

Community Workshop Notes

June 23, 2004

Enterprise, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Martha Bean
Meeting Recorder: Kathy Campbell
Meeting Participants: 31 participants signed in

Co-Convenors: Mike Hayward, Chair, Wallowa County Commissioners

Forest Service Officials: Dee Hines, Acting District Ranger, Eagle Cap Ranger District and Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, Wallowa Whitman National Forest

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:** How similar will the three Forest Plans be? Are all three plans going to be identical? What if one forest identifies conditions different from other areas?
- A:** *Having consistent management across the three forests is one of the reasons we are doing all three plans under the same effort. There may be some slight differences in the final plans, but we expect the three Plans will be 80-90% similar. The differences will reflect the difference in the desired conditions that the communities develop through the collaborative process.*
- Q:** Will the process of setting priorities be collaborative?
- A:** *Setting priorities will be done collaboratively with the public.*
- Q:** Will there be 32 meetings for everyone to attend?
- A:** *The Revision Team has scheduled 32 workshops; 4 rounds of workshops in each of 8 communities across the Blues. They are all open to whoever wants to attend. (comment: We later scheduled additional meetings in Portland and Pasco for a total of 10 communities in each round)*
- Q:** Can we drop the circles on the map (Management Areas) except for congressionally designated areas?
- A:** *We are considering at identifying Management Categories (similar to Management Areas) that will cover larger areas and be more desired condition focused as opposed to activity focused. We will work with the public to determine how these will be included in the revised Plans.*
- Q:** What impact does this have on management of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area? If you hear a strong desire from Wallowa County to change the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area Comprehensive Management Plan will you make changes?
- A:** *The revised Forest Plans will be based on the need for change. There is direction within the Hells Canyon NRA that is still being implemented under the current Wallowa-Whitman Forest Plan as amended. This direction will be evaluated in the revision and we will determine whether or not there is a need for change. Because the decision on the Comprehensive Management Plan for the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area was just made in July of 2003, it isn't likely we would identify any major changes that would be need related to those decisions. Any changes would have to be approved by the Forest Supervisor.*
- Q:** Is the next meeting to present the vision we did here?
- A:** *Yes. At the next workshop, we will present the vision and desired condition statements for the Blue Mountains area and for each community. Those will incorporate the comments we receive at these meetings. We will also discuss the current conditions and ask you to identify needs for change.*

- Q:** Will you give us draft feedback ahead of time before the next meeting?
A: Yes. We will provide information in advance so we don't give it and then ask for comments at the same meeting.
- Q:** Will every Post-it-Note be tracked and available in a database?
A: Yes. Each Post-It and worksheet will be tracked and entered into our database. This information will be available in three forms for your review: the raw worksheets, the database that we are entering this information into, and the synthesis of the draft vision.
- Q:** What do we do if we have more ideas for the vision?
A: We are also accepting information about the vision on our website, through U.S. mail, and over the phone. You are welcome to use any of these formats.
- Q:** Is there one large business that has the most influence over activity in the Blues?
A: No.
- Q:** Will there be different visions for different geographic areas?
A: Maybe. We plan to have one vision that addresses the entire Blue Mountains. We are also planning to have specific visions for each geographic area, depending on the information provided by the public; it is likely the geographic areas will be mostly the same as the greater Blue Mountains vision, but there may be a few site specific differences.
- Q:** How is the vision statement going to be developed?
A: The Team will enter all of the information we collect into a database. We will then synthesize the information and develop vision statements using the sustainability framework which will include desired conditions. We will bring this back to you at our next round of workshops for your review and comment.

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; What a Plan Does and Does Not Do; Workshop Schedule; Thumbnails of PowerPoint Presentation;

Table - Social and Economics /Criteria and Indicators:

Handouts: Draft Criteria and Indicators

- ♦ Adopt the Wallowa County Salmon Plan
- ♦ We've already done a vision for Wallowa County

Table - Recreation & Access:

Handouts: Inventoried Roadless Areas & Wilderness

- ♦ Locally and statewide-based ATV planning is important to do at multiple levels (scales).
- ♦ Keep moving forward on programs already underway, use partnerships and cooperative programs to make things happen on the ground.
- ♦ Issues with cross country aspect of motorized recreation - most places if they keep to the roads/trails they should be allowed.
- ♦ consistency with state regulations
- ♦ What is the tie in to the Lynx conservation strategy?

Table - Hydrology/Watersheds:

- ♦ Mining activity, past and present, is a concern on the south side of the Wallowas.

Table - Vegetation Management:

- ♦ Concerns for fire on Hunt Mountain
- ♦ Concern about too high of levels of grazing
- ♦ Need greater emphasis on native species, concerns for grazing, problems with fences.
- ♦ Too high of level of noxious weeds
- ♦ Need to treat some of the excessive fuel loadings.
- ♦ Noxious weeds concern (separate comment from above).
- ♦ Grazing mentioned as an issue.

Table - Biological Sciences:

- ♦ Need to address the hazards of wildlife crossing major highways
- ♦ Need to address the issue special plant species

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

- ♦ The public enjoys recreating in the forest on ATVs and motorized vehicles
- ♦ Unanticipated recreational forms are easily incorporated
- ♦ Like to see it stay open for families and woodcutting
- ♦ Access to the forest for timber harvest and grazing
- ♦ Public accountability, with measurable standards that are actually possible to meet
- ♦ The forest is here in ten years – it doesn't burn, isn't taken over by noxious weeds, and the soil doesn't wash downhill
- ♦ Whatever manages the forest in the future should be financially sound
- ♦ A manageable trail system for ATVs
- ♦ Forest to be managed in ways that are reflective of the collaborative local input
- ♦ Federal government to reduce ownership in Wallowa County

Group Critique of the Meeting:

What worked and what we learned

- ♦ Efficient process
- ♦ Like the format

What could be changed

- ♦ Something besides coffee for refreshments
- ♦ More inviting locations – not metal chairs
- ♦ Do a better job of advertising
- ♦ Break into small groups and discuss sticky notes
- ♦ Draft pre-work prior to next meeting
- ♦ Put raw data/sticky notes on a table or spreadsheet
- ♦ Arrange chairs in a circle format, not enough verbal space
- ♦ Wallowa County's visions future search economic development and community fire plan need to be incorporated into the vision

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. **(3.7)**
I plan to attend most or all of the Blue Mountains Community Collaborative Workshops in my area. **(4.2)**
It is important that the public is involved at this early stage of Forest Plan revision. **(4.5)**
The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people I don't know. **(3.5)**
The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people who hold different viewpoints. **(2.7)**
I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a large group setting (15 people or more). **(3.64)**
I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a small group setting (6 to 8 people). **(3.91)**
I am comfortable using maps to enhance the group discussions about concerns regarding the area. **(4.00)**

They were also asked:

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

- ♦ I was going to say not enough discussion, but the discussion after the exercise was good;
- ♦ Great format
- ♦ Liked the openness and allowing expression
- ♦ Hard chairs, only bad coffee
- ♦ Yes, it's public planning but you get the feeling that your ideas hold no weight unless backed by money/lawyers!
- ♦ Liked the format, if stickies stay where they are supposed to
- ♦ Efficient gathering of some input, but relative importance of comments wasn't discussed or argued (if necessary)
- ♦ It was short and easy/you didn't get much
- ♦ Do something, not social

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

- ♦ I'd like to know more about what everyone else thinks
- ♦ Yes, not at this time
- ♦ Yes, if this process will work
- ♦ Pre-agendas sent out so people come ready to talk

- ♦ A vision is a blinding light that dims by the time you can put it into effect
- ♦ OHV master plan
- ♦ Nothing new

Any other comments about the workshop?

- ♦ I'm not sure we discussed much (public lands issues) except the process, smaller groups for discussion of what's been put up on the maps, am comfortable in small groups especially when I know the people
- ♦ Better advertising about meetings
- ♦ Good info but need to do something
- ♦ Regarding the format making it comfortable to discuss issues - "no discussion yet!!"