

Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests (KIPZ)  
Forest Plan Revision  
Priest GA Meeting

August 16, 2005  
1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Public Attendees: 18

The meeting purpose was to: review the starting option (map and management area guidelines) with the public; discuss concerns and recommendations; and validate support for the starting option or recommendations offered. Based on input from an earlier public meeting the maps had been revised with additional landmarks and section lines for better orientation. The notes and forms that follow reflect discussions from the meeting.

The meeting began with District Ranger Kathy Murphy greeting the group and introductions by all. Forest Service personnel in attendance included Forest Supervisor Ranotta McNair, IPNF Ecosystem Staff Officer Carolyn Upton and others from the district and forest headquarters. The meeting was facilitated by Jodi Kramer of the KIPZ Planning Team, Kathy Murphy and Carolyn Upton. The meeting had been advertised to end at 3 p.m. but by consensus from the attendees it was extended to 4 p.m. Attendees were oriented to the working materials (handouts and maps) to be used during the meeting. These included the starting option and other maps/overlays for grizzly bear and caribou recovery areas and identified snowmobile routes/play areas.

Initial time was spent discussing concerns that had surfaced in other GA meetings regarding Backcountry management areas 5a and 5b. Similar concerns were expressed here on the definitions and how areas were identified for this MA, the suitable activities within these MA's and the use of exceptions applied in various locations. This also led to a discussion on the strategic nature of the Forest Plan and the role of existing travel restrictions, which will remain until future travel management decisions are made. Points brought out by attendees on **Backcountry MA 5a and 5b** included:

- MA 5a/5b was not explained clearly and appears mapped inconsistently across GA's.
- Consider dropping the a/b split, because it is site specific and not appropriate in Forest Planning.
- Make one MA5 backcountry designation.
- If there were only one MA5 – could make variety of trail use designations in Travel Planning – by type of use.
- Keep current approach of open unless designated closed and do study of closures when issues arise (site specific).
- Recognize that due to vegetation, terrain, grizzly restrictions, etc. many large polygons called “motorized” are not actually accessible (i.e. they are non-motorized).
- Focus specific decisions (routes) on specific reasons (wildlife).
- Backcountry definition is needed.
- On other open system roads, the forest default should be closed to vehicles, not open.
- Unroaded areas adjacent to MA 5s, 2s and 1s should be added to the 5 category.
- Consider using starting map tools as is. They're good the way they are.
- Need clarification on seasonal 5s? Motorized/non-motorized by season?

- Concern about flexibility of plan to adapt to future changed conditions such as grizzly recovery.
- Economic impact of Forest Plan decision needs to be considered.
- Noise and lack of noise is a concern.
- Logging issues in 5a/5b should be discussed for economical development, road support and fuels issues.
- Some areas of 5a/b should be change to MA 7.

General agreement could not be reached on any of the recommendations to change MA5 areas.

The next topic discussed was the **Proposed Wilderness area MA1b**. Kathy explained the starting option map, the area proposed in the 1987 plan and the recommendation for change being made by district staff. Recommendations and concerns regarding the starting option included:

- Anything that already has existing roads is not conducive to 1b.
- For every “5” area contiguous of proposed wilderness, these all should be incorporated into 1b.
- Do not include the 5s into 1b.
- Do not like the starting option proposal. Do not add any acres of 1b to the 1987 allocation. The additional acres to the proposed wilderness in the starting option should be MA5.
- Additional proposed wilderness should be a MA7. All the 5a/5b should be MA7.
- Concern about how to manage proposed wilderness. Don’t manage areas as wilderness while still in proposed wilderness status. Should stay as currently managed until Congress designates.
- Don’t add any more wilderness or proposed wilderness.
- Concern if fires start in wilderness, are not managed and goes onto State land, is the Federal Government going to reimburse the State for lost resources?
- Proposed wilderness needs to be managed and shouldn’t be limited under proposed wilderness management.
- Desire an open route from Priest to Bonners Ferry, for vehicles or mountain bikes.
- Stay with 1987 proposed wilderness.
- Change all 5s and some other MAs more comparable to current use.
- Change all 5s to 1b.
- Agree with starting option proposal.
- Change additional proposed wilderness to MA5.

General agreement could not be reached on any of the recommendations to change MA1b areas.

The topic of **Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic Rivers MA 2b** was next. Only the proposed Upper Priest Area was discussed and the following points and recommendations documented:

- Entire Upper Priest River should be wild instead of ½ wild and ½ scenic. The rationale is differences in suitable uses and the wild designation being more restrictive.
- Upper Priest River – the 2 designations are not clear.
- Issue is how does the existing road/trail impact or not impact the suitability call on wild or scenic because the road goes through both the scenic and wild section of the river.
- Concern is if lower section is scenic, would it allow motorized trail? Not desired for this use.
- Follow-up – Kent Wellner-FS needs to determine what’s applicable, based on the eligibility analysis that was completed. He’ll review the evaluation.
- Don’t change the proposal of ½ wild and ½ scenic. Be responsive to agency guidance for evaluation of rivers and avoid precedence that would be set by deviating from it.

General agreement could not be reached on any of the recommendations to change MA2b areas.

## Suggested Changes to Starting Option Map

<u>Information Needed</u>	<u>Meeting Attendees Information</u>
<b>Geographic Area or Public Meeting Location and Date</b>	<b>Priest Lake 8/16/2005</b>
<b>Proposed Change (Include the Starting Option proposal and the Proposed Change)</b>  <b>In addition, indicate the "Issue" that you are addressing with the Proposed Change</b>	<b>Have one management area for "5"</b>  <b>Issues: Site specific decisions on motorized use will be made in travel planning.</b>
<b>Rationale or Criteria for your Proposed Change</b>	<b>Concern that 5a/5b split makes site specific decision not appropriate to Forest Plan</b>  <b>Site specific closures or decisions need specific analysis of issues such as wildlife, vegetation conditions, terrain.</b>
<b>What are the tradeoffs by your proposed change?</b>	<b>Two different approaches to 5s:</b> <b>1. Open to motorized unless specifically closed</b> <b>2. Other than open system roads, forest should be closed to motorized use.</b>
<b>Group Discussion – Discuss areas of Agreement and areas of Disagreement</b>	<b>Not group agreement on having one "MA5".</b> <b>Alternate Proposal to retain 5a/5b</b>

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<p><b>Proposed Change (Include the Starting Option proposal and the Proposed Change)</b></p> <p><b>In addition, indicate the “Issue” that you are addressing with the Proposed Change</b></p>	<p><b>Recommended Wilderness:</b></p> <p><b>1. Additional proposed wilderness moves back to current Forest Management (87 Forest Plan)</b></p>
<b>Rationale or Criteria for your Proposed Change</b>	<p><b>1. Do not need additional wilderness</b></p> <p><b>2. More flexibility for mechanical use and motorized access; vegetation, fire suppression and wildlife management; and forest health.</b></p> <p><b>3. Congress isn’t acting on wilderness in Idaho</b></p>
<b>What are the tradeoffs by your proposed change?</b>	<p><b>1. Proposal equals current management so there is no trade-off.</b></p> <p><b>2. Loss of proposed wilderness from starting option.</b></p>
<b>Group Discussion – Discuss areas of Agreement and areas of Disagreement</b>	<p><b>Group is split in agreement on proposed wilderness. Group agreed further discussion would not reach agreement on any of the six recommended wilderness issues captured on flip chart notes.</b></p>

Prior to concluding the meeting, **unfinished topics** were identified that attendees wanted to discuss. These will be discussed at an additional meeting August 23<sup>rd</sup> and include:

- Timber harvest and where it's considered suitable.
- MA 6 suitable uses and allocations.
- Hughes Fork – Eligible and Suitable Wild and Scenic River segment
- Areas of MA6 adjacent to MA5
- Creating a connected wildlife corridor between Selkirk and Salmo.
- How Travel Plan meetings will be handled with the community.
- Further discussion on MA 5a/5bs.
- More information on how area MA determinations were made.

Two items were deferred to other GA meetings but may be discussed on the 23<sup>rd</sup> if time permits.

These include:

- Questions about the 4a area in the West Fork in the Lower Kootenai GA. (Call Mike Herrin, Bonners District Ranger 267-6701).
- Selkirk 1b proposed wilderness area. To be discussed at Sandpoint meeting 8/22/05 from 6:00 P.M. – 9 P.M. at Federal Building.

**Next meeting will be held at the Priest Lake Ranger Station Cookhouse on August 23, 2005 from 6:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.**