

Forest Plan Revision Meeting
August 22, 2005
Sandpoint Ranger District

Facilitator: Jodi Kramer

FS Attendees: Dick Kramer, Greg Hetzler, Dave Lux, Joe Madison, Dave Roberts, Don Gunter, Carolyn Upton and Ranotta McNair

Public: See sign-in sheets.

Notetaker: Joe Madison

The intent of this meeting is to continue to work through the issues and possible changes to the Forest Plan Management Areas and Starting Option map that were discussed at the last meeting.

Notes:

(The following bullet list is intended to capture the emphasis of the discussions)

- Dick Kramer (Sandpoint District Ranger) welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted that the National Forest is public land that belongs to all of us regardless of how long you have lived in the area and appreciates everyone's participation.
- A quick recap of the previous meeting was done stating that after discussing at length a proposal in the Packsaddle area, the group decided to move on and look at the wilderness areas. Dick Kramer briefly went over the various maps displayed around the room and called attention to the maps displaying the differences between the 1987 proposed wilderness boundaries and the forest plan revision proposed wilderness boundaries. One of the maps displayed the wilderness boundaries along with aerial photos and pointed out the logging and roading that has occurred in the area.
- Jodi Kramer (Forest Plan Revision Team Public Involvement Coordinator/Writer Editor) did a quick reminder of the ground rules that the group had agreed upon at the last meeting and then opened up the meeting for discussion.
- **General Proposal #1 - A participant proposed that Management Area (MA) 5a and MA 5b be lumped together to form MA 5 with motorized use where it was appropriate. Another participant added that MA 5 should be maintained in a primitive condition with motorized use where appropriate. Jodi Kramer clarified that only through travel management planning will any of the current direction be changed/modified, despite what's in the forest plan.**
 - A show of hands was conducted on General Proposal #1. The results were mixed with the majority of the group in favor of the proposal. Therefore no consensus was reached.
- Another participant wants the language for MA5 to state that motorized travel would be allowed everywhere except where it is not appropriate or there have been problems. There should no site-specific closures until after an attempt has been made to fix the problem.
- Dick Kramer clarified that the proposal is not a lot different than the way we manage now. He used grizzly bear motorized restrictions and other issues that require the closure of motorized routes as examples. He then discussed the damage to a meadow from ATV's and the need for an emergency closure.
- Question: What is the condition of the meadow now? Response: The closure signs have been repeatedly shot and replaced. Damage to the meadow is still apparent and will be evident for a long time.

- A participant wanted to follow the workgroup process and hear the rationale for allowing motorized use everywhere except for where it wasn't appropriate.
- The rationale for allowing motorized use except where it was inappropriate was given that the Forest is open now to cross country travel and the decision to close the forest during the forest plan process was done without much public input so it should be reverted back to the way it is now. It was too great of a change closing off large areas to motorized use without the appropriate documentation and/or justification.
- The rationale for combining MA 5a and MA 5b was stated that it was very confusing and controversial to the public and should be consolidated.
- The comment was made that these issues are too site specific for this process and should be done in the travel plan.
- Question: Under the current management, would the meadow be open until the damage was done? Response: Yes
- Dick Kramer stated that there is a new OHV (Off Highway Vehicle) rule in the works that may eliminate cross-country travel and he anticipates a decision on this rule in the near future.
- A participant stated that it would be helpful to have a clearer definition of what MA 5 would mean. What is meant by "inappropriate" and "appropriate"?
- Dick Kramer clarified that all issues/changes in access management would have to go through a NEPA process. All applicable laws and regulations for a particular piece of ground in question would be followed. Motorized restrictions in grizzly bear habitat, elk security, other listed species with specific management strategies, and resource damage are all tools that would aid in the decision of whether or not a particular activity was appropriate or inappropriate. Emergency closures do not require NEPA
- Comment made that the default for access management would be the existing travel plan regarding what is appropriate or inappropriate.
- Dick Kramer clarified that regardless of the MA designation the travel management plan that is based on about thirty years of NEPA decisions takes precedence and is periodically updated through NEPA processes. An attempt was made through the revision process to designate as MA 5a, areas where there isn't as much management flexibility and where there is less activity. If areas didn't have as many restrictions it was designated as MA 5b. Other policies, laws and regulations were definitely used as overlays in this endeavor.
- A participant expressed concern that if an area within grizzly bear habitat was designated as MA 5a non-motorized and grizzly bears recover that the area would still be non-motorized until the forest plan is revised several years down the road.
- Dick Kramer stated that under the new planning rule, the concept is that forest plans will be much easier to modify and adapt as needed.
- The comment was made that it is very nearly impossible to regain access to an area once it has become non-motorized.
- A participant stated additional rationale for having only one MA 5. MA 5a and MA 5b are too site specific and should be blended, then manage for the appropriate use.
- A participant read verbatim the definitions of MA 5a and MA 5b to illustrate that there was more of a difference than just the motorized aspect.
- Jodi Kramer clarified that the differences between the MA 5 categories regarding management options is not just logging, it is all restorative management activities (e.g. watershed restoration).
- The comment was made that the MA 5b definition would be a good definition for a lumped together MA 5 just by adding the word non-motorized.
- A participant stated that the MA 5a and MA 5b designations are more clear than lumping them together and that the definitions should be looked at again and spelled out more exactly to further clarify the differences between the two.

- Question: When we are looking to restore elk habitat, does that include logging? Response: Sometimes it does and sometimes it is just entails prescribed burning, but due to fire suppression over the last 90 years many areas need to be harvested before we can conducted prescribed burning.
- Question: Is burning considered a natural process? Response: It is the best way we know to mimic a natural ecological process.
- Dick Kramer commented that every GA workgroup is going through this process and just because the majority of this group wants to consolidate MA 5, it doesn't mean that it will necessarily happen.
- The group decided to move on to discussing the wilderness areas and start by looking at them individually.
- **Selkirk Proposal #1 – Add sections 12, 13, 24 and maybe part of 25 to the south end of the Selkirk proposed wilderness. The original proposal included adding some acres on the northern tip of the wilderness also, but since that is outside the scope of this GA meeting it was not included in the proposal. Rationale: To increase the size of the wilderness area and preserve wildlife and wilderness values.**
- **Selkirk Proposal #2 – All of the proposed wilderness south of Long Canyon Pass (section 30 and 31) should be converted from MA 1b to MA 5. Long Canyon itself would remain as MA 1b. It would basically remove the Selkirk Crest from proposed wilderness. Rationale: The nature of the use of this area does not support a de facto wilderness designation and the proposed change in the Forest Plan takes out motorized use (including snowmobiling), trail maintenance and mountain biking, which are currently allowed. Additional rationale: Economic stability. Additional rationale: Enforcement of current boundaries is difficult because they are not easily locatable on the ground.**
- Comment made that if proposed wilderness is treated as wilderness from a management standpoint it would make fire suppression more difficult and endanger private lands to the west.
- **Selkirk Proposal #3 – All of the Selkirk proposed wilderness should be changed from MA 1b to MA 5. Rationale: A proposed wilderness designation is too restrictive and limits search and rescue methods, particularly ones that can respond quickly. Additional rationale: The corridor of wilderness is not easily managed and it would eliminate historic travel routes. The fact is that the wilderness is only a mile wide, which makes it less suitable for wilderness. Additional rationale: Enforcement of current boundaries is difficult because they are not easily locatable on the ground.**
- Participants wanted clarification on whether or not a wilderness designation precludes search and rescue operations. Ranotta McNair (Forest Supervisor) clarified that she does have the authority to give the go ahead for search and rescue operations in wilderness under situations with an imminent threat, not just for over due parties, for example. There is also a national memorandum of understanding (MOU) for the border patrol to conduct the necessary operations for homeland security.
- Comment made that if the Forest Supervisor is not available and when the Forest Supervisor was not able to give the go ahead in a timely manner that it has cost lives. Ranotta McNair clarified that there is an acting system in place so in her absence there will always be someone who can make the decision.
- Dick Kramer made a couple of clarifications that under the Selkirk proposal #3, the existing travel management plan would still be in place and that under the Selkirk Proposal #1, about half of section 12, which in this proposal would become proposed wilderness, has been roaded and logged. The travel plan is always the baseline even if an area is taken out of proposed wilderness.

- Question: To be considered for wilderness doesn't the area have to be a certain size?
Response: Typically wilderness areas are 5000 acres, but that is just a general guideline and there are exceptions.
- **Selkirk Proposal #4 – No change in the wilderness area from the 1987 Forest Plan in the management or existing condition. Rationale: Designated wilderness does not allow motorized use, but wilderness study areas do allow winter motorized use, mountain bikes and mechanized equipment. Since congress has not acted on proposed wilderness areas, the management should mimic areas where congress has also not acted (e.g. wilderness study areas) and not where congress has acted (e.g. designated wilderness). Synopsis: Don't treat non-wilderness as wilderness until congress has acted. Additional rationale: Economic stability. Additional rationale: Enforcement of current boundaries is difficult because they are not easily locatable on the ground.**
- A participant commented that fixed boundaries do not allow for good management because it takes away flexibility. Example of how the caribou closure should be adaptable to where the caribou actually are located and not a fixed area.
- Comment made that wilderness is wilderness regardless of whether or not congress has designated it as such. Concerned about the stewardship of these areas if all activities are allowed to happen. Wants to preserve wilderness.
- Question: Will the Selkirk Crest MOU with the State still be carried forward? Response: Yes, the area does not have to be wilderness to fulfill the MOU obligations, as long as the area is designated as MA 5.
- Jodi Kramer proposes that the group move on to Scotchman to see if there are any areas of compromise before the group looks for a consensus on the Selkirk proposals.
- Discussion about the boundaries of the Scotchman wilderness area.
- **Scotchman Proposal #1 – The northern lobe of the 1987 proposed wilderness area that was taken out of proposed wilderness during this forest plan revision should be put back as proposed wilderness. The area is in the Thunder and Char Creek drainages. Rationale: It is prime winter habitat and a breeding site for mountain goats and some of the prime lower to mid-elevation habitat and therefore promotes biological diversity. Additional rationale: It does not appear to be actively used by snowmobilers and doesn't think it would be a great loss for motorized users to place it back into the proposed wilderness area.**
- It was clarified by a participant that snowmobilers only sporadically use the eastern portion of the area in question, but that the western portion is much more heavily used.
- Dick Kramer clarifies that the Scotchman Proposal #1 would not include the portions of Sections 23 and 27 that have a road corridor and existing harvest units. The fires in 2000 in this area were basically left to burn because of limited resources available to suppress them.
- **Scotchman Proposal #2 – Implement Scotchman Proposal #1 and Selkirk Proposal #2. Rationale: Shows collaboration with both interests giving and taking. Additional rationale: Meets current and historic use.**
- Question: Doesn't wilderness have to be an undisturbed area? Response: Generally speaking that is correct, but there are several designated wilderness areas that have past logging and/or roads.
- **Scotchman Proposal #3 – Change the lower portion of East Fork Lightning Creek from MA 6a to MA 5a. The original proposal included the obliteration of the roads in this area, but as that was too site specific for this process, it was removed from the proposal. Rationale: To decrease the fragmentation of the area and increase value of area for wildlife.**
- **A show of hands was conducted on Scotchman Proposal #3 and a consensus was reached.**
- A participant stated that snowmobilers heavily use the East Fork and it provides access to a lot of play areas. There is a gate in section 28 beyond which there is no summer motorized use. Approximately the first 2 miles are open and drivable.

- Question: How would a fire in a wilderness area affect State of Idaho on their lands to the west of the Selkirk Crest? Response: Because it is a narrow strip, it is highly unlikely that there would be fire use and most likely all fires would be fully suppressed. It is not a big enough area to take a risk and let a fire burn.
- A participant was under the impression that we were not allowed to suppress fires in wilderness areas. Carolyn Upton (Ecosystems Management Staff Officer) clarified that there is a protocol to go through regarding a fire event to determine the appropriate response that looks at suppression techniques, distance to private lands, etc. The forest plan revision process will not change the fire response protocols, but may help identify the resources in the area of the fire.
- Question: Is it typical to put wilderness up against private land? Response: It varies greatly across the country. Examples stated included a junkyard, condos and highways within a few hundred feet of different wilderness boundaries.
- **Scotchman Proposal #4 – Retain the 1987 Forest Plan management for the Scotchman proposed wilderness area regardless of whether what the proposed wilderness boundary ends up being. Rationale: Evolving snowmobiles are getting better and can go more places. It would be nice to have more challenging terrain and more dispersed snowmobile use.**
- Others felt like this would negative impact grizzly bear and wolverine denning habitat.
- Food for Thought: Collaboration is a good tool for both sides to get some of what they want. Something similar to the Selkirks being opened to motorized and Scotchman being closed to motorized, instead of both sides sticking to their guns.
- A participant has a lot of difficulty making these kinds of compromises when there is a lawsuit pending that could close large amounts of land to snowmobiling and there are other outside factors not yet fully known.
- A comment made that the predator issue has not been addressed with regards to caribou and that snowmobiles are not the only thing impacting caribou. Dick Kramer stated that specifics about the caribou issue are not what we are here to discuss.
- **Scotchman Proposal #5 – Scotchman is much larger than just this GA. An attempt was made in the mapping process to move the wilderness boundary to amore locatable location, but some changes need to be made. On the west and southwest corners of the Scotchman proposed wilderness, it borders MA 6b. It would make more sense to change it to MA 5. In addition, the wilderness boundary should be further up the slope in Sections 18, 24, 29 and 30, so these areas should also be changed to MA 5. Rationale: To allow for more flexibility managing within the wildland urban interface (WUI) by allowing light logging.**
- **A show of hands was conducted on Scotchman Proposal #5 and a consensus was reached.**
- Question: How would this proposal impact timber harvest? Response: Currently the area in question is not regulated timber and falls with Roadless Recreation MA 10. Scotchman Proposal #5 would generally be the same level of management.
- A participant commented that we have more wilderness than we really need and islands of wilderness to not have much value.
- It was clarified by a participant that the Scotchman IRA is approximately 88,000 acres, the Scotchman proposed wilderness was approximately 57,000 acres in the 1987 Forest Plan and even though there are proposed boundary changes that the acres of Scotchman proposed wilderness would be about the same under the new plan.

- Jodi Kramer stated that the GA groups meeting in Trout Creek and Troy have discussed adding MA 5a back into the Scotchman proposed wilderness but that the feeling is mixed among the two workgroups.
- Question: If the border to the wilderness were changed would you still be able to drive to the Scotchman Peaks Trailhead. Response: Yes, no changes in access with the proposal.
- **General Proposal #2 – Remove slivers of MA 6a along the Upper Pack Wild, Scenic and Recreation River in the north portions of Sections 19 and 20. Change to MA 1b, MA 5 or MA 2 depending on the appropriate designation for the area based on current use and condition. Rationale: Increase the width of protection for the river and remove the slivers of that would be difficult to manage as MA 6a.**
- **A show of hands was conducted on General Proposal #2 and a consensus was reached.**
- Question: How was the MA 2 width determined? Response: The width of Wild, Scenic and Recreation Rivers are typically a quarter of a mile on each side of the river, but can be altered based on topography, existing condition, etc.
- Question: Is it being proposed as a wild and scenic river or as a recreation river? Public needs to know so they know whether or not to support it based on the intended designation. They would support a recreation designation, but not wild and scenic.
- A concern was voiced that the bathroom facilities would not be allowed to remain if the area became MA 2.
- Carolyn Upton clarified that 14 miles of the Upper Pack River were found to be eligible as a recreation river and the buffer along that stretch is approximately 4000 acres. The designation would not change the current management or use.
- There was a discussion over possible compromises but it was generally felt that the amount of proposals and variables would make it difficult to do a straight compromise.
- Question: What will be done with the information from this meeting? It will go to the line officers, forest supervisors and revision team to look at the input from all the GA's and determine what, if any, changes to make.
- A participant reiterated an earlier comment that it is unreasonable for the workgroup to commit to specific proposals or compromise on things because there are so many other issues at play besides the forest plan.
- Jodi Kramer stated that the group does not have to come to consensus. The district ranger can take the information and viewpoints provided in these meetings and go forward with the process and the MA map could potentially stay the same.
- Group agreed to try and reach a consensus on some of the proposals.
- A participant was concerned that the people in the group were representing the public and that they were planning the forest management based on trade-offs and that doesn't seem appropriate. They felt like the previous meetings were more of a collaboration, but that tonight's meeting turned into a special interest group meeting.
- Jodi Kramer clarified that by trade-offs she is referring to melding one or two of the proposals together that the group can live with.
- Dick Kramer stated that there are a lot of proposals on the table and that it might work to look at all the proposals and see if there is a combination of the proposals that we can come to a consensus on. A lot of good things from both sides were voiced tonight that would meet the forest's overall objectives, but we need to come up with what feels like the right thing to do for the land. He can take what he has heard to his staff and tweak the map based on the group's comments and then take it on to the forest supervisor with the message that the group had mixed feelings on some issues.
- A participant commented that they feel like the group could adjourn now and she could sleep knowing that the Forest Service would make the appropriate changes based on the group's comments and she doesn't think that going through the proposals again and trying to reach a voting would be helpful.

- Jodi Kramer commented that the currently proposals do not currently depict collaboration and we need to try to meld them together as a consensus building tool.
- It was stated that the Scotchman Proposal #5 is fairly straightforward and a consensus could probably be reached on it.
- A participant stated that she agreed with the recent statement that she would feel comfortable leaving the final decision making up to the Forest Service. Both sides of the issue have shown that they have a deep respect for the land and we have expressed our recommendations to the Forest Service and they can go forward with that.
- Question: On the remaining proposals, how are we going to gauge when you agree with several of them, but have a strong support for one in particular? There was a short discussion on how best to accomplish this, with no resolution.
- At the request of the group, a list with a brief description of each proposal was done to boil down the issues and let the group clearly see what was being discussed
- The group discussed where to go from here to determine which proposal or combination of proposals best suits everyone.
- Ranotta McNair commented that the group doesn't appear to be disagreeing on the ecological baseline, but the use of the land. She suggested that the group narrow the focus to the exact point of disagreement, which appears to be the use of the land and not the underlying management of it.
- A comment was made that the group should try to tease out which one of the proposals most clearly represents the view of the motorized community.
- A participant states that she felt like voting would create more rifts between the participants in the future and that it would be best to let the Forest Service work it out from here now that they have heard all the issues. The voting process is unnecessary.
- The comment was made that we are not truly voting and we shouldn't be voting. Let the Forest Service work it out from here and then we can meet again to go over it.
- Someone commented that nobody present was under the impression that a straight vote was how this was going to work. We all understand that there are strict guidelines for what process has to be followed.
- Jodi Kramer posed the question, have the Forest Service personnel heard enough during these meetings to take it back to the leadership team or do they need more clarification?
- Dick Kramer responded that, yes, we have heard a lot of proposals tonight that made a lot of good sense and he thinks he can take it from here, along with his staff and work it out before he takes it to Ranotta. Jodi Kramer agreed, unless there is a compromise that works well for everyone and that a consensus could be reached on.
- Dick Kramer commented that the one place he heard some potential for compromise was what use would be allowed in wilderness. Ranotta is going to have to take into consideration what all the other GA groups have come up with and decide what to do based on a need for consistency across the forest.
- Comment made that voting would bring out the compromise on certain aspects.
- Comment made that there are a lot of people being represented not just the parties present.
- A participant stated that there are so many solutions that would involve some sort of combination of the proposals that he feels the Forest Service already has a pretty good idea of what the values and desires are and not sure that the group spending more time would produce much more.
- **A show of hands was conducted on the proposal to let the Forest Service proceed without further workgroup meetings and a consensus was reached.**
- As a result, there will be no more meetings.
- Jodi Kramer thanked the group and expressed that we came along way and that there will be some tough decision to be made. All of the information from this group will be taken to the

leadership team. Check out website or call us if you need more information throughout the rest of the process.

- Question: What's the timeline? Response: The team will continue to work on the MA map and the document with a goal of February 2006 for the release of the draft, but you will likely get more information before then.
- A participant wanted to thank the Forest Service for being such a good team to work with and thanks for your efforts.
- Jodi Kramer commented that she definitely looks at this meeting as a success. We've built relationships, we better understand each other's values and it will benefit all of us when it comes to other issues such as the travel plan.
- Dick Kramer stated that he concerns about upcoming meetings, but that the meetings always go better than expected and that is because of the participants involved. The group now has a better understanding of why we do what we do and we have a better understanding of your views. The relationships started in this process will continue to build. There are always going to be disagreements and litigation, but he hopes we can continue to do the things to best manage your National Forest lands.
- Ranotta McNair stated that managing public lands is one of the most complex issues because people with different values all love them so much. Sometimes the trade-offs are social value trade-offs not ecological. It was imperative to have the district rangers present at these meetings, build relationships and work through this process. There is a reason it was called the starting option and there were important comments that came out during the meeting.