

# Lolo Plan Revision Meeting Summary

## Interagency Governmental Working Group (IGWG) Meeting

Date: 9/05/2023

Hybrid meeting, in person in Missoula (MT FWP Conference Room) and online.

Facilitators: Heather Stokes and Nick Maya, University of Montana Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy

### Attendees

Tony Incashola, CSKT Director of Tribal Resource Management  
Shawn DeFrance, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe (CSKT), Inventory Planning  
Stephen McDonald, CSKT Acting Forestry Manager  
Zac Covington, City of Missoula  
Steve Kimball, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)  
Amy Helena, Area Manager, Montana DNRC  
Randy Arnold, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MT FWP)  
Crystal Stonesifer, USDA Forest Service (USFS), Missoula District Ranger, Lolo National Forest  
Jeff Hayes, USDA Forest Service, Lolo National Forest  
Meg Cirullo, USDA Forest Service, Plan Revision Team  
Amanda Milburn USDA Forest Service, Plan Revision Team  
Don Long, USDA Forest Service, Plan Revision Team

## Summary of Discussion

Revision Team Lead Amanda Milburn welcomed the group to this meeting of the Interagency Governmental Working Group (IGWG) in support of the Lolo Plan Revision process. Each attendee introduced themselves. Amanda provided an update of the revision status about wild and scenic rivers eligibility study, wilderness evaluation process, potential species of conservation concern lists, the revised assessment, and the draft preliminary need to change document that will be released this week. The Proposed Action is upcoming after the end of the calendar year. Recent and upcoming public engagement efforts were also discussed.

Amanda then briefly reviewed some broader-scale emerging topics related to the Lolo's revision effort such as the mature and old growth executive order, wildfire crisis strategy, Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act, US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) work on listed species, and Nez Perce Clearwater National Forest's plan revision record of decision that will be forthcoming.

The group engaged in a wide-ranging discussion about cross-boundary coordination, particularly toward opportunities to align county, tribal, state, and federal wildfire risk strategies, and community protection concepts. The discussion explored specific elements of the State Forest Action Plan, how the concepts of wildfire risk, fire suppression, and vegetation management issues interact across jurisdictional boundaries, and how the Lolo's plan revision may consider and support the land management objectives of neighboring lands such as (but not limited to) State trust lands, the reservation, and private lands.

What follows is a summary of discussion points based on the meeting agenda topics.

1. MT DNRC is interested in maintaining roaded access through federal lands for management activities and fire suppression on state trust lands. For example, Clark Creek on Hwy 12 from the top into the Belmont area is of concern. MT DNRC will touch base with additional staff to provide more information on specific concern areas.
2. The City of Missoula is working on a Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) plan and is looking forward to collaboratively working together on this work.
3. MT DNRC suggests that the USFS look closely at the mapped priority treatment areas found in the Montana Forest Action Plan, determine if those align with Forest Service Strategic Fire Management Zones, and consider how assigning management areas can support the State's objectives. The Lolo Plan Revision Team noted the likelihood of overlap between the two concepts, but no acre-to-acre comparison has yet been done.
4. The group also discussed reviewing other concepts such as fire sheds, the wildland urban interface, community protection zones, direct protection areas, and modeling results that integrate fire risk and opportunities for vegetation management in a manner similar to the Bitterroot Front Project to inform land allocation assignments in the Lolo's revised plan.
5. The group discussed the need to manage around communities, and the importance of ensuring that the Lolo revised plan provides opportunities to reduce fire danger around communities.
6. We talked about the importance of the revised plan remaining strategic and flexible, but also providing the direction and framework needed to guide future implementation of projects.
7. The CSKT shared an update on their resource management planning, and that they used the FIREMON model to provide helpful information about fire effects and severity.
8. The group noted that while conflicting objectives between wildlife and habitat can occur with the need for active management to achieve wildfire risk management goals, there's also the possibility of broad scale opportunities for alignment as well.
9. MT FWP shared an update on the Fish Creek area, for which they will provide a draft plan for 30-day public comment soon. We discussed cross-boundary management for this area in broad strokes.
10. The group also talked about travel management, and how the plan revision will not include travel planning but will inform future travel planning efforts. In particular MT FWP noted the importance of talking about more motorized recreation in the Fish Creek area.
11. The group also discussed the importance of reaching out and developing more working relationships with forest collaborative groups, such as offering briefing opportunities from the revision team as a first step.

Revision topics that interested the group for further discussion include connectivity and wilderness recommendations, as well as inviting the US FWS to attend and provide an update on ongoing listed species work (e.g., species status assessments, conservation strategies) that may influence the revision process.

The next IGWG meeting is scheduled for December 5, 2023.