



**"Jay
Gore/R1/USDAFS"
<jgore@fs.fed.us>**

08/31/2000 02:28
PM

To: Johnna_Roy@r1.fws.gov, grizz@selway.umt.edu
cc: "Laird A Robinson/R1/USDAFS" <larobinson@fs.fed.us>
Subject: Re: Fire Impacts to Bitterroot Recovery Area



good. what is your fax number? i have a new book from yellowstone assessing the impacts of the 88 fires on lots of things, one of which is grizzly. i can fax those pages to you. it is god news-burn was good for grizzly. jay

(Embedded image Jay Gore
moved to file: National Grizzly Bear Habitat
pic10906.jpg) Coordinator
Northern Region, Forest Service
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Johnna_Roy@r1
.fws.gov To: grizz@selway.umn.edu,
larobinson@fs.fed.us, jgore@fs.fed.us
cc:
08/31/00 Subject: Fire Impacts to
Bitterroot Recovery Area
02:52 PM

Attached is a summary report of the burned acreage within the Bitterroot Recovery Area and Experimental Area. I pulled this together so we would have some actual numbers to respond to questions we getting about the fires. The plan is to update this report as the fires grow. Page 2 has two "fire" Q&A's we developed for the newspaper insert, and the answer to the second question contains information specific to the selected alternative and ROD (so shh). The third Q&A is new and summarizes the information in the report...so here it is in case you don't want to wade through the report.

Q: How much of the Recovery Area has been burned?

A: The Recovery Area consists of the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Areas (3.7 million acres). As of August 30, 2000, approximately 12% (448,950 acres) of the entire recovery area has been burned, with the majority of fires occurring south of the Salmon River. The most productive grizzly bear habitat in the recovery area is north of the Salmon River, and a smaller percentage of this area has burned. Approximately 6% of the area north of the Salmon River has burned. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness constitutes the majority of this area, and is the area where grizzly bears will be reintroduced. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is burned over 5.5% of its acreage. The area south of the Salmon River in the Frank Church Wilderness contains dryer habitat types that are not as productive for grizzly bear habitat as are the moister habitats north of the Salmon River. Approximately 18% of the area south of the Salmon River has been burned. It is also important to note that fire acreage figures overestimate the actual burned area because they are derived from perimeter mapping which includes unburned areas.

Reports from wildlife specialists familiar with the various fires in the Bitterroot Recovery Area consistently indicate the majority of acreage

burned is in higher elevation stands, and the result is a natural mosaic of burned and unburned areas. Their professional opinion is the fires will be beneficial to wildlife habitats.

-Johnna

(See attached file: firesummary.wpd) (See attached file: firesummary.wpd)



pic10906.jp firesummary.w

Summary of fire acreage in the Bitterroot Recovery Area and adjacent USES lands in the Experimental Area (Updated August 30, 2000, J. Roy)

I. Bitterroot Final EIS information:

Recovery Area - 5,785 square miles, 3.7 million acres

Area north of Salmon River - 2,875 square miles, 1.84 million acres

Area south of Salmon River - 2,910 square miles, 1.86 million acres

Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness - 2,095 square miles, 1.35 million acres

Frank Church Wilderness - 3,690 square miles, 2.36 million acres

II. Fires within the Recovery Area (Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church Wilderness Areas):

TOTAL ACREAGE BURNING IN RECOVERY AREA: 448,950 acres

PERCENT OF RECOVERY AREA BURNING: 12%

PERCENT OF RECOVERY AREA NORTH OF SALMON RIVER BURNING: 6%

PERCENT OF RECOVERY AREA SOUTH OF SALMON RIVER BURNING: 18%

Frank Church Wilderness - (contact: Salmon/Challis NF, Andy Klimek, 208-756-2215):

Total Acres Burning: Total = 375,000 acres

North of Salmon River = 37,250 acres (Three Bears)

South of Salmon River = 337,750 acres (Diamond Complex, Flossie Complex)

Percent of FCRNRW Burning: Total = 16%

North of Salmon River = 2%

South of Salmon River = 18%

Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness:

Total Acres Burning: 73,934 acres

Percent of SBW Burning: 5.5%

Details:

Clearwater and Nez Perce Forest portions (contact: Becky Winkler, NPF, 208-983-1950)

Total = 1,934 acres: Hidden Fire (CNF)- 1650 ac.; Frog Fire (CNF)- 60 ac.;

Porphyry Fire (CNF)- 89 ac.; Poacher Fire (CNF)- 135 ac.

Bitterroot Forest portion (contact: Jim Fears, Bitterroot NF, 406-363-7122)

Total = 72,000 acres: Wilderness Complex (14 fires) and Blodgett Fire (SBW portion)

(Note: Keep in mind that the perimeter of fires is mapped. Most fires are mosaics of burned and unburned areas, thus the mapped acreage figure overestimates the area actually burned.)

III. Fires outside Wilderness on USFS lands adjacent to Recovery Area and within Experimental Area:

TOTAL burned acreage (outside Wilderness, and in 10(j) area): 374,805 acres

Details:

Clearwater Forest - 9,560 acres (contact: Grangeville Dispatch, 208-983-4060):

- Powell /Lochsa Districts- 5155 acres: Crooked Fire (Lolo pass) = 4,880; Bear Camp 275
- North Fork District- 4,406 acres: Elizabeth = 3,200; Snow Creek = 900; Collins Creek = 158; Copper = 108
- (Note: These fires are all higher elevation stands of spruce/fir, doug. fir, lodgepole, and are burning a natural mosaic.)

Nez Perce Forest - 13,076 acres (contact: Becky Winkler, 208-983-1950):

- Burnt Flats Fire (FS lands only) = 13,076
- (Note: This fire is located 6 miles south of Grangeville on USFS and state lands)

Bitterroot Forest - 120,000 acres (contact: Jim Fears, 406-363-7122):

- Blodgett Fire, Valley Complex Fire = 120,000 acres
- (Note: This represents the burned acreage on USFS land in the Bitt. Valley from the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary east to Hwy.93, i.e. the experimental area)

Salmon-Challis Forest - 153,000 acres (contact: Salmon/Challis NF, Andy Klimek, 208-756-2215)

Payette Forest- 79,169 acres (contact: Mira Crawford, 208-634-0784, or Floyd Gordon):

- Burgdorf Junction- 63,869 ac., Nick (east of McCall)- 4,300 ac., Indian- 11,000 ac.
- (Note: Floyd Gordon, the Forest Wildlife Biologist said the majority of acreage burned by the Payette fires is higher elevation spruce/fir and lodgepole stands, and the fires are burning a natural mosaic. He said the fires will be beneficial to wildlife habitat on the Forest.)

Other Information Sources:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/news/fire/index.html>

<http://www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/firemap.html>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/payette>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/sc/fire2000>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/clearwater>

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/bitterroot>

Q&A's on Impacts of Wildfire on Grizzly Bear Habitat and on Implementation of the Bitterroot Recovery Project

Q: *Will the recent fires in the Bitterroot Ecosystem impact the ability of the area to support grizzly bears?*

A: Habitat studies indicate the Bitterroot provides ample suitable habitat to support a population of grizzly bears. The recent fires of 2000 will not change this conclusion. Fire is a natural process integral to all Rocky Mountain ecosystems and grizzly bears have been living with fire in their habitat for thousands of years. In many areas habitat capability will actually improve as regeneration after the fires increases the distribution, abundance, and productivity of vegetative bear foods such as shrubs and forbs.

The 1988 fires in the Yellowstone ecosystem provide an example of the impacts of large fires on grizzly bear habitat. These fires burned 1.41 million acres of grizzly habitat in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Overall, the fires resulted in increased production of bear foods such as berries and forbs through nutrient cycling and regeneration of burned vegetation. Some old-growth whitebark pine trees were burned and killed, but fire is also an important part of whitebark pine ecology in that fire removes competing species and promotes whitebark seedling regeneration. The overall impact of the 1988 fires on the Yellowstone grizzly population was beneficial and this grizzly population has continued to occupy the burned areas, to increase in numbers, and to expand its range since the fires.

Q: *Will the fires impact the implementation of the Bitterroot recovery plan?*

A: Grizzly bears will not be reintroduced into the remote Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness until 2002, at the earliest. The fires are expected to have minimal impact on the habitat support capacity of this area for bears, especially since burned areas will have a chance to regenerate by the time bears are reintroduced.

With regard to the Bitterroot Valley of Montana, the fires in the Bitterroot Valley will have no impact on grizzly bears or their management. The Bitterroot Valley is identified in the plan as an area where grizzly bear presence will not be tolerated, and management agencies will actively relocate any bear on private lands in this Valley.

Q: *How much of the Recovery Area has been burned?*

A: The Recovery Area consists of the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Areas (3.7 million acres). As of August 30, 2000, approximately 12% (448,950 acres) of the entire recovery area has been burned, with the majority of fires occurring south of the Salmon River. The most productive grizzly bear habitat in the recovery area is north of the Salmon River, and a smaller percentage of this area has burned. Approximately 6% of the area north of the Salmon River has burned. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness constitutes the majority of this area, and is the area where grizzly bears will be reintroduced. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness is burned over 5.5% of its acreage. The area south of the Salmon River in the Frank Church Wilderness contains dryer habitat types that are not as productive for grizzly bear habitat as are the moister habitats north of the Salmon River. Approximately 18% of the area south of the Salmon River has been burned. It is also important to note that fire acreage figures overestimate the actual burned area because they are derived from perimeter mapping which includes unburned areas.

Reports from wildlife specialists familiar with the various fires in the Bitterroot Recovery Area consistently indicate the majority of acreage burned is in higher elevation stands, and the result is a natural mosaic of burned and unburned areas. Their professional opinion is the fires will be beneficial to wildlife habitats.



"Becky
Winkler/R1/USDAFS
"

<bwinkler@fs.fed.us>

08/30/2000 08:38
AM

To: <Johnna_Roy@r1.fws.gov>
cc:
Subject: Fire Acres within wilderness

Here are the acres you requested, the only fires we're tracking here in the GIS shop are the larger fires, so I don't have acreage for the smaller fires. You'd have to contact dispatch at the Supervisors Office to obtain the smaller acres.

Selway Bitterroot Wilderness:

Hidden Fire - 1440 acres
Frog Fire - 60 acres
Porphyry Fire - 89 acres
Poacher Fire - 135 acres

Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness:

Threebears/Flossie Fire - 25278 acres

Nez Perce NF (non wilderness)

Burnt Flats - 13076 acres on Nez Perce NF (total fire including state land
= 19630)

Becky Winkler
Nez Perce, National Forest
(208)983-1963



"Jim
Fears/R1/USDAFS"
<jfears@fs.fed.us>

08/30/2000 03:38
PM

To: johnna_roy@fws.gov
cc:
Subject: Selway-Bitterroot Fires

Johnna - Approximately 72,000 acres have been burned in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. This area is just the Montana and Idaho portions of the Wilderness. Approximately 120,000 acres have been burned in the Bitterroot Forest west of highway 93.

These acreage figures are approximate. The perimeters were derived from IR flights, air and ground GPS, and local knowledge. The figures will change as the fires change and as we get better intelligence at the end of the season.

Jim Fears
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