

April 20, 2020

Nez Perce Clearwater National Forests
Attn: Zach Peterson, Forest Planner
903 3rd Street
Kamiah, ID 83536

RE: Nez Perce Clearwater Forest Plan Revision Comments

Dear Mr. Peterson,

As a forester, wildland firefighter and citizen that loves to recreate in wild places I respectfully submit the following comments on the Draft EIS for the New Peace Clearwater Forest Plan. First and foremost I appreciate the arduous work the planning team has undertaken and I understand the difficult decision Supervisor Probert will have to make. Certainly, no planning team could craft an alternative that will make everyone happy.

My comments reflect a belief that National Forest System Lands should provide for the socio-economic needs and safety of local communities, maintain or improve the ecological condition of the ground and provide recreational opportunities for all.

Broadly speaking the economic health of the eleven counties in the economic analysis zone is tied to what happens on the forest. As the largest landowner in those counties a robust timber supply from the forest is needed to sustain the timber industry infrastructure in the area. Not only is the timber industry an important economic driver in these communities, but it is also a needed partner for the forest to meet the objectives outlined in the plan and for other landowners to meet their objectives. I will leave of the specifics regarding PTSQ and what needs to be done to protect local communities to them, but I do support a robust timber and vegetation management program which enhances forest health, reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfire and provides raw material to mills.

I would like to focus my comments on the Great Burn area of the forest. I have enjoyed many day trips, weekend trips and multi day trips into the Great Burn. I frequently enjoy hiking and fishing in Great burn but my most frequent method of travel through this area is on a mountain bike. The area offers several options for very unique backcountry day rides and overnight trips. The trails in Great Burn are rugged trails, traveling by bike on these is quite different from what one might see on front country trails and is extremely different from any kind of cross country or downhill racing. Mountain bikes on these trails do not reduce the wilderness character of the area and the difficulty of reaching and riding many of these trails will ultimately limit their use to only a dedicated and respectful group of backcountry riders.

I have poured over the map of the Great Burn and have several routes I would love to ride, it would probably be the first time a mountain bike was on many of those trails and I would like to see the entire area remain open for exploration by bike. However, I will also submit the specific comments on the following trails which I have personally ridden on several occasions and I would truly be disappointed if I could no longer ride so please:

- Keep the Stateline trail open to mountain bike use and restore access to miles 20-27
- Maintain mountain access on trails which lead to the stateliness trail

Respectfully,

/S/ Neil C. Simpson

