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First name: Eric

Last name: Hayes

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Nez Perce and Clearwater USNF

Dear Nez Perce Clearwater National Forests,

Dear officials of Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests:

I am an American living in the Midwest who spent time in Montana in the 80's. On an all-too-brief side trip to Idaho I fell in love with the extraordinary landscape that is the birthright of every American; the places under your jurisdiction for safekeeping. I am planning to visit again, and bring my family in the very near future now that I have the time and the finances.

As an attorney, fisherman and a whitewater kayaker, I am acutely aware of the effect of development on the natural world. There are so few precious places that deserve protection that I am always stunned and heartbroken by those who seek to limit the preservation and conservation of extraordinary places from commercial exploitation. Almost always the vast majority of Americans don't know what is at stake until it is too late, but if they do find out, they are overwhelmingly in favor of the conservation of wild and scenic places like those those under your stewardship. Those in favor of exploitation of these American assets are frequently those who stand to profit locally or in other jurisdictions, who seek to exploit public property near them.

Proximity is not a reason to value local opinion over those owners of this land who are more distant. I realize all too well that you likely live near those who urge allowing these properties to be without protection and your kids may attend the same schools. I would urge that you collectively be very cognizant of the potential local bias that creeps in to improperly influence decisions such as this. Often this is rationalized under a "balanced" approach. If your "balance" doesn't consider all the lands available for commercial exploitation including those that are in private hands, and the rarity of the lands you supervise, I suggest it is not very balanced. Remember that you owe no more allegiance to local companies and their employees who seek economic gain, than you do to the millions of Americans including me and my family who wish to visit the unspoiled magnificence of the American treasures you hold for our safekeeping.

I am writing to ask that all 89 streams that you have found eligible for Wild and Scenic designation remain protected as eligible in the new forest plan, and to voice my support for their ultimate designation. If you finalize the Draft Suitability Report, I ask that all 89 streams be found suitable in the final report.

Please keep forthright in your minds the awesome responsibility you owe to millions of Americans to conserve their heritage and lands they dream of one day having the privilege to see, unspoiled in their natural wild and scenic condition. What is upstream eventually will be downstream. The watersheds of the incredible rivers under your protection should not be sacrificed for economic gain.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Eric Hayes

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