

Community Workshop Notes

July 7, 2004

Heppner, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Martha Bean
Meeting Recorder: Kathy Campbell
Meeting Participants: 28 participants signed in

Co-Convenors: Terry Tallman, Morrow County Judge

Forest Service Officials: Dave Kendrick, Acting Heppner District Ranger, Jeff Blackwood, Umatilla National Forest Supervisor, David Hatfield, Umatilla National Forest Planner

Team Members: Dave Schmitt, Elaine Kohrman, Trish Callaghan, Bob Gecy, Bob Mason, Bruce Countryman, 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 much local input will be used in the plan?

A: *As much as you want to give. We will listen to all interested parties and consider what they tell us. However, we do have to make calls on controversial issues and contradictory uses; you may not get everything each person wants. We will try to collaborate on these decisions and get as close to a consensus as we can in the time we have to complete the revision.*

Q: Will the local District Rangers have direct input?

A: *Yes. They are attending these meetings and kept current on revision activities by the Team Leader. As members of the Forest Leadership Team, they will be involved in the revision process and can take as active a role as they choose to take.*

Q: Will Washington DC be involved?

A: *Not really. We will follow agency policy established by the Washington Office, but they will not be involved in the decision unless it is appealed under the current planning regulations.*

Q: Are the Forest Supervisors the decision-makers?

A: *Under the current regulations, the Regional Forester is the responsible official who will make the final decision on the revised plan. For decisions of this nature (those directly affecting the forest), the Regional Forester depends heavily on their input. The three Forest Supervisors will work very closely with the revision team and be a part of every aspect of the process. The three Forest Supervisors will be attending workshops as time allows and are available then. The Revision Team is sharing the outcomes of the Community Workshops with them and will keep them informed throughout the process.*

Q: Are you also working on a budget for the plan?

A: *No, the forest plan is not a budget document. It will not impact the money the Forest Service gets from Congress to do work. Future budgets will be estimated and those figures used to identify work that is expected to be done over the next 5-10 years. These will be estimates and not a guarantee of activities accomplished.*

Q: What about water rights on National forest lands?

A: *When the Forests were created, they acquired “reserved” rights to use water to do things to manage the national forests. On occasion, the national forests have filed for water use rights for specific purposes like campgrounds and administrative sites. The national forests have been recently rumored to be trying to acquire all water rights on streams flowing from national forests, and this is not correct. Water rights are not a part of the revision process.*

Q: What is the current status of the Umatilla Tribe asking for grazing allotments on national forest land?

A: *Currently we don't have any proposals on the block. Umatilla National Forest is ceded territory of Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the tribes are currently not actively seeking this.*

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

- ◆ I like the idea of managing for integrated resource conditions for sustainability to balance all the resource needs. We can't keep managing for piecemeal conditions.
- ◆ I think revising the three Forest Plans together is a good idea to create a better management situation where the boundaries come together.
- ◆ The forests are important to me for my livelihood, for recreation, and for my kids' future. I want to be able to continue this in the future.
- ◆ This area is called the "Gateway to the Blue Mountains"

Table - Recreation & Access:

Handouts: Inventoried Roadless Areas & Wilderness

- ◆ Discussion about the new OHV park and how the cooperators make that work.
- ◆ Scenic Byways seem to be maxed out, we have plenty of them at our maintenance threshold. right now.

Table - Hydrology/Watersheds:

No comments

Table - Vegetation Management:

- ◆ Concern for high fuel loadings on National Forest land directly adjacent to private.
- ◆ Concern for increasing distribution of noxious weeds.
- ◆ Concern for increasing distribution of juniper.
- ◆ The forest service needs to be more aggressive in treatments (weeds/fuels).

Table - Biological Sciences:

No comments

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

- ◆ If the Forest Service makes a decision it should not be "appealable," authorized and publicly accepted practices should not be subject to lawsuits or stall tactics.
- ◆ Get rid of noxious weeds / weed-free landscapes
- ◆ No genuine old growth areas are cut.
- ◆ Like to see Strawberry Lake preserved for scenic value and solitude.
- ◆ Multiple use – Land of Many Uses
- ◆ Use and conserve and take care of the national forests
- ◆ Wise use but not abuse
- ◆ Overall use of natural resources of our national forests for the public good
- ◆ We all want healthy forests
- ◆ Produce some lumber
- ◆ Total management package – potential conflicts are worked out for all the resources (wildlife)
- ◆ Healthy watersheds
- ◆ Economic and population sustainability of communities that rely on the natural resources – multiple use
- ◆ Minimize artificial constraints on management (for example old growth areas)
- ◆ Conserve not Preserve
- ◆ More freedom for local managers to manage
- ◆ Make the plans clear and concise and use the right verbiage
- ◆ Forests should be managed for producing lumber

- ♦ Forests that are producing lumber and mining will help the national economy and not drain the budget or be financial liability
- ♦ Healthy forests – fear of wildlife moving to private lands. Forest does not become a threat to adjacent lands.
- ♦ Cooperative planning for a wildfire suppression/management
- ♦ National Forests don't become a threat of insect and disease to adjacent lands

Group Critique:

What worked and what we learned -

- ♦ 7:00 pm is a good time
- ♦ Good turnout
- ♦ Impressed with ideas and sticky notes and map exercise
- ♦ Open discussion concept and exercise for those not comfortable talking in a group

What could be changed –

- ♦ Where is the coffee?
- ♦ Get the word out better – phone tree in community
- ♦ Possible other facilities: Fairgrounds/Elks Club/High School

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. 4.35

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. 4.9

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people I don't know. 4.4

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people who hold different viewpoints. 4.3

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a large group setting (15 people or more). 4.1

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a small group setting (6 to 8 people). 4.7

I am comfortable using maps to enhance the group discussions about concerns regarding the area. 4.65

They were also asked:

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

- ♦ The introduction to the meeting was a little bit long, repetitive, and dull
- ♦ Liked the sincerity of the Team, and the direct, plain speak of the team leader, Mr. Schmitt
- ♦ Need more outreach to public – I did not receive a mailing – almost didn't know about it, also, need workshops like this held in Portland, Bend, Walla Walla – these are national public lands not local fiefdoms, people from other areas (including major cities) use these areas
- ♦ Sticky notes on maps good
- ♦ I liked the visual aids, very useful
- ♦ Get districts (personnel) involved with communities

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

- ♦ The useful part of the meeting was dialogue – almost a discussion amongst forest workers, forest service, and forest users
- ♦ Yes, general protection within the forest which stand already – more legal knowledge, what's the policies for logging? Near water? Old growth?
- ♦ Yes, more information about the restoration of burned over areas
- ♦ More specifics needed re: what the Forest Plan will determine and include
- ♦ Yes - very helpful, steep learning curve, good clear presentation – need to develop sideboards

Any other comments about the workshop?

- ◆ Although I already circled #2 for not being comfortable speaking in large groups – this group would have been hard to speak my mind to because of diverse beliefs on what the forest is for (which is not really meant for human profit but a home for itself and its species living within them)
- ◆ Not a bad set-up but strongly object to idea of “outcome-based” strategy that throws out accountability of definite, quantifiable standards and guidelines, Need to keep water quality standards (eg. Water temperature, bank stability, lack of sediment, pools, etc.), elk and deer hiding and thermal cover standards, management indicator species population surveys and protection, riparian buffers for fish and water quality, limit on soil impacts, management area designation protections etc., not leave it up to the Forest Service how they’re reaching particular outcomes, these need to be definite accountable standards that have to be met to protect biodiversity and ecological integrity and wildlife habitat in the forest plan itself
- ◆ We want more logging, what agency policies keep it from happening
- ◆ Good job
- ◆ A good format