

Blues Intergovernmental Council (BIC) Meeting Summary

September 27, 2022

1:00 pm – 3:30 pm, Union County offices, La Grande, OR

In-person and Zoom videoconference

Members Attending: Charles Amerein, Paul Anderes, Anthony Botello, Glenn Casamassa, Courtney Crowell, Dan Dorran, Charles Emmet, David Fitz-Enz, Jay Gibbs, Bill Harvey, Matt Howard, Maura Laverty, Bill Lind, Amanda Lindsay, Shaun McKinney, Nick Myatt, Todd Nash, Sam Palmer, Brandon Pursinger, Susan Roberts, John Rowell, Kristen Shelman, Emmit Taylor, Craig Trulock, Eric Watrud, Andrew Wildbill, Darcy Weseman

Attendees providing public comment: Ed Hardt, Patty Deery, Gabriel Schmoe, Susan Schmoe, Mike Raesdak, Frances Preston, Wanda Ballard, Billie Jo George

Facilitator: Laurel Singer, facilitator, Jennah Stillman, project associate (note-taker Cat McGinnis) National Policy Consensus Center

Action Items

Note from Laurel—

The BIC members identified public forums as the highest priority for communicating with the public. The BIC communication and public engagement subcommittee has worked to create a format, materials, and a schedule for public engagement beginning this month (presented at the last BIC meeting).

The next step is for YOU (BIC members) to sign up for at least one of the forums to help share about the work of the BIC. The hope is to have at least one member of all governmental entities (Tribal, federal, state, and county) at each forum. **Let Darcy (darcy.weseman@usda.gov) know which session(s) you will attend as soon as you can...you can participate in as many as you would like!**

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Welcome

Conveners Susan Roberts and Mark Owen provided opening comments emphasizing hope for a highly productive public engagement effort, and hope that, as BIC work is brought back to those who initially voiced their concerns about the 2017 forest plan, those commenters will see in the desired conditions that their voices were heard, even if not all of everyone's desires were met.

BIC Updates

- BIC desired conditions are a starting point for public discussion. After the BIC engagement process, USFS will put out a proposal for broader public comment. USFS

acknowledges public commenters' requests for no designated forest routes and open forest—this will have to be worked through.

- USFS is working on getting the right people in place to move the planning process forward. They are filling journey-level positions. The funding is available for needed positions. The team will include 12 people—6 local and 6 virtual. Some people will be current employees, some new. The team will coordinate well with the BIC throughout the process.
- The required NEPA process will draw heavily on data USFS already has. The usual 5-year NEPA timeline will be more like 2–3 years.
- A definition for “open access” was requested. USFS: Open access means that the access plan for the forest includes no closures except wilderness areas.
- Laurel Singer is winding up NPCC’s role in facilitating the BIC. The group is nearing selection of a replacement.

Public Engagement Committee Report

Charles Amerein presented for the committee. See appendix A for presentation slides.

- For open houses, presenters will stay after the meeting to allow the public to converse with BIC members. BIC members will be asked to participate in panel discussions at these meetings, not just to attend.
- **ACTION:** Let Darcy Weseman (darcy.weseman@usda.gov) know which session(s) you will attend as soon as you can.
- Note that all desired conditions are on the website at <https://www.pdx.edu/policy-consensus-center/bic-desired-conditions>
- BIC will take public meetings back to the same five communities that originally commented on the 2017 plan.
- BIC public meetings are intended to be educational sessions and outreach to the public. They will be an opportunity for the BIC to share information about their work and progress and clarify the difference between the BIC’s work and the USFS’s process. The BIC meetings are informational and not meetings to take objections. USFS will also do its own input process as part of the NEPA process, and that will invite objections.
- In addition, through the sessions the BIC will seek feedback on their recommendation which can be brought back to the BIC for further discussion and can continue to inform their work with USFS as they use desired conditions to develop standards and guidelines. Audiences can also let the BIC know of areas where they may be bringing objections later. Public input from the BIC engagements will be fed into USFS’s work on the plan and USFS will coordinate with each BIC committee as it addresses each aspect of the plan (e.g., access).
- A note taker will be arranged to capture discussion at the public engagement sessions.
- It was noted that access and socioeconomic issues were not in the original forest plan. The BIC is bringing them to USFS as a critical piece of the new planning process.

- The video being developed by the public engagement subcommittee is near completion. They hope to have it ready for the public meetings.
- The subcommittee hopes county commissioners will open each meeting. Facilitators for the meetings have not yet been determined. Also, it remains to be determined whether notes will be captured at the meetings and, if so, what the notes will focus on and who will take them.

Wrap-up

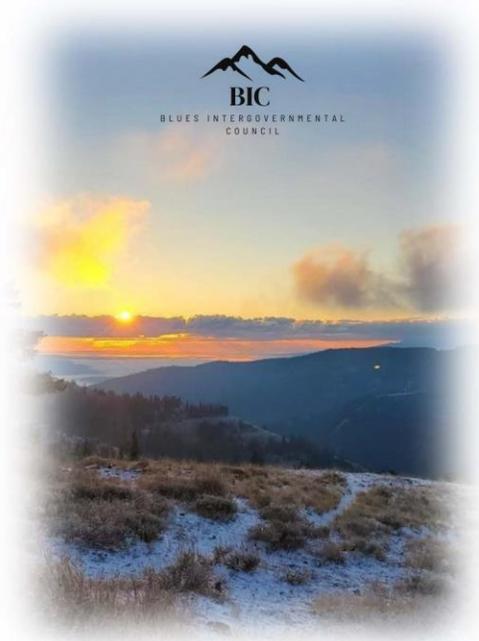
- USFS commented that it is incumbent on USFS to carry forward input from the townhalls, to be nimble, and to move fast on the plan after the BIC community engagement.
- Susan suggested that county commissioners might be willing to be cooperating agencies this time—if it is different than the last time. What is the timeline for requesting cooperating status? USFS: The USFS team is just starting to look at that.

Adjourned

Public Engagement Subcommittee

Updates on upcoming engagement, products and messaging

Presented on Sept. 27, 2022



- Introduction/overview of subcommittee's work
- Discussion on planned public engagement and supporting material
- Other updates (as time allows)
- Next Steps and Action Items

Objective: to review draft communication and engagement products, solicit participation from BIC members, and ensure alignment around planned public engagement so that the BIC can begin outreach to the public.



Communication Products

The engagement activities and communication products were developed based on ideas and priorities shared during the May BIC meeting.

- **Public Engagement Sessions Outline**- identifies the format, schedule and locations for public meetings that the BIC will host this fall.

Supporting Materials

- **News Release**- outreach for public engagement sessions
- **Brochure**- overview of the BIC: why the BIC formed, the group's collective objectives and work accomplished.
- **Business Cards**- handout with links to the BIC's website, email and other communication platforms as developed.
- **Comment card**- handout to allow participants to provide contact information, ask questions, or provide feedback to the BIC.



Public Engagement Sessions Outline



Intent of the public engagement sessions

- Explain who the BIC is, why the BIC formed, the work that the BIC has completed, how the BIC has worked with the Forest Service.
- Hear from the public ideas/concerns they have
- Highlight the importance of the public's participation in the Forest Plan Revision process moving forward.

*Desire for BIC members to participate in each of the scheduled meetings.
Sign up with Darcy*



Public Engagement Sessions Outline

Meeting Format (see handout)

- Welcome
- Panel Presentations*
 - Background
 - Overview
 - Who is the BIC
 - Key issues the BIC worked on
 - BIC work products
 - Why public should be involved
- Question and Answers
- Next Steps/Close out
- Open House
- Adjourn



** Desire for BIC members to participate in each of the scheduled meetings. Sign up with Darcy*



Public Engagement Sessions Outline



Meeting Locations (see handout)

The recommended locations are the same communities that the Forest Service held the objection resolution meetings in 2018 and 2 communities in Washington state. These meetings will also be live-streamed.

Week 1 – Oct. 25-27

- Pendleton, Oregon: Sheriff's Office Media Conference Room
- Walla Walla, Washington: Fairgrounds [pending]
- Clarkston, Washington: Fire Station

Week 2 – Nov. 1-3

- John Day, Oregon: Grant County Fairgrounds
- Baker City, Oregon: Baker City Event Center [pending]
- La Grande, Oregon: Eastern Oregon University

Week 3 – Nov. 9

- Enterprise, Oregon: Cloverleaf Hall



Public Engagement Sessions Outline

Supporting Material Needs (See handout)

- News release
- Brochure
- Comment Cards
- Business Cards

Questions to think about...

1. What stands out to you in these products that will help the BIC connect with the public and each other?
2. Where are there gaps in the strategy for these public engagement sessions?
3. What recommended changes do you have?
4. What content needs further discussion or clarifications?



Wrap up and Next Steps

Path Forward

1. Action Items-
 1. BIC MEMBERS- sign up to participate in the public engagement sessions that work for your schedule
2. Next Steps
3. Closing Thoughts

