



U. S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

2004 Forest Service and Federal Highway Administration Environmental Streamlining and Collaboration Workshop September 21-23, 2004 Mt. Hood, Oregon

WORKSHOP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND ACTION PLAN

The three-day workshop was highly successful and worthwhile as rated by every participant who filled out an evaluation form. Sixty-five representatives attended from both agencies, which represented a variety of skills, expertise, and areas from around the country. The attendee list, along with other backup information and copies of the presentations are included in the complete report.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

- Identify and continue developing successful collaboration and streamlining practices that support the missions of both the Federal Lands Highway Division of Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the U.S. Forest Service (FS), and
- Assess recurring and emerging issues and solutions to those issues, which will assist both agencies to improve the Forest Highway Program (FHP) delivery process.



KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED AT THIS WORKSHOP

- How can we develop realistic schedules and stick to them?
- How can we collaborate better?

ATTACHMENTS

- List of attendees
- Compilation of presentation feedback: What did you learn from this presentation that can help us achieve the purpose of the Streamlining and Collaboration process? What more do you need to know about this topic?
- Breakout group notes
- Level of Agreement process





RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOP / ACTION ITEMS

Following two days of active learning, sharing, and discussion, the workshop participants identified three areas of action items, which are outlined below. A copy of the action items from the 2003 Workshop was provided in the participant binder and reviewed by the group. Items listed in #2 and #3 below are short-term action items and Big Hairy Deal action items, respectively. (*“Big Hairy Deals” is a term used to describe changes within an organization that will provide significant benefit and requires action from*

management.) The group used a process called “Levels of Agreement” to select the suggested action items in these two groups. An explanation sheet of this process is attached.

It was decided that anyone who took on an action item from this workshop should review the notes from the 2003 Workshop and contact the people who had related action items from that workshop.



1. **Individual actions.** Lori shared with the group that the organizations she has worked with that have been the most successful are the ones where the individuals take the responsibility to make changes in their day to day activities – instead of waiting for some big action item to happen to make the changes. In order for change and improvement to be successful, individuals need to change their personal actions, and changes to be made to policies, procedures and systems as well. Lori asked each person to identify things they learned at the workshop that they can begin doing right away to improve their individual work tasks, as well as the efficiency and collaboration among their peers. The complete list is attached, some key items is listed on the next page.

- a. Ensure that proposed projects are listed on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs) and/or Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs)



- b. Participate in the FS planning process.

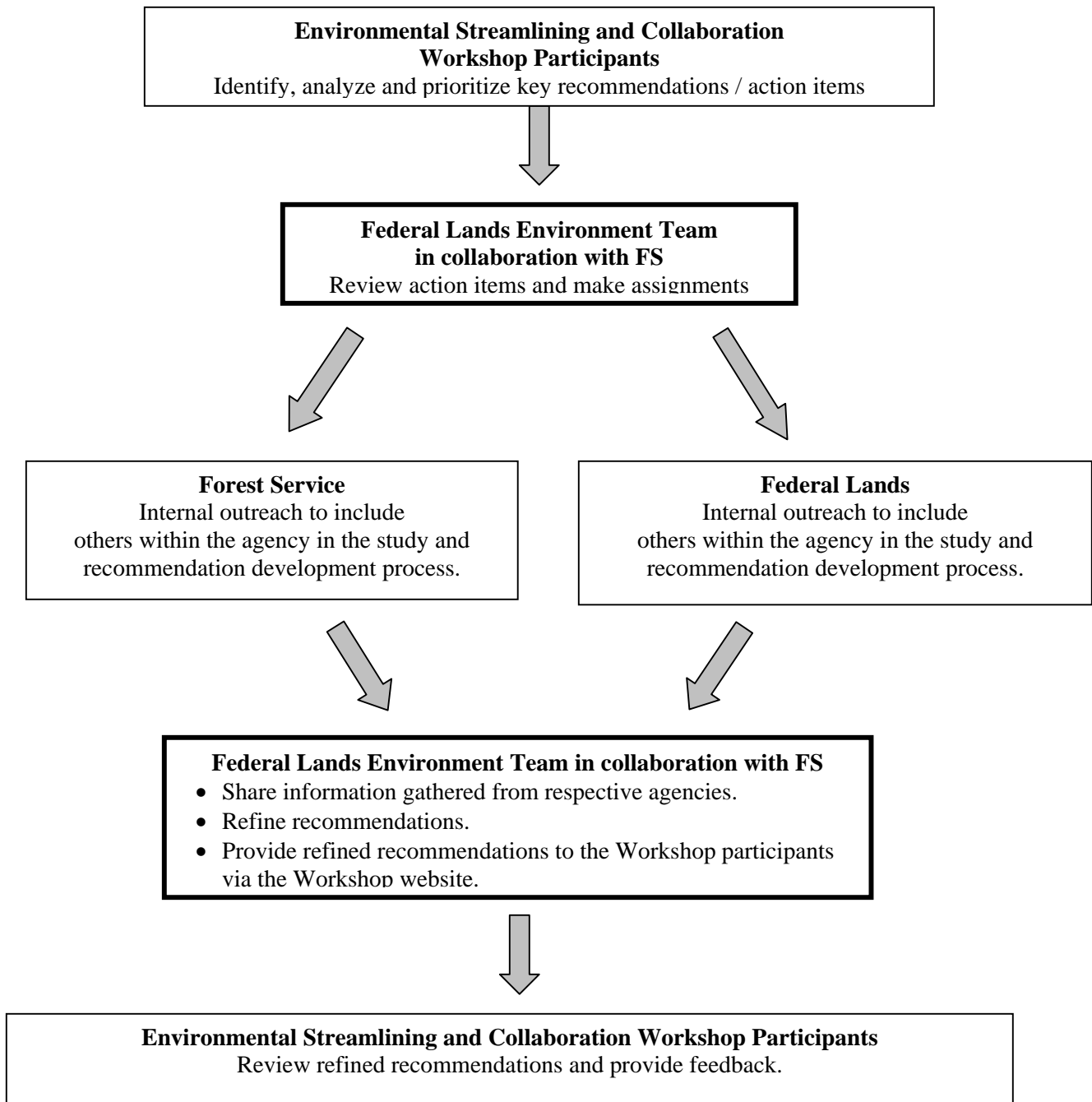
- c. Develop realistic timelines –review the current ones.
- d. Inform resource agencies (Federal Lands Management Agencies, cooperating agencies) of pending program decisions.
- e. Thoroughly document your entire process: agreements, commitments, meeting notes, etc., and share this information with the team in a timely manner.
- f. FHWA has the ability to fund agency personnel participating in development of the project.
- g. Consider producing an environmental handbook for construction on complex projects such as Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) and complex Environmental Assessments (EAs).
- h. When working on a Purpose and Need statement, do the following:
 - Bring in a neutral facilitator for complex projects
 - Establish lines of communication – Who do I talk to regarding this issue?
 - Continuously ask the following questions:
 1. Why is this a problem?
 2. Is this really a problem/need, or is it a part of a solution?
 3. Is this need too general?
 4. Is this need too broad?
 5. Do we have the right people here to discuss transportation, recreation and resource issues?



2. **Short-term action items.** The people listed below volunteered to work on the short-term action items identified by the group. The result of their work will be posted to the website for review and comment by the rest of the Workshop participants.

Action	Persons responsible	Due date
1. Prepare a Glossary of Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rick Cushing, FHWA ▪ Ellen LaFayette, FS 	Jan. 15, '05
2. Review current Project Agreements and prepare suggestions for improvement. Include ideas on how to include consideration of values and potential resource and recreation issues also.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jody Marshall, WFLHD ▪ Stephanie Popiel, CFLHD ▪ Bill Ruediger, USFS ▪ Terry Brennan, Tonto NF 	March 15, '05
3. Identify possible ways to improve the FS involvement on SEE teams, and prepare recommendations for the group to consider.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jim Keeley, CFLHD ▪ Terry Brennan, Tonto NF ▪ Diane Spencer, WFLHD ▪ Ric Suarez, WFLHD 	Feb. '05
4. Prepare recommendations on a process to ensure the project teams get copies of the planning documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jim Keeley, CFLHD ▪ Ric Suarez, WFLHD ▪ Alan Blair, CFLHD 	Jan. '05
5. Develop a website to provide information and track action items for the on-going Forest Service and Federal Highway Administration Environmental Streamlining and Collaboration Workshops. It will start with the summary and action items from the 2003 and 2004 workshops. Information about upcoming workshops will also be provided as available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brian Allen, FLH Environmental Discipline Leader 	Jan. '05
6. Review and prepare recommendations on how to improve the Project Identification Report (PIR) process. (The PIR is currently only prepared and used by WFLHD for FH projects.)	Jim Keeley, CFLHD	Dec. '04

3. **Big Hairy Deal process and action items.** These are the items that will be given to the Federal Lands Highway (FLH) Environment Team to study in more detail and develop recommendations for implementation as shown in the diagram below.



The group identified seven Big Hairy Deal (BHD) action items and identified self-selected groups to further define: (a) *What* is the BHD action item; (b) *Why* it will be beneficial; and (c) *How* it will be implemented. The self-selected groups reported their findings and suggestions, and the large group discussed each potential BHD action item. After the discussion, Lori led the group through the Levels of Agreement process, and then a prioritization process. As a result, four items were identified as high priority and three as lower priority. The low priority items are recorded below the high priority items but will not be worked on this year unless something unexpected happens that brings them to the surface. The four high priority items will go through the study and recommendation development process shown above.



High Priority for 2004-2005

1. Two-step programming process

What

Provide a mechanism to use a two-step programming process for high-risk or complex projects: 1) Program the NEPA phase, and 2) when NEPA is completed or near completion, program the rest of the project activities that lead to construction. Any one of the items listed below would qualify a project as high risk or complex project:

- EIS or a complex or controversial EA
- multi-jurisdictional
- three or more build alternatives
- complex, conflicting environmental issues or special resource impacts
- numerous, conflicting regulatory agencies
- lots of controversy

Why

- More stable project delivery program
- Would eliminate advancing the design too far before NEPA is done
- Would promote more efficient NEPA with better decisions
- Would help to reduce scheduling conflicts
- Will help to prevent making pre-decisional decisions
- Would help to reduce redesign
- The No-Build remains a viable alternative until the final NEPA decision is made since there would be less resource investment
- Will provide the needed break (per NEPA) between preliminary and final design.



How: (What needs to be done to make this happen)

- Get buy-in from partner agencies, FS and State
- Change mindset: deadline-based to decision-based.

2. Project Selection Process

What

Examine how proposals are developed and how projects are selected for programming.

- Selection officials
- Solicitation process: criteria for prioritization; how we ask for proposals
- Selection process: criteria for priorities; criteria for different types of projects: 3R, 4R, enhancements.

Why

- Improve credibility of FLHP
- Help best projects go to the top
- Provide leverage with cooperators
- Help to set realistic schedules and stick to them
- Help to establish stable programs

How

- Establish Tri-party team
- Examine current processes
- Evaluate successes and failures
- Make recommendations to the FLH Team
- Implement changes accordingly



3. Ensure Early and On-going Interdisciplinary Involvement in Projects

What-Why - How

- Update FH projects proposal form to include specific critical resource issues so that appropriate items go into the PIR.
- FS engineer needs to insure FS resource people are involved in completing the form – allow FS enough time to complete.
- Assure FHWA involves environment specialist in PIR development. Assure environmental specialist contacts FS resource personnel to determine issues in collaboration.
- Involve FS resource specialists in SEE team process – NEPA development

4. Get FH funding to appropriate level in the FS

Problem: Annual funding to FS regions Highway Trust Fund Administration Expense (HTAE) / Insufficient funds to the right place and insufficient awareness of:

- Project funding such as Highway Trust Fund Construction (HTCN) and Highway Trust Fund Scenic Byways (HTSB)
- Reimbursable Agreements – mixed bag with Public Lands Highway (PLH) discretionary
- Scenic Byways and grants for trails cause problems for Real Property Inventory and money is obligated when Agreement signed.



What

- Track available funds
- Get annual funding to ground asap

Why

- With a Reimbursable Agreement it will be easier to get resources involved
- S. Nevada BLM's model forces accountability

How

- Investigate South Nevada's BLM model – doing reimbursements
- Work with Headquarters (Federal Lands and FS) to develop an integrated process for dispensing and tracking
- Identify pitfalls in funds transfers

Lower Priority for 2004-2005

1. Improve use of Technology

What

- Develop web-based information systems: Management systems; GIS applications; document libraries

Why

- Avoid duplication of efforts
- Keep public and partners informed
- Information sharing between agencies
- Reduced paperwork / efficiency
- Pro-active way for interested people to obtain information

How

- Identify web designer / master
- Educate people to create web ready documents / GIS standards
- Agency commitment that this is important information to share. Sample: construction, environment, design and planning
- Continue development of management systems, Incorporate in programming process.

2. Develop strategy for training for both agencies

What

- To include topics such as roles, responsibilities, and processes.

Why

- Understanding the roles, responsibilities and processes of both agencies will improve compliance and project development.
- This increased understanding will also help with the problems associated with the lack of early involvement; help understanding functions in the project and budget time.
- These courses should especially benefit the USFS personnel who are not consistently involved.

How

- Look at current courses available through both agencies
- Consider modifying and adding module for USFS FHP 101
- Ideas:
 - Annual training – identify FS personnel working on FHP projects to attend
 - Joint FS/FLH training or separate?
 - Handbook available to those who are not able to attend the training.
 - Consultant develops through FLH Environmental Team and FSHQ
- Obtain support of leadership
- FLH- Bring divisions together (Team multi-division) to share current process and identify opportunities for improvement.
- FS – regarding coordination - Review/comment on recommendations / get leadership approval of recommendations.



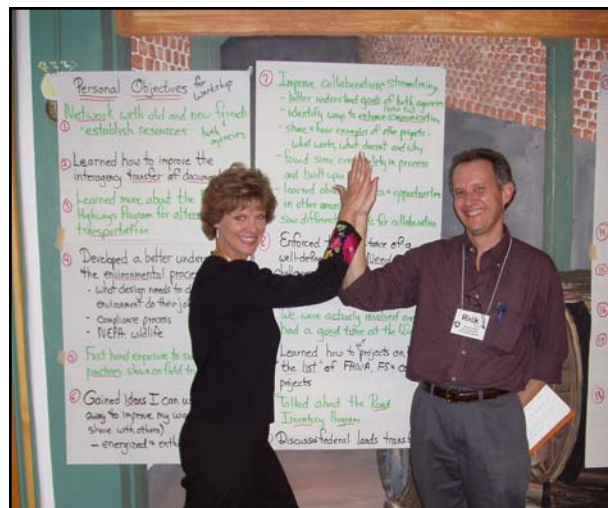
3. Forest Service develops liaison team to facilitate the FHP.

Why

- To develop consistency, early involvement, define process, for forest / districts that may not have any experience with FHP.

How

- Each region of the FS will identify cadre to provide leadership and guidance to local Forests.



Workshop planner, Rick Cushing, and facilitator, Lori Isenberg, share a High Five at the end of the workshop.