

Community Workshop Notes

June 30, 2004

John Day, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Lois Schwennesen
Meeting Recorder: Kathy Campbell
Meeting Participants: 45 participants signed in

Co-Convenors: Dennis Reynolds, Grant County Judge

Forest Service Officials: Roger Williams, Malheur National Forest Supervisor

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 Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics be allowed to disrupt the process?

A: *They will be allowed to participate as everyone else is.*

Q: How will the neighboring federal lands be included in the process?

A: *We have met with the BLM several times and will try to work together as much as we can. We hope to share data. We also hope to not have conflicting management across ownership boundaries.*

Q: Where do alternatives fit into the process and when will they be developed? Are you open to having alternative desired conditions?

A: *When we develop a proposed plan and begin the environmental analysis process, we will develop alternatives based issues raised in comments on that proposal. We hope to develop desired conditions together but if someone wishes to suggest alternative desired conditions, they can do that.*

Q: Are the Eastside Screens going to be addressed?

A: *Yes. They will be considered in developing the proposed plan and those parts of the screens that are appropriate will be incorporated into the proposed plan.*

Q: Are there plans to hold meeting in the Tri-Cities and Portland? Why do they (Tri-Cities and Portland) need to be involved in our forest?

A: *We are considering a request to hold more workshops in additional locations. The Blue Mountains Forests are national forests and there are forest users who live outside the local area who want to participate and holding meetings in these areas provides opportunities for those users.*

Q: Will the three components of sustainability (social, economic, and ecological) all have the same weight?

A: *Yes, the plans will attempt to achieve a balance between the three components of sustainability.*

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

- ♦ Everything is linked together; the social and economic well-being depends on the ecological conditions of the resource.
- ♦ Nothing matters if we can't take care of the resources.

- ◆ We need to have a more flexible way to implement projects on the ground that are more responsive to needs.
- ◆ I'm really worried about the next 2-3 months, I can't wait for 4 years for a planning process.
- ◆ We need more money and employees now to get projects through the NEPA process.
- ◆ We've overlooked impacts to communities that get washed away in the big picture.

Table - Recreation & Access:

Handouts: Inventoried Roadless Areas & Wilderness

- ◆ Question about trail maintenance priorities; how are trails selected for maintenance?
- ◆ What's the deal with roadless areas//wilderness, can you clear something up for me? Aren't there roads in both and what gets done with these?
- ◆ Want to see increase in availability of motorized trails
- ◆ Changes in technology of recreation equipment, there are needs to be kept up with...

Table - Hydrology/Watersheds:

- ◆ How will the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) be addressed in the revision?
- ◆ The ACS was only supposed to be in effect for 18 months, but has been in effect for nearly 10 years.
- ◆ How will ephemeral streams be managed?

Table - Vegetation Management:

- ◆ Need a management strategy for management after large fires. Once areas are burned then many of the management guidelines that were setup for the pre-fire green conditions no longer apply.
- ◆ Concerns for noxious weeds
- ◆ Will we still have the screens and HRV concepts
- ◆ Will we still do EIS and EAs?
- ◆ Will we use information from the National Fire Plan?

Table - Biological Sciences:

- ◆ The visitors critiqued the fish distribution map. They questioned whether fish were present in Belshaw and Birch Creeks.

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

- ◆ Social, economic, and ecological systems are all links in the chain
- ◆ This forest needs to be in charge of their own business
- ◆ Cooperation, coordination, and streamlining
- ◆ Healthy, vigorous, diverse forests that are species-appropriate depending on site productivity
- ◆ Maintenance of healthy, vigorous, diverse forests will maintain ecological productivity
- ◆ Need to talk about what's there; economic, social, and ecological all together
- ◆ Want the forest to be there
- ◆ People in the local area need to have more say because they know it better than anyone else
- ◆ Site productivity, growth, soil, moisture – ecological
- ◆ Need more funding to carry out the plan

Group Critique of the Meeting:

What worked and what we learned -

- ◆ Allowing individual expression on the maps was a good idea
- ◆ Question allows other ideas expressed for the future
- ◆ Visual process with maps worked
- ◆ Evening time of 6 PM

What could be changed -

- ◆ Change wording of "what do you want your forests FOR in vision exercise.
- ◆ The areas appear to be pre-cut – need to convey other area configurations
- ◆ Let folks know what the agenda is and content of meeting ahead of time, might email the agenda to people

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. **(4.00)**

I plan to attend most or all of the Blue Mountains Community Collaborative Workshops in my area. **(4.5)**

It is important that the public is involved at this early stage of Forest Plan revision. **(4.77)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people I don't know. **(3.35)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people who hold different viewpoints. **(3.40)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a large group setting (15 people or more). **(3.10)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a small group setting (6 to 8 people). **(3.81)**

I am comfortable using maps to enhance the group discussions about concerns regarding the area. **(3.95)**

They were also asked:

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

- ♦ Public comments were all about "why things are not working" – need to have more control over non-germane (to the protocol as proposed at the beginning of the meeting) polemics
- ♦ I liked the format
- ♦ I think the questions could be more to the point
- ♦ Vision is a very broad
- ♦ I hope that this process will allow local citizens who have common sense knowledge of this forest to have a say that is actually implemented
- ♦ I agree that the question should be "how would we like to be able to use our forest in the future"
- ♦ Base assumption that forest plan will be implemented is flawed, was the last one?
- ♦ I liked not being made to participate in a group not of my choosing
- ♦ The ability to express individual opinions
- ♦ I like the opportunity to write the various ideas of mine, personal to me, which are at odds with the other members of my community

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

- ♦ Yes, how to get the message to the right ears to have projects that would be good for the forest and people implemented
- ♦ Like more info on where to read/see the current condition report
- ♦ No, I would like to know where we going and who is in charge, because it's not us

Any other comments about the workshop?

- ♦ Naïve and unfair to apply a protocol to a small community like John Day that is more appropriate to La Grande/Baker City, etc. size, signed a conservationist (aka "radical environmentalist")
- ♦ Layout regulatory constraints at one of the future meetings – eg "why do have to have public meetings – Portland", and lay out where to direct out energies if we want the regulations changed
- ♦ Work in some education about the range of differing viewpoints and value of each – even those which may seem extreme to some but which are really fairly middle of the road across the country
- ♦ Advertise purpose of meeting – more basically because many of us do not understand the forest plan planning process, include descriptions of mechanics, go on Ruth's show, presentations to watershed councils
- ♦ Need to better address the new planning regs.
- ♦ Do a better job on informing the public if you want our opinions
- ♦ More meetings like this
- ♦ Need to keep public totally informed about all!!
- ♦ "Was okay", excellent form to hear strong values and convictions which are contrary to wider spread thought now on ecosystem management and ecological integrity
- ♦ Good facilitating, maybe "what do you want your forest to be for?" could have been one options with another being "what do you want your forest to look like?"