

FOREST PLAN WORKGROUP MEETING

YAAK GEOGRAPHIC AREA

10/29/03

Workshop Participants:

Larry Davis
Robert Croucher
Phillip Lundin
Jim Dagget
Jim Mayo
Cristina Eisenberg
Steve Eisenberg
Keith Haggerty
Robyn King
Brian Lawson
Scott Daily
Joanne Linehan
Bud Journey
David Cronenwett
Rick Bass
Linda Stehlik
Sue Janssen
Mary Campbell
P. J. Breithaupt
Pam Fuqua
Chuck Leidigh
Camille Leidigh
Cassia Leidigh
Cherith Leidigh
Randy Beacham
Wade Kidder
Jerry Wandler
Carolyn Bennett
Steve Garrett
Randy Beacham

Forest Service Representatives:

Mike Balboni, Three Rivers District Ranger
Jack Zearfoss, Forest Plan Transportation Specialist
Kathy Mohar, District Planning Staff
Mark Natale, District Resources Staff

Following introductions, Mike Balboni asked participants to say some words about what they would like to see as far as DFC—desired future conditions—for the Yaak GA. Some of their statements were as follows:

- I am mostly interested in the old-growth component, would like to see a plan to have the forest structure protected—possibly more than 10% old growth. I would like to see more old growth. Take out more small diameter trees. I would also like to see wildlife issues addressed, to see roadless cores for grizzlies. I don't want them to become extinct.
- I am concerned about forest health.
- I am interested in seeing development of a community forestry project that would get rid of overstocked trees in site-specific areas. I would like to find a common ground and agreement

as to access and logging. Some areas can be more developed. I also have a special interest in watershed restoration.

- I am interested in forest health components. The forest today is different than it has been historically, made up of different types of trees, too much Douglas fir. All you have to do is look at old Forest Service photographs to see how much the forest has changed.
- I am concerned about everyone's definition of roadless areas. I'd like the freedom to build roads wherever we need them.
- True roadless areas should be left alone.
- I want to know more so I can make an intelligent decision. I want to discuss each of these seven points and have experts give us information if necessary. Otherwise, I don't see how we can make any kind of intelligent decision about forest management.
- I am interested in a stewardship program—one that would bring out merchantable trees and still maintain forest health.
- I want to see the experts do their job and give us a fully functioning forest, with room for both old growth and harvestable timber.
- I am concerned about the value of the forest—both economic and social. I'd like to see a balanced approach. We all have our needs and we need to address these needs. When the forest is healthy, the economy is healthy.
- I am concerned about roadless areas. I am also concerned about forest health. I want to see a balanced approach, where there is harvestable timber, but endangered species and watershed health are protected.
- Based on the June 26th meeting feedback, isn't that enough for the Forest Service to do their job? Do we really need all this discussion? The dots tell you what people care about. It's all there. Sixty-five percent of the comments related to access, timber, and wildlife. These comments should be represented.

Mike Balboni said we are having this discussion because we need to get more specific regarding things such as access. The Forest Service needs more input in order to determine where and how to allow access. The dots show that these issues are very important. There was little public input twenty years ago when drafting the previous forest plan. Now the Forest Service has used science, monitoring and evaluation to come up with the seven topics of discussion. Things have changed in the past twenty years as far as the social situation, forest composition, cultural factors and economic resources.

A participant expressed concern about the cost of the forest plan and how this could raise our taxes. Someone suggested that perhaps we should have seasonal roadless areas. The group agreed that we all have our differences, but that we have to come to a consensus. More DFC comments followed:

Reintroduce competitive greenslip sales.

- I'd like to see permanent protection for IRAs. I hunt, hike, get out in the woods—I'd like to know there are areas that are wild and not messed with. Roads were originally built to access timber. We can't maintain them all because there are too many of them. We can't afford this.
- It's important to look at things in a three-dimensional way—watershed damage, for example. It hasn't worked thus far to have the forest pay for itself.
- There are fourteen areas where roads haven't been built—places beyond roads. Forest health may involve some sort of vegetative treatment. The mill in Eureka uses low diameter wood. Plum creek can also use low diameter wood. There is more and more of a market for this wood.
- We get into trouble when we expect to find a market for our trees.
- I am interested in the land adjacent to private property, the wildland/human interface. I'm worried about infestations of insects that damage trees. There are infestations of bugs on Douglas fir forest adjacent to my land. I'm worried about how this will affect my trees.

The question was asked whether the revised Forest Plan would likely be litigated, noting that the Garver project was recently litigated even though the forest considered the latest science. Mike Balboni responded that any project decision can be litigated, including the decision for the revised Forest Plan. Alternatives produced through consensus could have a better chance of being successful.

A participant stated he does not trust the Forest Service because there is a constant change of personnel and Forest Service employees don't always live up to the things they say. Mark Natale pointed out that many Forest Service employees are long-term members of the community with varying values and often the same kinds of discussions occur during district planning as are occurring in the workgroups.

Robyn King said the workgroup process should involve accountability and feedback.

Other participants made the following comments:

- Worried about aerial spraying for weeds
- Fire is a natural part of the system.
- Systematic plan for building roads has dumped a lot of sediment into the streams. We need to improve watersheds and fish habitat.
- If we leave existing roads alone, then we wouldn't have to worry about using tax dollars to decommission them.
- We need to ensure connectivity among roadless areas.
- We need community forestry with the locals working.
- We want to know about road building and maintenance expenses. Exactly what is involved? We need maps and statistics so we can have an intelligent discussion.

- Let's just focus on access.
- Let's do a survey of local residents and try to figure out what they want and use that information in our workgroup.
- We are here to represent ourselves and only ourselves and find some common ground. A survey is not necessarily fair to the issues.

Mike Balboni said that though it is beyond the scope of this workgroup to re-define the boundaries of current roadless areas, we can qualify the type of use allowed in roadless areas, and these things can be addressed in our workgroup.

The group agreed to focus on roadless issues and access at the next meeting. They feel the issue of roadless areas encompasses all seven topics of discussion. After a brief discussion about the workgroup process and its validity, the group concluded they are sufficiently diverse to accurately represent the stakeholders in this area. Mike Balboni further stated that the public is still able to participate by commenting.

The group agreed that they need to draft a mission statement before proceeding. Participants were asked to come to the next meeting prepared to draft this statement, to think about this workgroup's purpose.

Information Needs:

Grizzly core area map
Local lynx study results
Water quality report, including stream surveys
Statistics on road maintenance costs for the district and forest

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, November 19, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. at the Upper Yaak Work Center.
Cristina Eisenberg will be the notetaker; Mike Balboni will be the facilitator.

s/ Cristina Eisenberg and Kathy Mohar