



State of Idaho

## Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Janice McGeachin

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Mr. Chuck Mark, Supervisor  
Salmon Challis National Forest  
1206 Challis Street  
Salmon, ID. 83467

RE: Formal Substantive Comments on Wilderness and other issues

Dear Mr. Mark:

As you move forward in the Plan Revision process for the Salmon Challis National Forest (SCNF), you need to take into consideration the impact on our rural communities. Throughout the State of Idaho, our rural communities are losing their traditional livelihoods through the loss of grazing, mining and timber harvest. To be able to continue their traditional way of life at a sustainable level for future generations, more multiple use opportunities must be encouraged. The lock up of more land through Wilderness and Wild & Scenic River designations is detrimental to our traditional values. Both Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers equate to more unusable acres in each County, severely impacting their economies.

As a State, Idaho is 61.7% under Federal management in one form or another. It has more wilderness designations than any other State in the lower 48 with the largest single wilderness being on the SCNF. According to the 2011 study done by the Idaho Association of Counties, Lemhi County has 8 percent private land while Custer County has only 5 percent. Our rural counties and communities throughout the State cannot survive unless the multiple use needs of these areas are met through increasing multiple use opportunities. Multiple use designated lands have been declining for the last 40 years.

The Plan Revision process must weigh and consider the needs and concerns of the citizens residing within Custer and Lemhi counties with greater emphasis than those of parties further removed from the direct impact of the resulting Plan. Proactive management to sustain, enhance and encourage more multiple use opportunities needs to start now and be considered a priority throughout the Plan process.

President Trump's Executive Order dated December 21, 2019, on "Promoting Active Management of America's Forests, Rangelands, and other Federal Lands to Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk" is an important directive to be followed concerning current public land management policy whether it is Forest, National Recreation Area or Wilderness. The State is ready to help in this effort by actions promulgated through the establishment of the Good Neighbor Authority. More Wilderness equates to more unmaintained forest lands left to burn, causing a true detriment to the residents of the area, and it certainly is not the answer regardless of qualifying factors. Please take the steps necessary to eliminate most, if not all, of the proposed Wilderness areas in the SCNF.

To maintain healthy forests, more accessible roads should be established and closed roads opened for the general purposes of timber harvest, fire suppression, weed control, and grazing access as well as recreation. Access to the forest is critical to all users for enjoyment in all its many forms. Forests are not just for those that hike or possibly can ride a horse as it is now in Wilderness areas. The biggest share of the population does not fit into this Wilderness scenario. Young children, the aging and disabled or handicapped populations are currently disenfranchised by being locked out of the

Wilderness. This translates into more motorized access, not less. This is discrimination at its finest and needs to change. Public means everyone, not an elite few.  
Keep the great State of Idaho and its rural communities traditionally and economically viable. Please consider these comments carefully.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Janice McGeachin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Janice McGeachin  
Lieutenant Governor