

STATEMENT OF E. L. MATHES, P.E., STATE HIGHWAY ENGINEER FOR THE IDAHO BOARD OF HIGHWAY DIRECTORS

The Idaho Department of Highways appreciates the opportunity to register its opinions regarding the construction, maintenance and operation of highway facilities in the proposed Sawtooth National Recreation Area. The Department has reviewed the Summary Report of the Sawtooth Mountain Area Study and associated exhibits.

Our research indicates that the present roadless Sawtooth Primitive Area will eventually be incorporated into a proposed National Wilderness System and administered under the Wilderness Act of 1964.

EFFECTS ON THE IDAHO STATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

The Idaho Department of Highways is responsible for maintaining and improving the State Highway System. The study area boundaries defined by the Summary Report map entitled, "Sawtooth Mountain Study Area" indicate that two major facilities on the State Highway System could be affected:

U.S. Highway 93—from Galena Summit northward to a point several miles northeast of Stanley Village. This arterial is the only major, all-weather, north-south route across Central Idaho.

State Highway 21 from Eightmile Creek, just east of Lowman, to its junction with U.S. Highway 93 at Stanley Village. For many years, the Department of Highways has cooperated closely with the Federal Highway Administration in programming improvements to this route for its eventual incorporation into the State Highway System as an all-weather highway between Boise Valley and U.S. Highway 93 at Stanley Village.

The continued improvement of these two highways is vital in view of their growing importance to the State and the region.

A. A Sawtooth National Recreation Area would be administered by the U.S. Forest Service

1. The Department of Highways assumes that the present high degree of Federal-State cooperation in matters pertaining to sections of the State Highway System in National Forests will continue in effect. The scope of this cooperation is spelled out in a "Memorandum of Understanding on Procedures Related to State Highways Over National Forest Lands" between the Department of Highways and Regions One and Four, U.S. Forest Service (now being updated).

2. The U.S. Forest Service-proposed multiple-use management is a flexible type of administration much dependent on adequate highways. This concept would be consistent with the Department of Highways' plans for future operations in the Sawtooth Area. Intentions of the U.S. Forest Service to encourage development of winter sports centers would further enhance this relationship. For example, winter sports enthusiasts destined for Stanley from Boise Valley and other population centers would augment the feasibility of keeping State Highway 21 open during winter months.

3. There would be fewer interagency complications in the construction, maintenance and operation of highways.

4. Joint Federal-State interest in highway improvements in the area would favor application of increased recreational funds for roadside improvements. In addition, this mutual interest might lend importance to future assignments of Public Lands Funds.

5. The present rate of incompatible private development in the Sawtooth Valley and Stanley Basin could be arrested not only by expanded control of highway access, but by the Bill's proposed land-use standards as well. Panoramic views from the road could be preserved while allowing commercial development.

6. In the event that extensions of or additions to "through highways" were required at some future date, a National Recreation Area would not hinder their development.

B. Additional Factors for Consideration

1. As a State agency the Department of Highways must be guided by the needs of the citizens of Idaho and service to the road-using public in general. In this respect the following factors should be evaluated in determining the future of the Sawtooth Area:

- (a) Physical aspects of highway improvements should meet modern standards recommended by the American Association of State Highway Officials.
- (b) Regulations pertaining to the transportation of "out-sized" vehicles.