Following a story's path: Memoir explores Selway-Bitterroot wilderness  

[Image: Lee with elk in the Crags, October 2008]  

Lee and her mother in the Crags, October 2008  

DJ Lee  

Michelle Schmidt  

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Lee and her mother in the Crags, October 2008  

One of the needs Lee brought to the wilderness was to understand her family. It seemed to make sense. The wilderness area, which is part of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, is rich with history and Lee is a researcher and literary scholar. The idea was that in the course of her research and writing, she would be accessible to those with or without a connection to the area, she said. She whittled it down until the story that emerged told in short chapters that seamlessly wander from descriptions of big personalities, bold actions and small encounters — like one woman who went missing in the Selway-Bitterroot wilderness during the fall of 2018 and is presumed dead. Johnson was a friend to Lee and someone to whom she turned for help and support. Lee's grandfather, George Case, touched an elk in 1930. He was killed by a poacher and Lee's grandmother picked up his body and buried him. Lee's great-grandfather was a ranger there in 1910. Lee is a member of the Nez Perce Tribe. The family connection isn't something Lee ignored, but she didn't want it to be part of the book. "To let that be part of the book," she said. "I decided it would be a spiritual, mystical aspect to the wilderness."

"I do think there is a spiritual, supernatural aspect to the wilderness. I decided to let that be part of the book," Lee said. "To let that be part of the book." Lee found a way to share the family story that is both tender and truthful. "The respect and appreciation Lee developed for the wilderness comes out in her writing."

"Whatever happened there that made our relationship distant and difficult, the same.

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