Appendix P – Lolo Creek Kayaking Hazards

The Clearwater County Sheriff’s office completed an analysis of hazard trees in the Lolo Creek drainage which could pose a hazard to kayakers. The following text was obtained from the Clearwater County website (http://www.clearwatercounty.org/news_detail_T2_R91.html).

The 2015 fire season was one of the worst in recent history for the Clearwater River Basin area. Clearwater County experienced large wildland fires near Weippe, Pierce and Orofino causing damage that will take many years to fully recover. One specific area of concern is the Lolo Creek drainage because of the steepness of the drainage and that the fire burned both sides of the drainage. As spring approaches many people like to try and kayak down Lolo Creek.

On March 7 the Clearwater County Sheriff’s Office along with the Back Country Medics flew over Lolo Creek to check for mudslides and log jams that could cause a public safety concern. What we found was that no mudslides had occurred, but numerous trees had fallen into the creek causing logjams. We saw several others trees that had fallen along the creek that will be washed downstream when the water rises with spring runoff. We only checked the area from the bridge outside of Weippe down to the Clearwater River but we found six different places that trees were completely across the creek. There were three places that the logjam was not only all the way across but also several logs deep. There were two places that had logjams right after a 90-degree turn in the creek. We are especially worried about these because you cannot see them until you are into them.

Those that have been in the Lolo Creek drainage know about the steep and unforgiving terrain. This causes a significant challenge to first responders when someone gets injured or trapped in the canyon. Please consider this when planning to kayak Lolo Creek. Anytime you go out into backcountry make sure that someone knows where you are and what time to expect you back. Don’t hesitate to call the Sheriff's Office when someone does not show up on time. We would rather start searching early for someone that is over due and find that they didn’t need help than to wait and delay finding them when they really did need help. For questions regarding this inventory contact Chris Goetz, Sheriff; 208.476.4521.

See pictures below of Lolo Creek taken on March 7, 2016