

Central Idaho Public Lands Planning Meeting

Facilitated by [Salmon Valley Stewardship](#)

September 15, 2016, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Mackay City Hall

Participants

Sarah Baker, U of ID Custer Extension	Campbell Gardett, Custer NRAC
Lonnie Mollberg, Empire Mine Group	Roxanne Gardett, Chilly resident
Meg Allen, Rally in the Pines	Bart Wojciechowski, rancher
Blake Allen, Rally in the Pines	Shane Rosenkrance, rancher
Nolan Sauerbreit, Custer Natural Resource Advisory Council	Bret Zollinger, rancher
Wayne Olsen, Mayor of Mackay	Mike Seal, rancher
Marshall Smith, private landowner	Steve Smith, rancher
Lin Hintze, Custer County Commissioner	Gina Knudson, Salmon Valley Stewardship
Debbie Johnson, Wildhorse Association	Toni Ruth, SVS, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Steve Stephens, Butte County prosecutor	Mindy Crowell, SVS
Cassi Wood, Trout Unlimited	Chuck Mark, Salmon-Challis Natl Forest
Sydney Dowton, rancher	Cheri Ford, SCNF
Karen Dowton, rancher	Allison Jackson, SCNF
Craig Gehrke, The Wilderness Society	Lans Stavast, SCNF
Marx Hintze	
Gary Ingram, Rancher	
Jackie Ingram, rancher	

- Toni gave a brief History of the emerging Central Idaho public lands planning collaborative which can be found here: <https://goo.gl/9jGtGG>
- Chuck Mark, Salmon-Challis Forest Supervisor and Deputy Supervisory Cheri Ford gave an update on Forest Service Plan Revision timeline:

- The Forest Service has hired 2 members of the plan revision interdisciplinary team: the team leader and the collaboration specialist. The revision process will begin with assessments to inform the need for change. The Forest Service will also conduct the Wilderness assessment. The wilderness assessment is a required, not optional, component of the new planning rule.
- Goal is to have plan revision wrapped up in 2020.

- The 2012 Planning Rule Federal Advisory Committee has drafted two guides for understanding opportunities for participating in the Forest Service planning process. Click here to see the final text for: [A Guide for State, Local, and Tribal Governments](#) (9 MB) and [A Guide for Citizens](#). (40 MB)

- Chuck Mark explained that the point of the new planning rule is to hear what people have to say early on, rather than having agency specialists come up with a plan and then ask for reactions from the public.

- Although the Forest Plan Revision will be conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act, the standard public involvement opportunities will be expanded to include nearly continual public involvement. This public lands planning collaborative, other collaboratives and groups, and the general public all have opportunities to provide comment throughout the process.

- Counties have special status as coordinating and cooperating agencies and the SCNF is looking to other examples in the Intermountain Region and other forests who have completed plan revisions under 2012 Rule for guidance on how to design productive interaction with county and other governments, tribes, etc.
- Cheri explained that although the BLM does not have its planning rule 2.0 finalized, Salmon and Challis field office managers and staff have been working closely with the SCNF to coordinate efforts and that will continue throughout the planning process.

- A group discussion was held to begin identifying what is going well, and what needs improvement, on the SCNF and BLM managed lands near Stanley. The purpose of this exercise is to take this list to other watersheds across the Salmon-Challis National Forest and the Salmon and Challis BLM field office areas in order to find reoccurring themes. It is hoped that these reoccurring themes will then be addressed by the group in order to help the agencies focus on what is important to the constituents. The following list is a result of that exercise:

What is going well?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The City of Mackay has a positive working relationship with BLM and SCNF when it comes to trails and providing access. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ranchers and agriculture are the backbone of Mackay's economy. ✓ Stewardship – ranchers, farmers and the community care for the land. |
|--|--|

- ✓ People come to this area because of the outstanding recreational access on public lands.
- ✓ Trails are vitally important to tourism economy.
- ✓ Services such as search and rescue are provided by residents, many of whom are part of ranching industry.
- ✓ Range conservation pros in BLM and SCNF have a good relationship with local ranchers.
- ✓ Community, BLM, FS, non-profits, IDFG and others pulled together to

- recover the Big Lost River whitefish, avoiding a threatened and endangered species listing
- ✓ Motorized trail users are giving back to community by purchasing cattle guards and donating to community causes.
- ✓ Ranchers are good stewards and the rangelands in this area are some of the best preserved.

Opportunities for Improvement

- Grazing litigation
- Too many road closures
- Communication about road closures.
- Absentee private landowners
- Environmental analysis takes too long (Thompson Ck Mine example)
- Lack of staff/funding capacity to conduct environmental analysis so trails users can help with needed trails improvements
- Signage lacking
- Need to connect Corral Creek with Copper Basin for ATV riders
- Communication. Need to share information about events (example, Trail Ck Road bicycle ride)
- Agency turnover
- Bias in decision-making process (why does range of reasonable alternatives always involve reducing cattle #s but never increasing?)
- Recognize ecological/stewardship value of grazing
- Congress needs to allot more funding for public lands management
- Paperwork stops agency personnel from getting out on the land
- Litigation costs are passed on to other users (Equal Access to Justice Act needs reformed)
- Mt. Borah trailhead use is too intense for existing infrastructure (parking, camping, water, etc)
- Search and Rescue costs are borne by County residents
- Payment in Lieu of Taxes formula needs to be changed
- When campground maintenance services are contracted, county doesn't get 25% of receipts like they used to
- New wilderness means more visitors with costs of visitation passed on to local residents

- Consider “impact” funding
- We have enough wilderness and wilderness study areas
- Sage grouse related BLM & State lands trades could impact rural schools if places like Custer County end up with less state land
- Hazardous fuels
- Controlled burns should be first considered for harvest opportunities
- Slash piles need to be cleaned up
- Deal proactively with wolf management
- Conservation easements erode private tax base
- Firewood permitting boundaries are unclear
- Updated maps needed for trails for all user groups
- Consider prescribed burn effect on wildlife

Next steps:

1. SVS will email meeting minutes to group next week, share Facebook information, and link to Idaho Forest Restoration Partnership website where documents will be posted
2. If anyone has other thoughts after the meeting, please email them to toniruth@salmonvalley.org or mindycrowell@salmonvalley.org
3. Plan is to host similar meetings in Challis, May/Ellis/Pahsimeroi, Salmon, and Leadore in order to:
 - Find common themes, narrow scope using information gathered from watershed meetings
 - Attract new representation and members, raise awareness of process
 - Determine collaborative group structure and focus; select chair (s) for a citizens’ collaborative
 - Provide recommendations to FS and BLM