

Umatilla National Forest Collaborative Listening Tour
Heppner District
July 16, 2011

NOTES



I. Discussion “Themes” Captured During the Tour

The following are summarized conversation themes captured by Oregon Solutions Staff during the tour. They were then refined/revised during the post-tour debrief with the participants.

Forest Conditions – conditions and metrics to describe conditions

- Fire regime and condition class as a tool for management
- Need to understand the land use history – grazing and other land uses
- Cool moist forest types can have more complex conditions
- Fuels and fuel loading stated often as management issues
- Need to recognize that dead trees have value too
- Concern about “cool moist” designation for large areas of forest due to potential for “locking it up”
- Roads are part of the impacts, costs, and opportunities of forest management.
- Basal area measurements as a guideline for management
- How use “plant association group” – the potential for the site within the context of disturbance or not?

- Impact of past and current human intervention/action. Can't remove this from consideration b/c we'll continue to impact conditions.

Treatment Options

- Discussed the use of selective harvest, fuel reduction thinning, regeneration harvest (clear cut), prescribed fire, and leaving the forest alone.
- Experimentation in areas and regarding issues with less scientific and collaborative consensus
 - role of science panel as discussed in Wyden Bill
 - opportunities for experimentation without waiting - review historic management prescription and view outcomes
- Need to understand and consider the costs of doing different types of treatments.
- Possibility of considering different types of management in riparian areas.

Scale

- Difficulty determining appropriate stand management w/out understanding the landscape context
- Discussion on managing for multiple values on every acre versus in a balance across the landscape

Collaboration

- Provides opportunities to avoid or at least limit litigation.
- Need to develop some agreement around a shared vision/goals for desired future conditions – important.
- Past collaborative efforts have produced an early agreement to “do right” for the forest and the community.
- Opportunities for adaptive management to experiment and learn in areas/issues w/out consensus?
- All perspectives presented here today are valid and collaboration creates a forum for shared understanding.
- Kevin Martin - there is a large amount of time and energy and \$ on the documentation in going through the appeals process. Could we save time and energy doing more together in a collaborative model?
- Opportunity - larger-scale planning effort - Aspen meadow restoration. There are a large # of meadows on the forest (each one is small); can they be dealt with as a group?
- There are about 80K acres of dry mixed conifer on the Heppner District - Programmatic analysis/NEPA?

Community Impacts

- How are the impacts to local communities of forest management decisions analyzed?
- What is our vision for community and forest interdependence? Do we recognize this relationship?

- Desire to maintain current sawmill/logging infrastructure before we lose that restoration tool.
- Desire to maintain FS staffs/capacity.
- Desire for local jobs and income.
- Desire for public sector income/revenue for things like schools, roads, etc.
- Need to also acknowledge the restoration job opportunities from non-timber activities (e.g culvert replacements, riparian restoration, road decommissioning, etc.).
- Desire to use local labor/contractors vs. ability to actually do so
 - Is there a need for local training? Equipment purchases? What is the reason for this?
- Recreation/Tourism impacts of forest management decisions.
- Need to balance active management between high priority restoration areas and areas that can generate revenue.
- Markets? What are the products that could be produced from the different stand types? Value vs. cost to remove.

Management Goals on the Umatilla

- What are the restoration priorities on the Umatilla? According to whom?
 - should it be in dry forest types or the more productive areas where change is happening more quickly? Dry mixed conifer? Moist mixed conifer?
- There is a difference between restoration and maintenance – don't just do restoration, need maintenance also or we will end up with more expensive restoration needs in the future. Maintenance is an investment. Also maintenance activities could get done with less controversy.
- Agency sideboards (statute, rules) limit some opportunities
- What is the role of historic range of variability in setting management goals?
- Lack of consensus on need for active management in cool moist sites
- Comment – we didn't discuss "forest health" as much as I expected

Other

- Grazing impacts; scale of grazing (appears to be very low)
- Schedule of proposed actions web site – public involvement tool
- Limitations of Listening Tour sites as representative of the Heppner District
- Aquatic/riparian conditions weren't on the Tour but are important
- There were 2 lawsuits out of all the projects put forth on the Umatilla NF last year.
- Cost of fighting fire vs. timber management. Problem snowballs and never ends.
 - Relates to structure of FS budgets. Alignment of budgets is a policy question. Fuels vs. timber vs. everything else? New integrated budget policy doesn't seem to help on the ground.
- Is wildfire always catastrophic?

II. Next Steps Conversation

The following are comments made by participants and staff during the post-tour debrief session:

- Mark Webb – have the Heppner District propose some areas for work and have us work on it.
- Todd Buchholz – standing invitation for folks to come back and look at actual project sites.
- Brian Kelly – is the thought here to develop a collaborative to address the whole Umatilla NF?
- Brett Brownscombe – collaborative efforts have really expanded around Oregon and are doing promising things. Collaborative approach is the way to address what people want to see locally. This is the bottom-up way to approach anything that happens in federal and state policy. Federal Forestlands Advisory Committee – that effort is looking at a couple big questions on forest health – including how to save money on planning/NEPA (efficiency) and getting the ecological outcomes as well as the jobs. How do we get to scale and reduce the costs and timelines of planning to get to scale sooner than later? But they can't come up with the local 'what's going to work here' solution – you can.
- Rural jobs, work in the woods is part of the Governor's vision. It's time to scale up and make this vision real. Need to incorporate all the issues in the watershed, not just trees. We'll keep pressuring on that. Things won't look the same that they used to, we need to keep diversifying and incentivizing things like biomass, etc. Think outside the box and come up with new solutions. This is a big priority for the Governor.
- Mike Cloughesy – who should be here that wasn't?
- High Ridge Watershed Study – should look into that.

III. Tour Attendees

1. Scott Aycock	OR Solutions
2. Mike Cloughesy	OFRI
3. Lineah Barnett	North Fork J.D. Watershed
4. Mike Billman	Malheur Lumber Co.
5. Kevin Birch	ODF
6. Stanley Boatman	Boise
7. Rick Brown	no affiliation
8. Brett Brownscombe	OR Governor's Office
9. Todd Buchholz	Umatilla NF
10. John Buckman	ODF
11. Jean Cassidy	no affiliation
12. Kathleen Cathey	Senator Wyden
13. Mark Davidson	Union County
14. Jonathon Day	Forest Service
15. Elaine Eisenbrown	North Fork J.D. Watershed
16. Jay Gibbs	USDA-NRCS
17. Ron Haqueson	Lake Penland

18. David Hatfield	Umatilla NF
19. Mike Hayward	Wallowa County
20. Mark Henjum	USFS
21. Stephen Todd Jankowski	Forest Service
22. Irene Jerome	AFRC
23. Brian Kelly	Hells Canyon Preservation Council
24. Kacee Lathrop	USDA-NRCS
25. Tim Lillebo	Oregon Wild
26. Ivan Maluski	Sierra Club
27. Gary Miller	USFWS
28. Rick Minster	Business Oregon
29. Vince Naughton	no affiliation
30. Turner Odell	Oregon Consensus
31. Ed Pearson	Blue Mountain Lumber Products
32. Dave Powell	Umatilla NF
33. Mary Scurlock	Pacific Rivers Council
34. Mark Stern	Nature Conservancy
35. Glen Ward	Lake Penland
36. Mark Webb	Grant County

