Meeting Summary
Potential Wilderness Area Evaluation Kick-off Meeting
Colville National Forest

Stevens County Sheriff's Ambulance Training Center
425 N. Highway 395, Colville, WA

September 6, 2008

Meeting Objectives

1. Provide the context for inventoried roadless area (potential wilderness areas) evaluation and decision-making.
2. Review 2006-2007 collaborative work group information regarding potential wilderness area evaluation.
3. Discuss how to apply the Forest Service wilderness evaluation criteria, and identify additional public considerations.
4. Identify opportunities for public involvement throughout the evaluation process.

Opening

Kathy Bond, facilitator, opened the workshop by reviewing the agenda (Appendix 1), handout packets and meeting ground rules. Rodney Smoldon, Colville National Forest Deputy Forest Supervisor, welcomed the participants and described the intent of the workshop.

Foundations

Rick Brazell, Colville National Forest Supervisor, provided background information, context for the discussion, and a reminder of his role as Forest Supervisor:

- While 2006-2007 collaborative process addressed the full spectrum of forest plan revision, this collaborative effort is focused on the forest plan revision topic of wilderness suitability.
- The discussion of potential wilderness areas is consistent with the plan revision objective of identifying desired conditions for the forest.
- Collaboration will help inform the Forest Service's recommendations for wilderness.
- Information, products and areas of agreement from the 2007 discussion of inventoried roadless areas will be incorporated as the evaluation process continues.
- As Forest Supervisor, Rick ultimately makes the decision on what, if anything, to recommend for wilderness designation on the Colville National Forest. Congress makes the final designation decision.

Rick also talked about the steps taken to update the inventoried roadless area boundaries, which provides the basis for the wilderness evaluation process:

- Additional inventory field work was done in 2006-2007 to respond to concerns about the accuracy of the inventory.

- Rick has accepted the current inventory as the best information available, and has instructed the Forest Plan Revision Team to move ahead with the evaluation process.
- Additional changes to the inventory will be made only if evidence of better information is provided to the Forest Service. A form to collect the appropriate information has been provided for this purpose. Rick also asked that people with additional inventory concerns contact their local district rangers.

Wilderness Evaluation Process

Margaret Hartzell, Forest Plan Revision Team Leader, reviewed the process the Forest Service must undertake to inventory and evaluate inventoried roadless areas ("potential wilderness areas") for their potential to be recommended as wilderness areas, and identified the point where the Colville National Forest was in this process.

Lisa Therrell, Forest Plan Revision Recreation Specialist, introduced the concepts of Capability, Availability and Need as the Forest Service prescribed process for evaluation areas for their wilderness potential. In the evaluation process, the Forest Service must also consider its ability to manage a given area as wilderness. The following are general explanation of these terms:

- The capability of a potential wilderness area is the degree to which that area contains the basic characteristics that make it suitable for wilderness recommendation.
- The availability of a potential wilderness area addresses the resource values and activities that occur within the area compared to its value for wilderness; it is the discussion of "trade-offs."
- The need for an area to be designated as wilderness is evaluated by the degree that it contributes to the overall National Wilderness Preservation System. Biological, ecological, recreational and social needs are evaluated.

Margaret shared the results of the 2006-2007 collaborative effort on the Colville Forest, and said that the public involved in that effort identified three general areas of agreement specific to wilderness evaluation on the Colville National Forest:

1. Salmo-Priest Adjacent Potential Wilderness Area received broad support for recommendation as wilderness;
2. There was general agreement that the Lost Creek Potential Wilderness Area had the least wilderness characteristics of all the potential wilderness areas, and would be better managed in some other way than wilderness.
3. There was general agreement that the existing wilderness qualities of the inventoried roadless areas (potential wilderness areas) should be maintained, whether or not they are recommended for wilderness designation.

These general areas of agreement will be included in Rick's considerations for wilderness recommendations.

Margaret also introduced the "considerations" tables developed by the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest Provincial Advisory Committees during their wilderness evaluation work last year. These were offered as a starting point for the upcoming small group activity of reviewing and refining the considerations for use in the Colville evaluation process.

Public Involvement Opportunities

Susan Hayman, facilitator, explained that the Colville National Forest had contracted with her and Kathy Bond (facilitation team) to design and facilitate a collaborative public process for the evaluation of potential wilderness areas for possible wilderness recommendation. In order to propose a process design, the facilitation team interviewed a number of people representing the interests involved in the 2006-2007 collaborative process, and those who were new to the process and wanted to be involved. The facilitation team synthesized the information collected from the interviews, and proposed a collaborative process design to the Forest Service at a planning meeting in July 2008. The "collaboration process road map" emerged from the discussion at the July planning meeting.

Susan described the relationship between the kick-off meeting, Spokane informational meeting, community workshops and the integration meeting illustrated in the collaboration process road map. She said that this collaborative process was not the only opportunity for public input into evaluations for wilderness, opportunities for groups to host their own field trips, and providing comment through informal networking and during formal comment periods.

She also reviewed the potential wilderness areas scheduled for discussion at each community workshop. Some concern was expressed about which potential wilderness areas would be discussed at which communities. Susan and Rick separately shared that the intent was to focus discussion on those areas that were in geographic proximity to the communities in which they would be discussed. Susan said that the list of areas to be discussed at each workshop has been posted on the project Web site to allow people to prepare for the workshops. Rick invited those with specific concerns to talk with him or Margaret.

The community workshops are scheduled for the following dates, at the following locations:

Pend Oreille County
Saturday, September, 20, 2008, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Kalispell Tribe of Indians Wellness Center Meeting Room
1821 N. Le Clerc, Cusick, WA

Stevens County
Saturday, October 4, 2008, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Stevens County Sheriff's Ambulance Training Center
425 N. Highway, Colville, WA

Ferry County
Saturday, November 1, 2008, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Republic Elementary School Auditorium
30306 E. Highway 20, Republic, WA

Availability and Need Considerations

After a break, the meeting participants gathered in one of four small discussion groups (determined by counting off). Two groups focused on the "Availability Considerations" table, and each of the other two groups focused on either the first half (biological, ecological)

or second half (recreation, social) of the "Need Considerations" table. Each group was provided with a facilitator[1] who helped keep the discussion on track and recorded notes. General comments were recorded on flip charts (Appendix 2); general areas of agreement regarding changes to the text of the tables were recorded on large poster-sized copies of the table.

At the conclusion of the small group session, a spokesperson reported the results for each group. The general areas of agreement noted on the posters have been consolidated by the facilitators and are included in Appendix 3 and 4.

The group was reminded that the Availability and Need tables will be used at the community workshops. They are not intended to be used as checklists but, rather, to help guide the evaluation discussions.

Wrap Up

Additional comments and questions were provided by the participants prior to concluding the meeting. These are noted in the transcribed flip chart notes at the end of Appendix 2.

Rick thanked people for coming to the meeting, and encouraged them to attend one or more of the community workshops. People were also invited to check the Web site often for new and useful information, and to use this information to prepare for the community workshops.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hayman, Facilitator (EnviroIssues)
Kathy Bond, Facilitator (KTB Decision Resources, Inc.)

[1] Small Group 1: Jan Bodie, Kathy Ahlenslager; Small Group 2: Susan Hayman; Small Group 3: Craig Newman; Small Group 4: Debbie Kelly and Jim Parker

APPENDIX 1—AGENDA

Kick-off Workshop Agenda

Potential Wilderness Area Evaluation -- Colville National Forest

Workshop Objectives:

5. Provide the context for inventoried roadless area (potential wilderness areas) evaluation and decision-making.
6. Review 2006-2007 collaborative work group information regarding potential wilderness area evaluation.
7. Discuss how to apply the Forest Service wilderness evaluation criteria, and identify additional public considerations.
8. Identify opportunities for public involvement throughout the evaluation process.

Time	Topic	Process/Product
9:00 a.m.	**Opening** – Facilitation Team	Information
9:15 a.m.	**Foundations** – Karen Mollander and Rodney Smoldon • Forest plan revision • The collaborative process • Decision-making • Updated inventory of roadless areas (potential wilderness areas)	Information
9:35 a.m.	**Wilderness Evaluation Process** – Margaret Hartzell, Lisa Therrell • Process • Available information • Q&A	Information Q&A
10:05 a.m.	**Public Involvement Opportunities** – Facilitation Team	Information
10:20 a.m.	**Break**	
10:30 a.m.	**Availability and Need 'Considerations'** – Facilitation Team	Facilitated small group activity *Product: Availability & Need considerations for community workshops*
11:15 a.m.	**Small Group Reports** – Facilitation Team	Discussion *Product: Synthesized Availability & Need considerations*
11:50 a.m.	**Next Steps/Wrap up –** Karen Mollander	Information
12:00 p.m.	**Adjourn**	

APPENDIX 2—TRANSCRIBED FLIP CHART NOTES

Small Group 1 – Availability	Small Group 1 – Availability (cont'd)
• Wildlife is not dependent on wilderness; availability should be based on the management needs of the species. • Availability should be based on whether there is excess forage available. • How do you determine if something is potentially "at risk" (re: vegetation)? • Example: Snow courses – mechanized, motorized access needs (actual and potential land use). 1	• Would like to see discussion of the issues of managing for extraordinary circumstances within or adjacent to proposed and existing wilderness areas. • Consider how to address preventative measures before it becomes an extraordinary circumstance. • Past motorized and or mechanized trails that have had insufficient maintenance due to funding and were taken off system should be given low availability. • Neglect should not be a basis for determining availability 2

Small Group 2 – Need (biotic species)	Small Group 2 – Need (unique scientific)
• High: Not limited to federally listed/designated species. • High: Should be based on species presence. • Concern: Confidence in data being uses – was it only collected by the FS? • Medium: Third bullet may be redundant? • High: if contiguous to IRA/wilderness area where species exists. 3	• High: include presence of critical migratory corridors. **Small Group 2 – Need (unique landforms/eco)** • Presence of unique landforms/ecosystems may not be a compelling reason overall for wilderness designation. • Ecosystems shouldn't be a factor in high, medium or low: Too much chance for change, ever-changing. • Late-successional should have more influence. 4

APPENDIX 2—TRANSCRIBED FLIP CHART NOTES

Small Group 3 – Availability	Small Group 4 – Need
• Areas that have passes the capability screens will be evaluated. • Medium means some/limited. • Motorized use applies to all uses. • Cross-country skiing is overly specific. • Currently used by non-motor/non-mech activities. • Change "used by non-mech users" to "used by mech users." • Current use for motorized dispersed and developed camping • Scratch municipal in high and low. • Scratch steep terrain. 5	• Need to clarify the relationship between the potential wilderness evaluation process and the management of IRAs in light of the recent Wyoming Court Decision. • (Process comment) The distribution/relationship to other wilderness areas – need to better define "region". 6

Small Group 4 – Need	Small Group 4 – Need
<u>Criterion- Distribution/Relationship to other wilderness areas:</u> • See low column, bullet #2. • Should say "Already well-distributed portions of wilderness regionally present. Should evaluate at multiple scales. Need to define region. • Last bullet should refer to Okanogan Highlands instead of North Cascades (general agreement). • One opinion voiced—See High column- first bullet, item #1-—creating wildlife corridors should be lower rating criterion. Another person in group disagreed, and wanted it to remain in High.	<u>Criterion- Current User Pressure:</u> • Process Comment—Need data on current use in other wilderness and IRAs in order to evaluate this factor, but need baseline to put data in context. • Suggested to drop bullets number 1 and 5 or describe the measure to give data context. • Drop- bullet #1 Low pressure for uses excluded by the Wilderness Act (e.g. Motorized/mechanized). • Drop—bullet #5 High demand for adjacent or nearby wilderness areas. • Suggest moving bullet #4 to medium column, or quantify or strike all together. Mechanized use is not necessarily incompatible with resource values. —Threatened by potential mechanized use, and alternative locations for mechanized use exist. • Need to clearly articulate that there are other options for IRA management aside from wilderness---example Special Interest Area or Special Resource Area, or recreation area.

APPENDIX 2—TRANSCRIBED FLIP CHART NOTES

Small Group 4 – Need	Other Comments – Wrap up discussion
Criterion- Other non-wilderness opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation. • Suggested adding bullet number 5 from the Current Pressure- High column. High demand for adjacent or nearby wilderness areas, with wording.... Existing wilderness might not be meeting demand. Scale would also need to be addressed. • Comment—High need if adjacent, and high need if no others in area are contradictory ideas. Facilitators need to be consistent with regards to scale/region. • Adjacency to populations needs to be captured under Current User Pressure. • Unrelated to this task at hand-- One opinion voiced- medium overall need for Wilderness at best in the Colville National Forest area for additional Wilderness.	1. [Identify] What are options for these lands? Other kind of designation. Why would wilderness designation be best? 2. Process-- look to diversify the small groups. 3. Include County Plan considerations in evaluating for Wilderness. 4. Active claims versus inactive? How used in evaluation? --Presence/trade-offs. 5. When it reaches point of recommending, can there be flexibility in management requirements for specific areas? --We're limited by Wilderness requirements. 6. Is it a goal of the Colville to recommend?

APPENDIX 3—AVAILABILITY "CONSIDERATIONS" – A DISCUSSION FRAMEWORK/TOOL

- This table is a tool to systematically frame the evaluation discussion. It is not intended to be a "checklist" where yes/no answers tally up to a given end result. This tool was developed by the public.
- For use with existing Forest Service evaluation criteria (Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, chapter 70.)
- May apply to portions of, or entire, potential wilderness area.
- May be influenced by the degree to which it is occurring
- Consider historical use and possible or potential future use

Activities/Conditions	High availability if…	Medium availability if…	Low availability if…
Recreation including tourism	• No historic motorized use occurring now • No historic mechanized recreation use occurring now • Currently used by non-motorized uses	Used by mechanized users ***"Medium" means some/limited for most activities.***	• Groomed for cross-country skiing • Popular area for large group activities • Current motorized / mechanized uses • Established OHV trails • Current motorized camping use (developed and dispersed) • Current / historic non-motorized, large party size, outfitter use
Wildlife species, populations, and management needs	Critical habitat for endangered species, refugia, or other important habitat		A highly managed population / habitat requires mechanized or motorized equipment
Water availability and use	Area is part of a watershed that requires protection for water quality and quantity		Watershed that needs vegetation manipulation or other management that is inconsistent with wilderness
Livestock operations	No allotments present		• Active or vacant allotments or potential for allotments – high forage availability • Presence of noxious weeds that livestock could abate
Vegetation	• Unique plants (threatened, endangered, sensitive) • Low fire risk due to lack of vegetation or high elevation with limited vegetation • No commercially viable timber based on species and terrain		• Forest vegetation is in poor forest health and could impact areas outside of • Areas with a current need for mechanized noxious weed treatment
Minerals	• No active valid claims. • Low or no commercialized mineral resources		• Active claims • Contains strategic mineral reserves • Highly commercialized mineral resources
Authorized and potential land uses	No current authorized uses and none expected in future		• Easements to third parties • Permitted motorized outfitters • Special use permit holders

Appendix 4—Need "Considerations" – A Discussion Framework/Tool

- This table is a tool to systematically frame the evaluation discussion. It is not intended to be a "checklist" where yes/no answers tally up to a given end result. This tool developed by the public. The criterion column comes from the Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, chapter 70.
- If these situations or conditions **currently exist** for a potential wilderness area, the **"Need"** of the area for wilderness would be evaluated as described below.
- Keep flexibility in mind during evaluation – considerations for "Need" are fairly subjective.

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF…	Medium Need for Wilderness IF…	Low Need for Wilderness IF…
Distribution / Relationship to other wilderness areas	• Provides a link between existing wilderness to: – Create corridors for wildlife – Increase the overall wilderness character – Increase manageability of existing wilderness • Adjacent to existing wilderness (touching boundaries) to increase manageability • Contains underrepresented or low represented wilderness characteristics found in national, regional[2] or statewide, wilderness network • Provides significantly closer distance to population centers that are underserved by national, state, and / or regional wilderness network	• Only a few areas of pristine wilderness areas are available • Contains moderately represented characteristics • Presents some measure of connectivity between existing wilderness areas • A portion of boundary is adjacent to existing wilderness • Would have no effect on the overall wilderness character or manageability of existing wilderness	• Presents no value as connectivity between existing wilderness areas • Well-distributed portions of wilderness "regionally" present (should be evaluated at multiple scales.) • Reduces the overall wilderness character and/or decreases the manageability of existing wilderness • Contains very commonly represented wilderness characteristics found in national, statewide, and / or regional wilderness network • Isolated island surrounded by uses incompatible with the maintenance of wilderness • If there is already wilderness in the region (need to define "region")
	The following should be important considerations, but not necessarily used to evaluate the degree of need: • *If there are no wilderness areas within the local national forests* • *If there are no wilderness areas within the ranger district* • *If Wilderness areas already exist*		

[2] Regional means, for the purposes of this exercise, generally the area on the east side of the Cascade Mountains to northern Idaho.

Appendix 4—Need "Considerations" – A Discussion Framework/Tool

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF…	Medium Need for Wilderness IF…	Low Need for Wilderness IF…
Other non-wilderness opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation ***(Said another way…Are there*** *non-wilderness designated lands* ***in proximity to this IRA that provide opportunities for*** *"wilderness-like"* ***experiences?)***	• Non-wilderness lands that provide opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation are in short supply • Regional demand for wilderness-compatible uses cannot be accommodated on adjacent non-wilderness lands		• Abundant non-wilderness land provides opportunities for unconfined outdoor recreation • Other opportunities exist that are currently being underutilized (BLM, DNR, NPS) • Regional[3] demand for mechanized use of this location cannot be accommodated elsewhere • Regional demand for wilderness-compatible uses can be accommodated on adjacent non-wilderness lands

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF…	Medium Need for Wilderness IF…	Low Need for Wilderness IF…
Current User Pressure	• Low pressure for uses excluded by the Wilderness Act (e.g. motorized/mechanized) • High use of the area is currently causing damage to ecosystems for rare plants, endangered animals, watersheds, etc. • Existing wilderness areas are crowded, with degraded conditions • Threatened by potential mechanized use, and alternative locations for mechanized use exist • High demand for adjacent or nearby wilderness areas	• Moderate user pressure	• High pressure for uses excluded by the Wilderness Act (e.g. motorized/mechanized) that cannot be replaced somewhere else reasonably close • Creation of new wilderness would displace a significant amount of current user activity • High current use, but little damage occurring to the ecosystem

[3] Regional means, for the purposes of this exercise, generally the area on the east side of the Cascade Mountains to northern Idaho.

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF…	Medium Need for Wilderness IF…	Low Need for Wilderness IF…
Certain biotic[4] species in the IRA that cannot compete with increasing public use and development	• **Species are unique to this area** • Federally-listed endangered species whose habitat, survival and/or recovery requirements cannot be met without the level of protection afforded by wilderness designation • Species of special public concern (e.g. game species, cultural, etc.) whose habitat, survival and/or recovery requirements cannot be met without the level of protection afforded by wilderness designation • Federally-listed species or species of concern are currently present in adjacent designated wilderness areas • Area contains critical migratory corridors **SUCH AS:** • Mature boreal forest • Low elevation, mature ponderosa pine	• The area contains certain biotic species within the target area where it is uncertain if the biotic species can compete with increasing public use and development. • Species are threatened and other areas not available for protection • Species warranting protection under the Endangered Species Act that are affected by non-compatible wilderness uses (such as mechanized or motorized travel or resource extraction) are present • More common species OR INDICATORS not currently imperiled, but nevertheless are negatively impacted by uses wilderness designation would protect against **SUCH AS:** • Adjacent to core grizzly habitat • Mountain goat security habitat • Closed canopy goshawk habitat • Non-adjacent grizzly core habitat • Black-backed woodpeckers that require periodic fires for prey species	• No plant or animal species present are being impacted (e.g. from mechanized or motorized travel or resource extraction) and in need of protection • Suitable habitat is common and well-distributed • The area under consideration contains identified species of concern that can compete with public use and development. • No species impacted by non-compatible wilderness uses are present

[4] Aquatic, plant, or wildlife are biotic species.

Criterion	High Need for Wilderness IF…	Medium Need for Wilderness IF…	Low Need for Wilderness IF…
Other unique scientific values or phenomena in the IRA	• Exist in the area • Cannot be found in any other location or mitigated in any way. • At risk without wilderness protection	• Not at risk without wilderness protection • Clearly not affected by the management afforded by wilderness allocation	• Not unique to the area • Can be easily mitigated • Such scientific values or phenomena would be clearly negatively affected by wilderness management
Preservation of identifiable landform types and ecosystems (local, sub-regional, regional)	• Truly unique to the area, and can be best preserved by the protection afforded by wilderness designation • The preservation of such identifiable landform types and unique ecosystems (such as late successional ecosystems) would be threatened by the absence of wilderness protection • The preservation of such unique, identifiable landform types and ecosystems that could not be preserved except by wilderness • This is the only place where these values are found regionally[5], statewide, or nationally	• Clearly not affected/not at risk by wilderness management • Dry-site ecosystems, if they can be maintained and managed, and would not threaten WUIs or other values	• Not unique to the area under consideration • Wilderness designation will not afford the highest level of protection or preservation • Clearly negatively affected by wilderness management

[5] Regionally, for the purposes of this exercise and only for this criterion, means the states of Washington and Oregon.