

Working Group 2 – April 29, 2006

Forest Plan Collaborative Process – Facilitator: Susan
Present: Dave, Gary, Mitch, Dean, Tom, Mike, Deb, Russ, Bonnie.

How to Add in New Members

Working Group members had originally been told that, after the Forest Summit, no new members would be added to the groups. However, people very interested in the process were unable, for one reason or another, to attend before and were here today, wanting to be involved.

Bonnie _____ and Russ Vaagen participated in group introductions and then “old” group members discussed whether to have them as permanent observers, observers for one day or full-fledged members from the start. The group decided to welcome them as full-fledged members, but to reserve the right to make a different choice next time.

General Discussion Before Starting “Questions”

Several key agreements were made:

1. The group does not necessarily agree with some of the assumptions made by Phil in the Forest Health talk and they have questions about some of the science and some of the facts presented as well. However, they felt able to proceed with this noted.
2. It is VITALLY important that collaborative agreements be developed at the implementation stage and at all “zoom levels” from the Forest Plan down to the implementation stage. Agreement at the level of the “questions” being asked today assumes that such collaboration will, in fact, take place.
3. The Forest Service MUST NOT take general agreement at this level and use it as a mandate to run with, leaving the collaboration process behind.
4. With regard to WUI areas, the real issue is not just how to protect people from the forest, but also how to protect the forest from people. If you do the particular project right, you do both – protect the forest and protect the people.

Note: all answers below are by group consensus, unless noted otherwise.

WUI & not IRA – situation 1

General comments on situation 1

This should be the “most liberal” of all the areas.

Collaboration should occur BEFORE a NEPA document comes out.

All answers are conditional and are dependent on the specific site.

1. Roads

In general, if roads are added, obliterate others elsewhere, so there is no net gain.
Keep road system economically and ecologically manageable.

Difficult to respond in general, because if we really want to do it right, we have to look at each case individually.

Given the above statements, the answers are:

yes, new roads – but stick to the existing road system unless it's absolutely necessary; if, when and why to add roads should be determined by a collaborative process

yes, permanent (but see answer to yes directly above)

no, activities not restricted (but see answer to yes directly above)

2. Timber – Sustainable Production

Yes, with good collaboratively developed forest practices that offer watershed protection, wildlife enhancement and give careful consideration to the viewsheds of neighboring property owners, not devalue-ing their property.

For example, rather than clear-cutting a lodge pole stand, treat it in multiple applications that move it toward a natural stand structure but allows it to look good while you're achieving that goal.

3. Timber – Special Harvest

Yes, with all the conditions noted in #2 above.

The only time #3 is really relevant as a question is when #2 above is no.

4. Vegetation Projects

Yes, with watershed, wildlife and viewshed protections as noted in #2 above.

5. Prescribed Fire

Yes, with collaboratively developed burn practices, including a careful partnership with neighbors.

If a prescribed burn “gets away”, there are huge social, economic and political problems.

Window of opportunity to do this is very limited, especially if you consider smoke issues.

Extensive root systems can be a huge problem as well, with fire spreading and smoldering in them.

6. Wildland Fire

No, don't utilize. Suppress it.

7. Pest Management

Use biological controls first.

Consider impact on watersheds, butterflies and other species.

No consensus at this time in scientific circles, so group can't answer.

Plus it's too site-specific to give a general answer.

IRA & not WUI – situation 4

1. Roads

No.

2. Timber – Sustainable Production

No – 7. Abstention – 1.

3. Timber – Special Harvest

No – 4. Because any harvest that leaves stumps might make it ineligible for wilderness consideration, the answer is no. After it's rejected by Congress as a wilderness, it could be re-considered for a special harvest. Some people may feel that there should simply be no timber harvests in roadless areas.

Yes – 1. Not to do a special harvest would be a missed opportunity to restore areas, using thinning, that would be in the best interests of the forest.

Abstention – 3.

Don't trust the Forest Service to make an interpretation on this question.

Wouldn't object to not harvesting in larger areas, but want to be able to consider possible harvesting in smaller areas.

Trust issue with the Forest Service – only the smaller areas could even be considered for special harvest and a prescribed burn is an alternative treatment.

Group felt this whole question of special harvest needed further discussion.

4. Vegetation Projects

Yes, with collaborative process and only if it can be done without degrading its wilderness characteristics.

5. Prescribed Fire

Yes.

6. Wildland Fire

Yes, but it depends on severity of fire and circumstances such as weather, moisture content, etc. Any suppression needs to be monitored.

7. Pest Management – same for all situations

Use biological controls first.

Consider impact on watersheds, butterflies and other species.

No consensus at this time in scientific circles, so group can't answer.

Plus it's too site-specific to give a general answer.

not WUI & not IRA – situation 3

1. Roads

The “bar” for building new roads needs to be higher here and more emphasis put on if it is absolutely necessary, because we are not trying to protect homes.

Use a sliding scale:

- the more roads, the lower the bar
- the less roads, the higher the bar
- the closer to a WUI, the lower the bar
- the closer to an IRA, the higher the bar

Given the above statements, the answers are:

yes, new roads – but stick to the existing road system unless it’s absolutely necessary; if, when and why to add roads should be determined by a collaborative process; if new roads added, obliterate roads elsewhere, so there is no net gain.

yes, permanent (but see answer to yes directly above)

no, activities not restricted (but see answer to yes directly above)

2. Timber – Sustainable Production

Yes, on a sliding scale, with good collaboratively developed forest practices:

- the less densely roaded and the closer to an IRA, go to restoration mode
- the more densely roaded and the closer to a WUI, go to sustainable harvest

3. Timber – Special Harvest

Yes, on a sliding scale, with good collaboratively developed forest practices:

- the less densely roaded and the closer to an IRA, more likely to do special harvest
- the more densely roaded and the closer to a WUI, more likely to do sustainable harvest

4. Vegetation Projects

Yes, with watershed, wildlife and viewshed protections.

5. Prescribed Fire

Yes.

6. Wildland Fire

Yes, utilize it but consider suppression on a sliding scale:

- the closer to a WUI, suppress it more aggressively
- the closer to an IRA, suppress it less aggressively (or not at all)
- it depends on the type of fire and the time of year, for example, a lightning fire near a WUI in dry conditions, put out immediately

7. Pest Management – same for all situations

Use biological controls first.
Consider impact on watersheds, butterflies and other species.
No consensus at this time in scientific circles, so group can't answer.
Plus it's too site-specific to give a general answer.

WUI & IRA – situation 2

General comments on situation 2

Difficult to discuss, because waiting for WUI boundaries to be finalized.
New research, which Mike Peterson will email to the group, suggests that with firefighters, a ¼ mile buffer will protect homes and buildings.

The further you get from any structure, the less aggressive any treatment should be.

Very concerned about homeowners affected by decisions in this situation – we have to take their interests into consideration.

If it's necessary to do any logging in this area, consider removing stumps, or shave them level to the ground to preserve wilderness characteristics.

(Group felt this needed further discussion before any agreement.)

In this situation, where prudent because of fire protection, we should provide ¼ mile relief for the WUI and feather it out beyond that. **(This, too, needs further discussion after research is sent out before any agreement.)**

1. Roads

No. (3 people are saying they will go with “no” for now.)

2. Timber – Sustainable Production

No.

3. Timber – Special Harvest

Maybe – 4.

These folks may be willing to go along with WUI treatment no further than ¼ mile into an IRA area for fuel reduction to protect structures. Their main concern is to preserve wilderness characteristics, which is why they say maybe.

Maybe – 3.

These folks may be willing to go along with WUI treatment no further than ¼ mile into an IRA area for fuel reduction to protect structures. They have several concerns:

they want a better understanding of the research that says ¼ mile will protect structures

they want options for feathering beyond the ¼ mile

they want to be able to restore certain areas in WUI/IRA situations they are willing to look at it differently depending on where the

structure is in relation to the forest boundary

Yes – 1.

Allow treatments 1 ½ miles into the IRA – wants to treat all property owners fairly.

4. Vegetation Projects

Yes – 4 – so long as it doesn't change the wilderness characteristics.

Yes – 3 – so long as it is done with care.

All – with watershed, wildlife and viewshed protections as discussed before.

5. Prescribed Fire

Yes – 2 – under certain circumstances that protect the safety of homes.

No – 5 – too chancy.

6. Wildland Fire

No, don't utilize. Suppress it.

7. Pest Management – same for all situations

Use biological controls first.

Consider impact on watersheds, butterflies and other species.

No consensus at this time in scientific circles, so group can't answer.

Plus it's too site-specific to give a general answer.