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Title:

Comments: I am writing to express my dissatisfaction with all of your proposed alternatives. As a wilderness backpacker, whitewater kayaker, and native Idahoan, none of the alternatives offered represent my recreational or conservation needs. None of these alternatives adequately takes into account a landscape scale conservation view necessary to managing such a large swath of land, nor do these alternatives protect the economic values that conservation creates. Although in your public meetings, you have repeated stated that the Forest Service knows conservation, I don't see landscape scale habitat protection or a reduction in fragmentation due to roads in any of these alternatives. Science has proven that large protected areas that lack roads provide the best habitat for wildlife--especially migratory ungulates and large carnivores. Science also shows that both summer and especially winter motorized recreation changes wildlife movement pattern and decreases survival rates. Finally, recent research in the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex suggests that headwater streams provide the most likely refugia for cold-water fish species as climate warms. Protecting all 89 of the rivers and creeks found eligible for wild and scenic river status ensures that you protect fish habitat, and the economics derived from fishing, into the future. I'd like to see all this well-accepted science actually represented.

From an economic perspective, the areas surrounding the Lochsa corridor generate significant revenue from auto-tourism, river recreation and camping. These areas draw people like me and others to them because they are wild and unpredictable, because there's no cell service, because there are no restaurants and strip hotels, because we know when we're there that we're small, weak and insignificant amid the grandeur of a landscape much bigger and more powerful than ourselves. The water quality in the Lochsa river is unmatched. How can you expect future river runners, fishermen and tourists to be able to see the river rocks at the bottom, if you don't protect ALL of the tributaries that feed this river? Iconic WSRs like the Middle Fork Salmon and Selway deserve no less protection of their tributaries. So I would ask that you please consider a new alternative:

1) Take all of the recommended wilderness areas listed in Alt. W and add to that Pot Mountain and West Meadow Creek. This creates a large protected area connected to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

2) Take all of the eligible wild and scenic rivers in Alt. Z plus those that don't appear in any of your alternatives. All 89 streams that you have found eligible for Wild and Scenic designation should remain protected as eligible in the new forest plan. This will protect water quality in existing wild and scenic rivers, which the agency is by law required to maintain and enhance.

3) For the north half, take your summer and winter ROS plans in Alt. W and make Pot Mountain and the block east of it semi-primitive non-motorized in both seasons. Eliminate fragmentation by removing roaded natural and semi-primitive motorized corridors within this area north of the Lochsa River and east of the N. R. Clearwater year round. This will reduce motorized/wildlife interactions and conflicts.

4) Keep intact your current no action position on non-confirming uses, and ensure that you continue to apply strict prohibitions on motorized and mechanized uses in wilderness.

I understand that the Forest Service has a difficult job balancing many different types of interests in a very red state. The Forest Service has the opportunity through this plan to maintain its position as a conservation leader. No land management agency has ever regretted better protecting its public lands through more conservative conservation measures; alternatively, many have regretted (and gotten sued in the process) when they have made decisions that prioritize non-conservation interests. This area is not just precious to Idaho; it is world-renowned and the opinions of those who visit this area from neighboring states or elsewhere are just as important as those of county commissioners and residents. Overall, I sincerely hope that the Forest Service will

take a more conservation-centric view of land and water management in its final plan.