Organizing For Effective Public Participation in Forest Planning
Carson National Forest

Listening Sessions Summary

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I. Introduction

In 2013 the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests of northern New Mexico initiated forest plan revision, in accordance with the new 2012 Planning Rule. Each National Forest is governed by a Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) as specified in the National Forest Management Act. Forest Plans set desired conditions, standards and guidelines for the management, protection and use of the Forest. The current Carson Forest Plan was adopted in 1986. The Forest Plan revision process responds to changed conditions on the Forest, the best available science, legal requirements, and new and emerging topics on the Carson National Forest.

At the outset of the plan revision effort, the Carson National Forest (CNF), in partnership with the Santa Fe National Forest, invited the National Collaboration Cadre (Cadre) to help develop a foundation for their public participation strategy. The Cadre is a United States Department of Agriculture – Forest Service (USDA-FS) program staffed by government and non-government people. Cadre teams provide training programs, and coaching to National Forests and their communities that are interested in understanding, developing, and applying appropriate collaboration processes. Cadre members include Forest Service staff in all types of positions in different regions of the agency; local municipal and county government members - both elected and staff; members of not for profit regional associations; and university professors who teach and practice community-based collaboration.

To support and assist Carson National Forest staff and Forest communities, the Cadre employed a three pronged approach. First, the Cadre offered a training workshop on collaboration for Forest Leadership and staff. Second, the Cadre conducted listening sessions with community stakeholders, Tribes, and relevant government organizations. Throughout the listening sessions, Cadre members assessed collaborative potential, both opportunities and constraints; and learned about the forest management situation. Third, the Cadre designed and facilitated community workshops. The workshop emphasized parties working together on organizing for public participation for forest plan revision. The intent was for the workshop to include a diversity of interested parties as well as National Forest staff. Following this public participation workshop, Forest staff will continue to develop and implement participation activities, assisted by a professional facilitator.

II. Listening Sessions Purposes and Procedures

Based on successful experiences with numerous collaborative planning efforts, the Cadre views the listening sessions as an important first step in understanding the context of local situations. The listening sessions offer Tribes, stakeholders, organizations, and Forest Service staff an opportunity to (1) discuss how communities and stakeholders work together and with the Forest; (2) describe opportunities for and constraints on collaborative engagement; 3) exchange ideas about how to conduct public involvement; 4) reveal topics or trends that might emerge during plan revision; 5) and begin networking, sharing knowledge and experience, and identifying participants for future collaborative work.

Many stakeholders have interests in both the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests. As a matter of convenience, the Carson National Forest and Santa Fe National Forest held joint listening sessions even though each Forest has a separate forest plan revision effort. The listening sessions took place on 31 January, 01, 03, and 04 February. Sessions ranged between 90 minutes to 2.5 hours. Nearly 260 people participated in 27 listening sessions at 19 sites.

These attendees represented a wide range of interests, experiences, and backgrounds. Ten Tribes participated in one or more of four Tribal sessions held in Albuquerque, Cuba, Ohkay Owingeh, and Taos. Listening sessions were held at a variety of facilities, including fire stations, libraries, community centers, and Forest Service District offices. In addition to these meetings, Cadre team members talked by phone with a number of people who were not able to attend a listening session.

Listening session participants were self-selected; they chose to attend. Many participants responded to an invitation from the Carson and Santa Fe National Forests. Others learned about the listening sessions from another person or an organization and may not have seen the original information describing the purpose and who would be conducting the sessions. The listening sessions included a large number of people who had not signed up; participation exceeded expectations. Everyone who wanted to participate was welcomed; no one was turned away.

Two-person Cadre teams were designated to facilitate each listening session, although due to a medical emergency, eight meetings were facilitated by a single Cadre member. The format of the sessions was informal and conversational, guided by broad discussion themes. The facilitators began by briefly describing Forest Planning and the Carson National Forest's and Santa Fe National Forest's intent to engage interested stakeholders, community members, and Tribes at feasible and appropriate times throughout the plan revision process. After this introductory information, the facilitators asked open ended questions such as "Describe situations when you worked well together in your communities and/or with the Forest Service," and "What are some barriers to working together with the Forest Service," and "What are some ways the Forest Service can improve future public participation efforts?"

Cadre members recorded by hand the comments of the public to the best of their ability. The listening session comments and findings are not comprehensive and reflect the views and opinions of those who attended and not necessarily the larger community. Cadre teams did not verify the accuracy of the statements made or challenge participants on the validity of their comments. Regardless, participant contributions have value. Cadre team members believe that whether the statements are accurate or not

is not as important as the Forest staff learning about and understanding the perceptions, information, and judgments people share among themselves and with other parties.

III. Themes and Observations that Emerged from the Listening Sessions

As the Carson National Forest and Santa Fe National Forest Cadre team members have constructed, reviewed, and integrated the Listening Session notes, a number of themes and observations have emerged. The following section is organized around these themes. The themes presented in this summary, when viewed collectively as a set, make the case for collaborative work with parties (Tribes, stakeholders, communities, organizations) as a central feature of forest plan revision. There is collaborative potential in the forest plan revision process, but roles need to be clarified, expectations managed, messages communicated consistently, and decision space clarified.

1) Many people want to work with the Carson National Forest

Throughout the listening sessions, participants expressed a willingness to work with the Carson National Forest on planning efforts that were meaningful to them. People are motivated to participate and be involved. The large number and diversity of groups represented at the listening sessions, as well as local, state, and federal representatives was indicative of the commitment many people have to working with the CNF, in part, because people care about the Forest. This is an important place to them. Even those participants who were skeptical and frustrated in light of past planning and project work talked about mobilizing volunteers, sharing information, and assisting the Forest where appropriate.

Sample Statements

- In addition to government-to-government consultation, several Tribes spoke of the need for regular quarterly meetings with the Forest Supervisors to discuss issues and for the Forest Supervisor to come to the Pueblo for face-to-face consultations; Tribal resource staff also spoke of the need for regular meetings with Forest Service resource staff to keep well-informed of issues, planning, and projects
- Many local businesses and communities depend on the CNF for economic viability. Community leaders and business owners alike strongly expressed the need and importance of working closely with the CNF staff to sustain local economies and cultures; it was stated that a significant portion of the county land base is owned by the federal government
- User groups, like trails and hiking clubs (Red River) work directly with CNF staff on agreed upon projects
- It is important that local and regional forest offices work with local communities and people; people don't want confrontation due to lack of communication or threats, they want reasonable conversation and results
- Camino Real Ranger District cited as good example of working with community to "chip away" at fuels program

Opportunity

People welcome the opportunity to work with the Forest, but want to be assured their time is respected and their comments are heard. For example, many listening session participants appreciated the

opportunity to be engaged at the very beginning of the plan revision process and help design it. Many people also indicated their willingness to participate in working groups for plan revision.

It was suggested that CNF staff should think of forest plan revision as an opportunity to collaborate with stakeholders from the position of what the Forest thinks it can do with the staff and resources it has rather than from the historic position of solving problems. The latter approach results in more rules and regulations – more bureaucracy.

Build on the good work – recognize the contributions of public and staff. Publicize and celebrate the successes. There were several examples on the CNF of successful and effective collaborative efforts such as the Amigos Bravos project on the Questa Ranger District, the Columbine-Hondo wilderness proposal, Quivera Coalition, Camino Real Ranger District's fuels thinning project, and Valle Vidal. It was suggested they could be models to build upon and/or resources to call upon for forest plan revision effort.

Just as important, though, is to acknowledge and respect the frustration and skepticism people feel when efforts fall short and to look for ways to engage them constructively. Look to the Forest's critics to find common ground; some work that can be done together. Reach out to local elected officials and community business leaders to forge new relationships, i.e. municipal and county officials. Make collaboration a viable option. Recognize that stakeholders will behave competitively when they do not feel that they can achieve their goals through collaboration -- a competitive, individual gain is the default strategy when parties do not trust the collaborative process.

2) Relationships and trust need attention

Stakeholder relationships with the Carson National Forest run the range of very strong to very tenuous. Some citizens and stakeholder organizations do not trust the CNF to manage the Forest for multiple uses. Relationship quality, trust, and credibility are affected by management decisions, public participation processes, communication, and staff turnover. While citizens understand that people want to advance their careers, there are concerns that relationships between Forest personnel and communities suffer when key staff roles keep changing (e.g., the District Ranger).

Sample Comments

- Explore ways to enhance the relationships with other state and federal agencies such as Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Create additional opportunities for face time
- Although many felt relationships between District Rangers on the CNF and community were positive, it is difficult to maintain good relationships between communities and the Forest because of staff turnover, employees not residing or being "vested" in the communities as a result of "zoned staffing patterns", reduction in face-to-face time with the public at all levels, and lack of resources to get local on-the-ground projects completed in a timely manner
- Indian tribes feel relationship with Forest has been pretty good in the past – would like to have more face-to-face consultation than via emails or phone calls
- Meet with local land grant councils face-to-face to collaborate/coordinate on shared objectives and management of land grants with the CNF
- The CNF has credibility problems with the OHV community

Opportunity

As noted earlier in this report, Tribes, stakeholders, and other government organizations want to work with the CNF. Some have established good working relationships and expect these to continue. Others, though, have limited trust in the Forest and have doubts about the Forest's commitment to meaningful participation and collaboration. The Forest can build trust through clear decision space, good communication about expectations, accessibility, and transparency. Parties want explanations for why decisions are made. They want to see evidence that their ideas are considered, and that participation activities are not simply pro-forma. Trust and relationships can be enhanced through partnerships, volunteer opportunities, follow-up, and follow-through. Credibility can be built through line officer and senior staff visibility at events, co-sponsorship of forest planning activities, consistency in policies and practices, and coordination between District offices and the Supervisor's Office.

3***) <u>Stakeholders want to clearly understand their role, the decision space they have to influence and how their comments/contributions will be addressed</u>***

Parties are willing to participate in forest planning, what they want to know is how. They are concerned about follow through and accountability. How will their comments be considered? They look for follow-up and follow through. They want to understand the decision space and know what roles they can expect to play in the process. Stakeholders want to know that their participation matters and see evidence that their involvement makes a difference.

Sample Statements and Observations

- Perception that decisions have already been made – it's just a matter of "checking the box" – not really <u>listening</u> to public input/comments; public participation has been nothing more than giving "lip service" to the public
- Some felt local communities need to break the traditional alternative approach to plan revision and offer a citizen's alternative
- There have been communication breakdowns – information goes nowhere – people will go to only so many meetings
- Some people asked how the Forest Service will integrate the needs of the local communities into an alternative
- Parties and the Forest need to work together to shape expectations and options
- Perception that policies are driven from top down – not derived from local perspective
- There is a sense of confusion regarding decision space when working with the CNF; how much can we influence
- Be very clear on the purpose of meetings and information you are asking stakeholders to provide. Send background information out in advance so folks have time to review
- Provide a graphic of FPR basic steps – an accessible, understandable road map with a timeline

Opportunity

Clarify at the start of plan revision, and repeat often, the scope of the effort. Clearly articulate the decisions people can influence. People want the forest staff to use clear language and not technical

jargon. “Don’t make it into dry toast”. They also asked that the CNF staff help people understand the importance of the plan revision -“Why should I care”. People want the CNF to explain the “why” and make it relevant. It was suggested that CNF staff identify for the public the tasks to be completed in each phase of the revision process, what information they are seeking from the public, and the decision space.

Develop methods for explaining and demonstrating how participants’ contributions are considered and reviewed. For example, a website page can explain how the plan revision interdisciplinary team (ID) team works with data, from specialists, other agencies, citizens, Tribes, etc. The website can post ideas citizens have developed and how the Forest is addressing those ideas. Forest staff, at meetings and in the field, can discuss how comments are being incorporated and speak to specific key recommendations. Reach out to local elected officials and organizations and ask them to exercise their leadership role in the community by convening meetings and encouraging their constituency to become engaged in forest plan revision.

4) Create safe opportunities for shared learning among diverse stakeholders

A few listening sessions were attended primarily by people with similar interests and concerns often focused on one topic or a limited number of items. They were concerned primarily with substantive topics and did not want to discuss process at the expense of their topic. Ranchers wanted to talk about grazing, business owners and local officials wanted to discuss economic development, and acequia associations wanted to talk about their “rights” to access for irrigation ditch maintenance. Although participants may be aware of the Forest’s multiple use mandate, many did not seem aware of the complexity of forest management. That being said, there were moments when people with diverse interests shared insights on the complexity of the process and issues facing the Forest and communities.

Sample Statements and Observations

- Diversity of communities (values, resources, needs, socio-economic disparities) within Carson NF – resort communities, land grant communities, Tribes, rural northern subsistence communities
- Capitalize on the communication and relationships other agencies staff have with stakeholders such as extension agents and Natural Resources Conservation Services. NRCS has established partnerships with farmers and ranchers
- Take a more holistic approach to grazing practices/allotments – not such drastic cuts; stockmen would favor peer review of best science
- Concern that Forests are moving away from historic multiple use philosophy to more of a preservation model. Believed to be driven by environmental groups that have a lot of funds and political influence
- Public perception that Forest deems it easier to close roads/trails/campgrounds than to maintain them. The Forest “ratchets down” facilities when conditions warrant doing so, but fails to “ratchet up” when conditions improve, i.e. example of popular off road highway vehicle (OHV) trail permanently closed near Middle Fork Lake near Red River
- Some community members talked about how their various issues might be received during plan revision and briefly discussed the need to organize themselves
- During one session, comprised of diverse stakeholders, the distinct and at times conflicting process preferences identified by the participants lead them to comment on the complexity of the forest plan revision process

Opportunity

Sponsor activities in which parties recognize the many areas of forest management. Encourage learning about complexity. Design events and include meeting or workshop tasks that are transformative; changing a party's single topic focus into one that locates that topic in a broader landscape and a more holistic agenda. One suggestion was to host engaging "Science Cafés". Invite the Southwest Research Station staff or the other three New Mexico research institutions to help with this activity, connecting their research function with land management. Another suggestion was to have a Saturday Family Day where children engage in their own activities and learning and parents choose from topic-focused discussions, speakers, or volunteer activity (perhaps with their children).

Stakeholders with divergent interests and goals don't seem to interact much with one another, learn from one another, or understand one another. Through face-to-face and web-based activities such as the Forest Service interactive mapping tool "Talking Points", parties can become more knowledgeable through more direct interaction and funneling all ideas through the Forest staff.

Many people commented on the value of photographs and maps to illustrate the complexity of forest management. Photographs and maps can be used in public meetings and workshops to help convey the changing landscape or existing conditions and what the landscape will look like if the CNF intervenes or if not. There also might be an opportunity for a youth project in updating archived photographs.

Many people recommended professional facilitators to help create safe spaces for shared learning and stay on topic. Many local community members feel their voice will be lost in the process because they do not have the advocacy skills the professional organizations and groups bring to public meetings. Facilitators can also help participants have a voice in the discussion.

5) ***Culture, history, and place attachments run deep in northern New Mexico***

A number of listening session participants commented on the importance of culture and history in northern New Mexico. They referred to sacred sites, special places, subsistence uses, struggling rural economies, and traditional land rights. Some participants expressed concern the people conducting the listening sessions – the Cadre members – were not local. Listening session comments highlighted the importance of Forest Service staff knowing the culture and history of northern New Mexico, particularly in rural areas.

Sample Statements

- Plan revision effort must include an accurate picture of the social and economic conditions of the area
- In some sessions, many felt to have meaningful meetings, the Forest Service needs to recognize the rights of those who pre-date the Forest Service. Acknowledge the rights of ranchers and historic land grant communities
- Forest Service staff need to be better trained; need to better understand the local people
- There is a lack of knowledge of and respect for traditional cultures and uses, i.e. cutting firewood, grazing

- Provide orientations for new agency personnel on local history and culture and increase sensitivity to local custom and culture throughout the agency
- Increasing problem of law enforcement agents' insensitivity towards local cultures/heritage

Opportunity

Many people recommended incorporating traditional (local, indigenous) knowledge into the forest plan revision process. Consider having Tribal leaders/elders, land grant ranchers, and long-timers give presentations at community meetings or write columns in a forest plan revision newsletter (both hard copy and on-line). Some people suggested providing training in culture and history as part of the transition to new staff, particularly line officers. Participate in cultural and historical activities in the area, particularly those that have a direct connection to natural resource management. Consider creating an exhibit in an appropriate, high traffic location, sponsored by the Forest that presents information (and honors) local culture and its relationship to the forest landscape. Build stronger relationships with cultural and historical institutions, such as the acequia associations.

6) <u>There is a general consensus that education is important</u>

Few of the listening session attendees have prior experience with or knowledge of a forest plan revision process. They want to be informed. Some parties voiced concern that the multiple use mandate and mission of the Forest Service is not well understood. Listening session participants commented on the importance of education, from K-12 to involving the universities. There is also an opportunity for Forest Service staff to be educated about regional and local plans and resources to inform the planning process.

Sample Statements

- People need education and information to understand the history and significance of grazing, timber, and acequia associations
- Send out existing forest plan or link to existing forest plan – "Can't know where you are going until to you know where you've been"; include the Forest Service mission and multiple use mandate
- Partner with the different user groups like oil/gas community, stockmen associations, watershed groups, and environmental groups to offer educational tours
- Help people understand the "what" and "why" of forest plan revision
- Increase educational and outreach opportunities as foundations for successful collaboration
- Accept Philmont Boys Camp offer to host a "meet and greet" for Forest to come out and talk about FPR with counselors and campers
- Red River Ski Area offered to assist with developing a survey that could be included with their guest surveys to reach out-of-state tourists; offered services of their guest services consultant
- Convene a public meeting in Red River on a Sunday in July – probably attract 300 attendees - mostly seasonal residents

Opportunity

Listening sessions occurred before the formal launch of plan revision when education about plan revision was a foundational aspect. Comments received support the Forest's direction to develop an education and outreach campaign. Appropriate Carson National Forest staff can serve as speakers at meetings of stakeholder and community organizations (e.g., Forestry Club in Questa, Red River and Questa City Councils, acequia associations, county governments, and land grant communities). Train Forest field staff (e.g., District specialists and staff) to explain forest plan revision in the rural communities where they work and live. Provide a regularly updated "question and answer" area on the website. Explore opportunities to work with K-12 and higher education institutions and teachers. There are also opportunities to educate and engage youth with the Philmont Scout Camp, Rocky Mountain Youth Corps or Questa's "community build" program.

7) *Good communication is essential*

In the listening sessions Cadre members asked about this topic directly and received a lot of comments. Participants said that the Carson National Forest communicates with stakeholders well at times and on specific projects (e.g., but needs to make communication about forest management policies and practices not just forest plan revision a top priority). People want to be informed (as noted earlier).

Sample Comments

- There is a low trust level with the public due to a history of ineffective communication, an inability or failure to cooperate/coordinate with partners to implement projects, inconsistency in how policies have been interpreted and applied between districts and between Regional/Washington offices and local Forests, and failure to "close the loop" on commitments
- Improve communication with stakeholders. Stakeholders want to know who to contact for questions about recreation, timber, road closures. Follow through with communication by calling stakeholders back
- Post meeting notices in local newspapers, "Town Crier" (Red River), trailheads, Dixon/Taos Farmers Market, send to organization's email distribution lists to forward to members, i.e. summer associations., cattlemen's associations, annual permittee/special use permittee mailings, and New Mexico OHV user associations
- Communication could be better – process begins with gusto and then fizzles out

Opportunity

Stakeholders look to Forest to model and practice effective and consistent communication. The Carson National Forest should invest in communication activity and adopt a multi-faceted communication strategy. Relevant information should be accessible in public venues (e.g., libraries), via mail, cable TV, local radio, and on-line as well as be provided in Spanish. The website should be updated regularly. The Forest should consider a "forest plan revision newsletter," available regularly as hard copy and on-line. Stakeholders could be invited to write guest columns to communicate their points of view.

People suggested keeping law enforcement informed of upcoming meeting; they are the "boots-on-the-ground". People also recommended "email blasts", flyers at post offices (we were informed that northern New Mexico has the largest number of small post offices in the nation), and meeting notices sent in local electric bills.

Stakeholders want to be informed and value opportunities to participate and comment. A good communication strategy should include follow-up and explain how public input is assessed and incorporated.

Communication with Tribes should go beyond formal consultation. Tribes value informal, face-to-face consultations that occur through the planning process. Some Tribal natural resource staff members have communicated and worked well with National Forest staff and should continue to do so.

Appendix A includes the Cadre members' notes on suggestions for public participation that emerged during the listening sessions.

Appendix A
Listening Session Notes

The Cadre has organized their notes from Tribal participants and participants from stakeholder organizations, communities, agencies, and citizens-at-large into the following categories: (1) Topics/Issues, (2) Possibilities, (3) Working Together, (4) Past Approaches that Affect or Enhance Relationships, (5) Obstacles & Constraints to Public Participation & Collaboration, and (6) Public Participation Suggestions.

Topics/Issues

Below are statements heard during the listening sessions that reflect the views and opinions of those who attended and not necessarily the larger community. Cadre teams did not verify the accuracy of the statements made or challenge participants on the validity of their comments. Regardless, participant contributions have value. Cadre team members believe that whether the statements are accurate or not is not as important as the Forest staff learning about and understanding the perceptions, information, and judgments people share among themselves and with other parties.

- Watershed protection in light of drought and fire conditions – fuels reduction and vegetation management are needed to protect health of watersheds
- Agency staff, particularly staff new to the agency, lack knowledge of, respect for and sensitivity to history of acequias, local culture and customs and traditional uses of the Forest and their importance to communities in northern New Mexico
- Public perception that management of the Forest is driven from the "top down" (from Washington, D.C. and Regional Office) rather than from the "bottom up". Special interest groups/organizations with money and political influence drive decisions.
- Inability to build and maintain good relationships between communities and the Forest because of staff turnover, employees not residing nor "vested" in the communities as a result of "zoned staffing patterns", reduction in face-to-face time with the public at all levels, i.e. Regional Forester, Forest Supervisor and ranger district staff and lack of resources to get local on-the-ground projects completed in a timely manner
  (Citizen Comment: "Only thing rarer than the spotted owl is a ranger in the Forest")
  Low trust level with public due in part to history of ineffective communication, inability or failure to cooperate/communicate with partners to implement projects, inconsistency in how policies have been interpreted and applied between districts and between Washington, D.C. and Regional office and local forests and failure to "close the loop" on commitments.
- Current Forest policy and management decisions are impacting local rural economies and cultures, i.e. timber mills closing, cuts in grazing allotments, trail/campground closures impact businesses in rural communities, reduced opportunities for firewood sales
- Issue of "invasive species" needs to be address in FPR
- Perception that decisions have already been made – it's just a matter of "checking the box" – not really <u>listening</u> to public input/comments; public participation has been nothing more than giving "lip service" to the public

- Ability to get work/projects completed on the ground is related to capacity both in terms of agency staff time (ability to get out on the ground and complete NEPA planning) and financial resources
- Diversity of communities (values, resources, needs, "rich vs. poor") within Carson NF – resort communities, land grant communities, Tribes, rural northern subsistence communities
- Forest Service has not been a good neighbor to the native cultures; dealing with the same issues since 1930's – Why does it continue?
- Recent USDA Civil Rights Report reinforces the injustices; what's the Agency's response?
- On Carson National Forest there has been an 18% reduction in allotments for every rancher permittee
- Too many elk and mustangs impact grazing
- Forest Service did away with free grazing permits
- Rio Arriba County – more economic development is needed. More wood cutting and harvesting is needed. A significant percent of the County land base is federally owned. Forest plans need to continue and provide for the historic culture and customs
- Permittees are impacted by the drought
- Forest Service land is for multiple use
- Last 20 years the Forest Service just listens to you and nothing changes. Local communities have no influence. They want the Forest Service to implement their suggestions
- As an agency, the Forest Service is moving more towards wilderness protection and recreation uses than the historical and cultural uses of the land.
- Stakeholders are frustrated with the lack of responsiveness at the local and regional levels so they are taking their concerns to Washington, D.C.
- Communities are dying, becoming ghost towns because there are no local jobs from Forest activities.
- Rafting outfitters and guides benefiting economically from the Forest Service lands but not the local community members
- Grazing on public lands is a right not a privilege
- Discrimination exists against the Hispanic culture and Native Americans; need to remedy these issues. They have historical rights that are not recognized by the Forest Service
- Decreasing grazing allotments due to drought
- Acequia members require access to the ditches and reservoirs to make improvements and access water; it's an inherent right
- Northern New Mexico Policy has been abandoned. Forest Service is trying to eliminate grazing
- Forest does not have the authority to stop people on county roads
- Forest Service law enforcement is terrorizing local community members; issuing $800 tickets. Local community members feel they are being harassed when law enforcement officers continually check for their driver license and registration. Come out of their vehicles with their hands on their gun. Locals feel threatened. Sending a petition to Washington, D.C. regarding this issue
- Law enforcement needs knowledge and understanding of local history and culture
- During hunting season, the Cruces Basin area becomes a "small city" with no facilities there is human waste and trash everywhere

- Catastrophic fire concerns. Nothing is being done to reduce the risk. Timber is rotting and no thinning occurring
- Why are gates locked? Information is needed to inform the public.
- Build trust.
- Plan revision effort must include an accurate picture of the social and economic conditions of the area. Many people depend on the renewable resources of the Forest for their livelihood
- The permitting for outfitters needs to be user friendly
- Create jobs
- Roads – be site specific
- Road access/open and closed – why?
- Need local decision-making; decisions at the district level rather than forest level
- Grazing needs to be supported

Possibilities

- Provide orientation and training for new agency personnel on local history and culture and increase sensitivity to local culture and customs throughout the agency
- Schedule regular onsite visits with the Indian Pueblos for face-to-face consultations
- Take a more holistic approach to grazing practices/allotments – not such drastic cuts; stockmen would favor peer review of best science; Quivera Coalition good resource
- Meet with local land grant councils face-to-face to collaborate/coordinate on shared objectives
- Meet with and engage various youth organizations, i.e. Philmont Scout Ranch, Questa's "community build" program that Mayor has initiated with students; forestry clubs, Rocky Mountain Youth Crop;
- Use crews from Rocky Mountain Youth Corp to help on CFR projects; a great way to introduce youth to stewardship as a management philosophy
- Create a job share/job training program with CFR projects to engage youth
- New Mexico Environmental Dept – Surface Water Quality – Contact: MaryAnn McGraw – has wetlands inventory; could help "ground truth" for statistical sampling
- Build collaborative relationship with Game & Fish, state and federal agencies and private landowners to reach common agreement on carrying capacity for large game herds –currently competing interests; in drought conditions herds are depleting water and vegetation quality
- Consider special designations as a "system of designations" rather than in a "pocket", i.e. isolated designations
- Think "out of the box" in terms of increasing capacity, i.e. Dept of Interior's 21st century Service Corp (attracting investors to help public agencies), American Eagle, Inc.
- Promote good conservation in active multiple use management
- Local communities need to break the traditional alternative approach to plan revision and offer a citizen's alternative
- At the Tierra Amarilla listening session, attendees briefly discussed the possibility of organizing themselves to bring a larger voice to the planning process
- How will the Forest Service integrate the needs of the local communities into an alternative?
- Don't wait for plan revision – start addressing the needs of the local residents now

- Congress created a mess; fix the things that are separating folks – NEPA, SHPO, Endangered Species Act
- Some listening session participants expressed the need for community members to be open to all viewpoints within their community during plan revision
- Explore ways to enhance the relationships with other state and federal agencies such as Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Create additional opportunities for face time.
- NRCS has established stakeholder connections and can be helpful in disseminating information. In addition, Forest Service staff can bring information to NRCS stakeholder meetings
- Improve communication with stakeholders. Stakeholders want to know who to contact for questions regarding recreation, timber, road closures. Follow through with communication by calling stakeholders back.
- Some participants appreciated the listening sessions; it provided a forum for community members to think about how their issues might be addressed and briefly discuss the need to organize in light of the role professional special interest groups have had in past planning processes.
- Rather than bringing in outside people, why not promote from within?
- FS people need to be better trained; need to better understand the local people
- Need follow-up on projects/decisions
- The FS could be partnering with Tribes – look for opportunities
- Coordinate planning efforts better with other agencies – federal and state
- Demonstrate – provide evidence that – comments matter
- Partner with oil/gas to offer educational tours
- Involve stakeholders in implementation
- Look to examples of successful collaborative efforts, such as South Jemez CFLRP, Sandia District of the Cibola NF
- Share data – other agencies and SH groups can provide
- Find ways to accommodate competing interests
- Develop education opportunities for schools
- Trails are an economic driver
- Help people understand the what and why
- Universities can play a role – NMSU and grazing on the Caldera
- Rangers and staff need to listen to the ranchers – good learning opportunities from local knowledge – go riding and learn on the ground
- Grazing can be integrated into management goals
- Could be prudent to put together a study about ranching in the area
- People need to understand the history and significance of grazing. Education and information are needed
- Local economies need to be held up
- Range staff need to be better educated
- Reach out to the universities
- Look at the economic impact on rural communities

Working Together

- Amigos Bravos: example of collaborative effort on Questa Ranger District to improve trail signage for OHV and hire enforcement officer to enforce road closures
- Columbine-Hondo – collaborative coalition to designate Columbine-Hondo as wilderness area but protect historic uses;
- Quivera Coalition – example of grasslands bank whereby ranchers were able to move cattle to grasslands bank in order to do restoration work on home permit. USFS participated initially;
- Fuels reduction program in Camino Real District – effective fuels thinning program
- Valle Vidal –an example of collaborative effort to protect the area from oil and gas development; subject lands were donated and incorporated into the Carson National Forest
- Fire Symposium – created an open dialogue between private landowners, federal and state agencies
- Rio Grande/Del Norte Coalition
- Northern New Mexico of Conservation Districts works closely with other agencies and private land owners.
- Relationships at the District level are good but there is no funding for thinning or fences
- Forest Service Washington Office is not taking into consideration the historical uses when they allocate funding
- NM State Forestry works with State and Private Forestry; Carson National Forest Service has a national perspective
- Forest is doing a good job spraying for invasive species
- State agencies such as New Mexico Fish & Wildlife included in planning process
- Grazing permittees depend on the land for their economic survival so they need to be stewards of the land; Trust is a concern
- The Forests have worked well with other parties during fires
- Face-to-face meetings are important – don't just send a letter
- Don't wait until a deadline to talk with Tribes
- Need message consistency
- Provide clear agendas
- Reach out to ranchers/farmers ahead of time
- Use all communication approaches, including mail and flyers (old school)
- Provide clear decision space
- Clarify the multiple use mandate
- A good website is important
- All lands all hands – what does that mean?
- Provide quality science and economic analysis
- Use a professional facilitator
- Partner for cultural resources
- Engage at the beginning
- Get involvement from own staff
- Good oil and gas relationships with Districts
- Leadership New Mexico

- Use knowledge of the staff, particularly to identify SHs
- Use people on the ground
- Look to successful examples – El Norte Monument
- Utilize Coops; e.g., energy/utility coops
- Develop a cross-border fire plan
- Let's have a productive conversation about the forest products industry
- Good relationships around prescribed fire
- Base decisions on facts
- Use the resources of existing groups (e.g., volunteers)
- We need an economic assessment
- We need real user data
- There is an OHV fund – FS has applied for grants
- Thinning and biomass have good economic potential – counties may be able to help
- Manage the contract, not the contractor – let locals help
- Some good work has been done around restoration
- Use local knowledge to help guide restoration projects
- Consider scientist-citizen dialogues
- Need to bring people together for a common vision of the Forest
- There is win-win potential in restoration and fire management
- Crisis communication is good (e.g., fire) Indian tribes feel relationship with Forest has been pretty good in the past – would like to have more face to face consultation then via emails or phone calls

Past Approaches that Affect or Enhance Relationships

- High turnover with Forest Service it's impossible to develop relationships. Many folks remember when they could walk into a district office and know exactly who to talk to – they had relationships. Not anymore.
- In the past, the Forest Service staff had the "attitude" needed to get projects completed
- In the past, each National Forest had an advisory committee with representatives from all the rural uses. Forests were accountable to the local communities. Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) prevents these types of committees from forming
- There is a perception that the FS hands are tied
- FS needs to follow through with projects
- Meetings have not been effective – develop mutually agreeable objectives, focus on what the Forest CAN do
- Are the rangers the decision makers?
- Parties and the Forest need to work together to shape expectations and options
- There have been communication breakdowns – information goes nowhere – people will go to only so many meetings
- Culture needs to be considered
- The FS needs to understand the impacts of its actions on local people
- Actions have been taken without reasons

- Public participation seems like a box checking exercise
- The Forest seems to have a direction in mind when it starts the process

Obstacles & Constraints to Public Participation & Collaboration

- Not starting from a point of trust or strong relationships with the public in general
- Perception that policies/decisions are driven from "top down" – not derived from local perspective – this perception inhibits community-based collaborative efforts
- Outstanding and unresolved issues for some stakeholders regarding Land Grant communities, Treaties, Planning Rule and Directives
- Lack of transparency – examples of inability to access forest budget or find out how priorities are determined or decisions made
- Perception that agency does not understand or respect local culture and customs, i.e. failure to recognize "rights" of acequia associations to manage and maintain ditch systems; need to adapt to culture and heritage of acequias
- History of inconsistency in interpretation and implementation of policies; one year fence repair has been considered "maintenance" and two years' later it is considered a "project" requiring archeological survey
- Concern that the Forest Service is implementing the 2012 Planning Rule when the directives have not be finalized
- Northern New Mexico Stockman's Association invested considerable time & effort in preparing formal & technical comments on the draft planning directives; no formal response was received. If the plan revision process is the same, it's a waste of time
- Past experiences with Forest Service planning efforts is they have not responded to the needs of the oppressed
- Collaboration only works when you do what the Forest Service wants
- Local views are different than the national perspective
- Plan revision process is received with skepticism; how will this be different than any other time?
- Some local stakeholders feel they do not have the advocacy skills that the professional organizations and groups bring to public meetings and this will hinder their ability to articulate their points
- Differences between Forest headquarters and District offices - disconnect
- Agencies are in conflict with one another – such as with minerals policy
- The Forest Plan is an obstacle to private land owner actions
- Need a smoother transition from one Ranger to another
- Avoid public process burnout
- It's confusing about where to get information
- Provide the why of actions/changes
- Forests are understaffed
- A lot of the budget goes to fire
- Poor communication and notification
- Information about roads does not get on the website
- The Forest seems to have its own agenda
- Organizational disconnects – District, SO, RO, WO

- There is a perception that "the Forest Service does not have the data, does not know who its customers are, but makes decisions"
- General public seems unaware – need to do a better job of reaching the public
- Carson has credibility problems with OHVers

Public Participation Suggestions

- Be very clear on "decision space"; explain how and when feedback to public's comments will be addressed
- Communication: often and candid; define the issues; be transparent and positive
- Accept Philmont Boys Camp offer to host a "meet and greet" for Forest to come out and talk about FPR with counselors and campers
- Red River Ski Area offered to assist with developing a survey that could be included with their guest surveys to reach out-of-state tourists; offered services of their guest services consultant
- Convene a public meeting in Red River on a Sunday in July – probably attract 300 attendees - mostly seasonal residents
- Reach out to local communities by going out to the communities and calling on local organizations to convene meetings, i.e. Taos Community Foundation, local governments in Questa, Las Vegas and Red River (offered specifically to help convene meetings); church groups; bingo nights; community groups that worked on CWPP and fire preparedness/coordination mtgs
- Post meeting notices in local newspapers, "Town Crier" (Red River), trailheads, Dixon/Taos Farmers Market, send to organization's email distribution lists to forward to members, i.e. summer assns., cattlemen's association, annual permittee/special use permittee mailings, NM OHV user assns..
- Access social media sites – Red River offered a link on their site
- Reach out to communities in Cimarron, Raton, Eagle Nest; Angel Fire, Mora
- Include resources such as the Haskell Report, " Social, Cultural, and Economic Aspects of Livestock Ranching on the Santa Fe and Carson National Forest" by McSweeney and Raish in Assessment Phase – demonstrate willingness to consider outside sources of info/data
- How forest approaches public is critical – approach from position of mutual respect
- Meetings on Saturdays
- Small groups are more conducive to everyone participating; some people hesitate to speak in large groups
- Respect and value people's time
- Don't have so many meeting people can't engage
- Make local community meetings a priority
- Forest Service should provide a facilitator to the local communities so they can organize themselves
- Forest Service should provide local communities with resources to hire attorneys to represent their interests during the plan revision process
- Planning process is very complex; it needs to be discussed in language everyone can understand
- Allocate enough time before a meeting so community members can receive the background information in advance, have time to review it and ask questions if needed
- Are there resources to pay stipends for travel costs if meetings are not held locally?

- Bring everyone to the table, not just the environmentalists who have more resources and a larger voice than local communities
- Chama Peak Land Alliance used an interactive online mapping tool that was very helpful; perhaps the Forest Service could use an interactive mapping tool during plan revision
- Be clear on how community members will be able to influence the plan
- Request direct responses to comments; not just put into bin categories
- Spanish translator at the meetings
- Northern New Mexico College – El Rito Campus offered meeting space
- Rural Events Center in Abiquiu is another meeting venue
- No morning meetings
- Communicate better
- Use local radio
- FPR literacy – language literacy
- Use local papers, e.g., Rio Grande Sun
- Groups/organizations as part of communication network
- Utilize the staff who live in the local communities – they are the face of the Forest
- Account for geography
- Use maps and photos
- Educate people about the Forest Plan
- FS needs to go to organizations' meetings
- Meetings should have clear objectives – the public wants to know their role and contributions
- Workshops/meetings should be well planned and targeted
- The process needs to match the outcome
- Clarify for each phase – the public's role/contribution
- FS needs to communicate what happens at the meetings

Recommended Resources to Review

1. Raish C, McSweeney AM 2003. Economic, social, and cultural aspects of livestock ranching on the Española and Canjilon Ranger Districts of the Santa Fe and Carson National Forests: a pilot study. General Technical Report RMRS-GTR-113. Fort Collins, CO: USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station. 89 pp. http://www.treesearch.fs.fed.us/pubs/5574
2. University of New Mexico will present a study on watershed findings in mid-May
3. Include resources such as the Haskell Report, " Social, Cultural, and Economic Aspects of Livestock Ranching on the Santa Fe and Carson National Forest" by McSweeney and Raish in Assessment Phase – demonstrate willingness to consider outside sources of info/data