

NEWS RELEASE

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First Round of Blue Mountains Community Collaboration Workshops Concluded in July

The Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision Team concluded the first set in a series of Community Collaborative Workshops in early July. The objective of the workshops was to work together to develop a vision for the future management of the 5.3 million acre area collectively referred to as the Blue Mountains national forests. Over 300 people in the ten communities the Team visited participated in a visioning activity to gather information about what people care about, what they want their Forests to look like, what they expect the Forests to provide, and what conditions they want to exist on the Forests. People also provided responses using the website and by letters and phone calls. Notes from all ten workshops are posted on the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision website (www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/blue_mtn_planrevision/).

Each of the 1,421 responses collected was recorded in a database in July. They were grouped based on social, ecological or economic content in relation to the sustainability framework that the Team is using throughout the revision process. The sustainability framework approach focuses on the linkages between these three systems to increase understanding of sustainability and make better decisions for the future.

Some of the preliminary themes that emerged from the workshops included:

- Many people want the Blue Mountains national forests as a place where they can recreate with their friends and families and to provide future generations a sense of tradition.
- Many people look to the Blue Mountains national forests as a place of renewal, for their sanctuary, for solitude, for rejuvenation of the spirit, for peace of mind, for quiet. Others expressed the desire to know that the Forest is there for its own worth or its intrinsic value.
- Many people expressed a sense of urgency and crises about the condition of the forest, grasslands and watersheds.
- People stated support for multiple use, sustainable use, and ecological sustainability.
- Many comments focused on the need to protect and restore various habitat types.
- Many people support sustainable use of the land to provide timber products and grazing for the Nation as well as to support local communities in the Blue Mountains.
- Many people also view their recreational activities as a positive economic impact on local communities.

The Revision Team will synthesize the information collected from the public into one draft vision for the future management of the national forests of the Blue Mountains that will be composed of desired condition statements. The consolidated vision will be presented and discussed at the second round of Community Collaborative Workshops beginning in October.

The Revision Team would like to thank those that participated in the Round One workshops. The Round Two workshop schedule will be posted on the Revision website soon.

For more information, contact Tami Paulsen, Public Affairs Specialist at 541-523-1332 or Dave Schmitt, Team Leader, at 541-523-1248 or visit our website at www.fs.fed.us/r6/uma/blue_mtn_planrevision/

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