

Management Area 19

Warm Lake

CHARACTERIZATION

General Location and Description - Management Area 19 is comprised of lands administered by the Boise National Forest near Warm Lake in the upper South Fork Salmon River drainage (see Map 19). The area lies in Valley County, and is part of the Cascade Ranger District. The management area is an estimated 103,600 acres, almost all of which are administered by the Forest Service. The area is bordered by Boise National Forest to the east, south, and west, and by Payette National Forest to the north. The primary uses or activities in this management area have been dispersed and developed recreation, fish habitat restoration, timber management, and livestock grazing.

Access - The main access to the area is by the paved Warm Lake Road (Forest Highway 22) from Cascade. Other access routes through the area include the South Fork Salmon River Road (Forest Road 474), Forest Road 579 from Warm Lake to Landmark, Forest Road 478 up Rice Creek, and Forest Road 409 up Curtis Creek. Overall road density is an estimated 1.5 miles per square mile, as over half the area is roadless. Trails provide access to portions of the roadless areas, and other portions are relatively inaccessible.

Special Features - Prominent landmarks in this area include Warm Lake, the South Fork Salmon River, Vulcan Hot Springs, Rice Peak, and Thunderbolt Mountain. The South Fork Salmon River system has significant spawning and rearing habitat for threatened chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout. An estimated 52 percent of the management area is inventoried as roadless, including portions of the Caton Lake, Reeves Creek, Peace Rock, Stony Meadows, and Needles Roadless Areas.

Segments of Trail Creek, Tyndall Creek, and an unnamed creek near in Stolle Meadows are potentially eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. Segments of the South Fork Salmon River are eligible for National Wild and Scenic River designation, and are being considered for suitability. If found suitable, the Forest Service will recommend the South Fork Salmon River for potential designation under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The South Fork Salmon River drainage has been designated a “special management area” by the National Marine Fisheries Service to protect steelhead trout (Steelhead Biological Opinion 1998). Additional management constraints have been put in place due to this designation (see Standards and Guidelines for this Management Area).

Air - Air quality is usually excellent; this area is remote from any large population centers. However, periodic smoke from nearby wildland fires can settle in the valley bottoms for days or weeks at a time.

Landforms and Soils - Elevations range from 5,000 feet on the South Fork Salmon River to 8,696 feet atop Rice Peak. Management Area 19 falls primarily within the Upper South Fork Salmon River Subsection, and includes minor portions of the Salmon River Canyonlands and Fitsum Peak Glaciated Lands Subsections. The main geomorphic landforms are glaciated ridges and headlands, depositional lands, and fluvial mountain slopes. Slope gradients average between 5 to 20 percent in the depositional lands, between 40 to 75 percent in the ridges and headlands, and between 40 to 60 percent in the fluvial mountain slopes. The surface geology is Idaho Batholith granitics. Soils generally have low to high surface erosion potential, and moderate productivity. Geomorphic integrity is at low to moderate risk due to roads, timber harvest, livestock grazing, and recreation in roaded areas that have resulted in accelerated erosion, stream channel modification, and streambank degradation.

Water - The management area is in the Warm Lake and Upper South Fork Salmon River Watersheds of the South Fork Salmon River Subbasin, which drains north into the Salmon River Basin. The major streams in the area are the South Fork Salmon River and its tributaries, Sixbit, Trail, Curtis, and Rice Creeks. Several high mountain lakes occur in the watershed, including Curtis, Rice, Bear Creek, and Roaring Lakes. Water quality is at low risk as they recover from wildfire, roads, and timber harvest that are causing an increase in sedimentation and nutrient levels.

Vegetation - Vegetation at lower elevations is typically ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir on south and west aspects, and Douglas-fir and grand fir forests on north and east aspects. Mid-elevations are dominated by shrubs and forest communities of grand fir, Douglas-fir, and subalpine fir, with pockets of persistent lodgepole pine and aspen. Forest communities of subalpine fir and whitebark pine are found in the upper elevations, interspersed with cliffs and talus slopes.

The dominant vegetation groups in the area are Cool Moist Douglas-fir, Cool Dry Douglas-fir, Dry Grand Fir, Cool Moist Grand Fir, Warm Dry Subalpine Fir, and Persistent Lodgepole Pine.

Cool Moist Douglas-fir is functioning at low risk due to the exclusion of fire and the downward trend of aspen that is associated with the vegetative type. Cool Dry Douglas-fir is functioning at low to moderate risk due to exclusion of fire and outbreaks of Douglas-fir beetles. This management area lacks the aspen component, and fires are producing uncharacteristic effects.

Dry Grand Fir is functioning at moderate risk due to fire exclusion and earlier logging practices that removed seral species. This has led to an overstory and understory that is heavy to grand fir. Potential for spruce budworm is high in the grand fir. Down woody debris and snags are lacking in previously harvested areas. Cool Moist Grand Fir is at moderate risk due to fire exclusion and impacts from past timber harvest. This has created areas deficient of snags and large woody debris, shortages of the large tree component, loss of larch and seral species, and a dense understory of grand fir.

Warm Dry Subalpine Fir is at a properly functioning condition. Persistent Lodgepole Pine is functioning at moderate to high risk due to the exclusion of fire and the associated lack of seedling/sapling stages, and the high risk of mountain pine beetle attacking the large even-aged stands that are older and lack vigor.

Botanical Resources - Region 4 sensitive species in this management area include Idaho douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*), Kellogg's bitterroot (*Lewisia kelloggii*), Buxbaum's sedge (*Carex buxbaumia*), podgrass (*Scheuchzeria palustris*), white beakbrush (*Rhynchospora alba*), bulb-bearing water hemlock (*Cicuta bulbifera*), and giant helliborne orchid (*Epipactis gigantea*). No federally listed or proposed plant species are known to occur in the area, but potential habitat for Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), a threatened species, may exist in riparian/wetland habitats from 1,000 to 7,000 feet.

Non-native Plants - Spotted knapweed and rush skeletonweed occur in the area, particularly along the main road corridors. An estimated 18 percent of the management area is highly susceptible to invasion by noxious weeds and exotic plant species. The main weed of concern is spotted knapweed, which is currently found in scattered populations throughout the area.

Riparian and Aquatic Resources - Riparian vegetation is functioning at low risk due to localized impacts from grazing that have reduced the willow component, and the presence of exotic plant species. Localized areas lack down woody debris and snags due to fires, past harvest treatments, and firewood gathering.

Warm Lake is stocked with westslope cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, lake trout, and bull trout. Kokanee salmon also occur. Important spawning, rearing, and migratory habitat for chinook salmon and steelhead trout occurs in the South Fork Salmon River and many of its tributaries. Native westslope cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and introduced brook trout are also present. The Cascade Ranger District has made numerous improvements to enhance water quality and fish habitat conditions over the past ten years. Aquatic habitat is functioning at moderate risk due to limiting fish habitat factors in this area, including elevated fine sediment and poor pool habitat. Native fish populations are at risk due to the presence of non-native species.

Wildlife Resources - Ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forests along the South Fork Salmon River provide habitat for white-headed woodpecker and flammulated owl, and winter range deer and elk. The area around Warm Lake is moose winter range. Douglas-fir and grand fir forests at lower and mid elevations provide habitat for Region 4 sensitive species, goshawk and great gray owl. High-elevation forests provide habitat for boreal owls, three-toed woodpeckers, wolverine, lynx, and many neotropical songbirds, as well as summer range for mammals such as deer, elk, black bear, and mountain lion. Wolves frequent the area, and this area is part of the Central Idaho Wolf Recovery Area. Bald eagles use the Warm Lake area and portions of the South Fork Salmon River. Terrestrial wildlife habitat is functioning at low risk. In managed areas, corridors, routes, and patterns have been altered by roads and harvest units, and timber harvest and fuelwood gathering have reduced snags and large woody debris. In unmanaged areas, fire exclusion has created dense stands that are at increasing risk to uncharacteristic fire.

Recreation Resources - The Warm Lake is a popular year-round destination for water-oriented recreation. Forest Service developed sites include three campgrounds, a boat ramp, a picnic area, and a swimming area. Privately owned or operated sites include lodges, summer homes, and organization camps. Dispersed recreation and includes hunting, fishing, boating, hiking, ATV use, snowmobiling, motorbiking, and horseback riding. Several hot springs occur along the SFSR corridor. Users in this area come from Cascade and Long Valley to the west, and Boise

and Treasure Valley to the south. The area is in Idaho Fish and Game Management Unit 25. Most trails in the area are open to motorbikes. One rental cabin exists at Stolle Meadows, and Rice Peak Lookout is being developed for rental use.

Cultural Resources - Cultural themes in this area include Prehistoric Archaeology, Ethnic Heritage, Agriculture, Mining, Public Land Management, and Recreation. Documented Nez Perce camps existed along the South Fork of the Salmon River and at Warm Lake. These camps were used well into the historic period and the area remains important to the Nez Perce people. Knox Ranch supplied miners on their way to the Thunder Mountain mining district in the 1890s. Knox Ranch is one of the oldest agricultural sites on the Forest. Historic properties associated with the Knox operations include several historic burials and the Billy Cline Cabin. In 1916, the Forest Service converted Cline's cabin to a ranger station. Stolle Guard Station, established in 1907, was originally known as the South Fork Ranger Station. The CCC maintained a summer camp at Warm Lake and a spike camp at Stolle Meadows. CCC crews replaced the structures at Stolle Guard Station with new ones, and built new campgrounds and roads in the area. They also built a new lookout on Rice Peak, originally known as Blue Point.

Timberland Resources - An estimated 75,900 acres of Management Area 19 are tentatively suited for timber management. These acres represent about 6 percent of the tentatively suited land on the Forest. Past timber management activity has occurred in scattered areas. Future management is dependent upon achieving goals and objectives for water quality and fish habitat. Forest products such as fuelwood, posts, and poles are also collected in designated areas.

Rangeland Resources - Grazing is limited to recreational and administrative stock. Management Area 19 provides an estimated 251 acres of capable rangeland. These acres represent less than 1 percent of the capable rangeland on the Forest.

Mineral Resources - This area is open for mining activities and prospecting. The potential for locatable minerals is low to unknown. The potential for geothermal resources is high in the SFSR corridor and moderate elsewhere. The potential for other leasable minerals is low to unknown. The potential for common variety mineral materials is unknown.

Fire Management - Prescribed fire has been used to reduce fuels in the Warm Lake summer homes area. Large wildfires in the last 15 years include the Thunderbolt Fire in 1994 and the Warm Lake Complex in 1989.

Lands and Special Uses - Special uses include outfitter and guide operations, utility corridors to private inholdings, recreation residence tracts (Paradise Valley and Tule Lake), the Warm Lake and North Shore lodges, organizational camps, waters systems, and recreation events. The Cabin Creek designated communications site is located within the management area.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In addition to the Forest-wide Goals and Objectives that provide direction for this management area, the following Goals and Objectives have been developed specifically for the area.

Soils and Water

Objective - Improve water quality by reducing road-related accelerated sediment delivery to the South Fork Salmon River and its tributaries.

Objective – De-list the South Fork of Salmon River drainage from the State of Idaho's impaired water-bodies list by applying appropriate and active watershed restoration to reduce sediment, which is the identified pollutant source.

Forest Vegetation

Objective - Manage vegetation to lower risk of uncharacteristic wildfires while maintaining visual and watershed values.

Objective - Restore the historic composition and structure in the Persistent Lodgepole Pine potential vegetation group to create a mosaic pattern of age classes, and to reduce risk of uncharacteristic disturbance patches from insects, disease, and wildfire.

Objective - Restore decadent aspen stands where they currently exist by stimulating regeneration and reducing conifer encroachment.

Shrubland and Grassland Vegetation

Objective - Enhance Warm Lake Creek Meadow by rejuvenating the willow age class structure lost due to absence floods and fire.

Objective - Reduce lodgepole pine encroachment in dry meadows within Lodgepole, Mormon, headwaters of South Fork Salmon River (Stolle Meadows), Tyndall, Dollar, Six Bit, and Curtis Creek drainages to retain meadow composition and a diversity of vegetative communities.

Botanical Resources

Objective – Maintain or restore habitat for threatened, proposed, and sensitive plant species.

Objective – Maintain or preserve habitat for Sensitive plant species including Idaho Douglasia, Kellogg's Bitterroot, Buxbaum's sedge, Podgrass, White beakbrush, Bulb-bearing water hemlock, and Giant Helliborine orchid.

Objective - Reduce spotted knapweed and rush skeletonweed within rare plant actual and potential habitat.

Objective – Maintain or enhance habitat and populations of Idaho douglasia consistent with the conservation agreement developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Non-native Plants

Objective - Prevent and control the establishment of noxious weeds, with special emphasis on spotted knapweed and rush skeletonweed.

Objective – Prevent the introduction of Eurasian water milfoil to Warm Lake.

Riparian and Aquatic Resources

Objective - Improve streambank stability in the Stolle Meadows area by restoring and maintaining cutbank and fillslope stability structures on Stolle Road, and by revegetating banks with native species as needed.

Objective - Restore aquatic and riparian habitats in the South Fork Salmon River and its tributaries by reducing bank instability and accelerated sediment from existing roads and other disturbances. Prioritize restoration where impacts to chinook salmon, steelhead trout, and bull trout spawning/rearing habitats can be reduced in the short term, with long-term benefits to water quality and fish habitat.

Wildlife Resources

Objective - Maintain or enhance habitat and travel corridors for lynx consistent with the Lynx Conservation Management Plan developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Objective - Reduce impacts to wildlife by reducing the number of motorized trails within the roadless areas.

Recreation Resources

Objective - Provide interpretive sites for watchable wildlife and other resources to increase non-impactive recreation opportunities and experiences throughout the Warm Lake area.

Objective - Manage and improve dispersed recreation experiences at Vulcan Creek and Rice Creek areas to reduce increasing impacts to vegetation, soil and water from recreation use.

Objective - Reduce unauthorized ATV use and enforce existing travel restrictions to reduce recreation impacts to wildlife, soil, and water resources.

Cultural Resources

Objective - Identify, protect, and interpret historic properties in the management area. Maintain the National Register status of eligible properties, specifically prehistoric sites on the SFSR,

Knox Ranch, Rice Peak Lookout, permitted recreational residence cabins on Warm Lake, and Stolle Meadows Guard Station, which is on the Forest's cabin rental program. Develop a heritage trails system for connected historic trails and contributing historic properties in the Warm Lake, Cascade Reservoir, and Upper Middle Fork Payette River Management Areas.

Objectives - Conduct an inventory to identify historic trails and properties contributing to a heritage trails system in the area. Provide interpretive materials for the public using these trails. Monitor the conditions of National Register eligible properties in the management area. Nominate Knox Ranch, Stolle Meadows Guard Station, and Rice Peak Lookout to the National Register of Historic Places. List the lookout on the Forest's cabin rental program. Complete the restoration of Knox Ranch and make the site available to the public. Develop a maintenance plan to protect the historic character of these facilities, and provide interpretive materials to the public using them. Complete a contextual evaluation for permitted, recreational residences on Warm Lake to help determine the National Register eligibility of individual properties.

Fire Management

Objective - Use prescribed and wildland fire to restore and maintain vegetative composition and structure, to reduce fuel loadings, to recycle nutrients, and to protect investments. Use prescribed fire within and adjacent to wildland/urban interface areas to reduce wildfire risks.

Objective - Identify areas appropriate for Wildland Fire Use for Resource Benefits in the Fire Management Plan.

Lands and Special Uses

Objective – Continue use by recreation residences within established recreation residence tracts.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Scenic Environment

Standard – Where indicated below, meet the visual quality objectives as viewed from the following areas/corridors:

Warm Lake Management Area										
Sensitive travel route or use area	Sensitivity Level	Visual Quality Objective								
		Fg			Mg			Bg		
		Variety Class			Variety Class			Variety Class		
		A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C
Warm lake, Warm lake rec sites and summer homes	1	R	R	PR	R	PR	PR	R	PR	M
Warm Lake highway	1	R	R	PR	R	PR	PR	R	PR	M
South Fork Salmon River	1	R	R	PR	R	PR	PR	R	PR	M
Forest road 474 to Rice Creek	1	R	R	PR	R	PR	PR	R	PR	M
Forest road 409	2	PR	PR	M	PR	M	M	PR	M	MM
Forest road 467	2	PR	PR	M	PR	M	M	PR	M	MM
Forest trails 103, 105	1	R	R	PR	R	PR	PR	R	PR	M
Forest trails 014, 072, 084	2	PR	PR	M	PR	M	M	PR	M	MM
Forest trails 086, 091, 104, 108	2	PR	PR	M	PR	M	M	PR	M	MM
Forest trails 109, 112, 150, 161	2	PR	PR	M	PR	M	M	PR	M	MM
Paradise Valley Summer homes	1	R	R	PR	R	PR	PR	R	PR	M

Riparian and Aquatic Resources

Standard - Timber harvest will not occur within Riparian Conservation Areas unless designed to meet riparian and aquatic objectives.

Standard - Where floatboating may impact spawning of listed species, the affected reaches will be closed to floatboating during the spawning season for those affected fish species.

Standard - Genetic integrity of the wild, native steelhead, summer chinook salmon, bull trout, and westslope cutthroat trout will be protected.

Guideline – Road cut and fill slopes should only be modified to increase stability or reduce surface erosion, sediment delivery and to improve user safety.

Guideline – Emphasize timber harvest methods that produce low levels of ground disturbances.

Botanical Resources

Standard – Implement the Conservation Agreement Idaho Douglasia (*Douglasia idahoensis*).

Guideline – Coordinate all aquatic, terrestrial, and watershed restoration, forested restoration, prescribed fire, and non-native plant eradication efforts with Forest Botanist to minimize impacts to threatened, proposed, or sensitive plant species, actual or potential habitat, and pollinators.

Recreation Resources

Standard - Camping by the general public will be limited to developed campsites within the "No Shooting Area" boundary surrounding the Warm Lake area.

Fire Management

Guideline - Use anadromous drainage suppression guidelines. Emphasize full suppression around Warm Lake summer homes and recreation sites. Emphasize containment and confinement rather than control tactics in other areas.

Special Uses

Guideline - The following guidelines apply to management of the Warm Lake and Paradise Valley Recreational Residences tracts:

- Allowable square footage for all buildings within the lot should not exceed a total of 2,500 square feet.
- Manage lots to include no more than a main cabin, storage shed, deck, garage, one dock (located off lot), and one outhouse. All structures should be within the permitted lot and be listed on the face of the permit. Unauthorized structures shall be removed upon the sale or transfer of the cabin.
- Approved outhouse structures are acceptable as long as there is no indication of pollution. Approved new outhouses will be the vault style construction. As cabin septic systems fail, they will be upgraded to meet existing codes.
- All buildings, including outbuildings, will be of wood construction and match existing structures on the lot.
- Landscaping of lots will blend in with natural surroundings and consist of native plants. No non-native flowers, shrubs, or trees will be planted within the lots.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Standard – Manage the South Fork Salmon River under a Recreational classification from the headwaters to the confluence with Goat Creek. Protect the river’s free-flowing status and outstandingly remarkable anadromous fish habitat, geology, cultural resources, and scenery until the river is formally designated and protected by Congress or the river is dropped from further consideration as a Wild and Scenic River candidate.

MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

This management area has been assigned the following management prescriptions.

Management Prescription Category (MPC)	Percent of Management Area
1.2 – Recommended Wilderness	0.1
2.2 – Research Natural Areas	1.3
3.1 – Aquatic, Terrestrial, Watershed Preservation	10.7
3.2 – Aquatic, Terrestrial, Watershed Restoration	73.3
4.2 – Roded Natural/Modified Recreation	14.5