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## NOTES

Idaho Panhandle National Forest, Supervisors Office

May 9, 2017

**Attendees:** Jim Caswell, Dale Harris, Scott Stouder, Brad Gilbert, Bill Higgins, Sam Eaton, Dave Rosenkrantz (R4), Michael Gibson, Dave McGraw, Alex Irby, Patty Perry, Dan Denning, Robert Cope, Brian Riggers, Jonathan Oppenheimer, David Schmid (R1)

**Visitors:** Mitch Silvers (US Senator Mike Crapo's Office), Mike Hanna (US Senator Jim Risch's Office), Piper Gussell (Payette), Patty Socheck (Payette), Chris Gold, Christine Dawe, Eric Walker, Sara Herome, Will Young, Kevin Davis, Jason German, Carol McKinzey, Mark Bellis, Karl Dekome, Ray Phillips

## Welcome and Introductions

## Commission Business

Travel reimbursements should be submitted by May 19<sup>th</sup> to meet year end fiscal deadlines.

## IRR Training Module      Progress Report

At the last meeting we discussed the opportunity to develop a training module on the website, facilitating training for various individuals and providing online availability. The group agreed to use some funding by State to pay for FS Team to assist. We had difficulties getting the contract approved, but is now complete and progress is being made. We expect to have more progress

by the next meeting along with a draft. Brian invited members to submit any thoughts or suggestions to him.

Within the FS there are not Roadless Specialists on the forests, typically the Recreation person does the analysis and often they are new. This would describe what an analysis would look like, what typical sticking points are and how to progress through the analysis.

*As we progress through the 2012 Rule, it requires a reanalysis of recommended wilderness; so if it's recommended for wilderness does the Idaho Roadless Rule still prevail? The letter the Regional Forester wrote to the Governor in 2012 lays out the discretion the Forest has to make decisions if there is some compelling reason by the public or a collaborative, and they have the discretion to do that. You still have to go through rulemaking to modify the rule.*

*The IRR will take precedence over any component of inconsistent practices. You could potentially have a Back Country Restoration that is recommended Wilderness in the Planning Process.*

Those are the types of “issues” that are brought up during the training. There is also a companion to the 2012 letter that contains principles. You need to remember the three components: vegetation, roads and discretionary metals – everything else is guided by the Forest Plan. Incompatibility would refer to the components. There will be links to those documents and others that refer to Forest Plan Revision and what the Regional direction is.

*My recommendation is to review this prior to deployment and emphasize what IS available/allowed, as opposed to what is not allowed. There is a lot of interpretation that infers restrictions instead of permissions. Spell out what the components are.*

***A draft will be presented to the group prior to deployment.***

## **New Template for non-road, timber, or minerals projects**

### ***Example: Wilson Flat Trailhead – Boise National Forest***

During a discussion on other minor projects, we seek to make those simpler projects more efficient in terms of not filling out the entire Briefing Paper as we would for a larger project.

The example today is more simplistic and straightforward. If there is no timber, roads or mineral activity then there shouldn't be a Rule Exception to apply and those are the projects that would fit into this category

Feedback has been positive. We want to ensure we get everyone's thoughts on the short format. This would apply to 60-70% of projects. It will make all of our projects efficient in their processing. We would have a couple projects on a page.

## Feedback:

- *Sometimes we ask questions if someone bypassed permissions available to them, if we have that discussion are we going down a path that we don't need to?*
- *Considering there is no components, why are we hearing them at all?* Because we've asked to see all projects. Sometimes it's worth just asking the question or giving a heads up. The Regional Foresters want to ensure we see everything as well. There is a lot of timber harvest that some folks don't perceive as harvest, so there is potential for things to fall through the cracks.
- *So this is just a short form for quick projects?* Yes, but if something came in that should be presented as a longer form we can request that.
- *It will still come in, just in a short form?* Yes, for example: we're building ½ mile of fence in the IRA.
- *The Wilson trail Scenario, that's an old road system that was narrowed up to accommodate recreational vehicles and if someone takes a D9 Cat in there and builds a 15' road, then we need to be made aware of that.*
- *Do we need an abbreviated Purpose and Need Section?* I don't think so. Feedback has included "should or should not" include, and I would suggest that we don't need that.
  - *It does say "purpose" and does add a little detail – it would vary by project, but it will shorten things up. This is for repeater sites, water lines, etc.*
- *A D9 cat removing timber wouldn't be on this form?* No, it would not.

## Succession Planning

We've done some research on the topic, as you would expect most research points to corporations and companies; some deals with nonprofits, but not a lot. We did get a better idea of objectives and needs. Out of that we developed a proposal.

### Principles for Succession:

1. Executive Order sets the priorities and the Membership by Category
2. 15 Members by category
3. Term Limits and Expectation – serve for the life of the EO, the last being four years. If you are on the Commission, the expectation would be that you would serve a 4 year term. The next EO you could be reconsidered.
4. Serve at the pleasure of the Governor, individually and as a Commission – they could change the entire roster.
5. Term Limit – based on the life of the EO, the exception being Elected Officials – who could be unelected. A new EO, people could be reappointed if the Governor decides that is okay.
6. Resignations – you need to recruit a replacement for consideration by the Governor. Choose a person that is willing to work collaboratively and on the issues heard by the Commission.
7. Leadership – the EO says the Chair and Vice Chair are chosen by the majority vote of members. Also at the pleasure of the Governor. Vacancies will be filled by the majority vote at the *next* meeting.

Our current EO expires in May 2018, one year from now. This is the time for us to adopt the principles and perhaps make a leadership change.

Proposal: review the proposal and principles and provide feedback to the Chair and Vice Chair by June 10<sup>th</sup>. Finalize and vote on the results (electronically, with a call if needed) by July 10.

Over the next 6 months (by the November meeting) we should solicit for nominations of the Chair and Vice Chair, bring it to a vote at that meeting. One year from now, whomever those turn out to be – the meetings would need to be run by them.

*We need to perform succession planning, but I am concerned about the loss of historical experience. We often hear about knowledge we don't have.*

*If we were not re-elected, would we still serve on the Commission? Personally, I don't have any desire not to serve on the Commission. Whoever is Governor next, they may not like either of us or the Commission.*

*What we do not have is legislation behind what we are doing. That would compel the next Governor (like us or not) to continue the program. We should consider the introduction of legislation.*

## Four Year Executive Orders

- Does this Commission want to live EO-by-EO and Governor-by-Governor? It's been renewed without any issue and we don't really see it as being unpalatable, but it could be a lower priority.
- Is it time to ensconce this in code or some other fashion so we don't need an EO every 4 years? This could be the time to propose this as Code. We would look to the EO as a blueprint on what Code could look like. It could just be a codification of our EO.

There are those of you who understand the political will better than we do. Now that the Rule is in place and has been endorsed by the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, it is incumbent on the State to play its part in ensuring the Commission in the future.

The process to introduce a Bill starts now.

We would want an open and transparent process. We need feedback and response, either positive or negative. Do people know what they would like it to look like?

### Comments and Feedback:

- You may want to consider having the United Association of Counties to propose that. If it comes through them, they can fight the battle so it isn't an individual Senator or Representative. We have a cutoff date for new Bills at our June meeting.
- The initial spark for this Committee came from the RACNAC and we are structured similar to a RAC. If modeled after the SRS, it would be easy to fashion after the existing law.

- Simple things can become complicated when introduced to Legislature. There is a lot of simple elegance in having an Executive Order. The makeup of the Commission now lends a powerful voice to the Governor. From my perspective, we should not make it a foregone conclusion to codify the Commission, but talk to some folks and ensure it doesn't snowball into something you don't intend.
- Our Representatives should be invited to our Field Trips and meetings to enlighten them to our activities and educate them about our affairs.
- If you have examples or simple ideas to bring forth, that would be helpful.
- Consider staggered Chairmanship's and perhaps a Chair-in-Waiting so that you don't lose the institutional knowledge all at once.
- What is the vetting process for these positions? It has always been verbal, up until now. It could be reflective of the elegance of a simplistic EO versus a statutory requirement.
- It would be helpful to know how much time the Chairs spend on this assignment – I believe there is a lot that occurs behind the scenes.
  - Time commitments are not consistent; they wax and wane but make up a sizable amount of time.
- I have concerns that a future Governor might consider smaller government, less Committee's, etc. I would encourage that we do not preclude either route and consider a simple, straightforward draft sooner than later so that if necessary we are prepared.
- Being on the Commission, I am trying to discern whether the Rule is working for Idaho and whether its intentions are being met. It does refer back to Leadership, but the Commission Members itself have a responsibility. If it's not working, then let's make it work.
- It's been beneficial to have the Authors of the Rule here at the table, we need to maintain that. I would hope that through good leadership the original interpretation becomes stable.
- I think there is a statutory limitation on the number of Commissions or Boards that can be authorized by the State.
  - I believe that it is Agencies, but that is a good point to check. DFM did not initially balk at the idea.

**Proposal:** Circulate the proposal, provide feedback to the Chairs by the 10<sup>th</sup> regarding the Succession Portion, and it will be brought back and voted on formally at the next meeting, prior to incorporation into the Protocols for the group.

#### **Responses to be sent to the Roadless Chairs**

## Section II – Projects

### Payette Forest

#### South Fork Restoration and Access Management Plan

This project was proposed through a Collaborative process in March 2017. Currently we are reviewing the project proposal and reviewing the Forest Plan to ensure it makes it through the screens. We will have Field Trips to review on the ground. This is a cursory introduction.

We anticipate a formal proposed action in June/July and will return in November with a better proposal.

#### **Purpose and Need:**

There are four specific objectives of the proposal. These objectives represent the purpose for this project:

1. Determine the Minimum Road System (MRS) needed for management of the project area, and what routes will be open for public motor vehicle use.
2. Improve watershed condition by: decommissioning or obliterating roads, storm damage risk reduction treatments, improving maintenance of roads and trails and managing dispersed use.
3. Provide motorized ATV and motorcycle trail opportunities, while minimizing resource impacts.
4. Reduce resource impacts from dispersed camping and parking while accommodating public access.

#### **Question and Answer:**

- *This is building a motorized trail?* The proposal as is, has some trail expansion. We will see if it's a real possibility on the ground. There will be designation changes, travel management decision on routes and putting those on visitor use maps. At this time we haven't committed to any one path, we are currently conducting our due diligence.
- *A lot of these were old mining roads contributing to water quality issues for fisheries. The Davis Ranch Road goes through 7 major tributary drainages and almost all have washed out over time. They have private land issues as people use it for access. Rebuilding the road in places is problematic. They are working with a Collaborative, so I trust that they are vetting the subject matter and conditions.* That is fairly accurate, the area is landslide prone and we've had a fair number of issues this year alone due to spring runoff. But, there are bigger issues to be considered.
- *In the description, it speaks to Buckhorn Creek Trail and old logging roads are those different than Trail 96?* Yes, we're currently awaiting geotechnical report on that drainage and we've had a lot of ongoing landslide issues – we're considering relocating access. There is an ATV trail north of Buckhorn and there is a proposal to expand that access on old jammer roads.
- *Is there a proposal for a trail accommodating full size vehicles?* Not at this time. Under the Rule, you could put trails accessible by full size vehicles and still be considered a trail.
- *Is there access to private property via these roads?* That is something

- *It was full-size vehicle access and now you are reducing?* One of the components was built and was washed out in 1997, and the landowner uses {\*\*\*1:09]

## **North Fork Lick Creek Trail 082 Reconstruction and Reroute**

**Proposed Action:** The Krassel RD proposes to reconstruct a section of the North Fork Lick Creek Trail #082 at (#1 on map) the upper end of the drainage that is approximately 1 mile in length; re-route approximately 85' of tread (#2 on map) near Hum Lake where downfall has caused users to create a go around to access the main trail; and clearing and re-establishing the trail tread and trail prism near the bottom of the North Fork Lick Creek (#3 on map) drainage where large-diameter trees have fallen over the trail covering approximately .5 mile of tread. Please see attached Maps (Figures 1-3).

### **Question and Answer:**

- *This is in Wildland Recreation and it is problematic in that your description says you're using chainsaws?* We are not planning on it, the saw work needing to occur is pretty technical due to the size of the trees (4' Spruce) and a chainsaw may not be appropriate.
- *You have large diameter trees and a flood trail and you can use motorized tools under an Administrative Program, but you elected not to?* Our forest is known for non-motorized saw work and when and where can apply that technique we will do so.

## **Stibnite Gold EIS**

**Proposed Action:** The Forest Service proposes to conditionally approve a Plan for mining on NFS lands. The Plan describes mining operations and temporary supporting infrastructure, portions of which could impact IRAs for a period of approximately 20 years.

The planned mining-related operations and activities would disturb private patented lands and approximately 1,500 acres of surrounding NFS lands. Portions of mine waste storage facilities in Meadow Creek and Fiddle Creek could impact the Meadow Creek Idaho Roadless Area (IRA). Infrastructure to service the mine site that could temporarily impact corridors through IRAs from separate points on the Johnson Creek Road include a re-constructed and partially re-aligned powerline from the Johnson Creek airstrip and construction, re-construction, upgrade and/or re-alignment of a primary mine access and public route from the Landmark Guard Station. The operator also suggested that an existing road from Horse Heaven be upgraded and connected through IRAs to the Meadow Creek Lookout to accommodate public vehicle traffic from the vicinity of Yellow Pine.

**Question and Answer:**

- *Doesn't this get the mining traffic out of Johnson Creek?* Yes, the current access is through roads on the stream bottoms. The amount of mining traffic on roads next to creeks is problematic. The proposal to get that access out of the stream bottoms is a good thing.
- *This is an 1872 Mining Project and the Rule is silent on this?* Yes
- *There are elements of this that are 1872 Mining Law related, but there are other facets (modification of themes or Roadless Areas, timber cutting, etc.) but are a good example of why we want to see all projects. The degree to which access to a mining site is reasonable is a good question.*
- *This is a year round road?* Yes
- *How many miles of new construction to upgrade the Burnt Log route?* It will be a major upgrade. Currently, our travel routes don't show an actual connection there and it would be new. It would be 19 miles of new road construction and 30 miles of reconstruction. Also, new power lines will be installed cutting directly to the mine site.
- *How much boundary modification is proposed?* At this point, this is not something the FS is proposing. It may be an alternative that comes up through public scoping (starting shortly) and we'll have to determine how to address that. We expect there may be public input we need to address.
- *It would be helpful to have the Roadless Areas on the map.* We recognize that it's hard to put things on a small map, so we appreciate the larger map.
- *Are all the roadless in Back Country Restoration?* Yes
- *Does the power line corridor separate the two different roadless areas?* Yes, the existing roadless has a small corridor that separates a couple of roadless areas. Public access that currently comes up from Yellow Pine is where one of the initial pits will occur, digging out the current road system. The public use will be moved to Warm Lake.
- *The mining plan will be 20 years?* Yes, there is a notion of mixed use on the new action. The proposal is to obliterate the road after the mine.
- *I thought there was another element that as a result of the loss of access from Yellow Pine, but I'm not seeing it?* The Plan of Operations includes the idea of access from Warm Lake. There was thought of mitigation of loss by utilizing another access point via the Meadow Creek Lookout (boundary between Payette and Boise NF).
- *Will that be open to full size vehicles?* That was the initial Proposed Action – OTAV (Trail Open to All Vehicles).
- *I heard the term long-term temporary road, what is that?* Our Forest Plan defines short term or temporary impacts and it's associated with management acres tiered to roadless areas and that is 3 years. Most mining projects have been exploration, where if it's temporary it's for a few years, where this one is quite a bit longer.
- *So there is new construction?* Yes, defined at 20 years. That's the important part of the proposal.
- *Would it have to meet the definition?* The rule doesn't apply to this project or decision.



- *You are kidding yourself if you think you are going to remove a road after 20 years of use that you are going to simply remove the road.*
  - *The rule is silent on trails and there are no real standards between differences of trails and roads.*
- *The entire Burnt Log access? Reclaimed to standard, the sections that decommissioning is from new construction would be obliterated. The intent is that they would be returned to preexisting standard.*
- *During the 19 miles of construction and 30 miles of reconstruction and avoiding issues, potentially having a pit-side road could relieve a lot of complications. The ground is not conducive to putting a route around the operation. There will be access roads for the operation, but it's not an accepted practice as you would be mixing haul trucks with private vehicles, which is not safe. Could we route near the mine site? It was not technically feasible. During the Scoping Period we will get all sorts of comments.*
- ***From the Mining Operation:*** We have asked ourselves these Alternative analysis – we have performed a lot of technical studies and we have the safest and most reasonable route. The fewer miles the better, and this is the route.
- *The mitigation proposal, is that an element of the 1872 Mining Law and I would ask at what point does mitigation come into the Roadless purview?*
- *When does something that looks like a road become a road?*

## **Pony Creek Outfitter**

The permit holder for Pony Creek Outfitters (Jack Kummet) is requesting reauthorization of their priority use permit for a 10-year term.

The purpose of the project is to issue a special use authorization to Pony Creek Outfitters (Jack Kummet) for outfitting and guiding activities that provide clients opportunities to hunt in high mountain areas of the Payette National Forest. This action is necessary for Pony Creek to retain the areas previously permitted for these activities, owing to their authorization expiring in December of 2017. Need: Pony Creek Outfitters allows recreationists a unique opportunity to experience backcountry and Wilderness areas of the Payette National Forest in order to engage in big game hunts. A commercial needs assessment completed in 2012 affirmed that there is a need to provide these types of services to the public. A commercial guide allow for a quality experience for Forest visitors that may lack the skills necessary to be in the backcountry on their own and allows guides to provide education about the Forest.

### **Questions and Answers:**

- *Is this germane to the rule? No*

### **Return to next meeting:**

- Stibnite
- South Fork Ramp

## Caribou-Targhee National Forest – Doug Herzog, Forest Planner

### Winschell Dugway Motorized Trail

The proposed action would establish a motorized ATV trail from Morgan Meadows to Caribou City. The proposed action comes from planning efforts that have occurred since 2007. This alternative includes constructing approximately 3 miles of new trail and managing the new trail as a motorized ATV trail. Further, the proposed action calls for reconstructing approximately 4 miles of existing trails, exploratory mining roads and abandoned roads (see Alternative 2 Map) to implement the Winschell Dugway Motorized Trail project. The remaining 1.5 miles of trail would utilize existing ATV trails in the area. The mileage numbers represented here are reflective of GIS generated lengths and may not reflect exact, precise distances on the ground.

#### *Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative):*

This alternative would establish a motorized ATV trail from Morgan Meadows to Caribou City by using existing trails and roads and constructing and reconstructing approximately 2.95 miles of new trail. The route would start at Morgan Meadows and follow Caribou Mountain ATV Trail (#449) to the North Fork Eagle Creek Trail (#451). The route would then follow the Barnes Creek Road (#188) to Road 381 (Robinson Mine Road), where the route would connect to segment 12 of the proposed route. The remaining segments of the trail to Caribou City follow the same route as the proposed action.

#### **Questions and answers:**

*Is this open to full size or just an ATV trail?* Just an ATV trail.

### Dairy Syncline Mineral Reclamation Plan and Land Exchange

The JR Simplot Company has submitted plans for a proposed open pit phosphate mine at the Dairy Syncline Phosphate Lease Area. The BLM and Caribou-Targhee National Forest are jointly preparing an EIS to determine and analyze effects of this proposed phosphate mine and reclamation plan and land exchange. Development and mining of the federal phosphate leases in the project are a valid existing right under the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act. Lease #28115 was issued on 12-27- 2000. Lease #0258 was issued on 10-25- 1949.

Proposed Action: A portion of this proposed mine would occur within the Huckleberry Basin Inventoried Roadless Area (HBRA) both on and off existing Federal mineral leases. The attached Proposed Project Area Maps shows the relationship of the project area to HBRA and the Map 3-201 areas from the Idaho Roadless Rule. Map 1 shows the current layout of the project infrastructure. Map 2 shows the Roadless areas and the proposed land exchange.

## **Yale Creek Fuels Reduction**

All treatments occur within the Wildland Urban Interface, as defined within the 2015 Fremont County CWPP. The treatments within the IRA are within 1.3 miles of the Forest Boundary; private land and some structures. Treatments are designed to create fuel breaks adjacent to subdivisions, along Forest Service and county roads and to compliment in-progress BLM fuel reduction treatments on adjacent lands. In general, a mix of commercial logging and hand-crew thinning followed up by mastication or burning to reduce surface fuels and increase overall health and vigor of the forest. About 3,160 acres in four separate treatment units are being analyzed for treatment.

The largest of those treatment areas is 2,359 acres in size, and includes approximately 635 acres of IRA (none of the other treatment areas are adjacent to or include any IRA). Of that acreage; 313 acres are Backcountry and 322 acres are GFRG. The proposed fuels treatment within the IRA consists of cutting all trees less than 6 inches in diameter, pruning remaining trees up to 6 feet from the ground, hand piling slash and burning those piles. No roads will be constructed and no product will be removed from the IRA.

### ***Questions and answers:***

- *Any community protection zone analysis associated with this project? Yes, there is a CPZ associated with this project.*
- *Are all the activities proposed within that CPZ? Yes*
- *Within a 1/2 mile? From the subdivision, yes*
- *I remember that the problem was the reluctance of private property owners to remove fuel? Some of the private landowners have performed work on their property, but it is a slow effort.*
- *It's useful to point out that the CPZ is a standardized approach to the delineation of these areas. It's good for these projects to incorporate discussion and mapping of these projects. I would appreciate a follow up.*

### ***Return to next meeting:***

- Yale Creek
- Dairy Sincine – move to Table 1

## Sawtooth National Forest

### Elk Mountain East Vegetation Management Project

The project proposal includes a variety of vegetation modifications and prescribed burning treatments to reduce stand density, reduce the susceptibility of forest stands to insect and disease, improve large tree growing conditions, create an environment more favorable for wildfire management and provide an opportunity to protect values-at-risk including private lands with homes and the popular Stanley Lake recreational complex. The proposed actions in Roadless Areas include prescribed fire (172 acres), mechanical fuels treatments (22 acres) and hand thinning, piling, and cutting standing dead trees adjacent to trails (36 acres) to create a favorable environment for prescribed fire and move the project area toward the desired conditions.

#### **Question and Answer:**

- *Didn't we see a project very similar to this?* The Salmon Challis project and they are up the road about 5-10 miles NW of this project. Both projects received recommendations from the Sawtooth Valley Collaborative.
- *I applaud you for moving ahead in reducing fire hazards.*
- *How long as the temporary road been there?* ½ mile of it is in roadless and it's an old logging road, maybe it's been there 20-30 years.
- *My suggestion is to gate it instead of obliterating, as the lodgepole pine will regrow quickly.*
- *The wording in your briefing paper regarding the Management Direction of the Roadless Rule would not apply, perhaps you would prefer to say "you are consistent" with the Roadless Rule. We suggest saying you're "consistent with the Roadless Rule".*
- *Is the project located within the ½ mile CPZ?* Yes, the map in the back shows the CPZ – not all of it is in it, just unit one where the east side is a trail we can use as a control feature. Across the highway are private homes and the CPZ is 1.5 miles out from that.
- *There are temp roads outside of the CPZ?* That road is under Forest Plan special area
- *Is that a Wild and Scenic special area?* Yes, Elk Creek is eligible to be Wild and Scenic.

### Free Gold Bridge Pasture

The Soldier Mountain Ski Area is planning to construct approximately 7.5 miles of mountain bike trails within the ski area boundary. This area also falls within the Free Gold-Bridge Pasture of the Soldier Creek C&H Allotment. With the increased summer recreation within the Ski Area, recreation-livestock conflict is anticipated to increase. To help mitigate this conflict, minimizing livestock use in the Soldier Mountain Ski Area is being considered. The project is to construct a fence (about 2 ¼ miles) that would split the Free Gold-Bridge pasture in half. The North half of the pasture encompasses the ski area with the majority of recreation use. This new pasture would be used as a gathering pasture to put cattle in for a short time while gathering

them to change pastures. This would reduce the time that cattle are in the ski area (thus reducing conflict with recreationists) while still providing a beneficial use for management of livestock.

## Free Gold Trailhead

Currently, the Free Gold ATV trail has no trailhead parking. The public parks on private lands and along a county road adjacent to the Forest in order to access and use the trail. This project consists of constructing a trailhead on National Forest System lands just off of private lands adjacent to the Forest boundary. The trailhead will contain parking, restrooms, signing and will be fenced to exclude livestock. Once completed, this trailhead would also provide parking and access for Nordic skiing. In addition, next to the trailhead, a new trail bridge will be constructed across Free Gold Creek to provide better access the Phillips Creek Trail.

This is one of a series of projects within the Soldier Creek drainage that will improve recreational access by building or expanding trailheads, adding new restrooms and coordinating signing.

### **Question and Answer:**

- *Construction of a parking lot in a Primitive Area is unique.* In a similar project that was litigated, the Forest Service prevailed. It was recommended that we discuss it as there are a couple of things to discuss.
- *Is there any opportunity on public land outside the IRA to build this?* This is the closest opportunity to place a parking lot on private land.
- *Has there been discussion with the private landowner for an easement?* No, the picture shows the house is a private residence.
- *Are we setting a precedent?* It would be quicker and cheaper to move the boundary, or create a small area out of the area to provide for the parking lot.
- *Has this been a historical parking spot?* They've been parking along the road and on private property. The use increased so much that people were parking everywhere they could. It's actually a Wild and Scenic River Corridor as well, but it seems like a logical approach to me.
- *A boundary adjustment seems reasonable*
  - *Given the proximity to where they are parking and the ATV use, I don't believe you're going to lose a lot of Roadless qualities by providing a small area for a parking lot*
  - *I think it's a logical approach to the problem, the areas are not getting less use they are getting more*
  - *It's important we ask and answer the questions*
- *There were tradeoffs in acres as we eliminated some old road.*
- *Is there a preferred course of action by the Forest? A parking area is not necessarily a road, so we are talking about "disturbance" but not a road. But, again, if you can drive your vehicle AND a trailer, doesn't that constitute a road?*

- *Is there any efficiency in floating a CE? If it doesn't work, perhaps return to a Boundary Modification route.* Boundary modifications take time and effort, we should rationalize our approach. It is proposed without a boundary modification due to other litigation – a parking lot is not a road.
- *I would like to see minor boundary adjustments become common, non-controversial occurrences. Make a minor boundary change around the parking lot and move on.* We do have a boundary modification process, which we haven't used yet, but if there are no serious concerns from the public it should be 45 days.
- *Ultimately, this is a Regional Forester decision.*
- *There is existing judgment in a different forest on the subject, attempt going that route before creating more work.*
- *Would the Commission have an issue if the Forest did a Decision Memo (without challenge to CE) and afterwards they could proceed with the Boundary Issue?*
  - The public would then become the determining factor.

**Return to next meeting:**

- Free Gold Trailhead
- Elk Mountain

## Boise National Forest

### Three Trappers

The purpose of this project is to reduce the natural fuels accumulation within the project area and specifically reduce the risk of a crown fire spread within the wildland-urban interface. The current stand condition can be described as having high surface fuel loading, continuous dense overstory canopies that are conducive to high intensity fires, spotting, crown fire initiation and crown fire spread. There is a need to reduce dense pockets of regeneration within some stands that have produced a multi-storied canopy which could facilitate crown fire should an ignition occur. Across the Project area, there is a need to manage forest structure and species composition to accelerate the development of large tree size class by early seral tree species that will contribute to achievement of the Forest Plan Goals and Objectives.

**Questions and Answers:**

- *Was there recent fire?* 2007 had the Cascade Complex and this is a large green patch remaining. It puts several areas in high risk. That complex was comprised of 6 fires.
- *Do you have enough area to prevent crown fire?* It's fairly thick on the east side and on the west side is the Cascade Complex, but down to the Yellow Pine drainage there is no treatment.

## **North Pioneer Fire Salvage and Reforestation Project**

Consistent with the goals and objectives identified in the Forest Plan, the purpose of the North Pioneer Project is to remove hazard trees affecting public health and safety along travel routes and within developed sites; restore portions of the landscape burned by the wildfire by initiating reforestation; reduce watershed impacts resulting from NFS roads and unauthorized routes; and recover forest economic value and benefits through salvage, generating revenues to support the accomplishment of project objectives.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- *Are there any felling or felling with removal in areas not designated as General Forest?* No

## **Wilson Flat Trail 606 Reconstruction**

The purpose of this project is to reconstruct and/or realign approximately 1 mile of motorized ATV Trail 606 and re-establish the trailhead (information board and parking) located off Forest Road 120. The trail segment is part of the popular Wilson Flat ATV trail system located on the Mountain Home Ranger District. The trail segments are located within the perimeter of the 2013 Elk/Pony Fire. During August 2014, surges of monsoonal moisture swept through Idaho from the southwest creating severe thunderstorms and flash flooding across the Boise National Forest. Locally heavy rain and flash flooding occurred through much of the Wilson Creek drainage, resulting in damage to roadways, stream crossings, trails and natural resources. The portion of the Wilson Flat trail system being proposed for reconstruction/realignment was damaged during this event. This motorized trail system was formally designated in 1999 using a decommissioned road system. On September 12, 2000, a Decision Memo was signed for a new trail construction, repair/replacement to two stream crossings and routing trail maintenance and light reconstruction.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- *Your trail with 60", is that required for width on a vehicle?* It will be less than 50", but to accommodate pack saddles and design parameters the width is 60".

### ***Return to next meeting:***

- North Pioneer Salvage – FYI

## Kootenai National Forest

### Starry Goat Project

The Three Rivers Ranger District of the Kootenai National Forest has developed a Proposed Action for the Starry Goat Project. The Project Area is located immediately west of Troy, Montana and runs from the Kootenai River west to the boundary between the Kootenai and Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The legal description includes Townships 30, 31, and 32 North; Ranges 33 and 34 West; Lincoln County, Montana and Townships 58, 59, 60 and 61 North; Ranges 2 and 3 East; Bonner and Boundary Counties, Idaho.

The project area encompasses approximately 90,776 acres (48,471 acres in Montana; 42,305 acres in Idaho, all administered by the Kootenai National Forest), this includes 9,364 acres of private timber land, 661 acres of Montana State land, and 2,569 acres of other private land. The project area is dominated by two inventoried roadless areas (IRAs): Roberts IRA #691 and the Willard Estelle IRA #173. The total IRA acres are 37,472. Callahan Creek, Brush Creek, Ruby Creek, and Star Creek are the major drainages in the project area; all flowing into the Kootenai River at the project area boundary. Callahan Creek Road (NFSR 427) and the South Side Road (NFSR 4402) are major travel routes through the project area.

Recreational activities pursued in the project area include firewood gathering, camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, huckleberry picking, horseback riding, scenic driving, and snowmobiling.

The project area includes some of the lowest elevation, drier habitats found on the Three Rivers Ranger District. Warm/moist habitat types are abundant, as well as some warm/dry areas in the lower elevation areas along the Kootenai River and Callahan Creek and some higher elevation subalpine fir/mixed conifer areas to the south of Troy. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the 2015 Kootenai National Forest Land Management Plan defines biophysical setting.

#### **Questions and Answers:**

- *The Roberts roadless area is in Montana?* Both have parts in Montana. They are only presenting the Idaho Roadless portion today. The 3,200 acres is in the IRA.
- *What are the themes?* Back Country Restoration
- *This gets paired up with Boulder?* Yes, they are back-to-back
- *What happens when you have a state line?* When we wrote the Rule in Idaho, we coordinated all roadless in Montana, Utah, Wyoming, Washington and Nevada to ensure (remember that at the time the 2001 Rule was enjoined) consistency with Forest Plans at that time. We compared our proposed Rule against the Plan to ensure there wasn't a huge disparity. They weren't 100% compatible, but we didn't see Wildland Recreation abutted to General forest. Likewise we did this with the Counties who had management preferences.



## Idaho Panhandle National Forest

### Boulder Creek Restoration Area (Update)

The Boulder Creek Restoration Project (BCRP) is a large scale forest restoration project being planned on the Bonners Ferry Ranger District of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests. The current project proposal includes about 7,000 acres of prescribed burning spread across the Katka Peak and Mt. Willard-Lake Estelle Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs).

The majority of the 40,000 acre Boulder Creek watershed was last burned during the 1889 and 1910 fire seasons. The absence of large wildfires since then have left the these two IRAs with a congested landscape of mature lodgepole pine, mixed conifer, old growth ponderosa pine stands and a few whitebark pine scattered along the main ridges. Prevailing summer winds blow from south to north and move upslope toward Black Mountain, Clifty Mountain and Katka Peak. Consequently, potential wildfires threaten important local values such as the communication towers on Black Mountain, the Black Mountain lookout tower, and two community watersheds adjacent to the northern project boundary (see map).

#### **Questions and Answers:**

- *As the project looks now, it isn't with Collaborative design – of which we were just made aware of. Please brief the Committee about what has been taken out.* The main components that were changed – it was proposed to have helicopter units (1,600 acres in Roadless areas) and 375 of ground based next to the main 408 road, ironically separating the two areas. Our theory was with Scoping we would put out the helicopter idea, perhaps there would be a suitable proposal come forth. Availability in this area is tough, so we are at a big maybe at that point. The 375 acres, we are picking what we can on difficult ground. All other roads and trailheads and AOPs remain the same.
- *I know you identified a couple of WUI's, do you have a CPZ map and are any of the treatments you proposed in those areas?* We don't know if they will be feasible, it might be a good idea to include them in NEPA for future availability should the option present itself. Where the 375 acres are, we could protect the infrastructure of Black Mountain – that's the concern the KVRI collaborative would want to have. This is a CFLR Project.
  - We still have a couple of helicopter units outside of Roadless that could still be feasible; those would be in the WUI.
- *The units along the road, are then in the IRA?* They are on each side of the road, delve into Roadless Areas. They are adjacent to Roadless – no new roads.
- *The boundary includes the units?* Yes
- *We need the CPZ map?* Not if you aren't building roads and it's in CPZ. We are in BCR with no new roads and existing roads.
- *This is all good input, but the intent here is to review the projects before us and ultimately because of KVRI involvement the project will be modified. But, we should be careful that we are not performing project design in the meeting.*

- *As the original proposal came forward, with roadside reach and helicopter units, we didn't say it did not meet the intent of the rule – ? The last time it was very generalized and is now very specific.*
- *Last time, we had 2,000 acres and there was no CPZ and there was no significant risk and then today the project is different? I don't understand why?*
  - None of this is as linear as we'd like it to be, there are a lot of moving parts. Originally presented the intent was to:
    - Testing to see how helicopter vendors could respond, industry was not supportive of bringing any helicopter logging to the table. It has the potential to bring a lot of negative aspects to the project. At Decision Making time, the Regional Forester could have excluded it from the Decision, but did not. We walked down the road to see how it would culminate.
    - We have to answer to our Region and Regional Office and we had conversations with them and they were nervous of our moving forward and potentially changing the characteristics of the Roadless Area.
    - The social aspects and concerns would have taken it from an EA to an EIS, which would also have to take into account the timelines of the deliverables and the EIS would have taken an additional 6 months and affected the deliverables and the ability to bring other sales forward.
  - We factored all this in and elevating it to an EIS. There was a minimal probability that this could have gone forward as the risk outweighed the gain. It was not an easy decision to make, but with all the discussions internally it became a Decision internally versus the Collaborative.
- *If logging isn't feasible, why didn't you take them all out? It's about both the economy and the Roadless areas – it's a combination of effects.*
- *What is on the table in front of the Committee today is the proposal.*
- *If you were proposing activity outside the CPZ, this would have elevated the Decision to the Regional Forester. If you were to go back, it would have required that approval.*
- *This did come into our office, as all projects do, it has been explained fairly well. There were concerns around some of the size and other items, and our advice was to be thoughtful about the project going forward given the high risk of litigation. They came back with a briefing on the project laid out as you see it today.*
- *Are the ground based units out? Correct*
- *If they were originally designed to help protect that infrastructure, and there is an additional ecological decision (fitting under Rules permission) if we wander into the discussion of "future considerations" I think that part of it is a stretch. The Rule says, all other things being equal, you have to show that you benefit at least one roadless characteristic for the long term. Along with the other items are presented to the RF and should be kept in the mix.*
  - *That is a good point and why the Decision was extremely difficult to reach because there were no clear directions – we could argue either side of the equation. There were enough things at odds with each other that it wasn't easy.*

- *Viewing things through the Adaptive Management lens and where you are protecting infrastructure – our desired conditions are somewhere other than where they are now? We have projects designed to help protect the infrastructure? Why are we talking potential wilderness when it is not our desired condition?*
  - The Recreation Specialist has to analyze how any action might potentially affect future eligibility for wilderness. We don't say "it's GFRG, therefore we don't have to analyze it" – those things have to be looked at.
- *So, because it is Roadless, if a Recreation Specialist determines that every piece shouldn't be touched because it's all valuable for future wilderness? Taken to the extreme, that could be correct.*
- *It's going to be 20 years before you get back to this project, and now its defacto wilderness? We have to analyze two things, they will have to go through effects to future wilderness designation and effects to Roadless characteristics.*
- *The agency is performing their due diligence, I don't see any violation of the IRR and I would see that adding those units is up to the Forest. I see disagreement between locals and the local collaborative, which is important – but again, that is a local purview, not the IRC.*
- The Idaho Roadless Rule is about prohibitions and permissions and we are continually seeking (throughout the State) for places where we can push the envelope and make clarifications on the Rule. Now that we've taken the helicopter logging out of the equation, it removes that assessment.
- One difference between the two proposals is treating / slashing [3:45] small-diameter trees so that when we perform a prescribed fire we are protecting the old growth in the area.

**Return to next meeting:**

## Salmon Challis National Forest

### Ramey Creek Vegetation Improvement

The purpose of this project is to improve the health and vigor of conifer stands and aspen clones, with a preference for aspen where conifer competition exists. The project would reduce susceptibility of conifer trees to wildfire and insect disturbances by modifying the structure, density, and species composition of the conifer and aspen components within the project area.

### Salmon Municipal Watershed

The project is in the NFMA design phase and the purpose and need will be further refined prior to scoping. A preliminary purpose and need and has been developed by the interdisciplinary team and will be further developed by the Lemhi County Forest Restoration Group, City of Salmon, and other partners.

#### **Questions and Answers:**

- *We're finally moving forward on this. There won't be a lot harvest, but there will be some mechanical thinning. Harvest will be on the north and south edges of the drainages.*
- *Your meeting on May 17<sup>th</sup> will be with the Collaborative? Yes*
- *There is some adjacent roadless within Jesse Creek? Yes*

### Leesburg Land Exchange

The purpose and need is to consolidate ownership and management of National Forest and private lands in the vicinity of Leesburg, Idaho. NFS lands currently occupied by the reclaimed open pits, capped cyanide heap leach pad, and long-term water treatment facilities of the Beartrack Mine would be exchanged for private lands on approximately six miles of streamside and riparian area along Napias and Arnett Creeks. Lands acquired by the Salmon-Challis NF would include the culturally significant Leesburg Townsite, and would be available for additional habitat restoration projects and would be removed from mineral entry.

#### **Question and Answer:**

- *Federal Land ownership has increased in recent years, why is there a need for more private land?*  
There is concern by appraisers that the value of lands being proposed for exchange may not be equivalent to the value of lands being acquired.

## South 21 Fuels

There is a need to address forest stand health and densities in this area to maintain and enhance tree growth and yield to improve and protect forest health and vigor, while recognizing the natural role of fire, insects and disease and other components that have a key role in the ecosystem. Increased forest stand resiliency to insects and disease and other disturbances, including wildland fire is needed.

A key objective of this project is to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic large wildfires such as the Halstead fire of 2012 and Pioneer fire of 2016.

### **Question and Answer:**

- *How many of the acres are in BCR?* 785 for mechanical and 303 for manual treatments
- *You've received direction that it is alright to continue with that many acres in BCR?* Yes, as we read it, it is consistent with the Rule for uncharacteristic wildfire.
- *Has this been to the Region yet?* It was briefed last week.
- *Please speak to maximizing old growth.* This is a mixed conifer stand and the larger Douglas fir trees will be retained. This is a group shelterwood, single cut. We are leaving the larger tree in the lodgepole stands – perhaps the top percentage of trees.
- *This is identical to what we reviewed in Boulder – and it was recommended that it be taken out. What is the difference?* The focus on maintaining the large trees in terms of existing vegetation type there. The goal of the prescription is to emulate natural disturbance on the landscape. That area would receive a lethal fire from time to time but more so mixed severity fire. We're looking for a diverse landscape, with a matrix in the middle and perhaps a higher intensity fires. You may see pockets of small blowout and they will be looking to do those same things on the landscape.
- *What fire regime group is this in?* 3, mixed severity
- *Is the activity within the CPZ?* Outside, in the WUI. This area has missed the regularly returning fire intervals.
- *Is this in the Middle Fork Watershed?* Yes
- *What about the PACFISH Appendix?* We have a 400 ft buffer around the RHCA.
- We have a fisheries biologist to assist
- *Is this being proposed as a CE?* Yes, at this time it is but we haven't started our in depth analysis.
- *How do we have comments when Scoping hasn't been completed?* In March the Scoping was completed.
- *Since 2010 the Forest has been [20:00] – Brian's comments*
  - *But it outside the direction of the Roadless Rule?* Yes
  - *It's a NEPA exercise*

## **Forest Plan Revision**

The Salmon Forest Plan (1988) and Challis Forest Plan (1987) are in need of revision (and combination into one plan) based on new Forest Service planning regulations developed in 2012.

The forest is still conducting planning and obtaining public comment. There are no new updates.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- *Just a reminder that we're supposed to be able to perform the Plan in 2 years.*

## **Withington Road Reclamation Project**

Twenty-two routes on the Leadore Ranger District are proposed for decommissioning.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- *Until the Briefing Paper came out, no one in the area knows anything about it. The Working Group for Forest Reclamation was not consulted. There is no more sensitive issue than roads in Lemhi County right now. I strongly recommend that you talk with the County and the Collaborative group. I will follow up on all of that. We did Scope the project, but we will follow up on the other aspects.*

## **Ramshorn Water Association Road Permit Renewal Project**

There is need for the Salmon-Challis National Forest to respond to a private land owner request to reissue an expired special use permit for an existing road. The purpose of the road use permit is to authorize motor vehicle access across National Forest land to residences on private land and a water system that is also on NFS land under special use permit and serves the nearby community.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- This is another example of a short-form project.

## **Prudent Man – Expansion 5**

The Salmon-Challis National Forest proposes to approve, with terms and conditions, an operating plan that includes excavating and producing rough agate material from one location in Bedy Canyon, a tributary of Alder Creek, over the course of three operating seasons, with final reclamation to be completed by November 2019. Access to the project area would be via the Alder Creek Road (NFSR 40144) and a designated motorized trail in Bedy Canyon with a pickup or ATV.

The Forest Service will hold financial assurance for reclamation of the operating area. Terms of plan approval will also include conditions to protect water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, and monitoring and administration of the operation by Forest specialists.

### **Questions and Answers:**

- This project falls under the 1872 Mining Law. There were comments received from the public in that additional remediation measures should be sought.
- *Is agate a hard variety or hard rock?* This is an uncommon variety, gemstone quality agate – different from the variety used for abrasives.
- *It's an existing, non-system road that accesses the site?* Yes, it's about ½ mile long and in very flat terrain. It's a system ATV trail, 50" or less.
- *Would it be designated for full size vehicles?* Yes
- *But not a road?* No
- *No reclamation following?* I would have to refer to the EA as its being written right now, I'm not sure we have a clause in there for decommissioning.
- *How extensive will the travel be for this operation?* Not a lot, he's typically there once a month.
- *What do you call a route that is open to full size motorized vehicles without calling it a road?*
- *What is included in the Plan of Operations for vehicles?* Just the pickup, there are a few items he cannot carry on an ATV.
- *Is it gated?* I believe so, there is a cattle allotment there as well and there are terms and conditions in the draft EA that include his need to fence excavations to keep cattle out.
- *Doesn't the 1872 Mining Rule preclude this anyway?* Yes

### **Sideline conversation regarding the Definition of Roads**

- *I would just like to flag again that we continue to call this a "trail" or something else besides a road. I would encourage the Commission to bring back some clarity to this subject.*
  - There is the opportunity to define this through the Rule, or it could be done at the Forest level. Also, we look at the analysis of Roadless Characteristics and those effects have to be considered. We should focus on what is pertinent to this group in context.
  - This definition would apply to all Forest Service lands and we should not take this conversation lightly. I'm not sure we should be defining that.
  - I think for ourselves we should define it. It's not good the way it is.
- There are a lot of definitions of roads; it's a complex topic that takes a lot of time. We would need a lot of time to discuss it.
- We need to understand how it affects us in interpreting the Rule.
- It is pertinent and even if it's a Decision Flowchart for Commission members, it's entirely appropriate and we should follow up on it.
- Is it the definition or the effect it has on the Roadless Characteristics.

## 2017 Communications Site Special Use Permit Renewals Project (Potaman Peak)

There is need for the Salmon-Challis National Forest to reissue expired or expiring special use permits for communication uses at designated communications sites: Grouse Peak North, Grouse Peak South, Jump Off Peak, Potaman Peak, and Windy Devil. The purpose of these sites is to provide various television, radio, handheld radio, and cellular communications for various public and private entities.

### ***Return to Next Meeting:***

- Salmon watershed
- South 21
- Forest Plan Revision
- Boulder Creek
- Prudent Man
- Ramey Creek (if any activity)

## Idaho Panhandle National Forest

### **Potters Wheel Initial Briefing**

Existing conditions in the project area deviate from Forest Plan desired conditions. Key objectives of the project are to improve resiliency of the landscape to future disturbances, improve water quality and aquatic habitats, and contribute to employment and income by providing forest products from NFS lands. This has caused a widespread shift to grand fir and western hemlock, severely reduced the diversity of the overstory, and made the landscape less resistant to pathogens, including insects, diseases, drought, and fire. The project area, as a whole, is currently experiencing high levels of mortality due to bark beetle and root disease infestations; these are expected to continue into the near future. As a result, fuel levels are high and are increasing throughout the project area.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- *This is in BCR and you're going to use mechanized equipment? Yes*
- *Everyone's been briefed up to the Region? Yes*
- *Because it's outside the CPZ and proposing timber harvest, it's a RF decision. Yes, that's correct*
  - *There would be concurrence by the Regional Forester to the Forest Supervisor's Decision.*
- *Large tree retention? Yes, with the intent to retain.*



## **Snow Peak Wildlife Management Area Rx Burn**

The primary purpose of the project is to improve browse conditions for big game species. As a secondary benefit, heavy concentrations of dead and down fuel will be reduced, subsequently allowing for greater probability of success of control of unwanted fires that display uncharacteristic fire effects. In addition to fuel reduction, reducing stand density and creating a variable stand structure with multi storied stands, will reduce the likelihood of large scale outbreaks of insects and disease in the future.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- *Any Nez Perce Clearwater partnership?* It doesn't stretch to their area.
- *What are the purple polygons?* Those are beetle insect units we've identified, it's pretty infested with beetle kill. Red areas are Priority 2.
- *Does the state have the ability to harvest their units?* Under the WMA and the State is looking at performing some Good Neighbor Authority work, but not any further off the road than they can reach. It's topographically limiting and without major road building they could not log anything.
- *There was a land exchange in this area?* Within the last 20 years I believe so.
- *Was this logged?* Some time ago, the land within the checkboard is Fish & Game lands administered by Idaho Dept. of Lands.
- *Didn't they put a road in there?* Back in the 1990's, but it is not really present any longer – mostly washed out.
- *Areas were identified collaboratively as potential browse units.* They are prepared to fund the implementation of the project.
- *Scoping will be out this week.*
- *Didn't we consider another project east of this?* Yes, it was on the St. Joe and this is near the Mallard Larkins area.
  - *What happened with that?* In those areas they produced the forbs they were seeking, and those unique patterns are still on the landscape.
  - That was on the other side
- *Do you have smoke problems?* It's unique that it's high elevation and it dissipates prior to hitting Montana.

## **Lightning Rootwad Material Collection      Initial Briefing**

The rootwad and the first 40-50 feet of up to 200 trees that blew down in the 2014 wind event will be salvaged with an excavator. A log truck will load the trees with rootwads attached and haul them about 4 miles up NFSR#419 to be stored outside of the roadless area at a rock borrow site until the stream restoration projects are implemented. Avista and IDFG have prepared a grant to cover the cost of salvage.

### ***Questions and Answers:***

- *I don't understand what you're doing.* We place the rootwad in the creek and it begins to collect particular items that come downstream and are beneficial to fisheries and water quality. Avista is already working with us to provide funding to secure the wood and also they are working with NRCS to fund the first project.
- *This is in BCR and you are going to use equipment from the road to collect the rootwad, has this been to the Region?* Yes, last year we worked with the Regional Forester to ensure that we would be working within the guidelines.
- *Are you going to do a white paper on rootwad storage?* Sure, we have an old rock pit up the road where we plan on storing them. *It's innovative.*

***Return to Next Meeting:***

- Boulder Creek
- Potters Wheel
- Snow Peak

## Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest

### Lowell WUI

***Questions and Answers:***

- *Is the part of the Roadless area within the CPZ?* Yes, the reason is for the holdup is primarily due to wild and scenic river litigation occurring downriver. Additionally, we're undergoing litigation on another project with relevance. Therefore we are waiting for progress on those fronts.

### Clear Creek (Litigation Update)

***Questions and Answers:***

- *Do you have a schedule for the Supplemental EIS?* Not at this time, we can figure that out after we've resolved some of the issues with the Tribe. We had hoped to sell the first timber sales in 2018, but the lawsuit and withdrawing the Decision has all affected the timeline.

## Orogrande Fuels Project (NOI update)

### **Questions and Answers:**

- We are currently responding to the Preliminary Request for Injunction. We won't be able to argue the merits of the case until August.
- *The State was granted Intervenor status and so have the Counties, subsequently combined into one Intervenor.*
- *IFG was issued the contract, but subject to the Preliminary Injunction. We won't continue until the hearing has been completed.*
- *By this fall, perhaps the people of Orogrande won't have to worry about this any further? Yes*

## East Saddle

The purpose of this project is to improve vegetation and wildlife habitat, with an emphasis on the creation of a forest structure with a range of ages, size classes, and species diversity that is resistant and resilient to insects, diseases, and wildfires. There is a need to manage forest vegetation in order to restore natural disturbance patterns across the landscape; improve watershed conditions; improve early seral wildlife habitat; and maintain habitat structure, function, and diversity. These actions are needed to move resource conditions in the project area from existing conditions toward desired conditions described in the Clearwater Forest Plan (Forest Service 1987).

In the project area, fires that occurred in 1910 and 1934 and the introduction of white pine blister rust have created a homogeneous age class and species composition which has become highly susceptible to insect and disease change agents in the project area. The purpose and need to manage vegetation throughout the project area applies to the RA. The proposed action includes approximately 8,500 acres of prescribed burning within the Bighorn-Weitas, Hoodoo and Moose Mountain Roadless Areas. Project activities are designed to maintain and restore ecosystem composition and function, and would maintain or improve roadless character by improving the diversity of native plant and animal communities. Access to the RA would remain unchanged, as no new permanent road construction is proposed; with that said, there would be little to no long-term effect on dispersed recreation, solitude or wilderness attributes within the RA. The project would not affect traditional or cultural properties, or other locally identified unique characteristics.

### **Questions and Answers:**

- *Is that going out for scoping?* The legal notice will be published at the end of this week; we're just getting that going.
- *What is the acreage of treatment in Roadless?* 50% E1 and 50% Roadless
- *What precipitated the change?* Our need to move the project forward in a quicker manner. We knew commercial harvest in the Roadless Area would be controversial and we knew the economics didn't particularly line up. We were on the edge of it being economically feasible. There is certainly the need for treatment, but we need to ensure we are successful and look at the time/effort going into it.

- *Thank you for moving ahead. We don't have the facilities to handle the material, but there is a need to move ahead and perform restoration.*
- *The prohibitions in the Roadless Rule are preventing this project from moving forward.*
- *The tool that we're going to use now really fit the job at hand? I don't expect the answer today, but is it appropriate to burn this timber down? There are other avenues that might mean some rule changes, but if the tool and the prescription are not correct then that is what I want to talk about. I can address a little of that. The purpose and need and original thought about vegetation management is under the idea of ecological restoration, returning the species and structural diversity to the landscape which is somewhat lacking in the existing condition since the 1910 and 1930 fires which created a singular aged stand in the North Fork District. Commercial harvest is one tool to get the job done. Prescribed burning will be equally effective in returning some of the structural diversity and wildlife habitat.*
- *There is also the Forest Plan Settlement agreement which requires that lands included in the 1993 Larry Larocco wilderness and those lands would be managed according to recommended wilderness. So, it's not just Idaho Roadless Rule, but additional legal settlement language. That was brought up at our November meeting and it is something that is a consideration until the Forest Plan Revision is completed.*
- *I hope that you continue to move ahead on the Quartz Creek Project. We are planning to stay engaged with the Commission; our intents and needs on the Cool Mush Project haven't really changed – it was just too much to bite off at one time.*

## **Windy Shingle**

Scoping began in February 2017 following a public meeting in Riggins, ID on 31 January, 2017. A subsequent meeting was held on 7 February with several landowners adjacent to road 517 (Seven Devils Road) within the Papoose drainage. ID County Commissioners have been briefed of the project details by the Line Officer.

### **Questions and Answers:**

- *Why was the Rapid River area dropped? Prior to Proposed Action being released, the landowners in the Seven Devils area were concerned about fuels accumulation in the stair-stepped areas. We had some concerns about the ability to get in there and perform the harvest. At the time, the total acreage was up against the 3,000 – so we took B2 from the south and applied those back into Unit 5 in the north area.*
- *You have dramatically changed the project from its inception. Thank you for listening to the landowners. The Ranger arranged for the meeting with the public and had a good meeting.*
- *Are there still other projects in the area? We're just focused on Windy Shingle; there are other projects on the "island". We are starting the process with the Center Johnson (north end of island) and looking at a Farm Bill EA. Race Cow is several years out.*

- We were going to leave Unit 11 in as a treatment area but continue to evaluate its efficacy once we got out there. We think that 11 is important given the conditions to the west of there. It would be a good place to manage fire if it started from the west.
- *Road 2056 and the after effects to that, was there any discussion about that.* Those areas are being addressed in the specialist reports. That road is likely to be used as part of the harvest process; it's a FS road with an easement through the property. We'll do what we can to minimize the impact to the property.
- *I'm confused by the map; there is no timber harvest in Roadless?* There is a little harvest in the Salmon Face. There is no activity planned in the Rapid River Roadless Area.

## **NPCNF Forest Plan Revision**

Scoping of the proposed action received 13,800 comments. 90% of these comments were related to the Hoodoo IRA regarding recommendation for wilderness versus continued allowance of over the snow vehicles and designation as a Special Management Area (SMA) for winter recreation (a voice for or against the options presented in the Proposed Action). Other scoping comments related to IRA's focus on which IRA's to move forward as recommended wilderness. Based on the issues as a result of scoping, alternatives will analyze a range of IRA's being recommended for wilderness designation. Issue statements include 1) amount of recommended wilderness, 2) motorized and non-motorized access opportunities on the forest, 3) Desired conditions of forest vegetation and 4) timber harvest levels on the forest. Alternatives to the proposed action will be developed based on these issue statements reflecting unresolved conflict between available uses.

Timeline: The Forests are currently collaborating with stakeholders as the proposed action is revised and a framework for alternative development is outlined. Recommended Wilderness criteria and evaluation are in process.

### **Questions and Answers:**

- None

## **DRAMVU**

Travel Management, not including over-snow vehicle use.

### **Questions and Answers:**

- *Any trails open to full size vehicles?* No
- *What is the timeline on this?* We are preparing the final ROD at the end of this month and we expect litigation on it because it's Travel Planning, but we felt we managed some of the Objections pretty well.

## **Dixie Comstock**

This is very early in the process and there hasn't been a lot of fine tuning and filters still need to be put through.

### **Questions and Answers:**

- *Will you have all the field work completed this summer?* Yes, Collaboration started in April 2017 and Scoping is proposed for October 2017.
- We might try to get a field trip together on this.
- *Similar to other projects, this one also is a RF Decision with timber cutting outside the CPZ.* Yes, the Initial Briefing paper may have shown that, but it will be Leanne Marten.
- *This is not a Farm Bill Project?* We haven't determined that yet.
- *This project is an opportunity to start from the ground up and form a long-term community protection project; I personally don't want to be encumbered by something that may work against. What does it take to do this project?*
- *I hope that we try to apply common sense and what is in the spirit of the Rule.*
- *There are a number of old patented mining claims and do all of those have structures?* Some do and some don't, the area has a long history of mining in the area. Right now, we are anticipating that it will be a heavy workload for them.

### **Return to Next Meeting:**

- Orogrande
- Dixie Comstock
- Lowell / Clear Creek / Orogrande – Move to Table 2 (return when there is activity)

## **Additional Regional Forester Approval**

With respect to the processes for the required Regional Forester approval, what we have in both regions is the same thing that is going on here – the projects come forward, we review them, we look at consistency, and more. We are trying to dramatically increase the pace and scale of restoration and we have to do business differently than we did in the past. We have half the people that we did 10 years ago. When a Forest Supervisor tries to make Decisions based on risk of litigation, that's a problem. The same people that spend their time on planning the projects are the same people that have to stop and write Declarations and focus on defending the project. We are working on strategy and trying to approach things differently than we have in the past.