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Comments: An overview of both the Draft ROD and the revised Land Management Plan for the Nez-Perce Clearwater National Forest leads me to the conclusion that both documents place too much emphasis on consumptive uses of the forest and too little emphasis on protection of the forest as a national ecological treasure.

This shortcoming of the plan is tied to an overevaluation of short term economic benefit to local/regional communities and an underevaluation of the long term importance of the forest to our nation as a whole. The forest belongs to ALL Americans, not just to those who live nearby it. There is almost no discussion in the plan of the role the forest plays in mitigating climate change, a change that affects ALL of us.

The plan as a whole should be rethought. The issues discussed above are big ones.

In comments submitted earlier I specifically prioritized the preservation of wildlife. The new plan degrades wildlife habitat by greatly increasing the timber cut, decreasing buffer zones around streams, failing to adequately protect special old growth zones, and expanding motorized human access into the landscape.

These detrimental changes should not be made.

Of particular concern is the expansion of motorized access to facilitate the consumptive use of forest products. (Draft ROD, pg. 17) Clearly more harvest by humans means less food, fewer resources for wildlife, as well as more disruption of wildlife habitat by human presence.

The extent of the proposed expansion of motorized access into the forest is alarming:

"The only trails found not suitable for mechanized use at the forest plan level in the Preferred Alternative are trails in recommended wilderness and in designated wilderness." Draft ROD pg. 17

This expanded access would greatly reduce the quiet and solitude found on trails in non protected areas of the forest, therefore damaging wildlife habitat. --- I live close to a non protected area; under the new plan, in order to enjoy the peace of a non-motorized trail and have the related enhanced chance of seeing wildlife, I would be forced to drive far from my home. Rather than facilitating my enjoyment of wildlife viewing, the new plan would make it less likely I would see animals.

Let me explain that further: hikers moving in the same direction up a trail seldom pass one another. Bikers routinely pass hikers; wildlife is not apt to be seen by hikers following mechanized vehicles.

Sometimes I horseback ride rather than hike. Wildlife viewing is often at its best on horseback. A horse at a walk moves at about the same speed as a human at a walk. The presence of motorized vehicles is disruptive for horseback riders as well as for hikers.

The best solution to the problem of increased motorized access damaging wildlife habitat is to not increase the access. Failing that, some trails in all areas of the forest should be kept off limits, to mechanized vehicles, not just the trails found in recommended or designated wilderness. Wildlife habitat and circumstances favorable to wildlife viewing should be preserved in all areas of the forest.

Thank you for your attention.

