

APPENDIX C
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

Public involvement has been an important part of the process of developing the Environmental Impact Statement for the Salmon River Canyon Project. Extensive public involvement opportunities were available since the inception of this project. Public involvement activities included public meetings, newspaper articles, open houses, scoping letters, field trip, consultation with other agencies, and interest group briefings. A full detail of documented meetings, telephone calls, written correspondence, and other communications is available in the project record located at the Nez Perce National Forest Supervisors Office in Grangeville, Idaho.

CHRONOLOGY

February 1997 - A letter was sent to approximately 4,500 members of the public to announce a series of public meetings where the focused fuels project would be discussed. In addition, news articles were published in the newspapers of record for the Nez Perce, Payette, Salmon-Challis, and Bitterroot national forests and in local newspapers for these communities.

FEBRUARY - MARCH 1997 - Eleven public meetings were held in Missoula and Hamilton, Montana and in Salmon, Boise, Lewiston, Kamiah, Grangeville, McCall, Riggins, and Elk City Idaho. The purpose of these meetings was to share the need for treatment with the public and to solicit ideas.

April 1997 - Content analysis was completed on the comments received from the public meetings.

August 1997 - Letter sent to approximately 4,300 people updating them and asking if they were interested in remaining informed of the project once we began scoping. Approximately 400 people returned cards.

December 1997 - Presented the project concept to the Frank Church-River of No Return Board of Directors.

January 1998 - Presentation to wilderness group during their annual meeting to present the concept of the proposal.

January 1998 - Presented project to fire personnel on the Payette National Forest.

March 1998 - Level 1 consultation team identified representing the Forest Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Fish and Wildlife Service.

March 1998 - Visits made to all districts and forests involved to validate analysis team findings prior to finalization of proposed action.

March 1998 - Met with director and staff of the Bureau of Land Management Cottonwood Area to discuss the project.

March 1998 - Met with Bitterroot National Forest leadership team to present the proposed action.

April 1998 - Met with Nezperce National Forest leadership team to present proposed action.

April 1998 - Field trip with representatives of National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Department of Lands, Idaho Fish and Game, Nez Perce Tribe, Rocky

Mountain Elk Foundation, Bureau of Land Management, Regions 1 and 4 Regional Offices, and the Nez Perce and Payette National Forests.

April 1998 - Met with Salmon-Challis National Forest leadership team to present the proposed action.

May 1998 - Presented the proposal at the Tri-Regional Fire meeting (Regions 1, 4, and 6).

May 1998 - Scoping letter mailed to all respondents of the August letter. Mailing list also included adjacent landowners and state and federal agencies who did not respond but may be affected or interested.

July 1998 - NOI published in the Federal Register announcing the intent to prepare an EIS.

July - August 1998 - Open houses held in Lewiston, Grangeville, Elk City, Riggins, Salmon, and McCall Idaho and in Hamilton and Missoula Montana.

August 1998 - Met with Mike Larkin (fish biologist) at the Salmon division of IDF & G. Gave him an overview of the proposal and left him with a copy of the scoping letter, map, and comment form. Also gave him Steve Blair and Dale Hoth's names and phone numbers. He will share with the wildlife biologist.

August 1998 - Float trip to meet with Salmon River inholders and/or caretakers. Able to talk with Newt High (Yellowpine Bar), John Belton (Polly Bemis Ranch), Mike and Linda Demerse (Shepp Ranch).

September 1998 - Met with ROOTS members at a regular meeting to discuss proposal.

October 1998 - Met with Clearwater Elk Initiative group to discuss project and process used.

November 1998 - Leadership Team (Payette NF) presentation on progress, alternatives, and issues.

January 1999 - Presentation and discussion to Lead Working group, Directors, and Prescribed Natural Fire Managers for the Frank Church-River of No Return meeting to discuss project options and progress.

September 1999 - Presentation and discussion with R1 Regional Forester and staff to update them on the upcoming DEIS and the project.

September 1999 - Presentation and discussion with representatives of Governor Dirk Kempthorn, Congressman Helen Chenoweth, and Senators Larry Craig and Mike Crapo.

September 1999 - Presentation and discussion with Grant Sangrey (Idaho Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board), Grant Simonds (Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association), and Jeff (Idaho Fish and Game).

ISSUE DEVELOPMENT

Responses to the scoping letter and open house meetings were analyzed using a process called Content Analysis. All comments were reviewed, summarized, and analyzed to determine the disposition of the issues. The following process was used for this disposition:

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Scoping and issue identification procedures are outlined in FSH 1909.15, Section 11-Conduct Scoping.

Usually a preliminary set of issues can be identified by the IDT or team leader. Comments received from the public and other agencies and Tribal governments should be analyzed. Once scoping comments are reviewed and a revised set of issues identified, the IDT and Responsible Official must determine which issues will be addressed in the environmental analysis and how they will be used. The tentative set of issues should be sorted into the following classes:

1. Beyond the Scope of the Project Decision--These issues will not be addressed in the environmental analysis.

2. Issues addressed by Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines--LRMP standards and guidelines are sufficient to address the concern raised.

These may take the form of alternative design standards (e.g., no activity within XX feet of these locations).

Management area direction specifies if activities can occur and any guidelines for their design and implementation.

Analysis procedures/requirements are specified in the LRMP.

3. Issues that can be addressed by adopting mitigation measures or design standards common to all alternatives

Generally titled "features common to all action alternatives" these measures can be used to address these concerns.

Use of mitigation measures which require monitoring of conditions and adjustments over time must be critically reviewed to determine if the net result of their application over a Ranger District or Forest is too cumbersome or costly. The investigation of these issues by use of Alternatives may be more appropriate.

4. Issues that can be addressed by measuring the effects of different alternatives and comparing or contrasting differences between alternatives.

In many cases a simple comparison of environmental effects of the alternative for the "resource" concern is all that is necessary. Examples include effects on water yield, recreation opportunities, visual quality, etc. These are the issues/resources discussed in the affected environment and effects chapters of the environmental document. They are also included in the alternative comparison section of the Alternatives chapter.

5. Issues that can be addressed by the developing alternatives to the proposed action.

These issues are best addressed by considering alternatives to the proposed action. They do not always involve consideration of an alternative in detail. If rejected from detailed analysis, the rationale must be developed and included in the environmental document.

Issues included in 4 and 5 would be the environmental issues that "drive" the analysis. Issues included in 2 and 3 can be used to modify the proposed action and more narrowly define the range of alternatives considered.

The following is a summary of how the issues identified through the Content Analysis were addressed.

SUMMARY

Step 1 - Issue beyond the scope of Project Decision

- The Forest Service and the NEPA process may not be able to plan a project of this scale.
- This concern is being addressed through the NEPA analysis and the completion of an EIS. Therefore, it is not specifically addressed in the body of the document.
- The Forest Service should restore healthy forest ecosystems through fire management.
- This concern is the basis for the Purpose and Need for the proposal. Therefore, while not specifically identified in the Issues section of the document, this issue is addressed with the proposal and the alternatives.
- The Forest Service should emphasize letting lightning strike fires burn.
- This concern is beyond the scope of this analysis. However, an alternative that addresses this concern was considered and eliminated from detailed study.

Step 2 - Addressed by Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines

- The Forest Service should take into account legal issues possibly affecting the proposed project.
- This project violates the Clean Water Act.
- This project violates the Clean Water Act.
- This project violates the Clean Air Act and state air quality laws.
- All alternatives considered are within the parameters identified with the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, ESA, NEPA, etc. No alternatives were considered that violated these laws. Therefore, while not specifically identified as an Issue in the EIS, these concerns are addressed.

Step 3 - Can be addressed with mitigation measures or design features common to all alternatives.

- The project must take into account weather patterns.
- The Forest Service should involve private landowners and educate them on fire's role in the Salmon River ecosystem.
- The project plan must provide for adequate protection of private property.
- The project should make provisions for managing noxious and exotic weeds.
- Reseeding should be an integral part of this project.***NOTE Also Step 4
- The project should consider ways to protect archaeological sites in the project area.
- Prescribed fires should not interfere with times of peak human use. ***NOTE Also Step 4

Step 4 - Can be addressed by measuring Effects of Different Alternatives and comparing/contrasting Differences

- Air quality should be protected, not polluted with smoke from fires.
- The project should acknowledge the difficulty in mimicing natural fire cycles and controlling large burns.
- The proposed project should take into account the effects of fire on riparian habitat.
- The Forest Service should consider the impact of the proposed project on recreation.
- Impacts on wildlife and their habitats, especially small mammals and ground nesting birds, should be considered.
- The proposed project should consider its effect on Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species.
- These fires will violate PACFISH objectives.
- The Forest Service should consider the negative impact of fire induced erosion on fish.
- Reseeding should be an integral part of this project.
- Public water supply will be affected and could become undrinkable or not available.
- The effects of smoke on public health should be addressed.
- The project should reflect consideration of its short- and long- term costs and avoid expensive methods.
- The project must address the impact on businesses and livelihoods dependent on tourism and recreation in the project area.

- The project must consider its social acceptance in light of the controversy surrounding grass burning.
- The project should consider ways to protect archaeological sites in the project area.
- Prescribed fires should not interfere with times of peak human use.

Step 5 - Can be addressed by developing alternatives to the proposed action

- The project should consider alternatives to prescribed burning.
- The Forest Service should restore healthy forest ecosystems through fire management.
- The Forest Service should emphasize letting lightning strike fires burn.
- Prescribed fires should not be set in spring or early summer.
- The Forest Service should use timber harvest instead of burning to control fuel loads.
- The Forest Service should allow timber harvest before burning.
- The Forest Service should not burn in Wilderness Areas.
- The Forest Service should consider burning in Wilderness Areas.
- The Forest Service should consider using livestock grazing as a tool to reduce fuel loads.
- The project should consider opportunities for employment, including harvesting timber.