

History of Coordinated Resources Management Planning (CRMP) in Oregon—An Overview

E. William Anderson

The coordinated resource management planning (CRMP) process in Oregon will have its 50th anniversary in 1999. The first Oregon coordinated plan was formulated in the Eagle Valley Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) in eastern Baker County near the Oregon-Idaho border. It was signed by the participants in November 1949.

This was a relatively simple plan. It involved the Dry Gulch Grazing Association which consisted of 5 ranchers, each of whom had already formulated an individual ranch conservation plan for their private lands as a SWCD cooperator. Collectively, they had some problems with their grazing permits on the Dry Gulch USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM) allotment on which they grazed their livestock in common.

At the suggestion of USDA Soil Conservation Service (SCS), the ranchers, BLM District Manager, Chairman of SWCD Board of Supervisors, and SCS met to discuss the situation. We decided what needed to be done to improve the allotment and to coordinate each ranch program with the allotment, documented the problems and the team's decisions, and then agreed to apply the program by signing off on the coordinated plan.

Background

This was an innovative approach to resource management planning. Previously, beginning in 1937, the SCS program in Oregon was largely oriented toward helping farmers and ranchers plan and apply conservation measures on their private lands. By the late 1940's, however, it had become apparent in eastern Oregon that range improvements and livestock management on public-land grazing allotments needed to be dovetailed with those on interdependent private ranches so that resource management on both ownerships could be improved.

In some instances, developments such as water, fences and seedings were needed. Adjustments in such items as turn-out dates, sequence of livestock moves between management units, and seasons of grazing were commonly needed to produce harmony within the total-ranch operations concept. Important wildlife habitat, such as critical big game winter range, often was involved and needed special considerations. Irrigated hay and pasture and dryland grain operations on base ranches needed to be dovetailed with grazing on rangelands and forests, both private and public. Grazing systems needed to take into account forestry practices, such as harvest cuts, so as to reduce conflicts between livestock grazing and establishment of erosion-control seedings on disturbed areas, for example.

This was the setting in which Oregon's first coordinated resource management plans were formulated.

The CRMP process attracted the attention of Oregon ranchers and local agency people in those days because it effectively resolved long-standing management problems and conflicts. In addition, each of these plans was based on evaluation of an inventory of ecological sites and soils that provided a sound basis for resource management out on the land. As the CRMP program expanded in conservation districts throughout eastern Oregon during the 1950's and '60s, the process increased in scope and effectiveness. Coordinated plans were increasingly comprehensive. They involved such items as irrigation and drainage systems, crop rotations, pasture and hay production, wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, range improvements, weed control, water developments, and forestry on private lands. These activities were also coordinated with similar resource management and grazing concerns applicable to BLM and Forest Service allotments that were involved. This represented coordination between various land uses as well as between ownerships.

Concurrently, we learned to deal effectively with complex resource situations by working together as a local team to resolve such issues and make full use of local expertise and the variety of incentives and subsidies that were available. This one-on-one teamwork during that era represents the early evolution of the CRMP process which is currently defined in Oregon as:

Coordinated resource management planning (CRMP) is a process through which resource owners, managers and users, working together as a team from beginning to end, formulate and implement plans for the management of all major resource and ownerships within a specific area and/or for the resolution of specific conflicts. Resource owners and managers do not abrogate their rights, authority or responsibility to make decisions, but they make these decisions while listening to the viewpoints, experiences and opinion of others. Collaborative decision making, not voting, is a fundamental element in the CRMP process.

By the end of 1965, over 100 coordinated plans had been formulated for ranching operations in 22 SWCDs in eastern Oregon, which represented a huge geographic range of interest in this process among SWCD cooperators at that time. These early plans also represented a very wide range of experience in identifying and evaluating ecological sites and soils as a basis for planning resource management since these plans occurred within nine of Oregon's ecological provinces (Anderson et al. 1998). The first plans were in the Snake River province which were followed by plans formulated successively in the Blue Mountain, Columbia

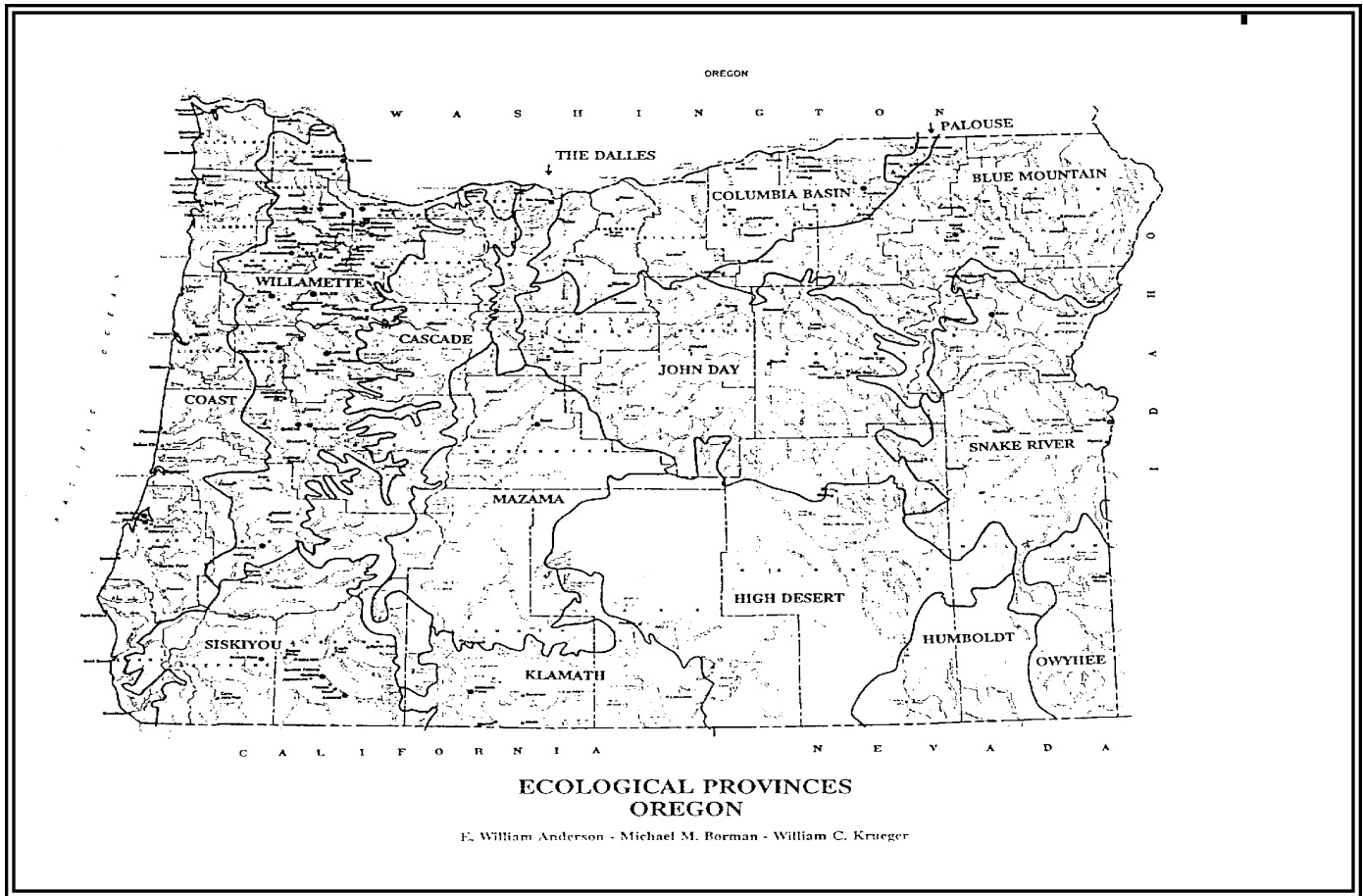


Fig. 1. Ecological Provinces—Oregon.

Basin, Siskiyou, Mazama, John Day, Klamath, High Desert, and The Dalles provinces (Fig. 1).

During these formative years of training personnel to do coordinated planning, the criteria used to judge adequacy of the resulting plan were:

- Is it technically sound, feasible and practical?
- Does it adequately cover the needs of the land and resources?
- Is it tailored to the rancher and his operation?
- Was it worked out with the rancher(s)?

These criteria are as basic in judging relevance and quality of coordinated resource management plans in Oregon today as they were then.

Collectively, these early coordinated plans, developed primarily at the request of SWCD ranching cooperators, represented an unpublicized display of personal ethics regarding resource management on the part of the ranchers. It also demonstrated a realization that conservation management of renewable natural resources is basic to economic stability over time.

Organization

As the CRMP process became increasingly popular in Oregon, it caused some local problems in scheduling SCS and BLM employees' time to work jointly on these plans. To

make this joint use of employees legal in Oregon, the SCS State Conservationist, A.J. Webber, and the BLM Oregon State Director, Russ Getty, signed the first interagency memo of understanding to deal specifically with cooperative resource planning in Oregon. This was in March 1965. On June 14, 1965 a national SCS/BLM memo of understanding that dealt specifically with ranch unit/allotment planning by the two agencies, was signed.

These were the first Oregon and national memos of understanding regarding the kind of interagency cooperative activities that later became known as Coordinated Resource Management Planning, with the acronym CRMP.

Coordination between agencies in respect to Oregon's CRMP program started to expand shortly after the first SCS/BLM memo of understanding was signed. At the first organizational meeting in 1965, we established our Executive Group and Task Group to guide the program with members representing SCS, BLM and Oregon Conservation Commission. The Executive Group, which consists of administrators of signatory agencies/organizations provides interagency agreement on policy and guidance. The Task Group, which consists of staff representatives of the Executive Group, provides interagency, interdisciplinary assistance and guidance to local planning teams, which conduct the planning process.

Although the US Forest Service, Oregon Dept Fish & Wildlife, and Oregon Extension Service participated in Oregon CRMP activities at the field level as early as 1955, the concept of coordination between agencies did not permeate those agencies' administration until the late 1960's. In 1970, US Forest Service and Oregon Dept Fish & Wildlife, and in 1973, Oregon Extension Service joined the organization.

In January 1976, the Oregon memo of understanding was updated and signed by eight federal and state agencies. Five such updates have occurred with the last in 1992 being signed by USDA Soil Conservation Service (now Natural Resources Conservation Service), Forest Service, Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service (now Farm Service Agency), USDI Bureau of Land Management, and Fish & Wildlife Service; Oregon Departments of Fish & Wildlife, Forestry, Agriculture, and Water Resources; Oregon Division of Lands; Oregon State Extension Service; and Oregon Association of Conservation Districts. The Natural Resources Advisor to the Governor's office is a member of the Executive Group and the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board's program director is a member of the Task Group.

Since inception, members of the Society for Range Management have served on the Oregon Executive and

Task Groups. These include: Bill Anderson, Dan Merkel, Roy Mann, Hugh Barrett, Dave Franzen, Jeff Repp; (SCS); Howard Delano, Don Gipe, Warren Sandau, Reg Ross, Chad Bacon, Bill Leavelle, Gerry Fullerton; (BLM) Gary Nelson, Bob Nelson, Clarence Almen, Bob Hamner, Jim Guest; (USFS); Dillard Gates, Bill Krueger, Tom Bedell, Mike Borman; (Oregon State University); A.K. Majors (Oregon Dept Lands); Howard Borgerding (Oregon Conservation Commission and rancher).

Representative CRMP Activities

As experience was gained, the kinds of situations for which coordinated planning was used in Oregon changed from almost entirely livestock ranching issues and opportunities to a wide variety of resource management situations. Complexity ranged from relatively simple to intricate. The scope of these CRMP activities spread from eastern Oregon to statewide, which represents dealing with ecosystems ranging from arid rangelands through forested mountains to coastal climates, and with rural to urban settings.

The following examples illustrate how the CRMP process in Oregon has been effective in resolving a variety of complex resource situations involving a diversity of local organi-



Representatives selected by Planning Team to design a grazing system in accordance with the overall plan.

zations, landowners, commercial industries, and agency representatives.

Strategic Planning: In 1956, the Grant SWCD in the John Day ecological province, central Oregon, requested assistance to help resolve a knotty resource issue that involved the Northside Game Range on which concentrations of wintering deer had become increasingly troublesome over the years. These were mainly south-facing private lands along the north side of John Day river historically used as a spring turn-out range for ranchers located from Prairie City west about 40 miles to Picture Rock Gorge. About 156,000 acres and 22 ranchers were involved.

Evaluation of an ecological inventory was the basis for formulating an overall assessment of the situation and program for improvement—this is a strategic plan. The CRMP team included 7 of the ranchers, the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, US Forest Service, Oregon Dept Fish & Wildlife, Oregon State University, Oregon Extension Service, Agricultural Stabilization & Conservation Service, BLM and SCS. Our team agreed that the overall program—the strategic plan—we had formulated should be applied to the land ranch by ranch. This was done by SCS and Extension Service working with each rancher to formulate and implement individual ranch plans that collectively implemented the strategic plan.

The Northside Game Range plan created several important contributions to the evolution of CRMP in Oregon:

- It was focused primarily on a major complex wildlife habitat situation which broadened the adaptability of the CRMP process.
- It involved a wider variety of agencies and organizations that had previously been involved, which broadened and increased support for the CRMP process.
- It established the technique for developing a strategic plan for a complex area that was essentially unmanageable because of the number of properties and families involved, yet it resolved the broad issues by collectively applying the basics of the strategic plan to each manageable unit, ranch by ranch.

Wildfire Burns: Re-establishing vegetational cover following severe wildlife on sensitive forested watersheds in Oregon has been facilitated by using the CRMP process. The first burn-rehabilitation CRMP was for the 1968 Snow Basin burn on private forest lands in Wheeler SWCD in the John Day ecological province, central Oregon. In addition to achieving re-establishment of vegetational cover for effective erosion control and a stand of adapted tree seedings, this CRMP pioneered a guideline for mobilizing local organizations and obtaining available public funds and supplies quickly so that the burned area was treated in a timely manner. The planning team consisted of 9 landowners, one federal and two state agencies, and the Wheeler SWCD.

In 1969, a similar CRMP was the basis for mobilizing efforts to successfully rehabilitate the Schoolmarm burn in the forested watershed from which the city of The Dalles obtained its water supply. The Dalles city is in Wasco SWCD in The Dalles ecological province, northcentral Oregon. In 1976, the CRMP process was again used as the

basis for successfully rehabilitating the Rockhouse Creek burn in the forested watershed from which the city of Dallas obtained its water supply. Dallas is in the Polk SWCD in the Willamette ecological province of western Oregon. The diversity of planning teams in such situations is represented by the Rockhouse CRMP team which consisted of City of Dallas, Boise Cascade Corp, Pope and Talbot Inc., Willamette Industries, CH2M Hill consulting firm, Polk SWCD, Polk County, US Representative Denny Smith's office, Oregon Extension Service, Oregon Departments of Forestry and Fish & Wildlife, BLM and SCS.

Watersheds: Needs and opportunities to improve watershed qualities became a normal element in the CRMP process in Oregon beginning with the 1970 Dupratt Ranches CRMP in Wallowa SWCD in the Blue Mountain ecological province, northeastern Oregon, and the Zack Keyes CRMP in Wheeler SWCD in the John Day ecological province, central Oregon. These two experiences were the basis for developing a worksheet to help guide other CRMP teams to give adequate consideration to the watershed aspects of each future coordinated plan.

The first Oregon CRMP that dealt specifically with a watershed as the focal point was the 1973 Upper Butte Creek Watershed CRMP in Wheeler SWCD in the John Day ecological province, central Oregon. It was 4,800 acres in size and our planning team consisted of two ranchers, Kinzua Corp, Oregon Departments of Forestry and Fish & Wildlife, Oregon Extension Service, BLM and SCS. This plan was based on achieving watershed qualities through vegetational management related to planned forestry, grazing, and recreational practices.

Following that watershed CRMP, a series of watershed plans have been formulated in Oregon. These include:

- The 1975 Bradford Creek Watershed CRMP in Curry SWCD in the Siskiyou ecological province, southwestern Oregon, for which the planning team consisted of two timber companies, two state and two federal agencies.
- The 1976 Fall Creek Watershed CRMP in Lincoln SWCD, in the Coast ecological province, western Oregon, which involved 14 interests.
- The 1992 Fairview Creek Watershed CRMP in East Multnomah SWCD in the Willamette ecological province, northwestern Oregon, which is very unique because this watershed transects the densely populated metropolitan area that adjoins the city of Portland on the east. The planning team, too, was unique consisting of representatives of 15 groups such as schools, cities, parks, industry, and local government. Shirley Boothby, former secretary in the SCS State office and then Director, East Multnomah SWCD, was the primary team leader.
- The 1993 Devils Lake Watershed CRMP in Lincoln SWCD in the Coast ecological province dealt with excessive nutrient and sediment inputs into the lake from numerous lakeside septic systems, excessive fertilizer from lawns, golf courses, and agricultural and forestry activities. The planning team consisted of 16 private, state and federal interests. Dave Wagner, Manager of Devils Lake Water Improvement District, was team leader.

—The 1997 Catherine Creek Watershed CRMP in Union SWCD in Blue Mountain ecological province, eastern Oregon, dealt with a very large, complex situation and involved one of the largest and most diverse planning teams which represents the scope of issues addressed in the plan. This planning team consisted of 18 private landowners, Boise Cascade Corp, Umatilla Tribe, Union SWCD, Grande Ronde Model Watershed Program, Grande Ronde Resource Council, City of Union, Eastern Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station, Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Departments of Forestry, Fish & Wildlife, Water Resources, Parks & Recreation, Environmental Quality, and Transportation, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Forest Service, and US Natural Resources Conservation Service (SCS). Dale Council, local rancher and chairman Union SWCD, was team leader.

Large Tracts: The 1972 Big Butte CRMP in Jackson SWCD, southwestern Oregon, was one of the largest, most complicated coordinated plans to that date, yet one of the most successful in Oregon. The planned area was 144,737 acres occurring from the crest of the Cascade mountains westward, which involved both the Cascade and Siskiyou ecological provinces of Oregon. Outside the national forest, which represented about 60% of the planned area, the ownership pattern was a jumble of land parcels consisting of BLM, private, leased, and lumber company lands. The planned area, which was grazed by the Big Butte Grazing Association, encompassed the source of water for the city of Medford, a huge wildlife winter range, and extensive private forest lands. Our planning team consisted of the four ranchers, two timber companies, the city and county, one state and three federal agencies.

Prior to 1990, the largest CRMP in Oregon was the Leslie Ranches plan which involved 251,850 acres of private and federal lands in the Mazama ecological province, central Oregon. The planning team consisted of the ranch manager, BLM, US Forest Service, Oregon Dept Fish & Wildlife, and the Central Oregon Land Issues Forum. This plan involved about 2,000 head of cattle in three herds, plus deer, antelope, and sagegrouse all utilizing the area yearlong. Ecological sites represented pine forest transition to natural shrub grasslands. Our planning team's emphasis was on vegetational management for naturalness, forage, wildlife habitat, and recreation.

Wildlife Management Areas: Between 1972 and 1985, coordinated plans were formulated, at the request of Oregon Dept Fish & Wildlife, for 10 state wildlife management areas and refuges located in the Blue Mountain, Coast, Columbia Basin, High Desert, John Day, The Dalles, and Willamette ecological provinces. In each plan, our planning team consisted of a variety of local interests and agencies, both state and federal. These wildlife-oriented plans contributed invaluable knowledge and experience in dealing with a wide variety of wildlife and their habitat needs which was subsequently incorporated into formulation of other coordinated plans on a widespread basis through Oregon.

River Reach: The 1984 Lower Deschutes CRMP was the first Oregon plan that focused on treatment and manage-

ment of a reach of a river—the lower 24 miles of Deschutes river that forms the boundary between Wasco and Sherman SWCDs in the Columbia Basin ecological province, north central Oregon. This CRMP produced outstanding beneficial results to the reach of the river, its fishery and recreational values. Our planning team included a wide diversity of interests: Oregon Departments of Fish & Wildlife and Parks & Recreation, 6 ranchers, Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, Oregon Isaak Walton League, Association of Northwest Steelheaders, The Dalles Rod & Gun Club, Deschutes River Public Outfitters, Northwest Rafters, Sherman SWCD, Sherman County Commission & Landowners, Sherman County Weed Control District, Wasco SWCD, Oregon Extension Service, BLM and SCS.

Team Leadership

Team leadership in Oregon CRMP activities over the years has been provided primarily by SCS (now NRCS). However, local non-agency team members are increasingly providing leadership in planning teams and this has been encouraged through training workshops conducted by the CRM Task Group. Specialists formally trained in conflict resolution have not been involved in Oregon' CRMP program because we know from experience that, given competent technical assistance, local people can and will resolve their resource issues in a manner that is technically sound, feasible and practical.

Communications

There was a distinct lull in CRMP activities in Oregon during the 1970's and '80s which was at least partially due to the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA brought about conceptual advancements in resource planning and management that motivated concerns about watersheds, riparian, aesthetic values and wildlife, including fish, which have become recognized as being important components of both public and private resource management programs.

NEPA also caused adverse reactions that contributed to agencies, landowners, user groups and environmental groups becoming polarized, defensive and introverted. Communications were pretty bad.

In 1986, a group of far-sighted members of the Society for Range Management, under leadership of Dr. William C. Krueger of Oregon State University, organized the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Coalition (OWIC) for the purpose of developing communications among various groups interested in the management of riparian zones in rangeland environments. Over a period of time, and with plenty of fantastic patience, OWIC created the beginning of a favorable turn-around. The OWIC sparked additional groups into action and Oregon has benefitted notably by such effective efforts to improve communications and achieve on-the-land beneficial results as have been made by the Central Oregon Land Issues Forum, the Trout Creek Mountains Working Group, the on-going riparian/watershed action programs on many ranches that is sponsored by Oregon

Cattlemen's Association, and there are others. All of these laudable efforts have made remarkable progress toward reducing the "heat" between groups and building credibility for practitioners who live on the land in addition to achieving widespread improving ecological conditions of watersheds and riparian zones.

Legislation

A major event that has enhanced the on-going Oregon CRMP program was passage of Oregon House Bill 2215 during the 1993 legislative assembly. This act relates to coordinated watershed management. It encourages cooperative partnerships between affected private individuals, interested citizens, and representatives of local, state and federal agencies to improve opportunities to achieve the protection, enhancement and restoration of the state's watersheds. It encourages formation of local watershed councils which are adopting the CRMP process to formulate their watershed management plans. As of January 29, 1998, 83 watershed councils had been organized throughout Oregon.

The Most Valuable Plan

In retrospect, each successive coordinated plan in Oregon has contributed significantly to the refinement of our overall CRMP process as well as to the working relationships between members of each local planning team. However, from the standpoint of the most significant contribution made by a single coordinated plan, it would have to be attributed to the first plan—Dry Gulch Grazing Association—in November 1949. That plan taught us the CRMP process, per se, and how it works effectively. All successive CRMP plans in Oregon have used this basic process as the foundation upon which each plan was built.

How the Oregon CRMP Process Works

Involving the various disciplines, agencies, owners and users, working together as a planning team from beginning to end to develop the rationale upon which decisions are based involves the process of taking scientific data, combining it with know-how and applying it effectively to the land under local conditions. In this process, there are four essential considerations that need to be made in sequence:

SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY FEASIBILITY PRACTICALITY

In this sequence, scientific studies are incorporated by professionals and technicians into the technology needed to apply the research to the land. This is how so-called "conservation practices" have been formulated.

In the process of applying the technology to a special local situation, such as a subwatershed, farm or ranch, the local practitioners become key members of the CRM planning team. In a professional way they provide the practical experience and industrial judgement that is absolutely essential to effectively apply science and technology to the

land under specific local conditions.

Local conditions are likely to differ significantly from one locality to another or from one ownership or subwatershed to another in the same locality, and for various reasons. It is safe to say that no two ownerships or subwatersheds are exactly alike. Therefore, there is a high probability that a well established practice or measure solely based on science and technology will need to be adjusted somewhat in order to function as intended when applied under a particular set of local circumstances. When such adjustments are needed, they are usually based on considerations or feasibility—can it actually be done, and practicality—will it accomplish the intended results under this particular set of circumstances. Owners, managers and users of the area—the practitioners—have the necessary local experience and knowledge to help the planning team make these judgments.

Furthermore, during the team's discussion of science/technology backgrounds, as well as the HOWS, WHY, and WHY NOTS of its local applicability, each member of the planning team becomes more knowledgeable because they LISTEN to viewpoints, experiences and knowledge of others. Since they are involved from beginning to end, they develop a sense of responsibility and confidence in the outcome. They increase their awareness of total-resource relationships and interactions. All this helps them amend the viewpoints they had at the beginning and this is part of the social change that is needed.

Social changes achieved in such an inconspicuous manner and by personal volition are usually subtle. They essentially signify the inauguration of a personal resource conservation ethic. As this ethic expands, it helps produce long-lasting and cumulative beneficial effects on the way our renewable natural resources are used and managed. Consequently, achieving needed social changes among planning team members is probably the most valuable and effective outcome of the CRMP process when it is employed correctly.

Everybody benefits. So do the resources.

Reference

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Author is Mentor, Oregon CRMP Task Group; retired SCS Oregon State Range Conservationist; certified range management consultant C78-01.