WILDERNESS EVALUATION

Lost Creek - 621015

6,642 acres

OVERVIEW

History

The Lost Creek Potential Wilderness Area (PWA) has not been identified as a roadless area in any previous inventory. The following chart depicts the current 1988 Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan direction for the 2006 inventoried area.

Table 1--Management area percentages (rounded)

MA1 Old Growth Dependant Species Habitat	MA3A Recreation	MA5 Scenic Timber	MA6 Scenic/ Winter range	MA7 Wood/ Forage	MA8 Winter Range
4%	5%	35%	6%	45%	4%

Location and Access

The Lost Creek PWA is located in the eastern edge of Pend Oreille County, 100 miles north of Spokane, Washington. Road access is from three directions. On the northern edge, Highway 20 connects with Forest Road 520. This road is open for approximately 2 miles for full-sized vehicles, and then gated. The road continues as a cherry stem surrounded by the PWA. On the east side, you can access the PWA via Forest Road #2712, which eventually ties back into Highway 20. On the south side, it can be accessed via Forest Road #300 and #423. On the eastern edge, it is accessed off Highway 20 via Forest Road #520. In addition, there is motorized trail access from Trail #145 and #142.

Geography and Topography

This PWA occurs on the north and northeastern shoulder of Granite Peak, part of the ridge forming the hydrologic divide between the Pend Oreille River and the Columbia River. The area is dominated by Granite Peak, which is the highest geologic feature in the area. Granite Peak is sparsely vegetated and rocky, covering about one third of the PWA. The greatest part of the PWA is rolling lateral ridges, with highly dissected streams creating multiple breaks. Three land type associations are present in the PWA; continentally glaciated mountain slopes and ridges, both steep and moderate slopes, and glaciofluvial and alluvial deposits. Historically, mass wasting occurred on incised drainages as glaciers

DRAFT

receded. Most of these events occurred over 10,000 years ago. The dominant historical erosional process was sheet erosion. Most of this area became National Forest System land through land purchases made by the Resettlement Administration in the 1930s.

Current Uses

The primary recreation use of this area is motorcycle riding and hunting that occurs in the fall months. Elk, deer, black bear, and grouse attract hunters to the area. Huckleberry crops are usually good although the patches are fairly difficult to get to. Motorized trail access via the Little Pend Oreille motorcycle trail, #145 and #142 are very popular, accessing the Granite Peak. This trail system is also used by horseback riders, hikers, and mountain bikers.

Appearance and Surroundings

This area offers a variety of views from different locations. The top of Granite Peak, affords views up and down the Pend Oreille valley and over to into the Selkirk Mountain Range of Idaho. Looking north, you can see Abercrombie and Hooknose, the PWA north of Highway 20. Looking west, you can see part of the Columbia River Valley. From within the PWA the thick vegetation and rolling hills obscure the views. Most of the area is surrounded by National Forest System land, which is roaded and has timber harvest activity on a regular basis. The private land that borders the area on the northwest and eastern edges has development typical for rural northeastern Washington. Residential and timber harvest activity occurs on this private land.

Key Attractions

The most prominent attraction is Granite Peak and the motorcycle trails that access the peak. In addition, the big game that inhabits the area draws serious hunters.

CAPABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Level of Natural and Undeveloped Environment

Homesteading in the Lost Creek area began in the late 1800s. Large-scale timber harvest began with the advent of the rail line in the early 1900s. Western white pine, western red cedar, Douglas-fir and western larch were the most valuable species at the time. Large fire followed in the slash created from logging. Large fires in the watershed are recorded between 1916 and 1931. By the 1930s, logging was an activity of the past. Hillsides were either burned or covered with brush. Resulting from fires and the depression, many of the homesteads and other landholdings in the area reverted to the county for delinquent taxes. During the 1930s, much of this land was bought back by the government and the Federal Forest reserves were created. As a result, this area has very old evidence of human activity scattered throughout, but not the type of activity that might compromise its inclusion as PWA.

This area has highly dissected terrain with dense vegetation. Other than this trail system, it is very difficult to travel though the PWA. Developed access consists of four roads leading to the boundary of the PWA and two system trails within it.

Eastern brook trout may be present in the streams within the PWA.

Water quality data is not available for the PWA, however due to the relatively low-level disturbance water quality is assumed to be high. There may be localized disturbances due to grazing activities.

Noxious weed survey data is not available for this PWA.

The Harvey Creek PWA is impaired by light pollution from the Ione and Metaline area. The southern portion of the PWA (2 percent of the PWA) rates a Class 2 on the Bortle Scale, whereas the northern portion (98 percent of the PWA) rates as a Class 3. A Class 2 Typical Truly Dark Sky represents the darkest skies viewed in the continental United States. The summer Milky Way is highly structured to the unaided eye. Any clouds in the sky are visible only as dark holes or voids in the starry background. No light domes from population centers are visible. A Class 3 Rural Sky has some indication of light pollution on the horizon. Clouds may appear faintly illuminated in the brightest parts of the sky near the horizon, but are dark overhead. The Milky Way still appears complex. Light domes from population centers may appear on the horizon (10-15 degrees above horizon). Visual observing is still relatively unimpaired. Time-lapse photography could be impaired by light pollution.

Level of Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

This PWA has few places for true solitude because of its size, shape, proximity to adjacent actively managed forest land, proximity to the highway, proximity to private land, and inclusion to motorized travel ways within its boundary. There is little human activity within the PWA except for the activity associated with the motorized designated routes. From the peak, visible signs of civilization occur at a distance of one or two air miles in every direction. Some human-made sounds are audible at many locations due to the proximity to Highway 20 (decompression breaks on trucks driving down the steep grade) and activities along the ridge (two-cycle motorcycles on the trail). There are no intensively used dispersed camping areas known within the boundary of the PWA. The motorized trail system is very popular and highly regarded as one of the peak experiences on the Little Pend Oreille System. While this allows motorcycles riders as real sense of “getting away from it all”, it has an effect on silence and solitude for non-motorized users.

Special Features

There are five State listed sensitive plant species present in the Lost Creek PWA; yellow sedge (*Carex flava*), boreal bog sedge (*Carex magellanica ssp. irrigua*), beaked sedge (*Carex rostrata*), bulblet-bearing water hemlock (*Cicuta bulbifera*), crested woodfern (*Dryopteris cristata*). Also present in the PWA is stalked moonwort (*Botrychium pedunculosum*) which is listed under Federal status as a species of concern and under state status as sensitive.

Most of the PWA provides habitat for grizzly bear and wolverine, and small portions of the area provide habitat for Canada lynx and American marten. There is also habitat for pileated woodpeckers and goshawks.

Manageability of Boundaries

Lost Creek has a highly unmanageable boundary due to the historical settlement pattern, roading and logging, fire, and mining history in the area. The PWA boundary was determined not by identifiable features on the ground, but rather by deleting out the areas that have been roaded and logged, resulting in a highly irregular boundary.

AVAILABILITY FOR WILDERNESS

Recreation

The special recreation attraction is Granite Peak, which is featured in the hiking book *50 Highest Peaks of Eastern Washington*. For this reason the motorized trail system to the top is very popular and is one of few motorized trail systems on the Colville National Forest. Motorized use has been steadily increasing, and is projected to continue increasing.

Three miles of motorized trails (Trails 144 and 142) are located within the Lost Creek PWA. These trails are part of the Little Pend Oreille off road vehicle (ORV) trail system and connect with other trails to form a large loop. Wilderness designation would require closure of these trails. The trails would have to be relocated to an area west of the PWA boundary in order for the trail system to stay intact. Snowmobile use is allowed in this PWA.

The Kettle Falls and Metaline Chamber of Commerce offices promote the opportunity for outdoor recreation activities in the vicinity, but do not directly promote this PWA. This PWA is proximate to the International Selkirk Loop drive, and hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking are promoted in the Selkirk Loop brochure and website. One trailhead entering the PWA is easily accessed from a side trip shown in the loop drive brochure. Due to the proximity to the Little Pend Oreille Lakes area, and the prominence of Granite Peak, this area would be likely to receive media coverage promoting visitation if the area is designated as wilderness. This could lead to a moderate increase in hiker and horse use. However, some motorized users seeking a higher elevation experience would be displaced.

Considering that this PWA is part of a larger interconnected motorized trail system-- the only well developed system on the forest--continued management of this area as a semi-primitive motorized opportunity is more in demand for this area than providing for wilderness-dependant recreation.

Table 2--Miles of recreation trails

Motorized Trails	Non-motorized Trails	Snowmobile Trails
3	0	0

Wildlife

The Lost Creek PWA is located outside of designated recovery habitat for threatened or endangered species. This means that habitats in the area are not needed for the survival and recovery of the species. Grizzly bears could find succulent herbs and other seasonal forage resources at local sites in the area. Gray wolves might occasionally use the area. At this

DRAFT

time there is no evidence that a wolf pack has been established on the Colville National Forest. Habitat is available for Canada lynx within this roadless area. Portions of two Lynx Analysis Units (LAUs) have been mapped within the area: the Ruby and Lakes LAUs. Habitat manipulation for lynx would be precluded by wilderness designation of the PWA. Suitable den habitat for wolverines does not appear to exist in the area. Several decades ago, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife released small numbers of pine marten into this PWA from source populations located east of the Pend Oreille River. Descendants of these animals continue to persist in the PWA. Habitats for pileated woodpeckers, furbearers, forest grouse, and goshawks exist in this area. A wide variety of game and non game wildlife species provide good opportunities for both consumptive and non-consumptive recreational uses of the area.

The PWAs provide varying levels of habitat for focal wildlife species. To help evaluate the habitat that these areas provide, the following information was provided: the focal species emphasized in the area, the amount of habitat for each focal species, the priority ranking for the habitat (based on conservation assessments and recovery plans), and the proportion of the total habitat available on the forest that is within the PWA.

Table 3--Availability of habitat for federally listed Threatened and Endangered wildlife species, and R6 focal species

Wildlife Species	Acres of Habitat	Habitat Priority Ranking (1=high, 2=mod., 3=low)	Percent Total Forest Habitat in Evaluation Area
Grizzly bear	6,413	3	NA
Canada lynx	63	3	<1
Wolverine	6,423	2	<1
American marten	157	2	<1

Water and Fish

The Lost Creek PWA is located entirely in the Pend Oreille River subbasin (4th HUC). The PWA contains non fish-bearing tributaries of Lost Creek watershed (6th HUC). The South Fork of Lost Creek contains pure westslope cutthroat trout, a sensitive subspecies, as well as brook trout. Lost Creek contains brook, brown and coastal rainbow trout populations. Access exists throughout this watershed for focal species that may reside or travel through the Pend Oreille River.

The PWA also contains the upper portion of an unnamed tributary to Heritage Lake in the Little Pend Oreille Lakes watershed (6th HUC). Little Pend Oreille Lakes watershed is located entirely in the Colville River Subbasin (4th HUC). This watershed has a series of lakes, including Heritage Lake, that have been planted historically with westlope cutthroat trout. This tributary contains both cutthroat and brook trout. Access to this watershed for focal species that may reside or travel throughout the Colville River does not exist due to a dam on the Little Pend Oreille River approximately three and a half miles downstream from the PWA. Existing habitat condition of these tributaries to the two 6th field watersheds in the PWA is unknown. Both 6th field watersheds have been analyzed for vegetation and road conditions. When vegetation conditions and road related effects are considered cumulatively, the Lost Creek and Little Pend Oreille Lakes subwatersheds were

DRAFT

rated fair and poor respectively. This is due to past harvest activities and high road densities.

This habitat in the Lost Creek portion of the PWA is considered important to the recovery of the bull trout, which has been observed recently within the Pend Oreille River subbasin. The Little Pend Oreille Lakes portion of the PWA is not considered essential to this recovery due to the natural blockage to this habitat to utilization by bull trout from the Columbia River. This natural blockage is Meyers Falls on the lower Colville River.

Wilderness designation would protect the basic ecological functions of these tributaries. This objective could also be accomplished without Wilderness designation if the proposed PWA remained in an unroaded condition. If management actions, such as road building and timber harvest, are approved by the Regional Forester or Chief in the future within this PWA, a degradation of riparian and aquatic processes is expected. The adverse effects of such actions could extend beyond the boundaries of the PWA and continue throughout the 6th field HUCs.

There are no existing power withdrawals, proposed impoundments or known Federal Energy Regulatory Commission permits or licenses outstanding.

There are no water source protection areas.

Range

Three active cattle and horse allotments are partially located in this area. Much of the PWA is in the Lost Creek Allotment, with a portion at the south end in the Ruby Creek Allotment, and a small portion in the northwest portion of the PWA in the Tiger Hill Allotment. Much of the area is not of significant rangeland value because of the closed canopies and lack of palatable forage. The Lost Creek Allotment will be closed in 2011 due to the continued forage decline. Although the Ruby Creek Allotment is included in a portion of the PWA, there is almost no cattle use of that part of the allotment. The portion of the PWA that is part of the Tiger Allotment is only incidentally used by cattle. There appears to be little or no recreational stock use in the area due to lack of a trail system for stock.

Table 4--Grazing suitability and current allotments

Percent Area Suitable for Cattle Grazing	Percent Area Currently in Cattle Allotments	Percent Area Suitable for Sheep Grazing	Percent Area Currently in Sheep Allotments
8	73	9	0

Vegetation and Ecology

This area is covered mostly by forest with the exception of some shrub vegetation types and rock outcrops near the top of Granite Peak and a meadow/beaver pond complex at Granite Meadows. About 95 percent of the area is covered by forests. These forested areas are mostly second growth resulting from large fires in the late 1920s. The northeast, north and northwest flanks of the peak are dominated by lodgepole pine, especially on flat benches and terraces. These areas also have varying amounts western larch Douglas-fir

mixed in. Small pockets of western red cedar, western hemlock, and grand fir occur along drainages and around small seasonal wetlands. In the area north of the peak there are also several fairly large areas that are dominated by mature aspen with some western larch and lodgepole pine mixed in. The area immediately to the west and northwest of the peak contains large diameter western larch and Douglas-fir with an understory of subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce. The area to the south of Granite Peak is more open and rocky with scattered large diameter ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir. Several attempts have been made to use prescribed fire in this area in the last 15 years to enhance wildlife habitat. An area east of the peak contains mature grand fir, western hemlock, western red cedar, Douglas-fir and western larch. This area was marked for timber harvest, but never included in a sale.

Western white pine did exist in this area before they were removed through logging and by white pine blister rust. Opportunities to re-introduce western white pine would be precluded with wilderness designation.

The Lost Creek PWA is 35 percent wildland urban interface (WUI). The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) authorizes direction to implement fuel reduction projects in the WUI. The HFRA prohibits authorized projects in wilderness areas. There is a concern that 46 percent of the WUI is dry forest. Wilderness designation would preclude reducing the fuels with mechanical means.

Timber Harvest Suitability

The underlying criteria for determining timber harvest suitability are found in the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, 36CFR219.12, and Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 60.

For the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, the general criteria for timber suitability that will be used for timber harvest suitability are:

- Is it forest land (10 percent crown cover minimum, productivity >20 ft^3/ac/yr).
- The area has not been withdrawn from timber harvest or production.
- Soil, slope, or other watershed conditions will not be irreversibly damaged (based on soil attributes for erosion, instability, or compaction potential, slopes >65 percent, and certain land types)
- Reforestation can be assured within five years (lack of shallow soils, low frost heave potential, low surface rock, plant community type, certain land types, and elevation <5,500 feet)
- Economic and technologic viability (less than 0.5 miles from existing transportation system, species value or condition, volume availability, logging systems)

In consideration of all the criteria for determining timber harvest or timber production suitability and not just the fact that harvestable species can grow at a specific location, it appears this PWA does not have conditions that pass all the criteria. The main criterion for failure is that unacceptable resource impacts would likely occur due to road construction activities. This does not preclude helicopter operations that could fly material over sensitive areas to adjacent road systems. However, in most if not all cases helicopter

logging and the associated expenses (such as manual slash treatments) would not be an economically viable option.

Table 5--Stand data percentages

Suitable for Timber Harvest	Forest Groups		WUI	
0%	**Parkland**	0%	**Total WUI**	35%
	Cold Dry	0%	**WUI in Dry and Mesic Forest**	46%
	Cold Moist	57%		
	Mesic	1%		
	Dry	42%		
	Non-forest	1%		

Fire

Wildland fires are the major natural disturbance to vegetative communities within the analysis area fulfilling an important role in ecosystem maintenance and development across the landscape. Fire behavior and vegetation response is classified into three broad categories based on the severity of the fires characteristic to that regime. These categories are low, mixed (or moderate), and high severity fire regimes.

Low severity fire regimes are those where fires result in 90 percent of the overstory vegetation surviving (Morgan et al. 1996). In this regime surface fuels typically carry fire and only litter, herbaceous material, foliage and small twigs on woody undergrowth (i.e., “fine fuels”) are consumed by the fire. Examples within the Lost Creek PWA include the south to southwest-facing slopes that contain an overstory ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir with an understory of bunchgrass and/or ninebark/snowberry (less than 20 percent of the analysis area). The historic fire-return interval is 5 to 35 years (LANDFIRE imagery, 2007).

The mixed or moderate severity fire regimes are those where fires result in 20 percent to 80 percent of the overstory vegetation surviving. Fire frequency and fire effects are variable across the landscape producing spatially uneven mosaics of even-aged stands. Typically, wildland fires in this regime are largely understory fires except when local fire weather and fuels interact to create periods of high severity (stand-replacing fires). This is the most common fire regime within the study area. Examples within the Lost Creek PWA include the Douglas-fir/grand fir, lodgepole pine, and western larch cover types (northwest to southeast aspects, all elevations). The historic fire-return interval is typically 35 to 75 years.

The high severity fire regimes are those where fire often results in less than 10 percent of the overstory vegetation surviving. Fire frequency is relatively long; severity is high (stand-replacing) and opportunity for ignition is limited. This fire regime is restricted to riparian areas and sheltered north aspects. Examples within the Lost Creek Potential Wilderness Area include the western hemlock, western red cedar, and subalpine fire/spruce cover types. Large woody debris with an abundant shrub and herbaceous layer characterize

DRAFT

the understory component of this fire regime. The historic fire-return interval is 100+ years.

Prescribed fire is an option that may be used to reduce surface and ladder fuels, promote fire-tolerant species, improve big-game browse, and maintain and/or restore the area to its historic fire regime.

Insects and Disease

The Wilderness Act of 1964 allows for the control of insects and disease, but taking such actions in wilderness is rare. Forest Service wilderness policy (Forest Service Manual 2324.11) directs the agency "to allow indigenous insect and plant diseases to play, as nearly as possible their natural ecological role". Policy also directs the agency to "protect the scientific value of observing the effect of insects and disease on ecosystems and identifying genetically resistant plant species", and finally, "to control insect and plant disease epidemics that threaten adjacent lands or resources."

An aerial survey of this PWA was completed in 2007. The most extensive damaging agent reported in Lost Creek was mountain pine beetle in lodgepole pine. Mountain pine beetles can attack and kill many species of pines, but are most closely associated with lodgepole pine. Lodgepole pine stands that are older than 80 years, with an average dbh of eight inches or greater are highly likely to experience outbreaks. Additional risk factors are basal area over 120 square feet per acre, and low elevation.

When a mountain pine beetle outbreak occurs in a lodgepole pine stand, the beetles preferentially attack the largest diameter trees. Over the course of an outbreak, 85 percent or more of the large diameter trees will be killed, and progressively smaller proportions of the small diameter trees (Cole and Amman 1980). Thinning can reduce the proportion of a stand that will be killed by beetles, but stocking must be reduced to less than 80 square feet of basal area to be effective (Mitchell et al 1983). A light thinning in small diameter stands may just hasten the development of 8-inch diameter trees without keeping densities below a beetle susceptibility threshold (Cochran and Barrett 1998).

The largest contiguous area of activity was south of Nile Lake, where about 300 acres of damage was mapped. This is a large increase over the amount of damage reported in 2006. Preliminary aerial survey reports for 2008 indicate that mountain pine beetle mortality is still increasing.

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species

There are five state listed sensitive plant species present in the Lost Creek PWA; yellow sedge (*Carex flava*), boreal bog sedge (*Carex magellanica ssp. irrigua*), beaked sedge (*Carex rostrata*), bulblet-bearing water hemlock (*Cicuta bulbifera*), crested woodfern (*Dryopteris cristata*). Also present in the PWA is stalked moonwort (*Botrychium pedunculosum*), which is listed under Federal status as a species of concern and under state status as sensitive.

Noxious Weeds

Noxious weed inventory data is not available for this PWA.

Minerals and Soils

There is low probability for mineral exploration within the area. The probably mineral deposits appear to be south of the PWA. There are two active claims south of the PWA. The soils in the area are extremely variable and are formed mainly from colluvium and residuum with volcanic ash and loess deposits. Compaction occurred apparently during homesteading eras, from sheep and cattle grazing or logging in lower elevations. These soils are difficult to rehabilitate after disturbance of the ash cap. Some soil series have acidic sub-soils that preclude revegetation when exposed and result in accelerated hillslope erosion.

The Lost Creek PWA is located within the Priest River Complex which consists of intermixed, heterogeneous granitic rocks and highly recrystallized Middle Proterozoic rocks. The subject lands are entirely underlain by Cretaceous igneous intrusive rocks, namely granite. Based on historic claim records and the location of historic prospects/mines, prospecting and exploration in the parcel has been focused in the eastern half. At present (3/2008), there is one claim in the S.E. ¼ of Section 19 in T. 36 N. R. 43 E. This active claim encompasses the historic Highnoon mine which produced 100 tons of uranium, thorium, and beryllium ore prior to 1958 (Derkey and others, 1990). There are other documented uranium occurrences and mines within and south of the Lost Creek PWA.

The area has a moderate to high potential for the occurrence of uranium in the western half and a moderate to high potential for uranium and beryllium in the eastern half (Grant, 1982; Castor and others, 1982). The area has not been the subject of expressions of interest, lease applications, or leases for coal, oil and gas, or geothermal resources. The area has no potential for the occurrence of coal and oil and gas resources and a low or unknown potential for geothermal resources.

Cultural and Heritage Resources

There are five known cultural resources sites within the Lost Creek area. One site is the remnant foundations of the Granite Peak lookout. The remaining sites are associated with historic homesteading.

Land Uses and Special Uses

Grazing allotments are managed through term grazing permits.

Private Lands

There are no known private lands located within the PWA.

NEED FOR WILDERNESS

Location and size of other wildernesses in the general vicinity, and distance from area and population centers

The nearest designated wilderness is the Salmo-Priest Wilderness, which contains approximately 41,335 acres. It is located within the Colville and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The nearest population center is Spokane. The drive time from Spokane to the

DRAFT

Salmo-Priest Wilderness is approximately two hours. The drive time from Spokane to the Lost Creek PWA is approximately two and a half hours.

There are two relatively small congressionally designated wilderness areas within a three-hour drive of the Spokane area. In ranking this PWA for its potential to provide a high quality wilderness recreation setting it ranked as moderate. The area is relatively accessible, and Granite Mountain provides a high quality destination, but the trail system within the PWA is limited.

Present visitor pressure on other wildernesses, trends, and changing patterns of use

Use of the Salmo-Priest Wilderness is fairly light. Wilderness use was monitored during the summer of 2004 through the national visitor use monitoring program (National Visitor Use Monitoring or NVUM). Only 18 visitors to the wilderness were encountered during 21 days of sampling. Most visitors to this wilderness area are from northeastern Washington. Spokane residents also have access to the Idaho Panhandle National Forests for recreation. Travel time and distance are comparable to the areas located on the Colville National Forest. There are 215,898 proposed for roadless allocations and 148,961 acres recommended for wilderness designation on the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. Seattle, ten hours driving time from this area, is the closest major metropolitan area. The abundance of prime backcountry recreation (including wilderness) close to Seattle precludes heavy use from that area.

The projected population increase for 2000 to 2030 in Ferry, Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Spokane Counties ranges from 40 to 67 percent. With this increase in population there is a chance of overuse and crowding in the Salmo-Priest Wilderness.

Extent to which non-wilderness lands provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation experiences

There are five other PWA within 15 air miles of the Lost Creek PWA (Abercrombie-Hooknose, Grassy Top, Hall Mountain, Harvey Creek, and South Fork Mountain), which encompass an additional 72,142 acres on the Colville National Forest. This acreage, in combination with other PWAs and designated wilderness on the forest totals approximately 226,000 acres. The roadless areas identified in RARE II constitute about twenty percent of the Colville National Forest.

The need to provide a sanctuary for those biotic species that have demonstrated an inability to survive in less than primitive surrounding or the need for a protected area for other unique scientific value or phenomena

Wildlife

Most of the Lost Creek PWA provides habitat for grizzly bear and wolverine, and small portions of the area provide habitat for Canada lynx and American marten. There is also habitat for pileated woodpeckers and goshawks. However the wildlife sustainability index

is 5.4 (a low relative ranking) and the habitat connectivity index is 7.2 (also low relative ranking).

Fish

The habitat within the Lost Creek watershed is not considered essential but is important to the recovery of the bull trout. This PWA contains primarily tributaries that are important to future water and instream habitat quality. The habitat condition is fair. The unnamed fish bearing tributary to Heritage Lake within the PWA supports a small population of cutthroat trout of unknown genetic purity. As a result of this analysis, the importance of this PWA to future water and habitat quality to potential bull trout habitat and sustainability to a subpopulation of potentially pure westslope cutthroat trout indicates that this PWA should be considered a low priority for wilderness classification.

Table 6--Lost Creek watershed

Focal Species	Miles of Habitat	Percent Total Forest Habitat in Evaluation Area	Vegetation Score	Overall Road Density Score	Habitat Priority Ranking (1=high, 2=mod., 3=low)
Bull trout	1.5	<1	-1.00	-0.50	3
Westslope cutthroat trout	0	0	-1.00	-0.50	3
Interior redband trout	0	0	-1.00	-0.50	3
Pygmy whitefish	0	0	-1.00	-0.50	3

Table 7--Little Pend Oreille Lakes watershed

Focal Species	Miles of Habitat	Percent Total Forest Habitat in Evaluation Area	Vegetation Score	Overall Road Density Score	Habitat Priority Ranking (1=high, 2=mod., 3=low)
Bull trout	0	0	-1.00	-1.00	3
Westslope cutthroat trout	1	<1	-1.00	-1.00	3
Interior redband trout	0	0	-1.00	-1.00	3
Pygmy whitefish	0	0	-1.00	-1.00	3

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species

An analysis was completed to prioritize which PWAs would contribute the most to providing refugia for those plant species on the species of interest/species of concern (SOI/SOC) list. The analysis ranked three factors. The first factor, the total number of sites occurring within the PWA, ranked as low for this PWA. The second factor, which ranked

DRAFT

as high for this PWA, examined the degree of rarity of any SOI/SOC species present, and also recognized the importance of individual PWAs in supporting a high incidence of populations relative to Washington State as a whole.

PWAs are generally unsurveyed for rare plants due to a relative lack of projects occurring in these areas. Thus an additional factor examined the potential for the PWA to support SOI/SOC species. Based on databases, first the SOI/SOC plant species were identified that are present within a five-mile radius of the PWA, but are not known to occur within the PWA. Then the PWA was analyzed to see if the potential habitat for these species occurs within the PWA. Based on this analysis, this PWA ranks as high.

Finally, a composite score was assigned to each PWA based on combining each of the rankings described above. This PWA ranks overall as high priority for preserving rare plant refugia with a wilderness designation.

Ability to provide for preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems

The Lost Creek PWA is classified as Okanogan Highlands using Bailey's Ecoregion classification. The area is part of the Selkirk Mountain Range. Wilderness lands are under-represented in the Okanogan Highlands ecoregion.

An analysis compared vegetative cover types that are under-represented in wilderness on the National Forest System in Region 6 with those same cover types present in the PWA. Large-scale cover types were available through existing data layers and represent approximately 32 percent (approximately 2,120 acres) of the vegetative cover if this PWA. These types include forb lands, non-alpine meadows, ponderosa pine, and western red cedar. Taken as a whole, the contribution of underrepresented vegetation types ranks as high for the portion of this area with underrepresented cover types, but as moderate for the number of acres that are represented within this PWA relative to the other PWAs in the planning area.

In particular, the western red cedar cover type, which comprises approximately 1,900 acres in this PWA, would make a significant contribution within the eastern Washington planning area.

Some under-represented cover types fill microhabitats such as riparian areas or perched water tables. Such finer scale cover types represented in this PWA include sparse amounts of cottonwood and aspen.

DRAFT