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Organization:

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Comments: Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Officials -

I am writing to express my wishes and concerns regarding the Great Burn area as it relates to the forest plan in progress. I encourage you to keep this area roadless and manage it as if it were a wilderness area. Allowing motorized use in the Great Burn would negatively impact wildlife, which already have too few places left to escape human influence. In particular, mountain goat and wolverine populations are likely to be most at risk. Considering that wildlife are to be managed as a public trust resource, it is imperative that these species and their habitat be managed and protected for future generations. With the wolverine as a candidate to be listed as a threatened Species under the Endangered Species Act, it's in everyone's best interests to provide habitat security.

Shrinking or eliminating any of the recommended Wilderness could open up the Great Burn to road building and increased resource extraction that would threaten and forever alter this important habitat and landscape. Increasing winter motorized use and removing recommended Wilderness on the Idaho side will certainly increase the likelihood of the Lolo National Forest doing the same on the Montana side. Therefore, this decision should be considered as potentially precedent setting in the larger context.

With regard to cold water fisheries, and considering present and predicted climate change effects, sustaining healthy numbers of wild westslope cutthroat trout is vital wherever we can do this. The South Fork and Kelly Creek in particular should both be considered for Wild & Scenic river designations to aid in habitat protection.

In summary, I believe the Idaho portion of Great Burn should be left as it was planned in 1987 Forest Plan, not shrunken or opened to motorized use.

Thank you.