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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Cheryl Probert,

I have been coming to the Orogrande, Dixie, and Elk City area since a small child. My childhood is full of memories in this area. Now that I am grown and married with children of my own my husband and I bought a cabin of our own in 2016 in the Orogrande area. The purpose of this was to give our children a childhood filled with the great outdoors. For five generations now my family has been coming to the Orogrande, Dixie, and Elk City area. These are recreational areas that are used by motorized vehicles. Its has been that way for generations. The Forest Service are the caretakers not the owners of the Forest. The impression that is given by the Forest Service is that the Forest Service will do what they want and not do what the people want that use and love these areas whose lives will be affected by their decisions. The people who use this area should get to decide what the forest plan should be and the Forest Service implement it. It should not be decided by someone who happens to hold a certain title or by those who do not spend time in the forest or those who belong to environmental groups from other states who have never stepped foot in Idaho County. This is the land of the free and we the people of the United States own this land not the Forest Service.

Please consider these comments and concerns in regards to the Forest Plan.

My first concern is in regards to the economic impact of adding more wilderness and closing roads to motorized vehicles to the small communities of Elk City and Dixie. Several hundred folks come to the Elk City, Dixie, Orogrande, Newsome and surrounding areas to ride trails on their ATVs, jeeps, and pickups. Go camping, fishing, hunting, huckleberry picking, mushroom picking and See the old mining history and to just enjoy the great outdoors.

See attached Addendum below (SEE ATTACHMENT LTR#573) which clearly shows headcount in just the Orogrande area alone. This is the same data that is provided to you each year on the major holidays. By adding more Wilderness and closing roads down to motorized vehicles these folks will have no reason to come to the area if they are shut out of what they love. As a result this will take away customers to the Elk City and Dixie area and business doors will close and these towns will be Ghost towns. It's these Customers that keep the doors open in these small communities. So it is with great concern that you consider this in your decision process of the Forest Plan.

The Draft Forest Plan does not address or acknowledge motorized users in side-by-sides. These middle age users have transitioned from ATVs to Side-by-Sides in order to include their children and grandchildren when adventuring out to go berry picking or mushroom picking. One of our local residents has been diligently working to gain access to gated roads. Gated roads offer access for these types of users which allow them to get off the main road and travel in less congested areas. For example, in the Orogrande area with the mining operation occurring year-around. The increased traffic from heavy equipment is going to have an impact to someone's safety. Evaluating and considering opening up gated roads will reduce accidents along a busy road corridor and allow users to have a backcountry riding experience, and not be congested and confined to close proximity of each other.

Another popular Jeep route is from Elk City to Selway Falls via the NF-443 road. Due to fires, landslides have closed this forest road to full size vehicles. A group of Jeep riders would travel over to Selway Falls and then proceed to Three Rivers resort for a bite to eat and then make the return trip back to Elk City on NF-443 road. This route is the shortest route (32 mi) and very scenic. The other route over Hamby Saddle down O'Hara Creek is much longer. This route is very popular with all the motorized users. This route has always been a Egress road

for Elk City residents and needs to be re-opened.

Jeeps need to be allowed on these ATV routes. Their size is no different than a four seater side by side. Jeeps are much more affordable. This is how my husband and I are able to go on rides in the great outdoors with our small children. Not everyone is able to afford a \$20,000 plus side by side and a Jeep allows us to go berry picking, mushroom hunting, and exploring the history in these great outdoors as a family.

Another concern is Meadow Creek being considered for wilderness area. This is a unique area with motorcycle trails that people enjoy coming to and riding. Meadow Creek is a great place to take the family to ride the trails together. This is an area we have been looking forward to sharing with our children. As do many other folks. By turning this into wilderness we are depriving people of this experience and taking away customers to those Mom and Pop shops in Elk City. And especially the Red River Hot Springs. Attached is the survey information was done recently by Elk City Resident, Karen Crosby. She performed a phone survey with area lodging businesses to document what type of users stay at local lodging businesses and what their guests do when they travel to the greater Elk City area. You can see that majority of recreation users at motorized. Businesses do not feel that wilderness users will support their businesses and generate income to carry them through lean winter months.

My Third concern has to do with Burpee Mountain being considered for wilderness. There is a lot of history in this area in regards to the Gold Rush. Utopia Mine is located in this area along with some great riding trails that we take our Jeep on every year as a family. We love sharing the history of this area with our children.

Pilot Knob is my fourth concern being considered for wilderness area. This is truly a one of a kind place. The history there with all the old wagon roads to explore is endless. The view at the lookout is truly magnificent. You can see for miles and miles in all directions. This in itself is critical in the ability to identify wildfires as they start to protect the communities. Folks enjoy coming to this area for the trail riding. By making Pilot Knob wilderness will have an economic impact on Elk City and Dixie.

My fifth concern has to do with Dixie Comstock being considered for Wilderness. If the Dixie Comstock is turned into wilderness, this will eliminate the ability to do the fuels reduction project around Dixie. The fuels reduction project allows the forest service to be proactive to wildfires instead of reactive. Without the fuels reduction and Dixie being surrounded by Wilderness when forest fire does occur Dixie will be burn up. Structures and lives will be lost. Regarding the Roadless areas, our communities would like to add in ATV trails, after a fuels reduction/timber sale, where applicable. For instance with the Fuels Reduction project in Orogrande there was one logging road that remained open for locals to travel via horseback, Hiking and ATVs. When the Roadless Commission came out for a tour this past fall. There was a environmentalist on the tour that brought up the old logging road not being decommissioned. The next thing you know, the forest service has somebody come out to decommission the road. The locals were being respectful of the environment. The locals understand some areas do not make sense to add in ATV trails in steep terrain. However, the access allowed us to hike, ride horses or ATV up onto the ridge to pick mushrooms and enjoy the outdoors with our families. This is a great example where locals would like to re-open access and enjoy the views on top of the mountain ridge.

Our communities do not support any additional recommended wilderness areas designations and wild and scenic river designations in our area. The Southfork of the Clearwater river will never have a dam on it, even though it was considered back in the 70s. There are mine tailings on the Southfork Clearwater river system and Crooked River that leads to Orogrande. I feel that there are active regulations for water quality currently with State and Federal levels. Adding this designation to the Southfork Clearwater River will add another layer of bureaucracy to an effectively managed checks and controls established by active regulations. The active mining company,

Endomines, currently working in Orogrande would be impacted and slow down their permitting process which would cause miners to stop mining and further impact the economics they provide to the local lodging businesses, grocery store, fuel, cafes and bars.

I strongly encourage you to consider the detrimental economic impact that these communities will suffer if more wilderness and wild-scenic rivers are added and the lives and structures that will be lost due to wildfires. I strongly support Alternative X. No more Wilderness and Wild-Scenic rivers areas in the Nez-Perce Clearwater National Forest. No more closing roads and open decommissioned road to atvs, side by sides and jeeps.

Best Regards