

# Community Workshop Notes

## March 2, 2006

### Riggins, Idaho



**Meeting Recorder:** Tami Paulsen

**Meeting Participants:** 37 participants signed in

**Forest Service Official:** Mary DeAgüero, Hells Canyon NRA/Eagle Cap District Ranger, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

**Team Members:** Trish Callaghan, Tami Paulsen, and Dave Schmitt

**Handouts to Each Participant:** Meeting Agenda.

**Handouts Available:** The Forest Plan Revision Team; Components of a Forest Plan; What a Plan Does and Does Not Do; How to Contact Us, Inventory and Evaluation Process for Areas with Wilderness Potential, and Inventory and Evaluation Process for Wild and Scenic Rivers, Understanding the Processes.

#### **Meeting Summary/Objectives:**

The purpose of this workshop was to summarize the Blue Mountains Forest Plan revision process to date and explain the timeline and to present updated inventories for both Areas with Wilderness Potential and potential Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The Wilderness and the Wild and Scenic River presentation was focused on the inventory phase of the process; no decisions or proposals were being made. This step was only to identify what areas and rivers meet the criteria to be considered for designation. Time was provided for questions to clarify the inventory criteria and to gain additional information from the public on current uses and conditions of specific areas and rivers.

#### **Overview of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision**

Team Leader Dave Schmitt gave a PowerPoint presentation about the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. He explained how the Revised Forest Plans will not change the management direction in the Hells Canyon NRA, which is provided in the Hells Canyon NRA Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) signed in July 2003; nor will the revised plans change direction in the Snake River Recreation River Management Plan. There will be no changes to management direction in Hells Canyon NRA.

**Q.** Will the revised forest plans change the recreational uses allowed in Hells Canyon NRA? Will jet boats still be allowed?

**A.** There will be no changes to management direction in Hells Canyon NRA. Jet boat use in Hells Canyon NRA will not be affected by the revised forest plans.

#### **Wild and Scenic Rivers and Areas with Wilderness Potential:**

Trish Callaghan, Recreation Specialist for the Revision Team, made two presentations: one on the requirements and process for inventory and review of Wild and Scenic Rivers and one on the process for updating the inventory of Areas with Wilderness Potential. Participants were given time to ask questions about the criteria process used and to review maps.

#### **Questions and Answers**

**Q.** Do designated snowmobile trails influence roadless?

**A.** No, an area used by snowmobiles can still be roadless. The types of uses occurring in a roadless area will come into play during the evaluation phase of the process.

**Q.** How do the Final Travel Management Rule (commonly called "the OHV Rule"), the Governor's State Petitioning process, and the Forest Plan revision all fit together?

**A.** The revised forest plans will identify lands that are "generally suitable" for motorized recreation; it will not open or close roads, trails, or areas to motorized use.

The OHV Rule will be implemented nationwide across the Forest Service and will require about 4 years of analysis and public involvement. This process will occur on the parts of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan revision areas in Oregon and Washington separate from the revision process. The end result will be travel management maps that designate specific roads, trails, and areas open for motor vehicle use on all National Forests and Grasslands. This process will NOT occur within the Hells Canyon NRA because those decisions were part of the management direction in the CMP and we do not intend to change them.

The Governor's State petitioning process is separate from the Blue Mountains Forest Plan revision effort, although Idaho will use Forest Service inventory information. The Governor's petition, which will be decided by the Secretary of Agriculture, would revise the forest plan decision.

**Q.** The Hells Canyon CMP was done before the Final Travel Management Rule (commonly called "the OHV Rule"), so how does it comply with the Rule?

**A.** The OHV Rule directs individual National Forests to implement their travel management strategies. Because the Hells Canyon NRA CMP is a recent decision and it made site-specific designations, it meets the requirements of the Rule and it will be implemented for that part of the forests.

**Q.** Are the Blue Mountains exempt from the Secure Rural Schools proposal?

**A.** No, there are some national forest parcels in the Blue Mountains that are being considered in the President's bill.

**Q.** Will the revised forest plans for the Blue Mountains use the same management categories as other forest plan revisions like the Payette's?

**A.** No, they may be similar but we are currently considering different categories.

**Q.** What do you plan to do to curb the spread of noxious weeds like star thistle in Hells Canyon?

**A.** The Hells Canyon NRA CMP contains management direction to address noxious weeds. There is also a Region 6 planning effort underway to address noxious weeds.

**Q.** How does the BLM's mission to determine utility corridors fit into Forest plan revision?

**A.** Forest Plan revision is a separate process. If that effort gets done before we're done revising the forest plans, we will incorporate their information. If they finish after we do, their results will be used to amend the plans. We're watching the process and are informed about it.

**Q.** How many areas have had roads obliterated in them causing them to meet the criteria for a wilderness area?

**A.** There are some areas where roads were obliterated for watershed restoration purposes and they now meet the criteria. We know of no roads that were obliterated specifically to create roadless areas.

**Public Comment:** It's important to comment when you agree with something, not just when you don't agree. If you remain silent on an issue because you agree, the decision-makers will only hear from those who disagree and they won't have all the needed information to make a good decision.

**Response:** We would like to get positive comments.

**Q.** Are Big Creek and Klopton-Corral Creek in addition to wilderness study areas and inventoried roadless areas in the original legislation?

**A.** Big Creek and Klopton-Corral Creek were called inventoried roadless areas at the time of the Hells Canyon NRA legislation – not wilderness study areas. There were some places called wilderness study areas that were added to Hells Canyon Wilderness in 1984.

**Q.** How do social and demographic demand (like growth, population) figure into the process of recommending (or not recommending) more wilderness?

**A.** They will be addressed in a Wilderness Needs Assessment, which will be conducted soon. Additionally, we will be looking broader than just at the Blue Mountains (for instance to Portland,

Bend, and Boise) to determine if more wilderness is needed. The Revision Team has a social scientist/economist to work on issues such as this.

**Q.** What percentage on the three national forests is wilderness and what percentage is inventoried roadless areas?

**A.** About 18 % is currently designated wilderness and about 18% is currently inventoried roadless areas.

**Public Comment:** Areas outside wilderness don't necessarily have roads; there are areas without roads that aren't wilderness.

**Response:** That is correct.

**Public Comment:** I am disappointed in your engineering staff's work in the Kirkwood drainage. The gate set aside for pack animals is too narrow.

**Response:** We will pass that comment on to local Forest Service personnel.

**Q:** How is RS-2477 factoring into the planning process?

**A:** The RS-2477 issue will not affect the revision effort. RS-2477 roads will be considered in site-specific analysis separate from the revision.

### **Overall Evaluation**

#### *Comments from the Critique Forms:*

Participants answered the following questions on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

	<b>Average</b>
I understand the process for Wild and Scenic River Inventory.	3
I understand the process used to inventory the areas with wilderness potential.	3
I was comfortable discussing public land issues with people I didn't know tonight.	3.1
I was comfortable discussing public land issues with people who held different viewpoints tonight.	3.2
The workshop format was appropriate for what we needed to do tonight	3.1
I am comfortable using maps to enhance my understanding of the discussion topics tonight.	3.1

#### *Participants were also asked:*

**Is there anything in particular that you liked or didn't like about the workshop?**

**Is there anything that you would like to know more about?**

**Do you have any other comments about the workshop?**

- It was a waste of my time. Nothing was specific.
- We do not need any more wilderness or roads closed and they can do away with closing our roads.
- Want as much local control and input as possible this includes our local FS heads of departments.
- How is RS-2477 factoring into the planning process?