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First name: Cassandra

Last name: Rideg

Organization:

Title:

Comments: 5/21/2023

Comment on Lolo National Forest Plan Revision - Wild and Scenic Rivers

Lolo National Forest Supervisor's Office

Attn: Amanda Milburn - Lolo Plan Revision

24 Fort Missoula Rd

Missoula, MT 59804

SM.FS.LFNRevision@usda.gov

Dear Ms. Milburn;

Rivers and creeks (water in general) are a lifeline to all life on earth. There are innumerable reasons to provide the highest level of protection to all of Lolo National Forest rivers and creeks. There is no more valuable resource than water and we must treat all water sources accordingly. In my comments here I will cover the water source that is of greatest concern to me, Ninemile Creek. Besides all the unique, scenic, and diverse tributaries draining vital water into Ninemile Creek, here is a list of my reasons to protect all water sources supplying water to this creek:

- As mentioned above for the scenery, beauty, and uniqueness that surrounds Ninemile Creek.

- They supply an abundant cold-water source for Climate refuge for all stakeholders! This will be critical in the very near future!!!

- Cultural significance, to our first Americans in providing historical fishing (and the entire valley Hunting grounds) grounds and sources of many other riparian based animals (mollusks and crustaceans) and plants. Historical value, protection, and reclamation of mining sites must continue to be done and the colonial culture that developed in this particular valley. This valley needs at least one Wilderness and wild and scenic river designation to preserve its cultural significance!

- Recreational value for swimming, picnicking, hiking, camping and fishing (tremendous, historic fishery and fishing opportunities) all along the banks of Ninemile Creek and the many tributaries that feed our creek.

- Wildlife and diverse plant life is greatly dependent on its preservation as both a water source and as a corridor by which to travel. To protect this creek and the many tributaries is to protect the water source of all the wells that residents depend on for life giving water in this valley. Ninemile Creek is the ultimate source of all our water here!

Montana species diversity is protected here with the protection of Ninemile Creek. Species of concern depend on this creek: Mammals (beaver, otter, and mink), Cutthroat, Bull Trout and other fish, mollusks, crustaceans, invertebrates, insects and many amphibians.

In my opinion Ninemile Creek fulfills a great majority of the criteria for a wild and scenic river, Thank You!