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Comments: While attending the University of Idaho ( BS Forestry, MS Fisheries Management) in the 1960s I hunted much of the Clearwater for black bears and elk including the Lochsa and North Fork Clearwater, and fished steelhead in the North Fork Clearwater before Dworshak Dam closed it off forever and eliminated steelhead from one of the best wild steelhead spawning streams in the Columbia River system. Continued over zealous fire suppression has reduced habitat quality for both elk and black bears as forest succession reduces food supplies. Roads constructed for timber in granitic soils continue to bleed sediment into remaining salmon and steelhead and westslope cutthroat trout spawning streams.

1. Clearwater steelhead are a genetically unique national treasure and are locally an economically important resource. and all remaining and potential habitat deserve restoration and full protection. Westslope cutthroat are also important regionally and economically important deserving full restoration and protection. One way to foster protection is recommending designating all suitable stream segments as as Wild or Scenic rivers.

2. In a fire dependent ecosystem, all wildfires on the Nezperce Clearwater should be managed to allow maximum restoration of seral vegetation beneficial to most ungulates and ecosystem health.

I was a member of a 5 person core team developing the Lolo Forest Plan in the late 1970s to 1986. I was also team leader of the 1986 Lolo Travel Plan to bring it into compliance with the new Forest Plan. From 1988 to 1998 I was Ninemile District Ranger on the Lolo National Forest responsible for administering the recommended Great Burn Wilderness on the Montana side of the divide.

The management of the Lolo's recommended wilderness has always assumed the Clearwater portion of the Great Burn would also have permanent protection. Mountain Goat habitat and the role of this area as a north south wildlife connectivity were also a major consideration, in addition to protection of remaining undeveloped landscapes .

3. The entire intact Idaho portion of the roadless Great Burn area deserves designation and management as Recommended Wilderness under the new Forest Plan.

4. Retaining the Blacklead landscape and sliver of land west of Hoodoo Pass as Recommended Wilderness is critical to the integrity of a manageable boundary for a future Wilderness designation.

5. Both mountain goats and wolverines occupancy of their suitable habitats is threatened or eventually eliminated or much reduced with snowmobile use. Snowmobile technology allows easier access and use of more extreme habitats and this increase in capability will certainly continue over the life of the Forest Plan. Snowmobiles must not be allowed to penetrate the Blacklead landscape as well as the sliver of land west of Hoodoo Pass as is being considered.

6. Climate change will threaten or reduce habitats for both wildlife and fish....particularly mountain goats, wolverine and cold water fish. The Plan must acknowledge the climate change trends and offset these effects by assuring all available habitats are protected with definitive standards, guidelines and allocations for these and other vulnerable species.

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