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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing to comment on the proposed land use changes for the Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forest. I am familiar with this area as I have camped and fly fished there with family and friends for many years. We fish the North Fork Clearwater, Kelly Creek and the St. Joe (which, I believe, receives Mallard-Larkins Wilderness Area drainage). These waterways run through incredibly beautiful, wild and primitive country. We have seen many wild animals that inhabit the area over the years. It is always a thrill to view these creatures. This country provides the habitat for these animals. The rivers and creeks provide the clear, clean water that the cutthroat trout need for survival. They also provide uninterrupted waterways for the threatened bull trout migrating upstream to spawn. These fish need the designation protections of the North Fork Clearwater to be identified as a suitable wild and scenic river. While I am not a steelhead fisherman, I know the South Fork Clearwater provides the habitat critical for B-run steelhead and should also be identified as a suitable wild and scenic river.

I have learned that the Mallard-Larkins Wilderness and the Toboggan Hill, Blacklead Mountain and Williams Peak portions of the Great Burn Wilderness are proposed for snowmobile areas. I am strongly against these proposed changes. The wildlife in these regions (mountain goats, wolverines, etc.) ought to have year around protections from motorized vehicles. Winter conditions are already severe for these creatures. They shouldnt be subjugated to expending precious fuel reserves fleeing snow machines. Snow mobiles and now snow bikes are permitted already in nearly one half of the forest service area. Wilderness areas should be free of motorized vehicles. These pristine, beautiful areas are unique to our locale and deserve the protections afforded by wilderness designations.

Sincerely, Thomas Benson