

Community Workshop Notes

June 15, 2004

Pendleton, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Martha Bean
Meeting Recorder: Kathy Campbell
Meeting Participants: 22 participants signed in

Co-Convenors: Hulette Johnson, Economic Development Director, Umatilla County

Forest Service Officials: Jeff Blackwood Umatilla National Forest Supervisor and David Hatfield, Umatilla National Forest, Planning Staff Officer

Team Members: Dave Schmitt, Elaine Kohrman, Trish Callaghan, Bob Gecy, Bob Mason, Bruce Countryman, Tami Paulsen, Dee McConnell, and Kathy Campbell

Meeting Summary/Objectives: The team and the co-conveners held a series of community workshops to introduce the Forest Plan revision process to the public and invite them to help define a vision and desired condition for the Blue Mountains. The beginning of the session was held in an open house format with each team specialist providing a display and discussion on the Current Management Situation and a sign-up sheet to have a copy of the Current Management Situation Report mailed to anyone interested when it is ready. Team Leader Dave Schmitt gave a PowerPoint presentation about the process, followed by a short question and answer session. The second half of the workshop consisted of the neutral facilitator leading the participants through an exercise to identify what participants “want their forests for” to create a vision and desired conditions for the Blue Mountains National Forests.

Question & Answer Sessions:

Q: Will the revised Forest Plans recommend re-introducing wolves?

A: *While we do not anticipate that the revised Plans would recommend re-introducing wolves, we will cooperate in the implementation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Wolf Recovery Plan.*

Q: What will happen to the special-use permit I have for my cabin?

A: *For the Forest Plan Revision, we will be determining suitability of lands for specified uses, such as recreation cabins. We will NOT be making decisions regarding individual permits. The suitability of lands for various uses will be a public process. (As a follow-up, Trish Callaghan had a discussion with the individual cabin owners and re-assured them that the cabin permit re-issuance process would occur prior to and separate from our plan decisions. She also restated that the revised plans would not be making decisions on individual lots, tracts, or permit-specific issues).*

Q: How current or how old is the data you will be using? Is it new since the last plans? Will the data be peer reviewed?

A: *We have been collecting data for a long time and there are various levels of “current.” Much data has been collected since the current plans by the Forest Service and other agencies and groups. We will be using the best data available. The Region is working with the Pacific Northwest Lab to determine where we need scientific review and how to accomplish that.*

Questions/Issues/Concerns shared by people at display tables during the open house portion:

Handouts: The Forest Plan Revision Team; Components of a Forest Plan; Please Add Me to Your Mailing List; What a Plan Does and Does Not Do; Workshop Schedule; PowerPoint Presentation; How to Contact Us.

Table - Social and Economics /Criteria and Indicators:

Handouts: Draft Criteria and Indicators

- ♦ More and more people are using the area around Tollgate for snowmobiling. Much of the use has been by people that have cabins/recreation residences, now they are seeing more use just for the day from people outside of the area.
- ♦ The people who have residences want to keep their access for snowmobiling, but they don't like the abuses in the use they see such as intrusions into the wilderness.
- ♦ Four-wheel drive use is causing impacts to other resources including muddying the roads and off-road areas.

- ♦ The residences want to protect their experience, but don't like a lot of new people moving into their area for snowmobiling.

Table - Recreation & Access:

Handouts: Inventoried Roadless Areas & Wilderness

- ♦ "Snowmobile" use does not equal "ATV use" seasons or areas, there is quite a bit of inequity in this, not a good way to tell why there is a difference.
- ♦ Make sure that people get meeting information back out at end of round one of meetings.
- ♦ Don't want to be locked out of more areas.
- ♦ Why do we need MORE wilderness?

Table - Hydrology/Watersheds:

- ♦ 303d- listed streams for Washington are not displayed.
- ♦ Riparian areas in the Blue Mountains average about 3-4% of the total land area, not 2% as shown in the display.

Table - Vegetation Management:

- ♦ We have too many old growth areas.
- ♦ Too many large fires.
- ♦ Need to be able to clean up more of the down wood in a timely manner.
- ♦ Need more firewood cutting areas.
- ♦ We should be able to cut large/old trees.
- ♦ We should be able to cut firewood in old growth areas.

Table - Biological Sciences:

- ♦ We have too much old growth.
- ♦ We do not need anymore wilderness.
- ♦ Are ATVs really a problem?
- ♦ There is too much hazardous fuel in the Tollgate Area.
- ♦ Why is the snowmobile use restricted?
- ♦ Are we going to re-introduce wolves?

Vision Exercise: These were comments made during the open discussion time on visions people wanted.

Vision for Tollgate Area:

- ♦ Its special because its close to us
- ♦ Want to snowmobile when there is snow on the ground
- ♦ Clean up downed timber for fire prevention
- ♦ Want connected ORV trails
- ♦ Put more emphasis on recreation
- ♦ More local control

Vision for the Blue Mountains:

- ♦ Equal/consistent rules
- ♦ Multiple uses – Used by everyone appropriately (the trails are groomed for everyone to use, snowshoers, skiers, etc).
- ♦ Need decision made locally and quickly
- ♦ Preserve – Keep current status for the enjoyment of future generations; no commercialization
- ♦ Family time – Don't exclude kids and older family member w/ inaccessibility to areas
- ♦ Watching wildlife
- ♦ Allow us to have the privilege to use the area
- ♦ Manage – Don't let the forests burn up
- ♦ Be respectful of others and the environment
- ♦ Encourage safe use
- ♦ Some trails could be groomed and others not groomed.
- ♦ If something is working, don't change it

Group Critique of the Meeting:

What worked and what we learned-

- ♦ Got to hear what others wanted and they were able to hear me

- ♦ Got to write ideas down without standing up in front of other people
- ♦ Good process covered a lot of information with a large group in a short amount of time.

What could be changed?

- ♦ PowerPoint slides have too many acronyms, need to check and edit them.

Comments from the Critique Forms:

Workshop participants answered the following eight questions on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree):

I understand what a Forest Plan is, and the revision process that was described to me tonight. **(Average 4.07)**

I plan to attend most or all of the Blue Mountains Community Collaborative Workshops in my area. **(3.56)**

It is important that the public is involved at this early stage of Forest Plan revision. **(4.56)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people I don't know. **(4.13)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people who hold different viewpoints. **(3.81)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a large group setting (15 people or more). **(3.63)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a small group setting (6 to 8 people). **(3.63)**

I am comfortable using maps to enhance the group discussions about concerns regarding the area. **(4.44)**

They were also asked:

Is there anything in particular that you liked or didn't like about the workshop?

- ♦ More representation from the community; good info – presented well
- ♦ I think you are trying to be fair
- ♦ I got to put in any thinking in private; was able to say what we thought
- ♦ What about more user groups?
- ♦ It dragged a bit but was well organized
- ♦ I thought it was well run

Was the information presented helpful to you? Is there anything that you would like to know more about?

- ♦ When and what the plan intends to finalize this plan
- ♦ Yes – maybe later; yes – input?
- ♦ Need more input on ORV use; need OHV trails like at Heppner, Frazier, Unity
- ♦ Yes – snowmobiling getting a longer season, not just 4 months
- ♦ Yes – not at present
- ♦ Yes- it was very helpful

Any other comments about the workshop?

- ♦ Like to hear positive feedback regarding the ownership of cabins in regards to ownership
- ♦ I hope when this plan is final all ranger districts in Umatilla National Forest will be equal and we can snowmobile like the other districts when there is snow on the ground
- ♦ No more wilderness
- ♦ Evaluate road closures