Nez Perce – Clearwater Forest Plan Revision

Status and Opportunities

Starting the Revision Collaborative

- Five Community Meetings – Fall 2012
  - Introduced public to forest plan revision process and asked for their participation
  - Co-Hosted by County Commissioners
- Summit – October 2012
  - For those interested in participating to help develop the collaboration process and rules of engagement
  - Held in a centralized location
  - Agreed to meet once a month on the second Saturday, rotating between Grangeville to Orofino
  - Agreed to work in smaller working groups then pull the information together in the larger meeting

Revision Collaborative

- Open to the public
- Objective: Make recommendations to the Responsible Official on Plan Components and Geographical Areas
  - Desired conditions
  - Objectives
  - Standards
  - Guidelines
  - Suitability
- Divided into working groups to facilitate discussions
- Open to input from public not able to participate in the in face meetings via e-collaboration

Collaboration Process

- Interdisciplinary Team prepares primers and draft forest plan components. This prework is shared with the Revision Collaborative via email and internet.
- At the meeting, IDT member(s) and our partners present background on the resource being discussed.
- Collaborative divides into small working groups to discuss draft plan components and recommend changes.
- Collaborative comes back together to share their recommendations and to identify any common ground.

Collaboration Process Continued

- All ideas are brought forward to advise the Responsible Official
- The IDT considers the recommendations and incorporates the recommendations, where appropriate, into the plan components.
- The IDT provides feedback on those recommendations they feel are not appropriate.

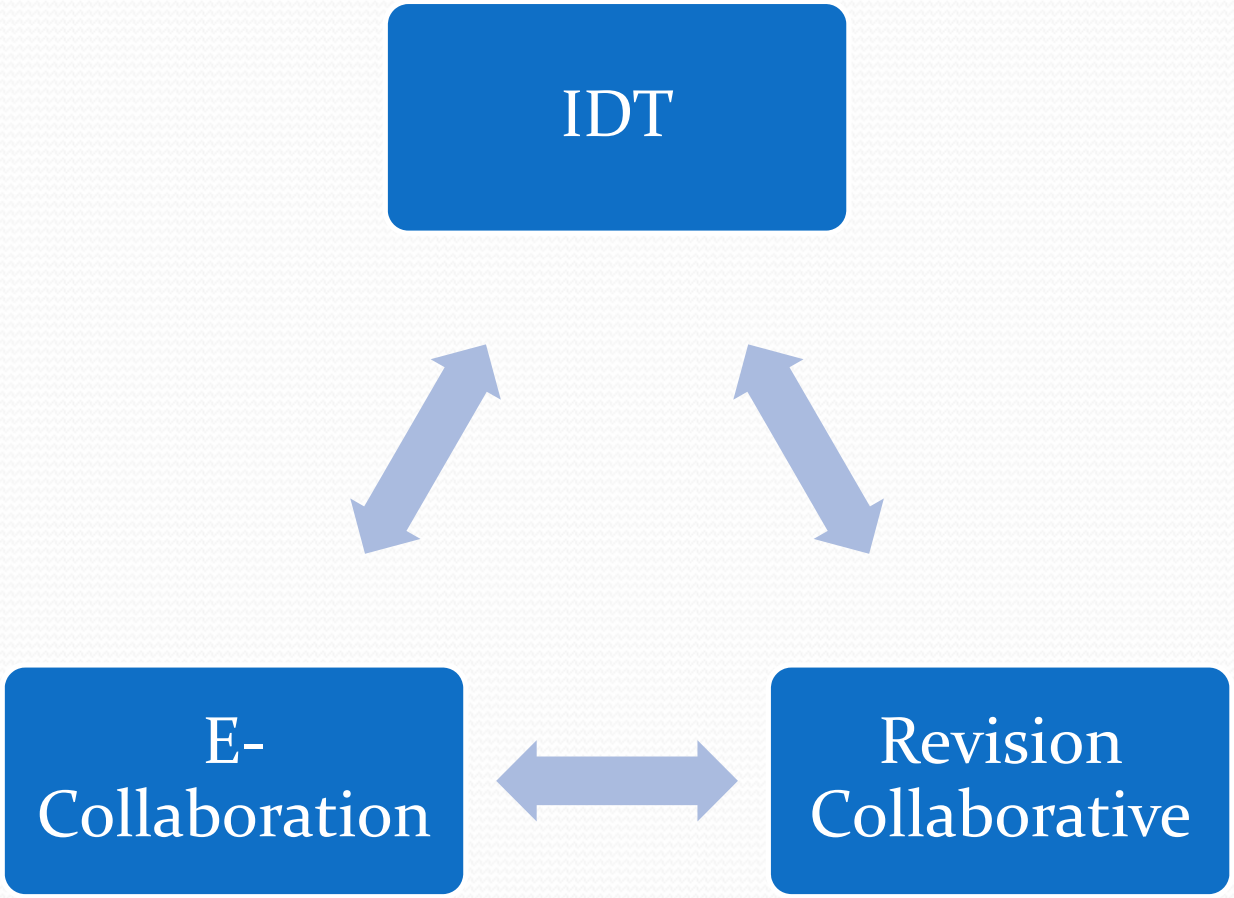
E-Collaboration

- Comments In-Box
  - For those who can't participate in person to provide input.
  - For members of the Revision Collaborative to provide additional input.
- Google Groups
  - For members of the working groups to interact and collaborate outside of the meetings.
  - Forest Service employees are monitoring discussions amongst members of working groups.

E-Collaboration

- Collaborative Mapping Tool
  - For both members of the Revision Collaborative and members of the general public to provide input that is spatial in nature.
  - Includes forest data pertinent to each resource/functional topic being addressed
  - We expect increased use of this tool later when we develop Geographical Areas and Management Areas.

Developing Draft Plan Components



Topics for Plan Components

Topics Introduced

- Cultural
- Minerals
- Lands
- Infrastructure
- Aquatics
  - Watersheds
  - Riparian
- Terrestrial
  - Forest Vegetation
  - Wildlife
  - Non-Forest Vegetation
  - Invasive Weeds

Future Topics

- Timber
- Range
- Recreation
- Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness
- Wild and Scenic Rivers
- Other Designated Areas
- Management Areas/ Geographical Areas

Community Check-In Meetings

- Objective: Inform interested publics what we've been working on and how they can provide input (either through participating in person or e-collaboration).
- Next three weeks will hold meetings in the same five communities as the original meetings.
- County Commissioners will be co-hosting meetings.
- Asking for collaborative members to share their experiences.

CHALLENGES

Staffing

- Challenge: How does a Forest take on something as large and extensive as Forest Plan Revision while continuing regular programs?
- Solution: Contracted out some key positions; IDT Leader, Forest Ecologist, Wildlife Biologist, Range.
- Challenge: We still have challenges with workload of those we haven't contracted out.
- Solution: Considering contracting out other work the specialists would do. FLT is working together to resolve priority conflicts.

Internal Collaboration

- Challenge: It's more difficult to collaborate internally than externally. The new Planning Rule delegates most decisions to the Forest Supervisor and some within the agency are struggling with the changing roles and responsibilities.
- Solution: Planning Staff is having weekly meetings with Regional Directors to address any issues that may come up. If they can't be resolved at this lower level, we have developed a process for bringing the issue forward to the Forest Supervisor and/or Regional Forester.

Collaboration Takes Time

- Challenge: Developing relationships and collaborating on something as extensive and integrated as a Forest Plan takes a lot of time.
- Solution: Encourage working groups to use Google Groups to accomplish some collaboration outside of the monthly meeting. We've just started using Google Groups so the success is unknown.
- Solution: We're letting the Revision Collaborative set the pace.

Involving Regional, State and National Interests

- Challenge: How to involve members of the public who can not participate in the collaborative meetings?
- Solution: E-Collaboration Tools. While there has been some use of these tools, they aren't yet being used to the extent we had hoped.
- Solution: Video Technology in Missoula and Boise. There has been interest in a VTC site in Moscow/Pullman area but we are limited with our technology.

Engaging Youth

- Challenge: Need to take special measures to engage youth and we have limited resources to do so.
- Solution: We've had discussions with the Washington Office on ideas to engage youth. However, we are still challenged with having the time and the knowledge on how to best engage them to get meaningful input.
- Solution: We have one younger person participating and he's shared with us some of the barriers for youth participation.

Engaging Minorities

- Challenge: The largest minority group in the area are Native Americans. We have a formal government-to-government consultation process with the Tribe and tribal members are used to expressing their interests in this formal process.
- Solution: We have hired a tribal member to be the liaison between the Tribe and the Revision Collaborative. There is continued work that we need to do to successfully incorporate tribal interests into the plan.

Diversity in Working Groups

- Challenge: Some of our working groups are lacking in a diversity of interests.
- Solution: The collaborative is requesting to combine working groups. They have become more efficient at collaboration and are recognizing the value of diversity.
- Solution: We've asked collaborative members to consider and represent others interests. This works with some success.
- Solution: We've asking collaborative members to bring others to the table.

Understanding Plan Components

- Challenge: All parties, including the IDT, Regional Office and Revision Collaborative struggle at times to understand what is an appropriate plan component.
- Solution: The IDT Leader provides constant reminders to the IDT and RO on what is an appropriate desired condition, objective, standard and guideline.
- Solution: We are posting definitions at the Revision Collaborative meetings as a reminder.

Iterative Process

- Challenge: Integrating input from the collaborative and e-collaboration and presenting that back to the collaborative for input takes time and results in a non-linear process.
- Solution: Asking Collaborative to discuss revised plan components and e-collaboration input via Google Groups.
- Challenge: Concerns have been raised by collaborative members and IDT members that integration isn't occurring.
- Solution: We continue to reiterate that we will review previous plan components for integration needs later.

What to Include in Assessment

- Challenge: IDT members struggle with what to include in the assessment. Draft Forest Service Directives do not appear to reflect the streamlined assessment concept from the Planning Rule.
- Solution: ???? We could use some help on this one!

Collaborating on Assessment and Plan Components Concurrently

- Challenge: Occasionally, we have presented assessment information to the collaborative that didn't reflect our latest knowledge and science about the resource or function being addressed.
- Solution: We just made a decision to assure the assessment includes our latest knowledge and science for the resource or function being addressed prior to submitting to the collaborative.
- Challenge: We have not been receiving a lot of input on the assessment.
- Solution: We are re-iterating at each meeting that we are collecting input on the assessment. We are highlighting this on our website.

What are we proud of?

- Members of the Revision Collaborative are becoming increasingly educated about the Planning Rule.
- They value the collaborative process that they helped develop at the summit.
- They are becoming very efficient and effective as they develop relationships and are able to cover a lot of material at every meeting.
- They value diversity of thought and are willing to bring new members along and to see other perspectives.
- As a result, they are providing us with increasingly better draft assessment and plan components.