

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/24/2024 4:32:53 PM

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Comments: Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs Forest Plan Revision #44089

Responsible official: Cheryl Probert

I'm concerned with the draft plan's proposed release of 40,000 acres for winter motorized recreation in the Hoodoo Roadless Area. This area possesses clear Wilderness qualities - pristine waters, quality subalpine habitat and free from roads - and ought to be managed as such. What's more, with the recent listing of wolverines and as a threatened species, it is imperative to retain this habitat as non-motorized. More studies need to be done to ensure that the opening of snow machines to this area would not negatively impact potential wolverine populations. The plan needs to better address habitat for sensitive species and the cultural impact of releasing 'Wilderness-eligible' land for motorized recreation.

In my previous comment submitted during the drafting of this forest plan, I cited several instances in which snow machines were already routinely operating illegally within the non-motorized areas of the Hood Roadless Area and Great Burn Recommended Wilderness (see below, snowmobile tracks crisscrossing Heart Lake). It is imperative that the forest service develop systems/methods to ensure better regulation of illegal motorized activities before considering adding legal areas.

FWS wolverine listing: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5123>