

Community Workshop Notes

June 22, 2004

La Grande, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Martha Bean
Meeting Recorder: Kathy Campbell
Meeting Participants: 29 participants signed in

Co-Convenors: John Lamoreau, Union County Commissioner

Forest Service Officials: Katie Countryman, Acting Planning Staff, Wallowa Whitman National Forest and David Hatfield, Umatilla National Forest, Planning Staff Officer

Team Members: Dave Schmitt, Elaine Kohrman, Trish Callaghan, Bob Gecy, Bob Mason, Bruce Countryman, Tami Paulsen, 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:

There were no questions at this meeting

Questions/Issues/Concerns shared by people at display tables during the open house portion:

Table - Forest Plan Overview:

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

- ♦ People want to preserve roadless character, biological diversity, wildlife habitat, and old growth

Table - Recreation & Access:

Handouts: Inventoried Roadless Areas & Wilderness

- ♦ How many and where are: Mountain Bike trails, trails that meet ADA standards, Horse/stock trails, and hiker-only trails?
- ♦ Fishing Opportunities, where are certain closures and why are they in effect?
- ♦ Mud Bogging - whether its private or public lands, I don't want to see it around the area.
- ♦ Roadless areas should be evaluated to see if they can still become wilderness.
- ♦ Motorized equipment is sometimes hazardous to non-motorized users in same areas - especially with new technology equipment getting into roadless areas formerly inaccessible.
- ♦ Changes in motorized recreation (Anthony Lakes Area) with out the decision as a public process; how did this happen?

Table - Hydrology/Watersheds:

- ♦ What is 303d?

Table - Vegetation Management:

- ♦ Concerns for fire on Hunt Mountain.
- ♦ Concern about too high of levels of grazing.

- ◆ Need greater emphasis on native species, concerns for grazing, problems with fences.
- ◆ Too high of level of noxious weeds.
- ◆ Need to treat some of the excessive fuel loadings.
- ◆ Noxious weeds concern (separate comment from above).
- ◆ Grazing mentioned as an issue.

Table - Biological Sciences:

- ◆ There is too much motorized recreation use
- ◆ There are too many roads
- ◆ There are not enough old-growth forests
- ◆ Need to develop a landscape approach for managing old-growth
- ◆ The road density maps is too positive

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

- ◆ Open roads for Sunday drives
- ◆ Pre-emptive fire control – method of cleaning out so their aren't catastrophic results
- ◆ Fun places to ski
- ◆ Revision of Umatilla, Malheur, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, instead of Blue Mountain Revision. Blue Mountains don't reflect inclusion of the Wallowas.
- ◆ FS takes responsibility for economic health of communities
- ◆ Better-sustained watershed programs
- ◆ Large blocks of unroaded wildlife habitat
- ◆ Increase number of motorized trails
- ◆ Improve communication and education with general public, especially eastside/westside issues
- ◆ Native plants, not invasive plants
- ◆ Prioritization, you can't do it all. Find ways to fund high-priority items; Need realistic budget expectations
- ◆ Non-motorized use areas
- ◆ Diversification of species and ages – both flora and fauna
- ◆ Source of clean drinking water
- ◆ Lack of resource management – current ecological disasters – who is responsible?
- ◆ Resources redeveloped for sustainable economy
- ◆ A place for research
- ◆ Preserve economic and ecological resources for future generations
- ◆ Increase unmotorized trails
- ◆ Decrease motorized use of the forest
- ◆ No more road abandonment
- ◆ Responsible risk reduction/ less on fire suppression

Group Critique of the Meeting:

What worked and what we learned -

- ◆ Liked the open house format and the graphic displays and person to talk to
- ◆ Like the Post-it-Notes exercise with some modifications

What could be changed -

- ◆ More notification of workshops
- ◆ Incorporate more teenagers and young adults in the process
- ◆ Start at 6:00 p.m. and let people know more information on the open house format and shorten that part up
- ◆ More time to discuss Post-it-Notes and information. Move discussion after people realize what's going on
- ◆ Sort Post-its and maps into social, ecology, and economic categories. Present back to the group at the next meeting.

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. **(4.29)**

I plan to attend most or all of the Blue Mountains Community Collaborative Workshops in my area. **(3.86)**

It is important that the public is involved at this early stage of Forest Plan revision. **(4.52)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people I don't know. **(3.29)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people who hold different viewpoints. **(3.33)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a large group setting (15 people or more). **(3.29)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a small group setting (6 to 8 people). **(4.10)**

I am comfortable using maps to enhance the group discussions about concerns regarding the area. **(4.38)**

They were also asked:

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

- ◆ More info on what the group exercise was going to be; need to get to meat of subject
- ◆ Lack of direction on each section
- ◆ Open house time was good
- ◆ Post-it notes worked well
- ◆ The open house was too long
- ◆ More time to talk about each of the stations and the people who were there
- ◆ The mapping process was a great way to go about this process
- ◆ Lovely presentations
- ◆ Too much time talking about the process
- ◆ I liked the mediator, can help to diffuse situation
- ◆ Vision statements – hmmm, you and everyone knows there are diverse desires...multiple use
- ◆ Well organized, facilitator very good, Dave excellent
- ◆ 45 min at beginning too long, prioritization of issues very important in order to have meaningful monitoring throughout the Blues
- ◆ Shorten the first portion of the workshop...for those driving long distances...a 9 p.m. ending is tough
- ◆ Didn't hear of what changes have come about in last 15 years, liked the idea of a hired facilitator

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

- ◆ Yes, but too thin on details – the plan – perhaps have some to hand out?
- ◆ Yes, how responsive will the system be to our input?
- ◆ I'd like to keep informed about the process; yes, what are your priorities?
- ◆ Yes, funding prognosis for the USDA Forest Service

Any other comments about the workshop?

- ◆ You need some method of involving younger people, teens to young 20s, it will be their forest we are planning
- ◆ The vision needs to give people a sense of ownership of the commons and how to keep it around, establish designed conditions to be achieved
- ◆ Maybe team should have community/county representatives
- ◆ Question about the importance of the public - "we'll see"
- ◆ Not well advertised
- ◆ Public involvement in forest plan is very important
- ◆ Have the revision fit into the Columbia Basin EIS