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First name: Colleen

Last name: Bazan

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

We believe the areas of the Salmon-Challis National Forest currently being evaluated for wilderness designation should be preserved as wilderness areas because of their excellent potential for motorless recreation, wildlife habitat, and solitude that we experience firsthand. We live in Ketchum and often visit the areas under consideration for day hiking, backpacking, and to see wildlife.

We backpacked into Hat Creek Lakes at the end of July in 2017 from Forest Road 129 and didnt see anyone else on the trail. We deeply appreciated the solitude. The many butterflies and blooming flowers, including heart-leaved arnica and lupine, were incredible.

We have also done many day hikes on trails in the Pioneer Mountains including, Kane Lake, Moose Lake, and Boulder Lake. Living up to its name, we encountered moose and several grouse on the hike to Moose Lake and then enjoyed the scenic views and solitude at the alpine lakes.

Additionally, Page completed the Rebeccas Private Idaho bike ride in the Pioneer Mountains. While he appreciated the access Trail Creek Road and Wildhorse Creek Road provided, it is important to keep the areas beyond protected to preserve the character of the ride. Aptly titled, Rebeccas PRIVATE IDAHO, the ride allows you to experience the quiet and solitude of this area along with unbeatable views. While Page is an avid biker, he values keeping certain areas free of biking so that they may be preserved.

At its core, a wilderness classification is designed to protect the wild character of these places. The primitive recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, and solitude that these landscapes provide would be best preserved for future generations by being classified as wilderness areas.

Thank you,

Colleen Schmit and Page Bazan