

Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) Meeting Summary

March 26, 2021

2:30 pm – 5:00 pm

Zoom Video Conference

Members Attending: Charles Amerein, Paul Anderes, Anthony Botello, Marcie Carter, Leisa Cook, Courtney Crowell, Tony DeBone, Dan Dorran, Patty Dorroh, Nick Goldstein, Jim Hamsher, Bill Harvey, Mark Kirsch, Maura Laverty, Amanda Lindsay, Heidi McRoberts, Tom Montoya, Todd Nash, Lisa Northrup, Sam Palmer, Steven Pozzanghera, Julia Riber, Kevin Robinette, Susan Roberts, Carl Scheeler, Kristen Shelman, Tom Schoenfelder, Dan Shively, Emmit Taylor, Greg Tompkins, Darcy Weseman, Greg Wolf

Interested Parties Attending: Shirley Allman, Nick Audio, Nils Christofferson, Howard Teasley

Facilitator: Laurel Singer, National Policy Consensus Center (note-taker Cat McGinnis)

Meeting Materials: All meeting materials can be found at [March 26, 2021, Meeting Materials | Portland State University \(pdx.edu\)](#)

Action Items

1. The full BIC group should read the forest health desired conditions and get comments or edits to Laurel by Friday, April 16. The subcommittee will then meet to incorporate edits on Wednesday, April 21 1:00 – 4:00 pm. Those submitting comments are encouraged to attend.
2. All—Let Laurel know of any potential meeting locations large enough for social distancing. Paul Anderes will check out venues in Union County. Dan Dorran will check on EOTECH.

Welcome

Convener Susan Roberts and Lisa Northrup provided opening comments emphasizing that work in the subcommittees has been robust, and some challenging word-smithing has been admirably accomplished. The process has been good.

Discussion of Forest Health Desired Conditions Draft

- Subcommittee members included Susan, Sam, Travis, Lena, Amanda, Joe, Eric, Brett, Tom, Dan, Nick, and others who often showed up to the meeting. This group started out as wildfire and salvage then morphed into forest health with the goal of determining how to achieve a balance between the environment and the economy.

- In developing the desired conditions, the group aimed at a high level to allow land managers on the ground to have tools for fire, fuels, etc., and to still support healthy socioeconomics.
- The group looked at management tools that could be used “if not prohibited by law” and tried not to be too specific regarding location. They looked at wild land and urban interfaces to put protections in place.
- The group talked about forest resiliency—how to move forward with forest health while addressing the human side.
- A priority is keeping firefighters safe. The group identified ways to do that through mechanical thinning, forest clean-up, prescribed fire. They discussed decisions about allowing natural fire and, if fire occurs, whether salvage is valuable or would flood the market.
- They looked at forest densities to reduce fire risk, insects, disease, and to minimize structural loss.
- They looked at old forest structure and the resiliency it provides and addressed snags for habitat, but avoided tying managers’ hands by requiring X snags per acre. Such decisions can be made on the ground at the project level.
- It was asked, given that the BIC’s role is to provide sidebars, is this document the kind of recommendation the group was hoping for? The group was happy with the result—the process brought in the right people, addressed matters at the right level and was also aspirational. The product will serve the forest service well.

Action: The full BIC group should read the forest health desired conditions and get comments and edits to Laurel by Friday, April 16. The subcommittee will then meet to incorporate edits on Wednesday, April 21 from 1-4 p.m. Those submitting comments are encouraged to attend.

Discussion of Grazing and Livestock *Final* Desired Conditions

- Subcommittee members included Todd, Kristen, Calla, Jason, Mara, Nick, Craig, Carl, Mark, Sarah, Charles, Bill, Tom, Justin, Marissa, Emmit, Dan, and Julia and many others who often showed up for meetings.
- The group distributed a final draft three weeks ago and has integrated BIC comments to complete this final version.
- During its meetings, the subcommittee had robust discussion. They recognized that it is important for communities to have grazing, fisheries are contentious, and some hydrology issues fell outside the group’s purview.
- There was a concern that the group didn’t find a place to address grazers as individuals. The commenter would like to see some specifics on familiar pieces of range. The issue was addressed in a glossary. Perhaps the socioeconomic subcommittee will take up this issue.
- In its meetings, the group discussed forestlands and rangelands. They went for consistent language, having identified a lot of variation. They held to a goal of keeping the document public-friendly.
- Key points of the document:

- Attempt to achieve good distribution of vegetation and water.
- Better develop water in uplands to keep livestock out of riparian areas.
- What's desired regarding fisheries, hydrology, and watersheds without reference to laws that USFS is already bound by?
- Address what tribes need regarding fish.
- The subcommittee's support for the document: 75 percent were enthusiastically supportive and all could live with it.
- *Consensus poll regarding final document: Laurel explained that one's support means they are comfortable taking the document to their decision makers. All members reported that they can live with the document. No one responded with a thumbs-down. The document will now move forward to USFS.*

Quick Updates—Socioeconomic and Access Subcommittees

- *Access subcommittee:* In desired conditions, still need to draft language to address set-asides using wording that leaves flexibility for USFS. Hope to have a final draft soon.
- *Socioeconomic subcommittee:*
 - Risk and opportunity index beta has been created for three counties.
 - A useful meeting was held in Columbia County—the professor who did the index beta found out that a pulp mill is coming.
 - The group expects to have a revised version of the index by late spring and will share it for all 14 counties over the summer.
 - Group has been working on in-plan modeling and they are getting ready for scenarios. Forest products modeling is the most straightforward. Will want more information about what changes might occur regarding livestock.
 - Engaged EOU Ecosystem Workforce Program. They're creating a mockup that will come to the subcommittee next week.
 - Hats off to county commissioners who worked to build this socioeconomic assessment capacity in eastern Oregon with EOU.
 - The next socioeconomic subcommittee meeting is April 6 at 8 am.

Next Steps for USFS Planning Process—Powerpoint presentation by Julia Riber

(available at <https://www.pdx.edu/policy-consensus-center/bic-resources>)

- How we got here: USFS has had a very long planning process with several rounds of public and intergovernmental engagements.
- BIC is a pioneer—process hasn't been done before and it is hoped that others will use the process.
- USFS goal is to make sure the BIC's work results in a durable plan.
- The BIC work will serve for starting an expedited planning process.
- If there are any changes to BIC outcomes, USFS will be consulting with the BIC.
- USFS will put BIC work out for public comment.

- USFS will use 2012 rule, rather than continuing under the 1982 rules because they can pull fresh data from existing sources and pair it with the BIC socioeconomic analyses—easier to defend in court.
- Julia offered a comparison of the 1982 and the 2012 rules.
- Next steps—USFS will integrate the work of the BIC and do the following:
 - Do an assessment to identify species of conservation concern and adapt management indicators to species plan
 - Adapt wilderness analysis
 - Identify recreational opportunities spectrum for sustainable recreation
 - Review BIC desired conditions, and determine if standards and guidelines need to change (if they need to, USFS will consult with BIC).
 - Translate results document into 2012 rule format
 - Solicit public comments
 - NEPA process (DEIS comments and publish FEIS)
 - Address objections
- Julia urged the BIC to trust USFS in this process and to remain open to alternatives that come out of public comments. The group expressed trust and agreed on the importance of it. Julia also pointed out that the BIC is not required to commit to the final product and retains the right to object.
- All three forest plans will be developing concurrently. (A single EIS process.)
- Comment: Want socioeconomic information to be weaved into the USFS plan, not just put in its own section.
- Comment: Julia’s presentation will be useful to show the public that the group worked together on what all want: a healthy forest. It will be easier to work with our individual communities now.

Public Comment Period

There were no public comments

Next Meetings

- **Next BIC meeting is April 30, 2021.** The group will review the forest health final desired conditions and a first draft from the access subcommittee. It may be a hybrid meeting with some in-person attendance and some Zoom.
- **BIC Socioeconomic Analysis Subcommittee:** April 6, 8-9 a.m.
- **Forest Health Subcommittee:** April 21, 1-4 p.m.

Action: All—Let Laurel know of any potential meeting locations large enough for social distancing. Paul Anderes will check out venues in Union County. Dan Dorrان will check on EOTECH.

Adjourned