

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/17/2020 7:00:00 AM

First name: Greg

Last name: Peters

Organization: Montana Backcountry Alliance

Title: Board President

Comments: Hi Zachary,

Thanks for this opportunity. I tried to use the online commenting portal for this project but kept getting an error message. So I decided to email these comments directly to you. I hope that works. As noted in the letter, I represent Montana Backcountry Alliance and these are our organization's official comments. I pasted our comments below and attached them to this email as well.

Thank you,

Greg Peters

Board President, MBA

Official Comments:

Thank you for providing Americans with the opportunity to comment on the Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest Plan Revision.

I represent a grassroots community group called Montana Backcountry Alliance (MBA). MBA represents quiet, human-powered winter recreationists, primarily backcountry skiers, snowboarders and snowshoers. MBA's members seek out ungroomed, unmaintained opportunities for quiet recreation in Montana's beautiful winter landscapes.

MBA is led by an all-volunteer board of directors and has no dues-paying members. Our email list includes more than 600 people and our Facebook group has more than 1,000 members. We represent backcountry skiers and riders across western Montana with board chapters in Missoula and Bozeman.

Our constituents extensively recreate on the Bitterroot Divide, including Hoodoo Pass, Lolo Pass and points in between. We are invested in these areas and their future management.

We are writing to support the alternative that provides the greatest amount of non-motorized winter use. Specifically, we advocate that the entire Hoodoo Roadless Area should be managed so that wintertime non-conforming uses, such as snowmobiling, are not permitted. We would further advocate that wintertime non-conforming uses in other areas of the Bitterroot Divide that are not within the Hoodoo Roadless Area specifically

are also prohibited. Currently, this is best represented by Alternative W.

We do not support Alternative Z because it allows wintertime motorized use in the Hoodoo Roadless Area and other areas on the forest. This non-conforming use will directly affect our constituents who recreate in these areas specifically because they provide the quiet, non-motorized wintertime recreation opportunities we seek out. These opportunities are somewhat rare in this region due to limited wintertime road access and abundant winter motorized recreation opportunities already present on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest.

We feel that over the entire Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, there are ample opportunities for winter motorized recreation. Protecting the Hoodoo Roadless Area and other areas on the Bitterroot Divide by prohibiting wintertime motorized use is the best strategy to 1) protect important wildlife habitat for mountain goats and other species of conservation concern, and 2) provide quiet, non-motorized winter recreation opportunities to a growing set of users who live in western Montana communities.

An untrammelled winter wilderness experience is indeed a rare commodity these days. Sacrificing the areas currently managed as proposed wilderness on the Nez Perce-Clearwater, like the Hoodoo Roadless Area and the Mallard-Larkin proposed wilderness area to road building, timber harvests and motorized recreation is not worth the lasting negative consequences those activities would bring to these special areas.

We encourage the Nez Perce-Clearwater to adopt a Forest Plan that preserves as many of the areas on the Nez Perce-Clearwater that still possess wilderness qualities and ask that winter motorized use be prohibited in these areas.

We also ask that the Nez Perce-Clearwater commit to developing and adopting a full-forest-wide travel plan in the next two to three years that further clarifies travel opportunities on the forest.

Thank you

Greg Peters

Board President

Montana Backcountry Alliance