

Forest Plan Revision Meeting
August 15, 2005
Sandpoint Ranger District

Facilitator: Jodi Kramer

FS Attendees: Dick Kramer, Joe Madison, Greg Hetzler, Jim Barrett, and Dave Lux

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)

- Marcia Phillips (Bonner County Commissioner) - Movement for counties to take a more hands on approach with the roadless areas issue to help make sure that a balanced approach is used and that the diversity of interests are taken into account. This feeds into the process that the Governor would like to see in regards to Inventoried Roadless Areas.
- The group reviewed and agreed to the ground rules for the meeting.
- Question : Has the planning team discussed the possibility of having only one Category 5 or splitting it into Category 5a, 5b, and 5c? Response: The planning team does not want to make any changes to the Management Areas until this public meeting process has runs its course, which is after August 31st.. What this group can do is collectively make a recommendation regarding the lumping or splitting of Category 5 or other recommendations for a change, along with the rationale of why. The planning team will then take those recommendations into consideration along with the other GA group recommendations and decide how to best proceed.
- Question : Can the planning team better define 5a and 5b in order for the group to better decide if any changes are needed? Response: Generally speaking the differences are that 5a is non-motorized, but there are exceptions to allow for motorized and 5b is motorized. There are other differences in the types of management within these MAs. What we need to try to do is come to a consensus on the appropriate management for a particular piece of ground and make sure we document the issue. Once all of the workgroups have submitted their input, it will help the planning team determine whether or not to lump or split the MA 5's.
- Comment: If we go with this plan, the proposed wilderness areas within the IPNF would be the only proposed wilderness areas in the State of Idaho that would not allow snowmobiles and that the IPNF should be consistent with the rest of the state.
- Question: Why were the MA 5 areas to the south of the Selkirk Crest Proposed Wilderness not included in the wilderness area? The opposite question was then asked of why was more of the proposed wilderness area not designated as MA 5.
- Comment: Proposed wilderness should be maintained as if it was designated as wilderness, otherwise it will divide and polarize the community as it has done regarding the Ten Lakes Proposed Wilderness Area in Montana.
- How should the group proceed? One proposal is to start in the areas with less conflict such as the east side of the lake (e.g. Packsaddle Area). Do we want to get site specific or will it bog the group down too much? Would it be better to go by Management Area? Comment made to not get too site specific with this process so the conflict over the use of areas (e.g. wilderness areas) is left

to a later document (e.g. travel plan map). Someone else proposed to focus on the areas with a high potential for conflict first.

- Dick Kramer clarified that some areas within the expanded Selkirk Crest Proposed Wilderness may have included areas with roads and those areas could be removed from Proposed Wilderness. Adjustments were also made to the boundaries of the Scotchman Proposed Wilderness, but the acres remained relatively the same.
- Comment made that the changes to the proposed wilderness boundaries were made without public input. Jodi Kramer clarified that the district personnel did a mapping exercise to map the Management Areas and then the planning team took that input, along with all of the public comments during last year's public meetings and came up with the starting option map, which is also the best mix of what the public wanted in regards to more, less or the same proposed wilderness in the revised plans.
- Comment made that the Management Areas in the Packsaddle area look pretty good with the possible exception of the 5a surrounding private land in the Green Monarchs that has a motorcycle trail in it. The condition and use of the trail was unknown.
- Question on the boundary of Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA) just to the east of Packsaddle Mountain because there is an area of no roads or timber harvest, so why was it not included in roadless. It was clarified that no attempt was made to make any additions to roadless areas with this forest plan revision process.
- An informal proposal was made to change the areas around the Packsaddle IRA that didn't have existing roads or logging to a 5a for the protection of wildlife values (e.g. lynx, wolverine, grizzly bear). There was some disagreement because it is not an area managed for grizzly bear or known to support grizzly bears. The area in question is within the Divide Lynx Analysis Unit (LAU). Dick Kramer commented that regardless of what management area designation this area receives, when the Forest Service is evaluating a particular action, the lynx standards would have to be met.
- A comment was made about a map created for lynx habitat south of the lake that they thought that the Fish and Wildlife Service said contained an acceptable amount of current use by snowmobiles. It was clarified that one of the standards within an LAU is no increase in over-the-snow groomed routes.
- An informal proposal was made to change the unroaded areas around Packsaddle that are categorized as 6c and 5b on the starting option map to 5a, along with any other unroaded areas. Dick Kramer clarified that even if an area is designated as 5a, the travel plan map would override it and existing motorized use would still be allowed.
- The comment was made that the only difference between 5a and 5b was that one was motorized and one was non-motorized. It was clarified that there was another difference in that restoration in 5a would be through natural ecological processes only and restoration in 5b would be through natural ecological process along with some management activities but would not include road building, see the Generally Allowable Use Table.
- The comment was made that although the designation of 5a or 5b may not change anything right now, it sets forth the potential to change the existing condition in future travel management plans.
- An informal proposal was made to modify the previous proposal and instead of designating the unroaded areas around Packsaddle as 5a, make them 5b.
- There was some confusion over whether designating an area as an MA 5 would make it part of the IRA. It was clarified that not all areas designated as 5a or 5b are IRA's and that we are not changing the IRA boundaries in the revised forest plans.
- The comment was made that 5a would not allow the Forest Service to manage for fuels and 5b would. 5a would let natural fire play more of a role.
- It was stated that the Forest Service is not adding any acres to IRA's through this process, but adjacent areas could be designated as a MA 5's, without becoming part of the IRA acreages.

- It was further clarified that the Forest Service did not analyze making additions to the IRA, and the proposal by some of the participants is not to add them area to the IRA, but make them a MA 5 instead of a MA 6.
- **Formal Proposal #1:** In the Packsaddle area, any acres that are currently MA6c, that are currently unroaded, and are contiguous to the area designated as MA 5b, change to MA 5b. Not all of the 6c, just approximately 1500 acres that is currently unroaded and hasn't been logged. It will not affect access for the public, just management direction. Jodi Kramer clarified that this proposed change to MA 6c would take the area out of a regulated timber harvest and limit the management activities allowed by the Forest Service because of the inability to build roads.
- Consensus was not reached on this proposal, see table below.
- The comment was made that less timber harvest means less money coming into local schools.
- A participant stated that the science supports the need for more unroaded areas for ecological integrity. Another participant agreed that we need lots of unroaded areas out there, but does see the need for more management and was interested in the evidence to support unroaded areas.
- The comment was made that the Interior Columbia River Basin Management documents concluded that the most ecological integrity is found in large contiguous areas with no roads. Dick Kramer concurred, but believes that because of the way the Forest Service does things today, that we can manage an area and still maintain or enhance its integrity. There was mixed opinions among participants as to whether or not management can be done without causing harm.
- Some participants wanted to see all of the proposals throughout the entire district before they made up their minds for any one proposal. Others wanted to complete each individual proposal before moving on to a different area.
- Comment made that the areas around Packsaddle designated as 6c are currently heavily timbered and need treatment, whereas the areas currently 5b have already received some treatment.
- The county is concerned that moving the Packsaddle area to MA 5 would limit the amount of timber production. It was clarified that it would not take it out of timber production, just change the mechanism and some areas could be dropped from timber consideration due to feasibility or economics.
- The comment was made that the change to MA 5b wouldn't eliminate access.
- It was stated that the payments to the county were no longer directly tied to how much timber was harvested.
- A participant indicated that the reason he disagrees with Proposal #1 is that he believes the Forest Service knows what they are doing and believes we should give them all the tools available to manage the area. Others indicated a mistrust of the Forest Service due to past practices. A participant reiterated an earlier statement that Forest Service has much better ways of managing the ground than in the past.
- Question – Do we know the specifics of the areas being discussed as far as where they have been actively managed and where they haven't? Without detailed maps it couldn't be determined whether or not these areas proposed for changes have received management or not.
- It was requested that a rationale for Proposal #1 be stated and it was given as the following: To avoid the negative impacts of roads and to maintain biodiversity.
- The group made the decision to move on to the Scotchman Area.
- An informal proposal was made that all of the IRA should be included in the Scotchman Proposed Wilderness.
- The revision team removed the upper portion of the original proposed wilderness area because it gets some snowmobile use, but an area on the south end was added to the proposed wilderness area with the end result coincidentally leaving the proposed wilderness area with about the same amount of acres. An attempt was made to try and map the boundary to more locatable features on the ground.
- The comment was made that portions of the area categorized as 5a falls within the critical habitat for mountain goats and part of what was taken out of proposed wilderness on the Montana side is

also critical mountain goat. Dick Kramer clarified that mountain goats are managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game as a game species and they are currently not on any list as a species of concern.

- A participant stated that the Spar Lake area was roaded in the late 1960's or early 1970's and then logged, which allowed access to areas with mountain goat herds and nearly led to them being decimated. There are now only 2 populations of mountain goats in Montana. A study was done in the Scotchman area in 1980, which produced a management plan and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Montana side to transplant some mountain goats into the area and limit access. In 1999, a closure order was issued under threat of lawsuit. Regardless of what Management Area it is categorized as, there will be no motorized access on the Montana side because of the closure. The original study looked at habitat and delineated some areas as suitable with some use by mountain goats or areas with the potential to support mountain goats. The area gets flown for mountain goats approximately every 5 years during other big game flights. During flights this past spring, mountain goats were found on Savage Mountain and Drift Peaks.
- There is no currently no MOU or special management for mountain goats in Idaho.
- The comment was made that the areas in Scotchman that we are talking about are also grizzly bear denning and wolverine habitat.
- There are no roads on the Sandpoint Ranger District portion of the area we are talking about and it has been managed as a proposed wilderness since 1987. You can currently use bikes, chainsaws for trail maintenance and snowmobiles in this area per the 1987 Forest Plan, but under the new Forest Plan those activities would no longer be allowed.
- Comment that the Scotchman Proposed Wilderness and the Selkirk Crest Proposed Wilderness areas should be looked at together at our next meeting.
- Looking at wilderness areas as a whole warrants some discussion, but we need to keep in mind what the decision space in some of these areas and focus on what areas we can even think about changing because the decisions on these areas have not already been precluded by previous management actions (e.g. caribou closure).
- Question - Is there overlap of snowmobiling and grizzly denning? Response: Yes, during the spring grizzly bears sometimes begin to emerge from their dens while there is still enough snow for snowmobiling and the Forest Service has received some reports of snowmobilers seeing grizzly bears in the spring.
- The group began to discuss the caribou closure and the Selkirk Crest Proposed Wilderness.
- Question – Is the caribou closure likely to remain. Response: The caribou closure is unlikely to be removed in the near future because of the extremely low population numbers for caribou and because we do have recent sightings within the closure area. (Clarification – During this past winter/spring, there were 2 caribou found in the vicinity of Snowy Top and the tracks of 1 caribou were found in Abandon Creek, which are both in the U.S. portion of the Selkirks, but outside the closure area. In addition, there were sightings of 2 caribou in the vicinity of Chimney Rock and of 1 caribou near the Chimney Rock Trailhead, both of which were within the closure area.)
- How does the group want to proceed? Would the group like to have maps before the next meeting to see the differences between the 1987 proposed wilderness boundaries and the new proposed wilderness boundaries? Response: Yes, it would allow folks to have a chance to study them and formulate some recommendations for the next meeting.
- **Next Meeting: Monday, August 22nd from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Sandpoint District Office.**

Suggested Changes to Starting Option Map

| Information Needed | Meeting Attendees Information |
|--|--|
| Geographic Area or Public Meeting Location and Date | Pend Oreille GA, Sandpoint, ID – 8/15/05 Meeting |
| Proposed Change (Include the Starting Option proposal and the Proposed Change) In addition, indicate the “Issue” that you are addressing with the Proposed Change | In the Packsaddle area that is currently allocated to MA 5b, for any of the acres that are currently MA6c, that are currently unroaded, and are contiguous to the area designated as MA 5b, change to MA 5b. The total acres are approximately 1500 acres. |
| Rationale or Criteria for your Proposed Change | To avoid the negative impacts of roads and to maintain biodiversity. |
| What are the tradeoffs by your proposed change? | This proposed change would take the approximate 1500 acres out of the Regulated Timber Harvest and limit the management activities allowed by the Forest Service because of the inability to build roads. Less harvesting equates to less economics. Currently the area is heavily timbered and needs treatment. |
| Group Discussion – Discuss areas of Agreement and areas of Disagreement | The group was divided on this proposed change and decided to move on to Scotchman Peaks Recommended Wilderness and Selkirk Recommended Wilderness. |