

Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest Plan Revision Public Information & Scoping Meeting July 28, 2011

5:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Republic Elementary School Multi-purpose Room, Republic, WA

Meeting Purpose and Overview

The USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) hosted a public information and scoping meeting for the Colville and Okanogan National Forest Plan in Republic, Washington on July 28, 2011. The meeting provided a combination of formats, including open house, presentation, question and response, and group comments. Approximately ninety members of the public attended the meeting.

The meeting served two purposes: to provide the public an opportunity to learn about the Forest Service's proposals for long-term management of the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests, and to provide information on how the public can comment on the proposals, how their comments will be used, and to learn about future opportunities for their involvement.

Meeting Agenda

Susan Hayman, EnviroIssues facilitator, welcomed everyone and explained the meeting objectives, agenda, and meeting conduct. Al Watson, Republic District Ranger, talked briefly about the Forest Plan Revision process, the value and use of comments and balancing various user needs, and Forest Service expectations for the meeting. Al introduced the rest of the Forest Service's Forest Plan Revision team.

Presentation

Margaret Hartzell, Team leader, presented the key concepts of the Proposed Actions. Since this meeting was held in Republic, Margaret focused on the specific proposals related to the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest. She provided a general overview; a process timeline; and *new* and *continued* goals of the Proposed Actions for the following categories:

- Aquatics and riparian systems
- Plants
- Vegetation
- Wildlife habitat
- Access
- Livestock grazing
- Recreation
- Renewable forest products

- Scenery
- Preliminary Wilderness recommendations

Margaret also explained the “tools” the plan uses, as well as how comments are being gathered and used in the process. Please see Attachment 1 for the presentation slides.

Questions & Answers (Q&A)

The following is a synopsis of questions (Q), comments (C) and corresponding responses (R) from the meeting. *This is not intended to be a verbatim transcription of this portion of the meeting; similar questions / concerns were combined for summarization purposes.*

Q/C: Are previously submitted comments from years ago used in this process? Why are we commenting again if our comments have already been recorded?

R: We have had lots of dialogue and collected comments over the years. This information is kept at our offices. The comments were used to help shape the Proposed Actions we are presenting today. Please let us know if your previously expressed concerns have not been addressed.

Q: How will the proposed Wilderness designation affect local fire fighting? I am concerned about prescribed burning and suppression, and want to prevent poorly managed fire suppression events in the past from happening again.

R: If the areas proposed for Wilderness designation do become Wilderness areas, the question about fire-specific suppression and management would always be asked early. Fires can sometimes be managed to stay within an allowable area using natural barriers, roads, landmarks, etc. This generally works, but sometimes fires do expand beyond the control boundaries. Outside of Wilderness areas, fires would be suppressed 100% of the time. We would be happy to discuss this in more detail at another time.

Q/C: What is the Forest Service doing to protect the country and the people of this community? We need production in this community, including timber harvest.

R: Our team is only tasked with addressing the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests. We have a small scope of control and limited authority; we cannot address national concerns. We consider biological condition, natural resources, and the interaction of those with local economies. We will continue to provide for firewood cutting and timber harvest.

C/Q: According to the Forest Service’s own assessment, thirteen IRAs (inventoried roadless areas) in the Kettle Range Mountains and nine in the Selkirk Mountains have Wilderness characteristics. Why did the Forest Service recommend only five of the 22 areas it assessed for having Wilderness potential despite a consensus agreement with northeast Washington residents and elected officials?

R: A number of inventoried roadless areas are included in the pool of candidates for Wilderness recommendation. However, the Proposed Actions do not recommend all of them, based on input we received from a full spectrum of people, including those you are referring to. Those lands not recommended as part of our Proposed Actions would become part of Backcountry and Backcountry Non-Motorized Management Areas. The intent is to not develop roads and to continue to allow existing uses, including summertime OHV (off-highway vehicle) and snowmobile use. We will continue to allow such uses in these backcountry areas. We deliberately decided not to include areas with an existing motorized trail system in our Wilderness recommendations.

Q: Why are you trying to close or restrict land – and not work with renewable resources and open up for use of other resources? There is wood rotting and forests are being closed. You should provide jobs.

R: The Proposed Actions provide opportunities for timber harvest. There are also Wilderness opportunities. We encourage everyone to look at the maps for the specific Proposed Actions. In Active Restoration areas 2 and 3, we will continue to manage forest resources and have active roads, and likely activity related to timber production.

C/Q: I participated in a collaborative process and endless meetings – for The Forest Summit. The consensus was support of no degradation of roadless areas. The Backcountry area proposed allows vegetative management (i.e., degradation). Why?

R: The intent in the Backcountry Non-Motorized Area is to maintain their unroaded condition. Additionally, allowing limited vegetation treatment is also being considered (without roads). This would include prescribed burnings and helicopter harvest, among other activities. However, the door is still open for public input – nothing has been decided yet.

Q: Do you need an amendment to harvest more timber than is specified in the Forest Plan?

R: This is a technicality of the plan. It relates to average accepted allowable sale quality and long-term sustained yield, which is the biological viability of long-term sustained yield of the land. Twenty-five to thirty-five (25 to 35) million board feet of timber is based on current projections of growth. Increased capacity could increase the harvesting potential. You wouldn’t need an amendment in that case. Long-term sustained yield capacity is required by the National

Forest Management Act. This information will be available in the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) in the next year, or so.

Q: To clarify – is there sixty to eighty million board feet available for harvest each year on the Colville National Forest?

R: We can discuss this topic in further detail as a side conversation. Members of the project planning team are available to meet after the group Question-and-Answer session.

Written comments / questions submitted but not addressed during the meeting in the large group question-and-response session due to time constraints:

Q: Why doesn't the proposed Wilderness area at least include the whole of the Kettle Crest?

C/Q: A new National Conservation Area and National Recreation Area proposed by Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition's balanced plan and agreed to by a consensus of the public during the Forest Summit is *not* included in the Forest Plan. Why?

C/Q: The Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition's balanced plan for the Colville National Forest – developed over 8 years of multi-stakeholder community collaboration – recommends Wilderness protection for 17 of 22 inventoried roadless areas (IRAs), and two-thirds of the forest open for lumber product. Why is the Forest Service ignoring NEWFC's recommendations?

Closing

Susan noted that while the formal presentation and question-and-response session was over, Forest Service staff would be available for further discussion and to answer any remaining questions.

Margaret and Al thanked everyone for their participation in the process, noting that their input will be helpful in developing plans in the future. They also encouraged everyone to continue to ask questions in the remaining time and to submit written comments by September 28.

The open house reconvened for another 30 minutes. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

A list of forest service staff and meeting facilitation team in attendance at the meeting is included in Attachment 2.

Attachment 1: Presentation Slides

WELCOME!

**COLVILLE AND
OKANOGAN-WENATCHEE
NATIONAL FOREST PLAN REVISION**

**PUBLIC INFORMATION AND
SCOPING MEETING**

July 28, 2011 Republic, Washington

Agenda

- 5:00 p.m. Open House
- 5:30 p.m. Welcome and Meeting Overview
- 5:40 p.m. Informational Presentation
Questions and Responses
- 6:20 p.m. Return to Open House
- 7:00 p.m. Adjourn

NEWZ Plan Revision

Meeting Conduct

- Listen actively
- Participate actively
- Discuss concerns in a constructive and civil manner
- Share question and response time
- Please hold applause
- Turn off/mute electronic devices
- Let the facilitators or Forest Service Staff know if you need help finding something, or someone to talk with you.
- The FS will genuinely try to answer, as specifically as possible, any questions about the proposed actions and how they may affect your interest(s) on the Colville or Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests.

NEWZ Plan Revision

Informational Presentation

Margaret Hartzell,
Forest Plan Revision Team Leader

NEWZ Plan Revision

Why you should be involved

- Forest Plan Revision – Proposed Action public involvement
- June 30 to **September 28**, 2011

“Sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forest and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.”
- Forest Service Mission

NEWZ Plan Revision

What Plans Do...

- Describes desired
 - Habitat for wildlife, aquatic species, and plants
 - Vegetation (trees, shrubs, range lands)
- Identifies areas suited for kinds of travel
 - on foot, motorized, or mechanized
- Recommend wilderness, determine eligibility of wild and scenic rivers
- Provide sideboards for projects
 - standards and guidelines

NEWZ Plan Revision

Attachment 1: Presentation Slides

Plan Revision – the basics

- Managing expectations
- Bring current plan up-to-date as required by NFMA
- Cannot make changes to laws, regulations, the directives, policy



Umbrella
Operating framework for Forest

NEWZ Plan Revision

Time Line

- This summer – Proposed Action
- Summer 2012 – DEIS
- Summer 2013 – FEIS
- Fall 2013 – revised forest plan



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- **Aquatics and Riparian Systems**
 - New – Key watersheds
 - Continuing – good water quality, riparian buffers, healthy riparian ecosystems



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- **Plants**
 - Continue – preventing introduction and spread of invasive plants
 - Using native plants
 - Protecting unique habitats, rare plants, ESA species
 - Have healthy ecosystems



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- **Vegetation**
 - New – role of disturbance in ecosystem, data on composition, structure, and spatial patterns
 - Continue – focus on ecosystem restoration and forest health, managing wildfire risks, contributing habitat



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- **Wildlife Habitat**
 - New – science to better describe habitat condition, ESA species
 - Continue – high quality habitat, connectivity, and contributing to recovery of ESA species



NEWZ Plan Revision

Attachment 1: Presentation Slides

Proposed Action

- Access – roads and trails, docks and bridges
 - Continue – safe, affordable, environmentally sound system of roads and trails
 - Continue – range of recreational trails
 - NOTE on the Travel Management process



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Livestock Grazing
 - Continue – range lands in good condition.



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Recreation
 - New – additional data on recreation trends and use specific to Forest
 - Continue – offer quality, nature-based recreation in outdoor setting



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Renewable Forest Products
 - Special forest products, merchantable wood products
 - Continue – provide firewood, saw timber, biomass, wood fiber
 - 25 to 35 mmbf and 10,000 acres per year on average



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Scenery
 - New – system that emphasizes actively managing to enhance and maintain
 - Continue – provide beautiful scenery



NEWZ Plan Revision

Proposed Action

- Preliminary Wilderness Recommendation
 - Continue – Salmo-Priest Wilderness – 29,000 acres
 - New – preliminary recommendation of 101,000 acres.
 - About 9% of Forest
 - Not final decision, existing uses can continue until Congress acts
 - Excluded motorized trails, mining operations, WUI with dry Forest, tools needed, not high quality



NEWZ Plan Revision

Attachment 1: Presentation Slides

Proposed Action

- Tool the plan uses
 - Management Areas
 - Consistent with neighbors
 - Habitats move
 - New congressionally created trail – Pacific Northwest National Scenic



NEWZ Plan Revision

Commenting

- Today – gather information, ask questions
- Tomorrow - Send us comments specific to the proposed action, on-target, thoughtful
- Use comments to build options (alternatives) for plan



NEWZ Plan Revision

How to Comment

- **Send comments to:**
 - Forest Plan Revision
 - Okanogan Valley Office
 - 1240 Second Avenue South
 - Okanogan, WA 98840
- Email: r6_ewzplanrevision@fs.fed.us
- Website: www.fs.usda.gov/goto/okawen/plan-revision

*Comments are most helpful if received by **September 28, 2011**.*

NEWZ Plan Revision

Attachment 2: Meeting Attendees

Forest Service Staff		
Name	Forest	City, State
Holly Akins	Colville	Colville, WA
Bill Gaines	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Wenatchee, WA
Margaret Hartzell	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Okanogan, WA
Debbie Kelly	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Okanogan, WA
Mark Loewen	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Wenatchee, WA
Shannon O'Brien	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Tonasket, WA
Mary Scholz	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Omak, WA
Marcie Johnson	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Tonasket, WA
Dale Olson	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Tonasket, WA
Lisa Therrell	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Leavenworth, WA
Al Watson	Colville	Republic, WA
Eric McQuay	Colville	Republic, WA
Reed Heckly	Colville	Republic, WA
Facilitation Team		
Name	Affiliation	City, State
Caylen Beaty	EnviroIssues ¹	Seattle, WA
Susan Hayman	EnviroIssues	Boise, ID
Kerston Swartz	EnviroIssues	Seattle, WA

¹ Neutral public process outreach and facilitation company (www.enviroissues.com) working under the auspices of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (www.ecr.gov).