

## **Public Meeting Summaries**

From February 22 – March 9 2016, fifteen public meetings were conducted in a variety of communities across the Custer Gallatin National Forest.

**All information and public meeting summaries will be shared with the Forest Plan Revision team and Assessment Team members.**

A version of the public meeting power point is available on the public involvement page. We experimented with recording and throughout the process we will do our best to provide recordings of public meeting where bandwidth and technology allows.

A [form fillable questionnaire](#) is provided online and can be downloaded, filled out and returned electronically at [cgplanrevision@fs.fed.us](mailto:cgplanrevision@fs.fed.us) or by mailing to:

Forest Service  
Attn: Forest Plan Revision  
Custer Gallatin National Forest  
10 E Babcock, P.O. Box 130  
Bozeman, MT 59771

It is helpful to receive the questionnaire and any accompanying information **prior to June 1 for consideration in the Assessment of our Existing Conditions.**

### **Updated information since Public Meetings:**

- Sources used in the Assessment to date are [available online](#).
- Data and information received is updated periodically, by visiting [online](#) and clicking on right-hand sidebar – about midway down page.

We will be creating a FAQ page for the questions we commonly receive.

[Mailing List – Opt in](#)

*Check back frequently for updates. <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/custergallatin/home>  
(click on right-hand quicklink – Forest Plan Revision)\**

### **Information summarized - as recorded on Flip Charts**

**Week 1: Public Meetings: Week of Feb. 22 – Feb. 25, 2016**

**Broadus – Feb. 22, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Four people attended

- Concern – Not a one size fits all approach, look at each area, and recognize the individuality of each district/area.
  - Would like to see consistency across the forest in Allotment Management Plans (AMP's) with the permitting process following the same steps
  - Continue to put emphasis/or more on noxious weeds – very important issue
  - Access and road conditions – this is a public safety issue, need maintenance, more people using them, need more work on the existing roads and infrastructure on this district
  - How does the Fire Management Plans fit into the Forest Plans? We have fire hazards out here and want to continue to see prescribed burning, more of it, hazardous fuels reduction work and prevention
  - Ashland is a major hunting district, consider seasonal closures and temporary roads to enhance wildlife security during hunting season
  - Please show wilderness criteria next meeting and process
  - Will the plan get into grazing, rest, rotation areas?
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### **Ashland – Feb. 23, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Thirty-eight people attended

- Concern – Study the economics of each area, travel around, bring the specialist working on economics out here, consider the economics in each local area.
  - What are sources for grazing
  - Concern – about conifer encroachment into grazing lands
  - Concern – for recent movement of species (elk, bear) that were not here previously and associated impact on grazing resource.
  - Concern – Want to see the historical look of the landscape, what amount of vegetation was on the landscape, historical the vegetation, the trees. Consider this in your desired conditions on the landscape, the history.
  - We would like to monitor grazing sources – the direction that it is headed
  - Consider drought conditions and the affects they have on grazing
  - Continue or do more – hazardous fuels work, reduce the fuel loading around here.
  - What is budget?
  - Concern – do not have a one size fits all, use the Geographic areas option out here.
  - How do we stayed involved?
  - Take into account the economics and food value that beef has on the economy. Consider our economic information, want to continue to see the sources for economics throughout the process
  - How are reforestation efforts being done? What are the priority areas, how are they determined? Using native seed?
  - When is next involvement
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### **Colstrip – Feb. 23, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

9 people attended.

- Want to see emphasis on recreation and opportunities overall
- Concern for hunting and grazing conflicts – user conflicts
- Concern for grazing conditions out there, revegetation, drought we've been having
- Want to see fuels reduction work continue
- Access needs to be improved – notably on the northern portion of the Ashland R.D., are there opportunities to consider land exchanges or consolidating parcels?

### **Ekalaka – Feb. 24, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Overall 7 people attended, confusion over start time. Conducted back to back presentation at 5:30/6:30.

- Concern for conifer encroachment onto grazing areas, also overall road maintenance
- Want continued fuels reduction work on the landscape
- Concern – Want to ensure our voice is heard, we are so different than the western part of the forest, don't make this a one size fits all plan, consider the different landscapes, management practices are not the same, geographic areas should recognize these differences.
- Consider Sage Grouse affects, movement and management – any user/grazing conflicts
- Ensure noxious weed treatment continues
- Want to see more of an education component from the forest
- Want to better understand the wilderness evaluation, inventory.
- How are roadless areas defined?

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### **Buffalo – Feb. 25, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Four people attended

- Question – Regarding cooperating agency status and the process
- Concern for not having a one size fits all plan.
- Recreation use is increasing – as this plan is made, recognize the impacts of increasing population, impacts and maintenance of existing roads, infrastructure.
- Concern for balancing grazing use and recreational use, we need to ensure our voice is heard
- Keep maintaining noxious weed treatment
- Will there be an opening for looking at non-developmental areas as well, such as astronomers? Night time viewing and little development as emphasis
- Concern for any additional wilderness or the designation of this (how do we use the land then?)

- Want to better understand the wilderness process, inventory, evaluation
- Where do monuments or possible designations of monuments fit into the process?
- Clarification on who signs decision from presentation
- Ton of work with Riley Pass – in the Forest Planning process can we incorporate or consider additional recreational areas or any improvements to infrastructure up in that land unit?

## **Week 2:**

### **Big Timber – Feb. 29, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Approximately 38 people attended

- How travel plan, recreation opportunities, settings and access fits into this Forest Plan Revision process?
- Concern for access – roads, bridges, buildings and the overall management of this broad landscape
- Want to ensure intergovernmental relationships – the county and the forest need to work together on providing access to NFS lands, it's a public safety matter and need to be able to access
- Consider integrated multiple uses when making management areas
- Want to see more fuels reduction work
- Please use both Geographic areas and management areas for the revised forest plan, it better recognizes the combination of the forest, the diversity, the various uses on the landscape, historical uses, and takes into account local conditions
- Need to balance all multiple uses
- Question pertaining to Assessment topics from presentation. How developed and prioritized.
- Clarification on schedule – wilderness inventory and evaluation (when)
- Next meeting please provide current designation list, what is already designated or in place, also provide on website, where are wilderness, recommended wilderness, inventoried roadless areas....
- Work on how the Motor vehicle use maps and travel plan meet up when put on the ground, from district to district

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### **Livingston – Feb. 29, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

40 people attended

- How are you working with other agencies, considering best available scientific information?
- How tracking info and comments?
- Clarification on administrative record and standing.
- Consider a reading room for comment received
- We need more infrastructure maintenance, upkeep of what is already out there

- Ensure forest plan is implementable, budgets keep going down, you have less staff, make sure this is something that can be done – realistically.
- Relationship of Forest plan to travel plan?
- Concern for access to NFS lands?
- Local gov't and USFS need to work together and collaborate on maintenance of roads, access to NFS lands.
- Consider looking at past plans, what has, hasn't worked, monitoring data, reasons why something may not have occurred.
- Look at economic data from actual communities, local businesses, how they interface with the forest.
- Who makes decision – clarification –
- Why four years long, can't you make it cheaper, faster?

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### **Columbus – March 1, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Approximately 38 people attended

- How are you coordinating with the BLM, other agencies?
- Make master forest plans available in Stillwater County Library as well
- Want to see continuance of fuels reduction work. Is there a place for this in desired conditions on this landscape?
- How are you incorporating the economics and socio-economics into plan? There were many businesses here in the past, consider the past 25-50 years, what used to be here, consider our economics.
- How do you avoid litigation over the forest plan?
- How are you going to take in all this feedback, you are receiving such a broad range.
- Clarification on Management areas? Any policy for trend to larger management areas?
- Concern for access, accessibility – for handicap accessibility and also from an aviation perspective (voiced twice, overlapping) –
- Concern for one size fits all – recognize the diversity of the landscapes and areas.
- Range Inventory – differs quite a bit in agencies (NRCS, BLM) – is there some opportunity for consistency, monitoring plan, data, consider society of rangeland mgmt. data, ecological site descriptions.

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### **Red Lodge – March 1, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Approximately 40 people attended

- Where does the budget come from?
- Clarification on next round of public meetings –
- Want to better understand Wild and Scenic Rivers process?

- Consider information from user groups in the Assessment – IMBA, ABWF, Search and Rescue
  - Status of adjacent forests in Forest Plan Revisions
  - How are you defining roadless areas?
  - Definition of Research Natural Areas?
  - Wilderness Study Areas – if we are seeing changes in these, and we have concern they should be addressed
  - How are you working to gather economic feedback? Work with cities, towns and incorporate that into plan. Such as the 2012 Red Lodge Study –
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### **Bozeman – March 2, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Approximately 130 - 150 people attended

- Concern for Assessment topic #9 – need to understand the recreation settings, opportunities, access, and how it fits into the forest plan, also how the travel plan fits into
- Was there an Assessment done prior to travel planning?
- Want to see fire history on National Forest System lands and adjoining other lands, ecological factors of fires across the landscape
- How does Gallatin Community Collaborative efforts play into Forest Plan?
- Would like to see substantive information and/or comments online not just for internal review.

### **Big Sky – March 3, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

42 people attended

- Clarification on desired conditions, how we will start on them
  - Consider the role of fire on the landscape, keep doing fuels reduction work.
  - How are amendments done in future?
  - Will large management areas alleviate as many amendments?
  - When can Big Sky as a community voice concerns?
  - Assuming some legislative action is taken on the Gallatin Wilderness Study Area (Hyalite Porcupine Buffalo-Horn WSA), how would that fit into the forest plan?
  - What is your interaction with other agencies?
  - Budget?
  - How incorporating climate change into forest plan?
  - Concern for monitoring, would like to see specific thresholds in revised forest plan
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### **West Yellowstone – March 3, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Approximately 36 people attended.

- You have two forest plans – is there any way to measure the success of those past forest plans?
- Coordinate with the Caribou – Targhee and other adjacent forests that surround National Forest System lands.

- Is there a length of time that Wilderness Study Areas can be in place?
  - Would like to see timeframe on recommended wilderness (maximum length)
  - What is the background to designating Lionhead?
  - Concern for areas to ride (motorized recreation) - Only areas include Whits Lake, Sheep Lake, coffin lake, want to see more motorized options around the basin and all multiple uses.
  - How make forest plan across such a broad landscape?
  - Amendment process requires public input right?
  - What do you see coming up in the Assessment of Existing Conditions?
  - How do other projects fit into forest plan?
  - How do we keep this so it doesn't wind up in court? Its not immune to the process?
  - Decision in Fall 2019 – it will go through the objection and legal process if any?
  - Will the legislation you currently see involving public lands to states affect you?
  - Are there instances where recommended wilderness has been removed?
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### **Week 3:**

#### **Gardiner – March 7, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Nineteen people attended.

- Concern for one size fits all, vast landscape, how fitting across this whole area?
- How does wilderness fit into Forest Plan?
- Yellowstone – Wild and Scenic River – process? Can we influence this?
- What are criteria for Wilderness – understanding better?
- Concern for getting the word out in Gardiner?
- Want to see more maintenance on existing roads, trails, upkeep the access we have
- Concern for social and economic balance – large amount of forest service lands in Park county, balance the economic concerns with other interests
- What about the mining proposals in Gardiner and Emigrant? Would admin withdrawal be considered? Or as create management areas do withdrawal across an area?
- Funding and staffing continue to be down, to what degree can you really fulfill?
- Strong concern for wildlife habitat in Gardiner, maintaining corridors, encourage to reduce or eliminate the extractive services in this area.
- Concern for cattle grazing, want to maintain the habitat for wildlife as well, range needs to be for wildlife habitat
- We need recreation staff here, so much recreation
- Concern for more fuels reduction work, damage to wildlife habitat is much more after large scale wildfires

#### **Cooke City – March 8, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Twenty people attended.

- Why has it been 30 years?
- How do we know what zone, management area in?
- Concern for amount of wilderness designation – there is already a ton around here, I would hope for less in the future, my concern stems from access to National Forest System lands, for the general public, only serve select interests, all these buffer zones, Griz habitat, so many regulations puts many limits on what we can access
- Why do amendments happen?
- Congress designates wilderness, but who recommends it?
- What recommended wildernesses are there?

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### **Billings – March 9, 2016 Questions, Concerns, Information**

Twenty people attended.

- What is the best way to get information to Forest Service?
- How will you be working with other agencies?
- How work on Emergency Situations?
- Concern – Participated in travel planning, the forest plan sets the context, I get no site specific decisions, but concern that criteria for roads and wilderness won't take into account trails, motorized routes, either just road or just trail looked at, look at motorized routes throughout your NEPA and consider them too.
- It takes an act of Congress to change Wilderness, Citizens can write to their Congressman, the boundaries were done by volunteers back in the day
- How do you maintain that 1.1 million acres of wilderness?
- How do we figure out where we can help.
- Concern – to make the plan implementable, understandable and reviewable to the general public, keep it a manageable size.
- How do we get info to you and know info was received?