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## Idaho Roadless Commission Meeting

### NOTES

November 30 – December 1, 2021  
Virtual Meeting – Hosted by OSC via WEBEX

### Introductions

**Commission Members present:** Alan Prouty, Alex Irby, Bill Higgins, Bob Cope, Brad Gilbert, Dan Dinning, Jim Caswell, Billy Barquin, Michael Gibson, Peter Stegner, Dale Harris,

**Forest Service:** Amy Marshall, Dan Fabbi, Chris Noyes, Joshua Simpson, Sara Daugherty, Karen Ritland, Chris Moyer, Corrin Floyd, Carl Petrick, Linda Jackson

**Idaho State:** Jace Hogg, Tara Ball (IDFG), Darren Parker, Mitch Silvers

**Others:** Garret Visser

### SECTION I: Welcome and Business Meeting – October 27

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#### Welcome and Introductions:

- Jim – David Rosenkrance will be late, schedule will shift a little.

#### Review/Approve Spring 2021 notes:

- Motion to approve Spring 2021 notes. Peter motioned. Billy seconded.

#### Annual Report/State Update:

- No changes to the statute or MOU. Annual Report will be compiled after this meeting and submitted to the congressional natural resource committees on Jan 15<sup>th</sup>, Jace will send out copy. The Roadless budget stayed at \$15,000 this year, and again has only been used for Jace's hours and printing time/cost.

### Reinventory/Theme Change:

- David: The FS has a process in mind. Subcommittee meeting January for those discussions. Amy will provide a document for what it takes to make theme or boundary changes.

### Substantially Altered: David Rosenkrance, Deputy R4

- David: The FS ultimately decided not to issue a guidance paper, it is used infrequently and that the IRC is the best avenue to discuss how this is interpreted on a case-by-case basis. In the future, the commission will review a future situation and try to come up with an informed recommendation with Forest.

## Section II: Project Updates and New Projects

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### Non-Timber, Roads or Minerals Small Projects

The following Table provides a summary of new small projects that have ***no tree cutting, road construction/reconstruction, or mineral activities***. Projects that include any of these activities are addressed individually below the table.

#### Discussion

- Amy presented.

PNF - Payette Lake Trail – East Side

- Elt: What kind of money is being used to pay for this? Parks and Rec? Michael: CIMBA mountain biking group funding and parks and rec. Amy email to commission 11/30/2021: There is no funding committed at this time. They don't usually secure the funding until after the NEPA is done, but CIMBA proposed the project so they will be looking for the funding and possibly Idaho Dept. of Parks & Recreation.

C-TNF - West Fork Mink Trail and Watershed Improvement

- Elt: motorized trail or no? Jim: Is this joint state funding as well? Amy email 11/30/2021: Idaho Dept. of Parks and Recreation will contribute \$26,500 and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality \$10,389.

S-CNF - Leadbelt Rider's Camp Corral

- No comment

**Day 1 Public Comment: No comment**

**Day 2 Public Comment: No comment**

### Individual Projects by Forest:

Following are the generally larger, individual projects. These projects may or may not require the use of an exception under the Idaho Roadless Rule.

(Since we were running ahead of schedule, Payette folks weren't on yet so Caribou Targhee presented first – see notes below). Follow through implementation Bring back Day Two

## Idaho Panhandle National Forest Kevin Knauth, Carl Petrick

Carl Petrick introduced as the new Forest Supervisor

Westside Restoration.....Update/Status

- Jim: timeline for implementation? FS: First sale being bid on currently, second bid is coming out Q1 FY24, all burning is authorized whenever burn window is ideal. Dan: who were other partners on this project? Kevin: IDL (GNA), BLM, IDFG (Kootenai Wildlife Refuge). BLM will sign decision soon. Bill: does this project overlap with Boulder project? Kevin: No this does not. Michael: This project is a good project to see through implementation and continue to have updates as it occurs over the next few years. Burning and rec improvements could happen very soon. Michael: Add section on large project follow up. This would be a good project for a field trip.

## Payette National Forest Piper Goessel, Sara Daugherty, Rita Bennet, Joshua Simpson

**11/30/21**

Payette NF Projects with Idaho Roadless Areas.....Vicinity Map

General landscape burning (Big Creek Fuels and Brush Mtn no BP).....Update/Status

- Big Creek: Elt: why did the timber sale fall through? Piper: combo of quality or material and long haul route, timber bid and labor issues.
- Brush Mountain: No questions.

Rapid River Travel Management.....Update/Status

- Jim: What's the timeline? Rita: Draft decision February. Alan: What did the comments say? Rita: They referred to sense of place and what was under Special Use Order. Elt: How many comments were for motorized and for non-motorized? Rita: Doesn't have a count, but there were comments for motorized and non-motorized.

East Fork South Fork RAMP.....Initial Briefing

- Billy: when is a trail a road? If a motorized trail is open to all vehicles... There should be a larger discussion around how roads are defined, and if there is a negative outside perception on how the IRC allows these routes to be maintained or used. Elt: Sugar Creek area is a sticking point in Valley County. Big Creek/Yellow Pine collaborative could not agree.

Railroad Saddle..... Initial Briefing

- No questions.

**12/1/21 Kevin Knesek**

Stibnite Gold EIS ..... Update/Status

- Late 2020, modified plan of operations received. Midas changed to Perpetua, and the Modpro2 was created to reflect updates to groundwater data (less than they thought). Changes: size of pits (smaller), location of gravel pits, surface water feature (stibnite lake) as a water temperature buffer, started getting tech documents March 2020 through now, FS reviewing them currently. FS has thoughts about assumptions made and data that the assumptions are based on. FS: did the draft EIS and additional information require public comment? Yes, so a supplemental EIS will be developed. Modpro2: generally less impactful, but there are some assumptions... availability of groundwater and how much needs to be treated, especially if lake is drained. The FS has not decided if it agrees with 2019 groundwater data in modpro2, and analyzing water temperature. Supplemental: easier to read and more in depth, separate technical information from narrative, comments will be addressed through incorporation of substantive comments. Mining: reduce environmental impacts as much as possible and alt 1 and alt 3 did not meet those criteria. Supplemental will not have alt 1 or 3. Two action: modpro2, and the original alt 4. This will include travel route analysis – Johnson Creek-Stibnite route includes a lot of work to bring it up to safety standards and protection for avalanches. Disclose effects. Burnt Log Route hasn't changed. Jim: The only connection to this project for roadless is access, and the FS is still trying to figure this out. 1872 exemptions with mining rule. RR doesn't stand in the way for mines to get access, does impact who gets to use it. Sitka: modpro2 has access through mine site (public notices for closures), during closure still looking at public proposals, public could use burnt log. Under other alternative with Johnson creek as only route. Jim: Lets keep this on agenda with a very brief update.
- Timeline for supplemental EIS: March, maybe May 2022

## Boise National Forest Noe Reyes, Jake Strohmeier, Ryan Jones

### Payette-Ola C Allotment Bull Trout Protection.....Initial Briefing

- Elt: Will permittees do this under their permit? Permittees will be implementing project and in charge of maintenance. Dan: Trees are pushed to the ground by snow. Trees may be felled to fix any holes that develop. John Robison: There are forest protections/design features for meeting riparian conditions. Min. 30 ft from streambank, 3.5 snags per acre, retain legacy trees. How much have you worked with permittees to date? Multiple field trips with fish biologists and concern from permittees about the amount of work. Elt: No motorized equipment will be used.

### Southwest Idaho Resilient Landscape (SWIRL) .....Initial Briefing

- EA for forest wide prescribed fire. No treatment in wilderness or Research natural areas. Annually – close to 60,000 acres max, HUC 5, not more than 25% per year. Decision Feb 2023. Cope: what options do you have when complying with the clean air act? We won't want to exceed the Clean Air Act, even with an exception. Elt: too bad we couldn't burn this year, this would have been a good year.

### Tamarack Resort Proposed Expansion Special Use Permit.....Initial Briefing

- 5 new lifts, summit to base gondola, new 10,000 acre guest use facility. EIS. Proposal has been submitted, but not accepted. Billy: is building a ski resort within the spirit of the roadless rule, and this isn't currently in line with the forest plan. CPZ creep – keep building further into the forest. Bill: This seems ripe for a theme change discussion to maintain the integrity of the rule. Being within the confines of the roadless rule seems silly. Can't imagine any roadless characteristics remaining. Elt: Was this a previous phase of tamarack? In the roadless EIS there was no proposed expansion. Not completely new, but it never got to this stage before the existing resort was constructed. Jim: solution around a theme change. Jake: Theme change or boundary adjustment? Which does the commission prefer, what is the suggestion? Brad: the forest plan could label this area as a special area, not change the roadless rule. John (ICL): Lifts and lodge implemented, would tamarack ask for WUI treatments and actually having more cutting than just implementation, and outside of the roadless. FS: Proposal does mention WUI, and that the forest around tamarack is pretty departed so its already a tough fire management issue with no proposal. SUBCOMMITTEE ITEM.

**Caribou Targhee National Forest** Ashly Kula, Deb Flowers, Dylan Johnson, Arik Jorgensen, Louis Wasniewski

East Palisades Hazardous Fuels Reduction.....Update/Status

- Efforts for cross boundary work with private. Billy: Commission appreciated great delineation of CPZ

Caribou Prescribed Fire Restoration.....Update/Status

- Objection period starts Jan 1. Comments? 30% - 50% of individual burn blocks will actually be burned. No more NEPA, but have burn plan and have section 7, SHIPO, forest plan compliance. Jim: there are some lessons learned here.

Bear Lake West Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Restoration.....Update/Status

- No comment

Caribou Basin Small-Scale Gold Placer Mining.....Update/Status

- Objection period: ICL, Y2Y, added mitigation measures and added monitoring. Elt: does placer mining require reclamation bonding? Mel: Small scale-permit with the state. No POO with us and no bonding required. Elt: is it 50ft of contiguous disturbance per person or over project area per year? Amy (email 11/30/21): 50 feet contiguous is per sluice. Ashly Kula followed up with our geologist on the project and she said that we do hold reclamation bonds for the highbanking under a Plan of Operations. Bonds are typically ~\$800 per operation and refundable if the miner fully reclaims the site. The projects are really small, though.

Stone King Vegetation Restoration.....Initial Briefing

- Jan 2022 scoping. CE, possibly an EA. No roads in backcountry restoration? Yes.

Lower Wells Canyon Road Realignment.....Initial Briefing

- Dan Denning: this is in general forest? Yes. Forest Plan would be supportive of this kind of work.

**Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forest** Marty Mitzkus, Zach Peterson, Karen Ritland, Ron Tipton, Dan Fabbi, Zoanne Anderson, Graydon Galloway, Andrew Skowlund

- Forest Plan Revision.....Update/Status
  - Still finalizing BA, final decision late 2022. Dan: If a forest plan changes a theme, the forest keeps the change, then roadless has to evaluate theme change. FS: roadless rule takes precedent over Forest Plan.
- South Fork Clearwater Mineral POOs.....Update/Status
  - No comment
- Race Cow.....Update/Status
  - No comment
- Green Horse.....Update/Status
  - No comment
- Dixie Comstock.....Update/Status
  - Alan/Jim: This project has been in planning for multiple years (4) and it just burned up anyway, so the whole point of the project is a little moot at this point.
  - Bill: 36 million suppression cost, would the project being implemented reduce that cost? Remains to be seen. Brad: structures lost? No, encroached on 222 road.
- Dead Laundry.....Update/Status
  - No Comment
- Lost Toboggan Landscape Prescribed Burn.....Update/Status
  - Jim: What kind of comments were received during scoping? Andrew: Scale of project, too small for rx fire, sediment inputs? SHIPO is also taking a long time to clear, working to work around those.
- Ohara Wildlife and Fuels Rx.....Update/Status
  - No comment
- Red Siegel.....Update/Status
  - No comment

Jace - I had to bring back all but, minerals projects and red siegel. do we have any other notes maybe Michael?

**Closing Thoughts:**

Jim: Should the commission write letter about the effectiveness of Rx fire and keeping the management options open? Air quality issues, implementation consultation, there area lot of unknowns.

Higgins: “tinkering around the edge” look at a variety of tools.

Large concern: that Rx fire becomes part of the FS agency culture and other management considerations will fall to the wayside.

**12/1/21**

**Introductions**

Michael: Add place in the agenda for long term tracking of projects. Marked on spreadsheet as they move through. Periodically ask for spreadsheet. Jim: The commission will work on drafting a Rx fire letter.

**Salmon Challis National Forest** Chuck Mark, Jeff Hunteman, Ken Gebhardt, Clayton Collins, Heather DeGeest, Glen Brighton?

Forest Plan Revision ..... Update/Status

- Mary Farnsworth and Chuck decided to move forward: two separate forest plans. Stagger analysis. Start with Salmon forest plan first. Take a look a previous work, three concurrent processes. Have drafted – need for change, W&S River eligibility, Species of Conservation Concern. Also start with econ analysis. Working on timber feasibility study with u of I, rocky mtn research station, contactors, Custer County. Revising plans over the next 4 – 6 years. Brad: will roadless areas be altered through forest planning? Michael: is there any ground truthing that will happen with the roadless areas? Chuck: yes, especially surrounding potential wilderness areas. Brad: boundary change could be added as forest planning fourth concurrent process.

Sheep Creek Vegetation Improvement ..... Update/Status

- Third update for this project. 42,000 acre project. Backcountry restoration. Major tribs to north fork and main salmon river. 28,000 rx fire. Timber harvest. Aspen, whitebark pine, ponderosa pine, doug fir. 4 miles temp roads. No roads in roadless. LFRG field trips have happened. NOAA comments on draft biological assessment. Timeline: scoping 2022.

Bayhorse V2 ..... Update/Status

- Brad: Can you specify the comment on not meeting roadless rule intent? Jeff: The comments fairly generic. Nothing specific. During scoping, there were general concerns about activity inside roadless and how it effects roadless characteristics. Follow-up - Did we get it done in May 2022?

Big Creek Restoration ..... Update/Status

- 71,200 acres. CE. Veg treatments, no road building, treatment units will be built after project area is authorized. 61,000 acres in backcountry restoration. Timeline: Winter 2022.

S-C Fuels Reduction and Restoration ..... Update/Status

- EA condition based. EA and draft decision, then objections.

Darling Creek ..... Initial Briefing

- CE, scoping winter 2021. Jim: is this included in forest wide projects? Why is Big Creek and Darling separate? Timing.

Big Gulch Forest Products ..... Initial Briefing

- Harvest, post and pole, personal use (70 acres, 60 acres IRA). No roads. Just went out for scoping. In CPZ? Brad doesn't think there are any communities close to the project, no CPZs.

Navarre Exploration Drilling ..... Initial Briefing

- Backcountry restoration. 10 miles NW. 31 drilling locations. 7 pads. 3.7 miles of closed user created routes, 1 mile new road outside roadless. Scoping winter 2021.

BTAC Drilling ..... Initial Briefing

- John: how many temp roads in backcountry restoration? Majority of the 24 miles are in general forest not BCR.

Pope Shenon Trenching and Drilling ..... Initial Briefing

- Small exploration drilling, 15 small drill pads. Scoping: winter 2021. John: Would your routes be decommissioned after? Yes.

**Closing Statements:**

Jim: Looking into a letter to the Forest Service about a worry Rx fires becoming the only management strategy in backcountry management.

Stone king on C-T should be a field trip, figure out why backcountry restoration areas are being left out of mechanical treatments. Why? Artifact of access/existing roads. Cope: general forest was harvested in the 60s. Prescribed burning east of divide. Almost evacuated Gibonsville. How quickly can we get at it? Does it make sense in other areas? Jace – Caribou Initiative went to BCR- prescribed fire. Chuck: lack of infrastructure to make cutting/mechanical viable.

Jon: Restoration of natural processes is within the rule, there needs to be a balance of that intent with the management options the forest service has.

Make sure everyone from previous mailing list is still on there.

Adjourn.