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First name: Pete

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Re: Revised Land Management Plan for Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests Dear Ms. Probert:

I am writing this in mid-April during the Corvid-19 pandemic. An interesting effect of the pandemic is the world for a short time is a quieter, cleaner and less polluted planet. It is unrealistic to ascribe human qualities to the natural world but it certainly seems like Mother Nature is pushing back at the abuse she is suffering from the human population and the residual good effects are a reminder of an earlier age. The pandemic was both predictable and predicted yet the world population was unprepared and now suffering the consequences. All of this leads to a point which is, we are in an era of uncertainty and what used to be predictable as far as climate was concerned is no longer. Regardless of which parts and pieces are used for the final draft of the forest plan I suggest that climate should be the foremost factor in making the decision. Your literature states the time frame of a forest plan is assumed to be 20 to 30 years. Also that your staff used the best available scientific information from a number of sources in addition to other resources to formulate the alternatives to be considered. Therefore I think it would be a good idea to step way outside the box and using this information try to imagine the world 30 plus years from now.

Beginning in the 1970's I have worked and recreated in the back country of the Clearwater. Therefore I would choose Alternate W is a starting point. I attended the presentation in Hamilton and my take away was that the final plan would very likely be a mixture of the alternatives presented. Alternative W is described as the "have it most" alternative. This appeals to me for two reasons. The first is that I am a strong believer that there is no such thing as too much wilderness. It is so necessary for connectivity for wildlife, watershed, research and its intrinsic value. My guess is that in years to come wilderness will be more and more valuable. It is a lot easier to preserve it now than it is to reclaim it later. My second reason for suggesting Alternative W is that while I am an advocate for wilderness, I have no problem with logging. I don't find them mutually exclusive. Alternative W provides for a robust timber harvest which I support for economic value and an aid in fire management. With modern equipment and responsible logging practices timber harvest should be a significant part of the forest plan. Unfortunately, with the changing climate the potential for frequent and large scale wildfire increases so I think it's better to harvest the timber than watch it go up in smoke.

You have a tough job ahead and I don't envy the task of creating a forest plan trying to do what you feel is right with numerous special interest groups attempting to influence your decision. I truly believe you and your staff care deeply for the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests and that your decision on a forest plan will be based on best available science and an appreciation for what is best for the forests.

Respectfully submitted

Pete Clarkson