

Summary

Eastern Washington Cascades and Yakima Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting January 26, 2007

*The next PAC meeting is **February 23, 9am-4pm***

Attendees:

1. Arnie Arneson (timber interests)
2. Jim Boynton (Forest Supervisor, Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests)
3. Howard Briggs (recreation & tourism interests)
4. Lee Carlson (Yakama Nation)
5. Bill Ford (recreation & tourism interests)
6. June Helbig (recreation interests)
7. Lynda Hofman (Washington State Dept. of Fish & Wildlife)
8. Scott King (wildlife interests)
9. Nick Martinez (grazing interests)
10. Saundi McPhee (public at large)
11. Dale Neuman (recreation & tourism interests)
12. Dick Rieman (environmental interests)
13. Ron Simon (timber interests)
14. Walt Smith (public at large)
15. Jen Watkins (environmental interests)
16. Dan Wood (Chelan County Commissioners)
17. Cynthia Wilkerson (environmental interests, for Susan Crampton)

Observer: Mike Anderson (Wilderness Society, Seattle)

Forest Service attendees: Forest Plan Revision Team members Margaret Hartzell and Deb Kelly; Paul Hart and Robin DeMario,

Facilitator: Susan Hayman

Meeting Objectives (see Attachment 1 – Agenda):

1. Review and comment on the Forest Service’s preliminary “Capability” evaluation of roadless areas for potential wilderness recommendation.
2. Finalize and prioritize “Availability” considerations for the evaluation of roadless areas for potential wilderness recommendation.
3. Discuss “Need” considerations for the evaluation of roadless areas for potential wilderness recommendation, and discuss homework assignment.

Handouts:

1. Agenda
2. Revised Wilderness Evaluation Process Overview
3. Evaluation of Fall PAC Workshops
4. Evaluation of Potential Wilderness Areas
5. PAC Evaluation of Fall Workshops, 1.26.2007
6. Alphabetical listing order of Inventoried Roadless Areas

7. Comment listing order (high to medium to low) of Inventoried Roadless Areas
 8. Potential Wilderness “Considerations”—Pework Comments
 9. Draft PAC availability considerations applied handout (long posters)
 10. “Need Considerations” Assignment (table).
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Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Paul Hart opened the meeting by welcoming all participants, and asking PAC members and others present to introduce themselves.

Jim Boyton, Forest Supervisor, provide the following opening remarks:

- The Forest Service – Pacific Northwest Region is discussing the status of PACs; in some instances, PACs may not be rechartered. Given the high value the Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest places on the Eastern Washington Cascades and Yakima PACs, Jim will recommend that these two PACs be rechartered.
- The PACs, plus the Collaborative Action Team, have worked very hard on salvage issues, and the Tripod salvage in particular. While there are some areas of disagreement (e.g. size classes of salvageable trees), some common ground has been identified. The Forest Service is moving ahead on about 300 acres of salvage. The Forest Service will also prepare an EIS for salvage on an additional 3,000+/- acres. Jim will review proposed alternatives for this larger salvage project next week.
- Criminal charges have been filed against a Forest Service employee for his actions during the Thirtymile Fire. This has created a stressful situation for employees on the Okanogan-Wenatchee Forests, and elsewhere within the Forest Service.
- Thanks to the group for the talent, skills, and enthusiasm they bring to these meetings.

Susan provided an overview of the agenda, and reviewed the ground rules.

Review of the Fall Evaluation

Susan referred PAC members to the “Evaluation of the Fall PAC Workshops” handout. She noted that several people commented that they valued the learning opportunity they have in PAC meetings, and that most people felt the topics were relevant. People generally felt that disagreements occurred in a civil way. There were good suggestions for the facilitators too. Susan recommended that everyone take the time to read through the survey results.

Revised Wilderness Evaluation Process Overview

Susan reviewed the overview of the PAC wilderness evaluation process. This has been revised since the October 16 meeting where it was first presented to reflect the changes that have been made as the process has moved along. The revised process includes evaluation of inventoried roadless areas at the fourth PAC meeting (February 23), and a proposed fifth meeting to discuss how roadless areas not recommended for wilderness will be managed under the revised plan, and

also how to manage areas in the interim between being recommended by the Forest Service and Congressional action.

PAC members were assured that they would receive two weeks in advance the Forest Service write-ups (i.e. Forest Service preliminary evaluation) for each of the Wenatchee roadless area being discussed on February 23. It was acknowledged that even if a portion of the write-ups were ready in advance, it would be worthwhile to go ahead with the meeting, as the group would likely be unable to evaluate all the Wenatchee roadless areas in one day anyway. The evaluations of Okanogan roadless areas would take place later in the spring.

Due to delays in completing the preliminary wilderness evaluations, the 'draft option' for the revised Forest Plans won't be available until this summer.

Preliminary "Capability" Evaluation

Margaret Hartzell referred the group to handout 4, "Evaluation of Potential Wilderness Areas." She reminded the group that "capability" is the degree to which an area contains the basic characteristics that make it suitable for wilderness recommendation, without regard to its availability for or need as wilderness. All of the Capability items listed on the third page of the handout come from the 1964 Wilderness Act and National Forest Service direction. Capability is about what you have, what the opportunities are, what the geographic shape of the inventoried roadless area is, and the location of inventoried roadless area boundaries.

The following reflects the Q&A regarding the capability evaluation:

Q: Some of the roadless areas on the map are very small; do you bunch them together as groups or do consider them as separate items (e.g. Alpine Lakes)?

A: They are considered together as one Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). If they are adjacent to wilderness, proximity will eventually play into the consideration phase.

Q: If an item has more than one capability rating identified, does that mean that there are parts of the particular roadless areas that fall into different rating categories?

A: Yes. It would mean that, within those particular roadless areas, there are certain characteristics that lead us to say it has each of these capabilities (high, medium and low). The transition between these may not be easily mapped (fuzzy boundaries)

Q: Is this the level of detail in the write-ups that you will be sending us prior to the February 23 meeting?

A: No. The write-ups will be much more detailed, and contain supporting data/information (total of 200+ pages for the Wenatchee roadless areas, alone).

Q: Where is the Colville National Forest in the wilderness evaluation process?

A: They are approximately at the same stage as the PACs.

Q: What is the Forest Service's intention for the roadless areas that have capability ratings of high, medium and low? Is there an overall ranking?

A: We are being asked to identify the degree to which that particular IRA has these capability factors (refer to page 3 of the "Evaluation of Potential Wilderness Areas" handout). We do this by using high, medium, and low ratings, which illustrates to

what degree that IRA meets these capabilities. We don't average these out; this is just a tool for the evaluation process.

Comment: Availability and need are evaluated too.

Response: The Forest Service doesn't require an evaluation of the degree to which an area meets availability or need, but sorting roadless areas by H, M, L for availability and need is one useful way for evaluating these areas in the PAC process.

Q: If an area ends up rating as low, will availability and need be addressed?

A: We have to look at all the factors, capability, availability and need. Just because an area has low capability doesn't mean it won't rate highly for availability or need.

Q: Is the condition of the stand factored in with your wilderness consideration?

A: Yes, stand condition is factored in, especially under the evaluation for availability (refer to the availability component on page 4 of the "Evaluation of Potential Wilderness Areas" handout).

Q: Does the public get a chance to review and comment on the wilderness evaluations?

A: Wilderness evaluations do require public review and comment. Sharing the preliminary wilderness evaluations with the PAC does not signal the beginning of the formal public comment period; the Forest Plan Revision Team is sharing this preliminary first draft information in support of the collaborative process with the PAC. At a future date, the Forest Service will release the full text of the wilderness evaluation for public review and comment.

"Availability" Considerations

Susan reviewed where the PAC left off with their discussion of "availability" considerations at the November 17 meetings, and referred them to the summarized prework comments received from several PAC members.

PAC members divided into three breakout groups:

1. Recreation sub group
2. Vegetation sub group (including wildlife and vegetation)
3. Other (including water, livestock operations, minerals, authorized and potential land uses).

Each breakout group reviewed the pre-work comments that pertained to their group listed in the "Potential Availability Considerations"-- Prework Comments handout, and then proposed refinements to the November 17 Availability considerations for their assigned topic. These refinements were then discussed by the full PAC. Attachment 2 contains the transcribed flip chart notes that include the breakout group refinements.

During the full group discussion of the proposed Availability considerations, it became apparent that the group needed some statements about the nature of the Availability considerations, and how these considerations would be used. This is written as a proposed preamble to the revised table (assigned to Susan Hayman to develop) in Attachment 3, and includes the following caveats:

- Use in consideration of evaluation

- May address portions or entire IRA
- Can be influenced by the degree to which it is occurring
- Historical and future considerations; look at historical use and possible/potential future use

The breakout group assigned to refine the considerations related to livestock grazing was unable to reach agreement on any of the previously bulleted considerations. Nick Martinez, PAC representative for livestock grazing interests, was asked to share his perspective regarding the sticking points in their discussion. He said that his concerns were that both vacant and active allotments are being managed, and that this management should reduce their availability for wilderness. He also felt that there was motorized use for most allotments, which would reduce their availability for wilderness.

The vegetation breakout group also struggled to reach agreement on any of the previously identified bulleted availability considerations.

Attachment 3 contains the “Potential Availability Considerations” table as revised per PAC discussion. PAC members agreed that individual members could propose livestock and vegetation bullets as part of their prework for the February 23 meeting.

“Need” Considerations

Margaret provided an overview and responded to question regarding the concept and steps required in the Forest Service “needs” evaluation. The “Need” evaluation is the third step in the overall wilderness evaluation process (see handout 4, Evaluation of Potential Wilderness Areas).

Susan referred PAC members to handout 9, the “Need Considerations” homework assignment. She explained that, like the exercise for “Availability considerations,” PAC members are being asked to identify the conditions or circumstances that would result in an inventoried roadless area being evaluated as filling a high, medium or low need for wilderness. PAC members agreed to complete the assignment and send the results to Susan by February 10 (*note: this has since been extended until February 12*). Susan will send out the electronic version of the table for those who wish to submit their assignment via email to hayman@northcountryresources.com. Those wishing to send their assignment hard copy should send it to the following address:

Susan Hayman
North Country Resources, Inc.
910 Main Street, Suite 254
Boise, ID 83702

PAC members also agreed to send any additional ideas for “Availability considerations,” especially for livestock or vegetation, by February 10 (*note: this has since been extended until February 12*).

Observer Comments:

Mike Anderson: The Okanogan and Wenatchee National Forests has the most wilderness and potential wilderness, and largest roadless areas in Washington State.

BIN Items (*how they will be addressed is in italics and parenthesized for each item*):

1. Recreation Facilities Master Plan. (*Need to find an opportunity to talk about this topic. An option to discuss this in the interim of the wilderness discussion*).
2. FYI—there is a spruce budworm die-off in the Bumping Lake area, creating hazard trees around the cabins. What are the Forest Service regulations to deal with this in a timely fashion? (*Need to identify tools to deal with this.*)
3. What % of the total Okanogan and Wenatchee NFs acreage is wilderness?
(*Paul Hart provided these percentages:*
 - *Nationally, 18.2% of National Forest land is wilderness*
 - *In Washington State, 27.7% of the land base is wilderness*
 - *In the Wenatchee NF, 37.2% is wilderness*
 - *In the Okanogan NF, 36.5% is wilderness*)
4. What % of the Okanogan and Wenatchee NFs is under consideration for IRA? (*Margaret will find this out and report back to the PAC.*)
5. What % of the Okanogan and Wenatchee NFs is being recommended as high, medium, or low? (*Unknown at this time because this is a product of the evaluation task that is currently underway.*)
6. Check if CD maps correspond to IRA names and numbers on handouts (*Debbie Kelly to follow up on this.*)
7. Be prepared at evaluation meeting for GIS display for specifics (*Debbie Kelly to follow up on this.*)
8. How availability table is used, preface remarks, disclaimers, etc. (*Susan Hayman will follow up on this.*)
9. Livestock availability (*suggested availability considerations can be sent to Susan by Feb 12.*)
10. Revisit the recreation availability considerations -- We need to simplify it. (*This discussion will naturally occur during the evaluation meeting.*)

The meeting adjourned at 3:15pm, following closing remarks by Paul Hart.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Hayman, Facilitator

Note: Meeting notes captured on laptop by Robin DeMario during the course of discussion are included in their entirety in Attachment 4.