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Comments: I am writing to comment on the draft management plan for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest. I am discouraged to learn that the Forest Service may open the proposed Great Burn Wilderness Area to snowmobiles. The Great Burn is vital to wildlife. The area provides crucial winter habitat for wolverines and mountain goats. Allowing snowmobiles in the Great Burn will displace these animals and potentially cause population declines. Please preserve the current boundaries of the recommended wilderness area and maintain the current restrictions on motorized and mechanized travel.

I would also like to see the entire Meadow Creek watershed protected as wilderness. This significant tributary to the Selway River includes populations of steelhead, salmon, cutthroat trout, and bull trout. Furthermore, I am told that the native trout in Meadow Creek have a higher level of genetic diversity than any other watershed in the Rocky Mountains. Wilderness designation will protect this valuable fishery.

The Mallard-Larkins Area is another important candidate for wilderness. This area is a favorite destination for primitive backcountry recreation. The trails are great for hiking and backpacking. There are fewer and fewer places to enjoy the quiet solitude of wilderness. The Mallard-Larkins is one such place.

Finally, I would like to see the North Fork and South Fork Clearwater Rivers protected as wild and scenic. Wild and scenic rivers designations would ensure that no one can build a dam or divert water from these rivers. I would hate to see that happen. The North Fork is a blue-ribbon cutthroat trout river. The South Fork has large steelhead. Please protect them.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. I understand that the development of a new management plan is a complex task. Please help us preserve some of the unique areas of Idaho.