

PUBLIC LANDS REPORT by Jerry Shriner, Panhandle BCH

The St Joe travel management plan that Bernie Lionberger worked on is yet to be finalized. The process has been delayed by the departure of Chuck Mark, the former St Joe Ranger. The final review and decision is now in the hands of Ranotta McNair, Forest Supervisor for the Idaho Panhandle National Forest. Until the new plan is approved the existing rules apply and can be accessed by contacting the St Joe Ranger District.

Two land exchange proposals are in the works that affect North Idaho and possibly public land that PBCH members use. The first is the Lochsa exchange which involves the exchange of privately owned parcels in the upper Lochsa River area for scattered Forest Service parcels in six northern Idaho counties. The FS would acquire ownership of approximately 39 thousand acres of logged over land formerly belonging to Plum Creek Lumber in exchange for 28 thousand acres of public land managed by the USFS.

The second is an exchange proposed by M3 Development and Idaho Forest Group involving approximately 11 thousand acres of land owned by M3 in the Horseshoe Bend area north of Eagle, ID for 9 thousand acres of publicly owned scattered parcels of land managed by BLM in the northern counties of the Idaho. Under the plan the land in the north would immediately be sold to Idaho Forest Group. For information on the Lochsa exchange contact Teresa Trulock at 208-935-4256 and for the M3 exchange contact Stephanie Snook at 208-769-5004.

The need for vigilance regarding trail maintenance pops up in the oddest places. While riding in the Panther Creek area of the Frank Church Wilderness, Diane and I found one trail that clearly has been abandoned, two that are nearly impassable and one in serious need of maintenance. This is in an area burned over several years ago and now subject to an increasing number of dead falls, large and small. Without maintenance, access to the Bighorn Crags from the Clear Creek Trail head may soon be lost. This is just one example. If you are aware of others contact George Miller at 208-661-0154 who is working to inventory trails before they are lost all together.