

## **Composite Prioritization Form & Discussion- Rock Creek**

The final step was to integrate the desired condition, the risks, the opportunities and prioritize areas for Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed scale or projects that could be implemented. Table H shows the priority by Resource and subunit. Cultural resources was added as a component to the Prioritization based on input from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe. It is described as the tribal perception that all resources cannot be separated. They are connected. Collaboratively, an overall rating was determined. Areas needing coordination between intergovernmental agencies was checked. On the priority chart there is a visible difference from the first six subunits and the remaining. To keep risks and opportunities in focus to determine priority, the categories were added to the Composite Prioritization form for West Fork, Ross Fork, Middle Fork, East Fork, and Upper Willow. For future management, the following is a list of priorities:

Composite Prioritization - Rock Creek - Table H

Subunit	Priority	Coord. Needed		Resource					
				Veg	Wildlife	Hydro	Fish	Social	Cultural
Mainstem	High	✓	risk opp. priority	H	H	H L M	H L M-H	H H H	H H H
North Rock	Mod to-High		priority	H	H	M	M	M	M - H
Welcome Ranch	Low	✓	priority	M	M	L	L	L	M
Ambrose	High		priority	M	H	H	H	H	H
Hogback	Low		priority	L	L	L	L	L	L
Stoney	High	✓	priority	H	H	H	M	H	H
West Fork	Mod	✓	risk opp. priority	M-H M M	M M M	H H H	M M H	H H H	H
Ross Fork	Low	✓	risk opp. priority	L L L	L L L	L L M	L L M	L L L	L
Middle Fork	Mod	✓	risk opp. priority	L-M M M	L-M L-M M	H H H	H H H	H H H	H
East Fork	Mod	✓	risk opp. priority	M M M	M M M	H H H	H H H	H H H	H
Upper Willow	High	✓	risk opp. priority	H H H	H H H	H H M-H	H H H	H H H	H

## **DISCUSSION**

The following capture some of the highlights of the discussion and some of the factors used by the team and collaborators to determine the final priority. For complete list of factors, see the Specialist's reports in Appendix A.

### **North Rock = Mod. to High Priority**

- proposed to acquire lands to facilitate mgmt. activities (e.g. burning)
- this subunit is mainly MA16, Timber Mgmt., but has regeneration problems
- Brewster Creek is in this subunit (south boundary)

Veg = High priority

Majority is low intensity, frequent fire regimes. Most in the subbasin. Highest departure from historic.

Wildlife = High priority

- MT FWP sees opportunities for enhancing sheep distribution in Welcome Creek which dovetails nicely with North Rock.

Hydro = Mod priority

- there are major problems in HUC 130060, Brewster Crk., opportunities are mod., mining reclamation. The summer homes in the bottom has had limited success with restoration. If we could deal with the main road, there would be major payoffs.

Fish = Mod. priority

- same as hydro

Social = Mod priority

- there is a lot of private land, summer homes. DNRC has direct protection in the rural/interface. The value or STATUS is high for hunting, wildlife viewing, commodities (historically due to proximity to Missoula).

Cultural = Mod - High priority

- due to steep slopes, not as important as other places.

### **Welcome Ranch = Low**

-this is mainly wilderness and roadless.

Veg= Mod

This area has a majority of the low intensity, frequent fire regimes. Prescribed Natural Fire is main opportunity for veg trt..

Wdlf = Mod.

Sawmill, sheep use is high. Re-introduction of fire would be beneficial on dry sites.

Hydro and Fish = Low

There are opp. for benefit in Cinnabar Crk. but could be addressed in Ambrose.

Social = Low

The value is high due to roadless/wilderness but low priority due to low risk & low opportunities for mgmt.

Cultural = Mod

Stamp Creek Mine has largest gold nugget.

**Ambrose = High**

Veg = Mod.

due to moist, mixed fire regimes but roads = high weed risk

Wdlf = High

mainly due to fragmentation, opportunity for Rx fire, furbearers

Hydro = High.

Wahlquist and Cin. Bear have high rd. densities that are near headwaters of streams.

There are no "impaired" water bodies. Impaired has specific state definitions. The potential is high risk though. Opp. for rd. closure.

Fish = High.

Important for bull trout. Opp. in Alder Crk.

Social = High.

Did an analysis a few years ago. Closure of roads was contentious, especially the ridge road. ... BUT an opportunity was identified for yr. long closure of the laterals. There's an opp. for travel mgmt. and to address problems with ORV use in the Quigg proposed wilderness area.

Cultural = High

**Hogback = Low**

This area is almost all roadless. For all resources, nothing's broke, low risk, limited opportunities for management/restoration.

Wdlf = Low.

There is a portion of Hogback Creek that has high value for sheep but can be assessed with Stoney.

Fish = Low.

key migration for salmonids. Low to none exotic species.

Cultural = Low.

very high value but low risk and opps.

**Stoney = High Priority**

Veg. = High.

except for subwatershed, HUC 120040 is low due to mid elev., moist types. High risk to riparian due to grazing allotment.

Wdlf = High.

good opps. for winter range bunchgrass types. The BLM has a planned timber sale, Marshall Mill, to treat doghair LPP and re-introduce fire in the Grahmn area.

Hydro = High

*with full recognition that the majority of the opportunities to manage are under State jurisdiction (DEQ and MTFWP) not federal.* There are private landowners who want to improve water quality on their land. Subwatershed, 120050, has 1<sup>st</sup> order tributaries with roads right up the bottom. e.g. Williams Gulch which is DEQ "threatened" to the Bagdad Mine. The BLM data shows there is an upward trend in water quality.

Fish = Moderate.

Even though this area is VITALLY IMPORTANT for spawning, the opportunities for mgmt. on federal lands is limited. The main risk to fish is to the Mainstem and private

land

Social/Cultural = High.

The Shoshone-Bannock would like more quantitative data on this sub-unit. The Rock Creek Advisory Council has expressed interest in Wetlands and Wetland Reserves in this subunit. They are ready, willing and able to help out. The DNRC (John Blaine) is looking for funding to help organize and look at potential conservation easements.

### **West Fork = High**

Collaborators at this point decided to record ratings for RISK, OPPORTUNITIES, and then establish a PRIORITY for each resource. Based on this, an overall PRIORITY rating was recorded. This subunit contains the Skalkaho Hwy.

Veg = risk = Mod.; opp. = Mod. to High; priority = Mod.

This subunit is very complex for all issues. In most of the subwatersheds opportunities and risk are low EXCEPT for Subwatershed, 100040. It is very high for composition, struct., function and grazing in riparian.

Wldlf = risk, opportunities and priority = Mod.  
see Veg. notes

Hydro = risk, opportunity, and priority = High

Currently, some steps are being taken to reduce road density. *Need coordination with Dept. of Transportation on the Skalkaho Hwy.*

Fish = risk and opportunity = Mod. priority = High

The priority is high because Subwatershed, 100040, has been sampled and there is a genetically pure strain of salmonids. There is 60 years of information/data on this subunit.

Social/Cultural = risk, opp., priority = High.

High opportunities for "commodity" production even though comp./struct/func. may be within the range of variability.

### **Ross Fork = Low**

Two subwatersheds are roadless. HUC #090030 is roaded. Hydro and Fish had moderate opportunities for reducing road densities in HUC #090030. Otherwise, all resources had low for risk, opps., and priority.

### **Middle Fork = Moderate**

Land ownership is mainly private in lower elevations. High elevation = Anaconda Pintlar Wilderness.

Veg =

Riparian veg is at high risk in two subwatersheds due to grazing and succession. All risk factors are high except for composition and structure change for HUC # 080050.

Wldlf =

This subunit has good Elk Winter Range on private land.

Hydro =

see Hydrologist report in Appendix A.

Fish =

The high risk is loss of migration habitat.

Social =

High due to opportunities for access into the Anaconda-Pintlar Wilderness.

**East Fork = Moderate**

The main risk is to Fish. There is a hot spot of the parasite that carries whirling disease.

Hydro = This subunit is highly degraded. There are not a lot of opportunities because of private land.

**Upper Willow = High**

Hydro =

There is a lack of information on USFS land. According to DEQ, five water bodies are listed as Water Quality Listed Segments. There was some disagreement in the group whether the degradation is due to natural sources or human caused.

**Priority Analysis At The Watershed Scale**

**#1 Priority for USFS/BLM = Ambrose**

**#1 Priority for Interagency = Upper Willow**

**Group Consensus for Subunit Priority:**

**High Priority**

Upper Willow

Stoney

Ambrose

North Rock

**Moderate Priority**

East Fork

West Fork

Middle Fork

**Low Priority**

Ross

Hogback

Welcome Ranch

This is a watershed priority based on opportunity and need for management activities to move toward the desired landscape conditions. Public Involvement will help determine final priority. The priority will be looked at to determine if further Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale is needed for these watersheds due to information gaps.

**There are Opportunities identified by the collaborators and IDT to address that do not need EAWS. They include:**

Integrated Weed Management. Follow DEIS Vol. II, Appendix F format. Representatives to include: Granite and Missoula County Weed District and County Extension. (Lucas, Knud-sen), BLM, USFS - Lolo and BVRD (Kulla, Shaw), State (?)

Mainstem Recreation and Restoration Plan (Stack, Kipphut lead, BVRD - Philipsburg, State FWP fisheries, DEQ, County Extension, Tribes)

**Opportunities outside of BLM/USFS authority for resolution:**

Subdivisions, Ranches as Ranches, maintaining open range landscape, Private Structure Fire Protection, Skalkaho State Highway sediment reduction, Stream and land restoration on private lands. MT FWP, County Commissioners, Msla. County Office of Planning and Grants, County Extension, MT RC & D (Andreozzi).