

The Wilderness Society strongly opposes the exclusion of 80 acres within Unit E along the Alpine Way Trail from the proposed Wilderness Area. The proposal itself is shocking in that it seeks to justify the exclusion of this unit in the hope that this will eliminate encroachments by trail vehicles within the proposed Wilderness Area. Exclusion of this Unit would be extremely unwise.

After careful study of this proposal, and inspection of the Alpine Way Trail, we have recommended that the boundary within Area E be extended down slope, a distance of one-quarter to one-third mile from the present trail to permit the exclusion of vehicles from this boundary. Timbered slopes, covered largely by lodgepole pine, would thus be included in the proposed Wilderness Area below the talus slopes of lower Goat Creek, Iron Creek, and McGowan Peak.

The present Wilderness Area boundary, as proposed for this Alpine Way Trail section by the Regional Forester, does not provide an adequate margin between the talus and granitic faces of the peaks, and the areas immediately down slope which under the Regional Forester's proposal would be outside of the Wilderness Area. Placement of the boundary one-third mile below the trail in the stretch between McGowan Peak and Marshall Lake (Unit 5) would protect core areas of wilderness from intrusion by vehicles and the threat of future roads and other developments that are incompatible with the wilderness qualities to be protected through the Wilderness Area designation. The area that would be added to the Wilderness Area through this boundary adjustment would represent less than 2,000 acres, most of which would be represented by a lodgepole pine cover type.

The Society endorses and supports the Regional Forester's proposal for addition of the 800 acres containing the Bench Lakes within Unit 1 near Redfish Lake. We urge that the proposed boundary be moved a half mile to the eastward at the head of Redfish Lake to permit the inclusion of the upper one-eighth of the lake in the Wilderness Area. This adjustment would add less than 800 acres (Unit 6) to the Wilderness Area and would permit the boundary to extend along the ridges that lie to the north and south of the lake. As in the case of Pettit Lake, it is extremely important that the upper end of Redfish Lake be protected from development and uses that are not consistent with the present wilderness character of this area. Boat use here should be restricted to the high water mark of the lake and other uses of mechanical equipment should be prohibited.

Extension of the Wilderness Area boundary to the waters edge along this upper section of Redfish Lake (in Unit 6), with location of boundaries along ridges extending northward and southward from the upper end of the lake, would assure future protection of important "wilderness-edge" camp sites and their primitive setting for the benefit of visitors who are able to penetrate only the perimeters of wilderness, but who will find this a thrilling and deeply satisfying experience, nonetheless.

The Wilderness Society strongly supports the Regional Forester's proposals for additions of Units 2 and 3 which include 2,110 acres in the McGowan-Trail Lake Basin and 1,840 acres in Baron Creek. We propose further, on the basis of our studies and the recommendations of those who are familiar with the area, that the boundaries of Units 2 and 3 be extended to the North and West to include all of the Trail Creek basin, upper Stanley Lake Creek and the Hanson Lakes.

We also urge that the boundary of the proposed Wilderness Area be moved north from the crest of McGowan Peak ridge to include the face of the mountain itself and the slope extending from its base to the southern shores of Stanley Lake. We would recommend that the boundary extend southwest from Stanley Lake, up Stanley Lake Creek and onto the ridge north of the Hanson Lakes. This should include within the Wilderness Area the unnamed lakes immediately to the north of Hanson Lakes. The boundary could then follow the ridge between Stanley Lake Creek and Elk Creek to the divide ridge northwest of Observation Peak and thence southward along the ridge west of Silver Creek, between the Trail Creek drainage and the Grandjean Creek watershed.

This addition (of Unit 7) to the Regional Forester's proposal would place the highly scenic area of Stanley Lake Creek and the open parks of Hanson Lakes and the entire Trail Creek Basin within the boundaries of the Wilderness Area. A high country area of approximately 10,000 acres would thus be added to the Wilderness Area that is proposed by the Regional Forester. The road above Stanley Lake is in nearly complete disrepair and unpassable. No public use is being made of it. The Society proposes that it be closed to public use at a point approximately four miles north of the headwaters of Stanley Lake Creek.

The Greenback Mine location within this proposed addition to the Wilderness Area should be recognized as a non-conforming use of the Wild lands to be protected within the Wilderness Area. It is hoped that these lands could be acquired at some future time for appropriate use as part of this wilderness unit.