North Idaho Working Group Process Committee Meeting Record
Tuesday, February 1, 2022, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. PST

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendance

Members: John Finney, Sandpoint Winter Riders; Alan Harper, Idaho Forest Group; Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League; Dave Wenk, Boundary Country Grooming Board

Technical advisors: Commissioner Dan Denning, Boundary County; Jessie Berner, Idaho Panhandle National Forest (IPNF); Mike Lithgow, Kalispel Tribe; Marc Kilmer, Office of Congressman Russ Fulcher; Jace Hogg, Office of Governor Brad Little; Stefany Bales and Darren Parker, Office of Senator James Risch


Meeting Objectives

• Discuss the concerns around membership: number of members, balance of members, and how to move forward.
• Determine a starting point map.
• Discuss how to get everyone on the same page for the U.S. Forest Service’s rules and regulations for winter travel planning.
• Discuss how to get everyone on the same page for what the IPNF Forest Plan says about areas open and closed to Over Snow Vehicles (OSV).

Decisions

• Next meeting agenda items will include a set of presentations from panelists. These will include Bert and Christy on wildlife and caribou and how the caribou recovery plan will impact process; the 2019 map and what the IPNF had in mind when they drew map, what resource concerns helped make the decisions for this map, and who was involved; and the Environmental Coordinator to talk about winter travel planning rules and regulations.
• The group will be meeting third Tuesday of every month.
• The Process Committee will meet the first Tuesday of every month.

Action Items

• Ben will address number of members at the next meeting.
• Ben will add a clause in code of conduct to address the role for alternates and for the number of proposed alternatives for dissenting members.
- Ben and Jessie will get together to determine talking points for the FS panel at the February meeting.
- Discuss what success looks like at the next meeting.
- Ben will send out a message to group regarding the meeting schedule and include calendar invites.
- Ben will send the contacts list to email to members, as well as the code of conduct. The code of conduct will also be sent to the wider audience.
- Determine Ken Barrett’s membership status as he was absent for the last couple of meetings.
- Ben will send the Process Committee notes out to all members. In the future, he will let members know about the process committee agenda and inviting them to join.

**MEETING RECORD**

Ben reviews the meeting objectives and agenda.

1. **Concerns about number of members and balance of membership**
   - Members have raised concern over the number of members and the balance of membership. Currently, the total number of members is at twenty seven. Will the group take on new members down the road or will we close to membership?
   - There is concern about gate-keeping and determining who can or cannot be involved. Simultaneously, there is concern about the process getting unwieldy, particularly if stakeholders from similar interest areas are not on the same page. We need to make sure the process is manageable and that we can meet this ambitious deadline.
   - Members understand the concerns about balance, but the OSV group that has high representation is the group being the most impacted. If it were to be balanced, would it be a one-to-one representation for interest groups?
     - There are many overlapping interests, but these overlapping interests might have a stake in different geographic locations.
   - There is ongoing coordination at the state level looking at Parks and Rec being a voting member. There is a meeting on February 9th to address this.
     - There is agreement that state agencies should all be voting members, or none should be voting members.
   - It is important to lock in the definition of a member and determine a voting policy that considers alternates.
   - Members expressed concern for the conservation representatives finding themselves in the minority position and the possibility of the majority of the group advancing their viewpoint to the detriment of the conservation interests.
     - The group is operating by consensus and not a majority rule. The conservation community has the ability to nullify a vote or recommendation regardless of how many OSV users are on the group.
• There is a clause in the code of conduct that requires dissenting members to offer viable alternatives. There is concern about being in the position of constantly offering alternatives and new suggestions if there is not agreement based on how the bylaws are written.
  o Jesse Berner notes that this is a recommendation. The IPNF will also take other groups recommendations into consideration. The IPNF will take all of this into account as they develop a proposed action and conduct an effects analysis. As long as the IPNF analyzes all the parts and pieces, they can pull from different recommendations. It is helpful to have full picture, what the majority of the group recommends and then the minority reports. The effects analysis will cover all of this. At decision, the IPNF can draw from all parts and pieces as long as they as it has gone through the effects analysis. Jesse encourages group to continue to work together through alternatives development, effects, and all the way through to the decision.
• Regarding concerns about total number of people, Ben proposes that at the next meeting, he proposes to existing members that if they see their interests already represented on group that they consider stepping back as a voting member and staying in close contact with their interest group.
  o General agreement that this is a good idea to have people volunteer to remove themselves. Goal would be to have a representative report back to group. Ben will reinforce the need to stay in touch with constituents.
• Does the code of conduct have anything regarding attendance? Something should be added to the code of conduct.
  o There was a suggestion that if you miss two consecutive meetings, you are removed as a member.
• When asking about consolidation of representation at the next meeting, we should also discuss the option for an alternate.

2. Starting point map
• John Finney recommended another set of maps as starting points. These were four quadrants with management areas from the Forest Plan shown. These maps do not have 2019 areas.
  o These are base maps and could be potential maps to start laying polygons onto. First, the group must review the IPNF’s 2019 maps and hear their reasonings behind these maps to help the group determine where to go.
• There are questions about wildlife corridors and caribou habitat. The group needs an overview of the caribou recovery plan. Christy and Bert will explain this at the next meeting.
• When talking about the history of the 2019 maps, it will be important to keep this at the 30,000-foot level and not bring up past points of contention.
3. Discussion around Forest Service (FS) rules and regulations for winter travel planning

- The FS will run through rules and regulations at the next meeting. The FS should discuss the Forest Plan and the management areas in the plan and what they say about OSV use. The group needs to know the guardrails that the FS must follow. This should be done before looking at maps.
  - The Environmental Coordinator will join the next meeting to frame up the sideboards.
- The group needs to discuss what success looks like and highlight that this is a recommendation. Success could look like identifying a zone of agreement. A written statement might be more attainable than drawing lines on a map.
- The motor vehicle use rule for OSV typically produces a map for wheeled travel for summer. It would be helpful for the Forest Service to explain map designations and how closed and open areas are portrayed on the maps.
  - Other considerations for the panel in addition to rules and regulations for travel management include review of the Forest Plan and the rationale behind the 2019 maps.
- Jessie Berner envisions having a panel present which will include Jessie, the environmental coordinator, and a wildlife person. They will discuss the travel rule, analysis process, ESA and other constraints, the Forest Plan, land allocations that preclude snowmobile use, and then open it up for questions.
  - Bert Lyndaker and Dan Gilfillan could speak to the 2019 map.
  - There were a lot of decisions on that map that had to do with habitat, looking at corridors, timing restrictions, etc. There were also proposed trails for snowmobiling that are part of the injunction. Some had to do with what was happening in the Colville National Forest. They've been working on a map that shows land allocations with Forest Plan that shows where you can’t ride.

Meeting adjourned at 6:11 PM.