

Draft Operating Principles For the Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC)

This document is to provide a framework for how the BIC intends to conduct its work, including defining the group's scope, purpose and outcomes, decision-making processes, membership, roles, structure and commitments.

Members recognize the BIC represents an opportunity to approach forest planning and management in a new way. They have agreed to support these operating principles, recognizing this are guidelines for participation and are not a commitment to any predetermined outcome or substitute for existing NEPA, consultation, or the objection process. This is a living document that is intended to be adapted as needed by the BIC.

Scope

The Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) is to serve as an overarching entity for planning and guidance around land management issues related to the Blue Mountain Forests (consisting of the Wallowa-Whitman, Malheur, and Umatilla Forests) including but not limited to the forest plan revisions.

The BIC will serve as a forum for members to work together to create zones of agreement to guide programmatic planning, frame future work to achieve mutual goals, identify innovative pilots, remove barriers to working together, and align work for implementation of efforts. In working toward agreement, members seek to create a table where they can be honest and constructive in their communication, surface and work through differences and seek mutual understanding as the basis for joint recommendations and actions.

Common Purpose & Outcome

Decision Making

The BIC will seek mutual understanding in working toward joint recommendations. Members will seek to make decisions by full consensus, meaning all members could live with a decision. If the group has reached a point where all members believe a thorough attempt to understand all perspectives has been made and further discussion will not bring any new understanding yet there is not a full consensus, group members can opt to stand aside to allow a decision to move forward, can provide an opportunity for members to submit a summary that characterizes the nature of their concern.

Roles and Structure

Members - Membership consists of leaders from Federal, State, Local and Tribal Governmental entities. Membership is voluntary although attendance is expected at meetings once an invitation to participate has been accepted. Entities to be invited are:

- Federal agencies: US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS), Rural Development (RD), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); US Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Fish and Wildlife (USFW); US Department of Commerce; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- Tribal Governments: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Burns Paiute Tribe
- State Government: Oregon State Governor's Office, Washington State Governor's Office, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Washington State Department of Natural Resources (WA-DNR)
- County Government: All affected Oregon and Washington Counties
- State elected representatives and senators upon request to the BIC.

Membership is by invitation only and requires endorsement by governmental entity. Membership can be modified by agreement of the full BIC.

Members are expected to serve as liaisons to the entities/constituencies they represent, providing regular updates and bringing feedback from these entities/constituencies to the BIC.

Federal congressional leaders and their staff, are welcome to attend as observers of the BIC for the purpose of staying informed about BIC activities.

Steering Committee

A steering committee consisting of five representatives of the engaged entities and the facilitation team to provide oversight of the BIC. The Steering committee has responsibility for helping to insure the BIC is making progress toward shared objective, including planning the agendas and creating other work products for each for BIC meeting. The Steering Committee will meet via conference call between full group meetings to discuss logistics and process.

Conveners:

Leadership from the USFS and representative leadership of the eastern Oregon counties will serve as co-conveners. Co-conveners will serve as the point of contact for the BIC, convene full

[meetings, help frame issues, keep the BIC moving toward identified outcomes, and chair the steering committee.](#)

Sub Committees

Subcommittees would be formed as needed to assist the BIC in taking advantage of expertise and information that could assist them in conducting their work on specific topic areas such as grazing, socio-economic conditions, etc. The BIC would establish the questions to be addressed by a subcommittee. At least two BIC members would serve as the conveners of a subcommittee. Members of the subcommittee would be by invitation and would represent a balance of public interest along with representatives of governmental entities. Sub-committee conveners will decide whether to invite members of the subcommittee to present to the full BIC or to provide reports themselves.

Meeting times and location

The BIC will meet regularly. It will initially meet each month from approximately 10:30 am to 3:30 pm. and adjust the schedule as needed. ~~Starting 2020, these meetings will be held on~~ the last Tuesday of each month [at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande, Oregon](#). Meetings will be arranged for travel ease or to address specific topics (with tours, for example). Subcommittee meetings will meet between full group meetings to develop draft work products for full group review, discussion and direction.

Facilitator

A neutral facilitator will be selected by the steering committee to help support the process. [Funding for these services will be paid for through joint sponsorship from member entities. Initial funding is sponsored by the Eastern Oregon Counties Association, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Department of Fish and Wildlife.](#)

Public Participation

Meeting will be open to the public. Up to fifteen minutes will be scheduled at each meeting for [2-3 minutes/person for](#) public comment.

Action Items Memo/Meeting Summary

In order to assist the BIC in documenting its activities, the facilitator ~~with the steering committee,~~ will prepare and distribute ~~an action items memo to all participants, including a meeting summary,~~ after each meeting [detailing agreed upon action](#). These ~~memos summaries will be intended to~~ convey general information on topics discussed and ~~will~~ help ensure that timelines for completing agreed upon actions are clear to all participants and can be distributed. All entities will take responsibilities to post meeting notices and summaries if required by law.

Communicating Externally

Information and materials related to full BIC meetings will be made available through a project page on the National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC) website at <https://www.pdx.edu/npcc/blues-intergovernmental-council-meeting-materials> and other venues as appropriate to ensure that the group's work remains accessible to external audiences.

Individual members speaking to the media will make it clear they are not speaking on behalf of the BIC.

BIC members are expected to keep colleagues and constituents informed about the process and to bring relevant information back to the group. Individuals are expected to bring concerns directly to the individual or the group.

Meeting guidelines and commitments

The BIC strives to create an environment that supports open discussion where mutual understanding of needs and interests is sought. All members agree to hold each other accountable to the established communication guidelines and principles, which include the commitment to:

Structure Conversation around Zones of Agreement

Focus on finding areas of common interest or agreement.

Structure meetings for two-way conversation.

Share pros and cons of actions and agreements

Present information in a clear, concise, simple way that invites engagement and input.

Communicate Effectively

Delve deeper into complex issues so that they can provide clear information to their communities.

Accept the limitation of law. If problematic, work to identify the appropriate venue for resolution.

Abide by Ground Rules during the Meetings

- Don't Refrain frommake personal attacks—stay focused on the issue.
- Be respectful—even if you have an agenda.

- Stay open.
- Explain terms in a clear, understandable way.
- Stop and ask if something isn't clear; take time to explain when asked.
- Be honest—if you have something on your mind, say it.
- Don't agree to something you cannot fulfill.

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