

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/26/2024 4:13:20 PM

First name: Aaron

Last name: Gardes

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Leanne Marten (or respective reviewing officer),

I am writing to convey support for the Preferred Alternative during the objection period based on my standing as having submitted formal comment during the Nez Perce-Clearwater Forest Plan Revision process.

To begin, I appreciate the extensive effort given by the planning team to balance best available science with diverse stakeholder input. The plan reflects compromise in many areas including balancing additional recommended Wilderness with requests for mechanized use. As a lifelong mountain biker and supporter of protecting our nation's wildlands, I view this balance positively.

As such, I am pleased to see your recommendation to install a 150-foot corridor along Divide Trail #738 to allow for mechanized use. This is a reasonable and creative approach to containing potential user impacts to the trail while allowing for continuation of non-motorized bicycle travel. Thank you for making this decision as was requested by numerous mountain bikers during the plan engagement period.

It is important to me that people continue to have a range of opportunities to access and enjoy National Forests. The benefits are numerous including potential for adventure, personal development and most critically, a greater appreciation of the natural world. There are a limited number of true backcountry trails both open and suitable for bike travel in our region. In recent years, these opportunities have been reduced as several long-distance routes in the Northern Rockies have been closed to bike travel through management policy.

Thank you for considering my comment.

Sincerely,

Aaron Gardes