

RMPs for Western Oregon Scoping Meeting Summaries -- June 2012

Eugene District

Date: May 29, Springfield

Attendance: 40

Summary: About 40 individuals representing several groups including: Umpqua Watersheds, Cascadia Wildlands, Association of Forest Service Employees for Ethics, Association of O&C Counties, Lane County Board of Commissioners, a local Tea Party group, Backcountry Horsemen and Emerald Trailriders Association. Also present were staff members for Congressman DeFazio and U.S. Senator Merkley.

Issues Raised: The overwhelming majority of the attendees did not turn in scoping comments at the meeting, but likely will turn in electronic copies of comments. Conservation organizations indicated that they'd like for BLM to stop 'treating timber as a resource' to manage more actively for wildlife, and to increase the size of stream buffers. The recreation advocacy groups want a larger focus on recreation, including more bike and OHV trails, and the equine groups want more horse trails. The Constitutionalist groups would like to see Federal lands turned over to the State or privatized. The second preference would be for the BLM to increase logging to meet the State's output.

Lakeview District

Date: May 23, Klamath Falls

Attendance: 24

Summary: Approximately 24 people attended including Klamath County Commissioner -- 21 people signed in at the meeting. There were six written comments were received at the meeting.

Issues Raised: Studies of suckers; status of a draft proposal; communication with the public; travel management; and project timelines.

Medford District

Date: May 17, Grants Pass

Attendance: 22 – including a 7 year-old boy that slept through the entire meeting.

Summary: Received 3 written comments. Meeting attended by Congressman Walden's staffer, Rob Patridge and U.S. Senator Merkley's staffer, Amy Amrhein. There were no official reps from Josephine County.

Issues Raised: Difficulties of managing the checkerboard; economics and the "real costs" associated with timber production; too much emphasis on northern spotted owl and not enough on Southern Oregon/Northern California coho; request for consideration of more OHV trails systems throughout the District; less wilderness with more logging and mining; and questions associated with addressing ongoing litigation.

Medford District

Date: May 16, Medford

Attendance: 43 attendees.

Summary: Representatives from KSWild, Motorcycle Riders Association, Horse Riders, ODFW, Boise-Cascade, Congressman Walden's staffer, Rob Patridge and U.S. Senator Merkley's staffer, Amy Amrhein, and Jackson County Commissioner Don Skundrick. No media.

Issues Raised: Comments and attitudes were generally favorable. The attendees appeared to appreciate the openness of the process. Staff spent time drawing distinctions between scoping comments and substantive comments. A small number of participants requested we not consider turning over BLM lands to the Forest Service or sell it off. This was obviously referencing the Trust Proposal. Few people appeared to be in favor of the O&C Trust proposal concept. Transportation management, with an emphasis on trails, came up from both the OHV users and hikers/horse riders.

Salem District

Date: May 24, Salem

Attendance: 24

Summary: Acting BLM District Manager Jody Weil welcomed everyone and presented a Salem-specific power point about the Salem District. Mark Brown, project manager, followed with a power point about the Resource Management Plans for Western Oregon.

Issues Raised: The Recreation station in general produced some good discussions surrounding Travel Management Planning and Visual Resource inventory processes. There were no questions and/or comments relating to Wilderness characteristic inventories, and limited discussions surrounding the Wild and Scenic River suitability determinations. Representatives from several users groups (OHV/Equestrian/MTB) shared their frustrations with the U.S. Forest Service model of travel management planning and urged the BLM to engage in a more collaborative process.

One comment expressed concern over BLM's riparian management in the headwaters of the Scappoose watershed. Two folks from timber industry planned on submitting comments later. They said that BLM probably already knows what their comments would be. They did comment they did not think a new plan was worthwhile as it will just end up like the last one in the courts. Former Salem District Manager, Van Manning, asked about the proposed spotted owl critical habitat.

Coos Bay District

Date: May 30, Coos Bay

Issues Raised: *Timber vs. Wildlife Management:* A majority of the participants requested that a larger proportion of the land base be managed for timber production and harvest, and we should harvest older trees (> 80 years old). Several people also mentioned that BLM should sell trees based on market conditions.

Access: Participants voiced the importance of keeping access to BLM-lands and the road network open to the public. Calls for more transparent information on road closures (outside the NEPA process) were also made. With adjacent National Forests completing travel management plans, there was concern that BLM would undertake a similar effort that would result in additional, closed access.

Plan Scale/Process: The overriding majority of participants thought the planning is too slow and the planning should stay at the local level (District or County). The participants expressed frustration that the BLM says it understands the urgency and needs of local communities, but the planning timeline covers four years. If the planning happens at the regional level and/or the Governor is involved, participants expressed fear that the political process, rather than community needs, will drive the decisions.

Roseburg District

Date: May 31, Roseburg

Attendance: 24

Summary: Many regular participants attended, but the meeting also brought a variety of new folks and a mix of interests. The meeting was also attended by AFRC, Umpqua Watersheds, Cascadia Wildlands, DFPA and others. No staff from the Congressional delegation. Randy Rasmussen, the Director of Umpqua Watersheds made his first appearance at a Roseburg BLM meeting and indicated he is interested in having further dialogue with the District.

Issues Raised: Industry is very upset at the lack of interpretation of the O&C Act, and that the sideboards are wide open. There is great frustration with being asked to provide input into a new planning effort with the time and energy they expended in providing input during the Western Oregon Plan Revision. The environmental community appeared generally pleased with the open sideboards for the Scoping process and liked the neutral nature of the planning process at this stage.