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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Being that I am an avid snowmobiler, my comments are primarily on the "winter use" of the possible travel plan recommendation.

I reside in the area of McCall, Idaho within the Payette National Forest. As you are probably aware, there are two Recommended Wilderness Areas (RWA) in the Payette. Being that both of these RWAs have motorized restrictions, there is a huge concern for me as to the final decisions on the Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest travel plan proposals. I foresee the precedent that could be set with the upcoming decisions on the Nez Perce Clearwater Forest. Within the Payette National Forest there are several Congressional wilderness areas with the Frank Church Wilderness being the largest. Granted, the Frank Church has been determined wilderness due to its unique qualities of wilderness characteristics and vast roadless areas. Unfortunately, it is also a huge area of "no use". Due to budget constraints and financial woes of the USFS, the trail systems and other amenities that were to have been maintained have gone to the wayside. Basically, the majority of the trail system within Congressional wilderness is non-existence. Which in turn means that it is not used. The few trails that are maintained are done so by pressure from private enterprise such as outfitters and guides or local groups that have a personal interest. As for winter use, the very few backcountry skiers and snow-shoers usually don't extend beyond a few miles of where ever they have parked their car. This leaves the vast majority of a wilderness area available for recreation but, due to its non-mechanized definition, is excluded for any motorized winter use. And, as a matter of fact, most skiers and snow-shoers will not drive the distance to get to the wilderness boundary to start with.

As for wildlife concerns with mechanized use during the winter, there have been several recent studies, maps, and reports done that express interesting results. These documents have shown the adaptability of wildlife in regards to their ability to tolerate the interactions with winter recreationists, both motorized and non-motorized. This includes Lynx, Mountain Goats, and Wolverines. To me, this means that the negative impact that so many groups try to portray of mechanized winter enthusiasts is unfounded.

As you know, snowmobiles and other forms of motorized winter recreational vehicles travel across snow. Whatever tracks, or disturbances, are made on the snow disappear when the snow melts. In other words, they leave no tracks.

When it comes to summer motorized/mechanized use, specific trails are designated which restrains the user to a given trail and does not allow the ability to venture off that trail. Other wise, new trails/tracks would be established all over the forest. This is the major difference between summer and winter travel planning. Winter use leaves no tracks.

Being that the Nez Perce Clearwater Forest also has one of the larger intact wilderness areas in the lower 48 state, it is my opinion that we have enough wilderness areas already. I oppose any new wilderness in the Forest, and oppose recommended wilderness areas. I could support an area designation of Primitive Motorized, or special management areas, in order to preserve historical motorized uses in areas with some wilderness qualities.

I believe that all historic motorized uses and activities pre-existing Recommended Wilderness Area (RWA) designation should be restored and allowed until Congress directs otherwise.

Even though I have not had the opportunity to recreate in The Great Burn or Hoodoo Roadless Area, I have heard that it is a spectacular and unique winter recreation area for snowmobilers and other motorized winter recreationists. It has the opportunity to create an experience of solitude, challenge and untouched opportunity. There is no environmental damage posed by winter-motorized use in the Great Burn or any other forest during the winter months. .

I could support a special management area being created for the Great Burn, so long as it provides policies that preserve historic winter motorized recreation in all areas of the Great Burn.

Also, I do not support Wild & Scenic River designations. River corridors can be preserved and protected

while still maintaining historic motorized uses.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my views and concerns with the Nez Perce Clearwater travel planning process.