

***FINAL NOTES - REVISED***  
**Forest Plan Revision Meeting – August 10, 2005**

The fourth meeting of the Kooconusa/Tobacco Geographic Area (GA) collaborative effort to recommend edits to the Starting Option for revision of the Kootenai National Forest plan was held at the Lincoln County High School in Eureka on August 10, 2005. The meeting began at 6:35.

The meeting was facilitated by Sandi Mason. Other Forest Service attendees were Betty Holder, Fortine District Ranger, and Jamie Appelhans.

The meeting was attended by 30 people, representing a variety of interests (logging, wilderness advocates, snowmobilers, backcountry horsemen, motorized use, etc...)

Sandi began by asking if there were any questions/edits to the notes of the meeting held on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. One participant (Traci MacIntyre) asked that the roads that the group agreed to keep open were consistent with the document that was created for the group to sign. Sandi mentioned to email Jamie any additions for the draft notes.

Betty gave a brief update on the Camp 32 Fire on the Rexford Ranger District and the Gibraltar Fire on the Fortine Ranger District.

Betty mentioned that Kootenai National Forest Supervisor, Bob Castaneda wants to meet with all of the Collaborative Groups on the Forest. He wants to meet with this group during the August 31<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Betty reviewed the Draft Agreement that was prepared for signatures from the participants for last week's meeting. This agreement stated the decisions that were agreed upon for the Forest Plan. She said to provide any edits on titles and the decisions to Jamie. There was a suggestion to add Robin Creek and Frozen Lake to the decision about the roads to remain open. Betty asked the group if the decisions mentioned on this form were what they agreed to and if they would sign the form. The group said yes.

Betty reviewed the handout with the graphs that compared the Management Areas from the 1987 Plan with the Starting Option for the Kooconusa and Tobacco GAs.

There was a question if the Geographic Area boundaries were consistent with the district boundaries. – Yes.

Betty reviewed the Flathead Starting Option map with the MA's and corresponding acreages.

Sandi asked how the group would like to handle new people with the voting process. This created a lot of discussion but the final decision was that new people should be able to vote. One item was that if the new people start rehashing points, they will be told that this has already been reviewed and the group will not revisit this issue. The participants will be asked if they're up-to-

speed on the issues and if they're comfortable enough, they will be able to vote. We will provide the ground rules and the definitions of collaboration and consensus when they arrive.

A participant asked about the Big Creek information that was asked by Bob Seidel last week. Unfortunately a representative from the Rexford Ranger District was not there. This participant needs to contact Ron Komac at the District to let him know exactly what information they want. A suggestion was made by Ruth Kraus to go on a field trip to this area. It was decided that field trips would need to be done on your own time but if anybody's interested, contact Ruth to possibly car pool.

Sandi reviewed and highlighted some points from previous meetings that could be used as Alternatives.

Noel Williams presented an Alternative to the Starting Option for the Ten Lakes/Whitefish Divide areas. He mentioned that he has been in contact with congressional delegates and they said they will not designate any wilderness without broad-based community support. In fact there are some members of the Congressional Natural Resources committee that are concerned about the pace that Wilderness is being designated. He recognizes that the forests need to be protected but does not feel that Wilderness needs to be designated. Here are his proposals: The area west and north of the Grave Creek we should designate as Special Interest Area (SIA). (There was no elevations designated in the SIA). The area east and south should be designated as Backcountry – Non-Motorized. He reviewed the definitions of a National Recreation Area and for an SIA. He believes the SIA is more appropriate because it protects water, wildlife, heritage/cultural, and historical values with more of a broad-based range. There's also better potential of treating boundaries for wildfire protection at private boundaries in an SIA. There is also no need for additional road construction in the SIA. He mentioned that if we can agree to this and is overseen by a diverse group, the congressional delegates would have the opportunity to remove the Wilderness designation from the Wilderness Study Area in the Ten Lakes area. He suggested putting together a mini-Resource Advisory Committee as a diverse group. Noel reported a congressional concern that the agency is creating de facto wilderness. He explained that the county commissioners had supported the new planning rule because of its emphasis on local input. But the current starting point with its proposed wilderness does not reflect the preponderance of that public comment.

It was pointed out that our congressmen from Montana have voted in support on Wilderness. An area in Nevada was just designated Wilderness. It was mentioned that if any changes from or to Wilderness Designation it would have to come from the local grass roots and 1 or 2 counties at a time. It was acknowledged in a response to a question that the wilderness voted on was but one in a package of components that included economic development.

There was a suggestion that we should come to a consensus on that the group doesn't want any new road construction.

A participant said that they think that Noel's proposal is very good and reasonable that has been presented. There would be a range of areas that would be protected and areas that would be multiple use.

One member said she wanted consensus on Noel's proposal as the group's option.

There was a question on what specifically would be Back-Country Non-Motorized and how would it be different than an SIA? There was also a question between the differences of Wilderness and Back-Country Non-Motorized. An answer from one of the participants mentioned that Wilderness restricts adaptive management with the changing environments. The public has the right to decide some multiple use options in the Back Country Non-Motorized.

A comment was made that we can't use wildlife as a reason for Wilderness. There's a lot more wildlife and hunting opportunities outside of the Wilderness areas.

A comment was made that we have to get away from trying to convince each other the differing opinions. We need to find middle ground and come together to make changes.

A comment was made that Wilderness or a Wilderness component has to be part of the collaborative agreement or there will be no agreement

On the proposal from last week, a participant asked how this was compromise? What are the Wilderness advocates going to give up? A response was that they would give up the Wilderness Scenic Area in the Ten Lakes area.

Some participants are concerned about groups coming back in a couple years and wanting more than what they're asking for now. There needs to be trust developed by participants and know that if they agree to something they will stick to it but nothing can be prevented from new people making new proposals in the future.

A participant had a concern with the small chunks of wilderness. They felt wilderness should be contiguous. It would be very hard from the multiple users to define those boundaries in the small areas.

Josh Letcher presented a proposal for the Ten Lakes/Whitefish Divide areas. He proposed to make the Ten Lakes and contiguous areas, including Wigwam and north of Lewis Creek Road to be MA 3 – Special Interest Area. He proposed the Whitefish Divide area to be 5a – Backcountry - Non-motorized. He also proposed that the Lebeau IRA should be 1b – Recommended Wilderness.

There was a comment that just because the area was "green" on the map doesn't mean it's going to be logged which is not good from the economic standpoint.

A question was asked if there could be temporary roads in an SIA. The answer was yes – in a site specific NEPA decision.

A participant mentioned that the term generally was used a lot in the definition for an SIA which was a concern.

Betty reviewed the Timber Suitability Map from the old forest plan in 1987. A participant pointed out that the 1987 map is out of date with today's ground truthing of what is on the landscape. She believes that the Kootenai NF has growth and mortality of around 300 MMBF. The new Forest Inventory Analysis (FIA) may actually show an increase and this data is not reflected on the 1987 forest plan map as the last FIA was done in 1995. This is why a new analysis is being done nationally. She also said blocking off management to 40,000 acres is irresponsible.

Fire regimes – Condition Class 1, 2, 3 were mentioned. More than 40,000 acres are in Condition Class 2 & 3 which are very much a concern.

There was suggestion to move on to another color since it was clear that there is not going to be a consensus on the wilderness issue.

A question was asked, is there a possibility to compromise? How many more meetings will this take?

A participant commented that there is very little difference between Back Country Non-Motorized except wilderness if forever. This means that you put a piece of land aside forever for future generations.

A question if there's a 5 mile buffer in wilderness? Answer – no.

A question if there was an elevation boundary for the wilderness proposal? Answer – no.

The next meeting will be held on August 17<sup>th</sup> at the High School's Music Room, starting at 6:30. The meeting adjourned at 9:05.

#### List of Attendees

George Williams	Wayne Finch
Noel Williams	Chuck Roady
Traci McIntyre	Holly McKenzie
Cathy Schloeder	Tim Thier
Steve Hawkins	Chris Damrow
John & Pat Doble	Charles Newton
Jon Leonard	Alice B. Elrod
Steve Newman	Jared Sherwood
Rex Nichols	Gary Hall
Josh Letcher	Debbie Henry
Ruth Kraus	Julia Altemus
Edwin Fields	Marianne Roose
Roger Sherman	
Catherine Hogan	
Dave Hadden	
Bob & Lynette Starling	
Mike Marvel	