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First name: Pat

Last name: Haffner

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Comment DEIS P-CNat.Forest

Please see attachment for My comment. Thank You. Pat

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Pat Haffner

P&S Fabricators, Inc.

office 406-728-6872

cell 406-240-1310

pathaffner@montana.com

haff@montana.com

ATTACHMENT BELOW

April 20, 2020 Cheryl F. Probert - Forest Supervisor 903 3rd St Kamiah, ID 83536 Tel 208-935-2513 Fax 208-935-4275
Re: Comment for Perce [ndash] Clearwater National Forest DEIS. My name is Pat Haffner. I am a member of the Missoula Snow Goers Club, MT Snowmobile Assn. and the Back Country Sled Patriots, a conservation group dedicated to the preservation of our historic snowmobile use areas. My comments are solely pertaining to the Great Burn RWA and wintertime motorized recreation usage. IE. Snowmobile recreational use. I object to the snowmobile closure in the Great Burn RWA. I have snowmobiled the Great Burn Area beginning in 1972 until the closure was enforced. The areas proposed to be prohibited to over snow vehicles due to recommended wilderness or wilderness would bar me and others from winter recreation as we presently enjoy it today. I am not in favor of the proposed wilderness designation for the Great Burn Area. I am in favor of the proposed boundary adjustments to the Great Burn RWA that allow for the historic snowmobile use. I can see no benefit to locking up this area to everyone during the winter season. I do snowshoe and hike in the Great Burn backcountry in the winter, but to get there to do that, I use a snowmobile due to the logistics. The Forest Service manual states that [rdquo] Any area recommended for wilderness or wilderness study designation is not available for any use or activity that may reduce the wilderness potential of an area. [rdquo] The Great Burn RWA has been utilized by snowmobile recreationalists for close to 50 years without reducing the wilderness potential of the area. Snowmobile use should continue in the areas used in the past. The USFS motto States [rdquo] Caring for the land and serving the people. [rdquo] This is exactly what we all desire. Above all caring for the land and serving the people, but all the people should be well served. The social values of all people and their recreational interests are paramount. Some points why I am in favor of snowmobile use are: Snowmobile use does not promote environmental damage, after every snowfall or wind, signs of use are gone. Often within hours. Snowmobiles utilize higher elevations, encounters with wildlife are rare or nonexistent. My wildlife encounter experience has been an occasional moose in the Kelly Creek bottomland. Also, the occasional coyote at lower elevations. Mountain goats do not inhabit the higher elevations in the winter or snowmobile season. Goats do not come back to the high country and rocky terrain until May or when the snow is hardpacked. The snowmobile season is typically over by April. I have never seen a wolverine in the areas that we travel. Snowmobile use for the above

areas is self limiting due to its nature, a high number of inclement days per year precludes activity. Lack of groomed trails and parking further limit activity. Snowmobiles do not disrupt skiers in the backcountry because they rarely travel more than 2 to 3 miles from their parking spot. I have never encountered a person on foot in the Great Burn in the winter. I think it would be a mistake to close these areas and force snowmobiles to concentrate in the same areas as cross country skiers, where conflicts could arise. Snowmobiling provides a great outdoor experience and a solid clean industry for the area businesses. Older people that can't walk or hike, can utilize the snowmobile alternative. Snowmobile use in the Great Burn Area has historically been limited to a small percentage of area. From my experience I would say less than 10% usage. Much of this due to the terrain being too steep, or inaccessible. I support a No Action Alternative. The Great Burn or Hoodoo RWA changes to semi-primitive area. The North Fork Spruce-White Sands and Sneak Foot Meadows RWA's are eliminated. This allows for snowmobile use in historically used areas. I strongly disagree with the USFS managing the RWA's as wilderness. This practice is discriminatory toward certain recreational users. It bypasses their rights and takes the place of congressional action. It is my desire for all sides, the conservancy groups, the Forest Service and the snowmobile advocacy groups to work together toward a common sense plan that puts a stop to discriminating against snowmobiling and includes all of our goals for the Great Burn. We wish to maintain the wild nature of this area. Allowing for snowmobile use is a perfect way to achieve that, and it enables people to enjoy the benefits of the Great Burn. Thank you for your time and consideration. Pat Haffner