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Organization:

Title:

Comments: The opportunities that exist on the New Peace-Clearwater NFs for wild free-flowing streams and areas of wilderness ecosystems can not be matched anywhere in the lower 48. It is my hope that managers of this extensive area take time to seriously consider the future impact of any decisions made. In a world as we have today, with uncertainty and growing angst, there is a greater need for wild places and untrammeled landscapes for personal renewal and reconnection to life on earth.

I am a human being that could not live on this planet if it were not for the places that I have experienced in the forest, and specifically places in the central Idaho wilderness areas. These are places that if they had not been championed by others and protected, would not be the places they are today. It is rather simple, there are major sacrifices as humans that must be made in order for natural and wild areas to perpetuate. It is our needs and wants as humans to control everything that must be squelched. Let the rivers flow and let the trees breathe. Simple.

I support the following recommendations:

Recommended wilderness areas

Wilderness areas are available for hiking, hunting, fishing, camping and solitude. Because they are off limits to logging, mining and motorized vehicles, wilderness areas are also important to protect fish and wildlife habitat from development. ICL is encouraging the Forest Service to recommend the following areas for wilderness in the new plan:

Great Burn

There are no wilderness areas in Idaho north of the Lochsa River, but the Great Burn has long been considered one of the top candidates for protection. Unfortunately, the Forest Service is considering a proposal to carve out two chunks of land near Black Lead Mountain and Hoodoo Pass for snowmobiles. Opening these areas to snowmobiles would force mountain goats away and cause their decline. The Great Burn is also a critical migration corridor for grizzly bears, wolverines, and lynx. Increased motorized recreation along the Idaho-Montana Border would affect the movement of wildlife. The Forest Service should not open any portion of the area to snowmobiles. We support a recommendation to protect the entire area as wilderness and to prevent the decline of mountain goats and other wildlife living in the area.

Mallard Larkins

The proposed Mallard-Larkins Wilderness provides outstanding opportunities for hiking, backpacking, hunting and fishing in a non-motorized, backcountry setting. The area provides habitat for elk, mountain goats, cutthroat trout and many other animals. We support a recommendation to protect this special place as wilderness for the benefit of wildlife and people seeking a primitive recreational setting.

East and West Meadow Creek

East and West Meadow Creek encompass a 200,000-acre watershed that flows into the Selway River near the western edge of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. According to fish biologists, there is no greater diversity of wild salmon, steelhead, trout and char anywhere in the Rocky Mountains. The Forest Service should recommend East and West Meadow Creek for wilderness to protect this important fish habitat.

Suitable wild and scenic rivers

I love free-flowing rivers because they're great for native fish and they're fun to float. Wild and scenic river classification protects these values and prohibits dams and water diversions. ICL is encouraging the Forest

Service to identify the following rivers as suitable for wild and scenic river status:

North Fork Clearwater River

The North Fork is a popular cutthroat trout fishery. There is also a population of threatened bull trout that migrates up the river to spawn in late summer. Unfortunately, federal agencies have identified twenty-six potential dam sites on the river above Dworshak Reservoir. The free-flowing portion of the North Fork Clearwater River should be identified as a suitable wild and scenic river to protect the remaining cutthroat trout and bull trout from potential new dams and water diversions.

South Fork Clearwater River

The South Fork provides critical habitat for B-Run steelhead. Unlike A-Run steelhead that spend just one year in the ocean before returning home to spawn, the B-Run steelhead spend two years in the Pacific, growing even larger than their cousins. There are eleven potential dam sites on the South Fork. Construction of dams or diversions would impact B-run steelhead as well as the river's scenic character. The South Fork Clearwater River should be identified as a suitable wild and scenic river to protect one of the few B-Run steelhead fisheries in Idaho.

Thank you for taking my comments.