

# Public Engagement

## Your Values Matter

Your input matters! A successful planning process depends on public participation. The best decisions will be made with input from all people who care about the Blue Mountains, people like you.

The Blue Mountains national forests plan revision effort was publicly launched in August 2022, via press releases, email, and website announcements. We initiated an assessment of existing conditions with a Federal Register notice on July 31, 2023. In August, September, and October 2023, the forest plan revision team held 11 public meetings to:

- Provide an understanding of what forest plan revision is and why it matters.
- Gain an understanding about the scope and scale of the Blue Mountains national forests.
- Gather local knowledge and information, current trends, conditions, perceptions, and concerns.

In-person, open house meetings were held in Eastern Oregon in Baker City, Enterprise, John Day, Heppner, Hines, La Grande, Pendleton, Prairie City, along with the Washington community of Dayton. We held two meetings virtually, garnering a wider range of participants. In sum, over 163 people attended these 11 meetings. The Blue Mountains national forests plan revision staff consulted with four Native American Tribes, and interacted with state, local, and other governmental stakeholders (including the Blues Intergovernmental Council), and interest groups.



## Values Mapping

The open houses included a values mapping exercise to identify special places. We asked individuals how they currently use the national forests and what works well regarding national forest management. We also had people identify necessary changes. The values mapping exercise was available online via a story map and hardcopies were available at open houses and at the district offices. The team produced spatially detailed maps of the results which will be used to identify trends, values, or a need for change. These maps can also be found via the Blue Mountain Forest Plan Revision website.



We received a total of 131 questionnaires and unique letters, and over 400 form letters requesting fair opportunities for the public to provide input. We heard from people what they would like to see in the revised plan and changes in current forest management. Themes include types of multiples uses and recreation and travel opportunities, access, increasing or decreasing designated areas, coordination among agencies, habitat connectivity, and the importance of ecosystem health.

The plan revision team reviewed the comments, local information, and published sources submitted by the public and incorporated them where applicable into the assessment process. All public feedback received during the assessment phase will also be reviewed and considered during the development of the land management plan.

## Looking Forward

The Forest Service is eager to hear input on individual and community values. Public feedback about the Draft Assessment, the proposed SCC list, Lands that may have Wilderness characteristics inventories, and Wild and Scenic River inventories will help the Forest Service develop durable Land Management Plans that balance the ecological needs of the landscape with the economic and social needs of the communities that depend on them.

Have questions about the Land Management Plan Revision? Want to connect with the team? Check out our website at <https://tinyurl.com/35wtfbpj> or by following the QR code.

