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First name: Jacob

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Nez-Perce Clearwater Forest Plan Revision Team,

I have recently reviewed the released Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest Plan Revision Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Revised Forest Plan and found that none of the alternatives presented reflect the management I would like to see implemented for the Hoodoo Roadless Area. Please accept these comments into the formal record.

My first backpacking trip was with my father and brothers into the Great Burn Recommended Wilderness. We drove from Missoula to Superior and from there to the Heart and Pearl Lakes trailhead. Besides my father, we were all brand new to backpacking, so it wasn't the fastest hike for any of us. Along the way we saw a multitude of wild flowers alongside the trail that inspired us to push on. As soon as we got to Heart Lake, we caught up to some other hikers that informed us they had just spooked a black bear on the other side of the lake and we realized we were truly in a special place. We spent the next couple of days forming memories and a budding love for hiking, fishing, wildlife, and the solitude and connection that comes from wild landscapes. It's a memory I'll cherish forever and hope to someday pass along to the next generation.

While on the trip, we saw signs of mountain goats, black bears, and elk. They were always out of sight by the time we saw their scat or footprints, but we could tell they were present and dependent on the landscape, we were visiting. Later I would learn the Great Burn Recommended Wilderness is in fact a home to a great many list of species which also includes lynx, wolves, moose, and westslope cutthroat & bull trout.

If four hikers were enough to disrupt mountain goats and black bears from their daily routine, then snowmobilers can only do more harm. There are so few roadless areas left like the Hoodoo Roadless Area that are critical for protecting unique fauna to North America. This is apparent when comparing landscapes protected from roads and mechanized/motorized use, to unprotected landscapes which are host to diminishing wildlife populations. That's why the wildlife of the 151,874 acre Hoodoo Roadless Area must be spared from motorized use.

Snowmobiles, as we know them, are only the tip of the iceberg - their cousin, the snowbike, are quickly evolving. They're able to access areas that were once thought too distant or technical for motorized use during the wintertime. With time, motorized winter technology is only going to become more capable and more disruptive to wildlife. This disproportionally affects species like mountain goats and elk which depend on these landscapes to survive the winter.

When considering the benefits of Recommended Wilderness protection it's absurd to think the Hoodoo Roadless Area would be considered for motorized winter use. The Great Burn Recommended Wilderness and the surrounding roadless areas, like Hoodoo, offer crucial and remote habitat for wildlife, connection to the outdoors for nearby communities, healthy headwaters for fisheries, and are a huge attraction that benefit the MT-ID outdoor recreation and tourism economies. I'd like to see the Great Burn Recommended Wilderness Area, including the Hoodoo Roadless Area, all be protected as recommended wilderness, until congress can finally add permanent Wilderness protections to these landscapes.

Thank you for reading my comment and considering it in the formal record.

Sincerely,

Jacob Foster

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