

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 8/5/2014 12:00:00 AM

First name: Brad

Last name: Smith

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest Plan Comments

To Whom it May Concern:

Attached, please find my comments about the proposed forest plan for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,

Brad Smith

I am writing to provide comments about the proposed forest plan for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. The national forest lands of this region harbor a vast wealth of abundant fish, wildlife, flora, and clean water. For years I have explored and treasured the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest, including the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, Gospel Hump Wilderness, and Hells Canyon Wilderness. I am eternally grateful to those Americans who came before me and had the foresight to ensure that these areas are protected.

I have also ventured in to unprotected areas, such as Meadow Creek, Fish Creek, the Great Burn, Cayuse Creek, and the Mallard-Larkins. Despite the unique resources and characteristics of these areas, they face growing exploitation by motorized recreation. When I hike into places and observe the damage caused by reckless four-wheeler riders, it sickens my heart knowing that someone can have such blatant disrespect for the land, the water, and the wildlife. It is not a "few bad apples" as they suggest, it is a culture of consumption and abuse.

Perhaps one of the worst examples of motorized recreationists abusing the land is found in the Meadow Creek Roadless Area. The mud-bogging in the meadows must be put to an end. While I appreciate the fact that the Forest Service is proposing to recommend the east side of Meadow Creek for wilderness, it is my view that the entire watershed should be protected by restricting off-road vehicle use. Meadow Creek is an enormous watershed inhabited by resident and anadromous fish. It is also my understanding that the area is of significant cultural and historical interest to the Nez Perce Tribe. Splitting the baby simply doesn't make sense. The resource values that exist on the east side don't end at the creek. The whole roadless area should be recommended for wilderness.

It is also very troubling that the Forest Service has done an about face on the Great Burn. When the forest plan revision was initiated ten years ago, the agency was poised to recommend the area for wilderness and restrict all summer and winter off-road vehicle and snowmobile use. When the revision was put on hold, the Forest Service completed a travel management plan for the Clearwater National Forest that finally put an end to the

Rick Brazell

August 4, 2014

Page 2

use of snowmobiles, off-road vehicles, and mountain bikes in the recommended wilderness areas on the forest. The agency had taken a critical step toward protecting these areas as they should be.

Now, I am told that you believe you were strong-armed by the region into adopting the travel plan. You are ready to settle with the snowmobilers and give away the farm. Opening up three snowmobile play areas in the Great Burn will eviscerate the area once again, reducing its wilderness character and wildlife habitat potential. With all the noise and blue haze, we can rest assured knowing that wolverine, lynx, and grizzly bear will never inhabit the

area again. I strongly detest this proposal, and sincerely hope that you will recommend the whole area for wilderness as it should be.

Fortunately for the Mallard-Larkins, I am pleased to observe that the area recommended for wilderness would be expanded near Black Mountain. This is one of the largest and most unique unprotected areas left in northern Idaho. Its cutthroat trout fisheries and mountain goat, lynx, and wolverine habitat should all be protected by recommending the area for wilderness. No motorized or mechanized use should be allowed in order to preserve its wilderness character and wildlife habitat.

Finally, I want to encourage you to consider recommending the Cayuse and Fish Creek watersheds for wilderness. These areas are important fisheries that are worthy of protection. One of the action alternatives should include these watersheds as recommended wilderness areas. There are no protected wilderness areas in Idaho north of Highway 12. All of these areas make fine candidates.

Sincerely,  
Brad Smith