Performing organization name: Oregon Association of Counties

Project Title: Social and Economic Analysis for Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision

Goal Statement: To characterizes the social and economic conditions for the communities affected by the Blue Mountain Forest Plan.

General Description:

This work will support recent efforts to revise the Blue Mountain Forest Plan (BMFP). As part of that effort, an intergovernmental council (referred to as the Blues Intergovernmental Council or BIC) was developed. The BIC (https://www.pdx.edu/ngcc/blues-intergovernmental-council-meeting-materials) and the committee which formed the BIC identified social and economic analysis as one of the early needs in revising the BMFP. The structure of the BIC is such that subcommittees will lead in specific subject areas and report to the larger group as tasks are accomplished. There is a Socio-economic Subcommittee, which will oversee the efforts outlined in this statement of work (SOW). There is also allowance for an Advisory Board of social science professionals to provide input to the BIC.

The analysis defined in this SOW will include the geographical area influenced by the three national forests in eastern Oregon and southwestern Washington; the Malheur, Umatilla, and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests. This analysis will support US Forest Service planning efforts within the three forests.

The outputs of this work will include three primary products:

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.

**Economic and Demographic Mini Profile:**

The communities to be profiled will be selected by the BIC Socio-economic Subcommittee with input from CED and the BIC Socio-economic Advisory Board. There will be a cross-section of communities including: **forest focused communities** that historically had forest-based activities as a major component of the local economy; **forest-peripheral communities** where forest-based activities are important, but not dominant; and **regional gateway communities** that tend to be larger towns where forest-based income is a minor component of the economy. These community types are described in the following publication: Central Sierras: Perceived Impacts of Forest Policy Change, 2016-2019 Business Survey Results (version 1.3 October 23, 2019 Center for Economic Development). The type of data to be highlighted can be found in the mini profiles referenced in the previous section (see website). There may be some variation in data available at the state level (Oregon and Washington may be slightly different from California). The template developed by CED is very easy to follow and each page of data provides the source of the data at the bottom, making the document very transparent. We will follow that same format.

**Business Survey:**

This part of the project will require coordination between the BIC Socio-economic Subcommittee, the Socio-economic Advisory Board, CED, and the Eastern Oregon University Rural Engagement and Vitality Center (REV). The questions for the survey will be developed with input from all four entities. The BIC Socio-economic Subcommittee will approve the questions and outline for conducting the survey. The REV will be responsible for working with the communities to gather the information and the summarization of data will be conducted by REV with oversight from CED. The surveys will provide work experience for students in the REV program, and will provide a link between this effort and the local businesses.

**Scenario or What/If Modeling:**

This part of the project will use economic modeling to project the economic impacts of the various potential options associated with the Blue Mountain Forest Plan revision. The BIC and Forest Service will have many decisions to make during the revision process. Understanding the
potential economic outcomes of those choices will be an important part of the planning process. The EOU/REV program has the tools to conduct these analyses. The BIC Socio-economic Subcommittee will serve as the interface between the BIC and REV for developing the most appropriate scenarios to model.

**Timeline:**

The goal is to have results in no more than 18 months from the initiation of the project.