

*Pacific Biodiversity Institute's  
Unprotected Wilderness Report*

**Little Bridge Creek- - July 22, 2000**

**Preface and Wilderness Potential**

This report describes an exploratory outing on July 22, 2000 in an unprotected wildland area south of the Sawtooth – Lake Chelan Wilderness area in the Okanogan National Forest. Pacific Biodiversity Institute (PBI) director, Peter Morrison and nine other staff, interns, board members and members explored the area in an effort to collect information. This trip also included putting up a grizzly bear hair sample station for a Washington State University graduate researcher, Kim Romaine.

A wilderness area, by definition, must be at least 5000 acres in size. There is approximately 14 square miles of land, which is 8960 acres, southwest of Little Bridge Creek that have been excluded from the Sawtooth – Lake Chelan Wilderness. If we include the area north east of Bridge Creek this would add an additional 7 square miles of unprotected land to the 14 square miles totaling approximately 13,000 acres of Wilderness!

**Location and Access**

The study area is south of the Sawtooth- Lake Chelan Wilderness area in the Okanogan National Forest and the area can be accessed from I-5 at Burlington by taking the North Cascade Highway (Hwy 20) to the Methow Valley. Go south from Winthrop to Twisp, and at Twisp take The Twisp River Road north west to Little Bridge Creek road (FS 4415). From eastern Washington highway 97, take Highway 153 to Twisp and follow the directions above. We parked at the end of Little Bridge Creek road and followed a trail off to the north west of the parking area.

The trail immediately goes through a clear-cut area and in approximately 1/3 of a mile the trail forks. On July 19, 2000 Peter Morrison, Pamela Becwar and Rebecca Schultze scouted the left fork, which heads generally southwest. This trail follows along West Fork Bridge Creek up to an unnamed ridge. The trail is in very good condition until just before the ridge and then becomes intermittent. The trail resumes at the ridge.

The right fork of the trail follows Little Bridge Creek. When we hiked this trail it was quite brushy and we lost the trail approximately three miles from the trailhead. Considering the time and the abilities of the people in the group we decided to head back down the trail the same way we came up.

## **Land Use**

### **Research**



The PBI wilderness study trip group erected a grizzly bear study sight from directions given by Kim Romaine. The purpose of the study area was to attract bears to an area baited with skunk, blood, and fish scent (this was very disgusting, by the way) and for the bear's fur to snag on barbed wire that was strung around the baited trees. DNA testing will be done on collected hair samples. We selected a site in the Midnight Mountain quadrant map with an elevation of 4220 feet, 25° slope, southwest aspect in PSME,

AMAL, CARU, BASA vegetation. There was bear scat found along an animal trail about 100 meters away from the study area. This location, as required by the study, was at least 250 meters from the trail and 500 meters from any campgrounds or roads. The first time we went back to check the sight and collect hair samples there were none. This was two weeks after the sight had been put up. About three hours after we put the sight up there had been a very heavy summer down pour of rain. We considered that perhaps the rain had affected the sight but after two weeks the smell was still powerful. On September 12, 2000 we went back to check the sight a second time and this time we collected several clumps of hair, individual hair including a possible guard hair and several hair from the bait tree that the blood and fish had been poured upon.

### **Logging**

There was helicopter logging about 10-15 years ago, which extends to GPS location N48°27.2511' W120°23.6291'. There was selective logging from N48°27.4624' W120°24.2445' to N48°27.2511' W120°23.6291'.

### **Grazing**

There was grazing in this in the Little Bridge Creek watershed.

### **Mining**

There was no evidence of mining.

### **Recreation**

The primary recreational use of this area seems to be horse travel and hiking.

## **Flora**

### **Trees**

At N48°27.4624' W120°24.2445', near Little Bridge Creek, there was open Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*). The area was fairly

lush and had mature and old growth trees. All the trees we saw were less than 20' DBH. The age of the stand was 200 + years with 20-30'. The coverage percents were:

Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) 35%  
Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*) 10%  
Thin-leaved blueberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*) 55%  
Douglas' maple (*Acer glabrum* var. *douglasii*)  
Pathfinder (*Adenocaulon bicolor*)  
Big-leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)

Checklist:

Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)  
Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)  
Subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*)  
Engelmann spruce (*Picea engelmannii*)  
Western white pine (*Pinus monticola*)  
White bark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*)  
Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*)

## Shrubs

Checklist:

Mountain-box (*Pachistima myrsinites*)  
Western serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)  
Thin-leaved blueberry (*Vaccinium membranaceum*)  
Shiny-leaf spiraea (*Spiraea betulifolia*)  
Black twin-berry (*Lonicera involucrata*)  
Sticky-laurel (*Ceanothus velutinus*)  
Douglas' maple (*Acer glabrum* var. *douglasii*)  
Scouler willow (*Salix scouleriana*) or Clear-eye (*Salvia sclarea*)  
One-sided wintergreen (*Pyrola secunda*)  
Woodnymph (*Pyrola uniflora*)  
Leafless pyrola (*Pyrola asarifolia*)  
Common pipsissewa (*Chimaphila umbellata*)  
Swamp gooseberry (*Ribes lacustre*)  
Sticky currant (*Ribes visosissimum*)

## Herbs

Checklist:

Pinegrass (*Calamagrostis rubescens*)  
Hood's sedge (*Carex hoodii*)  
Brewer's mitrewort (*Mitella breweri*)  
Dotted saxifrage (*Saxifraga punctata*)  
Silvercrown luina (*Luina nardosima*)  
CACO  
Pinedrops (*Pterospora andromedea*)  
Bigleaf sandwort (*Arenaria macrophylla*)

White-flowered hawkweed (*Hiercium albiflorum*)  
Hounds-tongue (*Hiercium cynoglossoides*)  
Blue stick-seed (*Hackelia micrantha*)  
Arrow-leaf balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*)  
Western Solomon-plume (*Smilacina racemosa*)  
Slender bog-orchid (*Habenaria saccata*)  
Heart-leaf arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*)  
Rosy pussy-toes (*Antennaria microphylla*)  
Tiger lily (*Lilium columbianum*)  
Showy aster (*Aster conspicuus*)  
Columbine (*Aquilegia* sp.)  
Western sweet-root (*Osmorhiza occidentalis*)  
Bedstraw (*Galium* sp.)  
Liola glubrum  
Monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum* var. *ochroleucum*)  
Pathfinder (*Adenocaulon bicolor*)  
Northern starflower (*Trientalis arctica*)

## **Wild Flowers**

### Checklist:

Lupine (*Lupinus latifolia*)  
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)  
Larkspur (*Delphinium*)  
Heart-leaf arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*)  
Indian-paintbrush (*Castilleja* sp.)  
Pipsissewa (*Chimaphila menziesii*)  
One-sided Wintergreen (*Pyrola secunda*)

## **Fauna**

### **Birds**

#### Checklist:

Winter wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)  
MacGillvray's warbler (*Oporonis tolmiei*)  
Yellow-rumped warbler (*Dendroica coronata*)  
Pine siskin (*Carduelis pinus*)  
Red-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*)  
Chickadee (*Parus* spp.)  
Juncos (*Junco hyemalis*)  
Spruce grouse (*Dendragapus canadensis*)

## Amphibians



A tailed-frog (*Ascaphus truei*) was found in a small tributary of Little Bridge Creek (N48°27.4624' W120°24.2445'; Elevation 1386m). Both tadpoles and adult and were found by 10 year old, Elijah Dotson. According to Jason Karl, a wildlife biologist and PBI staff, the sighting of this species is an indication of a clear, clean mountain creek. The tadpoles were easy to identify based on the their distinguishing attribute, a mouth like a suction-cup that allows them to adhere to the bottom of streams.

## Mammals

Found bear scat near N48°27.4624' W120°24.2445', elevation 1386m.

## References

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