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Values, Attitudes and Beliefs Toward National Forest System Lands: The Cibola National Forest

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Executive Summary

Data collection was accomplished by a combination of individual interviews and small group discussions. A listing of topics (included in appendix) guided the interviews and group discussions. The guide topics were used to discuss how participants perceive issues rather than to elicit information in predetermined response categories. Three sessions were organized with the assistance of the forest planner and district rangers. One session was held at the Sandia District Office near the village of Tijeras; a second meeting was held in Grants for the Mt. Taylor District; and a third meeting was held at the district Office in Magdalena. No meetings were held on the Mountainair Ranger District. The meeting in Tijeras was attended by 9 of the 14 persons invited. The Grants meeting was attended by 8 of the 9 persons invited; and, the Magdalena meeting was attended by 5 of the 10 persons invited. The results of all group and individual sessions were analyzed using a combination of predefined and emergent codes to identify themes in the data.

Results

The social environment of this national forest is characterized by local rural communities that are in relatively close proximity to the largest urban area in New Mexico. Both urban and rural areas have a diverse ethnic mixture that is perceived to have different values and beliefs about forest lands and uses. In all districts of the Cibola National Forest, extractive uses have declined resulting in some population loss and some decrease in perceived economic diversity and economic opportunity. Population increase in the metropolitan areas adjacent to the forest is believed to result in more users for the “finite resources” of the Cibola National Forest. The increase in demand extends beyond those districts adjacent to the Albuquerque metropolitan area. Participants residing in other rural areas perceive a “spill over” from the urban communities of the region that will also increase demand for use of forest resources in other districts.

Participants describe a heavy growth of trees and underbrush as contributing to an evaluation of forest conditions as “poor.” However, residents also describe a range of valued forest characteristics including: the size of the forest allows for the experience of being away from other persons; vistas and scenery; mountain peaks; different “life-zones” that change with elevation; landscape diversity, and “enchanted beauty.” The Cibola National Forest is also characterized as primarily a recreational forest that provides the opportunities for rural and urban residents to engage in the full-spectrum of recreational activities in a setting close to their homes. Traditional uses such as woodcutting, piñon gathering, Christmas tree cutting, and hunting are also described as prominent and important uses. Commercial uses are perceived to be minimal other than commercial grazing.

Information about attitudes, beliefs, and values was organized for each ranger district using three categories that emerged from the data: Agency Presence and Procedures; Multiple-Use Issues; and, Resource Issues.

Sandia District Results

Agency Presence and Procedures: Participants expressed overall satisfaction with the management of the Sandia District. However, there were other concerns that appear to be more forest-wide, including concerns about improved communication, the Agency role in problem solving user conflicts, a desire for a strong Agency presence on the ground, the role of volunteers, and enforcement of existing regulations.

Multiple-Use Issues: Participants expressed issues about conflicts regarding the rights and obligations of users in a “multiple-use” environment; problems with unmanaged off-highway vehicle (OHV) use; the desirability of an accessible forest environment nearby to an urban area; the diverse seasonal recreational benefits offered by forest lands; and a desire for expansion of traditional woodcutting opportunities.

Resource Issues: Participants describe a range of benefits and values associated with the Cibola National Forest, including: the forest contribution to overall environmental quality; its value as a place for adventure and exploration; its value as a legacy for future generations; the value of forest lands for peace, solitude, and respite from life’s stressors; the desirability of diverse wildlife; and, problems with the density of trees that is perceived to contribute to fire danger.

Mount Taylor District

Agency Presence and Procedures: Participants expressed concern about the management effectiveness of the Agency, including compromises resulting from limited staff on the ground, lawsuits, excessive regulation, and undue influence from special interest groups. Management effectiveness can be increased by collaborating with local interest groups and other interested parties to identify issues, improve communication, and develop locally meaningful plans.

Multiple-Use Issues: Participants express support for the idea of multiple-use, but emphasize the contribution and status of grazing permittees in the mix of user. Off-highway vehicle use challenges the complete support for multiple-use because of perceptions of abuse by some OHV users. This type of use highlights a more general issue about perceptions of bad behavior and the need for education rather than regulation as a response to change bad behavior.

Resource Issues: Participants emphasize the potential economic, environmental quality, and lifestyle benefits of nearby forest lands. Specific concerns are expressed about a perceived relationship between limited water, the potential for catastrophic fire, and high tree density. Participants also note their desire for increased attention to predator populations and to elk population, especially the effects of elk on the availability of water and browse for cattle.

Magdalena District

Agency Presence and Procedures: Participants emphasized a general approval of the quality of the Agency relationship with the community and interest groups. However, participant statements express several themes about how Agency procedures and presence influence adjacent communities: economic development; information and outreach; and, NEPA processes.

Multiple-Use Issues: Participants generally embrace the idea of multiple-use, but acceptance of this idea is challenged by concerns about local versus national interests, and concerns about off-road vehicle use. Additionally, increased pressures associated with hunting are cited as affecting the experiences of local hunters and the existing economic benefits associated with guided hunting. Some participants also emphasized the value of “public land” as an important resource for all citizens, especially those who do not have access to because of socioeconomic status or other factors that limit access to natural environments.

Resource Issues: Participants offered comments about specific resources of this district that are perceived to enhance the quality of life or that have economic development implications. The prominent resources noted by residents as having quality of life and economic implications are:

historic resources, water, scenery, timber, roads and trails, wildlife, and wilderness. In general, participants perceive resources as requiring some maintenance and management attention. There is also a perception that resource issues are not being addressed because the district is believed to have a “low priority” among all districts on the Cibola National Forest.

Agency and Public Priorities for Forest Plan Revision

Issues for forest plan revision from Agency and public perspectives are categorized into three groups: Agency Presence and Procedures; Multiple-Use Issues; and, Resource Issues. Publics have a range of concerns about Agency mission, the adequacy of staffing and funding to effectively manage forest resources, enforcement, the role of the Agency as a catalyst for problem solving and economic development, information sharing and outreach, the public input process, continuity in management across time and districts, effective use of volunteer, and the processes for planning and decision making. Agency issues in this topic area address the processes for public input and developing standards and guidelines for special-use permits. Discussions with district rangers indicate awareness of some if not all of the public concerns about Agency presence and procedures. Future interactions with publics about the planning process are likely to see these issues raised again.

Agency and public perspective about multiple-use issues have some commonalities and differences. Off-highway vehicle use, recreational demand, and travel management (trails and roads) are priority issues for participants and the Cibola National Forest. Public priorities in the multiple-use category also include concerns about economic development potentials for forest resources, addressing problem behavior and user violations of forest regulations, accommodation of traditional activities such as wood gathering, and continued attention to access for handicapped users.

Perspectives about resource issues also show some consistencies and differences. Agency and public priorities show consistency in concerns about: fire and fire planning in both urban and rural areas; wildlife management issues; scenery management; and, to some extent wilderness. Agency and public priorities also each identify land exchange as a priority issue. However, perspectives about land exchanges differ with some public sentiment opposing land exchanges in urban areas. Agency priorities also include attention to roadless issues, which were not raised by any participants in the discussion sessions. Public priorities also included issues about grazing, timber harvesting, water quality and availability, and consideration of opportunities for “peace, quiet, and solitude” as resources to consider for future planning efforts.

Cibola National Forest

The Cibola National Forest is the third largest forest in the Southwestern Region and the second largest forest in New Mexico. The Cibola National Forest also administers four national grasslands located in portions of New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. This report focuses only on three of the four ranger districts of the national forest also known as the “mountain districts.” The national grasslands are addressed in a separate document.

The four “mountain” ranger districts of the Cibola National Forest are the Sandia; Mountainair; Mount Taylor; and Magdalena.

shows the relationship of these ranger districts to surrounding counties and to one another. There are several noteworthy points about the configuration of the districts:

- Districts are generally not within one contiguous area but they are associated with particular mountain ranges from almost the western border of New Mexico to just east of metropolitan Albuquerque. These districts are thus similar to the “Sky Islands” of the Coronado National Forest in southern Arizona.
- Ten different counties have lands within the mountain districts of the Cibola National Forest, suggesting one of the most complex sociopolitical contexts of all Southwestern Region national forests.
- Land grants and reservations share borders with each of the mountain districts; and, both have traditional ties to Forest Service managed lands. Tribal issues and concerns are addressed in a separate report presenting similar work with New Mexico tribal entities.
- The Sandia District is adjacent to the most urban and populous area of New Mexico while the other districts are generally in rural areas of the state.

Table 1: Region 3 National Forests Ranked by Total Acreage

Southwestern Region	Rank by Size	Gross Acreage	NFS Acreage	Other Acreage
Tonto NF	1	2,969,543	2,872,935	96,608
Gila NF	2	2,797,628	2,708,836	88,792
Cibola NF	3	2,103,528	1,631,266	472,262
Coconino NF	4	2,013,960	1,855,679	158,281
Apache NF *	5	1,876,891	1,812,576	64,315
Coronado NF *	6	1,859,807	1,786,587	73,220
Santa Fe NF	7	1,734,800	1,572,301	162,499
Kaibab NF	8	1,600,061	1,559,200	40,861
Carson NF	9	1,490,468	1,391,674	98,794
Prescott NF	10	1,407,611	1,239,246	168,365
Lincoln NF	11	1,271,064	1,103,748	167,316
Sitgreaves NF	12	884,495	819,442	65,053
National Forests (12)		22,009,856	20,353,490	1,656,366

Source: U.S. Forest Service http://www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/lar/LAR04/table3_r3.htm

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/cibola/>

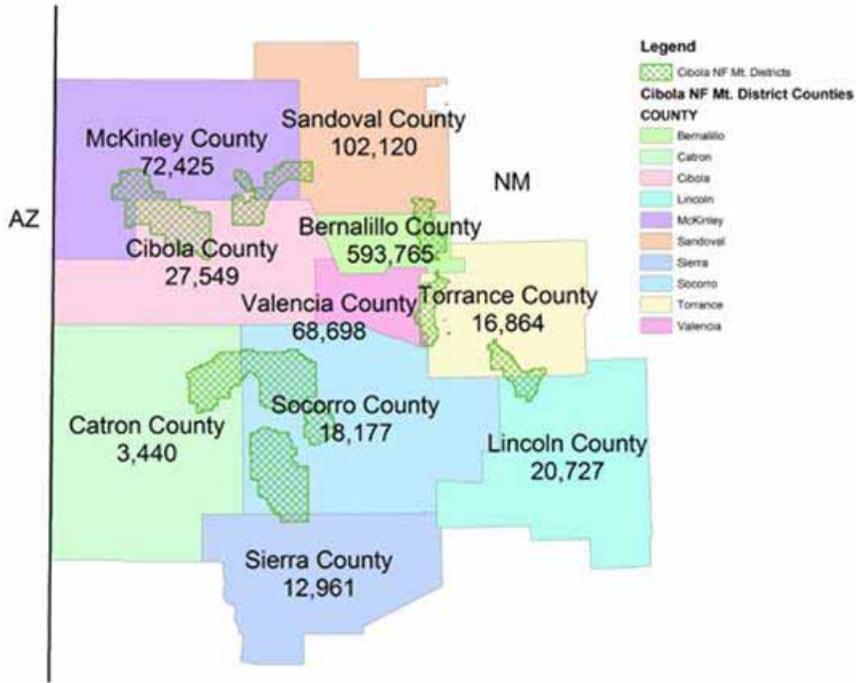


Figure 1. Cibola National Forest Counties

The Socioeconomic Context

The overall socioeconomic context of the Cibola National Forest is complex, composed of an ethnically diverse population in a combination of metropolitan and rural communities of significantly different size, economies, and lifestyles. Metropolitan Albuquerque (located in Bernalillo County) is the business and population center for New Mexico. Sandia District is immediately adjacent to Albuquerque and lands of the other districts are within an easy 2-hour drive.

In contrast to some other forests in the region, Cibola National Forest managed lands are a relatively modest proportion of the total land area in the counties adjacent to each district. However, as previously noted, there are ten different counties that share boundaries with these districts. Table 2 and figure 2 show the distribution of land ownership including Cibola National Forest managed lands.

Table 3 shows the distribution of population centers within the 10 counties. Metropolitan Albuquerque and Bernalillo County contain nearly a third of the population of New Mexico and about 64 percent of the population of the 10 counties associated with the Cibola National Forest. As shown in figure 3, most of the other counties have less than about 10 percent of the total population in the 10 county area. Outside of the Albuquerque metropolitan area, communities such as Grants (9041) and Socorro (8724) are service and population centers nearby to forest lands. These represent some of the larger rural communities among the 10 counties, but most are significantly smaller in size than either of these service center communities.

Summary census data for the ten counties presented in table 4 also show noteworthy differences between the metropolitan and rural areas of the ten counties:

- Outside of metropolitan Albuquerque, county populations show more ethnic diversity other than Sierra and Catron Counties.
- Native Americans and Hispanics are the primary non-white populations among the 10 counties.
- Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties have higher than the state average for median household income and the remaining counties are lower than the state average.
- Median age is generally higher in the rural counties than in the urban counties.
- In general, rural counties tend to have higher rates of persons below the poverty level.

Overall population shows a wide range of variation: Cibola County has the lowest 1990-2000 growth rate at 7.6 percent and Torrance County has the highest rate at 64.4 percent. All counties other than Bernalillo (15.8 percent) and Cibola (7.6 percent) show higher than the state average for population growth in the 1990-2000 census decade.

Table 2. County Land Ownership

County	BLM	USFS	State	Private	Indian	Inland Water	Other	Total
Bernalillo	17,225	76,860	32,201	338,842	222,527	0	60,505	748,160
Catron	581,435	2,217,036	533,037	1,081,779	0	900	533	4,414,720
Cibola *	256,531	365,928	229,746	1,357,800	689,551	1,437	4,607	2,905,600
Lincoln	563,368	400,414	301,841	1,704,937	0	500	138,700	3,109,760
McKinley	351,760	178,701	183,974	583,576	2,158,410	4,500	34,119	3,495,040
Sandoval	588,449	371,228	80,192	659,111	650,380	1,900	27,620	2,378,880
Sierra	822,175	378,665	361,195	474,655	0	34,000	629,470	2,700,160
Socorro	949,396	627,854	609,517	1,214,455	56,680	14,500	768,238	4,240,640
Torrance	56,017	151,283	299,805	1,617,308	16,300	6,000	487	2,147,200
Valencia *	27,920	15,365	22,000	460,789	160,000	0	6	686,080
	4,214,276	4,783,334	2,653,508	9,493,252	3,953,848	63,737	1,664,285	26,826,240

Source: New Mexico Association of Counties website <http://www.nmcounties.org/main.html> and National

Association of Counties website for Cibola County total acres

* = Cibola County was organized from Valencia County in 1981

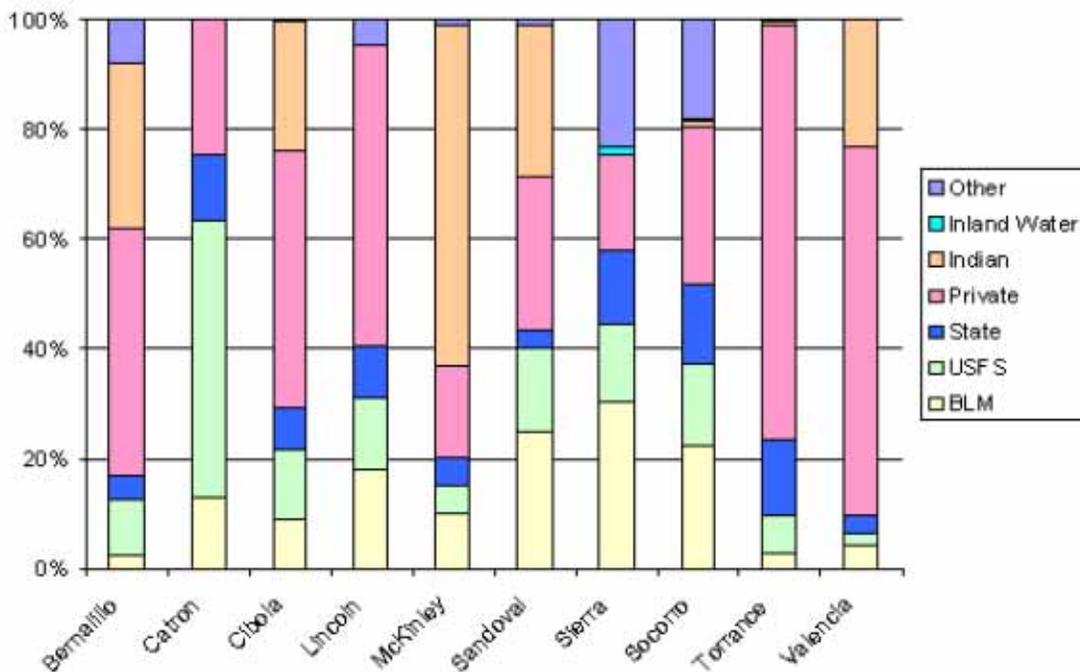


Figure 2. Cibola NF Mountain Districts County Land Ownership

Table 3: Cibola NF Mt. Districts Study Area Incorporated Places Population 2000 & 2004

	2000	2004	% Change
New Mexico	1,819,046	1,878,562	3.3%
Bernalillo County	556,678	593,765	6.7%
Albuquerque city	448,607	484,246	7.9%
Corrales village (partially in Sandoval County)	7,334	7,616	3.8%
Los Ranchos de Albuquerque village	5,092	5,495	7.9%
Rio Rancho city (partially in Sandoval County)	51,765	61,953	19.7%
Tijeras village	474	467	-1.5%
Catron County	3,543	3,440	-2.9%
Reserve village	387	345	-10.9%
Cibola County (*1)	25,595	27,549	7.6%
Grants city	8,806	9,041	2.7%
Milan village	1,891	2,527	33.6%
Lincoln County	19,411	20,727	6.8%
Capitan village	1,443	1,486	3.0%
Carrizozo town	1,036	1,053	1.6%
Corona village	165	168	1.8%
Ruidoso village	7,698	8,691	12.9%
Ruidoso Downs village	1,824	1,921	5.3%
McKinley County	74,798	72,425	-3.2%
Gallup city	20,209	19,715	-2.4%
Sandoval County	89,908	102,120	13.6%
Bernalillo town	6,611	6,956	5.2%
Corrales village (partially in Bernalillo County)	7,334	7,616	3.8%
Cuba village	590	618	4.7%
Jemez Springs village	375	388	3.5%
Rio Rancho city (partially in Bernalillo County)	51,765	61,953	19.7%
San Ysidro village	238	248	4.2%
Sierra County	13,270	12,961	-2.3%
Elephant Butte city	1,390	1,334	-4.0%
Truth or Consequences city	7,289	7,163	-1.7%
Williamsburg village	527	503	-4.6%
Socorro County	18,078	18,177	0.5%
Magdalena village	913	878	-3.8%
Socorro city	8,877	8,724	-1.7%
Torrance County	16,911	16,864	-0.3%
Encino village	94	91	-3.2%
Estancia town	1,584	1,555	-1.8%
Moriarty city	1,765	1,812	2.7%
Mountainair town	1,116	1,081	-3.1%
Willard village	240	254	5.8%
Valencia County (*1)	66,152	68,698	3.8%
Belen city	6,901	6,946	0.7%
Bosque Farms village	3,931	3,887	-1.1%
Los Lunas village	10,034	11,748	17.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and Population Estimates Program 2004

(*1) - Cibola County was organized from Valencia County in 1981

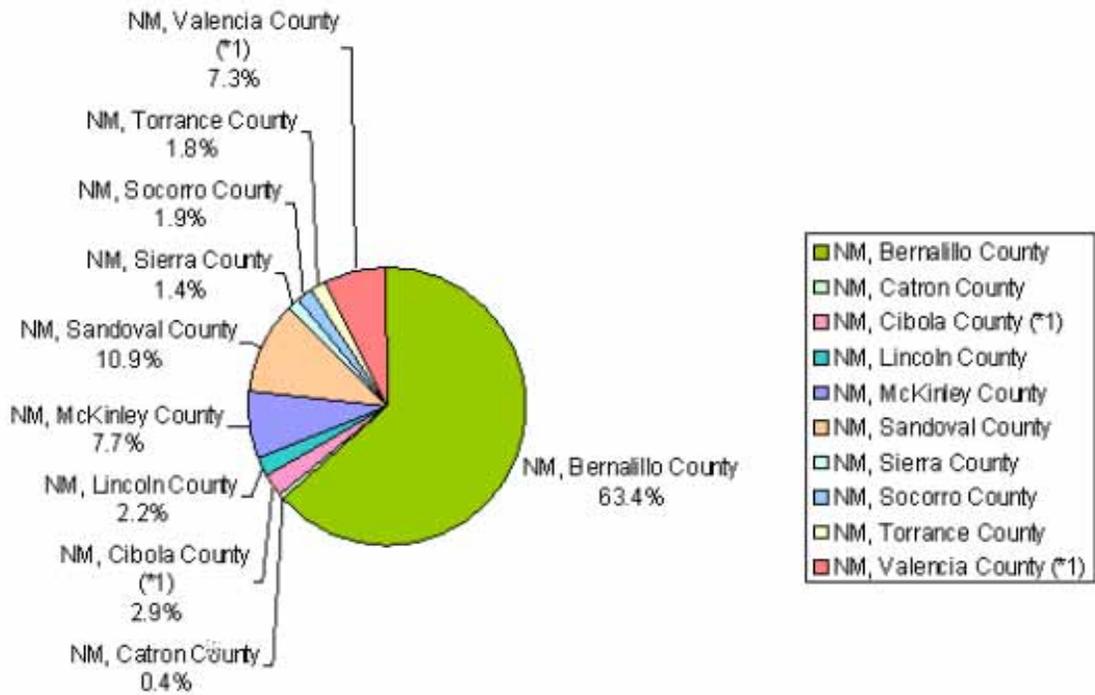


Figure 3. Cibola NF Mt. Districts Study Area Percentage of Total Population by County

Table 4: Cibola National Forest Mountain Districts

People QuickFacts	Cibola NF Mountain Districts										
	New Mexico	Bernalillo County, NM	Catron County, NM	Cibola County, NM	Lincoln County, NM	McKinley County, NM	Sandoval County, NM	Sierra County, NM	Socorro County, NM	Torrance County, NM	Valencia County, NM
Population, 2003 estimate	1,874,614	581,442	3,415	26,453	20,322	72,555	98,786	13,125	18,178	16,802	67,839
Population, percent change, April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2003	3.1%	4.4%	-3.6%	3.4%	4.7%	-3.0%	9.9%	-1.1%	0.6%	-0.6%	2.6%
Population, 2000	1,819,046	556,678	3,543	25,595	19,411	74,798	89,908	13,270	18,078	16,911	66,152
Population, percent change, 1990 to 2000	20.1%	15.8%	38.2%	7.6%	58.9%	23.3%	42.0%	33.9%	22.4%	64.4%	46.2%
Persons under 18 years old, percent, 2000	28.0%	25.3%	21.1%	30.7%	22.7%	38.0%	29.6%	20.1%	28.4%	30.4%	30.1%
Persons 65 years old and over, percent, 2000	11.7%	11.5%	18.8%	10.7%	17.9%	6.9%	10.6%	27.7%	10.9%	9.7%	10.2%
Median Age	34.6	35	47.8	33.1	43.8	26.9	35.1	48.9	32.4	34.8	33.8
White persons, percent, 2000	66.8%	70.8%	87.8%	39.6%	83.6%	16.4%	65.1%	87.0%	62.9%	73.9%	66.5%
Black or African American persons, percent, 2000	1.9%	2.8%	0.3%	1.0%	0.4%	0.4%	1.7%	0.5%	0.6%	1.7%	1.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons, percent, 2000	9.5%	4.2%	2.2%	40.3%	2.0%	74.7%	16.3%	1.5%	10.9%	2.1%	3.3%
White persons, not of Hispanic/Latino origin, percent, 2000	44.7%	48.3%	75.8%	24.7%	70.9%	11.9%	50.3%	70.5%	37.6%	57.2%	39.4%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, percent, 2000	42.1%	42.0%	19.2%	33.4%	25.6%	12.4%	29.4%	26.3%	48.7%	37.2%	55.0%
Language other than English spoken at home, pct age 5+, 2000	36.5%	29.5%	16.9%	43.9%	20.7%	61.3%	31.8%	21.6%	42.3%	26.2%	33.9%
Median household income, 1999	\$34,133	\$38,788	\$23,892	\$27,774	\$33,886	\$25,005	\$44,949	\$24,152	\$23,439	\$30,446	\$34,099
Per capita money income, 1999	\$17,261	\$20,790	\$13,951	\$11,731	\$19,338	\$9,872	\$19,174	\$15,023	\$12,826	\$14,134	\$14,747
Persons below poverty, percent, 1999	18.4%	13.7%	24.5%	24.8%	14.9%	36.1%	12.1%	20.9%	31.7%	19.0%	16.8%
Land area, 2000 (square miles)	121,356	1,166	6,928	4,539	4,831	5,449	3,709	4,180	6,646	3,345	1,068
Persons per square mile, 2000	15	477.4	0.5	5.6	4	13.7	24.2	3.2	2.7	5.1	62

Table 4: Cibola National Forest Mountain Districts

Agriculture	Cibola NF Mountain Districts										
	New Mexico	Bernalillo County, NM	Catron County, NM	Cibola County, NM	Lincoln County, NM	McKinley County, NM	Sandoval County, NM	Sierra County, NM	Socorro County, NM	Torrance County, NM	Valencia County, NM
Number of Farms 1997 to 2002 % Change	-15.1%	-9.1%	-28.0%	-27.6%	-23.4%	-43.6%	-25.4%	2.8%	-20.2%	-25.6%	-14.3%
Land in farms (acres, 1997 to 2002) % Change	-3.0%	(D)	-9.5%	-1.2%	-19.2%	0.9%	-5.8%	5.7%	-7.5%	11.2%	-4.9%
Average size of farm (acres, 1997 to 2002) % Change	14.4%	(D)	25.7%	36.4%	5.5%	78.9%	26.2%	2.9%	15.9%	49.6%	11.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2002 People Quickfacts and U.S.D.A. 2002 Census of Agriculture

(D) = Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual farms.

Note: Cibola County was organized from Valencia County in 1981.

Data Collection Process

Data collection was accomplished by a combination of individual interviews and small group discussions. A listing of topics (included in appendix) guided the interviews and group discussions. The guide topics were used to discuss how participants perceive issues rather than to elicit information in predetermined response categories. This approach is a discovery process to understand issues from a local perspective rather than using predetermined questions (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999; Bernard 1995; Spradley 1979). Consequently, the guide outlined general topics for discussion, but the interests and issues of concern to participants structured the information discussed. The guide was sent to participants before the sessions so participants would be aware of the topic areas for discussion.

Discussion group sessions were recorded to ensure access to the most detailed information for analysis. Notes were also taken and key topics were summarized; and, the time mark in the audio recording for these points was noted to facilitate easy access for analysis. Segments within the recordings were identified by topic area and then coded using a combination of predefined and emergent codes. The predefined codes correspond to the topic areas in the discussion guide. The emergent codes were based on topics volunteered by participants. The analysis identified themes in the topic and emergent codes as well as participant statements to illustrate the content of the issues. The results of this qualitative approach (Dey 1993; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1998) organize the presentation of results.

A list of potential participants was prepared in consultation with the forest planner and district rangers. The moderator discussed the list of potential participants with the district rangers to assess geographic and interest group coverage. Native Americans with interests in the Cibola National Forest were invited to separate sessions to discuss concerns specific to tribal groups, including values and beliefs, consultation expectations, and related cultural issues. A draft report is available presenting the results of meetings with participants from the New Mexico Pueblos. Invitation letters were sent to all potential participants and follow-up telephone calls reminded participants of the date, time, and location of the meetings.

Three sessions were organized with the assistance of the forest planner and district rangers. All meetings took place in the evening, starting about 7 p.m. and generally lasting until about 9 p.m. One session was held at the Sandia District Office near the village of Tijeras; a second meeting was held in Grants for the Mt. Taylor District; and a third meeting was held at the district Office in Magdalena. No meetings were held on the Mountainair Ranger District. The meeting in Tijeras was attended by 9 of the 14 persons invited. The Grants meeting was attended by 8 of the 9 persons invited; and, the Magdalena meeting was attended by 5 of the 10 persons invited. Three additional individual interviews were conducted with individuals representing traditional users and local business interests.

Results

Discussion groups and individual interviews resulted in information about several topic areas:

- The social environment and perceived characteristics and uses of the Cibola National Forest.
- Issues, concerns, beliefs, and values about forest uses and resources.
- Public and Agency perspectives on management issues and concerns.

Presentation of the results about the social environment and perspectives on management issues aggregate the responses from all districts. The attitude, values, and beliefs results are presented for each district. These results were organized into three categories for each district:

- Agency Presence and Procedures. This topic presents information about participant views about Forest Service interaction with communities and assessments of management procedures.
- Multiple-Use Issues. Participants expressed a range of views about the use of forest resources that in one manner or another address the concept of multiple-use.
- Resource Issues. This topic presents results about natural resources such as water and timber and other perceived resources for recreation and enjoyment of the forest.

Although the categories are the same for each the three districts, the configuration of issues within these categories shows variation.

Social Environment, Forest Characteristics and Resource Uses

I moved here to Albuquerque from Colorado. I live on the northeast side. After work I can get on my bike and ride up into the forest and you would never know there is a city here. In the winter when we have snow I can take my board (snowboard) and get some boarding in after work. It is a place to be if you like the outdoors. The mountain is so close it gives you a place to go without having to take a big trip.

Albuquerque (~484,246) and Magdalena (~878) represent the differences in social scale among communities in the Ranger districts comprising the Cibola National Forest. The Sandia District is immediately adjacent to the northeastern portions of metropolitan Albuquerque and the other ranger districts are within an easy 2-hour drive from the city center. There are some broad generalizations about the perceived characteristics and social environment of the Cibola National Forest expressed by participants in this work.

Social Environment

The following are some of the noteworthy characteristics of the social environment of the Cibola National Forest:

- Although Albuquerque is a source of users and interested parties for all districts of the Cibola National Forest, each district has a unique local social environment that reflects the social history, economy, and traditions of each locale. There are similarities among these local social environments, but the differences are especially noteworthy because of issues of social scale, economy, ethnic composition, and local traditions.

- In some rural areas, ranches and other lands are being subdivided in areas that are sometimes directly adjacent to national forest lands. This is resulting in the loss of some ranching lifestyles. Those buying these lands are usually from out of the immediate area and often from out-of-state.
 - o This is increasing the social diversity and an increasing mix of values and beliefs in some smaller communities where subdivisions have been created.. These newer residents are perceived to desire more services, paved roads, and amenities that are similar to the places they left behind to move to rural areas.
 - o Retirees as well as individuals who have independent incomes comprise many of the newer residents in the more rural areas.
- The mixture of land grants, pueblos and other reservation lands adds to the social and cultural mix of communities. Participants describe this social mix as a desirable characteristic of local social environment. Participants also note that because of traditions and lifestyles, there is limited mixing of ethnic groups.
- Participants from the more populated areas perceive more population growth and increased demand on forest resources. Residents of rural communities perceive a general decline from 20 years ago, decreased job opportunities for young people, and most population growth resulting from in-migration. For example, one participant from a rural community observed:

We used to have a mine and three sawmills and the population was twice the size that it is now. During that time there was a drought too and we were just cutting salvage timber during that time. Over time all the jobs from the mines and sawmills were lost. The cattle business has also tapered way down. The area has taken a big hit.
- Interstate highways both north and south (Interstate 25) and east and west (Interstate 40) facilitate easy access to some areas of the Cibola National Forest, especially the Sandia District and portions of the Mt. Taylor District. This access has facilitated use of public lands by urban residents who value the options offered by public land.
- The social and family experiences of urban and rural residents often have a component of interaction with the Cibola National Forest.

The social environment of this national forest is thus characterized by local rural communities that are in relatively close proximity to the largest urban area in New Mexico. Both urban and rural areas have a diverse ethnic mixture that is perceived to have different values and beliefs about forest lands and uses. In all districts of the Cibola National Forest, extractive uses have declined resulting in some population loss and some decrease in perceived economic diversity and economic opportunity.

Forest Characteristics

Participants from the three districts expressed some shared perceptions about valued characteristics of the Cibola National Forest and the types of uses of forest resources. There are some differences in perceived uses, especially in the amount of grazing that occurs on the Mt. Taylor and Magdalena Districts. However, these shared perceptions about uses and characteristics are noteworthy given the dispersed nature of forest lands and differences in social scale.

- The elevation of the landscape and the diversity of life-zones with elevation is perceived to be distinguishing and valued characteristics of Cibola National Forest lands. For example, one retiree and resident of the Magdalena area observed:

There are all kinds of high peaks here and people from outside this area don't think about it that way. People think about New Mexico and they think red desert and hard wind, but we have high mountains, trees, and water in some places. It is those mountains that drew me here.
- Landscape and ecological diversity is another valued characteristic of forest lands. Participants identify specific resources (e.g. water) and landscape characteristics (e.g., mountains) as important, but a more common assessment is the significance of overall landscape and ecological diversity. One rancher from the Mt. Taylor District commented:

The land itself is so varied from the lava beds to the top of Mount Taylor to the red sandstones going to Gallup. There is diverse beauty here It is the prettiest part of the country. There is lots of beauty and lots of diversification, lots of different culture. It all works together.
- Natural beauty and scenery are identified as important forest characteristics in all of the mountain districts.

There are places you go on this forest and you are just enchanted by the beauty of the natural resources like the red bluffs in the Zuni Mountains. You are riding along and all of a sudden there is a big red rock with green all around it and aspen trees. ... There is a just a lot of beauty. Every corner you turn there is something there.
- Participants also suggested that a perception of open space in which there are wide vistas is an especially appealing characteristic of the forest landscape:

It is spectacular when you get out into the mountains. This is country where you can see clear through to tomorrow.
- The size of the forest is also perceived to be an asset relative to the current population of surrounding areas. That is, participants perceive the forest provides a space big enough to feel one is in an uncrowded environment:

We are one of the only areas in the country that has something that is open. We are running out of this kind of resource and that makes it valuable. What I like about it is there are just not many people. The forest is big enough to have the experience of being alone. If they develop some trails, it would be even better.
- Forest conditions are perceived to be poor as indicated by the following quotations from participants from different districts:

This country used to be Savannahs. There were not that many trees then. There just used to be little pockets of trees, like pine trees and piñon trees. Years ago, just hundreds of years ago there were lots of wide open spaces and the forest took care of itself. Now, when man steps in to take care of it and he mismanages it, and they won't do a prescribed burn, when there is a fire it is catastrophic. It kills the big trees. Before, a fire would not kill the big trees the way it does now. Too much management is not good either. They don't allow us to log it or thin it or do anything.

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The perception of more trees per acre is one factor contributing to the assessment of the forest condition as “poor”:

We were talking to one of our older neighbors and he told us that in the old days there were about forty trees per acre. I pointed to a small corner of our land and he said there were probably 40 trees in just that small corner.

The forest is sick and its dying and it will continue to die unless we give it some medicine. The younger trees are taking the water from the old growth trees that make a forest a forest.

Types of Uses of Forest Resources

Participants identified three categories of uses: traditional uses such as wood and piñon gathering, recreational uses such as skiing and mountain bike riding, and grazing as the primary commercial use of forest resources.

Commercial Uses

Participants describe limited commercial lands and resources. Participants identified some limited harvesting of trees, sand and gravel, and some commercial tourism benefits associated with the Sandia Peak Tramway. However, grazing is otherwise identified as the primary commercial activity on lands of the Cibola National Forest. Ranching participants describe grazing resources as a significant component of their operations; and, some expressed the belief that without these resources, many ranching operations would not be viable. This topic is addressed further in the Management Priorities section of this document.

Recreational Uses

Participants describe recreation as the primary use of forest lands and resources. Recreation uses include the full range of traditional activities such as hunting, hiking, backpacking, birding, picnicking, cross-country skiing, down-hill skiing, and wildlife and scenery viewing. Within the past fifteen years, participants also describe the development of newer uses such as off-highway vehicle riding, mountain bike riding, rock climbing, geocaching, and trail running. The proximity of forest lands and resources to adjacent communities is evaluated as an important value for the recreational users of forest lands.

Traditional Uses

Participants distinguish some activities such as hunting, woodcutting and gathering, Christmas tree cutting, and piñon picking as “traditional activities.” They are also sometimes described as “lifestyle” activities, but whether described as lifestyle or traditional uses the meaning appears to be the same. For example,

In my family hunting is something we have always done on the forest. My brothers were the ones doing the hunting and every year it was a big thing for them and for the family. The meat was important to us, but it was also just everything that went with it. I guess you could say it was just part of our lifestyle. Or maybe it is better to say it is part of our tradition.

These types of activities become a component of the patterns and cycles of living and are evaluated as “traditional.” These types of activities then become evaluated in terms similar to other family and cultural activities.

Participants also describe piñon picking, woodcutting, and picnicking as other types of “traditional” uses of forest resources. Some example statements about these activities indicate the meanings of these activities in participant lifestyles:

People do it in different ways. Some people put a tarp on the ground and then back their pickup into the tree to shake down the piñon. Other times you just see a grandma out there picking them up from under a tree. Our whole family goes; it is a picnic type of thing for us. Sometimes friends will go with us, but it is mostly our family. We scout out spots ahead of time and then we go and everyone helps gather them up and we have a picnic. It is nice outing for us and a chance for the family to get together. We roast them and crack them and just eat them. Sometimes we put salt on them but most of the time we just eat them after we roast them. My husband likes them raw. He likes me to make them into parallitos, it is a mixture of deer meat and pine nuts. We do it when the nuts are plentiful, which isn't every year. It is just something we have always done and my husband's family has always done it and if our kids stay here, they will too.

The above quotation expresses the linkage between forest resources, family activities, and the creation of family memories and traditions that parents expect will be maintained by their children.

Participants also describe woodcutting or wood hauling, and Christmas tree harvesting, and picnicking in similar terms: friends and family visit forest lands to gather resources or have picnics that express the traditions of families and communities. These traditions are often a primary means for experiencing natural resources and establishing expectations about forest resources and their use.

Traditional uses are important because they establish this linkage of place, lifestyle, and forest resources that creates a framework about “this is how it should be.” And this framework is a basis for the values and expectations individuals and communities have about forest resources and their use.

Summary: Social Environment, Forest Characteristics, and Evaluations of Uses

It is an understatement to describe the social environment of the Cibola National Forest as “complex.” Factors contributing to this complexity include differences in social scale socioeconomic characteristics, and population diversity. Population size is increasing in most of the region, but especially in Bernalillo County which is a major source of users for the Sandia District. Population increase in the TEMC uni. ybelpi isdderultopulout forest

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persons; vistas and scenery; mountain peaks; different “life-zones” that change with elevation; landscape diversity, and “enchanted beauty.” The Cibola National Forest is also characterized as primarily a recreational forest that provides the opportunities for rural and urban residents to engage in the full-spectrum of recreational activities in a setting close to their homes. Traditional uses such as woodcutting, piñon gathering, Christmas tree cutting, and hunting are also described as prominent and important uses. Commercial uses are perceived to be minimal other than commercial grazing.

Sandia District: Issues, Concerns, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

Participants in the Sandia District session describe this as an “urban forest” adjacent to the relatively densely populated Albuquerque metropolitan area. As in other areas, the proximity of forest resources to nearby residences is a valued characteristic that offers a range of opportunities that have become a part of the lifestyle of Albuquerque residents. The contrast of the high mountains and water resources with the comparatively flat valley and limited water appear to be especially important assessments of forest resources. Similarly, the integration of family and community experiences with the availability of forest resources is also especially important:

I can go and find peace and solitude in the desert, but the mountains and the forest offer a whole different environment that is not extensively represented in New Mexico. Only twenty percent of the New Mexico land surface is high mountains. We have that right here, outside our doors. ... It has always been important to me to come up and cut a Christmas tree. You cannot go out in Albuquerque and cut a Christmas tree unless you steal it from your neighbors. It has always been real important to be able to do that. It is a whole different environment that is very dear to me. ... Most people who have lived here for awhile, well the Sandias are where we all learned to ski and all the things you do in the mountains.

- The Agency is perceived to be limited in the ability of developing flexible and proactive management plans because of concerns about litigation.
- Additional regulations that cannot be enforced are perceived to be undesirable. A better solution is for the Agency to facilitate solutions that do not require regulation.

Multiple-Use Values and Beliefs

Participants expressed issues about conflicts regarding the rights and obligations of users in a “multiple-use” environment; problems with unmanaged off-highway vehicle use; the desirability of an accessible forest environment nearby to an urban area; the diverse seasonal recreational benefits offered by forest lands; and a desire for expansion of traditional woodcutting opportunities.

The Multiple-Use Concept

Participants raised the issue of “multiple-use” in the context of discussions about concerns regarding off-highway vehicle use. This resulted in a more generalized discussion of multiple-use values and beliefs. Participants recognize that users of forest resources are generally tax payers and therefore all users should have access to and use of forest resources. The dilemma about multiple-use is the combination of increasing usage resulting from population growth and increased demands for limited resources. And, a res useT4 Tw T*(inpotiroii)64(maonrec)6(pap{nd4(forced)TJ0.ced)TJ

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people and told them I was coming to this meeting, the one thing they asked me to bring up is motorized vehicles.

All these motorized vehicles tend to go fast and as soon as you hear them you better get off the trail because they will be right on you in no time. The bicycle people are educated about what you do when you see a horse and when you come across a hiker, but the motorized users don't have that. ... I have had a few near accidents because they go so fast and they are usually looking down. I know a couple of people who will not even go out any more in those areas because they are afraid of the motorized vehicles.

Participants also made a distinction between two and four-wheel drive types of users: two-wheel bikes that ride single-track trails are perceived to be more responsible than four-wheel all-terrain-vehicle users who are perceived as having a particularly aggressive attitude about riding their vehicles:

They have that Star Trek attitude: go where no man has gone before and preferably at 80 miles an hour.

Participants also described a belief about responsible OHV users as those who belong to organized clubs and problem riders as generally not having a club affiliation:

There are lots of conscientious OHV users, but it is the ones who are not members of the groups that tend to be the problem. They go out for thrills periodically and they are the ones most visible and the most obnoxious and least considerate. If they care enough to join the groups, then they have some training and education. It is the general public that does not join the groups that are the biggest problem.

Younger riders who live in areas where they can easily access the forest were also identified as potential problem riders:

The new houses that have been built that have kids, they buy a vehicle for the kid, and when the parents are working the kids go out and cause problems. You see kids out there all the time speeding around with no helmets and you know they could get killed. The parents are not there, they are not teaching them. But you get the kids with their heads down and they don't see anything. I don't know how to stop them because there is no licensing of these things. That is a problem

These comments suggest that OHV use is a priority issue because it is perceived to adversely affect the experience and safety of other users.

Open Space and Accessibility

The proximity of forest resources to the urban and rural areas adjacent to the Sandia District is an especially valued by participants. The forest creates an additional space for residents and creates a perception of extended personal space. For example, one participant described the following experience of visiting forest lands:

On Sunday morning, I take the Sunday paper and go up to Capulin Springs with a thermos of coffee and a cinnamon roll. I spend three or four hours reading the paper and picking up my binoculars and listening to the birds. That is heaven. I keep telling people I can't imagine heaven

being better than this. It is a place of solitude and beauty, the wonderful sounds that are there and the peace you can find there.

Proximity is an important attribute that creates this perception of extended personal space:

I can walk fifteen minutes from my house and be in an official wilderness. You can usually hike from most of the trailheads ... on the west side about a mile going a way from the city; you are in a forest or a wilderness. You can't see the city. It is just a part of our lives; it is a huge part of my life. Outside of work and family and things like that, that is what I do.

Another participant also describes the importance of proximity and accessibility of forest lands and resources:

It is out my back door. It is not like I have to take a two hour drive to get to it. I can take a picnic dinner and enjoy it every night.

This accessibility and proximity offers the opportunity to integrate use of forest lands into the everyday experience of users.

Recreation Benefits

Participants describe recreational opportunities as among the most important benefits of national forest lands. Noteworthy recreational benefits include the following:

- The availability of skiing, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing is an important recreational asset of the Cibola National Forest. Continuing to develop winter recreation activities and opportunities will add to the mix of year-round recreation on forest lands.
- Skiing adds to the mix of recreation opportunities. The Sandia Peak ski area is primarily a local ski resort, although there is some limited use from outside the state.
- Snowshoeing is becoming an increasingly popular activity; and, the needs of these users may require some future attention since groomed trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing do not coexist easily.

Modern snowshoes that are light in weight and they have decent bindings now. ... It is very popular now. I see almost as many snowshoe users up there as skiers. And conflicts ... there are these narrow trails that used to offer you a wilderness experience that is not in the wilderness. In the winter time there are trails used by walkers that get in the way of some of the cross-country skiers. But, I don't want anymore restrictions. Some people want signs that say 'no walkers or snowshoers on the trail' but I don't want that, because who is going to enforce that? We have to accept it as part of sharing the forest.

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- Sight seeing, wildlife viewing, and driving for pleasure are popular activities for area residents.
- Birding is an increasingly popular activity on forest lands; and, forest lands offer a variety of habitats for birds and birding.
- Motorcycle riding on the mountain roads is increasing as a popular activity. “Speed bikes” are a concern because they race on mountain roads.

The Sandia District is a recreational destination for area residents more than out-of-state or out-of-area residents. The recreational uses and values appear to be broad and indicative of the wide range of recreational interests that exist in any metropolitan area.

Traditional Woodcutting

Participants describe traditional woodcutting as a valued activity that has been limited in recent years. Woodcutting opportunities are a benefit to users who prefer to cook and heat their homes with wood that has traditionally been gathered on Forest Service managed lands. Participants also expressed a desire for increased woodcutting and gathering opportunities that can benefit traditional users; and, this activity is also perceived as a means to thin a too dense forest.

Resource Benefits and Values

Participants describe a range of benefits and values associated with the Cibola National Forest, including: the forest contribution to overall environmental quality; its value as a place for adventure and exploration; its value as a legacy for future generations; the value of forest lands for peace, solitude, and respite from life’s stressors; the desirability of diverse wildlife; and, problems with the density of trees that is perceived to contribute to fire danger.

Environmental Quality

The forest is perceived to contribute to the overall environmental quality of the metropolitan area. The environmental quality characteristics are ones that contrast with the non-mountainous areas of metropolitan Albuquerque:

- Clear skies provide views of the night sky not available in lower altitudes.
- Clean air characterizes the upper elevations of the district.
- The watersheds of the district are believed to be among its most important assets, although these can be threatened by increasing urbanization and development that uses septic systems that can leach into district waters.
- Wildlife is perceived to be an indicator and expression of environmental quality.

Environmental quality is an enhancement to the lifestyles of residents adjacent to the Sandia District, especially residents of metropolitan Albuquerque.

Exploration Value

Some participants describe Sandia District lands as offering the opportunity for exploration experiences. These are opportunities to travel on and off established trails in both summer and winter to explore new areas and experience new situations. Forest trails that have the quality of wilderness trails without being in the designated wilderness are valued as are the opportunities for cross-county experiences. For example,

The more undeveloped areas of the mountain are my favorite. I like to see new things; I like to hike off-trail. I like to find abandoned mines, I know we are not supposed to go in them, but we go in all of them. ... That opportunity to find new things and experience new places is one of the things I care about most.

This is an important contrast with the desires and beliefs of other users who prefer to stay on trails and have more signage that can locate the user in the forest. For example,

I like to stay on the trails. I don't have any desire to walk across meadows or damage something that might be off the trail. I don't need to tromp off into the woods. I just learned over time that I don't want to go stepping on pristine ground cover. I don't want to tromp though and damage something. I get everything I need from staying on the trails and going off-trails isn't something I need to do.

The contrast in needs is noteworthy: some users desire a more controlled experience while others desire the opportunity for more exploration and novelty in their forest visits.

Legacy Value

Participants whose families are long-term residents of this area describe a type of “legacy value” to forest resources. For these participants, formative experiences of their lives are connected with the use of forest lands. For some, family experiences are linked to use of forest resources; and there is a desire for the next generation to have the same opportunities:

When I think of this area (forest lands), I think of my family. I think of the family experiences we have had and I think about my children and the experiences I want them to have here too.

A similar expression of legacy value links important individual experiences with the desire for the resources to be available for future generations. For example,

I want my kids to be able to experience the things I am experiencing. When I grew up here my experiences in the forest helped to shape me. I want (my children)... to have the opportunity to enjoy it and learn from it the way I did. I think it is a place where you can learn to put the forest first and not just think of what the forest does for you.

Peace, Solitude, and Respite Values

Modern-life is perceived to have its own stressors and demands that can be ameliorated by visiting forest lands. Participants describe the opportunity for peace, quiet, and solitude as important values of forest lands and resources. And, the benefits of the visits can be described as having a “respite value”; that is, forest visits provide both a respite from life stressors and a mitigation of their effects. For example,

Humans need a place to go that is totally away from others. There is a real connection between humans and nature and if you just get out there and sit, it is amazing the peace and solitude you can experience. In our stressful lives, we need that more than ever.

Another participant also expressed the respite and renewal aspects of forest visits:

It is a connection with my soul. It is like I go there and I can be myself and find myself no matter where I have been in my stressful day. It is a classroom in itself. I am learning about myself or

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watching the seasons change. It is a classroom for my children. It is just such an integral part of who I am and how I function in my daily life. We try to get out there once a week. ... It makes me a better person. When I come home I am smiling, I am even-keel, I am calm and it just really grounds me.

These sentiments express two noteworthy sentiments: (1) the perceived need for a place in which individuals can experience self-reflection; and (2) the positive psychological benefits that result from experiencing peace, solitude, and self-reflection. Other participants noted that as population increases and modern life becomes more stressful, there are increasing needs for places where individuals can experience peace and solitude.

Vegetation and Timber

The most prominent issue regarding forest vegetation and timber is a perception of too many trees per acre that is resulting in fire danger. Some participants suggest that in the past traditional activities such as wood gathering and grazing helped to control fire danger related to forest density:

When the Forest Service came in ... they made us take all the animals off the land and there was no more wood gathering allowed. That is why we have the problems we have now. ... They won't let people in to graze and gather wood and it is contributing to the problems (increased fire danger). We were able to control the fires in the old days because we cut the dead trees and then it was sold in Albuquerque. That is how many people made a living. The animals we ran would keep the growth down and that lessened the fire danger. If we could do that now, it would not be the problem it is.

While not all participants may agree with the assessment of the relationship between woodcutting, grazing, and fire danger, there is agreement in assessments of forest lands as having too many trees per acre. This density not only contributes to fire danger, but it also affects uses of forest lands:

We used to wander all through the south side, through South Peak all the way down to Burger Boy. Now it is so overgrown you can't walk through there at all. There are just too many down and dead trees now. The forest structure has changed in the fifty years I have been using the forest. Before, the firewood cutters would take most of the down and dead trees. The wood didn't go to waste, but things have changed.

Some participants also expressed the belief that aspen, which is valued for the contribution it makes to ecosystem diversity and scenic views, has suffered because of fire suppression.

Wildlife Values

Some participants describe the opportunity for hunting as important for some residents. For other participants the diversity of wildlife and the opportunities for wildlife viewing are among the most valued benefits of these lands:

The Sandias are a great birding place. It is on the migration pathway for raptors. For three months in the spring, Hawk Watch International count and band raptors here. In the fall they also count and band the birds. If you go to any canyon, practically any canyon you can sit and watch the birds come in. Then, in the winter, the Crest House, they host people from all over the

world. They are looking for rosy finches. This is the only place in the world where you can see three of the species of the rosy finches in one spot and it is eyeball to eyeball. It is an important birding area ... it is just a great place.

Participants also describe the forest as providing important habitat for diverse species of wildlife, including game and non-game species. And, there is also concern about how Interstate 40 affects wildlife movements between the northern and southern portions of the district. The habitat value of forest lands for wildlife is expressed in the following statement:

There are big animals that move through here. I got clued into this because I live on a farm on the border of the Cibola National Forest. ... A lot of wildlife uses the area; they go right across my yard. I have bears and bobcats and we have seen the tracks of cougar. That is another part of the aesthetic of the wilderness: you have an intact ecosystem of sorts. It is hardly pristine, but you have a spectrum of natural life that is more at risk as time goes on and there is more use as people move in. It is something to take note of. The wildlife managers are taking note of it; there is extinction of wildlife going on. Intact corridors like this This mountain range can connect quite a ways south and north to the Sangre de Cristos and Jemez Mountains, these kinds of linkages are essential for maintaining genetic diversity and the whole ecosystem context. It is a growing awareness and there is growing awareness of how at risk it is.

Valued family and individual experiences are associated with the use and existence of forest resources; and, participants desire the future availability of these resources so their children and others of the next generation will also have the potential to benefit as they have.

Mt. Taylor District: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

The Mount Taylor District is nearby to Mount Taylor (11,389') that received its modern name from General Zachary Taylor who was also the twelfth President of the United States. Mt. Taylor is in the San Mateo Mountain range to the north of Interstate 40. Another part of the district is south of the Interstate where Lookout Mountain (9,128 ft) is the highest peak of the Zuni Mountain range. The Community of Grants is a service and population center for this region, although nearby Gallup is also a community of regional importance, especially for Native Americans. Land grants and several reservations share boundaries with the Mt. Taylor District.

Major themes in the discussion session address Forest Service management actions, perceived benefits of national forest lands, the contribution of forest lands to environmental quality, fire conditions, grazing, water issues, wildlife management, and a range of topics related to problem behavior in national forests and perceived solutions to those problems.

Agency Presence and Procedures

The mission, decision making, and planning actions of the Forest Service received limited but focused attention in this discussion session. The following are the prominent themes about this topic area:

- Participants believe that lawsuits, budget cuts, and budget inefficiencies have diminished the Agency's ability to effectively manage forest lands.
- Effective management of forest resources has been hindered by lawsuits filed primarily by environmental interests; and, participants believe the Agency should pursue these lawsuits rather than settle them out of court.

- Regulations about forest use appear to be increasing, but effective enforcement of regulation is diminishing. Developing new plans or regulations without the ability to enforce compliance is perceived as undesirable.
- Special interests such as environmental groups have more influence over decision making than residents in rural communities; and, it is these rural residents who are often most affected by these decisions. Those closest to the land and most knowledgeable about the resource should receive equal attention in decision making and planning.
- Cooperative planning and information exchange between the Agency and interested parties is desired. More input from local persons and increased communication among all interested parties can improve the decision making and planning process.

Multiple-Use Values and Beliefs

Participants express support for the idea of multiple-use, but emphasize the contribution and status of grazing permittees in the mix of user. Off-highway vehicle use challenges the complete support for multiple-use because of perceptions of abuse by some OHV users. This type of use highlights a more general issue about perceptions of bad behavior and the need for education rather than regulation as a response to change bad behavior.

Grazing, Forest Maintenance, and Social Value

Grazing interests perceive there are more opportunities to graze on public lands than are currently allowed. They also believe there are benefits to forest health, wildlife, and national values that result from grazing. Specific themes expressed about this topic include the following:

- Permitted users are held to measurable standards and have rights and obligations to the use of forest resources that are generally not held by other types of users. Permittees perceive they have a vested interest in maintaining a healthy forest environment for grazing:
If we abuse our permits, the Forest Service will pull that permit immediately. They don't want hot water, they are afraid of another lawsuit. ... But, look at the private lands and some people graze it down to nothing, but we have grass. You see, if they pull that permit then I am out of business.
- The knowledge of ranchers about local landscapes and environmental conditions has management value that is applied to the maintenance of permitted lands; and, the presence of ranchers on forest lands also has management value, especially at a time when Agency presence in the forest is perceived to be limited.
The rancher can use that land pretty reasonably. ... If you figure out how many hours you work on the land, then it probably would not be worth it, but for some cattlemen it is the only source of income, so we have to be up there and take care of it. Nobody is paying him to take care of the land, to build fences, maintain waterholes. The only one paying him is that cow. So, he is going to try to get something for that cow to survive. If you take that cow away from the land, the rancher has no reason to be there. It is a cheap way for the federal government to police their land.

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- “Problem” users are identified as usually local persons who are casual users rather than regular users who are perceived to have a more vested interest in maintaining resources they enjoy. Although there are some out-of-area problem users, their abuse is believed to result from a lack of information about forest regulations or rules.

As people increase, use will increase and there is going to be a problem. They are going to shoot the signs down. Young people are not taught to respect the forest. They don't respect themselves. There are the casual users that go up there once a year and throw out their trash or build a fire in the wrong place. It is the people who are using it every weekend that are taking care of it. The guy who uses it responsibly, you never know he was there. It is three percent of the people that are causing the problem, but we can't shut down the forest for that three percent. More regulation is not the answer, because they cannot be enforced.

- Participants offered some specific ideas about “the answer” to problem behavior:
 - o Local users should set an example for others and thereby provide a role model for their peers as well as visitors to the forest.

You don't let somebody who comes into your house spit on the floor: responsibility starts with us and we need to set the example of what we expect when people use the forest. The whole community should be involved and we should have signs or billboards or flyers in the Chamber of Commerce that let people know 'we take care of this land.' I think about that commercial a long time ago that had the Indian with the tears running down his cheek. That was effective. We need to let people know we care about it before they are going to care about it.
 - o Cultivate “responsible users” who have respect for the land and its resources. Although some participants were skeptical of the potential effectiveness of this strategy, it nonetheless was discussed as one element of a larger plan for dealing with abusive uses:

I would like to see more use of the forest by people who are responsible, because they will not put up with the abuses by others. When I am up there and I see someone doing something I think is abusing the forest, then I challenge them on it. If you invite more responsible users, does it help or hurt it? – They are going to come anyway, so we have to prepare for who they are. “A responsible user” keeps the forest clean, they understand the danger of fire, they know and read the rules, they try to find out what the rules are. There are lots of unwritten rules that people learn from growing up here. There are people who don't know the forest and get into trouble real quick. If we target the responsible users, it will benefit the forest by maintaining it in its natural state ...
 - o Provide education for all users about a land ethic, forest regulations, and expected behavior. This was a strong theme with agreement by all participants that education of potential and existing users is the most effective approach to responding to problem behavior and resource abuse. Education techniques include using outreach, flyers, information handouts, billboards and other communication techniques along with community-wide attention to the expectations about land ethics and behavior on public lands.

Resource Benefits and Values

Participants emphasize the potential economic, environmental quality, and lifestyle benefits of nearby forest lands. Specific concerns are expressed about a perceived relationship between limited water, the potential for catastrophic fire, and high tree density. Participants also note their desire for increased attention to predator populations and to elk population, especially the effects of elk on the availability of water and browse for cattle.

Benefits of Forest Resources

There are several themes in the discussion data about the existing and potential benefits of forest

Results

- o The number of trees per acre is having an adverse effect on overall forest conditions, including forest aesthetics, value for wildlife habitat, and benefits to local grazing interests:

Where there is thick timber, there is no grass or brush, which means no habitat for wildlife or browse for cattle. There is a lot of regeneration potential if we clean up the forest. Now, the only way to clean it is fire.

- Wildfires are likely to be catastrophic because of the density of trees on the forest.
Natural fires are a problem because there has been so much mismanagement. If we let them go, it would create a clean slate! There is no choice but to put them out. If you get up on Oso Ridge and the wind is blowing 90 miles an hour, at the right time of year it would be catastrophic because it is so thick now.
- Prescribed burns may be undesirable because any fire has an increased potential to become catastrophic. Allowing wood gathering and woodcutting in certain areas can put to use resources that would be wasted in a prescribed burn. The potential benefits to local residents of using wood that would otherwise be burned should be considered in planning and decisionmaking.
- Logging and thinning can reduce fire hazards, promote forest health, and create local economic opportunities. Some participants believe logging done well is not destructive:
My experience is I have logged my own land ... when we were finished you could not tell it was logged. When it is done right then it works. Utilize it, put people to work, make something economical out of it. ... They are not taking enough off the top.

There is more elk up there than cattle. So, when they say get your cattle off the pasture, what are they going to do about the elk? Ten years ago there were no elk in the Zuni Mountain and now there are maybe 3,000. They drink all the water and eat all the grass. How are they going to deal with the effects of those elk on grazing? Right now we are the ones maintaining the pastures and providing the water. The elk are drinking all the water. I think they need to drill their own watering holes for the elk. I love elk but they are mismanaged. I guarantee people will tell you a lot about that.

- A second theme about wildlife is the perception of increased populations of mountain lions and especially coyotes that are having adverse effects on the population of other wildlife, especially deer:

Coyote and mountain lion are increasing and affecting wildlife populations. There are lots of coyotes and a problem with predators in general because of overprotection. The coyotes used to be taken care of by the sheep people, but the deer population is suffering because of the coyotes and mountain lions.

Magdalena District: Attitudes, Beliefs, and Values

The Magdalena District is located about a 2-hour drive southwest of Albuquerque. It is the largest district of the Cibola National Forest with almost 900,000 acres of land in three separate counties: Catron, Sierra, and Socorro. Collectively, these counties have a total population of approximately thirty-five thousand persons. The City of Socorro is the largest population center with about nine thousand persons, followed by Truth or Consequences in Sierra County with about eight thousand persons. Magdalena is a small village of about 800 persons that is west from Socorro. The issues expressed by participants address issues of rural communities adjacent to national forests where activities such as logging, grazing, and mining have waned in the past 15 years.

Agency Presence and Procedures

Participants emphasized a general approval of the quality of the Agency relationship with the community and interest groups. However, participant statements express several themes about how Agency procedures and presence influence adjacent communities: economic development; information and outreach; and, NEPA processes.

Economic Development

Participants expressed a strong theme about the desire for attention to economic development issues in rural communities adjacent to the Cibola National Forest. Specific issues raised by participants include the following:

- The Agency has assisted communities by hiring local persons where possible. Increased attention to hiring local persons can benefit the Agency, communities, and natural and other resources managed by the Forest Service: local knowledge of resources can contribute to effective management.
- Participants believe that natural resources are the primary assets available to rural communities for economic development, but these resources are under-used. Timber, scenery, trails and roads are specific resources residents perceive can assist rural communities in economic development.

- As one of the oldest institutions in the community, participants desire the Agency to contribute natural resources for future economic development.
- Participants desire the Agency to support development of the Magdalena Ridge Observatory, which is believed to offer some economic benefit to local communities through direct employment and tourism benefits.
- Residents of the region believe lifestyle and communities changes will accompany economic development, but it is important to anticipate potentially adverse impacts and mitigate those through effective planning:

Everyone who moves in here wants the gates to close behind them, but change is what happens and it is what will happen here. It is necessary for the future to see development and change. We just need to work to mitigate any of the negative impacts that might come with change.

- Facilitating contracting with local and regional entities is believed as another means for the Agency to assist communities with economic development.

Information and Outreach

Participants expressed several noteworthy issues about this topic area:

- Although the Agency is a strong presence in the community, there is a desire for more outreach about Agency activities and contracting opportunities. This outreach can assist local entities to overcome any administrative or information road blocks that inhibit participation in programs that can benefit communities.
You know, I know there are opportunities out there, but I don't have the time to always come in to the office and find out. I wish they would come out to us and let us know what is going on. I think it would help us to know more about opportunities to help us.
- Participants recognize the limitations of funding and staffing, but there is an expressed desire for a strong Agency presence “on the ground.”
- Information about forest resources and the locations of recreational opportunities is perceived to be limited. More information for potential tourists and local residents is desired. This can also assist in mitigating the effects of bad behavior and rule violations by providing information about rules, regulations, and acceptable uses.
- Information about management decisions and actions is desired so that local peoples have awareness about ongoing activities and issues:
Sometimes you just don't know what they are doing, if they are managing things or not. I am not sure what they are doing, but sometimes I see people out there and I am not sure what is going on. I would like to see them share some more information about what is going on so local people know what is going on. But, you never hear much about what is going on.

NEPA and Cultural Clearance

The bureaucracy of NEPA and especially the archaeological clearance is perceived to be an impediment to responding to immediate needs and issues. For example,

I spent four months to get a hundred foot long road from a county road ... it was with the BLM but it is the same thing with the Forest Service. They had to get a raptor study and an archaeological survey and it just goes on and on and everyone who is supposed to do it is always too busy to get it done. I don't know why they are too busy because they are always in the office. Anything that requires any NEPA study is almost impossible to get done.

Another participant made a similar observation, but stressed the delays caused by the requirements for “cultural clearance”:

I just wanted to get a simple little project done, nothing fancy, just a simple little thing. They said I had to do this and do that, but the most frustrating thing was waiting for the archaeologist to give me the cultural clearance. If you want to get anything done, God forbid you find an arrowhead nearby, because it will never happen because you can't get the cultural clearance.

Multiple-Use Values and Beliefs

Participants generally embrace the idea of multiple-use, but acceptance of this idea is challenged by concerns about local versus national interests, and concerns about off-road vehicle use. Additionally, increased pressures associated with hunting are cited as affecting the experiences of local hunters and the existing economic benefits associated with guided hunting. Some participants also emphasized the value of “public land” as an important resource for all citizens, especially those who do not have access to because of socioeconomic status or other factors that limit access to natural environments.

A National Forest

Participants describe a strong sense of attachment to national forest lands and resources. However, there is also recognition these are “national” forest lands and “outside” interests may also influence management decisionmaking and planning.

We have to remember this forest is not ours, it belongs to everybody. There is some sense it is “our” forest and we don't want any changes. But, lots of comments come from out of the area and those people and groups have an interest in the forest, too.

Although there is some recognition of these external interests, there is also skepticism that non-locals have sufficient understanding of local ecological conditions and processes to have effective involvement:

Those groups that make comments, they don't know anything about local conditions. Sitting in Los Angeles, how are they going to know what is best for this forest? It is just environmentalists that want everybody out of the forest and they whip people up and get them to write a letter.

Participants did not generally advocate only local input and local control. However, there is a belief that the stewardship values of local residents can be effectively used to increase the effectiveness of multiple-use management:

If you just go to a local stewardship perspective, then you can lose the national perspective. You need a broad range of expertise and you have to have that expertise to understand the big picture. The stewardship should not just be up to the local folks, but if the Agency cannot do it, then why

not let the permitte or stewards do it? The Agency can provide some oversight and guidance. If you do it with that point of view, then it can help to manage all the different uses on the forest.

Hunting and Woodcutting

Hunting and woodcutting are each described as traditional activities that have been affected by management actions and policies. Furthermore, out-of-area big game hunters are also perceived to provide economic benefit to some residents who either guide, provide outfitter services, or lodging to these hunters. Three specific concerns were noted about these issues:

- Wood gathering for heating and cooking is a traditional activity practiced by many households. Curtailment of wood gathering because of environmental or other concerns is perceived to be undesirable.
- Hunting elk provides economic benefits, but there is an increasing number of guided hunts and this is perceived to be adversely affecting the “quality of the hunt” for both local and out-of-area hunters:

The people from Pennsylvania or Washington may not come if it gets any worse. If they pay an outfitter a couple of thousand bucks and they are not having a quality hunt, then they are not coming back. There are even some locals that are quitting hunting because there are too many people out there hunting, too many guided hunts.

- Diversification of the hunting opportunities to include turkeys and other game has the potential to provide additional economic benefits to residents. This is believed to require the Agency, working with Arizona Game and Fish officials, to create habitat conducive to turkeys and other game.

OHV

Participants expressed disapproval of perceived damage caused by unregulated OHV use and concern about the intrusiveness of the machines on other users. There is also some concern about what are perceived to be responsible local users who ride off-trail as distinguished from recreational users who are uninformed about local conditions and who cause excessive damage from off-trail riding.

- The landscape of this forest is perceived to be “fragile” and prone to damage from erosion caused by off-trail OHV riding. For example,
They are not supposed to be using ATVs in this part of the forest. The landscape is fragile and it cannot really support ATV use. If you go in and tear it up, it does not come back.

- Off-highway vehicle use is perceived to be “out of control” and a growing type of activity:
I ride out there (in the forest) a lot and I think it is just out of control. I am not sure that you can control it now because it has just been out of control too long. When you are on the highway, you see these people pulling a trailer or maybe two and they are full of ATVs. They are going to come. They are going to ride them, no matter what. And they will ride them at eighty miles an hour to get wherever they want to go. They just seem to want to go to places and they don't think about the damage they are doing.

- Participants also suggested three possible solutions to perceived abuses of OHV use: (1) designation of OHV-use areas; (2) exclusion zones that prohibit riding of OHV vehicles within the exclusion zone; and (3) permitting the use of OHVs to monitor and regulate users.
- Some participants also expressed reservations about controlling all off-trail riding since hunters as well as those who gather elk horns do ride off-trail.

Public Lands Value

Two noteworthy beliefs were identified about the value of public lands.

- As subdivision of ranching and other lands increases, the availability of national forest lands as places for recreation, hunting, and access to open space becomes more important.
- The availability of public lands for all citizens is one of the inherent values of national forest lands:

There are certain things you should be able to experience without owning it. There are certain things everybody should be able to experience and you should not have to own a piece of land to have those experiences. That is why national forests are important, we can all experience it, we all have access to it, and just the fact it is there as an option to experience is important.

Resource Benefits and Values

Participants offered comments about specific resources of this district that are perceived to enhance the quality of life or that have economic development implications. The prominent resources noted by residents as having quality of life and economic implications are: historic resources, water, scenery, timber, roads and trails, wildlife, and wilderness. In general, participants perceive resources as requiring some maintenance and management attention. There is also a perception that resource issues are not being addressed because the district is believed to have a “low priority” among all districts on the Cibola National Forest.

Historic Resources

Participants identified several locally important historical resources such as cabins, old forts, and archaeological sites. These historical resources appear to have local importance and they appear to be evaluated as assets that express the connections of residents with the history and traditions of the past.

They may not be big, big historical sites, but there is Baldwin Cabin and some other places like that. But, we don't expand on that very much because if you do then there is more chance for vandalism.

Historical resources are thus important, but there is some reluctance to promote these sites because of concerns about vandalism.

Roads and Trails

Roads and trails are perceived as important local assets that also have potential for economic development benefits. As a local asset, forest roads and trails are the primary access routes for hiking, horseback riding, and other entry onto forest lands. Participants expressed the following evaluation of these trails and roads:

- Overall, forest roads and trails are deteriorating and require maintenance to increase ease of use and the safety of forest users. The perceived poor condition of forest roads and trails is inhibiting some local users from use of forest lands.
- Attention to road and trail maintenance also has the potential to benefit the development of recreational opportunities attractive to out-of-areas users:

Some of those roads you can get into but can't get out and it is dangerous. If we are going to promote recreation, then we need to do something about the roads. A good road just makes people feel comfortable out in the forest and it is the same with trails. It can benefit those of us who live here and if people know we have good trails, it will help our tourism, too.

- Similarly, trail signage and maps of roads and trails can aid users unfamiliar with the forest:

I have lived here a long time, but I don't go out on the forest roads because I don't know where I am. I need a good map that can help me know where I am, but that is one of the reasons I don't go: there are not many signs to let me know where I am.

Scenery

Participants describe the vistas, mountains, and changes in elevation as among the important scenic assets of this area. These “scenic resources” contribute to the quality of life for communities adjacent to the forest. These resources, along with climate and relatively low population, are perceived to be primary reasons this portion of New Mexico is attracting new residents. Participants also suggest that scenery is an underused resource that has economic value that can benefit local communities. For example,

They could take a road and make it a scenic byway. It would help to make the area a destination. We have a road from Mount Withington to Grassy Lookout that is about nine miles and it is one of the most spectacular drives you will ever see. Most people will never see it because you almost have to have an old jeep to drive across there.

Throughout the discussion of scenery as a resource, participants emphasized the linkage of road maintenance and development with access to the area’s scenic resources.

Timber

Timber is a resource that has importance for its use in traditional wood gathering, but it is also perceived to be underused as a commercial resource. Participants believe that timber is “over grown” and in need of harvesting or thinning in order to improve forest health, reduce fire danger, and offer economic opportunities for adjacent communities. These assessments include the following points:

- Although there have been some interest from outside parties in developing uses for small diameter timber, these efforts have not materialized because of a perception the Agency cannot guarantee a long-term supply of wood:
There have been opportunities for people to move into the area and develop small diameter timber and that timber is out there. The problem is the Forest Service cannot make a long-term commitment that would allow these companies to make the investment that it would take to build the plants. What we need from the Forest Service is a commitment to supply timber over the long-term to one of these companies.
- There is a perception that if historical conditions supported timber harvesting and a local timber industry, it can also be supported now:
Historically, there were five sawmills cutting in this country from the late forties through the mid-sixties. So, five sawmills were supported here for almost twenty years, and there were also a lot of small mills, too. So you should have a resource base out there to support one mill with a long-term investment. It is a big investment to put in a mill and they need the long-term commitment.
- Some participants believe that past logging has not significantly harmed forest conditions and this is a basis for believing that contemporary harvesting can also be accomplished without adverse effects:
Most people go into the forest now and they don't even realize it was logged. And it was being cut through the mid-sixties. It seems to me we can do it today and not have any problems if it is done well.
- Participants also link a perceived decline in water resources with an increase in the number of trees per acre on national forest lands:
The trees have sucked up all the water: there is so much piñon and pine and the problem is that the trees are sucking up the water.
- As in other districts, participants suggest that prior to or in place of controlled burns, residents should be allowed to gather wood for cooking and home heating purposes.

Water

Water is perceived to be among the most important resources to conserve and develop. Forests are described as the source of water quality and an asset to the quality of life in a semi-desert environment. For example,

I remember when I was a child and one of the first places my parents took me was up to Garcia Falls. I was just amazed at the water. It is still my favorite place to go, just because of the running water. When you live in a desert, water is your friend.

Throughout the discussions participants referred to access to water, means to increase the flow of water, water quality, and even the absence of water in campgrounds as noteworthy issues for attention on this district.

Wilderness

This district has two designated wilderness areas: Withington and Apache Kid. In general, these appear to be resources about which participants have limited knowledge. For example,

We just don't know enough about the wilderness areas to make any comments about if it is anything useful or not useful for our communities.

And, another participant observed:

Our wilderness areas are just not discovered yet. They have no roads in to them and it is not a big impact or influence on us. I don't even know about them. If they did some outreach, then we would know more about them.

Another participant responded in the following way to a prompt about the benefits to communities and local residents of these wilderness areas:

A big value of wilderness is that ATVs can't go on them! Those designated areas keep the ATVs out. I am all for that, keeping those ATVs out of the wilderness. We need places like that.

Management Priorities: Agency and Public Perspectives

Participants from each district volunteered perspectives about issues to address in future planning and management efforts. These issues are summarized in this discussion and compared with a draft preliminary set of issues developed by the Cibola National Forest as part of pre-planning for Forest Plan revision. The forest list should not be considered as a final list of topics, but a starting point for both forest and public issues are grouped into the same categories used to present information about the results of the discussion sessions in each district: Agency presence and procedures; multiple-use issues; and resources issues. These categorizations of Agency issues is for comparison with public perspectives and it does not indicate how forest managers and planners categorize these issues.

Forest Priorities

Planning and other forest management staff in each Southwestern Region forest identified pre-planning issues as part of the three-tier process for this project. The Cibola National Forest identified issues for the mountain districts and the four national grasslands managed by forest staff. Only the mountain district issues are addressed in this discussion.

Agency Presence and Procedures

- Develop a strategy for working with the public on the process for forest plan revision.
- Special-Use Permits: Standards and Guidelines

Multiple-Use Issues

- Unmanaged OHV activity
- Travel Management/Access/Right of Way/Roads
- Forest recreation interface near a large metropolitan area
- Extent and impact of increased recreation use and its relationship to land ownership patterns and opportunity for improved public land access

Resource

- A program that allows for more intensive land exchange to consolidate properties where feasible. This may abate some of the fragmentation issues on internal private parcels
- Scenery management system
- Wilderness management/special designated areas/RNA's
- Rare II Roadless
- Management parameters for threatened, endangered, sensitive species (e.g., there may be a need to redefine management indicator species and unique habitats such as playas, caves, etc.)
- Landscape level application of prescribed fire including application on adjacent private lands; fire management area designation/fire use.
- Migratory/Neo Tropical Birds - monitoring and management standards and guidelines.

- Better define wild-land urban interface issues and address management priorities for plan revision.

Public Priorities

Many of the issues noted here are expressed in previous sections. These issues are aggregated in this section to summarize the range of issues raised by publics during the discussion sessions and interviews.

Agency Presence and Procedures

- Agency staffing and funding is perceived to be insufficient to maintain forest resources consistent with the expectations of users.
- Local level decision making about resource management issues is perceived to be more effective than decisions made in the Supervisor's Office or the Regional Office. More local level decisionmaking is desired.
- Develop a strategy for information and education of interested parties about forest resources, management activities, and Agency goals and objectives.
- Participants perceive a cumbersome bureaucratic process for managing resources that is often not timely. Delays in implementing the NEPA process because of limited staffing are assessed as problematic.
- Personnel turnover in key management positions is a source of concern because of issues of consistency in management style and priorities. Stability in staff positions and a written set of district level management priorities and procedures can mitigate turnover in district rangers, forest supervisors, and other key management positions.
- Facilitate collaboration among groups with conflicts or different perspectives about issues and concerns (e.g., resource issues, recreational uses, economic development)
- Participants expressed a desire for increased public involvement to identify issues and to develop solutions appropriate to existing problems. The Agency should act as a catalyst to develop solutions "from the ground up" rather than "from the top-down."
- Participants desire a more proactive approach to preventing conflicts and user-generated resource problems. Outreach to users, education, information exchange, and anticipation of problems is desired.
- The Agency has made an effort to be inclusive in soliciting public involvement and this effort should be continued.
- Enforcement of existing rules and regulations is perceived to be insufficient because of limited resources. Participants suggest the limited enforcement of rules and regulation results in conflicts among users and declines in resource conditions. Participants suggest any additional regulations should be accompanied by resources to enforce those regulations.
- The Agency has an effective volunteer program in the Sandia District. This can be a model for other districts about effectively involving volunteers to assist the Agency accomplish a mission participants perceive the Agency is not completing:
Volunteers are a critical aspect of managing the forest. There is an extremely active volunteer program here on the Sandia District.. Volunteers are doing just about everything on this District except managing the District. I mean that. The majority of the

time if you find somebody out in the field, it is a volunteer. There are about twenty-five active adopt-a-trail groups that are managed by Friends of the Sandia Mountains. So, you have volunteers managing other volunteers.

- Participants desire the Agency to work cooperatively with communities to enhance local stewardship and to educate users and residents about expected behavior and land ethics.

Multiple-Use

- Off-road vehicle use is problematic for many users and there is a desire for better management using a combination of education, permits, designated use areas, and exclusion zones.
 - o Some areas are perceived to be too fragile for OHV use and these areas should be excluded from use by OHVs.
 - o Single-track usage is perceived to require different management than four-wheel all-terrain-vehicle use.
 - o The OHV speed on some trails poses a safety threat to hikers, horseback riders, and other users. Speed issues need to be addressed in planning.
 - o Off-highway vehicles generate noise that disturbs other users. Noise levels and areas where users desire quiet and no-mechanical sounds should be accommodated in planning.
 - o Off-highway vehicles are perceived to disturb wildlife. Future attention to the interaction of OHV use with wildlife is desired.
 - o Ranchers who use OHVs as “tools” require different consideration when management approaches are developed for non-commercial users.
- Accommodation of traditional uses such as wood gathering, piñon picking, and hunting should be given consideration when management decisions are made. For example, prior to controlled burns wood gathering could provide valued resources for traditional users.
- The Cibola National Forest has shown leadership in providing handicapped access to facilities; and, this leadership should continue in future planning efforts.
- Participants perceive overall increasing demand for recreational resources as population pressures increase in urban areas.
- Trails for both winter and summer recreation need increased attention in future planning efforts.
 - o More trails that meet the needs of mountain-biking are desired.
 - o Trails are perceived to be in poor maintenance from erosion and over-use.
 - o Trail markings are perceived to be limited. Developing better trail markings can increase use and provide a higher quality experience for hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bike riders.
 - o There is a perceived need for a wider range of winter recreation trails and opportunities at higher elevations for tubing.
 - o In some areas old rail beds appear to have value as trails for hikers and mountain bikers.
 - o The Continental Divide Trail appears to be an underused and underappreciated asset.

- Mountain biking is perceived to be an increasing use of forest trails, especially as other established areas in Colorado and northern New Mexico become more crowded. There is a perceived need to plan for the growing demand of mountain bike use.
- Problem behavior, including vandalism and litter are increasing problems that participants desire to see addressed in decision making and planning. Education, outreach, and working with concerned citizen groups are perceived solutions to address problem behaviors.
- Participants expressed a desire for planning to consider the potential economic development benefits for local communities in planning and managing resources.
 - o Thinning and timber harvesting are perceived to offer potential economic benefits for local communities.
 - o Opportunities to develop small diameter woods such as piñon and juniper for local economic benefit are desired. Rural communities can benefit from the opportunity to develop small mills, biomass, and other types of projects that can use small diameter timber.
 - o Development of any timber opportunities will likely require a long-term commitment of timber from the Agency in order for private industry to make the necessary financial investment.
 - o The potential for economic development should be considered in planning and decision making at all levels of the Cibola National Forest, including the forest supervisor and the district rangers.
 - o The Agency can be a more visible partner in local economic development activities, including outreach to provide information and assistance about grant opportunities and “bringing resources to the table” to assist rural communities to develop new economic opportunities.

Resource Issues

- Erosion control is perceived to be a priority issue for trails, roads, and other forest lands. Participants suggest the need for management action to respond to erosion control is under-appreciated by forest managers.
- Participants perceive a high potential for catastrophic wildfires, especially near urban areas and rural communities.
 - o The threat of catastrophic wildfires is attributed to the need to manage the high density of trees per acre on all districts of the forest.
 - o Managers should give more attention to the role of natural fires and thinning to manage the risks of catastrophic fires.
 - o Fuel breaks are needed to protect some urban interface areas.
 - o Although prescribed burns generate smoke that can be problematic, there is a need to consider increased use to manage the risk of catastrophic fire.
 - o Participants perceive a need for increased Agency planning about fire and especially the potential for catastrophic fire given public assessments of high fuel loads on forest lands.
 - o Residents adjacent to public lands perceive a need for the Agency to consider the effects of fire “across the boundaries” in future fire management planning.

- Grazing is perceived to be well-managed, although there are issues participants perceive as in need of attention.
 - o Limited water is affecting the opportunity for expanding grazing opportunities. Thinning and timber harvesting is suggested as a means to make available more water for grazing interests.
 - o Vandalism is increasing and causing permittees increased costs for grazing.
 - o Grazing is perceived to be an underused resource on the Cibola National Forest.
- Participants perceive the Cibola National Forest has been too aggressive in pursuing land exchanges. Participants suggest a need to limit land exchanges as part of future planning: *They have a habit of trying to sell things or trading pieces of land and I think they don't need to do that. Land exchanges, even if you have a place close to homes, even if you sell it, then another piece is going to be close. You are always going to have some areas close to homes that are going to be more trashed, but that is your buffer. They have sold some pieces saying it does not look like national forest anymore because it is so close to these homes. But when you get rid of it, then something else is close, so you just have to keep what you have.*
- Timber is perceived to be an underused economic resource that is contributing to increased fire danger and water shortage. Timber management that includes thinning projects as well as timber harvest for commercial purposes are perceived to be solutions to the water and fire issues.
- Water quality and availability are important issues for management in all districts. Forests are perceived to be important watersheds in an environment in which water is scarce. Attention to water quality and availability is perceived to be among the highest priority issues for planning and decision making.
- While wilderness is a valued resource, participants do not generally perceive a need to expand existing wilderness areas.
- Wildlife is a valued resource on forest lands for aesthetic, existence, and hunting purposes. Priority planning issues for wildlife management include:
 - o Coordination with other entities involved in the “Safe Passage Coalition” to ensure the existence of wildlife corridors.
 - o As urban areas around forest lands increase, there is a need for education and information about coexisting with wildlife such as bears, mountain lions, and other species.
 - o The forest is habit for migratory as well as other species of birds and wildlife that are valued national resources as well as important resources for local wildlife enthusiasts.
 - o Although participants recognize the Agency does not manage wildlife, there is a perception that elk are under-managed and affecting forest resources, especially available water and browse also used by cattle.
- Open space, quiet, and the opportunities for “peace and solitude” are resources participants identify as ones to be managed in future planning efforts.

Summary: Agency and Public Perspectives

Issues for FOREST PPlan revision from Agency and public perspectives are categorized into three groups: Agency Presence and Procedures; Multiple-Use Issues; and, Resource Issues. Publics have a range of concerns about Agency mission, the adequacy of staffing and funding to effectively manage forest resources, enforcement, the role of the Agency as a catalyst for problem solving and economic development, information sharing and outreach, the public input process, continuity in management across time and districts, effective use of volunteer, and the processes for planning and decision making. Agency issues in this topic area address the processes for public input and developing standards and guidelines for special-use permits. Discussions with district rangers indicate awareness of some if not all of the public concerns about Agency presence and procedures. Future interactions with publics about the planning process are likely to see these issues raised again.

Agency and public perspective about multiple-use issues have some commonalities and differences. Off-highway vehicle use, recreational demand, and travel management (trails and roads) are priority issues for participants and the Cibola National Forest. Public priorities in the multiple-use category also include concerns about economic development potentials for forest resources, addressing problem behavior and user violations of forest regulations, accommodation of traditional activities such as wood gathering, and continued attention to access for handicapped users.

Perspectives about resource issues also show some consistencies and differences. Agency and public priorities show consistency in concerns about: fire and fire planning in both urban and rural areas; wildlife management issues; scenery management; and, to some extent wilderness. Agency and public priorities also each identify land exchange as a priority issue. However, perspectives about land exchanges differ with some public sentiment opposing land exchanges in urban areas. Agency priorities also include attention to roadless issues, which were not raised by any participants in the discussion sessions. Public priorities also included issues about grazing, timber harvesting, water quality and availability, and consideration of opportunities for “peace, quiet, and solitude” as resources to consider for future planning efforts.

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Appendix. Topic Areas for Discussion

Please describe where you live and your interest in national forest lands.

Community Character and Recent Changes

How has this community changed in the last 10-15 years? What are the sources of community change?

Have these changes had any consequences for forest lands?

What communities, occupations, or lifestyles are most and least affected by how this national forest is managed?

Uses

Describe your use or the uses of family members of Forest lands. (Please indicate use areas on the national forest map.)

Are there types of uses of forest lands that you feel need to be enhanced or better managed by the Forest Service? (Please indicate on the map)

Are there areas where some types of uses are in conflict? (Please indicate on the map)

Is there anything the Forest Service should do to change how Forests are used in the future?

Resources

What are the special qualities and characteristics of this national forest?

For example, wildlife, vegetation, vistas, climate, historical structures or sties, timber, grazing, trails, quiet places, etc...

Locate on the map the forest resources that are important to you.

What changes would you like to see in the management of forest resources?

Favorite Places

Do you have a picture or a story about a favorite place on this forest? Can you describe what makes it a favorite place for you?

What are your thoughts about the benefits of Wilderness, Roadless, and similar areas for this national forest?

Do you believe there is a need for additional designations for lands or resources within this national forest?

National Forest Benefits and Values

What do you value about this national forest? (e.g., Products, Services, Opportunities, Existence)

What are the benefits to nearby communities and groups from this national forest?

Desired Futures

How would you compare the conditions in the forest now to how you would like to see them in the future?

What should the Forest Service do to achieve your future vision for these lands?

Key Management Issues and Priorities for Future Forest Management

What do you think is broken and what needs to be fixed in management of this national forest?

What has the USFS done well in its management of lands and resources here?

Are there any additional issues would like the forest to consider or address in future management?