

**Proof of Concept Q and A's**  
Colville National Forest  
September 6, 2007

**What does the term “Proof of Concept” mean?**

Proof of Concept describes a trial period used to verify that a concept or theory is feasible. The concept behind this model suggests that through collaboration with the public and a predictable budget, the agency can increase managed outcomes while decreasing overall costs.

**What are the objectives for Proof of Concept?**

Our objectives are to allow for greater public involvement through long term collaboration, stewardship contracts, and partnerships; a stable budget should increase all of these by creating steady, predictable work opportunities for community members and contractors. Another objective is to increase program efficiency while decreasing overall costs.

**Who designed this new business model?**

Ron Hooper from the Forest Service Washington Office was primarily responsible for developing the concept and implementation plan for this new business model.

**What other National Forests are participating in this initiative?**

The Allegheny National Forest in Pennsylvania and the Shasta-Trinity National Forest in California will also implement the new Proof of Concept business model.

**Why is it necessary for the Forest Service to use a new business model?**

The Forest Service is currently struggling as increasing program requirements continue to exceed budget allocations and workforce capacities. Proof of Concept is designed to accomplish work with improved efficiency by increasing management flexibility and leveraging dollars by securing partnerships. This should allow resource management needs to drive the program of work rather than budget line item allocations, bringing more funding to the ground.

**When will it become effective?**

Proof of Concept became effective this past summer when the Charter was signed. All three Forests will use the new budget process beginning on October 1, 2008, when the new fiscal year begins.

**For how long will the Colville utilize this new business model?**

We are planning to use the new business model for a minimum of ten years.

**What about Colville's previous collaboration efforts?**

None of that information will go to waste! All public input that was provided at previous collaboration efforts, such as the Forest Plan Revision workshops and Travel Management workshops, will be used along with current findings.

**How will you decide upon a program of work?**

A Performance Contract, defining operational goals, will be developed with our stakeholders through a collaborative process so it represents local interests. Shared knowledge and interests gathered from our collaboration efforts are likely to enhance our decisions and improve outcomes. The contract will outline the Forest's operational goals for the next five years.

**Will the operational goals that are described in the Performance Contract become effective immediately?**

The Performance Contract describes operational goals for the next five years. We will immediately follow the contract; however, we expect program changes to occur in increments. Current partnerships, collaboration agreements, and MOU's will be honored.

**What are the parameters that you must work within?**

The goals and objectives identified in the Performance Contract must be consistent with the National Strategic Plan, the Forest Plan, and the law.

**Can the Performance Contract change if priorities change or if new needs are identified?**

Yes, the Performance Contract will be evaluated annually to ensure that it is still accurate and it can be modified if necessary.

**How will you measure your accomplishments?**

Based largely on partnerships and collaboration, Proof of Concept measures success on a continuum. We will be held accountable to meet our Performance Contract. Long term accomplishments will include partnerships, improved community economics, and resource sustainability.

**What actions will be evaluated?**

Rather than measuring short term outputs, Proof of Concept will measure long-term outcomes on a continuum that includes partnerships, improved community economics, and resource sustainability. We hope to have the public help with evaluation.

**Who will evaluate the effectiveness of this new business model?**

The model will be monitored and evaluated by the Regional Forester and the Washington Office as well as periodically by the public. We will review the progress we have made towards our long term goals on an annual basis.

**Does this change the Forest Service mission?**

Our Forest Service mission remains the same: caring for the land and serving people. Proof of Concept will help our efforts to ensure healthy forests for the future.