

Section 3

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3A

Perspectives

OVERVIEW

PERSPECTIVES

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OVERVIEW

Forest lands provide benefits to everyone. People who get involved in forest planning are asked to offer their perspective on what makes the forest valuable to them and how the forest should be managed to protect those values. Forest plans must recognize both sides of any given issue in order to effectively balance the differences. This assessment highlights different perspectives to illuminate both sides and also to make clear the challenge of trying to balance them. It is not intended, nor is it feasible, to be an exhaustive list, but it does cover many of the often-repeated perspectives.

This summary was compiled from a wealth of comments contributed by the public, from Forest Service public workshops, county and regional workshops for this assessment, and the Topical Working Groups. Many perspectives are also included within the text *Section 2—Findings* as they relate to specific linkages people have to these forests. Here, they are synthesized by the linkage to which they pertain and are presented as either commonly-held views or perspectives that diverge. Statements of “agreement” are general, but not absolute agreement, and the same is true for statements of “disagreement.”

These perspectives represent sets of views that were generally agreed upon and held in common by several people. Certain groups of people, such as local residents or urban visitors, do not always hold all views in common. Frequently, perspectives within a group diverge or overlap with groups whose views are otherwise contrary. This section does not point out the origin of specific comments because perspectives are often shared beyond a defined group.

Differences in perspectives often result in conflict over management decisions. The sources of conflict can often be traced back to:

1. problems with relationships (*resulting from miscommunication, history, etc*)
2. problems with data (*resulting from misinformation, lack of information, etc*)
3. incompatible interests (*competition over limited needs*)
4. structural problems (*resulting from distance, organization, culture, etc*)
5. value conflicts (*opinions of right-wrong*)

(Moore, C. The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 1986)

This summary attempts to portray a number of different perspectives that conflict on one or more of these points.

The Forest Service realizes that while not all conflicts can be avoided, there are still those that can. The first step in addressing conflict is to help people understand the ways other people perceive the forest. Only then can groups agree in principle. Following this, management options can be analyzed and decisions made. This summary is offered to help people see themselves in this assessment, share their perspectives with other stakeholders, and identify common ground for finding shared solutions.

The perspectives offered here should not be construed to originate from, or be endorsed by, the Forest Service.

PERSPECTIVES

1. Social And Cultural Perspectives

Connection between People and Forests

- Agreement that every stakeholder can claim a connection to these Forests, and feel they are caring for the Forest as best as they can. Agreement that these Forests are a major contributor to everyone's quality of life, for many different reasons.
- Disagreement over the role of people in natural systems.
- One perspective is that people are the important part of the system. Believe that active stewardship through use and improvements that benefit humans is a continuation of the way people have always shaped their environments.
- Another perspective is that people are just one part of the system and that other living things deserve equal consideration. Believe that human uses often negatively impact natural systems and rebalancing these impacts is necessary.

Public Participation in Forest Planning

- Agreement that Forest planning is often contentious and that conflict can negatively affect Forest management. Agreement that planning is often not productive and implementation is often lacking, leading to a frustration with the process. Agreement that people have valuable contributions and deserve to be involved meaningfully in forest management.
- Disagreement over whose wishes are most often represented.
- One perspective is that interest and user groups have the most influence on Forest management because the tactics they use (advocacy, appeals and lawsuits) are very disruptive. Also believe that the Forest Service now favors these "outside" interests, when in years past they were more responsive to their local district's needs. Perception that the Forest Service does not listen to or respect local elected officials enough, considering that they represent many constituents.
- Another perspective is that local groups have the most influence and local leaders take matters into their own hands to get what they want when necessary. Also believe it is difficult to fully represent themselves because participating in planning for a distant forest is difficult.

Concern for Forest Resources

- Agreement that people care about the health of the Forests and resources within it.
- Disagreement over what defines a healthy forest, what resources it should be managed for, and what approaches are appropriate.
- One perspective is that healthy forests are managed to the conditions that humans feel are important. Hands-on management of elements like vegetation, predators, game wildlife enhance conditions for people and help them derive more benefits from the land.
- Another perspective is that healthy forests are dominated by natural processes. Improvements and interventions should correct the imbalances that humans have

caused and natural processes and changes usually should be allowed to run their course.

Values Regarding Forests

- Agreement that Forests have both intrinsic (important in their very existence) and extrinsic (important for the benefits people receive from them) values. Agreement that many intangible qualities of Forests and feelings toward them are important, such as solitude, quiet, family experiences, memories, sensory experiences, enjoyment, and a healthy appearance. Agreement that some places on the Forest are special and should be protected to a higher degree than others.
- Disagreement on whether intrinsic or extrinsic values are more important. Disagreement on what has an impact on people's experience.
- One perspective is that using the forest is an important part of appreciating and experiencing it. Humans need and deserve to derive benefits from land and resources. Evidence of other people is less disturbing because the Forest is there for all to enjoy and one can still feel like they can get away from it all. Believe that it is unrealistic to remove human impacts entirely.
- Another perspective is that preserving Forests for all living things of utmost importance. Humans should only take what is necessary from Forests. Forests should be a retreat from civilization and evidence of other people or human uses, such as grazing or sounds from motors, detracts from the experience. Believe that the Forest Service should be diligent in minimizing human impacts.

Knowledge about Forests

- Agreement that both personal knowledge (more qualitative) and scientific information (more quantitative) can contribute to forest planning. Agreement that science can often be biased and a source of contention.
- Disagreement on what information is trusted and what types of knowledge are most valuable.
- One perspective is that first-hand experience is accurate and the most trustworthy, but is not always respected by others who want scientific "proof." Believe that science is not always in-depth or long term enough to capture every factor that may have an impact on results. Believe that science is often given more weight in decisions than personal experience.
- Another perspective is that people can learn just as much through second-hand information and that research and studies are more objective than experience. Believe that personal knowledge can be helpful, but is often clouded by opinions. Believe that science should have the most weight in guiding decisions.

Changing Social and Cultural Demands

- Agreement that the world is changing and is increasingly subject to diverse interests from around the globe. Agreement that many effects are negative, such as business closures and abuse of Forest and private land. Agreement that many effects are

positive, such as economic diversity and increase education. Agreement that expectations of traditional Forest users are generally different from those of new stakeholders but that both sides should be respected.

- Disagreement on what changes are welcome.
- One perspective is that the traditional world, focused around local needs and priorities should be protected. Belief that traditional industries are the most important part of a community's economy and lifestyle. Some new uses and residents are welcome, but the character of the community should stay intact. Belief that newcomers and visitors don't respect traditional cultures to the same degree and jeopardize their strength.
- Another perspective is that modern world, subject to global needs and priorities, is an unavoidable reality. Belief that new industries such as recreation, tourism, and technology can improve rural economies and have fewer environmental impacts. Belief that new views can help make beneficial changes.

Managing People and Uses

- Agreement that many uses are out of control. Agreement that individual users often give a bad name to entire groups. Agreement that enforcement is lacking and some fines are not high enough to be deterrent. Agreement that monitoring and evaluation, volunteer support, greater enforcement, good maps and materials are important management tools. Agreement that public information and educational programs are very valuable.
- Disagreement on best management solution, whether through active or passive management. Disagreement on whether or not fees help solve problems and are fairly applied.
- One perspective is that people should be trusted to manage themselves. Enforcement is needed for offenders, but most people have good intentions and just need adequate guidance. Belief that too many regulations and restrictions detracts from a person's experience in the Forest. Believe that fees are appropriate to support particular uses, but can't solve every problem.
- Another perspective is that people too often abuse privileges, so access and uses need to be excluded from certain areas to protect them. Belief that regulation of uses that can impact other people's experiences in the Forest are beneficial. Believe that funding is insufficient for most of the Forest's needs and that fees try to address these unmet needs.

2. Economic Perspectives

Economic Context

- Agreement that rural and urban economies benefit one another. Agreement that communities should be allowed to determine their own future course.
- Disagreement on the best direction for rural Utah. Disagreement on whether local or global concerns are more important.
- One perspective is that rural Utah plays a unique and significant role in the regional economy. Belief that local economic concerns or wishes are not well-considered in

the broader economic context. Belief that local perspective is the most applicable because of traditional connections to these Forests. Belief that locally-owned businesses are the most beneficial to local economies.

- Another perspective is that traditional industries of rural Utah are less significant in today's world. Belief that all of Utah will benefit from adapting to the new economy. Belief that a broad perspective is the most appropriate because the modern world is driven by global forces and concerns.

Economic Trends

- Agreement that the regional and global economy is changing. Agreement that social and cultural changes come with economic change, and discussing economic effects alone is not sufficient. Agreement that better business practices and creative economic development can help make traditional industries and lifestyles more sustainable economically and environmentally.
- Disagreement on what the future economy should look like. Disagreement on how to achieve a sustainable economy.
- One perspective is that losing traditional industries and the lifestyles associated with them is detrimental to communities and the region and that every effort should be made to preserve them. Belief that new industry sectors, such as recreation, tourism, and technology, do not support the same quality of life in communities as traditional industries. Belief that the environmental impacts of new industries are no better than those of traditional industries.
- Another perspective is that new industries and businesses keep both rural and urban communities successful. Belief that change is inevitable and new industries will likely replace most traditional ones in the long run. Belief that new industry sectors such as recreation and tourism improve communities and should be encouraged. Belief that many new businesses or industries have less environmental impacts and are more sustainable in the long run than many traditional ones.

Economic Linkages to Forest Lands

- Agreement that the tie between these Forests and this region overall is relatively small. Agreement that social and cultural ties are as important as economic ones. Agreement that unpredictability in Forest management is bad for business and discourages involvement in forest planning.
- Disagreement on the level of economic impact that Forest lands have on individual communities. Disagreement on how important economic considerations should be to Forest management.
- One perspective is that some industries supported by Forest lands have a significant role in the economies and lifestyles of some communities. Belief that the Forest Service's multiple-use, sustained yield philosophy directs them to encourage economic uses. Belief that much of the slowdown in traditional industries can be attributed to excess environmental regulations or disputes. Belief that traditional industries can rebound if public lands were managed differently. Belief that Forest Service staff is less in touch with local concerns than in the past. Belief that local communities should have more influence on Forest Service decisions that may impact their businesses.

- Another perspective is that Forest lands support only a small part of local economies. Belief that the Forest Service's multiple-use, sustained yield philosophy directs them to be careful to protect the rights of many different interests for the long term. Belief that the benefits of environmental preservation often overlooked or ignored in pursuit of revenue-generating uses. Belief that environmental regulations are needed to mitigate the impacts of industries, and much of the drop in traditional industries was inevitable. Belief that some traditional industries are not very sustainable in the long run, either economically or environmentally. Belief that the new industries in this region (recreation, tourism, technology) are now the most significant to the Forest Service. Belief that Forest Service staff is slow to respond to new trends. Belief that all constituents should have equal influence on Forest management.

Government Revenues and Expenditures

- Agreement that most rural economies struggle financially, in part due to a limited tax base. Agreement that many local services benefit visitors. Agreement that sharing Forest revenues with local communities can be an incentive to accept some industries that have negative impacts on the Forest and neighboring lands. Agreement that uses should pay their way as much as possible. Agreement that nearly everything is subsidized and it is difficult to understand the true cost/benefit of many public goods.
- Disagreement over how much visitors contribute to local economies. Disagreement over who benefits the most from government subsidization.
- One perspective is that revenues from Forest lands do not adequately replace lost property tax revenues. Belief that local communities provide services for visitors, but don't fully recover these expenses.
- Another perspective is that the many different ways Forest lands contribute to local economies (tourism, sales/visitor taxes, jobs) help replace lost property tax. Belief that tourism has a net positive effect on the economy.

3. Neighboring Lands Perspectives

Shared Resources

- Agreement that many resources found on Forests carry on to neighboring land and that managing the entire ecosystem benefits all the parts.
- Disagreement over how these resources should be managed.
- Different perspectives include: managing for game animals, for livestock grazing, for certain plant species, for native plants and animals, for water quality, for water yields, for resource use and extraction, or as wilderness.

Benefits of Forests to Neighboring Communities

- Agreement that Forest lands benefit neighboring communities and the entire region. Agreement that everyone feels a sense of responsibility for these resources and has a right to enjoy the Forest.
- Disagreement on whose concerns should be more important to Forest management.
- One perspective is that communities that evolved using Forest lands as their

“backyards” have a strong sense of ownership and stewardship toward them. Belief that those who regularly use and care for forests have a greater stake in them, and thus greater claim to use and protect these resources.

- Another perspective is that Forest lands belong to all Americans and everyone has an equal responsibility to care and watch over them.

Demands of Forests on Neighboring Communities

- Agreement that Forest Service and its visitors place demands on neighboring communities. Agreement that visitors should contribute a fair share for using the Forest and should also be encouraged to volunteer their stewardship. Agreement on the need for neighboring communities to coordinate management efforts with the Forest Service and other agencies.
- Disagreement on who should be responsible for and pay for many services.
- One perspective is that neighboring communities shoulder an unfair burden to care for these lands.
- Another perspective is that neighboring communities are compensated for many services, through taxes and cost-share agreements with the Forest Service.

Land Ownership and Jurisdiction

- Agreement that the high proportion of public land in Utah has shaped how communities developed and the opportunities available to them. Agreement that government agencies do not always do the best job managing land and sometimes make decisions that negatively impact the public. Agreement that some special places and resources deserve to be protected for everyone.
- Disagreement on who should have the most input in how public land is managed. Disagreement on whether land is better-off in public or private hands.
- One perspective is that many lands have been “locked up” by public ownership, compromising many uses that could benefit local communities. Belief that public lands should be released into private hands as needed to permit communities to expand. Belief that federal or state regulation, which is somewhat immune from local control, can and sometimes does not look out for local community interests, and is not as trustworthy as local government. Belief that most lands are better cared for in the hands of a person rather than the government. Belief that more public land should be returned to private hands.
- Another perspective is that public ownership of land has benefited all citizens, including local communities. Belief that federal and state regulation is less subject to the whims of elected leaders and political trends. Belief that individuals can not always be trusted to manage land and many impacts today can be traced to irresponsible individuals. Belief that an increase in publicly-held lands is generally a good thing and that growing communities should find ways to expand without converting public lands to development.

Wildland-Urban Interface Issues

- Agreement that the impacts of growth and development near Forests are growing.

Agreement that human uses can have a negative impact on the environment and on communities. Agreement that controlling problems that cross between boundaries in these areas is important. Agreement that protecting existing access points into areas where human activity is established or desired is important.

- Disagreement on what activities should be allowed and what level of use is appropriate.
- One perspective is that most human activities should be allowed if their impacts can be mitigated. Belief that low levels of use, across large areas, are generally fine. Belief that regulations should adjust over time to accommodate changes.
- Another perspective is that many places should have few or no human activities in order to reserve them for nature. Belief that human uses should be concentrated to minimize impacts. Belief that human uses will continue to rapidly increase, so stricter regulations now will help prevent problems in the future.

4. Decision-Making Perspectives

Local Planning

- Agreement that local planning should address issues shared with Forest lands. Agreement local planning frequently does not address these issues. Agreement that consistent communication between local communities and the Forest Service would help both of their plans. Agreement that plans are not updated frequently enough.
- Disagreement over exact data on future trends, such as population or employment growth.
- One perspective is that Forest Service decisions affect businesses, and thus employment and population trends reflect this and would change as management changes.
- Another perspective is that employment and population trends are being driven primarily by forces larger than the Forest Service and should help shape forest decisions.

Tribal Planning

- Agreement that tribes are not very involved in Forest planning. Agreement that greater involvement would lead to more accommodating decisions and more opportunities for tribes.
- Disagreement over whose responsibility it is to get tribes more involved and how it should be paid for.
- One perspective is that there is an established route for involvement, through consultation, and that this should be utilized. Belief that it will be impossible to participate without funding from the Forest Service.
- Another perspective is that tribes need to be a part of collaborative planning, with other interests brought to the table in order for planning to be realistic. Belief that some expenses are the Forest Service's responsibility, but that some initiative to

participate is expected on the part of all stakeholders. Belief that no one should get special treatment beyond what is outlined in Forest planning regulations.

Statewide Planning

- Agreement that statewide plans and planning tools can improve coordination between local and Forest planning.
- Disagreement over how much say state agencies should have in local planning. Disagreement whether state agencies favor federal interests over local ones and urban interests over rural.
- One perspective is that the state can not tell local communities what to do, but needs their buy-in to make plans happen. Belief that State agencies act as representatives of both federal and local interests in their efforts to represent their constituents while ensuring compliance with federal regulations.
- Another perspective is that statewide agencies favor the interests of the state's primarily urban population. Belief that federal agencies benefit from this standpoint.

Forest Planning

- Agreement that Forest planning is complex and it is impossible to honor every stakeholder's desires and views in the decisions made. Agreement that people should be included and heard in Forest planning efforts, but sometimes feel their input is not effective. Agreement that the Forest Service sometimes is unable live up to its own regulations or plans, which frustrates and confuses stakeholders about the regulations. Agreement that regulations of different agencies makes Forest planning difficult and their application to Forest land is confusing to many users.
- Disagreement over what group's desires and views should take priority. Disagreement over whether broad regulations and special designations like wilderness are an effective management tool. Disagreement over the merits of many regulations that apply to Forest lands, such as the Endangered Species Act.
- One perspective is that the Forest Service was created to help protect resources important to local communities and that they need to maintain as much control as possible to protect access to these resources. Belief that local influence has been diminished today and local public officials are not involved enough in Forest planning. Belief that outside groups, with more money and political influence attract more attention. Belief that obstructionist measures, such as legal appeals, are unfair to local communities most affected by decisions and delays. Belief that blanket regulations that don't adapt to local conditions are inappropriate. Belief that different federal agencies sometimes abuse their powers when they encourage or initiate regulatory actions in other agencies.
- Another perspective is that the views of the public at large should be the primary consideration of public land management. Belief that distance from Forest lands is a disadvantage to participating in planning processes. Belief that local elected officials often have their defenses up against planning and act or make decisions contrary to the general public good. Belief that overarching federal regulations protect

the interests of the public at large. Belief that is not always in the best interest of advocacy groups to participate in collaborative efforts where any compromise may not be backed by their supporters.

Challenges Facing Effective Planning

- Agreement that many people are frustrated by slow and contentious Forest planning processes. Agreement that poor communication is a major stumbling block. Agreement that readily accessible planning information, on the internet, is helpful. Agreement that collaborative planning can help address these challenges. Agreement that interaction with Forest Service staff in planning efforts is helpful and encouraging. Agreement that planning need to adapt better to trends and a changing resource. Agreement that Forest plans must be realistic and consider budgetary constraints.
- Disagreement over who or what should change to make planning more effective.
- One perspective is that Forest planning is too broad distant to react quickly to local needs and conditions. Belief that responding to the concerns of the entire public is not always necessary and prohibitively slow.
- Another perspective is that Forests benefits from the caution and deliberation taken to respond to diverse needs. Belief that responding to the requirements of numerous agencies and stakeholders is their primary responsibility.

5. Use Perspectives

- Agreement that uses have grown since the existing forest plans were written, largely due to the proximity of these forests to growing regional metropolitan centers (Utah's Wasatch Front, Las Vegas, and Denver) and major interstate highways and to developments in OHV technology.
- Disagreement over how, where, and to what extent uses should be managed.
- The perspective of the GOPB Assessment Team is that the ability to assess, manage, and monitor general access and illegal use linkages is currently very difficult because the users are unknown to the USFS, data on these uses are hard to obtain, and management approaches are much more indirect. Besides analyzing the direct interface that users have with the land, an analysis of where those users live helps to assess the dependence and influence of USFS management outside the boundaries of the lands that it oversees.

6. Interest Perspectives

- Agreement that the major issues of concern to people interested in these three forests include: forest health; social and cultural values and attachments to these forests; access to National Forest System lands, recreation and its management, vegetation manipulation, watershed protection, managing wildland-urban interface issues, allowing for multiple uses of the land (including commodity production), managing conflicts between various user groups, and coordinating with local and tribal governments on land and resource management issues.

- Disagreement among the American public about how National Forests, in general, and these three National Forests, in particular, should be managed.
- The perspective of the GOPB Assessment Team is that special interests have differences of opinion concerning the philosophical basis for forest management, what they think should be contained in a forest plan, which priorities they would give to particular uses and to particular users, which areas should receive special designations that would put conditions on use, what analyses they think the USFS needs to conduct, and recommended management actions (in general and in specific sites).

7. American Indian Tribal Perspectives

The perspectives presented in this Assessment are largely based on comments received in meetings and conversations with tribal leaders. They also reflect the research conducted by the Rocky Mountain American Indian Foundation.

- It is widely recognized that the Tribal perspective is that American Indians' traditional values regarding land and the natural world encompass both visible physical aspects and less apparent values, such as relationships and spirituality. It is generally agreed that forest management should encompass entire natural systems and consider the role of each part within the system. The current priorities developed by the Forest Service are also priorities of tribal communities.
- There is a real sense of dissatisfaction regarding the amount of consideration American Indian interests receive from the Forest Service. Generally, the Tribal perspective is that there is not enough consideration given to Tribal issues, and some non-Tribal comments expressed that there is too much.
- The Tribes believe that land managers can learn from the American Indians' perspective, because from the American Indian perspective, many current problems are a result of the perpetuation of outmoded beliefs derived from the Euro-American past.
- American Indian people feel as though Euro-American science often brushes Tribal knowledge aside; referring to it as "fictional-mythology" or superstition.
- From the American Indian perspective, job creation is the highest priority because it is essential to helping restore tribal culture and social structure. The Tribes believe that the USFS can help with this by encouraging culturally-aligned employment and education opportunities. This is the primary goal of the Tribes in participating in forest planning.

