

Nov. 3, 2014

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express to express my ideas about the Clearwater-Nez Perce Forest Proposal currently under consideration. As a senior citizen, I have been privileged to visit and hike in the North Fork Clearwater and Lochsa River areas. In addition I have participated in and greatly enjoyed Research Natural Area workshops. These experiences provided me with a tremendous appreciation of these wild places, as well as being one of the highlights of my life.

Here are some of the issues I am concerned about regarding these Idaho forests.

Why would the Forest Service recommend only a mere 22% of the total 1.5million acres as "wilderness"? I believe all of these incomparable and irreplaceable places - Weitas Creek, Pot Mountain, Upper North Fork Clearwater River, Meadow Creek deserve permanent protection. These are the last big wild places left in the lower 48 states. In addition, I have been to Europe and few original wild spaces like these are left. Their original forests are long gone - morphed into small, heavily managed and harvested areas.

These areas in the Clearwater-Nez Perce also need real protection from motorized use. Part of the rationale for passing the 1964 Wilderness Act was "to assure that an increasing human population...accompanied by growing mechanization does not modify all areas...". These ATV's leave permanent scars on the landscape and seriously disrupt wildlife. (where can we be free of noise, if not in the wilderness?

The new Forest Service Proposal allows for a very significant increase in logging including larger clearcuts in most areas under consideration and seems to inadequately protect old growth trees. Larger timber harvests and larger clear cuts would very much impact wildlife species and lead to more soil erosion and more sedimentation in the rivers (detrimental to fish spawning). These wildlife species, including large carnivores, need big uninterrupted spaces to thrive and thus insure their genetic viability.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act passed by the U.S. congress. What better way to honor this visionary action than to step up and boldly enforce accountability standards and protect these irreplaceable lands for our children to enjoy?

Sincerely,



Cathryn Willmes
2152 Arbor Crest Rd.
Moscow, Idaho 83843