



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
IDAHO

Monday, January 29th, 2024

The Idaho Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (“ID BHA”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Nez Perce-Clearwater Draft Record of Decision. Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (“BHA”) is the voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife. We seek to ensure North America’s outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting through education and work on behalf of fish, wildlife and wild places. With chapters in 48 states, Washington D.C., two Canadian provinces and one Canadian territory, as well as over 1,000 dues paying members in Idaho, BHA attracts sportsmen and women, as well as other public land users, from across the continent.

ID BHA previously submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement which emphasized our desire that the forest work closely with Idaho Fish and Game to prioritize winter range and migration corridors in the updated forest plan. While we appreciate the efforts that have gone into the Draft Record of Decision released on November 28, 2023, we would prefer to see a greater emphasis placed on conserving mountain goat habitat in the Great Burn / Hoodoo Roadless Area as well as an increased focus on wildlife habitat and winter range for elk. The Draft Record of Decision removes approximately 32,000 acres of Recommended Wilderness from this area, and we would like to see that acreage included as Recommended Wilderness in the final decision.

Given the proximity to high use areas, we understand the difficulties in enforcing illegal motorized activity in this area. However, as technologies (such as snowmobile capabilities) continue to increase, motorized activity will reach further and further into sensitive wildlife habitat. This is particularly true of elk winter range. The Decision opens up country on the north side of the Lochsa to motorized use that is vital wintering range for elk. With the ability of motorized recreationists to utilize the ridgetops in these areas, the potential is significant for elk to be disturbed during the winter and spring months when they are at their most vulnerable.

As the technology of motorized vehicles continues to progress, it is critical that core habitat areas, migration corridors, and winter range be conserved. Given these realities we would ask that the forest include the entire Nez Perce portion of the Hoodoo roadless area, 153,900 acres, as Recommended Wilderness.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dre Arman, Chapter Coordinator
The Idaho Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



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