

Forest Plan Revision Workgroup Meeting (Final)  
St. Maries Federal Building  
November 6, 2003

Meeting began at 7:09 pm

**Attendees:** Public - Wes Case, John Walters, Roblyn Stitt, Denise Best, Bernie Lionberger, George Currier, Dan Hammes, Russell Lowry, and J.D. Wulfhorst.  
Forest Service: Gary Ford, Kimberly Johnson, Ervin Brooks, and Kenneth Gebhardt –

**Ervin Brooks (Acting District Ranger) – Welcomed the group, and went through introductions. He reviewed the agenda and then discussed the purpose of the meeting.**

The U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) originally asked the public for input on the Forest Plan Revision Process in May and June. The public provided initial comments. A process has now begun to establish workgroups in the various geographic areas (GA's). The Forest Service is seeking input on the St. Joe GA.

At this meeting the group will discuss comments from the May and June meetings, provide existing information and documents to potential workgroup members, and discuss workgroup formation and meeting schedules. Copies of comments were handed out to the group.

Timeframes and work schedules will be up to each workgroup. The Forest Service would like to see the workgroup take over and organize each meeting. Each workgroup should determine how they will function.

**Gary (Revision Team Leader) - Purpose of the Work Group**

Gary talked about the current Forest Plan and then described what was envisioned for the workgroup process. It will be important to establish workgroups that are composed of people who are involved for the entire process. Forest Service staff may provide direction but would like to see the workgroups establish their own direction and function. This is also a new process for the Forest Service, so everyone will be learning together.

It is important that the workgroup established a timeline. The draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) will be completed in the Fall/Winter 2004. There will be a 90- day comment period with continued public involvement. The final environmental impact statement (EIS) will be completed by Fall/Winter 2005.

Work groups will: 1) work together to develop products for consideration in the planning process (ie...desired future conditions for the St. Joe GA; 2) work together to learn about the workgroups interests and understand the complexities of decision-making and; 3) develop and enhance relationships.

Question: Will we be given specific things to work on? Yes. After the workgroup has established its role then they can work together to discuss issues and provide input into

Forest Plan revision process. The work group will need to work with small tasks first to determine how the group can and will function.

Question: How much technical support will be available? The Forest Service will provide specialists to assist in answering questions and to deal with issues as requested by the group.

Question: Will you provide us with numbers and statistics? The workgroup will need to first identify issues they wish to address. If necessary, the Forest Service will provide supporting data and information. It is important to first determine what the workgroup needs.

Question: Will our work product be a majority vote or a collaborative process? The level of collaboration will depend upon the composition of the work group.

Question: What will be done with our work product? The Forest Service will be getting information from many sources. There will be many ways to get involved with this process. Recommendations and alternatives developed by the workgroup that are legally defensible will be given consideration by the Forest Service.

Question: Will the product go to the Forest Supervisor for a decision? The Forest Supervisor and Rangers will be given updates regularly.

Question: Can suggestions and recommendations be prioritized by the location of folks providing input? Everyone will have an opportunity to provide comment and will receive equal consideration. Kim Johnson stated that the workgroups are designed to represent local interests and issues.

Question: Will there always be someone here from the Forest Service planning team? The work group should be self-directed. The Forest Service does not want to direct the process but will provide suggestions and guidance. Staff may provide clarification on specific issues to address timelines and the decision making process. District Rangers want to make sure that work groups are working on important issues that will benefit the Forest Plan revision process.

### **Kimberly- Comment Sheets**

Kim Johnson noted that access and recreation are very important issues with the Forest Plan Revision process.

Question: What was the Green Slip? The Forest Service historically sold timber with Green Sheets for small amounts of timber. It was a much faster process. The new categorical exclusions may speed up the current process.

Question: What is the 25% process? Twenty-five percent of timber receipts went to the local area ie...schools, government, etc....Now, an amount has been designated for each county and there is a process utilizing a committee, the Idaho Panhandle Resource Advisory Committee (RAC). They decide how timber receipt dollars are spent in the local area.

## **Gary – Existing documents**

Gary mentioned that there are several existing documents available for workgroup members to review during the workgroup process (Forest Plan, Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS), and St. Joe GA). Copies were available at the meeting. Other sources for the documents include the Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF) website, and compact discs (CD's). Workgroup members should decide what they would need for the process.

## **Gary – Revision Topics**

Gary presented the major areas that will be covered during the revision process. It will be important for the workgroup to decide what issues they will deal with and how.

## **Ervin – Creation of Workgroup.**

Comment: A workgroup member stated that the Forest Service should not be revising the Forest Plan alone. Public input is necessary.

Comment: There are many Forest Service management issues that need to be addressed ie...bug infestation, fuels, and fire potential. As a group we need to provide input to address these problems.

Comment: The Healthy Forest Initiative is extremely important and will hopefully improve the current situation on our Forests.

Question: What types of “products” will the workgroup be expected to produce? Workgroups should first establish priority issues and concerns for each GA. The first step will be simple. Establish the workgroup, meeting dates and locations, and then begin to address one issue that the group feels they can handle effectively.

Comment: Difficult to determine how often to meet without knowing what the task is? Some groups are meeting once a month. Other groups are meeting every two weeks to make up for the holidays. It will be up to the workgroup to establish meeting timelines.

Forest Service Question: Are there revision topics that people are interested in?

Comment: Wilderness areas are already established. What can we really do? The work group can still discuss management tools like letting fires burn in wilderness areas or how wilderness areas can be managed in the future.

Comment: Workgroup ideas and recommendations may not be implemented because of appeals and litigation. How do we avoid this?

Comment: Would like to see Idaho Fish and Game brought into this process early. The Forest Service is willing to involve other groups and agencies. Dave Spicer was notified about the meeting this evening.

Comment: Workgroup member from the U of I interested in making sure local community interests and problems are addressed during the Forest Plan Revision process.

Comment: People may not be available to attend all meetings. Meeting notes will be available on the website. Workgroup may decide to designate minute takers.

Everyone's time is limited. The workgroup may want to decide how to concentrate efforts on one or two key issues or revision topics. Everyone already knows or has an idea of what the current issues or problems are. Workgroups may be able to provide new ideas and recommendations to address problems and issues.

**What are interests of the potential workgroup members?** Workgroup members responded individually and presented top priorities

Access/recreation –all responded that this was important

Wildlife –four responses

Watersheds and Aquatic Species –5 responses

Timber Production –7 responses

Fire Risk –5

Vegetation – 4

IRA's and Wilderness - 4

**Conclusion:** Group is interested in and wants to work on all revision topics and wishes to establish a workgroup.

**Meeting Date: November 20<sup>th</sup>.**

**Time: 7:00 pm**

**Location: St. Maries, Idaho**

**HOMEWORK Suggestion:** Workgroup members will need to read the AMS and the GA packet before the next meeting.

Question: Will workgroup welcome new members? Yes.

Suggestion. New members should not be involved after the first two or three meetings. There was no support for this suggestion from the workgroup members present. Some members felt that new members would be important to the process and should be able to catch up by reviewing meeting notes.

Comment: Forest Service facilitators and resource people would be helpful for the workgroup process. Forest Service facilitators will remain neutral. They will not be making decisions but will keep the meeting moving forward with the agenda.

Question: Is there a Forest logging operation or harvest that has not been appealed or been through the litigation process? Yes, the 2003 Whitehouse Christmas tree cutting in Idaho.

Question: What will be the topics for the next meeting? The Forest Service will try to get something out to the group for the next meeting. Workgroup members need to review the

existing information and handouts (AMS, GA, and Forest Plan). Everyone needs to review these documents to have similar backgrounds for future discussions.

Comment: Work group member stressed importance of having Idaho Fish and Game at next meeting. Individual feels that the Forest Service and Fish and Game are not working together as well as they should. Dave Spicer may be a good person to have at the next meeting.

Comment: Materials provided at the meeting should have hole punches for 3 ring notebook. Some Workgroup members will be putting together workbooks.

Note: A workbook will be maintained with all materials so that if new person comes to meeting they can be given the notebook and brought up to speed.

End Meeting at approximately 9:10 pm.