

University of Idaho

College of Natural Resources

Ralph M. Bleak Memorial Endowment for Wilderness Education and Research

Supporting wilderness research and environmental education

Establishing a bequest to benefit the University of Idaho and the College of Natural Resources' wilderness and environmental education programs was a natural next step for Clara Bleak (pronounced "Blake"). Environmental and wilderness education has been a consistent theme throughout Bleak's life. Growing up in Preston, Idaho, Bleak's interests in nature were encouraged early on by her grandmother, who taught her how to make ceramics out of the local shale and weave baskets out of the marsh reeds. After earning a degree from the University of Idaho in 1946, she and her husband, the late Ralph Bleak, moved to the east coast where they enjoyed hiking and bird watching. The excitement of finding lots of "new" birds on their wooded Connecticut property further instilled Bleak's passion for the outdoors. Since 1977, Bleak has generously supported the university and CNR and during that time has created two endowments to benefit wilderness research and environmental education. She made a trip last year to visit these programs at the Taylor Wilderness Research Station and the McCall Field Campus. With this bequest, her enthusiasm and passion for the outdoors will always be a part of the University of Idaho.

