



Friends of the Clearwater

*Preserving, Protecting and Defending the Forests,
Waterways and Wildlife in the wild heart of north
central Idaho since 1987.*

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NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jeff Juel, Forest Policy Director, 509-688-5956 jeffjuel@wildrockies.org

Moscow, ID - [Friends of the Clearwater](#) (FOC) announces today they have filed a Complaint in the U.S. District Court of Idaho challenging several timber sales* authorized by the U.S. Forest Service in the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (NPCNF) of north-central Idaho.

We have major concerns over loss of habitat security affecting a slowly recovering and sparse population of grizzly bears in the Bitterroot Ecosystem, a recovery zone [characterized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (FWS) as essential for recovering the species from its status as listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). This concern is affirmed by [independent grizzly bear scientific opinion](#). The timber sales would open up or construct 134 miles of roads, largely severing already degraded habitat connectivity into the Bitterroot Ecosystem. The sales occur in or adjacent to areas FWS indicates grizzlies “may be present” based on confirmed reports. Numerous scientific studies confirm that human activities along roads increase grizzly bear mortality and displace bears from using otherwise suitable habitat.

Jeff Juel, FOC’s Forest Policy Director stated, “The ongoing degradation of grizzly habitat in the Wild Clearwater country that these timber sales exemplify is one reason why the species must not be removed from the Endangered Species list. The effects of climate change are also reducing the population’s resilience, so they can’t afford to have already limited habitat security logged and roaded into oblivion. The Forest Service violated the ESA in failing to consult with the FWS, pretending that heavy industrial activities in this national forest have absolutely no effect on grizzly bears.”

Keeping grizzly bear habitat as intact as possible has the additional benefits of securing habitat for big game species such as elk, other rare and endangered wildlife such as wolverines and lynx, plus fish such as steelhead, bull trout and salmon which depend upon clean, cold water threatened by sediment from logging roads. “This agency’s illegal approval of thousands of acres of logging and all the associated road work is a callous and irresponsible stab at the wild heart of Idaho,” stated Juel.

Another major impact would be wide scale destruction and fragmentation of old growth and mature forests. The timber sales would lead to more than 25 square miles of new clearcuts, some over 200 acres in extent and one at 790 acres, plus over 15 square miles

of other logging. FOC notes that in the northern Rockies, [the practice of creating huge clearcuts has become the norm rather than the exception](#) Congress intended in passing the National Forest Management Act in 1976.

“Logging proponents and the Trump administration believe private profits are more important than the public interest in wildlife habitat and enjoyment of naturally resilient wild forests,” stated Juel. “And the Forest Service, which is mandated to act in the public interest, is not disclosing how much old growth still exists on the NPCNF following over a century of commercial logging, despite a legal requirement in the [1987 Land Management Plan](#). And the mature forests being targeted provide habitat components, including large snags and down wood, multi-layered and complex forest canopies and understory vegetation so important for maintaining viable and robust populations of many wildlife species such as fishers, northern goshawks and pileated woodpeckers which become absent or rare for many decades following logging,” he added.

“Friends of the Clearwater will continue to hold the Forest Service accountable for its irresponsible and lawless management of this national forest,” concluded Jeff Juel.

FOC is represented by Greenfire Law, PC, a public interest environmental law firm located in Berkeley, California.

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*Links to the Forest Service timber sale project pages:

[Clear Creek Integrated Project](#)
[Green Horse](#)
[Red Siegel](#)
[Limber Elk](#)
[Twentymile](#)
[Dixie-Comstock](#)
[Hungry Ridge](#)
[End Of The World](#)

*Some Forest Service project websites were not functioning when last visited 10/10/2025.
Documents are available from FOC upon request.*