

# Deschutes Provincial Advisory Committee

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## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** March 9, 2016

**Time:** 09:00 am

**Location:** Deschutes Historical Museum  
129 NW Idaho Ave., Bend, Oregon

### **Attendees:**

Ken Fahlgren  
Gay Fletcher  
Erik Fernandez  
Marilyn Miller  
Teresa Kubo  
Chuck Arnold  
Carol Benkosky

John Allen  
Paul Anderson  
Dave Elpi  
Garth Fuller  
Woody Starr  
Elvira Young  
Dennis Oliphant

Clay Penhollow  
Woody Starr  
Beth Peer  
Lauren DuRocher  
Jerry Hubbard  
Susan Skakel

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### **Introduction**

The last few meetings have focused on an introduction to the topics, areas, etc. Next meeting should focus on dialogue on what to do moving forward and narrowing to which topics to tackle. Reminder that the Deschutes PAC covers the Deschutes NF, Ochoco NF, and BLM land. “Go slow to go fast” – these meetings help us get set up for success with information sharing and starting to build trust.

### **Fuel Program Presentation (Deana Wall, Deschutes & Ochoco NF Fuels Program Manager)**

Deanna presented an overview of the fuels program on the Deschutes National Forest. The fire adapted landscape is outside of historic conditions. Despite suppression efforts, a large fire history still exists and about 1/3 to 1/2 of recent fires are from lightning ignitions. The fuels program uses a number of methods such as pruning (usually limited), mowing, thinning, and prescribed fire to reduce surface fuels.

Prescribed fire is often used after these other methods and can be used in the long term for maintaining low fuels and reducing needle cast and brush. Each year about 1-3% of the Forest is treated in some way with about half within WUI. Changing public acceptance of fuel treatment work closer into town has meant more projects occurring in the WUI in the last ten years. Public outreach, education and partnership building are ongoing with efforts through social media, Central Oregon Training Exchange, and utilizing state employees to help with burning. With these partnerships, Central Oregon is competitive for grants and special funding programs such as the Joint Chiefs funding. Smoke continues to be a hot topic and education about the smoke management trade-offs between underburning and wildfire in a fire adapted ecosystem need to be discussed. Prescribed burning intrusions into town have remained below NAAQS standards for the Bend area, yet when wildfire occurs it has exceeded those standards for days/weeks.

### **Forest Products Program Presentation (Brian Tandy, Forest Products Coordinator, Deschutes & Ochoco NFs)**

Brian discussed the forest products program on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests. These products are more than just timber and include firewood, cones, Christmas Trees, mushrooms, etc. He handed out the 5 year action plan for the two Forests. The program has transitioned to having forest products be more of a byproduct of restoration activities instead of simply timber management. Each forest has timber volume targets that are set through a negotiation between the Region and Forest with initial NFS targets set by congress. With forest plan revision, a deeper look will be needed at what a sustainable program target might look like. What might be the goals for 30, 40, or 50 years out?

Stewardship agreements and contracts can and are being used throughout the Forests. It is a growing use, but it also only fits certain circumstances. The mix of saw vs non-saw log also drive the economic feasibility of a sale. A lack of local biomass markets for non-saw has meant that either the forest pays for biomass to be hauled off or it is piled and burned. Use of stand along contracts for work such as mowing, is very funding dependent.

### **Forest Plan Revision (Susan Skakel, Deschutes NF Environmental Coordinator)**

As of right now, the timeline for Forest Plan revision has been pushed back to FY17/18. Good news is that it is more time to prep. The PAC can help identify what are the needs for change and what are some of the focal points. There may be lots to change but narrowing to the top 5-10 that really need to be addressed.

The Forest Plan is an overarching guidance document that does not get into site specific details. For example, the plan might give a vision for what a trail or road system would accomplish but would not outline which routes are part of the system.

Plan revision would occur under the 2012 Planning rule. Only a few forests have started planning under the 2012 rule, but none have been completed. Overall, the process would have the same public comment review as NEPA projects. There are six components of a Forest Plan: standards, guidelines, goals, objectives, desired conditions and land allocation. There must be some land allocations that allow for timber and grazing. The new planning rule focuses on being less prescriptive and more vision/goal oriented. It would steer away from outlining specific tools to be used, but rather give guidance on desired conditions.

The process begins with an assessment phase to review current condition, new information, and new science. The revision would not be starting from scratch, rather it would review what should stay and change from the current plan. Then a Draft EIS (with alternatives) along with a Draft Proposed Forest Plan (created from the preferred alternative) would be released. Eventually a Final EIS, ROD (signed by the Forest Supervisor) and Forest Plan would be adopted.

The existing Forest Plans were amended by the NWFP and Eastside Screens. The goals of those plans would be incorporated into the new plans through revision. They may not necessarily have the same standards and guidelines. The Regional office has a team looking into how address these amendments as well as Survey and Manage and PACFISH/INFISH into the plan revision.

For the forest plan revision process, the Forest would receive additional funding from the Washington Office. The goal is for revision to take about 4 years.

The BLM has a different planning process with multiple plans for different areas of the district. The Lower Deschutes plan is on the radar of needing to be updated in the near future, but timeline is a bit uncertain. Some of the other plans have already been updated.

PAC can have a role to help develop items like desired conditions that the FS could directly adopt within the alternatives.

## **Sustainable Recreation**

The group broke into three discussion groups with a goal of identifying their top three focus topics for the sustainable recreation subcommittee, based on the list of topics generated at the December meeting. The topics that rose to the top are (tried to group these as best as possible):

### **Carrying Capacity**

- There is Ecological (resource impacts, e.g. to wildlife that need connectivity & security) and social (demand/tolerance)
- Work on defining this – i.e. what are thresholds and measurements
- Demand forecasting / envisioning future use / landscape perspective

### **Encouraging Sustainable Recreation / Education & Stewardship / Seeing Recreation as a Consumptive Use**

- Encouraging use that supports the habitat, economy, and people's desire to recreate on Forest without dissuading people from using forest
- Identify the best approaches and how this should be undertaken in a comprehensive approach
  - e.g. engaging those that promote recreation
  - e.g. managing expectations
  - e.g. deliberate planning with infrastructure to support

### **Uncontrolled Use / User-Created Trails**

- Identify ways to address/manage (e.g. zoning for trail density, managing expectations)
- Issues include human and dog waste, trash, wildlife conflicts, water impacts, noise

### **Trail Conflicts / User Conflicts (inter-recreation conflicts and conflict between different uses**

- Identify ways to address/manage
  - e.g. one-way trails; parallel trails for different uses; zoning

There was interest by the group to involve/invite members of local tourist industry and others who promote tourism that affects public lands. Stakeholders includes different industries that are based on the recreation available on the Forests. We have the ability to bring in speakers, experts, etc. when it will help our work. It will be important to understand the economic drivers and differences between communities such as Bend and Prineville.

### **Human Ecology Mapping**

Some in the group had questions about Human Ecology Mapping (HEM). HEM will be part of the assessment phase of Forest Plan Revision. The following article can be found online: “Making sense of human ecology mapping: an overview of approaches to integrating socio-spatial data into environmental planning.” (McLain, Rebecca; Poe, Melissa R.; Biedenweg, Kelly; Cervený, Lee K.; Besser, Diane; Blahna, Dale J. 2013. Making sense of human ecology mapping: an overview of approaches to integrating socio-spatial data into environmental planning. Human Ecology. 41: 651-665.)

### **Next Meetings / Field Trips**

A ½ day meeting of the Sustainable Recreation Subcommittee will take place prior to the next full PAC meeting. This meeting will be held outdoors at a recreation “hot spot” such as Phil’s Trailhead area. Doodle poll open until March 16<sup>th</sup>. There are three late May days available: <http://doodle.com/poll/xs2xvk5kpmtukmcq>

The full-day PAC meeting will be in June. There are three early June days available. Doodle poll will be open until March 16<sup>th</sup>. <http://doodle.com/poll/s8pwk8sx8ctxp265>. This meeting will also include a field trip.

***If you want to go fast, go alone.  
If you want to go far, go together***