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Organization: Bennett Lumber Products Inc

Title: Resource Manager

Comments: April 2, 2020

Forest Supervisor, Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest Attn: Zach Peterson, Forest Planner

RE: Comments regarding the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest Plan Revision Dear Zach,

Please accept the following comments from Bennett Lumber Products Inc. concerning the Nez Perce- Clearwater National Forest Plan Revision. Bennett Lumber Products Inc. is a family owned small business with sawmills located in Princeton, Idaho and Clarkston, Washington. Combined these two mills employ 240 people and are important contributors both socially and economically to their respective communities. Both mills have current timber sale contracts and a long history of dependence on the Nez-Clear National Forest for a supply of logs to source its mills.

The importance of the Nez-Clear National Forest to local communities cannot be over emphasized. For that and other reasons, Bennett Lumber strongly supports Alternative X as described in your Draft Forest Plan. This alternative provides the most potential number of jobs to struggling communities as well as addressing the numerous silvicultural and forest health issues currently facing many stands within the Nez-Clear Forest. As your numbers indicate, there exists a disproportionate amount of Grand Fir and Douglas Fir on warm sites throughout the Forest.

Aggressive management within these stands is recommended to shift towards a better ecological balance and species composition.

Bennett Lumber does recognize the importance of the Nez-Clear National Forest to all user groups and would support some limited wilderness designations. This being said, less than 18% of all Nez[shy] Clear Forest acreage is currently deemed suitable for timber production. This is an alarmingly low percentage when one considers the importance of these lands to local businesses and timber dependent communities. Bennett Lumber supports mechanisms within the Forest Plan to manage areas currently deemed unavailable to harvest under the Idaho Roadless Rule. Many of these areas also have serious forest health issues requiring management. Access to some of this acreage would shift more land towards timber production and reflect a more realistic portion of land available to management based on its importance to local communities.

Bennett Lumber Products Inc. appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important topic.