

Community Workshop Notes

April 20, 2005

Pendleton, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Susan Hayman
Meeting Recorder: Tami Paulsen, Kathy Campbell
Meeting Participants: 17 participants signed in

Co-Convener: Hulette Johnson, Umatilla County Economic Development Director
Forest Service Official: Jeff Blackwood, Umatilla National Forest Supervisor
Team Members: Trish Callaghan, Bob Mason, Bruce Countryman, Tami Paulsen, Dave Schmitt, and Kathy Campbell.

Handouts to Each Participant: Meeting Agenda, Worksheet for Management Categories, Worksheet for Areas with Wilderness Potential, Worksheet for Wild and Scenic Rivers, Management Categories & Subcategories, Inventory and Evaluation Process for Areas with Wilderness Potential, and Inventory and Evaluation Process for Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Display tables during the open house portion:

Table – Forest Planning Process:

Handouts: The Forest Plan Revision Team; Components of a Forest Plan; What a Plan Does and Does Not Do; The 2004 Planning Rule, How to Contact Us.

Table – Inventory of Areas with Wilderness Potential and Wild and Scenic Rivers

Handouts: About Areas with Wilderness Potential and About Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Table – Management Categories

Handouts: None

Table – Suitability

Handouts: None

Meeting Summary/Objectives:

This was Round Three in the Community Collaborative Workshop series. The beginning of the workshop was an open house format with displays for one-on-one discussions as people arrived. The purpose of the workshops was to summarize the Forest Service's 2005 Planning Rule, introduce Proposed Management Categories for use in the Revised Forest Plan to display management guidance, and to present updated inventories for both Areas with Wilderness Potential and potential Wild and Scenic Rivers.

The Wilderness and the Wild and Scenic River presentations were focused on the inventory phase of the process; no decisions or proposals were being made. This step was only to identify what areas and rivers QUALIFIED to be considered for designation. Time was provided for questions to clarify the inventory criteria and to gain additional information from the public on current uses and conditions of specific areas and rivers. Discussions on these topics were intended to provide the public with information so they could comment on whether they thought the areas and rivers met the criteria. The Revision Team asked that additional comments be sent in by June 30, 2005.

The 2005 Planning Rule:

Team Leader Dave Schmitt gave a PowerPoint presentation about the 2005 Planning Rule.
No questions were asked

Management Categories:

The Revisions Team's Vegetation Specialist, Bruce Countryman, presented a PowerPoint describing a preliminary set of Management Categories that may be used to display management guidelines on the three Blue Mountain national forests and asked the participants to comment on the concept and suggest additional categories and subcategories they would like to be used. **The team asked that additional comments be received by June 30, 2005.**

Flipchart Comments

- Appears to be more Management Category 3 than 4.
- Lines are needed – management areas

Questions and Answers

Q. Why would areas with significant management investment be put into Category 3? Appears to be more Category 3 than 4. Category 3 areas that have gotten intense management seem to be in wrong area.

A. Some management activities have occurred in Category 3 and could continue to occur depending on where the lines end up. While the map being shown displays our estimate of the current management direction, there was some difficulty in combining the three forest plans. During forest plan revision, a change in management direction is possible.

Q. What about scenic areas that cross management category boundaries?

A. The line could be redrawn so that it doesn't cross category boundaries or we can address the scenic area with specific forest-wide direction that would apply to scenic areas in multiple categories.

Q. Are the Management Categories regionally designated? And why not? Need standardization for understanding

A. No. The regional office requires the team to map designated areas but gives us flexibility beyond those that to use what we believe is appropriate for our forests. While management categories will be standardized across the Blue Mountain forest plan revision planning area; the regional office does not think it is necessary to standardize management areas across the region. We believe this gives us the opportunity to design areas that best fit the Blue Mountains.

Q. Will you not have designated roadless areas?

A. We will track areas with wilderness potential but will not have a management area designation for them. Each of these areas will be placed into some category for specific management direction.

Q. Are there going to be lines drawn? I think you will need to.

A. Don't know yet other than Category 1 and 2.

Q. What about other areas that may be in a congressional report or local agreements? Such as Walla Walla River, special areas for fish (Tucannon River), winter range, and other local agreements.

A. We will look at existing uses, desired conditions, and designations and decide, "Are those still valid?" If there are agreements in place, we will follow them. We hope local people will help us identify local agreements and expectations for specific areas.

Q. Would the yellow areas (Category 3) become no entry for timber harvest (flexibility is important)?

A. Maybe, depending on the desired conditions set for the area. Timber harvest as a tool for reaching the desired condition will likely be allowed.

Q. Where is the term "roadless areas"?

A. The term "roadless" is confusing as there may be "roads" in the roadless area. Using the term areas with wilderness potential more accurately describes what the areas. "Roadless" is more closely linked to the current Forest Plans and to the RARE I and RAREII processes from which the 1984 wilderness areas were created. Areas with Wilderness Potential are those areas which meet or may meet the intent of the Wilderness Act and Forest Service Handbook direction for inventorying areas with wilderness potential. While we will track these areas, there is no management category for Forest Plan Appendix C inventoried roadless areas.

Q. Are categories in the Blue Mountains standard? Would reduce the number of categories and define expectations.

A. Management categories will be standardized across Blue Mountains. We are, however, open to changes in the categories and would like your opinion on changes.

Wild and Scenic Rivers and Areas with Wilderness Potential:

Trish Callaghan, Recreation Specialist for the Revision Team, made two presentations: one on the requirements and process for inventory and review of Wild and Scenic Rivers and one on the process for updating the inventory of Areas with Wilderness Potential. Participants were given time to ask questions about the criteria process used and to review maps and identify rivers and areas that should be added or removed from the inventories. **The team asked that additional comments be received by June 30, 2005.**

Flipchart Comments - Wild and Scenic Rivers

- On the South Fork of the Walla Walla River all water rights are completely allocated – 25% of agriculture water is now allocated for fish. Be careful how it is managed—mitigation is needed if economic impact will occur.

- There is a lot of water being studied—concern that it could lead to designation restricting management activities.

Questions and Answers – Wild and Scenic Rivers

Q. Did you look at every stream on the three forests?

A. Only perennial streams were reviewed.

Q. Wasn't the Wild & Scenic River Act in the 1960s? The Forest Service gets to designate wild and scenic rivers and not the federal government?

A. Yes, the original Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was in 1968, and there was an Oregon Omnibus Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1988. The Forest Service does not designate. The Forest Service assesses and possibly recommends rivers through the suitability process; then Congress would decide if a river should be designated.

Q. There are currently 18 wild and scenic rivers and you are proposing more? I do not see that that many more have outstandingly remarkable values.

A. We are not proposing any rivers at this time; we are just inventorying and evaluating to identify the rivers that meet the criteria. A decision on whether any rivers should be recommended will be made later by the Forest Supervisors.

Q. With appeals discussion with American Rivers fisheries after the original planning process, it was agreed that fisheries would not be considered as an outstandingly remarkable value.

A: That particular fact is not part of the settlement agreement that I can find, however, those streams that may have fisheries listed are those that have either an abundance of different species, or a variety of habitat diversity and occasionally threatened and endangered fish species with superb habitat values. So fisheries was considered an outstandingly remarkable value in those circumstances.

Flipchart Comments – Areas with Wilderness Potential

- Horseshoe Ridge – Acreage in the table not in the map (4,500 acre difference)
- Several areas are less than 5,000—appear to be adjacent to existing wilderness or roadless.
- The Forest Service needs to help handicapped people to access these (closed) areas?

Questions and Answers – Areas with Wilderness Potential

Q. If we go thru the process, will the economics actually be considered?

A. Yes, we have economist on the team and we will look at and document economic consideration in our forest plan revision process.

Q. Are you going to revise the maps if you are told that it is economically dangerous to designate additional wilderness or wild and scenic rivers?

A. No, these are inventory maps and the areas still meet the inventory criteria. Economics will be considered in the evaluation process that may affect the management direction for a specific area. The management designations will be mapped as part of the Revised Forest Plans.

Q. Is there a requirement to look at these areas periodically?

A. Laws require this review to occur when forest plans are revised.

Q. How do fires play into designating wilderness?

A. Evaluation process looks at past activities and conditions and trends that would contribute to the overall management of the area. Access to and the need for fire suppression would be considered during evaluation of potential wilderness and may affect whether recommendations for wilderness are made.

Q. What is the role of the governor in the designation?

A. We would welcome input from the state on their desired for management of these areas. The most recent Roadless Rule does give the governors the opportunity to petition for management of specific areas if they so choose.

Q. How much of the Inventoried Roadless Areas were made wilderness?

A: The 1990 Forest Plans did not recommend any areas for wilderness.

Q. Would we recommend areas that would be managed by two forests?

A. Some of the areas with wilderness potential are administered by two forests; the one that takes the lead during this process is generally the forest with the greater percentage of the land. Occasionally, there are wilderness areas that are administered by two or more national forests, like our North Fork John Day and the Monument Rock Wilderness areas.

Overall Evaluation

Comments from the Critique Forms:

Participants answered the following questions on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

	Average
I understand what management categories are and how they will be used in the Forest Plan.	2.8
I understand the process for Wild and Scenic River Inventory, and ways I can contribute to it.	2.7
I understand the process used to inventory the areas with wilderness potential and ways I can contribute to it.	2.5
I was comfortable discussing public land issues with people I didn't know tonight.	3.3
I was comfortable discussing public land issues with people who held different viewpoints tonight.	3.6
The workshop format was appropriate for what we needed to do tonight	2.9
I am comfortable using maps to enhance my understanding of the discussion topics tonight.	3.3
I receive useful information and meaningful opportunities to engage in forest plan revision through this collaborative process.	3.5

Participants were also asked:

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

Is there anything that you would like to know more about?

Do you have any other comments about the workshop?

As part of the evaluation process, we need to know how management of the various categories interacts. Example: if you have a management category "2" located "downwind" of a management category "3", will the active management practices followed on "2" negatively impact area "3". Forest fire preparation for example. If fire fuel reduction efforts don't occur in area "2", they could have the potential of increasing the risk of wildfire in area "3".