



Summary of Public Comments and Public Involvement

We would like to take this opportunity to provide you with a brief summary of where we've been and where we're heading in regards to how you've been involved, how we're using your comments, and how we will continue to involve you and utilize your comments in developing our revised Forest Plans.

From April 30, 2002 to May 31, 2004, we had extensive involvement from many of you, through comments that were submitted during the scoping process and through the workgroups work on Geographic Area Desired Conditions. The Revision Team carefully reviewed all of the public comments and workgroup input, summarized and considered it in development of components of the draft Forest Plans. The review of all public input has resulted in many products, including:

- What We Heard From Workgroups- comments that focused on Desired Condition (attached to this page)
- Scoping Comment Summary (Scoping Content Analysis and Summary Document – at www.fs.fed.us/kipz)
- Complete Summary of Workgroup comments (available upon request)

Your input validated the seven revision topics identified in the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS), and provided information for desired conditions and other components of the Forest Plan. The attached document is a summary, which reflects workgroup and other public comments that were specific to Desired Conditions on each Forest and/or Geographic Area. As part of the Forest Plan components, a summary of our public involvement activities, as well as how the team and the decision-makers considered these comments will be developed.

On May 12, 2005, our planning process changed when the Regional Forester made a decision for our two Forests to use the new 2005 Planning Rule. What didn't change is that all of your comments and hard work by the workgroups over the past two years is still helpful to us in developing the components of the revised Forest Plans. Workgroup input, as well as public, agency, and tribal comments, will continue to be used by the Forest Supervisors and the KIPZ team to build and refine the following plan new components:

- Desired Conditions
- Strategy, which includes the Objectives
- Design Criteria, which includes the Guidelines
- Special areas and Suitable Uses

We cannot thank you, the public, enough for your extensive participation in making the past efforts a wonderful example of collaboration. In fact, the willingness of all participants (workgroups, public and the KIPZ Team) to be communicative, responsive, and to promote an active exchange of information, desires, and ideas has brought us to these meetings where we can start talking about the Starting Option map. We hope you will continue to work with us!



DESIRED CONDITIONS SUMMARY

CLARK GEOGRAPHIC AREA WORKGROUP

From August 2003 through May 2004, there were Workgroup meetings in which people discussed their Desired Conditions for a specific Geographic Area or the Forest. The attached Summary:

- **ONLY** reflects the workgroup comments and letters received during the scoping period that were specific to Desired Conditions on each Forest and/or Geographic Area.
- Is **NOT** a draft of the Desired Condition statements for the revised Forest Plans. This Summary is one source of information the team is using to write the Desired Conditions, both at the Forest and Geographic Area levels. We are using other information to help write the Desired Conditions (ie. Starting Option map after the public has submitted changes; specialists on-the-ground knowledge; and laws, regulations and policies we must adhere to)
- Is **one piece** of our Content Analysis of the scoping and workgroup comments. Some of the comments submitted during the Workgroup meetings and public comment process that are not addressed in the attached summary have been addressed in one or more of the following ways:
 - Incorporated into the following management direction areas: goals, objectives, guidelines, management areas/suitability, special areas, and starting option.
 - May be analyzed at the site-specific project level, where appropriate. Some comment address topics that are outside the scope of the Forest Plan revision process but that are still a Forest Service issue. However through the Forest Plan process, Management Area (MA) allocation and/or direction may or may not allow consideration of this opportunity. For example, Forest Plans will classify all National Forest System (NFS) lands as either suitable for motorized or non-motorized uses for both summer and winter seasons. Through subsequent Travel Management planning and public involvement, decisions will be made regarding individual road and trail management.
 - Addressed by laws, regulations or National and Regional Forest Service policies and are not repeated in the Forest Plan. Other comments are outside Forest Service authority and/or outside the scope of Forest Plan Revision.
- Reflects **areas of general agreement**, where possible, regarding Desired Condition statements. This does not mean these statements reflect consensus on any particular issue as this was not the goal of these meetings and it also was not a voting exercise. They simply identify areas of discussion in which general agreement occurred between the participants that attended that particular meeting.
 - IPNFs workgroups used a process called the Nominal Group Technique to help participants determine areas of general agreement within the revision topics.
 - KNF workgroups did not use this process but some workgroups did reach general agreement on some of the revision topics. However, some of the revision topics in some of the workgroups only reflect a range of desires for management.
- Consists of some Desired Condition statements that are “how to” statements instead of reflecting the condition that the group wants to see on the land or resource conditions. For example, the comment focuses on what silviculture treatments the Forest Service should use, what road improvement activities the Forest Service should implement, etc. The “how to” statements will not be included in the Desired Condition statements in the Revised Forest Plans. In general, the Forest Plan will emphasize what the Desired Condition is and leave it to project implementation to determine the appropriate tools to use to move the area toward the Desired Condition.

WHAT WE HEARD FROM THE Clark Geographic Area (GA) Workgroup

The input in the following desired condition summaries sometimes reflect areas of general agreement but in some cases they reflect a range of desires for a specific concern statement within a revision topic. For example, within the revision topic *Timber Production*, concern statements related to the question, “*What do you see as appropriate objectives for timber harvest on NFS lands?*” may vary from a desire to utilize harvest for a range of management objectives (fuels reduction, local economies, etc.) to the desire to harvest only trees on the ground and diseased trees.

REVISION TOPIC – VEGETATION

Desired condition is to have an accessible, productive, healthy forest with balanced structure and diverse species composition. Tools available to achieve this desired condition include, but are not limited to timber management; prescribed fire; fire use, noxious weed treatment, and public awareness/education programs. Specific areas of concern for the Clark GA included the continued health, maintenance, and management of old growth stands, riparian vegetation, and utilization of current data as it relates to climatic trends.

Commenters stated concern for the health and management of old growth stands in the Clark GA and climatic trends (reference paper by Dan Farge) relative to the AMS for the *Revision of the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle Forest Plans*, March 2003, report.

REVISION TOPIC – FIRE

Desired condition includes a forest trend toward a more fire-tolerant stand composition while maintaining reasonable access (roads and trails) for fire suppression and evacuation purposes. Specifically within:

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

Management activities should include protecting and restoring WUI by reducing fuels near communities. Specific suggestions for accomplishing this included stewardship logging and prescribed fire activities.

Wildland Fire Use Areas (WFUA)

Utilize natural fire to achieve fuels reduction and restore/establish natural fire regimes to NFS lands, IRAs, and Wilderness areas. When appropriate, utilize a Fire Management plan.

General Forest Areas

Reduce heightened fire risk presented by the existing species structure and composition through fuel reduction activities. Specific priorities, by drainage, are:

- High priority – Elk, Pilgrim, Trout, Blue, Bull and Swamp
- Moderate priority – Martin, Whitepine, Beaver, Little Beaver, and Rock
- Low Priority – Stevens, McKay, and Vermilion

REVISION TOPIC – TIMBER PRODUCTION

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 included historical structure, species diversity, protecting vegetative and aquatic habitat, no clearcuts (was general desired but a point was made that sometimes clearcuts are the best treatment), use of prescribed fire only when timber harvest would be inappropriate, and adhering to the letter and intent of The Organic Act of 1897.

Priority areas for selective timber harvest include: A) Smeads/Rice - Commercial selective logging, to include thinning of the existing regenerated clearcuts; B) Blue/Fat Sale; C) Soldier Gulch Sale; and D) Increase the number of small salvage sales (of overstocked stands, diseased stands or stands where fire should be reintroduced).

REVISION TOPIC – WATERSHEDS AND AQUATIC SPECIES

Desired condition addresses two major issues **Watershed Restoration (to include water quality/quantity and soil productivity)** and **Fisheries**.

Desired condition for **watershed restoration** to be properly functioning, healthy and have the ability to provide high-quality water flows into the Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Reservoirs and healthy habitat for aquatic and riparian species. Specifically watershed restoration projects should be designed to:

- Minimize the spread and impact of invasive species through public education, monitoring and interpretive signs).
- Incorporate interagency efforts (e.g., LCF Watershed Councils, MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Green Mountain Conservation District, and Avista) to identify and develop solutions for degraded areas.
- Integrate priorities with wildlife and fish (to include westslope cutthroat and bull trout habitat).
- Prioritize federal and private lands (specifically affected by management actions) in drainages with 303(d) listed waterbodies.
- Prioritize watershed restoration in Elk, Rock, Whitepine, Bull, Trout, and Pilgrim watersheds.
- Prioritize funding for watershed projects.
- Monitoring of restoration projects.
- Provide assistance with NEPA and permits for watershed projects.
- Development of restoration projects that can utilize Title II (RAC) funding.

REVISION TOPIC – IRAS AND PROPOSED WILDERNESS AREAS

The desired condition in the Clark GA for management of Inventoried Roadless Areas includes:

Criteria for IRAs Recommended for Wilderness Designation

Other areas of emphasis include remaining roadless areas to remain roadless and “motorless.”

Which IRAs Proposed for Wilderness

Specific suggestions for IRAs to propose for Wilderness include: Wilderness designation: Scotchman Peaks - all 55,000 acres in MT down to within 200 yards of private property; Trout Creek Roadless Area - all of it except the specific area around Bloom Peak that the CFGA excluded for winter snowmobile use; McKay Creek - the entire 15,378 acres; and consensus was only on Scotchman Peaks. A part of the group suggested the following for proposed wilderness: Galena - 19,300 acres; Cataract - 25,440 acres; Allen Peak - 29,587 acres; Chippewa - 2,300 acres.

Management of IRAs Not Proposed for Wilderness Designation

Management of IRAs not proposed for Wilderness designation included managing as general forest areas (to include harvest and motorized uses).

Management of Proposed Wilderness Areas

Management should include continued primitive skills, development of a management plan within five years of designation, continuation of winter and summer recreation uses (motorized and mechanized) on established roads and trails, forest maintenance (including prescribed burning), development of Wildland Fire Use plan, and “Backcountry” designation for IRAs that do not meet criteria of 1964 Wilderness Act.

REVISION TOPIC – ACCESS AND RECREATION

It is important to note that the revised Forest Plan will classify all National Forest System (NFS) lands as either suitable for motorized uses or suitable for non-motorized uses for both summer and winter seasons. The Forest Plan will not make individual road and trail decisions. Travel Management Plans and project level planning will make individual roads and trails decisions. Travel management plans will be based, in part, on information in the Forest Plans, specifically: (1) the motorized/non-motorized designations found in the Management Areas, and (2) the desired conditions for the Geographic Areas. These two items from the Forest Plan will be the foundation of the Travel Management Plan.

General Access and Recreation desired conditions include the following:

- Conduct a wildlife study of Bloom Peak riding area for T&E species, especially wolverine denning.
- Inventory potential access and recreation sites for future planning purposes.
- Increased handicapped accessible recreation use areas.
- Monitor effects of certain recreation uses in the Clark GA (e.g., horse traffic on St. Paul Lake Trail).
- Maintain access to all trails (including formerly listed trails). Maintenance should include promoting appropriate vegetation, watershed quality, and recreation use safety.
- Access roads to trailheads will remain open.
- Maintain access to Snowshoe Lake and Little Ibex Lake upper trails as manways to limit access.
- Develop maintenance plan for the trail to Dad Peak.
- Individually review roads and trails (including cross-country ski and snowmobile trails) for recreational needs prior to closing and only those that may cause significant adverse effects to critical wildlife habitat, resource damage, and/or where there is a conflict human/horse/machine interaction and/or disturbance.

Prioritize opening the following gated roads:

1. Open FS #2278 (Lost Girl) and #2289 (Snake Creek Pass) for berry picking and firewood gathering in August and September;
2. Spur roads on Fatman for firewood gathering;
3. FS #2735 and 215 - Grays Gulch year-round for various uses. Year-round access would allow this to be used as an evacuation route for the residents in this drainage.
4. FS #2257/2222 – Sex Peak loop road from April through October, then opened for snowmobiling during winter months;
5. Elk Lake (Vermilion) open to ATV use and Cabinet Ridge Riders would agree to maintain the trail and area around Elk Lake;
6. Canyon Creek (Vermilion) left open to ATV travel;
7. Open FS #2744 (West Fork Pilgrim) for seasonal firewood gathering;
8. Open FS #2220 (Swamp Creek power line road) for seasonal firewood gathering; and
9. Temporarily open all logging units for firewood gathering following project completion.

Summer Motorized

Desired condition for summer motorized access includes increased access for ATV use on the Cabinet Ranger District.

Winter Motorized

Desired condition for winter motorized access includes maintaining existing use policies, accurate travel maps/plans, road closures, and an increase in designated areas and the specific suggestions to:

- Retain current level of access (e.g., Bloom Peak bowls, Galena, Cataract; Allen Peak; Barren Creek; Cabinet Face East and West; Maple Peak; Lower Trout Creek; Devils Gap; Rock Creek; Government Mountain; and Scotchman Peak.
- Maintain existing situation pertaining to snowmobile access to the Bloom Peak bowls.
- Consider opportunities for more designated groomed trails for snowmobiling.

Winter Non-motorized

Desired condition for winter non-motorized access includes development of additional cross-country ski opportunities in conjunction with the Cabinet Ranger District.

Motorized, Wheeled Cross-Country Travel

Desired condition for motorized, wheeled cross-country access includes utilization of the management strategy issued the OHV EIS.

Developed Recreation Facilities

Desired condition for developed recreation facilities is for improvement, expansion and restoration of existing facilities. Develop and utilize partnerships (e.g., Avista Corporation, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks) to aid in the development and maintenance of access and recreational sites.

Special Forest Products

Desired conditions for special forest products is for maintaining and enforcement of current regulations related to the special forest products permit system for huckleberries, mushrooms, rock picking, grazing, and firewood gathering. Specific suggestions included a desire for sustained crops of huckleberries and mushrooms in the future.

REVISION TOPIC – WILDLIFE

Desired condition addresses **wildlife habitat** concerns. Specific **wildlife habitat** concerns include managing vegetation for both habitat and security needs; monitoring habitats and populations; providing quality snags and down woody debris; mechanical treatment of old clearcut areas that were not replanted (e.g., southeast side of Gem Peak) restoring and maintaining T&E habitat; maintaining habitat for huntable populations of elk and deer; and developing and maintaining habitat linkages and corridors. Vegetation management tools for these purposes include, but are not limited to thinning, integrated timber management practices, fuels reduction, prescribed burning.

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Desired condition is to protect and preserve remaining fire lookout and guard station structures for their value as historic assets and as opportunities to contribute to the economic well-being of local communities. Suggested structures include Seven Point, Berry Mountain, Gem Peak, Sex Peak, Star Peak, Minton Peak, and Bull River Guard Station on the Cabinet Ranger District.

INFORMATION, INTERPRETATION, VOLUNTEERS, AND EDUCATION

Desired condition is to develop and utilize community partnerships/volunteer programs for assistance with trail maintenance (e.g., Adopt-A-Trail program). Specific suggestions include the development of a school volunteer program that could be used to clear trails (e.g., Lolo NF and Lewis and Clark NF) and accurate signs throughout the Cabinet Ranger District, corrected Kootenai National Forest map and recreation travel maps (e.g., shading overlaps on Travel map - Eight Mile Peak/Jew Peak/Black peak trail in Trout Creek area).