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Comments: I have had the immense pleasure of photographing the Great Burn Recommended Wilderness over the past 4 hours. I wandered its sweeping subalpine ridgelines every month of the year seeking photographs.

My concerns stem from open up sections of the Great Burn Recommended Wilderness to snowmobiling. This doesn't concern me from a user conflict perspective: Rather, it concerns me from a wildlife and ecological preservation perspective. The Great Burn Recommended Wilderness is home to many sensitive species that, under the best conditions, struggle to eke out a living during the winter months. Wolverines and lynx, two threatened species, continue to struggle in the face of a changing climate. The native mountain goat population in the Great Burn is in decline. The added stress of loud machines moving through the subalpine is not insignificant. My Great Burn travels last winter demonstrated that today's snow bikes are incredibly nimble and capable. Places where snowmobiles hesitate to go are easily accessed by snow bikes, further reducing zones where animals can seek winter shelter. Studies have shown that snowmobile use in critical habitats negatively impacts wildlife by straining animals that are already resource deficient.

I have nothing against snowmobiling. In fact, I used one to legally access trailheads in the Great Burn via Forest Service roads. In addition to being great tools for winter travel, I recognize how fun they can be. This is not an anti-snowmobiling comment. I am not advocating to take anything away from currently legal snowmobiling terrain. Rather, I am advocating for retaining the primitive status of the roadless Great Burn Recommended Wilderness. There are so few of these unprotected pristine roadless habitats remaining. It is difficult to imagine regretting the decision to protect the Great Burn in 100 years. A protected Great Burn will ensure that future generations of hunters, anglers, hikers, skiers and backpackers will be able to enjoy the rich experience of recreating in an intact ecosystem.

The Great Burn is an extraordinary piece of land that human history - logging, mining and motorized recreation - spared because of an ecological process, the Great Burn of 1910. This was, in a way, a stroke of luck. It has resulted in a pristine piece of intact land where species, finding themselves ever squeezed for space, are able to thrive.

Please consider maintaining this Wilderness characteristic of the land. When it's gone, it's gone.