#

# Forest Plan Revision Subcommittee Meeting

January 23, 2017

US Forest Service Offices, Orofino

**NOTES**

**Attendees:** Alex Irby, Dave Galantuomini, Brad Brooks (VTC), Dale Harris (CC), Skip Brandt, Greg Danly, Bill Higgins, Brad Smith, Leo Crane, Randy Doman, Robyn Miller (CC), Bill Warren, Don Ebert

**Liaisons and Partners:** Tony Snodderly (US Senator Mike Crapo’s Office), Kevin Labrum (USFS), Elayne Murphy, Charles “Hoey” Stewart (Back Country Hunters and Anglers), Zach Peterson (USFS Forest Plan Revision Team Lead), Marcus Chin (USFS, Forest Plan Team), Kelli Rosellini, Ray Henneke (Idaho Dept. of Fish & Game), Megan Lucas (USFS, Forest Plan Team), Norma Staaf (USFS, Forest Plan Team (VTC))

Today’s purpose is to organize our committee, garner a common understanding of the function and purpose of the committee and we will also discuss preliminary topics a schedule and resulting products. We will make work and communication assignments and establish the next meeting dates.

## Introductions and Meeting Purpose

*Review of the agenda and discussion of purpose*

The development of alternatives needs to reflect the public wishes and options for consideration. The Proposed Action has changed significantly; however is still our foundational document. Changes will be made to this foundational document. There were 13,000 Scoping Comments. How the PA morphs will become the alternative development. The Team is still working through the topics which are most useful for discussion. This spring we will move into Alternative development and will seek considerable input from the public and collaborative efforts.

### Timeline

The timeline is a little unclear; we are moving forward as quickly as we can, but there are recommendations from the Region that we will implement – engaging the public, getting the best product possible and ensuring all comments are considered. However, the intent is not to drag this out another 5 years!

There is no specific deadline at this time. The Washington Office has asked that we do not have a firm deadline. We may have one in the future

* *It will be three years this summer since the Proposed Action came out. Are you starting over?* We are certainly not starting over. We are making tweaks to the Proposed Action, which is the result of earlier collaboration. We are moving into Alternative Development which is fairly far along in the process. But, what we are not doing is artificially constraining ourselves by a timeline.
* *My goal is to see a draft issued, to determine where we are aligned and where we are not, so I would like to see some type of schedule perhaps towards interim products?* A lot of that has worked through, we can discuss where we are. What we haven’t done is pulling it all together and issued a Revised Proposed Alternative.
* *The Proposed Action being modified makes me nervous as there was a lot of work involved in that process and there were a lot of things I liked about it.* The PA was a Scoping document, which was very detailed, and was aiming at determining where we were on target and where we had to focus our changes. Based on internal and external comments, there are things to be tweaked.
* *Why is this an Interim Process and why is the PA the starting point?* The NEPA process, especially an EIS, it’s an iterative process and we’ve brought it a long way. We were one of the first forests to cut a Forest Plan under the new directive. Some Forests have moved ahead of us and we are learning from their processes as well. Using soils as an example, we said we would base our analysis on specific things and through ground trothing the range of variation based, the standard deviation was off the charts. So, we had to be more objective if we were to base decisions off that. Every resource is being similarly examined.
* *Management area allocations?* We are a bit different on that. This is probably the most solid idea in the document and need the least adjustment. There are small tweaks, but nothing major. There are
	+ *1 –* Designated lands, recommended wilderness
	+ *2 –* Back Country areas – Idaho roadless rule areas
	+ *3 –* Front Country –

That gives us the difference to discuss the areas.

* There will still need to be mid-level management plans executed after the Forest Plan is finalized; but issues should be resolved.
* *With respect to treatment in Roadless Areas, it looks like it’s not going to happen as you can’t do it without temporary roads and it appears we can’t construct temporary roads so it will be difficult for the Ranger – so perhaps this is an opportunity to discuss those issues.* I don’t want to drill down to specifics as that will take our whole day. The Roadless Rule clearly states that any inconsistencies will be determined by the Idaho Roadless Rule, it trumps all decisions made. It takes changes made to the Rule itself through rule making.
* *I strongly suggest that we update River Management Plans during the Forest Plan Revision process.* We started the process saying we weren’t going to do mid-level management plans (such as River Management, Wilderness, etc.) and there are some places that won’t work. In some instances there isn’t enough detail at the Forest Plan to execute some of those issues. We will keep you posted on that subject.

As soon as the Proposed Action is moving forward, we will move directly into Alternative Development which is the final iteration before an EIS is issued.

There will be periods of time where collaboration is more beneficial than others. After the EIS is released and through the Comment Period, will be good times to engage. The Team won’t be as available as they work through the analysis.

**Timeline Review:**

1. Update the Proposed Action
	1. Step through with dialogue surrounding thoughts
	2. By resource – Team member presents their resource
		1. Proposed Action
		2. What we’ve heard
		3. What we’re thinking
		4. What you’re thinking
2. Develop Alternatives
3. Analysis

The Proposed Action acknowledges the previous effort and is really what has gotten us this far. It’s been published and based on different comments, along with natural changes, there are tweaks to be made.

* *Talk to me about Alternative Development, sideboards, mandatory alternatives, etc.*  The hard sideboards are that it must be consistent with law, regulations and authority.
* *Maximum opening sizes?* No, a few things to be identified according to NEPA, but that can happen on the back end. We’d like to go in open minded. The focus needs to be around identified issue statements – there are four issue statements identified and they drive the alternative development process. There is a lot on the table.
* *If we want to look at Recreation differently, this would be the time?* Yes, as long as it isn’t inconsistent with existing law (Idaho Roadless, etc.) it can be considered.
* *To not look at the Idaho Roadless Rule is a mistake, if it’s too constraining somewhere we are going to ignore it?* *Maybe we don’t change the Rule, but we recommend a theme change?* From a Decision maker’s perspective, that’s not within our decision space. *I’m not saying set it aside, let others deal with policy changes, but don’t ignore it.* Recommendations to change the Rule or Theme would need to be stated as recommendations, not a Decision.
* *Think about the ASQ, it became clear the Forest would have internal Staff and $$ capacity determine the ASQ regardless of forest growth –* *don’t diminish the public’s opinion of what the Roadless Rule can provide.* Sure.
* *What about the Landscape Assessment?* We are definitely including the information in our assessments and that people have the information. We are looking at some NFMA analysis and we are making sure the Landscape Assessment is included.
* *Is the nutrient program from the Wildlife Habitat Restoration Initiative being included?* Mike Wisdom has been working with us to share information with us. We are currently working with drafts and his goal is to have an adaptive nature on the data being gathered.

## Potential Collaboration Topics

Alternatives will center largely around Issue Statements, which are reflective of where we have potential issues or unresolved conflicts.

**Recommended Wilderness**

Issue 1: The proposed action may not adequately apportion recommended wilderness areas (RWA) across the Forest.

Indicators

* Acres of recommended wilderness areas that provide Primitive recreation opportunities.
* Acres of recommended wilderness areas that provide Semi-Primitive non-motorized recreation opportunities
* Areas of recommended wilderness areas currently providing Semi-Primitive Motorized recreation opportunities.
* Idaho Roadless Areas providing High and Medium-High Capability for providing wilderness character (as assessed using wilderness character attributes of untrammeled, natural, undeveloped, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of undeveloped, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation and special Features (ecological, geologic, scientific, educational, scenic or historical values).
* Idaho Roadless Areas with the potential to add underrepresented ecological communities to the national wilderness system (as assessed using number and percentage of underrepresented ecological communities at forest, regional and national landscape scales).

**Recreation and Access Management**

Issue 2: the proposed action may not adequately apportion motorized and non-motorized recreation access opportunities in the front country (management area 3) and backcountry (management area 2) areas across the forest.

Indicators

* Acres of forest by use season providing semi-primitive motorized or mechanized opportunity in SMAs managed as recommended wilderness with the exception of providing limited, seasonal semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities.
* Acres of Forest by use season providing semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunity provided secluded recreation experiences in the backcountry management area (MA-2).
* Acres of Forest by use season providing motorized recreation opportunities in the front country (management area 3).

**Forest Vegetation**

**General Comments and Discussion:**

* *What are the requirements for monitoring?* We develop the monitoring plan, tiered off the broad scale monitoring strategy developed by the Regional Office. We hope they are close to the end of that process, but haven’t seen a product yet. We seek to have meaningful things in the plan that get at the uncertainty – testing assumptions, etc.
* *What is more ripe for discussion?* ORV identification for Wild/Scenic Rivers and Recommended Wilderness. There is some work on Wildlife components, but that is what we’re working on what needs to conclude prior to Alternative Development. So anything that isn’t on those subjects would be ripe.
* *What about weeds?* This is conducted by Zones (north, south, mid) with the exception of the Selway and Frank Church Wilderness areas which have their own. The last Weed Directives were done in 1988. There is thought of doing one forest wide and have it more of an adaptive plan, which is more likely to occur but the Forest Plan would have a Desired condition. If there are broad thoughts to be contributed, Forest Plan is the time to build that rule set.
* *What about DRAMVUU?* *This was poorly done and the sideboards are terrible.* The Forest Plan is not Travel Plan, DRAMVUU and Clearwater Travel Management Plan dictate those issues. We can set the stage for what future Travel Plans should adhere to – set a broad stage for what they look at. Forest Planning is not Travel Planning.
	+ *And Travel Planning is not travel planning. We didn’t look at how people travel through the forest. We looked at NEPA and decided what would change and what wouldn’t. The new initiative on Trails says, at a national level, is about the fact that people can’t move and we’re creating a backlog of energy and people will eventually travel where we don’t want them. How do we set this up right?* Some of that only the Forest Supervisor can answer. But, how do we place thoughts in the Forest Plan would have a clearly laid out plan to begin that thought process.
	+ *Outfitters need to belong to that conversation.*
	+ *The Idaho GEM Trail needs to be considered during that conversation – Outfitters may be located along that trail. Everything moves, we have land-based and water-based outfitters and we need to consider that “flow” through the forest.*
	+ All too often Forest Plans fail because they think about today and not tomorrow. On that line of thinking, let’s plan on the future and accommodating how things may change.
* *Regarding Fire Risk and Fire Ecology, we need to consider a strategy that doesn’t break the bank every time we have a fire. We cannot have 1,000 people show up every time a 500 acre fire breaks out. At the end of the year nothing can be done due to lack of funds. We must not miss this boat, make fire suppression cheaper.* At the broadest scale, where to focus on suppression and other ideas, that is exactly what the Fire Risk Assessment does and that’s being prepared now. Some of those questions are in there, but you’re right we need to look at those questions. This goes back to our Desired Future Conditions; in theory if you move towards your DFC you begin to reduce those suppression costs as you are meeting your vegetation goals.

**Additional comments from FS Team**

* **Erosion, Sedimentation** and Elk Modeling – we are using this for the Woodrat Project where we received an Objection as it relates to WET Modeling and we will use this document in defense.
* We are now where the Forest Plan Team was 30 years ago.
* We need to deal with the sediment issue – it’s something we get comments on all the time. It takes a lot of time and money to analyze this issue for projects. If these effects last so many years, and then the sediment sits there for 10, 20 or 30 years and not moving down the stream that will affect things. We need to look forward and think about how to approach this and a big hurdle on Forest Plan Revision. This all relates to good water quality and anadromous fisheries which are important to this area.
* In looking at the 2012 Planning Rule there is Wildlife Language in several sections.
	+ The most prominent portion of language falls under Ecological Diversity, Diversity of Plants & Animals Section. We feel solid on the Federally Listed section.
	+ The next section for Species of Conservation Concern – I believe we need to document more carefully how we intend to protect those species. This can be done straightforward, but needs to be defined better. It needs to tie to each species and ecological condition. We also need to document where threats to those species of concern are threatened. We need to maintain viable populations on the landscape and is one of the most challenging issues to deal with in the 2012 Planning Rule.
	+ The Multiple Use Section of the Planning Rule emphasizes species that are hunted, fished and observed. That is where our hunted and trapped species are referenced and I believe we should put our emphasis into restoration of the landscape.
	+ Finally, the last part is the Monitoring which identifies Focal Species and it’s a monitoring construct. The key part is that they should be selected so they can provide meaningful information on how we are managing for reference to how well we are achieving our ecological (DFC) goals.
	+ One thing is clear, each alternative goal should be to provide viability to Species of Conservation Concern. We should think about that *through the process* rather than at the end.
	+ *Regarding fisheries – Aquatic Riparian Conservation – what does that refer to? What about fisheries restoration?* Part of the Planning Rule language directs us to identify Priority Watersheds and they will be identified for Integrated Restoration. Throughout the Aquatic Restoration Process those Priority Wtersheds will be identified. Beneficial uses, ID State Water Quality, - *Is that an opportunity for collaboration?* Absolutely, as we go resource-by-resource we can do that better. We’ll have a matrix of identified watersheds, that would be a good time to have that conversation.
	+ *As Outfitters were not recognized in the previous Plan, I would like to see that Outfitters & Guides are recognized.*
* Vegetation Desire Conditions – what do they look like? Constraints we face? Competing values? How do we meet those conditions? That would be where we need the most help.

**General Questions and Comments**

* We work for the Executive Branch, if there are any changes that come from the top we will let you know.
* There are 40 Forests currently undergoing Forest Plan Revision across the nation. Idaho Panhandle recently finished their revision under the old rule, however are currently under litigation.
* *There is one Working Group meeting per month, how many meetings per month could the FS participate in?* This would depend a lot on what other meetings the FS is required to attend for CBC. A couple a month would be ideal, but if there are more needed.
	+ I suggest that we meet when we can be productive
	+ Progress – if we’re making progress we probably won’t need as much activity. If nothing is happening, you’ll hear us request a meeting.
	+ *True, but we have to have an “integrated” plan and from our perspective, not everybody has to be there but the more the better*
	+ So, two meetings per month plus the Working Group meeting?
		- By topic members can integrate themselves by topic, but Zach is the integrator.
		- *This group should meet as often as they wish, please don’t let the FS hold you up.*
	+ Day of the week that works best? – **Wednesday, Thursday**
		- Mondays are the worst
		- Get days on the calendar in advance
		- Mondays and Tuesday’s are out as the Commissioners cannot attend
		- Try to schedule around other meetings so people can attend in person
		- Fridays are timber sale days
* *Was there a gap analysis to be conducted? What is missing? Deficiencies?*
	+ Overview of Proposed Action v. What is being changed?
	+ What’s important to CBC? Future subject on the agenda
* Integration
	+ Each group came up with their own components as it relates to issue, so a topic for conversation could be integration.
	+ Common ground themes that multiple resources can benefit from will be the most valuable. Where you can find common ground you will find the most success.
* Staffing
	+ The Forest is still down 50% over the whole forest
	+ There is a hiring freeze that come through this morning
* Anything else
	+ Get some dates on the calendar
	+ Get into the details
	+ Get working
	+ We appreciate the Forest Service always deferring to us, but we are also available to the FS to be most helpful to you. We need to start getting our work done to help you.

***Action Item: Request a list of all the Team Members and their disciplines from Forest Service (Zach)***

***Action Item: Notes and handouts to Committee Members***

## Structure and Administration

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Forest Plan Revision Subcommittee, limited public involvement (CBC Meeting)**Members:** One each Subcommittees - Forest Health, Recreation, Wildlife Habitat, Land Allocation, and Rural Economics. FS has dedicated Collaborative Liaison (i.e., Zach Peterson). Public involvement, per CBC protocols. **Frequency:**  as often as weekly to facilitate true input to the process. Members will need to be *dedicated from the start*.**Technical Level:** Intermediate to advanced knowledge of FS processes and forest ecology.**Decision Making or Consensus:** Per existing Protocols, Subcommittee *makes recommendation*s to WG and FS.  | ***Summary: regularly operating Subcommittee forming consensus ideas and decisions, returning those to the Working Group and/or Forest Service for consideration and adoption***Sample Agenda, Wildlife Habitat:Wildlife Habitat Presentation by FS Facilitated Question and Answer session by group* Summation of consensus ideas or thoughts
	+ Facilitated drafting of document outlining summary
	+ Forward to Working Group as Recommended Consensus Path Forward

**Output:** Series of input “papers” to the FPR Team as comments and/or FS defined submission type. |
|  |

**Sample Meeting**

Recreation (as a subject)

**Attendees:**

Minimum:

Randy Doman & Alex Irby (Co-Chairs of Recreation Subcommittee)

Zach Peterson & Norma Staff (Team Leader and Recreation Lead on FPR Team)

Additional:

Any interested CBC members

**Pre-Work (Critical Component):**

* Facilitated Meeting
* Established Agenda
* Desired feedback established ahead of time
* Prepare meeting & participants
	+ Emails
	+ Phone calls
	+ In person

**Meeting #1 – Building the Foundation**

* ~~Understanding the Proposed Action & where do we go from here?~~
* Understanding the Forest Plan Revision as a process
* Administrative Details
	+ Protocols – discussion and decision (adherence, incl. consensus language)
	+ How often to meet / where, when, who
	+ Other items/member concerns

**Meeting #2 and Continuing Meetings**

* Prework – Zach to help drive the subject matter
* Prep Group – make sure participants know the subject matter we’ll discuss
* Facilitated – Focused – Production Oriented meetings

**Post Meeting**

* Forest Plan Revision Subcommittee reports to Working Group
	+ In tandem or in lieu of Zach presenting
* Write up of comments, suggestions and feedback
	+ If unified, great!
	+ If not unified, capitalize on our protocols – characterize our differences

**Comments and Discussion:**

* This seems to create more bureaucracy than it does efficiencies?
	+ It was intended to do just the opposite. The Subcommittees (Wildlife, Recreation) should forward any overarching recommendations to the Forest Plan Revision Subcommittee.
* I would hate to see that almost all members of the Working Group attend this meeting and then get to the Working Group and have to repeat the process again
	+ I don’t think that works either because if you have missing people from the FPR Subcommittee, you are still going to have to vet the subject at WG meeting.
	+ The idea is that this group performs the majority of the work, does some shuttle diplomacy prior to a WG meeting and when that meeting occurs it should proceed without too much controversy.
	+ If you present it to the WG in an organized method, you shouldn’t have to reinvent the wheel again
* We’re trying to create a process that contributes to a Decision Making process that is easier, but it’s not going to “make us” agree.
	+ We still need to perform sensing prior to the meeting and document that
	+ We’re not going to have consensus every time, we need to document our differences and move on
	+ Do not force the issue, we all need to move forward at the same time
* It’s important to remember what we’re doing – we’re providing input to the Forest Plan. We aren’t the decision makers, we’re providing information to the Forest Service.
* From my perspective, at the end of the day, after all the analysis is done if CBC can come to agreement on a particular alternative is great. But, what is most important to hear the different viewpoints and those differences can be captured in the Alternatives.
	+ Even if we agree, we can agree to disagree – that information is just as important to the Forest Service as alignment on a particular subject.
* We are in on the ground floor and that’s amazing. At the last Forest Plan, one of our members was completely left out.
* If we aren’t about making compromises and getting to consensus, then why are we here?
	+ That’s what alternatives are about
	+ If we can’t agree on topic 6A, you might be agreeable when 11B is approved - ??
* The **goal** is consensus, that is what we strive for. The objective is still consensus and when we don’t have it we are going to figure out why.
	+ We actually require, not ask, that an alternative be produced
* Summaries: with working with the Forest Service for so long and being involved in previous Forest Plan Revisions, as we progressed individuals began to rely on opinion leaders and others to form their public opinions. We are hopeful that as we work through issues and we have well throughout concepts that we can use the summaries that people can use to help provide their input.
	+ Option 2 of the original concept paper had a larger public involvement, which was difficult to document as it could be extremely cumbersome.
* We are a varied organization – are we considered a single entity or multiple voices?
	+ As valuable as CBC is and multi-faceted as their voice is, we are still obligated to meet with any public group that requests our presence. If we meet with you once per month, you can bet we are attending 4 or more other public meetings. Option 2 actually sounds attractive from an efficiency standpoint.
	+ The most effective way to do that is to have a product to sell. Once you have something I like, I can help you sell it. If I don’t like it, I won’t. We’ve done a lot of good work in the beginning [FPR].
* If the Subcommittee’s just talk about projects (GEM Trail) then Recreation would discuss the higher level information at the Forest Plan Revision Subcommittee?
	+ That particular Committee has already done its work – we have a Vision for the Committee and the Committee is in agreement and full support.
	+ The larger view discussion would occur here, unless something needs further vetting. Some issues won’t be resolved here in this committee and would need to be referred back to the appropriate Subcommittee.
	+ **We want to keep this Committee focused on management direction and big picture visions – the 30,000 foot level**
* I’d like to hear about what our **final product** might look like? One possibility is that we have a broad comment letter, for which I would advise against. Or, we have a “Allocation of Management Areas CBC is behind” or “these are the objectives we are behind” and those may sound more daunting than a Comment Letter, but the FS already has a foundation with some of this already prepared. It’s not a final product, in draft form, there are things that are good and things that need to be added but they could bring us drafts and we could comment.
	+ My hope is the alternatives created would give us a clear Alternative to choose, giving us an easy way to support a particular alternative.
	+ Should there be a CBC Alternative?
	+ There is probably a better way to state intentions, this group could probably help with that. CBC could choose that alternative – but the best case scenario is that CBC stands next to us in court stating they support the Choice of Alternatives we chose.
	+ I want to make sure the Forest Plan covers those items we typically get sued on, like sediment modeling and species of concern.
	+ At the end of the day, via our MOU, you should have support from us on the Alternative you choose. We should be part of the process and involved after the Decision.

## Summary

***Decision: it is a good thing to have a Forest Plan Revision Subcommittee comprised of Co-Chairs of Committees and it remains open to all Working Group Members – all thumbs up***

***Decision regarding Interaction with other Subcommittees; yes, there will be interaction, keep the big picture strategic at this Subcommittee level realizing that other Subcommittees may need to bring particular issues to this Committee – all thumbs up***

***Ground Rules are from the Operating Protocols, Decisions per Operating Protocols – agreement***

**Additional Items with Agreement but no formal vote:**

* Products – we talked about having a “Summary” to bring forward (1 page) and Members will perform shuttle diplomacy prior to Working Group meetings
* Bigger Products – inputs on Standards, Guidelines and Allocations and support at the end for an Alternative – it may morph and evolve, but we have direction

Meeting Schedule and Topics –

1. Proposed Action, Changes contemplated, Quick Reaction in the morning

Identify areas that don’t have a lot of change. Use the afternoon to further react and set priorities

***Action Items: Bring copies of the PA to the Working Group Meeting on Jan. 25***

1. Next Meeting Dates:
	1. February 16th, Grangeville, 9:00-3:00pm
	2. March 9th, Orofino
	3. March 23rd, Grangeville
	4. April 13th, Orofino
	5. April 27th, Grangeville

Report Out to Working Group on Wednesday, January 25th – Alex/Elayne

Summary of Action Items:

* Handout electronically for sharing with Dale/Brad (Zach/Kelli)
* Provide list of ID Team Members (Zach/Kelli)
* Provide list of CBC Subcommittees and Calendar of Events (Kelli)
* Review CBC Comments submitted regarding Proposed Action (Kelli)
* Bring 20 copies of Proposed Action to CBC (Zach)
* Pre-work, recommendations on What to Review (Zach)