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First name: Kurt

Last name: Refsnider

Organization: Bikepacking Roots

Title: Routes Director

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

I am writing on behalf of Bikepacking Roots to express our support for the Preferred Alternative during the objection period based on my standing as having submitted formal comment during the Nez Perce-Clearwater Forests Land Management Plan revision process. Bikepacking Roots is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports the rapidly growing bikepacking community and the conservation of the landscapes through which we ride. Bikepacking Roots represents more than 18,000 members who seek opportunities to travel and camp by bicycle in wild places.

To begin, we appreciate the extensive effort given by the planning team to balance best available science with diverse stakeholder input. The plan includes compromises in many areas including balancing additional recommended Wilderness with requests for mechanized and motorized use. We view these compromises favorably as land management and conservation necessitates compromises when stakeholders have such wide-ranging requests and desires.

In our original comment on the draft EIS, we asked for the creation of a corridor along Divide Trail #738 (the Stateline Trail) to allow mountain bike access on this unique and adventurous backcountry trail. This type of raw, remote, demanding, and incredibly scenic riding experience is becoming increasingly rare for mountain bikers in the Northern Rockies due to management decisions and policies. We are pleased to see your decision to create a 150-foot corridor along Divide Trail #738 to allow for mechanized use. This is a reasonable compromise that allows for continued mechanized non-motorized travel on this trail, and it also re-opens the storied Heart Lake Loop to mountain bikers. Given the rigor of these trails, they will never draw large numbers of mountain bikers (or other recreationalists), but the few that do ride (and push their bikes along) the Stateline Trail will be incredibly appreciative of the opportunity. Thank you for making this decision as was requested by numerous mountain bikers during the plan engagement period.

Thank you for considering our comment.

Sincerely,

Kurt Refsnider
Routes Director
Bikepacking Roots