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BOARD OF IDAHO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

April 20, 2020

Cheryl Probert, Forest Supervisor
Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest
903 3rd Street
Kamiah, ID 83536

RE: Response to DEIS and Draft Forest Plan Revision

Dear Cheryl;

Please find our additional response to the DEIS and Draft Forest Plan Revision, specifically the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) map. Our earlier response referred to this map and that it would be coming under a separate response. This map was collaboratively worked on by Idaho, Clearwater, and Lewis Counties.

Our previous comments outlined our recommendation for the final alternative. This ROS map represents our written recommendation. However, with any GIS exercise, there is always a possibility of mapping errors or inaccurate data. We request, in accordance with our Cooperating Agency Agreement, that you contact us directly if this map does not support our written recommendation, does not make sense, or there appears to be errors in the base layer that may affect this mapping. It is critical for us that we do not have any misunderstandings as the map will be a final part of the Revised Forest Plan.

There are three specific areas we want to address in more detail:

1. We recommended that all MA3 should be Roaded Natural, unless there are specific situations that would warrant otherwise. We understand there are some areas in MA3 that are classified as Rural and we did not recommend any changes to that setting. This recommendation is based on our companion recommendation that there should not be any W&S Rivers inside or overlapping MA3.

2. We recommended that the Bighorn-Weitas and the East and West Meadow Creek Roadless Areas are managed as Semi-Primitive Motorized with a more primitive setting by having areas of Semi-Primitive-Nonmotorized setting mixed within.
3. We recommended that a portion of the Hoodoo Roadless Areas (previously the Great Burn RWA) have an area identified as winter Semi-Primitive Motorized. This area should not exceed 20 to 25% of the areas. Our winter ROS map does not have this area identified as we did not have the technical ability to accomplish in the limited timeframe. However, we believe the Forest has the ability, with our assistance, to identify this area. We look forward to this discussion.

Our understanding is that the Travel Plan will be updated after revision is completed. At that time the specific winter motorized areas would be identified. Our suggestion is this revised winter travel plan would identify the specific areas open to motorized travel, using an adaptive management approach. This would allow for modification of these areas to protect wildlife, over time based on new information.

We do not believe, as you have also stated, that the Forest Plan should make site-specific decisions. There has been a dialog between The Great Burn Study Group and some snowmobilers to identify specific areas in the Great Burn that would be open to snowmobiling, as a concession for the remaining area being recommended wilderness. This discussion and the small areas being mapped have the appearance of a site-specific decision, hardwiring a travel decision into the Forest Plan. This would allow little flexibility to manage the motorized use and wildlife concerns for this area.

Our maps can be found via the following links:

Winter <https://arcg.is/1zz18e>
<https://clearwatercounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/b34c374027c447c4abebbc9d76d5cf96>

Summer <https://arcg.is/1meaTm>
<https://clearwatercounty.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/d157238c6901427988f1014639638112>

Sincerely,



R. Skipper Brandt, Chairman



Mark Frei



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