



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation Commission

Chair: James Caswell

OSC Staff Support: Jace Hogg - Federal Lands Coordinator

Vice Chair: Michael Gibson

Michael Edmondson - Administrator

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Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation Commission Members

Name	Affiliation	Appointment Length*
Brad Gilbert	Dispersed Recreation	4 years
Bill Higgins	Timber Industry	4 years
Jonathan Oppenheimer	Idaho Conservation League	4 years
Jim Caswell	Public at Large	4 years
Michael Gibson	Trout Unlimited	4 years
Billy Barquin	Kootenai Tribe of Idaho	4 years
Alan Prouty	Mining Interests	5 years
Pete Stegner	Timber Interests	5 years
Elt Hasbrouck	Valley County Commissioner	5 years
Blair Dance	Fremont County Commissioner	3 years
Mike Hanna	Motorized Recreation	3 years
Dan Dinning	Participated in Rule Development	3 years

* All appointments were renewed in 2020 after amendments to Idaho Code 67-826 became effective

Photo: Flat Mountain –Mallard Larkins Roadless Area, Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest

Photo Credit: OSC

Overview

The Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation Commission (Roadless Commission or IRC) was created by Executive Order # 2006-43 and codified in Idaho Code Section 67- 826 as amended in 2020. The members of the commission are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor. Commissioners were appointed in staggered terms of two to five-years, and after the initial terms, appointed to five-year terms. Per the amended Idaho Code, the commission is composed of nine to twelve members. There are currently 12 members serving on the commission.

The Roadless Commission reviews, analyzes, and provides recommendations on proposed projects slated to occur within Idaho's National Forest Roadless Areas. The Commission also provides general policy guidance on proper implementation of the Idaho Roadless Rule across Idaho's 9.3 million acres of roadless areas. Major duties and responsibilities of the commission are to coordinate with the US Forest Service (USFS) and advise on projects, plans, and policies occurring within or affecting Idaho Roadless Areas (IRA), as defined in 36 CFR 294.21. As a part of its role, the commission advises on activities related to shared stewardship, Good Neighbor Authority, forest health, and the protection of communities at risk from wildfire within and adjacent to Idaho Roadless Areas. Pursuant to Idaho Code 67-826(6), the Roadless Commission is supported by the Governor's Office of Species Conservation.

“ To ensure that the spirit and intent of the Idaho Roadless Rule is implemented in the state of Idaho.” – IRC Mission Statement

Actions Update

The Idaho Roadless Rule Implementation Commission generally holds two meetings a year to review projects and policies that affect roadless areas. In 2023, the Roadless Commission's spring meeting was held in Coeur d'Alene on June 7th and the fall meeting was held in Boise on November 3rd. Below is a summary of actions taken by the Roadless Commission over the past year.

The Commission reviewed 54 projects across 7 National Forests with presentations and Q & A sessions with USFS project leads, Regional, and Washington Office staff. The Commission continues to use a spreadsheet, maintained by Forest Service staff, to track the projects reviewed, their status, activities proposed, and other relevant metrics.

After the Fall 2021 meeting, a Commission subcommittee, Chair and Co-Chair continued to work with the Forest Service on questions regarding updating the roadless inventory and adjusting themes. Based on these conversations, it became clear that a pilot project was needed to understand if roadless reinventory was necessary across the entire state, and to examine in detail roadless themes that could potentially need adjustment. A Pilot Project proposal to hire a contractor and work with Region 4 of the Forest Service to undertake a GIS exercise looking at the McCall Ranger District on the Payette National Forest and the roadless areas surrounding the Hemmingway Boulders, Cecil D. Andrus White Clouds, and the Jim McClure-Jerry Peak Wilderness Areas approved by the Commission during the Spring 2022 meeting. The Commission, through the budget administered by the Governor's Office of Species Conservation, then hired Northwest Natural Resource Group to carry out the Pilot Project. The final product was presented at the Fall 2023 meeting, which comprised of an interactive ArcGIS map that was shared among the Commission members for their review. The subcommittee will meet before the Spring 2024 meeting to work on a recommendation for the Governor to give the Forest Service.

Appointment Updates

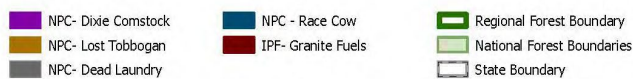
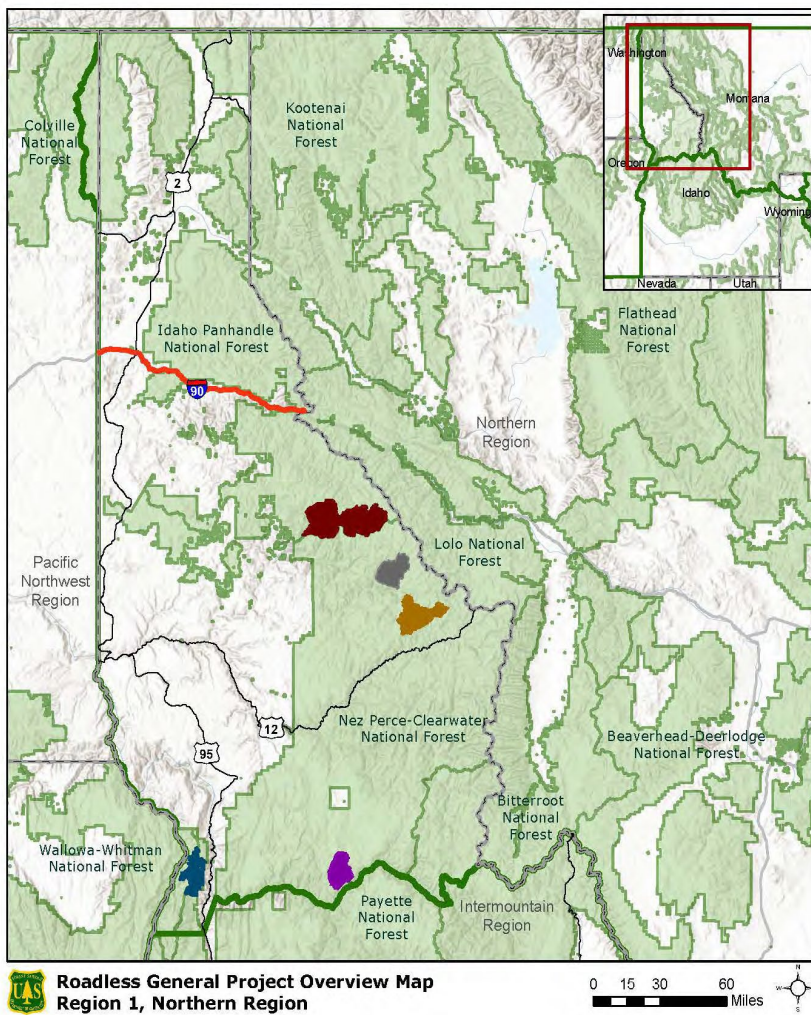
Per Idaho Code 67-826, Roadless Commissioners serve on staggered terms. Three commissioners, Alex Irby, Dan Dinning, and Bob Cope were at the end of their three-year terms as of February 2022. Bill Higgins and Brad Gilbert were also up for re-appointment in July in 2023, and both asked to be reappointed. Alex Irby did not ask to be re-appointed, and Bob Cope passed in early 2023. Dan Dinning did ask to be re-appointed, and multiple nominees were forwarded to the Governor's office for consideration.

The Governor decided to re-appoint Dan, Bill, and Brad and appointed two new commissioners. Representing motorized recreation, former regional director for Senator Risch Mike Hanna, and Blair Dance, one of the current Fremont county commissioners, joined the Roadless Commission in time for the June meeting in Northern Idaho.

The Idaho Roadless Commission website is hosted through OSC's webpage [under the planning tab.](#)

2023 Project Lists and Maps

The Commission was updated on and reviewed 22 projects total in 2023 spanning across Idaho's 9.3 million acres of Roadless. Over the past 4 years, or 6 meetings, the Commission reviewed 33 projects per meeting on average. Section 67 – 826 (3) of Idaho Code states that the commission shall "... coordinate and advise on activities related to shared stewardship, GNA, forest health..." The Commission reviewed 2 projects within the Southwest Idaho and Lower Slamon Salmon Wildfire Crisis Strategy Priority Landscapes: Railroad Saddle and Dixie Comstock. All of the projects were presented by Forest Service District Rangers and NEPA Planners with supporting resource staff brought on the call as needed to answer questions from the Commission members.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service uses the most current and complete data available. GIS data and product accuracy may vary. They may be developed from sources of differing accuracy, accurate only at certain scales, based on modeling or interpretation, incorporate data being revised or created, etc. Using GIS products for purposes other than those for which they were created, may yield inaccurate or misleading results. The Forest Service reserves the right to correct, modify, or replace GIS products without notification.

Region 1

To the left is a map provided by the Forest Service for the Commission and only includes projects with NEPA. Granite Fuels was the only initial briefing in Region 1, the other projects were updates.

Idaho Panhandle National Forest (1)
Granite Fuels - *Initial Briefing*

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest (5)
Forest Plan Revision - *Update/Status*
Race Cow - *Update/Status*
Dead Laundry - *Update/Status*
Lost Toboggan Landscape Prescribed Burn - *No update; review in Spring 2024*
Dixie Comstock - *Update/Status*

Other (Non-Timber, Roads, or Minerals Small Projects)

These are projects that are done through Categorical Exclusions or administrative action and are on smaller scale (single parking lot, fence extension, gravel pits, etc.)

Region 1 (0)
None

Region 4 (1)
Winnemucca Bridge Project – *Salmon Challis National Forest*

Region 4

Below is a map provided by the Forest Service for the Commission and only includes projects with NEPA. Copper Mountain Road Reroute and Everson Creek Trail Re-Route were the only initial briefings in Region 4, the other projects were updates.

Boise National Forest (1)

Southwest Idaho Resilient Landscape (SWIRL) - *No update;*

Payette National Forest (4)

Stibnite Gold EIS (very brief update) - *Update/Status*

East Fork South Fork RAMP - *Update/Status*

Railroad Saddle Forest Restoration - *Update/Status*

Payette Forest-Wide Prescribed Fire - *Update/Status*

Caribou-Targhee National Forest (2)

Caribou Prescribed Fire Restoration - *Update/Status*

Diamond Creek Forest Management - *Update/Status*

Salmon-Challis National Forest (8)

Update Forest Plan Revision - *Update/Status*

Sheep Creek Vegetation Improvement - *Update/Status*

Bayhorse V2 - *Update/Status*

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

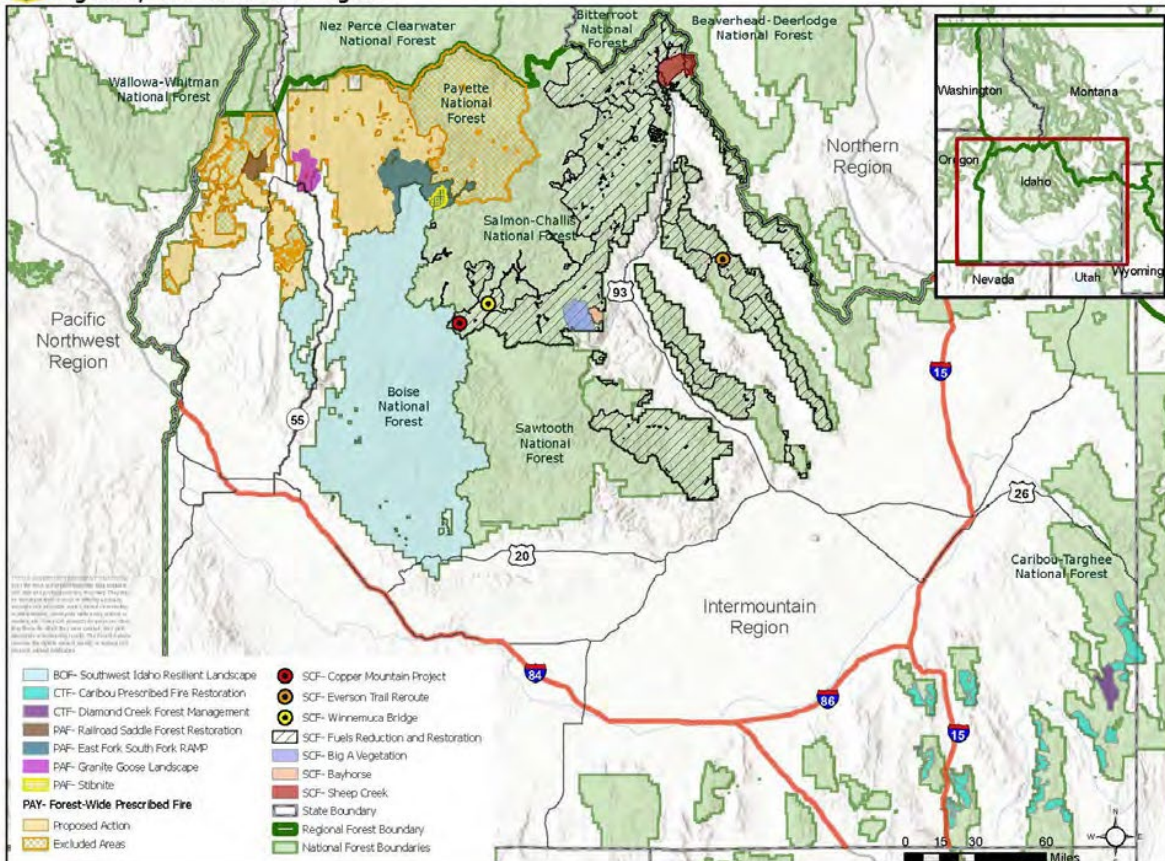
Big A Vegetation - *Update/Status*

Ramey Forest Products – *Dropped since Spring 2023 meeting*

Copper Mountain Road Reroute - *Initial Briefing*

Everson Creek Trail Re-route – *Initial Briefing*

 **Roadless General Project Overview Map
Region 4, Intermountain Region**



Litigation Updates

Lawsuit Update 1: Rowley Canyon is a 3,955-acre restoration project and treats 1,666 acres in an IRA. The Wildland Defense raised the issue, in their complaint, of project effects to wilderness attributes and potential future wilderness recommendations. The Judge granted the FS Motion for Summary Judgement which included a request for dismissal in 2020, with no updates since that time.

Lawsuit Update 2: Lower Valley Energy—Crow Creek Natural Gas Pipeline, is a 48 mile, 50-foot-wide pipeline project that crosses parts of 6 IRAs. Approximately 18.5 miles are on national Forest lands. The Judge issued a Stipulation to Dismiss on 08/5/2022, with the Caribou Targhee National Forest agreeing to not issue a ROD on the project without completing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the project. The proponent released a Draft SEIS in July of 2023, with a comment period that ended in September of 2023. No word on a date for a signed ROD.

Next Steps

The Commission plans to continue to meet in person with a hybrid option for the Spring 2024 meeting. The Commission will complete the normal project reviews and may address one or more of the following policy questions with the Forest Service.

- The Commission will continue to work with the final product from Northwest Natural Resources Group to complete recommendations based on the Pilot Project, which will be presented to the commission by the subcommittee during the Spring 2024 meeting.
- The Commission will continue to work with the Governor's Office to receive confirmation of the re-appointment of Jim Caswell and Michael Gibson, and to look for a new Commissioner to replace William Barquin, who asked not to be appointed again.
- The Commission looks forward to working with the new Forest Service Roadless Coordinator, Catherine Blackwell, who took over officially for Amy Marshall for the Fall 2023 meeting.