

# Dixie-Fishlake Forest Plan Revision

January 2002 - September 2005

**Location:** Southwestern Utah

## Background

The Dixie and Fishlake National Forests are designated as two separate forests, yet they share many resource issues and have similar landscapes. In 2001, supervisors for both forests decided to work together to revise forest plans that had been in place since 1986. The Institute worked with the Forest Service to develop a collaborative process including local stakeholders. The goal was to develop a common vision for future management of the forests. Stakeholders were engaged early in the process to propose forest plan revisions. The proposal helped identify desired conditions and management needs on both local and forest-wide scales. In addition, individual working groups focused on topics of special interest to them. Topics included timber harvest, recreation, off-highway vehicles, livestock grazing, and wilderness areas.

## Process and Results

The collaborative process began in 2002 with productive collaborative meetings and excellent stakeholder participation. In 2003, the working groups made great progress in developing guidelines and recommendations for specific forest issues. By 2004 however, the process had come across a number of challenges. Forest Service personnel who had provided leadership for the process were transferred and not replaced. The issuance of a new forest planning rule led to delays in the planning timeline and confusion among some of the participants. This contributed to lost momentum and commitment both within the Forest Service and in the general public. With the potential for collaboration reduced, the Institute's role ended in the fall of 2005. The forest plan revisions are still underway.



## Lessons Learned

- **Lengthy planning projects require special long-term commitment.** Frequent turnover of agency staff can undermine early progress in relationship building among stakeholders. Steady commitment to progress by agency decision makers is a critical factor for successful collaboration.
- **Monitoring and adaptation are key to keeping the process on track.** Regular check-ins and assessments are important. They allow facilitators to make adjustments and improvements to the process.
- **Work Together.** Internal collaboration among agency employees is essential for external collaboration to succeed.
- **Working Groups Work!** Dividing participants into work groups is a useful tool for integrating science and values. Working groups promote interactive learning among participants. It is critical however to clarify the purpose and expected use of the product before convening a group.

## Credits

### Partner

Scott Truman, Utah Center for Rural Life, Convenor

### Partner from National Roster of ECR Practitioners

Susan J. Hayman, North Country Resources, Inc.  
Facilitation

### U.S. Institute Project Lead

**Larry Fisher, Ph.D.**, Senior Program Manager  
Public Lands and Natural Resources  
Phone: (520) 901-8544; FAX: (520) 670-5530  
E-mail: [fisher@ecr.gov](mailto:fisher@ecr.gov); Web site: [www.ecr.gov](http://www.ecr.gov)