

Community Workshop Notes

May 3, 2005

Portland, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Susan Hayman
Meeting Recorder: Tami Paulsen, Kathy Campbell
Meeting Participants: 37 participants signed in

Co-Convener: None, but remarks by Boyd Britton, Grant County Commissioner
Forest Service Official: Roger Williams, Malheur 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.

Flipchart Comments

- Using fire as tool in management won't work in Grant County because fire risk is too high.
- Citizen input is part of law for fire plans.

- I feel sorry for the Forest Service because of shrinking budgets and they have to spend all their time planning and not on the ground.
- Healthy Forests Restoration Act is draining piggybank.

Questions and Answers

- Q.** How will Forest Plans fall in line with Community Fire Plans and the National Fire Plan?
A. Community Fire Plans are under the umbrella of the Forest Plan. We will work with our fire specialists to assure that what is in the fire plans is consistent with the Revised Forest Plans.
- Q.** Has the team prepared an Environmental Management System (EMS) yet?
A. No, we will have one in place before we sign the decision of the Revised Forest Plans. This process will also be open to the public.
- Q.** How developed will the national forests be for users?
A. The recreation program will be addressed in Revised Forest Plans. The amount of developed recreation will be included in the desired conditions for the forest.
- Q.** Will there be third-party audit in Environmental Management System?
A. We are not sure it will be a formal audit, but outside people will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation defined by the EMS.
- Q.** Has there ever been a cost analysis of forest planning and project planning vs. implementation?
A. There have been numerous studies, although I can't point to any in particular at this time.
- Q.** Will 2005 Planning Rule preclude substantive written public comments? Will written comments be provided on the final Forest Plan?
A. The 2005 Planning Rule encourages public involvement in the planning process. We believe we have provided ample opportunity for public comments throughout our forest plan revision process. We've taken comments in Rounds One and Two workshops and are doing it now and will do so until the decision is made on the Revised Forest Plans.
- Q.** Does 2005 Planning Rule still go thru National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process?
A. Yes. That process will begin when we have a proposed plan developed and ready to present to the public. Until then, we will continue our collaborative process through community workshops and other meetings.
- Q.** What's co-agency status? Who's listed? Are there more levels on input from these people than from others?
A. NEPA makes allowances for cooperating agency status. We have not yet started the NEPA process so we have no agencies with cooperating agency status yet. We do have a group of county commissioners who we are working with as we move through the collaborative process to encourage participation by the many interests represented among the public. We are considering all comments received.

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

- Lines are needed – management areas.
- Grant County doesn't have areas with natural fuel loads so fire will be high intensity;
- In Category 1, several of these fires are not historic but stand-replacing.
- Might want to think of new ways of looking at management categories. Be sure to consider reserved allocation, species connectivity, and restoration. Look at things more ecologically.
- Suggest just two categories: comprehensive resource management (focused on needs of the resources) and wilderness.
- Categories appear to be only ecological.
- Overlays don't show that many areas. Show only one use instead of many different uses that may be possible in certain areas.
- Forest health needs to fit in somewhere

- There are areas in Washington that have natural fuel loads. Clean up fuel loads first.
- The management categories don't address ecological processes.
- What about social and economic management areas?
- Need to factor in multiple uses.

Questions and Answers

- Q.** What are the acres broken down by the five categories?
A. We do not have them tonight, but we can get these figures and send them to you.
- Q.** Category 3 may be too broad and contain conflicting uses.
A. We will consider changes to the categories, if you have specific suggestions, we would like to hear them..
- Q.** Category 4 is not scattered throughout Category 3, but there's lots of Category 3 in Category 4.
A. Even in Category 4 there may be areas where timber harvest may not be appropriate and areas in Category 3 where it is. Because it was difficult to combine the three forest management plans, you should look at specific areas to see what management is allowed.
- Q.** Where does forest health fit into these categories?
A. We will develop desired conditions for the categories. Forest Health will be considered in writing those condition statements
- Q.** Will natural conditions be looked at related to current?
A. Natural processes will be looked at in writing the desired conditions; we will weigh all the factors in determining management direction.
- Q.** How have you factored the social and economic elements into these management categories?
A. Desired conditions will address the three principles: ecological, economic, and social. Social and economic elements will be considered in distributing the categories across the forest when we draw the lines for the Revised Forest Plans.

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

- Changes to segments referenced in material are hard to see on maps.
- There's nothing unique or special about Trout Creek. The North Fork of Minam Creek and the Little Minam are almost identical and are also similar to many others. Horse, Lightning, Cow, and Deep Creeks are all also very similar.
- "Outstandingly remarkable values" is very subjective. Loss of salmon may have been a change that makes areas outstandingly remarkable now when they might not have been before. Last area of salmon habitat. Need to consider any areas that have salmon habitat as having outstandingly remarkable values.
- Transportation network
- Noxious weed treatments
- Biggest danger is wildfire
- Some criteria is very subjective—seems unbalanced that in over 5.3 acres only 15 rivers are designated and only two additional rivers are being looked at on the Malheur National Forest.

Questions and Answers – Wild and Scenic Rivers

- Q.** Did you consider Community Fire Plans? Which areas would be affected by designations?
A. This will be looked at during suitability phase. Community Fire Plans are under the umbrella of the Forest Plan. We will work with our fire specialists to assure that what is in the fire plans is consistent with the Revised Forest Plan.
- Q.** What is the intent of Wild and Scenic Rivers Act?
A. To protect the outstandingly remarkable values for which the river is designated.
- Q.** What are they being protected from?

- A.** Originally the intent was to protect them from dams and water developments, but management direction for each river is intended to protect them from anything that will negatively impact the outstandingly remarkable values for which the river is designated
- Q.** Can you remove water from wild and scenic rivers to fight fire?
- A.** Yes.
- Q.** What have we done (what might have changed) to have to put the rivers into special designation?
- A.** They still qualify so they have remained in good shape even though people have been there for hundreds of years.
- Q.** What makes a river (specifically Camp Creek) eligible when it wasn't 20 years ago? Define "outstandingly remarkable values".
- A.** We do not know if it met the criteria 20 years ago or not. With different people looking at it, it might have been missed before. Our updated inventory indicates it does now, so we need to make a determination as to whether it should be designated.
- Q.** Are there notes or information on the preliminary inventory? Can we have copies?
- A.** Yes, we will make the process documents available as soon as we get them completed.
- Q.** Camp, Deep, and Butte Creeks – what fish populations are there – what makes it outstandingly remarkable? Additional information is needed.
- A.** A wide variety of fish use those streams. This can be a factor in meeting the criteria.
- Q.** Concerns about corridor widths—are some wider than others?
- A.** During the study period, the width is ¼ mile either side of the high water mark. Upon designation, the final boundary will be designated based on the width needed to protect the outstandingly remarkable values for which the river is designated. It may change at that time .
- Q.** What are the ultimate potential widths?
- A.** There are no specific widths, it depends on the river and on the width needed to protect the outstandingly remarkable values for which it was designated.

Flipchart Comments – Areas with Wilderness Potential

- If we lock areas up we throw away tools to manage—they will be damaged through fire.
- Protect these areas by not managing them?—they may just burn up. This needs to be considered in the evaluation process.
- RS-2477 says that roads should be considered in wilderness recommendation criteria.
- All of the areas have been "substantially influenced by man" like everything in Hells Canyon, the Tucannon, and the Imnaha. For example, recreationists have brought in weeds.
- There are existing wilderness that have "primarily influenced by man" - do not have to be 100% pristine.
- Areas aren't necessarily excluded because they have roads, clearcuts, or developments.
- Concern that June 30th does not give us enough time to provide substantial comments.
- We need to address areas where fires have been fought—areas with unnatural fuel build-ups. This is a human impact.
- There are roads throughout some of these areas.

Questions and Answers – Areas with Wilderness Potential

- Q.** What is the intent of wilderness?
- A.** To protect values of areas that are remote, untrammelled by man, primitive, and pristine.
- Q.** Why has no thinning been done in Strawberry Wilderness Area?
- A.** We do not know other than the fact that timber harvest is generally not allowed in a wilderness area. You need to ask the local District Ranger or Forest Supervisor.
- Q.** Were there no wilderness recommendations in the current Forest Plans?
- A.** Correct, the 1990 Forest Plans did not recommend any wilderness areas. The last wilderness recommendations in Oregon and Washington were in 1984.
- Q.** If there were 800 acres adjacent to existing wilderness that met the criteria, would that qualify?
- A.** Yes, areas like that would be reviewed in the evaluation step and possibly recommended for wilderness.
- Q.** Is the more detailed list of criteria in the Forest Service Handbook?
- A.** Yes, see Forest Handbook FSH 1909.12, Ch. 7 we can e-mail them to you or give them to you.

- Q.** Since many roads are not being maintained, could this make more areas meet the criteria?
A. No, The level of maintenance intended for each road (road management objectives) is what is considered during inventory criteria review, not whether or not the road is actually being maintained at that level.
- Q.** If a road is decommissioned, can that make it “not maintained”?
A. Yes.
- Q.** The Wilderness Act allows less than 5,000 acres. Is the Forest Service dismissing areas just because they are less than 5,000 acres?
A. No, areas less than 5,000 acres are included in the national wilderness preservation system. If areas meet the “physiography” or other special conditions (such as being an island) they will continue through the evaluation process.
- Q.** How do we know that you will just not recommend additional wilderness again if no recommendation was made in 1990?
A. Specific language in the 1984 Oregon Omnibus Wilderness Act said we did not have to recommend additional wilderness in the original Forest Plans and stated that in Forest Plan Revision, the evaluation process would be completed to determine management of these areas.
- Q.** How do the “new areas” compare to the areas in RARE I and RARE II that set us up for the 1984 designations?
A. These are not “new areas”. They were identified in the current forest plans. That inventory has merely been reviewed and updated to reflect recent activities authorized by the current forest plans and changed conditions. RARE I and RAREII lands are a big part of what is in the current forest plan appendices.
- Q.** Could areas with roads that have been closed for some period of time be recommended for wilderness? Could we create wilderness by closing roads?
A. Yes, it’s possible. Situations like that will be considered as we look at what areas currently meet the criteria.
- Q.** When you looked at re-inventory, why did you not look at areas that may have been missed in the RARE I and RARE II inventory? Why was update confined to areas that were looked at in 1990?
A. We are revising the current Forest Plans and working forward from that point. The forest plan revision is based on a need for change, if there is a need for change, we will consider additional areas.
- Q.** When you map these, is there consideration given to fire potential and fuel loading? Designation as wilderness will spend a lot of money on fires and will adversely impact a lot of area around it.
A. That is not part of the inventory process. Looking at resource protection needs will be done in the evaluation part of the process and will be considered in what areas are recommended for designation.

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.	3.1
I understand the process for Wild and Scenic River Inventory, and ways I can contribute to it.	3.3
I understand the process used to inventory the areas with wilderness potential and ways I can contribute to it.	3.5
I was comfortable discussing public land issues with people I didn’t know tonight.	3.6
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	3.7
I am comfortable using maps to enhance my understanding of the discussion topics tonight.	4.1
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?

- Didn’t like: Too many overlays in land classification
- Didn’t like: Scenic rivers are too heavily geared in the recreation categories

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

- I would have liked a clearer description of how, specifically, to make input. Who to write? How to address concerns?

Do you have any other comments about the workshop?

- Need more time than June 30 to provide comprehensive, site-specific comments.
- Some Grant County people seemed hostile.
- Facilitator was excellent.
- More emphasis should be put making people aware that this is an initial process. It's a long way to decision.
- Not enough time for questions or discussion, but well managed.
- The meetings are still more informational in nature rather than collaborative. The Forest Service needs to get the public involved in between "set" meetings. For example: participate in decision-making regarding which management categories will be used. Also, let's get on-the-ground together.
- There are no easy answers!