

3B

Recommendations

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION STATEMENT





OVERVIEW

The role of a social-economic assessment is to illustrate social and economic conditions and trends with the intention of helping the Forest Service recognize the potential implications of their decisions. An assessment is not a plan for the future, but a presentation of the current situation. However, in addition to the information and observations contributed to this assessment, many suggestions were offered for how to apply the findings. These recommendations are included here with the intent that they contribute to future phases of this planning process. Some of these recommended actions are already underway in this current Forest plan revision, while others are suggestions for changing future planning efforts or to help implement this plan.

These recommendations are compiled from a number of suggestions raised by the public, the Forest Service, the GOPB assessment team. Many suggestions are also included in the 2—*Findings*, where they are attributed to the people who made them. Here, they are synthesized and presented as unified recommendations. The recommendations are organized by the linkage they pertain to most closely. They are then synthesized further into a desired future condition for each linkage. These desired future conditions are intended to be included with the desired future conditions for other management conditions as a constant measure of success in meeting social and economic concerns.

These recommendations are directed to all parties involved—local municipalities, interest and user groups, the Forest Service, and agencies that work with all of these groups. The success of their implementation depends on the cooperation of all these stakeholders.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Social And Cultural Recommendations

Many discussions regarding social and cultural issues reveal fundamental differences in perspective on the current and future state of the communities and people who use the forest. In particular, there is a fundamental difference between traditional, local communities and outside, more environmentally-oriented groups. Different values and perspectives toward management result. But there is substantial agreement that finding ways to include different perspectives in the discussions and decisions is essential to successful Forest planning. The following efforts are suggested by the GOPB Assessment Team to address these issues:

1. Give equal consideration to social and biological issues in the forest—every management decision should ask:
 - What are the possible impacts on people?
 - How can we measure them?
 - What is the desired social and economic condition?
2. Make public participation in forest planning and management frequent, consistent, and meaningful. Be inclusive and encourage involvement that promotes shared solutions, not conflict and competition. Conduct regular “check-ups” not tied to any specific project with stakeholders to evaluate changing their needs and concerns.
3. Define a “healthy forest” from a social and economic perspective, including both tangible and intangible factors.

4. Identify and incorporate “intangibles” (example: spiritual value, tradition, solitude) and include them as factors to rate decisions.
5. Help people understand the perspectives of other people tied to the Forest. Regularly bring diverse interests together to share their own knowledge and values and to invite their input on information used to make decisions.
6. Recognize emerging trends and include them in planning as early as possible. Work to balance traditional and emerging uses.
7. Improve management of human activities and involve people more fully in doing this. Establish partnerships to involve stakeholders in education, maintenance, monitoring, and enforcement efforts.

2. Economic Recommendations

Many economic discussions center on issues that are not well-researched. Many facts and figures are not known or have never been studied, leading to much debate and speculation. More hard data, even from other locations with similar issues, would clarify many beliefs. Another current shortcoming in this area is little cooperation on economic development. Many communities focus on land use and economic development equally. Land use is the centerpiece of nearly all planning on these Forests, but economic development is an integral part of this. More involvement across boundaries in this realm would help. The following efforts are suggested by the GOPB Assessment Team to address these issues:

1. When considering the economic impacts of Forest decisions, determine:
 - Effects on both traditional and new industries
 - Effects on both the regional and local economy
 - Effects on both local and non-local businesses
 - How business investments and profits will stay in the local and regional economy.
 - Intertwined cultural and social effects linked to certain industries and businesses
 - Long-term sustainability of industries and businesses
2. Analyze the management costs and economic benefits of new activities and forest uses, in particular:
 - ATVs and other motorized recreation
 - Destination tourism
 - Hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching
3. Coordinate economic development efforts between the Forest Service and local communities. Efforts might include:
 - Forest Service involvement in local economic development committees.
 - Establish official community representatives in Forest Service resource development plans.
 - Encouraging private enterprise to provide recreation services not currently provided by the Forest Service.
 - Joint materials and marketing of National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Forest Service attractions and amenities in nearby communities.

- Creative economic development to support locally-produced foods, clothing, businesses.
 - Getting involved in the Outdoor Recreation Economic Ecosystem and Smart Sites technology programs being developed by GOPB.
4. Reconsider government revenue sharing sources.
 - Study the effects of changing the formula for calculating PILT payments in each county.
 - Create a comparison of all revenue sources versus all expenditures that support public properties.

3. Neighboring Lands Recommendations

Many neighboring lands discussions centered on the obligations of local communities and the Forest Service to one another. Discussions also focused on who should have more influence on Forest management – its neighbors or people with other vested interests. The following efforts are suggested by the GOPB Assessment Team to address these issues:

1. Find ways to balance participation of neighboring communities and other interests. Bring these groups together and give them similar tools to participate whenever possible.
2. Encourage more active stewardship on the part of local communities and regular Forest users.
3. Coordinate local community and Forest land use planning better, both on paper and in person. Incorporate planning processes of other agencies, such as the BLM as well, to help streamline the efforts. Develop joint plans that carry actions across borders Forest Service land. Critical plans to develop include:
 - Fire prevention and management plans
 - Transportation and access plans
 - Water resource management
 - Development standards in the wildland-urban interface
 - Utility plans
4. Identify places that are a shared concern for neighboring communities and other interests. Identify places everyone agrees should be protected.
5. Determine and make known where lands are likely to be sold, traded or acquired for community or business expansion. Actively pursue land exchanges that improve landownership patterns and reduce management costs.
6. Prevent impacts on neighboring lands through public education and information.
7. Make existing access points known and help local communities understand the Forest Service's policies for changing access.

4. Decision-making Recommendations

Many decision-making discussions focused on the need to include people in the planning process. Another major concern is coordinating effectively and efficiently between different agencies and jurisdictions. The following efforts are suggested by the GOPB Assessment Team to address these issues:

1. Establish a forum, committee, or representatives responsible as liaisons between Forest Service and local community interests. A similar liaison is needed for tribes as well, and further support is needed to include tribes in more public participation opportunities.
2. Seek additional funding or community development opportunities to help support participation for groups with limited funding.
3. Utilize state-sponsored tools and opportunities to improve local planning and coordination between federal, state, and local agencies.
4. Develop a guide to help different parties understand the responsibilities of various agencies and jurisdictions.
5. Receive regular updates on social and economic trends as a reference and shared learning opportunity. Make available to everyone on the internet.
6. Regularly post planning efforts and updates for all jurisdictions and agencies in one central location on the internet.
7. Set realistic desired future conditions and implementation plans that can be achieved within current budgetary constraints.
8. Create opportunities to build relationships and trust between different stakeholders and agencies. Regularly schedule opportunities for the public to meet with leaders and officials, such as Forest Supervisors and County Commissioners to share ideas and plans
9. Continue collaboration through this Forest plan revision and conduct all planning in this manner whenever possible. Set goals to encourage collaboration and discourage obstructionist actions.

5. Use Recommendations

Many use discussions focused on issues that were not well researched. Consequently, opinions were largely based on personal perspective and experience. The recommendation of the GOPB Assessment Team is that the Forests should study the impacts of different levels of use in order to dispel the myths. More specifically:

1. Study the linkage framework in order to gather better data. The USFS might consider changes to their permitting system to accommodate this.
2. Data collection needs to be driven by management objectives. Existing Forest Service resources, such as permits, the INFRA database, and the knowledge of line officers could be used for this research. Permitting could be used as a tool not only for managing these uses, but monitoring them as well and assigning more responsibility to the users for their actions.
3. Data from simple standardized forms, recording processes, and non-confidential aspects of incident reports should be recorded and added to INFRA to help estimate and monitor open access and illegal uses.

6. Interest Recommendations

The most important conclusion of this assessment is that people want to be involved in planning the future of these forests, and they are committed to working towards their goals collaboratively. There is a need to tie detailed analyses to specific issues or management problems or prescriptions so the research questions and data gathering can be focused, efficient, and useful for decision making. Nevertheless, not everyone wants to quantify everything — aesthetics, memories, scenery are all very important unmeasurables to a wide range of stakeholders. Therefore, the GOPB Assessment Team recommends that the USFS:

1. Study the linkage framework in order to find a way to gather better data.
2. USFS continue to encourage special interest participation in Forest Planning activities in order to provide them an opportunity for due diligence.

7. American Indian Tribal Recommendations

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

Most of the discussion on Tribal issues was centered on the concept that the USFS could help remedy pressing Tribal problems with things such as job opportunities. The Tribes also felt that they could provide expertise on, and maintenance of, the forests in an effort to move towards a more cooperative stewardship of the land.

1. The USFS should establish and maintain formal consultation arrangement with tribal governments directly. These agreements should take into consideration the financial (staffing) ability of Tribes to participate in planning activities.
2. The GOPB recommends that American Indian Tribes collaborate with not only public land agencies, but also with local counties in order to facilitate a better-functioning regional economic system.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION STATEMENT

In southwest Utah, the social conditions and economic conditions are intertwined to an extent that makes it impractical to discuss them separately. For that reason, the following section considers social and economic desired conditions as a single unit.

The following is a suggestion made by GOPB in the development of a desired future condition statement.

National Forests contribute to the sustainability of the social and economic systems in southwest Utah¹. The National Forests do not independently sustain a social and economic system, but are critical contributors to the system. Forest managers recognize the numerous ways people are linked to the Forest. These links are balanced within the managers' decision space. Forest managers understand how their decisions affect future social and economic conditions.

Forest users' activities are appropriate. Forest users also understand how their actions may affect others. Forest users are good stewards of the land: they exhibit responsible behavior, encourage others to do the same, and contribute to society's responsibility for the long-term sustainability of the Forests.

Social and Economic Opportunities

The Forests provide a wide variety of opportunities that contribute to social and economic sustainability. The following bullet statements describe the desired conditions of the more significant contributions (the list does not include all contributions):

- **Timber** – The Forests provide a sustainable and predictable level of timber and wood products. These products are made available to the local and regional economies. The resulting timber industry, in southwest Utah, is a reliable, capable, and appropriate tool for forest management. In turn, the timber industry provides stable employment opportunities for the community.
- **Range** – Livestock grazing continues to be an appropriate land use and is well managed. The livestock-grazing program does not degrade the long-term productivity of the forage and water resources. The livestock grazing opportunity is supported by a combination of open land on federal and private range. Thus, landscape fragmentation is minimal and at low risk to future development. Grazing operators continue to be an important thread to a community's social fabric.
- **Recreation** – A wide variety of opportunities are available for both private and commercial recreation. The opportunities continue to be widely available to local, regional, and national visitors. These opportunities are in harmony with long-term resource sustainability. Incompatible uses are zoned to appropriate locations.

¹ For social and economic analysis, the primary area of analysis is southwest Utah. However, the two Forests are also a small part of the social and economic fabric of the southwest United States and of the entire Nation.

- **Minerals** – Opportunities for mineral development (both saleable and leaseable) are available in accordance with applicable laws. Development results in minimal resource impacts, both during and after operations.
- **Culture** – Cultural, historic, and spiritual values are respected and integrated into decisions and actions. These values are sustained for future generations' enjoyment and education.
- **Quality of Life** – The Forests continue to set context for life in southwest Utah. They are a source of clean air and water. The Forests provide visually pleasing landscapes and their existence increases the quality of rural life.

Planning

National Forest planning is collaborative. It builds trust, reaches substantial agreement, and encourages a sense of stewardship to achieve the stated desired conditions. Governments (state and local), groups, and individuals are welcomed partners in the planning process. Tribal governments participate through their government-to-government relationship with the federal government. Forest Service officials retain their delegated decision-making authority. However, their decisions result from a transparent, established, and accepted process. Knowledge and learning are shared among all partners.

Implementation

Forest Plan implementation is coordinated with other federal, state, and local agencies or governments. Partnerships and agreements cooperatively implement strategies described in the plan. The Forest Service and neighboring communities cooperatively share resources, planning goals, and expertise to achieve desired conditions across the landscape.

