



Forest Plan Revision News

October 2007

Special Point of Interest:

Court enjoins USDA from implementing and utilizing 2005 planning rule

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A Publication of the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests

Message From the Plan Revision Team Leader

The Colville and the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests are in their fourth year of forest planning. Although good progress continues to be made on the draft plan several things have occurred nationally related to the 2005 Planning Rule that have affected the project timeline and the targeted release date of the draft forest plan.

Both the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee Forests transitioned to the 2005 Planning Rule in May 2005. Direction included in those regulations was being used to guide the revision of the land management plans for the two Forests.

On March 30, 2007, the U.S. District Court of California (9th Circuit) issued a final decision in the Citizens for Better Forestry v USDA; Defenders of Wildlife v Johanns with respect to the 2005 National Forest System Land Management Planning Rule. The court enjoined the USDA from implementing and utilizing the 2005 rule until it complies with the court's opinion regarding the Administrative Procedure Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act.

The Washington Office of the U.S. Forest Service has prepared the proposed rule and a

draft environmental impact statement to meet the court order. The draft environmental impact statement includes five alternatives. These alternatives are the proposed action (essentially the 2005 rule), the 2000 Planning Rule, the 1982 Planning Rule, and two modifications of the 2005 Planning Rule. The draft is now out for review, and a 60-day comment period began on August 24 and closes October 22.

For the most current information about the proposed 2007 Planning Rule visit - -
http://www.fs.fed.us/emc/nfma/2007_planning_rule.html

The Forest Plan Revision Team has continued to work towards producing a draft revised forest plan, but release of the draft forest plan to the public will depend on the production of a new planning rule. We have been able to continue to work with the public on other tasks not tied to the enjoined rule, including wilderness evaluation and refining management areas.

We realize that many of you have invested a lot of time and energy collaborating and work-

ing with us on the Colville, Okanogan-Wenatchee Land Management Plans. The information from collaboration will still be important and very useful in developing our final Plans. We will be contacting you as soon as there is clear direction on how we are to proceed.

We thank you for your patience during this time and continued interest in the revision of our Land Management Plans.

If you have any questions, please call Debbie Kelly, Public Affairs Officer, or Margaret Hartzell, Team Leader at (509) 826-3275.

Margaret Hartzell



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Stay Tuned

Your feedback and participation will be greatly needed when the draft plan is released. Visit our updated website to find the newest postings for the public collaboration effort. We will continue to post information as it becomes available.

Updated Project Timeline

The initial timeline for the Forest Plan Revisions called for release of the "Starting Option" (or first draft of the plan) in March 2006. There have been several reasons for the timeline extension, including taking the necessary time to support two public collaboration efforts and the delay caused by the national planning rule injunction.

At this time the tentative schedule calls for release of the draft plan to the public in March 2008 with a 90 day com-

ment period. Response to comments, editing of plans and internal Forest and Regional Office review would occur between June and August 2008. Forests would operate under revised plans in December 2008.

Visit the revision website to find the most current timeline.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/forest-plan/>



Planning Milestones 2003-2007

Public Involvement

Four major rounds of focused public involvement for Forest Plan Revision have occurred.

The first round was at the beginning of the project in 2003 to gather input for the need for change. In 2004, a second round of public involvement was held to gather input on "Sense of Place" as it related to recreation, and in 2005-2006 a round of public involvement centered on boundary validation for Inventoried Roadless Areas. In 2006-2007 we engaged collaboration groups on both Forests to identify possible additional wilderness. Team members have also met informally with individuals and groups by request throughout the planning process and will continue to do so. The next major round of involvement is expected when the draft plan is released.



Okanogan-Wenatchee N.F. Provincial Advisory Committee

Collaboration Efforts

Both the Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee Forests, with support from the Plan Revision Team and contracted facilitators, worked concurrently on two separate but similarly focused public collaboration efforts.

The Colville pulled together a collaboration group from interested public stakeholders who met eight times between March 2006 and March 2007.

The Okanogan-Wenatchee utilized its Provincial Advisory Committee and met 14 times between January 2006 and June 2007. Both collaboration groups focused on developing management themes for recreation and vegetation and considered possible wilderness recommendations. Both efforts were challenging because the collaborative groups took the time to learn about Forest Service planning processes, issues, and each other's perspectives throughout the process as they sought areas of common ground. Each group



Forest Supervisor, Rick Brazell visits with a member of the Colville collaboration group

encountered challenges as it worked through various issues. Overall, the collaborative efforts were rewarding and yielded solid input for plan revision. These efforts have also enhanced connections between stakeholder groups, the counties, and the Forest Service. Recommendations provided by collaborators are posted on the Forest Plan website.

Planning Milestones, cont'd

Interactive Map Website

The Forest Plan Revision Team has worked closely with the Geospatial Service and Technology Center (GSTC) to develop an interactive mapping service website. GSTC is a USDA Forest Service facility located in Salt Lake City that provides the Forest Service with a range of geographic information products.

This website is intended to provide a dynamic visual method for viewing resource



data layers, spatial relationships and land management options as they pertain to resource issues. As the Revision Team continues the reiterative process of developing a starting option, additional data layers will be added to the website for review, comparison, and comment from both internal personnel and external partners. It is our hope that this website will also become an excellent tool for resource managers in implementing the

Forest Plan Revision. Check it out! <http://maps.fs.fed.us/ewz/>

Electronic Maps & GIS Data Layers Available

Downloadable Geographic Information System (GIS) resource data layers and map products used in Forest Plan Revision are also available on the Plan Revision website.

We do suggest you check the time stamp for each layer because these data layers are specific to Plan Revision. To ensure analysis consistency for the Plan Revision it is necessary to "freeze" data layers at certain points in the land management planning process. Thus, the data layers within the Plan Revision project directory, located in the corporate library, are somewhat static. In addition, the data layers are intended and recommended for use at mid-level planning (1:100,00 scale) and may be inappropriate for project level planning.

Data layers within the corporate library are dynamic and are continually being updated by Data Resources Management Services personnel for use on other projects such as transportation management planning. The data layers pro-

vided on the Plan Revision website(s) are specific to the Forest Plan Revision project and may not be the most current data source or appropriate for project level planning.

Wilderness Evaluation

Stage one, the validation of the Inventoried Roadless Area boundaries, is complete. Updated maps are posted on the maps section of the Forest Plan web page. We are now in stage two where we evaluate whether or not to recommend wilderness. If we recommend wilderness then we would identify that in the draft plan. It takes a separate process and an act of Congress to designate wilderness, so in the Forest planning process they are deemed "recommended" wilderness, and would be managed to preserve their wilderness characteristics until such time as Congress designates them as wilderness.

Wild and Scenic River Evaluation

Evaluation is complete and the eligible rivers have been identified. There will be no suitability analysis done on these rivers as part of the plan revision.



Salmo Priest



Pasayten



Entiat River

Keeping Track of Public Participation on Your Forests

Keeping track of changing direction and delays that are often outside of the Planning Team's control can be difficult. In addition, several other key Forest projects that may or may not be connected to planning are occurring concurrently and may add to the confusion.

To help you differentiate between Plan Revision and other ongoing Forest and Regional projects, here is a short rundown of other Forest Service public involvement efforts.

National OHV Rule & Travel Management Planning

In 2005, the Forest Service released a new travel management rule that requires all national forests to designate routes available to motor vehi-

"It is challenging to maintain public interest and focus throughout the life of a plan revision."

Margaret Hartzell,
Team Leader

Have you moved?

An extensive effort was made in September, 2006 to update the Forest Plan revision

mailing list. To be added to the mailing list or update your contact information please visit our webpage.

Thank you!

Public Participation, cont'd

cles including off-highway vehicles (such as all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles), and passenger vehicles (such as cars and pick-up trucks). The Colville and the Okanogan-Wenatchee are both moving through this process. The Planning Team has provided data and analysis to support the Travel Management Planning process.

The Okanogan-Wenatchee Forest has just completed a second round of public meetings to share what routes might be included in the proposed action in preparation for environmental analysis, which is targeted to begin in January 2008. At this time the Forest Service is asking for comments specific to the individual proposed routes. Maps are being posted to the website and each ranger district will soon have an updated set of maps for public viewing. See the project webpage to download the comment form; which



can either be submitted by e-mail or hardcopy. Comments are due by November 1, 2007.

If you have an interest OHV travel on the national forest, we encourage you to check out the draft proposals. Team Leaders are Marge Hutchinson

(509) 653-1430 and Tom Graham (509) 554-9200. <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/travel-management/>

Colville National Forest Travel Planning

Contacts: Craig Newman or Donna Nemeth, (509) 684-7000. Colville's 2007 Interim travel plan maps are available on the forest website: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/colville/forest/recreation/ohv/index.html>

Recreation Site Facility Analysis (RSFA)

The Forest Service is reviewing over 360 developed recreation sites on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest through a process that allows the Forest Service, with ideas from the public and partners, to provide the best developed recreation opportunities in the right location on the Forests.

The Forest Service wants to ensure their developed recreation sites match the unique characteristics of the Forest, projected recreation demand, visitor expectations, and budget. Every national forest in the nation will complete this process by the end of this year.

The Colville N.F. completed their RSFA in 2005. The Oka-

nogan-Wenatchee N.F. began their process this summer. Public meetings were held in July. The Okanogan-Wenatchee was able to utilize the Planning Team's "Sense of Place" findings in the niche development for public meetings.



For more information contact the Forest Headquarters at (509) 664-9367 or check the forest website for updates - - <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/wenatchee/rsfmp>

Colville National Forest Proof of Concept Project

The Colville is one of three national forests involved in testing a new business model for operation of a national forest. The plan revision provides data and vegetation projections for use in determining possible outputs and the possible five-year program of work. Public collaboration is one key element of this model. Contact: Donna Nemeth, Colville Public Affairs Officer, (509) 684-7177.



The Colville and Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests administer approximately 4.5 million acres of public lands, which equates to 11.7% of all lands in Washington state.

What a Forest Plan Does & Does Not Do

Land and Resource Management Plans – often known as “Forest Plans” – are used by every national forest. Congress decided in 1973 and in 1976 what goes into a Revised Forest Plan; the U.S.D.A Forest Service later issued clarifying regulations and policies. The Revised Forest Plan will include several key decisions and create layered and over-arching management direction of lasting importance. In other words, it will provide the framework in which other project decisions can be made on case-by-case and site-specific bases. What a Revised Forest Plan does *not* do is just as important as what a Revised Forest Plan *does* do. The table below helps clarify those differences.

Topic	The Forest Plan Does...	The Forest Plan Does Not...
Laws, regulations, and policies	Use guidance provided by the Forest Service Handbook (FSH), Forest Service Manual (FSM), and other federal regulations and policies to create an over-arching management plan for the national forest.	Make law, regulations, or policy. The Revised Forest Plan is not a policy-making document; it reflects agency policy and goals.
Budget for local Forest Service operations	Consider the financial feasibility of implementing Plan goals and objectives.	Determine funding levels for the national forest (budget allocations are determined in other ways).
Travel management	Identify what kinds of travel are suitable to particular parcels of land, based on desired conditions (DCs) and other designations. This can vary by season.	Make the decision to open, close, or otherwise restrict use of a specific road or trail to certain modes of travel (such as ATVs or mountain bikes). If the management objective for certain parcels changes, site-specific plans for road and trail management will have to be made separately from the Forest Plan to bring travel into compliance. Decisions about specific roads and trails are made through project-level NEPA analysis and decision documents.
Timber harvests	Identify sustainable annual yields. Identify which lands are suitable for timber harvests for various objectives, including timber production.	Identify individual areas that will be offered for sale.
Timber sales	Provide direction and guidelines to determine where and how sales can take place, based on goals and objectives.	Approve any site-specific timber sale.
Grazing allotments	Analyze and disclose which lands are suitable for grazing. Describe the parameters or guidelines that grazing practice shall attain.	Make decisions about what to do with vacant allotments or allotment management plans and permit renewals.
Land exchanges	Identify values and considerations to be evaluated in potential exchange of land parcels. Identify landscapes where opportunities to consolidate landownership patterns should or should not be pursued to meet desired conditions and objectives.	Identify or prioritize specific parcels for exchanges. Guidance for required analyses for land exchanges is in Forest Service manuals and handbooks.
Ski areas	Identify which lands have DCs, objectives, guidelines, and suitability that emphasize ski-based resorts.	Approve creation of any additional infrastructure such as lifts, runs, or snowmaking facilities.
Endangered species	Provide DCs, objectives, and guidelines to ensure sustainable habitat conditions for species that have been listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.	Decide which species will be protected under the Endangered Species Act. These decisions are made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&W).

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Forest Plan, cont'd

Topic	The Forest Plan Does...	The Forest Plan Does Not...
Hunting and wildlife management	Describe desired conditions, objectives, and guidelines for managing the habitat for many game and non-game species.	Set hunting seasons, designate areas as open or closed to hunting, or set harvest levels or hunting fees. Seasons and limits are set by Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. (Except migratory birds - set by USF&W)
Wilderness	Recommend to Congress those areas that are suitable for designation as wilderness. Allocate land to area designations that are managed for wilderness values.	Create or designate lands as wilderness.
Wild, scenic, and recreational rivers	Identify river segments eligible for further study as wild, scenic, or recreational under the nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Allocate land to river corridors that must be managed to maintain the values that provide eligibility for wild, scenic, and/or recreational rivers.	Designate those rivers as wild, scenic, or recreational. A finding of eligibility does not automatically launch further study.
Law enforcement	Emphasize cooperative partnerships and collaborative activities with stakeholder groups, local communities, and governments.	Include directives about law enforcement, specify enforcement staffing, or budget for those operations.

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