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Organization: Elk City Hotel & Gift Shop

Title:

Comments: I have lived in Elk City for 45 years, am a business owner and property owner.

#### PERSONAL USE OF THE FOREST:

Personal use of the forest has been supplanted by very limited to no use. We, as a family, have used the surrounding forest for backpacking, hiking, horseback riding, sponsored equine endurance rides, riding 4 wheelers, motorcycling, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, camping, fishing, prospecting, mining activities, historical exploration, logging, post and pole extraction, firewood gathering, huckleberry & blackberry picking, mushroom harvesting, gravel and rock procurement, yew wood harvesting, shooting, hunting, pine cone harvesting, special use permit holder, staying in lookout towers over-night, trail maintenance, etc., to name a few. We live in the heart of the Nez Perce N.F. I literally cannot leave my home town of Elk City without passing through some portion of the forest. It is not a place I go to; it is a place I live in.

#### ECONOMIC/SOCIAL/CULTURAL DYNAMICS:

As a business owner (Elk City Hotel & Gift Shop, LLC), we are critically dependent on a multiple use range of access and use by the public in order to operate, sustain and continue this family business into the future.

Whereas some small amount of our revenues are from local sources, more than 95% are generated from "outside" folks physically coming to or passing through this location. Any more designation of Wilderness or Wild and Scenic would further negatively impact our ability to make a living in the place we love and have chosen to live in.

The community of Elk City existed long before any national forest including the Clear-Nez. The fact that our township is completely surrounded by the Nez Perce N.F., through no action or fault of our making, has made it entirely hostage to actions and decisions that occur on that forest. Previous actions have resulted in the "lock up" of much of the forest. When management changed from the mind set of multiple uses to "lock up" actions, the communities, the timber industries, as well as the recreationists suffered immensely. The forest has an obligation to insure that this proposed plan must not result in detrimental economic, social or cultural impacts to those who call Elk City and surrounding communities home. Rather than simply mitigate impacts to our community, the forest has an obligation to enhance and develop actions that result in positive contributions to the economy of our area.

As the historian for the Elk City, Dixie, Orogrande, Newsome, Buffalo Hump, etc., area I now have limited access to on-the-ground history. I have seen the destruction by the forest of historic buildings, homes, dredge ponds (see Crooked River destruction results), etc. Further designation of wilderness/wild and scenic would destroy what is left of this important heritage.

The 'neglect' of the forest, i.e., stopping/curtailing logging, tree planting, etc., has resulted in a dead forest (bug/beetle kill, aged trees, etc.) subject to catastrophic wildfires, loss of quality timber, recreation opportunities, homes, property values, and potentially, entire communities within the Nez-Clear forest, or for that matter, any area that is surrounded by national forests, not to mention possible loss of life of firefighters and residents/visitors.

Forest are like a garden, needing to be tended, harvested, replanted, used, etc., just like anything that grows.

#### DEIS ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

The DEIS Action Alternative I support is: Alternative X

I strongly support a multiple use approach to all management on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

I strongly support timber harvest, mining, outfitting, hunting, recreation, etc. activities that provide local jobs, cash flows to communities, tax revenues that support schools, roads and county services.

I strongly support active development of mineral location and extraction vital to the economic and national security interests of our country. The forest needs to create an atmosphere friendly and encouraging to exploration and development to counter the current stranglehold held by China and other foreign countries.

I strongly support active vegetation management for economic, fire suppression, wildlife, recreational and species diversification needs.

I strongly support the forest plan expand motorized vehicle access for recreation and other uses. All forms of increased access should be expanded.

I am strongly opposed to any more additions to proposed wilderness areas or proposed wild and scenic river designations. This area already composes the largest contiguous wilderness area in the lower 48 states. Further expansion is detrimental to other forest management priorities, health, and uses. Further, any current proposed wilderness or wild & scenic would be, but should not be, managed as de facto wilderness or wild & scenic, but should be managed in some other form as to allow/maximize multiple use activities that are historical or endemic to it, including, but not limited to, motorized uses, mineral location, vegetation management, etc. The South Fork Clearwater River should never, ever be considered for W & S designation. That corridor is the only year round access to Elk City. Further, the potential unintended negative impacts to all human activities on or upstream from the south fork are significant. It would also obstruct/limit management options available to the forest.

#### PERSONAL OBSERVATION OF THE NEZ PERCE FOREST DURING THE PAST 45 YEARS:

When I came to Elk City in 1975, the Nez Perce Forest was vibrant and the surrounding communities and county was youthful and flourishing. People were in the forest using it, whether to make a living, recreate, escape, hunt, etc. There was substantial use from not only locals, but from all over the country and the world. In fact, we had people from Europe and Asia stay at our hotel. Today, forest use is a shadow of what it was. Certainly there are a number of factors involved, but the "welcome" mat was removed in the 90s and the "do not disturb" sign hung in its place, i.e. closing and obliterating roads & trails, introduction of invasive species - the wolf - which has negatively impacted hunting & recreation. Extreme "environmentalism" has replaced multiple uses and caused detriment to the forest as a whole. It's time to get back to an active management mindset.