**Presentation Summary**

**Collaboration Restoration Workshop: Adaptive Management Session**

Tuesday, April 26, 10:45am – 12:00pm

*Session: A conversation with a researcher, land manager, partner NGO and a private ranch manager on adaptive management.*

Facilitator: Amy Waltz

**Ayn Shlisky, USDA Forest Service**

**Ochoco, Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests**

The main purposes of adaptive management are to learn and effectively apply lessons learned by validating assumptions, and maintaining alignment between our understanding of ecosystems and the effects of the management actions we take.

There are many barriers to achieving ideal adaptive management, including:

* + Lack of resources or will to go beyond monitoring required by policy, law or regulation
  + Resistance to change or risk aversion
  + Incomplete communication
  + Lack of accountability for learning
  + The weights put on different sources of information

The Forest Service mission is achieved by making ecologically sound land management decisions that support a variety of public values that depend on long-term ecological health and sustainability. “True” adaptive management in the NEPA project sense depends on identification of adaptation triggers, and analysis of multiple if/then effects scenarios for each treatment. Adaptive management in practice is largely based on agency-specific, or multi-party monitoring systems and reporting required by policy, law, regulation, or funding availability (e.g., CFLR monitoring). Using facilitated, multi-party learning networks not necessarily required by policy, law or regulation, but focused on key ecological and social assumptions underlying project decisions can greatly improve adaptive management. Adaptive management that engages our publics and partner agencies in learning supports our policies for collaboration, and can help resolve planning issues by informing consensus positions. Adaptive management requires a higher degree of flexibility in project design than strict research may allow. The size, budgeting processes, and culture of the agency makes it difficult to be flexible – change takes time, effort, and sometimes pushing back on agency norms.