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### Service Project Reflection Paper

Welcome to Idaho! Here in the shadow of the Scotchman's Peaks is a unique combination of plant and wildlife subject to much discussion lately. As a proposed wilderness area, the Scotchman Peaks promise a rugged and remote landscape. Some people argue for its preservation as a wilderness area, while others desire unlimited access for snowmobiles and ATV's.

However, as an area with integrity as a singular section of earth on the Idaho and Montana border, the Peaks deserve consideration for wilderness. In its natural state, with little trace of man's presence, the Peaks exemplify wilderness. Wilderness can only be understood in opposition to civilization, and is perhaps most easily discussed in terms of absences: it is the absence of cars and cities, of highways or a high-rise, parking lots and people. In the absence of these things, the powerful presence of nature can be felt as something whole and powerful. Such a presence must be experienced and here in the Peaks at the foot of a great rock slide, or in an open meadow, it is possible to be moved by wilderness. The space filled by noise and activity is simplified into the basic presence of air, water, rock, and sky and it is possible to see oneself as a visitor to this place. There is no architect of the mountain, no engineer of the forest. Individuals cannot claim responsibility for the awe inspired by stillness. No human is responsible for the grandeur of wilderness as they are for a great church or a moving piece of music. Yet there is a different type of responsibility that is entrusted to individuals in regards to wilderness. That is the responsibility to the integrity of the components of wilderness and wilderness as a whole. Wilderness is made up of the rare animals that inhabit it, the plants that color the ground, the trees that collectively form its forests, the mountains that make its walls. The Scotchman's Peak area witnesses the life cycles of rare animals, such as the wolf, the grizzly, the bull trout, the lynx, and the wolverine. Some of these animals are under study for the Endangered Species Act. This designation demands attention to their habitats so they may continue to play their part in wilderness. The rugged territory of the Peaks demands protection for the sake of posterity. Voices of opposition to a wilderness designation are speaking against involvement from the government. There are concerns about losing snowmobile and ATV access to the Peaks. Such concerns speak to the necessity for designating wilderness. These activities undermine the essence of wilderness. Used in certain areas, they allow for recreation. However, wilderness seeks to create a space away from such noise and man-made occupations. These spaces are rare, and they must be protected. For the sake of all that comprises wilderness and for wilderness itself, we must identify and protect the few lasting areas on earth that remind us of our place as visitors here.