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# I. PREFACE

## Background and Purpose

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) and the U. S. Forest Service (USFS) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU; Attachment A) committing both agencies to write coordinated guidelines for managing fish, wildlife and habitat within the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex (BMWC). This Management Framework was completed by a technical committee formed under the BMWC Managers Group.

In the spirit of the MOU, it is recognized that the agencies have different authorities and responsibilities; however, the fish, wildlife and habitat resources will benefit most through a mutual approach to management. This Framework reflects the direction given in the MOU to “develop a cooperative process to resolve management issues related to fish and wildlife resources in the BMWC,” and to “mutually develop a fish and wildlife plan [framework] for the BMWC.”

**The Framework represents a collective vision of our agencies on how to manage fish, wildlife and habitat in the BMWC.** It is a set of guidelines, not policies, which will evolve as our vision evolves. The Framework is a set of guidelines for one wilderness area, but could serve as a model for other areas.

Currently, managers are operating under a set of guidelines agreed to in 1986 by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for all wilderness areas in the United States. These guidelines are not specific enough to be effective for the BMWC. In addition, no consistent process is in place to address management proposals in the BMWC. **This Framework updates the 1986 guidelines and establishes a standard process for addressing management proposals.** This process includes FWP participation in the BMWC Managers

Group and revision of the BMWC Managers Group Charter (Attachment B).

Implementing this Framework does not require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) processes because it is an administrative effort and not a final decision document for implementing any specific proposal. The Wilderness Act specifically highlights the responsibilities of the two agencies in managing aspects of wilderness so this process has been consistent with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.



## **Relationship to the Wilderness Act; and Defining “Natural” and “Ecosystem Management” for the purpose of this document:**

This Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Framework reflects the guidance provided by language in the Wilderness Act of 1964:

“In order to assure that an increasing population...does not occupy and modify all areas...leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness....”

The Wilderness Act also states that “A wilderness, in contrast to those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”

For the purpose of this framework, the term “**natural**” is used in the context of a range of conditions moving towards a habitat condition or an age structure in fish and wildlife populations not overly affected by modern humans. “Natural” human influences are those that affected the long-term evolution of ecosystems prior to European settlement. Managers should strive for as little human technol-

ogy influence as reasonably possible and attempt to restore community (the biotic component of the ecosystem), population, and habitat processes (natural successional continuum) when possible. US Forest Service administrative

documents define natural as “existing in, or formed by, nature: not artificial.” A natural area is defined as “a physical and biological unit in as near a natural condition as possible which exemplifies typical or unique vegetation and associated biotic, soil, geologic and aquatic features. The unit is maintained in a natural condition by allowing physical and biological processes to operate, usually without direct human intervention.”

We recognize that ecosystems, as defined by energy flow, are open and dynamic, influenced by a variety of factors. Under the Limits of Acceptable Change concept, humans are recognized as part of the ecosystem and some deviations from strictly natural conditions are necessarily acceptable in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex.



“**Ecosystem Management**” has been defined in various ways. For the purpose of this document, there is value in the composite definition published by the director of the Sierra Institute: “Ecosystem management integrates scientific knowledge of ecological relationships within a complex sociopolitical and values framework toward the general goal of protecting native ecosystem integrity over the long term.” Most definitions involve “ecosystem integrity.” Jack Ward Thomas has stated that key in ecosystem management is ecosystem integrity, forest sustainability, and conservation of biodiversity. Most definitions emphasize the well-being of the ecosystem first, with other individual values secondary. Ecosystem management calls for managing communities rather than individual species.

This Management Framework is designed to set guidelines for fish, wildlife and habitat management proposals, plans, and projects in the BMWC following an ecosystem approach, as called for in the 1994 MOU. The framework includes broad fish, wildlife and habitat goals, a process for addressing management proposals, a summary of decision authority, a revised set of new and updated guidelines, and a description of public involvement and implementation. The Framework will guide fish, wildlife and habitat managers around the BMWC.

We recognize that in the Wilderness Act the states are recognized as retaining management authority over fish and wildlife and the USFS is recognized as the administering agency in wilderness habitat management. This framework seeks to meld those separate roles into a collaborative role without compromising the authority of either agency.

## II. WILDERNESS WILDLIFE GOALS

The following goals set broad guidelines for fish, wildlife and habitat management in the BMWC:

1. Within the legal and management authorities of both agencies, allow natural processes to shape the BMWC. Vegetative and wildlife management will follow an ecosystem approach encompassing areas in and outside of wilderness. Wildlife and fish population management will seek natural distribution, numbers, populations, wildlife behavior, composition, and interaction of all species.
2. Provide opportunities for solitude in natural and unaltered (untrammled) settings, emphasizing primitive recreation experiences including viewing, hunting, trapping and fishing.
3. Promote coordinated management and research that focuses on understanding and maintaining the natural ecosystem and visitor solitude. Carry out management and research activities by means that minimize the disruption to the wilderness and visitors.

## III. PROCESS FOR ADDRESSING MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

This Plan establishes a standard process for addressing fish, wildlife and habitat management proposals and resolving related issues raised by either agency. The process involves a checklist or series of questions which will help determine if a proposal is valid; if the proposal is found to be valid, agency representatives should design the proposal consistent with guidelines established in this Framework; managers then follow a process similar to an environmental assessment to reach a decision on the issue. The final decision on the issue rests with the responsible party consistent with their agency administrators and processes as outlined in the decision authority summary.

The Framework recognizes the public involvement and decision-making processes required of each agency by law and regulation—e.g., FWP Commission, NEPA, MEPA, Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Managers should first use the following checklist for determining if a fish, wildlife, or habitat proposal is valid in the BMWC:

1. Could the project be conducted at sites outside the wilderness boundary and still accomplish the same goals?
2. Is the proposed action consistent with the Wilderness Act, agency objectives, long term management goals and legal responsibilities?
3. Does the project fit within the guidelines set forth in the BMWC Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Framework?
4. Does the proposed project outline methods which have the least impact on the wilderness necessary to accomplish the desired outcomes?

If, after going through the above checklist, the management proposal appears to be valid (i.e., answers to questions 1-4 are: no, yes, yes, yes) managers from either agency should proceed to the following steps in preparing the proposal:

1. Describe the proposal: Include the need for the action, the purpose of the project, and address the four questions in the above checklist;
2. Propose a range of alternatives: Describe at least three alternatives to accomplish the proposal, including (a) a no action alternative, (b) an alternative without mechanized equipment if it is part of the proposal, and (c) an alternative proposing a method for accomplishing the proposal which has the least impact on the wilderness resource. Emphasize the method causing the least disturbance to wilderness resources;
3. Analyze each alternative: Include any potential social and environmental impacts on wilderness, comparative costs and benefits, and mitigation for each alternative;
4. Outline a preferred alternative: Provide a recommendation and justification;
5. Identify monitoring requirements for the project.

After a management proposal is prepared, managers should proceed as follows:

Proposals will be brought to a member of the BMWC Managers Group, who will communicate the proposal to other members of the group and appropriate state administrators. The BMWC Managers Group includes decision makers of both agencies. Most issues will cross National Forest and FWP

Regional boundaries, so it is vital that all members be aware of proposals.

The Fish and Wildlife Technical Committee will serve as support for the BMWC Managers Group as requested. The BMWC Managers Group Charter has been amended to include the role of the FWP Region Supervisors and the Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Technical Committee.



#### **Decision Authority:**

If the BMWC Managers Group and appropriate agency administrators agree that a proposal for a management action should go forward, the following authorities and processes should be followed to reach a decision:

- Both agencies must agree that the process meets the NEPA/MEPA guidelines;
- The US Fish and Wildlife Service must be consulted for actions that may affect Threatened or Endangered Species;
- Decision authority for proposals involving: (1) mechanical equipment, (2) Threatened, Endangered, or sensitive species, or (3) transplanting wildlife rests with USFS Forest Supervisors, FWP Regional Supervisors/appropriate administrators, and USFWS Montana Field Supervisor (T&E).

- Decisions authority for proposals to use pesticides rests with the Regional Forester (herbicides) and FWP Supervisors/ appropriate administrator;
- Decision authority for proposals involving Prescribed Natural Fire management rests with the District Rangers and Forest Supervisors. FWP Regional Supervisors/ appropriate administrators will be advised of wildlife implications of fire management decisions;
- Most other project level decisions, including emergency actions, rests with the USFS District Ranger and FWP Regional Supervisor/appropriate administrator.

## IV. FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The BMWC Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Management Framework recognizes the guidelines adopted and agreed to by the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and incorporated into the Wilderness Management Handbook in 1986. The general statement for fish and wildlife management in wilderness areas is consistent with this Framework's goals:

“Fish and wildlife management activities will emphasize the protection of natural processes. Management activities will be guided by doing only the minimum necessary to manage the area as wilderness.”

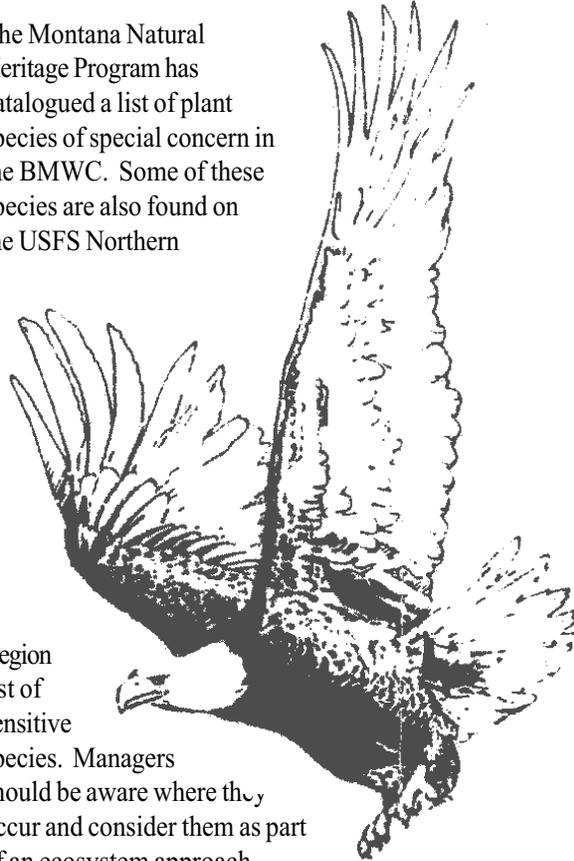
In this section, we update and add specifics to some of these guidelines (e.g., hunting, fishing, trapping), combine and streamline other guidelines (e.g., fish stocking, aerial fish stocking) and add new guidelines for issues not presently covered (e.g., wildlife law enforcement, education, fire and wildlife habitat). When the BMWC Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Framework is officially adopted, this set of existing, modified and new guidelines will form a working agreement between FWP and the USFS for management in the BMWC ecosystem.

The term “sensitive species” refers to indigenous state-designated Species of Special Concern and/or

species found on the USFS Northern Region Sensitive list.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program has catalogued a list of plant species of special concern in the BMWC. Some of these species are also found on the USFS Northern

Region list of sensitive species. Managers should be aware where they occur and consider them as part of an ecosystem approach when taking management actions.



## SPECIFIC GUIDELINES:

### 1. FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND BEHAVIOR

This guideline is based on the goal which calls for allowing natural processes to shape the BMWC ecosystem. The guideline gives broad direction to managers preparing specific management plans and proposals.

Wildlife and fish population management will seek natural distributions, numbers, populations, wildlife behavior, composition, and interaction of indigenous species, including Threatened and Endangered species. Under natural conditions, wildlife populations can be expected to vary over time.

The dependence upon natural processes does not define stable or preferred habitat or wildlife species populations, but does mandate that human activities not so impact either habitat or wildlife populations as to result in unnatural levels or characteristics.

Guidelines:

- (a) It is recognized that Wildlife habitat is dependent upon ecological processes, including natural fire and infestation of native insects, operating as freely as possible with only minimum influence by humans.
- (b) Approach management with a historic and current perspective of habitat and wildlife population characteristics within the BMWC ecosystem. This recognizes the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) concept that some influence by humans has occurred. The BMWC ecosystem is defined as the geographic boundaries of the designated BMWC and lands tied to the BMWC through wildlife migrations and use. Consider habitat characteristics such as plant species composition, species and

community patch size and distribution, including seral stages maintained by disturbance. Wildlife population characteristics considered should include population size and distribution, genetic variability, sex and age composition, birth and death rates, and important characteristics of behavior. Managers should strive to maintain natural population and habitat characteristics.

- (c) Management plans will be developed under State and Federal mandates. They should describe future population or habitat conditions within “natural ranges,” and propose actions that affect habitat or population characteristics in such a way as to alter current conditions, if needed, to meet these conditions. Managers will strive to restore ecological processes and natural composition of communities within the full context of ecosystem management principles.
- (d) Managers may consider actions to manage visitor use when necessary to lessen excessive human disturbance that affect wildlife species, numbers, behavior or distribution.



## 2. FISHING, HUNTING AND TRAPPING

Past guidelines designate hunting, fishing and trapping as legitimate activities in wilderness, subject to applicable state and federal laws and regulations. Section 4(d)(7) of the Wilderness Act directs that: “nothing in this act shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction of the several states with respect to wildlife and fish in the National Forests.”

Recreational hunting, trapping and fishing activities provide opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

The approach of this Management Framework is to ensure that FWP and the USFS cooperate on all aspects of fish, wildlife and habitat management in the BMWC, including hunting, fishing and trapping, and management of visitors taking part in these activities. FWP, through its citizen commission, sets regulations, but the USFS should be a partner along with the public in developing specific plans that guide regulations. An example of this approach is the Fisheries Management Plan for the South Fork Flathead River (FWP and USFS, 1991) and the subsequent fishing regulations setting process.

Guidelines:

- (a) Managers will recognize that the BMWC offers a unique set of opportunities in the overall recreational spectrum. Emphasis will be placed on state management actions that seek wildlife populations approaching “natural” characteristics as described earlier.

Harvest of fish and wildlife species plays a role in these activities and is a part of the wilderness experience, but not the primary goal of wilderness management.

- (b) Hunting, fishing, and trapping season setting; trail work; and visitor management will be planned in coordination to meet wilderness goals and wilderness wildlife and habitat goals. Wilderness values such as solitude, minimum impacts on trails, campsites, and lakeshores protection will be considered in planning.

## 3. VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT TO PROTECT WILDERNESS WILDLIFE RESOURCES

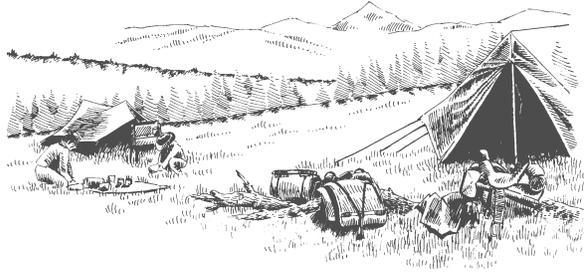
Excessive disturbance by humans may affect wildlife species numbers, behavior or distribution. To manage wildlife, fish or habitat, the Wilderness Act requires managers to search for a balance between protecting wilderness resources while at the same time making the resource available for visitor use. To do both it may be necessary at times to reduce the impacts caused by visitors. Visitor education should be a first approach to minimizing visitor effects; however, limiting visitor numbers may be necessary in some situations. This can also be accomplished in some cases by coordinating fish and wildlife management and seasons with visitor management.

When necessary to reduce excessive human disturbance to a wildlife species, the USFS in coordination with the FWP, may take direct or indirect management steps to control visitor use to accomplish management objectives.

Guidelines

- (a) Specify in management plans the management actions necessary and the agency responsible to reduce conflicts between humans and wildlife and manage fish, wildlife and their habitats in the BMWC ecosystem.

- (b) If it becomes apparent that visitor use is significantly degrading the wilderness wildlife resources, limitations on visitor use may be imposed and enforced by the USFS or FWP.
- (c) Displacement or habituation of wildlife because of visitor use can be significant. Managers will ensure that visitor use will be compatible with the conservation and recovery of Threatened and Endangered species.
- (d) Providing information to visitors and opportunities for education will be emphasized in management plans, in preference to limiting use. Examples include educating people about proper methods of food storage and camping to minimize impacts.



wilderness boundary. Enforcement activities will emphasize the link between wildlands and wildlife; wardens and rangers can portray this concept to visitors, thereby improving visitors' knowledge of ecosystem management and enhancing the quality of their wilderness experience. Cooperative training sessions will emphasize consistency of education and enforcement messages.

- (b) Law enforcement will focus on educating visitors about environmental ethics as they relate to wilderness lands and wildlife. By the nature of their duties, wardens and rangers contact a large number of visitors and can influence their attitude through these contacts. Education efforts should include

working with people who live near the boundary of the BMWC. These concepts should be included in the existing education strategy for the BMWC.

#### 4. WILDLIFE AND WILDLAND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Effective wildlife and habitat law enforcement is essential in overseeing and implementing fish, wildlife and habitat management in the BMWC. Enforcement officers of the FWP and USFS will provide a consistent message on all aspects of land and wildlife uses. Through this approach, regulation and education will contribute to an overall ecosystem approach to land, wildlife and visitor management.

Guidelines:

- (a) Law enforcement will emphasize cooperation between FWP wardens and USFS officers in all aspects of regulation and education both within and outside the

- (c) The last tool in fostering compliance is by means of regulation or adjudication. When this is the last contact with a visitor, that visitor has not become educated about the consequences of the action. On the other hand, enforcement of a regulation when violated can be viewed as a stricter form of education. Law enforcement represents an education/regulation continuum; ideally, if the education component is successful, regulation is not necessary. The following guidelines could be used in determining whether to choose regulation or education as the appropriate action:

- Has a regulation or law been violated?
- Is the wildlife and/or wildland resource damaged?
- Has the experience of other visitors been negatively affected?

These guidelines could be applied to food storage violations and campsite damage. In many cases, such as poaching or using chainsaws, the correct enforcement action will be obvious. Indicators and standards relative to the number of violations could be applied to track progress of enforcement/ education efforts, similar to standards used for trail encounters and campsite condition.

- (d) Wardens and rangers are in a unique position to collect monitoring data for the BMWC. An easy-to-use data collection system is vital; this is aided by a standardized data sheet or card. Information collection could include: wildlife sightings and encounters, established LAC indicators and standards compliance, etc. This effort would emphasize consistency in data collection throughout the BMWC.

## 5. COORDINATION OF RESEARCH AND MONITORING

Research and monitoring of fish, wildlife, their habitats, and the recreational users of these resources is a legitimate activity in wilderness when conducted in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment and when the wilderness characteristic is a needed part of the research.

Routine monitoring will be coordinated between State and Federal agencies and the data shared to enhance overall management of the BMWC. Research will be coordinated between State and Federal agencies annually.

If no practical alternative exists, helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft overflights may be used to conduct approved fish and wildlife research and monitoring activities. Aircraft will be scheduled and used in a manner that minimizes disturbance to other users.

Capturing and marking of animals, radio telemetry, and occasional temporary installations (such as shelters for cameras and scientific apparatus essential for wildlife research or management surveys) may be permitted, if they are essential to studies that can not be accomplished elsewhere.

Guidelines:

- (a) New research proposals will be reviewed and approved by the BMWC Managers group.
- (b) Obtain specific written approval or permits from the administering agency before erecting any structure, enclosure, or exclosure.
- (c) Locate and construct all structures so as to make them unobtrusive on the landscape. Construct structures of native materials or camouflage them.
- (d) Plan aircraft flights over wilderness to minimize disturbance. Consider time of day, season of the year, route and altitude of flight.
- (e) Research projects underway when a wilderness is designated may continue, but modify research methods to minimize disturbance of the wilderness environment.

- (f) Installation of permanent base stations within wilderness is not permitted for monitoring of radio-instrumented animals.
- (g) Use only capture and marking methods that minimize impact on wildlife in a wilderness setting.

## 6. MANAGEMENT OF FIRE

Fire is a natural and primary force in the BMWC ecosystem. Suppression of wildfire has led to changes in vegetation community composition, structure and function. Fire plays an important role in plant/animal associations. Many wildlife species such as elk and many upland bird species are dependent on fire-created habitats.

Fire may occur in this ecosystem in a variety of ways ranging from low intensity, creeping ground fires to high intensity, stand-replacement fires that cover large acreages. A successful program will allow fire to operate at all levels of the ecological spectrum and should result in a landscape more dominated by early successional stages. The BMWC has an approved Prescribed Natural Fire management plan.

Guidelines:

- (a) Managers will permit lightning-caused fires to play, as nearly as possible, their natural ecological role in maintaining the forest ecosystem;
- (b) Fire ignited by lightning will be permitted to burn or will be suppressed as prescribed in an approved plan; the plan will reduce to an acceptable level the public risks and consequences of wildfire in the ecosystem.
- (c) Managers should consider the use of prescribed fires to achieve wilderness objectives if they can not be met through the natural Prescribed Natural Fire program.

## 7. HABITAT ALTERATION

Habitat alteration projects may be approved, in rare circumstances, if the projects are necessary to maintain wilderness values, or to sustain Threatened, Endangered, and sensitive species.

Guidelines:

- (a) The habitat condition needing improvement should be the result of previous human influence; also, managers will demonstrate that the project can be accomplished without compromising wilderness values.
- (b) In managing sensitive indigenous fish species, limit clearing of debris to streams deemed critical to the propagation of the species. Debris must be human-related, e.g. a result of activities upstream. Use only non-motorized equipment to clear debris; use explosives only when hand tools are not practical, and during low visitor and non-critical wildlife use periods.

## 8. HABITAT AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT ON ADJOINING LANDS

Several fish and wildlife species in the BMWC rely on land and water outside the wilderness boundary during a portion of their life cycles. Management activities in these areas can have a profound effect on fish and wildlife populations within the BMWC through effects on seasonal habitat and migration corridors.

The approach of this guideline is to recognize the interrelated nature of wildlife and habitats in the larger context of the BMWC ecosystem. The



- (c) Managers should give priority to species of special concern and sensitive species to avoid the potential of federal listing under the Endangered Species Act.

These guidelines do not change Forest Plan management direction for non-wilderness lands, but do prescribe that the needs of the BMWC wildlife species, which may be present seasonally, be considered in ecosystem assessments and during project planning.

following guidelines will be followed in the context of the legal and management authority of the US Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and other entities:

Guidelines:

- (a) Management activities on public lands outside the BMWC boundary should follow ecosystem management principles and be designed to minimize negative impacts to wilderness-dependent fish and wildlife species. Managers should identify migration corridors and vital habitat components when management activities are proposed and consider them in project planning. Riparian management on streams providing fish migration routes will address any potential impacts in project proposals.
- (b) Managers should encourage cooperative efforts with private landowners to maintain or enhance habitat values that wilderness species depend on, and provide technical assistance when requested. Activities on private lands will be considered in environmental analyses.

## 9. CONTROL OF NOXIOUS WEEDS

Noxious weeds have decreased the quality of habitat in the BMWC. Efforts to control noxious weeds should focus on three aspects: visitor education in methods to minimize introduction and spread of noxious weeds; evaluation of the scope of the problem; and direct control actions.

Guidelines:

- (a) Managers should use an integrated pest management approach to control noxious weeds. Noxious weed control in wilderness will be accomplished by pulling or other hand methods. If hand treatments are not effective, chemicals may be used if the noxious weeds pose a substantial threat to wilderness values and habitat. Use biological controls in the ecosystem only after a thorough evaluation of risks to non-target species, and with great caution so as to not create another exotic species epidemic.
- (b) Managers should employ a Limits of Acceptable Change approach to the management of noxious weeds and other exotic vegetation; managers will establish standards, recognizing noxious weeds and exotics that have become naturalized.

- (c) Education programs will focus on methods visitors can use to minimize introduction and spread of noxious weeds. USFS and FWP will cooperate on education programs and will ensure administrative use of proper weed free feed and other control measures.

outside wilderness. Use only the minimum actions necessary and the methods most appropriate in wilderness.

#### Guidelines

- (a) Manage wilderness to conserve and recover known populations of federally listed Threatened and Endangered species and to protect the habitats on which they depend. Provide habitat for sensitive species to avoid a trend towards federal listing as Threatened or Endangered.



- (b) When alternative areas outside the BMWC offer equal or better opportunities for habitat improvement or species protection, take actions to benefit Threatened and Endangered and sensitive species outside of wilderness first. This is consistent with reducing the amount of manipulation by humans within the wilderness boundary, as called for in the Wilderness Act.

### 10. THREATENED, ENDANGERED, AND SENSITIVE SPECIES

The BMWC supports wildlife species that are federally listed as threatened and endangered. In addition, BMWC habitats support sensitive species listed by the State as Species of Special Concern.

Actions necessary for conservation and recovery of Threatened and Endangered, and to protect sensitive species, including habitat manipulation and special protection measures, may be implemented in the BMWC. Any such actions that will cause other adverse effects on the wilderness resource must be demonstrated to be essential for the perpetuation or recovery of the species and it must be demonstrated that the actions cannot be done more effectively

- (c) Threatened, endangered, and sensitive species may be transplanted into the BMWC if agreed to by USFS and FWP and if the action is necessary for the recovery of the species. Other indigenous species may be transplanted if their populations have been reduced by excessive human actions. Transplants will be made in a manner compatible with wilderness; motorized methods and temporary holding facilities may be allowed if they are the minimum necessary to accomplish an approved transplant.

## 11. WILDLIFE CONTROL ACTIONS

Wildlife control actions in the BMWC may be necessary to protect Federally listed Threatened and Endangered species, to prevent human injury, or to prevent transmission of diseases or parasites affecting other wildlife and humans, consistent with existing guidelines. Control of non-indigenous species also may be necessary to reduce conflicts with indigenous species, particularly if the latter species are threatened, endangered, or sensitive.

### Guidelines

- (a) Acceptable control measures include lethal and non-lethal methods, depending upon need, justification, location, conditions, efficiency and applicability of State and Federal laws.
- (b) Control measures should be implemented by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the US Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, or other approved State agency, pursuant to cooperative agreements or memoranda of understanding. Wildlife damage control must be approved on a case-by-case basis, and coordinated with existing plans.
- (c) Direct control at individual animals causing the problem, including Threatened and Endangered species, if necessary.
- (d) Use only the minimum amount of control necessary to solve the problem.
- (e) Non-selective lethal predator control is not permitted.

## 12. FISH STOCKING

Fish stocking may be conducted by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks in coordination with the US Forest Service, using means appropriate for wilderness, for the following purposes: (a) to reestablish or maintain an indigenous species adversely affected by human influence; this involves maintaining genetic refuges in high quality aquatic habitats, and improving genetics of native, sensitive species like westslope cutthroat trout (“swamping” technique); these techniques are integral to conservation biology; (b) to perpetuate or recover a Threatened and Endangered species, and (c) to provide fishing recreation where appropriate. Fish stocking must be consistent with wilderness values.

It is recognized that stocking fish in waters in the BMWC has altered the natural biological community in many of the approximately 40 lakes in the complex that support fish. The practice was established prior to the passage of the Wilderness Act and, although it is controversial, it is a traditional practice and supports a traditional use by visitors. Like many other traditional uses it carries impacts to wilderness.

This management framework promotes an integrated approach to minimizing the effects of fish stocking on wilderness by urging managers to use a combination of fisheries management and visitor management options to solve problems of overuse at some lakes. In addition, managers should look for opportunities to move towards more natural conditions where possible, such as the 1994 removal of brook trout from Devine Lake within the BMWC to protect bull trout in the drainage downstream from the lake.

The approach to fisheries management in the BMWC ecosystem now is much more conservative than allowed under the 1986, IAFWA guidelines. Only sensitive, genetically tested native species are stocked and management favors sensitive species. Non-indigenous species are considered exotic even if

they were present before wilderness designation. Fishing regulations are restrictive in lakes and streams, down-playing harvest and emphasizing fishing as part of the wilderness experience. This management framework outlines an even more conservative approach.

#### Guidelines

- (a) Selection of species for stocking will be determined jointly by the two agencies. Only indigenous species of fish should be stocked. Numbers and size of fish and time of stocking will be determined by FWP, with the involvement of the USFS and, where appropriate, the public.
- (b) Fishless lakes and streams represent special aesthetic, scientific and social values. Managers of both agencies should work together to complete an inventory and analysis of fishless lakes in the BMWC and develop a management plan for these lakes before any proposals to stock fishless lakes are considered.
- (c) FWP will make fish stocking schedules available annually to the USFS, indicating what species and numbers are planned for each water within the BMWC. FWP managers will consider USFS input in preparing fish stocking schedules.
- (d) Managers should adjust stocking rates to reduce the likelihood of exceeding the carrying capacity of the water being stocked so as to reduce the chance of producing a population imbalance. This will minimize the likelihood of attracting overuse harmful to the wilderness resource. Coordinate trail work and stocking plans to address overuse problems. Recognize that there are potential additional problems associated with less trail maintenance or modifying a stocking program (e.g., both actions could

concentrate use on remaining waters in the area; trail maintenance can protect against abuse).

- (e) Aerial stocking of fish may be permitted for those waters in wilderness where this was an established practice before wilderness designation if the continued need is agreed upon by FWP and USFS, or where other practical means are not available, as agreed to by both agencies. Managers should consider impacts to wilderness values of each stocking method proposed.

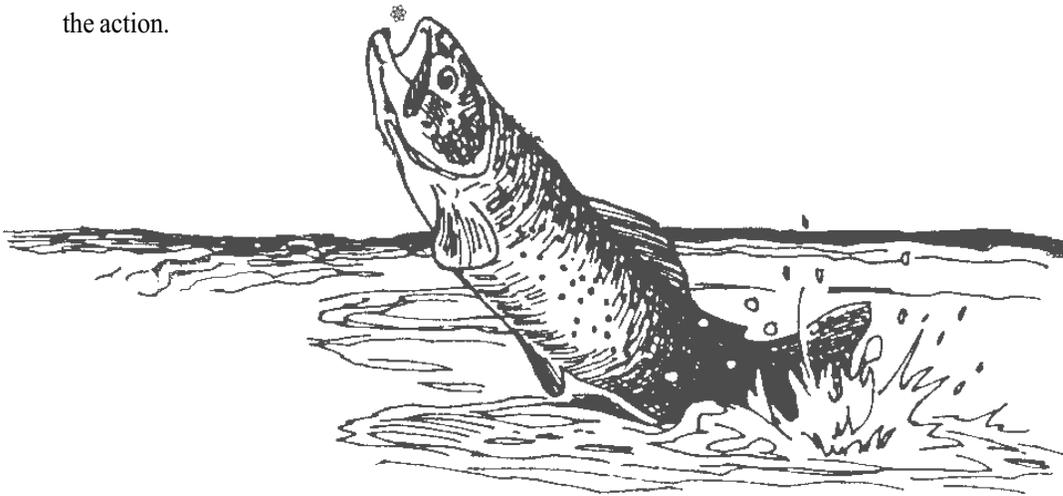
As justification for aerial stocking, FWP should supply the USFS with a list of those waters stocked with aircraft before wilderness designation, indicating the type of aircraft used (fixed-wing or helicopter). This justification will become a part of the management proposal. Plan aircraft flights over wilderness to minimize disturbance. Consider season of year, time of day, route and altitude of flight, and location of landing areas on the perimeter of the wilderness.

### **13. CHEMICAL TREATMENT TO CONTROL EXOTIC FISH**

Chemical treatment may be necessary to prepare waters for the reestablishment of indigenous species, to protect or recover Federally listed Threatened and Endangered species, or to correct undesirable conditions resulting from the influence of humans (for example, the establishment of an exotic fish population that threatens a native gene pool). The action must be necessary to maintain wilderness values or to recover a Threatened and Endangered species.

Guidelines

- (a) Consider the over-planting or “swamping” technique to restore indigenous species where practical rather than chemical techniques. Include in the management proposal an alternative using the over-planting technique if practical.
- (b) If chemical treatment is proposed, design a baseline and post-treatment survey of aquatic fauna to gain scientific value from the action.



- (c) In selecting pesticides, give preference to those that will have the least impact on non-target species and the wilderness environment.
- (d) Schedule chemical treatments during periods of low human use and immediately dispose of fish removed in a manner agreed to by FWP and the USFS.

**14. FISH SPAWN TAKING**

The collection of fish spawn to maintain or enhance indigenous species shall be permitted in the BMWC when alternative sources are unavailable or unreliable, or where spawn taking was an established practice

before wilderness designation (e.g., Big Salmon Lake).

Guidelines:

- (a) Motorized equipment to assist in collecting and removing spawn will be considered only under extraordinary circumstances as agreed to by FWP and USFS.
- (b) Facilities for spawn-taking stations must be removed after the termination of each season’s operation.

**15. USE OF MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT**

The philosophy of fish, wildlife and habitat management in the BMWC emphasizes using methods to accomplish management objectives which least impact the wilderness resource. Section 4 (c) of the Wilderness Act provides guidance on the use of motorized equipment in wilderness:

“Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and, except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for this administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the

area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.”

The emphasis is on the management of the BMWC as wilderness as opposed to the management of a particular resource. This language is viewed as direction that all management activities within wilderness be done without motor vehicles, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport, unless truly necessary to administer the area or specifically permitted by other provisions in the Act. It means that any such use should be rare and temporary; that no roads can be built; and that wilderness managers must determine such use is the minimum necessary to accomplish the task.

Guideline:

- (a) Any use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport requires advance approval through the USFS Forest Supervisor for any management proposal. It is important to include an alternative that does not use motorized equipment. Where there are choices among management options, wilderness values should dominate over other considerations. Managers should also consider safety and length of time of disturbance to visitors in preparing management options.

## 16. VISITOR AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

Education is an important component of each management guideline in this framework. The approach of this Framework is to emphasize education over regulation in all cases of visitor use management and enforcement. Enforcement personnel of both agencies are in an excellent position to

inform and educate visitors about fish, wildlife, and habitat management. Other wilderness workers also represent an outlet to provide information to visitors.

The BMWC Recreation Management Direction puts a priority on information and education for limiting impacts to wilderness. An Education Strategy has been developed with the goals of Complex-wide education reaching a diverse audience of current and potential wilderness visitors.

Guidelines:

- (a) The USFS and FWP should work together to expand the existing, successful Education Strategy to include fish and wildlife values in addition to low- impact wilderness use and wilderness values.
- (b) Management strategies developed for fish, wildlife and habitat in the BMWC will be more successful if an effective education program results in public acceptance of these strategies. Managers should include an education and information component in each management proposal or plan. Information and education efforts should be directed to wilderness visitors, potential visitors, and the general public. Education is vital for public support of management guidelines and actions.
- (c) All agencies should work cooperatively to pursue partnerships with entities that can help promote wilderness education and

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## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

other wilderness programs.

This Framework takes effect with the completion of the signature page of this document.

A structured public involvement process will be vital in producing specific fish, wildlife and habitat plans and addressing specific management proposals. This process may be part of the standard procedure each agency follows. The USFS may input specific plans

and proposals as part of their Forest Plan revision process, which includes a public involvement component. FWP may enter the plan into the Environmental Assessment and FWP Commission processes; each includes public involvement.

The MOU (Attachment A) and BMWC Managers Group Charter (Attachment B) call for joint USFS and FWP participation in the BMWC Managers Group. Through this group, the progress of Fish and Wildlife management efforts can be tracked and adjustments can be made. The Managers Group will call for revisions and updates of this document as needed.



**APPROVAL OF THE FISH, WILDLIFE AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT  
FRAMEWORK FOR THE BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX**

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DATE

**ATTACHMENT A: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (1994)  
BETWEEN FWP AND THE USFS REGARDING FISH AND  
WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT IN THE BMWC**

**ATTACHMENT B: REVISED CHARTER (1995)  
FOR THE BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS COMPLEX  
MANAGERS GROUP**