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First name: Kyle

Last name: Funke

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I want to start by thanking Zach, Cheryl, and the rest of the Travel Plan Revision team for all their time and hard work on the Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest Travel Plan Revision. It is an incredibly difficult task to balance the interests of the forest, the communities, and the users of the land during the travel plan revision process. Thank you for listening to all the different voices and perspectives during this process and I hope you are considering the profound impact this decision will have for many years to come.

I have been a long time user and member of a community near the Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest. The land within the borders of the NPCNF has been a big part of my life. Any changes to recreational opportunities give me concern and are a great concern to many folks in the surrounding communities who have enjoyed the beauty and adventure that the forest provides for us all. There needs to be a balanced approach to any changes being made and my hope is that a plan similar to Alternative Z can be implemented for the Travel Plan Revision.

While I support much of the spirit of Alternative Z there are some specific details about the plan that I do not support. The biggest issue I see is the recommendation of Pot Mountain Area for Wilderness. The Pot Mountain Area should be removed as Recommended Wilderness in this Alternative. The area is fragmented by roads that separate it from other potential Recommended Wilderness Areas. Pot Mountain Area is not Recommended for Wilderness on any other plan, even the Alternative plan with the most Recommended Wilderness. Pot Mountain Area provides Semi-primitive Motorized recreation, which is already an underrepresented user group in the new travel plan Alternatives.

I would recommend, under Alternative Z, designating the Pot Mountain Area as a designated Recreation Area or similar. A Recreation Area designation can be equally protective of habitats while retaining current recreation activities. Oversight can help assure the desired conditions are maintained for the area. Other designations could be Backcountry Area or General Restoration Management Area. Similar actions were taken recently by the Colville National Forest Travel Plan Revision team to retain historical Semi-primitive Non-motorized and Semi-primitive Motorized travel for the Kettle Crest Area while making sure the desired conditions are maintained. This is an excellent model to follow.

I think it is important to also state, for the record, the importance of continued access for Semi-primitive travel in the Bighorn-Weitas Area. Windy Ridge 167 to Cook Mountain, Windy Bill 531, to Junction Mountain 191 is a backcountry loop of great importance to Semi-primitive Non-motorized and Semi-primitive Motorized users alike. This is truly a one of a kind backcountry loop that sees light usage from all user groups. Access to this area should remain as it currently is. I also support unchanged access to the Rackliff-Gedney and North-Lochsa Slope. Semi-primitive Non-motorized access should be retained in any travel revision for these areas.

In the spirit of Alternative Z, I hope that historical Semi-primitive Non-motorized access can be restored for the Hoodoo Area. Mountain bikers had a long history of enjoying the isolation and solitude of this area. I support oversight to ensure desired conditions are retained. I am confident that Semi-primitive Non-motorized recreation is compatible with the desired conditions for the area. Chainsaw use should be permitted for trail maintenance and only trail maintenance. Backcountry horsemen and cyclists alike need to use chainsaws to realistically keep the trails clear of downfall that can clog miles of trail at a time in this area.

Alternative Z meets the spirit of many conservationists desires for forest management that puts natural processes over anthropogenic influence. Recreation should remain unchanged in many areas and this is an important aspect of the Alternative. Recreation can provide a substantial economic boost for rural communities that currently rely heavily on timber extraction. For example, the town of Oakridge, Oregon was a community

that relied heavily on timber extraction to fuel the local economy. Restrictions on logging caused the timber industry to become unreliable for that area. It put their economy into ruin until locals embraced the recreational potential of mountain biking. Now Oakridge is a recreation destination, which is fueling the local economy.

Communities like Pierce, Orofino, Kooskia, and Lowell benefit already from recreation but could see even greater economic benefit from increased recreational opportunities on lands near these rural locations. Recreation increases could offset the lower timber output of Alternative Z, which still sees an increase of timber output from the current output levels. Recreational opportunities can be a more sustainable way to fuel local economies while protecting the forests long term. It can also increase the quality of life for the locals living in these communities.

Allowing Semi-primitive Non-motorized recreation in areas of Recommended Wilderness is an important aspect of Alternative Z. Mountain bikers enjoy the solitude and self reliance afforded to them in the Nez Perce Clearwater backcountry. Maintaining current historical use on current trails open to human powered cycling and regaining access to some of the trails that have been closed to cycling is an important step to take to show that the Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest is serious about taking a balanced approach with the Travel Plan Revision.

Thank you for your time, friendly conversations, and hard work during this process. I hope you will consider this commentary when making your decisions on the Travel Plan Revision.

Regards,

Kyle Funke