

Meeting Date: May 17, 2019

Agenda Item No. 9

Agenda Item: Back Country Access Update to
Include Airstrips, Trails, and Access Points

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Tom Curet, Regional Supervisor, Salmon

Background:

In response to reductions in accessibility for backcountry hunting and fishing and complaints of hunter congestion at backcountry airstrips, the Department has recently increased efforts in improving backcountry access for hunters, anglers, and trappers. In particular, in central Idaho, backcountry access has been severely impacted by the lack of federal funding, equipment, personnel and action. Since the federal designation of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act in 1980, maintenance of trails and access portals into and through the Frank Church River of No Return (FCRONR) has routinely failed to meet the demand, resulting in diminished accessibility. The backlog of deferred trail maintenance and access issues have intensified in recent years due to large scale fires and considerably more downed trees, making access through burned areas almost impossible. Since 2000 approximately 50% of "Frank" has burned.

Several years ago the Department developed a small working group (SWG) to begin improving backcountry access for our constituents

The SWG has initiated the evaluation of the following information:

1. Evaluated 10 IDFG Backcountry properties within or adjacent to the Frank for backcountry access improvements.
2. Evaluated current airstrip access for hunter, anglers, and trappers.
3. Initiated a backcountry trail condition mapping exercise with IDPR
4. Evaluated road access portals near the boundaries of the Frank to look for maintenance opportunities.
5. Secured funding and provided technical assistance for trail, road, and airstrip improvements and renovations.

Staff will provide an overview of the history of access conditions in the FCRONR, current status, and efforts underway to improve access for constituents and Department backcountry operations

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

N/A

Public Involvement Process:

Information from the agenda item will aid the Commission as they respond to inquiries regarding backcountry access

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is for Commission information

Justification:

None