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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I would like to take this opportunity to request that the Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest adopt stronger language in its upcoming Land and Resource Management Plan to provide protection for the Southern Nez Perce Trail.

I have been among the volunteers who have been clearing the Southern Nez Perce Trail of decades of blowdown timber. It has been one of the most gratifying experiences I've had; locating the ancient tread of the Nez Perce Trail, putting new signs up marking the trail, and seeing how much progress the volunteers have made over the past many, many years.

It has always been our hope that the Forest Service, once the Southern Nez Perce Trail has been cleared of deadfall, would put the trail back on its maintenance roster and schedule so that the trail stays open for future use.

The Land and Resource Management Plan needs to clearly state that the Southern Nez Perce Trail will be open only to foot and horseback use. Limiting the trail uses to these two historic modes of travel is the only way to assure that the original, ancient tread of the Southern Nez Perce Trail is protected.

I have hiked on trails on every national forest in Idaho, and where motorcycles, dirtbikes, mountain bikes and ATVs are allowed on trails, the structure of the trail suffers. The tread is eroded, corners are widened, and wet spots become quagmires. The tread of the Southern Nez Perce Trail is one of, if not the, key feature of this resource. It must be protected from motorized and mechanized tread degradation.

The Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest should also include language committing to restart the effort with the Nez Perce Tribe to designate the Southern Nez Perce Trail as part of the National Historic Register.

In addition to this, I request that the unroaded Bargamin Creek drainage be closed to motorized recreation, especially snowmobile use. Snowmobile use should be confined to the Magruder Road.

Thank you,

Craig Gehrke

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