

Working Group 2 – Forest Summit
Facilitator Susan & Note-taker Sarah

3/31/06 – Friday afternoon

Ground Rules

Were discussed and agreed to by group

1. Be non-judgmental
2. Ask questions to deepen your understanding and listen to answers.
3. Be open to other viewpoints.
4. Be respectful even when you disagree.
5. When you feel compelled to speak, do so!
6. Don't interrupt.
7. Don't hog air time.
8. Move beyond positions to explain why and reveal your interests.
9. Use collaboration to find common ground and don't get stuck on one subject.
10. If the group gets stuck, table the "hot" issues and come back to it.

Group agreement about substitutes:

1. If you can't come, notify facilitator and/or whole group as soon as possible.
2. Give us the name and other any helpful information about the sub.
3. Brief them and send them notes from our last meeting(s).
4. Talk to your sub afterwards and get caught up with what happened.

4/1/06 – Saturday afternoon

Inter-relationships between all four topics

The assignment for this session was to talk about the topic of Economics, but the group decided that it made more sense to first discuss the inter-relationships between all four topic areas.

Distinguish between economics directly from the forest (timber) and economics as a result of the forest (recreation) – extraction vs. attraction – managed landscape vs. unmanaged landscape.

There are costs associated with deriving products from the forest – e.g. maintain trails, forest fires, restoration, WUI treatments, etc.

WUI can result in an economic benefit from thinning.

Thinning may not be appropriate in some places because fire suppression has not caused imbalance yet in the forest – e.g. 200 year fire cycles in cold, wet forest and only 80 years of fire suppression.

Projected logging – 36 million bf, timber industry needs – 80 million bf.

Forest Plan Summit Meeting Notes, Chewelah Peak Learning Center

Facilitator: Susan Virnig

Economic benefit gained from recreational facilities – campgrounds, trailheads, ski hill, secondary benefit to the community of Chewelah through employment and tourist business.

Economic benefit from hunting and fishing to the communities through tourist dollars.

Economic benefit from wilderness through tourist dollars to the communities. Wilderness and extraction do not have to be at odds with each other – just need a well-designed plan – must avoid the checkerboard of extraction and attraction blocks.

We can always afford to have wilderness areas if we have a good plan for extraction.

Change in logging practices makes logging seem easier to swallow.

People need to understand how logging has changed in order to ease their worries associated with logging.

Giving recommendations for backcountry uses or extraction in isolation does not result in the best solution for everyone – developing recommendations together is the only way to avoid proposals that dissatisfy everyone.

Unreliable extraction plans result in unstable communities.

May be a niche for “green lumber” as some people are willing to pay more for lumber logged in an ecologically sustainable manner.

Wide range in stewardship practices between lumber companies and Forest Service.

Wilderness can increase property values.

Wilderness may take a larger amount of investment to derive the economic benefit.

Wilderness is not visited by large percentage of the population.

Trails within wilderness cost more to maintain than trails outside of wilderness.

In regards to wilderness, “it’s not just about us”, it’s about leaving a legacy for future generations and providing healthy habitat for animals

Vibrant communities result from predictable economic situation with buffers around the wild areas.

Economics

“What should stay the same? What value does it bring? What’s good about it?”

Haven’t done anything very well in this area.

Current plan has not been able to be implemented well due to budget constraints from Congress.

Forest Service’s hands are tied.

Good things: winter recreation – snowmobiles, snowshoers, skiers – and summer recreation – campers, fishers, hunters, etc. – bring money to the communities, but the forest is not drawing people from outside of the local area – the tourists are from this area, so it’s not bringing in outside dollars.

How about government studies re how to develop recreation?

What about promoting smaller local logging companies?

Forest Service can’t do more timber because of budget and other constraints.

Liberal access to forest is good.

What about water? Is that a valuable resource that is well-managed?

“What should change?”

CNF should do a significant funding increase for wherever this process finds common ground. Make these things a budget priority!

Don’t let budget limit the group for now, but will have to fight for it later.

Comprehensive trail system would be a boon for economic development that would bring in visitors nationwide – includes all types of recreation: motorized, non-motorized, horse trails, paddling, etc. – but need to create good maps.

Adequate marketing for the trail system, so that outsiders know about this area. (Hard to do at the same time that the Kettle Crest Campground is being closed.)

Do market research to support this?

Interface between the national forests and the communities – e.g. economic development groups pick up slack when FS budget declines, such as applying for grants, helping to organize volunteer groups for trail construction and maintenance, etc.

Look for grants from businesses such as Starbucks and from private groups and from foundations. Private industries could become involved in recreation development and maintenance.

Backcountry Horsemen have provided 62,000 hours of volunteer hours worth \$4 million. Get other groups to step up.

Since many members of the group belong to organizations, we should be going back and recruiting.

“What are the best kinds of places to encourage these two forms of economic development – extraction and attraction?”

Encourage logging in WUI and the already roaded landscape – **level of agreement: whole group.**

Were close to agreement on encouraging logging in the low dry forest, but there were some concerns about mule deer habitat and about certain trail systems.

Douglas fir, cedar, lodgepole pine, hemlock, grand fir, spruce – types of timber to log.

Need to consider infrastructure of the mills – that sawmills and newsprint places have certain requirements. Some can use tops of trees, thinnings & pulpwood.

Take this into account to determine where logging should occur.

Encourage the wilderness economy in and around inventoried roadless areas – **level of agreement: whole group**

Information Needs

Current economic impact of forest on communities.

Same information broken up by county and forest product as well as where the money goes.

County income and employment trends by sector including non-employment income.

Main industries of each community and county.

Hunting/fishing dollars going into each community/county.

The historical cut for the CNF.

Requirements of local mills and newsprints (species, size, etc.)

4/2/06 – Sunday morning

Recreation

“What’s good about recreation in the Colville right now?”

Motorized recreation

motorized recreation is a broad term – you need to talk specifically about different types of motorized recreation

all the roads in the forest – can drive for many miles in the forest just to look at it little impact on trails because they aren’t used very often

jeep trails make CNF and wilderness accessible to all, including handicapped

jeep trails are convenient for access (medical, rescue, fire suppression) and have historic significance – don’t obliterate old trails, just let them brush over and even let the culverts wash out because then they can still be used in emergencies

650 miles of designated ATV trails – and the counties can, as of March 30, legally designate short connectors between FS approved ATV trails and counties can allow ATVs to come into towns of less than 3000 people and they can allow ATVs to cross or run parallel to county roads

Non-motorized recreation

appreciate being able to hike anywhere in the forest – really nice trails

13-Mile Basin is unique – can start at the top and walk all the way down without hitting a road

awesome roadless areas with great recreation opportunities

little impact on trails because they aren’t used very often

dispersed camping

some of the best backcountry skiing and snowshoeing in WA state

kayaking and floating on the Kettle River

people can take off berry picking or wood cutting on old trails and don’t have to have any developed recreation

Facilities

a lot of facilities for camping and picnicking

being able to camp for free in the forest and being able to camp at a more developed campground

you don’t need much development – the forest already provides an opportunity for rustic recreation

Snow Peak shelter – jewel of the Kettle Crest for winter and summer recreation

Swan Lake campground – great lake, camping, hiking, picnicking and everyone can come there

Other comments

Great thing about the Colville is you can drive for miles and miles and see wilderness and then get out of your vehicle and walk to places where no vehicle can come.

Driving over Sherman Pass you can see moose, lynx, cougar, bear, deer, etc.
Hitting deer while driving is so common you could call it recreational!

“What changes would you like to see in recreation in the CNF?”

Motorized recreation (& more)

more campgrounds on ATV trails

more trails and marketing to get user-groups involved in trail maintenance
volunteer coordinator position for the Colville – one family cuts out trails already; Backcountry Horsemen are real active; CNF should set up, and market, an adopt-a-trail system with signs so more groups and families would help out
learn from Colorado where they do fund-raising from kiosks in stores and then use the money in a Memo of Understanding where a hundred people maintain and repair trails

Non-motorized recreation

more cabins in non-motorized areas built by volunteers; cabin to cabin hiking
more trails – recondition old trails – used to be a maintained trail where you could go from the Canadian border to south of Newport
turn roads into trails – like from Orient to Northport
create wilderness area out of Colville as an economic draw
places where large roadless areas are cut by a road, yet an alternative road is nearby that could be used instead – eliminate these spatial conflicts which detract from non-motorized recreation

Facilities (some of these ideas were mentioned above, but also relate to facilities)

more cabins throughout the forest in non-motorized areas for hikers, cross-country skiers, etc.
more campsites on ATV trails
more signed, maintained trails
bring back trails that have been lost
convert some of the roads that aren't needed anymore into trails
FS should follow their own standards for trail maintenance
volunteer coordinator on the CNF
more volunteer activity to maintain trails
adopt a trail program for organizations and individuals or families
promote these volunteer programs more in the cities
multiple use trails that utilize a time-share schedule

more management or some sort of system to minimize conflicts in high-use or overuse areas, such as Kalispel Peak and skiing vs. snowmobiling
construct trails that eliminate conflicts such as put in 2-3 foot steps to keep motorized recreation and mountain bikes off horse and hiking trails
still need to discuss economic benefits from recreation and opportunities for communities

Other Comments

Everybody can relate to the fact that other activities can detract from their experience.

Develop a rustic recreation mecca for the Colville and improve economic benefit to the communities.

A good bit of the understory needs to be removed by logging and/or by fire – this would be a boon to logging, to trails, to hunting and to mule deer.

More money needs to be allocated to the FS from other parts of government (for fire-fighting, recreation, trails, etc.)

Do a systematic road inventory of Level 1 roads and road-to-trail conversions, both motorized and non-motorized, so that new trails could be created without having to build them and road maintenance costs could be reduced.

Wilderness

“What is the value of wilderness/recommended wilderness/roadless areas in the CNF?”

Wilderness (some comments also pertain to roadless areas)

so nice to go somewhere and not hear any motors, only bird songs, etc.

hair-raising, awe-inspiring experiences of nature (the howl of a wolf)

contract with the future – it’s going to be there for all generations & changing opinions cannot touch it

scenery intact – no evidence of logging or other activities that detract from it undisturbed by humans

economic drivers for local communities

nice to have as recreation gains in popularity – people have more leisure and need more roadless areas to recreate

better chance that noxious weeds and invasive species not there, except for some stock trails

solitude

peace & quiet

hear animals and water running

value other than economic value – legacy for future generations

a place where more natural processes can take place without interference

biological diversity

spiritual aspect

Recommended wilderness areas and roadless areas

nice to still have options for wilderness to designate to leave to our children
have used them for over 50 years
there's a tremendous amount of it throughout the forest
the more Wal-marts you get, the more roadless areas you need

“What changes would you like to see in wilderness, recommended wilderness and roadless areas in the CNF?”

Wilderness

have FS better maintain trails in wilderness – and have a volunteer coordinator who could get people involved

Recommended wilderness/roadless areas

without wilderness designation, you won't get the economic draw
only 10% of the forest visits occur in CNF wilderness, so the economic boon may not come after wilderness is designated
need protection as a wilderness to preserve pristine area for the future as administrations and FS leadership change
would not like to see the Kettle Crest designated as wilderness, because can see evidence of civilization throughout
want to protect roadless areas but not necessarily through wilderness designation
wilderness designation would eliminate current uses, such as snowmobiles, ATV's, mountain bikes
wilderness trails not being maintained by the FS, so access would be limited after a roadless area is designated as wilderness

Forest Health

“What's good about forest health in the Colville right now?”

(point of information: FS can suppress fires in wilderness areas)

Logging

already discussed under economics

Ecological sustainability

give credit to the FS for what they do – restoration and riparian setbacks, fencing off sensitive areas, etc.

Community impact

healthy forests attract tourists and the economic benefit they bring

Other

new technologies – production of hydrogen from vaporization of wood will make waste wood much more valuable in the future

“What changes would you like to see in forest health on the Colville?”

Logging

need to leave groups of trees together, and “uneven” groups (not all the same age in one group) so they don’t blow down and so they can provide habitat for wildlife – rather than leave single trees – this is specific to lodgepole pine and other appropriate species

more focus on waste wood as new technologies come on line that use it – such as vaporizing sawdust into hydrogen

less yarding and more processing at the stump – equipment requirements on sales discriminates against smaller loggers

consider logging roadless areas with horse logging to remove excess fuels

more winter logging – results in less compacting and doesn’t spread root disease

Ecological sustainability

clean up the underbrush in our forests and use it to provide alternative energy – look for grant money to do this – but make sure you also pay attention to what you need to leave for forest soil health and only take what is excess

let a more natural fire regime take over or increase prescribed fires – fire balances the pH of the soil and is an important disease control

be aware of alternative fuels coming in the future and how the Colville could take advantage of that

grazing plays a part in forest health, but it’s not managed as well as it could be – make sure that grazing areas are not overgrazed – get the cows off when they are supposed to go

recognize natural processes are healthy, including fire and insect infestations

Community impact

the inactivity of logging has had a negative impact on the economics of nearby communities

increase stewardship contracts – restoration, road-to-trail conversion – other contracting & bidding processes aren’t always done well

protect communities from wildfire

improve contracting – use local mills – go for best value, not lowest bidder – have this be the norm rather than the exception

allow smaller jobs so that smaller loggers can bid on them – more contracts but one small logger can do a number of them

bring groups, families, members of the community in to volunteer – will result in increased stewardship, sense of ownership on the part of the members of the community

Other

have more discussion and education on different aspects of forest health – for instance, resiliency to disturbance, where around houses you want an artificial level of resiliency, say 90%, but in roadless areas you don’t need that more education about forest health issues