



for the greatest good



BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PLAN REVISION

Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman
National Forests

Meeting Notes

Nez Perce Tribe - Town Hall Meeting

Feb. 4, 2016 | Lapwai, Idaho

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.

Participants (as they appear on the sign-in sheet): Quintin Ellenwood, Gary Dorr, Catherine Thagard, Neil Thagard, Dan Holt, Ken Sonneck, Vera Sonneck, Ann McCormack, Kayla Warden, Loretta Halfmoon, J. Weasknes, Annette Penney Tomeo, Nancy McAllaster

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) participants: Tom Montoya, Sarah Crump, Sabrina Stadler, Dennis Dougherty, Peter Fargo (notetaker)

Introduction by the Facilitator, Jeff Blackwood: Earlier today the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) staff met with USFS staff to discuss some of the technical details in the draft Forest Plans. We are here this evening so the USFS staff can hear from you directly and answer any questions you may have. Let's begin with opening remarks from Quintin and Tom.

Opening Remarks, Quintin Ellenwood (Tribal Executive Committee and Natural Resources Subcommittee Chairman): We are here to provide input into the next 10-15 years of management for the Blue Mountains National Forests; we seek to preserve the forests as best as we can for future generations; we are facing climate change and need to think about how to deal with that; let me know if you have comments after this meeting, and we will make sure to get them to the Forest Supervisors and others.

Opening Remarks, Tom Montoya (Forest Supervisor for the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest): My mother used to tell me we have two ears and one mouth for a reason, and that is so we can listen as much as we talk. That is why we're here. The Regional Forester asked us to take a step back and have some dialogue with our communities; we wanted to meet with you all to understand what we can do with our Tribal trust responsibilities; we are here to learn and understand; earlier we heard some concerns from Tribes, and these conversations help us to move forward with a better understanding.

Input from meeting participants:

- The Blue Mountains are important for wood, hunting, gathering; we have had a lot of problems over the years, especially with wood cutting; I have even ended up in court, and the case was dismissed; when we speak with people at the top, we want to see those at the bottom get the message too; I have seen examples of poor management from timber harvest to prescribed fire.
- Here with KIYE radio.
- Member of the Nez Perce Wallowa Band; concerned about enforcement issues; Tribal members often visit the Forest for peace and ceremony, but there is a lot of economic / recreational activity on the Forests; need to balance it; Colville/Umatilla/Lapwai Nez Perce come together in the Wallowa Valley; it would be good to see more Tribal people employed by the Forest Service and other federal agencies; we are good workers and stewards of our natural resources.
- I'm a Tribal member; I used to go hunting all the time, but I can't walk like I used to.
- I'm also a Tribal member; when I was in Tribal government I used to meet with USFS; remember that when you do spraying, you could be killing our foods out there; I would like to have the NPT Executive Committee (NPTEC) informed before spraying happens; would like to see more discussion with Cultural Resources.
- I am here because I love this land; I love this country; three separate times I served on NPTEC and learned a lot; I am mostly concerned about religious freedom; what we saw on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge was a disgrace with the treatment of artifacts of the Burns-Paiute people; I am concerned about our spiritual, cultural, and archeological resources; this land has been taught by the elders; these Forest Plans break apart the lands and apply artificial boundaries that separate our lands; yes, herbicides, pesticides, and fungicides are a problem, and the notification process is a courtesy but also a right when it comes to our health; when people make baskets with their lips they can be poisoned; I speak on behalf of the deer, the ermine, the coyote, the bear, and the fish; all are tied to us; we are more than stakeholders; these elders are walking and living sovereignty; I am just asking that you recognize those other resources that we have—our cultural and religious rites are more powerful than our treaty rights; I ask you to respect the love we have for the land; provide notification not just to stakeholders, but to elders, who are our walking and living sovereignty.
- Director of the Wildlife Division of the NPT; I'm here to hear from Tribal members and the concerns and values of the people; I have my own interests in the National Forests; I am a big game hunter and enjoy time in nature.
- I'm a Tribal member and victim of Gulf War syndrome; concerned about chemicals; hyper-vigilant about it; we often gather medicines and teas where you spray and place poisons; we need to be notified and consulted. Treaty Rights were not given to us; they are what we gave to the Europeans; we have Reserved Rights. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act; want to see more mention of it in the Plan. When we have ceremonies we need to have privacy and closed roads, just like when the Forest Service needs to do work you close the road. This Tribe has the strongest treaty in the U.S. and need to be involved. You talked about many of the focal species on the Forest; I would argue that Tribal members need to have the

protection of “focal species” – remember we are part of the Forest, and it is part of us. Are you prepared for the militias? This weekend the militia members are meeting in Halfway to strategize about putting militia members into the County Commissions; they put a flyer out and are strategizing about elections. Do you have artifacts from the Wallowa-Whitman, and do you have a plan to keep them safe?

- Forest Archeologist: Artifacts are in a locked room in a locked facility that is not part of the main office.
- Here with the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision team; here to listen and learn from you.
- NPT Office of Legal Counsel
- I’m the Natural Resources Chairman; want to hear more about enforcement and firewood; our gathering of huckleberries is affected by climate change; it is also affected by other pickers damaging the bushes; we depend on the berries, but the berries also depend on us; whatever people do, say, and sing as they pick the berries has meaning; cultural resources are very important to us; we would be glad to organize a Nez Perce briefing from a forestry standpoint; respect what our elders say – that can never be taught.
- I’m concerned about hunting, especially in our ceded areas; we have never given that land up; elders have to stagger and stumble around trees that have fallen; would like to see those gathered and piled; we go gathering together and bring our families; want to make sure everyone stays safe.
- We go for weeks to collect berries; the men go hunting and the women gather; we bring back dried meat, fish, and berries; the fires were so bad in this last year, so people were afraid to go to the forests; we were not able to gather like we used to; I cannot tell you how important are the things in the mountains; we want our children and grandchildren to go there and see it too; we want them to be preserved – in writing – so they cannot be taken away.
- Concerned about four-wheelers and safety; worried about insects coming onto forest lands and fire-preventive maintenance that should be happening.
- Grew up with the long-house and seven-drum religion; our way of life is connected with the forest; we go there as a family to heal and bond as a family; my great-grandfather was on the Nez Perce Trail; when we go to those mountains, we feel like we are among the same trees where they prayed; I carry my family’s stories; we used to visit the mountains where we kept teepee poles and camped; woke up among a herd of elk and it was a beautiful sight. Where there are no roads, there should not be any more built. I know several places that medicine men went; when you walk into those areas your hair will stand on the back of your neck; we shouldn’t touch those areas. The culture ties in with every day of our life; please include the Nez Perce calendar where you can in your planning.
- Never have the agencies put Nez Perce interests first; I believe that our sovereignty is constantly being challenged by outside entities; we need to have our own integrated plan; integrated vision and mission; we don’t need to rely on the Bureau of Indian Affairs; the Treaties of 1855 and 1863 did not fare well; let’s

invest our money into Tribal members and education; I appreciate input from interested non-tribal parties, but I do not rely on it.

- We all come in with different viewpoints; gatherers, hunters, fishers; all part of the same whole; we are all “Ne Mee Poo” (Nez Perce). If the Plan doesn’t agree with me, I won’t stamp it; even if you have the Executive Committee’s stamp of approval, you don’t have all of our approval; come back in May during the General Council if you want to have everyone’s input.
- That is a really important point; when it comes to resource management, you want to include everyone. The structure of the plan can be an oxymoron; ecological, economic, and social goals are not separate; I am most concerned about water; water is sacred to us; big business is putting thousands of dollars in the media to focus on these issues we are talking about today. With all due respect, if the Creator comes to me and places in my heart to gather, hunt, access, I will do it without a permit. I need no one’s permission but the Creator’s. I don’t want a permit; I think it is anti-Indian. The infrastructure is anti-indigenous. I have great respect for the Forest Service and what you do, but you can’t match Trump and others. They are coming after these lands; the Counties want to take them back from you and from us, the Nez Perce. If you see me out there, please respect my right to the land; I don’t need permission.
- I think there is too much cattle grazing on Forest Service land; cows make a mess of everything; make trails bigger and messy; if you are hunting/gathering up there, the cows just get in the way.
- Before I came, I was talking with my family about how we use the forest for hunting, fishing, etc. Do ranchers or miners understand that we are here too, and we’re able to use the land? Access: It seems the Forest Service is ready to get you if you’re not in a camping area; we want to camp away from others to get peace.
- It appears to me that everyone could be better educated; there is so much information out there, but in some cases there isn’t enough; I like the idea of a Tribal Sensitivity 101; that could be good training for our employees and others; I understand this Plan is a living document and can be amended if needed; if you hear enough negative feedback, then it calls for a meeting to discuss our differences.
- We would like to see our resources integrated into maps, so we can see them and consider the impacts of plans and projects; I see a lot of things that don’t reflect Tribal perspectives; the Tribe needs to get organized independently; we need to figure out what everyone agrees to and doesn’t agree to; we don’t want to go against our neighbor Tribes and damage those relationships.
- If the National Forest lands were to be turned over to the States, and they privatize them, where would that put our Treaty? The Nez Perce have a treaty with the federal government that supersedes any State claims.
- States always have money problems, and the state of Idaho is fourth from the bottom. I hope public lands are not transferred to the States; wealthy businessmen will carve them up and sell them off, or post “no trespassing” signs. Before contact with Europeans, the Indian people were concerned with food, shelter,

and clothing. The trees are important to us; we can make dugout canoes out of certain trees; other trees you can make a home out of. Nothing went to waste when we harvested animals; the water is very important to us. The trees on our National Forests are important to us; they provide materials for baskets, homes, and canoes. I live in Spalding; trucks are rolling in with logs five days a week; they load the logs onto railcars; going back East where they need that lumber. I don't know if the people who are logging understand the impacts on trees, and also roots, berries, and medicinal plants. Some of the berries and trees are no longer around. Pigs, sheep, and cows ruined some of the plants in the mountains; people were coming west trying to settle. Everything is important to us here, even to you people in the Forest Service. I hope our National Forests do not fall into the hands of the States.

- I am thinking about everyone providing comments. We are just a few people; we were wondering who are they getting comments from? There are just not that many elders left; the younger people, from 25 to 50, if they are made aware that some decision will be made that is going to affect them, you would think we would get more participation; I would think on Facebook you could get more comments. I remember the food my grandmother used to eat, and she loved it. It's called "hopo," and you don't see it around here anymore; it is the black hairs on the trees; they made soup with it; made it into cakes and bread; today the only reservation that has it is the Yakima; they still have people who go into the mountains and get it; Grandma tells the story about it, and I hope you still have it on the Forest.
- Everything you are hearing tonight validates what we discussed from a scientific standpoint; this is a people speaking from the heart; there are no personal agendas here in the room; the people here tonight are looking out for their culture, their future; they have been here for 10,000 years, and they are thinking about the next 10,000 years. The science to manage these resources is pretty complex; the decision to use it is pretty simple. You can hear support in this room for federal lands remaining in federal hands. You have support to keep these lands where they are at, but it's not going to come without a fight.
- The Tribes have the trump card. The difference between a non-tribal gatherer/hunter and a tribal gatherer/hunter is our Treaty-Reserved Right. Add this clause to the Forest Plan: *"The Plan will direct the Forest Service to ensure that actions are not detrimental to the cultural, religious, scientific, etc. rights of the Tribe."* It's in the Clearwater National Forest Plan. Include new people in training. Provide an interactive map showing tribal resources.
- If you would like to get information into the Tribal Newspaper, send it by the 20th of each month.
- USFS: We have fallen short in putting out the word about enforcement; we are working on a brochure for front-line staff about Treaty-Reserved Rights; we need to better inform our seasonal employees. We are supposed to notify Tribes when our spraying is happening; we do have a policy in place where we are supposed to be notifying your Cultural Resources Program. Regarding camping, there is an MOU that exempts Nez Perce members from recreation use fees and length-of-stay limits.
- Climate change; manage for wildlife; everyone is wanting to go green; everyone is fighting for wind and solar power; there is going to be more demand on the wildlife; I would like to see more managing for wildlife; protecting for habitat and water; we have a Treaty-Reserved Right to graze, but the cattle cause

pollution; they eat our medicine before it can spread its seed and grow more medicine. The idea of inviting you to our General Council is a good idea. If we didn't have our natural resources, none of us would be here. I'm sure people would love to comment and ask questions. We need to have a true Tribal liaison; someone from the Nez Perce, also from the Umatilla, who can truly represent the Tribe's interests on the Forest.

- Reflection by Tom Montoya, USFS: Thank you for sharing your hearts with us. I heard that we need to notify and consult with you when we spray. Our Law Enforcement is limited, but we need to continue educating them about Tribal Treaty-Reserved Rights. I heard an offer from Quintin for training, and I'd like to take you up on that. (Quintin: Amanda Rogerson can coordinate that.) I heard a lot of concerns about grazing. I heard that nature matters, because you all matter; you are the forest, and the forest is you. Somehow we need to better reflect that in the Forest Plans.
- USFS: I think we are making progress with the herbicide communications. Huckleberries: What helps them? Maybe we can work that into the Plan. We are looking at emphasizing Tribal Treaty-Reserved Rights. Thank you all for being here and sharing your thoughts.
- I appreciate the sincerity, the knowledge, and the specificity tonight. This is about who you are.
- We need to watch what we're doing with our environment; that is what we want to share with you. We want to show compassion for you, as you show it to us. Our people go and search for our Spirit Guide. When we are berry picking, we have services before and after. Everything we bring in we take back out. Clean water is so important, because it all flows downriver. It's very important that we can give feedback to each other, when you bring us together like this. If there are graves that you find out there, what do you do? Thank you (in the Nez Perce language).
- I think this is a great opportunity for people to hear about the Forest Plans for the next 15 years. I would say if you come to the General Council, be prepared for a change in the agenda. Thank you (in the Nez Perce language).
- If you get on the General Council agenda, please do your due diligence, ask good questions, and be very specific in what you are asking. Ask people to be direct and brief. Otherwise, you will just get a lot of stories.
- USFS: The General Council agenda is put together by the Tribe, and federal agency time on the agenda is very limited. It may not be possible, but we will talk to those who make the agenda and who are presenting federal information to see if there would be time and if it would be appropriate to put the revision of the Blue Mountains Forest Plans on the agenda.
- Would like to see more Forest Service people schooled on Nez Perce traditions.
- I think this was a good meeting.

- Thank you all for listening (not just hearing). It was a good day.
- If we build on what we learned here, it will be a good meeting.