

## Memorandum

TO: People Interested in the BLM Western Oregon Plan Revisions Process

FROM: Matthew McKinney, Project Director  
Paul De Morgan, Senior Mediator

SUBJECT: Final Report and Recommendations

DATE: January 6, 2006

Attached please find the final version of our report, *Engaging People in the BLM Western Oregon Plan Revisions Process*. Thank you to everyone who provided feedback on the preliminary draft. We have done our best to incorporate your input and advice into this final report. Any errors or omissions remain our responsibility.

Please keep in mind that this report is advisory; it contains a number of process suggestions on how to engage people and make the process as transparent as possible given the time and other resources available. The report is not an end in itself. Rather, it should be viewed as one step in the planning process – a building block of sorts. Our understanding is that BLM's intent is to enable people to stay engaged and to provide ample opportunities for people to participate during this three-year process. We believe this final report includes some practical suggestions on how to fulfill this objective.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the situation assessment, the feedback we received on the draft report, and our understanding of the time schedule, we recommend the following steps to engage people in the WOPR:

### January through March, 2006

1. Begin to implement the “best practices for public participation” presented in option 8 and Appendix D, including but not limited to:
  - a. Provide more notice and a longer lead-time prior to public meetings
  - b. Distribute reports and/or other documents far enough in advance of a public meeting or hearing to enable the public to digest and review them.
  - c. Continue to publish and distribute a quarterly newsletter.
  - d. Build on existing social networks, and where feasible, allow the “culture of communities” to dictate the timing, location, and format of public meetings.

- e. Use effective web technologies when and where feasible.
  - f. Make every effort to make meetings of the Steering Committee, Science Advisory Team, and Cooperating Agencies more open to the public. This could include open meetings where the public could participate, publish minutes of the meetings, etc.
  - g. Encourage written public comment on draft documents.
  - h. Engage in responsive decision-making and provide continuous feedback to citizens and stakeholders on how their input is being integrated into the plans or not, and why.
2. Convene one or more sessions with Tribal governments in the region to design a government-to-government process for engaging Indian tribes during the WOPR planning and decision-making process based on the specific suggestions in the full report.
  3. Validate the draft planning criteria and “thematic alternatives” by explaining the underlying values, interests, and goals that will drive the planning and decision-making process and asking people:
    - a. Do the planning criteria adequately address the requirements of the settlement agreement, the O&C Act, the conservation objectives of the Northwest Forest Plan, and the other interests important to people?
    - b. Does the range of “thematic alternatives” capture the range of interests at stake in the management of BLM lands in western Oregon?

The process of validation could be accomplished through one or more of the following:

- Ask members of the WOPR BLM Steering Committee to host open public workshops; and/or meet with groups of like-minded individuals (e.g., the O&C County Association, conservation groups, Indian tribes, etc); and/or meet with existing groups such as PACs and watershed councils.
- Use an impartial facilitator to likewise convene public workshops, meet with groups of like-minded individuals, and/or meet with existing groups. The advantage with this approach is that people might be more candid and forthcoming with their comments than if a BLM official is asking for the feedback.

This process of validating the planning criteria and thematic alternatives should be separate from asking people for feedback on the models and methods that will be used to analyze the alternatives. The latter is likely to be interesting to a smaller population of technically-oriented people, while the former addresses more of the value issues, and thus is likely to be of interest to a broader, more general audience.

4. Seek input and advice on the model and methods for analyzing alternatives, including the Analysis of the Management Situation (AMS). This will provide BLM the opportunity to benefit from any additional information and knowledge that stakeholders have. Since this is likely to be a much more technical discussion than the dialogue around planning criteria and the thematic alternatives, it is probably wise to separate the two.

The BLM should explain that, while they are interested in obtaining information that will

help inform the analysis, the time formally to refine the assumptions and data is in the draft EIS (the AMS itself will not be revised until then, but will be incorporated into chapter 3 of the DEIS). At this point, the objective is to foster a common understanding and ensure the credibility of the basic methodology and model that will be used to analyze the alternatives.

This objective could be met by one or more of the following mechanisms:

- The project team and/or WOPR BLM Steering Committee could consult with the formal cooperators.
  - The project team and/or WOPR BLM Steering Committee could convene one or more open workshops for people interested in this more technical aspect of the planning process.
  - If appropriate, an impartial facilitator could help design and facilitate these workshops.
5. During this time period, the most valuable use an impartial facilitator/mediator might be to:
- a. Provide ongoing coaching and consultation.
  - b. Shuttle a single text document – including the planning criteria and thematic alternatives – around to groups of like-minded interests.
  - c. Convene and facilitate public workshops on the planning criteria and thematic alternatives.
  - d. Convene and facilitate workshops on the model and methods for analyzing the alternatives.
  - e. Provide input and advice, or help produce, communication materials.

#### April through December, 2006

6. After fostering as much common understanding (if not agreement) on the planning criteria, the thematic alternatives, and the model and methods to analyze alternatives, the challenge is to make the process of analyzing the alternatives as transparent and as credible to all stakeholders as possible. Realizing that this will take place over a nine-month period or so, the BLM should create periodic opportunities to brief any and all interested stakeholders on their progress.

This objective could be achieved through one or more of the following mechanisms:

- Share information, trends, surprises, and questions with the formal cooperators and the Science Advisory Team on a regular basis; seek their input and advice on how to proceed. Invite citizens and stakeholders to these meetings consistent with the “best practices for public participation.”
  - Convene periodic public workshops for the same reason.
7. Depending on the momentum and success of fostering a common understanding on the planning criteria and the thematic alternatives, the BLM and other parties should seriously consider the value of convening one or more workshops and/or a multi-party working group to jointly develop one or more mutual gain alternatives. If this process is successful, the preferred alternative is likely to emerge at this stage of the process, thereby mitigating the posturing and anxiety common during the formal selection of the preferred alternative.

In addition to workshops and/or a multi-party working group, other venues for participation might include a web-based survey and/or a collaborative/deliberative poll.

This strategy would need to be carefully linked to the analysis of the alternatives, such that there would be some back-and-forth between the Interdisciplinary Team and the working group (which would presumably include the formal cooperators). As part of this effort, BLM can increase the credibility of the analysis of alternatives by soliciting and incorporating into their analysis the cooperators' and others' questions about the alternatives and stakeholder views about the pros and cons of the alternatives being analyzed.

8. During this time period, the most valuable roles of an impartial facilitator would be to:
  - a. Provide ongoing coaching and consultation;
  - b. Help design and facilitate the process outlined in # 7 above.
  - c. Provide input and advice, or help produce, communication materials.

#### 2007 and Beyond

9. Once the draft EIS and RMPs are released, the BLM and other stakeholders should consider one or more of the options presented in the report on:
  - a. How to engage the unaffiliated, general citizenry;
  - b. How to effectively integrate national or non-local interests into the planning and decision-making process.

Since this step in the process is about 12 months away, there is ample time to continue exploring and refining the options.

10. Depending on the momentum and success of efforts to develop a preferred alternative the BLM and other parties should consider the value of convening a multi-party working group and/or other strategies to review the DEIS and continue efforts to develop agreement around a preferred alternative.
11. During this period of time, the best use of an impartial facilitator might be to:
  - a. Provide coaching and consultation;
  - b. Help refine, design, convene a way to engage unaffiliated, general citizens (e.g., the Citizens Jury, web-based surveys, and other methods);
  - c. Help design, convene, and facilitate more traditional public meetings;
  - d. Mediate any emerging disagreements.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with all of you. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to let us know.

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