

UNCOMPAHGRE PLATEAU WORKING GROUP

Montrose Pavilion, Montrose, CO

Thursday, October 10, 2002

6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

AGENDA

Facilitator: Kathy Bond

Time Agenda Topic

6:15– 6:30 Registration

6:30– 6:40 Welcome/Introductions (Kathy Bond and Rick Sherman, UP)

6:40–6:50 Forest Plan Timeline (Sandy Thompson, FS)

6:50–7:20 Suitability Presentation (Carmine Lockwood, FS)–Q & A

7:20–7:25 Poster Session: an explanation (Carol Howe, FS)

7:25–8:00 BREAK and Poster Session

8:00–8:05 Summary of Poster Session (Tony Cheng, C.S.U.)

8:05–9:00 Uncompahgre Plateau Restoration Project (Rick Sherman, John Moore, F.S., and panelists)–Q & A (Rick Sherman, moderator)

9:00–9:20 Collaborative Learning (Tony Cheng, C.S.U.)–Evaluation

9:20–9:25 Wrap–Up Comments (Alan Staehle, Ouray County Commissioner)

9:25 Adjourn (Kathy Bond)

CELEBRATION

Uncompahgre Working Group

October 10, 2002 Meeting Notes

(meeting notes by Kathie Detmar)

The meeting began shortly after 6:30 p.m. with introductions by Kathy Bond and Rick Sherman. About 60 people attended.

Sandy Thompson reviewed where we are in the forest plan revision process, and what each step involves by referring to the planning process chart found in the Landscape Working Group Handbook. She discussed how the landscape working group identified issues and developed desired future condition statements. The next step in the process is for the Forest Service to develop a Geographic Area Assessment from the information gathered in the first phase of the revision.

Carmine Lockwood followed with a presentation describing how a Forest Plan identifies areas that are suitable for certain actions. He reviewed the suitability situations on the Uncompahgre Plateau, including the topics of

timber management, grazing, oil and gas leasing, roadless areas, and other potential suitability analyses such as fire management and water development. This presentation was done using PowerPoint.

Carol Howe provided an explanation of the ten desired future condition posters that the planning team developed. The posters presented the ten most widely discussed desired future conditions and each had a desired future condition statement that resulted from past working group meeting discussions. The topics included timber management, fire management, range management, water quality, water yield, backcountry areas, recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) designations, travel management, vegetation diversity, and wildlife habitat. The posters provided a graph of how close the existing conditions are to the desired conditions, and descriptions of potential actions that could achieve those conditions. These posters were set up in the Pavilion lobby for all participants to review and comment on during the thirty-minute break that followed Carol's introduction. Also in the lobby was a display of the Uncompahgre Plateau Project group's goals and projects, as well as the shared timeline history developed at the first working group meeting. During the break, participants were encouraged to write down any comments or questions on flipcharts beside the posters or to discuss any concerns with the planning team or the UP project coordinators, Daniella Howell and Rick Sherman.

Following the break, Tony Cheng, from CSU, summarized the poster session and discussed how the public's comments will influence the draft geographic area assessment.

Next was a panel discussion concerning the transition from the landscape working groups to future projects and the geographic area assessment. John Moore reviewed how the landscape working group information will be translated into the 'issues' and 'synthesize and interpret' sections of the assessment. The assessment will use historic conditions and existing information to develop feasible alternatives and recommendations for achieving desired conditions in the area.

Rick Sherman followed with information on the Uncompahgre Plateau Project Plan. He introduced the draft plan that includes objectives and frameworks for projects that may begin next spring. These relate directly to the ideas resulting from the Uncompahgre Plateau landscape working group.

Other panelists who were available for questions were Robbie Baird LeValley (Public Lands Partnership), Jim Free (Ouray District Ranger) , Bruce Watkins(CO Dept. of Wildlife), and Bob Welch (Bureau of Land Management). The questions and discussion concerned the monitoring and data analysis of projects, the use of science as just one tool in managing, and the importance of opening the management process to include the public.

Tony Cheng from Colorado State University followed the panel discussion with a review of the collaborative learning process. This process was used during Phase I of the forest plan revision to incorporate public knowledge and concerns with technical information. He focused on the ‘process triangle’ of collaborative learning, which emphasizes an equal focus on developing the process, substance, and relationships.

The wrap-up meeting of the Uncompahgre Working Group concluded with comments from county commissioner Alan Staehle who thanked participants and urged for continued support of this new process. The meeting ended with a celebratory “cutting of the cake” and discussions between community members and the planning team.

What a Forest Plan Does & Doesn't Do

Land and Resource Management Plans , more commonly known as forest plans , are completed for every national forest. Congress decided long ago (1973 and 1976) what goes into a Revised Forest Plan; clarifying regulations and policies were later issued by the Forest Service.

The GMUG Revised Forest Plan will make several key decisions and, of lasting importance, create layered and over-arching management direction. In other words, it provides the framework within which other project decisions can then be made on a case-by-case and site-specific basis. Just as important as what this Revised Forest Plan does are those things it does not do. The following table explains those differences:

Topic

The Forest Plan Ö

The Forest Plan Ö

Laws

regulations,

and policies

DOES use guidance provided by the Forest Service Handbook, Forest Service Manual, and other federal regulations and policies to create an over-arching management plan ,for the GMUG National Forest.

DOES NOT make law, regulations, or policy. The Revised Forest Plan is NOT a policy-making document; it reflects agency policy and goals.

Budget for local Forest Service operations

DOES consider financial feasibility of implementing plan goals and objectives.

DOES NOT determine funding levels for the GMUG National Forests; budget allocations are determined in other ways.

Travel management

DOES identify what kinds of travel are suitable to particular parcels of land, based on desired conditions (DFCs) and other designations. Can vary by season of year.

DOES NOT make the decision to open, close, or otherwise restrict use of a specific road or trail to certain modes of travel (e.g., ATVs or mountain bikes). If the management objectives for certain parcels change, then site-specific plans for road and trail management will have to be made separately from the Forest Plan to bring travel into compliance. Decisions regarding specific roads and trails are made through project-level NEPA analysis and decision documents.

Timber harvests

DOES identify sustainable annual yields and DOES identify which lands are suitable for timber harvests for various objectives including timber production.

DOES NOT identify individual areas that will be offered for sale.

Timber sales

DOES provide direction and standards to determine where and how sales can occur based on goals and objectives.

DOES NOT approve any site-specific timber sale.

Grazing allotments

DOES analyze and disclose which lands are suitable for grazing and describes the parameters or standards grazing practice shall attain.

DOES NOT make a decision about what to do with vacant allotments or allotment management plans and permit renewals.

Oil and gas

DOES identify which lands are administratively available and authorized for leasing, and the surface use stipulations that must be met in development.

DOES NOT control timing or extent or leasing activities below the surface, nor does it authorize surface activity. Specific activities are considered in project-level NEPA.

Coal

DOES identify lands available for further consideration for coal leasing based on coal resource occurrence. Establishes surface and below-surface stipulations.

DOES NOT permit leasing, exploration or development. Further lease-specific activities are analyzed in NEPA.

Land exchanges

DOES identify values and considerations to be evaluated in potential exchange of land parcels. DOES identify landscapes where opportunities to consolidate landownership patterns should be or should not be pursued to meet DFCs and objectives.

DOES NOT identify or prioritize specific parcels for exchanges. Guidance governing required analyses for land exchanges is found in Forest Service manuals and handbooks.

Ski areas

DOES identify which lands have DFCs, objectives and standards and suitability that emphasize ski-based resorts.

DOES NOT approve creation of any additional infrastructure such as lifts, runs, or snowmaking facilities.

Endangered species

DOES provide DFCs, objectives and standards to ensure sustainable habitat conditions for species that have been listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

DOES NOT decide which species will be protected under the Endangered Species Act. That is a decision made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Hunting and wildlife management

DOES describe desired conditions, objectives and standards for managing the habitat for many game and non-game species.

DOES NOT set hunting seasons, or designate areas as open or closed to hunting, or set harvest levels or hunting fees. Seasons and limits are set by Colorado Division of Wildlife. (Except migratory birds – set by USF&W.)

Wilderness

DOES recommend to Congress those areas that are capable and suitable for designation as wilderness. DOES allocate land to area designations that are managed for wilderness values.

DOES NOT create or designate lands as Wilderness.

Wild, scenic and recreational rivers

DOES identify those river segments eligible for further study as wild, scenic, or recreational under the nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. DOES allocate land to river corridors that must be managed to maintain the values that provide eligibility for wild, scenic, and/or recreational rivers.

DOES NOT designate those rivers as wild, scenic, or recreational. Finding of eligibility DOES NOT automatically launch further study.

Law enforcement

DOES emphasize cooperative partnerships and collaborative activities with stakeholder groups and local communities and governments.

DOES NOT include directives about law enforcement, specify enforcement staffing, or budget for those operations.