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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Lolo National Forest Land Management Plan Revision #62960

I am a resident on Rock Creek and live adjacent to Welcome Creek Wilderness. The abundance of public lands, wilderness, intact ecosystems, pristine water, and native fish and wildlife are public assets that should be of the highest priority for preservation. Thanks to visionaries, bold legislative action, and dumb luck in generations before us we are the beneficiaries of the wild spaces and ecosystems we currently enjoy. Pressures to develop and privatize for short-term gain are ceaseless and this is the time in our generation to leave our own legacy for future generations of humans and wildlife. Let's take this moment to increase protections of wild and public lands and waters. Let's move Sliderock/Quigg into wilderness status and designate Rock Creek a Wild and Scenic River! Why?

Climate Refugia: Rock Creek's blue ribbon trout stream status is no accident. Fisheries management decisions decades ago, the high mountainous source of the Pintlers, and the narrow, steep canyon provide and preserve the cold water necessary for bull trout habitat, a canary in the climate coal mine. I get to enjoy a native Cutthroat on the fly or share a mountain whitefish taco meal with friends. When so many streams succumb to hoot owl restrictions in late summer, Rock Creek stays cold. How can we look away at further protections when we have the criteria for a climate refugia for native trout in the upper Columbia basin. Let's move Sliderock/Quigg into Wilderness status and designate Rock Creek a Wild and Scenic River!

Connected Ecosystems: ecologists and indigenous people understand that all things are connected yet we still live with the incompleteness of earlier attempts at preservation and are left with islands. We understand now that we need to think in larger scale, in watershed scale. We know that fish need to migrate, grizzlies need to disperse through corridors for food and genetic viability. Mule deer and elk can travel large distances for seasonal needs. Let's move Sliderock/Quigg into Wilderness status and designate Rock Creek a Wild and Scenic River!

Ecosystem Services: large intact ecosystems provide clean, cold, filtered water. Large intact ecosystems provide carbon sequestration and nutrient cycling. Large intact ecosystems provide the services and resources that life depends on, human and non-human. Let's move Sliderock/Quigg into Wilderness status and designate Rock Creek a Wild and Scenic River!

Human Value: I hunt, fish, and recreate in Rock Creek and the Sliderock/Quigg proposed wilderness. I have led wildflower hikes up Butte Cabin Ridge. The single hoot of the dusky grouse on the steep slopes signals spring. I harvested my first elk near Sandstone Ridge. I have communed with Whitebark Pine as I have explored the heights of this wild country. Huckleberries and solitude highlight a late summer trek into this land while early season yields abundant wildflowers and lingering snow fields. Stone glaciers hide under the ridgetops, home to Pika. Our human health is linked to our ability to spend time in nature, in healthy, intact ecosystems. Let's move Sliderock/Quigg into Wilderness status and designate Rock Creek a Wild and Scenic River!

Let's leave a legacy of protections we can be proud of and our children will inherit. Let's connect Welcome Creek Wilderness with Sliderock/Quigg Wilderness and do our part in protecting a corridor linking the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem with the Crown of the Continent Ecosystem. Sliderock/Quigg Wilderness designation along with Rock Creek Wild and Scenic River designation will benefit the human and non-human residents for generations to come.