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First name: Jill

Last name: Dahlman

Organization:

Title:

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

[External Email]

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Dear Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest,

I am a voting US citizen, born and raised in the US, and the child of a Naval officer. Please accept my comments on the 2022 IDFG Sheep Collaring Project (Salmon and Red River Ranger Districts).

The first thing I think of when I think of Idaho is gorgeous flora and fauna. I try not to imagine the countless ways the Forest Service and the state have waged an all-out assault on the fauna, but it's there in the back of my mind nonetheless. I write this letter to urge the Forest Service (FS) to reject Idaho Fish and Game's (IDFG) 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. Wilderness is meant to stay free. That means no motorized anything. The land should be left alone, and with it, the fauna, which should be allowed to remain unmolested.

I believe strongly in empathy. What I wouldn't want done to me, I don't want done to animals. I have a voice. They do not. 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 Forest Service'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. We all know what Idaho's real purpose is: destruction of the natural land and its inhabitants. They flaunt rules that are etched in stone so that they can achieve their own means to an end: no wilderness. If the legislators don't like an animal for whatever reason, they search for ways to eradicate, often in the face of Federal laws, like the Wilderness Act.

Time and again, Idaho has been brought to task for its blatant abuse of Federal laws, and they've been sued-- and lost. Federal judges have admonished the FS and IDFG for their rushed implementation of unlawful helicopter projects in Wilderness in the past, with the courts warning the FS 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. These "patriots" are anything but.

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

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jill Dahlman
10540 Dolecetto Dr
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
808-000-0000