

**Forest Plan Revision Workgroup Meeting
Yaak GA
12/18/03**

Participants:

Carolyn Bennett
Steve Garrett
Jerry Wandler
Ron Downey
Patrick Vinion
Mike Michlig
Tim Linehan
Joanne Linehan
Rick Bass
George E. Minturn
Dominik Schmidig
Frank Pival
Ron Brown
Gail Bennett
Bob Drake
Bill Garrison
Kenny Brothers
Dixie Schting
Justin Stehlik
Richard Stehlik
Charlie Wilson
Jimmy Martin
Dario Scarabosio
Fred Sighting
Jim O'Neil
Donner O'Neil (sp)
Chris Cox
Larry M. Davis
Jim Bowen
Randy Remp
Andy Remp
Mary Campbell
Pam Fuqua
Peter Kitts
Robyn King
Linda Stehlik
Scott Daily
David Cronenwett
Keith Hagerty

Forest Service Representatives

Mike Balboni
Joe Krueger
Greg Kujawa
Jack Zearfoss
Mark Mason
Mark Natale (notetaker)

Mike Balboni started the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves. Following that, he asked the participants to approve the notes from the 11/20/03 meeting. Changes were as follows:

1. Add Mark Mason to list of FS attendees.
2. Add to list of brainstorm ideas the following: “Perform clearcuts larger than 40 acres to mimic natural fire situation”.
3. Page 3, fourth para: Remove the reference to the wilderness act—IRA’s have nothing to do with the 1964 wilderness act.
4. Page 4, first para: Change “No off-road vehicles” to “No off highway vehicles”.
5. page 4, second to last para: Change “DFC for access should” to “DFC for access in roadless areas should”.

Balboni then reviewed the mission statement and stated that he and the group expected new participants to adhere to it.

Question: Can the draft meeting notes be put on the Forest Plan (FP) revision website? Decision was made to put copies of the notes at the Yaak Merc and the Troy Ranger station in Troy, and to E-Mail them to participants who requested it.

Balboni then told the workgroup (WG) that two handouts were available as general information. The topics are:

1. Healthy Forest Initiative
2. Off Highway vehicle Use

He also suggested that the WG critique the meeting at the end.

Topic: Inventoried Roadless Areas

Keith Hagerty then made a presentation (copy filed) concerning future management of IRA’s. He prefaced it by saying that it represented the feelings of a group of people. Following the presentation, he was asked if they were basically asking for a “no net change” in management from the current forest plan. He said that they were. A lengthy discussion of the current Forest Plan and uses allowed in IRA’s followed the presentation. The discussion covered the entire spectrum of management of IRA’s from no change to changing their classification to Wilderness.

(As part of the presentation, Hagerty referenced a report: 2002 Uof M Bureau of Business and Economic Research Report on Snowmobiling in Montana. Some participants asked if the WG could get copies of the report. Balboni said that the FS would make copies of the presentation and some copies of the report for those interested.)

Balboni then advised the WG that they didn’t have to always agree on one recommendation on IRA’s; i.e. They could agree to disagree, and present comments

representing both sides. Joe Krueger said that these issues have divided communities for a long time and that is how a spectrum of alternatives evolves.

There was also a discussion of the June 26 meeting. Balboni stated that the FP revision team used that information to identify the major issues that needed to be dealt with – it was not a vote.

Robyn King stated that the Yaak Valley Forest Council (YVFC) position is that there needs to be a discussion of some of the IRA's becoming wilderness. She also stated that the YVFC is willing to discuss some motorized use in some IRA's and that they needed to look at both motorized and non-motorized use – not just motorized.

Balboni then advised the WG that they needed to focus on where they go with the roadless issue. There again was a lengthy discussion – very diverse and divisive. The majority of the discussion centered on snowmobiling within roadless areas. Balboni then made the recommendation that, if the WG agreed, a smaller group representing all sides be formed to discuss the issue and see if they could come up with a compromise to bring to the table for the WG. He then asked who would be willing to try to make that happen and be on a smaller committee? It was decided that the objective of the sub-group would be to deal with snowmobiling within IRA's. Balboni was asked if the FS could provide a wildlife biologist to talk about effects to wildlife by snowmobiles. He responded that the FS could do that. Mark Mason gave a brief overview of each of the IRA's in the GA and what how each area was currently being used for snowmobiling.

Robyn King stated that the YVFC would be willing to participate in a smaller group to discuss the snowmobiling issue. She also stated that the YVFC was willing to sit down and discuss Hagerty's presentation point by point.

An intense discussion of the issue of snowmobiling in IRA's followed. The result was that there was no agreement that a smaller group could be effective or could compromise. Two positions seemed to be: 1. there needed to be some additional restrictions on snowmobiling in some IRA's for solitude, wildlife, etc. and 2. those supporting no new restrictions on the "snowmobiling are unwilling to "negotiate" away the uses that are currently available.

Decision: The WG decided that those from the opposing viewpoints each come to the next meeting with a position statement representing their view. Robyn agree to bring the YVFC's view on this issue to the next meeting. We have Keith's presentation for the record as well.

Balboni then asked the WG what they wanted to talk about next meeting.

The group decided to discuss access (except snowmobiling in IRA's) in the Yaak GA and to develop a Desired Future Condition statement on access.

Balboni then asked what the group needed from the FS for the next meeting. The WG requested:

1. a grizzly bear core map
2. A Forest Service wildlife biologist be in attendance
3. a road layer map.

The group then critiqued the meeting. The following points were made:

1. did not like one participant using bad language (swearing).
2. most of the participants tried to control tempers and did quite well considering the diversity present.
3. disappointed that the group couldn't discuss and compromise on snowmobiling
4. think 15 year forest plan period is too long.

The next meeting was scheduled for Jan. 7, 2004 at 1830.

mdn