

Open House Summary of Meetings

Elkins, WV: Davis & Elkins College Gymnasium, February 21, 2004, 10:00am to 12:00pm

Participants: 56

Public Feedback

Alternatives

- Support current plan and management prescription allocations. Will oppose combining 3.0 and 6.1 because this will give everything a timber purpose rather than a wildlife purpose.
- Supports alternative 3 and does not support vegetation management in management prescription 6.2.
- Believes alternative 3 will provide the best option to meet economic and environmental needs.

Vegetation Management

Early Successional Habitat

- Emphasize early successional species; the habitat is becoming rare as the forest grows older.
- In favor of early successional habitat for grouse and woodcock.
- Add more early successional forest areas.
- Too many deer and do not manage for them.
- Do not emphasize early successional habitat because it is available on private land; opportunity for MNF to become large core area of old forest.

General Comments:

- Apply all the known forest technology to assure proper regeneration of desirable species for future generations.
- Clearcutting should be a timber management tool, where applicable with total respect for streams and topography, to be used after intensive study to assure the activity would not cause erosion.
- Use a shelterwood cut where there are not sufficient counts of desirable seedlings to establish the seedlings and then remove the trees left.
- Consider public needs and multiple uses but not at the expense of the ecosystem.
- Clearcutting where proven suitable should be no less than 1200 acres, but less acreage and more acreage could be considered on a site by site basis.
- In order for a forest to be healthy and productive, it must be regenerated.
- Proper selection and small-area cuts are more important for forest health and sustainability than “efficiency” cuts that maximize profits by minimizing costs of doing the jobs (road-building, harvesting) correctly.
- In favor of large unfragmented forest.
- Continue plans for harvesting timber and clear cutting.
- Like to see better logging safeguards and but back on new roads.

Disease and Pests

- Expressed concerns about the affects of disease & pests on plant species diversity.

Listed species

- Endangered species should be #1 priority; concerned about warblers (cerulean).
- Continue every effort to protect the endangered species in the Monongahela National Forest.

Roads/Timber Sales

- No new logging roads.

- No cutting in old-growth areas.
- No timber sales.
- No below-cost timber and mineral contracts.

Remote Backcountry

General

- Continue development of public access to the scenic sites of the forest.

6.2/Wilderness

- In favor of recommending all areas that meet criteria for Wilderness.
- Increase Wilderness areas.
- No motorized vehicles; no roads in 1000 acre segments or more; priority areas for wilderness recommendation.
- Propose the area east and north of Lake Sherwood for special protection such as “scenic area.” Trees could be old growth.
- Recommend to U.S. Congress the expansion of Cranberry backcountry and Dolly Sods Wildernesses.
- Support MNF management to promote management prescription 5.0 and 6.2.
- Opposed to additional wilderness that does not allow bicycles and wheelchairs.

ATVs

- Opposed to OHV in MNF; lack of enforcement on Forest to keep OHVs out of Forest.
- Opposed to OHV in MNF
- Excluding consideration of all-terrain vehicles from this particular revision to focus on major considerations that affect a large segment of the population makes sense.
- Oppose to ATVs on federal lands.

Soil & Water

- Recommendations for nutrient sensitive soils: stream buffer (no roads), remove roads, restore nutrients using best science.
- Management priorities should reflect riparian and water quality protection or improvement vs. road/timber.
- Extensive soil nutrient monitoring needed.
- In favor of studying the acid deposition problem and its long-term effects on the MNF ecosystem as well as working on mitigation efforts.
- Continue emphasis on protection of riparian areas, particularly where new roads are put in or old roads are up-graded.
- Soil preservation is important.

Public Participation

- Submitted quote by Senator Hubert Humphrey on National Forest Management Act.
- Recommend a citizen attitude poll for managing the Forest.

Morgantown, WV: Holiday Day Inn, February 23, 2004, 4:00 to 7:00 pm

Participants: 68

General Planning

- Publish a supplement of short-term goals that target specific accomplishments during the next one to three years that demonstrate how the Forest Plan long-term objectives are being met.

Public Feedback

Vegetation Management

Early Successional Habitat

- More early successional habitat for grouse.
- Cut more timber for wildlife (game) species.
- In favor of early successional habitat for grouse, rabbits, and deer.
- Members of Woodcock Limited and Ruffed Grouse Society in favor of cut & manage forest for wildlife habitat improvement.
- Need to monitor the impacts deer have on vegetation so there is data to support a request to DNR to increase bag limits; deer impacting regeneration; don't encourage deer with wildlife openings
- In favor of a Forest Plan that produces adequate areas of young, successional forest.

Remote Backcountry

6.2/Wilderness

- In favor of all Roadless areas remaining eligible for Wilderness designation and managed with non-motorized recreation as the prime criterion.
- In favor of Wilderness and Alternative 3.

ATVs

- NO ATVs or ORVs.

Soil & Water

- Timber sales in SO4 areas should be suspended pending better science on regeneration.

Feedback Not Included in Forest Plan Revision

Issue Being Handled Outside Forest Plan Revision

- Against year-round dog training

Petersburg, WV: Public Library, February 25, 2004, 4:00 to 7:00 pm,

Participants: 23

Public Feedback

Alternatives

- Supports alternative 1.

Timber Supply

- Cut the 8% timber designated in the '86 Plan.
- Likes the Plan the way it is---could cut a little more timber (but not too much).
- Against any road building; log without building roads.

Remote Backcountry

- Consider impact of wilderness designation to landowners that live upstream.
- Believes we have enough wilderness designated already.

Soil & Water

- Make datasets of soil nutrient loss and acid deposition accessible to public (i.e. Internet).
- Concerned that the additional Wilderness will limit Forest access and resource management.
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General

- During process of looking at long term management, don't forget about fixing things in the short term.

Dunmore, WV: Pocahontas County High School, February 26, 2004, 4:00 to 7:00 pm

Participants: 41

Public Feedback

Alternatives

- In favor of alternative 1. Keep 6.2 areas as they are; it is important that the DNR continue to be able to manage these areas for wildlife.

Vegetation Management

- Doesn't like cool season grasses on invasive list.
- Invasive species management is a waste of money.
- Don't clearcut where there is no advance regeneration.
- Reduce logging and roads.

Remote Backcountry

- In favor of more 6.2 area and Wilderness.

ATV

- Do not allow ATVs and snowmobiles on USFS land; only allow use by USFS for maintenance.

Trails

- Improve existing trails.

Soil and Water

- Allow for flexibility with in the riparian guidelines based on site conditions and logging systems.

Wildlife

- If turkeys are a 'featured species', don't concentrate cutting in the coves where the turkeys are.

Feedback Not Included in Forest Plan Revision

Issue Being Handled Outside Forest Plan Revision

- Concerned about year-round dog training by bear hunters and impact to other users.

Site-Specific (Forest Plan Revision focus is forest-wide issues.)

- West Virginia Cave Conservancy would like to work with USFS on cave management plans.
- Open the Cranberry Backcountry on the Sunday when the time changes.
- Put in hot showers at Tea Creek campground.
- Spend more dollars on improving existing trails.
- Improve USFS tourism participation such as working on busy weekends to direct public to trails and scenic areas.
- Improve Forest Web site.
- Do more Wild and Scenic River projects.

Richwood, WV: City Hall, February 27, 2004, 4:00 to 7:00 pm

Participants: 35

Feedback

Alternatives

- Add an alternative that includes ATV trail development.
- Would like to see an alternative developed that includes ATV trails.
- Include the need for ATV trails in alternative(s).

Vegetation Management

- In favor of Alternative 2 to increase management for early successional species.
- Do not change any 3.0 areas to 6.2. They are needed for uses intended in the 1986 plan. A 6.2 prescription is much too limited and is needed by tourists and for multiple-use purposes.
- What are the riparian guidelines? How flexible are they? Do they reflect modern harvesting techniques?
- Publish the thought process used to determine the timber land base.
- Request a more definitive number for the timber land base.
- Increase management to benefit ruffed grouse.

Remote Backcountry:

- 6.2 prescription needs to have language which give managers the ability to make exceptions for special circumstances for the public to use motorized vehicles to travel through the area if in the managers analysis their would be minimal impact.
- Wilderness is used by less than 200 people per year. Do not expand because the use of these areas is very limited.

ATV

- EIS needs to include the economic impact of having ATV trails in the National Forest and how overwhelming number of users will benefit for the limited trail area they will use.
- Oppose ATVs on the Forest.
- Supports ATVs use on Forest for economic reasons.
- Supports ATVs on the forest.
- ATV trail development would be a social and economic benefit to communities.

Soil and Water

- Use of existing riparian standards and guidelines in Management Areas is sufficient. Don't create a new prescription. Don't create megabuffers that render areas inoperable and reduce the timber base.
- Don't just "write off" soil nutrient sensitive areas from forest management activities.
- What literature exists showing a decline in site productivity through tree growth rates? How is it tied to acid deposition or nutrient decline?
- Need more flexibility in riparian corridor to allow for some timber removal. This would promote large woody debris recruitment by increasing growth rates.
- Make riparian areas a priority to minimize sedimentation in trout streams.

Feedback Not Included in Forest Plan Revision

Outside Scope of Forest Service Authority

- Help build the South Fork Lake.
- Request Forest Service assistance in building South Fork of Cherry River Lake.

Issue Being Handled Outside Forest Plan Revision

- Against year-round dog hunting.
- Forest should prohibit year-round dog training.

Site-Specific (Forest Plan Revision focus is forest-wide issues.)

- Against opening Cranberry to vehicles.
- Support opening Cranberry backcountry to vehicles at least once a year.
- Oppose any timber cutting in the North Fork of Cherry River

Charleston, WV: Gaston Caperton Training Center, March 20, 2004, 10:00am to 2:00pm

Participants: 31

Public Feedback

Alternatives

- Supports alternative 3.
- Supports alternative 1; be realistic when setting expectations for harvest; base timber ASQ on forest growth of 293 mmbf.

Vegetation Management

- Stop the spread of non-native invasive species through road building and timber sales.
- Do not use pesticides or herbicides on the national forest.
- Protect old growth.

Remote Backcountry

- Keep 6.2 areas out of active management.
- Make Wilderness and top priority of the Forest Plan Revision.
- Increase Wilderness.
- Do not allow ATVs access to Forest trails.
- Increase recreational opportunities.
- Leave MP 6.2 as it currently is; no timber management.
- Add more remote backcountry.
- Establish limited off-road vehicle use; charge a fee to construct and maintain trails..
- Provide access points for white-water boating.
- Supports all 12 rivers under consideration for wild and scenic designation.

Soil and Water

- Concerned that the new Plan will prevent additional limestone fines in trout streams.
- Accommodate for limestone fines to enhance water quality for recreation.
- Protect riparian areas.
- Soil nutrient depletion is an important issue to consider.

Timber Supply

- Reduce logging; no clear cutting.
- No new roads.

Wildlife

- No more deer enhancement projects.
- Continue the black bear sanctuary.

Mining, Oil, Gas

- No leasing of national forest lands.
- No coal mining except deep mining; allow 10 acre maximum disturbance of surface area and no impoundments for refuse.

Land Acquisition

- Supports increasing funding to purchase more public land.

Public Involvement

- Supports public involvement to manage forest to benefit people.