

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

First name: Eric

Last name: Jensen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: January 23, 2018

Dear Zach Peterson:

I am submitting this letter in response to the call for public input into the potential designation of additional Wild and Scenic Rivers in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest.

My family and I have fished and hiked Kelly Creek, Colt Killed Creek, Meadow Creek, Gedney Creek, the North Fork of the Clearwater River, Post Office Creek, and Elk Creek; among others in the Forest. In addition, we have fished Cayuse Creek and hiked Weitas Creek.

We have camped on Kelly Creek, the North Fork of the Clearwater, and in close proximity to Colt Killed Creek.

We have harvested huckleberries on the North Fork of the Clearwater, Kelly Creek, and Elk Creek.

My discussion of the Outstanding Remarkable Values of these streams and their surrounding habitat follow.

As I am sure you know, these bodies of water are excellent habitat for and home to the native Westslope Cutthroat Trout. This species has been unofficially threatened for decades due to over harvesting for many, many years. We need to protect these remaining home waters of these native, wild fish.

Given the native trout populations, these streams are also home to Kingfishers, Osprey, and an occasional Bald Eagle. In addition, we have enjoyed otters in the North Fork of the Clearwater.

The scenery in these drainages is beautiful. I don't think I ever experienced wildness until I hiked up Kelly Creek several miles in pursuit of Westslope Cutthroat Trout. These areas are the envy of many people who live far from north Idaho such as many acquaintances I have made in the Central Coast of California and Chicago.

The recreational uses of these areas are many. As stated above, we have fished, camped in and hiked these drainages for well over 30 years. Friends of mine also enjoy backpacking in these drainages.

Given that the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest contains the largest wild area remaining in the lower 48 states, these streams and the associated drainages should be protected in perpetuity. Habitat, beauty and the outstanding recreational resources of these areas cannot be replaced once they are denigrated by humans.

A more rational and ecosystem-appropriate approach to what the Forest Service is currently doing with these streams would be to add the North Fork of the Clearwater River to the Wild and Scenic Rivers designation and then add all tributaries of the Wild and Scenic Rivers within the Forest to this designation.

I am greatly concerned that taking rivers and streams out of consideration as Wild and Scenic will allow

small, but vocal forces to intrude on the natural state of these systems with road building, logging, and possibly dredge mining. These actions destroy precious habitat and cause deleterious erosion into largely untouched streams. We must keep these areas wild and pristine for the future. Remember, these lands are owned by all Americans, not simply local profit-driven entities.

I am also concerned that this is a 30-year plan. Public sentiments change greatly over time. Do you recall the shift in public opinion on many issues from the Reagan era to the Obama era?

As a citizen of Latah County, I urge the Forest Service to have hearings on this issue in Moscow. People here deserve input. It is time to improve transparency in Forest Service policy-making decisions.

Sincerely,

Eric L. Jensen

1907 Rolling Hills Drive

Moscow, Idaho 83843