

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

4060

ESTABLISHMENT REPORT

FOR

WOLF CREEK RESEARCH NATURAL AREA

WITHIN

OKANOGAN NATIONAL FOREST

OKANOGAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON



DESIGNATION ORDER

By virtue of the authority vested in me by Regulation U-4 of the Regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture, I hereby designate as the WOLF CREEK RESEARCH NATURAL AREA the lands described in the preceding report by A. E. Klahn, dated October 30, 1968; said lands shall hereafter be administered as a research natural area subject to said regulations and instructions thereunder.

February 28, 1969
Date

Edward P. Cliff
Chief

4060

(1300)

October 30, 1968

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WITHIN
OKANOGAN NATIONAL FOREST
OKANOGAN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The proposed Wolf Creek Research Natural Area is located in the N $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 1, T. 34 N., R. 20 E., as shown and further described on the attached plat. It lies within and adjacent to the boundary of the Okanogan National Forest, approximately five miles west of Winthrop, Washington (see attached map). The area is formed on a gentle sloping bench or terrace remnant between Wolf Creek and Virginian Ridge, and includes slightly more than 150 acres. Elevation ranges from approximately 2600 feet in the southeast corner to 3200 feet in the northwest corner.

Vegetative cover is a bitterbrush-bunchgrass type with scattered ponderosa pine. Range examiners typed the area as P-1-Agin-Putr-F in 1960. Arrowleaf balsamroot and cheatgrass are also important constituents of the vegetative aspect. Granitic sandy loam soils are moderately deep and stony and are derived from glacial drift overlying shale and sandstone.

Average annual precipitation on the area is about 16 inches, the bulk occurring in fall and winter as a result of cyclonic fronts moving in from the west. Summer precipitation generally results from convectional storms and occasionally results in brief showers of high intensity. Snow cover is generally continuous from late November to early April and averages about one foot in depth. The growing season is estimated at 110 days.

DESCRIPTION OF VALUES

1. Flora. It is generally recognized that pristine vegetative conditions in the pine-bunchgrass type are difficult, if not impossible, to locate. The Wolf Creek area has been in range use since about 1900, grazed primarily by cattle. Heavy overgrazing occurred in the late 1930's and early 1940's. The overgrazing was attributed to an excessive length of season, trespass stock from adjacent state-owned lands, trespass stock from the homestead inside the Forest boundary, and a band of about 30 horses which ranged in the area until 1948. The turn-on date for cattle was moved up to June 1 in 1951 and has remained there since. The bunchgrass forage at this elevation begins to cure by the later date and is less palatable to cattle, resulting in very light utilization as the cows move to higher range. Although the proposed natural area does not have a history of favorable land use, the present management system has allowed the vegetative condition to follow an upward trend over the past 15 years or longer, and portions of the area appear to be in good range condition. It seems practical to exclude grazing from this area if it is established as a research natural area.

Some trees were removed from the east portion of the area several years ago and recent logging has taken place adjacent to and above the area on state-owned land. The cause of some intensive stands of cheatgrass within the proposed area has been undetermined. Adjacent land use, including that on private holdings, may exert

considerable influence in the form of altered environmental conditions and introduction of undesirable plant species because of size and location of the area.

A fence extends along the north side and portions of the east and west sides of the area. Dense forest growth along Wolf Creek provides a natural barrier on the south side.

2. Geology. The area appears to have very limited geological value for scientific studies. It has no unique geological formations.

3. Fauna. The proposed natural area contains no unique forms of wildlife. It serves as winter range for mule deer. Relatively easy access may make the area suitable for studies of smaller forms of wildlife which have home ranges of limited size.

4. Minerals. No conflict apparent. Action will be initiated to withdraw the area from mineral entry as soon as the research natural area is established. Even though the area is not known to contain valuable mineral deposits this action is believed necessary to insure the largely undisturbed condition of the natural area as planned.

5. Recreation. The area has little potential for recreation use, although the upper Wolf Creek area provides a scenic recreation attraction and the access trail traverses the proposed natural area.

6. Water Use. No conflict apparent.

7. Other Uses. No right-of-way conflicts are foreseen. The Wolf Creek Trail presently serves as access to the cattle allotment. Grazing will be eliminated by routing the cattle around this area in bringing them to and from the higher range and the area will be closed to grazing by signing. No effort will be made to prohibit recreational use unless such use conflicts with utilization of the area for research purposes or its maintenance in a natural condition.

8. Recommendation.

I recommend that the Wolf Creek Research Natural Area be established on the lands described in this report.

Signature

10/30/68
(Date)

Submitted

[Signature]
Forester

11/13/68
(Date)

Recommended

[Signature]
Supervisor, Okanogan National Forest

11-25-68
(Date)

Recommended

Philip A. Brizgala
Director, PNW Experiment Station

11-21-68
(Date)

Recommended

[Signature]
Regional Forester, R-6

2/17/69
(Date)

Approved

[Signature]
Director, Division of Recreation and Land Use

2/17/69
(Date)

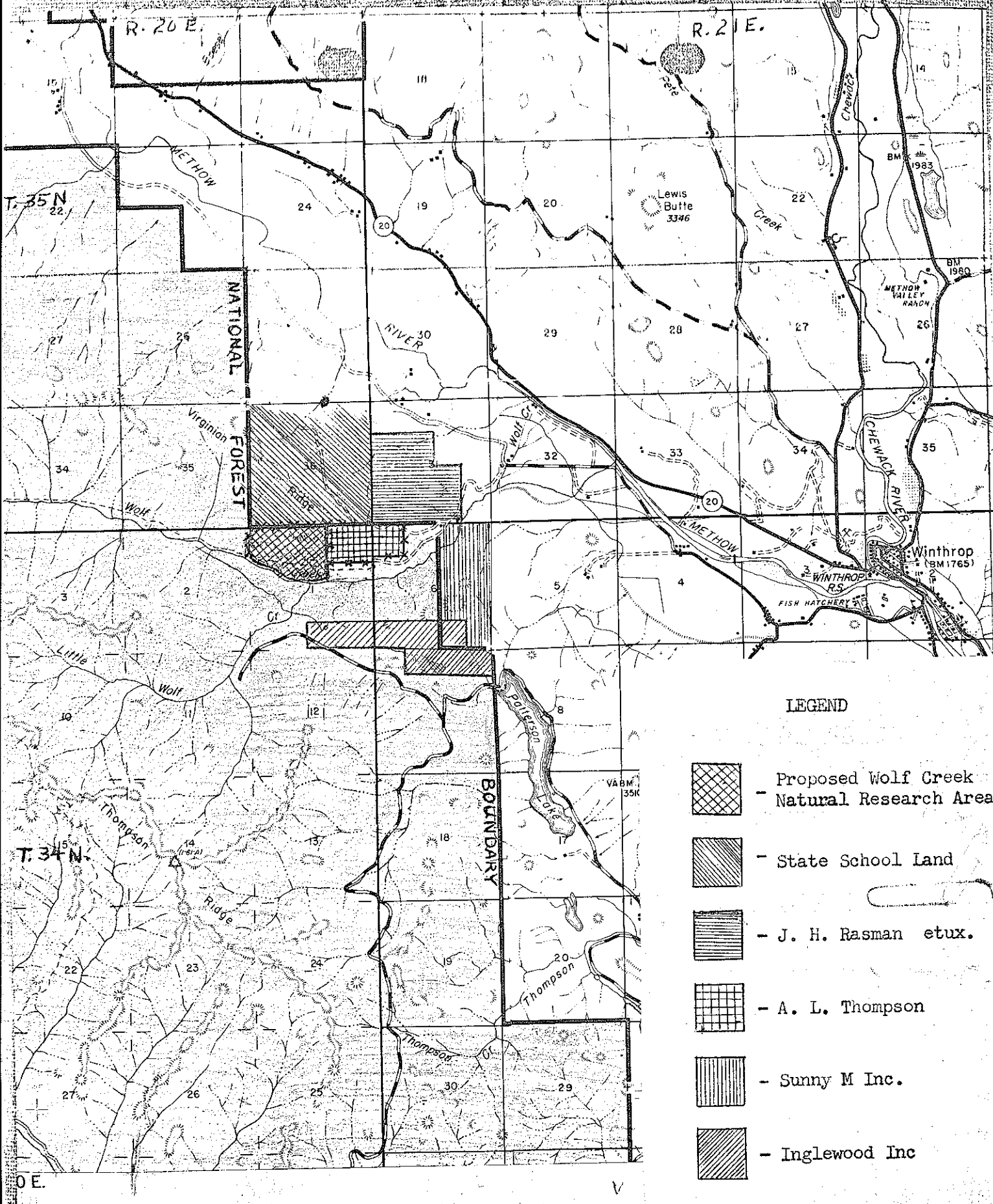
Approving

M. B. Duch
Deputy Chief, Research







3-28-69
(Date)

Approved

Edward P. Cliff
Chief



LEGEND

-  - Proposed Wolf Creek Natural Research Area
-  - State School Land
-  - J. H. Rasman etux.
-  - A. L. Thompson
-  - Sunny M Inc.
-  - Inglewood Inc

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