



Mr. Zach Peterson
Forest Planner, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
United States Forest Service
903 3rd St
Kamiah, ID 83536

Dear Mr. Peterson,

On behalf of the Boone and Crockett Club (BCC), I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the revised draft land management plan for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. For more than a decade, BCC has strongly supported efforts designed to restore forest management of federal lands. An increase in active management of federal forests will create rural jobs, restore healthy forests, reduce the costs of fire management, and provide revenue for counties and rural schools.

To that end, the BCC believes that the new forest plan should prioritize and accelerate forest management activities on lands determined to be suitable for timber harvesting. This will enable the forest to achieve desired outcomes for our public lands while providing positive economic and social benefits to our communities. The forest plan should be revised to

State and federal professionals have studied – with partnership and support from the Boone and Crockett Club – the effects of unhealthy forest conditions on wildlife in our National Forests. Study after study has shown that fire-prone forests can be restored through active management that improves forest health and creates early seral habitat. These components of forest health generate better forage for big game wildlife and a diversity of habitats including cover for wildlife. Far too often, the young-forest pieces of this diversity have been crowded out of our National Forests. In states where the area of young-forest habitat for deer and elk has declined, the drop in habitat management has led to a decrease in hunting, which threatens the excise tax revenues from hunting that support most wildlife conservation in the U.S.

According to the National Insect and Disease Risk Assessment, 65 percent of the Nez Perce-Clearwater - excluding wilderness and roadless areas- are at risk of wildfire, insects and disease. Forests, like the Nez Perce-Clearwater, that are extremely susceptible to wildfire are also “bare shelves” in terms of food quality for big game wildlife. Research is showing that stands in fire-prone condition and with greater than 60% canopy closure coincides with depressed populations due to lack of quality food.

Successful management of the resources identified in the Nez Perce-Clearwater plan is attainable. Resources such as timber and wildlife are not mutually exclusive. The BCC looks forward to continuing its partnership with the Forest Service as we work towards creating more resilient forest landscapes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T.A.S.R.', written in a cursive style.

Tony A. Schoonen
Chief of Staff
Boone and Crockett Club