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Organization:

Title:

Comments: ?Forest Plan Revision - Salmon Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest

ATTN: Forest Plan Revision

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest

Supervisor's Office

903 3rd Street

Kamiah, Idaho 83536

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am an avid Snowmobiler. I and my family spend most of our winter recreation time snowmobiling. Virtually all of our riding takes place on National forest lands.

?I SUPPORT the PROPOSED ACTION that provides for Special Management Areas which ALLOW SNOWMOBILING within the Great Burn RWA

AREAS

In the Forest Plan Revision (FPR) maps, several snowmobile areas have been omitted. The historic winter motorized recreation areas that must be preserved include all of the areas identified on the ISSA map, notably Goat Lake and its surrounding geophysical bowls, Blacklead Mountain and its surrounding geophysical bowls, Doe Creek drainage and its surrounding geophysical bowls, and Deer Creek drainage and its surrounding geophysical bowls.

USER ACCESS NEEDS

Snowmobilers seek a primitive backcountry experience for the same reasons summer users do: solitude, challenge, and appreciation of the spectacular scenery. Statistics produced by the FS in the ROS portion of the Clearwater Forest Plan Assessment show that snowmobiling access to the Clearwater NF has increased approximately 100 percent between 2006 and 2011, while primitive camping access has remained static (page 21). This clearly demonstrates snowmobiling is a growing recreational activity and demonstrates the need for more access to suitable riding area, not less. At the very least, future management should keep historic riding areas open.

RWA ISSUES

The area is adequately protected under existing laws and the Idaho Roadless Rule that allows for OHV uses. Management of Recommended Wilderness Areas as Wilderness is neither acceptable nor required as it relates to over the snow travel and there is no law or policy that requires the Forest Service to do. The Great Burn has been open to snowmobiling for the last 25 years and nowhere have we seen any documentation that this use has had any negative impact on the resources. The 2012 Travel Plan ROD states that NO evidence of Lynx was found in the Great Burn Area. There is no evidence supporting snowmobiling having a negative impact on mountain goat populations. Eliminating a legitimate use simply because someone thinks there 'may be' a negative impact should not be used as the rationale to make decisions such as this.

Thank you, for considering my comments supporting my belief and strong desire that the Great Burn remain open for snowmobiling, now and for future generations to enjoy.

Loyal Gibbons

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