

*The Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, protector of much of America's beauty, is constantly striving to insure our beautiful lands are used for maximum benefit of all the people. The "Hells Canyon Country" of Oregon and Idaho is one of these lands — a country of many values, dissected by many canyons including North America's deepest. This booklet outlines some proposals for recreational use of this spectacular land.*



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newly issued.

## FOREWORD

The Hells Canyon, the Seven Devils and the Imnaha River Country of the Snake River has long been recognized as unusually interesting. It is spectacular CANYON COUNTRY unsurpassed in the continental United States. It is an area of relative inaccessibility which, in its entirety, is known by few people.

The HELLS CANYON COUNTRY is located within the boundaries of three National Forests — the Payette and Nezperce in Idaho and the Wallowa-Whitman in Oregon.

A Forest Service recreation development plan has been prepared for the area. It, in detail, recognizes:

- The great and varied recreation opportunities possible through access and facilities development — along the Canyon bottom, in the rim country, and on top.
- Dams impounding the wild, dashing waters of the Snake River are closing, one by one, chapters of the past. They are changing the nature of recreation and accessibility of a vast deep and rugged canyon country.
- That, eventually, more than 75 miles of placid reservoir will be available for boaters' use. Access to the slopes and heights will be easier for the "canyoneer" — the bird and big game hunters, rockhounds, botanists, explorers, and photographers.

In addition the plan recognizes:

- The responsibility of licensees for development and administration of damsite facilities and public accommodations directly related to the dams.
- The interest, concern, and specific responsibility of others directly and indirectly involved in planning development of the CANYON COUNTRY.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the HELLS CANYON COUNTRY recreation development are to provide a full range of water- and forest-oriented recreation opportunities while maintaining the unspoiled, unique, rugged and forested environment. In detail the recreation development proposal does the following: (1) Appraises the recreation opportunities within National Forest boundaries; (2) estimates the probable extent and kinds of recreation use; (3) determines the transportation system needed; (4) anticipates the allotment of lands for various kinds of recreation uses with development and cost estimates; (5) establishes the necessary criteria for protection and administration of these resources, and (6) points out directions for further planning and correlation for recreation development.

The proposal is therefore preliminary in nature. Availability of funds and changes in public needs will require periodic revisions.



# **TODAY**

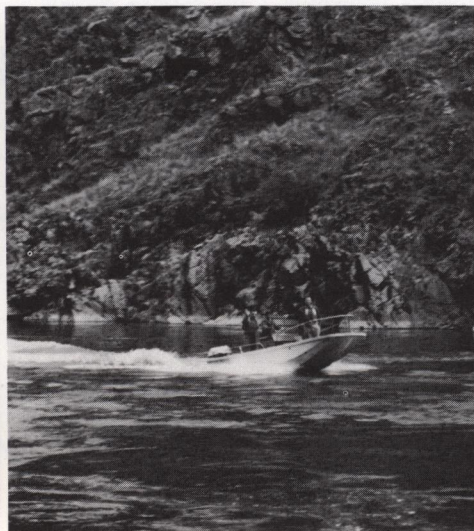
## **RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE . . .**

- Wild, rugged, challenging country.
- Access limited by trail, primitive roads, and boat on difficult and often dangerous waters.
- Fish and game paradise — steelhead, sturgeon, smallmouth bass, black bear, trophy deer, and elk.

*Smallmouth  
bass fishing  
is excellent!*



*Snake River trail.*



*Jet boat on Snake River.*



*A trophy elk.*





*Primitive road provides limited access down Imnaha River to Dug Bar on the Snake River.*

History enriches the lore of the HELLS CANYON COUNTRY. Chief Joseph, after being driven from the ancestral Wallowa Valley homeland by General Howard's Cavalry in the Spring of 1877, led his Nez Perce Tribe and their cattle and horses across the Snake River near Dug Bar ① (in photo at right). The remarkable crossing made when the river was in full flood was accomplished without the loss of a human life.

In May, 1887, 31 Chinese Nationals prospecting for gold at the mouth of Deep Creek ② (in photo at right) were massacred by white renegade horse thieves. As a result of the international incident, the United States paid the Imperial Chinese Government \$276,000 in indemnities.





## ***TOMORROW AFTER DEVELOPMENT...***

- Forest Service resource management will be intensified with emphasis on recreation.
- Greatly improved and increased access to key points and facilities will be provided.
- Natural beauty of rough topography and thousands of inaccessible acres will remain roadless and unchanged.
- Area economy will benefit — Many people will come to enjoy the recreation opportunities of the HELLS CANYON COUNTRY. Here will be scenic variety and opportunity for all ages and classes of people. It will become one of America's finest recreation areas, one of the great attractions of the Northwest.
- Tremendous use can be expected of the reservoirs and surrounding area.
- There will be nearly 300 miles of shoreline to explore.
- Visitors will have more than 200 miles of roads and 460 miles of trails to travel.
- There will be many kinds of recreation facilities to enjoy.
- The Forest Service will manage the area to avoid blights on the land caused by carelessness — wild fire, soil compaction, water pollution, and littering.



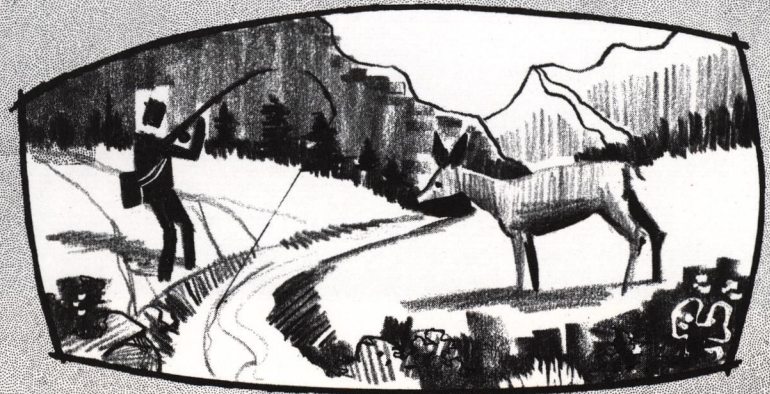
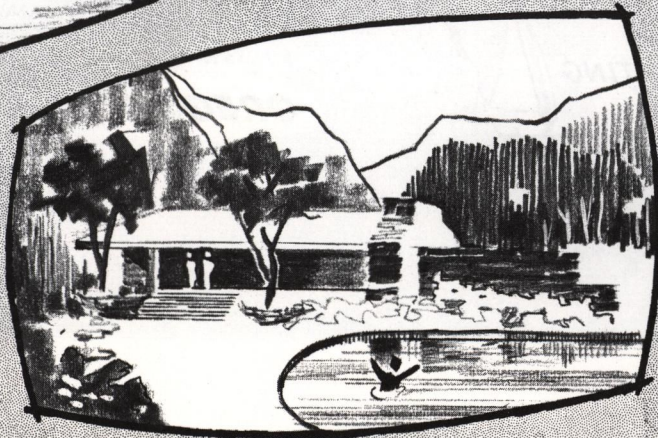
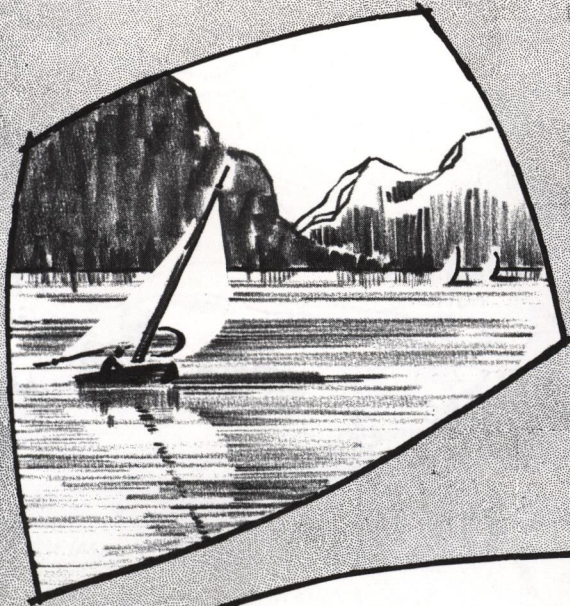
*Families will enjoy the camp and picnic facilities.*

*Water-oriented recreation use will increase.*



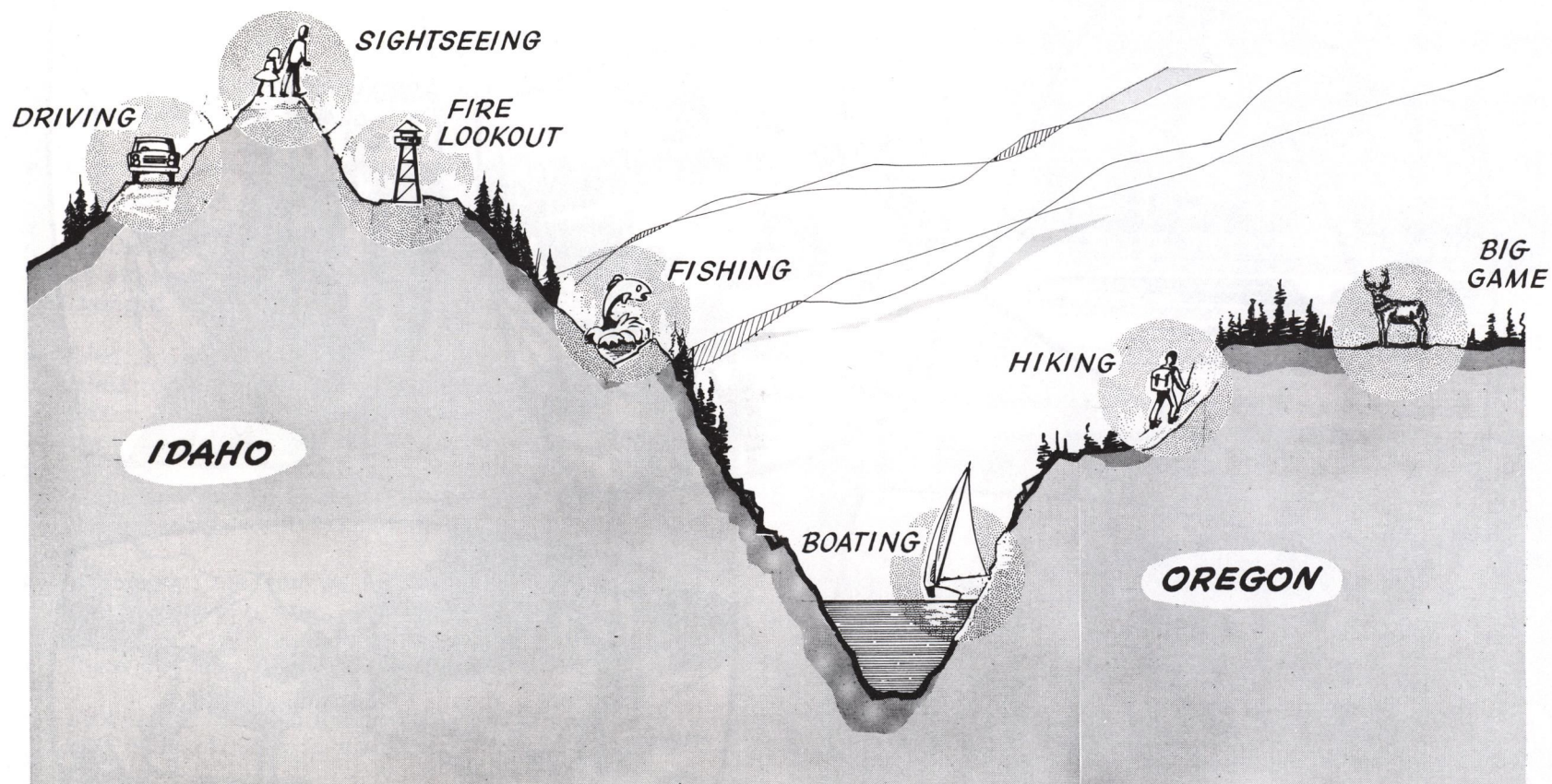


## RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES



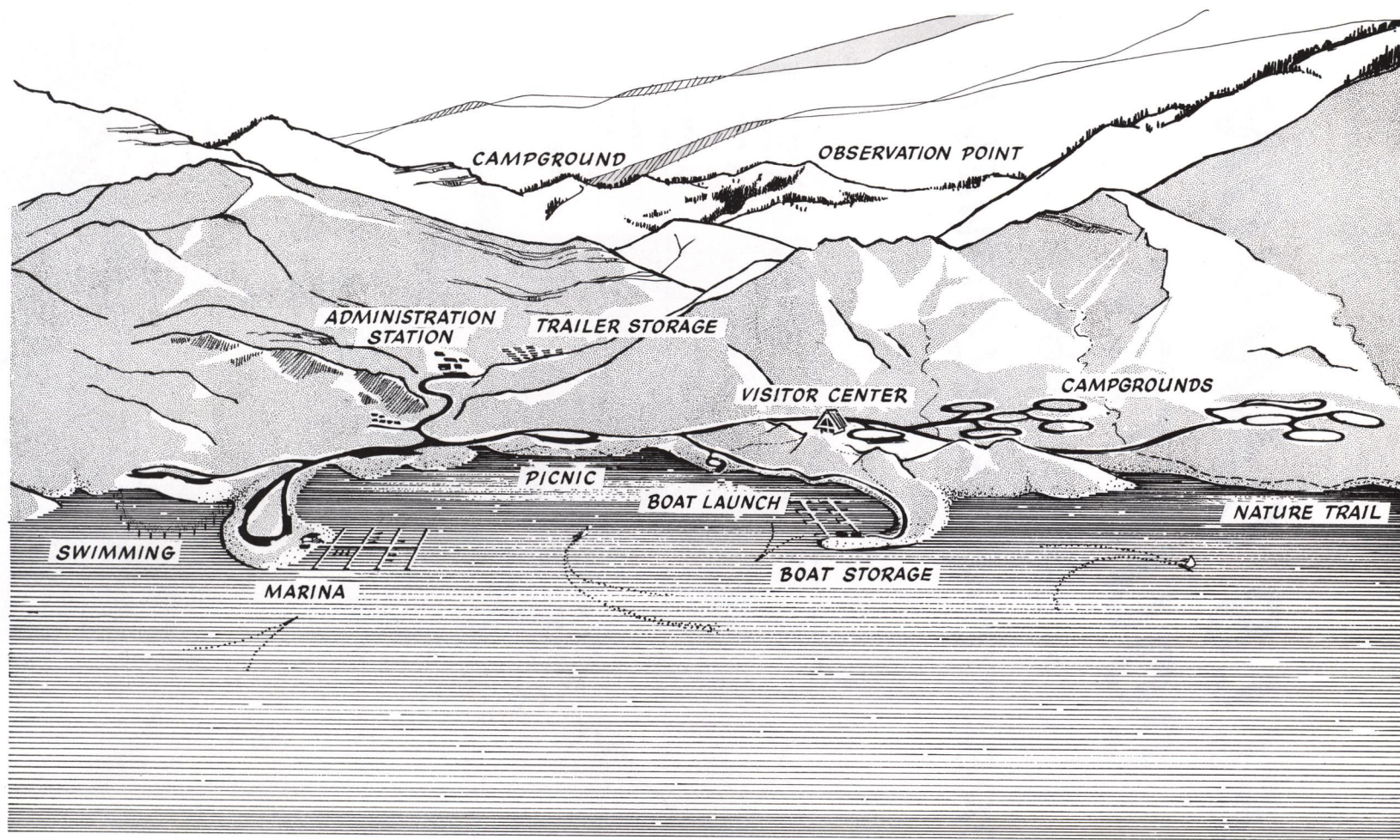
*Limited only by Your desires!*





A CROSS SECTION OF **CANYON COUNTRY** RECREATION



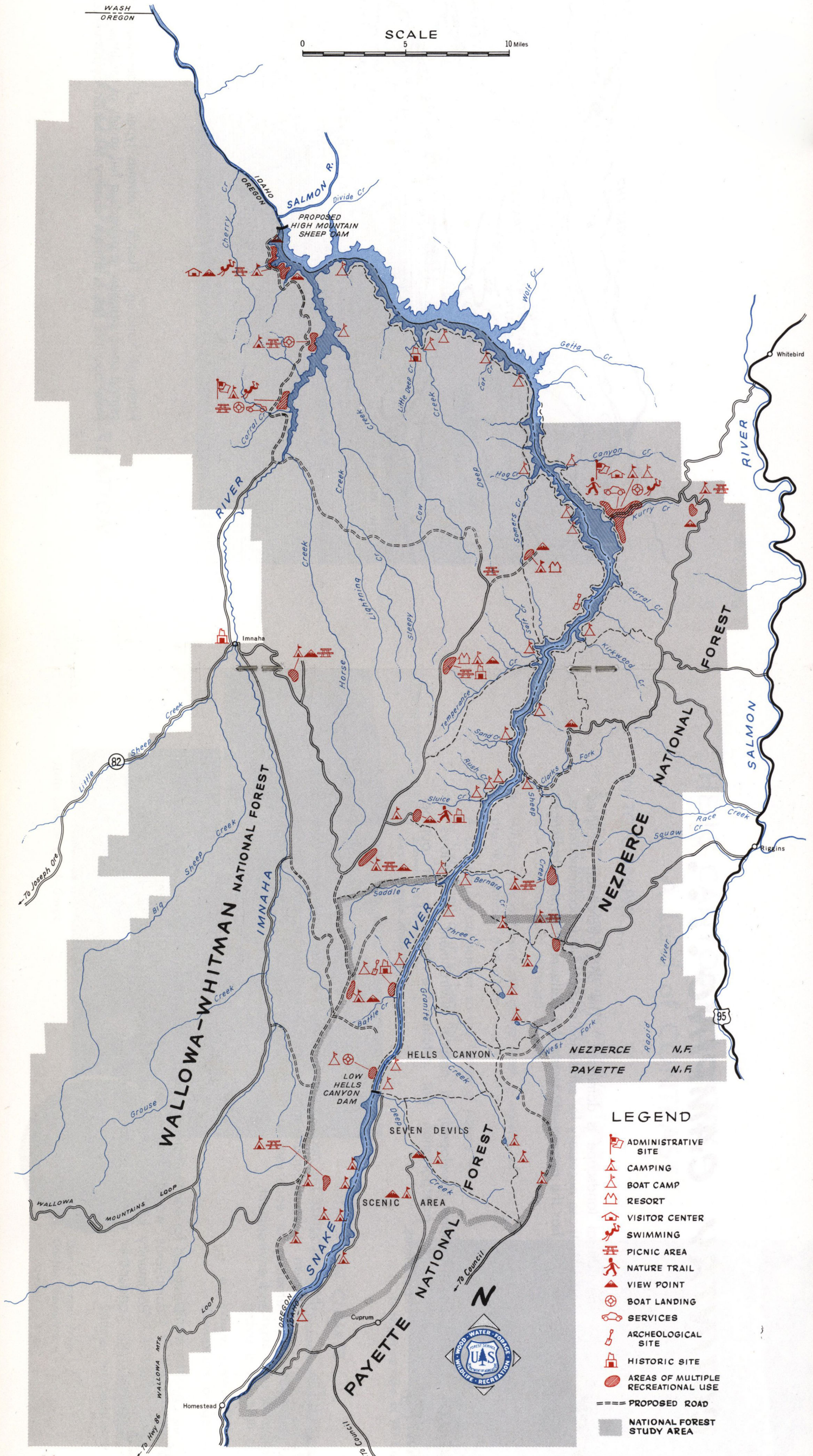


Pittsburgh Landing. Sketch illustrates types of development to be considered for a central camp complex to provide a full variety of facilities for water-oriented recreation. Note also the adjacent high country recreation opportunities.



# HELLS CANYON COUNTRY

## A PROPOSAL FOR RECREATION DEVELOPMENT





# ***CANYON COUNTRY CAMPING . . . .***

## ***BACK COUNTRY CAMPS***

The natural landscape is dominant. The only recreation facilities would be those necessary for sanitation and primitive accommodations. Man here has the opportunity to test his skills, meeting the challenges of nature.

## ***HUNTING AND BOATING CAMPS***

Slightly more developed; a natural environment that allows for motorized transportation but retains the freedom of outdoor experiences.

## ***IMPROVED CAMPS***

These recognize the necessity of additional controls to prevent overuse by man — the adequate spacing, circulation, design, and facilities — retaining for each user an opportunity to appreciate natural features and environment.

## ***MODERN COMPLEXES***

Designed for concentrated use, with emphasis on convenience. Modern complexes would contain deluxe sanitary facilities, amphitheatres, community kitchens, waterfront developments, play fields, marinas, and other modern accommodations.

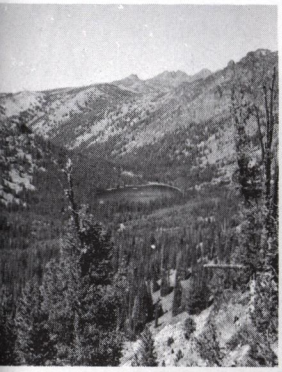


# HELLS CANYON COUNTRY -- A Land of CONTRAST

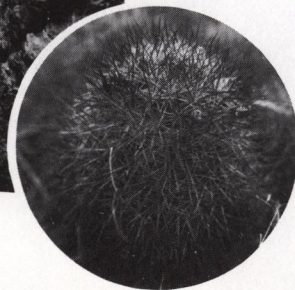
## IN TOPOGRAPHY . . .

- Where mountains rise more than 8000 feet from the Snake River to the peaks of the Seven Devils.
- Where grassy plateaus are interrupted by jagged side canyons and terraced ridges.
- Where five different life zones host a variety of plants, animals, and birds.
- A spectacular monument to the forces of nature — as forbidding as it is beautiful.

*Emerald Lake in the  
Seven Devils Mountains.*



*Hells Canyon Creek Gorge.*



*It is spring-like in the Canyon despite winterish appearance on top.*

## IN CLIMATE . . .

- Characterized by snowy winters and dry summers.
- Where precipitation, mostly in the form of snow, ranges from six inches on the lower slopes to sixty inches in the high country.
- Where summer rains may be sudden thunderstorm downpours or gentle showers.
- Where canyon bottom temperatures are extremely hot in the summer and mild in the fall, winter, and spring.
- On adjacent ridgetops recreationists find pleasant summer temperatures — seldom above 85 degrees.

*Barrel cactus from  
Cactus Mountain.*



## AREA ATTRACTIONS

- **HELLS CANYON** For countless years, the Snake River has been carving North America's deepest canyon. Originally the name was given to a side stream of the Snake River. Today it applies to the deepest part of the Canyon.
- **SEVEN DEVILS** Mountains named according to legend by a lost Indian brave. He wandered for days fleeing in his confusion from one devil, then a second and a third until there were seven. Since then, the mountains have been called the Seven Devils.
- **IMNAHA RIVER** A beautiful stream flowing to Snake River through one of the deepest river gorges on the continent. The name Imnaha is derived by combining the name of Nez Perce sub-chief *Imna* with the Indian word *ha* to indicate the territory governed by him.
- **GEOLOGY** Basically volcanic in origin. Successive age-old lava flows of Columbia River basalt are commonly evident. Some greenstones and small intrusions of granite are found in the Seven Devils.
- **LIFE ZONES** Five life zones are found, ranging from Upper Sonoran in canyon bottoms to Arctic-Alpine in the Seven Devils.
- **VEGETATION** Canyons are characterized by luxuriant growth of bunchgrass with occasional pockets of shrubs and conifers on north slopes.
- **WILDLIFE** Most western wildlife species are found here, including large numbers of deer and elk.
- **HISTORY** Contains sites of national significance in the exploration and settlement of the West. Routes of several exploration parties of the early 1800's, including that of Capt. B.L.E. Bonneville, were through the CANYON COUNTRY.

- **DAMS AND RESERVOIRS** Dams will ultimately create reservoirs totalling more than 75 miles of calm water.
- **VISTAS** High roads will connect viewpoints overlooking the canyons and other areas. From these points one will be able to see for miles into Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana — across grassy and timbered plateaus and uplifted mountains.
- **ARCHEOLOGICAL** A treasure trove of ancient Indian tribes. Artifacts, rock carvings, and other signs of Indian life are found here. Unfortunately, many of these areas along the Snake River will be covered by the reservoirs.



*Stone Head (Balanced Rock). Nature fashions many peculiar shapes.*

*The age-old flows of Columbia River basalt are clearly evident in the Hells Canyon of Snake River.*





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*View of Imnaha River Canyon shows contrasting terrain.*

*View from Lookout Mountain easterly across the Snake River to the vastness of Seven Devils country in Idaho.  
Note river in lower center.*





# AN AREA RICH IN WILDLIFE

## VARIETY

- **NON-GAME:** Songbirds, bald eagle and other birds of prey, and small animals, including coyote and bobcat.

- **GAME:** **Birds** — Chukar and Hungarian partridge, valley and mountain quail. Wild turkeys were recently introduced on the Idaho side.

### Big Game —

**White-tailed Deer** — A few frequent the canyon country, principally in Idaho.

**Mule Deer** — Commonly found in all areas.

**Rocky Mountain Elk** — The predominant big game animal on the Oregon side. Less common in Idaho.

**Mountain Goat** — Introduced in the Seven Devils in 1962.

**Black Bear** — Fine game animal.

**Mountain Lion (Cougar)** — Not common. Fine sport and trophy animal.

- **FISHERY:** Steelhead, Chinook salmon, smallmouth bass, catfish, and the largest freshwater fish of American rivers, the white sturgeon. Trout are found in the alpine lakes of Idaho's Seven Devils. After the proposed reservoirs are completed, the anadromous fish populations will probably decline. However, the warm water species can be expected to flourish.



*Chukar — most abundant game bird in the HELLS CANYON COUNTRY.*



*White sturgeon — largest fresh water fish.*



## HABITAT

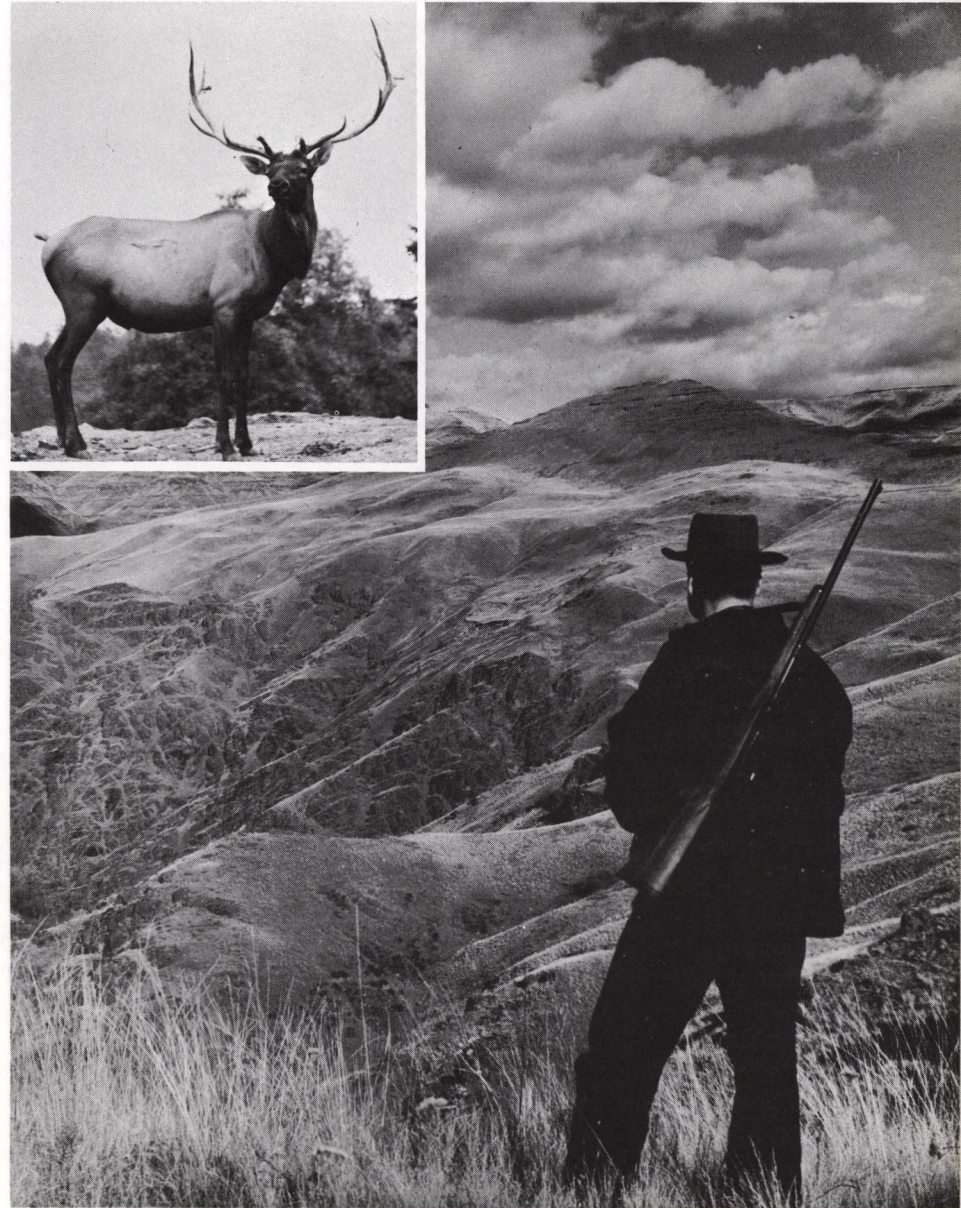
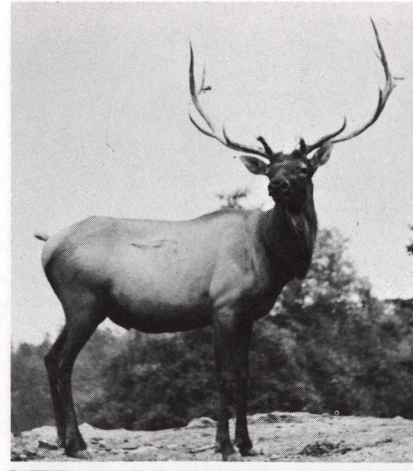
- Ideal for many forms of wildlife and fowl.
- Range and forage conditions are generally good.
- Oregon portion of Hells Canyon Country is potentially best big game producing area in State.
- Important livestock grazing area. Cattle and sheep now graze much of the area and will continue to do so on many of the areas particularly suited for this purpose.
- Is better suited for elk than deer because of nature of forage.
- Now supports resident deer and elk herds plus migrant populations which summer elsewhere and return to winter in the canyons.
- Has potential for re-establishing mountain sheep and wider spread of introduced wild turkey.
- Approximately 17,000 acres of critical big game winter range will be lost by reservoir inundation. Hungarian and chukar partridges and quail also will be affected.

## HUNTING — With camera, bow, or gun.

- Land of opportunity, to "shoot and capture" different wildlife species on film.
- Paradise for the hunter — chances of trophy deer and elk on rugged, challenging terrain.

Adequate annual big game harvest is essential to prevent overcrowding of canyon winter range. Current use is limited by difficult access. Hunter days use estimated for 1964 only 20,000-25,000. 75-80% of use in Oregon.

*Full use and enjoyment of the HELLS CANYON COUNTRY fish and wildlife resource, now limited, will be realized through planned Forest Service development of road, trail, and boat access.*



*The answer to a hunter's — or a photographer's — dream.*





## VIEWS FROM SCENIC POINTS

The objectives of the recreation plan are to select and evaluate key points of visitor interest; locate and develop the system of multipurpose trails and vistas which will permit people to enjoy a variety of visual experiences while traveling.

The HELLS CANYON COUNTRY is unequalled! Visitors can expect to see:

- Distant snow-covered mountain peaks  
The Seven Devils along the eastern ridge of the Canyon Country.  
The high Wallows to the Southwest.
- Geological Features  
Hells Hole  
Hells Canyon Creek Gorge  
Granite intrusions and greenstones
- Wildflowers and Wildlife
- Man-Made Facilities  
High Mountain Sheep Dam and Reservoir  
(Proposed)  
Low Hells Canyon Dam and Reservoir  
China Garden Dam and Reservoir (Proposed)  
Fire Lookout Stations  
Forest Guard Stations

*Snake River from Hat Point Overlook.*



# ***HELLS CANYON COUNTRY—A VACATION DESTINATION***

***DAY  
VISITORS***

***PICNICKING  
DAY-USE BOATING SITE***

***INTERPRETIVE SERVICES  
HUNTING AND FISHING  
SCENIC DRIVES  
MARINA ACCOMMODATIONS  
BEACHES AND SWIMMING  
BOATING AND WATER SPORTS  
HORSEBACK RIDING  
HISTORIC POINTS OF INTEREST  
NATURE WALKS***

***BACK COUNTRY CAMPS  
BOAT ACCESS CAMPS  
CAMPGROUNDS FOR TRAILERS,  
PICKUP CAMPERS, TENT CAMPERS  
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SINGLE  
FAMILY TO LARGE GROUPS  
MOTELS, LODGES AND RESORTS  
GAS, GROCERIES, AND OTHER SERVICES***

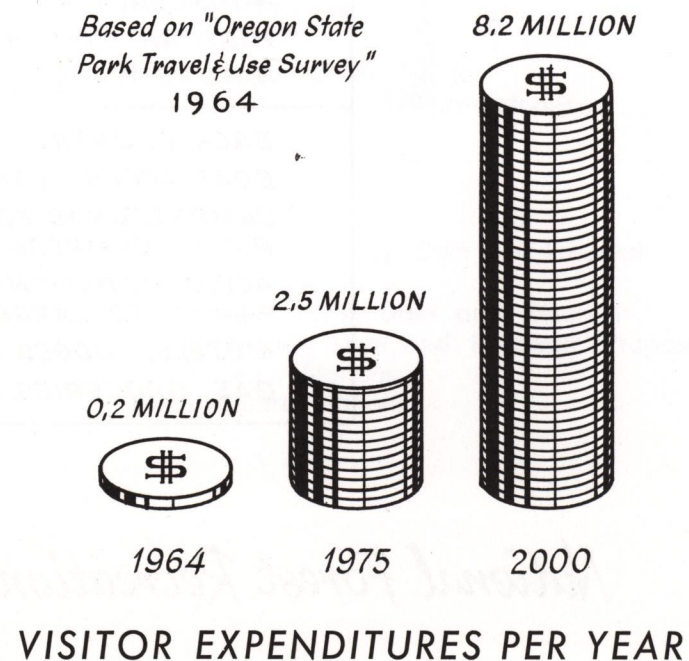
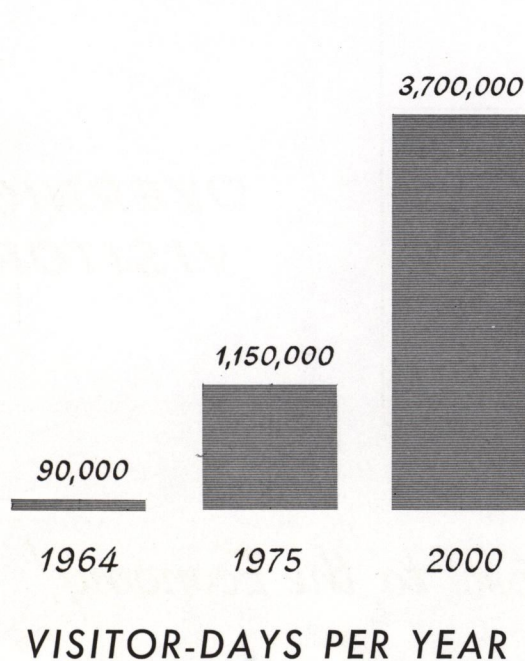
***OVERNIGHT  
VISITORS***

***National Forest Recreation — a boost to the Economy!***



## TRAVEL AND USE FORECAST FOR HELLS CANYON COUNTRY

Visitor	Location	Population	Use Factor	Estimated Visitor-days 1975
Local	(125-mile radius — 3 hrs. driving time)	290,000	3/4	217,000
Out of Area	(125 to 600-mile radius — 1 day driving time) (Uses from other states and foreign countries)	1,200,000	1/2	590,000
				343,000
				<u>1,150,000</u> visitors





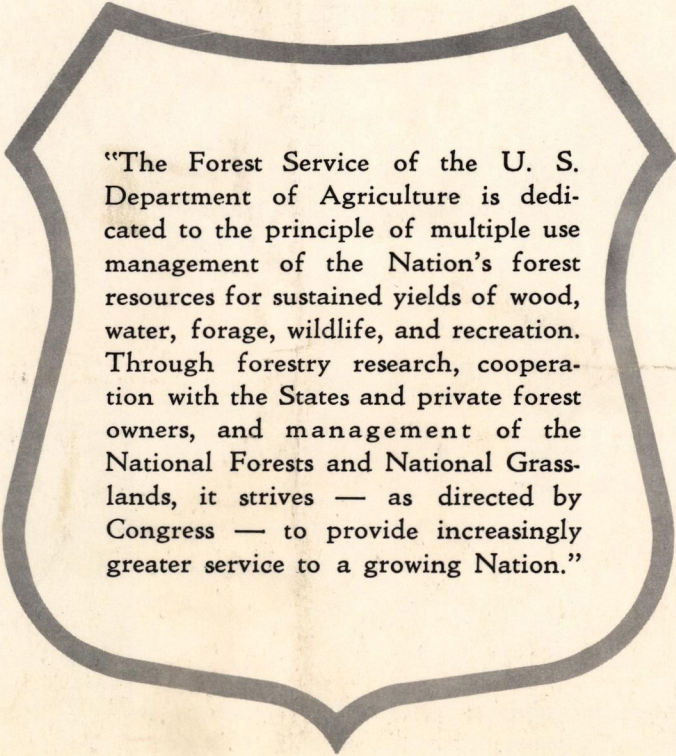
## A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR RECREATION

Facilities		Program Period <sup>1/</sup>	Public	Licensee	Commercial <sup>2/</sup>
Recreation facilities such as Visitor Centers, picnic areas, resorts, etc.		1	\$2,687,600	\$577,000	\$4,000,000
Boat Ramps, signing, campgrounds, Public Services, etc.		2	1,930,400		6,500,000
Trails around reservoir and to the High Country	(119 miles)	1	1,032,500		
	(200 miles)	2	1,378,000		
Replacing flooded shore- line trails	(148 miles)	1		2,664,000	
Roads and Highways	(120 miles)	1	7,580,000		
	(157 miles)	2	18,801,000		
	( 32 miles)	1		6,400,000	
			\$33,409,500	\$9,641,000	\$10,500,000

<sup>1/</sup> First priority developments include modern-complex campgrounds, hunting camps, and improved campgrounds adjacent to primary access routes. Program period #1 extends five years, and period #2 to ten years after High Mountain Sheep Dam completion. Recreation facility and access construction are planned to be carried out at the same time.

<sup>2/</sup> An ultimate full program of commercial public facilities developed and operated by private capital under a permit system would be encouraged.





"The Forest Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the principle of multiple use management of the Nation's forest resources for sustained yields of wood, water, forage, wildlife, and recreation. Through forestry research, cooperation with the States and private forest owners, and management of the National Forests and National Grasslands, it strives — as directed by Congress — to provide increasingly greater service to a growing Nation."