

08/30/05 (Tuesday)

IPNF Forest Plan Meeting  
Elks Lodge, St. Maries, ID

**Working Group Members:** Dan Wise, Joe Epler, Dale Dimico, Dave Spicer, Neil Smith, Bernie Lionberger, Dan Hanks, John Walters, Bryce Coulter, Dave Brummer, Ed Spooner, Mike Minier, Dick Harwood, Blair Peet.

**Public Attendance:** Mike Gee, Jeff Shippy, Elon Gilbert, Susan Miller, Chad Short, Shellie Schaffer, Ed and Elizabeth White, Nakkii and Peisis White, Doug Harwood, Rick Haeg, Troy Sibert, Karen and Fred Sindt, Dick McEwan, Christina Coll, Marty Marguards, Jim Schwartzman, Ronald Derry, Loy Christensen, Lance Cordle, Ken and Michelle Becktel, Tom Weems, Charles Grubbs, Ken Schiermeister, Jim Hansen, Lawrence Derry, Richard Schnebly, Christina and Blake Minier, Don St. George, Randy Harpole, Debbie Dustin, Tony Rothauge, Tom and Natilie Christensen, Glen Talbott, John Kennon, Gene Peet, Jeremy Brebner, Bill Barben, Ward and Bonnie Morris, Kristi and Rick Reaves, Don Capparelli, Dave Overman, David O'Brian, Robert McDonald, Bud Harvey, Larry Wright, and Paula Spooner.

**Forest Service Representatives:** Chuck Mark, District Ranger, Jodi Kramer, Forest Plan Revision Public Affairs, Kent Wellner, Forest Recreation Planner, Carolyn Upton, Forest Planner, Cornie Hudson, St. Joe District NEPA Coordinator, Mary Price, District Recreation Program Manager, Tracy Gravelle, District Trails Coordinator, Denise Best (Note taker), District Recreation.

Agenda was reviewed.

Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA): Carolyn Upton provided an overview.

Final state petition for IRA passes responsibility to the states on how National Forest system lands will be managed. State will submit recommendations to the Governor and there will be a determination of whether or not this recommendation will be incorporated.

The State of Idaho has asked the counties to gather information from the communities. County Commissioners will be holding public meetings in September. Shoshone County has lots of roadless lands, Benewah County not much.

The State of Idaho petition goes to Washington D.C. by November of 2006. The Secretary of Agriculture will convene a 12 member national advisory committee. That committee makes recommendation on whether the petition meets the criteria and requirements for petition content. The Secretary of Agriculture makes a determination. If a state does not petition, management direction goes back to the Forest Plan in effect at that time.

Question – What can supercede this rule? Response: Litigation: the rule and implementation of the rule could be litigated.

Discussion: If Forest Plan (FP) revision was completed and there were changes adopted through the IRA petition, the FS would have to adapt the FP based on the IRA rule. Discussion: Dick Harwood provided information on rulemaking in Congress.

Question – Could Secretary of Agriculture turn management of the lands over to the State? Response: Have not heard anything to that effect.

Question – If Governor decides not to petition, do we revert to original Forest Plan or...?

Response: It would revert to whatever Forest Plan is in place at the date of signing.

The Governor of Washington has decided not to petition. He is working in cooperation with the FS in the Forest Plan process.

Wild and Scenic & Recreational River status: Mary Price provided an overview.

To qualify a river must be free flowing, and must have outstanding remarkable values, i.e. scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, etc.

The St. Joe River is currently designated from Avery to the headwaters.

The Little North Fork of the Clearwater was listed as eligible in the 1987 FP with 10 miles as eligible for Recreation and 24 miles eligible for Wild status.

In the current review, Marble Creek was listed as proposed for Recreational status because of its historic value.

Once eligible the agency protects the free flowing characteristics, water quality and the outstanding values. Only Congress can designate a Wild, Scenic or Recreational River.

Three categories:

1. Wild – backcountry, no roads, can have trails but normally non-motorized. If there was established motorized use, you could have motorized activity.
2. Scenic – largely primitive, with roads and can have some development.
3. Recreational– may have development, i.e. roads, trails, and developed campgrounds.

Comments: There was concern that anytime there is a piece of land that gets designation the public loses.

Response: Marble Creek is eligible as Recreational River category. We can feature historic uses, continue access, it is a protection measure, stream cannot be dammed up, we can still harvest timber.

Suggestion: Research status of Potlatch Corporation having outstanding water rights on Marble Creek.

Discussion about the working group process - how individual vs. group voices vs. lobbyists are heard, number of votes, etc. Response: This is not a voting process. A group this large with varied interests is not likely to reach consensus. The Ranger and Forest Supervisor will review local, regional, and national comments for substance and rationale for reasonable decisions.

Meeting minutes from 08/29/05 were reviewed.

Correction on page 2, item 2, which proposed extending the Mallard Larkins Pioneer Area boundary north to Surveyors Ridge. Added to it- Surveyors Ridge Road 395 would remain open to motorized or use that road as the northern boundary.

Question: On fires in Wilderness areas – what happens?

Response: A site-specific analysis is done. There are a variety of options from full suppression to allowing fire to burn.

There was discussion about the Planning Rule, which requires the FS to look at each IRA and analyze it for Wilderness characteristics.

Question: Who will maintain trails if they become non-motorized?

Discussion continued without a response.

Comment: Forest Service should have the ability for emergency closures to protect wildlife, etc.

Response: The FS does have that ability now.

Correction: There is a typo error in KIPZ document titled: “What we heard From the St. Joe Geographic Area (GA) Workgroup, dated 7/20/2005. On page 4 re: Nelson & Dunn Peak, the proposed Management Activity should state “Emphasize motorized use”.

Question: On sustainable yield. Is there an ASQ?

Response: Cannot know all factors that will affect harvest. The FS will calculate a number of Timber Sale Quantity, based on the final Forest Plan map.

What is the difference between timber harvest and regulated timber production?

“Regulated Timber Production” is scheduled vegetation management/ timber harvest.

“Timber Harvest” would take place in areas with insect infestations, fire-kill, emergency situations, etc.

Question: Are mining industries input represented?

Response: There was no one in the room representing mining. Mining is addressed in the Forest Plan.

## **WORKING GROUP PROPOSALS:**

### **Wild, Scenic and Recreational Rivers**

**Proposal:** No additional designation to any river other than those already existing.

*Rationale:*

*-The Wild and Scenic designation is detrimental to wildlife.*

*-A tag/name on a river changes the scope. It places it into a category of change that is inappropriate to the people of Idaho.*

*-The area is usually larger than 1/4 mile designation and affects timber.*

*-Loss of motorized access.*

*-By not designating those rivers for Wild, Scenic or Recreational status, it assures motorized access.*

*-Concern about “way of life”.*

**Proposal:** Maintain Wild, Scenic, or Recreational designations as shown on the Starting Option map and assure that the existing motorized use continues.

*Rational:*

*-The rivers meet all criteria for eligibility.*

*-Maintaining access is a local concern.*

*-Allows access to good sections of rivers for fishing, recreation.*

**Proposal:** Do not propose any more Wilderness.

*Rationale:*

*-Congress is not designating Wilderness, why continue to propose it? It is a waste of time and money.*

**Proposal:** Propose that Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries be shown on the Forest Visitor map.

*Rationale: It is important for the public to know where the boundaries are.*

### **Timber Harvest**

**Proposal:** Move 6a (General Forest-Low Intensity Restoration) and 6b (General Forest – Moderate Intensity Restoration) into the 6c (General Forest – High Intensity Restoration) designation. (Emphasize timber production on highly productive sites at mid-elevation).

*Rationale:*

- Quote from “What We Heard From the St. Joe Geographic Area (GA) Workgroup”, 2005 Starting Option Public Meetings, Page 3, 7/20/2005:

*“Desired condition is to use timber harvest as a tool to achieve many objectives including healthy forest composition and structure; reduced fire risk; sustained utilization of wood resources and economic stability; improved wildlife habitat; maintenance of existing roads; and to provide funds for watershed improvement activities. Specific priorities for the St. Joe GA included sustainable timber harvest, timely, legal, and profitable salvage harvest, protecting vegetative, aquatic and terrestrial habitat.”*

*-Would not want to see any portion of the timber base not get maximum management because of its designation. The FS has to follow NEPA, Old Growth requirements, INFISH, 303D listed streams, etc. “I don’t think you guys could screw up the environment if you tried.”*

**Proposal:** Provide that one of the products of the Forest Plan is an ASQ.

*Rationale:*

*-Economic security*

*-Quote from St. Joe Geographic Area, Timber Production, Desired Condition Statement from 2/10/04 Draft, page 3:*

*“Create a reliable and realistic timber production program to improve and maintain local economies and forest health.*

*Manage the forest profitably in a pro-active manner to prevent disease, fire, insects, and other disasters and respond aggressively when encountered. Ensure that this process is timely, legal and profitable.*

*Capture mortality areas before they have lost marketability (two years).*

*While protecting beneficial uses, minimize land in stream buffers and inventoried roadless areas to maximize available timber and multiple use opportunities.”*

**Proposal:** Propose to retain 5a (Backcountry – Non-motorized) & 5b (Backcountry) designations as they are in the Starting Option.

*Rationale:*

*-The Travel Management Plan will deal with specifics of access.*

*- The a and b designations provide a specific flavor for that piece of Backcountry.*

**Proposal:** Propose a classification of 5a (Backcountry Non-motorized) that allows motorized winter recreation. (Similar to Kootenai’s 5c)

**Proposal:** Propose to change the label “5a (Backcountry Non-motorized)” to “Backcountry Limited-Motorized”.

**Proposal:** Propose that 5a (Backcountry Non-Motorized) and 5b (Backcountry) have “cherry stem” system, allowing existing roads and trails for winter and summer use.

**Proposal:** Regarding the area NE of Heller Cr, St. Joe River: change from 5a (Backcountry Non-motorized) to 5b (Backcountry), allowing summer and winter motorized use.

*Rationale:*

- The area is currently motorized with low use and minimal impact.*
- The majority of the St. Joe GA is multiple-use. There is a balance between motorized and non-motorized activities as they exist today.*

The next meeting is planned for February, after the draft plan is released.

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