

**USFS Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision Meeting | April 3, 2014 | Dayton, WA**

*Notetaker: Melissa Thom, EnviroIssues*

*Approximate Attendance: 35*

*Questions (Q), Responses (R), and Comments (C)*

**Q: If you don't make a comment during the comment period, can you make an objection? Or do you have to comment to have an objection?**

*R: You need to make a substantive comment to have standing in the objection process. Comments also allow you to litigate if you don't like the final decision.*

**C: That information should be included in your presentation.**

**Q: If we're going to make a comment, can we read the document online and then comment or do we need to make a comment tonight?**

*R: No. You can make a comment anytime before June 16, and you will have standing.*

**Q: What does the definition of old growth trees mean, as opposed to the 21-inch rule?**

*R: Please talk to Patty if you want more detail. Instead of size class, we're looking at structural characteristics like bark, broken limbs, large cavities where animals can den, etc. We are moving away from the 21-inch rule to define old trees because we've found, for example, that grand firs in some plantations are bigger than 21 inches but aren't old trees. You should take a look at how we explain that in the document and give us feedback. Old trees are controversial for how we manage them.*

**C: There's a great need for greater presence of law enforcement officers in the forest. There's no one out there to oversee and make sure your plan is working. We need help enforcing these things we agree to participate in to prevent the outlaws.**

*R: The plan doesn't address law enforcement. The degree of law enforcement presence is driven by budgets.*

**C: They're cutting green trees and taking fish out of the streams and no one is stopping them.**

*R: Let us know if you see these things and we will get there as soon as we can, but we can't manage all of that. There are not enough officers.*

**Q: Over time the pine stands in Blue Mountains have been disappearing and fir is encroaching. How do you deal with encroachment of Douglas fir, for example, and protect others under old growth that is based on your proposed characteristic approach?**

*R: We have to manage those. We can't have all of our trees as old trees. We need diversity. There are prescriptions that help us do that and would vary depending on the desired condition in that landscape.*

**Q: In order to achieve that old growth objective, you're going to have to cut some of the older, bigger trees and I'm just wondering how the plan handles that.**

*R: The plan allows us to cut bigger trees. Using old tree characteristics, we would be able to remove large grand fir trees that don't qualify as old trees to favor Douglas fir. Because of the diameter limit in the past, we have had to do plan amendments when we wanted to cut trees bigger than 21 inches.*

**Q: Money drives the whole program, so where does the money come from and how is it generated?**

*R: We get annual appropriations from Congress. There are assumptions in the document about what we would need financially to accomplish the desired conditions. We are able to work with grant funding, volunteer work, and partnership opportunities, as well, so there are a number of ways to get to the desired conditions. We get some state funding, too.*

**Q: We assume you will be faced with financial constraints. So roads that are closed will continue to be closed, though I understand the plan doesn't speak to that. Roads level 1 or 2 – what's the policy for making trails instead of closures?**

*R: I suggest you sit down with district rangers, because we can do that. It would take time to go through the analysis process, but we can explore all options.*