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SLIDES: Forest Service Planning at a Crossroads; New Approaches to Old Recommendations

Rick Cables

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Forest Service Planning at a Crossroads; New Approaches to Old Recommendations

Rick Cables
Regional Forester

The Past, Present, and Future of our Public Lands Conference
June 2, 2010
Where We’ve Been Since 1970

- NFMA 1976
- 1982 Regulations
- 2000 Regulations
- 2005-2008 Regulations
Key Concepts from 1982 Rule

- More certainty, ASQ
- Plans viewed as “social contract”
- Management area prescriptions heart of plan
- Standards and guidelines
- Species (viability) focus vs. ecosystem focus
Key Concepts from 2000 Rule

- Assessments of ecosystem conditions
- Best available science
- Recommended advisory committees
- Ecological sustainability guiding principle
Key Concepts 2005-2008 Rule

- Forest Plan as a broad strategic document
- Could be developed and changed quickly
- Categorical exclusions for plans permitted
- Desired conditions heart of plan
- Forest supervisor is responsible official
- Guidelines preferred over standards
Good Ideas-1970 and Today

- Plan across broad areas and across ownerships
- Public participation and advisory boards
3-1 planning complements uses and patterns of use on other ownership in the locality and the region.

3-5 All public land agencies should be required to formulate long range, comprehensive land use plans for each state or region, relating such plans not only to internal agency programs but also to land use plans and attendant management programs of other agencies.

3-12 Land use planning among Federal agencies should be systematically coordinated.
What’s the Right Scale?

- Wildlife corridors
- Roadless
- Prairie species
- Insects and fire
- Water
- Recreation
People in 177 counties in 13 states depend on water from national forests in the Rocky Mountain Region. They draw their water from rivers or valley soils, and typically use it for some mix of drinking, irrigation, and livestock watering. Counties were included down-river until less than 20 percent of the flow in the river originates on national forests in the Rocky Mountain Region.
“we recommend that consultation with advisory boards be required by statute.

to advise on the probable impact of the proposed land use decisions on the locality,

to suggest viable alternatives that should be considered, and to provide the administrator with opinions, views, and information that is relevant to the planning operation.

They should function actively from the inception of the planning process, starting before any plans have been developed, and should have a continuing role.” p 60
Part of nation-wide move
Forest advisory board disbanding

The Deschutes National Forest advisory committee is one of 11 advisory committees in the nation to be abolished by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland.

Bergland announced his decision to cancel the committees Wednesday afternoon, stating the move would increase public hearings and encourage broad public input.

Earl Nichols, Deschutes supervisor, said he would urge Bergland to reconsider his decision, at least until the land use planning is done on the forest. He said he hoped the committee, which meets about once a month, could be continued until at least November.

Nichols said the board had provided him with new perspectives on day-to-day issues that don’t necessarily warrant full public hearings.

In addition, he said, the committee had been meeting long enough to consider forest programs in relation to each other, rather than as specific issues standing alone.

Nichols said it would be wrong if the board were the only source of public comment. However, he said, major decisions do go through the public comment process.

Committee members expressed surprise that the group would be singled out among 11 in the nation, especially since some cited by Bergland were of more national interest.

The committees to be eliminated included the National Cotton Advisory Committee, National Peanut Advisory Committee, National Rice Advisory Committee, National Tobacco Advisory Committee and the Committee on Grains.

Other forest committees to be abolished included those on the Superior National Forest in Minnesota, the Ottawa National Forest in Michigan, the Sawtooth National Forest in Idaho, the White Mountain National Forest in New Hampshire and the Forest Research Advisory Committee in Maine.

The Deschutes Forest grazing advisory board was not named by Bergland.

Seniors group formed by community college

Bergland said the decision to abolish the advisory committees did not reflect on the performance of the members. He said whenever feasible, major decisions would be preceded by public hearings or comment periods, which would be made public through the news media.

A 17-member council of senior citizens, whose job it will be to prepare an “education action plan” for retired persons in Central Oregon, has been announced by Central Oregon Community College.

Council recommendations are expected in several areas — including and Nat Hanson, Howard Milton, Carman Pearce and Ted Thorson, Redmond.

Suggestions for the program may be made to Diekman at 382-6112, ext. 223.
Contemporary Advisory Boards

- Black Hills National Forest Advisory Board
- White Mountain Ad Hoc Advisory Committee
- RACNAC
Desired future condition - vision focused
Ecosystem focus vs. species
Sustainability - ecological, social, economic
Certainty where possible
Collaborative - advisory group
Fast, cost-efficient, adaptable, nimble
Large enough scale
QUESTIONS?