



OneWorld Communications, Inc.

PUBLIC RELATIONS SKETCH PLAN

November 21, 2003

FORESTS WITH A FUTURE

**Saving Sierra Nevada Trees, Wildlife and Communities from
Catastrophic Wildfires**

*A Public Information Campaign
For The
Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment
Management Review and Recommendations (March '03),
Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (June '03),
And Record of Decision (January '04)*

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Following is a narrative outline of the proposed public information campaign.

1. Purpose

Provide the public and Forest Service staff a better opportunity to appreciate the importance, quality and responsiveness of the upcoming Record of Decision, so that they may support it, or at very least, not impede it.

2. Strategy

This public information campaign is based on a strategy of inclusion. In other words, the campaign will adhere to a common denominator of ideas that appeal to the goals of, and address the worries and concerns of, diverse key groups. We propose that the 'common denominator concept' contain the simple essentials: catastrophic wildfires are an increasing threat in the Sierra Nevada, and the present framework of forest management needs to be improved to avert this threat. The forest of the future must be more like the forest of the past, that is, prone to acceptable low-intensity burns, not prone to the unacceptable high intensity wildfire catastrophes which devastate old-growth trees, wildlife, and local communities. The amended framework allows actions for a quicker, more likely return to forests similar to the past.

Equally important, the campaign also will have a strategy of strengthening the credibility of the new ROD, in response to an apparent atmosphere of mistrust and cynicism about the government's real intentions, as felt by interest groups and members of the public. It will address an apparent public perception that a Federal top-down, "riding rough-shod" approach is occurring, due to some hidden politically motivated agenda.

It is here proposed to strengthen credibility in a couple of ways:

- 1) highlight some of those people whose concerns triggered the process leading to this Amendment, especially District Foresters who are locally known and trusted, and who cannot perform their forest management mission, and
- 2) underscore the scientific expertise and professionalism of those who researched, formulated and decided the Amendment (the Team and the Regional Forester). For example, we foresee using District Foresters, Team members, and a tribal leader and/or member of an environmental group who would be willing to participate in the rollout (as possible), and presenting the individual credentials of the Team members.

The campaign will put forward technical data in simple "here's the bottom line" forms, understandable by lay people, supporting the two strategies. For example:

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showing the effect of low and high intensity burns on old-growth trees / wildlife / communities, estimating the number of 30-inch trees existing and likely to be cut, charting the increase of biomass and its possible reduction by the new measures, and showing owl habitats and how they might be affected. We will avoid putting forward complex technical data and jargon / acronyms, e.g. "SPLAT", which will divert the layperson from the core messages, and feed suspicions about what they cannot quickly know.

Finally, the campaign also will promote actions by local communities and individuals to reduce the threat of wildfires.

3. Positioning

The US Forest Service aims to preserve the forest. It calls all concerned individuals, interest groups and local governments to support this goal.

It publicly raises the warning flag that this goal will fail under the present Sierra Nevada Framework that is not allowing needed actions.

Experts in the field (District Foresters) warn about increasing biomass that they cannot control. Catastrophic fires are an increasing threat to the trees, wildlife and communities of the Sierra Nevada.

The US Forest Service has risen to the challenge. Experts have provided the advice needed to help solve the problem, and the Forest Service is moving forward with new guidelines.

The forest of the future must be more like the forest of the past. Local actions will be proposed by the local professionals – District Foresters – for both Federal and local review.

Likewise individuals and communities are urged to take fire prevention measures, especially while these new local actions by the US Forest Service are being put into place.

(Please note, we do not emphasize job creation and improving the economy of forest product businesses, because this is not the primary purpose of the strategy; it is one of the means to the end).

4. Audience considerations

High on the list of groups to be addressed are environmental activist groups who are highly committed, educated on the issues, and concerned. They may or may

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not use this particular ROD as an issue related to other political and social issues. As much as possible for journalists and the public to see, the 'common denominator concept' (the need to avert catastrophic fires affecting trees, wildlife and local communities), mentioned above, will be used to stake out a publicly common area of agreement, tacit or explicit. Accordingly, also high on the list of groups to address are 1) the journalistic media who rely on these environmental groups to flag issues which feed the interest of readers/listeners/viewers, and 2) those of the general public which are by and large empathetic to the environmental groups.

Perception is king. We point out right away our assumption that the majority of the general public empathetic to environmentalist organizations, is urban / suburban based. They do not live near the forest or regularly experience its local communities, forest product businesses, or foresters who must manage the forest. We assume that their interest in the forest is linked to other deeply felt ecological, cultural, political and even spiritual concerns. A perceived threat to the forest may be seen as a threat to these other deeply held concerns. Likewise, they may link challenges and problems felt in these other areas to our particular matter of the Sierra Nevada forests. In short, the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment is likely to have linkages to a wide range of topics and issues far beyond itself. This is one reason why we recommend simplifying and clarifying the issue as much as possible, to the 'common denominator concept', which can be stated and absorbed easily.

We also assume that some members of the public are 1) highly suspicious of decisions being made by government "bureaucracies" without their direct vote, and that 2) in the present Republican "pro-business" administration they may be cynical about the government's motives, such as the long-term health of the Environment being sacrificed for short-term financial gains and votes. For example, we'd bet that many perceive that Forester Blackwell is a Republican administration political appointee, aiming to appease this party's business constituents. Credibility of this staff and the Team, evidenced by professional achievements, history and credentials is vital for this audience.

Also high on the list of target audiences is the Forest Service staff itself. At this point we anticipate that the strategy, messages and materials to be prepared for the public / various groups will also do well with the internal staff. They will be briefed, and in some cases trained in implementing the campaign, in advance of the outside public, to help ensure consistency and clarity of message.

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5. Process

Time is of the essence. The ROD is scheduled to occur January 23, 2004 and between now and then is the Thanksgiving / Holiday Season. Messages and activities need to be defined, including materials written / designed / produced / duplicated, staff briefed / trained, on-site logistics arranged, materials disseminated and used. This rollout envisions a large role at the District level for the Credibility strategy sketched above. This requires coordination and planning.

Therefore, with the expressed confidence of our Forest Service supervisors for us to proceed, we will take the time to detail the execution of this plan, and cost estimate planned outputs, described below, for approval.

However, given the short time frame, we do ask for 1) quick verbal or email approval for details of the work as it proceeds and 2) flexibility as materials and activities take final form, for final approval by USFS. We expect a certain level of trust to be established regarding our labor hours, perhaps through a SPA arrangement or likewise. No purchases will be undertaken without written approval by USFS.

6. Confidentiality

Just as we will abide by the confidentiality of US Forest Service documents until they are finalized for publication, we expect the US Forest Service to maintain the confidentiality (not for public use) of this and other strategy documents from us, to better serve the US Forest Service itself. Members of the public who are not professionals in public relations and marketing might misinterpret certain ideas or concepts.

7. Creative Direction Notes

Following are some notes about fulfilling the strategy mentioned above, leading to a preliminary list of materials and activities:

7.1 Strategy – Inclusive Message: Catastrophic fires must be prevented.

A title / slogan is already proposed:

FORESTS WITH A FUTURE

Saving Sierra Nevada Trees, Wildlife and Communities
from Catastrophic Wildfires

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[Or shorter: Preventing Catastrophic Wildfires in the Sierra Nevada]

This is the 'common denominator' problem / solution statement which all concerned parties will be asked to acknowledge. We must have "forests with a future", i.e. there is a threat that they might not have a future. Catastrophic fires must be prevented, as compared to the slow fires. In a sense, the new ROD seeks to return the forests closer to their state in the past when slow / low intensity burns were more common.

This can be coupled with expressions from District level foresters that they cannot do their jobs to manage the forest because the present Framework restricts them unnecessarily, and there is a lack of funds. These District level foresters should welcome the new initiative.

Ways for local citizens to get involved through "improved practices" will be important. This information is useful to disseminate to schools, community based organizations and local leaders / government. Replace wood shake roofs? Clear brush around homes? What else? (Please advise us.)

Concepts to illustrate / visualize, include:

- The difference between hot intense burns which destroy large trees and wildlife habitat, and communities, versus a slow burn that does not. As much as possible this should be an "apples to apples" depiction, either using video of actual fires or if needed, an animation.
- The difference in aftermath of these different burns, both immediately and after a year or so.
- The build up of biomass, and how the new ROD can foster action to reduce this build up.
- Forests of the past (prone to slow burns), forest today (prone to high intensity burns), forest of the future through the new ROD (prone to slow burns).

7.2 Strategy - Credibility of the solution (ROD)

The credentials (photos and brief bios even) of the Team and Foresters.

Quotes from the Team Members regarding the problem and ROD solution.

Forester Blackwell is a career forester, not a political appointee. His bio and credentials.

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While a Regional/National level announcement is necessary, District Foresters could immediately thereafter (next day/week) make presentations to local media and communities. This should include some urban areas where District Foresters might visit if needed, i.e. San Francisco and Los Angeles (to be determined). These presentations should combine local information, concerns and solutions needed, as well as Region-wide problem / solution information. The Districts need to be furnished with communication kits and, as possible, district-level information gathered and put into materials containing their local information and messages.

Communication kits might consist of meeting banner with slogan / theme, display cards, posters, journalistic media kits (backgrounder, press release, photos, small versions of media materials, video "B-roll" for press conference and broadcast TV of slow and hot fires demonstration, short interviews, etc.) There could be a core kit reflecting the Region-wide story, supplemented by local information to be presented by District level foresters.

In addition to the visualizations mentioned above, others may include:

- District foresters complaining about not being able to do their jobs, and thanking the new ROD.
- The total estimated number of 30-inch trees in the treatment area, and the total number eligible to be cut, under the new ROD.
- District-level Maps showing particular danger areas, perhaps where biomass is not being adequately controlled, increasing the risks of catastrophic fires.

8. Proposed Materials

Following is a list of materials that would be useful for executing the abovementioned strategy. These need to be discussed regarding priority, time availability, and what information / source material is needed from the Forest Service. Based on this discussion, we will then estimate the production cost.

Video materials

- Low-Intensity vs. High-Intensity Wildfires Actual Footage and/or Animation - "B-roll" for TV news and press conferences. (We will cost out 2-D vs. 3-D variations.)
- Interviews and quotes from Forester Blackwell and some District foresters, as well as members of the Team.

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Print and Graphic Materials

- Provide an issues oriented Introduction to the ROD reflecting the public information campaign strategy, possibly copy edit if needed
- Prepare a handout brochure with photos and graphics reflecting the primary issues of the ROD public information strategy, measures to be undertaken, anticipated results
- Graphic: Comparative size of trees likely to be cut and numbers relative to totals, i.e. "forecasted total 30-inch trees to be thinned"
- Graphic: Increase of biomass and possible reduction by new measures chart. Shows the increase of biomass in Sierra Nevada Forests over time (e.g. 20 years?) as one indicator of fire risk. Chart also projects biomass increase if the Framework were to continue without change, and how the biomass rate of increase potentially would be reduced under the new ROD. Needed: data from the FS.
- Localized data (as noted above) for regional events (see below)
- Press releases, backgrounder, FAQs, biographies, and other press materials for district and local events
- Maps, photos, display cards, and banners for events, meetings
- Graphic (e.g. poster) / brochure - What local communities and visitors to endangered areas can do to reduce fire risks (re-use existing advice under the banner of this campaign).

9. Proposed Special Activities

Following is a list of proposed special activities needed to prepare and execute the campaign, involving FS staff and the media. These are incorporated into the timeline presented below.

Review of existing photographic and video materials available at USFS
See what is available for possible use in campaign materials.

Briefing of all Forest Service staff
Cover main messages of announcement, answer questions, about how to stay on a clear simple message about a highly complex subject.

Gathering of District level information
This refers to the localized "roll-out" information mentioned above - local problems, proposed local actions, signage titles. An explanatory letter to District staff followed by a teleconference to specify information needed and designs for presentation.

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Training of Regional level and District level Foresters to respond to media
Hold one-on-one (as deemed appropriate) and small group training sessions to review how media works, practice answering questions likely to be asked by reporters. Provide FAQs.

Prepare and Execute Regional and District Roll-out Press events
Disseminate press releases, background material, and B-Roll, and follow up with telephone calls as possible. Hold central and local press conferences for media in those geographic areas.

News Clipping Service

Consistently gathering and reviewing articles and broadcasts on our topic, to guide communications.

10. Tasks & Timeline

Following is an initial timeline to prepare and rollout the public information campaign. This timeline is dependant on a number of variables, including inputs of information and decisions by the Forest Service and production processes. However the Roll-out date of January 23, 2004 is fixed.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
1. Clarify and confirm strategy and overall messages	November 25
2. Identify and clarify individual target audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental organizations (Sierra/wilderness and wildlife groups) ▪ Forest Service employees ▪ Others (tribes, timber industry, WUI residents, elected officials, other government agencies) 	December 2
3. Cost estimate various materials and special activities to have budget envelope.	December 4
4. Confirm specific messages for individual target audiences	December 4
5. Begin production of Animation and Graphics Materials	December 12
6. Identify strategies and tactics for communication with individual target audiences; Review photo/video materials available at USFS. Draft initial batch of materials.	December 17
Environmental Organizations & Tribes	
Initiate personal contact with key staff at organizations regarding pending announcement	

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<p>Schedule phone calls or in-person meetings, as deemed appropriate</p> <p>Prepare for meetings and evaluate results</p> <p>Develop appropriate communications for environmental organizations as leave-behind after meetings</p>	
<p>Forest Service employees</p> <p>Identify appropriate media available for communication with employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intranet E-Mail Voicemail Payroll memo Bulletin boards Others <p>Convene special meetings (by function/department) to review main messages in campaign, answer questions</p> <p>Schedule "open forum" with Jack Blackwell where employees can ask questions, engage in discussion</p>	
<p>Media & Others</p> <p>Confirm editorial deadlines, copy format for individual media</p> <p>Develop and disseminate copy appropriate for individual media</p> <p>Prepare for special meetings</p> <p>Schedule presentations</p> <p>Confirm presenters</p> <p>Provide training and preparation</p> <p>Evaluate feedback received</p>	

<p>7. Develop expanded "Frequently Asked Questions and Answers" Document for Use by all staff when Communicating with Target Audiences</p> <p>Note: Timeline currently calls for similar document in conjunction with media relations efforts. What's envisioned here is a more broadly-framed document that addresses general concerns of all constituencies, in a language that conveys the richness of the subject matter but that's intelligible to the most diverse target audiences, plus questions and answers addressing key concerns of specific stakeholders.</p>	December 17
6. Finalize Intro for ROD if requested	December 17
7. Blackwell and IDT Team to DC - Bring Sample Materials	Week of Jan 5
8. Train Forest Service staff who will communicate with key constituencies locally	January 7
9. Finalize artwork for printing	January 9
10. Train Forest Service staff to be interviewed by reporters	January 13
11. Major Regional event in conjunction with announcement	January 23
12. District level events throughout Region in conjunction with announcement	January 26 - 30
13. Evaluation of Announcement Activities	February 15

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