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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am an ex-forest service employee on the Lolo and Flathead forests and a retired biological-science and environmental education teacher. I was born in Missoula and raised in the Mission Valley. My father worked as a smoke-jumper and forest service biologist in the late 1940s and early 50s and my paternal grandfather was the ranger of the Stevensville district of the Bitterroot Forest in the 1930s-40's. I have worked on the Thompson Falls and Missoula FS districts and spent a summer season doing extensive resource inventories throughout the Lolo National Forest.

Additionally, I have hunted, backpacked, mountain biked, and back-country skied across much of the Lolo National Forest.

I appreciate that the Lolo Forest has retained the 1986 Recommended Wilderness Areas as a starting point in its proposed action plans. In relation to this, I would like to offer some of my personal concerns about future plans for a biophysical area which I know so well and which has been an integral part of my 75 years of life.

We are witnessing a staggering increase in the extinction of sensitive species due to climate change effects coupled with far-ranging habitat destruction. This will become increasingly more pronounced with each passing day. In order to counter this, the world must adopt and implement the 30-30 plan. This plan will preserve 30% of terrestrial and 30% of aquatic ecosystems by 2030 and increasing this to 50-50 by 2050.

Encompassing the wildest and largest area recommended for wilderness designation in the lower 48 states, the Great Burn has received one of the highest wilderness ratings for all USFA RWAs. It essentially has a north-south orientation along the state line with open ridges overlooking a convoluted array of interlocking valleys providing excellent travel zones and critical coverage and security for transient and resident species. This makes the Great Burn, not only a vital habitat for mountain goats and other fauna, large and small, but also a keystone wildlife corridor facilitating the travel of wolves, lynx, grizzly bears, and wolverines between the GNP-Bob Marshall and Yellowstone regions.

It is critical that the Forest Service continues to designate the Hoodoo recommended Wilderness, with its nearly 40 year old boundaries kept intact, and to manage it as an area off-limits to all means of mechanized travel. It is also necessary to maintain and manage the Ward Eagle and Meadow Creek-Upper North Fork roadless areas as recommended Wilderness to protect the areas incredible wild character and to strengthen and enhance the concept of the GNP-Yellowstone wildlife corridor.

I also support retaining the 1986 recommended Wilderness for the Lolo Creek and Quigg/Slide Rock Areas. The Forest Service should also consider recommending Wilderness for the Stony Mountain roadless area, which is also important for the Rock Creek watershed.

The Cube Iron-Silcox area is a wild roadless complex (I spent a great deal of time working in this area) that should be managed as an RWA. It will provide excellent species connectivity between the Cabinet, Bitterroot, and Mission Mountains.

Additionally, it offers exceptional solitude and opportunities for quiet recreation.

Furthermore, I support the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act and would like to see all of the plan components of the collaboratively created agreement reflected in the Forest plans analysis.

Lastly, I encourage you to continue managing the Rattlesnake Corridor as a non-motorized recreational area and to minimize activities and usage that would impair travel of sensitive species.

Thank you giving me the opportunity to provide my input on the proposed action and for all the work that has gone into the plan revision process so far.