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Comments: [External Email]Comments on 2022 IDFG Sheep Collaring Project (Salmon and Red River Ranger Districts)

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Dear Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest,

Please accept my comments on the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) 2022 Sheep Collaring Project (Salmon and Red River Ranger Districts).

I urge the Forest Service (USFS) to reject the IDFG's request to use helicopters to pursue, capture, and collar up to 20 bighorn sheep in the Gospel Hump and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses, including the Salmon Wild and Scenic River corridor. Another 15 would be captured outside of Wilderness.

"It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment."

-- Ansel Adams

Helicopter pursuit and capture would cause undue stress on the bighorn sheep. Not only that, but the use of helicopters in Wilderness is prohibited by the Wilderness Act and the USFS's Wilderness implementing regulations, and this project is fundamentally antithetical to protecting Wilderness in its untrammled state. The use of helicopters in the Wild and Scenic River corridor is also prohibited by the Frank Church-River of No Return Management Plan. All told, this project has nothing to do with managing Wilderness and must be rejected.

Federal judges have admonished the USFS and the IDFG for their rushed implementation of unlawful helicopter projects in Wilderness in the past, with the courts warning the USFS that it "must proceed very cautiously here because the law is not on their side if they intend to proceed with further helicopter projects in the [Wilderness]." It's wrong for the agency to entertain authorizing another such project following decisive legal opinions on past helicopter use for similar wildlife collaring projects.

"A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."

-- Aldo Leopold

The USFS needs to uphold the law and reject the IDFG's latest proposal for motorized intrusion and intentional trammeling of the Gospel Hump and Frank Church-River of No Return Wildernesses in Idaho. The IDFG needs to conduct this project outside of Wilderness before proposing to go into Wilderness.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Christopher Lish

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