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Comments:

Growing up in Washington, DC, I didn't get to experience wild places as a kid. Once I moved out West after college, I was amazed to see places without roads or buildings or masses of people. I grew to love these wild places for their solitude, challenge, and opportunity to get away from the busy day-to-day of modern life. Wild places are where I feel the most free, the most alive, and most happy.

In this wilderness evaluation process, it is not my personal opinion on wilderness that matters. What matters is whether or not the areas up for recommended wilderness consideration are suitable and deserving of wilderness protection. My many hours spent on the Salmon-Challis NF have shaped my assessment of how worthy certain areas are in this respect.

The North Slope Pioneers and Borah Plus areas have been recommended as wilderness for 40 years and remain supremely deserving of wilderness protection. Beyond being unroaded and without permanent human improvements, these areas evoke the true essence of what a wild place offers - solitude and the opportunity to challenge oneself. Wilderness protection remains the gold standard for conservation on federal lands and those areas are very deserving.

I recognize that the Forest Service has a difficult task with this process given the strong opinions on both sides. Thank you very much for taking the time to accept and consider public input on this process.