

Federal Lands Interim Committee
C/o Legislative Services Office
Research & Legislation
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0054

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The topic of best management of public lands within the State of Idaho is a subject of major consequence to all persons within the State.

For more than 100 years the Federal Government has managed a significant portion of our State. Up until fairly recently, the Forest Service did a very good job of managing lands under their jurisdiction following the concept of multiple use. Over the past 20 years a dramatic change has taken place in the management of National Forests in our State, which has severely degraded our National Forests. Once vibrant forests are now overgrown, insect havens that are burning at explosive rates. These forests use to support rural communities & the economic health of our State through forest products, grazing, mining, and recreational activities. Current management by the Forest Service has dramatically reduced these important economic engines for our State.

Our family has a long history of association with National Forests in Idaho. Our uncles were businessmen supporting the mining & timber companies. We grew up hunting & fishing in National Forests of Idaho. Chris is a Forest Service retiree that is still proud of the track record of the Agency up until their apparent loss of mission over the past 2 decades. Although now retired we keep fairly close tabs on National Forest Management, because we own land that is essentially surrounded by National Forests. We see up close and personal how poorly these surrounding lands are being managed. We work hard at seeing our land is managed in a sustainable way even though our big neighbor the Forest Service is not doing the same. In our area the concept of multiple use is not even given lip service, rather the Forest Service has turned over most important decision making to other Federal Agencies, and Tribes such as US Fish & Wildlife, NOAA & the Nez Perce tribe. These powerful organizations are totally focused on natural resources that keep them in business, while ignoring the underlying reasons for the creation of the National Forests in the first place. In our area this basically means turning the National Forest surrounding us into an aquatic sanctuary. A huge majority of all the Forest Service roads have been closed & even camping has been SEVERELY restricted. There is currently very little economic activity on these lands. Even keeping backcountry airstrips open is a continuous battle.

Today, when any person with an open mind compares the National Forest lands with those managed by the State of Idaho there is no question which is better managed & is still providing broad economic & recreational opportunities. All summer long we worry about fires originating on National Forests burning up our property. We strongly recommend giving the proposal for State **management or ownership** of federal lands serious consideration. The status quo is simply not working for most Idaho residents, and especially for those individuals with connections to rural Idaho.

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