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Comments: Thank you for taking public comments on the draft management plan for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. I would like to see the North Fork and South Fork Clearwater Rivers protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. I know that an official act of Congress is required for designation to occur, but I also know that the Forest Service can identify candidates for wild and scenic rivers designation, and public comments are considered in this process.

Federal agencies have identified numerous potential dam sites on the North and the South Fork. Indeed, the era of large federal dams ended in the 1970s. However, given the projected changes to Idaho's climate, there's no telling whether or not proposals for new dams could be resurrected. Designation of the North Fork and the South Fork would protect these rivers from new dams and large water diversions. This is needed to keep the North Fork above Dworshak in a free-flowing condition. Designation is also needed to protect the entire South Fork, which fortunately has no dams.

I oppose opening the Great Burn area to snowmobiles. I fear that snowmobile use in the Great Burn will impact female wolverines during the denning season. Snowmobile use will also cause undue stress to the mountain goats that winter in the area, but have virtually nothing to eat. Snowmobiles will chase them away, causing the goats to expend critical energy reserves that they need to survive the winter.

Other areas that should be considered for wilderness include the Mallard-Larkins and Meadow Creek. While mountain goat populations in other areas of the forest appear to be declining, the mountain goat population in the Mallard-Larkins is stable. Wilderness designation will protect the mountain goats from snow machines, ATVs, motorcycles, and other motorized vehicles.

Meadow Creek is invaluable from the fisheries standpoint. There is no greater diversity of native steelhead, salmon and trout anywhere in the rocky mountains. Wilderness designation will keep the Meadow Creek watershed, its clean water, and its fisheries intact.