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First name: Owen

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the protections that have been included. Living in Missoula it is so important to me to be able to have these wild experiences out my doorstep. I understand that there are 21 waterways that are being protected as wild and scenic.

They are all familiar places to me and I have very excited to have them protected. I have very fond memories of hiking deep into the rattlesnake and floating back into town - such a unique experience! I love going to rock creek and seeing all the birds that tend to congregate there. There are so many other stories but I just wanted to say thank you for the 21 existing streams!

I understand them to be:

\*Rattlesnake Creek

\*Rock Creek

\*North Fork Fish Creek, West Fork Fish Creek, Straight Creek, Cache Creek

\*Lolo Creek, South Fork Lolo Creek

\*Blackfoot River, North Fork Blackfoot River

\*Clearwater River, Colt Creek

\*Morrell Creek

\*Clark Fork River (St. Regis to Quinns)

\*Monture Creek, Middle Fork Monture Creek

\*Lodgepole Creek

\*Deer Creek, Cromie Creek, Up Up Creek

\*West Fork Thompson River

That being said, I disagree with the determination that the St. Regis River, Fish Creek, SF Fish Creek and the Thomson River don't meet the bar for Wild and Scenic designations.

\*St. Regis River - critical habitat and unparalleled access. Logistically I don't know how I would have been able to spend time with family who isn't as mobile in this kind of environment given the access here.

\*Fish Creek - this is one of the closest whitewater runs to Missoula, there are not similar rivers for boating. I understand from many in my community that the same is said for the fishing.

\*Sf Fish Creek - I understand that the area connecting the clark fork and the great burn is extremely important habitat

\*Thompson River - Another river that I understand to be very important habitat. I've enjoyed boating here and there are not many like it in the region and I don't understand how it could be deemed not important enough for the wilderness designation.

Many of the rivers under consideration are very important for packrafting. More and more people are coming to Montana to recreate using packrafts - it's the fastest growing watercraft sport in the US. In the lower 48, Montana and Western Montana in particular is one of the most popular packrafting designations in the country. I think the analysis does not adequately take into consideration the importance of whitewater recreation and particularly packrafting to the economy of the region. Not protecting such exemplary rivers would have long term consequences on the tourism economy.

Lastly, I wanted to ask that Westslope cutthroat trout be added to the Species of Conservation Concern list. I believe that low genetic diversity could adversely impact the population if not properly managed. Furthermore, I think the forest service needs to better operationalize it's process around climate refuge within the conservation watershed network. Riverside shade cover and cold water are all very important factors that I believe are critical.

Thank you in advanced for considering better protecting western montana through within this proposed action.