

LOST CREEK-BOULDER CREEK LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROJECT

DRAFT RECORD OF DECISION

NEW MEADOWS RANGER DISTRICT
PAYETTE NATIONAL FOREST

MARCH 18, 2014



Presentation Overview

- Discuss elements of draft Record of Decision and *Selected Alternative*
- Compare *Selected Alternative* to PFC comments
- Compare *Selected Alternative* to PFC goals

Where are we?

- IDT responded to 32 comment letters, over 500 individual comments, 240 pages of responses
- FEIS in printing phase
 - Need to file with EPA
 - Need to distribute to public
 - NOA will be published by EPA in the Federal Register
 - 45-day objection period to begin when the Legal Notice in the Idaho Statesman is published



Selected Alternative

Alternative B, modified with
elements of Alternatives C and D.



Selected Alternative

– **Vegetation:**

- Commercial Thin/Free Thin acres of *Alt. B* with the intensity of *Alt. D*
- Free Thin/Patch Cut acres and intensity of *Alt. B*
- Commercial Thin/Mature Plantation acres and intensity of *Alt. B*
- Non-Commercial Thin acres of *Alt. B*

– **Prescribed Fire: *Alt. B***

Selected Alternative

Vegetation and Prescribed Fire

Activity	Acres
Commercial Thin/Free Thin (CT/FT)	12,200
Commercial Thin/Mature Plantations (CT/MP)	8,100
<i>Commercial Vegetation Treatments within RCAs*</i>	1,530
Free Thin/Patch Cut	1,800
Total Commercial Vegetation Treatments	22,100
Total Non-commercial Thinning Treatments	17,700
Prescribed Fire Treatments	45,000

*RCA acres are not in addition to the CT/FT and CT/MP acres

Selected Alternative

Watershed Restoration:

- System road treatments from *Alt. B*
- Unauthorized route treatments from *Alt. C*
- 36 fish passage barrier improvements from *Alt. B*

Selected Alternative

Watershed Restoration

Activity	Unit
Roads converted to long term closure status	61 miles
System road decommissioning	68 miles
Unauthorized route treatment	117 miles
Number of Fish Passage Improvements (Total)	36
Improvement through Culvert Removal	6
Improvement through Culvert Replacement	30

Selected Alternative

Recreation:

- Designated dispersed camping from *Alt. B.*
- 5 vault toilets installed
- OHV trails from *Alt. B*
- Corral Creek non-motorized loop from *Alt. C*

Selected Alternative

Recreation

Activity	Unit
Vault toilet installation	5
Pit toilet decommissioning	6
Kiosks installed	3
Change in miles of motorized trails open to the public	+15
Change in miles of non-motorized trails	+7
Change in number of designated dispersed campsites	+68
Closure and restoration of undesired dispersed campsites	-12
Trailhead construction and parking expansion	1
Trailhead decommission	1

PFC comment letter



Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended CT/MP treatments as low priority, due to low commercial value.
 - *Selected Alternative* includes the acres of CT/MP treatment (8,100 acres) associated with *Alt B*.
- PFC recommended *Alt. D* acres and treatment intensities for Large Tree Size Class in PVGs 1, 2, 5 and portions of 6.
 - *Selected Alternative* includes the acres of *Alt. B* and the intensities of *Alt. D* in large tree size class stands.

Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended treatments in high CCC, large tree size class in PVG 6 move to moderate canopy cover class to retain elk habitat.
 - *Selected Alternative* would emphasize
 - habitat for species requiring dense habitat in deferred areas & habitat for species that require open habitat in treated areas.
- PFC did not come to consensus regarding shelterwood treatments.
 - *Selected Alternative* includes FT/PC.

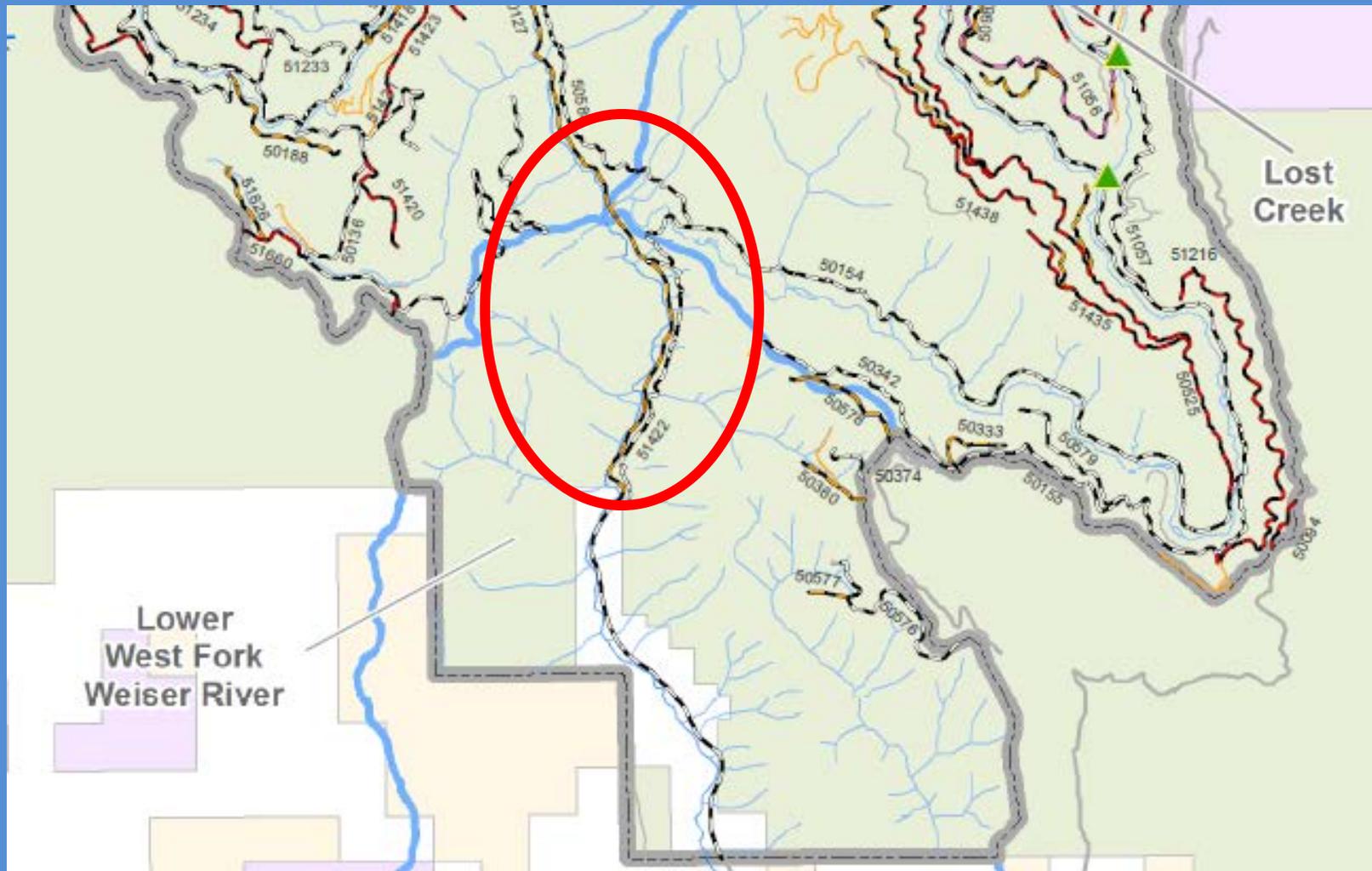
Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended Boulder Creek as highest priority for watershed condition improvement.
 - *Selected Alternative* brings Boulder Creek to Class 2 from Class 3.



Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended implementing actions to bring Lower West Fork Weiser River to Functioning appropriately.
 - *Selected Alternative* does not accomplish this. Determined to not be feasible in final analysis.



Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended considering additional miles of system road decommissioning and restoring additional miles of unauthorized routes beyond proposal in *Alt. B*, with priority in Boulder Creek.
 - *Selected Alternative* incorporates unauthorized route treatments (27 miles) from *Alt. C*.

Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended further evaluation of roads identified for long-term closure be considered for seasonal closure instead.
 - *Selected Alternative* - all roads recommended for long term closure are currently level 2 and closed to the public - changing them to seasonal closures would increase impacts to elk and other wildlife during summer months.

Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended that that all Forest Plan standards and guidelines for water and riparian resources are met, and WCI's maintained or improved.
 - *Selected Alternative* includes a project design feature that addresses the disturbance history WCI.

Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended selecting the non-motorized trails as proposed in Alternative C.
 - *Selected Alternative* incorporates the Corral Creek loop (7 miles) in the Lost Creek subwatershed.

Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended PFC using Road Improvement Guidelines in the review of road closures and the determination of the appropriate closure methods.
 - *Selected Alternative* incorporates these Road Improvement Guidelines and recommendations made in the Travel Analysis Process (TAP).



Comment Letter and Selected Alternative

- PFC recommended that the Forest provide further detail as to how individual large tree retention and large tree structure will be addressed at a stand specific level.
 - *Selected Alternative* includes further clarification regarding preference for retention of large trees, legacy trees, and large tree structure.

Specifications, a monitoring requirement, and a number of Project Design Features have been included to address this recommendation.



*PFC Goals and the
Selected Alternative*

PFC Goals

- Wildlife
- Wildfire
- Watershed Health
- Forest Access and Recreation
- Restoration Economics



PFC Goals and Selected Alternative

Wildlife Goal: Improve habitat for terrestrial and aquatic species, as appropriate by need.

- Maintain and promote large tree size class on approximately 16,000 acres
- Improve 5,000 acres of Priority 1 NIDGS habitat and 8,800 acres of Priority 2 habitat
- Restores white-headed woodpecker habitat to support approximately 18 home ranges in the short term and 40 home ranges long term.
- Reduce overall unauthorized road densities which benefits elk security, while improving nutritional value of winter range and foraging areas near calving habitat

PFC Goals and Selected Alternative



Wildfire Goal: Improve forest resiliency to wildfire, return fire to the landscape as an ecosystem process.

- 49% of the project area (37,600 acres) significantly moved towards historic fire regime
- Fire behavior moves from conditional/active crown fires to primarily surface fires with passive crown fires

PFC Goals and Selected Alternative

Watershed Health: Improve water quality and watershed health, with highest priority moving Boulder Creek to FR

Reduces road density in all subwatersheds

Subwatershed	Total Road Density (miles/square mile)		RCA Road Density (miles/square mile)	
	Existing	<i>Selected Alternative</i>	Existing	<i>Selected Alternative</i>
Boulder Creek	3.0	1.7	3.4	1.9
Lost Creek	7.4	5.3	9.9	6.5
Lower West Fork Weiser River	1.4	1.3	2.7	2.4
Upper Weiser River	4.7	3.1	12.5	7.1
Upper West Fork Weiser River	8.6	6.5	10.3	6.9

PFC Goals and Selected Alternative

Watershed Health: Improve water quality and watershed health, with highest priority moving Boulder Creek to FR

- Brings Boulder Creek to Class 2
- 52 miles of stream connectivity, 157 miles of stream improvement throughout project area

PFC Goals and Selected Alternative

Forest Access & Recreation Goal: Enhance the road and trail network to support access for resource management, outdoor recreation, and public safety.

- 5 new restrooms (4 Lost Valley area, 1 Ant Basin)
- 68 new designated dispersed camping sites
- 15 miles of new designated OHV trail will create loop opportunities and provide for safety
- 7 miles of new non-motorized trail will enhance the available recreation experience

PFC Goals and Selected Alternative

Forest Access & Recreation Goal: Enhance the road and trail network to support access for resource management, outdoor recreation, and public safety.

- 401 miles of National Forest System Road
- 255 miles of National Forest System Road open to the public
- Overall increase of 2 miles of motorized access

PFC Goals and Selected Alternative

- *Restoration Economics Goal: Recommend actions that are financially responsible and contribute to the economic vitality of adjacent communities*
- *Selected Alternative economic contribution is similar to Alt. B, but enhanced by including aspects of Alt.'s C and D.*

What's Next?

- 45-day objection period, anticipated ends mid-May
- Objection resolution period
 - Could take up to 45 days
- Expect Final ROD by June