

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/20/2020 12:47:48 AM

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Forest Plan Revision

To Whom It Concerns:

I am an Idaho native who grew up in logging camps around Avery, Idaho in the 1950's. Northern Idaho was truly a wild place then, and to this day maintains much of the wild qualities we experienced. However, I have seen many changes to our landscape and most of them have not been good for the environment - especially forests and water quality. We are in a unique position to save a big chunk of wild lands that will protect crucial wildlife habitat, clean waterways, old growth forests, and offer peace and quiet that can be found no where else, except perhaps Alaska. I am 100% in support of the meticulously researched Citizen Alternative that was submitted by Friends of the Clearwater. Members of that activist organization have had many boots on the ground to achieve critical information gathering on the Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forests over the decades. I totally agree with the plan that every remaining acre of wild and roadless land should be designated wilderness and left in its wild state. There is no replacing it once roads are built, old growth forests are destroyed, and waterways polluted.

There are a number of crucial areas that disturb me in the proposed changes to the forest plan. There must be continued protection for Wild and Scenic Rivers and streams that are critical habitat for salmon, bull trout and Westslope cutthroat trout, and steelhead. The plan offers insufficient protections for waterways - logging too close to streams and rivers with insufficient quantifiable standards for how such actions would affect fisheries that depend on clean water. Rather than reducing protection to streams, we must increase streamside buffers, and closely monitor all activities that impact water quality. To that end, Bimerick Creek Meadows is a logical addition to the Research Natural Area system. Much work on water quality and the value of untrammeled meadows to the health of ecosystems has been accomplished there.

The Forest Service is too willing to listen to those who would increase the logging activity to ridiculously high levels. There is much more value to our national forests than logging. [There are more alternative materials to wood than ever before. Repurposing endless supplies of plastic waste is much more environmentally sound than taking down our remaining forests.] Idaho is blessed to have the remaining wildlands we have. There is no other state that can offer wilderness to the American people like we have here in our state. Maintaining wilderness qualities is far more valuable than logging old growth will ever be. We cannot replace wildlife habitat and the intrinsic value of old growth forest. Once roads are built into fragile mountain landscapes, the damage to the land takes generations to heal itself.

Cutting down old growth forests and logging in general, is antithetical to caring for the planet in this time of climate change. Science has proven that standing trees are crucial to reducing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Carbon sequestration is achieved by healthy forest systems and is critical if we are to leave a livable planet for future generations. Unlike the Forest Service claims, we are NOT in a natural warming period. We are approaching human caused disaster in terms of global survival. We are in a unique position here in the Northwest to mitigate critical planet warming by leaving our forests standing.

The remaining 1.5 million acres of roadless lands on The Nez Perce/Clearwater (including the Gospel-Hump

Additions and the critical Weitas Creek area) should be designated wilderness in the new forest plan, and require compliance of directives within all existing wilderness areas. To that end, it is crucial to get a handle on the burgeoning use of motorized vehicles in our national forests. In the last thirty years, motorized use has exploded and is encroaching on every acre of public lands - befouling waterways and destroying fragile meadows and hillsides. Motorized recreational vehicles disrupt wildlife, create noise in otherwise quiet places, befoul the air and are generally a disruption in wild places. ORV's and snowmobiles should be limited to maintained off road areas and kept out of crucial wilderness lands where wildlife that depend on solitary habitat are left undisturbed. Laws pertaining to wilderness must not be relaxed in terms of use of motorized equipment within its boundaries. Structures do not belong on designated wilderness, nor should there be any harassment of wildlife - like extermination of wolves from the air.

Grizzly Bears are returning to the Northwest and they must be encouraged by maintaining the critical habitat qualities that Idaho currently has. All wildlife corridors should be protected so grizzly bears can safely move around to locate food, habitat, and mates. The Clearwater/Nez Perce NF is excellent habitat with crucial connecting corridors to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, No. Continental Divide, Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk Grizzly Recovery areas. The Forest Service needs to prohibit bear baiting where grizzlies are known to inhabit, because hunters are proving incapable of telling the difference between Black Bears and Grizzlies.

Make land use decisions based on the needs of Species of Conservation Concern that depend on old growth habitat. Old growth forests are habitat for fisher, pine martin, pileated woodpecker, and goshawk, - and wolverine in the high country. Protect them all.

- ~Protect old growth forests.
- ~Allow no activities that pollute waterways.
- ~Take care of Grizzly Bear needs.
- ~Take climate change into consideration with all decisions.
- ~Give wilderness designation to all remaining roadless lands in The Big Wild.

Sincerely,

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