

DECISION MEMO

Big Creek Lodge Resort Special Use Permit Reissuance Project

**USDA Forest Service
Payette National Forest
Krassel Ranger District
Valley County, Idaho**

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the proposed action for the Big Creek Lodge Resort Special Use Permit Reissuance Project, located in Township 21 North, Range 9 East, Section 26; Boise Meridian, Valley County, Idaho.

The project area is located roughly 30 miles east of McCall, ID. The project area is located in the McCorkle Creek, which drains into Big Creek.

My decision will allow for the issuance of a new special use authorization, to the new owner **J. Curtis Earl Idaho Aviation Foundation**, for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization. Details of the proposed action are included below. Project-specific design features associated with my decision are disclosed in Appendix A of this document.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action will issue a new special use authorization, to the new owner **J. Curtis Earl Idaho Aviation Foundation**, for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization. This permit will authorize use and occupancy of National Forest System Lands on the Payette National Forest for the purposes of constructing, operating, and maintaining a resort, including food service, retail sales, and other ancillary facilities described in the permit, known as the Big Creek Public Service Site, and subject to the provisions of the resort term special use permit. This permit covers 14.83 acres.

Services and facilities shall be operated, developed and managed in compliance with the Master Development Plan and any approved amendments; and in accordance with the Resort Operation and Maintenance Plan submitted annually by the holder and approved by the authorized officer and made part of this permit. These services will consist of public use and occupancy of the existing site in tents and existing structures for public service and food service for the 2013 field season.

The public pasture associated with this use shall be managed in accordance with the Pasture Management Plan.

No road construction or reconstruction will occur.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of this project is to approve and authorize the use and maintenance of the Big Creek Lodge. The Permit ownership has changed and there are facilities and improvements on the site that need to be authorized to prevent trespass. The proposal is to issue a new permit to replace the permit to the former owner. The construction of the new lodge will be a separate action with specific consultation when we

know specifics. This "action" is simply to issue a new permit for the ongoing services and existing facilities.

The need for this project is to authorize facilities and improvements that currently occupy National Forest System Land and maintain public service to the site.

REASONS FOR CATEGORICALLY EXCLUDING THIS ACTION

The Chief of the Forest Service has identified specific actions that may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA) if there are no extraordinary circumstances.

Category Applicability: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(15) states that issuance of a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization may be categorically excluded from documentation in an EIS or EA provided that no extraordinary circumstances exist. My decision will allow for the issuance of a new special use authorization, to the new owner **J. Curtis Earl Idaho Aviation Foundation**, for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization. Therefore, I have determined that this action falls within the category summarized above.

Extraordinary Circumstances: 36 CFR 220.6(b)(2) states that the mere presence of an extraordinary circumstance does not preclude use of a categorical exclusion. It is the existence of a cause-effect relationship between a proposed action and the potential effect on these resource conditions, and if such a relationship exists, the degree of the potential effect of a proposed action on these resource conditions that determines whether extraordinary circumstances exist. 36 CFR 220.6(b)(1) discusses those resource conditions that should be considered in determining whether extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action warrant further analysis and documentation in an EIS or EA. A summary of the effects of my decision on those resource conditions is provided below, with detailed information contained in the project planning record. Based upon these findings, and public involvement efforts discussed below, I have determined that no extraordinary circumstances are associated with my decision.

1. My decision has been evaluated to determine the effects on **Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, and Forest Service sensitive species**. The biological assessment for fisheries and wildlife concluded that this action will have no effect on northern Idaho ground squirrel; this action may affect but is not likely to adversely affect Canada lynx, Chinook salmon or their designated critical habitat, steelhead trout or their designated critical habitat, or bull trout. The biological evaluation completed for this project disclosed that the project will have no effect to any listed plant species.

Further, the analysis concluded that my decision will have no impact to American three-toed woodpecker, boreal owl, fisher, great gray owl, northern goshawk, mountain quail, wolverine, gray wolf, Townsend's big-eared bat, white-headed woodpecker, flammulated owl, rocky mountain bighorn sheep, spotted bat, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, bald eagle, Columbia spotted frog, harlequin duck.

My decision will have no impact to any sensitive plant species and may impact individuals but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or loss of viability to the population or species of west slope cutthroat trout.

2. My decision has been evaluated to determine the effects on **flood plains and wetlands, and municipal watersheds**. Activities would not effect floodplains and wetlands. This action is not expected to negatively change the functions or values of wetlands and floodplains in the project area and

is compliant with the Clean Water Act. There are no municipal watersheds involved. No ground disturbing activities are proposed.

3. Proposed activities will not occur within/adjacent or affect any **Congressionally designated areas**, therefore the activities will have no direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on these resources. My decision will maintain the Big Creek eligibility as a potential addition to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Its recommendation in the Forest Plan's Record of Decision as suitable for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System will not be affected. The free-flowing characteristics of the river will not be altered, nor will the eligibility or potential classification of the river corridor be affected. The outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) for fisheries and cultural are discussed elsewhere in my decision.

4. Proposed activities will not occur within any **Inventoried Roadless Areas**. Proposed activities will occur adjacent to an IRA. Recreationist could have a reduced feeling of solitude due to the noise associated with resort operations. Any reduced feeling of solitude will be a temporary effect. There will be no other direct, indirect or cumulative impacts to IRAs.

5. Proposed activities will not occur within/adjacent or affect any **Research Natural Areas**, therefore the activities will have no direct, indirect, or cumulative effect on these resources.

6. My decision has been evaluated to determine the effects on **American Indian and Alaska Native Religious or Cultural Sites**. Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comment were sent to representatives of the Nez Perce and Shoshone Bannock Tribes. The project was presented orally to the Nez Perce Tribe on December 5, 2012 during quarterly staff to staff meetings and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribe on December 13, 2012 at the Wings and Roots Consultation. The tribal notifications and/or consultation processes did not result in the identification of any known adverse effects to tribal interests or rights specifically associated with this project.

7. My decision has been evaluated to determine the effects on **Archaeological Sites, or Historic Properties or Areas**. The State Historic Preservation Office has concurred with the determination that this project will have no adverse effect on any cultural properties.

Other Information Considered: In addition to the above, I have considered other elements of the analysis in my determination that there are no extraordinary circumstances, as defined by NEPA, nor other adverse effects associated with this project that would necessitate documentation in an EIS or EA. I have also considered the potential for cumulative effects and arrived at the conclusion that without notable direct or indirect effects from my decision, there would be few cumulative effects to resources. My conclusion is based on (1) the short duration of the project, (2) the comments received during public involvement efforts, and (3) the minimal environmental effects expected as a result of my decision as summarized below:

1. **Public Involvement** – On November 8, 2012 a scoping letter describing the proposed action was mailed to 149 interested individuals and/or groups soliciting comments. A legal notice announcing scoping was published in *The Idaho Statesman* on November 15, 2012. Two comments were received in response to this outreach. In response to a recent court ruling (*Sequoia Forest Keeper v. Tidwell*, 11-cv-00679-LJO-DLB (E.D. Cal.)), I solicited comment for appeal standing pursuant to 36 CFR part 215 regulations through the mechanisms described above. Additionally, on November 20, 2012, I received a thorough discussion on the project and the summary of the effects regarding extraordinary circumstances from the IDT. None of these public involvement efforts, or internal discussions or analyses, resulted in identification of any extraordinary circumstances. Appendix B of this Decision Memo displays the IDT's response to the two comments received during the 30 day period for appeal standing.

2. Government to Government Consultation -

TRIBAL – The project was discussed in detail with staff of Nez Perce Tribe at a regularly scheduled Quarterly Staff to Staff meeting on December 5, 2012. Government to Government Consultation was conducted through the Wings and Roots Native American Campfire program with the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes on December 13, 2012, and individual scoping packages were also forwarded to representatives of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes on November 6, 2012.

FEDERAL- Scoping letters addressed specifically to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries representatives were mailed on November 8, 2012 soliciting comments on the Proposed Action. The project was described and discussed at a regularly scheduled Level 1 Meeting with NOAA and USFWS on November 5, 2012 in McCall. Individual scoping packages were sent to four different BLM offices and Environmental Protection Agency.

STATE/LOCAL- Individual scoping packages were also forwarded to Office of the Governor, Senators Crapo and Risch, Office of the State Controller, three offices of Idaho Department of Fish and Game, State of Idaho Departments of Lands, Agriculture, Water Resources, DEQ, Parks and Recreation, and Idaho Division of Aeronautics. Washington, Idaho and Valley County Commissioners and McCall Chamber of Commerce on November 8, 2012

FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS AND REGULATIONS

National Historic Preservation Act – As discussed above, my decision will comply with these acts. The State Historic Preservation Office has concurred with the determination.

American Indian Religious Freedom Act, Executive Order 12875, Executive Order 13007, Executive Order 13175, and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act - As described above in the discussion pertaining to extraordinary circumstances and government to government consultation, my decision will comply with these acts and executive orders.

Endangered Species Act – Biological Assessments (BAs) and/or Evaluations (BEs) have been completed for listed species and the effects determinations are summarized above.

National Forest Management Act – My decision was found to be consistent with direction in the Forest Plan and the Management Area.

Clean Water Act and State Water Quality Standards – My decision will protect appropriate beneficial uses and will comply with the Clean Water Act and related State water quality standards.

Environmental Justice – In accordance with Executive Order 12898, my decision will not disproportionately impact minority or low income populations.

Best Available Science – My conclusions are based on a review of the project's record that reflects a review of relevant scientific information, consideration of responsible opposing views where raised by internal or external sources and the acknowledgement of incomplete or unavailable information, scientific uncertainty, and/or risk where pertinent to the decision being made.

Executive Order 13443, Facilitation of Hunting Heritage and Wildlife Conservation - On August 16, 2007, President George Bush signed an Executive Order directing appropriate federal agencies to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat. My decision is consistent with direction in this executive order.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION DATE

My decision has been reviewed in accordance with the categorical exclusion guidelines. I have determined that none of the extraordinary circumstances described at 36 CFR 220.6(b) apply to a degree that would preclude the use of a categorical exclusion. The Interdisciplinary Team's analysis did not identify any

other unusual circumstances or effects that would preclude the use a categorical exclusion or inconsistencies with Forest Plan standards and guidelines, nor did public involvement efforts result in identification of any extraordinary circumstances. In response to public involvement efforts, two individuals or groups responded to solicitation for comment on this project. Project implementation will take place as early as March 2013.

This decision is subject to administrative appeal pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215, only by those individuals and organizations who provided comments or otherwise expressed interest during the 30-day comment period on the proposed action. The appeal must meet the requirements at 36 CFR 215.14.

The Appeal Deciding Officer is the Regional Forester, Intermountain Region. Appeals filed by regular mail or express delivery must be sent to: Appeal Deciding Officer; Intermountain Regional Office; 324 25th Street; Ogden, UT 84401. Incorporation of documents by reference is not allowed.

Appeals may also be hand-delivered to the above address between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:30 PM Mountain Time, Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Appeals may also be submitted via fax at (801) 625-5277.

Electronic appeals must be submitted in a rich text format (.rtf) or Microsoft Word (.doc) format as an email message to: appeals-intermtn-regional-office@fs.fed.us. E-mailed appeals must include the project name in the subject line. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in *The Idaho Statesman*, the newspaper of record, Boise, Idaho. Attachments received after the 45-day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in *The Idaho Statesman* is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

For further information contact Anthony Botello at the Krassel Ranger District, 500 N. Mission, McCall, Idaho 83638, or telephone (208) 634-0600.



Keith B Lannom
Forest Supervisor
Payette National Forest

02/12/13
DATE

Figure 1

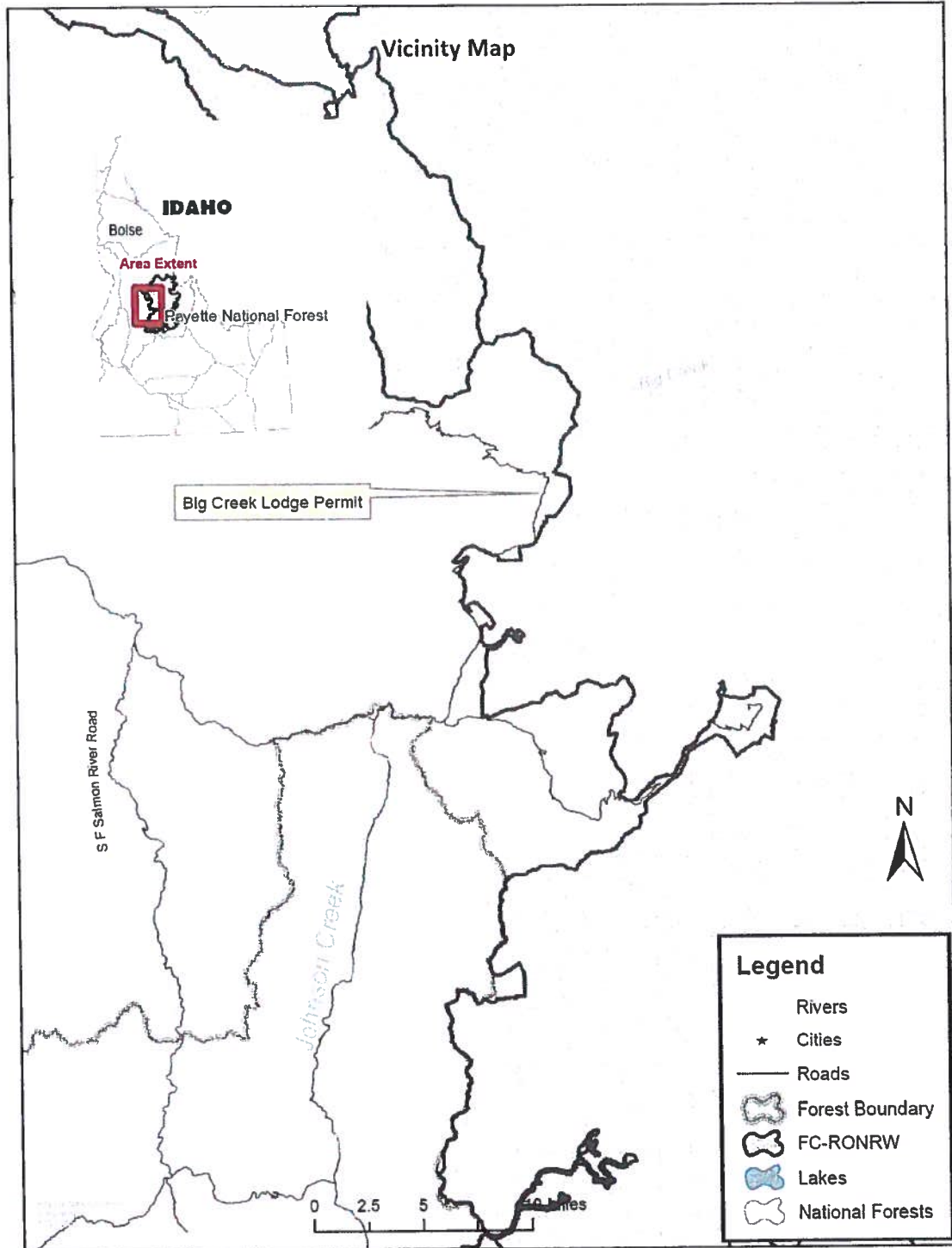


Figure 2

Big Creek Lodge Permit



APPENDIX A

Project-Specific Design Features

In addition to Forest Plan standards and guidelines designed to mitigate impacts, the following measures will be used. These design features have been incorporated by the Forest Service to reduce or prevent undesirable effects resulting from proposed management activities.

1. Diversions will be screened with a mesh size of 3/32" to avoid entrainment of fish and eggs.
2. Any ground disturbance due to maintenance of diversion equipment will be mitigated with a high level of erosion control to prevent erosion and subsequent sediment deposition into streams. All maintenance is assumed to be hand maintenance.
3. Any leakage due to malfunctioning diversion equipment will be repaired as soon as possible to prevent streambank washout or erosion and avoid sediment deposition in streams.
4. Stream channel conditions at diversions will be monitored every 3 years by special use administrators and fisheries biologist and/or hydrologists to determine if changes to the diversion activities are necessary based on conditions found at the site.
5. Mitigations/design features (above) identified in the Wildlife Programmatic BA (South Fork Salmon River Section 7 Watershed) as relates to lynx will be incorporated, including coordination with appropriate journey level wildlife biologists during contract preparation.
6. A draft copy of the permit will be made available for IDT review prior to issuance.
7. The project proponent will review project PDFs with a journey level wildlife biologist before issuance.
8. The operating plan will include practices to avoid wildlife and human conflicts, including potential bear related conflicts from sanitation practices.
9. Activities will take place outside of RCAs.
10. A conceptual MDP will be drafted and collaboratively finalized, setting a framework for the future development and operations of a commercial Resort over the Permit period. This MDP will address such key requirements as public service and retention of visual quality.
11. An annual O&M Plan will be submitted for FS review & approval – to be included as part of the Permit - describing in detail that seasons projected activities.
12. The linkage between the Resort Permit and the hydro-electric generating facility needs to be addressed, with a clear understanding the Permit Holder for the Resort is also the Permit Holder, and owner / operator for the hydro-electric generating facility.
13. As a matter of standard operating procedure, the Permit Holder will comply & provide evidence of compliance with, all local, State and Federal regulations pertaining to the activities associated with the operations of a commercial Resort. This includes such things as satisfying pertinent health & safety regulations, construction design review / approval and County building permits.
14. Forest will prepare a ISHS site form for the remaining structures at Big Creek to determine eligibility to National Register of Historic Places, prior to any proposed projects.
15. All ground disturbing activities propose at the site will be reviewed by the Forest Archeologist and a report prepared for the Section 106 consultation to Idaho SHPO and interested tribes. Additional inventory may be required.

Table 1. State water rights information associated with the Big Creek Lodge

Water Right #	Holder	Use	Amount	Notes
77-7157	Forest Service	Irrigation Domestic	0.08 cfs 0.05 cfs (negated by stipulation in 77-7298)	Ongoing BA consultation on 0.08 cfs for irrigation and associated facilities. SUA covers facilities.
77-7298	Forest Service	Ground Water	0.04 cfs	
77-7334	Forest Service	Hydro Power	0.75 cfs (non-consumptive)	Special Use Permit KRL104 covers hydropower facilities.

APPENDIX B
Responses to Comments Received

On November 8, 2012 a scoping letter describing the proposed action was mailed to 149 interested individuals and/or groups soliciting comments. A legal notice announcing scoping was published in *The Idaho Statesman* on November 15, 2012. Two letters were received. The following section contains photocopies of the two letters received and the Interdisciplinary Team's response to those comments. Responses to individual statements in the letters can be cross-referenced by the corresponding numbers in the page margins.

1	Hi Jeff, I appreciate you posting this proposed action under SOPA. It sounds like a temporary facility is going to be augmented by new construction. Can you share a copy of the Master Development Plan? Am I correct to assume this resort has electricity? If so, what is the name of the serving utility?	1	The old lodge did burn down and the long term goal of the new owners appears to be another lodge. However, no new construction is authorized or analyzed with this action. This action is to allow for the administrative change to new owners. Any new construction at the site would be a separate action.
2	Does this resort pump its own fresh water or is it supplied by a government (USFS) water system?	2	The old master plan is available upon request through FOIA. It should be noted that the new owners have not yet developed a master plan at this point and would be required to develop as part of the permitting process.
3	Thanks for your help.	3	Yes, the resort does have electricity. There are no utilities serving the remote area of Big Creek. They have a small hydropower plant to support their needs
4	Steve Steve Butterworth Specialist Energy & Environment Directorate Building Energy Systems & Technologies Pacific Northwest National Laboratory 1100 Dexter Avenue North, Suite 400 Seattle, WA 98109-3598 USA Tel: 206-528-3304 Fax: 206-528-3552 stephen.butterworth@pnl.gov www.pnl.gov CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This e-mail message (including attachments) is covered by the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, 18 U.S.C. §§ 2510-2521, and is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure, dissemination, copying, forwarding or distribution is prohibited. If you are not the intended recipient, please contact the sender by reply e-mail and destroy all copies of the original message. If you are the intended recipient but do not wish to receive communications through this medium, please so advise the sender immediately.	4	The USFS holds the water right. The culinary water is supplied by a well.



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
SOUTHWEST REGION
3101 South Powerline Road
Nampa, Idaho 83686

C.L. "Butch" Oster, Governor
Vigil Moore, Director

December 10, 2012

Kinsel Ranger District
ATTN: Anthony Botello
500 N. Mission
McCall, ID 83438
comments-internal-payette-kinsel@fs.fed.us

RE: Big Creek Lodge Special Use Permit

Dear Mr. Botello,

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game (Department) has reviewed the notice for the Big Creek Lodge Special Use Permit Reissuance. The Forest Service proposes to issue a new special use authorization to the new owner J. Curtis Earl/Idaho Aviation Foundation, for a new term. This permit would authorize use and occupancy of National Forest System Lands on the Payette National Forest for the purposes of constructing, operating, and maintaining a resort, including food service, retail sales, and other ancillary facilities described in the permit and subject to the provisions of the resort term special use permit. This permit covers 14.83 acres described as T21N R0E, Section 26 SW 1/4.

There has been a history of bear-human conflicts in the Big Creek and Edwardsburg areas. Some of these conflicts have involved the former Big Creek Lodge. Trash storage, outside food storage, and grease vat storage have been central to these conflicts. We recommend that bear-proof practices be part of the conditional use permit.

Thank you. If you have any questions regarding the Department's concerns please contact Jeff Rohlfman at our McCall office (208-634-8137).

Sincerely,

Scott Reinecker
Southwest Regional Supervisor

SR/rw
cc: Kerfer/HQ, R3/staff
cc: Gold file

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Equal Opportunity Employer • 208-462-4467 • Fax: 208-462-4467 • Idaho Relay (TDD) Service: 1-800-377-3339 • <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov>

The operating plan will include requirements for practices that avoid wildlife and human conflicts, including bear related incidents from sanitation practices.

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Payette National Forest

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Site Map

Release Date: Apr 15, 2013

Payette National Forest

Date: 4/15/2013

Contact: Cassandra Kollenberg (208) 634-0784 cell: (208) 634-6945

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Payette National Forest
800 West Lakeside Ave
McCall, ID 83638-3602

(208) 634-0700

Contact Us

Big Creek, ID – A Special Use Permit from the Forest Service for operations at the Big Creek Lodge and public service site in Valley County, Idaho has been issued to Idaho Aviation Foundation. The site is within the Payette National Forest and has operated under a special use permit from the Forest Service for many years.

Big Creek Lodge site is located 12 nautical miles northeast of Yellow Pine, Idaho and adjacent to the forest's Big Creek campground near the public use airstrip north of Edwardsburg - a narrow hogback ridge over from Big Creek which flows about 50 miles from this point down to the Middle Fork of the Salmon River through the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. The Big Creek corridor abuts the wilderness and provides several notable wilderness portals; Lick Creek Trailhead and Smith Creek-Big Creek Trailhead, as well as the intersection with the Smith Creek (road 373) which continues north with access to Pueblo Summit. The lodge was originally built in the 1930's to serve miners in the area and long served as an outdoor recreationist, fly-fishing, and aviators outpost renting rooms in the summer and fall. A fire believed to have been started by faulty wiring in the main lodge building destroyed the lodge in October of 2008.

The permit is for ongoing operations at the lodge site and will authorize light operations of the remaining systems and public events such as breakfasts and other drive-in events. Idaho Aviation Foundation is actively planning to rebuild a lodge on the former historic lodge site which will require a separate analysis for the construction along with development of a master plan in accordance with USFS requirements. "The Krassel Ranger District and the Payette National Forest have wanted public operations at Big Creek since the fire," noted Krassel District Ranger Anthony Botello. More information about Idaho Aviation Foundation's efforts to rebuild Big Creek Lodge is available at www.rebuildbigcreek.com.

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Big Creek Lodge Resort Special Use Permit Reissuance

Big Creek Lodge Resort Special Use Permit Reissuance Krassel Ranger District Payette National Forest

PROPOSED ACTION

Issuance of a new special use authorization, to the new owner **J. Curtis Earl Idaho Aviation Foundation**, for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization. This permit would authorize use and occupancy of National Forest System Lands on the Payette National Forest for the purposes of constructing, operating, and maintaining a resort, including food service, retail sales, and other ancillary facilities described in the permit, known as the Big Creek Public Service Site, and subject to the provisions of the resort term special use permit. This permit covers 14.83 acres described as T 21N R9E. Section 26 SW ¼ and as shown on the attached map.

Services and facilities shall be operated, developed and managed in compliance with the Master Development Plan and any approved amendments; and in accordance with the Resort Operation and Maintenance Plan submitted annually by the holder and approved by the authorized officer and made part of this permit. These services will consist of public use and occupancy of the existing site in tents and existing structures for public service and food service for the 2013 field season.

The public pasture associated with this use shall be managed in accordance with the Pasture Management Plan.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project area is located at the Big Creek Public Service Site adjacent to the Big Creek Guard Station and across the road from the Big Creek Campground and public use airstrip, roughly 30 air miles east of McCall, ID. The project area is located adjacent to but outside of the RCA of McCorkle Creek, which drains into Big Creek Creek. The project area is located in the Management Area 13 and guided by 3.2 Management Prescription Category (MPC).

The Project Area is not within an Inventoried Roadless Area or designated Wilderness or Wild and Scenic River.

Big Creek Lodge Resort Special Use Permit Reissuance

Figure 1

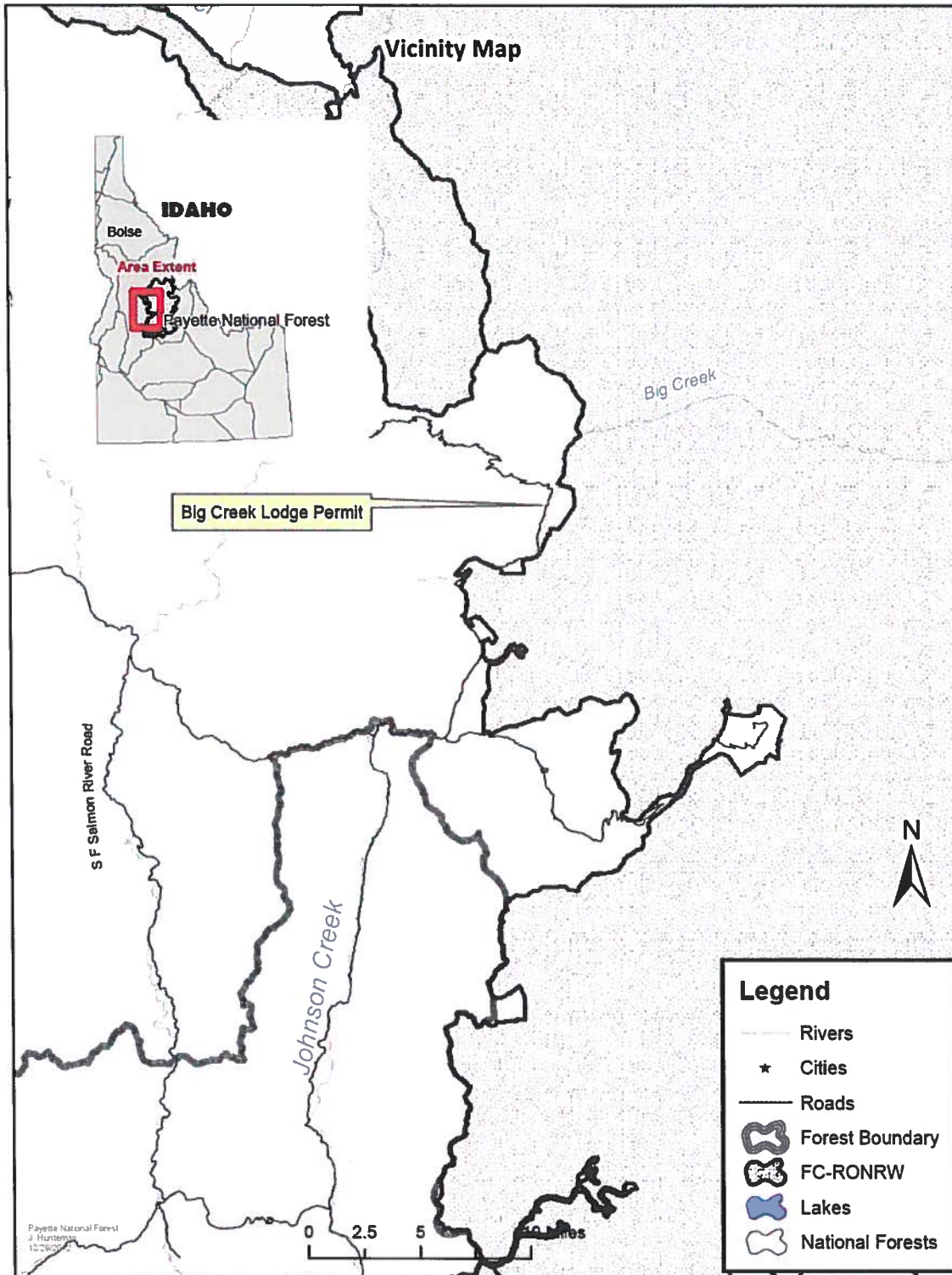


Figure 2.

Big Creek Lodge Permit



History vanishes in the ashes of the Big Creek Lodge

By: Frank Lester
Safety/Education Coordinator

At the beginning of October we were all shocked at the news that the famous, and much loved, Big Creek lodge had been completely destroyed by fire. According to an article in the Idaho Statesman, based on evidence and witness statements, it appeared that the fire was caused by an electrical malfunction. The main lodge and two other buildings were destroyed despite a valiant but futile attempt by Brook, one of the caretakers, who emptied three hand-held fire extinguishers in her efforts. The article quoted Vicki Martineau, who owns Yellow Pine Corner Bar, "Yellow Pine is just sick... There is so much history in that building that went up in smoke."



Flames lick at the last remnants of the lodge.



Big Creek Lodge in better days.

Thanks to Mike Weiss, Jim Hudson and Rachel Smith (pictures taken by Walt Smith of Arnold Aviation) for sending me pictures to use in this article. In the email that accompanied his pictures, Jim said, "Dan and his wife Brook, the caretakers, were just getting ready to leave and pay their last respects, just as we got there this afternoon. They will be heading back to Michigan. They both had tears in their eyes, and of

See Big Creek

Continued on page 17

Big Creek

Continued from page 1

course were very sad. They were fairly certain that wiring in the attic caused the fire. It was very sad to see the remains. Scott (the owner) was also there and said he hopes to rebuild, but said he was uncertain about the lease. [We have] many fond memories of Big Creek and hope to have the lodge back soon."

Scott's concern about the lease begs the question, "When is the lease set to expire?" According to what I have heard, there are currently two years left on the lease with the Forest Service. Now might be the time to voice your support for the extension of that lease, which would allow the Big Creek lodge to be rebuilt. To whom or to where would you turn to voice that support? The Forest Service? The Idaho Aviation Association?



Your legislators? I don't know if there is an organized effort to address this issue. But it will take more than one individual to make it happen.

Although the lodge may be replaced, we are now left with only memories and photos of this historic backcountry destination.



ORIGINAL

Federal Energy Regulatory
Commission (FERC)
FERC Form E0**Licensed Hydropower Development
Recreation Report**Form Approved
OMB No. 1902-0106
Expires: 09/30/98
Burden: 3.0 hours

This form collects data on recreational facilities at projects licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission under the Federal Power Act (16 USC 791a-825r). This form must be submitted by licensees of all projects except those specifically exempted under 18 CFR 8.11 (c). Submit this form on or before April 1, 1997. Submit subsequent filings of this form on or before April 1, every 6th year thereafter (for example, 2003, 2009, etc.). Submit an original and three copies of the form to the Commission's Regional Office (specified in the cover letter to this form). The public burden estimated for this form is three hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing the collection of information. Please send your comments about this burden estimate, or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions to reduce the burden, to: Director, Division of Project Compliance and Administration, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Washington, D.C. 20426 and the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Desk Officer-FERC, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, D.C. 20503.

Failure to comply with this collection of information will not result in a penalty, if you were unaware that a valid control number assigned by the Office of Management and Budget must be displayed on this collection of information.

Schedule 1. Public Use Information: Please read the instructions and glossary before completing this form**1. Instructions:**

- 1.1 All data reported on this form must represent recreational facilities and services located within the development boundary.
- 1.2 To insure a common understanding of terms, please refer to the Glossary on page 3.
- 1.3 Report actual data for each item. If actual data are unavailable, then please estimate.

2.1 Licensee Name: BIG CREEK LODGE & OUTFITTERS2.2 Project Name: BIG CREEK2.21 Project Number: 10721 - 001 Idaho2.3 Development Name: BIG CREEK HYDRO PROJECT

2.4 States Project Traverses (abbreviated):

2.41 State #1: ID (List State(s) with largest
to smallest area within the
Development boundary)

2.42 State #2: NA2.5 Type of Project License: Major _____
(Check One) Minor X3.1 Name of Stream: McCorkle Creek3.2 Reservoir Surface Acres: 12 Square Feet

3.3 Shoreline Miles at Normal Pool Elevation: _____

3.4 Name of Nearest City with a Population of 40,000 or
More: Boide, Idaho3.41 Distance: From This City to the Dam: 160 mi.3.42 Population of This City: 150,0003.5 Estimated Population Within 100 mile Radius from the
Dam 10,0003.6 Percent of Shoreline Safely Accessible to the General
Public by Land Travel Without Trespassing: 0.0 %

For the previous calendar year, enter only the licensee's annual recreational construction, operation, and maintenance costs for the development (project). Also enter the corresponding annual recreation revenues in whole dollars.

Item	Licensee's Annual Recreation Costs and Revenues (In Whole Dollars)	
	Construction, Operation and Maintenance Costs	Recreation Revenues for Calendar Year
4. Dollar Values;	0	0
5. Length of Recreation Season <u>N/A</u>		
Summer: From (MM/DD): <u> </u> / <u> </u> To: <u> </u> / <u> </u> Winter: From (MM/DD): <u> </u> / <u> </u> To: <u> </u> / <u> </u>		
Enter the number of visits to all recreational areas at development (in Recreation Days)		
Period	Number of Recreation days	
	Annual Total	Peak Weekend Average
6.1 Daytime	0	0
6.2 Nighttime	0	0

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 FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

FERC - DOCKETED

NOV 17 1997

971120-0337-3

Licensed Hydropower Development
Recreation Report

Schedule 2: Inventory of Recreational Resources

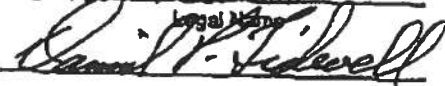
7. Enter data for each Recreational Resource Type (a). For Facility Capacity (e), compare the amount of weekend use for this season reported on Schedule 1, Item (5) with the facility's capacity to handle such use and enter a percentage that indicates overuse, underuse, or ideal use. Do not consider peak weekend use (see Glossary). For example, if Boat Ramps are used to half capacity during a non-peak weekend day, enter 50%. For Boat Ramps that are used beyond their capacity, enter the appropriate percentage above 100.

Resource Type		Facility Capacity		Use	
BOATING		Facility Capacity		Use	
BOATING	Access Areas. (No Facilities). Unimproved but well-known/popular sites which can be used to reach development waters (including waters below a dam) without trespassing on other property. Such waters are used for launching boats, fishing, swimming, or other water recreational purposes.	0	0		0
	Boat Ramps. Improved areas having one or more boat launching lanes, and which (a) are usually marked with signs, (b) have compacted gravel or concrete surfaces, and (c) usually have adjacent parking lots.	0	0		0
	Boat Launching Lanes. The area at the boat ramp from which boats may be launched into the development water. The number of lanes at a boat ramp are determined by the number of boats that can be launched safely at the boat ramp at one time.	0	0		0
	Marinas. Public or private facilities provided on or adjacent to development waters for the docking, fueling, repair, and storage of boats, and which may rent boats and equipment, or sell bait or food. Facilities may be private or public.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	White Water Boating. Access areas below a dam that can be used for rafting/floating.	0	0		0
FISHING	Canoe Portages. Sites located above or below a dam, diversion or other obstruction where persons can launch canoes, and the improved, designated, and maintained trails connecting each site.	0	0	0 Miles	0
	Tailwater Fishing Facilities. Ramps, walkways, or similar structures to facilitate below-dam fishing.	0	0		0
	Fishing Piers. Structures abutting or extending into development waters which are constructed and maintained specifically for fishing. (This code excludes Tailwater Fishing).	0	0		0
PARKS	Parks. Designated areas which usually contain multiple use facilities (picnic sites, playgrounds, swimming beaches, and boat ramps). Individual facilities within each park shall be reported using the appropriate resource type (e.g., playground areas, swimming areas, picnic areas, etc.).	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Playground Areas. Have playground equipment, game courts/fields, jogging tracks, etc.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Trails. Improved pathways used for non-automobile recreational travel which (a) can be located on a reference map, and (b) are designated according to type of use (hiking, biking, trailbikes, snowmobiles, cross-country skiing). This category excludes Canoe Portages.	0	0	0 Miles	0
	Swimming Areas. Sites providing access to development waters where swimming facilities (bath houses, designated swimming areas, parking, and sanitation facilities) are located.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Picnic Areas. Areas designated and maintained for picnicking and which contain one or more picnic sites, each of which includes a picnic table and in some cases a cooking grill, trash receptacles, and a parking area.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Wildlife Areas. Natural areas and reserves specifically created and managed for the protection and propagation of wildlife and the viewing of wildlife in their habitat.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Visitor Centers. Facilities located in a kiosk, pavilion or similar structure from which persons may obtain information about the development, its operation, recreational facilities, and related items of interest.	0	0		0
	Interpretive Displays. Historic or prehistoric objects, structures, sites and areas, including associated facilities (exhibits and museums) which describe or preserve archeological, historic or prehistoric activities, artifacts and materials.	0	0		0
	Overlooks. Public areas to see natural area/scenic features (e.g., pull-offs, vistas).	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Hunting Areas. Public or private areas open to the general public for hunting purposes.	0	0	0 Acres	0
CAMPS	Golf Courses. All types of golf areas, except miniature golf.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Cottage/Cabin Sites. Recreational dwellings which are seasonally rented by the public for recreational purposes.	0	0		0
	Camping Areas. (Campgrounds). Areas containing two or more campsites, tent sites, or trailer/recreational vehicle (RV) sites which accommodate overnight camping equipment.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Tent/Trailer/RV Sites. The total number of sites within Camping Areas that have been specifically developed for tent, trailer, or RV use. Such sites do not include Group Camps.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Organizational Camps. Camping areas that are maintained and operated by a specific entity but which may be used by other persons or groups (scout camps, military base recreation camps, church camps, handicapped children's camps).	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Group Camps. Camping areas which are equipped with facilities to accommodate use by the general public. Such areas usually require registration or advance reservation.	0	0	0 Acres	0
	Winter Sports. Any facility providing sports like skiing, sledding, ice skating or ice fishing.	0	0		0
Other (Specify):		0	0		0

Respondent Certification: The undersigned certifies that he/she has examined the accompanying data; and that to the best of his/her knowledge, information and belief, all historical and estimated data provided herein and appended hereto are true, complete, and accurate.

DAVID P. TIDWELL

Legal Name



Signature

Director

Title

October 29, 1997

Date Signed

(208) 888 - 3325

Area Code/Phone No.

January 31, 1997

Reporting Year Ending

Licensed Hydropower Development Recreation Report

Glossary of FERC Form 80 Terms

1. **Development.** The portion of a project which includes:
 - (a) a reservoir, or
 - (b) a generating station and its specifically-related waterways.
2. **Exemption.** Exemption from the filing of this form granted upon Commission approval of an application by a licensee pursuant to the provisions of 18 CFR 8.11(c).
3. **General Public.** Those persons who do not have special privileges to use the shoreline for recreational purposes, such as waterfront property ownership, water-privileged community rights, or renters with such privileges.
4. **Licensee.** Any person, state, or municipality licensed under the provisions of Section 4 of the Federal Power Act, and any assignee or successor in interest. For the purposes of this form, the terms licensee, owner, and respondent are interchangeable *except where*:
 - (a) the owner or licensee is a subsidiary of a parent company which has been or is required to file this form; or
 - (b) there is more than one owner or licensee, of whom only one is responsible for filing this form. Enter the name of the entity that is responsible for filing this report in Schedule 1, Item 2.1.
5. **Peak Use Weekend.** Weekends when recreational use is at its peak for the season (July 4th weekend and other holiday weekends). On these weekends, recreational use may exceed the capacity of the area to handle such use.
6. **Major License.** A license for a project of more than 2,000 horsepower (1.5 megawatts) installed capacity.
7. **Minor License.** A license for a project of 2,000 horsepower (1.5 megawatts) or less installed capacity.
8. **No. Rec. Resources.** Quantify the supply of natural or man-made property or facilities that are available for given recreational resource type.
9. **Recreation Day.** Each visit by a person to a development for recreational purposes during any portion of a 24-hour period.
10. **Revenues:** Income generated from recreation facilities at project development. Includes fees for access or use of area.

BIG CREEK LODGE & OUTFITTERS, INC.
DAVID P. TIDWELL, DIRECTOR
5700 SOUTH LINDER ROAD
MERIDIAN, IDAHO 83642
PROJECT NO. 10721-001 IDAHO
PHONE: (208) 888-3325
October 29, 1997

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Division of Licensing and Compliance
Office of Hydropower Licensing
888 1st. Street NE
Washington, DC 20426

ATTN: Mr. Jon Cofrancesco

Dear. Mr. Cofrancesco:

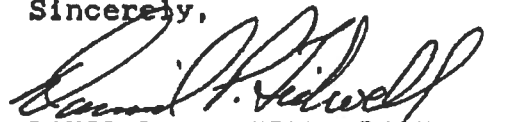
Please find our completed FERC Form 80 as well as my letter requesting an exemption from any further filing of a report of recreational activity in accordance with Section 8.11 (c) of your regulations.

Our project is very small. Our diversion box is only six (6) feet long, two (2) feet wide and two (2) feet deep and does not impound enough water even to take a bath. The stream, McCorkle Creek is too small to even support a fishery. There is no recreational potential whatsoever.

Please advise me if my exemption request letter needs to be addressed to another office. Otherwise, I sincerely feel your time and my time would be better utilized in other pursuits.

Thank you for your interest in our project. If I can be of further service, please let me know.

Sincerely,


DAVID P. TIDWELL, DIRECTOR

cc: Portland Regional Office

enclosure