



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

August 2003



Final Environmental Impact Statement

Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness Management Plan

**Bitterroot, Nez Perce, Payette, Salmon-Challis National Forest
Custer, Idaho, Valley, and Lemhi County, Idaho**



Acronym

All Terrain Vehicle	(ATV)
Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation	BA/BE
Boat Use Days	(BUDs)
Boats at one Time	(BAOT)
Central Idaho Experimental Management Area	(CIEMA)
Central Idaho Wilderness Act	(CIWA)
Civilian Conservation Corps	(CCC)
Department of Environmental Quality	(DEQ)
Draft Environmental Impact Statement	(DEIS)
Endangered Species Act	(ESA)
Environmental Impact Statement	(EIS)
Federal Aviation Administration	(FAA)
Final Environmental Impact Statement	(FEIS)
Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness	(FC–RONRW)
Historic Preservation Plan	(HPP)
Idaho Conservation Data Center	(ICDC)
Idaho Department of Fish and Game	(IDFG)
Implementation of Interim Strategies for managing Anadromous Fish-producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho and Portions of California	(PACFISH)
Land and Resource Management Plan	(LRMP)
Management Indicator Species	(MIS)
National Environmental Policy Act	(NEPA)
National Forest	(NF)
Notice of Intent	(NOI)
Outstanding Resource Water	(ORW)
People at One Time	(PAOT)
Programmatic Agreement	(PA)
Record of Decision	(ROD)
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum	(ROS)
State Historic Preservation Officer	(SHPO)
Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement	(SDEIS)
Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive	(TES)
United States Fish and Wildlife Service	(USFWS)
Wild and Scenic River	(W&SR)

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Abstract: This FEIS focuses specifically on the management of the Dewey Moore, Mile-Hi, Simonds and Vines landing strips; the appropriate level of recreational floating on the Wild sections of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River and Salmon River; the appropriate level of opportunity for private recreational jetboat use on the Wild Salmon River; and the appropriate management of the Painter Bar Road.

Alternatives A through E evaluate varying approaches to management topics presented above. Alternative A is the No Action Alternative, which continues existing management direction. Alternative B has a primitive emphasis while Alternative C emphasizes providing access to the Wilderness. Alternative D is the selected alternative and is a modification of Alternative 6 from the Supplemental DEIS. Alternative E is Alternative 6 from the Supplemental DEIS.

Because the FEIS incorporates a more focused decision structure than either the Draft or Supplemental Draft EIS the Forest Service is providing a 45-day opportunity for comment on the FEIS. The final decisions will be based on information presented in this FEIS and on information received from comments on the FEIS. A Record of Decision and accompanying Management Plan for the Frank Church–River of No Return Wilderness will be released following analysis and review of the comments received on the FEIS.

**For information
Or to send Comments
Submit to:**

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PREFACE

The Frank Church –River of No Return Wilderness (FC–RONRW) was established in 1980 when congress passed the Central Idaho Wilderness Act (CIWA). To many, the FC–RONRW exemplifies the National Wilderness Preservation System and the State of Idaho. The Forest Service administrative framework for managing the National Forest System lands within the FC–RONRW is as complex as the lands themselves. The six National Forests (NFs) and two administrative Regions that administer the wilderness have worked together over the last decade to identify and propose changes to the various plans that provide management direction to forest managers.

During this period your interests and those of others have caused us to consider and evaluate a number of possible changes to the management plans that govern activities within the FC–RONRW. The resulting Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Supplement to the Draft (SDEIS) were, as some reviewers said, confusing at best. Therefore, we have taken a hard look at our original objectives in proposing revision and have made some changes in this Final EIS designed to simplify and clarify our proposed action and alternatives examined. Some of those changes are:

Decision Framework - Revision of the FC–RONRW Management Plan is implemented through amendment of the Land and Resource Management Plans (Forest Plans) for the Bitterroot, Boise, Challis, Nez Perce, Payette, and Salmon NF's. Forest Plans are programmatic documents that establish goals, objectives and standards for management actions and are designed to provide broad direction – they do not make site-specific decisions for management actions. Therefore, we have taken a hard look at the actions and decisions proposed and evaluated in the DEIS and SEIS. Our review identified a number of actions that are not appropriately decided in a programmatic document, are not “ripe” for decision, are not within the Forest Service’s authority to issue, or should be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of special use permits or other authorizations for use and occupancy of National Forest lands. A detailed description of the revised decision framework is included in Chapter 1 of the FEIS.

Alternatives Considered – Public comments received in response to the DEIS and SDEIS provided suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. A number of the alternatives considered in the previous documents were combined for the FEIS, and portions of some alternatives will be decided in other ways through the revised Decision Framework. The changes are described in more detail in Chapter 2 of the FEIS.

Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences – these chapters of the DEIS and SDEIS contained detailed descriptions of the history of the FC–RONRW

and the many resources it contains. Many parts of these descriptions did not describe resources that would be affected by the management actions proposed in the FEIS. These parts have been moved into appendices to the FEIS, making it simpler to track the affected resources through Chapter 3 and the effects of the actions in Chapter 4, while maintaining the information in a readily available place.