



Umatilla Forest Collaborative Group | Operating Principles

(DRAFT: 23/APR/2012 | UPDATE: 29/OCT/2015)

I. Group Mission and Vision

Mission: To develop and promote balanced solutions from a diverse group of stakeholders to improve and sustain ecological resiliency and local community socioeconomic health in and near the Umatilla National Forest.

Vision: Umatilla Forest Collaborative Group recommendations meaningfully contribute to lasting ecological, economic, and social [alphabetical] resilience in and near the Umatilla National Forest.

II. Group Values

Participants in the Umatilla Forest Collaborative Group (UFCG) agree that their collaborative efforts should:

- a. Adhere to their signed commitments in the Declaration of Cooperation (**Appendix A**). Specifically to provide honest, solution-oriented input into the processes to develop named and future projects. Furthermore, organizations/participants are committed to provide their relevant skills and expertise in support of the development of these projects.
- b. Review, discuss and re-adopt the Operating Principles on a biennial basis to ensure all members are in agreement and current membership is fully vested.
- c. In all decision making processes, review, understand and consider the forest management goals of the Umatilla National Forest.
- d. Recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of others, and expect that their interests will be represented as well.
- e. Work on tangible, implementable projects and engage in deliberate dialogue on other issues that have not yet reached agreement and/or have higher potential opportunity for positive UFCG involvement. Focus on projects with the potential for ecological, economic, and social [alphabetical] benefit.
- f. Identify opportunities to provide economic benefit to local communities including reliable/stable supply of material.
- g. Identify opportunities to protect and restore clean water, stable soils, native vegetation and quality habitat for native fish and wildlife.
- h. Incorporate landscape-scale, ecological, economic, and social [alphabetical] considerations into a holistic analysis while making collaborative recommendations.



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III. Representation, Participation, Committees

The UFCG will actively seek to involve representatives of diverse perspectives, needs, and expertise. This includes:

- Community support organizations
 - Concerned community members
 - County Commissioners and other elected officials
 - Economic development agencies
 - Environmental/conservation groups
 - Federal agencies
 - Forest contractors
 - Forest industries
 - Landowners
 - Recreation interests
 - State Agencies
 - Tribes
 - Watershed councils/soil and watershed conservation districts
- [alphabetical order]

The UFCG will be an open meeting organization. We will seek to include a diversity of stakeholder interests and geographic representation. The UFCG will invite the Forest Service to engage, assist, advise and support activities of the group, providing leadership and staff expertise, working with the UFCG to develop and implement projects consistent with the mission and vision of the UFCG.

UFCG meetings will occur on the fourth Thursday of the month, unless otherwise decided upon by the group. The public will be invited to participate in meetings of the full collaborative.

Because the group will communicate via email and phone between regularly scheduled meetings, it is recognized that any direction taken, or decision made during meetings will supersede alternative direction or decisions that develop outside of facilitated meetings.

Subcommittees may be formed, as needed, to deliberate on areas of disagreement, do research, draft procedural documents, or work on any other matter that the full group has decided is relevant. Recommendations from subcommittees shall be brought to the entire UFCG for deliberation and approval.



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IV. Ground Rules

A) Basic Rules for Collaboration

1. Respect each other in and outside of meetings.
2. No backroom deals.
3. Personal attacks will not be tolerated.
4. The personal integrity and values of participants will be respected.
5. Stereotyping will be avoided.
6. Commitments will not be made lightly and will be kept; agreements will be honored.
7. Disagreements will be regarded as “challenges to be solved,” rather than as “battles to be won.”
8. Participants are representative of a broad range of interests, each having concerns about the outcome of the issues at hand. All parties recognize the legitimacy of the interests and concerns of others, and expect that their interests will be represented as well.
9. Participants commit to keeping their colleagues/constituents informed about the progress of these discussions.
10. Participants commit to stating interests, problems, and opportunities. Not positions. “My-way-or-the-highway” does not support collaboration.
11. Participants will air problems, disagreements and critical information during meetings to avoid surprises.
12. Participants commit to search for opportunities and alternatives. The creativity of the group can often find the best solution.
13. Participants agree to verify rumors at full group meetings before accepting them as fact.

B) Meeting Behavior - all participants will:

1. Come to meetings prepared.
2. Respect the basic rules of collaboration (as stated above).
3. Voice their concerns during meetings and take the time to resolve those issues.
4. Refrain from side conversations during the meeting.
5. Participants will make sure only one person speaks at a time – let individuals finish their thoughts and then take a deep breath before responding.
6. Respect the facilitator and meeting agenda.

C) Meeting planning and coordination

1. As a general rule, full group collaborative meetings will be scheduled for the fourth Thursday of each month.
2. The group will seek to have a minimum of two annual “field trips” in place of meeting room meetings. Group members have indicated a desire to spend more time in the field to build





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bonds and better understand different situations and management strategies therefore more than two annual field trips is encouraged.

3. Meetings where key decisions will be made will be announced well in advance (2 weeks).
4. Meetings will be announced via email and available on the calendar located on the UFCG website (or by phone and/or mail for members who do not have email).
5. Meeting agendas will be sent out approximately 10 days prior to the meeting to allow for group input and suggestions.

D) Record keeping

1. Written notes will be taken at each meeting and shared with members who are on the list serve or have requested them by mail no later than 3 weeks following any meeting.
2. Written notes from the prior meeting will be reviewed at the beginning of the next meeting and any issues (clarifications, other) will be discussed.
3. Active member organizations and representatives will be listed in written notes with information indicating their presence. Other attendees will be listed separately.

E) Internal communications protocol

1. A website will be maintained for storing and sharing all information. Partners are encouraged to help develop content for the website. The address is currently: <http://umatillacollaborative.org>.

F) External communications protocol

1. Information about the collaborative will be made available to external stakeholders via the website and other venues as appropriate; all efforts will be taken to ensure that the group's work remains transparent to external audiences. Non-members will have access to all information and the ability to share thoughts and comments with the group.
2. No individual member or participant of the UFCG should speak on behalf of the full group without first gaining consent of the full group.

V. Decision-Making System

A) Participation

While anyone may participate in meetings and deliberations, only persons signing this Operating Principles document may participate in group decision-making. Individuals must have attended at least 2 of the last 4 meetings to formally participate in group decisions (while allowing the use of "alternates" from the same organization if needed).





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Committee members are encouraged to prioritize attending meetings in person. If this is not possible, members are encouraged to ensure a proxy is in attendance or to submit written input to the facilitator ahead of time. Committee and full group agendas should note if the group will be asked to make a decision during that meeting. Materials and information that will help inform committee or full group member decision-making should be distributed at least a week before the group is asked to discuss it.

Rather than establishing formal quorum rules, the group has agreed that substantive decisions should not be made at meetings where the full spectrum of stakeholder interests are not present. The group may make tentative decisions at such meetings, or may delay decisions until the following meeting.

Forest Service staffs are extremely important to this effort, but will only participate in an advisory capacity for the decision process.

B) Consensus-Seeking

The UFCG agrees to be a consensus-seeking group. Consensus is defined as decisions that all parties can support, or at a minimum, agree to live with.

1. Before beginning a consensus-seeking process, the group will establish an agreed-upon review period to ensure members have had adequate time to review all relevant documents and materials and consult with their organization or constituents.

1-2. As decisions are being made by either the full group or a subcommittee, eligible members will be asked to indicate their support either by a show of hands or verbal confirmation.

2-3. When there is disagreement, the dissenter shall provide the basis for his/her dissent and offer a path forward. It is incumbent upon all participants in the conversation to seek a constructive alternative that they think will meet everyone's needs and interests.

3-4. If no consensus can be achieved, a subcommittee may be formed to find a resolution. If the subcommittee is unable to find a resolution that the full UFCG can support by consensus, the full UFCG may issue one report with a majority–minority decision.

4-5. Majority-minority reports are not desirable and therefore all efforts will be made to reach consensus.

5-6. In the event that clear consensus is not established and a majority–minority report must be issued, each report will include the majority and minority position of the full group for each recommendation, and a full list of persons and/or organizations supporting each recommendation.

6-7. All decisions that were made at a meeting will be documented at meetings end and the level of agreement with decisions will be recorded.



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7-8. Consensus on a decision about a project, recommendation, or action the group plans to take will be reached when all meeting participants can make one of the following statements about a decision:

- I agree with the decision and will publicly support it.
- I agree with the decision but will refrain from publicly supporting it.
- I can live with the decision (and won't disparage it in public).

8-9. Efforts will be made by the facilitator to reach milestone decisions throughout project discussions on clearly defined decision points.

9-10. The facilitator, in conjunction with participants, shall identify benchmarks for the upcoming meeting. Proposed benchmarks shall be established either at the meetings or in the interim, and included on the agenda for each item for an upcoming meeting.

10-11. In the interest of time and completing the agenda items for the day, the facilitator, shall, at his/her discretion, bring a discussion to a close, but shall offer opportunities for continuance via a subcommittee or other means.

C) Reversability of Decisions

Decisions made during meetings will not be revisited by the UFCG unless significant new ecological, economic, policy, or social information that may affect the decision becomes available.

D) Outcome of Group Decision

Once the full group has ratified a decision, a report, if warranted, will be given to the USFS for their consideration in their role as decision makers for USFS managed lands and waters. If consensus cannot be reached, the group will seek to define areas of consensus and non-consensus.

E) Objections

The UFCG recognizes that individuals both within the Collaborative and outside of the Collaborative, may choose to object to a final collaborative~~the final~~ project. The Collaborative also recognizes that the USFS is the ultimate decision maker with regards to all projects.

Should a member of the Collaborative object to a collaborative project, the Collaborative requests that the member who is objecting inform the Collaborative of the objection and outline the reasons why the objector feels an objection is necessary. Members who plan to object shall be provided an opportunity to explain the reason for their objection, and all members agree to demonstrate maturity and respect for other participants.

The UFCG requests that the USFS invite all UFCG members to the objection resolution meeting.

F) Administrative Committee





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The UFCG will utilize an Administrative Committee to assist in the following functions: developing draft meeting documents such as agendas and notes for full group consideration, fiscal administration oversight and assistance to the host organization discussion and feedback for staffing and other contracts, annual facilitator and host organization performance reviews, and agenda-setting for full group meetings.

The Administrative Committee will strive to include diverse representation from amongst the full group, and will include at least one forest industry, one environmental organization, and one local community representative. Committee members will serve one-year terms and may serve consecutive terms if desired by the participant and supported by the full UFCG group. Committee membership will be revisited and opened for interest and nominations on an on-going basis. Committee membership is open to any participants interested in serving.

The Administrative Committee is charged with lending their individual skills to ensure the smooth and appropriate functioning of the collaborative and that grant objectives and financial obligations are being met. The opinions and positions of individual committee members in regard to projects do not belong in this role.

VI. Staff Roles

The host organization of the UFCG will provide, as funding allows, fiscal administration, neutral facilitation, outreach, minute-taking, and other functions desired by the group. The host organization may enter into contracts with other entities to perform desired functions, specifically a third-party neutral facilitator to facilitate full group, Administrative Committee and subcommittee meetings; develop agendas for monthly meetings; and review meeting materials and notes.



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VII. Signature Page

Name

Title (if applicable)

Organization (if applicable)

Date



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APPENDIX A: DECLARATION OF COOPERATION