

Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) Meeting Summary

University of Eastern Oregon, Hoke Hall Room 339, La Grande, OR

February 25, 2020

10:30 am – 3:00 pm PST

Attending: Amanda Lindsay (USFS), Bill Harvey (Baker County, Oregon), Bruce Eddy (ODF), Calla Hagle (Burns Paiute Tribe), Charles Amerein (Columbia County, Washington), Courtney Crowell (Regional Solutions - Oregon Governor's Office), Craig Trulock (USFS), Darcy Weseman (USFS), Eric Watrud (USFS), Greg Wolf (County Solutions - AOC), Jessica Keys (Sen. Jeff Merkley), Jim Hamsher (Grant County, Oregon), Julia Riber (USFS), Justin Dixon (Garfield County, Washington), Kacee Lathrop (NRCS), Kathleen Cathey (Sen. Ron Wyden), Kristen Shelman (Harney County, Oregon), Lisa Northrop (USFS), Mark Kirsch (ODFW), Patti Adair (Deschutes County, Oregon), Paul Anderes (Union County, Oregon), Sam Palmer (Grant County, Oregon), Sarah Fesenmyer (NOAA Fisheries, Idaho), Scott Myers (Wallowa County, Oregon), Steve Pozzanghera (WDFW), Susan Roberts (Wallowa County, Oregon), Todd Nash (Wallowa County, Oregon), Tom Montoya (USFS), Tony Svejcar (Natural Resource Consultant, Eastern Oregon Counties), Travis Medema (ODFW), Tucker Billman (Sen. Greg Walden)

Attending via phone: Bill Lind (NOAA Fisheries, Idaho), Carl Scheeler (Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation), Marissa Meyers (USFWS), Patty Dorroh (Harney County, Oregon)

Facilitator: Laurel Singer (National Policy Consensus Center) with meeting support from Gary Winterstein (Community Solutions of Central Oregon)

Welcome, Meeting Overview & Introductions:

Conveners opened the meeting and provided a review of the process to organize the BIC so far. This is the fourth meeting to launch the BIC – a concept that emerged from nine-months of conversation between the Eastern Oregon Counties and USFS about how to work together after the USFS decided to withdraw its decision regarding the revised plan for the Blues Forests. The BIC represents a new and pioneering way of approaching forest planning. The initial work of this council will involve making some areas of agreement we can recommend the USFS in revising the forest plan. The initial work of this group has been on getting organized.

The initial focus has been on making sure potential members first understood and were willing to support the concept in general and to map out how the group is going to do its work. This has involved working through the operational principles and other key aspects of how we will be doing our work together.

Accomplishments this far have included

- a. successfully work through over half of the operating principles,
- b. creating a framework and timeline for the stages of the work (a process map)
- c. a list of the issues the group will need to address,
- d. an understanding of the CTUIR first foods vision and its relationship to resource management
- e. approval of the advancement of the socio-economic assessment committee.

The focus of today's session is on continuing to clarify how we intend to work together and begin to get organized with a focus in the morning on the BICs operational principles and our common purpose and after lunch to consider how to approach the issues identified last week

Organizing as a Council - Continue to Review & Revise Draft BIC Operating Charter:

The group continued to work through seeking agreement on the remaining aspects of the operating principles. The following changes were suggested:

Communication Guidelines.

Overall, members supported the communication guidelines with the suggestion that language be added to the effect that BIC business be done in BIC meetings. By that, members wanted to underscore that decisions and concerns would all be back to the large forum for open discussion. While ideas, suggestions and conflicts might be discussed outside the room, members would refrain from decisions and deal making outside the full forum.

Membership.

NOAA confirmed their commitment to the BIC and intend to participate. The group reaffirmed their expectation that members serve as liaisons to the entities/constituencies they represent, providing regular updates and bringing feedback from these entities/constituencies to the BIC. Staff of the Oregon Department of Forestry will serve as a specific point of contact for the Oregon State Department of Environmental Quality and the Governor's Round Table and staff from Washington State Fish and Wildlife will serve as the point of contact for the Washington State Department of Ecology assuring leadership in these state programs are up to date on BIC progress and bringing their feedback to the BIC. The group reaffirmed their expectations that representatives of these and other state programs can also be invited to engage in the BIC to provide technical support and engagement on subcommittees. The group identified the need for outreach to Nez Perce Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs to engage their involvement. Susan Roberts confirmed she is currently in conversation with representatives of the Nez Perce Tribe and Patti Adair said she would reach out the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs.

Subcommittees.

The members supported the use of subcommittees as important to more deeply explore issues, gather technical data and explore alternatives. The group underscored the importance that the operating principles reflect the importance of subcommittees to keep the larger BIC informed of their work and that all decisions be brought back to the full forum. Additionally, the group reaffirmed the need that each subcommittee be convened by at least two BIC members, representing different entities of the membership, who would have responsibility to assure there is a balance of members on the subcommittee who brought a diverse range of perspectives and expertise.

Media and Public Inquiries.

The group discussed how to handle media and public inquiries. Co-convenor expressed the ability to field initial process related questions and could serve as the point of contact/spokespeople for the BIC. However, the group agreed this role should include the flexibility to delegate responsibility to other BIC members with the best technical or working knowledge related to a specific inquiry. The group also agreed that they could also develop talking points or other communication strategies as needed.

Meeting Time and Location.

The group agreed that particularly during the fall and winter, meetings would continue to be held in La Grande. During the other seasons, meeting location should rotate to regions of the Blues Mountains including Pendleton, Baker City, and John Day in Oregon, and possibly Walla-Walla, Washington. Locations would be selected according to ease of travel via an airport and where meeting facilities had adequate technology to host a conference line.

Agreeing on Common Purpose:

The steering committee presented a draft common purpose statement that would be included in the operating principles as follows:

“Our common purpose is the sustainability of our communities’ economic and social health and enhancing environmental stewardship. By integrating the Tribes First Foods, Counties’ principals and Federal and State land management laws, we will develop zones of agreement that can be used by USFS to develop a broadly supported blue mountain forest plan.”

The group discussed changes to the draft purpose. All agreed that the first line should stay as is with the word culture added to “social” health. Discussion focused on how to adapt language in the second sentence to support the flexibility that appeared to be the intent of the statement such as integrating ‘interests and principles’ rather than focusing on policy or law. Additionally, language such as ‘values’ were viewed as more inclusive in serving to expand the BIC Common Purpose, as was recommended that the second sentence include ‘To respect, and integrate...’ The steering committee will adapt the purpose statement to incorporate this input.

Organizing for Phase 1 Issue Exploration - Looking for Interconnections Across Issues:

The group discussed how to best define the issues the BIC would explore in subcommittees, as the list they approved last meeting would be too many to try to accomplish, while acknowledging that all issues were interconnected. Conveners had the group exercise divide themselves between four topics to brainstorm all the issues that would fall under that topic: economics, animals, land, and water. The groups rotated to another topic and then a summary of all the issues identified in each category is found in Appendix A.

The group overall said this exercise highlighted that there are an immense number of issues in each category and many are overlapping. The group agreed that progress would mean making some decisions on where to focus and being sure to bring back to the large forum information about what the group was working on and new issues that might emerge.

Selecting Topics/Issues for Sub Committees:

Overall, the group felt that it was most important to focus on the areas where there had been the most objections. Commissioners confirmed that the list generated at the last meeting encompassed the areas of concern. The group condensed the issues and agreed they would serve as the subcommittees, along with the socio-economic assessment subcommittee:

- Access, Habitat, Wilderness and Set Asides

★ National
★ Policy
★ Consensus
★ Center

- Wildfire Management, Fire Suppression, and Post Wildfire Salvage
- Livestock, Grazing, Fisheries and Hydrology
- Timber Harvest and Forest Health

Populating Sub Committees:

The group agreed on the need for each subcommittee to be co-convened by at least two BIC members, representing different entities of the membership. Beyond working on their major issue, the subcommittee would identify a facilitator and/or notetaker, the role to be played by experts external to BIC, and other members assigned sub-group actions.

Next Steps:

Facilitator will work with the steering committee to integrate changes to the operating principles. The steering committee would come back with a recommendation for co-conveners at the next meeting.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be Tuesday, March 31, from 10:30 am – 3:00 pm at the University of Eastern Oregon in La Grande, Oregon in Room 339 of Hoke Union Building.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:00 pm.

**Appendix A:
Issues identified under small group topics**

Economic	Animals
<p align="center"> Recreation Cattle Timber Mining Community Health Workforce, Jobs, Wages Employment & Unemployment Health Impacts Wildfires & Disasters Emergency Response & Recovery Existing & Developing Infrastructure/Roads Poverty Societal Issues Demographics Housing Energy Community Viability & Vitality Public & Private Partnerships Education Carbon Investment Air Quality Electricity Environmental Controls </p>	<p align="center"> Grazing (Multi) Hunting Elk/Goats Mule Deer Big Horn Economics Water/Riparian Game Species/Wild Horses Wildfire/Humans Roads/Density Wildfire Connectivity/Forest Stocking Cultures Wolves/Predators Fencing Management/Practices Recreation Habitat/Restoration Threatened & Endangered Species </p>
Land	Water
<p align="center"> Access/Roads Existing/Proposed Wilderness Grazing Fire/Salvage Timber Harvest/Markets Forest Health Sovereignty Boundaries/Ownership Shared Stewardship Timber Practices Herbicide Use Land Management Activities/Objectives First Foods Recreation/Trails/Campgrounds Special Destinations Good Neighbor Authority Wild & Scenic Rivers Wildfire Management/Habitat/Risk/ Habitat Connectivity Big Game/Private Land Impacts Outfitters & Guides Hunting Fishing Access Gathering/Plant Materials Sacred/Cultural Sites/Practices Special Uses/Communications Sites Mining/Erosion Road/Trail Management Connecting to Biomass/Renewables/New Tech Open/Closed Lands & Roads Historic Lands </p>	<p align="center"> Recreation/Impacts Fish Protection Watershed Restoration & Management Irrigation & Flooding Prevention Riparian Management & Grazing Upland forest management Forest Management Wild & Scenic Rivers Surface & Subsurface Uses/Impacts Road Locations for Stream Crossings Access to Waters Water Quality Ground Cover Sediment Flow Agriculture/Downstream Impacts Roads/Infrastructure Forest Density/Snow Load Affects Water Storage/Assured Drinking Water Endangered Species/Access Climate Trends Flooding/Land Slides Wildfire/Impacts Dams Juniper Removal Aquaifers Ocean Conditions Wildlife & Fish Impacts Seasonal Flows Red Trampling (Fish eggs being stepped on) </p>