

## Lower Kootenai GA Workgroup Meeting Notes (Draft)

### Bonnors Ferry, ID

02/09/04

#### **Attendees:**

Public: Bob Bond, Cleave Shearer, Dave Wattenbarger, Don Nystrom, John O'Connor, Adriane Borgias, and Sandy Ashworth

Forest Service: Mike Herrin, Gary Ford, Pat Hart, and Jodi Kramer

Mike opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and discussed the agenda for the evening. Presentations about IRAs by Gary Ford, Access and Recreation by Jodi Kramer and Pat Hart and then discuss how to move forward with developing Desired Condition statements.

#### **Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs)**

Gary Ford presented information on IRAs. The handouts will be on the website under the "Resource Library". The handouts included:

- Some Important Dates Associated with IRAs
  - Most importantly the recent status of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (RACR) is that Judge Brimmer's permanent injunction and setting aside of the RACR is nationwide. This means at the present time Forest Plans provide the management direction of IRAs until such time legislation changes.
- Map and list of IRAs for the IPNF and the KNF
- Wilderness Evaluation Briefing Paper – this includes a process of analyzing and evaluating Capability, Availability and Need for Potential Wilderness Areas.
  - This evaluation process is occurring right now on each forest, which focused on the Capability section of this process.
- On the large map that was presented at the meeting, the dark green portions show the IRAs and the brown portions show the areas that were removed from IRAs.

**Comment:** Some things that we need to consider are the increase of the population, decrease of open roads accessible for hunting, advance in technology etc. A lot of this means that concentrated use or misuse of certain areas is a side effect of certain laws and regulations (ie. closing roads has concentrated the access and recreational use somewhere else). Concern about the national direction that comes down and is a one-size fits all – more local control because of the change in the situation – ie. increasing population etc.

**Q.** What's the wording in the "Wilderness Evaluation" paper on the 2<sup>nd</sup> page mean? "Current or planned uses of private land within the area should be compatible with wilderness management." **A.** There is private land within some IRAs and these need to be evaluated when analyzing these IRAs.

#### **Access and Recreation**

Jodi Kramer presented a handout about the two possible access decisions made in the Forest Plan revision.

**Comment:** Enforcement – need exponential increase to enforce “any” rules we look at implementing.

**Comment:** Really need definitions for cross-country travel, what’s an OHV, existing etc. before we can really discuss Decision #2 – prohibit motorized, wheeled cross-country travel.

Pat Hart talked about where we really can influence or discuss access and recreation decisions on the Lower Kootenai GA. (For the summer season) There are approximately 325 miles of trails that are open. Of the 325, about 80 miles are open to single track motorized use. Stampede Lake, (south of Bonners Ferry,) is the only area open for ATVs. We are in the process of identifying additional ATV routes. The Selkirk Range and the Cabinet Mountains on the Bonners Ferry Ranger District are non-motorized areas due primarily to Grizzly Bear Management Units. There are system roads in both areas are open to motorized travel. Much of the Purcells, in the northeast portion of the GA, is motorized and open for discussion. Questions to look at in our Desired Condition statements are where do we want to focus our motorized and non-motorized use.

**Comment:** With all the closed and seasonally closed routes, we need to remember that there still isn’t a piece of the National Forest that is closed to some type of use. The whole National Forest is open to some type of use.

**Comment:** How is Homeland Security affecting management of National Forest system lands along the Canadian/US border, especially in regards to access? They are creating new routes to implement their Homeland Security. They don’t have to abide by the ESA laws, road and trail closures etc.? Who is addressing this issue? How do we enforce any laws/regulations that may come out of the Forest Plan when another Federal Agency may not be abiding by these laws/regulations? Need to include some type of wording in our Desired Condition statements for access addressing this issue. (ie. we see the need for Interagency agreements between federal and state agencies).

**Needs for next meeting:**

- Definitions of Cross-country travel etc.
- Brief presentation of writing Desired Condition (DC) statements.
- Examples of other workgroups access and recreation DC statements.
- Maps of the GA for decision space (lynx, grizzly bear etc.) and open, closed, and seasonally closed roads.
- Flipchart paper to develop our DC statements (template).
- Nametags

**Next meeting: Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm at Bonners Ferry Library.**