

Case Clinic : A Collaborative Learning Workshop for the Caribou Travel Plan Revision

Presented by

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The Caribou-Targhee National Forest

- *The Caribou-Targhee National Forest lies in Southeast Idaho. The Caribou and Targhee Forests were administratively combined in 2000.*
- *The Forest contains high elevation basin and range topography. The climate consists of hot dry summers and cold dry winters.*
- *The Forests offers a variety of year-round recreation for local residents and visitors.*

Background

- *The Caribou-Targhee National Forest completed the Revised Caribou Forest Plan in 2003.*
- *The Revised Forest Plan set new direction for road and trail management on the Caribou.*
- *The Revised Forest Plan set an objective to revise the Travel Plan to reflect the new direction for access within three years.*

Seeds of Collaboration

- *The Wildlife Management Institute is a national non-profit organization that works to protect and enhance wildlife and wildlife habitat.*
- *Local trail users contacted leadership within the WMI in August 2003, suggesting they get involved with the Caribou Travel Plan process.*
- *After a field visit with forest staff, the WMI wrote a proposal to the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership requesting funds and staff time to promote efforts to bring trail users together to discuss the upcoming Travel Plan Revision.*

Beginnings of Workshop

- *Given the limited funding, WMI decided that a two-day workshop focusing on the eastside of the forest would be the most feasible approach to foster collaboration between those using various modes of travel.*
- *The objectives of the workshop were to help participants:*
 - *Understand the diversity of recreational travel on the Caribou*
 - *Understand potential impacts of this travel*
 - *Provide input to travel planning that minimizes conflict among uses while maintaining the integrity of local ecosystems*
 - *Establish future working groups for travel planning*

Recipe for a Workshop

- *TRCP contracted with the Department of Environment and Society in the College of Natural Resources at Utah State University in September 2003 to facilitate the two-day workshop.*
- *University faculty, staff and students handled correspondence, facility set-up, rules of engagement, workshop facilitation, and publication of workshop proceedings.*

Workshop Details

- *Unlike scoping meetings, for reasons of logistics and balance, the workshop was by invitation only.*
- *Forest staff provided the names of participants, with the objective that participants represent a variety of trail uses and interests.*
- *Participants received an invitation to the workshop in the mail, detailing objectives and the agenda, providing learning resources, and asking them to complete a survey and return it to USU beforehand. The survey asked about location, frequency and mode of recreational travel on the forest.*
- *More than 90% of the participants were regular recreational*

Workshop Design

- *On the first day, based on the pre-workshop survey, the ~40 participants were divided into three homogenous groups, i.e.,*
 - *motorized recreationists,*
 - *non-motorized recreationists, and*
 - *natural resource managers from federal and state agencies.*

- *Natural resource managers also served as sources of learning resources.*

- *Facilitators reviewed two-day agenda and rules of engagement.*

- *The three homogeneous groups were asked to:*
 - *give their vision for future recreational use on the forest, and*
 - *identify areas of past recreational use and those of special concern.*

Workshop Design

- *On the second day, participants were divided into four mixed stakeholder groups.*
- *The mixed stakeholder groups were asked to determine travel routes and modes of travel (including alternatives) for one of four areas identified the previous day as being of special concern.*
- *A confidential evaluation was administered at the end of the workshop.*

Workshop Results

- *Participants identified four areas of common agreement, i.e.,*
 - *caring for the land,*
 - *the need for a complete inventory of roads and trails (including those not previously designated),*
 - *adequate financial resources, and*
 - *increased trust and openness.*

- *Little or no consensus was reached on specific travel routes or modes of travel.*

- *Lack of consensus was attributed to:*
 - *insufficient time;*

- *insufficient information, including non-motorized use of the forest, inventory of non-system roads, and a draft of the proposed action;*
- *lack of trust;*
- *lack of accountability;*
- *lack of equipment to enforce the decibel law;*
- *lack of on-site visits;*
- *legal appeals;*
- *too far down the road with the process;*
- *historical influences,*
- *selfish behavior;*
- *different value systems;*
- *inputs only inform the public process in the broader national arena; and*
- *the select nature of the group of participants.*

Workshop Results

- *Participants concluded that future gains would require:*
 - *a consideration of each trail or road on a case-by-case basis with reasons for opening or closing them, and*
 - *increased trust and understanding among the various participants.*
- *All participants were willing to meet again for the purpose of reviewing USFS recommendations and striving for consensus on proposed routes and modes of travel for specific areas.*

Conference Proceedings

- Published on the IORT website and hard copies placed in several public locations for comment.
- All workshop participants invited to comment.
- Comments were received from only one person, who indicated the proceedings reflected accurately what transpired at the workshop.

Conclusions

- *Based on the post-workshop survey, facilitators concluded the workshop was a success with regard to:*
 - *people gaining an appreciation for diverse and conflicting perspectives, and*
 - *opening up lines of communication among those holding diverse viewpoints.*
- *The workshop was clearly less effective in terms of providing site-specific input to a revised TMP.*
- *The fact that most participants were willing to meet again suggests that progress is possible.*

What did the Workshop contribute to the Process?

- *The workshop was a “learning” exercise for many participants, including forest staff.*
- *It was a rare chance for forest staff to be participants in the process, rather than facilitators or hosts.*
- *Scoping efforts are designed to facilitate public comment on proposed actions. In contrast, this workshop was designed to allow participants to be the “decision makers”, understanding that others at the table have very different perspectives.*