

Progress Report
Eastern Washington Cascades and Yakima
Provincial Advisory Committees
Collaborative Wilderness Evaluation Process
Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests



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Introduction

The Okanogan-Wenatchee and Colville National Forests began an integrated forest plan revision process in 2004. While the two forests designed separate collaborative processes within the context of plan revision, they implement them in a coordinated manner, recognizing that they are utilizing a single interdisciplinary planning team (IDT) and associated shared resources.

In January 2006, the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests (Forest Service) began working collaboratively with the Eastern Washington and Yakima Provincial Advisory Committees (PAC) in an ongoing collaborative process that recognizes the need for inclusiveness and buy-in for setting the course for the future of the Forest. The process also develops tangible stakeholder support for implementing the forest plan into the future.

In July 2006, Susan Hayman and Kathy Bond (the Facilitation Team¹) submitted “*A Work in Progress*,” which summarized the results from the February 2006-June 2006 phase of the collaborative process. This phase of the process dealt primarily with developing PAC recommendations for vision, management themes, and vegetation and recreation suitability.

In October 2006, the Forest Service asked the Facilitation Team to work with the PAC on “carryover” topics identified in the July 2006 report, including management priorities, adaptive management and monitoring, and the possibility of working together to evaluate and develop a proposal for areas suitable for wilderness designation. At the October 16 PAC meeting, the PAC decided to focus their time on the wilderness evaluation component of the forest plan revision process.

This “Progress Report” summarizes the wilderness evaluation process that began in October 2006 and ended in June 2007. It also includes suggestions from the Facilitation Team for future collaborative engagement with the PAC.

Process

Wilderness evaluation meetings were held in 2006 on October 24 and November 17. Meetings on this topic continued in 2007 on January 26, February 23, March 21, May 18 and June 14. The administrative record contains the complete summary package for each of these meetings. Appendix 1 contains a flow chart of the wilderness evaluation process. In the interest of time, the PAC decided to evaluate in detail only those IRAs that the Forest Service determined with “high” or “moderately high” **capability** for wilderness.

¹ Susan Hayman, North Country Resources, Inc. and Kathy Bond, KTB Decision Resources, Inc. comprise a team of third-party neutral process facilitators under contract with the Forest Service since February 2006 to provide services and support to all the stakeholders engaged in this collaborative process.

Results

The PAC reached consensus on nearly all of their recommendations. Where they were unable to reach consensus, a notation is included within the text that briefly describes the reason for the disagreement.

Appendix 2-5 contains the PAC wilderness evaluation products. These products include “considerations” developed for the “availability” and “need” components of the Forest Service wilderness evaluation process (Appendices 2 and 3). These “considerations” were applied during the actual evaluation process. Appendix 4 contains a summary of the PAC recommendations for these IRAs based on their evaluation.



After the PAC evaluated the IRAs with high or moderately high capability, they identified special considerations for Forest Service management of IRAs they evaluated as desirable to manage for roadless character, but not recommend for wilderness designation (“Option 4”). They answered the following question for each “Option 4” IRA: *Do the PAC recommendations for vegetation/recreation management themes, plus “special considerations” provide adequate guidance for how these IRAs should be managed?* Appendix 5 contains the final list of the special considerations the PAC recommends to complement their previous vegetation and recreation management recommendations.

Twenty-two IRAs on the Okanogan-Wenatchee Forests’ inventory of roadless areas were not evaluated by the PAC. Since the PAC did not evaluate all the IRAs, the Forest Service was interested in general suggestions or considerations that they should use when evaluating the remaining IRAs on the inventory. The PAC reached consensus on five considerations. These are listed in Appendix 6.

Observations and Recommendations

Inventoried roadless area (IRA) management and potential wilderness designation are hot button issues on every national forest in the country. The degree of consensus reached on the PAC recommendations is nothing short of remarkable, given the diversity in interests and, sometimes, in personal values among the PAC members. As reported in July 2006, the level of agreement the PAC is able to achieve is a reflection of the quality of their working relationships and collective commitment to seek common ground.

It was very useful for the PAC to have chosen to focus wilderness evaluation on those IRAs which the Forest Service evaluated as “high or moderately high **capability.**” This ‘first cut’ enabled the PAC to deal with a manageable number of IRAs. The use of breakout session to evaluate groups of IRA on organized by geographic location IRAs according to their geographic proximity--and staffing each breakout group with a facilitator and Forest Service District resource advisors--provided an efficient mechanism for wilderness evaluation.

Once again, PAC members continued to work collaboratively with the Forest Service and demonstrated progress in significant ways to: 1) deliver a useful product within a given time frame; 2) continue to improve relationships with each other and IDT members; and, 3) improve functioning as a working group. The PAC is a group of capable and committed volunteer advisors for the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests and can serve the public and the agency in many ways. The following are suggestions for future PAC involvement, with some carryover in suggestions from the July 2006 report:

1. Continue to involve the PAC in a meaningful way in Forest Plan Revision
 - Host/sponsor field trips (serve as ambassadors).
 - Work iteratively with the IDT to incorporate PAC recommendations into the draft plan/environmental document.
 - Serve as a sounding board for the draft plan/environmental document before it is released to the public.
 - Provide recommendations for approaches to public involvement.
 - Provide recommendations for addressing public comment at the conclusion of the draft plan/environmental document comment period.
 - Develop and widely distribute a new road map for forest plan revision on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, including revised timelines and when/where the public can be involved, as soon as the Washington office makes a durable forest planning decision.
 - Retool the Forest planning website to highlight PAC collaboration activities and products. PAC members are making significant contributions as an advisory committee; it is important for the members’ constituencies to keep informed.
2. Utilize the PAC in other significant Forest Service initiatives: e.g. travel management and recreation facility site master planning.
 - Work with the IDT as it incorporates public comment into the proposed action and develops alternatives.
 - Serve as a sounding board for the draft environmental document (EA/EIS) before it is released to the public.
 - Provide recommendations for approaches to public involvement.
 - Provide recommendations for addressing public comment.

Closing

Once again, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to work on another facet of forest plan revision. We have witnessed substantial growth in the collaborative capacity of the PAC and Forest Service, together and individually since our first PAC meeting in March 2006. Strong, evolving relationships suggest the potential for even greater cooperation and joint problem solving in the future. We have thoroughly enjoyed working with the PAC and the Forest Service and look forward to watching your continued success in the ongoing challenges related to the management of the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests.

All the best –

Susan Hayman
Kathleen Bond



Most (but certainly not all!) of the PAC members, Forest Service staff and facilitation staff who were significantly engaged in Forest Plan revision in 2006-2007. Photo provided courtesy of the Forest Service, June 14, 2007.

Appendix 1

PAC Wilderness Evaluation Process (As implemented)

Wilderness Evaluation Process Overview

Meeting 1: Foundation (October 24)

- Discuss roadless/wilderness terminology and definitions, roadless/wilderness polices, rules and regulations governing the Forest Service
- Discuss the kinds of activities/uses appropriate in roadless areas
- Learn the history of the roadless/wilderness issue on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests
- Review the updated roadless inventory maps
- Discuss FS handbook wilderness evaluation criteria and how it is applied
- Discuss the unique values/opportunities found within roadless these areas.
- Discuss desirability of coordinating the PAC and the public in the wilderness evaluation process

Meeting 2: Development of “Availability” considerations (November 17)

- Using the Forest Service handbook criteria for wilderness evaluation, identify considerations for evaluating the “Availability” of IRAs.

Meeting 3: Development of “Need” considerations (January 26)

- Review and comment on the Forest Service’s preliminary “Capability” evaluation
- Finalize “Availability” considerations
- Identify considerations for evaluating the “Need” of IRAs

Meeting 4: Evaluation (February 23)

- Finalize “Need” consideration
- Conduct a “test” evaluation of selected Wenatchee National Forest IRAs identified as high capability by the Forest Planning Interdisciplinary Team

Meeting 5: Evaluation (March 21)

- Evaluate “high capability” IRAs for the Wenatchee National Forest

Meeting 6: Evaluation (May 18)

- Evaluate remaining “high capability” IRAs for the Wenatchee National Forest
- Evaluate “mod-high” and “high” capability IRAs for the Okanogan National Forest

Meeting 7: IRA Management (June 14)

- Identify any additional, specific recommendations for those IRAs that the PAC recommends be managed for their roadless characteristics, but not recommended for wilderness designation.
- Identify any additional considerations for the Forest Service to use as they evaluate the IRAs that the PAC did not evaluate.

Appendix 2

PAC "Availability" Considerations

(From November 17, 2006 and January 26, 2007 PAC Meetings)

Availability Considerations (from November 17, 2006 PAC meeting)

The bulleted items address: *“If these activities/uses/conditions **currently exist or occur** within a particular roadless area, the **“availability”** of this roadless areas for wilderness would be rated as follows:”*

Activities/Conditions	High availability if...	Medium availability if...	Low availability if...
Recreation including tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No motorized recreation at all (including snowmobiles). • No mechanized recreation uses. • Used for undeveloped skiing (ungroomed x-country trails). • High use by non-mechanized users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groomed x-country skiing. • High quality heavily used development-reliant camping areas. • Popular destination for large group activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorized uses in the area. • High density OHV area that is part of an established OHV network outside the area. • High motorized camping use. • Non-motorized outfitters.
Wildlife species, populations, and management needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical habitat for endangered species or refugia. • If there is a species that requires a very protected habitat (amphibians, bats) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly managed populations. • Feeding stations. • Critical habitat where active management is required. • Active management is required or desired.
Water availability and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers protection for municipal water sources. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal watersheds. Structures. • Manipulation is required to develop or improve a water source for long-term availability.
Livestock operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No allotments present. • No or limited grazing forage due to steep terrain. • Absence of forage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant allotment. • Little potential forage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active allotments or potential for allotment. High forage availability. • Presence of noxious weeds that livestock could abate.
Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique plants. • Low fire risk due to low site or high elevation where no fuels are growing. • No commercially viable timber due to species and terrain. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry forest fuels. • WUI areas. • Overgrown stands that need thinning. • Noxious weeds. • Stand structure improvement. • Good potential for timber production.
Minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No claims. • No potential for mechanized access. • Low probability of existing subsurface high value minerals. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims or potential for mineral material extraction. Strategic mineral reserve.
Authorized and potential land uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No authorized uses and no expected authorized uses, 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easements to 3rd parties, permitted motorized outfitters

² The determination of **availability** is conditioned by the value of and need for the wilderness resource compared to the value of and need for other resources (FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70, 72.1-72.3)

Revised Availability "Considerations³" (From January 26, 2007 PAC Meeting)

- 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

Activities/Conditions	High availability if...	Medium availability if...	Low availability if...
Recreation including tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently no legitimate motorized recreation use at all • No mechanized recreation use now • Used now for undeveloped x-c ski • Areas currently designated as non-motorized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by non-mechanized users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groomed x-country skiing now. • High quality, heavily used developed camping (semi-primitive) • Popular area for large group activities • Current motorized/mechanized uses • Established OHV trails • Motorized camping use now • Non-motorized outfitter use, if there is a party size issue
Wildlife species, populations, and management needs	Critical habitat for endangered species or refugia, or other important habitat		Highly managed populations/habitat that require mechanized or motorized equipment.
Water availability and use	If it is a municipal watershed that offers protection for water quality and quantity	[None identified]	Municipal watershed that needs vegetation manipulation or other management that is inconsistent with wilderness
Livestock operations	[No agreements]	[No agreements]	[No agreements]
Vegetation	[No agreements]	[No agreements]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a forest stand is in poor forest health and could impact areas outside of the IRA ○ When an area has an already present need for mechanized noxious weed treatment
Minerals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No active claims. • Low or no commercialized mineral resources 	[None identified]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active claims • Contains strategic mineral reserves • High commercialized mineral resources
Authorized and potential land uses	[Not discussed]	[Not discussed]	[Not discussed]

³ All listed considerations have broad, but not complete, support. Bold text indicates consensus recommendations

Appendix 3

PAC "Need" Considerations

(From February 23, 2007 PAC Meeting)

Revised “Need” Considerations (From February 23, 2007 PAC Meeting)

If these situations or conditions **currently exist** for a particular roadless area, the “Need” of these roadless areas for wilderness would be evaluated as follows: *****NEED TO KEEP FLEXIBILITY IN MIND *** WORK IN PROGRESS*****

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF...	Medium Need for Wilderness IF...	Low Need for Wilderness IF...
Distribution / Relationship to other wilderness areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a link between existing wilderness to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create corridors for wildlife - Increase the overall wilderness character - Increase manageability of existing wilderness • Adjacent to existing wilderness (touching boundaries) to increase manageability • Contains underrepresented or low represented wilderness characteristics found in national, statewide, and/regional wilderness network • Provides significantly closer distance to population centers that are underserved by national, state, and/or regional wilderness network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only few areas of pristine wilderness areas are available • Contains moderately represented characteristics • Presents some measure of connectivity between existing wilderness areas • A portion of boundary is adjacent to existing wilderness • Would have no effect on the overall wilderness character or manageability of existing wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents no value as connectivity between existing wilderness areas • Already well-distributed portions of wilderness present. • Reduces the overall wilderness character and/or decreases the manageability of existing wilderness • Contains very commonly represented wilderness characteristics found in national, statewide, and/regional wilderness network • Isolated island surrounded by uses incompatible with the maintenance of wilderness • If there is already wilderness in the region (northern part of the Cascades) [***NOT CONSENSUS***]
	<p><i>The following should be important considerations, but not necessarily used to evaluate the <u>degree</u> of need:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If there are no wilderness areas within the regional forest</i> • <i>If there are no wilderness areas within the ranger district</i> • <i>If Wilderness areas already exist</i> 		

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF...	Medium Need for Wilderness IF...	Low Need for Wilderness IF...
Current User Pressure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low pressure for uses excluded by the Wilderness Act (e.g. motorized/mechanized) • High use of the area is currently causing damage to ecosystems for rare plants, endangered animals, watersheds, etc. • Existing wilderness areas are crowded, with degraded conditions • Threatened by potential mechanized use, and alternative locations for mechanized use exist • High demand for adjacent or nearby wilderness areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate user pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High pressure for uses excluded by the Wilderness Act (e.g. motorized/mechanized) that cannot be replaced somewhere else reasonable close • Creation of new wilderness would displace a significant amount of current user activity • High current use, but little damage occurring to the ecosystem

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF...	Medium Need for Wilderness IF...	Low Need for Wilderness IF...
<p>Other non-wilderness opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation</p> <p><i>(Said another way...Are there non-wilderness designated lands in proximity to this IRA that provide opportunities for “wilderness-like” experiences?)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-wilderness lands that provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation is in short supply • Regional demand for wilderness compatible uses cannot be accommodated on adjacent non-wilderness lands 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abundant non-wilderness land provides opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation • Other opportunities exist that are currently being underutilized (BLM, DNR, NPS) • Regional demand for mechanized use of that location cannot be accommodated elsewhere • Regional demand for wilderness compatible uses can be accommodated on adjacent non-wilderness lands

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF...	Medium Need for Wilderness IF...	Low Need for Wilderness IF...
<p>Certain biotic species in the IRA that cannot compete with increasing public use and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species are unique to this area • Endangered species whose habitat, survival and/or recovery requirements cannot be met without the level of protection afforded by wilderness designation • Species of special public concern (e.g. game species, cultural, etc.) whose habitat, survival and/or recovery requirements cannot be met without the level of protection afforded by wilderness designation <p>SUCH AS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature boreal forest • Low elevation, mature ponderosa pine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area contains certain biotic species within the target area where it is uncertain if the biotic species can compete with increasing public use and development • Species are threatened and other areas not available for protection • Species warranting protection under the Endangered Species Act that are affected by non-compatible wilderness uses (such as mechanized or motorized travel or resource extraction) are present • More common species OR INDICATORS not currently imperiled, but nevertheless are negatively impacted by uses wilderness designation would protect against <p>SUCH AS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjacent to core grizzly habitat • Mountain goat security habitat • Closed canopy goshawk habitat • Non-adjacent grizzly core habitat • Black-backed woodpeckers that require periodic fires for prey species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No plant or animal species present are being impacted (e.g. from mechanized or motorized travel or resource extraction) and in need of protection • Suitable habitat is common and well-distributed • The area under consideration contains identified species of concern that can compete with public use and development. • No species impacted by non-compatible wilderness uses are present

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF...	Medium Need for Wilderness IF...	Low Need for Wilderness IF...
Other unique scientific values or phenomena in the IRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exist in the area • Cannot be found in any other location or mitigated in any way. • At risk without wilderness protection • If less than 10% of region area is accessible for scientific use [NOT CONSENSUS ON DELETING] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at risk without wilderness protection • Clearly not affected by the management afforded by wilderness allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not unique to the area • Can be easily mitigated • Such scientific values or phenomena would be clearly negatively affected by wilderness management
Preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems (local, sub-regional, regional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truly unique to the area, and can be best preserved by the protection afforded by wilderness designation • The preservation of such identifiable landform types and ecosystems would be threatened by the absence of wilderness protection • The preservation of such unique, identifiable landform types and ecosystems that could not be preserved except by wilderness • This is the only place where these values are found regionally, statewide, or nationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly not affected/not at risk by wilderness management • Dry-site ecosystems, if they can be maintained and managed and would not threaten WUIs or other values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not unique to the area under consideration • Wilderness designation will not afford the highest level of protection or preservation • Clearly negatively affected by wilderness management

Appendix 4

Summary of PAC Wilderness Evaluation

Appendix 5

"Option 4" Special Considerations

Manage for roadless character through management other than wilderness (Option #4)	Special Considerations <i>(Note: "Roaded Country" generally does not apply to IRA management. Identify road needs only as needed for "special considerations." Be aware of roadless rule issue.)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alpine Lakes 5 – "Icicle" 	Maintain non-conforming recreational uses (community trails and rock-climbing).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alpine Lakes 3, 9, 10 	Parcel 3: Allow for outfitter operations and disabled hunting opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entiat/Chelan – Entiat 	Needed recreation use/multiple use. Important wildlife and LSR management needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entiat/Chelan – Myrtle 	Maintain current existing recreation uses, including large groups, mountain bikes, and some motorized trails.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entiat/Chelan – North Fork 	Maintain motorized recreation trail use and access by larger groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entiat/Chelan – Pyramid (south) 	Maintain current motorized winter recreation use.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entiat/Chelan – Rock Creek SE 	Maintain access by large groups, mountain bikers and horse camp users. Some motorized biking also occurs in this area. Maintain the current boundaries/uses of motorized and non-motorized uses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heather Lake "ski unit" 	Retain future management options (this includes the Stevens Pass Ski Area, open to cross-country skiing).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberty Bell 	Maintain current winter and summer recreational uses, including maintaining (not increasing) existing motorized/non-motorized and mechanized use levels. Manage to protect wildlife values. Monitor recreation uses and adjust as needed for impacts. Allow access as needed to clean up the CERCLA site.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long Swamp 	Wildlife habitat values, unique landforms and important ecosystems. Monitor the resource impacts of motorized/non-motorized summer and winter recreation. Assess impacts of current recreation use and adaptively manage to protect values already listed (pay attention to meadow habitats).

• Pasayten Rim (Billy Goat)	Maintain accessibility and trail maintenance by mechanized equipment. Important for hunting/accessibility
• Sawtooth/Kangaroo Ridge	Scenic corridor (protected by federal act)
• Teanaway	Look at opportunity in include research natural areas with adjacent wilderness. Manage for special flora. Maintain currently occurring winter motorized and non-motorized recreation uses. Look at <i>possibility</i> of separate motorized and non-motorized areas. Manage rec uses in balance with wildlife needs.
• Twin Lakes (south)	Wildland urban interface -- vegetation management and fire suppression.

Appendix 6

Considerations for IRAs Not Evaluated

Twenty-two IRAs on the Okanogan-Wenatchee Forests’ inventory of wilderness suitability were not evaluated by the PAC. One IRA (Goat Rock’s) was discussed during a “test drive” of the evaluation process at the February 23rd workshop, but not brought forward for full consideration by the full PAC at the integration.. Since the PAC did not evaluate all the IRAs, the Forest Service was interested in general suggestions or considerations that they should use when evaluating the remaining IRAs on the inventory. These suggestions or considerations are based on the experience from the PAC on those IRAs they did evaluate.

Statements were collected from PAC members at the June 14, 2007 PAC meeting. The group discussed the statements, and reached consensus on five of them. These consensus statements are listed below:

- Apply Veg/Rec management themes the PAC developed.
- Manage areas for wildland urban interface issues, fuels reduction, and noxious weeds according to PAC veg management theme recommendations.
- Existing rec uses are an important consideration.
- Wildlife and ecological interests and needs are an important consideration.
- Consider the importance of economic viability for communities.

Other statements of consideration that were suggested, but not fully supported in a consensus agreement are contained in Attachment 2 to the June 14, 2007 Meeting Summary.

These PWA/PIRA Were Not Fully Evaluated by the PAC	
PARW PAC Name	Acres
Black Canyon	13,701
Bodie Mountain	3,890
Cackamas Mountain	12,775
Granite Mountain	39,437
Hungry Ridge	7,471
Jackson Creek	8,049
Long Draw	4,676
Lookout Mountain	6,055
Mt. Bonaparte	9,477
Tiffany	22,954
Bethel Ridge	9,437
Blue Slide	14,115
Devils Gulch	20,476
Goat Rocks Adjacent	5,326
Government Meadows	154
Grade Creek	10,318
Humpback Creek	1,775
Lion Rock	6,648
Manastash	39,881
Nason Ridge	19,361
Slide Ridge	11,094
Stormy	28,930
W.O. Douglas Adjacent	16,491