



for the greatest good



**BLUE MOUNTAINS**  
**FOREST PLAN REVISION - 2015**  
Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman  
National Forests

# Meeting Notes

## **Public Meeting on Access, Wilderness, and the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision**

Hosted by Union County, High Desert Partnership, and the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest  
La Grande, Oregon | Nov. 2, 2015

*These notes reflect the best efforts of the notetaker to capture the discussion of meeting participants, but in no way are these notes a word-for-word transcript as the notetaker may have unintentionally missed some statements or dialogue. Also, the notes do not attempt to correct or clarify any statements made by participants.*

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**Participants:** Mark Davidson, Sandra Mitchell, Constance Olmos, Gary Humphreys, George Mead, Jack Howard, Mike Shaefer, Tom George, Richard Isaacson, Leonard Flint, Cheryl Flint, Shelley Cimon, Martin Pawelek, Tom Cox, Mike Ragado, Tork Ballard, Frances Preston, Delbert Hammack, Billie Jo George, Terry George, Sherry Johnson, Jerry Johnson, Kelly Haggerty, Lonni Haggerty, Rick Gorte, Jim Hubbell, Clint Smithe, Les Patterson, Danny Scott, Ray Clements, Darla Bullock, Jim Holloway, Jack Kimball, Ed Hardt, Tim Mahan, Loren Clemons, Royce Irby, Pat Pacheco, Bill Ables, Bill Hansell, Tim Campbell, Marla Campbell, John Creighton, Ramona Creighton, Leslie Henderson, Irene Gilbert, Carrie Matthews, Jo Marlette, Gary Marlette, Joel Hasse, Jon Paustian, Cherise Kaechele, Larry Nye, Brian Kelly, Ralph Simonson, Art Chase, Chuck LeBold, Jerry Newland, Joan Newland, Dorian Cox, DA Danser, Chuck Chase, Veronica Hamilton, Jerome Brounstein, David Thiesfeld, Jamie Thiesfeld, Bill Harvey, Ken Anderson, Michael Gimera, Frank Mason, Ron Lesley, Dale Kruse, Jim Akenson, Holly Akenson, Larry Cribbs, Tisha Ball, Juanette Cremin, Jim Warrenner, Jayne Warrenner, Tim Rynearson, Donna McEntire, Wayne McEntire, Katherine James, C Eric Nelson, Jan Craig, Craig Ely, Roger Ball, John Thurber, Cleve Kimball, Douglas Osburn, Elaine Smith, Alan Fishback, Craig Walter, Mary Ann Walter, Morgan Olson, Matt Henneke, Susan Aldrich, George Aldrich, Wendy Franklin, Matt Franklin, Hal Franklin, Fred Zachary, Tom Higgins, Josie Higgins, Tim Higgins, Joyce Higgins, Pat Higgins, Jaime Higgins, Patty Gooderham, Mike Gooderham, Ted Taylor, Donna Lowry, Leo Castillo, Bob Staples, Troy Pointer, Michelle Staples, Dave Price, Ron Droke, Colt Hubbell, Peggy Kite Martin, Gina Birkmaier, Butch Baelteker, Justin Hoyt, Joel Walter, Steve McClure, Brian Parish, Roger Parish, Mark Deviney, Melissa Fullerton, Robert Kerr, Lindsay Warness, Nickole End, Brian End, Karen Shafer, Ben Casey, Kirsten Johnson, Gary Nash, Sky Mitsch, Rex Lantis, Brandon Gearse, Ryan Browne, Bob Sunderman, Ray Randall, Andy Ballard, Kayla Saager, Michael Bettis, Patricia Maier, Joe Maier, Danae Yurgel, Mary Rowland, Jennifer Schemm, Bruce Johnson, Mike Calaway, Kurtis Kinder, Tim Forsythe, John George, Vince Naughton, Janet Corets, Judy Witherrite, Glanton Jerbal, Barb Crouch, Vern Crouch, Jamie Knight, Joe Knight, Larry Morrison, Dylan Havell, Dorothy Dixon, Alan Dixon, Dave Shafer, Grant Shetlan, Cortni, Harris, Mary McCrack, Karen Wagner, Steve Neumann, Nick Pallis, Ron Burris, Katie Boula, Teresa Brain, Johnny West, Anthony Hilton, Jack Southworth (facilitator)

**US Forest Service (USFS) participants:** Tom Montoya, Chuck Oliver, Sabrina Stadler, Bill Gamble, Andy Steele, Barb Wales, Joani Bosworth, David Hatfield, Dennis Dougherty, Kathryn Gray, Peter Fargo (notetaker)

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**Organizations represented:** Union County, Baker County, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife, Idaho Recreation Council, Northwest Trail Riders Association, Cow Creek Tribe of the Umpqua, Forest Access for All, Citizens for Public Access, Idaho Aviation Association, Oregon Pilots Association, Recreational Aviation Foundation, District #29 State Senate, Oregon Trail Trader Inc., La Grande Observer, Milton-Freewater Tea Party Patriots, Hells Canyon Preservation Council, ECL, Eastern Oregon All-Terrain Vehicle Association, AFAL, Eastern Oregon Mining Association, Oregon Hunters Association, Trans-Pacific Partnership, City of Union, Supertalk Radio AM 1450, Blue Mountain Adventures, Blue Mountain Alliance, Backcountry Horsemen of Oregon, Back Country Horsemen of Washington, Oregon Women in Timber, Eastern Oregon Miners & Prospectors, Avella Orchard, Lighthouse Church, High Desert Partnership, and USFS

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### Introductory Remarks

*Facilitator, Jack Southworth of High Desert Partnership:* Welcome everyone; let's get started. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to discuss the access and wilderness portions of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision. Please note the guidelines for respectful dialogue on your agendas; let's be respectful with our language; please focus on the issues, not the person; also please be brief, so others have time to speak.

*Mark Davidson, Union County Commissioner:* Thank you all for being here. Over the past decades, changes in U.S. Forest Service policy have torn at the fabric of our culture. The Forest Plan Revision affects our community, our economy, and our jobs; we need to make sure it supports our way of life. The current draft doesn't meet needs of the forest ecologically, or the needs of the community economically or socially. We experienced severe forest fires in 2015, and it is not acceptable to have smoke in our valleys for weeks on end; this is a serious health issue, especially our most vulnerable populations. Using uncontrolled wildfire as a management tool is not acceptable; we need more mechanical treatments. Union County provided extensive comments in 2014; refer back to those comments.

*Tom Montoya, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor:*

- Welcome everyone, and thank you for taking the time to be here. Special thanks to those who traveled any distance to participate in this discussion. You might be asking, "Why are we here?" We're here to discuss the draft Forest Plans for the Blue Mountains National Forests – the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman. Each of these three Forests will have its own Forest Plan, supported by a shared Environmental Impact Statement, and we released these draft documents in 2014.
- What is a Forest Plan, and why is it important? Forest Plans are strategic documents that guide the future management of natural resources on National Forest System lands. Forest Plans describe the ecological, social, and economic goals of the National Forests and the Desired Conditions associated with those goals. The Forest Service is required by law (National Forest Management Act of 1976) to prepare a Forest Plan and revise it every 15 years to address changing needs and conditions, and to incorporate new information. The current Forest Plans are from 1990, and the landscape has changed significantly over the past 25 years, as have social and economic conditions across the Blue Mountains region. I hope you agree that it's time for new Forest Plans to guide our future land management.
- You may have also heard about Travel Management. Forest Planning and Travel Management are two separate processes, and they are very different.

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- A Forest Plan is a strategic document that informs and guides all activities on the Forest. Forest planning is guided by the National Forest Management Act. On the other hand, Travel Management is focused on the transportation system and how it interacts with other resources/uses. Travel Management is guided by the 2005 Travel Management Rule. There are some connections between Forest Planning and Travel Management: Both processes are mindful of, and need to balance, the multiple uses of the National Forest System. Some Forest Plan Components address motorized travel – such as Management Areas and Suitable Uses.
- Why is the Forest Service re-engaging on the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision? In 2014, we released a draft Environmental Impact Statement related to the Blue Mountains Forest Plans, and we received over a thousand public comments. By the way, thank you to all of you who took the time to comment. Based on your feedback, and discussions with community representatives, we identified a few key topics that needed more discussion across the Blue Mountains. These topics include: Pace and Scale of Forest Restoration, Grazing, Access, and Wilderness
- We wanted to sit down with the community on these topics, to give people time to: Listen to and learn from each other, and find areas of agreement and understanding. We are looking for new ideas, creative solutions, and zones of agreement that will help us improve the draft Forest Plans.
- How will the Forest Service use feedback received during these public meetings? The Forest Plan Revision Team and the Forest Supervisors are carefully considering all of the feedback we receive during these public meetings. We are taking notes, and we are comparing input from these discussions with the range of alternatives in the Environmental Impact Statement. The Forest Plan Revision Team is analyzing the input, and they may recommend changes to the Environmental Impact Statement or draft Forest Plans.
- On a separate track, we are evaluating the formal comments that we received in 2014 during the comment period for the draft Environmental Impact Statement, and we will respond to those comments in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.
- Thanks again for being here. Thank you for your participation and your patience throughout this complex process. And thank you for helping us take care of these Blue Mountains that we all love. I look forward to our discussion tonight.

**Conversation Starters:** To give us a sense of the different perspectives involved in the discussion about Access, Wilderness, and the Forest Plan Revision, we asked a handful of people to talk about their uses of, and interests in, our National Forests. *What is your relationship with the National Forests, what are your primary concerns about the Forest Plan Revision, and what are your solutions?*

- What's my relationship with these Forests? It's my home; same as your home. These management plans mandate changes to how I use the home I've lived in for 70 years. Meetings like this may or may not make a difference. We are asked to provide substantive comments; the USFS should provide a definition of substantive; you should provide substantive comments back to us that we can relate to. In this room I see people who I worked with for 50 years. I used to be able to work with USFS staff over many years; now there is constant change; some are here for just a year. There are new teams and new rules all the time. How can we feel heard? I attended meetings in John Day and Enterprise, and the notes were well done. Besides the thank you note, I don't know if people are actually paying attention to the comments; I want to hear how you are using them. Going back to the early 1800s, there are graves with my family's name on the tombstones; we are the past and present; our children will have to live with what we have put together in this plan.

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- Our organization, Forest Access for All, was couched under “motorized use” in the invitation, and I think that is a misunderstanding. We represent subsistence users of the forest; we are not just motorized users, but we rely heavily on motorized vehicles to access the resources. We don’t want our uses restricted just as we don’t want to restrict other people’s uses; we support independence for people and their interaction with the landscape. Our main interest in the Forest Plan is with (1) Designated Routes that lead to a “closed forest” and (2) proposed reductions in Road Densities. We dearly want to see those things removed.
- I don’t have any personal access issues; I love camping, hiking, and photography. Here are some ideas to consider in the future: (1) We need a Plan that preserves the multiple use objectives – allowing many uses of the National Forests in a sustainable manner. We need to live within the USFS budget and available volunteers; resources are limited, so we have to compromise. (2) Restoring forest health should be a priority, including removing noxious weeds and restoring stream habitat for fish. If we don’t have good forest health over long run, and we run the forests into the ground, then our grandchildren won’t have it to enjoy. (3) We need to find good opportunities for public-private collaboration that actually works; we need to develop solutions that we can test and check.
- Our group’s perspective is in line with many of the things that have been said. Whether cutting trees, hunting, fishing, or hiking, it is all about access. We are interested in a huntable, sustainable wildlife population for future generations. That means responsible grazing, forest management, etc. to support fish and wildlife.

### **Facilitator: Who are you, what’s your relationship to the forest, and what’s your concern / solution?**

- Lived here for 10 years; just drive through the forests and you can see the USFS has gone downhill so terribly; I had a terrible experience with the BLM; keep after the USFS; they are not doing their jobs; they are overpaid.
- Seldom see any loggers at work; USFS doesn’t have any money; they are not using the land for what it’s for; you can’t crawl through half of the forest; no wonder we’re having so many forest fires; it is “we the people” who own this nation; a lot of us fought for this nation and many others suffered during wars; they are closing roads and taking all of our rights away; when I was a kid you could go fishing everywhere. That said, we should turn everyone in for shooting signs and tearing up meadows.
- Mining is the most important and vital industry in our nation, or any nation. Try to think of a job you can do without using minerals. It’s vital to have access/use of the land for mining. All wealth comes from the ground originally. Every time we take a bite out of access, we take a bite out of mining and our economy.
- From Baker City; this is my 88-year-old mining partner; lived in Pendleton; love to hunt and fish; over past 30 years, the USFS has gone downhill. If the people don’t stand up for their rights, it’s going to keep going downhill.
- I represent Baker County; when I first moved to Baker County, there were six mills, but now they are all gone. Not just timber jobs but the rest of the economy that benefits from that income. We are not cutting trees anymore, but the trees keep growing. When planning forest management, we need to involve those who know the most and who live there. Things have changed, because we have seen them change. We

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didn't have problems getting firewood, etc. Our charge is to manage the forest – not walk away. We have a history; we know what worked; we had access. With access you have eyes in the forest to take care of it, to know when things are going wrong, like fire. Fires this summer were the worst in history; we couldn't fight them; we just had to get out of the way. The USFS Chief in Washington said, "This is the new normal." Not here; we are going to step up and help to change the situation.

- I have attended a lot of these meetings this year; people want access to the forests for a variety of reasons; we need to support the USFS, because it is not always their decision; it is the managers in Washington DC. How can USFS fix the roads if they spend all of the money on fire? We need to help the USFS, not sue them.
- I'm on the Forest Plan Revision Team and here for all of the reasons you are here.
- Come from the ranching industry; people use the forests for recreation and to support their families.
- Ranching industry also; used to work on the Ochoco National Forest.
- My family uses the forest for sustenance; firewood, deer, elk, berries. I own a trucking company; have tactical water containers; some of our crews were put in dangerous situations; closing roads puts my employees in danger; I'm against the decommissioning of roads; against locking us out because of my family's historical uses. My solution? Don't close the roads. Focus on cleaning up the forest.
- Former mayor of Joseph; saw 250 dislocated timber families lose their jobs, lose their way of life. This "closed forest" system that is coming down the track has the consequence of wiping out the culture of people depending on the land for sustenance. Firewood is hard to get; many people can't afford it. The skills of people in these communities could really benefit the USFS; need to involve people on the ground, who know how to take care of things; get us back out there, so we can take care of these woods.
- Grew up in La Grande; think wilderness is incredibly important; I feel a spiritual connection to land that is just "doing its own thing." I love wilderness and want to be able to take my kids there. I think there are ways to access the forests that don't involve motorized vehicles; personally, I enjoy quiet recreation. I have an elk tag this winter and hope to pack it out in four quarters; I don't think we always need to have a vehicle to use the forest.
- My family has lived here for six generations. I'm the Conservation Director for Hells Canyon Preservation Council; 1300 members; supporting responsible recreation for nearly six decades. Our members hunt, fish, hike, bike, collect firewood – all things many of you like to do. I use forest roads too, to find mushrooms, etc. Also enjoy hiking, snowshoeing and other forms of human-powered recreation. If I hear snowmobiles, I'm not getting the quality experience I am looking for. What is a solution? Group the uses that are compatible. Not all hikes should be in high-country, and not all vehicles should be in one area; all uses should have a diversity of opportunities. There is a trend toward more and more motorized use in our forests. Ranching and logging are always part of our communities and important economic contributors. Another growing economic benefit is recreation, including quiet recreation. Quiet recreation (hiking, hunting, and fishing) generates hundreds of jobs. Wilderness areas and quiet areas have spiritual benefits but also economic benefits.
- I represent Oregon Hunters and Anglers. My interest is in the backcountry; I am a mule packer and want to maintain the opportunity to travel the trails in the backcountry. We need to do something to maintain access, even if USFS budgets/personnel are not available. Solution: Need ability to use chainsaws in wilderness areas – even two weeks in spring or early summer – when wilderness users won't be disturbed.
- Hiker, backpacker, subsistence user, and biologist. The Forest Plan needs to address climate change; seeing impacts on alpine environment; insects; also new fire regime as evidenced by this summer; caused by climate change. Without the ability to use chainsaws in the wilderness, we cannot access and there can be

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- resource damage. Historic USFS buildings in the wilderness are currently not in use. Can public use them, e.g., for non-profit use? Need to address the problem of elk on private lands vs. public lands; perhaps it's caused by increased roads. Glad to see initiatives on restoration and recovery; something to support.
- Concerned about watersheds for seasonal irrigation; fires are impacting our community and will eventually hit the east face of the Elkhorns; need more active management.
  - Statement read from State Rep. Greg Barreto: "Thank you for taking the time and having the courtesy to hear the cries of we the people. The overreaching heavy hand of government continues to pursue its stranglehold on the rural parts of the state, our way of life, and our pursuit of happiness...If the federal government wants to earn back the people's trust, then first be truthful, second be honest, and third set an example that can be honored. Let those that love and use these lands be the steward of our national forests. We know how to manage our forests far better than an abstract panel from the east coast who has never even seen them. It's time our elected officials in DC listen to the people that they have taken an oath to protect and serve."
  - Lived here all my life; too many college-educated people in the USFS; they should be listening to the people who live here.
  - We have to manage our federal forests better; we don't have the same problems on state or private lands, I don't think. I'm opposed to a "closed forest." My colleague Greg Barreto said it well and captured the feelings of the people here.
  - Fires across the west show a system that is systemically broken. If the Wallowa-Whitman gives us a Plan that does not correct the problem in a reasonable amount of time, then I will oppose it, adamantly. If they can't take care of the forest, then we need another way to do it. Rep. Greg Walden has a plan that we should consider.
  - We had a booth at the Umatilla County Fair to inform people about the reforestation plan. We wrote letters to the USFS. None of the letters received a response. Why did we go through the trouble? You and I are not important to our government. The knowledge has to come from the people. We need a response back from the USFS. What is the end-result that your management is telling you that you need to do? We cannot fight something if you don't know what it is. Do I have your promise that you will respond to us over email or something? The government is not very transparent.
  - Quote from Thomas Jefferson: "When the people fear government, there is tyranny. When the government fears the people, there is freedom." I'm here to support freedom. I believe the true aim of the USFS is to close acres – not miles of road. Assuming a 300-foot corridor on each side of a road, access to acreage of the forest is limited. We can manage the National Forests according to conditions on the ground. It's a horrible thing to see meadows torn up by four-wheelers; most won't take part in that; we need to be willing to report and willing to prosecute. We're not going to do much damage; today you cannot even see the ruts on the Oregon Trail.
  - I grew up in Eastern Oregon; went away and came home; the economy sucks now; people move away for better opportunities. The restrictions on motorized access are not working; the bottom line is there are a lot more of us than there are of you, and we won't comply. Now we don't want it to come down to that. We also need to do more logging. The biggest threat to the National Forests is fire.
  - Any discussion of additional wilderness is premature, until we are provided acres of other set-asides: Inventoried Roadless Areas, etc. For example, the Hells Canyon Recreation Area is essentially wilderness and distorts the full picture. We should know how many people are accessing different areas for different uses. I like quiet solitude, but I get there by driving cross-country. The no-action alternative is an option; that is an option that I would like to be considered. A lot of money is going into planning, and I'd like to see

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it go elsewhere. Also, I have a problem with a trail built near Starkey using a bull dozer; habitat disruption and erosion issues. There used to be no feed in an area because of too many trees; USFS came in and thinned it, which created more forage; I support people buying tags to manage wildlife. If we do thinning, I would like to see timber companies benefit rather than burning wood in piles. Spend the money on managing the forests you have rather than more planning.

- We have enough wilderness area in Easter Oregon. I'm a cripple; if you take away my ability to go hunting on my ATV, then that is not considering all of the people.
- I have heard a lot of bashing – and that is just bad manners. Anger, venting, and political rhetoric are not productive. There is hardly any wilderness compared to the amount of multiple-use forest. Let's use science, objective information, and more compromise to make the forests healthy and productive.
- The W-Whitman is the third-most roaded National Forest in the country. Grazing and logging are two tools we can use to manage forest health, when used responsibly, sustainably, and in tune with current science. Roads are important, but it's a National Forest, not a parking lot. I go there to enjoy nature, not cars and ATVs. We have the resources to restore our forests, but we spend our time pointing fingers. We need an all-inclusive approach to how we manage the forests.
- I come from a ranching / logging family. Education is important; giving the forests back to the old-school people who used to run bulldozers up streams is a bad idea. Every American owns the Wallowa-Whitman. Why is the forest a mess? The big timber companies came in and people demanded more and more. We cut 90% of the forest. It is thick with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> growth. It is outrageously expensive to thin the forest. Don't blame the USFS; they are just an agency. Just about one percent of the Redwoods are left; about five percent of wilderness is left. Our children and grandchildren should get a choice. In 150 years, we have severely damaged the landscape, and it will take time to restore it.
- Government put 1200 people out of work within three months because of the spotted owl; I support all of the people who enjoy the forests; if the forests were properly managed, we wouldn't have fires.
- From Prairie City, OR; raised in Bates and served 46 years with the USFS; when will I get a response to my 52 pages of comments? No more wilderness, and is it possible to turn current wilderness back to multiple use? Access is one of my concerns. It took the USFS three days to get from Canyon Mountain to Prairie City Wilderness, because they closed roads. Access is important for safety. A solution: Keep the 1990 plan with no designation of routes. Coordination is a process that we all need to support. It is a process by which local government has a seat at the table to manage local lands consistent with local policies.
- It's time we have a change of personnel in the USFS.
- A roadless National Forest is a quasi-wilderness, and it's no good to us; we need to be able to access it; closing roads is a way to control the masses; not asking you to do any additional maintenance; we will take care of it if we need to use the road; vehicles don't disturb wildlife.
- I think we have more than enough wilderness; I would like to see federal timberland managed by the Counties that it sits on; USFS timber used to support your school district and roads, and it doesn't do that anymore; we got to change the laws, so we can harvest timber; we ought to manage timber like Bavaria in Germany.
- This is beautiful country; with the propaganda coming out of DC, people from the outside think this land has been so degraded there is nothing left, but there are trees and game all around us. We can continue to provide input, but I think the bigger enemy is the political agenda coming out of DC – not with the state and USFS.
- Consider the human habitat; the forest provides medicines and food. The indigenous people who lived here tended the forest as a garden; these gardens are feral and need to be protected.

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- The Eagle Cap Wilderness was my bedroom for months this year. My experience with wilderness is we are all takers. We ask, what can I get from it? Nobody is willing to give back to it. It's an opportunity for everyone, but everyone stretches it a little further. I heard shots at night (not in hunting season). Cattle are running rampant in riparian areas, not supervised by cowboys. We are taking and taking, but we are not giving back.
- There used to be a green fleet of USFS vehicles, maintaining roads and marking trees. People used to have jobs and take care of the forests. I'm a hunter and fisherman and enjoy the outdoors. I don't think we have an old-growth tree anywhere. It's all second growth, and it should be cut. It was a crime against society to see the timber burn like it did this summer. We are all here because we like the outdoors. We'll work with the USFS, but we need you to work with us.
- It's important that we get back to active management of forests; this should be a resource to support school districts, roads, etc. and drive the local economy. We have been working on these Plans for 12 years with no end in sight. It's time to return our National Forests to the land of multiple uses; all of the uses we heard about tonight; there is room for all of that out there. Harvesting timber and preventing catastrophic fires. There is more than enough wilderness to escape the noise, enjoy solitude, and have that spiritual experience. We can manage the rest of it actively.
- We have been at this for 12 years and asking what are we doing? We need to respect our seniors. I want to thank Bill Harvey. We have all been paying to support the forests; we need to create jobs.
- Think back on the Forest Plan in place now, signed more than 25 years ago. A lot of work went into that. That Plan spoke to many of the same issues you're talking about tonight. What happened? There was about the same amount of wilderness as there is today; the roadless areas were about the same, although there have been more roadless areas added. Road density was a concern then, and it's a concern now. People have seen more restrictions on their use, and you're seeing push-back. It's my forest, and I want to do what I want to do. There is a balance in road density and travel management. We may not all be happy, but there is a balance. The actions taken since 1990 have exceeded the boundaries of the 1990 Forest Plan. Travel management needs to be for legitimate resource reasons. I'm not in favor of adding 90,000 acres to wilderness; wilderness is not being managed.
- Aviation is only mentioned one time in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the Forest Plan Revision team is aware that they need to address airstrips. We need airstrips for a variety of reasons.
- USFS keeps saying, "We are listening." For the last 11 years I have attended meetings and provided comments when asked. When is the listening going to turn to action? Current Forest Plan has not been followed for decades. USFS puts the blame on climate change. USFS budget request shows more money than in decades. Use money to clean up the forests—not to close down roads.
- UN climate change conference coming up; Agenda 21 from 1992 led to Clinton's Roadless Rule to keep people off the land. Fires show that we need to make a change; we have the know-how to manage these forests to reduce fires. When we were harvesting timber, the forests were renewable resources; they grew more than we harvested. We need to return public lands to local control. There is a bill in Congress, the "Transfer of Public Lands," that we need to help push through; get it from state to local control immediately. We need an Office of the County Forester. The USFS employees could come to work for the county. We wouldn't have to worry about money, because we would have people working in the woods. Canada has transferred lands to local management; if they can do it, we can too.
- We need the roads to access mineral opportunities. The USFS used to manage the timber; now it manages the people. Roads aren't the problem and never have been. If a road isn't used, it grows and goes back to nature.



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- We are losing access behind the scenes. We have enough wilderness. The USFS never met the goals/objectives under the current plan – why try to shove a new one down our throats? Solution is Coordination with the Counties.
- This is the third meeting I have attended on Access and Wilderness. I think there is no way the Forest Plan will go through the way it is. The USFS asks for solutions, but they came up with this [bad] plan, and it's their responsibility to fix it. The 1990 plan is a good one; all they need to do is take the 1990 plan and do some amending.
- NW Trail Riders Association; help to manage the Winom-Frazier OHV area. I want to know where is the action? The comments are good, and the USFS is taking a lot of notes. What are you going to do? We want to see the system work better for people to get out and enjoy the forest. We are a responsible group and infuriated by people who are damaging the land. We are interacting with the USFS to make things happen; that is what it takes. Instead of closing roads, we would rather take over the maintenance.
- We are all here because we care. Solution: Individual rights; I have just as many rights, but no more rights, than the person beside me. We have no need for the USFS. If we haven't figured this out in 12 years, we are not going to. Instead of taking time for these meetings, go out and use the forests. Take our forests back. Solution: Turn management over to the Counties.
- I used to work on the Hanford nuclear site, and because of the way nuclear material behaves, I started to see time in 12 years and then hundreds of years. That is how I see the forest. USFS needs to apply science (e.g., Starkey, which showed that elk hate roads). Climate change needs to be considered; it is imperative. We saw a massive die-off of sturgeon. We need salmon to return and feed our streams. I want to see any/all research science in this Plan. I want to see as many roads reduced as possible. At Hanford we have a Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) board, and the USFS should consider that. These forests are not mine; it is a privilege to go out there. I want as much wilderness as we can have. Things are happening so quickly with climate change that we cannot begin to understand what to do about it.
- I'm going to share a brief lesson on history and science. The forests you have are the ones you asked for. You took the big pines out – the ones with 6-12" of bark that is fire resistant. A gradual progression of growth is what will return the forests back. The Counties cannot manage the forests – they don't have that kind of money. If we're lucky, we'll get what the USFS is already doing, funneling money into the economy that we don't have. The most important thing we have is clean water. It will take a lot of time to build back a mature forest. Harvesting 100 million board feet per year will never happen again. 8,000 miles of roads is ridiculous.
- I raised my kids here; I have worked as a contractor in these forests. I love these forests; we all do. The W-Whitman National Forest has over 9,000 miles of road – enough to drive across the country, and back, and back again. A lot of those are already grown in, and you can't drive on them. What the USFS needs to figure out is what roads do we actually need to get where we need to go. Others that are causing damage need to be decommissioned. Wilderness is a topic of tonight's discussion; the places that we have remaining of wilderness quality need to be protected.
- The elderly and handicap are not being adequately considered. I don't see more motorized users. There is a discussion that we don't have equal use of the forest as far as quiet recreation. 51% of W-Whitman National Forest is either Wilderness or Inventoried Roadless. My background is range management; animals are not running away from reckless ATV users who are hazing them. I want to see all science-based management—not cherry-picked science management. I don't believe this plan is current. We burned over 300,000 acres this year. The plan needs to be scraped and should start over to address the needs of local citizens. The core issue I have with this Forest Plan is "designated routes" and the wholesale

## MEETING NOTES

(continued)

closure of cross-country travel. Solutions: Designated routes removed from Forest Plan and road density reduction numbers removed. I hope that what you have heard will be used. I want to know if each person's comments tonight will give them standing to object in the future.

- I ask you to really look at Alternative A. Let the roads close themselves. I have a personal experience with the Starkey Experimental Forest. They keep the elk there and send them to OSU to do experiments, grind them up, etc.
- My grandfather used to be in the USFS when it was a respected unit. I have classmates and friends that are working for the USFS, and it appalls me that they don't see the perspective of the public. I won't go to the Umatilla, because I saw them give a \$1500 ticket to an 80-year-old man collecting firewood to heat his home.
- I don't see the wildlife having a problem with noise. Prior to 1990, our mills were cutting trees on about 75% of the forest land; now about 2%. We are not utilizing the resource; we are wasting it.
- There is a very large community of physically challenged people, senior citizens, and wounded warriors who need access to the woods. Stick with the 1990 plan and leave the roads open.
- I'm a board member of Eastern Oregon ATV; do a lot of the same things on the forest that everyone else does. A "closed forest" concentrates a lot of the impact and an "open forest" spreads it out. We have plenty of wilderness; we are trying to create it where it's unnecessary.
- I don't think you are listening to a word you heard tonight. I think you are here to dot the I's and cross the T's, get your NEPA done, and pass it on down the line.
- Look at the Confederated Tribes native foods program; their first priority is water. Solution: What if the Forest Plan put clean water at the center of everything? Couldn't we all agree that water, the source of life, is something that we would all want to protect? We could give back and leave something for others.
- I worry about the tragedy of the commons. Everyone wants something from the land.
- There are a lot of skillsets that could be used. In the Forest Plan, I would like to see an economic analysis. Is the economic base to support the mills even there? That is one solution to get past the conflict between restoration and economic timber harvest.
- In the past year, in areas where we hunt, roads have been closed and others burned out. No elk and deer in former clear-cut areas. Don't forget the seniors; I like the woods too.
- There are two words that scare the [heck] out of me: science and government. When you put science and government together, you get Hanford. My wife has brain tumors because of Hanford and can't walk through the woods. The game area is on private land, because that is where the food is. Include in the plan how much time the Forest Supervisor has to sit in meetings about the Forest Plan; he needs to focus on managing the land.
- We utilize roads to access the forest; we need to maintain what we are utilizing. My father is 72 years old and needs to be able to use motorized vehicles to manage our cattle. Are the ADA laws being followed in this Plan? I want to be sure that persons of all sorts can access / utilize the forests everywhere.
- I'm one of the original Oregon Women in Timber. Went to DC to say "healthy forests are managed forests." I want to see wildfire budgets come out of national emergency funds. I know that USFS employees love the forests and have the knowledge to manage them.
- Access is my issue. I support an "open forest." The 1990 Forest Plan can be reworked; issues could be addressed with a few amendments. I did not like being lectured to tonight. "Open forest" can mean balance and responsible use.

**Summary of what was heard: Tom Montoya, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor**

## MEETING NOTES

*(continued)*

- I heard a wide diversity of thought and opinion.
- Folks value access for a multitude of reasons; they also value the solitude given to us by wilderness.
- We need to manage the forests better.
- Most folks value fish, wildlife, etc.
- I heard concerns for the elderly and disabled.
- I want to leave a legacy of doing the right thing on the landscape for a number of reasons. Please keep in mind that not all control is with the Forest Supervisor. Right now 52% of the USFS budget goes to fighting fires; in another 10 years it will be 62%.
- Overall this has been a refreshing dialogue and a respectful dialogue with a diversity of opinions. We manage these National Forests for the American public; this is your backyard; this is your National Forest.
- I don't think we're going to get a Plan that everyone will love. We learned that when we released the draft. We need to work with a diversity of interests. Some say 9,000 miles of roads are too much on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest; others say we need them all to maintain our lifestyle. We need to find a way that works for everyone.
- I heard people interested in using the best science. We do try to use the best science. If you don't think we are using it, please bring it to our attention, and we will consider it. That is my commitment.
- I heard other topics – timber harvest and grazing. We are thinking carefully about those topics too.
- Thank you for spending the evening and sharing your input.