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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Nez Perce - Clearwater Forest plan revision

Please accept these comments on the revision of the forest management plan for the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest. These comments are submitted by myself as an individual, not to be confused with those of the organization I usually represent in these matters. I submit these comments as an Idaho native, born and raised in the Clearwater River basin, and one who has recreated on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests for over 50 years.

I appreciate the Forest Service's recognition of the wild, undeveloped character of much of this national forest. One of the best ways to maintain that character is by recommending a diverse array of comprehensive, recommended wilderness areas. No administrative designation offers as much promise to maintain the current nature of the landscape in the Clearwater Basin as recommended wilderness.

I support the following areas to be recommended for designation as wilderness:

- Mallard-Larkins, with the wilderness boundaries of Alt. Z
- Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork Clearwater with the wilderness boundaries of Alt. Z
- Great Burn with the wilderness boundaries of Alt. Z
- Selway Additions with the wilderness boundaries of Alt Z
- East and West Meadow Creek with the wilderness boundaries of Alt Z
- Rapid River with the wilderness boundaries of Alt Z
- Moose Mountain with the wilderness boundaries of Alt W
- Addition of the Cayuse Creek drainage to the Great Burn recommended wilderness
- Fish and Hungry Creek watershed.

I support all the recommended wilderness on the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest being managed in a manner to protect their wilderness potential by closing recommended wilderness areas to all motorized and mechanized recreation -- no snowmobiles/snowbikes, no mountain bikes, no all terrain vehicles and no motorcycles/dirtbikes, no game carts.

I urge the Forest Service to give no further consideration to deleting sections of the recommended Great Burn Wilderness to allow snowmobile use.

I urge the Forest Service to take more aggressive actions to stop illegal snowmobile use in the current Great Burn recommended wilderness, which is likely causing stress to wintering mountain goats on the Bitterroot Divide. I also urge the Forest Service to work with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to start annual winter monitoring of all mountain goat populations on this forest.

The Forest Service must develop models that account for the growing use of snowbikes/snowsleds and their impact on wildlife in winter, including mountain goats, wolverines, and lynx. In the absence of peer-reviewed studies that find that oversnow machines are not impacting wildlife, the default management approach should be

to close areas to motorized recreation in winter.

I support the following rivers and streams as suitable for inclusion in the Wild and Scenic River system:

- North Fork Clearwater
- South Fork Clearwater
- Kelly Creek and the North, Middle and South Forks of Kelly Creek
- Cayuse Creek
- Fish and Hungry Creeks
- Johns Creek
- Meadow Creek (tributary to the Selway River)
- Main Salmon River

I support the plan to close the Allison-Berg domestic sheep allotment to protect bighorn sheep populations from disease-carrying domestic sheep.

Please restrict the use of recreational pack goats, keeping them at least 16 miles away from bighorn core herd habitats.

Establish grizzly bear management units to foster the safe recovery of grizzly bears as they move into the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest.

Complete the evaluation of the Southern Nez Perce Trail for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

With the Nez Perce Tribe and other interests develop an action plan to restore the integrity of the Pilot Knob area so it can once again fulfill its spiritual role for the Nez Perce Tribe. The action plan should have a time frame and specific goals/actions to accomplish the restoration.

Several key recreational access roads have fallen into disrepair over the years and are no longer truly suitable for travel, except by an all terrain vehicle. I support the Forest Service restoring/maintaining the following recreational access roads to a standard at least suitable for a high clearance, four-wheel drive passenger vehicle:

Big Fog Saddle

Indian Hill

Coolwater Ridge

Orogrande Summit/Wildhorse Lake

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the forest plan revision effort for the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest. Please keep me informed of further developments in this effort.

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