Organizing For Effective Public Participation in Forest Planning
Santa Fe National Forest

Listening Sessions Summary

Prepared for the Santa Fe National Forest by the Forest Service National Collaboration Cadre Team
Susan Hansen
Carmine Lockwood
Sharon Timko
Gregg Walker

I. Introduction

In 2013 the Santa Fe and Carson 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 Santa Fe Forest Plan was adopted in 1989. 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 Santa Fe National Forest.

At the outset of the plan revision effort, the Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF), in partnership with the Carson 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 Santa Fe 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 forest employees, 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 will design and facilitate community workshops. The workshop emphasizes parties working together on organizing for public participation for forest plan revision. . The intent is 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. The Santa Fe National Forest "Organizing for Effective Public Participation" workshops occurred in March 2014, followed by a series of Assessment (Phase One of forest plan revision) meetings held in various communities throughout the Forest region.

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 Santa Fe and Carson National Forests. As a matter of convenience, the Santa Fe National Forest and Carson National Forest held joint listening sessions even though each Forest has a separate forest plan revision effort. The listening sessions took place at on 31 January, 01, 03, and 04 February. Sessions ranged between 90 minutes to 2.5 hours. 280 people participated in 27 listening sessions at 20 sites. Listening sessions were held at a variety of facilities, including fire stations, libraries, community centers, and Forest Service District offices.

Twenty- seven listening sessions were attended by stakeholders and community members only. 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. 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 Santa Fe National Forest's and Carson 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 team 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

Part One. Community and Tribal Sessions

As the Carson National Forest and Santa Fe National Forest Cadre team members have constructed, reviewed, and integrated the Listening Sessions notes, a number of themes and observations have emerged. Cadre members' notes from the listening sessions are attached as Appendix A. The following section is organized around these themes. The themes presented in this report, 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 Santa Fe National Forest

Throughout the listening sessions, participants expressed a willingness to work with the SFNF on planning efforts that were meaningful to them. People are motivated to participate and be involved but want their comments heard and contributions recognized. 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 SFNF, 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; 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
- South Jemez Collaborative Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) is a new modern example of genuine collaboration – there is ongoing communication and good advanced planning
- Many local businesses and permittees depend on the SFNF for economic viability. For example, during forest closures, tourism drops off and local business see a decline in revenue. Community leaders and business owners alike expressed the need and importance of working closely with the Forest staff to sustain local economies and cultures
- User groups like the Saddle Club work directly with SFNF staff on agreed upon projects. The Saddle Club has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the SFNF; every year they get together with SFNF to develop a plan to help with erosion issues on trails

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, most listening session participants appreciated the opportunity to be engaged at the very beginning of the plan revision process and help design it. Many

people indicated their willingness to participate in working groups because they feel it has the potential for more meaningful work than comments recorded on a flipchart. Some people commented on the challenge keeping the average person engaged throughout a multi-year planning process; they suggested providing interesting and helpful SFNF information at the beginning of each meeting (e.g., Things to do on the Forest).

It was suggested that SFNF staff 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 – the successes, such as South Jemez CFLRP, the Santa Fe Watershed Association. Recognize the contributions of parties and staff. Publicize and celebrate the successes. 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, Pecos Business Alliance.

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 Santa Fe National Forest run the range of very strong (e.g., with watershed councils) to very tenuous (e.g., some Off-highway vehicle—OHV—groups). Some citizens and stakeholder organizations do not trust the Santa Fe Forest staff 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 & Observations

- There is an inability to build and maintain good relationships between communities and the Forest because of staff turnover, employees not residing or "vested" within communities as a result of "zoned staffing patterns", reduction in face time with agency staff at all levels, i.e., the Regional Forester, the Forest Supervisor and the Ranger District staff, and a lack of resources to get local on-the-ground projects completed in a timely manner
- Many people are frustrated with the lack of SFNF's responsiveness
- Many people feel the SFNF is starting plan revision from a low point of trust and weak relationships with the public
- Some Tribes feel relationships with Forest has been pretty good in the past – would like to have more face-to-face consultation than via emails or phone calls

- Explore ways to enhance the relationships with other state and federal agencies such as Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) that have strong relationships and trust with local community groups and members. Create additional opportunities for face time
- The Los Alamos office needs to be staffed – doing so would improve communication and trust
- The SFNF has major credibility problems with the off highway vehicle (OHV) community. OHV organizations don't want to sue but have no other option

Opportunity

As noted earlier in this report, Tribes, stakeholders, and other government organizations want to work with northern New Mexico Forests. 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 needs to build and sustain trust through their actions.

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) Stakeholders want to clearly understand the process and their role, the decision space they have to influence and how their comments/contributions will be addressed

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

Sample Statements

- There is a perception that "the Forest Service does not have the data, does not know who its customers are, but makes decisions"
- There have been communication breakdowns – information goes nowhere – people will go to only so many meetings
- Concern that inviting public participation is nothing more than an exercise to "check off the box"
- More accountability is needed; public comments seem to go into a "black hole"
- 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 SFNF; what is the latitude; how much can we influence – this is not just about planning and NEPA review but also in regards to project implementation

- Be very clear on the purpose of meetings and information you are asking stakeholders to provide. Send background information out in advance so people have review time
- 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 SFNF staff help people understand the importance of the plan revision -"Why should I care". People want the SFNF to explain the "why" and make it relevant. It was suggested that SFNF 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) <u>Create safe opportunities for shared learning among diverse stakeholders</u>

A few listening sessions were attended primarily by people with similar interests and concerns. 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, motorized recreation enthusiasts wanted to talk about roads, 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 mandates, many did not seem aware of the complexity of forest management. That being said, there were moments in other listening sessions when people with diverse interests shared insights on the complexity of the process and issues facing the Forest and communities.

Sample Statements and Observations

- Public perception that Forest deems it easier to close roads/trails/campgrounds then to maintain them. The Forest "ratchets down" facilities when conditions warrant doing so, but fail to "ratchet up" when conditions improve
- 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
- During one session comprised of diverse stakeholders, the forest plan revision process discussion elicited a range of options from topic specific meetings to local community meetings focused on issues important to the community; several participants commented on the complexity of the forest plan revision process
- At another session, local community members heard from their neighbors who held different views of grazing on public lands; one community member acknowledged the importance of

listening and understanding all the viewpoints in the community even though at times we may disagree

- The SFNF is part of the whole; what they choose to do impacts others
- Travel Management planning was a harsh experience – public dialogue was a "fight"
- Question and answer sessions at public meetings have been passionate and heated where people in the audience argue amongst themselves; control the meetings

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).

Many people commented on the value of photographs to illustrate the complexity of forest management. Photos can be used in public meetings and workshops to help convey the changing landscape. There also might be an opportunity for a youth project in updating archived photographs.

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.

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

It is important to note that several issues raised about public land grazing and by the ranching community are beyond the scope of forest plan revision. The Forest would greatly benefit from clear messaging on those concerns from the Regional and Washington Offices to help them keep public participation focused on the appropriate decision space.

5) ***<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

- 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, environmental groups to offer educational tours
- Help people understand the "what" and "why" of forest plan revision; provide background information
- Increase educational and outreach opportunities as foundations for successful collaboration
- Public has already invested time in the development of city, county, state and Tribal plans; these plans need to be integrated into the revision process; SFNF has to be proactive in obtaining these plans
- Users can play an active role if they understand the process; they can help educate others especially people within their organizations
- Work with school and community youth organizations, i.e. Rocky Mountain Youth Corps, to educate and engage youth in forest plan revision
- Provide education and interpretation – develop an APP for this

Opportunity

The 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 Santa Fe National Forest staff can serve as speakers at meetings of stakeholder and community organizations (e.g., Back Country Horsemen, Rotary Club, United Communities of Santa Fe County, Acequia Associations, Pecos Business Alliance, and County Governments). 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

6) <u>Culture, history, and place attachments run deep in northern New Mexico</u>

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

- Socio-economic impacts of current Forest policy and management decisions are strangling local rural economies and cultures, i.e. timber mills closing, local businesses shutting down in rural communities due to campground/trail closures, reduced opportunities for firewood sales, cuts in grazing allotments.

- People need education and information to understand the history and significance of grazing, timber, acequia associations
- People need to be better trained; need to better understand the local people. Rather than bringing in outside people, why not promote from within?
- 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

Incorporate 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). Provide 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) about local culture and its relationship to the forest landscape. Build stronger relationships with cultural and historical institutions, such as the acequia associations.

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 Santa Fe National Forest communicates with stakeholders well at times and on specific projects (e.g., the South Jemez CLFRP) 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

- Communicate with local communities/business alliances when planning campground/road closures and explaining the reasons for closure before closures occur; provide public notice in local newspapers, radio announcements
- 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
- Communication could be better – process begins with gusto and then fizzles out
- Make information accessible and easy to find, the Valle Caldera Reserve is a good example

Opportunity

Stakeholders look to Forest to model and practice effective and consistent communication. The Santa Fe National Forest should invest in community 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. Arizona Fish and Game staff indicated they have "standing orders" to go talk to people and be proactive; many live in the communities they work in.

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, recorded by hand, 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.

- Concerns about the safety of the drinking water near Nacimiento Copper Mine Need access to firewood for personal use
- Reduce elk herd; others say it's not a problem. They "don't see a lot of elk".
- Some feel the elk are sustained by work on private lands
- Economic downturn and decrease in Federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) payments
- Catastrophic fires
- There are varying viewpoints about livestock grazing on Forest Service lands. Some view it as a source of revenue for a few local residents and others see it as a historical right.
- High Forest Service turnover makes it difficult to develop relationships
- Many people are frustrated with the lack of Forest Service responsiveness
- Forest is overregulated and understaffed
- Give the Forest Service land back to the people
- Navajo Nations requires access to traditional areas on Forest Service
- Navajo Nation Torreon/Star Lake Chapter needs firewood for elders
- Forest Service makes decisions about allotments before having a conversation with the permittee. They know they want a 20% reduction so they'll say there has to be a 65% so the 20% reductions will seem feasible.
- 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
- Communities are dying; Coyote Elementary School closed due to low enrollment
- Forest Service staff have a liberal viewpoint
- Formal consultations are important and should be continuous
- Interaction needs to occur between Tribes' natural resources staff and NF staff (some already does occur)
- Tribal consultations should occur in February or March, after the transition to new leadership

- Grazing is having a harmful impact on Tribes, desecrating springs, villages, sacred sites
- Consultations should be more than just a checkmark
- Roads – Tribes need to be consulted directly
- Tribes need fast and feasible access to deal with fire
- Tribes are concerned with economic development
- Poaching is a problem – work with Tribes, give authority
- Travel management was a mess – misinformation at all levels
- 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
- SFNF is an unhealthy forest
- Socio-economic impacts of current Forest policy and management decisions are strangling local rural economies and cultures, i.e. timber mills closing, local businesses shutting down in rural communities due to campground/trail closures, reduced opportunities for firewood sales, cuts in grazing allotments
- Public perception that Forest deems it easier to close roads/trails/campgrounds then to maintain them. Forest "ratchets down" facilities when conditions warrant but fail to "ratchet up" when conditions improve. On occasion the Forest has permanently closed facilities once they have been temporarily closed for a period of time.
- Low trust level with public due to history of ineffective communication, 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
- 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
- Inability to build and maintain good relationships between communities and the Forest because of staff turnover, employees not residing or "vested" within communities as a result of "zoned staffing patterns", reduction in face time with agency staff 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
- Lack of knowledge of and respect for traditional cultures and uses, i.e. cutting firewood, grazing
- Increasing problem of law enforcement agents' insensitivity towards local cultures/heritage, i.e. example of 4th generation native being asked for a "green card"

Possibilities

- 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 such as 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.
- Possible management transfer of the Valles Caldera National Preserve to the Forest Service in 2018
- Job training and employment opportunities for youth. How will these FPR sessions be different?
- Rather than bringing in outside people, why not promote from within?
- 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 SHs in implementation
- Take this approach – data—information—comment—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
- Approach FPR from 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 with more rules and regulations. Current system is mired in bureaucracy.
- Provide orientation for new agency personnel on local history and culture and increase sensitivity to local custom and culture throughout the agency

- Legalize the removal of small products without requiring a commercial permit, i.e. firewood for families
- Increase education opportunities and community outreach as foundations for successful collaboration
- Schedule regular on site visits with the Indian Pueblos for face to face consultations
- Prioritize a list of local on-the-ground needs, i.e. fuels reduction, and get NEPA clearance to be able to access funding opportunities with other state/federal partners, i.e. State Forestry, NRCS
- Communicate with local communities/business alliances when planning campground/road closures and explaining the reasons for closure before closures occur; public notice in local newspapers, radio announcements
- Open forests to Christmas tree cutting as a means of reducing fuel loads
- Take a more holistic approach to grazing practices/allotments – not such drastic cuts; stockmen would favor peer review of best science
- Work with community youth organizations to engage youth in FPR

Working Together

- Navajo Nation Torreon/Star Lake Chapter has good working with relationships with Cuba District Ranger staff
- Environmentalists shouldn't be treated as the enemy
- 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
- MOUs are useful
- The Cuba RD participates in community meetings
- Need message consistency
- Provide clear agendas
- Reach out to ranchers/farmers ahead of time
- Use all communication approaches, including mail and flyers (old school)
- SF website is good but needs to be updated regularly
- Provide clear decision space
- SF – good relationship with SF watershed associations
- Clarify the multiple use mandate
- A good website is important
- SH groups have worked well with the Districts, not as well with the SO
- South Jemez CFLRP a good example – has a good website and good advanced planning
- 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)
- SFNF gave good tours on fuels mitigation
- 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
- SW Jemez CLFRP has been effective in diffusing conflict and has resulted in effective thinning programs for fuel reduction
- Saddle Club (Espanola?) has an MOU with the SFNF; every year they get together with SFNF to develop a plan to help with erosion issues on trails
- Camino Real Ranger District (Carson Nat'l Forest) cited as good example of working with community to "chip away" at fuels program

Past Approaches that Affect or Enhance Relationships

- Navajo Nation Torreon/Star Lake Chapter recommends working with their Community Land Use Planning Committee
- Forest Supervisor Maria Garcia came out to the Navajo Nation Torreon/Star Lake Chapter
- Good email communication with SO Tribal Liaison
- Navajo Nation Torreon/Star Lake Chapter representative and Santa Fe NF District Ranger Allan Setzer used field trips to discuss various issues Rangers come and go
- Staff (particularly line officer) turnover is a concern
- There is a perception that Tribes are just tolerated – they need to be respected
- Travel management – motorized groups do not have a good relationship with the SF

- Travel management – a lot of meetings were held but the Forest seemed to do what it wanted.
- There is confusion about what SHs can influence
- Forests are understaffed
- Carson is more about what is possible – we can work this out; Santa Fe is more about "no we can't"
- Travel management was a disaster
- Need to explain decision why something has been done
- Communication could be better – process begins with gusto and then fizzles out
- Where is the follow through?
- How are ideas and comments considered?
- 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

- Maintain equal representation of all viewpoints. Everyone's voice carries the same weight. During travel management public meetings, many felt that professional associations/groups had people who were paid to attend while it was difficult for others to take off from work
- 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
- Some local grazing permittees expressed frustrations that they are being "compromised out of a living"
- Many stakeholders will not attend if they do not feel safe; stakeholders are deeply passionate about public land use and meetings can get tense; Trust is a concern
- Differences between Forest headquarters and District offices - disconnect
- Staff support – the Jemez RD needs a fish person
- 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
- Los Alamos office needs to be staffed
- The Forest seems to have its own agenda
- Organizational disconnects – District, SO, RO, WO
- There is a perception that "the Forest Service foes 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 and Santa Fe have major credibility problems with off OHVers
- OHVers want to volunteer but are ignored
- Not starting from a point of trust or strong relationships with the public in general
- Perception that policies are driven from top down – not derived from local perspective
- Lack of transparency, i.e. example of inability to see the forest budget – Regional office told citizen the District Ranger could show him the budget, District Ranger said he did not have one – raises the question: "what are you hiding?"
- Outstanding and unresolved issues for some stakeholders regarding Land Grant communities, Treaties, Planning Rule and Directive

Public Participation Suggestions

- Have a Navajo language translator to present Forest Service information to the Land Use Planning Committee (Cibola NF might have or know of Navajo translators)
- Email is a good way to communicate Navajo Nation Torreon/Star Lake Chapter
- Create a safe space for all viewpoints. Not everyone is comfortable with conflict at meetings
- Provide opportunities for written responses especially for those who do not want to speak in front of large groups
- Notify folks about upcoming meetings through email and flyers at grocery stores, post office and gas stations
- Use a consistent format and planning symbol for all plan revision information and documents that is easily identifiable and will alert folks quickly to the purpose
- Mail post cards with meeting information (include planning symbol)
- 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.
- Cuba is a good location for meetings; community very active and involved
- People prefer weekday evening meetings
- Some people advocated for inviting Congressional representatives to meetings while others felt it was a distraction from the work at hand because they become the focal point. One suggestion was to bring all the congressional representatives together for a separate meeting.
- Many of the Forest stakeholders live in Albuquerque; hold more meetings there
- Some participants favored a topic based approach to meetings while others advocated for a discussion of issues that interact with each other – one issue affects the other
- Occasionally have a meeting on cumulative topics; ask stakeholders at meetings what topics could be discussed together

- Meetings should build off each other and make progress
- Need a strong facilitator to keep everyone on task; less group frustration
- Form ongoing work groups to allow for meaningful input; move beyond the recording of comments on flipcharts
- Supervisor Office and local district staff need to be present at all meeting – they need to "hear and feel"
- A PA system is needed for all meetings
- Send out existing forest plan or link to existing forest plan – "Can't know where you are going to you know where you've been".
- Add all permittees and outfitters to mailing list
- 6 PM is too early for evening meetings; people are still returning from long commutes so 7 PM works better
- Explain existing plan; help education people about the current plan so they can make informed decisions regarding the new plan Be sensitive to timing of scheduling meetings with tribes so as not to conflict with their annual reorganization or other annual tribal events
- Educate the public to understand why becoming engaged in the FPR process matters to them
- Be open to listen to people that have experience and knowledge
- Use information and data from other resources, i.e. New Mexican Range Improvement Task Force; NM Highland University; USGS "liDAR" system for forecasting flood conditions
- Provide informational/educational flyers about FPR in annual mailing to grazing permittees, special use permittees, woodcutting permittees, etc.
- Develop a strategy to address on-the-ground issues that may arise at the workshop or other FPR meetings/programs
- Reach out to local communities and organizations, i.e. Pecos Watershed Alliance, Santa Fe County Commissioners
- Communicate directly with Governors and Tribal Councils
- Engage/consult before the work begins
- Rural people need to be involved
- Stay on a schedule – provide milestones or benchmarks
- Provide a process that is transparent and accessible
- Use local people and local networks
- Communicate regularly – keep people informed
- Provide user friendly information on the Planning Rule
- Communication with interest groups and agencies should be available for people to see
- Make information accessible and easy to find, the Valle Caldera Reserve is a good example
- Provide interactive maps
- Include outreach and education activities, e.g., in Albuquerque
- Try to reach younger groups
- Communicate better
- Use local radio
- FPR literacy – language literacy
- Use local papers, e.g., Rio Grande Sun

- Use local organizations, such as the Tesuque Community Assn
- Communicate regulations – what is possible – manage uncertainty – be consistent
- Venues should be personal, accessible, comfortable
- Use "Meet Up" websites
- Highway "light up" boards
- 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
- What role for colleges and universities?
- Provide education and interpretation – develop an APP for this
- Provide a graphic of FPR basic steps – an accessible, understandable road map
- Clarify for each phase – the public's role/contribution
- The process needs to match the outcome
- The right people need to be at the table
- FS needs to communicate what happens at the meetings
- Need clear decision space, transparency, and accountability
- Sandia RD has done a good job of engaging users
- Keep people regularly informed and engaged
- Meetings should have clear objectives – the public wants to know their role and contributions
- Workshops/meetings should be well planned and targeted
- Use schools – K through 12 – for education and outreach
- During some listening sessions, people commented on the complexity of the forest plan revision process and issues to be addressed. Allow time at each meeting to educate the public regarding different aspects of the planning process and existing plan.
- Continue to include stakeholders in adapting the planning process as the Forest goes forward. It might be as simple as asking or using a handout at the end of public meetings to get feedback on the process and communication methods used.
- During the listening sessions many issues and concerns were raised that were outside the scope of forest plan revision. To be efficient and effective with all stakeholders' time and energy, consistent messaging is needed to focus the meetings on the forest plan revision decision space.
- Encourage associations and organizations to pass information on their membership
- Many local stakeholders commute considerable distances to work. Meetings should start at 7 pm to allow for the commute time.
- Forest Service staff need to go to community meetings to present information, e.g. homeowners meetings and Tribal Chapter House meetings
- Deer Lake consists mostly of summer homes; their annual meeting is in March in Albuquerque
- Recreation community boards at trailheads are a good location for meeting notices
- Campground hosts could distribute information about forest plan revision and meeting announcements

- Travel Management had a one day blitz where all Forest employees distributed travel management proposed maps to the public. A similar strategy might be useful for plan revision.
- Cuba newspaper – once a month publication; everyone reads
- County fair both – first weekend in August in Cuba
- Cuba Fiesta (?) in mid-September is another opportunity for getting information out regarding plan revision
- Incorporate forest plan revision information into fire prevention material
- Check all permit and fee lists to incorporate those names and contact information into plan revision master list
- Provide for electronic input on Forest website
- Consider approaching the schools in the rural areas to see if the Forest can get information sent home with the children.
- Timber meetings twice a year