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Comments: I write to you as a California resident with strong affiliation for, and connection to, those lands encompassed by the Great Burn designation. I have travelled to Idaho and Montana to experience these lands for almost my entire adult life. My son now lives in Missoula and we both make time to spend in these wild places on a regular basis.

What makes the Great Burn so unique is its size, its proximity to other already designated wilderness areas and the role it plays connecting areas of habitat with one another. It is truly the link that allows other wild areas to reach their potential. The wild life that resides there needs the space and habitat to be successful. With encroaching urbanization and access to wild lands, there are few places like the Great Burn that remain. The thing about wilderness is that it is a one way street. It is very hard -- often impossible -- to reverse the impacts of access for motorized and mechanized uses. Once it is gone, it is gone. Keeping the Great Burn eligible for Wilderness designation is responsible management our wild lands. Any non-wilderness activities (motorized and mechanized) on the Idaho side of the Great Burn will jeopardize wilderness character on the Montana side and therefore of the entire area. Therefore comprehensive standards much be in place in both states.

Your attention to this important issue is appreciated.

Greg Swaffar