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First name: Chuck

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Lolo National Forest,

For over 30 years, I've lived in western Montana. My first two summers was living up Rock Creek just outside of Missoula. A blue ribbon trout stream that brought together people from around the world. What did the value? The wild, quiet recreation, and the beauty of Montana. More and more people are moving to Montana to use our precious public lands. It is imperative that the National Forest manage them in a way that sustains the next seven generations. But also start from a place of what they were like seven generations ago. I would like to see input, comments, and a plan from all the Tribes that traditionally used the National Forest. Their voice is the most important.

I would suggest by starting to manage for our keystone species. Grizzly bears are barely occupying the Lolo National Forest. The Lolo is a critical stepping stone for bears to get to the Bitterroots in order to reach the goal of connectivity. Logging, road building, and recreation all disturb grizzly bear behavior. There are numerous studies that show the displacement of wildlife just from hiking and mountain biking. It's time we protect what's left of these precious areas before it's too late. That would include designating all WMA's as wilderness. Not allowing mountain biking in the Great Burn, THE most important connectivity corridor. Winterized motor sports should be banned. It disturbs all winter denning creatures. The whole world is in decline and all species should be considered a Species of Conservation Concern.

The plan calls for only 8% of the forest to be old growth. This is wholly inadequate. We need old growth to sustain the forest. Whitebark pine is the most important food source for grizzly bears. The soil health created by the mycorrhizal fungi helps carbon sequestration. Fungi is just as important or even more than flora and fauna. It should be included in the management plan to our forests remain healthy for future generation. Healthy forests that aren't logged and have a natural fire regimen are vital to helping stop the effects of climate change.

I love floating the Clark Fork River. I truly value our healthy rivers and the species in them. I ask you to add the Thompson River, Fish Creek, South Fork Fish Creek, and the St. Regis River as part of the wild and scenic rivers act. And please add the Westslope cutthroat trout to the Species of Conservation Concern list.

I live in Montana for it's solitude and wild places. I want to share that experience with others. Please protect what's left. Stop the commercial business in the Lolo and manage for restoration and sustainability. Our species, soils, forests, rivers, and us depend on it. Protect and restore what's left before it's too late.

Thank for your time.