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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Proposed Action for Great Burn and Bighorn-Weitas

Dear Forest Supervisor,

I want the NPCW National Forest to continue protection of the Great Burn Recommend Wilderness and to add the Bighorn-Weitas Roadless Area to Recommended Wilderness status. Option A is the preferred option which would accomplish these objectives.

I have camped and back packed extensively along the State Line Divide trail--visiting Heart, Pearl, Dalton, Trio, Goose, Mud, Cedar Log, Kidd, and Leo Lakes. These areas have first rate wilderness characteristics including prime habitat for many wildlife species. Winter motorized snowmobile incursions by a few motorized advocates would seriously undermine the habitat and would be impossible to enforce. The NPCW National Forest would have to implement a significant monitoring and enforcement protocol requiring significant labor power and equipment, in numbers, with real teeth to cite and, perhaps, arrest violators of boundaries for snowmobiling. I snow shoed and skied into Heart Lake during the winter and witnessed numerous violations in the Heart Lake and Pearl Lake Basins.

I have hiked the length of Weitas Creek from the old trail/road on top down to the North Fork of the Clearwater. This country is prime wilderness despite the allowance of motorized trail bikes along the trails. Motorized bikes detract from the backpacking, camping, and fantastic stream fishing along the Weitas. The popularity of the area for these non-motorized activities was very evident in June 2005. Access from the Pierce Workstation and the road on the North Fork. The Bighorn-Weitas is a landscape with wilderness characteristics that should be elevated or advanced to Recommended Wilderness status.

I have had many positive interactions with national forest service personnel on both the Idaho and Montana sides of the Great Burn area. I truly hope that the NPCW National Forest will continue to be responsible stewards of all this wilderness Roadless area.

Thank you,

Steve Seninger

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