

What we heard at our open houses and how we're using your comments

Sandpoint, ID on June 5, 2002 (29 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from American Wildlands, Riley Creek Timber, Backcountry Horseman, Snowmobile Club, North Idaho Off-Road Vehicle Assoc., Native Plant Society, Trout Unlimited, 2 County Commissioners and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Some of the issues/questions/comments included:

- Requested information about forest plan process.
- How we make decisions with local interests vs. national interests and which takes priority in decision-making. Not a voting process.
- Access and recreation – Concern from older Americans on their need to have areas to drive to that are “motorized” since can’t walk as far or are disabled.
- How are we going to deal with roadless areas in forest plan revision?
- It’s difficult to provide comments when I have site-specific issues/concerns when forest plan revision is broad in scope. How do I make comments about my special area?

Silverton, ID on June 6, 2002 (6 people signed in)

Member from SNRC and other members of the public attended the meeting.

Some of the issues/questions/comments included:

- How are we going to deal with the roadless areas in revision?
- Access – personal use, ATV opportunities, huckleberry picking, access for Sr. citizens
- Land exchanges – how are we going to address in forest plan revision?
- Recreation – in general, if the community is diversifying their economy (ie. adding tourism), need to look at the Forest Service role on National Forest System lands to assist in this endeavor.
- Local economy and our affect on it.
- Voting process – local comments vs. national comments – which carry more weight in our decisions?
- In a discussion with one of the public, concerned about renaming peaks – wrong names?
- It’s difficult to provide comments when I have site-specific issues/concerns when forest plan revision is broad in scope. How do I make comments about my special area?

Priest Lake, ID on June 10, 2002 (16 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from the Priest Lake Permittees Association, Selkirk Conservation Association, Priest lake Trails, Dan Whiting from Senator Craig's office and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Access and Recreation
- Focus Groups – in favor of the Forest Service organizing this effort.
- Voting process – local comments vs. national comments – how they are used in the decision making process, which carry more weight?
- Get more in-depth on the Social and Economic write-ups in the new Forest Plans.
- Put the Social Assessments for each forest on the website.
- It's difficult to provide comments when I have site-specific issues/concerns when forest plan revision is broad in scope. How do I make comments about my special area?
- Are there any IRA's being proposed for wilderness in the old IPNF Forest Plan? How are these going to be addressed in Forest Plan Revision?
- What is the definition of an IRA and what's the difference from unroaded areas?
- What happens if the Forest Plan Revision is appealed/litigated?
- How will Endangered Species Act be dealt with in the forest plan revision?
- Suggestion to create an overlay on the land that shows all the restrictions, which will also show the interrelationships between species etc. This overlay would also show the special emphasis for that area and why that particular area is managed a certain way. (ie. ESA, grizzly, lynx etc.)
- The public wants to know how we are going to use their comments and if we actually heard and listened to them.

St. Maries, ID on June 11, 2002 (23 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from St. Joe Snowriders Assoc., the logging community, St. Joe Outfitters and Guides, construction companies, RAC group, Dan Whiting from Senator Craig's office and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Will you be looking at assessment already done for the economic sustainability (ie. ICEBMP) or starting from scratch?
- Encourages the Forest Service to look at timber "heritage" in the revision and in the social assessments.

- Make sure we also include people and the communities in the equation in the revision effort and not only ecological – which carries more weight/which is more important? The balance of ecological and social and economic is the difficult part in this whole revision effort.
- Look more on a local level for management strategies. CDA and Spokane are currently the cities they are because historically they were timber, mining etc. based towns.
- A lot of concern about the misuse and abuse of the appeals/litigation system – Need to revise the appeals process.
- Timber production helps reduce fire buildup/hazard. Why not use it as a tool for land management and also helps sustain the economy of communities?
- Noxious weeds on Federal lands have sky-rocketed – very serious problem. Noxious weeds are from many sources.
- Look hard at timber production predictions in the forest plan revision.
- Look at different hours for the meetings in St. Maries, possibly 6 – 9:00 pm.
- Need more management of the ecosystems to make and keep them healthy but don't lock us out.
- What Planning Rule, 1982 or 2002, are we going to be revising our Forest Plans?
- Concern about past involvement especially with the last Forest Plan and the result was not favorable. What will be different with this plan revision?
- It's difficult to provide comments when I have site-specific issues/concerns when forest plan revision is broad in scope. How do I make comments about my special area?

Coeur d'Alene, ID on June 12, 2002 (40 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from Vertical Earth, Spokane Mountaineers, Northwest Access Assoc., Kootenai County Groomer Board, Lewis-Clark ATV Club, Idaho State Snowmobile Assoc., Don Pischner from Idaho Legislature, CDA Snowmobile Club, Idaho Women in Timber, CDA Chamber, The Nature Conservancy, Regulus, Brush Bunch and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- What will happen with the changes that happen between now and 2005? How will they affect the new revised forest plans?
- Who determines the best science that's available and what we use during revision?
- Concerned contractor who has been informing the Forest Service how to better engineer our gates on our roads and we're not listening to him.

- Study needs to be done on damage to the resource by ATV's vs. horses and which has more impact as far as weed spread.
- What is the next step with the IRA's that were identified in the 1987 Forest Plans but were analyzed and "not" proposed for wilderness? What happens with the IRA's that were analyzed and proposed for wilderness? What's the next step? What is the Forest Service waiting for? What's the process?
- Need a definition of roadless areas – Does this mean there are no roads in these areas or have the roads all been closed?
- Who makes the decision on what roads/trails are closed? What is the process?

Libby, MT on June 12, 2002 (7 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included County Commissioners and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Concerns over how to engage the public in issues.
- What are the substantial resource and social changes that have occurred since 1987?
- Concerns about using CRB science.
- Should have some guarantees about more timber outputs, for stability of mills.
- How much weight will the public comments have in the plan?
- How to get more of the people involved?
- People need to know that the plan will be made locally and decision-maker is local.
- Road obliteration is the most controversial. A meeting about that will get people to attend and get involved.
- Contact schools, youth groups, etc. to find out indirect social effects (economic effects due to job losses).
- Let the professionals do their job.

Bonnors Ferry, ID on June 13, 2002 (10 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from Bonnors Ferry Chamber of Commerce, Forest Products Co., Boundary County RAC, Idaho Women in Timber, Boundary County Commissioner, Idaho Conservation League and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Forests need to be thinned “properly” even where they’ve been logged. So what’s the hold-up on doing hands-on land management – specifically thinning? Need to get the forests healthy and ready to log in future years.
- What was the biggest obstacle to us achieving the direction that we came out with in the 1987 Forest Plan (ie. timber production, ASQ)?
- Is there tree planting happening on the IPNF? If so, where?
- How are you going to replace the early seral tree species?
- Where do the funds go that come from timber sales?
- Why can anyone with their viewpoint, not necessarily substantiated, be able to stop or dictate how a project is done or appeal it, when the Specialists are in the Forest Service and have the knowledge?
- Why haven’t we ever met the ASQ target and the other targets in the 1987 Forest Plan?
- If we don’t address forest health issues now and clean up the forests, we “will” have real water quality issues because of catastrophic fires and other reasons.
- What is Pacfish and how does it affect Forest Plan Revision?
- What qualifies a stream to be impaired and who sets the standard?
- What causes a stream to be impaired? And what do we do now? The Forest Service has so many agencies/people telling them what to do and who or what law takes precedence?
- What percentage of the people that are using the forest is based on increases in the population base and what percentage is based on technology?
- The public really wants to know that we heard them and how we use their input? Don’t just document it in the DEIS but share with the public in other ways.
- Does the Forest Service really have to comply with all the laws mandated by USF&W? If not, let’s not roll-over and accept whatever the USF&W tells us to do?
- The public does “not” believe we truly want them involved – history proves that – they were involved before and the Forest Service did “not” listen to them.
- Don’t always give into recreation and also take into consideration that logging etc. will help maintain healthy forests.
- The health of the forest is the most important thing.

Eureka, MT on June 13, 2002 (24 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from all interests, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Fire risk is increasing, why can't we just estimate outputs related to reducing fire risk.
- Accountability is a critical component to a new plan.
- Appropriations not conducive to achieving all objectives, i.e. aquatic restoration, weeds, etc.
- Access subcategory look at closed roads need to be opened for disabled, access berry-picking, etc.
- Frustration with the process.
- Forest Service has no clue of historic conditions.
- What standards apply to restoration?
- Issue specific meetings.
- What happens if the 15 yrs. expires and the revision is not completed?
- WQLS – how many on KNF? 20-30?
- Weed program has been allowed to take the backseat to TM.
- Science – where do we get it? What do we use?
- Social environment – Assessment will be updated to reflect current attitudes, conditions, etc.
- IRA's – What happens to those not recommended for wilderness?
- A study group needs to be formed for the tobacco valley area.
- To who's standards will the forest be restored.

Priest River, ID on June 17, 2002 (4 people signed in)

Members of the public, which included employees of Stimson Lumber, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Who determines the best available science and what are we going to use in forest plan revision?
- Difficulty in understanding the potassium deficiency issue?
- Fire and timber harvest are tools for land management.
- It's difficult to provide comments when I have site-specific issues/concerns when forest plan revision is broad in scope. How do I make comments about my special area?

Noxon, MT on June 17, 2002 (11 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd with the tone of the meeting being that the public wants to work with local management to resolve some issues of forest management – timber issues, watershed issues, fuel build-up issues, etc.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Major concern was with the mill.
- Need to focus on fire because of the fuel build-up in the national forest.
- When timber mills close, this affects schools, roads and the tax base.
- We are getting more and more timber from Canada.
- Where's the accountability.
- Concerned about roads and access for firewood and recreation.
- Concerned about too much planning – planning to plan.
- Concerned about people who appeal forest management issues from out-of-state and don't know anything about the area.
- Concerned about the science - grizzly bear and lynx.

Troy, MT on June 18, 2002 (14 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd with the tone of this meeting being somber and you could feel the public's frustration. After they got their issues out in the open, the meeting went pretty well.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Concerned about the planning process – 10-15 years.
- Amendments to the forest plan seem to happen every year.
- Programmatic versus site-specific was discussed.
- Considerable conversation was on the contract with Plum Creek, which runs out next year. What about the 330 jobs – questions were raised about the economic impact to the community.
- Public involvement??
- What the public wants to see in the new plan – real public involvement?
- Skeptical of the new science. What is new science?
- Is equal weight given to ecological, economic and social components?
- Where's the scientific data in destroying roads. Where does the decision come from?
- The grizzly bears are security for Wayne Kasworm.
- Stop looking at stuff that's going to happen in the future – leave the roads alone.
- We know the grizzly bear is political and a farce. What about seasonal use

- People are giving up too much.
- No credibility.
- Decommissioning roads are used to keep people out.
- What about wilderness and roadless areas.
- Will we utilize to 10-14” trees?
- We can have both timber harvest and roadless areas.
- Wants more small sales included in the new plan.
- What’s the market for these small trees?
- Talked about the mismanagement of the forest – looking at the health of the forest.
- What about fire? We need a reduction of fuel loads.
- What about helicopter sales to get wood to the mills.
- We need to find common ground - what can we agree on.
- Appeal process is so ambiguous.
- The Chief said 40% of the Forest Service budget is being spent on planning and conflicting mandates. Analysis process is based on judges’ decisions.
- The Forest Service does not confront people, which contribute to analysis paralysis.
- Not listening to locals’ - people are frustrated.
- Listening to others (out-of-state) or scientists or environmentalists.
- How many bears can this forest support? Cabinet-Yaak ecosystem can support about 90 bears.
- Scientific studies are ambiguous – grizzly bear, lynx and UCRB.
- Talked about ASQ in the old plan – 220 mmb.

Moscow, ID on June 19, 2002 (20 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from University of Idaho, Public Land Access Year-round Organization (PLAY), VFW, retirees, Idaho Conservation Data Center, Lewis-Clark ATV Assoc., Idaho State Snowmobile Assoc., Russ Graham from USDA Forest Service RMRS, Leann Bifford from Senator Craig’s office and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- How will the Grizzly Bear Amendment be affected by Forest Plan Revision and how will we be dealing with in during revision?
- What happens if the new Planning Regulations become final during our revision process? How does the decision-maker decide which planning regulations to use?

- Someone thought they read in the Lewiston Tribune that the Chief of the Forest Service said we are getting too much public involvement.
- A member of the public feels that some of the laws that the Forest Service has to follow go against public viewpoints. What can the public do about that?
- Strongly encourage the Forest Service to summarize the issues and share comments from both sides of the issue with the public. Let the public know the Forest Service heard what the public said and this is how we use your comments.
- Suggestion to put the Appendices, EIS and maps from the 1987 Forest Plans on the website or at least ensure they are at the local libraries.
- Concern from a member of the public on the difficulty of sharing comments for forest plan revision when revision is broad in scope. Yet we encourage them to give specific information about a specific area when they are commenting, and at the same time the members of the public may not know the area very well. We need to give examples of “good comments” that are useful in our forest plan revision efforts.
- Suggestion to put a Glossary of Terms on our Website, easy to find. Should include terms such as Recreation vehicles, OHV, etc. and how we use these terms.
- Who determines the best available science and what are we going to use in forest plan revision?
- Roads and access are definitely issues we need to deal with in revision. Strong concern about closing off access to National Forest System lands. For example, by Forest Service definition, first a road that is open for road vehicles is closed and changed to a motorized trail excluding road vehicles and then sometimes it’s closed to ATV’s and open to motorcycles....explain to the public the reasons why?
- Concerning wildlife corridors, are we going to look at these during revision and how the Grizzly, lynx etc. amendments affect these wildlife corridors?

Spokane, WA on June 20, 2002 (16 people signed in)

Very diverse crowd, which included members from Spokane Mountaineers, Kettle Range Conservation Group, Priest Lake Permittees Assoc., The Lands Council, Backcountry Horsemen and other members of the public, attended the meeting.

Issues/Comments/Questions included:

- Did you have a meeting in Missoula? There are several people over there that recreate on the IPNF.

- It's difficult to provide comments when I have site-specific issues/concerns when forest plan revision is broad in scope. How do I make comments about my special area?
- When is the best time for special interest groups to provide comment and suggest an alternative?
- When are we going to address the Wildlands Fire Policy during revision?
- How does the Forest Service ensure that we can implement and monitor the Forest Plan, financially? Will the Forest Service prioritize how and what we implement and use this based on the funding given by Congress?
- How effective will the Forest Plan Revision Team be in covering such a big area, two forests?
- Regarding ESA, are the programs coordinated so that there isn't conflict between species (ie. caribou and grizzlies)?
- Is the forest plan revision going to be covered under the 1982 Planning Rule or the new Planning Rule?
- Which IRA's should be recommended for wilderness and were they completed in the 1987 plan? What does the Forest Service do after they've recommended areas eligible and/or additions for wilderness?
- If the funding goes away for forest plan revision, what happens to our schedule?
- ICBEMP – What's our plan to use the science from this project? Are we going to use the science from this Plan in its entirety?
- Do resource issues take precedence over social issues/desires on any given area? How do we balance ecological and social issues?
- When are site-specific decisions made and will there be public involvement?
- Suggestion and agreement amongst the audience for the Forest Service to bring divergent groups together to work together and come up with solutions to issues. Encourage the Forest Service to proactively make this happen.
- What happens to all the comments from these meetings, from comments submitted to the agency and how are these comments used?
- Concern from the audience about the low turnout at the open house....how does the Forest Service reach more people?
- Is technology the only reason for more impact, broader spread, and more intense impact on the land?