

COORDINATED RESOURCE PLANNING

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In recent years, diverse groups of resource users have increased their natural resource demands. As a result, issues facing both public and private resource managers have become much more complex. During the same period, the need to efficiently and equitably solve these common issues has become increasingly urgent. There have been withdrawals of areas rich in natural resources and increased demands because of a growing social concern for the environment, single use concepts, and a general lack of knowledge.

Western rural societies find themselves in a difficult position. They are expected to be guardians of our remaining natural resources while their survival, individually and as a community, depends on the economic strength of local industries that use the same resources they are expected to preserve. There is an urgent need for a process to develop plans for the best management of our resources, plans which will most nearly approximate the needs of society.

For the last 15 years, a dedicated group of eastern Oregonians has conducted, sponsored, and cooperated with studies and experiments analyzing the area's resource base. Local residents rely on income generated from the sale of basic resource industry products for their livelihood. If the people of eastern Oregon maintain their economic base, the conservation and development of renewable resources and improved management in basic resource industries--forestry, agriculture, and recreation--will be necessary because there is limited opportunity for diversification and industrialization. In fact, the residents of eastern Oregon recognize that most of the economic alternatives open to more heavily populated regions are unattainable for their area.

One of the major problems facing eastern Oregon is the allocation of scarce resources in a manner that will provide the greatest long- and short-term benefits to its people. If eastern Oregonians are to control their destiny, they must allocate the resource base in a manner that will develop, conserve, maintain, and improve the economic and natural resource base for future years. There is opportunity and potential for improvement through development of our resources, but careful planning based on sound information will be required.

COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

One of the best tools for resource allocation is comprehensive resource management, a systematical method of managing all our natural resources that recognizes the interrelationships of resources. The Coordinated Resource Management approach uses the best efforts and knowledge of everyone involved--private landowners, state and federal agencies, resource specialists, and resource departments of major universities.

Several objectives are involved in reaching the primary goal: 1. A complete inventory of all renewable and non-renewable resources within a

specific geographic area. 2. A recognition of the interrelationship between resources. 3. An identification of all feasible resource development alternatives and selection of the most optimum alternative of those available considering social, economic and environmental values. 4. Education of society to recognize and appreciate fundamentals of resource management and their importance to the public.

CRM is the result of implementing a good coordinated resource plan and such management cannot be implemented without the proper plan. Therefore, CRM has two major components: development of the coordinated resource plan and implementation of the plan.

To accomplish this goal, coordinated resource plans must be based on scientific facts, ecological and management principles, and concepts. Sound planning requires the evaluation of facts and the application of scientific principles to develop potential alternatives that can reach the desired management objectives. From feasible alternatives, one plan of action must be selected and implemented.

Coordinated resource planning and management is a result of several activities that provide the basis for the plan and its implementation. These activities are: a stated goal, a complete inventory, precise mapping to show resource location, recognition of the interrelationships between resources, recognition of the opportunity to develop resources, selection of an interdisciplinary team of specialists to develop the plan, and a forum for public review and input.

The biological and environmental aspect of resource management is only part of the entire process of CRM. The economic relationship among resources and the interrelated relationships among economic sectors of the county's economy structure are equally important. For resource managers and others to adequately plan, a complete study of the county's economic structure is necessary. This includes an input-output study for the area in question and related information about trade areas, leading industries, and revenues or taxes to support local government and community services. All industries and sectors of the economy must be included to provide an adequate picture for rational planning.

Who or what part of society pays for resource developments and who reaps the rewards also are important. Unfair relationships seldom have lasting value because as soon as one party finds out they are being treated unfairly, they begin to negotiate for a different position and the conflict is renewed. Therefore, good planning requires those who benefit pay the associated costs of the product.

In addition, resource planning and management must be done with people (resource users and the general public), not for them. Facts about resources and the principles of nature and management are the key to sound planning. Therefore, the role of specialists should include that of a helper, educator, and leader. The public will support and assist in implementing plans they helped develop.

Good plans begin with appropriate goals and objectives that are feasible, considering the resources available. A broad-based goal that is appropriate for most renewable resources management is "to manage renewable resources in a manner that will optimize both short-term and long-term social, economic, and environmental benefits to society without permanently altering the options for future use or changing the resource base."

INVENTORY

Coordinated resource plans by necessity are based on a complete inventory of all resources, natural and human, within a geography area or region. The completeness of the inventory determines the overall value of the coordinated resource plan because of interrelationships of the resources. The impacts of management decisions on the designated resource and the secondary impacts that result from the interrelationships with associated resources are of great concern to resource managers and users.

To be adequate, the inventory must identify and locate all vegetative eco-types, wildlife habitat, soils, available water, minerals, scenic and special recreation areas, and recognize potentials for development along with critical and fragile resources that must be managed with great care. All these data must then be assembled into a usable form.

PLANNING

From this type of inventory base, resource managers can begin to evaluate development and management potentials according to the interrelationships between resources and the social, economic, and environmental consequences that may occur in various management alternatives. Out of this complex and complicated mass of information, resource managers must assemble and package the facts and management principles in a way that all resource users and the public can fully understand. In addition, all feasible alternatives should be available for consideration by resource managers, resource users, and the general public.

The general planning process must start with an orientation session for resource managers so the entire interdisciplinary team is aware of all the resources, interrelationships of resources, and the management potentials available. Next, the teams must identify alternatives to be presented to the resource users and the public.

At this point, a general orientation session for all resources users, interested groups, and the general public should be conducted. It is important that no special interest or user group is left out of the planning process. After a complete and thorough orientation process, the resource managers, users, and public are ready to begin developing the Coordinated Resource Plan for a specific set of resources in a specific geographic area.

The planning process requires certain fundamental attitudes from those people involved. First of all, they must have a commitment to develop a rational, coordinated resource plan and implement it. Next, they must come prepared to communicate with other users and interest groups. This means to listen and try

to understand others' needs and desires. There also must be a recognition that compromise likely will be necessary and that special interest groups may gain more than they lose through compromises that can result in better plans. Each member of the team also must be prepared to facilitate the planning process as much as possible and still meet the goals and objectives of the group.

Most of all, members of the planning group need to recognize their greatest benefits will accrue if they approach the planning process with the attitude that they should make the greatest contribution they can with their experience and resource management capabilities. They should not have the attitude that their only reason for participating is to get the largest slice of the resource pie.

COORDINATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

A Coordinated Resource Plan is of little use unless it is implemented. The objective of the entire planning process and all the related activities is to get the plan implemented and the resources under management. The time and manner of implementing management often have much to do with success of the program.

Adequate economic resources, technology, and management must be available to meet implementation needs. This may require additional public funds to accomplish management activities on both public and private lands. Capital investments in the resource base are often necessary if increased values are desired and development is necessary. Increased costs also may be associated with the protection of aesthetics or environmental values.

No plan is ever complete or will always remain current. This means plans and management repeatedly must be reviewed and updated. The complete planning process need not be repeated but all concerned need to be kept aware of changes and to have an opportunity to contribute thoughts and desires.