

Colville National Forest
Meeting with Colville High School Students
May 18, 2016

Attending

Teacher Scotty Stalp and Colville High School Biology class

Forest Service:

Amy Dillon, Forest Plan Revision Team Lead; Rodney Smoldon, Forest Supervisor; and Marcy Rumelhart (notes).

The forest plan revision team was invited by Mr. Stalp and the Colville High School biology class to give a presentation on the plan revision. Class and the presentation began at 9:00 am.

Rodney introduced Forest Service personnel and provided a brief explanation of the scope of the forest, responsibilities, and directives and laws for how we manage the forest.

Amy gave an overview of plan revision history, which covered the hierarchy of the direction the Forest Service receives; purpose of the plan "big picture"; issues and alternative development; identification of a preferred alternative to show what the new plan would look like; what the plan cannot change (laws, regulations, policy, e.g., wilderness); what the plan can change (management area designation); Key points of timber production, riparian management areas, wildlife habitat (direction comes from US Fish & Wildlife Service), motorized & mechanized trails, and recommended wilderness; the proposed Kettle Crest special interest area; and next steps.

The presentation was followed by a questions from the students (italicized).

- ***Does cost affect planning related to what you do on the forest?*** Depends on how much the Forest receives from Congress, sometimes more, sometimes less. Budget does set sideboards for what we can accomplish and the forest plan objectives help determine where to utilize funds.
- ***Does that change with timber harvest?*** Congress provides funding to the Forest with the intent of harvesting timber. One of the Forest Service's missions is to produce timber and the local communities depend on that. The Colville National Forest gets approximately 2-3 million dollars a year to produce timber. The Forest has the authority to use stewardship contracts where timber is sold and part of the value from those sales is used to do other work such as thinning, culvert replacements, or removal of hazardous fuels. Locally there is a competitive market so when a contract is offered there are multiple bidders. Timber is generally sold to the highest bidder and that money can go back into projects on the forest.
- ***Regarding recreational vehicles like razors and dirt bikes, will (the plan) be removing access for those uses?*** Areas where motorized recreation is suitable are identified in the draft plan, but the plan doesn't make those types of determinations. Those decision are made at the project level.
- ***How are different uses prioritized like recommended wilderness?*** For recommended wilderness there are certain criteria that must be met like size, capability, availability, and need, to determine wilderness eligibility. On the Colville NF there are twenty-one areas that met the

criteria, but only three had a high rating. The Forest is required to consider areas for wilderness recommendation when revising forest plans. If there are areas identified that meet the criteria, the Forest Service can make a recommendation. We have heard from the public that existing inventoried roadless areas are similar to wilderness and that should be good enough for recommendation. Part of Rodney's job as Forest Supervisor is to bring forward a recommendation to the Regional Forester who will make a decision. A lot of social discussion happens for these types of discussions.

- **Which alternative do you prefer?** Alternative P.
- **How are American Indians considered in the plan?** We are required to consult with other governments including the Colville, Spokane, and Kalispel Tribes. That consultation is not an open, public process, but a government-to-government discussion. Tribes will share with us what their interests are. We are not required to do what the tribes or the county commissioners want us to do, but we want to work with them.
- **How did last summer's fires affect how you designated Management Areas?** Since the plan is a big picture document, most areas affected by the fires will be addressed at the project level. The fires did affect timber sales that were ongoing at the time.
- **What percent of the Colville National Forest is habitat for endangered species?** About one third of Pend Oreille County. The Forest Service manages the habitat and the state manages the species.
- **How do you enforce grazing so cattle stays away from riparian areas and sensitive plants?** Grazing has occurred on the Forest since 1907. There are annual operating plans for each grazing permittee on the Forest. The discussion in the draft plan that deals with sensitive plants is in regards to salting, which shouldn't be done in certain areas. Trailing of cattle can be a problem but is dealt with at the permit level and not the plan level. There is also a section in the plan that discusses trampling of redds, or fish spawning areas. There are many things we can do to keep that from happening such as having water troughs, and sometimes leaving a buffer of trees or shrubs next to a stream to make it difficult for cattle to get through.
- **Are there big changes in Alternative P regarding grazing?** One of the major changes with potential to affect grazing operations is a guideline for leaving 6-8 inches of residual stubble height in greenline vegetation areas the Forest manages, in riparian areas across the forest. In some areas that may be difficult to achieve. However, there is a footnote in the draft plan at the bottom of page 102 that speaks to the need to be site-specific with the guideline, at the project level, to provide for flexibility.
- **How does cattle compare to timber in income?** Our timber sales generate tens of millions of dollars, and we also receive funding in the amount of about four million dollars a year to do restoration work through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project. Cattle grazing on the Forest generates about one and a half million dollars annually.
- **Will an increase in timber production affect species habitat by increasing the amount of area harvested?** It wouldn't. A number of changes would result in increasing the ability to increase timber outputs. One part of those changes is that currently the Forest is following direction that restricts the removal of trees that are 21 inches or greater. Under Alternative P there would no longer be that harvest restriction. It doesn't mean the Forest would be cutting everything, large legacy trees would remain. Not having that size restriction in place allows the forest to be able to remove trees that may be an undesirable species for a certain location e.g., grand fir

occupying a site where ponderosa pine historically grew. Having the ability to remove more trees increases the volume produced.

- ***Can you explain the wildlife habitat for caribou and grizzly bears?*** Amy described the area of the forest where woodland caribou and grizzly bear recovery habitat is located, most of it in Pend Oreille County. The caribou recovery area includes high elevation habitat, which is mostly in wilderness and very rugged terrain. The Forest hasn't traditionally done any projects in those areas because it is very tough ground. Regarding grizzly bear habitat, there is nothing that precludes the Forest from doing work there. When the bears emerge from hibernation in spring they are hungry and do not want to be disturbed. We try to plan and coordinate project work in those areas so it does not occur in spring. In the summer we try to minimize the number of vehicles traveling in those areas. Because of the seasonal restrictions, most of the timber sale work is done in the winter. Some of the stream work has to be done in summer, but try to avoid doing work in spring. Bears love huckleberries, so when thinning work is done we also do prescribed burning which helps to regenerate berry bushes. We consult with the US Fish & Wildlife Service but can still do work in those areas. Where bull trout is an issue we try to plan and coordinate projects to consider proximity to streams, where roads are located, when roads are used, sediment created, and timing.
- ***Noticed there are quite a few gates on roads near the Gypsy Peak area, is that for the bears?*** Yes. Mid-summer is when most roads are open because bears are in high elevation areas away from roads. There are also gates on roads due to seclusion habitat requirements.
- ***How much time and people have been involved in the planning process?*** About 25-30 employees working on it in a given year, although not all of them are working on the plan revision full time.
- ***How many people are employed by the Colville NF?*** About 150 employees on the forest.
- ***What is the biggest concern, or most contentious issue?*** Wilderness. In 52 years of the wilderness act Congress has designated a lot of wilderness but never undesignated it. It's pretty permanent, and that scares a lot of people. The issue is not about logging it, there's a reason some of the forest hasn't been logged as most areas are very rugged. Only treat about 1-2% of forest each year.
- ***How much of the forest is treated for fire prevention for summer?*** Congress provides the Forest with funds to reduce hazardous fuels and our contribution is about 6-10,000 acres per year. That work can be done through harvesting, thinning and burning.
- ***Notice there is a wild and scenic river on the map, but only parts of it, why?*** It is broken up on the map due to land ownership, the river weaves back and forth across FS land.

The forest plan discussion ended at 10:00.

Colville National Forest

Land & Resource Management Plan Revision



Where plan revision fits

National Direction

Congress – Develop bills for special designations

Designate inventoried roadless areas

Set law, code of federal regulations & budget

USDA/Forest Service (DC) – Set policy and strategic plans

Regional Direction – policy also set by regional FS office (Portland, OR)

Forest Direction – outlined in the Land & Resource Management Plan

Project Direction – individual project NEPA completed at forest or district level (such as timber sales, fuel reduction, culvert replacement, trail construction)

Forest Plan Purpose

Provide high-level guidance for management of National Forest system lands

– 15-year strategic document providing land management direction by guiding programs, practices, uses, and projects

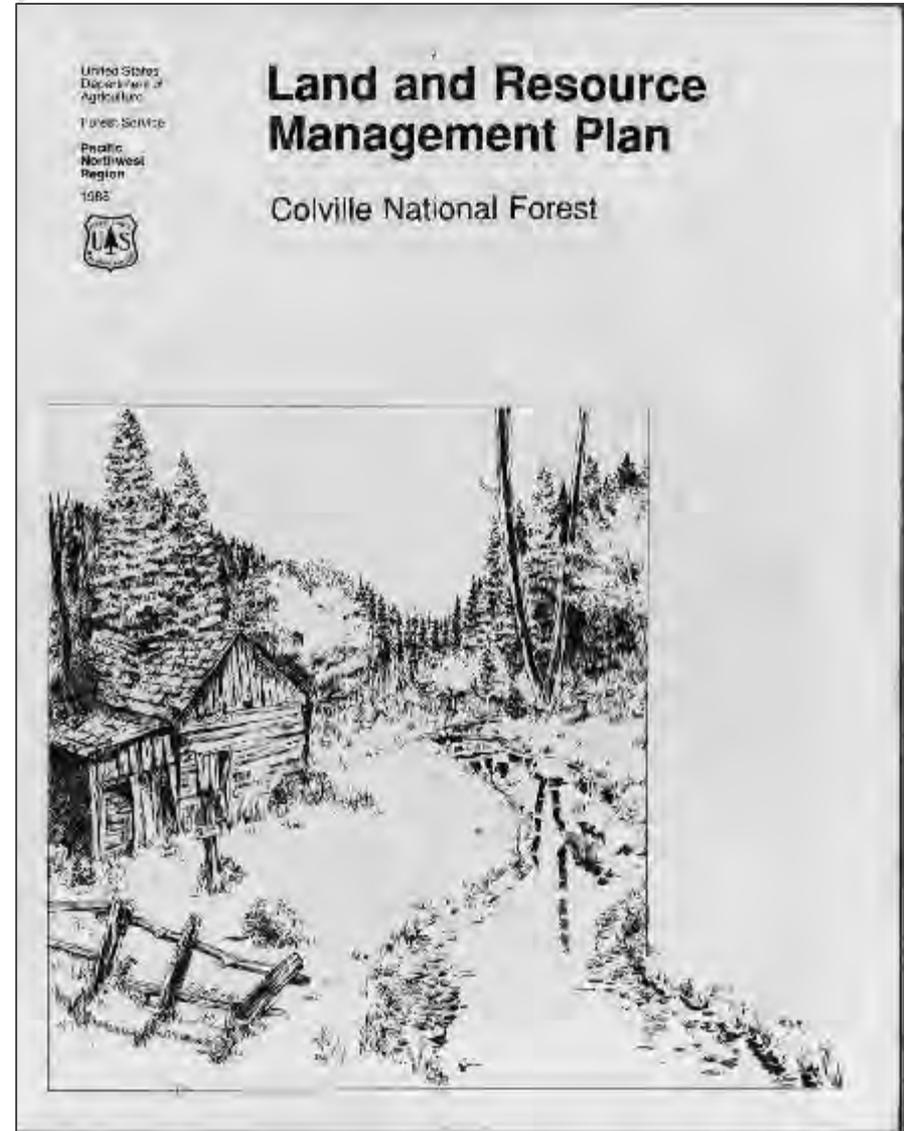
– Designates management areas allocating zones of the forest for different activities

– Designates suitability of areas for various uses

Need for Change (why are we doing this?)

Currently following a
land management plan
signed in 1988

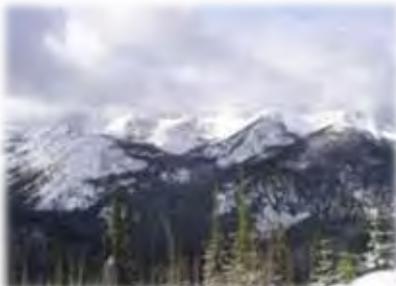
Includes 40 Forest
Plan Amendments



Key Issues for Alternative Development

Analysis of public concerns and resource issues produced 6 issues for development & comparison of alternatives

1. Old Forest (Late Successional) Management & Timber Production
2. Motorized Recreation Trails
3. Access (FS roads)
4. Recommended Wilderness Areas
5. Wildlife Habitat
6. Riparian & Aquatic Resource Management



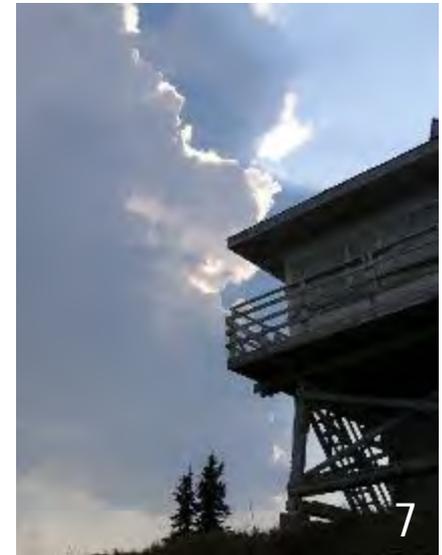
Alternatives

Issues led to development of 6 alternatives:

- ✓ **No Action (current 1988 plan as amended)**
- ✓ **Proposed Action (public comment provided on this in 2011)**
- ✓ **Alternative R (developed in response to comments supporting large areas as recommended wilderness)**
- ✓ **Alternative B (developed based on NEWFC proposal and public input during collaborative meetings)**
- ✓ **Alternative O (developed based on points many participants agreed to during collaborative meetings)**
- ✓ **Alternative P (developed based on public comment; 2016 preferred alternative)**

What the Forest Plan cannot change:

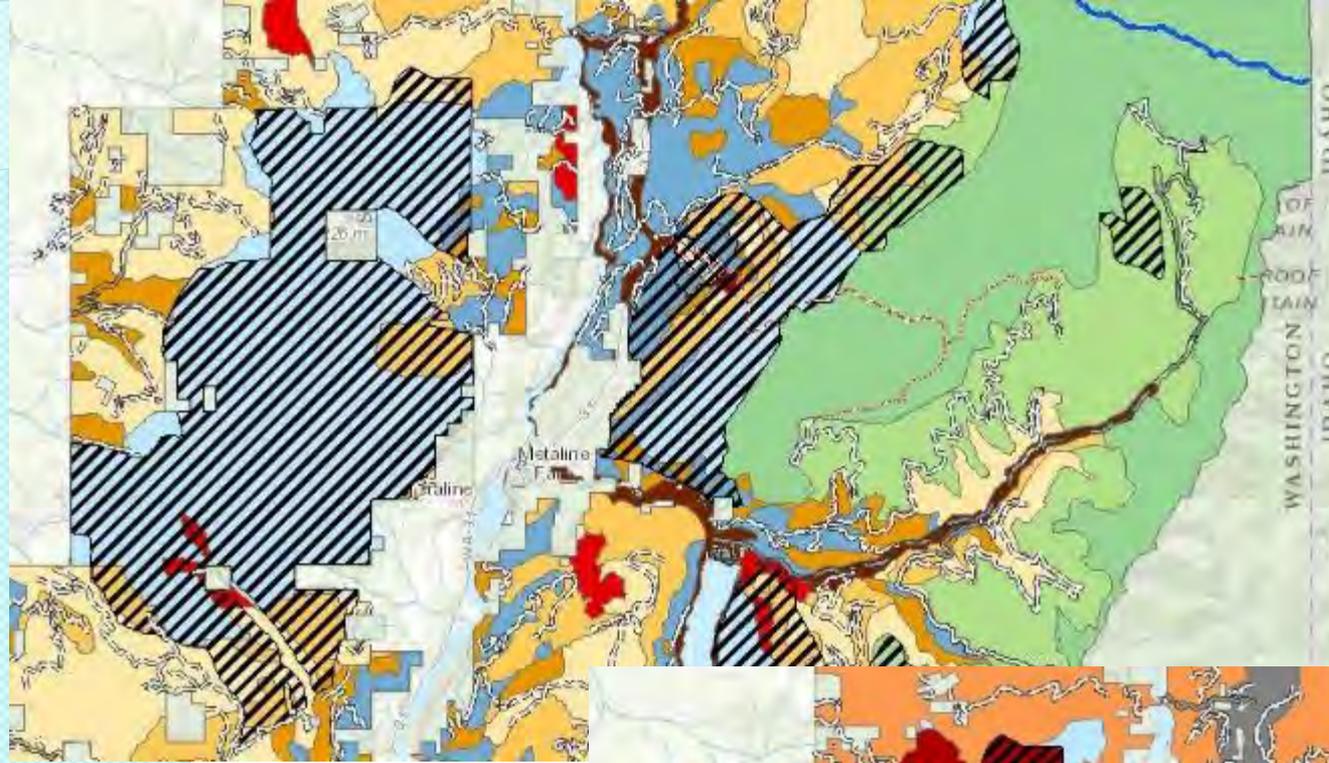
- ✓ Boundary for designated wilderness (Salmo-Priest)
- ✓ Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries (designated in 2001)
- ✓ Any existing law, regulation or policy
- ✓ Management plans or direction related to other ownerships



What *can* change in the Forest Plan :

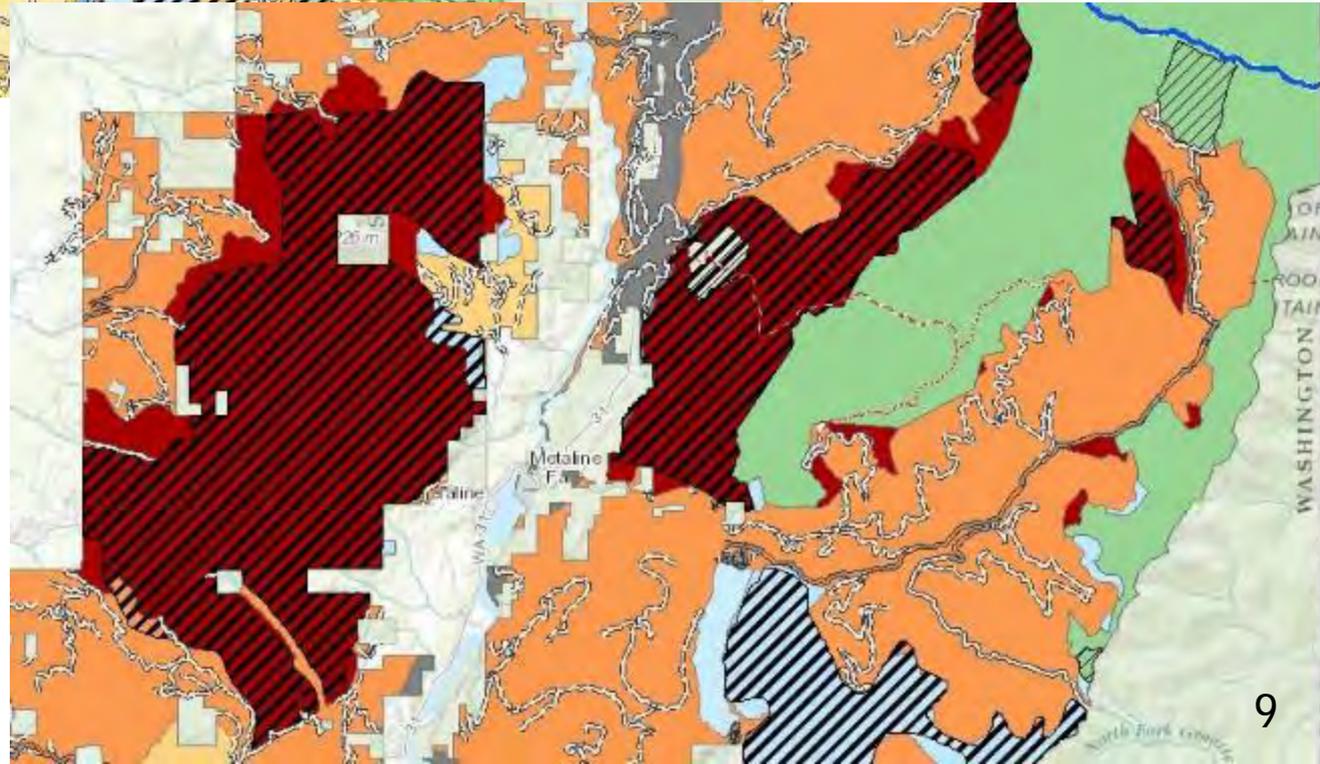
1. Management area designations
2. Management area proposed boundaries
3. Management area direction:
 - Desired conditions
 - Objectives
 - Standards
 - Guidelines
 - Suitable Uses





Current (1988)
plan

Alternative P
(preferred
alt.)



Key points – commercial timber

Resource and Indicator	No Action (existing plan)	Proposed Action	B	O	R	P
Acres/Percentage of NFS Lands Suitable for Scheduled Timber Production	535,725 48%	653,242 59%	384,485 35%	347,535 32%	129,420 12%	656,628 60%
Acres/Percent of NFS Lands Where Harvest Allowed for Other Resource Objectives	323,025 29%	205,508 19%	474,265 43%	511,215 46%	729,330 66%	202,122 18%
Predicted Wood Sale Quantity (PWSQ)						
MMBF	41	62	37	38	14	62
CCF	82,800	125,900	77,000	77,000	28,900	125,400



Riparian Management Area

- Alternatives Proposed Action, R, B & P have direction for no net increase in road miles in key watersheds
- No Action and Alternative O retain INFISH

Key watersheds:

- Based on native fish habitat and T&E species recovery area designations
- Have different guidance related to road density and other management activities that focuses on habitat improvement.



Wildlife Habitat:

All alternatives incorporate:

- Interagency direction for woodland caribou, grizzly bear, Canada lynx and bull trout habitat
- Management direction for big game and landbirds



Motorized & Mechanized Trails

- Direction for motorized & mechanized use varies between alternatives
- Recommended wilderness

Alternative	Acres	Existing uses continue?	Change to miles of trail currently designated	
			For motor vehicle use	suitable for mech. use
No Action	0		0	0
Proposed Action	101,400	yes	0	-150*
B	220,300	no	-39	-221
O	15,900	yes	0	-29*
R	207,800	no	-39	-213
P	68,300	yes	0	-78*

*If areas get designated by Congress

Key points - Wilderness & Recommended Wilderness

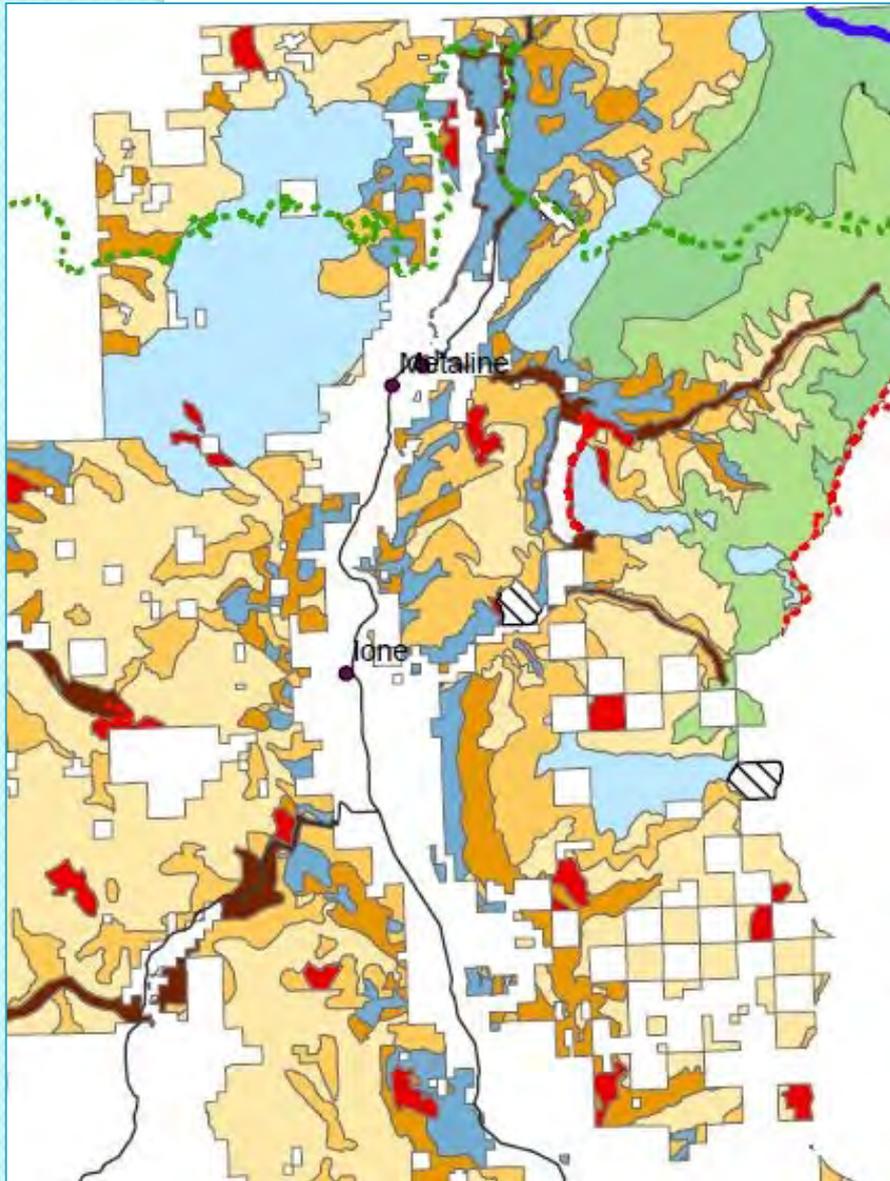
One designated wilderness (Salmo-Priest) = ~3% of Colville NFS land

Alternative	No Action	Proposed Action	B	O	R	P
Acres/Percent Recommended for Wilderness	0	101,390 9%	220,330 20%	15,950 1%	207,800 19%	68,300 6%
Existing uses can continue	n/a	Yes*	No	Yes*	No	Yes*

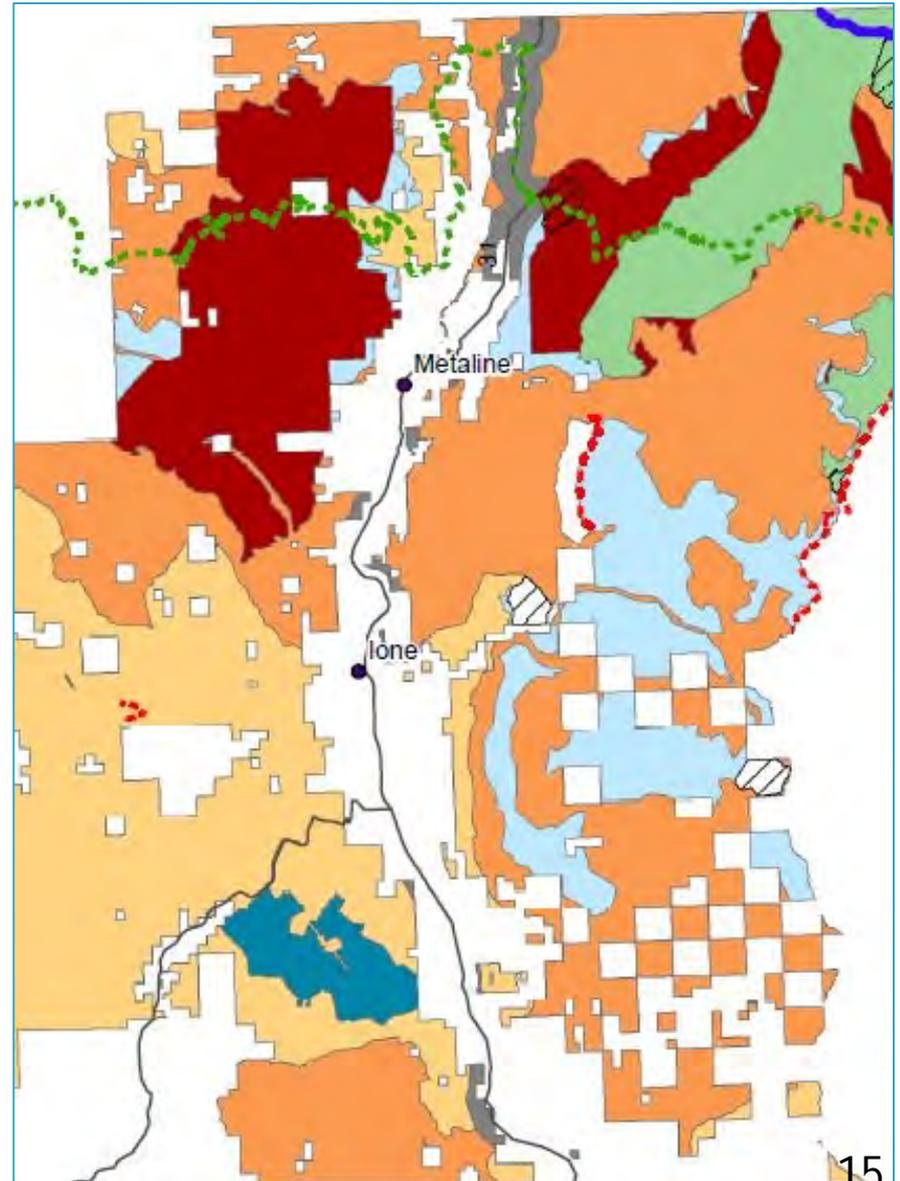
*Until such time Congress designates as Wilderness



No Action (current 1988 plan)

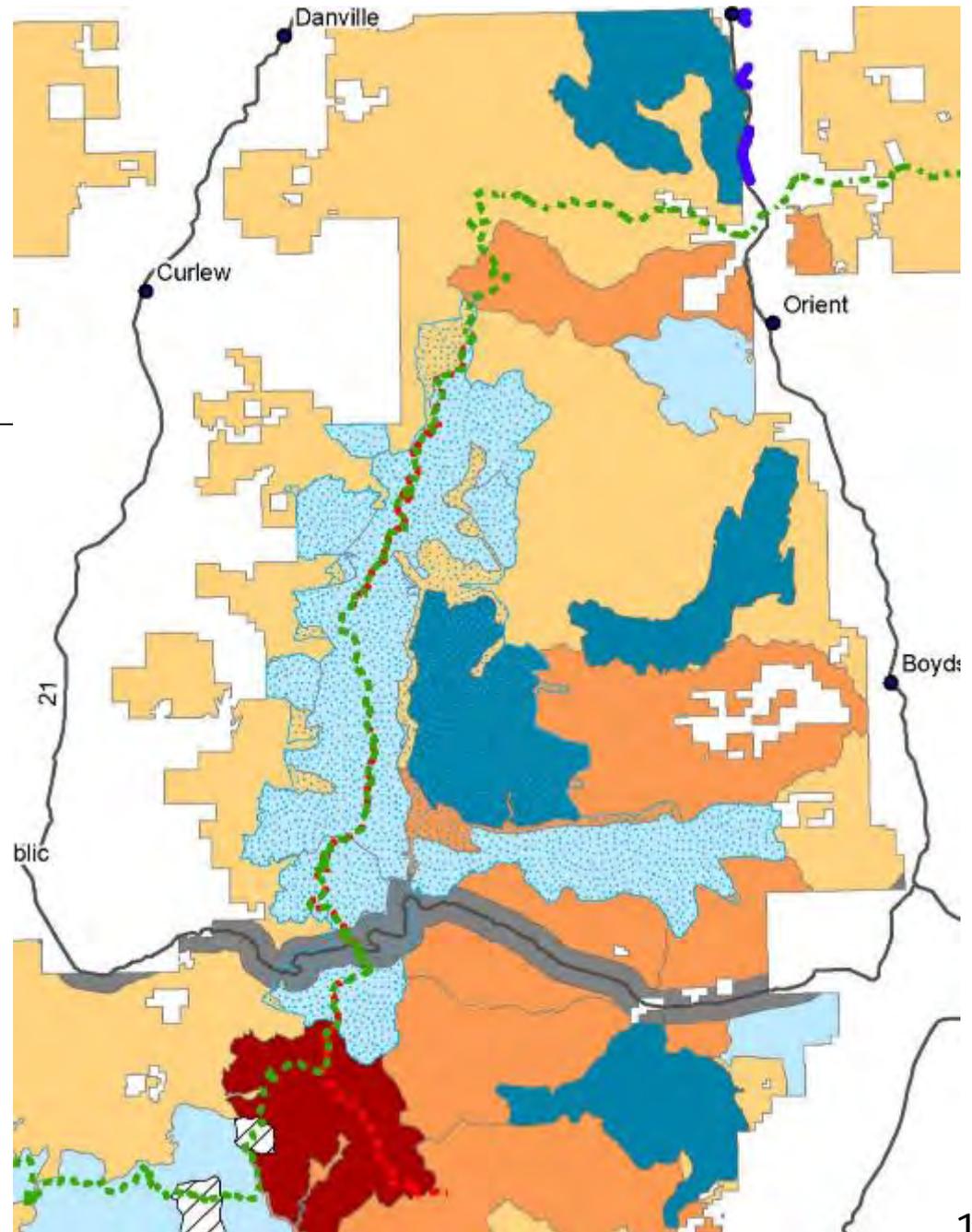


Proposed Action (2011)



Recreation Special Interest Area

Included in Alternatives
O and P



Immediate Next Steps

On-going

- Consultation, communication and coordination

February 19, 2016

- Notice of Availability of plan and DEIS published in Federal Register (started comment period)

February – July 5, 2016

- Draft environmental impact statement available for review & comment
- Receive public comments
- Engage the public through meetings & web applications



On-Line Information - Colville NF web page

www.fs.usda.gov/goto/colville/plan

The screenshot displays the website for the Colville National Forest, specifically the Forest Plan Revision project page. The header features the USDA logo and the text 'United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service' on the left, and 'Colville National Forest' with the UAS logo on the right. A navigation bar below the header includes links for 'Forest Service Home', 'About the Agency', and 'Contact the National Office'. The main content area is titled 'Forest Plan Revision' and features a large banner with the text 'COLVILLE NATIONAL FOREST' and 'FOREST PLAN REVISION' alongside an image of pine cones. Below the banner, a welcome message states: 'Welcome to the Colville Forest Plan Revision Project! The Colville National Forest has been working on a multi-year planning effort to update and revise its Land and Resource Management Plan. Many things have changed since the current "forest plan" was signed in 1988. The National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976 requires each national forest to have a plan, and to periodically revise them to address new economic, social and resource conditions, and to incorporate new scientific information. The work we are doing in plan revision will guide management of the Colville National Forest for the next decade and beyond. As part of earlier scoping and public collaboration efforts we shared a description of the proposed management approach with interested members of the public and tribes in June 2011. We received and analyzed a broad range of comments on that proposed action. That information helped us to identify the significant issues and to make adjustments to our proposal, and in addition to providing a basis for identifying alternative management approaches to consider.' A section titled 'Draft Plan Ready for Review' follows, announcing: 'We are pleased to announce that we've reached the next "big step" in our NEPA planning process with the release of a draft plan and draft environmental impact statement for public review and comment. The draft plan displays the draft direction for the management activities on the National Forest System lands across the four Colville National Forest ranger districts. A Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which shows the analysis and comparison of the six...'. The left sidebar contains a search box, a 'Go' button, and a menu with categories like 'Site Map', 'Colville National Forest', 'Home', 'Special Places', 'Recreation', 'Alerts & Notices', 'Passes & Permits', 'Maps & Publications', 'Land & Resources Management' (with sub-items: Planning, Projects, Resource Management, Geospatial Data), 'Learning Center', 'Working Together', 'About the Forest', 'News & Events', and 'Contact Information'. The 'Contact Information' section lists: 'Colville National Forest, 765 South Main Street, Colville, WA 99114, (509) 684-7000'. The right sidebar has a 'Quick Links' section with items: 'Plan Revision Home', 'Draft Environmental Impact Statement', 'Draft Revised Plan', 'Maps', 'Public Participation', 'Comment / Contact Us', and 'Comments Reading Room'. Below this are three buttons: 'Visit Online Open House', 'Submit Formal Comment', and 'Current Forest Plan', each with a small icon and a secondary text link.

On-Line Information - On-line Open House

<http://colvilleplanrevision.publicmeeting.info/>

ONLINE OPEN HOUSE: February 19-May 19 Select Language

colville NATIONAL FOREST PLAN REVISION

Welcome Overview Alternatives Forests/Timber Access/Recreation/Trails Wilderness Wildlife Habitat Water Public Involvement Comments

Welcome Next

Welcome to the online open house for the Proposed Revised Land Management Plan for the Colville National Forest Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Proposed Revised Colville Forest Plan (draft plan).

This open house is available until May 19.

About the DEIS and proposed forest plan

In order to revise the 1988 [Colville National Forest Plan](#), the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) has prepared this DEIS and proposed forest plan in cooperation with seven cooperating entities and with input from the public and interest groups. The DEIS describes and analyzes six alternatives for managing the Colville National Forest. The forest plan reflects the preferred alternative identified in the DEIS (Alternative P1).

The Forest Service administers the nearly 1.1 million acres that make up the Colville National Forest in northeast Washington State.

[Watch a short video about the project.](#)

How to use this online open house

- Visit the tabbed "stairs" to learn more about the DEIS, proposed forest plan, and how to submit your comments. You can visit as many times as you wish.
- You can click the "Next" button or select any tab at the top of the page to move around this online open house. Placing your cursor on words or phrases with a dotted underline will show their definition.
- Keep an eye out for the questions posed on some pages, and join the conversation if you like.

[Next page](#)

Colville National Forest Plan Revision

colville NATIONAL FOREST PLAN REVISION
An Overview of the Project and Process

read THE DRAFT PLAN

read the DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

- Executive Summary
- Full Draft EIS (7 MB)
- Chapter 1: Purpose and Need for Action
- Chapter 2: Alternatives
- Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences (3 MB)
- Chapter 4: Consultation and Coordination
- Executive Summary, Economic Analysis, Appendices and Index

Remember to submit your comments here!

Contact

WEB: colvilleplanrevision.info
EMAIL: colvilleplanrevision@fs.fed.us
PHONE: 509-564-7000

Share this site with others

f t e +



Udall Foundation



Discussion and Questions