

VIS
REFERENCE FILE

BURY MY SOUL NEAR KRASSEL HOLE

A History of the Krassel District

Tom Ortman
1975

EARLY DAYS

1862 Gold Discovered at Warren

1890 Idaho Becomes 43rd State

1891 Congress Authorizes the President to Establish Forest Reserves

Through the years the area which is now the Krassel Ranger District has witnessed much history. This narrative will attempt to trace this history since the coming of the first settlers to the area.

The first visitors to the South Fork were the Snake River Indians which included the Nezperce, Bannock and Sheepeater tribes. The Indians came into the area during the summer to hunt and fish. They set up temporary camps on the lower bars where access to the river and summer run salmon was easy. Their trails crossed the South Fork at shallow fords which were marked by blaze trees, some of which are still visible today. One such blaze tree is reported to be on the west side of the South Fork just above Krassel Hole. The Reed Ranch Bar and Hamilton Bar exhibit some evidence of temporary Indian habitation. The Indians also built a hunting blind in the loose rock between the upper Buckhorn bridge and the hot springs. The nearest known permanent Indian camp is on Mackay Bar where the South Fork joins the main Salmon River. This was a large village and Indians wintered here in the mild climate, living on a diet of dried salmon and deer.

The first white men to enter the area were fur trappers under the leadership of Donald McKenzie who worked for the Pacific Fur Company of John Jacob Astor. Two of these trappers, Francois Payette and Jack Weiser left their names on two prominent rivers of the area, the Payette and Weiser. Trappers entered the Chamberlain Basin country between 1818 and 1822 and probably passed through the District during this period.

In 1862 gold was discovered downstream at Warren and the miners flocked into the area. The major diggings were around the present town of Warren. Another small settlement in the head of the Secesh River by "Secessionists" gave that river its name. The miners and prospectors were willing to pay good prices for food and it wasn't long before the bars and flats just north of the District boundary were settled and farming commenced. Prospectors traveled the South Fork but didn't find much easy digging. There were many Chinamen in the area around Warren during this period. The Chinese were considered second rate citizens in those days and only dared mine the areas of lower value and heavy overburden passed up by white men. They carried on the early mining activity on the District, placer mining the sand bars along the South Fork. The piles of boulders they stacked

up as they worked their way through the bars can still be seen on the east side of the South Fork around Hamilton Creek and on down to Circle End Creek. It was commonplace for fights to develop over claims and gold, and in the absence of law and order disputes were settled with guns. One such fight in the vicinity of Deadman's Bar resulted in three Chinamen and one white man dead, thus giving that bar its name. A later day settler named Reegan is now buried there in a poorly marked grave. Reegan shot himself after contracting a terminal disease and his cabin on the bar was burned by the burying party.

The Indians and whites co-existed for awhile, but minor skirmishes over stolen horses and goods soon became common. White settlers took to farming the flats where the Indians camped and the hunting pressure on limited supplies of game reduced their numbers. Sometimes Chinese were killed for their gold and the Indians were blamed. One such massacre below Hells Canyon Dam resulted in the death of almost 30 Chinamen. At any rate the Nezperce war broke out in 1877 and it was followed by the Sheepeater war of 1878-79. During the Sheepeater war, Indians and soldiers battled near the District as the Middle Fork of the Salmon was the home of the Sheepeaters. Hostilities ended with most of the Indians dead and the survivors sent to a reservation in northern Idaho around Lapwai. In the 1880's a small band jumped the reservation and spent one winter in Little Buckhorn Basin. Since then the Nezperce visit the District mainly during the summer chinook salmon run to fish.

In the 1860's other mineral discoveries were made east of the District around Thunder Mountain. In 1896 the Caswell brothers and A. O. Huntley discovered a rich deposit and a real boom was on. The first travel was mainly from Grangeville through Chamberlain Basin. But soon a freight road was built, passing just to the south of the District through the old town of Knox. It was during this period that a man named John Reeves settled on the bar now known as the Reed Ranch and began placer mining. He constructed a cabin and a ditch used for mining purposes and irrigation. His placer workings and remains of a tunnel through the oxbow are still visible, though the tunnel washed out in 1974. Reeves abandoned the bar long before the National Forest was created.

Later, in 1906, a trapper named Paul Forrester erected another cabin on the bar and used it as his winter headquarters while running a trapline on the river. He abandoned the cabin in 1907. On another part of the bar including the oxbow and large flat just under the present Jackie Creek road a man named William Caldwell settled in 1905. Caldwell built a cabin, barn and fences and began farming; raising hay and oats. He was murdered about 1908, supposedly by two itinerate trappers, who shot him while he was cooking breakfast over his cook stove one morning. In the process of dying, he carelessly knocked over his stove and burned his cabin down. Camp Creek was called Caldwell Creek for some time after that.

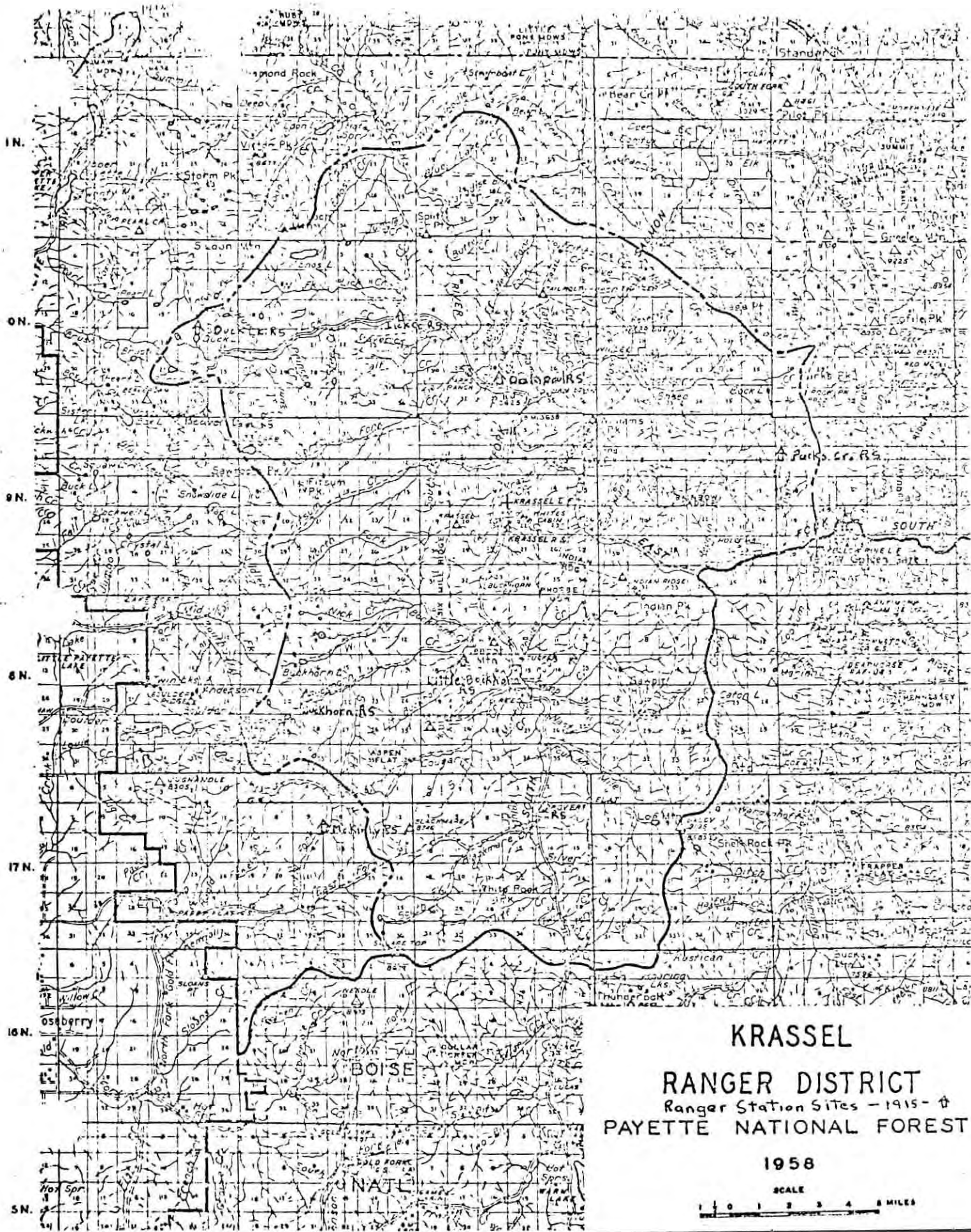
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NATIONAL FOREST

1905 Administration of Forest Reserves Transferred From Interior Department
To Department of Agriculture-National Forest Created
1908 Idaho National Forest Organized

The Government began creating Forest Preserves by the Act of 1891, primarily to reserve timber lands from the public domain. Lands within the reserves and later the National Forest which were suitable for farming were still open to homestead entry. It is from the homestead applications made on the District between 1905 and 1922 that much of this history has been recorded. The National Forest system as we know it began in 1905. Most of the Krassel District was first organized as part of the Idaho National Forest in 1908. The original Payette Forest with headquarters in the town of Payette included what is now the Boise National Forest in the Payette River Drainage. When the Idaho National Forest was established, efforts were made to build small ranger stations throughout the area. These stations were connected by trails maintained by the ranger and other forest personnel. Many areas now in the Forest were unreserved at first. Once people in the unreserved areas, such as Thunder Mountain, saw that the Government would build and maintain trails and telephone lines where before work had been done through poorly organized groups of users, they petitioned Congress to make additions.

The map on the following page shows the location of the old Ranger Stations as they existed around 1915. These stations were often little more than one room cabins used as base camps by the early rangers. They were built of logs and had wood shingle roofs all fashioned from native materials. Most were later abandoned, but a few like the one at Poverty Flat were improved and later became guard stations.

The present day Krassel District has had many boundary changes over the years. Originally, the south end was part of the Paddy Flat District and the Lake Fork District included everything on the north end. There was also a Yellowpine District that extended up the East Fork. Although many lesser buildings were called Ranger Stations also, these were the principal headquarters and were the centers for nearly year round activity.



ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW FOREST

1908 Early Rangers Withdraw Administrative Sites from Public Entry

One of the first Rangers was James D. McCall. McCall surveyed an administrative use site on Hitchelwood Creek, as Oompaul Creek used to be called, and recommended purchasing it and withdrawing it from mineral entry. A ranger station was established. It is interesting to note his glowing report of the fertile ground and his estimation of hay and grain that could be grown there. One of his other duties was to examine other "fertile" areas on his district whenever someone declared entry under the homesteading act. One homestead had already been established during the Warren mining boom downriver at the mouth of Sheep Creek by Sim Willey. The Willey Ranch, as it was called when the forest was organized, was later bought by Clarence A. Rebillet in the 30's and is now referred to as the Rebillet Ranch.

McCall's successor, William F. Gaekle, examined what is now known as the Zena Creek Wilderness Camp for an early homesteader, Clyde Parks. This attempt at homesteading the flat at the mouth of Zena Creek was successful and parks established the Parks Ranch. The ranch was purchased in the late 1940's by Brown Tie and Lumber and made into a logging camp.

On the south end of the District, a ranger station was established at Poverty Flat soon after the forest was organized. This flat supposedly was named after an early attempt at homesteading resulted in the family starving out. There were two main routes into the upper end of the South Fork. The best was from the town of Cascade east through the old towns of Crawford and Knox. From Knox travelers could come down the river onto the District. The second route started at Roseberry and ran east through Paddy Flat where the main Ranger Station for the District was located. Roseberry has long since dwindled in size because of the railroad bypassing it in 1914. The townsite is now marked only by an old hotel one mile east of Donnelly, Idaho. From the Paddy Flat Ranger Station it went up Kennally Creek and split with one trail coming down Blackmare to Poverty Flat and the other coming down Cougar Creek to Reeves Bar. A later trail up Buckhorn Creek also connected Long Valley and the bar. This bar, now known as the Reed Ranch, has attracted a colorful variety of homesteaders and miners. The most prominent to follow John Reeves and Paul Forrester was William Reed, an ex-Texas Ranger. William Reed, or Deadshot as he was called, was reputed to be very good with a gun. One story has it that he brought his family to the remote South Fork to homestead where they would be safe from enemies made during his career as a law officer. Deadshot took out his first homestead entry in 1914 on the south end of the bar. Following Caldwell's death, a man named Tucker had made entry on the north end of the bar. Tucker apparently abandoned his attempt at homesteading due to Bright's disease and a man named George Krassel settled on the old Caldwell place. Krassel had done a little placer mining up and down the river, and sometimes worked for the Forest.

Service building trails. He erected the first cabin on Dutchman's Bar across Indian Creek from the present station, and Krassel Creek and Krassel Knob were named after him. About 1918, Krassel returned to the river with his winter supplies in the fall and discovered Reed's cattle had gotten out and were grazing his hay. Enraged, Krassel decided to pay Deadshot a visit with his rifle. Since there were no other witnesses to the incident, we have only Deadshot's version of the story, which is that Krassel rode up to the Reed Ranch house, concealing his rifle behind the withers of his horse. Deadshot was out in the field cutting hay and when Mrs. Reed noted that Krassel had a rifle, she wrapped Deadshot's pistol in a dishtowel. She then summoned her daughter and sent her and the pistol to Deadshot. Krassel approached Reed on horseback and they had unfriendly words. Krassel started to swing his rifle out in the open when Reed opened fire, killing Krassel. An inquest was held and the verdict was self-defense. Krassel's grave lies near the 1/4 corner below the first bend in the road as one leaves the airfield going north.

With Krassel gone, Deadshot Reed filed on the Caldwell homestead and was granted a patent. Walter Estep was the Paddy Flat Ranger and platted the land. Deadshot proceeded to farm the bar and supported his wife and raised 14 children, two of whom died before they reached adulthood. He sold his holdings to Carl and Warren Brown of Brown's Tie and Lumber Co. in 1929 but the area is still referred to as the Reed Ranch today.

Downstream from the Reed Ranch, Ranger Estep had other homestead entries to inspect. The Buckhorn Bar area was filed on, but due to lack of water and the timber values present, Supervisor Lyle Watts recommended against the action. The bar was later filed on as a mining claim and a cabin built by a man named Arbuckle. The claim was proved invalid and the cabin burned in 1954. The foundation can still be found on the north end of the flat.

In 1919 a man named V. O. White occupied the Dutchman bar area, lived in Krassel's house, and established mineral claims. Utilizing earlier irrigation ditches, White farmed and placer mined the bar. He supplemented this income by working for the Forest Service during the summer. He and his wife lived there until the late 1960's. After an attempt by White's son to wash away the Krassel Administrative Site, and several shooting incidents, the White claim was declared invalid because of low mineral values and V.O. White moved to McCall. Dutchman's Bar is now referred to as White's Bar on some Forest Service maps. The ditches, cabin site and washes are easily visible today.

In 1914 a man named Arthur Hamilton established a residence on Hamilton Bar below the mouth of the Secesh. Hamilton's best access to civilization was by the Tailholt Trail to Warren or the Lick Creek Trail to McCall. He

and his family built several cabins, raised a big garden and some hay and established an orchard. The family abandoned their efforts before their homestead entry became patented after Hamilton died in 1923. The ruins of the cabins and the orchard still remain today and Hamilton's grave lies underneath the large lilac bush by the ruins of the old potatoe cellar.

During the same time a successful homestead entry was made on the flat now known as the Holcomb Ranch. Hay and pasture were the principal crops. Later in the 40's the timbered half of the ranch was logged.

On the Secesh, a father and son team took up some mining claims in 1933 and built a large cabin for their families. They trapped and farmed a little but the struggle for survival took up so much time they didn't get a chance to do much mining. The son became a local legend known as Slickrock Brown. The place was abandoned after a few years and only the cabin is visible today. It can be seen in a clearing just across the river from the intersection of the McCall-Stibnite road and the Zena Creek road.

Also during the 1930's a man named Bill Darling settled on some earlier claims on Bells Bar just upriver from the Reed Ranch. He lived there until passing away in 1970 and is now buried on the hill just above the road. The buildings and grave are still maintained by Pat Reed.

The success or failure of these early homesteading attempts seemed to depend on the persistence of the entryman and the nearness of markets. If a nearby mining camp provided a market, the homesteader had a place to sell garden produce and livestock. The Reed Ranch had the town of Knox, the Holcomb Ranch had Yellowpine and later Stibnite and the Willey Ranch had Warren for nearby markets. Another factor that undoubtedly influenced the failure of some homesteads was the sandy nature of the soil. Since fertilizer was unknown, the sandy soils became poorer and poorer as the years rolled by and the minerals were leached away. Some of the areas shown as gardens on the old maps barely support annual weeds today.

SHEEP HERDING

1910 First Official Sheep Permit Granted On The District
1931 Range Allotment Analysis Shows Range Use Beyond Carrying Capacity

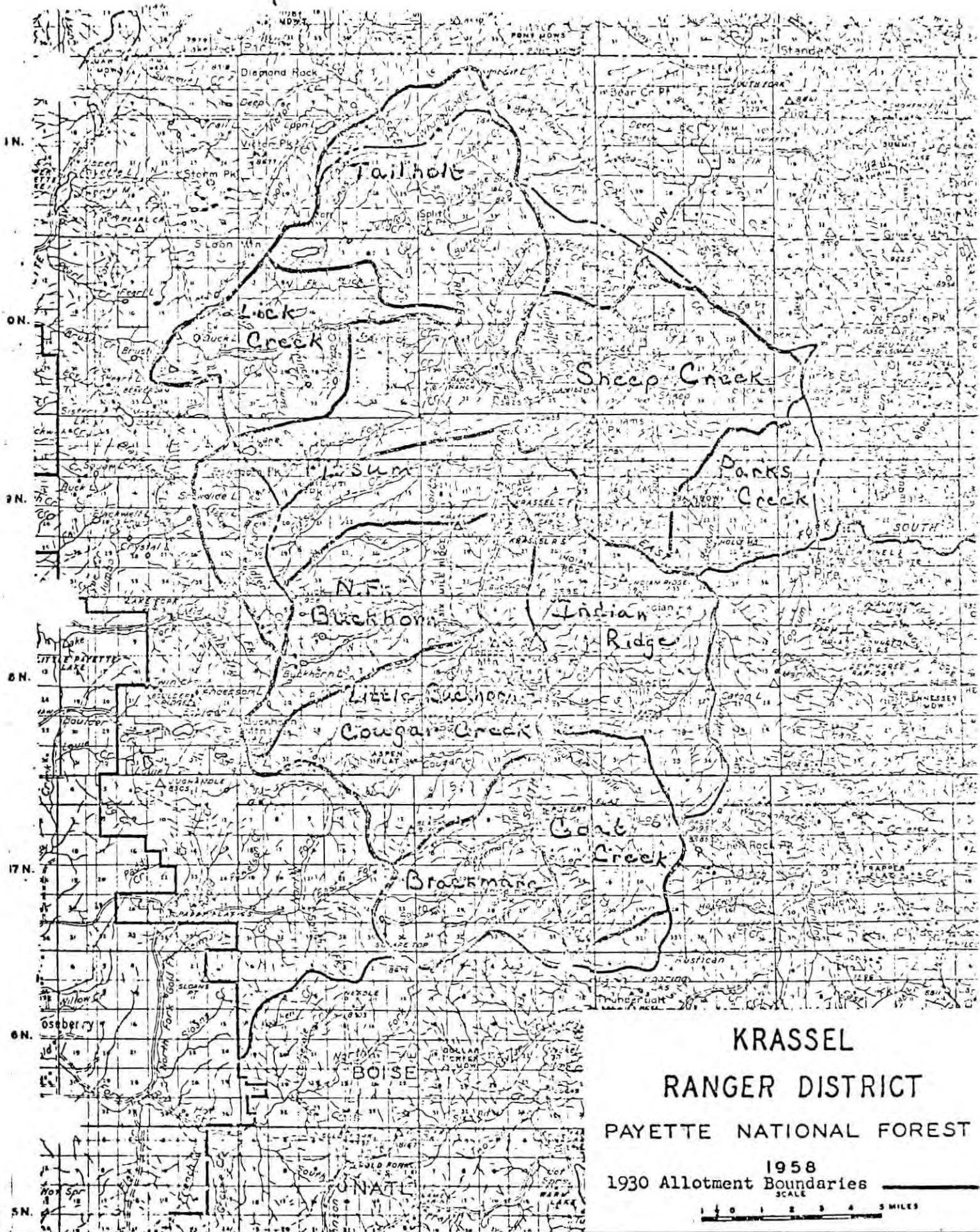
The first grazing permit on the district was in 1910. Up until the 1920's grazing was pretty much on a small scale such as Deadshot Reed's 100 sheep allotment in Nasty Creek. With the railroad into Long Valley to facilitate shipping and with the deterioration of the range in the more accessible areas, the sheepmen began to push into the South Fork. Most were driven over the Van Wyck driveway on West Mountain, across Long Valley, over the Buckhorn and Blackmare Trails and into the South Fork. By 1920 there were over 114,000 sheep on the forest. About 25,000 of these grazed on what is now the Krassel District. Andrew Little, L. E. Wilson, and P. J. Connolly were the biggest permittees. There were also some C&H (cattle and horse) permits given to homesteaders on the district like Reed, Parks and Rebillet.

It was the job of Ranger Lee Kessler in the early twenties and later W. H. Boles to try and maintain some sort of control over this activity. First priority was to set up allotments of land for each permittee and thus eliminate common use of the same area. This made control of numbers easier and as certain areas became denuded, responsibility could be fixed and the permittee encouraged to avoid continued use until the area recovered. Early maps and written descriptions tell of erosion problems along the sheep driveways in Buckhorn, Four Mile, and Blackmare Creeks. Areas in upper Buckhorn Creek and Cougar Creek were overgrazed and closed to sheep. The wintering of cattle and horses on the river became common practice among the residents and claim holders. Buckhorn Bar was described as a "dustbowl" by Ranger Johnny Wick. The great depression and low profits brought voluntary reductions to many herds. Then the higher cost of labor during the 1940's and poorer grazing opportunities on the district made further reductions possible, especially through the efforts of Ranger Johnny Wick during the early 40's and Yale Mitchell afterwards. From the 1930's on, range allotment analysis had shown low carrying capacities and poor range conditions. In 1953, Ranger Finlay McNaughton summarized the general conditions in the following letter to the Forest Supervisor:

"THE PROBLEM: Basically, our problem is securing management in the public interest on extremely steep slopes and on the immature, easily disturbed granitic soil type. The west slopes of the South Fork of the Salmon River from North Buckhorn Creek south to and including Blackmare Creek have been grazed with sheep since about 1910. Permitted use on this range has been periodically reduced from about 5700 head and 11,400 animal months to the present obligation of 1988 head for 6627 animal months. Approximately 84% of the 61,250 acres in this range is made up of inaccessible, unusable and used-but should-not-be-used range. Of the remaining 16%, all of it is in the conditional use class and generally poor condition. This 16% of

conditional use range is made up of small meadow stringers and related areas, severely used in the past and extremely limited as to accessibility. The forage that is produced on these restricted areas is harvestable only at the price of extreme soil disturbance on all adjoining slopes. It is generally recognized within the Service that we do not have forage to sell on this range and that grazing should be eliminated."

By the late 1950's the grazing pressure had been significantly reduced and by the 1970's only one allotment remained on the District in Lick Creek. A map showing allotment boundaries about 1930 is on the following page.



**KRASSEL
RANGER DISTRICT
PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST**

1958
1930 Allotment Boundaries
SCALE
0 1 2 3 4 5 MILES

IMPROVEMENTS

1934 Road Construction Down the South Fork Begun by Three C's

1944 Idaho and Weiser National Forest Combined to Form
Payette National Forest

1960 District Boundaries Reorganized to Present Day Configuration

Early day improvements on the district were aimed at improving transportation. The first rangers and guards spent much of their time working on trails. A constant problem was river crossing, which proved very hazardous during high water. Log bridges were constructed across the small and medium sized streams. One of the first major efforts was a log pack bridge called the Red Bridge, built in 1909. This became a prominent landmark of the early days and crossed the Secesh at the present site of Ponderosa Campground. The bridge was rebuilt several times and during the 30's a concrete pier was constructed at midspan on a large boulder. The bridge was washed out in 1948 and was never rebuilt, but the pier and one abutment were still visible in 1974. Another major span was completed across the South Fork at Poverty Flat. This bridge made it possible to get sheep across the river earlier and was an important link in the Thunder Mountain sheep driveway which crossed the district through the Blackmare and Four Mile drainages. The original bridge was replaced in the 1940's by a steel structure that still stands today.

Phone lines were an important improvement in communications. Early attempts at speeding fire messages by using carrier pigeons between Big Creek and McCall were only partially successful. Ranger Walter Estep said in a 1922 report "The experiment would have been more successful if the forest dispatcher had been present to receive the birds in McCall." In appreciation for services rendered, the carrier pigeons were eaten by Forest personnel. By 1925 a phone line was completed to Big Creek, and in 1927, a phone line had been run to the Reed Ranch. Rangers of the early 30's like J. W. (Bill) West no doubt found this to be a great improvement over horseback and messenger. Through the 40's and 50's these phone lines were maintained by Forest Service personnel. The biggest effort became a smokejumper project to put the line over Lick Creek back in every spring after avalanches had knocked it down. Although subject to storm damage and grounding by wet limbs, the lines provided fairly reliable communications. Warren Brown is said to have talked to someone in New York City from Chamberlain Basin over the old crank phone. The lines have now been largely replaced by radios and the wire rolled up over most stretches, but many trees along the routes exhibit a strange growth, which upon closer examination will prove to be an insulator.

With the formation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC's) the District received many first class improvements. The corps began constructing a road from Knox north down the South Fork in 1934 while F. E. (Gene) Powers

was rarer. They reached the mouth of the East Fork of the South Fork in 1930. A road was also completed from McCall to Lake Fork during the 30's. By 1940 the road had been extended across the South Fork and Secesh to the CCC's spike camp at Oompaul. The road over Lick Creek was completed in 1944.

Besides roads, the corp built camps, campgrounds, lookouts, pack bridges and the Krassel Ranger Station. Their main camp was located on Camp Creek next to the Reed Ranch. From here they built the present day ranger station completed in 1939, the Krassel Knob bridge completed in 1941, the airstrip at Krassel finished in 1938, and constructed our present day lookouts at Split Creek Point and Williams Peak. Other lookouts were constructed or improved on Blackmare Peak, Parks Peak, Tailholt, Krassel Knob, Teapot Mountain and Eagle Rock. The CCC's were disbanded in 1942 as the country went to war, but their camp remained to provide barracks for both Forest Service personnel and loggers when the logging era began five years later. The buildings at Camp Creek were removed during the mid 50's after the Forest Service project camp moved to Secesh and Brown's loggers had moved to the Parks Ranch. Only the concrete foundations remain today.

It was during the 20's and 30's that efforts were made to improve the wildlife populations in the Salmon River country. Grizzly bear and wolves had completely been exterminated and weren't really missed, but beaver and fisher were trapped elsewhere and turned loose on the South Fork to re-establish trapped out populations. The district boasted excellent deer herds as well as some elk, and many people journeyed from the Council and lower country areas to hunt. Besides natural predators, the deer competed with homesteader's stock for winter range. It was generally assumed that any reduction in predator population would result in an increase in the deer population. One wealthy sportsman gave yearly prizes to the trapper who could come up with the most cougar scalps. The prize was usually taken by Pat Reed, one of Deadshot Reed's sons. About 1938, the Fish and Wildlife Service introduced the efficient predator control 1080 to the South Fork. It is interesting to note that the first recorded large deer die offs due to starvation were in 1941. Cyclic die offs occurred from then on. In the spring of 1959, Ranger Al Dahlgreen looked at starving deer from a 1080 station in Fitzum Creek and decided maybe we had overdone the predator control, so he banned 1080 from the District. To study winter range conditions, a browse utilization transect was established on Six Mile ridge in 1942 by Ranger John Wick. In 1958 game exclosures on Buckhorn Bar and Deadman Bar were built to show the effects of game browsing on plants, especially bitterbrush and trees. Today the differences on Buckhorn Bar are very obvious with the area excluded from winter browsing having a completely different ground cover dominated by small trees and kinnikinnick. In his now famous studies on the mountain lion in Big Creek Maurice G. Hornocker, unit leader of the Idaho Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, University of Idaho, concluded that winter range, not predators, limited

elk and deer populations in the area. By 1972 mountain lions had been removed from the bounty list and protected as a big game animal and 1080 and coyote "getters" were banned from Federal lands.

As the district got into the timber business in the late 40's and 50's interest developed in establishing a seed production area so that ponderosa pine seed could be gathered and used to propagate seedlings that were well suited to the Krassel area. Camp Creek was chosen for the site and the seed production area was established in 1958.

In 1960 a ponderosa pine log grading plot was established along the trail to Krassel Knob. This area has been used ever since to teach timber markers how to grade ponderosa pine.

HEADQUARTERS SINCE WORLD WAR II

1961 Work Begins On The Krassel Site Plan
1975 Work Continues on the Krassel Site Plan

With the disbanding of the CCC's in 1942, improvements were slowed on the district. When large scale logging started on the district in 1947, housing was needed for the large Forest Service brush crews that followed the loggers lopping and piling slash. The CCC's camp was used and in 1954 two portable metal buildings were erected at Camp Creek. In 1948, the lookouts at Teapot Mountain and Krassel Knob were moved to Miners Peak to give a better view of the logging areas. When logging and project work shifted to the north end of the district, the metal bunkhouses were moved to a new project camp at Secesh. A portable wooden building known as the Timber Management (T.M.) shack was also moved to Secesh and several war surplus trailers provided family housing for crew foreman. About this same time the dwelling from Lake Fork was moved to Krassel and attached to the old Poverty Flat Ranger Station, moved earlier to make the present Fire Control Officer's house. The present office was formerly the warehouse and garage at Poverty Flat and was moved to Krassel in 1954. In 1960 the district boundaries were reorganized with inclusions on the north end to form present day boundaries. The Secesh camp was first class with an underground water and sewer system, a generator house and grease rack for vehicle maintenance. Crew facilities at Krassel consisted mainly of tents suitable for summer occupancy. Ranger Howbert (Hobby) Bennet tried to get an official site plan from the Forest in 1961, so improvements could legally be made at the Ranger Station. He was unsuccessful, but the issue was pressed again by his successor, Ed Heikkenen. Heikkenen was also unsuccessful, but did manage to leave his mark by constructing the barn which is reputed to be the best building on the district. This building was completed in 1970. After logging ceased in 1966, the Secesh camp was abandoned except for the T.M. shack. The metal barracks were moved off the district to Thorn Creek where they now house the Forest Hotshot Crew. The trailers fell into such a state of disrepair that they were buried in 1974 and the frames salvaged. The T.M. shack was used as a guard station through 1973. In January 1974 a large ice flow in the Secesh River destroyed it.

Efforts to obtain a site plan and improve conditions at Krassel were continued by Heikkenen's successor Ned Pence. In 1972 an Environmental Statement was approved by the Forest Supervisor stating that improvements should be made, but by January 1975 there was still no site plan. Ranger Pence did proceed to develop a camp next to the airfield and in 1974 a water system, wash house and T.M. trailer shelter were constructed. The possible resumption of timber sale activities necessitated work crews from March through November. Efforts to get better housing had gotten to be quite frustrating. Pence's Forester, Tom Ortman, finally commented "The Supervisor's Office has made us many promises but kept only one. They said we could not build a camp without an approved site plan - and no camp has been built."

CATASTROPHES

- 1919 53,000 Acres Burned East Fork and Fitsum Creek
- 1934 15,000 Acres Burned Sheep Creek
- 1949 13,500 Acres Burned Circle End Creek
- 1964 December Storm Causes 400 Landslides on District

The forest is a dynamic place, constantly undergoing changes. Some are subtle, like the gradual increase in vegetative cover occurring since fire control; while others are more violent and obvious, such as the large fires and floods that have always been a part of the area. With the formation of forest, man began keeping written records of these events.

Fire

The Krassel District is in that small corridor across Idaho called "The bowling alley of the world" because of the frequency of lightning strikes. Dry lightning storms are more frequent here than anywhere else in the world. 7/ The lightning and resulting natural fires are considered to be the primary reason for the high percentage of fire resistant species such as ponderosa pine in relation to other plants. 8/

With the establishment of the National Forest, organized fire fighting and prevention began. Early efforts consisted of establishing small platforms on prominent points that were manned after a storm. A few were improved during the CCC era. The lookout became the smokechaser if a fire was spotted. Some of these platforms or remnants of lookouts are still visible on Parks Peak, Indian Ridge, Krassel Knob, Tailholt Peak, Blackmare Peak, Teapot Mountain and Eagle Rock. Large fires were seldom corralled by the 3-4 man crews fighting them and many burned until fall rains and snow put them out. It was during the Civilian Conservation Corps era that fire fighting crews became larger and better organized. By the end of WW II, the district had smokejumpers available, good communications, improved road transportation, and especial helicopters which greatly improved initial attack success. Still, large fires have continued to occur and with the present fuel buildups will most certainly continue to be a part of the district history. Descriptions of the worst fires are summarized below:

1919 - Fitsum Creek - 18,000 acres and East Fork - 35,800 acres.

These fires were snowed out and have revegetated through natural processes to brush and timber. The large stands of young Douglas-fir and lodgepole pine visible on the south bank of East Fork are the results of this fire.

1928 - Hall Creek - 1200 acres.

Also in SF
1979 Townette A - 1200
1983 - Savage A 35000

1934 - Sheep Creek - 15,000 acres.

This was a fall fire that burned very hot. Embers as big as saucers were reported as far away as Big Creek when the fire topped out at the head of Sheep Creek. Snow finally put this fire out. Today vegetation is still sparse over this area.

1942 - Caton Creek - 4,330 acres.

1945 - Fritser Creek - 1,500 acres.

1949 - Circle End - 13,500 acres.

This fire started when lightning hit a snag. The fire was contained twice but rolled out the bottom each time and eventually jumped the river.

1961 - Poverty - 920 acres.

This fire was started by a salmon fisherman. 395 acres were salvage logged removing 5.3 MMBF of timber using cable logging system. Then most of burned area was contour trenched and trees planted. Survival was excellent.

The district fire average is 19 fires per year with 50 being the high and 1 being the low since the present district boundaries were established in 1960.

Floods

Flooding has caused some extensive damage to the South Fork watershed and roads. The high water combined with numerous landslides that accompany climatic events has come under closer observation since WW II because of the increased interest in the salmon habitat. The most damaging storms are warm rains on wet snow. The effects of such a storm are to scour many normally dry draws to bedrock periodically. The effects of this erosion is compounded when combined with a landslide of supersaturated soil. The activities of man have sometimes compounded the damage done by such storms.

Sometimes storms cause localized damage because they cover only small areas or because a small area has been denuded and is more prone to damage. One such storm occurred in 1923 in the head of Indian Creek, which had been burned off 4 years earlier during the East Fork fire. V. O. White reported that the creek was completely sluiced out and that a pile of logs and debris 30 feet high stacked up on the flat where the Fire Control Officer's house is located.

The first documented widespread storm damage was in the spring of 1948 when a major system hit the entire Columbia Basin and caused extensive damage. The newly constructed McCall-Stibnite road was washed out in many places from the mouth of the Secesh west when many dry draws were scoured to bedrock.

In December 1954, a warm rain on an already saturated snowpack caused damage to the road. The work crew had to hike from Camp Creek to Browns Camp at Zena Creek to get out. This storm resulted in many timber access road failures. Timber harvesting had begun in earnest in 1949 and nearly all of the new roads sustained damage. This event caused such concern that the Zena Creek Logging Study was conceived to try out various road stabilization methods and to manage areas with fewer roads by using cable logging systems.

The next major flooding was in December 1964, when another large storm system hit the Columbia Basin. By this time a much greater land area had been roaded on the district and this transportation system received major damage. The contours on the Poverty burn filled with water and failed, sluicing many draws to bedrock. Sand from this source and logging upstream on the Boise National Forest covered the major salmon spawning beds on the South Fork of the Salmon River. Fill failures on the logging roads along the Secesh failed and slid from the top roads down with a domino effect. One eyewitness report claimed that the entire Secesh River was blocked for a short time by a mudslide. Over 400 landslides occurred on the district. For awhile, it was feared that the South Fork spawning beds were completely ruined and following another storm in April of 1965 a moratorium on logging went into effect on the district.

In January of 1974 another rain on snow event occurred on the district. By this time virtually all the old logging roads had been closed, culverts bailed and bridges pulled so damage was relatively light. The Buckhorn and Zena Creek roads were still open and sustained major damage. The storm also caused heavy ice flows that destroyed the T.M. shack at Secesh, damaged the guard rail on the nearby bridge, and took out the spillway on the pond in back of the Zena Creek Wilderness Camp. High water in June of 1974 due to a record snowpack and high temperatures caused only the main rivers to flood and apparently flushed much of the sediment from the river system. Near the Reed Ranch the South Fork washed out a channel in the oxbow where there had been an old caved in miner's tunnel.

THE TIMBER YEARS

1941 John Wick Sells The First Major Timber Sale On The District

1962 Zena Creek Logging Study Begins

1965 Moratorium On Timber Sales On The Krassel District

There have been three timber surveys on the District, since the forest was created. The first in 1926 recorded timber present and delineated types and gave average volumes. The early records refer over and over to vast quantities of timber succumbing to insects, but because of poor transportation, the only use made was by the local homesteaders. Early district rangers talked of running the river with logs, but downstream rapids are so rough that little more than splinters would arrive at the nearest mill at Riggins. The second survey was in 1958 and the third was in 1965.

When Stibnite began booming in the 30's and 40's a nearby lumber market was created. A man named Frank Francis erected a little sawmill near the mouth of Parks Creek and began sawing boards. Ranger John Wick made the first timber sale on the district to him in 1942. 800 acres were cut over from the Holcomb Ranch to Yellowpine, using mostly seed tree and shelterwood cuts. Stibnite continued to grow to become the nation's second largest producer of antimony and the Bradley Mining Company bought Francis' mill and moved it to Stibnite in 1950. The old mill site, work roads and well regenerated cutting units can be seen from the McCall-Stibnite road west of Yellow Pine.

Completion of the McCall-Stibnite road over Lick Creek in 1944 made hauling logs to McCall feasible. That same year Ranger Yale Mitchell began work on the Camp Creek Timber Sale. Warren Brown logged the Reed Ranch starting about 1947 and then moved on into Camp Creek. By 1951 the following areas had been logged: Camp Creek 1880 acres, Jackie Gulch 1010 acres, Buckhorn Bar 600 acres, Phoebe Creek 760 acres, Yellowpine 800 acres. The logging activities continued at a rapid pace throughout the fifties. Logging methods were tractor and jammer and cut areas were intensely roaded even though cutting methods were mainly selection. Only the better pine and fir were harvested as it wasn't within the realm of sound economics to haul anything else out over Lick Creek. The bridge over the South Fork near the oxbow was constructed for timber access in 1959 and replaced a log bridge. The bridge at the mouth of Buckhorn was constructed for the Buckhorn sale in 1962.

In the late fifties sale activity moved to the north end of the District so the project camp was moved from Camp Creek to the Secesh. As a result of earlier road failures and erosion problems, the Zena Creek Logging Study was begun in 1962 and national attention was focused on the district. The following summary explains the project.

Development of a 15,000 acre logging study area on the lower Secesh River started in 1958. The main purpose of establishing the study area was to determine logging and road building methods that would be acceptable from a multiple-use standpoint in the South Fork of Salmon River drainage. Earlier timber harvesting projects had shown that numerous and serious resource management problems needed to be overcome before the large volumes of mature timber could be safely harvested in the South Fork drainage, as well as throughout the granite soil areas of the Boise and Payette River drainages. The logging area selected for study was named Zena Creek Logging Area. A 60 million board feet sale was made to Brown Tie and Lumber Company, which was large enough to secure their cooperation in the study venture. A skyline cable system and other specialized logging equipment were to be used. Special emphasis was given to research and study of road construction techniques.

To help the Forest with this study, specialized personnel from the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station and the Regional Forester's staff received assignments to this project. Top direction was provided by a committee composed of:

Krassel District Ranger
Payette Forest Supervisor

A representative from each of the following Regional Office functional divisions. Timber Management, Watershed Management, Wildlife Management, and Engineering.

A representative from each of the following Research Divisions: Watershed, Timber and Engineering.

The Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station was to conduct studies in:

1. Water yield and soil loss before and after logging.
2. Effectiveness and efficiency of the various types of logging equipment used.
3. Conduct experiments with reforestation methods for the severe site conditions found on the area.

Administration personnel were to supplement and apply research findings and work toward achievement of the objectives of the study by:

1. Determining logging and hauling costs.
2. Determining road construction costs.
3. Developing techniques for treatment of slash concentrations on clearcut areas.
4. Trying out and, if possible, developing equipment suitable for site preparation, tree planting, and erosion control.
5. Determining suitable K.V. and E.C. techniques for treatment of area and actual costs for doing the job.

Road building started in 1959 and logging started in 1960, using a highline system with an 800-foot main line and a Skagit SR-7R power unit. A radio controlled carriage operated from the main line with a pickup line from the carriage to the chokers. Logs were decked on prepared road sites and loaded on trucks by the Skagit power unit.

Some time after the start of operations, the 60 million board feet of the original sale was reduced to 45 million, as the result of a reappraisal of cruise data and the elimination of the Tailholt Creek drainage from the area to be logged. Tailholt Creek was reserved for a control area for water yield.

The timber species making up 88 percent of the volume sold for 50 cents per thousand plus \$2.60 for slash disposal, \$3.15 for K.V. and 11 cents for erosion control.

As the study progressed, some changes were made in study methods and techniques, especially those involved with road design and stabilization of cuts and fills.

In 1965 all road building was stopped because, up to that time, no construction or maintenance method had been developed which could assure stabilized cuts and fills. Due to steep slopes, character of soil and underlying rock structure, soil erosion problems originating on roads became insurmountable.

Timber harvesting continued into 1966 from areas accessible from roads already built, after which all operations stopped with full agreement with the purchaser. Total volume cut from the sale area during the seven-year cutting period was 32,640 M board feet. 1/

The December storm of 1964 caused such extensive damage to logging roads that several prepared sales were not sold and what amounted to a moratorium on logging went into effect. The last loads of logs were hauled off the Buckhorn and Zena Creek Sales in 1966. The total sale volumes by areas cut are summarized on the following page.

1/ James M. Hockaday, January, 1968

Timber Harvested-Krassel District

		<u>Mbf</u>
Parks Creek	1941-45	2,000
Camp Creek	1947-49	14,103
Buckhorn Bar	1948	2,451
Jackie Creek	1949	6,504
South Fork Salmon Needle Cast	1951	4,471
Little Buckhorn	1952-54	35,471
Maverick Creek	1954-58	11,900
Calf Creek	1956-58	9,800
Tie Creek	1958	1,400
Lower Tie Creek	1959	7,400
Lower Secesh	1955	7,823
Zena Creek	1956-57 & 1965	5,242
South Fork Blowdown	1956	6,000
Poverty Fire Salvage	1961	5,462
South Fork Bench	1963	1,025
North Fitsum	1963	7,336
Zena Creek Logging Study	1961-66	32,001
Buckhorn	1965-66	14,047
		<hr/>
TOTAL VOLUME		174,436

KRASSEL DISTRICT RANGERS

James D. McCall	1908-1913
William F. Gaekle	1913-1916
Charles DeWitt	1916-1921
M. E. Mahoney	1921
Walter A. Estep	1921-1923
Lee Kessler	1923-1927
Warren Bowles	1927-1929
Orin Latham	1929-1932
J. W. West	1932-1933
F. E. Powers	1933-1937
Holt Fritchman	1937-1938
John Wick	1939-1942
Yale A. Mitchell	1942-1950
Finley McNaughton	1950-1955
William S. Rozynek	1955-1956
Richard Stemple	1956-1957
Allen K. Dahlgreen	1957-1959
Howbert Bonnett	1959-1961
Edwin A. Heikkenen	1961-1971
Ned N. Pence	1971-

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