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Comments: Thank You for allowing this opportunity to comment on the Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forest DEIS. I have missed the beginnings of this process so these last several days I have been attempting to get up to speed with what you have been doing.

Up front I would like to give support to the Alternative W plan as your best alternative for new Wilderness acres added and latitude for Forest management in MA3. I view these new Wilderness acres as a minimum to build from that should be protected from vehicular/mechanized travel of any kind at any time of year and afforded the full protection of existing Wilderness Areas. Those IRR lands not recommended for Wilderness Designation should continue to be managed according to the IRR guidelines for primitive/non-motorized until such time that they finally are Congressionally designated wilderness or released to other multiple uses as managed by the USFS. Allowing motorized travel into areas previously managed as non-motorized is, in effect, a "hard release" that could preclude future Congressional qualification for Wilderness designation. It is difficult to throw whole hearted support into any of the alternatives offered since no particular alternative is uniquely appealing. "Have it most" is not necessarily an altogether good thing. There are so many caveats, qualifiers, options, and seemingly opposing/conflicting features that it becomes mind boggling unless, I suppose, one has participated in the plan development throughout its' inception. With this in mind, I would like to comment generally as to how I would like to see the Forest managed.

Alternatives X and Y are non-starters.

As mentioned already, I am in favor of including wild/primitive forest lands into the National Wilderness System. It is critical to protect more wildlands at this time as pressures from expanding urban populations of the surrounding areas and nationally continue to stress the integrity of the systems with overuse along with ever encroaching development around the perimeter and increasing intrusions from snowmobiles, ORVs, and bicycles. The 187 miles of motorized trails within the recommended wilderness should be immediately reclassified as foot or horseback only. All mechanized travel should likewise be excluded and the winter motorized acres should be reduced to zero. This will likely require increased winter enforcement particularly along the Montana State line. It is not a "site-specific" decision to disallow motorized and over the snow travel in Wilderness. That is the standard Nationally, and specified within the original Wilderness Act.

Alternative Z has merit. I like the Wild and Scenic Rivers recommendation, but not the motorized winter travel. Lands not recommended for Wilderness or covered by the IRR, seem to be treated fairly in this DEIS. This with the expectation that projects and development in MA3 and some MA2 will be guided by Best Management Practices, NEPA, ESA, Clean Water, Clean Air and other Federal and State standards. Timber sales and harvesting hopefully will be quantified according to National demand for lumber and the milling, cutting, and transporting capacity of the region, regrowth sustainability and forest health needs. Given the chronic lack of routine maintenance of existing FS roads, no new roads should be built for accessing new timber harvests until all existing roads are either decommissioned or brought up to current USFS standards. This is important with respect to stated DEIS objectives of controlling and reducing stream sediment loading and improving aquatic habitat. It will also enhance DEIS objectives for improving secure wildlife habitat and reducing noxious weeds. It is easy to appreciate the Idaho Water Resource Board's desire to retain control over water policy within Idaho State boundaries. However this doesn't necessarily translate into a great sense of confidence that these waters will be regulated and protected at a high standard over time. Those waters that qualify for WSR designation should be recommended as such and afforded that standard of protection and then I either fully designated or released by the US Congress.

In the end my preference of Alternatives, if I were to pick one as presented in the DEIS, would be Alternative W except to add the WSR recommendation of Alternative Z. This endorsement is only IF the Nez Perce/Clearwater Forest managers are guided by and adhere to the many and necessary standards set by BMP, NEPA, ESA, Clean Water, etc.. IF these regulations are honored, Alternative W could maybe be a win/win/win...

Thank You

