana State Line, was one of these. In the same year as the highway’s designation, Congress passed the Federal Post Roads or Federal Aid to Highways Act. The Post Roads Act provided federal financing for highways in the United States via direct appropriations by Congress and established two classifications of roads eligible for federal funding assistance: free rural mail delivery roads and roads within or adjacent to national forests. The legislation also required that states match the federal funds provided within two years of the funds’ allocation. Federal aid funds not matched

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32 Idaho Department of Highways Public Information Section, A New Highway with a Long History.


35 The term “post roads” was used in the act as a political maneuver in the 1916 Act. According to Historian Christopher Wells, this phrase was deployed in an effort to refuse primacy to neither farm-to-market nor long-distance roads and also to avoid constitutional objections to federal involvement in road building. As a responsibility delegated to the states, the Act allowed states to set their own road building agendas. See Christopher W. Wells Car Country: An Environmental History (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 82.
by the state within that time then reverted to the federal government and were lost to the state. Finally, the act directed that the United States Bureau of Public Roads determine the location, design, and construction of highways and that all the work should be performed by contract.\footnote{G.C. Hobson, Richard A. Lake, Clara Bays, \textit{Idaho Digest and Bluebook}, (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers,1935), p. 473 - 474. World War I served as the impetus for federal sponsorship of highway construction in the United States. The war spurred European powers to purchase raw materials and products from the United States – products shipped to ports via railroads and underdeveloped highways. Railroads in the United States could not handle the increased loads and demand for highway networks and rapid transport of goods led to rapid expansion of truck transport of goods and materials. With increased commercial use and heavy truck traffic, the nation’s roads deteriorated, creating conditions that pushed the American Association of State Highway Officials to submit a four-page long bill to Congress calling for increased federal funding of highways. This bill became the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1916. See John Williamson, “Federal Aid to Roads and Highways Since the 18\textsuperscript{th} Century: A Legislative History,” Congressional Research Service, January 6, 2012, \url{http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42140.pdf} (accessed 18 February 2013).}

Under the Federal Post Roads Act, the Idaho State Highway Commission intended to allocate federal road construction funding to less populated areas of Idaho in locales, where highway construction costs could not be financed by county highway districts.\footnote{Idaho Transportation Department, \textit{Idaho’s Highway History: 1863-1975}, 52.} When the Federal Post Roads Act began its allocation of funding toward construction of the Lewis-Clark Highway, Major Frank A. Fenn, United States Regional Forest Service Supervisor from Kooskia Idaho, began discussions with North Central Idaho communities regarding road construction prospects beside the Clearwater and Lochsa Rivers. With his confidence bolstered by $300,000 of Forest Road Funding already earmarked by the United States Forest Service for the Lewis-Clark Highway project, Fenn traveled to Lewiston to meet with the North and South Idaho State Highway Association. Representing both the Missoula Chamber of Commerce and the United States Forest Service, Fenn advocated the road as a link between Lewiston and Missoula, as the...
shortest highway through the inland northwest to the coast, and as an access artery to Forest
Service camps and ranger stations within the Lochsa-Selway Wilderness.\(^{38}\)

At the November 8, 1916 meeting in Lewiston, Fenn expressed the Forest Service’s
intentions of partnering with the State of Idaho and county good road districts to construct the
road through Idaho’s Clearwater and Nez Perce Counties. Fenn also presented an offer from the
City of Missoula, that if the State of Idaho appropriated $50,000 to supplement the earmarked
federal funds, the city would fund highway construction between Missoula and the Idaho state
line.\(^{39}\) Fenn concluded his Lewiston visit stating he believed “…that within three years a person
can drive over a fine highway on a water grade from Lewiston to Missoula.”\(^{40}\) Forty-six years
and $13,312,276 later, a person could indeed drive this fine water grade route.\(^{41}\)

North Central Idaho’s topography and geologic profile posed the most daunting obstacle
to Major Fenn’s vision of a passable route over the Bitterroot by 1919. The 1935 *Idaho Digest
and Bluebook* described the region’s natural barriers to highway construction, finding that
“Geographical features deflect the even trend of transportation. Mountains, canyons and rivers
interrupt the passage of highways and make difficult the placing of continuous routes to serve the
needs of those who form the state and to accommodate transcontinental traffic at the same

\(^{38}\) “Lewis and Clark Highway Edition,” 16. At Fenn’s meeting the Lewis and Clark meeting was
also cited as the eastern section of the Columbia River Highway / Oregon Highway 2.


\(^{40}\) *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, “Fenn A Visitor,” 9 November 1916.

\(^{41}\) “Lewis and Clark Highway Edition,” “Cost Per Mile To Be $142,574,” *Lewiston Morning
Tribune*, 19 August 1962, Section 3, p. 26. A water grade route is a route that parallels a river or
body of water.
Heading east from Lewiston, Idaho, the Lewis-Clark Highway winds through steep canyon valleys, running parallel to the Clearwater River for 96 miles, then parallel to the Lochsa River for 101 miles until the Idaho-Montana state line at Lolo Pass. Within this stretch, the highway passes by 16 million year old basalt lava flows of the Columbia Plateau and just past Orofino, heads into the 82 to 90-million year old alternating igneous granitic and metamorphic bedrock of the Bitterroot Batholith – the northern part of the Idaho Batholith. The meandering canyon bends through the path of the meanders the Clearwater River followed when it began flowing on the smooth surface of the Columbia Plateau. The river continues to follow these bends as it carves its valley deeply into the plateau’s basalt. The Lochsa River, far more turbulent than the Clearwater River, lacks floodplains and contains long stretches of near-continuous rapids with few deep pools. Minor tributaries enter the Lochsa through steep waterfalls – characteristics not common to unglaciated valleys. This combination of rapids and meanders within the Lochsa’s deep canyon made the task of grading, draining and paving the Lewis-Clark Highway a daunting one.

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42 *Idaho Digest and Bluebook*, 455.


44 Alt and Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Idaho*, 129.

45 According to Alt and Hyndman, Ice age glaciers of North Central Idaho were confined to higher mountains and never reached low enough to alter larger stream valleys. Evidence of glaciation can be spotted in the higher-altitude crags south of the Lochsa between Lowell and Powell.
“Transients,” Prisoners, and Dynamite

Despite these obstacles, highway construction began in the summer of 1918, funded by $235,740 of Forest Service funds matched with $58,560 from the State of Idaho. The initial construction contract let by the Forest Service in 1918 began work on the 23-mile stretch of the highway between Kooskia and Lowell. American involvement in the First World War slowed progress on the Lewis and Clark Highway, and by 1920, just 22 miles of the highway had been graded and drained. Between 1922 and 1945, work on the highway progressed, financed by forest highways funding, with approximately 40 miles graded and drained. During this period, a variety of federal programs and agencies worked to advance the Lewis-Clark Highway including the National Recovery Act and Civil Works Administrations, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Between 1934 and 1935 men employed by the Civil Works Administration, labored on a segment of highway between Kamiah and Kooskia. The Civil Works Administration “transients” from the shelter at Lewiston’s DeFrance Hotel worked in exchange for meals and housing and came and went as they pleased.

Next, between 1935 and 1941 the United States Bureau of Public Roads obligated Federal Forest Highway funds to the Federal Bureau of Prisons, who in turn, supplied the project with prison labor for six years. Within those six years, 200 federal prisoners from the Leavenworth, Kansas, penitentiary the “flowers” of the federal prison population (those


47 Ibid.

“carefully selected as individuals capable of being rehabilitated and who showed an attitude and desire to hold an honest job”), performed heavy-duty road construction work in exchange for shortened sentences.\textsuperscript{49} The State of Idaho, Federal Bureau of Prisons, and Bureau of Public Roads considered the prison camp a financial success. Prison labor removed one cubic yard of material at a cost of $0.67; the contract price would have been $2.60. According to project superintendent M.D. Bradshaw, the Bureau of Prisons also benefitted from the project, since it was cheaper to hold the men in Idaho than behind bars in Leavenworth. “And it was better for the prisoner. He was able to renew contact with civilians, learned a good outdoor trade before his discharge, and he earned three days a month off his sentence for good behavior.”\textsuperscript{50}

Highway construction contracts often stipulate that work be completed during “good weather months;” the Bureau of Public Roads contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons did not contain this stipulation and kept prisoners working year-round in Black Canyon. M.D. Bradshaw deemed Black Canyon “the toughest section of the highway.”\textsuperscript{51} Using “liberal applications of dynamite” prisoners built 19 miles of new road through the canyon. Suspended in slings rappelled down granite bluffs above the Lochsa river, prisoners drilled holes in the rock


\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
faces and planted dynamite charges while others worked from barges in the river.\textsuperscript{52} In this way, the prisoners moved an estimated 30,000 cubic yards of rock and dirt per mile.\textsuperscript{53}

With the start of World War II, the federal prison program ended and Japanese alien internees replaced prison laborers at the Kooskia work camp. With this change, the camp’s operation and management shifted from the Federal Bureau of Prisons to The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. Between 1943 and 1945 The Kooskia camp held approximately 265 “enemy aliens” or noncitizen United States residents of Japanese descent who had volunteered for transfer to and service at the Kooskia Internment Camp. Supervised by the United States Bureau of Public Roads the internees received wages for their work. The Geneva Convention of 1929 governed treatment of Japanese internees at the Kooskia Internment Camp. Because of the convention’s agreement, Japanese noncitizen internees at the Kooskia Camp received better treatment than their Japanese American citizen relatives held at War Relocation Authority camps. Kooskia internees thus pressed for improvements in medical and dental care, changes to camp procedural processes and administration, recreational opportunities. Working in pick and shovel crews, as tree fellers, dump truck drivers, heavy equipment operators, welders, and as in-camp laborers, the internees dynamited and hacked a rough forest road out of solid metamorphic rock.\textsuperscript{54}

While transients, prisoners, and Japanese internees chipped away at the Lewis-Clark Highway, a federal policy development threatened the highway’s progress toward Lolo Pass. On

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{54} Wegars, \textit{Imprisoned in Paradise}, 61.
January 29, 1927, the newly formed United States Federal Power Commission, under legislation provided by the Federal Water Power Act of 1920, withdrew one-half mile on each side of the Middle Fork of the Clearwater, Lochsa, and Selway Rivers, reserving these parcels for potential hydroelectric dam development sites on the rivers.\footnote{William H. Covey and George L. Lunden, \textit{Penny Cliffs Impact Study: Clearwater and Nez Perce National Forests}. (Missoula: United States Forest Service Region One Office, 1963), 5.} The Power Commission’s move effectively prohibited forty-two miles of highway construction alongside the Lochsa River and prevented inclusion of the Lewis-Clark Highway as a part of the State Federal Aid Primary System.\footnote{Idaho Digest and Blue Book, 488.} An aerial survey of the Clearwater and Lochsa River valleys and potential highway routes – the first aerial photographic highway survey ever conducted in the United States – revealed three possible routes from Kooskia to Lolo Pass, with the survey indicating the Lochsa River route the most feasible to build.\footnote{Lewis, “Building the Lewis-Clark Highway,” 19.} Citing the aerial survey’s evidence, the State of Idaho applied to the Federal Power Commission for right of way and withdrawal of potential federal hydroelectric power sites beside the Lochsa.\footnote{State of Idaho Application to Federal Power Commission for Right of Way, (DA-238-Idaho) in \textit{Thirteenth Annual Report of the Federal Power Commission}, 1933, 33.} In July, 1932, the Federal Power Commission granted permission to the State of Idaho, finding that: “the highway in the location and at the grades proposed by the

\footnote{Federal Power Commission Power Site Classification no. 166. \textit{Idaho Digest and Blue Book}, 488. Inclusion in the Federal Aid System would have made the Lewis-Clark Highway eligible for a separate, additional source of federal highway funding assistance beyond the Forest Highway funding legislated by the 1916 Federal Post Roads Act and the 1921 Federal Highway Act. The 1921 Act, Wells writes, funded road construction projects and created a coordinated national highway system that by the end of the 1920s put a federal-aid funded road within ten miles of nearly 90 percent of Americans. Wells, \textit{Car Country}, 129.}

\textit{Idaho Digest and Blue Book}, 488.
State of Idaho would interfere with the construction of three proposed high dams on the Lochsa River for power purposes, but would not seriously interfere with the development of the power resources of the stream by means of diversion dams and conduits.” The commission continued, that “the Lochsa River power sites are now very inaccessible, and that the highway, if built, would provide an excellent means of communication to and from these sites.”59 But, according to Idaho’s Highway History, upon the commission’s granting of the application, the commission did not withdraw the three power sites. Rather, the Idaho Department of Highways interpreted the commission’s decision that in the event any sites on the Locsha are ultimately developed, that the federal government would bear the highway’s reconstruction costs. With the Federal Power Commission’s granting of right of way alongside the Lochsa the Lewis-Clark Highway became eligible for funding from the Federal Aid Primary System.60 Thomas H. MacDonald, chief of the Bureau of Public Roads, announced the Lewis-Clark Highway’s inclusion in the Federal Aid Primary System on September 10, 1932.61 This announcement opened Idaho’s eligibility for additional federal highway construction dollars, beyond those allocated via the 1916 Federal Post Roads Act.

The increased availability of federal funds did not guarantee that construction would proceed on the Lewis-Clark Highway though. In 1935, the State of Idaho, the Idaho State Highway Commission, and Idaho Department of Highways acknowledged the state’s inability to finance construction of the Lewis-Clark Highway stating, “We know that with state funds alone

59 Ibid.

60 Idaho’s Highway History, 117.

we can only maintain our position. We hope that more funds will be available and are attempting to have regular Federal Aid re-established in addition.”

Idaho Commissioner of Public Works, G.E. McKelvey considered federal highway funds a right for the state. With Idaho’s taxable land base at 25 percent – excluding the nearly 70 percent of the state’s land under federal ownership and management and the 5 percent under state ownership - the Commissioner charged the federal government with responsibility for highway development in Idaho. McKelvey referred to eastern states’ objections to federal funding of western highways; objections the east made without realization the west’s economic development was already funded largely by eastern interests. These interests, being mostly extractive industries and incorporated in the east, by paying federal taxes in the east, would also benefit from use of highways constructed with their tax payments. Therefore, the companies’ objections were unfounded.

Without construction funds from the State of Idaho and slow progression of road building through the Clearwater River Valley, boosters within North Central Idaho took action to advance the construction and completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway. Like McKelvey, they realized the highway’s economic value to the region and the nation. In 1921, the Lewiston, Idaho chapter of the Lewis and Clark Highway Association formed to advocate for the construction of the highway as a “…feeder to a developed system of waterways, a transcontinental highway, a military road, and a commercial route between western states, and as a means of opening an area of great recreational value and providing additional access to Yellowstone park.” By 1929 the

62 Idaho Digest and Blue Book, 489.

63 Idaho Digest and Blue Book, 501.

national Lewis and Clark Highway Association formed to promote the highway traversing the length of the Corps of Discovery route from St. Louis, Missouri to Astoria, Oregon. A second booster association formed in 1936 - the Lewis- Clark Highway Association. With the association’s officers coming from Lewiston’s commercial and civic leadership circles, this group focused on the highway’s potential use as a military route and the possibility of War Department-funded construction of the highway. In 1940 with 54 miles of the highway remaining, Lewiston Chamber of Commerce President and Lewis-Clark Highway Association member, Marcus Means, traveled to Washington D.C. at his own expense to lobby the United States War Department for designation of the Lewis-Clark Highway as a “first priority military road.” Idaho’s Congressional representation also submitted a letter of application to the War Department, requesting that “…the Lewis and Clark Highway be included in the national-defense program and that the War Department designate this road as a military project to be given priority in the Bureau of Public Roads construction program.”


68 Compton I. White, Henry C. Dworshak, Walter M. Pierce, Homer D. Angell, D. Worth Clark, and John Thomas to Henry H. Woodring, February 5, 1940 in Hearings Before a Subcommittee on Public Works United States Senate, Eighty-fifth Congress First Session on S. 1136 A Bill to
War Department designated the Lewis-Clark Highway as a first priority military road. Despite this designation, since the Lewis-Clark Highway was not located on a military reservation, the War Department provided no additional funding.\textsuperscript{69} As of October, 1940 official War Department and Bureau of Public Roads maps indicated the highway’s inclusion in the military and strategic highway system of the United States.\textsuperscript{70}

During the late 1940s and early 1950s federal recognition of the Lewis-Clark Highway as both Forest Highway and first priority military road did seemingly little to move the highway toward completion. Beyond the work of Japanese internees on the highway, World War II diverted national and state funds and manpower away from the project. Between 1947 and 1948 Idaho State Highway Funds and federal Forest Highway funds graded and drained only four miles and widened and reconstructed two miles.\textsuperscript{71} In 1948, 36 miles of the Lewis-Clark Highway remained to be completed.\textsuperscript{72} That same year, on June 29, Congress amended the Federal Post Road Act of 1916 for a tenth time and passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of

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\textsuperscript{71} Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association, \textit{Wake Up, Rip!}, 14.

\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, 14 April 1948.
With President Truman’s signature on June 30, 1948, the act authorized a $1.5 billion package - $500 million for each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1950, 1951, and 1952 - in federal funding for United States highways. The act stipulated that money would be appropriated to states on the basis of area population and existing post road mileage. Although the Lewis-Clark Highway was eligible for both forest road and federal highway funds in this package, given Idaho’s small population and existing highways, the authorized funds graded and drained only six additional miles in three years.

Lamenting the slow pace of the Lewis-Clark Highway’s construction, Idaho Representative Compton I. White testified before the United States House of Representatives Public Works Committee on Monday, March 27, 1950. Calling the Lewis-Clark Highway “one of the most important transcontinental roads across the country,” White began his testimony highlighting the 330-mile gap between US Highway 10 in northern Idaho, and US Highway 30 in southern Idaho; without the Lewis-Clark Highway, the state lacked an expedient route though North Central Idaho. White blamed the United States Forest Service and the United States Bureau of Public Roads for this gap, that for thirty years the State had been trying to persuade the Forest Service and Bureau of Public Roads to complete the highway project. “We have $4,000,000 invested in that road and we do not get a nickel out of this road investment that had


74 Lewiston Morning Tribune, 14 April 1948.

been made. We do not get any gasoline tax, and we do not get much in the way of service. It is just a dead investment.” When asked by the committee chairman if the Idaho State Highway Commission had selected the Lewis-Clark Highway for construction, White acknowledged that the because of the road’s inclusion in the Federal aid system, that the forest service should fund construction and that the State of Idaho was had contributed all it could of its limited State treasury funds. After White accused the Forest Service of stymieing and blocking the project, the committee chairman reiterated to White that the Bureau of Public Roads and the highway authorities of Idaho determined allocation of Congressional highway appropriations. White replied that the Forest Service made these decisions, adding that “Lewiston is one of our biggest cities, and it is dependent on the development of that road for its natural growth.” The committee chair then concluded the hearing, telling White “We are always glad to have you appear before us...you always put on a good show.”

White’s appearance before the House Public Works Committee accomplished little in advancing the Lewis-Clark Highway toward completion. Following the three allocations made by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1948 – funding road construction in 1949, 1950, and 1951 –

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77 Ibid.

78 Ibid. In Conspiracy of Optimism, Paul Hirt argues that postwar timber harvests from national forest land soared as private forests exhausted their stands of merchantable timber. With receipts from these sales, and “intensive management” of national forest timber, road construction in national forests accelerated with 65,000 miles of additional roads cut into backcountry spaces between 1945 and 1960. Considering Hirt’s observation, the question remains why the Forest Service would not allocate more funds to the construction of the Lewis-Clark Highway, given the access it could provide to Forest Service-managed lands.
no work was done in 1952 or 1953, and in 1954 Forest Highway funds graded and surfaced only 3.29 miles.\textsuperscript{79} With the 1950 election of Idaho Governor Len Jordan, the Governor removed all State of Idaho funding and refused Federal-Aid funding for the Lewis-Clark Highway. Intending to end the State’s deficit spending, Jordan instituted across-the-board 25 percent budget reductions, leaving only federal Forest Highway Funds to advance work on the highway.\textsuperscript{80} Jordan’s removal of State funds and the absence of federal funds moved the Bureau of Public Roads to temporarily abandon the project’s east end to focus work on the western end of the highway.\textsuperscript{81} By the summer of 1952, though, the State of Idaho had managed to allocate a small pot of state highway funds for the project, allowing a 2.75-mile extension of the eastern end of the Lewis-Clark Highway, making a total of nine miles constructed since 1942.\textsuperscript{82} Bemoaning the condition of Idaho’s highways, Idaho Highway Department Director, E.V. Miller cited the doubling of the state’s highway traffic since 1942 and that as a result, every day the state’s economy slipped behind. Remedying the situation required more money and engineers, but with

\textsuperscript{79} Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association, \textit{Wake Up, Rip!}, 14.

\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Spokesman Daily Chronicle}, January 9, 1951, p.1. \textit{Paradox Politics: People and Power in Idaho} author Randy Stapilus explains Governor Jordan’s fiscal conservatism. Upon Jordan’s election to the Governorship, he slashed the state budgets his predecessor, Charles Robins, had expanded. Another Idaho Governor, Robert Smylie, recalled that Jordan’s budget measures were unjustified – the State of Idaho was not in financial trouble. However, in 1952, Jordan came to the Idaho Legislature with a “whopping surplus” largely the result reducing public school appropriations. Randy Stapilus, \textit{Paradox Politics: People and Power in Idaho} (Boise: Ridenbaugh Press, 1988), 105.

\textsuperscript{81} Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association, \textit{Wake Up, Rip!}, 21.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, 23 May 1952.
34 miles remaining, at the present pace of construction, it would be 20 years before the Lewis-Clark Highway’s completion.  

**Explosions in “Eden”**

The Lewis-Clark Highway seemed to be progressing little but the *Saturday Evening Post* brought attention to the route in an article proclaiming “They’re Taming the Lolo Trail.”

Authored by Richard L. Neuberger of Oregon, just prior to his election to the United States Senate, the piece traced the Lewis-Clark Highway’s advance through the “most formidable area of primitive upland solitudes left in the United States.”

Recalling the Corps of Discovery’s treks over the Bitterroots and alongside the Lochsa and Clearwater Rivers, the article described the construction of the Lewis-Clark Highway as a project of conquest wherein “… this age old fortress of granite and stony lava is in the process of surrendering at last to bulldozers, steam shovels, and blasting powder. Into the jumbled wilderness from east to west, like the prongs of pincers, poke the beginnings of a fabulous highway.”

Neuberger highlighted the highway’s isolation amidst the timbered peaks and wild river valleys of the Clearwater National Forest. As the road advanced through this space though, and tourists arrived, one pack train leader from the Lochsa Ranger Station mourned, “Now we’ll have to wear neckties and be on parade” and Bill Woolsey, construction boss at the eastern end of the highway, likened the highway’s

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83 Ibid.

84 Richard L. Neuberger, “They’re Taming the Lolo Trail.” *Saturday Evening Post*, 10 April 1954.

85 Neuberger, “They’re Taming the Lolo Trail,” 24.

86 Neuberger, “They’re Taming the Lolo Trail,” 25.
construction to “an explosion in the Garden of Eden.” Neuberger closed the article, depicting the road’s impact upon the Lochsa River valley, “Civilization nibbles now at the Lochsa Basin, as the steam shovels and bulldozers creep slowly toward a meeting somewhere beside the crystalline river.”

As the highway’s progress slogged along, a group of civic and commercial leaders from Lewiston, Idaho and Clarkston, Washington, formed the Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association with the sole purpose of expedited completion of the highway either as a toll road or as a free road. By passing H.B. 237, the Idaho Turnpike Control Act, March 16, 1955, the State of Idaho confirmed the legitimacy of the Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association. The bill’s language outlined various roles and responsibilities for the Idaho Turnpike Control Board, one of these being the ability of citizens to finance turnpike feasibility studies. With the state’s permission to finance a turnpike feasibility study, the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce, working with the Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association sold bumper stickers (or as the association called them, ‘bumper strips’) as a fundraiser for the feasibility study of the highway. After raising $3,000, the association contracted Wilbur Smith and Associates of Connecticut to conduct the turnpike feasibility study. The study deemed a toll road indeed feasible for the Lewis-Clark Highway, but another

87 Neuberger, “They’re Taming the Lolo Trail,” 119.

88 Neuberger, “They’re Taming the Lolo Trail,” 123.


90 1955 Idaho Session Laws, chapter 256, p. 572.

highway consultant, Paul Speer, informed the group that the federal government would not provide funding for toll road construction. According to the United States Bureau of Public Roads, federal legislation held that federal aid could not be used for the construction of any highway on which tolls are to be charged.92 During the Wilbur Smith and Associates’ work on the toll road feasibility study, neither the State of Idaho nor the federal government allocated construction funds; hence the Lewis-Clark Highway lost another year.93

With the loss of the Lewis-Clark Highway-as-turnpike prospect in 1956, the Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association reorganized itself, joined with the US Highway 12 Association of Montana and North Dakota, and began lobbying for inclusion of the Lewis-Clark Highway in the US Highway 12 system.94 In joining the association, Lewiston-Clarkston-area boosters recognized the value of automobile tourism and of a national commercial transportation network’s passage through the Clearwater Valley. The two groups began their work together, persuading the


93 Space, Clearwater Story, 97.

American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) to renumber U.S. Highway 6 through Montana as US Highway 12. In Idaho, on April 23, 1957, the City of Lewiston submitted a request to the Idaho Board of Highway Directors to designate the Lewis-Clark State Highway 9 as US Highway 12. The Board tabled the request until the highway’s completion.\(^95\) Finally, upon completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway in 1962, the Idaho Board of Highway Directors approved the designation, subject to the concurrence of the Montana State Highway Commission in extending the US Highway 12 designation from Missoula, to the Idaho state line. The Montana State Highway Commission agreed and AASHO renamed the Lewis-Clark Highway US Highway 12.\(^96\)

The Lewis-Clark Highway/ US Highway 12 Association amalgam also pressed state legislatures of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota to pass and submit memorials to Congress urging completion of the highway as a civil emergency evacuation route.\(^97\) In two similar memorials, one presented first to the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations in 1955 and one later to the House Committee on Public Works in 1957, the Idaho State Legislature requested Congressional funding to complete the unfinished sections of US Highway 13 in Idaho. Each of the memorials addressed US Highway 12 and the unfinished


\(^{97}\) Ibid.
Wash-Ho-Tana Link as vitally essential to the defense of the Pacific Northwest in the event a mass evacuation becomes necessary because of an enemy attack on the area’s strategic defense installations. Additionally, the memorials pressed the highway’s economic significance as providing transportation infrastructure for the region’s lumber, mining, and agricultural products, as well as its historical significance and potential tourist attraction.  

As the memorials submitted by the Idaho State Legislature emphasized, US Highway 12 needed to be finished to provide for the transportation of North Central Idaho’s timber resources. On April 27, 1956, a delegation of eleven men - consisting of representatives from Kamiah, Kooskia, Orofino, Lewiston, and Grangeville - appeared before the Idaho Board of Highway Directors, urging an all-out effort to complete the remaining 26 miles of the Lewis-Clark Highway. The men impressed upon the Board the highway’s necessity as an access route to merchantable dying timber that in the absence of suitable transportation routes had been going to Montana for processing. This timber, the group argued, should be brought to Idaho. Frank Gaffney of Orofino requested that the Board of Highway Directors commit to a definite annual expenditure for the highway. To each of the pleas, the Board responded that federal Forest Highway funds would be the only source of additional highway financing and further that the Idaho Highway Department would continue, as it had for the past four years, with obligating federal monies to the Lewis-Clark Highway, but only federal funds were available.


When Frank Church won election to the US Senate in November, 1956, 17.5 miles of US Highway 12’s “missing link” remained incomplete. As the Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association saw it, until the highway was finished, Idaho suffered daily irrecoverable economic losses. In Idaho’s election of Frank Church to the US Senate, supporters of US Highway 12 had found one of the road’s greatest champions. Among Church’s campaign platforms was his promise to “build your Idaho” via responsible and measured development of the state’s natural resources; Church readily acknowledged that US Highway 12 would fulfill this promise. In 1956, six years away from the highway’s 1962 dedication, the nine men’s efforts on the 1953 Wash-Ho-Tana Trek had not been in vain, nor had the efforts of boosters, business interests, and state and national elected officials actively promoting the highway during the 40 years since construction began. North Central Idaho heartily supported the highway’s advance through its mountains and river valleys and voices of opposition remained absent from the highway’s path. The “explosion in the Garden of Eden” and highway construction described in *The Saturday Evening Post* had begun to open North Central Idaho’s mountains, forests, and rivers to people and automobiles and opened these same spaces to postwar exploration and exploitation of this wilderness “Garden of Eden” by American consumers and industry alike.


CHAPTER 2
OPENING UP IDAHO’S WILDERNESS “EDEN”

At 8:01 on July 12, 1957, the National Air Raid Warning System, based in Colorado Springs, Colorado flashed a warning, reporting an imaginary flight of enemy bombers headed for St. Paul, Minnesota. The hypothetical first bomb fell in theory on Des Moines, Iowa, wiped the city off the map, and the simulated raiders reached their target of St. Paul a half hour later. This scenario initiated the 1957 Federal Civil Defense Administration Operation Alert. Held annually on the same day between 1954 and 1961, the alert functioned as a nationwide civil defense test. The 1957 alert featured a mock attack of twin fleets of supersonic bombers dropping 175 hydrogen bombs over 162 American cities. In the northwestern United States, the test acted out a simulated presidential proclamation ordering evacuation of Pacific coast areas. In Idaho, Governor Robert Smylie declared a simulated state of emergency in which the state would act accordingly under the state’s civil defense plan. Public participation in the alert on Friday July 12, 1957 was limited to the 15 minutes following the warning – with the first


phase of the simulation working to test local civil defense and “remind civilians of the need to take cover.”

The imaginary damage inflicted in Idaho’s Operation Alert scenario included nuclear bombing of Mountain Home Air Force Base and the National Reactor Testing Station at Idaho Falls. During the scenario “high explosive bombs” hit Pocatello, mines at Burke and Centerville were dynamited, and “the male population was out of control” – looting stores and vandalizing property. Simultaneously the power plant on the Snake River near Hagerman and substations near Boise and Nampa had all been sabotaged and nuclear fallout necessitated evacuation of all of southern Idaho. As the defense exercise played out in Lewiston, thousands of imaginary evacuees from Boise and surrounding states poured into the city. According to scenario documents opened by acting Nez Perce County Defense Director, Frank Sullivan at 9:15 AM, 8,000 evacuees traveled south on U.S. Highway 195 and east on U.S. Highways 295 and 410. As the evacuees moved into Lewiston and Clarkston, hypothetical fires raged in the Selway Forest, and phone lines went down. With the bridge between Lewiston and Clarkston sabotaged, civil defense officials routed evacuees south to Enterprise, Oregon. At noon, the simulation expanded and reported the spread of radioactive fallout from enemy bombings at Camp Hanford, Washington. Mock radio alert broadcasts warned citizens to cover all food and water supplies and to remain indoors for at least 48 hours.

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105 Lewiston Morning Tribune, “100 American Towns Crushed by Imaginary Nuclear Bombs,” 13 July 1957, p. 1. After the initial test involving public participation the survey lasted an additional 72 hours in which local officials acted out nuclear bombing scenarios and responses.


107 Lewiston Morning Tribune, “Thousands of Evacuees Pour Into City In Simulated Crisis,” 13 July 1957. While state and local staging of “Operation Alert 1957 ” ceased by the evening of
In Lewiston, the Tuesday, July 16 evening meeting of Civil Defense leaders evaluated Lewiston’s participation in Operation Alert 1957. National Guard Major Gordon I. Shore highlighted weaknesses in Nez Perce County’s shortage of auxiliary power supply plants, a lack of coordination with neighboring Asotin County, and overcrowded radio frequencies, but altogether called it a “generally well-organized” exercise.\textsuperscript{108} The Monday prior to the meeting, in a telegram from Governor Smylie to Lewiston resident and Lewis-Clark highway booster, Ernie Nelson, Smylie communicated that “Operation Alert” proved the need for completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway across North Central Idaho. Smylie argued the exercise “indicates how vital this highway is to an adequate civil defense program.”\textsuperscript{109}

Following Operation Alert 1957, the need for a completed highway over the Bitterroot Mountains seemed more pressing than ever. However, the newly legislated 1956 Interstate Highway Act threatened to diminish funding of the Lewis-Clark Highway in favor of the

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, “Keller Appointed Defense Director” 17 July 1957.

\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, “Highway Needed For Defense” 16 July 1957.
interstate routes of the United States’ largest-ever highway building endeavor. Between 1957 and the 1962 completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway, a cacophony of Cold War fears, perceived defense and economic needs, and competing Right and Left ideologies combined to simultaneously stifle and advance the highway’s progress. Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Oregon residents and business interests all pushed for federal funding only to receive resistance from the fiscally conservative Eisenhower Administration. Ultimately, in efforts to alleviate the Eisenhower Recession of 1957 – 1958, Congressional Democrats looking to stimulate the United States economy and ease unemployment via public works projects, won the federal financial support necessary for the Lewis-Clark Highway’s completion. Despite these difficulties North Central Idaho’s support for the highway persisted. In chapter 2, advocacy for the Lewis-Clark Highway shifts from a local and regional concern to one of national significance where members of Congress worked to secure construction funding. Similarly to chapter 1, the pace of highway construction moved in fits. However, in chapter 2, with national attention and support and urgency imparted by perceived Cold War threats, the Idaho portion of the Lewis-Clark Highway finally reached Montana in 1962.

National Highway Planning and Priorities

Before Operation Alert 1957, and the rationale for completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway provided by the exercise, the United States undertook a larger public works road-building project, legislated by the Interstate Highway Act or National Defense Interstate Highway Act. Signed by President Eisenhower Jun 29, 1956 as Public Law 84-627, The

\[\text{In chapter 2, US Highway 12 and Lewis-Clark Highway will be used interchangeably. The highway had been added to the US Highway 12 system in 1962, but already in 1957, both names were used in reference to the highway.}\]
Interstate Highway Act authorized construction of the 40,000-mile interstate network of highways dubbed “the greatest peacetime public works program in history.”\textsuperscript{111} This 40,000-mile network did not include the Lewis-Clark Highway.\textsuperscript{112} In July 1956 Representative Gracie Pfost of Idaho’s First Congressional District consulted with E.V. Miller, Director of the Idaho Department of Highways regarding the placement of the Lewis-Clark Highway on the Interstate Highway System. Pfost hoped that the highway’s inclusion in the system would secure additional federal funding and speed the highway’s completion. Director Miller responded that the general scheme of the Interstate Highway System had been approved already in 1947 and he saw it unlikely that any changes would be made to the 1947 schematic. Further, Miller conjectured that inclusion of the Lewis-Clark Highway would not speed up the highway’s completion; rather because of the construction standards required of roads on the Interstate System, that inclusion would delay completion.\textsuperscript{113} The Lewis-Clark Highway over the Bitterroot Mountains via Lolo Pass was excluded from the Interstate Highway System for good reason –

\textsuperscript{111} Congressional Record, 85\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 1\textsuperscript{st} sess., 1958, 5202.

\textsuperscript{112} Later testimony heard at the December 13, 1957 Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Works in Lewiston revealed Idaho’s anxiety at the shift of highway construction funds from forest highways, such as the Lewis-Clark Highway, to Interstate Highway construction projects. Governor Smylie testified “…I think this is a sentiment that I share with other governors in public lands States, that the emphasis which is natural in the public mind on the construction of the Interstate System will have a tendency to detract from the attention that we think should be paid to the construction of the forest highway system…” The Idaho Sate Board of Highway Directors and Department of Highways testified that “The great emphasis and publicity accorded to the interstate program has led to a rather widespread belief that the interstate will be pushed, possibly and probably, at the expense of greatly needed work on the primary and secondary systems.”

\textsuperscript{113} E.V. Miller to Gracie Pfost, 6 July 1956, Box 23 Folder 740, “Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers,” University of Idaho Special Collections, Moscow, Idaho.
the eventual construction of Interstate 90 over Lookout Pass proved a better route and more suited to the four-lane road required by Interstate Highway Act.\textsuperscript{114} The winding water grade route of the Lewis-Clark Highway, passing through the narrow canyons of the Lochsa and Clearwater Rivers, is not conducive to speeds above 50 miles per hour and hence could not be part of the Interstate Highway System. Although the road possessed the classification of Primary Highway within the Federal Primary Aid System, with the passage of the 1956 Federal Interstate Highway Act, the Lewis-Clark Highway became secondary to the wider and faster interstate highways.\textsuperscript{115}

Without Interstate Highway funding Idaho’s Congressional representation pushed on toward other funding opportunities. By the summer of 1956, the Idaho State Department proposed completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway via Forest Highway and Public Lands Highway funds, and looked to avoid requesting Federal-Aid Highway funds. Representative Gracie Pfost called this plan “unrealistic” and instead argued that Idaho should seek Federal-Aid Highway funds allocated within the 1956 Federal Aid to Highways Act. The legislation allocated to Idaho $18,200,000 for primary, secondary, and urban roads for fiscal years 1957, 1958, and 1959 along with an additional $6,000,000 in Forest Highway Funds for fiscal years 1958 and 1959. Idaho could also apply for a $2,000,000 share of Public Lands Highways funding, with the Idaho State Department of Highways having to request each of the available funds.


\textsuperscript{115} Historians including Wells, Rose, Seely chronicle highway and interstate’s impact upon suburbs, however, the impacts of highways and interstates on rural areas are just now receiving historians’ attention.
In fiscal year 1956 Forest Highway Funds graded and drained 3.5 miles of highway, with Public Lands Highway funds grading 4.5 miles. The Idaho Department of Highways did not request Federal-Aid Highway dollars that year and the Lewis-Clark Highway remained incomplete.

In 1957, twenty-five unconstructed miles of the Lewis-Clark Highway’s “missing link” remained. In another attempt to bring Congress’ attention to the highway, Washington Senator Warren Magnuson introduced Senate Joint Resolution 88 on May 8, 1957. Read twice in the Senate and then referred to the Senate Committee on Public Works, Magnuson’s resolution called for the designation and construction of the Lewis and Clark National Tourway. The proposed tourway would approximate the route of the Lewis-Clark expedition, beginning in St. Louis, Missouri, through Montana and Idaho, then paralleling the Columbia River, and terminating at Seaside, Oregon. Emphasizing the necessity of the highway in the public’s interest and that of national defense, the resolution specifically requested that sufficient funds be appropriated for completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway as necessary to carry out the provisions of the act. The resolution thus authorized action and called for appropriation of funds, but did not allocate money toward the project. Although federal funding remained absent, supporters nonetheless viewed the resolution as a foundation for requesting a single appropriation adequate

117 Wake Up, Rip!, 14.

118 Senate, A Joint Resolution Authorizing the Commissioner of Public Roads to designate and construct a highway system to be known as the Lewis and Clark National Tourway. 85th Cong., 1st sess., 1957.
to complete the road at the earliest time. Following the resolution’s introduction, while attending the 1957 National Governors’ Conference, governors of six western states – Governors Robert Smylie of Idaho, J. Hugo Aronson of Montana, Joe Foss of South Dakota, Albert Rosellini of Washington, John Davis of North Dakota, and Robert Holmes of Oregon – sent a message to Senator James Murray, chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. The message urged that the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee schedule hearings on the resolution at the earliest convenient time because “the early construction of additional highway capacity through the northwestern states is of urgent importance to the national defense.” Without funding, the Senate’s largely symbolic resolution and the western Governors’ urgings did little to advance the Lewis-Clark Highway toward completion.

While Senate Joint Resolution 88 lacked funding appropriations, another source of funding, Public Lands funds allocated by the Bureau of Public Roads, had promised $350,000 to the Lewis-Clark Highway for fiscal year 1957. This promise was just a portion of the $1,000,000 of Public Lands Highways funding the Idaho Board of Highway Directors had requested earlier in 1957. Although the money had been allocated, the contract to carry out the work funded by the allocation had not been let during fiscal year 1957. Further, because of a

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119 Governor Robert Smylie to Charles Baker, President, Inland Empire Waterways Association, Box 14, Folder 460, “Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers,” University of Idaho Special Collections, Moscow, Idaho.

120 Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association Newsletter, July 1957, Box 14, Folder 458, “Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers,” University of Idaho Special Collections, Moscow, Idaho.

121 Prior to 1976 the federal fiscal year began July 1, and ended June 30.

reduction in the 1958 fiscal year appropriation, and unpaid contracts let by the Bureau of Public Roads during fiscal year 1957, the Bureau of Public Roads intended to use 1958 funds to cover contracts let in 1957. As a result the bureau opted to postpone proceeding with all new Public Lands-funded work until the end of fiscal year 1958, keeping the $350,000 Lewis-Clark Highway appropriation in place, but deferring the obligation of these funds until the beginning of fiscal year 1959.123 Construction work on the Lewis-Clark Highway financed with Forest Highway funds, however, continued during 1957 with $500,000 grading and draining 5 miles of highway.

Civil Defense and National Commerce

As the yet unfinished Lewis-Clark Highway slowly advanced through the Lochsa River Valley in 1957, the highway’s value as a military and defense route became even more urgent amidst Cold War anxieties in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest.124 Following the 1957 Civil Defense Alert, Idaho Governor Robert Smylie communicated to a group of Lewis-Clark Highway boosters meeting Monday, July 16 at Missoula’s Florence Hotel via telegram the necessity of the highway to an adequate civil defense program.125 At the “Second Annual Northwest ‘Meet to Complete’ Lewis-Clark Highway” a group of 50 delegates from five states along the proposed Lewis and Clark Tourway met in Missoula, where the Secretary of Idaho


124 Heefner – Cold War military spending in the West.

Board of Highway Directors, Wayne Summers, outlined a timetable for the highway’s completion, with the missing link completed in six more years. Between 1958 and 1963, grading, draining, bridge construction, reconstruction, and paving were financed federal lands highway funds.\textsuperscript{126}

After the Missoula meeting, Lewis-Clark Highway boosters continued to publicize the highway’s progress and need for completion by hosting a horseback trek through the incomplete Black Canyon portion of the highway. Beginning at the highway’s eastern terminus on August 23, 1957 the two-day trip traversed a trail made in 1909 by a Northern Pacific Railroad survey crew, one that had not been repaired following damage inflicted during the 1948 snowmelt and flood. With the trail damage, the ride could not cover the entirety of Black Canyon and ended at the highway’s western terminus at Boulder Flat Campground, now Wilderness Gateway Campground. At the “Lewis and Clark Highway – Lolo Trail – Progress Festivity,” the communities of Lewiston, Clarkston, Orofino, Kooskia, Kamiah, and the Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association hosted a barbeque lunch for approximately 2,000 attendees.\textsuperscript{127}

Three months following the “enthusiastic meeting” at Boulder Flat, Lewis-Clark Highway boosters awaiting the highway’s completion received encouraging news. On December 5, 1957, the United States Bureau of Public Roads allocated to the Idaho State Highway Board $800,000 of Forest Highway Funds toward the Lewis-Clark Highway; this

\textsuperscript{126} Lewiston Morning Tribune, “Six-Year Fund Timetable Set For L-C Road,” 16 July 1957.


Space, The Clearwater Story, 97.
allocation was the largest sum set aside by the state board for the highway to date.\textsuperscript{128} Dispensed half way through the federal fiscal year, the money would be available for use in 1958, for road construction within boundaries of the Clearwater National Forest. The Lewis-Clark Turnpike Association had expected only $500,000 from the Bureau of Public Roads, to be applied to construction of the 15-mile uncompleted stretch at the highway’s eastern end. The State of Idaho and the Turnpike Association welcomed the additional $300,000, but remained dismayed – the State of Idaho could not be sure when the funds would be made officially available and payable from the state’s accounts. The Bureau of Public Roads obligated the $800,000 to the state, but the United States Bureau of Budget officially transferred the funds to Idaho; hence the State of Idaho was unsure when construction on the stretch could begin. Leonard Floan, Director of Idaho Highway District 3, hoped that the money would be obligated to the state early to allow construction work throughout the summer.\textsuperscript{129}

Interest groups and civic boosters economically and emotionally vested in the Lewis-Clark Highway’s completion reached beyond the Dakotas, Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Minnesota also saw benefit in the highway. The Minnesota Arrowhead Association, promoter of tourism and commerce in the Duluth-Superior region of Minnesota and Wisconsin, voiced its support for the Lewis-Clark Highway, finding that Great Lakes shipping ports would benefit from the transportation route provided by the highway. With the pending completion of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the combination of the seaway and the Lewis-Clark Highway would

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, “Smylie Hopeful Lewis & Clark Highway Will Be Completed for Travel By 1959,” 13 December 1957.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, “$800,000 Allocation Made for L-C Highway Work,” 6 December, 1957.
provide the shortest truck route between Lake Superior ports and the eastern head of the Columbia River shipping system at Lewiston. This “piggy-back” method of cargo transport via water and truck, argued Howard W. Cooper, President of the Minnesota Arrowhead Association, would significantly decrease transportation costs across the continent. Notably, prior to his service to the Arrowhead Association, Cooper served as Division Manager of Pacific Power and Light at Lewiston.\textsuperscript{130}

**Senate Hearing at Lewiston**

By 1957, Idaho’s Congressional representation succeeded in luring Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Roads and Highways, Senator Albert Gore Senior of Tennessee, to Lewiston, Idaho. Gore’s purpose for visiting was to conduct a hearing on Senate Bill 1136 – a bill to authorize the appropriation of funds for carrying out the provisions of Section 23 of the Federal Highway Act – and Senate Joint Resolution 88 – a resolution authorizing the Commissioner of Public Roads to designate and construct a highway system to be known as the Lewis and Clark National Tourway. Gore’s Lewiston hearing was one of five hearings conducted over six days on the same proposed legislation; prior to the Lewiston hearing, Gore held hearings in Albuquerque, Portland, and Seattle. After Lewiston, Gore traveled to Missoula to finish out the tour.

In each of the city’s hearings, Senator Gore intended to publicize the need for forest roads and trails and forest highways and to hear public comment on federal highway programs.

\textsuperscript{130} *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, “Minnesota Travel Group Urges Quick Finish of L-C Highway,” 12 December 1957.
throughout the United States.\textsuperscript{131} The Lewis-Clark Highway sat at the top of the agenda at the December 13, 1957 Lewiston hearing, convened at the Spanish Room of the Lewis & Clark Hotel. With a crowd of 150 attendees and over 30 individuals testifying on the highway’s behalf at the Lewiston hearing, Gore and the subcommittee looked for testimony regarding the status of the highway, its economic justification, a potential construction schedule, and the highway’s significance to the region and the nation.\textsuperscript{132}

Senator Gore opened the hearings emphasizing the need for public participation in democratic governance. Gore argued that despite centralization of federal decision making in Washington D.C., that the federal highway program should work well in all 48 states and in the communities of the 48 states. Further the “interlocking and interdependency of the welfare of the various States and communities of the country is something to which the highway program will make a great contribution.”\textsuperscript{133} Idaho’s Congressional representation followed Gore’s statements with Senators Henry Dworshak and Frank Church and Representative Gracie Pfost each attesting to unanimous public support for the Lewis-Clark Highway and the highway’s economic and military defense necessity to North Central Idaho. Representative Pfost’s statement reinforced the fact that Idaho’s First Congressional District, through which the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{132} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, “Sen. Gore Says He’ll Resist Any Effort to Cut Roads Funds,” 13 December 1957.
\end{thebibliography}
highway runs, has the greatest area of National Forest land among all districts in the United States, and therefore deserved Federal Forest Highway and Public Lands Highways funds.\textsuperscript{134}

The day’s most significant testimony, from Idaho Governor Robert E. Smylie, came next. Smylie’s statement outlined the need for federal dollars to construct roads on federally owned and managed lands, the historic significance of the Lewis-Clark Highway, economic and tourism benefits brought by the highway’s completion, the highway’s role as a civil defense route, and the fiscal problems imposed upon the State of Idaho if the state were required to finance the highway’s completion. Smylie predicted, that with a single federal appropriation of $8.25 million, the Lewis-Clark Highway could be completed by midsummer 1959.\textsuperscript{135} Smylie charged that this appropriation did not constitute a new federal responsibility – that this fiscal obligation was one “as old as the Federal forests which exist in this congressional district in greater degree than any other congressional district in the United States…The question is not whether the United States will build this road; that, they are committed to do.” Smylie concluded his testimony recommending immediate Senate approval of Senate Joint Resolution 88 and that Gore recommend to the Senate Appropriations Committee that $8.25 million be appropriated in


\textsuperscript{135} Adjusted for inflation, the $8.25 million requested by Smylie in 1957 would be equivalent to a $64,407,491 request in 2012.
the next fiscal year for the route. Smylie added that “This appropriation should be specific and in addition to the usual annual forest and public land highway appropriations.”

Heading into the hearing, Senator Gore and his Subcommittee on Roads and Highways policy aid, Robert Wolf, knew that Governor Smylie would be requesting the $8.25 million appropriation that day. Prior to the hearing, Gore and Wolf met and considered potential funding sources for the appropriation. Recognizing federal ownership of over 60 percent of Idaho’s land – and the fact that 101 miles of the Lewis-Clark Highway passed through federal Forest Service land - the pair honed in on the portion of the Federal Highway Act that authorized funding for federal Public Lands Highways and Forest Highways. The Federal Forest Highways funds, according to Wolf, operated as a sort of slush fund, into which members of the Public Works Committee would allocate Forest Highways funds to specific highway construction projects within their respective state or their political interest. Upon the federal government’s allocation of these funds to a state, that state would then determine which projects received funding. Gore and Wolf strategized that Smylie’s $8.25 million request could be granted, but that the governor would be required to allocate all of Idaho’s Forest Highways funds to the Lewis-Clark Highway, which would remove funding from every other federally-funded forest highway project within the state. Additionally, Gore stipulated that the State of Idaho would have to allocate all Forest Highway funding for the next four fiscal years to the Lewis-Clark Highway. After Smylie had made his pitch, Senator Gore countered with this strategy, and Smylie agreed that all available

Forest Highway funds and Public Lands Highway funds allocated to the state between fiscal years 1958 and 1962 would be applied to the Lewis-Clark Highway.\textsuperscript{137} Senator Gore had forced Governor Smylie to place all of his Forest Highway funds in the Lewis-Clark Highway basket, a maneuver made at the cost of all of Idaho’s other forest highway projects.

With this offer on the table, Charles L. Tebbe, Regional Forester with Region 1 of the United States Forest Service, took the dais next. Tebbe’s testimony provided a brief history of the Lewis-Clark Highway’s construction, and argued that the highway’s missing 13-mile gap hampered effective control of forest fires in the Lochsa River drainage. Smokejumpers alone, the Regional Forester held, were not an effective force in fighting fires. Only “mass movements of men” on access roads could effectively control conflagrations. Besides increased fire protection to valuable timber stands, Tebbe attested that the highway would provide access to the area’s recreational and wildlife resources; that it would prove a boon to commerce; and that it would provide a westward haul for timber.\textsuperscript{138} Regarding the westward timber haul, Tebbe’s assistant, Axel Lindh estimated that with access provided by the highway, the annual allowable timber cut in the Clearwater, Nez Perce and Bitterroot National Forests could be increased from


10 million board feet per year to 18 million, but that the cost-benefit ratio for the timber haul alone would not pay the returns on the Lewis-Clark Highway “at any time in the early future.”

Subsequent testimony from Idaho Highway Department reinforced the state’s dependence upon federal highway aid, given that 66.6 percent of the land within Idaho is classified as public lands, owned by the State or Federal government, and that 37.9 percent of that land is national forests. Since these lands are not subject to local taxation, these lands are almost entirely dependent on federal aid for construction since state highway user revenues collected by Idaho are not capable of bringing in enough money for federal aid matching funds. To direct all federal highway funds to the Lewis-Clark Highway, the Highway Department had withdrawn all other requests for Public Lands Highways dollars and assigned first priority to funds used solely for the Lewis-Clark Highway.

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139 Axel Lindh, United States Forest Service Region I Assistant Forester, *Hearings Before a Subcommittee on Public Works United States Senate, Eighty-fifth Congress First Session on S. 1136 A Bill to Authorize the Appropriation of Funds for Carrying out Provisions of Section 23 of the Federal Highway Act, Etc.* (Washington D.C., United States Government Printing Office, 1958), 448. Notably, in Robert Wolf’s account of the hearing at Lewiston, and the Forest Service’s testimony there, Wolf opined that the Forest Service did not oppose the highway, nor did they say they needed it. Rather, the Forest Service, speaking on behalf of the fiscally conservative Eisenhower Administration, would not advocate for the Lewis-Clark Highway’s completion. Wolf stated “They [The Forest Service] weren’t going to try and get them [Dworshak, Mansfield, Metcalf, and Murray] mad. But they weren’t going to go out and say, “Of all of the things that we need in Montana and Idaho, this is a prime need,” because it wasn’t.

The day’s testimonies also revisited the Lewis-Clark Highway’s value as a military highway and civil defense route. In expressions of Cold War anxieties, hearing statements recounted efforts to designate the highway a first priority military highway and as part of the military strategic and interstate highway system of the United States. Speakers, mostly residents of North Central Idaho, explained how these designations failed to win War Department funding of highway construction and subsequently, how the unfinished highway became a focal point in evaluations of North Central Idaho’s 1957 Civil Defense Alert. During the July 16, 1957 alert simulation, the Lewiston Civil Defense Organization realized the insufficient people-moving capacity of North Central Idaho’s one evacuation route, U.S. Highway 95. Dwaine Keller, Nez Perce County Director of Civil Defense argued for the necessity of an eastern evacuation route, and the Lewis-Clark Highway to serve as that route, should be completed as soon as possible.  

Joseph Blackeagle, member of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, provided comment on behalf of the Nez Perce Tribe. After briefly recounting a history of interactions between the United States Government and the Nez Perce Tribe, Blackeagle cited the tribe’s two primary interests in the completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway: the highway’s provision of access to tribal timber reserves and increased tourism traffic through the Nez Perce Reservation. Noting that the Lewis-Clark Highway passes through 100 miles of the Nez Perce Reservation, Blackeagle emphasized potential employment opportunities for Nez Perces afforded by

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economic development stemming from the highway – namely an “Indian city or trading post on the Lewis-Clark Highway.”  

At 2 o’clock PM, Senator Gore concluded the hearing offering positive assessments of the day’s statements and optimistic at prospects for the highway’s completion. Gore admitted his inability to comprehend why the highway had been avoided by highway and railroad development, and his happiness at witnessing North Central Idaho’s unified desire for completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway. The senator tempered his optimism though, pointing out that Idaho’s $8.25 million request would require President Eisenhower’s approval, who would then pass the request to his Budget Bureau and Congress, to then be compared with highway fund requests from the entire United States. Senator Gore stated he could make no predictions as to the terms of the bill that would ultimately appropriate funds or to the exact sum appropriated, but he did assure hearing attendees of his willingness to work together with Idaho’s Congressional representatives to bring about the early completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway.  

On the Saturday following the hearings, Lewiston Morning Tribune editor Bill Johnson, provided a hopeful review of Senator Gore’s visit Lewiston. Calling the hearing a “tremendous

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progress,” Johnson opined that although the hearing produced no immediate tangible gains, it revealed Senator Gore “as fine and as powerful a friend at court as it has ever acquired in a 40-year crusade” and that the hearing produced “a definite, bold plan of immediate action.” Johnson continued, praising the bipartisan character of the hearing’s outcomes, that an opportunity for cooperation between a Republican administration and a Democratic Congress existed and that so large an appropriation would not be possible without this teamwork. The editorial outlined possible next steps in the appropriation: first, Congress would authorize the Lewis-Clark Highway funds as a special, “rush-it-now project;” second, the Eisenhower administration would devote a budget line item to the Lewis-Clark Highway’s completion; third, Congressional representation and the Senate Public Works Committee would push for Congressional approval of the appropriation. Johnson disclosed that the process would likely not proceed in so clean a fashion, but that because of the hearing and North Central Idaho’s rally behind the cause and the presentation of a “sound, united purpose to the world” the highway’s completion was that much closer. The editor ended, finding “There are times, we observe, when one is proud indeed to be a part of such a region, and this was one of them.”

The Eisenhower Recession

The nation’s economic conditions of the next year quickly dampened Bill Johnson’s optimistic predictions for the Lewis-Clark Highway’s opening. In 1958, with 13.5 miles of the highway’s missing link remaining, the United States plunged into recession. During the “Eisenhower Recession,” beginning in July, 1957 and bottoming out in April, 1958, the nation’s

economy experienced ten months of contraction – one of the sharpest economic declines since the Civil War.145 Factors responsible for the recession included excess capacity in industry, over-accumulation of inventories, reduction of government orders for military goods, and tight credit.146 Federal actions bore much of the blame for the decline, where politics within the Eisenhower Administration, stifled federal action to prevent the recession. Despite the Council of Economic Advisers recommendations to ease credit and increase federal spending, the Federal Reserve Board did exactly the opposite. In January 1958 President Eisenhower indicated that he had no plans to ask Congress for action – he rejected Congressional recommendations of tax reductions and temporary budget deficits.147 While Eisenhower trusted monetary policy to ameliorate the recession, his administration made almost no use of available federal fiscal tools and economic controls. Fearing inflation, the administration chose to operate within the existing National Debt limit of $275 billion. The nation’s debt stood at $273 billion and inflation pushed up costs – the Eisenhower administration placed expenditure controls on each federal department, with the Pentagon feeling the most pain. As unemployment doubled from 2.5 million in October 1957 to 5.2 million in 1958, Eisenhower’s economic advisors proposed a myriad of fiscal and policy solutions, wherein the need to control inflation trumped all other economic objectives. The administration’s conservative approach to the nation’s economy


embraced a laissez-faire view of government’s role; through his inaction Eisenhower exercised his conservative faith in the market’s ability to correct itself. Preferring the ability of “private enterprise rather than a government campaign” to provide the main strength of recovery forces, the President advised individual action and self-restraint.\(^{148}\)

The Eisenhower Administration’s fiscal conservatism and the Eisenhower Recession of 1957-1958 directly impacted the Lewis-Clark Highway’s progress. Congressional Democrats countered Eisenhower’s recession alleviation actions with measures to expand spending programs emphasizing housing, highway construction, river and harbor public works, reclamation projects, and community facilities. Democrats developed recession-recovery strategies on a ‘piecemeal basis’ with individual congressmen proposing several individual recovery-oriented bills.\(^ {149}\) One such bill, S. 3414, to amend and supplement the 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act, authorized appropriations for continuing the construction of highways – including the Lewis-Clark Highway.\(^ {150}\) Introduced by Senator Albert Gore of Tennessee, Chairman of the Senate Public Roads Subcommittee, Thursday, March 6, 1958, the bill called for accelerated construction under the national highway program, authorized creation of the Lewis-Clark Highway as a National Tourway, and authorized an appropriation of $8.5 million to finish the highway.\(^ {151}\) The Senate Committee on Public Works believed that accelerated work on the

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\(^{148}\) Iwan W. Morgan, *Eisenhower Versus ‘The Spenders’*, 100.

\(^{149}\) Iwan W. Morgan, *Eisenhower Versus ‘The Spenders’*, 103.

\(^{150}\) *Congressional Record*, 85\(^{th}\) Cong., 1\(^{st}\) sess., 1958, 104: 5202.

nation’s highways would work as “one of the most effective permanent public works programs” for relieving unemployment, improving business conditions, and stimulating the Nation’s economy.\textsuperscript{152}

Eight Northwest Senators supported Senator Gore’s highway bill. Senators Magnuson (D-WA), Dworshak (R-ID), Church (D-ID), Jackson (D-WA), Neuberger (D-OR), Morse (D-OR), Mansfield (D-MT), and Murray (D-MT) all pressed for completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway, citing the highway’s great importance to Idaho and the entire economy of the Pacific Northwest. Testifying on behalf of the highway bill, Senator Frank Church, member of the Senate Committee on Public Works, defended the highway expenditures against suggestions that public works projects constituted “leaf-raking or make-work projects.” Speaking directly to the Lewis-Clark Highway, Church next asked Senator Gore if the bill’s increased appropriation for public lands highways in fiscal years 1960 and 1961 had been made specifically to speed construction of the Lewis-Clark Highway. Senator Gore responded that the appropriation had indeed been made for that purpose and that Church’s efforts had secured the funding.\textsuperscript{153}

Fiscal Conservative President Eisenhower reluctantly signed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1958 on April 16, 1958.\textsuperscript{154} Section 5 of the Act authorized appropriation of an additional $1 million for Public Lands Highways projects for fiscal year 1959, as well as an additional $3

\textsuperscript{152} Congressional Record, 85\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 1\textsuperscript{st} sess., 1958, 104: 5202.

\textsuperscript{153} Congressional Record, 85\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 1\textsuperscript{st} sess., 1958, 104: 5207.

million for fiscal years 1960 and 1961. In recommending the increase, the Senate Public Roads Subcommittee suggested the additional funds be used specifically to accelerate completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway’s “missing link” in Idaho. On July 9, 1958, the United States Bureau of Public Roads allocated $985,000 of the $1 million of Federal Lands funds authorized for fiscal year 1959 by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1958. This allocation allowed the State of Idaho to proceed with grading of the 13 mile unconstructed gap of the Lewis-Clark Highway.

As stipulated by the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1958, the federal government allocated highway construction funds to the State of Idaho in fiscal years 1959, 1960, and 1961. The 1960 federal land highway fund allocation to the State of Idaho was the largest single allocation ever made to one state, earmarking $1,385,000 for completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway, the entire amount federal funds that did not require state matching dollars. By 1961, the “missing link” between Warm Springs Creek and Eagle Mountain Creek had been completed and the highway was open to through traffic, but grading, bridge construction, and bituminous surfacing remained to be finished.

155 Senator Albert Gore to Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks, April 17, 1958, Box 19, Folder 29, “Mike Mansfield Papers,” University of Montana Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections, Missoula, Montana.

156 Paul F. Royster, Assistant to the Federal Highway Administrator to Representative Gracie Pfost, Box 14, Folder 448, “Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers,” University of Idaho Special Collections, Moscow, Idaho.


158 Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho’s Highway History: 1863-1975, 222.

New Relationships and “Common Adventures”

Just two weeks before the Lewis-Clark Highway’s August 19, 1962 dedication ceremony, Senator Henry Dworshak passed away on July 23, 1962 in Washington D.C. Idaho Governor Robert Smylie paid tribute to Dworshak at the ceremony and recounted one of his final conversations with Dworshak in which Dworshak regarded the Lewis-Clark Highway as “…one of the finest achievements of the government of Idaho and her congressional delegation working together that he knew of in his more than two decades in the Congress.”159

Along with Governor Smylie and 5,000 onlookers, Governor Tim Babcock of Montana, Senators Gore and Church, and numerous other state and federal highway officials attended the Lewis-Clark Highway’s dedication ceremony at Packer Meadows, near Lolo Pass. Organized by the Lewiston and Missoula Chambers of Commerce, chambers along the Lewis-Clark Highway, the United States Forest Service, and many other civic and fraternal groups, ceremony highlights included Governors Smylie and Babcock cross-cutting a cedar log in half a few yards west of the Idaho Montana State line, “close to where Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their party camped September 13, 1805, just prior to their agonizing trip across the Lolo Trail.” After the log sawing, Governor Babcock celebrated the highway’s completion, that “In dedicating this highway, we open one of the last frontier regions of our country…It is one of the fine recreational areas of the world. It is historic, it is scenic, and it is a haven for fish and wildlife. We want to keep it that way.”160


160 Ibid.
Senator Gore’s keynote address followed Governor Babcock’s words with Gore thanking Idaho’s Congressional delegation and Montana, Washington, and Oregon Senators for their work securing funding for the highway. Gore recounted his sponsorship of national highway programs as the most gratifying experience of his years in public service, and emphasized that while the primacy of the national interstate highway system received federal energies and dollars, routes such as the Lewis-Clark Highway were equally important, “…the justification no less valid, the resultant benefits no less genuine.”

Edward P. Giff, Chief of the United States Forest Service also spoke, telling crowds of the economic value of the lands now accessible via the Lewis-Clark Highway. Access to national forests “unlocked” by the highway would serve North Central Idaho and the nation in ways beyond timber production – the highway would invite picnickers, campers and tourists to the Clearwater Valley – “Management under the principles of multiple – use” Giff concluded “will assure this.”

The August 19, 1962 edition of the Lewiston Morning Tribune heralded the formal opening of the Lewis-Clark Highway as the beginning of a new relationship among people and among northwestern states. By uniting Idaho’s Clearwater River Valley and Montana’s Bitterroot Valley, the article argued “highways are important only insofar as they affect the relationships among people.” Calling the effort to complete the highway a “common adventure,” the commercial route provided by the Lewis-Clark Highway “ripen into fruitful commerce” of mutual benefit to Idaho and Montana. Additionally, the highway would facilitate a new relationship between the interior and coast, creating a “wedding of road and river transportation.”

161 Ibid.
162 Ibid.
With completion of dams on the Lower Snake River, Lewiston and Clarkston would become the Pacific Ocean’s navigational terminus where shipments of bulk products could move west to east and the reverse over the river-highway corridor. This commerce, according to the editorial, would bring significant change – both opportunities and problems - to all communities along US Highway 12, from Lewiston to Detroit.163

As the Lewis-Clark Highway / U.S. Highway 12 finally opened to through traffic, the highway stood ready to facilitate the development of regional and national economic relationships forecasted by the *Lewiston Morning Tribune*. The “explosion in the Garden of Eden” described by highway construction boss, Bill Woolsey, in *The Saturday Evening Post*, had quieted, making way for interstate travel through North Central Idaho’s rugged mountains and forests. Commercial loads, natural resources extracted from the region, tourists, and recreational users alike could now traverse these hills and valleys, paralleling the historic route of the Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery. In his 1989 interview, Robert Wolf, aid and policy analyst to Senator Gore, expressed doubts regarding the Lewis-Clark Highway’s necessity to North Central Idaho. Wolf recalled testimony and justifications for the highway aired at the December 1957 Lewiston Senate Subcommittee Hearing – “a vital link in the transportation network of the Inland Empire; it would bring economic development that was unheard of.” Wolf opined that the main argument for the highway was a sentimental one:

“There was no analysis of whether it was economically desirable or feasible to build a road. It was done as a part of completing the link of the Lewis and Clark Trail, and because Senators Church and Dworshak wanted to build it, and Senator Mansfield and

Congressman Metcalf wanted to build it and Senator Murray, it just looked like a nice thing to do. So there certainly is no analysis that was ever done to justify it.”\(^\text{164}\)

Despite the absence of empirical evidence or feasibility studies warranting the Lewis-Clark Highway’s construction, North Central Idaho fervently and whole-heartedly supported its completion. A necessity or otherwise, the Lewis-Clark Highway opened up North Central Idaho’s forested “Garden of Eden” to motor vehicle traffic. The highway made accessible 1.5 billion board feet of timber, opened up North Central Idaho to increased mineral extraction, and lured tourists, sportsmen, and recreationists to the Lochsa, Selway, and Clearwater River Valleys. The joining of Lewis-Clark Highway with the Snake River at Lewiston, Lewiston Morning Tribune Staff Writer Thomas W. Campbell predicted, would initiate a new era of rapid, cheap transportation of bulk goods, of new industry, and commerce for North Central Idaho, western Montana, southeastern Washington, and northeastern Oregon. Campbell expounded upon his vision for Lewiston and Clarkston, finding that this melding of river and road would “…not be without its problems. Growing pains hurt.” The potentially painful entrance into this era required completion of four dams on the Lower Snake River to make year-round navigation to ports at Lewiston and Clarkston possible: The Lower Monumental Dam, Little Goose Dam, Lower Granite Dam, and Ice Harbor Dam. Despite projected pains, Campbell ended his article optimistically, “When the highway and the river become one artery of transportation, the transformation will be complete, the dream come true.”\(^\text{165}\) The highway portion of North Central Idaho’s dream described by Campbell came true without opposition. But as chapter 3

\(^{164}\) Robert Wolf, interviewed by Milo McLeod and Dan Hall, Robert Wolf Oral History Project, University of Montana Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections, November 16, 1989.

demonstrates, unlike the region’s push to complete US Highway 12, the growing pains wrought by United States Army Corps of Engineers dam construction proposals in the Clearwater Drainage did not proceed without conflict.
CHAPTER 3
“FULL UTILIZATION” OF THE CLEARWATER DRAINAGE

At 4:17 PM on Memorial Day, May 30, 1948, the Columbia River broke through dikes at Vanport, Oregon, inundating the city of 18,500. Built to house World War Two Portland and Vancouver-area defense manufacturing workers and their families, Vanport was the nation’s largest wartime housing development – hastily erected by the United States Maritime Commission and Portland Housing Authority in a flood plain several feet below the Columbia River to the north, and a river slough to the south. On the 1948 Memorial Day holiday, heavy rains and spring snow melt waters from the Columbia Basin’s 258,000 square mile drainage converged and split wide-open a crack in the flood protection embankment provided by the Spokane Portland & Seattle Railway on Vanport’s western edge. In thirty-five minutes, the Columbia River backfilled the city as residents fled the flood plain on foot and automobile. Within two hours 10 to 20 feet of water and debris drowned Vanport, leaving the city’s wooden houses bobbing and swirling like unmoored toy boats in the mighty Columbia River and 39 dead.\textsuperscript{166}

Eight days earlier, on Saturday, May 27, 1948, residents of Orofino, Idaho, evacuated the city as the North Fork of the Clearwater River rushed down from the Bitterroot Mountains.


“causing a flood of almost Biblical proportions and leaving a trail of destruction and havoc in its wake.”

The Clearwater County Fairground, White Pine Lumber Company, and municipal airport were all underwater as traffic stopped on the Lewis-Clark Highway. Floodwaters halted railroad service at Kooskia and Stites and reports from Stites claimed damage to every house and business in the towns. By Thursday May 27, the United States Forest Service reported the daytime temperature at 95 degrees – the highest temperature of 1948 yet. With high temperatures, rapid snowmelt, and heavy rains, the main stem of the Clearwater River crested a second time on May 29, two feet higher than its crest of a week earlier. The second flood sent the Clearwater County Fairground buildings floating down the river, shattering the exhibit building and grandstand against a pier of the Orofino bridge. Between Orofino and Greer large floodwaters dislodged large chunks of the Lewis-Clark Highway and completely washed out three 100-yard stretches of the highway. In the June 3, 1948, edition of Orofino’s weekly newspaper, The Clearwater Tribune, editor Robert Werner lamented that the flood had covered newspaper offices with 22 inches of water and forced two staff members to evacuate their homes, but remained grateful that the Clearwater Valley fared better than Vanport.

The United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE or Corps) cited the Kootenai, Clark Fork, Clearwater and Snake rivers as the largest contributors to the flood disaster at Vanport. According to the Corps’ Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries, submitted to Congress October 1, 1948, mountain snowpack produced during the winter of 1947 – 1948 stood at 100 to 130 percent of normal on April 1, 1948. Above normal rainfall during April and

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a late spring warm-up resulted in an increase in the mountain snowpack’s water content. In the middle of May, temperatures turned unseasonably warm causing mountain streams to flow at levels the Corps deemed major flood stages. Heavy rains on May 29 and 30 added to flood crests with Snake River discharge at Clarkston (where the main stem of the Clearwater River feeds into the Snake River) exceeding 240,000 second-feet for 18 consecutive days; in a normal spring flow, this discharge would have receded within a day or two of the peak discharge. The Corps’ 1948 report concluded that because of these factors, the Snake River contributed to floods on the Columbia River and that the Middle and Lower Snake River Sub-basin contained the river system’s principal flood-producing tributaries. This sub-basin, the Clearwater Drainage, was thus the only region capable of providing large amounts of storage for effective control of floods on the Columbia and lower Snake Rivers. Essentially, waters rushing from the mountain streams of North Central Idaho’s wilderness “Eden” caused the destruction of Vanport, Oregon. The United States Army Corps of Engineers saw the engineered control of the Clearwater Drainage’s waters as the means to preventing another Vanport disaster.

Following World War Two, the wartime mobilization that created Vanport, Oregon and grew the Pacific Northwest’s population and expanded its economy began to fade. This economic downturn was short lived though, as federal investment in defense–related industries, river development, highway infrastructure, and atomic energy buoyed the region’s economy. But while other parts of the Pacific Northwest relied on federal investment and cheap hydropower, the population and economy of North Central Idaho stagnated at prewar levels – a


largely underdeveloped regional hinterland dependent upon forestry and agriculture as its economic drivers. West of Idaho, the Pacific Northwest’s growing economy and growing population simultaneously strained the region’s electric grid and power production capabilities. To relieve this strain, the Army Corps of Engineers looked beyond the Columbia River to its largest tributary, Idaho’s Snake River Basin, as a new source of regionally produced hydroelectric power. The Corps, operating under Progressive-era notions of full utilization of river resources, proposed a number of multi-purpose dams in the basin; dams that would provide flood control and commercial river channel navigation, supply irrigation water, and produce hydroelectric power with a secondary benefit found in recreational opportunities on dam reservoirs. But with each dam proposal, public objections to the Corps projects grew. In the case of North Central Idaho and the Corps’ work in the Clearwater Drainage, municipalities and boosters optimistically linked the region’s economic growth to the completion of US Highway 12 and development of its water resources. In combination, the highway and dams held the key to advance North Central Idaho out of its economic backwardness. Proponents predicted the developments would facilitate regional access to global markets, decrease freight hauling rates, and work to increase North Central Idaho’s steadily declining population. But not all of North Central Idaho’s residents agreed that the Clearwater Dams were the solution to the region’s

171 Carlos Schwantes’ *The Pacific Northwest: An Interpretive History* provides an expanded discussion of the Pacific Northwest’s postwar economy and the region’s rapid economic growth. Schwantes asserts that a few Pacific Northwesterners realized the negative aspects of this growth and felt that their quality of life should not be sacrificed to it. These developments, Schwantes holds, hastened the region’s confrontations between economic growth and quality of life considerations, and the economic and environmental problems accompanying these developments.
economic woes. If anything, some felt, the Clearwater Dams would ultimately damage North Central Idaho’s economy and quality of life.

This chapter will trace the postwar development of United States Army Corps of Engineer’s plans for dam construction and water control in the Columbia Basin and its tributaries – specifically within the Clearwater River drainage of North Central Idaho. With goals of flood control, slack water navigation, and hydroelectric power production, the Corps looked to expand its dam building and management program in the Pacific Northwest. In the Clearwater River Basin, the Corps justified its project planning and peddled its proposals to the public in the name of flood prevention, invoking the 1948 Vanport Flood and the need to avert similar destruction in the future. While residents of North Central Idaho generally agreed upon the need for flood control and the potential for beneficial economic development that dams on the Clearwater could spur, debates over economic development versus wildlife and river protection quickly formed in the region. Consequently, as these competing interests lined up to face off in late-1953, they defined the terms of the debate that would carry the Bruces Eddy dam to its 1962 authorization.172

172 Following World War Two, the Pacific Northwest looked to maximize its hydroelectric power production via federally and privately financed dams. Environmental law scholar, Michael Blumm, summarizes that this push was an outgrowth of New Deal policy wherein the economic crisis of the Great Depression worked to meld Progressive social ideology of the greatest good for the greatest number with massive federal public works projects to stimulate economic recovery. The cheap power and irrigation provided by Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dams industrialized and urbanized the Pacific Northwest, shifting the region’s economy away from its dependence upon agriculture and extractive industries. United States Army Corps of Engineers’ planning and congressional appropriations facilitated multipurpose river development in the Pacific Northwest, but did so in a decentralized fashion, with regional structures determining courses of development. This decentralized planning, while providing more local control, allowed major decision making to take place in internal technical reports and low-
**Early Attempts At Control – “308 Reports”**

The Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act of 1916 legislated the first examination of the lower Snake River for a series of navigational locks and dams and hydroelectric power production. The initial report of the Snake River study, submitted April 6, 1917, and a later survey report, submitted November 29, 1922, included study of the Clearwater River from its mouth at Lewiston to Orofino, Idaho. Mandated by the Rivers and Harbors Acts of 1923 and 1927, the Corps undertook a comprehensive study of the entire Columbia River Basin, and produced a series of “308” reports, named for House Document 308 in which the Corps and the Federal Power Commission recommended that the Corps survey all navigable streams and tributaries potentially suitable for hydroelectric development. The “308” reports were also legislated to explore flood control projects, hydroelectric power production and markets for the power, irrigation, hydrology, rainfall, evaporation, stream flow, runoff, silt content, and municipal water supply. The Columbia Basin “308” report, “Columbia River and Minor Tributaries,” submitted by the Corps to the United States House Committee on Rivers and Harbors March 29, 1932 as House Document No. 103, provided the foundation for multi-purpose planning and development of the basin’s water resources. Within the final report, the Corps

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proposed a multi-purpose system of ten dams within Washington and Oregon at Grand Coulee, Foster Creek, Chelan, Rocky Reach, Rock Island, Priest Rapids, Umatilla Rapids, John Day Rapids, The Dalles, and Warrendale. Providing permutations of flood control, navigation, hydroelectric power, and irrigation, the proposed dams would “…provide for the most effective improvement of the [Columbia] river.” The Corps did not include development of the Clearwater River in the 1932 report.

Following the Corps’ proposal in the 1932 Columbia River and Minor Tributaries “308” report, three dams went up on the Columbia River – Rock Island, near Wenatchee, Washington, Bonneville Dam, and Grand Coulee Dam. In 1943, as hydroelectricity produced by the three dams came on line and the wartime demands on the Pacific Northwest’s electric grid grew, the United States Senate passed a resolution requesting review of the “308” reports of House Document 103. The Corps began the “308” report review study in 1944 under the direction of the North Pacific Division of the USACE (consisting of Portland and Seattle Districts), with each district analyzing a set of “problems” including: geography, topography, geology, climate, economic development, navigation, flood control, drainage, power, irrigation, water supply, ground water, recreation, pollution, fish and wildlife, bank protection, and desires of local interests. The 1948 Vanport flood occurred as the Portland District neared the report’s completion. As the floodwaters receded, demands for flood control came forth from residents

175 United States House of Representatives Committee on Rivers and Harbors, Columbia River and Minor Tributaries.; 73rd Cong., 1st sess., March 29, 1932, 1.

176 Preston, A History of the Walla Walla District, 32.

177 Portland District United States Army Corps of Engineers, Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries, Appendix I, i.
and Congressional representatives of the impacted cities. Responding to the flood, President Truman ordered the Corps to include long-range flood control plans in the updated report.  

“308” Reports Revised – Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries

On March 20, 1950, the Corps’ North Pacific Division submitted to the House Committee on Public Works their review of the 1932 Columbia Basin “308” report. As the massive eight-volume, 4500-page plus, House Document No. 531, the report’s primary focus, to provide planned flood prevention, lay in its “main control plan.” The main control plan outlined a system of multi-purpose dams and reservoirs, upstream from the Dalles, Oregon, to contain runoff and reduce downstream peak discharge at the Dalles. According to the plan, confinement of future floods to discharges of less than 800,000 cubic feet per second (cfs), as measured at the Dalles, required upstream dams and storage reservoirs. The plan’s second element proposed increased levee construction on the lower Columbia River, from the Bonneville Dam to the Pacific Ocean. The Corps argued that dams or levees working alone could not accomplish the desired floodwater confinement level of 800,000 cfs as measured at the Dalles. A balance of the two methods would “create a well-knit system of works for the most efficient utilization of the

water resources in the promotion of a balanced economy.” Dams within the main control plan included: Libby, Albeni Falls, Priest Rapids, John Day, The Dalles, Hells Canyon, Hungry Horse, and smaller dam projects in the Willamette River Sub-Basin. Congressional approval of the 1950 River and Harbor and Flood Control Act authorized the Corps to begin work on these projects. 

The Libby Dam, included in the Corps’ 1948 report, although authorized by Congress, required approval of the International Joint Commission (IJC). The IJC eventually granted

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181 The International Joint Commission (IJC) is a bi-national organization formed by the United States and Canada under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 to prevent and resolve disputes over water quantity and quality along the boundary between the United States and Canada. The Commission possesses authority to “authorize international water uses, limit water levels and flows in order to protect shoreline properties and approve applications for dams or canals in one country that will affect water levels, flows, or quality in another country.” In the Columbia River Basin the IJC monitors dam operations impacting water levels in the United States and
approval for the Libby Dam in 1964, but the Corps wanted to begin work on main control dams immediately and did not want to wait on authorization. Alternatives to the Libby Dam, suggested by the Corps’ division engineer, Col. William Whipple within the 1948 report, included the Glacier View project on the North Fork of the Flathead River, the Paradise project on the Clark Fork River below the mouth of the Flathead River, and the Kooskia project on the Clearwater River. The Corps’ Glacier View project proposed a 416-foot-high earth-fill dam near the northwestern corner of Glacier National Park where the dam’s 30,500-acre reservoir would have flooded 10,175 acres within the park. Glacier Park Superintendent, John Emmert, Director of the National Park Service, Newton B. Drury, and conservation groups all opposed construction of the Glacier View project, citing the backup of reservoir waters into Glacier National Park as destructive to parklands and to fish, elk, moose, and deer habitat. Combined with protests voiced at public hearings in Kalispell, Montana, in 1947 and 1948, intense opposition to Glacier View led Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman to shelve the project. Opposition to the Glacier View Dam was the first instance of conservation groups’ and wildlife interests’ successful defeat of a major federal dam building project in the Columbia Basin.

Canada. Since the Libby Dam lies within the Columbia River Basin, the project required IJC approval and authorization before construction. Under provisions in the 1964 Columbia River Treaty, the IJC authorized construction of the Libby Dam. Construction began in 1964 with the dam completed in 1975. See [http://www.ijc.org/rel/agree/water.html].


183 Frederick H. Swanson, “Lee Metcalf and the Politics of Preservation: Part I – A Positive Program of Development,” *Montana The Magazine of Western History* 63, no. 1 (Spring, 2013): 13. Local interests also opposed the Paradise project, as it would have inundated productive agricultural lands, displaced towns, and violated American Indian treaty rights. Hungry Horse (Bureau of Reclamation) and Libby Dam (Army Corps of Engineers), completed in 1953 and
“Bitter Denouncement,” – The Kooskia Dam

Opposition to the Glacier View and Paradise projects left the Kooskia project as an alternative dam site within the 1948 report. Located 57.6 miles above the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater and 12 miles upstream from Orofino, Idaho, the proposed Kooskia Dam would be a straight gravity-type concrete structure, 514 feet tall and 1,400 feet wide. The project would provide 3.1 million acre-feet of storage capacity for flood control and power production – storage sufficient to “eliminate substantially all flood damage on [the] Clearwater River below the dam and to reduce flood stages effectively on [the] Snake River in the vicinity of Lewiston and contribute to reduction of damages on [the] Columbia River.”

The Corps proposal for the Kooskia Reservoir would flood approximately 19,500 acres.

At the August 19, 1948, Corps-hosted public hearing at Kamiah, Idaho residents within the proposed Kooskia Dam reservoir expressed “considerable opposition” to the project plan. Orofino’s weekly newspaper, the Clearwater Tribune, described opposition to the Kooskia dam

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184 Straight gravity dams have a straight downstream face (compared to the curved downstream face of the Hoover Dam). Gravity dams are those in which massive amounts of concrete exert downward force to counteract the force of the reservoir – both vertical and horizontal – and the uplifting force of water pressure coming from beneath the dam. The proposed Kooskia dam would have combined both of these design elements.

185 United States Congress, Columbia River and Tributaries, Northwestern United States, House Doc., No. 531, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., 220.

186 United States Congress, Columbia River and Tributaries, Northwestern United States, House Doc., No. 531, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., 219. According to House Document no. 531, in 1948 4,000 acres of the proposed Kooskia Dam pool area were used for agricultural purposes with about one-third of that land in Indian ownership.
“peculiarly conspicuous although explainable.” A vocal bloc of hearing attendees rejected the dam proposal for its inundation of towns in the Clearwater and Lochsa River valleys including Kamiah, Kooskia, Stites, Harpster, and Lowell. The Kooskia dam would have also inundated the yet-unfinished Lewis-Clark Highway and would require construction of 83 miles of new alternative roadway. Relocation of the Kooskia branch line of the Camas Prairie Railroad, however, would not be required since the dam’s reservoir would cover most of the activity that once required rail transport, namely logging and wheat production. Approximately 4,000 acres of farmland would be submerged beneath the reservoir and four cemeteries including one Indian cemetery, containing approximately 1,075 graves would require removal and relocation.

Responding to protests, Colonel O.E. Walsh, district engineer with the Army Corps Portland district counter-offered that if the Kooskia Dam did go up, the Corps would rebuild the flooded towns with “features of modern water systems, sewage disposal plants, electric utilities, schools, churches and public buildings at sites agreed upon by the displaced communities.” Opponents unequivocally rejected Colonel Walsh’s solutions, arguing that no suitable substitute sites were available in the steep-walled Clearwater canyon.

187 “Opponents Hit At Greer Dam,” *Clearwater Tribune*, 26 August 1948. The August 12, 1948 edition of the *Clearwater Tribune* refers to the Kooskia dam as both the Kooskia and the Greer dam.

188 *Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries, Appendix I*, 261. At the time of the 1948 hearing the towns of Kamiah, Kooskia, and Stites held populations of 568, 490, and 258, respectively.

189 “Opponents Hit At Greer Dam,” *Clearwater Tribune*, 26 August 1948.


191 “Opponents Hit At Greer Dam,” *Clearwater Tribune*, 26 August 1948.
Nez Perce voices present at the Kamiah hearing joined in opposing the Kooskia Dam, since the proposed reservoir and dam sat just outside of the boundaries of the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. Tribal attendees held that unassailable treaty rights reserved within the Treaty of 1863, secured use of land at the proposed site, despite its proposed location beyond reservation boundaries. The loss of these rights, Nez Perces argued, could not be compensated for in any way; further the dam would destroy the Clearwater River’s anadromous fish runs.192

According to the Corps, representatives for the town of Kamiah and the Kamiah Chamber of Commerce delivered a “largely sentimental attack on the project,” while residents of Orofino largely favored the project. Following the Kamiah hearing, the Corps received letters in favor of the project indicating “a considerable number of the local residents favor the proposed dam.”193 Orofino, safe from inundation beneath reservoir waters, saw the Kooskia Dam as a means to enhancing North Central Idaho’s economy. At the Friday, August 5, 1948 meeting of the Orofino Chamber of Commerce, members cited the dam’s potential to simultaneously provide cheap power to advance industrial expansion in the Clearwater River Valley as well as stimulate tourism and recreation on the dam’s reservoir. Ultimately, opposition to the Kooskia Dam trumped support and combined with the “serious dislocation of the local economy and highway developments” the Corps did not include the Kooskia dam in the revised main control plan.194

192 “Opponents Hit At Greer Dam,” Clearwater Tribune, 26 August 1948. The Clearwater Tribune and Corps’ minutes of the Kooskia hearing did not record names of Nez Perce tribal members attending the hearing.

193 Ibid.

194 United States Congress, Columbia River and Tributaries, Northwestern United States, House Doc., No. 531, 81st Cong., 2nd sess., 221. Following the hearing Senator Henry Dworshak asked Colonel Walsh to review the Corps’ report and pursue the possibility of smaller dams on the
The Alternative to the Alternatives: Bruces Eddy Dam

The cacophonous expressions of support and opposition at the Kamiah hearing led the Corps to abandon the proposed Kooskia dam, but again the Corps handily proposed alternative projects – this time on the North Fork of the Clearwater River at Elkberry and Bruces Eddy and at Penny Cliffs on the Middle Fork of the Clearwater River. The Corps’ field reconnaissance of 1942-1946 deemed the North Fork of the Clearwater River and the Bruces Eddy site as another viable multi-purpose dam project for North Central Idaho. Between September 22 and October 8, 1944, Corps Senior Engineer K.M. MacDuffee and Geologist L.L. Ruff scouted and surveyed the Main Stem, South Fork, North Fork and Middle Fork of the Clearwater River, along with the Lochsa and Selway Rivers. On the North Fork, MacDuffee and Ruff concluded

Middle Fork or South Fork of the Clearwater, “to develop projects that could be economically justified.”

195 Bruces Eddy is named for Northern Pacific Railroad Engineer, Bruce Lipscomb. Accounts vary on why the site is identified with Lipscomb. One account cites Lipscomb’s identification of the site as ideal for hydropower development during an 1877 Northern Pacific Railroad survey of the North Fork (see University of Idaho Special Collections AB Curtis Papers Finding Aid). Preston’s A History of the Walla Walla District reports that Lipscomb died at the eddy and hence the bend in the North Fork and the eddy were named for him.

196 The Corps 1948 report proposed a total of five dams on the North Fork, suggesting dam construction at Kelly Creek, Rock Creek, Elkberry, Cranberry, and Bruces Eddy. In the Columbia River Basin Report: Clearwater River Preliminary Power Estimates, November 1947 the Corps deemed the Elkberry site “the key site on the North Fork Clearwater.” Ultimately the Corps dismissed the Elkberry site from its development plans for the North Fork. See K.M. MacDuffee, Columbia River Basin Report: Clearwater River Preliminary Power Estimates, November 1947, Water Resources Research Institute 1942-1981, UG 40, Box 1, Folder 13, University of Idaho Special Collections and Archives, University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho.
that the river canyon geology was “favorable for the foundation of a dam.” However, the surveyors noted that dam construction would require relocation of eleven miles of secondary highway – the only road between Orofino and Elk River and Potlach Forests, Inc. land – a difficult job considering the rugged topography of the North Fork Basin. Regarding human presence on the North Fork at the time of the report, MacDuffee and Ruff concluded that the Bruces Eddy reservoir pool would inundate 12 small farms, but that these were “loggers’ and miners’ homes with shacky buildings, small plots of cultivated ground, and chicken yards,” that would not, in their view, be difficult to relocate.

With the information gathered in the 1944 Clearwater River and tributaries reconnaissance report, the North Pacific Division of the Corps laid out its plans for the Bruces Eddy site in an appendix to House Document 531, *Appendix I, Middle and Lower Snake River Basin*. Located 1.9 miles upstream from the North Fork’s confluence with the Clearwater River, the Corps evaluated Bruces Eddy as easily accessible and that dam construction there would result in “little disruption to existing transportation facilities” specifically to the Lewis-Clark

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198 K.M MacDuffee and L.L. Ruff, *Report on Reconnaissance*, 73. MacDuffee and Ruff included a section of the report titled “Human Interest Items,” wherein the authors addressed the historical significance of the Clearwater drainage including Lewis and Clark’s passage through the area and the Nez Perce Trail and the tribe’s 1877 escape through the Bitterroots. The authors also addressed a number of hermits and legendary characters eking out a solitary existence in the hills and valleys of the Bitterroots. The surveyors themselves attested to the remote and unforgiving character of these spaces, attempting to travel by automobile, horse, or foot between USFS cabins and lookouts.
Highway. With the site’s geologic profile of metamorphic bedrock forming the canyon cradle of the North Fork, the Corps felt Bruces Eddy an ideal site for a dam. The report proposed a dam 705 feet in length and 432 feet high for the river canyon capable of providing power, flood control, navigation, and recreation benefits. The dam at Bruces Eddy would produce 87,000 kilowatts of power and its 510,000-acre storage reservoir would reduce flood stages at Lewiston and on the Snake and Columbia Rivers. Additionally, release of water from the Bruces Eddy Dam reservoir would improve navigation conditions on the lower Snake and Columbia Rivers and navigation on the dam’s reservoir pool would open up then inaccessible areas to mining, lumbering, and recreation.

Appendix I concluded that the dam projects it had evaluated included “all major projects essential to a comprehensive development of the water resources and would fulfill anticipated needs of the region for the foreseeable future. Early development of the most desirable dam sites at locations which would utilize stream flow advantageously in the interests of Columbia Basin-wide multiple-purpose water use is proposed.” Of the 71 projects proposed for the Middle and Lower Snake River Basin in the 1948 report, only the dam at Bruces Eddy became reality.

202 The four Lower Snake River Dams – Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite Dams – were not included in the 1948 report evaluations. The Hells Canyon Dam, proposed in the Corps’ 1948 report, was built by and is currently operated by Idaho Power Company, along with the Oxbow and Brownlee Dams. Within the Clearwater drainage the Corps proposed 17 additional dams on the Selway, Clearwater, South Fork of the Clearwater, and North Fork of the Clearwater including dams at White Cap, Running Creek, Moose Creek, Wolf
The North Fork

The future site of the Bruces Eddy Dam, the North Fork of the Clearwater River (North Fork), runs 135 miles from its headwaters in the Bitterroot Mountains to its mouth at Ahsahka, Idaho, draining 2,440 square miles west of the Continental Divide. It is the Clearwater River’s largest tributary, with a 5000-foot drop from headwaters to mouth. In pre-construction studies of the Bruces Eddy Dam, later named Dworshak Dam, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service described the North Fork as a significant segment of the Columbia River Basin from the standpoint of fish and wildlife and home to some of the remaining wilderness in the basin. The upper one-third of the river’s drainage is within the boundaries of the Clearwater National Forest. Prior to dam construction, the North Fork watershed nurtured vast timber stands of white pine, ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, grand fir, cedar and larch on mountainous, rocky, and rugged terrain. Forest fires of 1910 and 1919 burned large areas of the North Fork watershed creating ideal grazing for the basin’s elk and deer herds and providing habitat for one of the richest big game populations in the United States.

Prior to construction of the Bruces Eddy Dam, the North Fork’s big game populations and the river’s anadromous steelhead trout and Chinook salmon runs constituted a sportsmen’s

Creek, Selway Falls, Peck, Agatha, Myrtle, Lapwai, Wendover, Jerry Johnson, Lot Creek, Newsome Creek, Sliver Creek, Meadow Creek, Kelly Creek, and Rock Creek. The Corps argued that if all proposed dams were constructed, the “storage would provide almost complete regulation of the river.”


paradise with the riverbed providing exceptional spawning and rearing beds for steelhead trout. Until the 1927 construction of Washington Water Power’s Lewiston Dam near the mouth of the Clearwater River large runs of both steelhead and Chinook moved throughout the Clearwater basin. Inadequate fish passage facilities at Lewiston virtually eliminated the basin’s salmon runs and significantly reduced steelhead runs. Improvement of fish ladders at the Lewiston dam in 1940 contributed to minor improvements in anadromous runs, and by 1959, about 15,000 steelhead spawned in the North Fork Drainage.205

As early as 1922, the Grangeville Electric Light & Power Company eyed Bruces Eddy for hydroelectric power production.206 The Corps’ 1948 “308” report proposed a 370-foot high dam at Bruces Eddy as part of a two-dam system on the North Fork consisting of Bruces Eddy and another north at Elkberry. Together, the dams would provide a total reservoir capacity of 750,000 acre-feet, with a capacity of 510,000 acre-feet for flood control and power, and a power plant housing two units with an output of 90,000 kilowatts each. The Corps proposed that the Elkberry Dam, at 590 feet high, act as a stream-flow regulating dam, reducing floods in the Lewis and Clark Valley and increasing power output at dams downstream. Release of water from the storage reservoir at Elkberry would raise water depths of navigation channels downstream and would include power generation facilities.207 The Corps concluded its report on the Clearwater River Basin optimistic that the Clearwater Dams would solve the basic problem


206 Clearwater Tribune “Will Build Dam At Bruce’s Eddy: Grangeville E.L. & P. Co. To Harness North Fork Of The Clearwater River,” 29 December 1922.

207 Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries, Appendix I, 266.
of “utilizing and controlling all available water resources so as to secure the greatest possible benefits for the Columbia River Basin.”\footnote{Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries, Appendix I, 298.} Maximum benefit, argued the Corps, would accrue from control of floods, hydroelectric power generation, increased river flow to aid in navigation and promotion of “maximum-possible fish runs, and from the control of flows for other unspecified purposes.”\footnote{Ibid.} Power production, the Corps argued would ameliorate regional power shortages and head-off future shortages resulting from agricultural and industrial development.\footnote{Whether or not the Columbia Basin was indeed dealing with a power shortage is debatable. While the Pacific Northwest relied on cheap hydroelectricity as a primary economic driver following WWII, and looked to cheap hydroelectricity for further economic development, it is unclear whether an actual shortage of electricity existed.} Further, control of the Clearwater’s run-off - responsible for flood damage in Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia River Basins – would prevent damages like those experienced in 1948. The Corps acknowledged that the dams would block anadromous fish runs and proposed that improvement of fish passage facilities at the Washington Water Power dam at Lewiston would “rehabilitate” the Clearwater and the river would “again become an important fish-producing stream”\footnote{Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries, Appendix I, 299.}

\textbf{“The Key to the Whole Pacific Northwest Power Problem”}

In mid-July, 1953, the Corps began the work of convincing North Central Idaho of the necessity of multi-purpose dams to the region. Initiating a public relations campaign, Colonel F.S. “Tom” Tandy of the Walla Walla District Army Corps of Engineers and his aide, Oliver Lewis, joined the Idaho State Land Board in the board’s annual tour of Clearwater Drainage forests. Setting out from the Clearwater Timber Protective Association Headquarters at Pierce,
Idaho, on Thursday, July 16, Tandy and a group of 40 individuals traveled throughout Potlach Forests Inc.-owned lands on the North Fork. Members of the tour group included notable federal, state, and local officials as well as the “who’s who” of North Central Idaho’s timber and logging interests. Orofino Mayor and Idaho State Fire Warden, A.B. “Bert” Curtis, Idaho Governor Len Jordan, Idaho Attorney General Robert Smylie, United States Forest Service Region I Assistant Regional Forester Clarence Strong, Potlach Forests Inc. (PFI) executives, and members of the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce all meet for the trek through the dense forests above the North Fork. Traveling first by automobile on Thursday, then floating 35 miles down the North Fork, the group made numerous stops to discuss issues of fire protection, bark beetle infestation and kill of timber, blister rust, pole blight, and forestry problems plaguing North Central Idaho. PFI forester Royce Cox informed the group that loss of timber from insects and disease posed a worse problem than annual loss by fire. A summer 1952 timber cruise survey of PFI lands in the North Fork, Cox continued, found about 350 million board feet of timber could still be salvaged from the area – enough to run PFI’s three mills at Lewiston, Potlach and Coeur d’Alene for a full year. On Friday night of the tour, the group camped at Boehl’s Cabin, on the Little North Fork, 35 miles above the proposed Bruces Eddy dam site. Colonel Tandy and his aide had surveyed the river that day and reported to the tour group that they had found the site they were looking for – Colonel Tandy remarked that “it’s a dandy.”

212 Lewiston Morning Tribune, “Governor, Land Board Ride River As Four-Day Forest Tour Closes,” 19 July 1953.

213 Lewiston Morning Tribune, “Army Engineers Pick Site on North Fork For High Dam,” 19 July, 1953. It should be noted that the White Pine site had been surveyed by the Corps in its 1944 survey. The Friday July 17, 1953 survey was the first time that Tandy had been to the site, and
that night, telling the Land Board that “the Clearwater River is the key to the whole Pacific Northwest power problem,” and that the North Fork storage reservoir was the location needed to confine winter runoff and release water later in the year when water is needed to supplement power production on the Columbia River. The dam site that Tandy spoke of that Friday night was not the Bruces Eddy site; rather it was a site upstream from Bruces Eddy at the junction of the Little North Fork and the North Fork at a site the group voted to name “White Pine” for the white pine timber stands in the area. At a banquet held in Lewiston on Saturday, July 18, Colonel Tandy said that the Corps envisioned Bruces Eddy as a secondary dam, functioning as “a run of the river power development” utilizing water released upstream by the White Pine dam.

Curtis and Tandy officially launched their efforts to win public support for the Clearwater Dams in the fall of 1953. According to Curtis’ and Corps’ records, the Corps announced a November 20, 1953, public hearing on the proposed Middle Snake River Basin dams on October 9, 1953. The public notice’s mailing list included organized labor groups, federal agencies, news periodicals, state governments and resource management agencies of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, county and city governments and judges, Chambers of Commerce, Granges, post his report of the site to the tour group at Boehl’s cabin seems to be more showmanship than expression of excitement at having discovered the White Pine site.

Ibid. The “northwest power problem” of which Tandy spoke was the idea that the Pacific Northwest’s rapid postwar industrialization and population growth would quickly strain the region’s power production capabilities. If the problem was not dealt with, the region’s economic growth would stagnate. The key to solving this problem, the Corps argued, was construction of more hydroelectric dams.

Ibid.

Opponents of the Clearwater Dams later charged that the Corps did not announce the hearing until November, 1953, and that the Corps had withheld information regarding its proposals for the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs Dams.
masters, railroads, utility companies, civic groups, and the Nez Perce Tribe (referred to in the mailing list as the “Lapwai Tribal Council, Lapwai Indian Reservation, Lapwai Idaho”). The announcement’s text informed notice recipients that, pursuant to Senate Public Works Committee and Committee on Appropriations resolutions of October 5, 1951, the District Engineer, Walla Walla District, Corps of Engineers, had conducted investigations to “to determine the most feasible storage sites on the Middle Snake River and its tributaries upstream from Lewiston, Idaho, with a view to optimum development of water resources of that area.”

The hearing’s purpose, the Corps explained, was to ensure “that all interested parties may be cognizant of the proposed plan of improvement” and that “all interested parties, particularly those directly affected will have the privilege of presenting their views concerning matters related to the storage sites under consideration.” Notably, though, the Corps did not make any of its planning documents available for public review prior to the hearing.

Despite the dearth of publically available information regarding the Corps’ Clearwater Dams proposals, in the weeks between the Corps’ public notice and the November hearing individuals and groups began forming opinions regarding Corps’ plans. From these opinions, conflicting voices of opposition to and support for dams on the Clearwater and North Fork quickly established. On October 20, Ross Leonard, Director of the Idaho Fish and Game Department issued the department’s findings on the proposed Clearwater dams. Without having


seen official project information from the Corps, Leonard stated that the proposed dams on the Clearwater would directly impact area wildlife populations. As such, the Idaho Fish and Game Department, the state agency mandated to protect and conserve wildlife resources would provide the public with unbiased facts and analysis, free from prejudice, on the dams’ effects on fish and wildlife. This information, Ross continued, would enable the Corps to “give consideration to all the interests and elements involved” in the Corps’ projects.\textsuperscript{219} Ross’ statement also emphasized the Clearwater Drainage’s importance to Idaho fishermen and to non-resident fishermen. The Corps’ program of dam construction, Ross said, would block and annihilate all runs of salmon and steelhead above the dams. Further, the runs of fish entering the Clearwater River could not be saved through transplant to other streams in Idaho, as no suitable unobstructed streams remained in the state. Regarding game populations, Leonard reported that proposed projects would eliminate lower-elevation winter range utilized by elk and deer and that the projected reservoir pool would impede big game movement within the region. Reservoir pool-level fluctuations needed for hydroelectric power production and facilitation of downstream navigation on the Snake and Columbia Rivers would adversely impact the basin’s furbearer habitat for beaver, mink, otter, and muskrat. If the Corps’ proposed Clearwater dams became reality, Leonard predicted, “the recreational aspects of the area will be severely damaged.”\textsuperscript{220}

Two days following Director Leonard’s statement, Bert Curtis, Orofino Attorney Ray McNichols, and publisher of the Clearwater Tribune at Orofino, Robert Werner, appeared at the


October 22, 1953 meeting of the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce’s Waterways and Highways Committee to promote the Clearwater dams and offer Orofino’s assistance in support of dams on the Lower Snake River. At the meeting Curtis summarized the Corps’ plans for the White Pine and Bruces Eddy dams on the North Fork, the Penny Cliffs and Three Devils dams on the Middle Fork, and others on the Selway River. Curtis explained that flood control and hydroelectric power would serve as the dams’ main functions. An “incidental benefit” of a controlled river flow on the North Fork, Curtis added, would be the opportunity for Potlach Forests Inc. to run an additional annual log drive down the river. Considering the benefits, Curtis expressed his desire to see the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs sites listed as first objectives and the White Pine site as secondary. Regarding the November 20 hearing at Orofino, Curtis appealed that all of North Central Idaho would “have to hang together” in support of the dams on that day. Attorney McNichols told the Chamber of Commerce that the North Fork dams should take precedence over the Middle Fork dams because “there seems to be no conflict over the North Fork dams.”

Curtis did not attend the Lewiston meeting simply to promote Orofino’s interests in the Clearwater dams – he attended the meeting to offer his support of Lewiston’s bid for another Corps-constructed dam on the Lower Snake River at Ice Harbor – a move that he saw mutually beneficial to Lewiston, Orofino and all of North Central Idaho. The mayor prophesized that the entire region stood to gain from slack water barge navigation provided by Ice Harbor Dam and the other Lower Snake River Dams. The Snake River Dams, combined with US Highway 12, would form a commercial transportation network linking North Central Idaho to the world. Curtis essentially made his appearance to assure the Chamber of Commerce that Lewiston and

Orofino were not in competition for federal dam-building dollars, but that by presenting a united front of support for both Ice Harbor Dam and the Clearwater Dams that Congressional authorization of the projects would be more likely. The Lewiston Chamber of Commerce agreed with Curtis’ united front approach, but did so with reservations. Knowing that the proposed Middle Fork dam’s threat to completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway, the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce looked to protect and advance the city’s interests. To do so, the chamber opposed any Corps’ plans that would delay or prevent arrival of economic activity brought by the highway. With this in mind, the Chamber offered mixed support to Curtis’ presentation via a motion support the North Fork dams, but oppose the Middle Fork proposals on the grounds that the latter might threaten completion of the Lewis-Clark Highway. The committee tabled the motion after Curtis assured the committee that the federal government would relocate any highways impacted by the dam projects and that the replacement highway would be an improvement over the Lewis-Clark Highway’s current route. Lewiston Chamber of Commerce Highway Committee member H.E. Karlburg remarked that Curtis would get no opposition on the North Fork, but that he would get plenty for proposed flooding of the Lewis-Clark Highway.

222 Reports of the October 22, 1953 meeting of the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce Waterways and Highways Committee cited a conversation between Senator Henry Dworshak and Lewiston Morning Tribune Editor, Bill Hall. In this exchange Dworshak indicated to Hall that if Idahoans presented a “solid front” of support for the Ice Harbor dam, that Congressional authorization and funding of the dam could be pushed through before authorization and funding for the John Day dam on the Upper Columbia River in Oregon. The Clearwater projects, Johnson surmised, “were initiated to find a suitable storage substitute for Hells Canyon Dam.”
Curtis responded with a compromise that he lobby for the North Fork projects before Penny Cliffs.\textsuperscript{223}

By mid-November 1953 camps of opposition and support for the Corps’ proposed projects on the Clearwater formed within and beyond the reaches of the Clearwater Drainage. Columnist Jim Parsons of the \textit{Coeur d’Alene Press} “Outdoors Notebook” based his opposition piece on Idaho Fish and Game Department Director, Ross Leonard’s October 20 statement that the Corps’ Clearwater dams would pose the most serious threat to the area’s elk herd – one of the largest remaining in North America and a unique resource worth far more than the Corps’ water storage scheme. The dams, Parsons concluded, would negatively impact future recreational and hunting use of the area and that these activities warranted consideration alongside flood control and power production; Parsons warned “Idaho’s Chambers of Commerce, industrialists, and business men would do well to consider whether or not their best long-term interest lies in aligning themselves with sportsmen’s organizations at Orofino Nov. 20 against the dam planners.”\textsuperscript{224}

Lewiston Morning Tribune Editor, Bill Johnson, quickly fired back at Parsons’ accusation that the Corps’ proposed dams would turn North Idaho into a “forest of concrete.”\textsuperscript{225} Johnson charged that unless the Idaho Fish and Game Department had access to information not publicly available elsewhere, the department’s objections were “somewhat overstated.” Johnson, 

\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Lewiston Morning Tribune}, “Orofino Group Asks Support of Clearwater Dams Program” 23 October 1953.


a vocal supporter of proposed Clearwater and Middle Snake River Basin dams, pointed out that obtaining public documents detailing the Corps’ plans has “proved impossible.” But, “those who have been given these details are convinced that the dams would not seriously affect the winter range of big game in the Clearwater basin.” Later in the article Johnson’s tone turned somewhat neutral, with a prediction that forthcoming Idaho Fish and Game Department studies would provide factual and moderate assessment of the dams’ impacts. This information would in turn aid residents of North Central Idaho in judging the proposed projects. Johnson closed, opining that the views of sportsmen and those of other interested parties be given “full consideration …when the dam proposals are presented for public scrutiny at the Orofino hearing next week. Any overstatements of benefits or disadvantages should become rather apparent when all the facts are in.”

The Thursday, November 19, 1953 edition of Orofino’s Clearwater Tribune gave Bert Curtis and the paper’s editor, Robert Werner the last word prior to the next day’s hearing. Curtis’ and Werner’s statements each defended the proposed dams with Curtis writing defensively against sportsmen’s opposition and Werner extolling the dams’ potential benefits. Curtis began by characterizing the opposition as “ill informed” and “made by persons not familiar with the area and it is so general in scope that it has little value.” Curtis cited Idaho Fish and Game Department Director Leonard’s October 20, 1953 statement as the principle

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227 Ibid.

source of opposition to the dams. As a consequence of Leonard’s statement “absentee sportsmen clubs” from Sandpoint, Boise, and elsewhere were blindly condemning the dams while local sportsmen from Kooskia, Kamiah, and Orofino “most vitally affected” had endorsed the projects.  

Invoking his and local sportsmen’s familiarity with the Clearwater basin’s lands and wildlife, Curtis surmised that Sandpoint sportsmen were, in fact, jealous of the Clearwater’s potential reservoir lake fishing possibilities and that they had no more reason to oppose the Bruces Eddy dam than Clearwater residents would have had in opposing Corps’ construction of the Albeni Falls dam on the Pend Oreille River in 1950. Curtis closed pointing out that with dam construction, the federal government would provide roads into areas behind the dam and reservoir “so that a decent program of game management could be carried out by the Idaho state department” and so that “predators could be controlled and feeding [of elk and deer] carried on if found to be desirable at critical periods.”

Clearwater Tribune editor, Robert Werner, offered his support for the dams, calling Friday, November 20, 1953 “‘D’ Day for Orofino, D standing for dams which are proposed on the upper reaches of the Clearwater.” Werner enumerated four reasons why the Clearwater dams would benefit North Central Idaho and why the dams warranted citizen support. First, the

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229 Ibid.


231 R.D. Werner, “Upstream Storage As Regional Benefit Aim of Engineers,” Clearwater Tribune, 19 November 1953. Werner’s reference to the “public versus private power controversy” involves the Hells Canyon High Dam and the battle over whether that dam would be constructed with federal dollars or by the Idaho Power Company.
Corps’ plan would have the support of Idaho Governor Len Jordan. Second, as federally-financed projects, the dams would be free of private versus public power development the likes of those surrounding the Hells Canyon High Dam. Third, the Corps’ first-ever intensive study of the Clearwater basin had revealed “extremely favorable Benefit-Cost ratios.” Lastly, the next day’s hearing would demonstrate local residents’ support for the proposed Clearwater dams and prove that those most significantly impacted by the dams favored the projects.

Somewhere between Colonel Tandy’s July statements declaring the Corps’ desire for the White Pine dam and the eve of the November 20 hearing, the Corps had dropped the White Pine dam from its proposal. Werner reported, that now, the Corps had modified its plans and instead aimed for two high dams at Bruces Eddy on the North Fork and Penny Cliffs on the Middle Fork of the Clearwater. These dams, Werner proclaimed, would produce power far in excess of the power production estimates provided by previous studies, producing so much power that Congress would “be impressed by their economic justifications.” Despite the fact that downstream benefits would prove greater than local gains and that the Clearwater dams would

\[232\] Ibid. Werner also intimated that North Central Idaho’s water resource development potential had been overlooked in the past because of the area’s lack of political prestige comparatively to Washington and Oregon. In *Muddy Waters: The Army Engineers and the Nation’s Rivers*, political scientist Arthur Maass, discusses the Army Corps’ use of cost-benefit ratio calculations in its project plans. According to Maass, if a project’s cost-benefit ratio calculation is unfavorable, with little possibility that project improvements can be economically justified, the Corps will scrap a project. If the cost-ratio benefit is favorable, the Corps will proceed with a project. The ratio, as a function of benefit to cost, Maass argues though, produces an incomplete and presentist assessment of a project’s value and ignores the question of whether or not a given project has real advantages for present and future uses. The Corps calculated cost-benefit ratio for flood control, navigation, power production, and recreation for Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs was 2.09 to 1. United States Army Corps of Engineers Office of the District Engineer, Walla Walla, Washington, *Review Report*, Part I, 121.
displace few persons, Werner concluded that if the dams could protect the area against the estimated $2,282,000 damage caused by the 1948 flood, that the projects’ benefits surely trumped their cost.  

Going into the November 20, 1953 hearing at Orofino, it is unclear if any one group or individual had seen the Corps’ planning documents for dam construction on the North Fork. Seemingly, Orofino’s Mayor, Bert Curtis, and his close friends and colleagues, and Colonel Tandy and the Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers staff were the individuals with the greatest command and comprehension of the Corps’ vision for the river. With incomplete information, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, those in support of the proposed dams, and those in opposition, crowded into the Orofino Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall to learn the North Forks potential fate and make sure that their interests – in favor of the dams and otherwise – would be heard.

233 R.D. Werner, “Upstream Storage As Regional Benefit Aim of Engineers,” Clearwater Tribune, 19 November 1953. Werner cited the damage estimate of $2,282,000 between Orofino and surrounding areas resulting from the 1948 floods. As a measure of comparison, the cost estimate given by Colonel Tandy at the November 20, 1953 for Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs were $125,000,000 and $180,000,000 respectively, with annual costs of $5,500,000 and $8,000,000 for each dam. Adjusted for inflation, Tandy’s estimated annual costs would be $46,558,183 and $67,720,993. During Fiscal Year 2011, total expenditures for the Dworshak Dam were $11,241,215. Inflation estimates provided by “The Inflation Calculator” at http://www.westegg.com/inflation/. Werner’s November 19, 1953 statement in the Clearwater Tribune proves that he, and likely the rest of the Clearwater Dams supporters in Orofino knew in advance that that next day’s hearing would focus solely on the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs proposals. The hearing minutes demonstrate that most in attendance did not know this information.
CHAPTER 4

THE BATTLE FOR BRUCES EDDY

The Coeur d’Alene Wildlife Federation broadcast a new S.O.S. on Saturday, November 14, 1953, calling out to federation members and the public “Save our Salmon and Save our Steelhead!” from the pages of the Coeur d’Alene Press. Six days before the Army Corps public hearing on the Clearwater dams at Orofino, the federation’s president, Frank Cullen issued grim warnings of complete destruction of anadromous fish runs and lamented the lack of artificial means of recreating the migrations in one of the “top unspoiled wilderness areas of the nation.” Cullen tactfully acknowledged the contributions of hydroelectric power at Bonneville, McNary, Grand Coulee, Albeni Falls, Clark Fork and Hungry Horse, but conceded that the economic gains provided by these dams came at a cost to the nation’s natural wealth.

At the Orofino Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall on November 20, 1953, Frank Cullen’s and the Coeur d’Alene Wildlife Federation’s objections to the proposed Clearwater dams aired alongside voices of support for the dams. Local chambers of commerce, civic groups, granges, state and federal agencies, and sportsmen’s associations gathered that day to hear Colonel Tandy and the Walla Walla District Corps of Engineer’s survey findings and to express their feelings toward the potential projects. With over 400 individuals packed into the meeting hall’s two floors, Tandy revealed the Corps’ plans for the Clearwater Drainage. The meeting continued with a series of tactfully arranged statements from backers of the projects and abruptly concluded


235 Ibid.
after only a few dissenters had said their piece. The November 20, 1953 hearing at Orofino set
the friction-filled stage for the nine-year battle over the authorization of Dworshak Dam that
followed. The battle’s outcome is clear, its victor marked by the tallest straight-axis concrete
dam in the Western Hemisphere.236 A chronological account of these disputes via a legislative
history of congressional actions leading to the dam’s authorization is not without value. Of
greater relevance to this study though, are the arguments deployed by each side between late
1953 and the dam’s October 23, 1962, authorization by President Kennedy. As demonstrated in
chapters 1 and 2, the construction of US Highway 12 proceeded free of conflict with the
highway’s completion slowed by fiscal realities and topographic challenges of road building over
the Bitterroot Mountains and along the Lochsa and Clearwater Rivers. In the case of Dworshak
Dam, however, conflict filled the nine years between the initial public hearing on the proposed
dams and federal authorization.237 During this time promoters of economic development and
flood control for the Clearwater, Snake, and Columbia River Basins clashed with conservation

236 US Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District, “Dworshak Dam and Reservoir,”
http://www.nww.usace.army.mil/Locations/DistrictLocksandDams/DworshakDamandReservoir.aspx (15 October 2013). The downstream face of the Dworshak Dam is straight (unlike the
curved downstream face of the Hoover Dam), making Dworshak Dam a straight-axis dam.
Gravity dams are those in which massive amounts of concrete exerting downward force
counteracts the force of the reservoir – both vertical and horizontal – and the uplifting force of
water pressure coming from beneath the dam. Dworshak Dam is a combination of these two
designs.

237 The battle over the North Fork of the Clearwater and Dworshak Dam is one of many
controversial dam projects during the 1950s. The most cost-effective projects – i.e. Grand
Coulee and Bonneville Dams on the Columbia and Hoover Dam on the Colorado – had been
built. Remaining projects of lesser economic value and greater cost to build, such as Hells
Canyon on the Snake River and Echo Park on the Green River in the Colorado River Basin, thus
became flashpoints between the federal government, the Army Corps of Engineers and Bureau of
Reclamation, and the American public.
groups over the fate of the Clearwater River and its tributaries. This chapter will consider these divergent arguments, which once established at the November 20, 1953 hearing, persisted even after Dworshak Dam’s authorization. The chapter will then locate these arguments within the context of three postwar trends: postwar consumption, intensified natural resource extraction, and the beginnings of twentieth century environmentalism in the United States.

**Public Hearing at Orofino**

Master of Ceremonies for the hearing, Orofino Mayor A.B. “Bert” Curtis, and Colonel Tandy called the hearing to order fifteen minutes late, while attendees shuffled about trying to secure a spot in the filled-to-capacity hall. After Curtis’ brief introductions of local, state, and federal officials in attendance, Tandy revealed the Corps revisions to the 1948 “308” reports. Tandy approached a map of the Clearwater Drainage and removed from the map ten of the thirteen ribbons marking potential dam sites within the valley. With the White Pine and Elkberry dams and eight others omitted from the Corps 1948 plans, Tandy announced that the day’s hearings would address three dams: Bruces Eddy on the North Fork of the Clearwater, Penny Cliffs on the Middle Fork of the Clearwater, and Mountain Sheep on the Salmon River. The audience murmured in surprise at the announcement. Many of them came to Orofino that day

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238 Later analysis of the Corps’ announcement of the three dam by *Lewiston Morning Tribune* editor Bill Johnson called the “package” presentation confusing. Hearing attendees had gone into the meeting expecting to discuss two dams on the North Fork of the Clearwater and two on the Middle Fork of the Clearwater. Instead, Johnson reported, meeting attendees, or “the customers,” “went to the meeting intending to buy four apples. They were offered two apples and a lemon.” Bill Johnson, *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, “The ‘Surprise’ In The Dam ‘Package’,” 29 November 1953.
expecting to hear proposals regarding thirteen feasible water storage sites on the Middle Snake River and its tributaries upstream from Lewiston as announced in the Corps October 9 public notice of the hearing.\textsuperscript{239} Tandy then reported that the Corps would recommend to Congress construction of Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs reasoning that since July 1953 surveys, subsequent studies had shown that single dams on both the North and Middle Fork of the Clearwater would prove more economically feasible than prior recommendations placing two dams on each stream.\textsuperscript{240}

Colonel Tandy’s opening remarks continued, addressing area wildlife populations, economic development in the Clearwater Drainage, flood control, hydroelectric power production, and recreational opportunities on the proposed dams. Rationalizing the Corps’ site selection to the audience, Tandy assured attendees that the agency “had given full and complete determination of the effects of these reservoirs on wildlife.”\textsuperscript{241} No federally or state-designated primitive areas lay within the potential area inundated by the Bruces Eddy reservoir and at Penny Cliffs, when the reservoir would be at its highest, the pool would extend only six miles into the

\textsuperscript{239} Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army Office of the District Engineer, Walla Walla District, Public Notice: Public Hearing Concerning feasible storage sites on the Middle Snake and its tributaries between Lewiston and Pittsburgh Landing, Idaho, 9 October 1953. Tandy omitted the Mountain Sheep Dam from the hearing because preliminary investigation, planning and construction would all be handled by a separate federal agency, the Bureau of Reclamation.


USFS-managed Idaho Primitive Area.\textsuperscript{242} Citing his work on previous dams, Tandy testified, “I am a conservationist at heart. I would not make these recommendations if I was not certain that we are not destroying the fish life. I know that we are not.”\textsuperscript{243} Tandy then shifted to the dams’ economic development potential for North Central Idaho. Located away from the main stem of the Clearwater and away from level and flat spaces necessary for industrial and commercial developments, the dams would leave plenty of room for the enterprises it would draw to the area. The dams would also benefit the area’s timber industry by facilitating road and river access to stands further up the North Fork and Selway Rivers, with log transport on the North Fork and over Bruces Eddy Dam possible via conveyor or lift system.

Colonel Tandy’s presentation consumed most of the morning, followed by a string of local dignitaries and officials voicing support for the proposed projects. Municipalities and civic organizations presented favorable resolutions predicting the dams’ ability to advance regional economic development, provide increased access to timber stands, and to improve recreational spaces and allow automobile access to those spaces. Further, the dams’ attraction of industry would expand the area’s tax base and lessen localities’ dependence upon state and federal funding of schools, roads, and government services. Considered together, proponents saw the

\textsuperscript{242} Designated by the United States Forest Service in 1931, the Idaho Primitive Area consisted of what are now the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.

dams’ benefits reaching beyond Orofino and Clearwater County to the entire Clearwater Drainage, the state of Idaho, and the nation.  

Following nearly five hours of unanimously favorable testimony, Chairman Joseph Blackeagle, on behalf of the Nez Perce Tribe, registered the hearing’s first statement opposing the Corps’ plans. While previous supporters invoked their knowledge of the North Fork, touting their 70 or 80 years of experience and knowledge of the area. Blackeagle, citing the Nez Perce Treaty of 1855, invoked the tribe’s presence on the North Fork and on the Columbia Plateau since time immemorial, and according to Article Three of the treaty, the tribe’s reserved rights to hunt and take fish from the North Fork and Clearwater Rivers. Blackeagle continued, that no monetary settlement could compensate the tribe for the permanent loss of its hunting grounds and fishery but that the tribe could do nothing but “ask for damages, not in dollars but

244 Groups represented included chambers of commerce, the Orofino and Kooskia Lions Clubs, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, Idaho Outdoors Association, the Inland Empire Waterways Association, and the American Federation of Labor.

245 Whereas other units of government testified as a bloc earlier in the day, hearing organizers grouped the Nez Perce Tribe’s statement with civic organizations in the hearing agenda and did not acknowledge the tribe’s sovereign status equal to that of other local and county governments within North Central Idaho. At the time of the November 20, 1953 hearing regarding the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs projects, the Nez Perce Tribe also opposed construction of the Ice Harbor on the Snake River and McNary Dam on the Columbia River and was seeking suit against the Army Corps of Engineers to stop construction of the dams.

246 The reserved rights of the Nez Perce Tribe are enumerated in Article Three of the 1855 treaty – “the exclusive right to take fish all the streams where running through or bordering said reservation.” The Supreme Court of the State of Idaho upheld this right in 1953 in State of Idaho v. David Arthur wherein David Arthur, an enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe, was charged in Idaho County Probate Court for the crime of killing a big game animal out of season on Nez Perce National Forest Lands. The court held that the terms of the 1855 treaty guaranteed Arthur rights to hunt on reservation land and land ceded by the tribe in the 1855 treaty.
millions.” Blackeagle closed, stating the Nez Perce Tribe’s desire to meet with the Corps again until the Corps realized the tribe’s rights and the federal government’s legal obligations to them. Colonel Tandy responded to Blackeagle, calling him “Chief,” and stating that if “competent legal authorities” determined that “an obligation exists here, we most certainly will adhere to a recommendation for that obligation and we will go into an immediate study of your problem and I assure of our fullest cooperation on our part.”

At 4:10 PM, ten minutes past the hearing’s scheduled conclusion, Bert Curtis began wrapping up public comment when Frank Cullen, Director of the Coeur d’Alene Wildlife Federation interjected, demanding to speak. Curtis ceded the floor and Cullen presented the federation’s formal protest to the dams, opposing the destruction of fisheries and big game grazing range on the North and Middle Forks of the Clearwater. The dams, Cullen argued were neither necessary nor vital to regional welfare and that the wildlife values alone justified arguments against the projects. Speakers following Cullen offered sarcastic congratulations to Bert Curtis and Colonel Tandy on the fine job they had done selling the Clearwater dams and


lauded Joseph Blackeagle and the Nez Perce Tribe’s opposition.\textsuperscript{250} Others called out the hearing’s intentional attempts to exclude and delay oppositional statements, a tactic that had been experienced by conservation groups at previous Corps hearings.\textsuperscript{251} Colonel Tandy hurriedly moved to conclude presentation of prepared statements with Bert Curtis refuting accusations that the meeting had been conducted undemocratically – “It was referred to a moment ago that some people have to wait until they are given a chance to talk. That, I resent. You are going to be given every opportunity to talk. We have not limited you at any time, for any length of time.” \textsuperscript{252} Tandy then instructed speakers not on the meeting agenda to approach the microphone and that he was in no hurry to return to Walla Walla and that the hearing would continue through the night if necessary. He then urged subsequent speakers to be brief in their comments. George Taylor, Secretary-Treasurer of the Idaho-Oregon-Washington Hells Canyon Association pointed out that the Corps had furnished no one at the hearing with a copy of its proposal, making evaluation and informed conclusions impossible. The Association, therefore, felt that the hearing had been called out of order. Tandy retorted, calling Taylor out of order, and that his statement should be struck from the record, to which the audience shouted demands that Taylor should be allowed to speak. Taylor repeated his request for a complete presentation of the


Corps’ plans for the Snake River Basin and for release of the Corps’ planning document. Tandy responded that the plans had been available for viewing for nearly two years with a copy available at this Walla Walla office and in no way restricted to the public.253 Bert Curtis offered closing remarks at 5:20 PM, noting that he was “very proud of the people who presented their resolutions” at the hearing and that it was “a very favorable presentation.” Before adjourning, Tandy added “I have a very friendly attitude toward the people in this region and toward your aspirations.”254

“A Very Neat Trick”

The Saturday following the hearing local newspaper headlines proclaimed great public support for the Clearwater Dams. Reporting near or unanimous approval of the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs proposals, the Lewiston Morning Tribune and the Coeur d'Alene Press largely downplayed voices of opposition present the day before. According to the Lewiston Morning Tribune, local governing bodies, chambers of commerce and the State of Idaho favored the dam, while opposition came from “the Nez Perce Indian Tribe, some wildlife organization, and few individuals.”255 Conversely, Coeur d’Alene Press columnist, Jim Parsons, who had written opposition pieces prior to the hearing spoke out again on November 21 and called for “a decisive


stand and aggressive opposition” against the dams. Recalling Bonner County’s experience with the Corps in construction of the Albeni Falls Dam on the Pend O’reille River, Parsons alleged the Corps had not fulfilled its promises to the county. It promoted supposed benefits of dam construction, glossed over disadvantages, and made promises that were later reluctantly kept or forced to keep under threat of legal action. The Corps’ had managed somehow, Parsons sarcastically charged, to keep the multi-purpose dam’s reservoir empty for flood control purposes and full for electric power generation – an impossible feat and “a very neat trick.” Parsons concluded that the best thing Idahoans could do was to put up a sign where the Clearwater joined the Snake River: “Army Engineers, Keep Out!!”

While supporters and opponents clashed and lobbed accusations back and forth on the pages of the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* and the *Coeur d’Alene Press*, the Lewis-Clark Wildlife Club, then a chapter of the Idaho Wildlife Federation, passed a resolution opposing the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs Dams. The resolution, sent to Colonel Tandy as the club’s first official public expression concerning the dams, proclaimed that the Corps had ignored sportsmen’s wishes in its construction of other dams in the Pacific Northwest. The club asked that the Corps delay construction until additional research on fish propagation and the passage of fish over high

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257 Ibid.

258 Ibid.
dams could be conducted. The club had faith that before the dams could be built, that possibilities for handling salmon over dams could be realized.259

The Lewis-Clark Wildlife Club’s resolution sat within stacks of letters Colonel Tandy and the Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers received in response to the hearing. Letters of opposition and support came from local and national respondents, individuals and organizations alike. Residents and landowners within the proposed reservoir pools protested displacement from their homes, businesses and livelihoods and that any monetary compensation would not provide sufficient reimbursement for these losses. The dam would not only “remove one of the last primitive frontiers where people can reside in comparative security and quiet” it would constitute a military target, attracting “hostile action.”260 Letters from he Idaho Wildlife Federation, Wildlife Management Institute, Izaak Walton League, Sierra Club, Wilderness Society and the State of Washington Department of Fisheries wrote letters warning of the destruction to the North Fork’s elk herd and flooding of elk winter range by the reservoir and blockage of Chinook salmon and Steelhead trout runs up the Middle and North Forks of the Clearwater. The Washington Department of fisheries warned that the “concrete curtain” dams of the Corps’ proposed Snake River projects would function as the second step in the sterilization of the Columbia Basin fishery; Grand Coulee Dam was the first.

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Letters to Colonel Tandy with address lines from localities in the vicinity of the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs sites – Orofino, Pierce, and Grangeville, Idaho – wrote in favor of the projects. Invoking personal knowledge of the North Fork and surrounding areas, supporters argued that the opposition’s protests of damage to fish and big game were unfounded. The opposition did not know the area well enough to make claims regarding the dam’s impact on anadromous fish runs and elk herds. Rather, supporters believed any damage would be negligible and the dam would, in fact, improve recreational fishing opportunities and facilitate improved game and range management above the reservoir.\textsuperscript{261} Local proponents began seeing the opposition as purveyors of “adverse propaganda” spread by “various wildlife leaders and paid propagandists.”\textsuperscript{262} Letters submitted to Colonel Tandy painted the opposition, emanating specifically from northern Idaho, as fearful and jealous of the dammed Clearwater Rivers’ potential for recreation and tourism. Further, as evidence of “petty sectional foolishness” within Idaho, the opposition’s statements were the sort of impediment that had long plagued the state’s economic and infrastructural development.\textsuperscript{263} Multiple letters submitted by the Orofino Chapter

\textsuperscript{261} Writing in support of the dam, Vernon Butler, Secretary of the Orofino Chapter of the Idaho Outdoor Association


\textsuperscript{263} Antagonisms between northern and southern Idaho originate in the mid-nineteenth century. Following removal of Lewiston as territorial capital in 1865 and the decline of mining in northern Idaho. The north then pressed for secession of the Idaho panhandle from the territory, figuring it either join Washington or Montana. Northern Idaho’s economy languished after the discovery of gold in the Boise Basin and Boise’s subsequent rise as the territory’s, and later the state’s trade center. Since then, southern Idaho has maintained its dominance as the state’s
of the Idaho Outdoors Association and by Orofino business owners saw Coeur d’Alene newspaper columnist Jim Parsons as selfishly promoting northern Idaho’s interests.\(^{264}\)

According to Harold Jordan, President of the Orofino Chapter of the Idaho Outdoors Association, prior to the Corps’ proposals, the fish and wildlife resources of the North Fork received little attention. But, with the possibility of the Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs Dams, predictions of disaster and destruction had suddenly surfaced and as such served to stifle economic development. The Orofino Chapter saw Parsons’ and others statements as “based upon selfish interests and a desire to keep recreation, tourist trade and sporting activity from our section of the state.”\(^{265}\)

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\(^{264}\) The Idaho Outdoor Association formed in Boise, Idaho on August 26, 1947 as a group of sportsmen and women dedicated to the promotion of “good sportsmanship, ethics and responsibility as hunters and fishermen.” The organization intended that its headquarters be located in Boise with local chapters throughout Idaho. With the exception of the Ada Chapter, all local chapters of the organization have disbanded. The Coeur d’Alene Wildlife Federation, with support from the Craigmont Rod & Gun Club, the Twin Falls Chapter of the Idaho Outdoors Association, the Pocatello Wildlife Federation, Clark Fork Rod & Gun Club, Bonner County Sportsmen’s Association, Lewis Clark Wildlife Club of Lewiston, Coeur d’Alene Chapter of the Idaho Outdoors Association, District 1 and 2 Wildlife Federations, Palouse River, Troy, and Moscow sportsmen’s groups, the Wilderness Society of America, National Wildlife Federation, Wildlife Management Institute, Izaak Walton League of America, Nez Perce Tribe, and Oregon Fish and Game Commission all went on record opposing the dam with statements to the Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers and the Lewiston Morning Tribune.

By the end of 1953, opposing camps in the battle over the proposed Clearwater dams had clearly formed. The *Lewiston Morning Tribune* described the Corps’ reveal of its plans for the river as one of the top stories of 1953, and reported that the public had supplied near unanimous approval at the hearing. Tribune staff writer, Ladd Hamilton, went so far to say of the hearing that, “the Army Engineers had stumbled across the two most noncontroversial damsites in the Pacific Northwest.”

Had Hamilton’s assessment of public support for the Clearwater dams been true, perhaps Dworshak Dam would have been authorized more quickly and Penny Cliffs Dam would be holding back the Middle Fork of the Clearwater today. The path to authorization of Dworshak Dam was certainly not without controversy and as the two sides battled over the proposed Clearwater Dams, their oppositional stances and repeated confrontations reveal much about postwar American consumption as well as Idaho’s and the nation’s relationship to its natural resources at that time.

A ‘Needed Element’

Shortly after the Orofino hearing, John Corlett, political editor for the Idaho Statesman, called “the need for flood control a positive, needed element” in controlling Snake River runoff. Aided by Corlett and other media personalities in Idaho, supporters of the proposed Clearwater Dams constituted a powerful and effective promotional machine. The iron triangle of

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267 The protests of local and national wildlife groups and objections of Penny Cliff’s flooding of US Highway 12 and flooding of a portion of the then Idaho Primitive Area (now Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness) led the Corps to drop the site from its development planning in 1956.

local, state, and national interests that championed Dworshak Dam included civic groups, governmental entities, and business interests from throughout the upper Clearwater River Valley, US Senator Henry C. Dworshak and later Senator Frank Church, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.\textsuperscript{269} What began with the Army Corps of Engineers studies of the Clearwater River and its tributaries in the 1940s, and municipalities and business desire for economic development, transformed into a symbiotic relationship between the Corps, the Clearwater Valley’s political-business elite, and Idaho Senator Henry Dworshak. In this iron triangle each side stood to gain from dam construction and each personality, Tandy, Curtis, and Dworshak, serves as a representative of the underlying ideologies and motivations that fueled their support of the dams.

At the start of Colonel Tandy’s brief fifteen month tenure as District Officer of the Walla Walla District, Corps officials in Washington D.C. planned to disband the district, deeming it unnecessary after the completion of McNary Dam. The Corps’ North Pacific Division based in Portland, Oregon, would pick up the Walla Walla District’s dwindling workload. Colonel Tandy learned of the plans at his initial briefing and was advised then that he should anticipate the

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\textsuperscript{269} Iron triangle is a political science term describing the policy-making relationship between congressional representatives, the bureaucracy or government agencies, and interest groups. In the case of water resource development, the iron triangle makes these projects possible. In Endangered Rivers and the Conservation Movement, author Tim Palmer places conception of river development projects with local promoters. These individuals then work to organize support, generate positive publicity, and meet with their congressional representation. Votes and contributions in exchange for congressional support are explicit. The congressperson then requests a feasibility study by the corps or bureau, or may directly attach an authorization amendment into another piece of legislation. The triangle’s three corners are dependent upon one another – if the corps has no projects, it has no work, so corps officials meet with local business interests and coach them through the process. See Tim Palmer, Endangered Rivers and the Conservation Movement, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 166.
\end{quote}
district’s closure; Tandy disagreed and proposed that the district should be expanded. The John Day and Ice Harbor Dams waited in the Corps’ project hopper and Tandy surmised that these dams combined with the Lower Snake River and Clearwater Dams would ensure the Walla Walla District’s existence. His efforts along with other Walla Walla District Officers have proven successful – the district still exists today.

While Tandy worked to preserve the Walla Walla District, the city of Orofino and the broader Clearwater River Valley continued to rely on North Central Idaho’s timber stands as its primary economic driver. As the nation demanded timber for residential construction and military structures timber harvests from United States’ forests, both private and publicly managed, soared during World War II. The USFS Northern Region harvested more timber from its national forests during the last six months of 1943 than in any previous half-year since the forests’ designation. Total timber sales receipts from all USFS regions during that time were more than double those of the same period in 1942.

To the west of USFS land in the

270 Howard A. Preston A History of the Walla Walla District, 1948-1970. (Walla Walla: United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1970), 54-55. Colonel F.S. “Tom” Tandy, “Terrible Tom” came to the Walla Walla District following his service in the Korean War directing road reconstruction and combat troop support. The district’s administrative history describes Tandy as “a very capable engineer, a good manager, politically astute, and every day a pusher, not only of his staff but of himself.”

271 Currently, the Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers operates and manages six dams on the Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers: McNary Dam on the Columbia River and Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose, and Lower Granite Dams on the Snake, and Dworshak on the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

272 The USFS Northern Region consists of Northern Idaho, Montana and the Dakotas.

Clearwater National Forest, Potlach Forests Incorporated (PFI) owned and managed much of the land on the North Fork of the Clearwater as a certified Tree Farm with the city of Orofino serving as the company’s commercial hub from which timber departed for processing mills in northern Idaho. Speaking of PFI’s Clearwater Tree Farm in the North Fork Drainage, PFI General Manager C.L. Billings confidently predicted, “The farm will go on producing crops indefinitely. We hope the harvests will continue to include homes, good wages, and living conditions in the nearby communities, and the feeling of security which comes with a feeling of permanence.” Between 1928 and 1971, PFI floated log drives down the North Fork and delivering the drainage’s timber harvests to its Lewiston mill. Wartime shortages of camp personnel and drive crews halted the drives between 1943 and 1949, but by 1952 timber floated down the North Fork to Lewiston made its way into a plethora of products including lumber, plywood, pulp and paper, paperboard, and pine veneers. Timber supplied by PFI’s Clearwater Tree Farm fueled the company’s postwar profits. To meet surging postwar consumer demand for their products, PFI required greater access to its stands deep within the hills above the North Fork. A dam on the river and its accompanying roads and reservoir pool would facilitate this

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274 The Potlach Forests Inc. monthly newsletter “The Family Tree” announced in its November, 1943 edition, in an article titled “Timber Is A Crop…the Harvest Is Homes” that the Western Pine Association certified the company’s lands within the North Fork Drainage a Tree Farm. Tree Farm certification is extended to corporations and private landowners deemed to be practicing standards of sustainable forestry as determined by the certifying organization. Potlach Forests, Inc. “The Family Tree,” 8(2) November 1943. The Family Tree Collection, University of Idaho Library, Special Collections and Archives.

275 Ibid.

access; hence Orofino Mayor AB Curtis, the city’s residents, and surrounding locales that relied on these spaces would be the dam’s most ardent backers.²⁷⁷

With the Walla Walla District Corps of Engineers providing the know-how, and Bert Curtis and the towns of the Clearwater Valley working as promoters, Republican US Senator Henry C. Dworshak, functioning as the Corps’ conduit to federal funding, completed the iron triangle.²⁷⁸ During Dworshak’s Senate terms he made Idaho’s economic development the

²⁷⁷ For further discussion of wartime and postwar timber harvest in the United States, see Paul Hirt, *A Conspiracy of Optimism; Management of the National Forests Since World War II*. Although Hirt speaks mainly to federally managed forests and the unsustainable timber harvests driven by the war and later by consumer demand, his arguments apply to privately-managed forests as well. Following the war private and public forests worked together to meet the nation’s timber demands. By harvesting timber at increasing and unsustainable speeds, private and public forests quickly exhausted their stands of merchantable timber and imperiled future logging in their forests.

AB “Bert” Curtis served as Mayor of Orofino 1951 – 1971. Professionally, he served in various fire prevention capacities with the Clearwater Timber Protective Association and later the Clearwater Potlach Timber Protective Association (CPTPA), serving as CPTPA Chief Fire Warden until his 1968 retirement. The CPTPA works as fire protection unit, similar to USFS fire crews, for privately owned and managed timber stands in North Central Idaho. Curtis also served as president of two mining entities, Orofino Lime Products and Oxford Copper Mining Company, near Pierce, Idaho. He also represented Idaho as the state’s director on the Inland Empire Waterways Association, a powerful business-political lobby for river development in the Inland Northwest. Considering the whole of Curtis’ business and political activities and affiliations, his vested interest in the Clearwater Dams is obvious.

²⁷⁸ Henry C. Dworshak served in the US Senate in fragments, filling vacancies left by deaths of Democratic Senators in 1947 and again in 1949. Idaho officially elected Dworshak to a full Senate term in 1954 and another in 1960, where he served until his July 23, 1962 death. Idaho’s other Senator, Republican Herman Welker (serving 1951-1957 until unseated by Frank Church) in *Sports Illustrated* magazine called the Clearwater Dams “detrimental to the welfare of Idaho” and could see no necessity for high dams on the Clearwater. Responding to Welker’s statement, Bert Curtis said Welker was “jumping off the deep end” and that the statement “must have been a snap judgment.”
centerpiece of his legislative efforts. In particular, Dworshak recognized the federal funding Oregon and Washington received for water resources development and felt that Idaho, with the undeveloped water resources of the Snake River Basin, should receive federal dollars for this purpose as well. Between 1954 and congressional authorization for Dworshak Dam in 1962, Dworshak repeatedly charged that Idaho had been discriminated against in federal allocation of water resource development dollars in the Columbia Basin. Whether Dworshak sincerely believed his argument or deployed it as a political maneuver, his Idaho constituents agreed with their Senator in feeling they lagged behind Oregon and Washington in this respect and felt the state deserved its share of federal dam building funds. 279

Each corner of the iron triangle advancing the Clearwater Dams worked under its own self-interested motivations. But the public case they made to constituents, and the case supporters rallied behind, touted the dam’s dual benefits of flood control and regional economic development. The floods of 1948, discussed in chapter 3, served as the Corps’ and Orofino’s foundational motivation to restrain the North and Middle Forks of the Clearwater River. Record rainfall, unseasonably warm temperatures, and rapid mountain snowmelts of that year sent the Columbia River and its tributaries rushing over their banks, destroying Vanport, Oregon, and inflicting $2.3 million in damages between Lewiston, Kooskia, and Orofino. 280 Invoking the floods of 1948, the Corps believed, and successfully convinced Orofino and surrounding locales,


that Dwoshak Dam, nee Bruces Eddy, was essential in the comprehensive development of hydroelectric power and flood prevention in the Columbia, Snake, and Clearwater Basins.

In Orofino, Bert Curtis reasoned, if a dam could contain and control the North Fork’s capricious spring runoff, the risk of business investment in towns laying within the Clearwater’s flood plains would be greatly reduced and practically eliminated. A multipurpose dam at Bruces Eddy could also float timber, generate electricity to alleviate projected regional power shortages, and provide Idaho and the nation with a recreational area where the “mediocre fishing that once characterized the North Fork will be replaced by a fishery second to none in Idaho.”

The notion that Dworshak Dam, as a multipurpose development, could achieve all of the above goals reflects ideals rooted in progressive-era conservation. Progressive conservationist disciples of what historian Samuel P. Hays calls “the gospel of efficiency” advocated efficient use of resources via intensive management practices reliant upon techniques of applied science. By attempting maximum development of water resources, multipurpose dams

281 Clearwater Dams Association and Orofino Chamber of Commerce promotional brochure, Albert Bruce Curtis Papers, 1927-1977, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.

282 See Samuel P. Hays *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency*. Hays asserts that progressives’ approach to resource management lay in “a rational and scientific method of making basic technological decisions through a single, central authority” making for a top-down approach to resource use policy. Managers making these decisions would act “objectively and with a comprehensive view of environmental issues.” (See Koppes’ “Efficiency/Equity/Esthetics…”) The Corps’ postwar activity in the Columbia and Snake River Basins harkens back to this ethos. In the case of Dworshak Dam, whether their activity can rightly be called rational, objective, or comprehensive is another matter. Koppes argues that in order to understand the likes of AB Curtis and supporters of the Clearwater Dams, we must set aside views of dams as ecological disasters, and instead see dams as “hydroelectric liberators” following the Great Depression and the New Deal.
constructed in postwar America, embodied the gospel. On the North Fork of the Clearwater Bert Curtis opined that the “full utilization” of the river’s resources facilitated by Dworshak Dam worked in the best interests of the Clearwater Valley, as well as that of the Pacific Northwest, and the whole of the nation. Further, the benefit thereof would far surpass any damage to the area’s fish or wildlife resources.  

As Bert Curtis pressed for “full utilization” of the North Fork though, the character of conservation in the United States was shifting and evolving. The movement directed at the efficient development of raw materials embodied by Bert Curtis and proponents of the Clearwater Dams no longer dominated natural resource management in the United States. Postwar consumers began turning the progressives’ commitment to efficient utilitarian exploitation of the nation’s rivers and forests on its head. With rising incomes and improved quality of life, Americans increasingly took to the outdoors to pass their leisure time. They looked to spaces like the North Fork of the Clearwater and North Central Idaho, now accessible via automobile on US HWY 12, not as spaces yielding commodities, but as life-enhancing amenities to be preserved and enjoyed. 

Americans were thus transforming consumption of the North Fork and of the North Idaho landscape, favoring camping, fishing, hunting and hiking,

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284 Preservationist sentiments were not absent from the Progressive era. The likes of John Muir continually butted heads with Teddy Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot over notions of “efficient” natural resource exploitation, as these policies discounted and excluded values and uses of natural resources that were not commodity and extraction-focused. In the postwar shift from natural resources as industrial raw material commodities to recreational amenities, North Central Idaho and other outdoor recreation destinations in the United States
over extraction and sale of the region’s resources. This transformation in American consumer behavior - from securing necessities to seeking amenities - lay at the heart of the battle for the North Fork of the Clearwater.

Those opposing Bert Curtis and the Army Corps of Engineers’ vision to realize the North Fork’s greatest utility exemplify postwar American consumers’ desire for outdoor recreation amenities found in riverine and forest spaces. The individuals and groups described in subsequent paragraphs represent these desires. But not all individuals objecting to the dams did so with protection of recreational spaces in mind. Following the November 1953 hearing at Orofino, Mr. and Mrs. S.D. Merry of Ahsahka, Idaho, where the North Fork meets the Middle Fork of the Clearwater, objected to the government’s subsidization of Potlach Forests Incorporated’s logging in the river basin.\textsuperscript{285} Citing PFI’s growing dominance in the region’s timber industry and displacement of smaller independent timber firms, the Merrys decried the estimated $585,000 of federal funds budgeted for chain conveyor log passage systems at Dworshak Dam.\textsuperscript{286} The Merrys also spoke for some 60 families living within the North Fork

\textsuperscript{285} Mr. and Mrs. S.D. Merry to Representative Gracie Pfost, 2 December 1953, Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers, 1950-1962, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.

\textsuperscript{286} Mr. and Mrs. S.D. Merry to Representative Gracie Pfost, 26 April 1954, Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers, 1950-1962, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives. During the 1950s forest product companies in the United States, under pressure from international timber markets, bought out smaller firms with the goal of increasing efficiency, acquiring more harvestable timber, and strengthening competitive advantage in the globalizing forest products market. This trend continues today.
canyon, opposing their future displacement by the dam and the less-than satisfactory compensation the Corps’ would be paying for their properties.287

Lewiston resident and president of the Lewis-Clark Wildlife Club and Secretary of District 2 of the Idaho Wildlife Federation, Mort Brigham, was one of the most vocal opponents of the Clearwater Dams.288 Like Mr. and Mrs. Merry, Brigham and the conservation groups he represented recognized PFI’s role in pushing for the dams and the benefits the company would reap in using the Bruces Eddy reservoir as a log pond.289 In the nine years between the Corps’ proposal and congressional authorization Brigham repeatedly faced off against the Corps and Bert Curtis at public hearings regarding the river’s fate, issuing countless warnings of the dams’ adverse impacts to fish and wildlife. The permanent destruction of the Clearwater’s sport and

287 Mr. and Mrs. S.D. Merry to Representative Gracie Pfost, 28 May 1954, Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers, 1950-1962, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.

288 Mort Brigham, 1915-2001, was the most vocal individual fighting the Corps’ Clearwater Dam proposals. A native of northern Idaho, Brigham attended University of Idaho and studied forestry and engineering. He worked for PFI, where his conservation work continually made waves until his activism lost him his job. He then began work as a consultant to sawmills, specializing in increasing mill efficiency. Brigham wrote countless letters to congressional representation and regularly squared off against the timber industry in disputes over logging practices in the Selway and Clearwater River Basins. According to Brigham’s wife, Janet, although he fought to keep roads and logging out of some areas he often supported public land timber harvest if the area in question could withstand industrial timber harvests. Brigham served as president of the Lewis-Clark Wildlife Club, chairman of the North Idaho Wilderness Committee, and advised the Idaho Environmental Council and the Idaho Wildlife Federation. Brigham also played pivotal roles in protection of the Mallard-Larkins Pioneer Area, the Gospel Hump, Selway-Bitterroot, and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses. Eric Barker, “Honoring Brigham,” Lewiston Morning Tribune, 10 August 2012. District 2 of the Idaho Wildlife Federation consisted of wildlife organizations in Clearwater, Lewis, Latah, Nez Perce, and Idaho Counties.

commercial fisheries and big game migration routes and winter range, Brigham explained over and over, seemed foolish; for as the population of the United States took to the nation’s steadily improving roads, the value of recreational resources of every type would only increase.290  Mort Brigham, the Lewis-Clark Wildlife Club, and District 2 of the Idaho Wildlife Federation demanded that before Congress authorized funding for Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs, further study of the Clearwater Drainage’s wildlife and impacts of the dams upon these resources be made.

Wildlife conservation organizations from greater Idaho shared Mort Brigham’s sentiments and desire to protect the Clearwater Basin’s recreational values and demanded more study of the dams’ impacts.291  At the Corps’ July 11, 1956 public hearing at Lewiston, Frank Cullen, Chairman of the Dam Committee of Idaho Wildlife Federation District 1 extolled the recreational value of the then undammed Clearwater River.  Calling the Clearwater Drainage “our wild area of Idaho” Cullen cited the thousands of hunters and fishermen from throughout North America drawn to the area annually to utilize its recreational amenities.  Further, Cullen referred to a pamphlet handed out at the Corps’ November 1953 hearing proclaiming “Orofino—


Sportsman’s Paradise” as the “gateway to the Nations largest primitive big game area.”

If Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs dams were built, Cullen predicted, Orofino and surrounding locales would lose its distinction as one of the nation’s “last frontiers;” the very least the nation could do was to hold onto this dwindling wilderness for future generations.

The local and state voices calling for preservation of the Clearwater quickly drew national attention to the river’s plight. In the days following the 1953 Orofino hearing, the Wilderness Society, National Wildlife Federation, Wildlife Management Institute, Izaak Walton League, Citizens Committee on Natural Resources, Audubon Society, National Parks Association, Federation of Western Outdoors Clubs, and Sierra Club all passed resolutions or submitted letters to the Walla Walla District objecting to the Clearwater Dams. Many of these organizations originated in their founders’ desire to prevent further human encroachment upon the nation’s outdoors spaces. Interwar developments on public lands, spawned as New Deal projects aimed at modernizing public lands for motorized recreation and use by increasingly

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293 Ibid.

294 See Paul Sutter’s Driven Wild: How the Fight Against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement. Sutter considers the various explanations for the rise of twentieth century wilderness preservation efforts and sees many of them as inadequate or faceless in describing the movement’s origins. He does give credence to Samuel P. Hayes assertion that broader cultural and demographic shifts in postwar America lay at the movement’s heart. But Sutter’s narrative digs deeper to reveal wilderness advocates’ desires to keep at least a portion of the nation’s outdoor recreational spaces free of motor vehicles – a desire that served as a critique of the nation’s consumption of nature as an amenity.
affluent Americans, made once difficult to access spaces less so. As federally sponsored projects opened up wild spaces, modern wilderness advocates the likes of Bob Marshall and Aldo Leopold, pressed for protection of the relatively untrammeled spaces that remained. In the case of Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs, the Wilderness Society and National Wildlife Federation provided the loudest national voice of opposition. During congressional hearings and in the organizations’ publications, Stewart M. Brandborg of the National Wildlife Federation and Dr. Olaus Murie of the Wilderness Society, repeatedly warned of losses to fish, wildlife, recreational areas that would result called for exhaustive study of the dams’ potential impacts. At the Federation of Outdoors Clubs’ 1956 annual meeting, the group passed a resolution echoing the Wilderness Society and National Wildlife Federation, finding that regarding Bruces Eddy and Penny Cliffs, the Corps had not formulated a comprehensive preservation plan for the scenic and wildlife resources impacted by its undertakings and that no impartial review of the developments

This statement is a combination of Hays’ and Sutter’s arguments. The cultural and demographic shifts drawing Americans to the outdoors following World War II and the impact of motor vehicles upon these spaces are not mutually exclusive, but rather work in tandem in explaining the nation’s postwar compulsions to get outside.

Prior to the 1969 passage of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), federal agencies undertaking any action were advised to consult with local, state, and federal natural resource management entities as to the impacts of their action. At the time of the Corps’ proposals for the Clearwater Dams, the Corps consulted with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and their Oregon and Washington counterparts, but chose to ignore or selectively consider the agencies’ recommendations and warnings. NEPA “establishes the requirement that all federal agencies’ funding or permitting decisions be made with full consideration of the impact to the natural and human environment. And it requires agencies to disclose these impacts to interested parties and the general public.” The act requires Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements as assessments of the likelihood of impacts from alternative courses of action. The central United States Environmental Protection Agency, http://www.epa.gov/region1/nepa/ (accessed 17 October 2013). Had the Corps’ been held to NEPA review requirements, perhaps the Clearwater Dams’ impacts would have been more transparently conveyed to the public.
had been accomplished. Further, the scenic and wildlife resources threatened by the dams were of national importance and that in the absence of such a study, the Federation opposed construction of the dams.\textsuperscript{297}

Conservation groups in Northern Idaho, as well in the rest of the state, and at the national level communicated identical warnings when expressing their opposition to the Clearwater Dams. Led by Bert Curtis, dam backers deployed rafts of slander to discredit these warnings and bolster support. Via newspaper coverage, letter writing campaigns, and public speaking engagements, proponents painted “the wildlifers” as “goons” and “crusading conservationists.” The opposition, they held, consisted of an ill-informed and small group of outsiders, possessing no knowledge of the area, who with their misleading statements and propaganda, stood against progress and desired to keep Idaho in “a primitive state.”\textsuperscript{298}

This back-and-forth dispute of “facts” pertaining to the Corps’ plans for the Clearwater Drainage turned the debate into a battle for legitimacy of each sides’ perceptions of the dams’ potential impacts. Conflicting notions of conservation – full utilization of the river’s resources versus preservation of those resources for public enjoyment – underscored these perceptions and accompanying claims. Further, these diverging notions revealed the problematic character of postwar natural resource consumption in the United States. Dam supporters, like Bert Curtis, who knew the Clearwater River Basin through extraction of its timber resources and their

\textsuperscript{297} “Wilderness System Bill Urged,” \textit{The Living Wilderness} 21 no. 58 (Fall/Winter 1956-1957), 30-31.

employment in these industries, looked to earlier Progressive era notions of conservation to justify their stance; if built, Dworshak Dam would transform the waters of the North Fork into tangible benefits for Idaho and the entire nation.\(^\text{299}\) Conservation advocacy groups, on the other hand, experienced the North and Middle Forks of the Clearwater through leisure, hunting, fishing, and camping in a landscape that remained largely untouched and distinct from modernized, man-made, outdoor playgrounds; because of the river’s unique and increasingly scarce character, it should be preserved.\(^\text{300}\)

In 1958, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game issued its official report on the Clearwater Dams’ impacts to fish and wildlife. Two teams of biologists, one focusing on fisheries and the other on big game, agreed that the dams would inflict “severe fish and wildlife losses” and recommended that the dams not be constructed. Further, the dams’ elimination of the Clearwater’s steelhead fishery and revenues provided by it would negatively impact the area’s economy.\(^\text{301}\) The four-year long study of the Clearwater River’s main stem and its

\(^{299}\) Historians Richard White, Karl Jacoby, and Benjamin Heber Johnson address human relationships with nature fostered by working in nature and conflicts between extraction and preservation promoted by government policy and environmental activism.

\(^{300}\) Paul Sutter’s *Driven Wild* speaks to interwar and postwar outdoor recreation as taking place in “landscapes of modernized leisure and play.” He argues that modern wilderness ideas, like those deployed by opponents of the Clearwater Dams, emerged as an alternative to these spaces. Prior to Dworshak Dam and its reservoir acting as a man-made recreational landscape, the North Fork of the Clearwater was exactly the space that Wilderness Society and National Wildlife Federation members preferred to recreate in. Sutter argues further, that wilderness advocacy arose in response to landscape, political, cultural, and technology changes that coincided with the increasing popularity of outdoor recreation in the United States. The stances taken by dam opponents demonstrate and reinforce this argument.

tributaries recommended that if the dams did become reality, a series of mitigation measures should be enacted including funding provisions for state-managed wildlife preserves adjacent to the reservoirs and for management of reservoir fishery stocks. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service followed Idaho Fish and Game’s report in 1962 and provided impact statements nearly identical to the state’s 1960 report. The dams would certainly impact fish and big game. On the North Fork, the reservoir would inundate approximately 47 percent of steelhead and salmon spawning grounds and reduce game habitat by 40 percent, submerging their winter range in the canyon’s lower elevation and decreasing elk and deer populations. The report concluded that Dworshak Dam should be built, but only if fish passage facilities, artificial fish propagation programs, and funding for game habitat accompanied the dam. Transforming the North Fork’s exceptional aquatic habitat into a large unproductive lake capable of generating hydroelectricity and control floods required a 59-mile long unproductive lake.\footnote{United States Fish and Wildlife Service, \textit{A Detailed Report on Fish and Wildlife Resources Affected by Bruces Eddy Dam and Reservoir Project North Fork Clearwater River Idaho}, (Portland: Fish and Wildlife Service, 1962), 2. See also Daniel E. Karalus, “Experiencing Nature and Nation: Debates over Idaho’s Dworshak Dam, 1942-1973,” \textit{Journal of the West}, 50(1) Winter 2011, 28.}

On October 23, 1962, opponents of Dworshak Dam lost their nine-year long battle when President Kennedy authorized the dam’s construction. Facts and recommendations supplied by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and United States Fish and Wildlife Service reports echoed the dire warnings issued by Mort Brigham, Frank Cullen, and national conservation organizations. And Brigham, Cullen, and the organizations they represented had hoped these reports would preserve the free-flowing North Fork of the Clearwater. Ultimately though, Idaho’s congressional delegation, Senators Frank Church and Len Jordan and Representatives
Gracie Pfost and Ralph Harding ignored the reports and all voted to authorize the Bruces Eddy dam as part of P.L. 87-874, the Flood Control Act of 1962. Mort Brigham called the authorization “a death warrant for North Fork Wildlife.” Conversely, Lewiston Morning Tribune editor, Bill Johnson hailed the authorization as “a tremendous triumph for the region and for all of Idaho.” Conservation groups achieved a pyrrhic victory, in that the proposed Penny Cliffs dam just east of Kooskia never materialized and received something of a consolation prize with the construction of the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery – the world’s largest anadromous fish hatchery and artificial spawning grounds to replace those inundated beneath Dworshak Reservoir. Local, state, and national conservation advocates had lost the battle for the North Fork, but another remained to be fought – the battle for the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and protection of the Magruder Corridor.


CHAPTER 5

THE SELWAY-BITTERROOT WILDERNESS VERSUS MULTIPLE USE

About 80 miles southeast of Orofino, Idaho, and Dworshak Dam lies the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The Selway-Bitterroot and its southern wilderness counterpart, the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness make up two of the nation’s largest federally designated wilderness areas at 1.2 and 2.3 million acres in size, respectively. Together, they comprise over 11 percent of Congressionally-established Wilderness area in the 48 contiguous states. The Magruder Corridor, a single-lane, mostly unimproved road, winds 95 miles through the Clearwater and Bitterroot Mountains between Elk City, Idaho and Darby, Montana. It serves as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness’ southern boundary and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness’ northern boundary. In 1980, seventeen years after the Selway-Bitterroot’s designation, President Carter approved legislation including the Magruder Corridor in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

 Nearly twice as long as the nine-year battle to preserve the North Fork of the Clearwater, the fight to include the Magruder Corridor in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness began when Doris Milner of Hamilton, Montana, and her family began making annual summer trips into the then Idaho Primitive Area in 1952, reaching the Selway River Drainage via the Magruder

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305 The United States Forest Service manages the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, which consists of portions of four national forests: Bitterroot, Lolo, and Nez Perce-Clearwater. The Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness is managed by the United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management and includes portions of six national forests: Payette, Salmon-Challis, Boise, Bitterroot, and Nez Perce.

During the Milner’s August 1964 trip, Doris and husband Kelsey, noticed increasing numbers of USFS vehicles and survey crews on the Magruder Road and a bulldozer parked near their camp on Indian Creek, but were not alarmed at possible improvements to the rugged road. The Milners were alarmed, however, when they returned to Hamilton and learned that USFS boundary adjustments to the Idaho Primitive Area and reclassification of the area out of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness were being made to accommodate logging in the Magruder Corridor.

The plans called for exclusion of the Magruder Road and a larger area defined as Area “E” from the Wilderness and complete reconstruction of the road on a grade adequate to

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307 It could be argued that the fight over the Corridor’s inclusion began in 1960 with the United States Forest Service’s reclassification proposal to redefine the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and that the Wilderness Society and other wilderness advocacy groups initiated the fight, not Doris Milner. I credit Doris Milner with reviving calls for the Corridor’s inclusion, following the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness’ 1964 inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

308 Frederick H. Swanson, The Bitterroot and Mr. Brandborg: Clearcutting and the Struggle for Sustainable Forestry in the Northern Rockies (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2011), 130.

The United States Forest Service defines “primitive area” as areas administered in the same manner as national wilderness areas, pending studies to determine suitability as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Forest Service’s 1932 definition of primitive area is one that is “usually remote, within which there is an absence of use, development, and the more modern facilities for travel and subsistence comforts, and which will continue in all probability to represent outstanding regions of this character. Their identification, designation and planned administration as representative of the primitive is in recognition of the appeal and benefits to the public seeking such environment for recreation. The character and extent of use on them should be gauged by their relative value to the public without development and the demand for their resources to meet specific needs, since in primitive areas as elsewhere in National Forests the principle of highest use will prevail.”
accommodate logging trucks and heavy equipment.\textsuperscript{309} Reacting to USFS public announcement of bids and award of contract to Rhodes-McKay Construction Company of Boise for the Magruder Road improvement project, Milner and others formed the Save the Upper Selway Committee in September, 1964 to press for protection of Area E and the Magruder Corridor.\textsuperscript{310}

This chapter chronicles the disputes between the public and the United States Forest Service, from the Forest Service’s 1960 plan to reclassify the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to the 1967 release of the Magruder Corridor Review Committee Report objecting to the Forest Service’s multiple use plans for the Magruder Corridor. During this time, a series of federal policy measures including the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the Wilderness Act of 1964 legislated changes to federal natural resource use policy administration in North Central Idaho. In the Magruder Corridor and Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness though, these changes did not proceed without conflict between both conservation groups and the United States Forest Service and timber industry interests. Conservation groups challenged the Forest Service’s implementation of these policies and management decisions - Doris Milner and the Save the Upper Selway Committee looked to save the Area E and the Upper Selway River Basin from development. The Forest Service and logging interests in Montana and Idaho looked to this same area as a yet untouched source of timber to fuel the nation’s postwar housing boom. Each

\textsuperscript{309} Doris Milner to \textit{Ravalli Republican} Editor, Bob Gilluly, Fall of 1966, Doris Milner Papers, 1963 - 1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives. Stretches of the Magruder Road have grades nearing 20 percent. Logging trucks can typically handle grades of less than eight percent.

\textsuperscript{310} Harold E. Andersen, Director of Bitterroot National Forest to Mort Brigham, 5 January 1965. William P. Cunningham Papers, 1967 – 1974, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.
side’s concerns over these policies’ enactment on publically owned lands in the Selway-Bitterroot quickly shifted this debate’s scale from regional to national, moving beyond the wilds of North Central Idaho and the Bitterroot Valley to Washington D.C. and beyond. Similar to the battle for Dwoshak Dam, the diverging visions of the Magruder Corridor’s purpose and use are rooted in postwar consumption and increased natural resource extraction necessary to fulfill American consumers’ appetites; contradictory appetites that on one hand fought for protection of the resources enjoyed in outdoor recreational pursuits and other the other hand, required those same resources to sustain and enhance Americans’ improved standard of living following the war.

The Magruder Corridor and Reclassification

The disputed space discussed in this chapter goes by many names. Magruder Corridor, Area E, or Upper Selway - all three refer to the same 292,000 acre unit located between what in 1964, was defined as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, and the Salmon River Breaks Primitive Area (now the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness). From 1936 until January 11, 1963, this area was a protected as a part of the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area. On August 28, 1960, the United States Forest Service announced its proposal to reclassify the Selway-Bitterroot

311 The Magruder Road is named for a California merchant, Lloyd Magruder. In 1863, Magruder and a group of fellow miners were traveling between Virginia City, Montana Territory and Elk City, Idaho Territory, carrying gold dust profits earned selling supplies to miners in Virginia City’s gold fields. On the trek, four other travelers joined the party. A few days later, the travelers attacked, murdered, and robbed Magruder and his companions in the night. The murderers rolled the dead bodies over a cliff, destroyed the evidence, and fled to San Francisco with Magruder’s gold dust. Hill Beach, a friend of Magruder’s, acted as vigilante, and retrieved the murderers and brought them back to Lewiston. The three men were found guilty and hung on March 4, 1964. See United States Forest Service, Nez Perce and Bitterroot National Forests, “Magruder Road Corridor: A Guide to the Historic Magruder Road.”
Primitive Area as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area. Wilderness advocates applauded the reclassification’s protection against road construction and logging but disagreed with the Forest Service’s proposed boundary modifications. The Forest Service justified the modifications under two criteria: that the Wilderness Area should contain no roads and that its boundary line should follow, as closely as possible, well-defined ridgelines. These criteria effectively excluded 310,412 acres surrounding the Magruder Road and road spurs to Hell’s Half Acre Lookout, Paradise Guard Station on the Selway River, and the Running Creek Road. The proposed net reduction in Wilderness protected area was to be 522,955 acres equaling 27 percent of the original Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area. Applying the road and ridgeline criteria, the Forest Service concluded that Area E contained many recreation values, but did not qualify for inclusion in the proposed Wilderness area. Further, the Forest Service recommended multiple use plans for Area E that would recognize the area’s “recreation values including wilderness-type recreation” and “management of commercial forest lands for timber.”

Conservation groups disagreed with the Forest Service’s conclusion. Carving Area E from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, the Wilderness Society argued, would compromise the Wilderness’ “extensiveness.” “To permit, for example, the existing roads…to serve as the basis for eliminating an extensive part of the present Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area would be a

312 Report of Professor R.W. Behan to University of Montana Dean of School of Forestry, Arnold W. Bolle, RE: The Upper Selway River Controversy. Clifton R. Merritt Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana. Other proposed exclusions from the reclassified boundaries of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness included Area “F” between the Lochsa River and the ridgeline of the Wilderness’ northern boundary, areas along the Bitterroot Range’s east face within The Lost Horse Creek and Fred Burr Creek Drainages west of Hamilton and Darby, Montana, and area surrounding the Powell Ranger Station just south of US Highway 12.
needless sacrifice of the quality of vastness which contributes so much to the unusual character of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.”

The Wilderness Society then suggested that the Magruder Road, and one-half mile to the north and south of the road serve as the southern boundary of the revised Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Essentially, the Forest Service stance required elimination of roads from the Wilderness whereas the Wilderness Society simply desired their existence as is, with no future expansion or improvement.

**The Multiple Use – Sustained Yield Act**

While the Forest Service formulated and defended its reclassification proposal, Congress passed and President Kennedy approved the Multiple Use - Sustained Yield Act of June 12, 1960. Section 4 of the act defined multiple use as:

> …the management of all the various…resources so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the needs of the American people…harmonious and coordinated management of the various resources, each with each other, without the impairment of the land, with consideration being given to the relative value of the resources, and not necessarily the combination of uses that will give the greatest dollar return or the greatest unit output.

The Act defined sustained yield as:

> …the achievement and maintenance in perpetuity of a high-level annual or regular periodic output of the various renewable resources of the national forests without impairment of the land.

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315 P.L. 86-517, 86th Congress, Sec. 4(a), 12 June 1960.

316 Ibid.
Ernest Swift, Executive Director of the National Wildlife Federation, described multiple-use as “professional nomenclature among forest managers and more especially in the U.S. Forest Service.” The concept, Swift explained, signifies more than one use or several uses and does not necessarily impart equal emphasis on all potential uses of forest resources. The act charged the United States Forest Service with the complicated responsibility of administering the nation’s forests for the oft-conflicting activities of “outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes.” Further, the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act stipulated that these requirements were to supplement but not contradict the 1897 Forest Reserve Act (16 U.S.C. 475) and its establishment of National Forests for purposes of timber management and watershed protection.

The Izaak Walton League of America editorialized of the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act that commercial interests often embraced ‘multiple use’ to describe public land management policies that would “preclude designation of large areas of wilderness.” The Sierra Club warned that “Multiple use without definition is a carte blanche for almost unlimited administrative discretion,” and that the legislation was “loosely-worded, vague, and possibly proposed in an attempt to confuse the move to preserve parks and wilderness.” In spite of the act’s title, it “does not define multiple use but leaves it to be played by ear, in any key that suits


319 Ibid.

320 “Making ‘Multiple Use’ Meaningful” Outdoor America, April 1960.
the moment.” Despite the act’s acknowledgement of nontimber resource values, conservation groups in the United States remained worried that the Multiple Use – Sustained Yield Act would be perceived as a substitute for the Wilderness legislation being considered by the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

Passage of the Multiple Use – Sustained Yield Act did little though to resolve the dispute over the Forest Service’s 1960 reclassification proposal for the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area. The natural resources found in Area E contributed to the conflict between conservation groups and the Forest Service and its allies, as lands suitable for both Wilderness classification and multiple use applications are found in the Magruder Corridor. Described as “one of the most extensive primitive areas in the United States” the Selway-Bitterroot gave wilderness advocates and timber industry interests an ecologically diverse and aesthetically rich space to fight over. Elevations in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness range from 2,000 feet on the banks of the Selway River to peaks of 10,000 feet in the Bitterroot Range on the Idaho-Montana border. The area’s


322 “Multiple Use Act Is Passed,” *The Living Wilderness* 25 no. 73, Summer 1960, 27.

In *Western Public Lands and Environmental Politics* political scientist George Hoberg credits the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act with providing “formal statutory recognition to nontimber uses of national forests.” As a supplement to the 1897 Forest Reserve Act, though, it provided the Forest Service with minimal direction and unrestricted discretion in its decision-making processes. Historian James Morton Turner’s analysis of the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act in *The Promise of Wilderness: American Politics Since 1964*, finds that despite wilderness advocacy groups receiving some reassurances of the Forest Service’s acknowledgement of nontimber resource values, the groups remained uneasy. In the 1950s, the agency doubled public land timber harvests via clear-cutting in national forests. Given the choice between preservation and logging, the agency chose logging, 50-51.

soil profile is soft and thin and in the absence of substantial vegetation root systems, its steep hills would quickly erode. Save the rocky, barren peaks above the Wilderness’ treeline, the Selway-Bitterroot’s lower elevations are forested with Douglas fir, white fir, cedar, white pine, and larch. Higher elevations grow spruce, whitebark pine, balsam, and Lodgepole pine. In 1955, Forest Supervisor V.T. Linthacum estimated that forest fires had burned approximately 25 percent of the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area; in the wake of the fires, vegetation regrowth had nurtured sizeable elk herds drawing big-game hunters to the area.  

Besides elk, mule and white-tailed deer, moose, mountain lions, mountain goats, bobcat, lynx, wolves and bears inhabit the peaks and valleys, along with smaller furbearers, mink, beaver, Fisher, marmot, otter, and pika. The Selway-Bitterroot’s lakes provide fishing of cutthroat and rainbow trout with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and United States Fish and Wildlife Service stocking smaller lakes with brook trout. Prior to the construction of the Lewiston Dam in 1927 and dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers, steelhead and Chinook salmon migrated away from and back to this area, into the cold headwaters of the Selway River, to spawn and perish. In postwar


325 “The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness: A Wilderness Society Statement,” 48. In this same article the Wilderness Society cited a 1956 United States Fish and Wildlife Survey that counted over 3,000 out-of-state hunters visiting the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area and Clearwater Basin that year. More than 90 percent of those visitors had travelled over 500 miles and 70 percent had traveled over 1,000 miles. The out-of-state visitors averaged an 11-day hunt and combined with 12,500 Idaho residents hunting that year, totaled more than 120,000 man-days hunting in the Clearwater Basin. The last run of unaided Chinook salmon returned to the Selway’s headwaters in 1931. Between 1965 and 1981 the Idaho Department of Fish and Game planted two million Chinook salmon eggs in the Selway River each fall in an attempt to reestablish anadromous runs destroyed by Columbia Basin dams. In the spring, the emerging fry were captured and distributed in the Upper Selway by vehicle, stock, and aircraft. See United
America, the Selway-Bitterroot’s resources simultaneously drew outdoor recreationists and resource extraction interests, both looking to consume its resources in fundamentally opposing ways.

With the Forest Service’s 1960 reclassification proposal for the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area on the table and the Multiple Use – Sustained Yield Act in play, the Forest Service Northern Region commenced public hearings in Missoula, Montana, and Lewiston and Grangeville, Idaho, March 7, 9, and 14, 1961. At each meeting hearing attendees from local, regional, and national conservation organizations unanimously opposed the proposal. While the groups approved of the Selway-Bitterroot’s reclassification from primitive area to wilderness, their major grievance lay in the proposed deletion of Area E. The Lewiston hearing ran eight hours with four basic positions presented: delay decision pending further study of the area’s mineral resources, include the areas exclude in the Forest Service’s proposal, reduce the area

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Groups represented at the hearings included the Western Montana Fish & Game Association, the Wilderness Society of Montana, the Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, the Idaho Wildlife Federation, the Lewis-Clark Wildlife Club, the Coeur d’Alene Wildlife Club, the Mountaineers Club, the North Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association, and the Bonner County Sportsmen’s Association. Mort Brigham attended the Lewiston meeting and testified that the Selway River was the only remaining “virgin and clean water stream” in the Clearwater Drainage; lands surrounding most other tributaries had been logged, resulting in “excessive siltation and water disturbance.” George Marshall, brother of the late Bob Marshall, represented the Sierra Club at the hearings, stating “There is a great difference between an existing simple and informal road winding through the mountains with natural conditions extending out from the road, and the creation of a 20-mile multiple-use gap between the two great areas of wilderness.” Living Wilderness 77, 44-50.
included to allow for access to timber, and maintain the proposal as is. Multiple use advocates represented by Potlach Forests Incorporated President, and Chairman of the Inland Empire Multiple Use Association, Royce Cox and Potlach Forests Incorporated Secretary, Clifford Hopkins, requested that the Forest Service omit acreage from its proposed protected areas, making 1.7 million board feet of timber available for harvest. Hopkins said of North Central Idaho’s smaller timber mills, that they produce more lumber annually than PFI and if all firms are to continue operations, the industry required access to all merchantable in the region. Of the Forest Service’s proposal, Hopkins disdainfully remarked, “We are asked, in effect, to mortgage the future economy of the region to purchase recreation for a handful of trophy hunters, utopian campers and individualistic hikers.”

A.J. Teske, Secretary of the Idaho Mining Association echoed Hopkins’ comments added “surely the opportunity for this economic expansion should not be denied simply to make large sections of our state a recreational colony for periodic visitors.” Attendees of the final of the three hearings at Grangeville, Idaho, largely favored multiple use management of the Selway-Bitterroot. At the time, forestry was one of the city’s economic bases, and attendees felt they could not support policies curtailing access to timber

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327 The Summer-Fall 1961 edition of The Living Wilderness reported that mining industry representatives present at the Forest Service’s March hearings objected to any land classification that might restrict future mining operations. Other testimony indicated that the Selway-Bitterroot supported no commercial mining at the time of the hearing and that years of mineral exploration concluded the area had “poor mineralogical potential.”


329 Bayne McCurdy, “Four Wilderness Views Expounded,” Lewiston Morning Tribune, 10 March 1961. Groups represented sharing Cox’s and Hopkins views included the Inland Empire Multiple Use Association, Moscow Chamber of Commerce, the Idaho Chamber of Commerce, the Western Pine Association, the Idaho Forest Practices Committee, the North Idaho Forestry Association, Associated Industries of Idaho, and Boise-Cascade Corporation.
resources. Grangeville resident R.E. Long, representing the Idaho County Association of Highways, went a step further and called for “orderly marketing of all the merchantable timber in the county.”

Nearly two years after the hearings, Secretary of Agriculture, Orville L. Freeman announced his decision establishing the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness on January 11, 1963. During the intervening months, the Forest Service never released information regarding the post-hearing proposals submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture. Coincidentally, the same day Secretary Freeman released his decision, the Wilderness Society unaware of the news, telegrammed him stating the society’s concern at the Department of Agriculture’s lack of transparency in reaching its decision, requesting updated information on the Forest Service’s recommendations to the Secretary, and for the society to be allowed comment on any pending proposals. The Secretary’s opaque reclassification of the Selway-Bitterroot Primitive Area to

330 Bayne McCurdy, “Final Hearing On Wilderness is Concluded,” Lewiston Morning Tribune, 15 March 1961. In August, 1961, The Inland Empire Multiple Use Committee published recommendations on the Wilderness Bill, S. 174. The committee, consisting of Idaho timber industry executives, opposed the bill for ten reasons, with a basic stance that wilderness protection legislation was unnecessary, endangered the economic welfare of Western states, and “jeopardizes a sound program of integrated multiple use of public lands.” The publication concluded that S. 174 should either be stopped entirely or amended, and that the Inland Empire Multiple Use Committee was opposed to “setting aside any additional wilderness areas under inflexible and overly-restrictive federal laws until a thorough inventory and evaluation of all resources is completed on the lands affected.”

331 The Wilderness Society’s January 11, 1963 telegram indicated that the society had learned from sources in Washington D.C. that Secretary Freeman would soon release a decision. Reiterating its stance on the proposed excluded areas expressed at the 1961 hearings, the society telegraphed “Elimination of this large area from wilderness classification would sacrifice some of our most valuable wilderness and wildlife resources. Accordingly, before you make a decision on this matter of so great importance, we urgently request an opportunity to obtain
the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness demarcated 1.2 million acres of Wilderness area, and south of
the Magruder Road, designated a separate 216,870-acre unit as the Salmon River Breaks
Primitive Area. The decision declassified 446,906 acres, mostly within Area E, to be managed
“under full multiple use management as national forest land.”332 Also subtracted in the decision
were 44,000 acres of the Lochsa Face on the south side of the Lochsa River, between Warm
Springs Creek and Boulder Creek. Located across from US Highway 12, the Forest Service
would manage this unit as part of the Clearwater National Forest as a multiple use area
“primarily for the protection of its scenic and recreational values.”333 This exclusion, stipulated
management on a “recreation key value basis,” with the area providing developed camp and
picnic sites and hunter access roads and camps. Any timber harvesting on the south side of the
Lochsa Face, the Secretary stipulated, would be “conducted only in a manner which will not
detract significantly from the ‘key value’.”334

detailed information on the proposals and to comment on these from our viewpoint regarding the
public interest in wilderness preservation.” Living Wilderness 82, Winter-Spring 1962 – 1963,
33. The Department of Agriculture’s lack of transparency in this situation is similar to that
displayed by the Army Corps of Engineers during the review of the Clearwater Dams proposals
and was common prior to enactment of National Environmental Policy Act legislation mandating
public disclosure of information by federal agencies.


333 Ibid.

334 Ibid. The area referred to as the south Lochsa Face now holds campgrounds and river and
trail access at Wilderness Gateway, Eagle Mountain, Mocus Point, and Warm Springs. These
sites all lie on the south side of US Highway 12 and the Lochsa River. The 1997 Highway
Easement Deed granted by the Forest Service to the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD)
conveying right-of-way, in perpetuity, for the operation and maintenance of US Highway 12
through the Clearwater National Forest, complicates the “recreation key value” management
stipulation; ITD could, if it desired, clear cut these areas. In the case of the mega-loads, ITD
Ultimately, the Wilderness Society approved of the protections afforded the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness by reclassification, but felt that measures should be taken to develop proposals to protect the declassified lands. This protection, the Wilderness Society directed its members, could be advanced by sending protest letters urging Secretary Freeman to assign permanent wilderness protection to the Upper Selway and by Idaho and Montana members contacting their Congressional representation.335

A larger matter though, the September 3, 1964 passage of the Wilderness Act, temporarily overshadowed the Wilderness Society’s concerns in the Selway-Bitterroot’s declassified areas. The Wilderness Act did not change Secretary Freeman’s 1963 reclassification decision, but simply added the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to the National Wilderness Preservation System.336 What complicated future efforts to protect the Magruder Corridor was

blatantly ignored this directive when cutting back trees and widening the road to accommodate the loads.


336 Section 3 of the act stipulated that “All areas within the national forests classified at least 30 days before the effective date of this Act by the Secretary of Agriculture or the Chief of the Forest Service as “wilderness,” “wild,” or “canoe” are hereby designated as wilderness.” Under the Wilderness Act’s definition, a wilderness area is recognized as “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. Public Law 88-577 (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136) 88th Cong., 2d sess, 3 September 1964.
the Act’s requirement that Congress, and not the Secretary of Agriculture, grant all subsequent federal wilderness protection. Further, the Wilderness Act reified the Magruder Corridor’s declassified status; the Act only requires review of remaining Primitive Areas, though it leaves the possibility of review of *de facto* wilderness areas as well. Analysis of the Wilderness Act’s impact on the Magruder Corridor finds that Secretary Freeman’s 1963 declassification of Area E had, in effect, moved the corridor from protected Primitive Area status to the shakier position of *de facto* wilderness.337

While politicians and wilderness advocacy groups hashed out the terms of the Wilderness Act, the Forest Service initiated planning for the multiple use development of the Magruder Corridor. Bolstered by authority to do so provided in the Multiple Use – Sustained Yield Act, the Forest Service essentially separated Area E into management zones and prescribed actions accordingly. In the Upper Selway, the Forest Service acknowledged the watershed’s ecological sensitivity and categorized it at “river break zone” wherein soil and water quality management would guide development. Recognizing timber values within the area, the Forest Service zoned 173,000 acres of Area E within the Bitterroot National Forest as “general forest zone.” In this zone, timber was the key resource and Forest Service timber cruisers began laying out potential timber sales for the area. With these zones established and the Slow Gulch timber sale marked, the Forest Service knew that the Magruder Road would not accommodate logging trucks and

337 *De facto* wilderness refers to units meeting the minimum criteria for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but which have not yet been added to the system. These units are thus open for development and are not afforded protection. For further analysis of the Magruder Corridor’s exclusion from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and reclassification as Primitive, see William P. Cunningham and Douglas W. Scott, “The Magruder Corridor Controversy,” *The Living Wilderness* 33, no. 107 (Autumn 1969), 36.
If the road was inadequate for logging trucks, it was certainly inadequate for the increasing numbers of outdoor recreationists accessing the area. The Forest Service envisioned the Magruder Road development creating a “mainline” road with two lanes designed for speeds of 25-35 miles per hour suitable for both recreational use and timber hauling. Spur roads of a lower quality would branch off of the Magruder Road to areas holding the largest timber stands. Timber cruisers estimated an annual allowable cut of 12.7 million board feet for the next seventy years.

338 The Magruder Road is built upon portions of the southern Nez Perce Trail. In the 1930s the Civilian Conservation Corps followed the southern Nez Perce Trail tread to construct the Magruder Road, to provide USFS fire crews access to the then Idaho Primitive Area. The Magruder road remains a single-lane, often steep, rocky, switchback-riddled road, with few turnouts for oncoming traffic. The Forest Service advises low-clearance vehicles and recreational vehicles to avoid the road; vehicle speeds on the Magruder Road’s unimproved sections top out at 15 miles per hour.

339 Report of Professor R.W. Behan to University of Montana Dean of School of Forestry, Arnold W. Bolle, RE: The Upper Selway River Controversy. For further discussion of wilderness designation and “zoning” that accompanies designation, see Kevin Marsh’s *Drawing Lines in the Forest: Creating Wilderness Areas in the Pacific Northwest*. Marsh asserts that wilderness designation is essentially a form of land-use zoning, similar to zoning systems deployed in more populated urban and suburban areas. Marsh’s study equates wilderness designation with the largely 20th century act of land use policy decisions imposed via boundary delineation. These boundaries, Marsh argues, ultimately direct human activity – economic and otherwise – within the bureaucratically-defined wilderness spaces and serve as an assertion of state power over that space. Further, this assertion of state power in spaces constitutes an expression of 20th century modernism, not unlike commercial and neighborhood planning, and is less a product of natural conditions than a product of political and historical context.

**Save the Upper Selway!**

With the Forest Service’s multiple use development plans for the Magruder Road and Area E in motion, Montanan Doris Milner entered the Upper Selway story. Doris and Kelsey Milner did not keep up with the debates surrounding the Selway-Bitterroot’s reclassification between 1960 and 1963. Milner admitted that although she attended the Forest Service’s March 7, 1961 Missoula hearing, she “could not believe that great changes were really intended and did not understand the issues well enough to take part myself.”

Transplants to Montana’s Bitterroot Valley from New Orleans, Louisiana, the Milner family, like many families in the west, viewed the mountain ranges surrounding them as spaces for outdoor recreation and wild retreats. As many American families did during the 1950s, Kelsey and Doris Milner and their four children Jean, Kelsey, Eric, and Scott packed their family station wagon with camping gear and headed into the Bitterroots on annual vacations. Camping, swimming, fishing, and hiking along the Selway River, Doris remarked that the family “had had probably the best time we ever had in our lives.”

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341 Doris Milner to *Ravalli Republican* Editor, Bob Gilluly, Fall of 1966, Doris Milner Papers, 1963-1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.

342 Doris Milner, oral history interview by Mavis McKelvey, 1975, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana. Paul Sutter’s *Driven Wild: How the Fight against Automobiles Launched the Modern Wilderness Movement* and David Lauter’s *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks* both speak to the role of automobiles in facilitating postwar outdoor recreation and motorized transport’s ability to take Americans deeper into the nation’s outdoor spaces, a development that ultimately proved detrimental to these spaces. Sutter argues that already during the interwar years, Americans were forging relationships between outdoor recreation and consumerism. Particularly following World War II, Americans with more leisure time and the mobility provided by automobile ownership increasingly opted to spend their free time outdoors. As more Americans escaped to nature, the pressures exerted on natural resources in making their escape, motivated
During the Milner family’s August, 1964 annual week-long trip into the Selway-Bitterroot, the Milners encountered a bulldozer parked by the Magruder Road near their camp on Indian Creek and noticed an unusual number of Forest Service vehicles and survey crews working in the area. The Milner’s meeting with machinery in their remote, forested camp rattled them. Upon Doris’ return to Hamilton, she contacted Guy Brandborg, former supervisor of Montana’s Bitterroot National Forest, who explained that the Forest Service’s June, 1964 Multiple Use Plan called for reconstruction of the Magruder Road to accommodate logging trucks and other heavy hauling. Later that fall, the Forest Service put out requests for proposal and let a $350,000 contract for construction of 6.5 miles of road between Peyton Rock and the Idaho-Montana state line at Nez Perce Pass, to be completed by the fall of 1965.

Reacting to Brandborg’s information, Doris Milner arranged a meeting at the Lochsa Lodge on September 20, 1964. The individuals in attendance formed a group of like-minded conservationists who knew each other via networks formed in previous Wilderness Society issue advocacy campaigns. Calling themselves the Save the Upper Selway Committee, the group wilderness advocates to preserve the nation’s increasingly-accessible and increasingly accessed wild spaces.

Swanson, The Bitterroot and Mr. Brandborg, 130.

Doris Milner to Ravalli Republican Editor, Bob Gilluly, Fall of 1966, Doris Milner Papers, 1963-1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.


In The Bitterroot & Mr. Brandborg: Clearcutting and the Struggle for Sustainable Forestry in the Northern Rockies, Frederick H. Swanson reports that Brandborg, although active in the Save the Upper Selway Committee, functioned as a more behind the scenes member of the committee. He coached Doris Milner in dealings with Forest Service officials, provided valuable personal contacts, and drafted letters for Milner during the earlier years of her activism and leadership in the Selway-Bitterroot.
established its purpose – to preserve the primitive characteristics of the Selway River via the return of Area E to protected classification. If the committee could prevent reconstruction of the road for which the Forest Service had awarded a construction contract, the delay could buy time and facilitate further consideration of Area E’s reclassification and reinstatement into the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. To meet this goal the committee decided to seek the Wilderness Society’s and other conservation group’s assistance in achieving its objectives.347 One group, the North Idaho Wilderness Committee, headed by Mort Brigham and having a similar aim of influencing Forest Service planning in Idaho, became an unofficial partner of the Save the Upper Selway Committee in working toward reclassification of Area “E.”348

The Save the Upper Selway Committee’s first publicity effort came with the group’s publication of a brochure, with the publication’s costs covered by the Wilderness Society. The run of 10,000 brochures announced “Save the Wilderness of the Upper Selway! One quarter million acres of wilderness are threatened by logging and roads!”349 After outlining a brief history of the area, the publication described Area E and the Upper Selway as “one of the most spectacular whitewater streams and scenic mountain canyons in the United States” and listed the area’s vast and rich wilderness and recreational opportunities. But left without protection, the brochure warned, the Upper Selway, as one of “the last free free-flowing streams in the


348 Cunningham, “The Magruder Corridor Controversy,” 78.

349 “Save the Wilderness of the Upper Selway!” Brochure, Doris Milner Papers, 1963-1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.
Columbia Basin,” would be destroyed by logging and subsequent erosion. The committee provided readers with explicit instructions to contact their Congressional representatives and the Secretary of Agriculture to urge federal protection of the Upper Selway, with specific verbiage requesting that Area E be protected as wilderness until Congress restored the area’s wilderness designation.

One of Doris Milner’s first letters to Montana Senator Mike Mansfield, and the first of many letters to Montana and Idaho’s Congressional representation from the Save the Upper Selway Committee and its associates, expressed the committee’s aims established at the Lochsa Lodge meeting. Milner requested that that Mansfield press Secretary Freeman to delay road construction in the Upper Selway Drainage so that the public and the Forest Service could further consider potential wilderness protection for the area. Throughout late 1964 and early 1965, Milner and members of the Save the Upper Selway Committee, aided by the likes of the Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, and Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs communicated these same sentiments to Secretary Freeman, Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor, Harold E. Andersen, Regional Forester Neal Rahm, Senator Mike Mansfield, and Chief of the United States Forest Service, Edward P. Cliff.

The committee’s letter writing campaign quickly drew in national support including the Wilderness Society and Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs. The publicity also elicited response from subject matter experts in forestry and wildlife and aquatic biology. All agreed that

350 “Save the Wilderness of the Upper Selway!”

351 Doris Milner to Senator Mike Mansfield, 26 October 1964, Doris Milner Papers, 1963-1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.
if logging proceeded in the Upper Selway Drainage, that the area’s steep hillsides and loose soils would quickly and disastrously erode, causing silting of the Selway and damage to the river’s ecosystem and sport fishery.\textsuperscript{352} Mort Brigham deployed his knowledge of North Central Idaho and the Bitterroots along with his timber industry expertise and concluded that in light of destruction to the region’s watersheds at Dworshak Dam and along US Highway 12, that the Selway certainly could not, despite Forest Service contentions, be logged without damage and erosion.\textsuperscript{353} Brigham also questioned the Forest Service’s estimates of merchantable timber in Area E. The Forest Service’s 1964 Multiple Use Plan targeted annual allowable cuts in the Upper Selway at 12 million board feet. Brigham estimated that a sawmill with only one headrig was capable of cutting 100,000 feet of lumber per shift and 200,000 feet in two shifts to turn a profit. A small mill, Brigham figured, could cut one million feet in a week. Therefore, the Upper Selway’s annual allowable cut would supply a small mill for just twelve weeks of a year. A large mill, like that of Potlach Forests Incorporated at Lewiston, would achieve this output in two weeks.\textsuperscript{354}

By late March, 1965, the Save the Upper Selway Committee’s letter writing campaign had deluged the Forest Service’s local, regional, and national administrators, pressing for the agency’s reconsideration of the Magruder Corridor’s classification status. In turn, Montana’s Congressional delegation, having received letters of the same ilk, pressed the Forest Service for

\textsuperscript{352} Manuscript by Boyd Norton. Doris Milner Papers, 1963-1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.

\textsuperscript{353} Mort Brigham to USFS Northern Region Forester, Neal Rahm, 13 April 1966. Evans Papers, University of Washington Libraries.

\textsuperscript{354} Mort Brigham to Doris Milner, 8 January 1965. Doris Milner Papers, 1963-1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.
answers to its constituents’ questions. As a response to these questions and retort to the Save the Upper Selway Committee’s brochure, the Forest Service Northern Region published the “Upper Selway Management Area – Bitterroot National Forest” brochure. As a defense of the agency’s exclusion of Magruder Corridor from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and the Forest Service’s subsequent 1964 Multiple Use Management Plan, the brochure essentially committed the Forest Service to its road construction and timber harvest plans. Rather than extolling the wilderness values of Area E, the Forest Service brochure touted the Magruder Corridor’s economic values and importance of the road to isolated Montana and Idaho communities; nowhere did it address potential for wilderness protections or imply that management alternatives could be considered.355

With the two sides firmly entrenched, the Upper Selway became a national battleground pitting wilderness preservation against multiple use. Ferris Weddle of the Lewiston Morning Tribune assessed the conflict not as merely an Idaho-Montana dispute, but rather the locus of a the national debate surrounding recently-passed federal wilderness legislation.356 During the summer of 1965, the conflict reached a point where Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor, Harold Anderson felt it necessary and beneficial to lead a two-day “show-me trip” into the Upper

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355 In Mort Brigham’s “Comment on Forest Service Multiple Use Plan for Upper Selway” Brigham points out that between January, 1965 and the Forest Service’s March, 1965 release of the plan brochure, its estimates of merchantable sawtimber jumped from 76 million board feet to one billion. Brigham opined, “In essence, the Forest Service proposes to tear up a quarter of a million acres of wilderness at a cost nobody knows to get less timber than it takes to operate one small mill.” Doris Milner Papers, 1963-1980, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.

356 Ferris Weddle, “Wilderness Vs. Multiple Use: Storm Clouds Swirl Over Upper Selway,” Lewiston Morning Tribune 23 May 1965. A second dimension of the Magruder Corridor controversy, Weddle reported, was its test of the Forest Service’s ability to manage wilderness areas and adjacent units.
Selway as a means of bringing the diverging sides together in the disputed space. The group of nineteen, from both sides of the debate, engaged in frank discussions of wilderness and multiple use management approaches. These discussions did not immediately shift the Forest Service’s stance. The “show-me trip” did, however, convince participants that the proposed construction of logging roads and logging in the Upper Selway could not be carried out without significant impairment of the watershed and damage to anadromous fish runs. Additionally, that summer it appeared that the Save the Upper Selway Committee’s strategy of stalling Forest Service timber harvest pending further study of the Upper Selway was working; the Forest Service had placed a two-year moratorium on logging in Area E. Unfortunately for the Save the Upper Selway Committee, at the same time, the Forest Service resumed letting additional construction contracts to extend Magruder Road improvements another nine miles into the de facto wilderness.

Despite continued letter writing from Doris Milner and the Save the Upper Selway Committee, Montana and Idaho’s Congressmen remained reluctant to introduce legislation mandating federal wilderness protection for Area “E.” Conservation groups maintained their position - multiple use development of the Upper Selway was not possible without serious damage to the area’s “wilderness atmosphere.” The Forest Service maintained that the Magruder

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Road’s presence precluded the Upper Selway from wilderness protection. Conservation groups responded with a new suggestion – that the Magruder Road and a one-half mile strip on both the north and south sides of the road remain in multiple use management, but that the remainder of Area E beyond the road and the one-half mile buffer be granted wilderness protection.359

**Review and Redirection in the Upper Selway**

With the new management option on the table, Senators Metcalf and Church considered introducing legislation on the suggested alternative. Instead, Metcalf approached Secretary Freeman over breakfast on May 24, 1966, and suggested that Freeman appoint a committee of disinterested civilian experts to study the debate over Area E and offer recommendations.360 Freeman, looking to avoid Congressional intervention and maintain the Forest Service’s control of management decisions, agreed to the study. On August 2, 1966, Secretary Freeman announced his decision to convene the study and on September 20 Freeman announced the appointment of Dr. George Selke to head the six-member review committee.361 Secretary Freeman directed the Magruder Corridor Review Committee, also referred to as the Selke Committee, not to conduct a study of the reclassification of the Upper Selway, but to “review on a broad basis these Forest Service management plans and advise me whether…it is feasible to

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361 “A New Chance for the Upper Selway: A Wilderness Society Statement,” *The Living Wilderness* 30 no. 94 (Autumn 1966), 38. Committee members included a mix of university faculty natural resource subject matter experts and leaders in wildlife and wilderness advocacy interest groups.
execute those plans of this character.” During the fall of 1966, the committee conducted visual assessments of Area E and in December held public meetings to gauge public opinion on the review study and on the Forest Service’s multiple-use plans for the Upper Selway. At the December 2 meeting in Grangeville, attendees rehashed prior arguments. Royce Cox applauded the Forest Service’s plans and Clifton Merritt, Director of Field Services for the Wilderness Society argued for the long-term benefits of preservation over development. The review committee’s meeting in Missoula differed from the Grangeville meeting where meeting attendees overwhelmingly favored wilderness management of the Upper Selway. Notably, at the Missoula meeting, Doris Milner was in attendance to rectify the Forest Service’s false accusation that the Save the Upper Selway Committee wanted to close the Magruder Road. Milner stated the opposite, that the committee had always maintained the road’s necessity and that it should remain open. The last of the meetings, held in Boise, mirrored the sentiments expressed in Missoula – attendees supported wilderness management for the Upper Selway and opposed Forest Service plans for road construction and logging developments. Chairman Selke closed the Boise meeting telling the audience that the committee would consider the three meetings’


testimony, and together with the committee’s investigations would likely make a recommendation to Secretary Freeman by the end of January, 1967.\textsuperscript{365}

The Selke Committee’s December 1966 public meeting minutes amounted to a lengthy recapitulation of past arguments – the issue of contention, again, being the economic benefits of multiple use management versus increasing recreation and aesthetic values. A tally of statements and letters received by the Selke Committee following the meetings revealed that approximately two-thirds of the more than 1,000 letters addressed to the Selke Committee opposed the Forest Service’s multiple use management plans.\textsuperscript{366} On April 17, 1967, the committee submitted “The Report of the Magruder Corridor Review Committee” to Secretary Freeman. The report’s contents expressed the Selke Committee’s belief that multiple use management, specifically logging within the Upper Selway, would indeed damage the area’s fisheries and soils. The transportation infrastructure required to reach timber stands within Area E would destabilize the area’s highly erosive soil and adversely impact the Upper Selway watershed. The Bitterroot National Forest’s multiple use management plan, the committee concluded, was difficult to evaluate and too general in its prescriptions. In dividing Area E into management zones, the Forest Service had split the Upper Selway into “arbitrary zones, obscuring consideration of the area as an integrated, environmental whole.”\textsuperscript{367} Under the auspices of the Multiple Use –

\textsuperscript{365} Wilderness Society press release, “Wilderness Management for Magruder Corridor Favored at Boise Meeting” Clifton R. Merritt Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, The University of Montana.

\textsuperscript{366} William P. Cunningham and Douglas W. Scott, “The Magruder Corridor Controversy,”\textit{ The Living Wilderness} 33 no. 107 (Autumn 1969), 38.

\textsuperscript{367} Cunningham and Scott, “The Magruder Corridor Controversy,” 38.
Sustained Yield Act, the Forest Service had initiated its version of multiple use management without having given holistic and adequate consideration to the area’s ecological character. As such, the Selke Committee report opposed improvements to the Magruder Road and requested that logging in Area E be conducted only with careful study control of erosion and siltation of the Selway and its tributaries. The expense of logging the Upper Selway, the committee concluded, outweighed potential economic benefit, and logging plans should be abandoned in favor of “high-quality primitive-type recreation for limited numbers of people.”

Secretary Freeman reviewed the Selke Committee’s findings and on June 1, 1967, released his comments directing the Forest Service to reformulate its management plan for the Magruder Corridor. The new plan, Freeman announced, would guide Forest Service management of the Upper Selway under the policy that all land management decisions “shall reflect and maintain wild land conditions consistent with the primary values of the corridor’s watershed, fisheries, historic, and recreational resources.” Freeman’s directive prohibited construction of logging road spurs off of the Magruder Road and halted logging pending further study of the area’s commercial timber values. Essentially, Secretary Freeman’s directive prioritized the Magruder Corridor’s watershed and recreation resources over the Forest Service’s historic priority of commercial timber management and harvest - an unprecedented move in the


369 Associated Press, “New Multiple-Use Plan Due For Magruder Corridor,” Lewiston Morning Tribune, 1 June 1967.

Department of Agriculture and Forest Service’s institutional histories necessitated by the outcry of concerned citizens.

A headline in the Thursday, June 13, 1967 edition of the *New York Times* announced “An Island Saved.” The article marveled, “It is not often that an entrenched bureaucracy like the Forest Service is overruled in its own domain” and applauded Secretary Freeman for accepting the Selke Committee’s findings and directing Forest Service action accordingly. Following Secretary Freeman’s decision, chronicler of the Magruder Corridor Controversy, William Cunningham, conducted interviews with individuals from each side of the conflict. The Save the Upper Selway Committee and its associates felt they had achieved the first step toward wilderness protection for the Upper Selway, with Secretary Freeman’s decision amounting to a stay of execution and an implicit mandate for federal wilderness designation. Forest Service officials felt that the Selke Committee and Secretary Freeman had undermined the agency’s authority and unnecessarily introduced politics into the agency’s management decision making process. Further, by requiring a new management plan, the Secretary had not provided a solution, but rather had passed the buck back to the Forest Service to attempt to apply multiple use legislation. Timber industry interests felt the committee’s report had unfairly criticized the Forest Service’s administration of multiple use concepts and that the committee, instead, should have evaluated the agency’s progress in preserving the Upper Selway and given more credence to the economic and aesthetic benefits afforded by accessibility. Finally, Regional Forester, Neal Rahm felt the report and Freeman’s application of its findings constituted a defeat for the Forest

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Service in its management of the nation’s forests and damaged the agency’s credibility going forward.\textsuperscript{372}

Chapter 4 interpreted the battle for the North Fork of the Clearwater and Dworshak Dam as a battle of facts, pitting resource protection against resource utilization. The Magruder Corridor controversy, in many ways, mirrors North Central Idaho’s experience at Dworshak Dam. Both share a lack of transparency on the part of federal agencies, the Army Corps of Engineers and the Forest Service, in carrying out their missions. Though in the Upper Selway, the conflict’s scale moved beyond Idaho to the nation; reacting to the Forest Service’s opacity this group of concerned citizens gathered and disseminated information nationally to advance their cause. Following World War II, citizen activists and federal agencies increasingly butted heads in determining the trajectory of natural resource management in the United States. Responding to pent-up consumer demand in the nation’s housing market, home construction soared in the United States. Scarcity of timber to satisfy the material needs of Levittown-like developments across the nation exerted immense pressure on the Forest Service to cut deeper and deeper into national forest land timber stands. In North Central Idaho and western Montana, rural economies like Grangeville and Hamilton, dependent upon timber extraction and processing, scrambled to meet the nation’s timber needs. Having exhausted privately-managed timber stands, the communities increasingly looked to those within the region’s vast National Forest Lands.

The same prosperity that drove the nation’s housing boom also worked to improve Americans’ quality of life and fuel their developing habits of consumption. The nation’s

increasingly affluent population opted to spend more of its non-working time in the outdoors, in what historian Paul Sutter calls “knowing leisure through nature.” In the public lands turned recreation spaces of the American West, hunters, campers, hikers, and anglers ventured into the same spaces USDA Forest Service timber cruisers had marked for commercial timber harvest.

Satisfying these incompatible manifestations of the nation’s postwar consumer behaviors proved increasingly difficult for the United States Forest Service. Competing claims to the national forest’s resources left the Forest Service in unfamiliar managerial territory. In recognizing the timber, aesthetic, and ecological values of its units, The Multiple Use – Sustained Yield Act exemplifies the agency’s attempt to please all parties. The addition of federal Wilderness legislation and designation further complicated Forest Service management responsibilities though. Principles of multiple use management and principles of wilderness protection, especially in the case of the Magruder Corridor, often collided. Pressured by this confrontation, during the 1960s, the Forest Service, created to administer the nation’s publically owned forest resources for “the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run,” became unsure of its mission. Despite outdoor recreationalists opposition, the Forest Service opted to remain the production mode required by World War II and postwar timber consumption. This tack only worked until wilderness protection advocates recognized it and challenged the Forest Service’s unsustainable and damaging logging practices in Idaho and Montana’s National Forests.
EPILOGUE

Bitter and prolonged public disputes regarding federal policy interventions into North Central Idaho’s landscape did not cease with the Selke Committee’s review of Forest Service multiple-use plans for the Magruder Corridor. The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, signed October 2, 1968 by President Johnson, reignited debates between advocates of resource protection and those favoring resource utilization in the region. By designating two Clearwater Basin Rivers, the Middle Fork of the Clearwater and the Salmon, as Wild and Scenic, the act preserved the rivers their “free flowing condition” and “protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.”^373 The act’s opponents saw its provisions as a “lock up” of Idaho’s water resources, amounting to the state’s “throwing away” of hydroelectric power sales revenues that could subsidize other reclamation projects. Representatives of Idaho’s tourist industry and conservation groups supported the act for its protection of Idaho rivers’ aesthetic and ecological values.^374 In North Central Idaho though, these clashes were nothing new.

Protected from multipurpose dam development, the Middle Fork of the Clearwater still flows largely free of obstruction alongside US Highway 12. Following World War Two and the long-awaited and fervently supported completion of US Highway 12, the winding road opened the forests and rivers of North Central Idaho to a variety of consumers, eager to access and


benefit from these resources. As US Highway 12 carried motor vehicles and passengers into the Clearwater River Valley and Bitterroot Mountains, though, the road also brought conflicting ideas of how exactly North Central Idaho and the nation would utilize these spaces. The first of these conflicts played out at Bruces Eddy on the North Fork of the Clearwater River, where the United States Army Corps of Engineers and local supporters of the Corps’ dam construction proposals collided with regional and national conservation groups’ campaigns to protect the North Fork and the river’s fish and wildlife resources. The conservationists lost this battle, their defeat memorialized by what H. Frank Evans, Director of the Coeur d’Alene Wildlife Federation called “a monument to stupidity.”\textsuperscript{375} In 2013, Dworshak Dam generates less than half the power predicted in original design specifications – the release of “peak load” waters required to produce these kilowatts would cause downstream flooding.\textsuperscript{376} In June 1980, just seven years after Dworshak Dam’s completion, the dam developed a 236-foot long crack on its reservoir side. 7,700 gallons of water per minute flowed through the breach until the Corps opted to lower a plastic sheet crack, drill seventy holes in the dam to relieve pressure, and sculpt a repair patch. The crack’s cost of repair exceeded $1 million. Mitigation measures for the fish and wildlife habitat destroyed by the dam and reservoir include 5,000 acres of Corps-purchased elk habitat, and the world’s largest steelhead trout hatchery, operated by the United States Fish and Wildlife

\textsuperscript{375} H. Frank Evans to Representative Gracie Pfost, 5 February 1954. Gracie (Bowers) Pfost Papers, 1950-1962, University of Idaho Library Special Collections and Archives.

\textsuperscript{376} The Army Corps proposed another dam at Lenore, Idaho in 1970 to alleviate peak power production flooding. By 1970, National Environmental Policy Act legislation required greater public input on projects like that at Lenore, and public opposition killed the project.
Service and the Nez Perce Tribe. Log-handling facilities were completed in May 1979 and used by Potlach Forests, Inc. through the mid-1980s until road construction into the North Fork’s upper reaches provide more cost-effective transportation routes. Fluctuations in the Dworshak Reservoir pool required for power production and downstream flow regulation to flush anadromous fish runs down the Snake River leave the reservoir with a 35 foot bathtub ring and crumbling shores. “Welcome to the toilet bowl of Idaho” proclaimed a sign at a 1995 rally protesting management of the dam. Dworshak Reservoir is hardly the recreational paradise Bert Curtis had envisioned in 1954.

When Mort Brigham passed away in December 2001, the Lewiston Morning Tribune’s eulogy to the late conservationist chronicled his long history of environmental activism in North Central Idaho. Dworshak Dam was not the only federal project Brigham challenged within the region though; his efforts achieving mixed results. Mort’s work to keep the North Fork free flowing ended in defeat and upon his death, the paper, surmised, Brigham could have said “I told you so.” But, the eulogy remarked, there were also federal projects and policies that Brigham successfully thwarted; the Forest Service’s development plans for the Magruder Corridor is one


379 Rebecca Huntington, “Past and present; Orofino rally decries broken promises; Residents say feds didn’t keep deal made in the ‘60s,” Lewiston Morning Tribune, 20 August 1995.

380 J.F. “Years hence, we’ll hear Mort Brigham’s warnings,” Lewiston Morning Tribune, 19 December 2001.
of these projects. Brigham’s efforts along with those of Doris Milner and the help of national wilderness advocacy groups, eventually achieved the corridor’s 1980 inclusion in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. Traversing the Magruder Road today – if the road is clear of snow and passable – motorists move between two of the nation’s largest federally designated Wilderness areas, the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness to the north, and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness to the South. In 2011, the Forest Service erected an interpretive panel honoring Milner’s work at Nez Perce Pass on the Magruder Road. Dennis Baird, a longtime friend of Mort Brigham is currently working to rename Elk Mountain, just outside the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, in Brigham’s honor.381

At the start of my dissertation research, I ventured to locate the origins of North Central Idaho’s vocal opposition to federal presence and resource management in the region, and then place these sentiments within the historical arc of twentieth century American Conservatism. Clearly, this project is a far cry from the project I envisioned in 2011. Nonetheless, the finished product reveals a great deal about North Central Idaho’s relationship with the federal government in the twentieth century, in particular following World War Two. As US Highway 12 opened the Clearwater River Valley and Bitterroot Mountains to motor vehicles, a development that proceeded with great support from area residents, the highway also opened the isolated and rugged space to conflicting ideas of just how the space should be experienced. On one side, Progressive era notions of full resource utilization and later principles of multiple-use management saw the region as capable of supplying timber for the nation’s postwar housing boom, contributing hydroelectricity to the growing Pacific Northwest’s power grid, and

preventing spring floods from damaging economic investment throughout the greater Columbia River Basin. On the other side, growing postwar affluence sent automobile-owning Americans into National Forests and National Parks in unprecedented numbers. In their outdoor leisure pursuits, Americans thus came to value spaces like the rivers and forests of North Central Idaho, not as suppliers of raw material commodities, but rather as lifestyle amenities to be consumed as such.

This trio of developments, considered both individually and beside one another, brings the history of North Central Idaho’s conflicts surrounding its roads, rivers, and wilderness into the twenty-first century and to the August 2013 standoff between the Nez Perce Tribe and corporate giant General Electric. Although fifty years removed from debates on the North Fork and the Upper Selway, the postwar conflicts explored in this dissertation and the mega-load controversy are strikingly similar in nature. The transport of mega-loads through North Central Idaho via US Highway 12, en route to the Alberta Tar Sands, has revived the postwar debate of economic development versus protection and preservation. Certainly that debate never completely quieted. Rather, it has reemerged in the twenty-first century with greater urgency and relevance to global environmental challenges. Just as the United States pressed further into its forests and deeper into its rivers following World War Two to satisfy the nation’s increasing demand for natural resources, the planet now looks to Canada’s resource-intensive tar sands petroleum to meet global oil consumption demands. Ultimately though, the very tar sands oil we decry and rail against for its destruction to Alberta’s boreal forests, ends up in the gas tanks

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of the automobiles that take us up the Lochsa River and to the edge of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, where we spend our free time, temporarily isolated from these troubling contradictions.
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