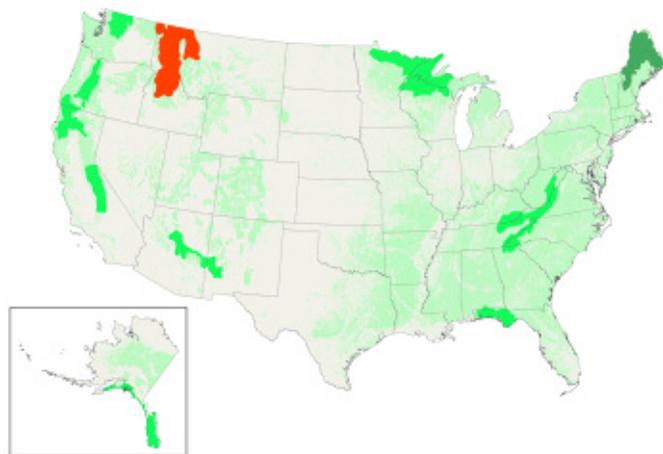


KEYSTONE FOREST



Physical Description

Known as the “American Serengeti,” stretching across Idaho and Montana into the extreme northwest section of eastern Washington, the Northwest Rockies Keystone Forest is part of the greater North Central Rockies forest ecoregion. This keystone forest encompasses the largest expanse of biological diversity in the lower 48 states and contains the largest contiguous block of coniferous temperate forest in the Intermountain West. It is the only bioregion outside of Alaska that still contains all species present at

the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Many different forest types can be found here, ranging from wet forests full of cedar, fir and white pine to higher-elevation forests of lodgepole pine, white-bark pine and sub-alpine fir to drier, lower-elevation forests of Ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. Populations of bighorn sheep, grizzly bear, goshawk, elk, caribou and mountain lion roam the region’s forests, mountains and grasslands. Keystone species such as grizzly bear, woodland caribou and bull trout have been listed as threatened and endan-

gered. Much of the nation’s fresh water originates here creating the headwaters for the Columbia River, the Missouri River and even for water draining north into Canada’s Hudson Bay.

This keystone forest is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts who use the area for fishing, hunting, backpacking, rock climbing, mountain biking, fly fishing, skiing, scenic and whitewater paddling and camping. Additionally, many locals use these forests to gather mushrooms, berries and other edibles.

Threats

This keystone forest continues to face a myriad of industrial threats from large-scale logging, mining and oil and gas companies. More than 20 million acres of publicly-owned wild lands remain unprotected. Iconic places such as the Rocky Mountain Front, the North Fork of the Flathead River near Glacier

Bitterroot National Forest.



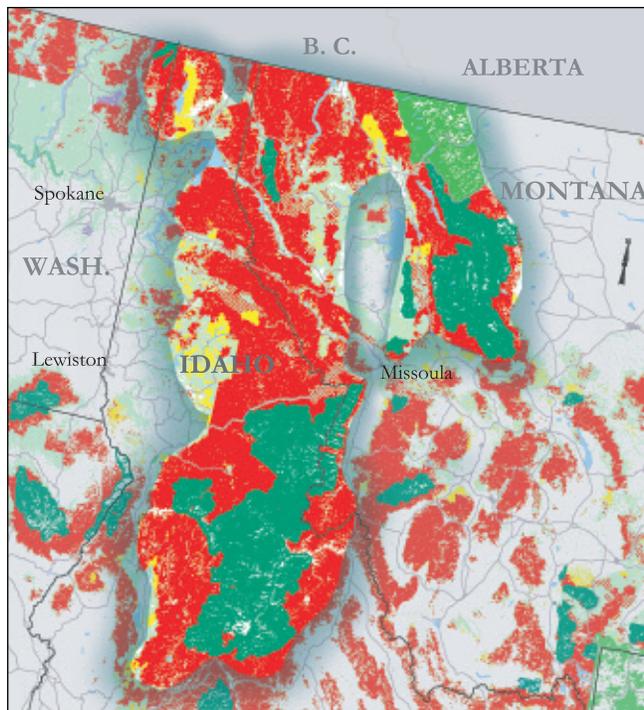
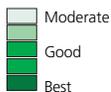
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Forested BLM Lands (non-wilderness)	146,418
Forested National Forest Lands (non-wilderness)	12,892,751
Forested National Wildlife Refuge Lands (non-wilderness)	1,297
Forested National Park Lands (non-wilderness)*	777,195
Forested Wilderness	5,039,447
Forested miscellaneous public and private preserves	944,869
Privately owned, unprotected forest lands	3,287,552
Total Forested Lands	23,089,529

*Available data did not necessarily distinguish wilderness from non-wilderness within national parks, so some wilderness within national parks may be included within this statistic.



Forest Quality



Forest Ownership



National Park, and the Lewis and Clark Trail in the Clearwater National Forest are all at risk. A relatively new and growing threat comes from off-road vehicles that cause both ecological damage and social conflict.

*Written by Jake Kreilick
National Forest Protection Alliance
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Efforts to Increase Protected Areas

The Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA) proposes a wide array of wilderness designations throughout the region. In contrast to traditional state wilderness bills, designations under NREPA are made according to ecosystems, watersheds and science—not arbitrary political boundaries. NREPA would create more than 18 million acres of new wilderness and designate 1,810 miles of eligible waters as Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers. NREPA provides the means to connect the Northwest Rockies Keystone Forest with the neighboring Hells Canyon and Greater Yellowstone ecosystems.