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First name: Tess

Last name: McEnroe

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Lolo Planning Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Lolo Forest Plan Proposed Action. I live in Missoula, MT along the banks of the beautiful Clark Fork River, and have river guided professionally across the west for the past 18 years. I now work in river and salmon conservation and guide part time. Rivers have changed my life, and it is my greatest passion to defend and protect them for future generations to enjoy. As you know Wild & Scenic River protections are one of the greatest tools and assets to clean water and healthy ecosystems. Adding more to our list that is fairly small given the number of outstandingly remarkable values so many rivers and streams have should be a HUGE priority for the Forest Service. This is not only a good defense against climate change, but also adds so many resources and places to enjoy for our diverse communities and species, who all deserve to thrive.

I have paddled, fished, floated and hiked along many of these rivers listed below. They are OUTSTANDING, REMARKABLE AND UNIQUE. Cultural significance should also be mentioned and prioritized as you hopefully make the right decision to protect them for time immemorial.

I support protecting the following 21 rivers and streams as Wild and Scenic eligible. These streams have outstanding recreation, fish, and wildlife values and include:

- *Rattlesnake Creek
- *Rock Creek
- *Lolo Creek, South Fork Lolo Creek
- *Clark Fork River (St. Regis to Quinns)
- *Blackfoot River, North Fork Blackfoot River
- *Clearwater River, Colt Creek
- *Morrell Creek
- *Monture Creek, Middle Fork Monture Creek
- *Lodgepole Creek
- *North Fork Fish Creek, West Fork Fish Creek, Straight Creek, Cache Creek
- *Deer Creek, Cromie Creek, Up Up Creek
- *West Fork Thompson River

In addition to the 21 rivers and streams listed above, Wild and Scenic eligible protections are also warranted for the Thompson River, Fish Creek, South Fork Fish Creek, and the St. Regis River. The Forest Service dismisses these streams as neither unique nor important within western Montana. I disagree. These rivers possess outstandingly remarkable values that are unique within the region of comparison and include:

- *Thompson River - whitewater boating, exemplary angling, and important habitat connectivity between the Clark Fork River and cold water climate refuge headwaters in the West Fork Thompson River
- *Fish Creek - whitewater boating, exemplary angling, and important habitat connectivity between the Clark Fork River and cold water climate refuge headwaters within the Great Burn
- *South Fork Fish Creek - exemplary angling, and important habitat connectivity between the Clark Fork River and cold water climate refuge headwaters in Cache Creek
- *St. Regis River - exemplary angling, critical spawning grounds, and cold water climate refuge habitat

Westslope cutthroat trout should be added to the Species of Conservation Concern list due to lack of distribution of high genetic integrity and the potential for increased distribution resulting from restoration. Finally, the Forest Service needs to better operationalize climate refuge within its Conservation Watershed Network by protecting riverside shade cover, cold water seeps and springs, areas of persistent snowpack, microclimates, genetically

pure fish populations, and riverine connectivity.

Please consider these improvements within the Proposed Action to better protect western Montana rivers. For our rivers!

Sincerely,
Tess McEnroe