Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) Meeting Summary
University of Eastern Oregon, Hoke Hall Room 339, La Grande, OR
January 28, 2020
10:30 am – 3:30 pm PST

Attending: Bill Harvey (Baker County, Oregon), Bruce Eddy (ODFW), Carl Scheeler (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), Charles Amerein (Columbia County, Washington), Courtney Cromwell (Regional Solutions, Oregon Governor’s Office), Craig Trulock (Malheur National Forest, USFS), Darcy Wesema (Umatilla Forest, USFS), Eric Quaempts (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), Greg Wolf (County Solutions, Association of Oregon Counties), Jim Hamsher (Grant County, Oregon), John Huffman (USDA Rural Development), Julia Riber (USFS), Kacee Lathrop (NRCS), Kathleen Cathey (U. S. Senator Wyden), Lisa Northrop (USFS), Mark Owens (Harney County, Oregon), Patty Dorroh (Harney County, Oregon) Paul Anderes (Union County, Oregon), Sam Palmer (Grant County, Oregon), Steve Pozzanghera (WDFW), Susan Roberts (Wallowa County, Oregon), Todd Nash (Wallowa County, Oregon), Tom Montoya (Wallowa Whitman National Forest, USFS), Tony Svejcar (Eastern Oregon Counties Natural Resources Consultant), Travis Medema (ODF), Tucker Billman (U. S. Representative Walden)

Attending via phone: Bill Lind: Representative (NOAA), Bobby Brunoe (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs), Calla Hagle (Burns Paiute Tribe), Dale Bambrick (Eastern Washington, National Marine Fisheries Service), Sara Sefenmeyer

Facilitator: Laurel Singer (National Policy Consensus Center) with meeting support from Eileen McLellan (Community Solutions of Central Oregon).

Welcome, Overview & Introductions: Why here, why now, why this group
Susan Roberts, Lisa Northrop, and Mark Owens convened the meeting and explained the focus was to continue work on the Draft Operating Principles document and start to identify the categories of issue to be addressed in the forest plan. After introductions, the current BIC members list was distributed and attendees were asked to update names and make corrections of those currently participating. Susan Roberts requested that Mark Owens, a previous Harney County Commissioner and likely to be appointed Oregon State Representative from District 60, continue his membership as a BIC co-convener. The group indicated their support for Mark to continue in this role.

Draft BIC Operating Principles – Review Revisions
The group continued to work through operating principles that would guideline BIC’s work and addressed the following:

Under “Decision Making” the suggestion was to add the word “full” consensus when working toward a joint recommendation? Although full consensus of agreement from the membership of BIC may not be possible, the group ultimately saw this as their aspiration.

Delineating expected outcomes. A question was raised about whether to clearly outline expected outcomes in the operating principles. Overall the group expressed:
The outcomes are hard to define out the outset, but once the actual process is started, realistic expectations may become clearer. This is a living document that can be changed.

The group clarified that the primary expectation/outcomes is that the BIC will make recommendations to the USFS that the USFS will use to draft a plan that will have broad support.

The question regarding whether to have a plan for all 3 forests or some variation is expected to be part of the BIC recommendations to the USFS.

It was suggested that the overview of what was in the document be consistent with what was actually in the document (so either eliminate a reference to expectations being defined or actually define expectations).

**Members.** The group discussed whether elected state representatives and senators should be included as BIC Members. The group agreed that if an OR or WA state elected leader from a region in which the Blue Mountains reside requested membership, they could serve on the BIC.

The group also discussed state agency representation, specifically Washington State’s Department of Ecology or Oregon’s DEQ. One on hand, group members thought these state agencies should be included because they could object to the final plan if not brought along in the process. On the other hand, group members had concerns about opening the door to too many state agencies and risking being too large to get work done.

- One option was to assure BIC members liaison to the entities they represent such as DEQ and the Department of Ecology and in Oregon, Jason Minor heads up the Natural Resources team and the Regional Solutions Coordinator would be sure to keep him in the loop.
- Travis Medema and Bruce Eddy committed to gather more input the group should consider regarding including Oregon’s DEQ and Washington State’s Department of Ecology on the BIC.

NOAA representatives expressed some concern about whether they could serve as voting members of the BIC without risking the perception of bias in their consultation process. They reaffirmed their commitment to be engaged in the BIC to offer advisory input at the least and would work with USFS and their legal counsel to develop a proposal for their membership to bring back to the next meeting.

**The steering committee.** While there is currently no limit on steering committee members, the group supported the operating guidelines that, once adopted, would limit membership to five representatives. Current members are Carl Scheeler (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), Mark Owens (Oregon State Representative, House District 60 and past Harney County Commissioner), Lisa Northrop (USFS), Susan Roberts (Wallowa County, Oregon), Peter Daugherty (ODF) with Travis Medema as an alternate to Peter, Paul Anderes (Union County, Oregon). Greg Wolf (AOC), Tony Svejcar (EOCA), and Julia Riber (USFS) attend as staff to the steering committee along with the NPCC facilitator.

**First Foods Management and Forestry Applications Presentation**

Eric Quaempts, Director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Department of National Resources, and a Yakama tribal member presented on the First Foods Management and Forestry Applications
based on their First Foods Vision and Umatilla River Vision. The First Foods, water, salmon (fish), deer (big game species) cous (roots) and berries, are deeply ingrained in tribal religion, traditions and cultural rituals. As Eric explained, “The foods are made to take care of the people, but our reciprocal responsibility is to take care of the foods.” The First Foods concept, which relies on traditional ecology, cultural and scientific knowledge, is integrated into and guides forest management practices as outlined in the Umatilla River Vision. Eric explained that in focusing on the sustainability of first foods, forest health naturally follows. An article Eric co-authored entitled, “Aligning environmental management with ecosystem resilience: a First Foods example from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Oregon, USA” can be found by clicking this link.

**Review of Issues and Framework**
The first phase of the BIC’s work, as presented and supported in the last meeting, is to build an understanding of and frame the key issues that need to be addressed by the forest plan. The conveners shared a draft proposal for the BIC to complete phase one of its work: 1) Identify the categories of issues and the once those are defined, 2) work toward framing each issue 3) Set up subgroups that would engage community resources as needed for deeper analysis and building possible zones of agreements for the BIC to consider. Based on the objections to the plan, prior listening sessions, and dialogue between counties and USFS, the conveners presented the following draft list as issue categories for discussion:

- Economy: How to sustain and grow local communities
- Access and Habitat Fragmentation
- Livestock and Grazing
- Wildfire Management and Fire Suppression
- Fisheries and Hydrology
- Post-wildfire Timber Salvage
- Timber harvest and forest health

Additional themes emerging in the discussion:
- Creating a common purpose/vision for the BIC could be helpful. Could review the vision in the original forest plan and look at EOCA Principles of Forest Management to assist with this. It was mentioned that the principles of forest management, developed by the Eastern Oregon Counties Association, had a great deal of overlap with the First Foods Vision. It was suggested that adding economic benefit to communities and recreation to the First Foods concept could be the basis of a common vision for the BIC.
- In approaching each issue, may be helpful to begin with identifying the “desired state”
- In addressing travel management and access, research is needed on the impact of roads on wildlife.
- In addressing individual issues, it will be important to consider a wholistic view as all these issues are interconnected in the ecosystem of the forests.

**Socio-Economic Research and Sub-Committee:**
In response to the group’s request at the last meeting, Abigail Whittaker of California State University, Chico, provided an overview of the Weaverville report, which explains the socio-economic analysis of California
communities affected by the changes in forests. Slides from the presentation are at https://www.pdx.edu/npcc/blues-intergovernmental-council-meeting-materials.

Paul Anderes presented a proposal for a BIC subcommittee that would initiate a Social and Economic Analysis for the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision with the goal of characterizing the social and economic conditions for the communities affected by the Blue Mountain Forest Plan. The scope of work, to be completed in approximately 18 months, is outlined as follows.

1) A community-level economic and demographic profile for 12-15 representative communities within the planning area.
2) Business surveys within each community pertaining to the perceived impacts of US Forest Service policy and practices on business conditions within each community.

The approach for the first two outcomes follows the outline established by the Sustainable Forest Action Coalition (SFAC) and the Center for Economic Development, California State University, Chico (CED). A complete collection of community mini profiles can be found at https://forestcommunityresilience.org. The SFAC/CED effort involved rural communities in California and part of the focus was on forest policy effects on community vitality.
3) Scenario-based modeling of potential future economic conditions. This effort will model economic futures for the various communities based on different levels of forest harvest, livestock grazing, fish restoration, or other scenarios developed by the BIC.

The full proposal is found on the link above. The group supported the scope of work, with the suggestion that a representative of the cities be added to the advisory committee, with the understanding Paul will begin efforts to form the advisory committee. Funding, estimated to be approximately $150,000, is continuing to be sought through Business Oregon, USFS, and other sources.

Next Steps:
- Facilitator will update the operating principles to incorporate changes.
- Paul A, Greg W., Julia Riber, and Tony S will form a sub-committee to: identify goals/outcomes and membership of advisory group; get Eastern Oregon University’s Rural Economic Vitality (REV) Center engaged and partnering with the CED; serve as a liaison between REV and CED; make formal invitations to steering committee.
- Travis Medema and Bruce Eddy committed to gather more input the group might consider regarding including Oregon’s DEQ and Washington State’s Department of Ecology on the BIC.
- USFS will work with NOAA regarding their membership in BIC

Next Meeting:
The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 25 from 10:30 am – 3:30 pm at the University of Eastern Oregon in La Grande, Oregon in Room 339 of Hoke Union Building.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:30 pm.