

Beetles, Fires, Search and Rescue, and Motorized Access in Wyoming's Wilderness Areas

**A study conducted by the Wyoming Wilderness Association
Sara Domek, Justin Gerard, and Bradley Lee**

March 11, 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While working with the users and stakeholders of the proposed Rock Creek addition to the Cloud Peak Wilderness Area, several concerns have arisen regarding the beetle epidemic, fire management, and search and rescue operations inside the boundaries of wilderness areas on Forest Service lands. All of these issues would seem to call for motorized access, which many believe is not possible in federally designated wilderness. This is not true. Under the 1964 Wilderness Act, the use of motorized and mechanized use and management is written in the language of the law. The 1964 Act set the precedent for future wilderness legislation, including the 1984 Wyoming Wilderness Act which designated the Cloud Peak Wilderness Area. Forest Service Manual 2300 describes how each office will properly manage wilderness areas with appropriate tools, including motorized equipment when deemed necessary. Additionally, the county governments adjacent to wilderness areas have worked closely with various agencies to ensure there is immediate response to emergencies. This ensures that waiting time for approval and response is minimal.

A wilderness area is “where the imprint of man’s work is substantially unnoticeable,” or an area which is “untrammelled” and allowed to be wild.¹ Because of this definition, wilderness management is somewhat of a paradox. Agencies are not allowed to manage the area actively so that the imprint of man’s work is noticeable, but the agencies are allowed to manage these areas to ensure nothing compromises the wilderness attributes. These restrictions ensure the highest possible protection for public land, creating a space that allows nature to take its course and remain undeveloped for generations into the future. Motorized equipment is normally discouraged, but it is sometimes permitted for the purpose of ensuring human safety and to aid in the preservation of wilderness values.

BEETLE MANAGEMENT

Bark beetles are native and a natural part of forest ecosystems in the Rocky Mountain region. They have coexisted with our trees for millions of years. Historically, the beetles would kill the trees in small localized patches at lower elevations, and for years scientists thought that they could not survive at higher elevations due to cold temperatures in the winter. With global warming during the last several decades, that seems to be no longer true.

Currently, the earth is warming, most likely due to the increasing concentrations of CO₂ in the atmosphere. Scientists seem to agree that this warming has played a significant role in the

¹The Wilderness Act. 1964. S. 4. 88th Cong.

current widespread epidemic of the beetles. As the earth warms, beetles can survive the winter months at higher elevations. Also, recent long periods of drought in the mountains probably have played a role in triggering the most widespread epidemic in recorded history. It is tempting to argue that chemicals or timber harvesting could be used to control these insects, but that does not appear to be true except in small, localized areas.²

The 1964 Wilderness Act was written to anticipate beetle infestations and allow agency management and control of the problem. Section 4(d)(1) states that “such measures may be taken as may be necessary in the control of...insects, and diseases, subject to such conditions as the Secretary deems desirable.”³

To address concerns about bark beetle management in designated wilderness areas, Forest Supervisors in Wyoming have provided input about the tools that are allowed to manage bark beetles inside a wilderness area. The 1964 Wilderness Act indicates that motorized and mechanical tools are allowed in designated wilderness areas under certain conditions. The 1964 Act is further explained and clarified by the 1978 Endangered American Wilderness Act, which “permits any measures necessary to control fire, insect outbreaks, and disease in wilderness areas. This includes the use of mechanized equipment, the building of roads...In short, anything necessary for the protection of public health or safety is...permissible.”⁴

In addition to the 1964 Wilderness Act and the 1978 Endangered American Wilderness Act, the Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2320 presents guidelines to address certain management tools and uses in wilderness areas in conjunction with federal legislation. The FSM section 2324.15 describes how each forest will respond and properly manage bark beetles, stating, “When control of insects or disease is necessary in National Forest wilderness, it shall be carried out by measures that have the least adverse impact on the wilderness resource and are compatible with wilderness management objectives.”⁵

To utilize motorized equipment to control the beetle epidemic would have adverse impacts on wilderness characteristics, as stated in the Forest Service Manual 2324.15, in 4(d)(1) of the 1964 Wilderness Act and demonstrated by Black et al. 2010. By allowing the bark beetle infestation to run its course, the Forest Service will respect the qualities of wilderness characteristics, as expressed by Congress in the 1964 Wilderness Act.

Responses from Forest Supervisors, district rangers and other agency personnel show that, even though the 1964 Wilderness Act and the 1978 Endangered American Wilderness Act allow motorized and mechanical tools to be used in controlling beetle epidemics, these tools have not yet been used. As of now, there are no examples of agencies using motorized and mechanical tools to manage, control or prevent bark beetle infestations in Wyoming’s wilderness. This does not mean, however, that this could not happen. Mark Booth, District

²Black, S. H. , et al. 2010. *Insects and Roadless Forests: A Scientific Review of Causes, Consequences and Management Alternatives*. National Center for Conservation Science & Policy, Ashland OR.

³The Wilderness Act. 1964. S. 4 . 88th Cong.

⁴The Wilderness Society. 2004. *The Wilderness Act Handbook: 40th Anniversary edition*. Washington, D.C.: ChromaGraphics.

⁵Department of Agriculture. 2007. *Forest Service Manual*. United States Forest Service.

Ranger, Bighorn National Forest, said, “The number one priority (when dealing with bark beetles) is to protect wilderness attributes and see if it is going to change the wilderness character.” If the wilderness character was threatened, the Forest Service would “evaluate the minimum tool or needs for the job.”⁶

According to Chris Thomas, Bighorn National Forest, “When dealing with infestation management in wilderness, the agency must first look at values, risk and costs involved.”⁷ Most often the values found in a wilderness area are at little risk from bark beetle infestations. The Forest Service stated that “...management actions are not taken in remote or wild areas of national forests, as dead trees provide nesting sites for birds and small mammals, and the natural openings add habitat diversity with the increased grass, forb, and shrub growth.”⁸

FIRE MANAGEMENT

Fire was historically present in forest ecosystems and has shaped the character of the forest for millennia.⁹ The 1964 Wilderness Act states that the Forest Service is legally allowed to use motorized and mechanical uses to address wildfire management in a wilderness area.¹⁰ These stipulations are written in the 1964 Wilderness Act and were clarified by the 1978 Endangered American Wilderness Act, which “permits any measures necessary to control fire, insect outbreaks, and disease in wilderness areas. This includes the use of mechanized equipment and the building of roads.”¹¹ Wildfire management and fire suppression continues today and the use of motorized equipment to suppress fires has been authorized in Wyoming’s wilderness areas.¹² However, wilderness areas are usually managed to allow nature to take its course. This can mean allowing fires to burn that were caused by lightning.

Mark Booth, District Ranger of the Bighorn National Forest said, “The Forest Service is allowed to fight fires in wilderness.” However, the Forest Service must determine if the fire was human-caused or a natural occurrence before action is taken to fight the fire. A human-caused wildfire occurring in wilderness areas is usually allowed to burn unless there is a high risk that the burn will leave the wilderness and threaten other areas.”¹³

⁶Booth, M. 7 Dec 2010. District Ranger. *Telephone Communication*. Bighorn National Forest.

⁷Thomas, C. 7 Dec 2010. Silviculturalist. *Telephone Communication*. Bighorn National Forest

⁸United States Forest Service. *Pine Beetle - A Disturbance in the Forest*. Retrieved Nov 23, 2010, from Bighorn National Forest - Resource Management:
http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet!/ut/p/c5/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gDfxMDT8MwRydLA1cj72BTH1NTAwgAykeaxRtBeY4WBv4eHmF-YT4GMHn8usNB9uHXDzYBB3A00PfzyM9N1S_ljTDIMnFUBAAMyyRJ/dl3/d3/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnZ3LzZfMjAwMDAwMDBBODBPSEhWTjJNMDAwMDAwMDA!/?navtype=BROWSEBYSUBJECT&cid=fswdev3_009188&navid=13012000000000&pnavid=1300000000000000&ss=110202&position=Not%20Yet%20Determined.

Html&ttype=detail&pname=Bighorn%20National%20Forest-%20Resource%20Management

⁹Black, S. H. , et al. 2010. *Insects and Roadless Forests: A Scientific Review of Causes, Consequences and Management Alternatives*. Ashland OR. : National Center for Conservation Science & Policy.

¹⁰The Wilderness Act. 1964. S. 4. 88th Cong. Section 4(d)(1)

¹¹The Wilderness Society. 2004. *The Wilderness Act Handbook: 40th Anniversary edition*. Washington, D. C. : ChromaGraphics.

¹²Welsh, R. 2010. *Motorized Equipment / Mechanical Transport Use Authorization Report*. Congressionally Designated Areas Program Intermountain Region. United States Forest Service

¹³Booth, M. 7 Dec 2010. District Ranger. *Telephone Communication*. Bighorn National Forest.

Each national forest decides how specific fires are handled in wilderness areas. Generally, the Forest Service uses a minimal tool analysis before conducting operations in wilderness areas. Tobin Kelly, Forest Manager of the Bridger-Teton National Forest, described the Bull Fire of 2010, which was naturally caused and allowed to run its course in wilderness, but the Forest Service allowed motorized vehicles in wilderness to help manage the fire. Kelly said, “The Forest Supervisor approved the use of helicopters landing in the wilderness area. The helicopter was utilized for water drops.” Chainsaws were not used in the wilderness on this occasion, but they were used within ¼ mile outside of the wilderness boundary. Fire suppression was not actively pursued within the wilderness boundary on this particular fire.

In another instance of fire on the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Kelly said the “Cache Fire was human caused and was suppressed with motorized and mechanical tools with the help of the chainsaw.”¹⁴ In 2010, twenty motorized uses were authorized on the Bridger-Teton National Forest, usually a helicopter, which was authorized within wilderness boundaries 11 times in 2010. Chainsaws were authorized six times in 2010 within designated wilderness on the Bridger-Teton National Forest.

The Shoshone National Forest (SNF) allows most fires to burn in wilderness areas, but chainsaws have been allowed in wilderness there. According to Bryan Armel, Resource Officer on the SNF, the use of chainsaws in wilderness “is a last resort,”¹⁵ but they were used on the Dickenson Fire. During the Gunbarrel Fire of 2008, helicopters were used to transport firefighters and gear into a wilderness area. Fifteen motorized equipment uses were allowed in SNF wilderness in 2010, mainly to fight fires and respond to emergency situations. Of the fifteen, there were nine instances where helicopters were allowed and three times when chainsaws were approved.

The most common type of motorized equipment authorized in wilderness areas in Forest Service Region 2 is the use of chainsaws, mainly in response to fire.

SEARCH AND RESCUE/EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Many concerns have been raised about the slow response time to emergency situations in wilderness, even when using motorized equipment. Each use of motorized equipment normally must be authorized in wilderness areas and this could cause delays that could be life threatening. To streamline the process, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Bighorn National Forest Service Office and the Johnson County Sheriff’s office allows immediate approval of motorized equipment and guarantees rapid response to emergency situations in wilderness areas.

Mark Booth, District Ranger of the Bighorn National Forest (BNF), said, “ATVs, chainsaws and helicopters are the only motorized uses requested in the BNF for emergency situations in wilderness.” In 2010, a helicopter was authorized for an emergency situation in the

¹⁴Kelly, T. 3 Dec 2010. Forest Manager. *Telephone Communication*. Bridger-Teton National Forest.

¹⁵Armel, B. 2 Dec 2010. Resource Officer. *Telephone Communication*. Shoshone National Forest.

Cloud Peak Wilderness. According to Booth, “this (Forest Service) office likes to lead a good example and not use motorized uses unless life or a very valuable resource is at stake.”¹⁶

Other parts of the State do not have comparable MOUs, but they immediately allow the use of motorized equipment when life or property is at risk. Bryan Armel, Recreation Manager of the Shoshone National Forest said, “The Forest Service generally errs on the side of caution to address any safety concerns.”¹⁷

Appendix A and Appendix B are examples of Wyoming Forest Service Memorandums of Understanding between the Bighorn National Forest and the Johnson County Sheriff Department; and the Targhee National Forest and Teton County, WY, Teton County, ID, and Fremont County, ID. These MOUs allow immediate response for motorized and mechanized use within designated wilderness areas in Wyoming in search and rescue and emergency situations.

CONCLUSION

The idea that a wilderness designation is associated with no motorized or mechanized uses is not true. In fact, motorized and mechanical tools are used in wilderness areas and provide managing agencies with options when dealing with emergency situations. These tools are allowed by the 1964 Wilderness Act and the 1978 Endangered American Wilderness Act. Furthermore, the Forest Service Manual 2320 states how each motorized and mechanical tool will be implemented in wilderness areas.

Of course, a wilderness area is defined as an area “where the imprint of man’s work is substantially unnoticeable,” or an area which is “untrammelled” and allowed to be wild.¹⁸ This creates a situation where forest managers must analyze the impacts on the wilderness resource and respond carefully to not damage that resource. The values of those few wilderness areas that remain merit this extra level of caution.

Bark beetle management is allowed in wilderness but has not been pursued in Wyoming and doesn’t merit active management practices; based on the experience of Tobin Kelly, Tom Florich, Mark Booth and other Forest Service personnel. Active management of bark beetles has not proven to be effective over large areas. Fire management will continue to be performed following guidelines of the Forest Service Manual 2320. The authorization of motorized uses in wilderness during emergency situations has been streamlined, allowing immediate response and guaranteeing permission to utilize whatever means necessary to aid in the protection of public health and safety in wilderness.

Thus, our examination of both the legal mandates and actual practices indicates that motorized and mechanical access to designated wilderness is allowed.

¹⁶Booth, M. 7 Dec 2010. District Ranger. *Telephone Communication*. Bighorn National Forest

¹⁷Armel, B. 2 Dec 2010. Resource Officer. *Telephone Communication*. Shoshone National Forest.

¹⁸The Wilderness Act. 1964. S. 4. 88th Cong.

Bibliography

- Armel, Bryan. 2 Dec 2010. Resource and Recreation Manager. *Telephone conversation*. Shoshone National Forest.
- Black, S. H. 2010. *Insects and Roadless Forests: A Scientific Review of Causes, Consequences and Management Alternatives*. Ashland OR: National Center for Conservation Science & Policy.
- Booth, Mark. 7 Dec 2010. District Ranger. *Telephone Communication*. Bighorn National Forest.
- Department of Agriculture. 2007. *Forest Service Manual*. United States Forest Service.
- Kelly, Tobin. 3 Dec 2010. Forest Manager. *Telephone Communication*. Bridger-Teton National Forest.
- The Wilderness Act. 1964. S. 4 . 88th Cong.
- The Wilderness Society. 2004. *The Wilderness Act Handbook: 40th Anniversary edition*. Washington, DC: ChromaGraphics.
- Thomas, Chris. 7 Dec 2010. Forest Silviculturalist. *Telephone Communication*. Bighorn NF.
- United States Forest Service. *Pine Beetle - A Disturbance in the Forest*. Retrieved Nov 23, 2010, from Bighorn National Forest - Resource Management:
http://www.fs.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsinternet!/ut/p/c5/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3gDfxMDT8MwRydLA1cj72BTH1NTAwgAykeaxRtBeY4WBv4eHmF-YT4GMHn8usNB9uHXDzYBB3A00PfyM9N1S_IjTDIMnFUBAAMyyRJ/dl3/d3/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS9ZQnZ3LzZfMjAwMDAwMDBBODBPSEhWTjJNMDAwMDAwMDA!/
- Welsh, R. 2010. *Motorized Equipment / Mechanical Transport Use Authorization Report*. Congressionally Designated Areas Program Intermountain Region. United States Forest Service

Acknowledgements

The Wyoming Wilderness Association would like to thank all the Forest Service personnel who were interviewed for this study, Dennis Knight professor emeritus University of Wyoming, Bart Koehler of the Wilderness Society, Liz Howell and Carolyn Schroth for editing.

APPENDIX A

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN

Steve Kozisek, Johnson County Sheriff
AND
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
Bighorn National Forest

This MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING is hereby made and entered into by and between Steve Kozisek, Johnson County Sheriff, hereinafter referred to as County Sheriff, and United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Bighorn National Forest, hereinafter referred to as Forest Service.

A. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this MOU is to clarify and streamline the approval processes for motorized search and rescue in Cloud Peak Wilderness.

B. STATEMENT OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND INTERESTS:

Whereas, the County Sheriff has the responsibility for Search and Rescue Operations on all lands within Johnson County.

Whereas, the Forest Service has the responsibility for the management and resource protection of national forest system lands, including Wilderness within the Bighorn National Forest.

It is in the mutual benefit of both parties to develop search and rescue procedures in Wilderness that are well-defined, responsive to life-threatening situations in a timely manner, and that protect the Wilderness resource.

C. FOREST SERVICE SHALL:

Approve, without prior request from the County Sheriff, the use of motorized equipment (only the extent necessary) such as helicopters or off-road vehicles less than 50 inches in width which would not require ground disturbance or vegetation removal in the Wilderness as follows:

A. RESCUE

1. Removal of people with obvious life-threatening injuries; (i.e. heart attack, stroke, serious bleeding, fractured skull, unconsciousness, etc.).

2. Removal of people whenever there is the strong possibility that an injury may be life-threatening or a situation where an individual may face a life-threatening situation (i. e. unusual snowfall, winter storm approaching, etc.).
3. Removal of deceased persons.
4. When the topography or footing is so hazardous that it will expose the injured party or the rescue team to the probability of additional or new serious injury.

B. SEARCH

1. When there is a good reason to believe that the person being searched for has a life-threatening injury.
2. When there is good reason to believe the lost person will be placed in a life-threatening situation such as a result of a predicted adverse change in the weather; (i.e. a person was lightly-dressed and snow storm is predicted, etc.).
3. When the only potential rescuers are not physically capable of accomplishing the search without motorized or mechanical equipment.
4. When there is an external situation requiring immediate location of a person within the Wilderness; (i.e. a signed affidavit in which a parent has to give written permission for surgery of a child, etc.).
5. When the topography or footing is so hazardous that it will expose the search team to probability of additional or new serious injury.

D. THE COUNTY SHERIFF SHALL:

1. Make use of mechanical and motorized equipment within the Wilderness without prior request of the Forest Service only as set forth above.
2. Report to the Forest Service Project Contact all "approved without prior request" search and rescue operations within **48 hours** of the beginning of operations. The report will include the information on the attached report form.
3. Make a phone request to the Forest Service Principal contacts listed in Section 6 for the use of mechanized or motorized equipment in the wilderness for all search and rescue operations not covered in the "approved without prior request" list.

E. IT IS MUTUALLY UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED BY AND BETWEEN THE PARTIES THAT:

1. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA). Any information furnished to the Forest Service under this instrument is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552).

2. MODIFICATION. Modifications within the scope of the instrument shall be made by mutual consent of the parties, by the issuance of a written modification, signed and dated by all parties, prior to any changes being performed.

3. PARTICIPATION IN SIMILAR ACTIVITIES. This instrument in no way restricts the Forest Service or the Cooperator(s) from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations, and individuals.

4. TERMINATION. Any of the parties, in writing, may terminate the instrument in whole, or in part, at any time before the date of expiration.

5. REVIEW. The Forest Service and the County Sheriff shall meet annually to review all wilderness search and rescue operations that occurred within their county during the previous calendar year.

6. PRINCIPAL CONTACTS. The principal contacts for this instrument are:

Forest Service Project Contacts

Mark Booth
 Powder River District Ranger
 1415 Fort Street
 Buffalo, WY 82834

Phone: 307-684-7806
 FAX: 307-684-9899
 E-Mail: mbooth@fs.fed.us

Craig Cope
 Wilderness Coordinator
 1415 Fort Street
 Buffalo, WY 82834

Phone: 307-684-7806
 FAX:307-684-9899
 E-Mail: cccope@fs.fed.us

Cooperator Project Contact

Johnson County Sheriff's Office
 639 Fort Street
 Buffalo, WY82834

Phone: 307-684-5581
 FAX: 307-684-
 E-Mail:

Forest Service Administrative Contact

William T. Bass
 Forest Supervisor

Cooperator Administrative Contact

Steve Kozisek
 Johnson County Sheriff

2013 Eastside 2nd Street
Sheridan, WY 82801

639 Fort Street
Buffalo, WY82834

Phone:307-674-2600
FAX: 307-674-2668
E-Mail: bbass@fs.fed.us

Phone:307-684-5581
FAX:
E-Mail:

- 5. NON-FUND OBLIGATING DOCUMENT. This instrument is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Any endeavor or transfer of anything of value involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the parties to this instrument will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures including those for Government procurement and printing. Such endeavors will be outlined in separate agreements that shall be made in writing by representatives of the parties and shall be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority. This instrument does not provide such authority. Specifically, this instrument does not establish authority for noncompetitive award to the cooperator of any contract or other agreement. Any contract or agreement for training or other services must fully comply with all applicable requirements for competition.
- 6. COMMENCEMENT/EXPIRATION DATE. This instrument is executed as of the date of last signature and is effective through December 31, 2011 at which time it will expire unless extended.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this agreement as of the last written date below.

USDA FOREST SERVICE

JOHNSON COUNTY SHERIFF

DATE

DATE

The authority and format of this instrument has been reviewed and approved for signature.

DATE
FS Agreements Coordinator

**Bighorn National Forest
Search and Rescue Information Report**

Date: _____

1. Name of Reporting Agency: _____

2. Name and Contact information for the Person Reporting Incident: _____

3. Number of Persons Injured or Lost: _____

4. Date of Incident: _____ Time of Incident: _____

5. Wilderness Name: _____

6. Other Landmarks: _____

7. Weather: _____

8. Method(s) of travel for rescuers: _____

9. Additional comments: _____

10. Date Sheriff Notified: _____ Time: _____

11. Date Forest Service Notified: _____ Time: _____

Report should be completed within 48 hours of an incident. Return to Forest Service Project Coordinator.

APPENDIX B

USDA-FOREST SERVICE
Intermountain Region

TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST
Teton Basin and Ashton Ranger Districts

Teton County, Wyoming
Teton County, Idaho
Fremont County, Idaho

Wilderness Search and Rescue Policy

____/s/Jerry B. Reese9/5/97_____
JERRY B. REESE, Forest Supervisor
Targhee National Forest

WILDERNESS SEARCH AND RESCUE POLICY

Purpose and Scope

This document establishes guidelines for Search and Rescue (SAR) operations in the Jedediah Smith and Winegar Hole Wilderness areas. The objective of this policy is to meet the intent of the Wilderness Act and to be responsive to public needs for protection of life and property, with an emphasis toward cooperation.

Definitions

The term "Sheriff's Department" refers to the respective elected County Sheriff and Sheriff's Department Employees.

The term "Forest Service" refers to the USDA National Forest and Ranger District employees.

The term "SAR Operation" refers to any search, rescue, or emergency medical search and rescue situation.

The term "Emergency" refers to any situation where delay will result in unnecessary danger to, further injury of, unnecessary suffering by or death of a person.

The term "Liaison" refers to the Forest Service personnel assigned to the Sheriff's Department Incident Command Team during a SAR operation.

Responsibilities and Authorities

Cooperative law enforcement agreements between the Targhee National Forest and local law enforcement agencies define working relationships and cost and equipment sharing responsibilities.

The Wilderness Act states that wilderness is a place where the imprint of man's work is substantially unnoticeable, there are outstanding opportunities for solitude, and there is no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or other forms of mechanical transport. The Wilderness Act also makes clear that we will take measures in emergencies to protect the health and safety of persons within wilderness areas.

The Forest Service will take a temporary lead role in any search and rescue emergency in which immediate and quick response will reduce suffering or save lives. The concept of closest forces must be used and the lead role maintained only until the Sheriff's Office is available to assume its leadership. After transferring the leadership role, the Forest Service will resume a supportive role and provide assistance to the fullest extent possible.

The Sheriff's Department is responsible for media information releases, determining areas of limited access, logistical support (including air SAR Operations) and for the safety of all personnel involved.

The Forest Service will designate a person to act as the Liaison between the Forest Service and the Sheriff's Department during SAR Operations. The Liaisons role will be to assure the safety of Forest Service employees involved, provide requested logistical assistance to the Sheriff, and insure that SAR Operations comply with Forest Service policy. The Forest Service liaison is jointly responsible for review of media information releases.

Operating Procedures

SAR practices must reflect knowledge of the Wilderness Act, current wilderness policies and a knowledge of SAR risks and procedures. Our practices must also demonstrate our combined ability to react quickly and skillfully in a coordinated manner.

Targhee National Forest field personnel will be responsive to public needs, particularly the protection of life and property. The appropriate line officer may approve the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport in Wilderness for emergencies where the situation involves an inescapable urgency and temporary need for speed beyond that available by primitive means. Motorized and mechanical access will be approved following the attached guidelines.

The Sheriff's Department may request logistical assistance from the Forest Service in terms of personnel, equipment and supplies. This assistance can include providing communication through the Forest Service communications system, furnishing qualified personnel and experienced guide service, providing transportation equipment, providing pack stock, and furnishing maps and aerial photos.

It may be useful to place a Forest Service employee at the location of the SAR operation to inform the general public about the situation and why non-primitive methods are in use.

A yearly coordination meeting between the Sheriff's Department and Forest Service will be held, preferably in the spring before heavy visitor use of National Forest System lands.

Approval Guidelines

These guidelines pertain only to those items requiring Forest Service approval, i.e., air drops, landing of aircraft in wilderness, use of motorized or mechanical equipment (generators, wheeled litters and carts) and installation of permanent anchors for climbing and caving in the wilderness. Over-flights above the FAA 2,000 feet advisory do not require approval, but low elevation aerial search should be discussed with the Forest Service liaison assigned to the incident.

- Contact should be made to the Forest Service or Sheriff's Department by either party as soon as possible when a SAR Operation is imminent or occurring. The Forest Service must be notified as soon as possible for any search and rescue in a wilderness. Specific approval must be given for use of motorized and mechanical equipment within wilderness.
- As a rule, no mechanical or motorized equipment (including helicopter landing) is allowed in wilderness areas. Exceptions are made for life threatening conditions or death, determined on a case by case basis by the Forest Supervisor or delegated District Ranger using the approval guidelines.
- SAR Operations should be as unobtrusive as possible to minimize any potential degradation of the resource or the visitor's experience. The preferred mode of travel is by horseback or foot. Where motorized equipment is approved as being necessary, the Forest Service and Sheriff's Department should be sensitive to potential impacts on natural resources and recreational experiences.
- The Sheriff's Department and Forest Service liaison will re-evaluate the need for motorized or mechanized operation in the wilderness immediately following the initial effort and again every 12 hours until SAR operations are complete. The Forest Supervisor or delegated District Ranger will approve each decision to continue motorized or mechanized operations.

SEARCH

Always Approve

- There is good reason to believe that the person being searched for has a life threatening injury.

- There is good reason to believe the lost person will be placed in a life threatening situation as a result of a predicted adverse change in the weather, i.e., person was lightly dressed and snow storm is predicted.
- Where, because of terrain limitations, no type of ground coverage is safe or feasible.
- The search for those persons (young children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, etc.) who by virtue of their age, physical condition, mental condition, health or mental ability are in a life threatening situation and may be at extreme risk to serious injury or death because they cannot take care of themselves and/or make the rational decisions in the way that could be expected of a healthy adult.

Case by Case Basis

- When there is serious doubt concerning whether or not the situation is life threatening.
- A close relative has died and the family has requested the person be located so they can perform a necessary function within uncontrollable time constraints.
- When there is an external situation requiring immediate location of a person within the wilderness that has to do with an emergency situation (normally life or death); i.e., signed affidavit in which parent has to give written permission for surgery.

Never Approve

- There are no real indications that the person is in a life threatening situation, i.e., person in good health, dressed for the situation, is slightly overdue.
- Outside request is made to locate a person for non-critical external reasons, i.e., attend funeral of a friend, to make financial decisions, to see if a person is okay.
- The specific requested method will result in serious physical impact to the wilderness and there are alternate methods that accomplish the objectives of the search without the impacts.

RESCUE

Always Approve

- Removal of people with obvious life-threatening injuries; i.e., heart attack, stroke, serious bleeding, fractured skull, etc.
- Whenever there is real doubt as to whether or not the injury is life-threatening, or situation where there is likelihood individual may face a life-threatening situation, i.e., unusual snowfall, winter storm approaching, etc.

Usually Approve

- Injury is not life threatening, but delay in rescue or rescue transportation by hand litter or stock may result in additional injury or serious complications resulting from the initial injury, i.e., a broken leg where the pain resulting from the primitive transportation would put the person into shock.
- Injury is not life threatening but it is serious and the present and/or predicted weather would likely cause delays in travel that would make the injury life threatening.
- Where the topography, footing or weather conditions (snow and avalanche potential) are so hazardous that it will expose the injured person or the rescue team to a very high probability of additional or new serious injury or hazard; or the physical condition of the victim does not allow for non-mechanized transport.

Case by Case Basis

- Removal of deceased persons where conditions may present risk to rescuers.
- Logistical support (food, supplies, equipment) for catastrophic rescue i.e., multiple victims, avalanche rescue, plane crash, cave rescue.

Never Approve

When the injury is not life threatening and the person can transport him or herself or be transported by non-motorized or non-mechanical means to the nearest logical point of rescue, e.g., simple fracture of arm, sprained ankle.

Removal of equipment that has been stranded because of weather. No sling-loading of equipment out of the wilderness.

Retrieval of dead or injured livestock or pets.

Wilderness SAR Contacts (as of 7-15-98)

Name	Position	Work Phone	Home Phone	Responsibility
Jerry Reese	Forest Supervisor	208/624-7635	208/624-0955	Jedediah Smith and Winegar Hole Wilderness Areas approval
Patty Bates	District Ranger	208/354-2312	208/787-9043	Jedediah Smith Wilderness, south of Bitch Creek approval
Cell Phone:208/390-3745				
Adrienne Keller	District Ranger	208/652-7442	208/624-2855	Jedediah Smith

Wilderness, north of
Bitch Creek; and
Winegar Hole
Wilderness approval

Cell Phone:208/558-7301

Megan Bogle Wilderness Manager 208/354-2312 307/353-8109 Primary wilderness
liaison

Teton County, WY Sheriff's Office
Dispatch307/733-2331 Lead responsibility for SAR
In Jedediah Smith and Winegar
Hole Wilderness Areas

Teton County, ID Sheriff's Office
Dispatch208/354-2323 Often initial responders to
SAR in Jedediah Smith
Wilderness

Fremont County, ID Sheriff's Office
Dispatch208/624-4482 Provide support on SAR in
Jedediah Smith and Winegar
Hole Wilderness Areas.

Eastern Idaho Interagency Fire Center, Idaho Falls, ID
Dispatch208/524-7600 after hours 208/529-1020 or 800-438-8160
24 hour Dispatch Service for
The Targhee and Caribou
National Forests and Idaho
BLM.

Interagency Fire Center, Moose, WY
Dispatch307/739-5580 Central Dispatch Center for
Grand Teton National Park and
Bridger-Teton National Forest