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Title:

Comments: I've recreated in the Clear-Nez for nearly 40 years: backpacking, mountain biking, rafting, hiking, ATVing, and camping. The area of the Great Burn is extra special historically and culturally. The FACT of the Great Burn led us to many of our modern firefighting techniques, which will be more important in the coming years as climate change impacts our forests. We know from longterm studies that logging has a negative impact on fire behavior (contrary to what many loggers believe); the slash piles and resultant scrub growth catches sparks quickly, and fire runs from clearcut to clearcut.

Having spent nearly four decades in the backwoods of the Clear-Nez -- living in Kooskia for 20 of those years -- I'm aware there are already ample old logging cuts available for snowmobiles, ATVs, mountain bikes, and jeeps to explore the backcountry. Wilderness is something different. I know that "values statements" are not important to your study group, but wilderness IS a value. Once you send the logging trucks in, it will take millenia for the wild landscape to recover. I've accessed existing old logging cuts from the 500 road, the Selway River Road, over Tahoe Ridge, down Sweetwater, up from Weippe -- there is no shortage of access points and no shortage of EXISTING roads for recreation with mechanical advantage.

I know the Clear-Nez is concerned about the elk population and recently exterminated numerous wolves to help the elk herds, even while acknowledging that wolves were not the reason for smaller elk herds. So how will logging help the elk herds? Negative impact. How will snowmobiling and ATVing impact the elk herds? Negative impact. I'm assuming you won't be exterminating humans to help the elk herds, so prohibiting their motorized activities and timber harvest is the next best step. If you want elk, you must stop opening more forest to disruptive human activity.

Respect history. Respect wildlife. Respect wilderness values. Do NOT open the essential area known as The Big Burn to timber harvest and motorized activity.