

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/4/2014 12:00:00 AM

First name: Mari

Last name: Schramm

Organization: Gonzaga University Department of Environmental Studies

Title: Undergraduate Student

Comments:

To: Joyce Thompson, Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Forest Planning & Public Affairs Officer:

RE: Clearwater Forest Plan proposed action document.

I am a hiker, fisherman, botanist, and wildlife watcher studying Biology and Environmental Studies at Gonzaga University. As part of the current and future generation of activists and recreators, I am interested in ensuring the health and integrity of the local national forests. I hope to provide some valuable, substantive feedback to the proposed forest plan. As an ecologist with a background in post-wildfire succession, I have specific concerns about the "ecosystems" section of the document (pgs 15-41), specifically those subsections concerning fire and soil ecology.

Soil Quality and Productivity:

?Table 14 (pg 31) indicates soil characteristics and desired conditions.

?Please ensure that project-specific soil surveys are conducted, and that specific desired conditions are determined (preferably by an impartial party).

!Example: the "Infiltration" "Soil crusting" category's desired condition is "Surface crusting is as expected for this site." pg 31

?Table 14 (pg 31) addresses "Nutrient Cycling"

?Please include an assessment of organisms that facilitate nutrient cycling including nitrogen fixing plants, fungi, microbes etc.

Fire:

?Fire objectives are focused on protecting urban and forested areas from fires by reducing fuel loads, however, according to FW-DC-FIRE-01. and FW-GDL-FIRE-01., fire is important to natural ecosystems

?Please make objectives reflect the role of fire as an important ecosystem service in some areas, and not only something to be prevented.

?The document only focuses on reducing risk of crown fire, what are the objectives with respect to lower-intensity burns?

?On pg 33 the conservation of riparian communities during fuel reduction activities are specifically addressed in detail, however, removing fuels could also impact other communities.

?Please address other communities such as the community of rodents and small prey that depend upon downed woody debris

?Please address the impact that disrupting such communities would have on current dependent predator populations.

?I acknowledge that fuel reduction (via control burns etc.) is important to maintain the health of the ecosystem, but the document should address potential problems of setting such burns.

?Please address fire as a management tool and more explicitly state how fires will be managed in different situations. I would like to see fire used as a management tool (more often than timber harvest, for example) in most situations. The heat and chemical cues associated with fire stimulate the germination of certain species (e.g. legumes) that are very important to natural succession. When areas are managed by timber harvest, much of these benefits could be lost and natural succession could be impaired.

As a seasonal forest service research employee who works, studies and recreates extensively in National Forests, and as a supporter of responsible, minimalistic forest management, I hope that you will take my

comments into consideration when drafting a final Forest Plan. The new Forest Plan needs to be as comprehensive as possible while also allowing for some flexibility as different management situations arise. Thank you for your time and consideration of public interests such as my own.

Thank you,

Mari Schramm