

2-15-2012 B.Countryman

Public involvement in Blues revision process

Overview of Collaborative Process

Since June 2004 the Revision Team has been working collaboratively with local communities to:

- Develop a vision for the future management of the Blue Mountains
- Create the building blocks that will be used in the revised Forest Plans
- Identify the things in the current Plans that are not working
- Craft revision proposals

The Revision Team formed a **co-convenor** group for the collaborative process, utilizing county governments, tribes, and resource advisory groups. These participants have broad networks of contacts, have expertise in land management planning, and have demonstrated that they can build partnerships, resolve conflicts, and solve problems.

As of April 2005, eight counties (Asotin, Baker, Union, Wallowa, Grant, Harney, Morrow, Umatilla) and the John Day-Snake Resource Advisory Council have committed to be **co-conveners**. We have met many times. Their **role** includes:

- Helping develop the strategy for how to work with various interest groups and with the public (i.e., Collaboration Strategy).
- Lead the effort to bring diverse interest groups in their area together
- Attend meetings with the Forest Service and others at key steps in the process.
- Convene meetings and help determine:
 - Who to invite – identify lead contacts for various groups
 - Where to hold meetings
 - When to have meetings – at which steps in the process and on what dates/times
- Help assimilate the information collected at the community meetings.
- Be co-meeting managers and provide co-process facilitators for community meetings.
- Provide specific expertise such as being knowledgeable about state or local laws or existing county plans, and expert knowledge of land management planning.

Blue Mountains Community Collaborative Events

We work with the co-conveners to determine when and where to have **community events**. Taking into account the **project's timeline and available resources**, we decided we could **reasonably visit eight communities** across the Blues (Pendleton, Dayton, La Grande, Enterprise, Hines, John Day, Heppner, and Baker City). In response to requests to hold more workshops, we included two additional communities, Portland and Pasco, WA.

We anticipate having **4 to 5 rounds** of workshops in the ten communities beginning in June 2004. Each workshop series builds on the products that were created at previous workshops and will culminate in draft Proposed Revised Forest Plans.

For the first year and a half of our collaborative work, we used a **neutral third-party facilitation team** (through the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution) to assist with the collaborative efforts and help design and facilitate the collaborative activities.

Round 1 (June/July 2004)

The bulk of the **June workshop was engaging in a vision activity** to learn what people appreciate about the Blue Mountains. The objectives of the activity were to incorporate local knowledge, gather information about what people care about, build relationships through shared understanding, and create a vision together that people are passionate about to carry forward in the rest of the process.

Information was collected from **over 300 people** in the ten communities the Team visited. People also provided responses using the **website** and by **letters** and **phone calls**.

Round 2 (October/November 2004)

Round Two of the Blue Mountains Community Collaborative Workshops occurred in October and November. **This set of workshops included:**

- Information about the **current resource conditions and trends** on the three Forests.
- Review and discussion of the **consolidated proposed vision** that participants provided ideas for in the Round One workshops.
- Discussion of aspects of resource management in the current Forest Plans that **needs to change**.

About 250 people participated in the **Round 2** Workshops. The main focus of the workshop was to **engage in an activity** to discuss the proposed desired conditions and what needs to change to reach those desired conditions. People also provided responses using the **website** and by **letters** and **phone calls**.

Round 3 (April/May 2005)

- ♦ The following **topics were discussed:**
 - ♦ An update and overview of the 2005 Planning Rule
 - ♦ Review and discussion of management categories
 - ♦ Review and discussion of wild and scenic river inventories
 - ♦ Review and discussion of the inventory of areas with wilderness potential.

About **250 people participated** in the Round 3 Workshops. People are also providing responses using the **website** and by **letters** and **phone calls**. Responses are due July 29, 2005.

The Team also **met with FS units** the mornings after the workshops. These **were not separate meetings to collect input** but an attempt to share information with employees who could not attend the workshops. Employees are still being strongly encouraged to participate in the workshops.

Field Trips (October 2005) - one field trip on each of the three national forests was held to discuss:

- How the **desired conditions** (the vision) that we are developing together **relate** to one another and how to **apply** them.
- **Management** to move toward the desired conditions.
- **Measures of** social, ecological, and economic **sustainability**.

About **150 people attended** the field trips. Participants were very **diverse**, and they had **productive** and **open** discussions.

Open Houses (May 2006)

We held seven open houses (Burns, John Day, Enterprise, Sandy, Pendleton, La Grande, and Dayton) to share information about:

- Forest Plan Format and DRAFT Chapter 1 – The Vision
- Updated inventories of Inventoried Roadless Areas (areas with wilderness potential) and eligible wild and scenic rivers
- Other Specially Designated Areas
- Recreation Residences
- Information about how we might determine suitability of lands for OHV use, timber production, livestock grazing, and wildland fire use
- Species Diversity
- How social and economic criteria are used in planning
- Sample strategies

About **150 people attended** the open houses. The informal format facilitated **productive** and **open** discussions.

Economic Workshops

In June 2006 workshops were held in Baker and Union Counties to identify strategies to meet goals for public lands and local community goals for the future. Participants identified some common measures for tracking changes in social and economic conditions and how these potentially relate to public lands. The Revision Team is using this information as they develop the revised land management plans.

About **100 people attended** the economic workshops.

What the Forest Plan Revision Team worked on during summer and fall 2006 and winter 2006/7:

During this time, the team worked through all of the information we've collected to prepare the proposed revised forest plans. We also did the following:

- ◆ Continued to revise the desired conditions (vision).
- ◆ Reviewed other plans (such as subbasin plans, the Spirit of the Salmon Plan, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Five-Year Strategic Plan).
- ◆ Ensured consistency for fire condition class and vegetation data across the three forests, preparing information needed to determine timber and grazing suitability, getting ready to use successional models.
- ◆ Watershed assessment protocol and riparian condition inventory.
- ◆ Compiled data, populated databases, and set up models for species sustainability analyses.
- ◆ Drafted a Wilderness Needs Assessment
- ◆ Prepared social and economic data and running models.

In June 2009, the 2008 planning rule was vacated and remanded by the courts which resulted in the team using the 2000 rule as amended, which allows the Forest Service to use the provisions of the 1982 rule.

- This resulted in the revision team backing up a bit and doing additional analysis as required by the rule (benchmarks, AMS, ASQ, etc..)
- During 2009 and early 2010 the team prepared the proposed action for internal and public release
- Several forest and RO level reviews of the draft were completed

- Cooperating agencies were involved in the development of the proposed action
- Co-convenor group meetings were held to review products
- Meetings were held with several tribes
- Meeting were held with the RAC groups

In March, 2010 the draft proposed action was released to the public.

- A series of public meetings were held (Spring 2010) on each forest, in Pasco Washington, and in Portland Oregon to review the proposed action and receive comments

In 2010 scoping comments were reviewed and draft EIS alternatives were developed

- The alternatives were approved by the Forest Sups and Ro in the fall of 2010
- The DEIS was started in fall 2010/winter 2011
- The draft DEIS was reviewed (forest and Ro) July-August 2011, and January 2012
- Numerous edits were made to the DEIS following the reviews
- The WO briefing for the DEIS is scheduled for March 2012

Release of the DEIS to the public is scheduled for spring 2012

While all of the above was happening, a number of new planning rules were being released Nationally:

- Started with 2000 rule, deemed unimplementable at some point
- 2005 planning rule proposed 2005, remanded 20xx...
- 2008 rule remanded in 2009
- Currently back to using 2000 rule as amended with provisions allowing use of the 1982 planning rule
- 2012 planning rule FEIS decision in March 2012?