

Community Workshop Notes

July 8, 2004

Baker City, Oregon



Meeting Facilitator: Martha Bean
Meeting Recorder: Sophia Millar
Meeting Participants: 33 participants signed in

Co-Convenors: Tim Kerns, Baker County Commissioner

Forest Service Officials: Dick Markley Wallowa-Whitman Forest Supervisor, Dick Haines Whitman Unit District Ranger,

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

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.

Questions & Answer Sessions:

- Q:** Does your database include past history of management actions on specific locations? How specific is the information?
A: *We have monitoring data and activity records. We have also produced an annual monitoring report for the past 10 to 15 years. The degree of detail of the data varies by resource. Interested people can talk to individual resource specialists on specific data.*
- Q:** Will secondary effects of an action be included (like the social and economic impacts of closing the Unity Ranger District)?
A: *The Revision Team includes a social scientist/economist (Elaine Kohrman) who will address impacts to communities from both an economic and a social standpoint.*
- Q:** Will the database define the highest and best use for the land?
A: *“Highest and best” means different things to different people. We would like to work together to determine desired conditions, vision, and what activities are suitable where. If we can get a plan that has broad support, we could say that is the highest and best use.*
- Q:** Will the analysis process include taking NEPA scoping to all the communities you’ve met with so far? Why include scoping in Portland? Who asked the team for meetings in Portland?
A: *When we begin the NEPA analysis, scoping will be open for everyone to participate. We will include the communities we have visited as well as others. There are a significant number of users in other areas, like the Westside (e.g., Portland). They requested that we bring our workshops to them and we felt like it was a reasonable request.*
- Q:** How is this collaborative process different than consensus?
A: *Consensus implies that everyone agrees; we would like that, but don’t expect it will happen. We will work together (collaboratively) to get as close as we can to consensus.*
- Q:** We designate so much of our Forest as wilderness but I don’t see portions being dedicated to sustained yield to sustain our economies.
A: *Sustainability has come up in many of the other workshops. We will attempt to balance ecologic, economic and social factors to create a sustainable flow of products while also sustaining the ecology of the area.*
- Q:** How will the decisions be made regarding issues that never have consensus? What criteria will be used? Will they be based on the majority opinion?

A: They will not be based on majority opinion. We will sit down and look at the information we have. The Team's job is to present the information and pros and cons to the Forest Supervisors who will make the decision based in part on what is sustainable.

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

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

- ♦ We need to use the mineral resources to support our nations wealth, everything today in our society comes from the ground in some way. This is vital to our economy and national defense.

Table - Recreation & Access:

Handouts: Inventoried Roadless Areas & Wilderness

No comments

Table - Hydrology/Watersheds:

No comments

Table - Vegetation Management:

- ♦ Forest Service needs to be able to get in and salvage fire killed timber in a timely manner before it loses value
- ♦ Concern for increased distribution of noxious weeds
- ♦ Concern that we recognize and track our past site specific management activities to learn what does and doesn't work

Table - Biological Sciences:

No comments

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

- ♦ Concern that results of fire have not been cleaned up; harvest the burned timber.
- ♦ Access regarding use of the land have damaged the economic situation. Ease restrictions and access to the land.
- ♦ A well-managed forest. More scientific management than by judges.
- ♦ Thin to allow trees to grow, survive insect infestation and avoid fires – fuel reduction.
- ♦ Avoid a one plan fits all system – plans that match the sites and data of the area.
- ♦ Control noxious weeds – adequate budgets and planning for future prevention (ex. Campgrounds and trails).
- ♦ Why hasn't Multiple Use act been brought up in this meeting?
- ♦ Budget money for signage, enforcement, and patrol of motorized vs. non-motorized use of recreational trails (how will the plan be enforced effectively implemented to educate & enforce?)
- ♦ Will the plan prioritize visions?
- ♦ Need more enforcement/patrol for snowmobile and x-country ski use.
- ♦ Wash stations for ATVs and snowmobiles prior to entering trails to prevent noxious weed spread.
- ♦ Relax setbacks from roads and streams (i.e., buffers) for harvest. Fuel reduction.
- ♦ Manage entire ecosystem – include riparian areas.
- ♦ Harvest the timber and minerals of the land. All new wealth comes from the ground.
- ♦ Sustainable economic industry and livelihood by managing the forest and taking care of it.
- ♦ PR has been thrown out of the equation. Don't know the Supervisors; too many rules and regulations. Go back to where we were 20 years ago – loggers were putting out fires. No more people are working on the forest.
- ♦ Community needs to be more connected to the Forest Service. Need better PR – should be able to talk directly with the Forest Supervisor.
- ♦ Adequate staffing for the mission – need an increased FS presence – family wage jobs lost by reducing Forest Service staffing. Employees were tax payers contributing to the community.
- ♦ More multiple use – let the people decide – anyone, recreationalists, miners
- ♦ Examine uses now and see what's compatible and what's really true; there are ways to handle problems.
- ♦ A consistent clear policy where motorized and non-motorized use can occur.
- ♦ Need more courtesy – promote this.

- ◆ Healthy, green forests, clear clean water, abounding with recreation (mushrooms, cabins). Number one thing is to keep the water pristine.
- ◆ Let the counties do law enforcement – cooperative management.
- ◆ Recognize and respect good work that has been done in Eastern Oregon.
- ◆ More citations for uses that cause damage like ATVs in streams.
- ◆ Four-wheelers are fine.

Group Critique of the Meeting:

What was worked and what we learned -

- ◆ Very well presented, well thought out.
- ◆ Statements about existing data (i.e. we will use what we and others have and not collect more). Hold to that.

What could be changed -

- ◆ Have coffee
- ◆ Better chairs
- ◆ Open-ended – no clear result
- ◆ Are we going down the path of analysis paralysis – boil it down to simple principles

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. **(4.31)**

I plan to attend most or all of the Blue Mountains Community Collaborative Workshops in my area. **(3.88)**

It is important that the public is involved at this early stage of Forest Plan revision. **(4.81)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people I don't know. **(4.56)**

The workshop format made it comfortable to discuss public land issues with people who hold different viewpoints. **(4.50)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a large group setting (15 people or more). **(3.88)**

I am comfortable contributing to discussions in a small group setting (6 to 8 people). **(4.19)**

I am comfortable using maps to enhance the group discussions about concerns regarding the area. **(4.19)**

They were also asked:

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

- ◆ The workshop was great; need more time
- ◆ Forest officers need to take leadership in decisions to do what is best for resources
- ◆ Good PowerPoint, introduction, good facilitator
- ◆ Difficult to keep people on track and not venting on small particular items
- ◆ No, not really

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

- ◆ Yes and no, too early in the process
- ◆ Need law enforcement representative at the workshop

Any other comments about the workshop?

- ◆ Keep the communication open, thanks
- ◆ Very well presented and managed, hope the FS does as well in the field