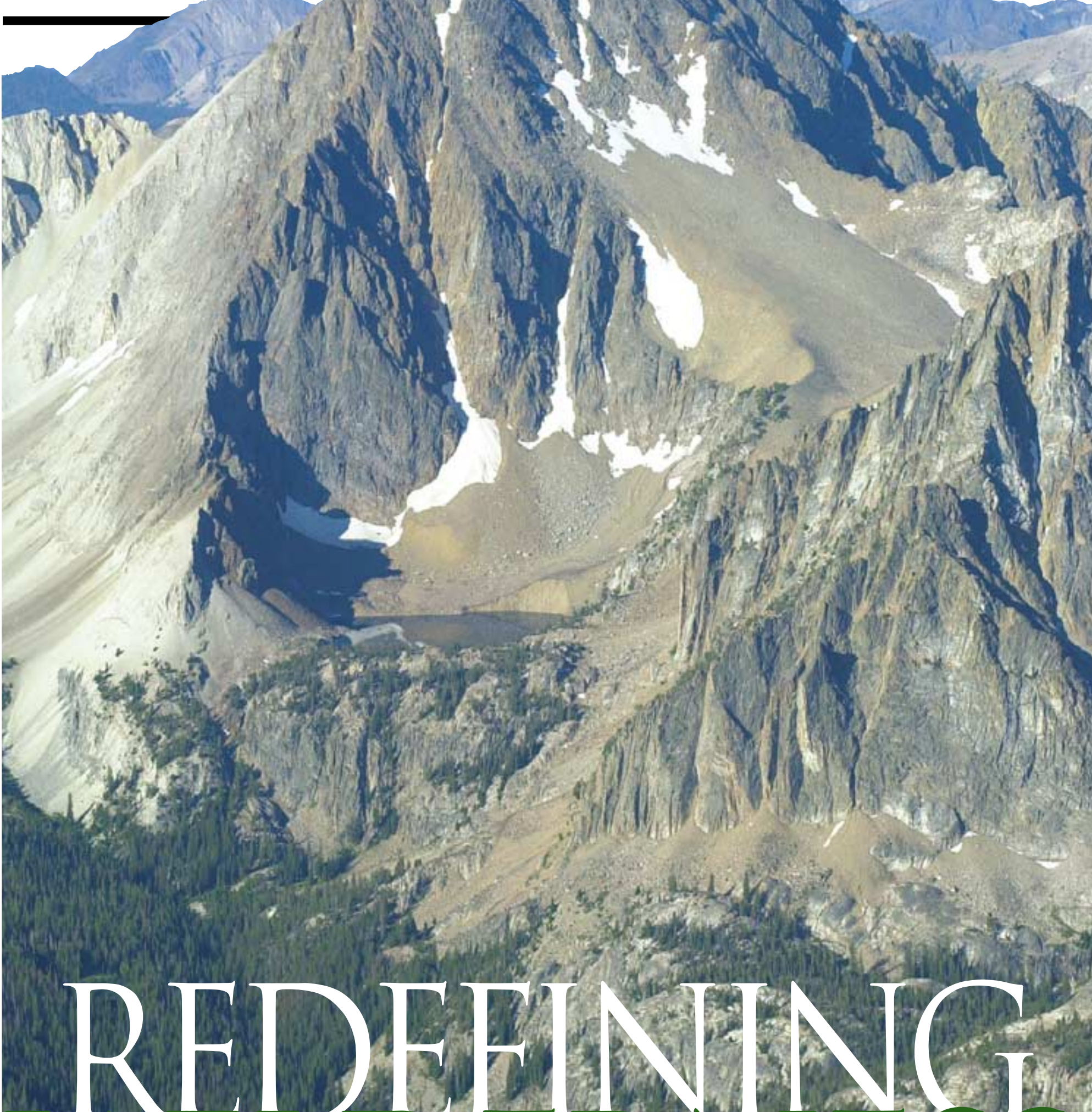


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Wednesday, July 30, 2003
Editor Ken Retallic, 726-8060

Valley

EXPRESS
SECTION
B



REDEFINING WILDERNESS

SIMPSON NEGOTIATES BOULDER-WHITE CLOUDS COMPROMISE

BY GREG STAHL AND GREGORY FOLEY
EXPRESS STAFF WRITERS

First in a series of three

Stories and pictures begin on page B3

CASTLE PEAK
Express photo by Willy Cook

Is it time for a Boulder-White Clouds Wilderness?

Rep. Simpson tries to appease groups with wilderness, economic stimulus bill

First in a series of three

By GREG STAHL

Express Staff Writer

At 11,815 feet above sea level, Castle Peak in Idaho's remote and rugged White Cloud Mountains towers over more than 500,000 acres of contiguous road-free wildlands that bridge two vastly different cultures.

This wild country, connecting the wealthy resort kingdom of Sun Valley with the rural and agrarian communities of Custer County, is a battle ground that has hosted land-use skirmishes for more than 30 years.

In the 1970s, the people of Idaho staved off a massive molybdenum mine planned for the lower flanks of Castle Peak, drawing the White Clouds into the political limelight for the first time and helping to effect congressional designation of the 756,000-acre Sawtooth National Recreation Area.

Now, 30 years later, with the region's land-use conundrums still partially unresolved, Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, is attempting to strike a chord of compromise among the Boulder and White Cloud Mountains' diverse and numerous stakeholders.

Simpson's pledge and the art of compromise

In 1999, near the shores of Redfish Lake, just 15 miles northwest of Castle Peak, Simpson stood before a burgeoning crowd of environmentalists and announced that he would try to craft a wilderness bill for the Boulder and White Cloud mountains. Four years later, Simpson's chief of staff, Lindsay Slater said the congressman is nearly ready to release a plan for public review, perhaps in September.

Simpson's proposal, an apparent study in the art of compromise, would designate about 250,000 acres of the White Cloud and Boulder Mountains as wilderness. The hybrid wilderness bill, to be called the "Central Idaho Economic Development and Recreation Act," would also trade roughly 16,000 acres of public land to Custer County that it would sell to private interests, netting the county up to \$10 million.

Half of the proceeds would be used to fund a new "Central Idaho Education Center," and half would be retained by the county for economic development with very few strings attached.

"Because Challis is basically competing with 200 other communities like it in the West for economic development, we want to offer an opportunity for people to gain higher education, those kinds of things that would be very attractive to a business," Slater said.

Concepts disclosed so far also include potential grazing permit buyouts and ranch purchases that would allow ranchers in environmentally sensitive areas to relocate.

As part of the compromise, and because motorized and mechanized uses are not allowed



Express photo by Willy Cook

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE BOULDER AND WHITE CLOUD MOUNTAINS reveals a landscape, twisted and crinkled, like a flattened piece of wastepaper. Hikers, bikers, motorcyclists, campers, off-road vehicle drivers, miners and nearby residents have all laid stake to this land. For proposed wilderness designation to become reality, the groups must look for common ground.



"In some areas everybody is going to have to swallow.(although)... I have never met anyone who doesn't agree that we ought to protect the pristine areas of this state."

REP. MIKE SIMPSON
R-Idaho



"In fairness ... maybe he's got such a compelling case ... that maybe I'm going to turn tail. I want a little more ingenuous information before I jump on this bandwagon. But I don't want more wilderness and that is basically where this is headed."

LENORE BARRETT
Idaho state representative

that in this art of compromise, no one group will get everything it wants.

"The Idaho Conservation League wants more than 500,000 acres. We're at half of that, and the congressman is looking at boundaries that are similar to what the Forest Service recommended, with adjustments to protect traditional motorized and snowmobile use," Slater said.

Some groups—like the ICL, which has been brokering the deal on behalf of environmentalists, and the Blue Ribbon Coalition, which has been working on behalf of motorized and bicycling interests—have acknowledged that compromise is part of the game. Nevertheless, nervous apprehension appears to be gnawing at key players on various sides of the issue as they await the release of Simpson's official blueprint.

"In fairness to Congressman Simpson, maybe he's got such a compelling case for what he's going to do that maybe I'm going to turn tail," said State Rep. Lenore Barrett, a conservative Republican from Challis and a wilderness opponent. "I want a little more ingenuous information before I jump on this bandwagon. But I don't want more wilderness, and that is basically where this is headed."

Stew Churchwell, a Boulder and White Cloud wilderness supporter, has lived in Custer County for 20 years and manages a Custer County ranch on the East Fork of Salmon River for Western Watersheds Project, a Hailey-based environmental group. He also is anxious to learn more details about Simpson's plan, but, unlike Barrett, he fears not enough of the mountain ranges will be included.

See WILDERNESS on page B7

in wilderness areas, proposed wilderness area boundaries would not encompass areas of traditional snowmobile, motorcycle and off-road vehicle use. In general, the wilderness would include areas east of the spine of the White Cloud Mountains and some, but not all, of the Boulder Mountains.

A significant portion of the

wilderness area would include relatively low-elevation land in the eastern portions of the mountains to the east of the East Fork of the Salmon River and north of the North Fork of the Big Lost River. It would stretch east to Jerry Peak.

Areas specifically omitted from the proposal include the Boulder Basin near Boulder

Peak; Champion, Washington and Fourth of July lakes basins; Warm Springs Meadow and parts of Warm Springs Creek; Rough and Casino creeks; and Railroad Ridge, Slater said. Some of these areas are equally prized by environmentalists, mountain bikers, off-road vehicle riders and snowmobilers.

Slater quickly acknowledged

This Week's **OPEN HOUSES**



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**Friday & Sunday,
August 1 & 3
12:00pm - 3:00pm**

**473-B Wood River Dr
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11:30am - 2:00pm**

**229 Alturas Drive,
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1:00 - 4:00pm**

**20 Lane Ranch Road,
Lane Ranch**

A really great property with new hardwood flooring & a wonderful functional floor plan with a First Floor Master Suite with Fireplace Large Kitchen with slab granite & huge well landscaped yard. Well priced at \$2,295,000. Hosted by Leisa Brait.



**Sondra Kantor
578-9595 / 720-1937**

**Wednesday, July 30
11:30am-2:00pm
Sunday, August 3
2:00-4:00pm**

14 Old Sage Trail

4 sunny, quiet acres, lovely air-conditioned home and space for horses, tennis court, putting green-what's your pleasure? Light-filled rooms, views in all directions, 3BD, 3BA, great room looking up Greenhorn Gulch. Come in for an ice cream treat! \$1,475,000.

Wilderness Act set rules for wildland uses

By GREGORY FOLEY
Express Staff Writer

With Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, preparing a proposal to designate 250,000 acres of wilderness in the Boulder and White Cloud mountains, north of Ketchum, many residents of Blaine and Custer counties are wondering how a federal wilderness designation might affect their use of the land.

Some revel in the possibility of seeing mechanized or natural-resource extraction uses being restricted in the largest, unprotected, national forest roadless area in the Lower 48 States. Others cringe at the notion of a potential increase in federal control over public lands in Idaho. And, at times, the debate is complicated by vastly varying opinions on what true "wilderness" is.

Still, the real implications of creating a designated wilderness area in the Boulder-White Clouds lie in the federal Wilderness Act of 1964, the guiding legislation that enabled the establishment of 106 million acres of protected wilderness in the United States.

The Wilderness Act describes wilderness 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."

The original legislation established 9.1 million acres of wilderness in a new land-management system. Eventually, an additional 97 million acres of lands were designated as wilderness in areas managed by the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Fish and Wildlife Service.

In the Lower 48 States, approximately 48 million acres of land have been designated as wilderness, or approximately 2 percent of the total land area. The balance of wilderness lands are in Alaska.

The Wilderness Act does restrict the use of land, but at the same time generally allows for a multiplicity of activities, including hiking, camping, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, and limited grazing.

Activities that are generally banned in wilderness include the use of all mechanized vehicles: motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles, as well as all bicycles and mountain bikes.

The act states "there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road... and, except as necessary... 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."

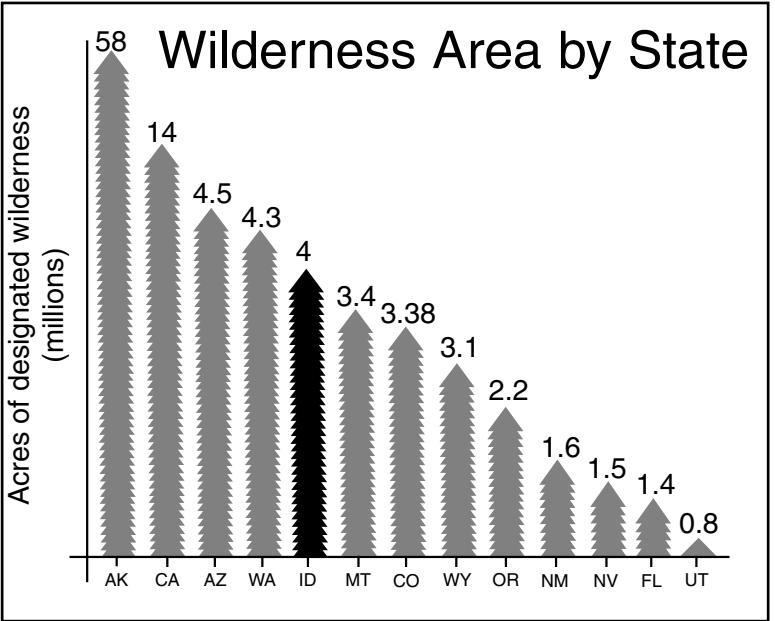
The rules include a provision to allow certain barred activities to ensure the health and safety of people, generally to accommodate the use of helicopters in emergencies.

The law also makes provisions for "the control of fires, insects and diseases" within wilderness areas.



Express graphic by Gavin McNeil and Tony Barriatua

THE BOULDER AND WHITE CLOUD MOUNTAINS contain the largest road-free land mass in the lower 48 United States. Rep. Mike Simpson's proposed wilderness boundaries, though still unofficial, would include about half of the total road-free area. The dark gray on this map represents areas bereft of roads.



IDAHO'S WILDERNESS AREAS

Idaho is home to six wilderness areas, encompassing 4 million acres.

- Selway-Bitterroot (1.09 million acres)
- Sawtooth (217,000 acres)
- Gospel Hump (206,000 acres)
- Frank Church-River of No Return (2.4 million acres)
- Craters of the Moon (43,000 acres)
- Hells Canyon (84,000 acres)



Photo courtesy the U.S. Forest Service

MINING'S REMAINS still linger in the White Cloud Mountains, as they do in Washington Basin, pictured above.



Express photo by Willy Cook

MOUNTAIN BIKERS HEADING INTO THE WHITE CLOUD MOUNTAIN FOOTHILLS at Fisher Creek could signify access conflicts to come. For years, mountain bikers, motorcyclists and snowmobilers have enjoyed unfettered access to the Boulder and White Cloud mountains. Wilderness Designation could end that, although Fisher Creek and several other key mechanized access areas are not proposed to be included in Rep. Mike Simpson's wilderness bill.

WILDERNESS

Continued from page B3

ed in the final document.

"It's very mysterious and nebulous," he said. "How can you comment when you don't know what's going on."

But support from people like Barrett and Churchwell is what the congressman needs, Slater said.

"Frankly, there needs to be a broad consensus for this, because there are any number of ways it can be killed.

"If we don't have a bill that has broad support, we won't take it to Congress."

The past and the present

In 1968, the American Smelting and Refining Co. announced plans to mine and process molybdenum at the base of Castle Peak, prompting a backlash from the state's budding environmental community and from the people of Idaho, who elected Gov. Cecil Andrus, in part, because of his pledges to protect the area.

Andrus, who opposed the ASARCO mine, became Idaho's first Democratic governor in 25 years by defeating incumbent Don Samuelson, a mine supporter. Over the next two years, the debate continued on how to

"Frankly, there needs to be a broad consensus for this, because there are any number of ways it can be killed. If we don't have a bill that has broad support, we won't take it to Congress."

LINDSAY SLATER

Rep. Mike Simpson's chief of staff

protect the White Cloud and nearby Sawtooth Mountains. The Sawtooth National Recre-

ation Area was established in 1972, along with the Sawtooth Wilderness Area, which encompasses 217,000 acres of staggering granite cirques, peaks and timbered moraines. In establishing the SNRA and Sawtooth Wilderness, Congress also instructed the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to establish a wilderness study area in the Boulder and White Cloud Mountains. The request resulted in a 251,100-acre safeguard, which is the only congressionally mandated wilderness study area in Idaho.

To this day, the 582,931-acres of road-free wild lands including and surrounding the congressionally mandated wilderness study area are the largest conterminous road-free area in the lower 48 states.

Since the SNRA was established, there have been at least three attempts by conservationists and politicians to introduce legislation establishing a Boulder-White Cloud Wilderness Area. None succeeded.

For some, the current effort represents a window of opportunity that may not return for at least a generation.

"Opportunities like this don't come around all that often," said Geoff Pampush, executive di-

See WILDERNESS on page B8

This Week's **OPEN HOUSES**



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WILDERNESS

Continued from page B7

rector of The Nature Conservancy-Idaho.

TNC-Idaho is working with Custer County ranchers and politicians to help effect the economic stimulus portion of the deal. However, it has not taken a position on wilderness designation.

"If the moment passes, it is passed for a long time. If it passes, both (Custer) county loses and the wilderness advocates lose," Pampush said.

At the crux of the wilderness debate are the numerous stakeholders who must find common ground for legislation to become reality.

Throughout the last 30 years, recreational use in the Boulder-White Clouds by outdoors enthusiasts has steadily increased, and the skyrocketing popularity of off-road vehicles, mountain bikes and snowmobiles has hit home in the two mountain ranges. But, while use has increased, wild populations of certain plants and animals have been on the decline.

Although wilderness debates often center around human use and access issues, it is well documented that wildlife and wild plants are key beneficiaries of wilderness designations.

"For humans, wilderness areas are places of solace. But from a wildlife perspective, species don't have the confrontation of mechanized human uses that impact them," said Kaz Thea, of Hailey. A former U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologist, she an advocate for the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act, a federal bill that would designate wilderness in road-free areas throughout the Northern Rockies.

"The importance is locking up large tracts of land, and that's the beauty of wilderness, because you're reducing intensive human uses like off-highway vehicle use," Thea said. "Large blocks of unfragmented habitat with low human intervention are one of the key as-



Photo courtesy the U.S. Forest Service

EXPLORATORY DRILLING in the vicinity of Castle Peak, at the lowest of the Little Boulder Chain Lakes in the White Cloud Mountains, helped spur designation of the Sawtooth National Recreation Area in 1972. In this photo, the Longyear Drilling Co. core drill rig was under contract to the Taylor Mining Co. of Denver, Colo. Taylor and ASARCO both had exploration programs for several years in the vicinity of Castle Peak.

pects of wilderness areas."

In the Boulder and White Cloud mountains, a number of species share the land with people, including mountain goats, bighorn sheep, salmon, gray wolves and Canada lynx. Several species are listed under the Endangered Species Act, and several more—including a rare plant called White Clouds milkvetch, which is found only in the White Cloud Mountains—are considered sensitive species.

For Churchwell, it's a land of

inspiring beauty as well as an important piece of Idaho's habitat puzzle.

"The first backpacking trip I did in this country was in the White Clouds, and I really loved it," he said. "The thing that draws me, personally, to the White Clouds is the incredible beauty. The color of those vertical headwalls you really don't find in other mountains like the Sawtooths or the Bighorn Crags. It's so beautiful and so

See WILDERNESS on page B10

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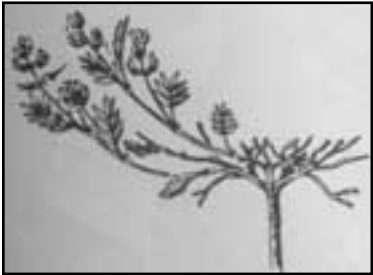
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WHITE CLOUD MILKVETCH
(*Astragalus vexilliflexus*)

Boulder-White Clouds a haven for rare plants

By **GREGORY FOLEY**
Express Staff Writer

The rugged Boulder and White Cloud mountains contain a unique collection of alpine and sub-alpine plant communities, including one plant that is found nowhere else on the globe.

In fact, numerous species of plants listed as “sensitive” by the U.S. Forest Service occur in the White Cloud Mountains, while one rare plant that may occur in the area is protected under the federal Endangered Species Act.

- White Cloud milkvetch (*Astragalus vexilliflexus*) is a low-lying flowering plant that is endemic to the White Cloud Mountains. Only nine populations of the plant are known globally, all of which occur in the higher elevations of the northeast section of the White Clouds.

- The slender moonwort (*Botrychium lineare*) is a rare fern that occurs in alpine meadows, forests, cliffs and grasslands. A species that is a candidate for protection under the ESA, the slender moonwort was discovered on Railroad Ridge in the White Cloud Mountains in 2002.

- Northern sagewort (*Artemisia campestris*) is a blooming perennial that ranges throughout North America, but is found in Idaho only in the White Cloud Mountains.

- Ute ladies’ tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), an orchid that grows in riparian streamside and lake-side areas, is listed under the ESA as a “threatened” plant species. The White Cloud Mountains are considered excellent habitat for the plant.

- Silvery/Jones primrose (*Primula incana*), a riparian flowering plant that prefers stream banks and moist meadows, has been documented nowhere in Idaho except near the East Fork of the Salmon River, in the White Clouds.

Other sensitive plant species that occur in the White Cloud Mountains include wedge-leaf saxifrage, Farr’s willow, Challis milkvetch and Brewer’s sedge.

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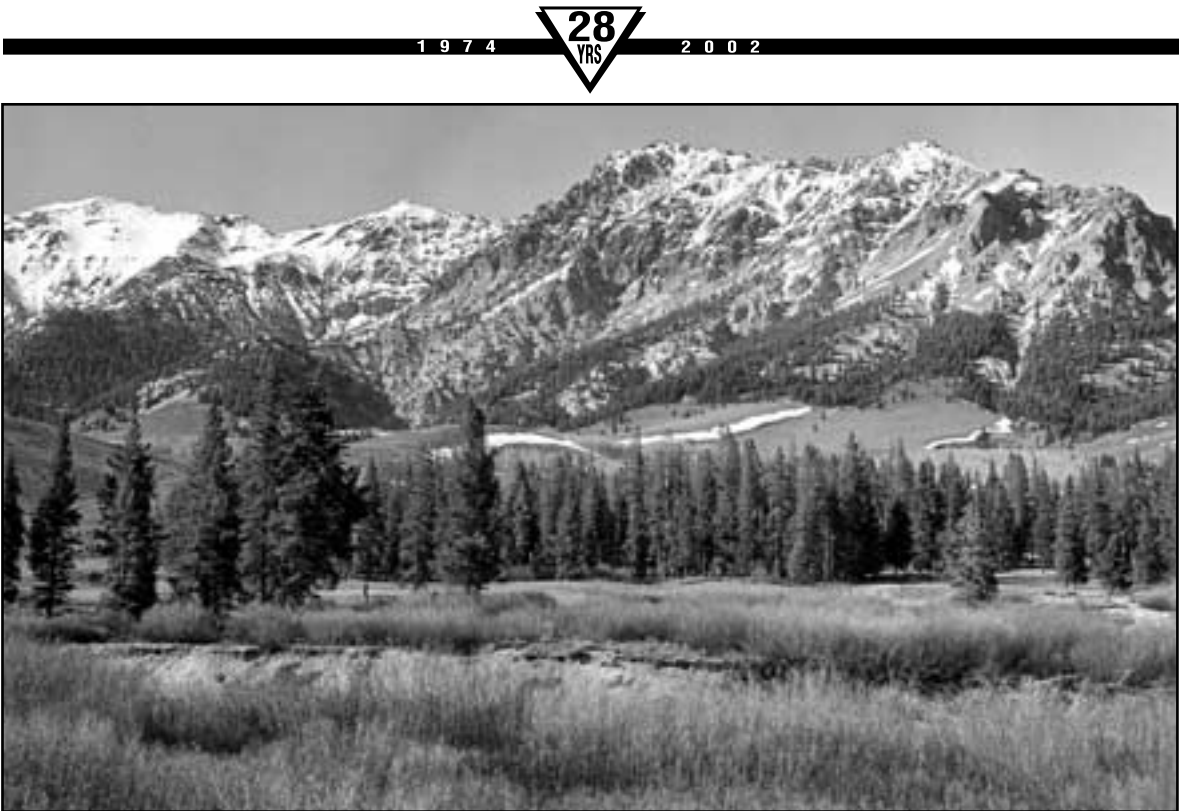


Photo courtesy the U.S. Forest Service

THE BOULDER MOUNTAINS include a staggering string of 11,000-foot peaks north of Sun Valley and Ketchum. Some, but not all, of the Boulders will be included in Rep. Mike Simpson’s Boulder-White Cloud Wilderness proposal. Historical use, particularly in the Boulder Basin, and a recent winter use agreement among snowmobilers and skiers, will be honored, according to the congressman’s chief of staff.

WILDERNESS
Continued from page B8
photogenic.”

But Idaho is growing, and as the demand for forest use rises, wildlife, fish, forests and motorized and mechanized access to them are all at risk.

“Our position is that we feel we should be able to preserve the current recreation access that our constituents have in the Boulder-White Clouds area,” said Clark Collins, executive director of the Blue Ribbon Coalition, an organization that represents a broad spectrum of backcountry recreation interests including horseback riders, mountain bikers, off-highway vehicle users and snowmobilers.

“In the past, all the wilderness proposals have only included lands proposed for wilderness, and everyone else be damned,” Collins said. “Simpson has made it clear that our interests will get something out of this, and that is designation of land for our use.”

An ongoing process

The balance between the conflicting interests involved in the wilderness discussion, as well as



“I’d like to see it left the way it is. I’ve seen so much stuff change here, and I’d like to see it stay the same.”

John Downing
14-year-old Stanley resident

the proposed economic stimulus package for Custer County, could be precarious. Environmentalists are calling for more protection, while access groups are asking for assurances that their members will not be cut out of a myriad of historical use areas.

What’s more, the concept of giving 16,000 acres of public land to Custer County for economic stimulus has created quite a stir among grassroots environmentalists.

And this debate aside, Idaho still has more wild land than any state outside Alaska, with 4 million acres of designated wilderness and another 17 million acres of Forest Service and BLM land still bereft of roads and available for potential wilderness protection.

For now, the various interest groups are assuming a wait-and-see posture.

“Our process is going slow and methodical, keeping people informed when we can, and then going public with the concepts to find out what’s going to work and what’s not going to work,” Slater said. “Then we’re trying to find out where the wins are for each affected group.”

Next week: The economics of Rep. Simpson’s proposal

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Dr. Melani Harker,
of Every Woman’s Wellness,
is pleased to welcome a nurse practitioner into her OB-GYN practice. Nancy Schwab, MS, CRNP is currently accepting new patients in the field of women’s health.

727-9900



CITY OF

SUN VALLEY

PUBLIC NOTICE

**ZONE CODE AMENDMENTS: NOTICE OF A HEARING BEFORE THE
SUN VALLEY CITY COUNCIL UPON ORDINANCE #344; AMENDING THE
ZONING AND LAND USE TITLE OF THE SUN VALLEY, IDAHO CITY CODE**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN NOTICE that on Thursday, August 14, 2003, in the Sun Valley City Hall, at the southeast corner of the intersection of Dollar Road and Elkhorn Road (81 Elkhorn Road), the Sun Valley City Council will hold a Public Hearing upon Ordinance #344 proposing amendments to Chapter 2 of Title 9, ZONING DEFINITIONS by creating a definition for a Compact Dwelling Unit and for Community Housing, and amending Chapter 6, Article B of Title 9, CC COMMERCIAL CENTER DISTRICT, by inserting the following changes:

- (1) The PERMITTED USES of the CC District are clarified regarding residential uses, to provide a direct reference for multiple-family dwellings.
- (2) The GENERAL REGULATIONS would have a new Item A.1 on to clarify and cap the density allowed in the CC District at 21 dwellings per acre, to be the same as RM-2 (the adjacent zoning for much of the Sun Valley Village Commercial Center), except that the existing reference to 30 dwellings per acre would be allowed for smaller sized dwellings, to be called Compact Dwelling Units; additionally, a density bonus would be allowed for an affordable housing element that is acceptable to the City.
- (3) New Item A.4 of the GENERAL REGULATIONS would require minimal commercial floor area, to ensure commercial elements in a Commercial Core.
- (4) New Item D.2 of the GENERAL REGULATIONS City would revise the allowable height at the setback line adjacent to RA and RS-1 districts, and provide for a setback requirement for other adjacent residential districts: RS-2, RM-1, and RM-2.
- (5) The allowable height would be adjusted based on the type of use; the existing height regulation of 64 feet could be reserved for specific uses only in the new Subsection E of the GENERAL REGULATIONS.
- (6) Finally, the parking requirements would be revised to require 3 parking spaces for large homes in the CC Commercial Core and one space for compact dwelling units.

The ordinance is available for inspection at City Hall during regular business hours. NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that at the aforementioned time and place, all interested persons may appear and be given an opportunity to comment on the matter stated above. Comments and questions to be considered prior to the meeting should be directed to the Sun Valley Planning Department, Phone (208.622.4438); Fax (208.622.3401); Email (planning@ci.sun-valley.id.us), or, U.S. Mail (P.O. Box 416, Sun Valley, Idaho 83353). Written comments must be received 7 days (August 7, 2003) prior to the hearing in order to be made part of the record at the hearing(s).

Sensitive species inhabit Boulder-White Clouds

By GREGORY FOLEY
Express Staff Writer

With pristine forests, pure alpine lakes and lush meadows, the Boulder-White Cloud Mountains provide habitat to an array of sensitive fish and wildlife species, including five that are protected by the federal Endangered Species Act.

- Reintroduced to Idaho in 1995, the threatened gray wolf has found an abundance of suitable range in the White Cloud Mountains. At least one pack of wolves established itself in the western White Clouds this summer.

- The U.S. Forest Service has determined that thousands of acres of land in the region provide excellent habitat for the threatened Canada lynx, which occurs in small numbers in central Idaho.

- Canada lynx have historically been spotted in the White Clouds, while their prey species—such as snowshoe hare, grouse, and a variety of small mammals—occur in adequate numbers to support lynx.

- Bald eagles, also a threatened species in the Lower 48 States under the ESA, are known to occur in northern sections of the White Clouds, although much of the mountain range has been deemed unsuitable for the birds. Proposals are pend-

ing to remove the bald eagle from the federal list of endangered species.

- Peregrine falcons—removed from the ESA in 1999—are also found in the greater Sawtooth National Recreation Area. Parts of the White Clouds are considered suitable habitat for the once-endangered falcons.

- The threatened bull trout, a species of char native to Idaho, is known to inhabit specific streams and tributaries in the White Cloud Mountains.
- The native Chinook salmon, which migrates annually from

the Pacific Ocean to spawn in freshwater systems in and around the White Clouds, is also listed a threatened species under the ESA.

In addition, two sensitive—and elusive—species of mammals that are rarely seen by humans, the wolverine and the fisher, have been sighted in or around the Boulder-White Clouds. The west-slope cutthroat, the native trout of central and northern Idaho, is managed as a “species of concern” by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game.

The Boulder-White Clouds also provide habitat for populations of elk, mule deer, antelope, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, pine marten, coyote, mountain lion, and black bear.



Express photo by Willy Cook

A BALD EAGLE SOARS over Salmon River country.

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2003

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Fever	Sometimes	No	Sometimes
Headache	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Pain in upper teeth	Sometimes	No	No
Bad breath	Sometimes	No	No
Coughing	Sometimes	Sometimes	Yes
Nasal congestion	Yes	Sometimes	Yes
Sneezing	No	Sometimes	Yes

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