

**Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest Plan Revision Public Information & Scoping Meeting
August 11, 2011
5:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Cle Elum Centennial Center, 719 E. 3rd Street, Cle Elum, 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 Cle Elum, Washington on August 11, 2011. The meeting provided a combination of formats, including open house, presentation, question and response, and group comments.

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

Deborah Kelly, Plan Revision Public Affairs Specialist, welcomed everyone and explained the meeting objectives, agenda, and meeting conduct. Judy Hallisey, Cle Elum District Ranger, talked briefly about the Forest Plan Revision process, the value of public participation in the process, and Forest Service expectations for the meeting. Judy introduced the rest of the Forest Service's Forest Plan Revision team (Team).

Presentation

Margaret Hartzell, Team leader, presented the key concepts of the Proposed Actions. She also explained that the comment period was extended an additional 30 days until September 28. Since this meeting was held in Cle Elum, 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 2 for the presentation slides.

Margaret also explained the difference between the Plan Revision project and Travel Management.

Questions & Answers (Q&A)

The following is a synopsis of questions (Q) / comments (C) and corresponding responses (R) from the meeting. Note: similar questions / concerns were combined for summarization purposes.

Q: SR 2477 is a Congressional law about mining and access. How were your recommended wilderness areas chosen?

R: Areas with roads were not candidates for recommendation. Areas with recent or recognizable timber harvest were also not candidates. There is a separate process for SR 2477 road assertions.

Q: I’m pleased to learn that you consider the social and economic setting. We want to keep contributing to the economy with 23 million annual visits. What is the analysis on economic impacts for Plan Revision?

R: This proposed action is the first step. The Draft EIS will analyze impacts, including economic ones, for the proposed action and each of the alternatives.

Q: 11% of the NFS is wilderness. Why do we need more?

A: We’re required to look at this as part of the plan revision process. The proposed action is the early result of that examination. If you want to know about the need for additional acres on this Forest, I can describe our analysis process. There were three main questions we addressed to each area: is it capable of providing wilderness character? Is it available to become wilderness? What is the need for this area and what are the trade-offs? The NFS wilderness system nationwide is part of that third question – there is a goal of diversity across the system.

Q: With wilderness designation, there is no fire or insect suppression. Doesn’t this contradict the stated need for management?

R: Many tools are not used in wilderness, but there is still a lot of management. Fires may be fought or monitored. We can address insect and disease issues, if needed, but the emphasis is on allowing the natural processes to work.

Q: What happens when insects get beyond the wilderness boundary?

R: We can use additional tools to manage outside the wilderness boundary.

Q: Why is there a need to have more Wilderness? What access is limited with this designation?

R: There were about 900,000 acres in the pool that we could have recommended for wilderness. There is a lot of wilderness on this Forest, so that wasn't a big driver. There also wasn't much of a pressing wildlife need for additional wilderness. The opportunity to address current management issues was really a driver. All the wilderness proposed here is adjacent to existing wilderness. We've had boundary issues, land exchanges, and now we have an opportunity to move wilderness boundaries to more clearly designated places, like ridge tops and stream lines. We wanted trails not to go in and out of wilderness so much, and we wanted most of the Pacific Crest Trail to be in wilderness. We tried to get rid of mid-slope boundaries, because these are an issue in fire suppression.

Q: Is No Action an alternative?

R: Yes. In that case, the current Forest Plan would stay in place.

Q: Why not address boundary issues by reducing wilderness?

R: It's not within our authority to ask Congress to shrink wilderness areas.

Q: You mentioned new data on recreation trends. What is the source of that data?

R: National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) is a Forest Service recreation study that occurs every five years. They sample summer and winter across the forest. There is also state score data and industry and use group studies.

Q: Can volunteer groups help with management to prevent additional wilderness? Will wilderness eventually take over the entire forest?

R: Please volunteer. Not all of the forest can meet the criteria for wilderness, so it will never be 100%.

Q: Why did you call these proposed wilderness areas undesirable?

R: I think you misunderstood. We considered whether areas to be proposed for wilderness recommendation were of sufficiently high quality.

Q: Is no net gain of wilderness an option? Can you recommend moving back the boundaries?

R: No change is an option. We can't recommend moving back boundaries, but you can speak with your congressman.

Closing

Judy noted that the formal presentation and question-answer session had ended, and that Forest Service staff would be available for further discussion and to answer any remaining questions during the open-house portion of the meeting. She identified the Information stations that were set up around the perimeter of the room and invited attendees to check out the proposed action maps and ask questions.

Margaret and Judy 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 submit written comments.

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

Attachment 1: List of Forest Service Staff

Forest Service Staff		
Name	Forest	City, State
Margaret Hartzell	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Okanogan, WA
Debbie Kelly	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Okanogan, WA
Mark Loewen	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Wenatchee, WA
Roland Giller	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Wenatchee, WA
Emily Johnson	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Wenatchee, WA
Lisa Therrell	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Leavenworth, WA
Rod Clausnitzer	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Okanogan, WA
Tina Mayo	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Cle Elum, WA
Patty Garvey-Darda	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Cle Elum, WA
Jo Ellen Richards	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Cle Elum, WA
Nancy Jones	Okanogan-Wenatchee	Cle Elum, WA

Attachment 2: Flip Chart Notes

WELCOME!

COLVILLE AND OKANOGAN-WENATCHEE NATIONAL FOREST PLAN REVISION

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND SCOPING MEETING

August 11, 2011

Cle Elum, Washington

NEWZ Plan Revision

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 Principles

- 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.

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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 2: Flip Chart Notes

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 2: Flip Chart Notes

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.



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Proposed Action

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



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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



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Proposed Action

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



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Proposed Action

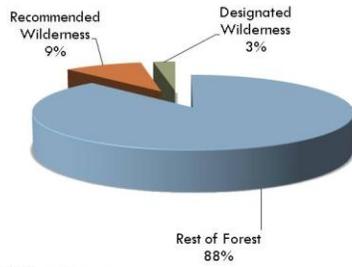
- Preliminary Wilderness Recommendation
 - ▣ Continue – Salmo-Priest Wilderness – 29,000 acres
 - ▣ New – preliminary recommendation of 101,000 acres.
 - About 9% of Forest
 - Not final decision, existing uses can continue until Congress acts
 - Did not recommend areas with motorized trails, mining operations,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



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Attachment 2: Flip Chart Notes

Proposed Action



Percent of total Forest acres

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Proposed Action

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



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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



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How to Comment

- **Send comments to:**
Forest Plan Revision
Okanogan Valley Office
1 240 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.

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