



Statements from Public Participation Meetings

The Carson National Forest is in the process of revising its existing forest plan. The current plan was written in 1986 and has been amended 16 times. The plan revision process consists of three phases – assessment, plan revision, and implementation and monitoring. The Carson is in the assessment phase in which current ecological, social, and economic conditions are identified and evaluated to determine if they will be sustainable into the future based current plan management actions. Areas considered at risk for not being sustainable are identified as potential items which “need to change” in the management plan. These “need to change” items are the starting point of the development of the draft proposed plan in the phase two.

An important part of the assessment development is to gather local and scientific knowledge. To gather local knowledge, the Carson reached out to individuals, communities, and organizations around the forest. From June 02 – 28, the Carson National Forest held meetings in 14 communities. Meetings were held in Penasco, Truchas, Espanola, El Rito, Canjilon, Tres Piedras, La Jara CO., Taos, Questa, Red River, Taos Ski Valley, Bloomfield, Angel Fire, and Cimarron (see figure 1). The locations were selected to maximize the largest representation of individual and community voices. The purpose was to understand how individuals and communities value and use the Carson. The attendees were asked 3 questions:

1. How is the Carson National Forest important to you and why?
2. What changes have you seen on the Carson National Forest?
3. How do you hope the forest will serve future generations?

In this report we tried to organize and capture the statement and feelings of the attendees based on their written responses. In certain cases important statements were made in the course of the meetings, which were not written, which we also tried to capture.

Comments from the attendees were separated in 13 categories:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Access | Nature |
| Appreciation | Partnership |
| Climate Change | Recreation |
| Communication | Regulation |
| Cultural | Site-Specific |
| Economic | Water |
| Fire | |

The report is broken into two sections. Section one is a summary of what was heard by category, and section two contains a compilation of the statements provided by the attendees. Not every comment is included in the report, as many of the comments were similar in thought. We attempted to provide each unique thought, both positive and negative in the report. For many topics, people's feelings were similar in diverse meeting locations. However there were also some local issues we tried to capture. The report provides a tremendous perspective of how users of the Carson National Forest value the forest, how they use the forest, how they understand forest service management, and how they see the forest of the future.

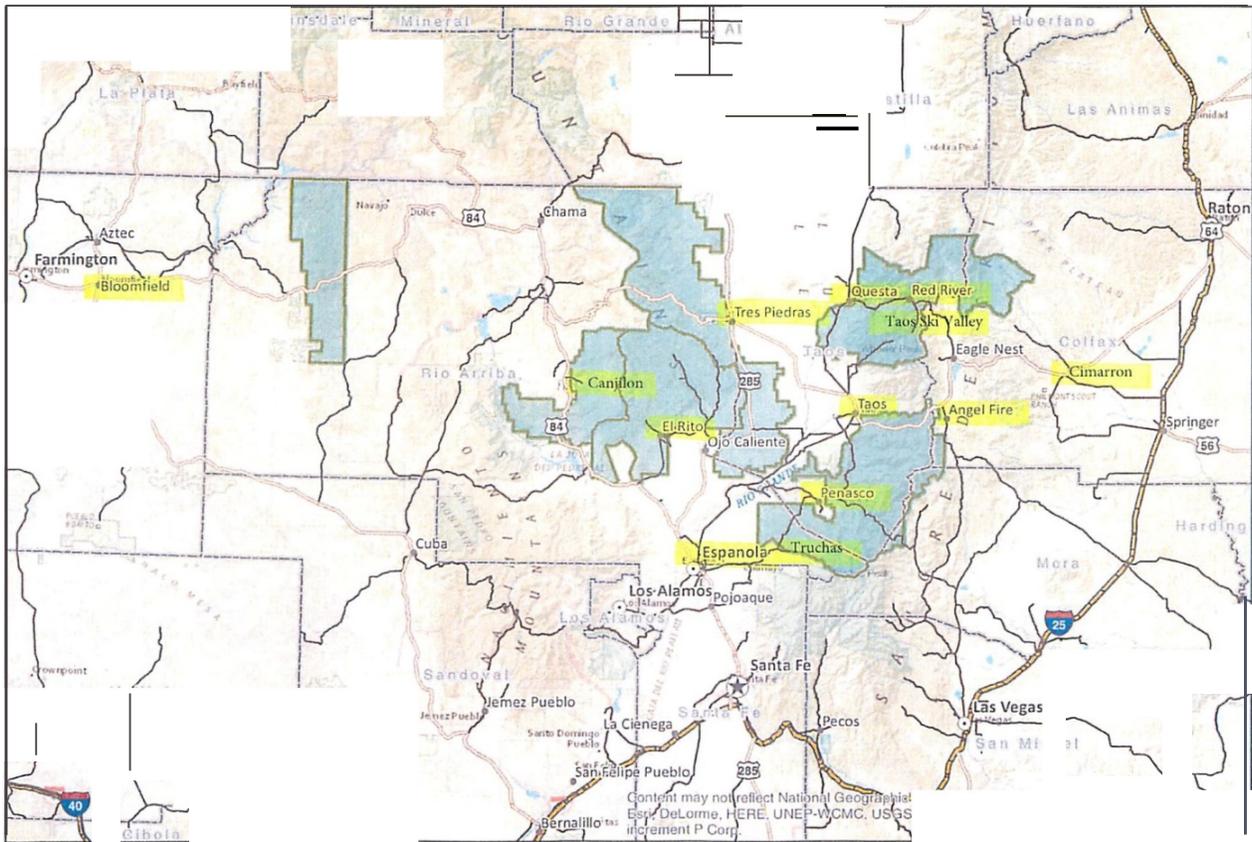


Figure 1: Map of communities where public meetings were held around the Carson National Forest

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES

ACCESS

Both roads and non-motorized trails were discussed, from the perspectives of maintaining access as well as factors that contribute to the degradation of the forest:

- Road maintenance and signage, closures -- Many attendees talked about the poor condition of many roads and signage, due to inadequate funding and the resultant limitation of Forest Service personnel. There was some concern that the Forest Service uses road closures as a means of foregoing the expense of maintenance or as a means of deliberately reducing human traffic. Other attendees were pleased that road closures protect sensitive areas.
- ORV usage -- A few attendees expressed a desire for additional ORV access, especially where people's pedestrian mobility was impaired. These and other attendees recognized the need for a balanced use of the forest, to maintain areas where quiet and solitude prevail. A number of attendees expressed concern about degradation in the forest from ORVs and about issues of compatibility between motorized travel and the solitude that many seek on the forest.
- Non-Motorized Trails -- The issues expressed regarding trail maintenance and signage were similar to those expressed about roads: people seeking alternate off-trail routes, and thereby contributing to degradation of the trails, erosion and destruction of vegetation. Attendees mentioned specific areas and a general desire to see an increased number of trails for non-motorized and multiuse recreation.

APPRECIATION

Attendees expressed appreciation of the forest for its cultural, natural, aesthetic and spiritual qualities. Some people appreciate the opportunity to go to the forest to engage in recreational and economic activities. Many people go to the forest for its peacefulness and quiet. With its quiet, solitude, and natural beauty the forest offers an enjoyable respite for local residents as well as visitors. For many families and communities, the forest provides a chance to share and bond with each other.

CLIMATE CHANGE

In almost every meeting, attendees expressed strong concerns about the impact of climate change and how the changing environmental conditions will impact the forest, its health and that of communities that rely on the forest. Along with the concern about the increase of drought conditions and consequent decrease in water availability, many were concerned about the changing overall health of the forest as temperatures climb. Those who rely on the forest watershed were concerned about the availability of future water supplies for humans, forest animals and fish, as well as the impact of diminishing water supply on economic activities.

COMMUNICATION

Many attendees expressed views regarding communication with the Carson National Forest. Participants in many of the meetings brought up the importance of educating citizens—especially young people and visitors to the forest—in the importance of understanding and maintaining the forest.

- Communication with citizens -- A number of persons expressed frustration at what they felt has been poor communication between the Forest Service and the individuals and communities using the forest.
- Current Forest Management Plan/Planning process -- While criticizing the nature of communication with the Carson in the past, a number of attendees said or wrote that they appreciate the current Forest Management planning effort. Others expressed concern about the transparency of the process and its outcome.
- Education -- Attendees noted the need to educate young people to appreciate the forest as cultural heritage as well as a valuable resource, the need to educate visitors in how to treat the forest with respect, and the need for education in the ecosystem of the forest.

CULTURAL/HISTORICAL/TRADITIONAL USES

- Land Grants and Land ownership -- In some communities, cultural/historical uses were viewed by some through the background of historical land ownership. Some strongly expressed the view that major areas of the Carson National Forest were originally land grant community properties they felt should remain under the control of their communities.
- Traditional Uses -- The forest traditionally has provided—and continues to provide—material sustenance in a number of areas, separate from strictly economic activity. These include: cutting firewood or harvesting lumber or vigas, grazing, hunting and fishing, collecting medicinal herbs, and diversions for acequias.

ECONOMIC:

Many participants said they are concerned that economic activity be sustainable, not only to maintain the vitality for families and communities, but also for the long-term health of the forest. Several attendees noted changing emphases of economic activity, to more recreational uses.

- Animal husbandry -- Many permittees engage in ranching—grazing sheep, cattle or horses as a full-time activity—as their livelihood. For others, grazing of a few animals supplements their work income or serves as additional food supply for their families. There is concern about changes in Forest Service policies they feel reduce the amount of grazing. Attendees noted some negative impacts in the forest from grazing activities, such as decrease of riparian habitat or introduction of invasive species of plants and insects.
- Extraction of forest materials -- Harvesting of forest resources can also be a strictly economic activity, in addition to traditional forest uses. Extraction uses include:
 - Wood products – Lumber and firewood harvesting.
 - Mining – Most of those who commented about mining felt it contributed to the degradation of the forest.
 - Oil and gas – In general those who commented about oil and gas (except in Bloomfield) expressed concern about the negative impacts to the water table and the forest.
- Recreation -- Recreational activities in the forest provide economic benefits for nearby communities. Visitor expenditures include supplies, lodging, dining, equipment or equestrian rental, and guiding services.

FIRE:

Attendees indicated that fire in the forest has both destructive and constructive impacts. In addition to loss of trees and vegetation and destruction of residences and work, fire can help in keeping the forest healthy by clearing brush and small and dead trees. Many people were concerned about an increase in uncontrolled wildfires. While acknowledging the benefits of controlled burns, several noted the danger from improperly managed burns. Others said that thinning or grazing are useful in reducing the amount of fuels and resultant fire danger.

NATURE:

Attendees expressed a wide range of views regarding nature, ecology and wild areas.

- Value of Wild Areas -- Many attendees place a value on wild areas not only for their intrinsic value but also for biodiversity and places where young people can learn important values
- Animal Species -- Attendees noted the decrease of a number of indigenous species, as well as loss of habitat. The increase in the elk population was noted as problem in many areas
- Insects and Invasive Species -- Attendees noted the impact on trees from drought and insects. Attendees noted the increase in invasive plants and the resultant negative effects.

PARTNERSHIP

In every meeting, attendees addressed partnerships, expressing an understanding that the Forest Service does not have the personnel or funding to completely maintain the forest. Some suggested that partnerships will be needed even more in the future. Partnership opportunities included: infrastructure maintenance, harvesting small-diameter trees to reduce fire risk, education, and monitoring for damage and illegal activity.

In several cases, some attendees said existing partnerships had improved and described successful partnerships. Some fulltime permittees said the lack of adequate funding forced them into reluctant partnerships to maintain their existing infrastructure; when Forest Service maintenance was not forthcoming, they went ahead and made the needed repairs.

RECREATION

Attendees expressed their appreciation of recreation in the forest. A number of types of recreation were discussed. Some attendees felt that some of these uses should be separated.

- Biking, Hiking, and Equestrian -- Hiking, biking, and horseback riding users were found in almost every area of the Carson. However, equestrian use raised some objections to odor and manure.
- Motorized Vehicles -- Most meetings included some recreational vehicular users. They typically wanted designated areas for ORVs. While they recognized the need for separate quiet and natural areas, they also wanted some access to those areas. Some non-vehicular users expressed concerns about ORVs in the forest.
- Hunting and Fishing -- Attendees appreciate the hunting and fishing available. Some grew up hunting and fishing in the Carson.
- Camping -- Attendees enjoy camping in the Carson, with concerns expressed about maintenance, policing and trash.
- Skiing -- Attendees enjoy ski areas in the Carson—both downhill and cross country.

REGULATION AND MANAGEMENT:

Attendees used the opportunity afforded by the planning meetings to express many opinions regarding regulations and enforcement, maintenance, and management priorities in the Carson.

- Need for regulation and enforcement -- Attendees expressed concern that the existing rules and regulations are not being enforced, at least in part due to budgetary constraints experienced by the Forest Service. Concerns included the growing problem of trash and litter in the forest, along with illegal wood harvesting.
- Too many rules -- A number of attendees complained about an increase in the number and enforcement of rules and regulations.
- Enforcement priorities -- A number of participants said that they were concerned about selective enforcement of rules and regulations, and also focus on matters not directly related to the forest.
- Forest management -- Attendees spoke about the need to manage the forest sustainably—or even regeneratively. People mentioned increased usage, budgetary constraints and—for some—an overemphasis on endangered species and fear of decision making.
- Infrastructure -- Attendees expressed concern about the decline in infrastructure maintenance, and the desire that maintenance and development receive higher priority in Forest Service decision making.

WATER AND WATERSHED:

The Carson was viewed as an important source of water, not only for the local areas but statewide as well. Attendees discussed the need to protect watersheds from drought, gas/oil development and pollution. Water uses discussed included domestic consumption, irrigation, grazing, recreation and support for wildlife.

COMPILATION OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES

During the month of June the Carson National Forest (CNF) held 14 public assessment meetings, which were conducted by professional contract facilitators. The intent was to find out how people use the Forest. We asked three questions:

- 1) How is the Carson National Forest important to you and why?
- 2) What changes have you seen on the Carson National Forest?
- 3) How do you hope the forest will serve future generations?

We asked attendees to form smaller groups, write answers to the questions, then discuss them in their group. Then we reconvened the groups and had further discussion. Based on review of the evaluations submitted at the end of each meeting, we can say that people enjoyed the meetings, and most importantly, felt they were heard by Forest Service staff.

In this summary we tried to capture the statements and feelings of the attendees based on their written responses. In certain cases, we also included the sense of important comments that were made in the course of the meetings, but were not submitted in writing.

Comments from attendees are included in italics and separated by bullets--

- ◆ *Comments look like this.[Bracketed words are editorial clarifications]*

For many topics, people's written comments were similar, despite the diversity of meeting locations. In addition, we tried to identify some issues unique to specific locales.

We appreciate the thoughtful discussion of everyone who attended the meetings.

Comments from the attendees at the 14 meetings were sorted into these categories:

Access	Nature
Appreciation	Partnership
Climate change	Recreation
Communication	Regulation
Cultural	Site-specific
Economic	Water
Fire	

ACCESS

Two separate area of access were discussed, from the perspectives of maintaining access as well as factors that contribute to the degradation of the forest:

- A. Roads
- B. Non-motorized trails.

A. Roads

Several aspects of roads were discussed. These included:

1. Maintenance of roads and signage
2. Closures and inadequate closures
3. Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Usage

1. Maintenance and signage

Many attendees talked about the poor condition of many roads, due to inadequate funding and the resultant limitation of Forest Service personnel to keep roads in good condition. They said this caused increased erosion, as well as limiting access for permittees and recreational users. In a few locations, attendees felt roads had

improved, as a result of partnership with permittees. In some areas permittees took it upon themselves to maintain roads and other infrastructure (e.g., stock tanks, fences).

Attendees also expressed concern about inadequate signage. The signs were either removed through vandalism, or were unclear to begin with. This is a particular concern to recreational users.

- ◆ *Less maintenance of road (road closures), culverts, water going all over road damaging.*
- ◆ *Erosion may be serious issue due to road and trail construction, as well as cattle grazing, and should be controlled.*
- ◆ *[There are] Not enough resources to maintain roads*
- ◆ *[I see] Maintenance of parking areas to trails but not to the roads that lead to them*
- ◆ *Improve signage – enforcement of correct public use*
- ◆ *[I'd like] More highway pullouts with interpretive signage.*
- ◆ *[I'd like the forest areas to] Continue to be undeveloped, without signs and paved roads and visitor center. These amenities encourage more people to come and enjoy the land, but for those of us who crave wilder places, it is our loss.*

2. Closures

Some attendees mentioned specific closed roads that they wished to see reopened for recreational or other uses. There was some concern that the Forest Service uses road closures as a means of foregoing the expense of maintenance or as a means of deliberately reducing human traffic. Other attendees were pleased that road closures protect sensitive areas.

- ◆ *[I've seen] Road and trail closure, rather than maintenance and enforcement*
- ◆ *The roads need to remain open for fire protection of the communities within the forest.*
- ◆ *Travel Management Rule (TMR) creating “de facto” wilderness areas via road closures.*
- ◆ *Honestly, the entire process of travel management for example was clearly designed to severely cut down human access to the forest, by everyone, not just motorized travelers. In places, bicyclists and horseback users are also being shut off. How can an inaccessible forest be managed well? Or at all? Who benefits by closures?*
- ◆ *Some old roads have been closed off*

But

- ◆ *Close off access roads for habitat improvement – positive*
- ◆ *If the Forest closes a road, keep it closed.*

3. Off Road Vehicle (ORV) Usage

A few attendees expressed a desire for additional ORV access, especially where people's pedestrian mobility was impaired. These and other attendees recognized the need for a balanced use of the forest, to maintain areas where quiet and solitude prevail.

- ◆ *The development of a larger motorized trail system is most important to me.*
- ◆ *Make parts of forest more easily accessible to families with children, elderly, handicapped.*
- ◆ *Improve motorized trail system to isolate from other uses by getting input from motorcycle riders on design of trail systems.*
- ◆ *Serve future generations as it does now – preserve motorized trail use.*
- ◆ *It's a place to ride my motorcycle and a place to get away from everything.*

A number of attendees expressed concern about degradation in the forest from ORVs and issues of compatibility between motorized travel and the solitude that many seek on the forest.

- ◆ *In the past forty years I have watched my primary access to the Wheeler [Peak area] go from your grandfather in a Willys [Jeep] drive up one switch back and backing up the next, to 3-wheelers, dirt bikes and four-wheelers tearing up the forest floor and grasses.*
- ◆ *To some degree more unauthorized off road vehicles are damaging the forest and creating erosion.*
- ◆ *Erosion is affecting pastures below.*
- ◆ *It's become more crowded and noisy with ATVs in summer and snow mobiles in winter – seems like you have to go deeper, further from roads to find quiet recreation, which doesn't make sense, since quiet recreationists aren't able to travel near as far and quickly.*
- ◆ *In the lands where I've seen the introduction of 4-wheelers and other motorized recreational vehicles, erosion has skyrocketed to become a serious problem, as well as pollution from the vehicles.*

B. Non-Motorized Trails

Trails for non-motorized use were also discussed. Topics included:

1. Maintenance & signage
2. Number and types of trails

1. Maintenance and signage

The issues expressed about trail maintenance and signage were similar to those expressed about roads. Attendees noted that inadequate maintenance and signage of trails contribute to people seeking alternate off-trail routes, contributing to degradation of the trails, erosion and destruction of vegetation.

- ◆ *I have seen trails used and abused, people going where they shouldn't.*
- ◆ *There are many trails not being maintained properly.*
- ◆ *[I've seen] A serious and large deterioration in trails maintenance and trail signage that is discouraging (rather than encouraging) people from going into the forest.*
- ◆ *[I've seen] Dead trees along the trails*

2. Number and types of trails

Attendees mentioned specific areas and a general desire to see an increased number of trails for non-motorized and multiuse recreation.

- ◆ *I cherish having accessible nature trails.*
- ◆ *We need the walking trails – horseback trails*
- ◆ *[I've seen] Closing of trails instead of maintaining/improving*
- ◆ *Keep trails separate for multiuse (not having mountain bikers interfere with hikers)*

APPRECIATION

Attendees expressed appreciation of the forest for its cultural, natural, aesthetic and spiritual qualities. Some people appreciate the opportunity to go to the forest to engage in recreational and economic activities.

- ◆ *It's important to me because I use it for hunting and fishing and for wood, and for camping*
- ◆ *[CNF affords] The chance to enjoy nature by giving people a place to camp-hunt-fish-hike-to just get away.*
- ◆ *I want to see the Carson gain a more national reputation and become better known to residents. I think many residents do not know about this treasure.*
- ◆ *I love just to spend time in the forest. Me and my brother go for hikes and I have to say it is good...*
- ◆ *There is no price that can be put on the value and beauty that the forest has provided for me and what it means to me.*
- ◆ *The CNF can serve...as a place where we as human beings are reminded of the natural ecosystems that sustain us and their beauty that sustains our soul.*

- ◆ *I guess what I'm trying to convey is it's a cool spot. Don't change it too much.*

Many people go to the forest for its peacefulness and quiet. With its quiet, solitude and natural beauty, the forest offers an enjoyable respite for local residents as well as visitors.

- ◆ *[It is] A place of peacefulness and quiet in a busy world.*
- ◆ *[I appreciate] The peace and quiet, the rivers, the trees, the wildlife, the clean air, etc.*
- ◆ *It is so peaceful. I live in the ski valley and it's so nice to see the wildlife and wild flowers.*
- ◆ *[It is] a refuge – not only for wildlife – but also for people who increasingly live in dense, developed areas.*
- ◆ *[It is a] Place to disappear in and get away from the world.*
- ◆ *Keeping our National Forest healthy will keep our air and water healthy ... and our minds!*
- ◆ *It is my 'church,' it is synonymous with my soul*

For many families and communities, the forest provides a chance to share and bond with each other.

- ◆ *Since growing up as a young child traveling to NM to recreate on Carson National Forest land, family vacations were centered around using forest service land instead of going to hotels and theme parks.*
- ◆ *I also see it as very important to allow our families to continue to be able to see and live in the beauty*
- ◆ *I appreciate the forest because it has provided my family and I with many memories when we would spend time camping, picnicking and doing many other activities there.*
- ◆ *I use the forest for camping and hiking with my family and fishing, and the reason why is to enjoy the beautiful wildlife and the time I spend with my family there.*
- ◆ *Having access to use the forest is important to my family as well as to the community as a whole. We hike, bike, fish, camp and have raised our children doing this.*
- ◆ *[It is] A place for families to come together*

CLIMATE CHANGE

In almost every meeting, attendees expressed strong concerns about the impact of climate change and how the changing environmental conditions will impact the forest, its health and that of communities that rely on the forest.

Along with the concern about the increase of drought conditions and consequent decrease in water availability, many were concerned about the changing overall health of the forest as temperatures climb.

- ◆ *[I've seen] Big changes in climate and vegetation and water.*
- ◆ *Rio Cebolla is now dry and not running on our property – recharge has stopped from the Carson.*
- ◆ *We use to have a lot more rain and snow and could raise potatoes, grain and hay.*
- ◆ *[I see] Climate change with respect to less moisture and lower water flows*
- ◆ *[There is a] Different climate now – hotter, earlier runoff, drought cycles, more forest insects and dying trees.*
- ◆ *[There are] Obvious, natural changes (or not so natural) – less snow pack, beetles, etc.*
- ◆ *Drought is more common and climate change is evident.*
- ◆ *The forest has suffered in the drought tremendously.*
- ◆ *Beetle kill and worm damage is really frightening*

Those who rely on the forest watershed were concerned about the availability of future water supplies, for humans, forest animals and fish, as well as the impact of diminishing water supply on economic activities.

- ◆ *Climate change –[we need to] prepare for changes that will come from it*

- ◆ *[I] Hope future generations will have forests and clean air and water despite climate change and population growth.*
- ◆ *The Carson is important in providing resilience in the face of the impacts of climate change.*
- ◆ *Drought conditions in the CNF can destroy the forest and future of communities in this watershed.*

COMMUNICATION

Many attendees expressed views regarding communication with the Carson National Forest—both the general communication regarding issues impacting individuals and communities as well as the specific concerns about the Forest Management Plan and the planning process.

Participants in many of the meetings brought up the importance of educating citizens—especially young people and visitors to the forest—in the importance of understanding and maintaining the forest.

A. Communication with citizens

A number of persons expressed frustration what they felt has been poor communication between the Forest Service and the individuals and communities using the forest. Some people said that the Forest Service historically has not listened to the citizen concerns in the decision-making process.

- ◆ *[The Forest Service should] Communicate better with local community people, and hire locals for working [the] forest*
- ◆ *Work with acequias – not against.*
- ◆ *[In the past]The forest would consult the ranch first before changes etc. Now they want all public opinion.*
- ◆ *Keep area residents informed on rules and regulations if changes are imposed.*
- ◆ *Try to maintain transparency and public notification of activities and policy changes*

B. Forest Management Plan/Planning process

While criticizing the nature of communication with the Carson in the past, a number of attendees said or wrote that they appreciate the current Forest Management planning effort. They noted especially the sense that they were really being heard in these meetings as they expressed their interests and concerns. Others expressed concern about the transparency of the process and its outcome.

- ◆ *Continue including the community in the future planning of the CNF*
- ◆ *[A] Community meeting or planning session is great but who does filtering of (fluff) information? Who and why and what decides what is it added to the plan?*
- ◆ *Forest Management Planning Rule is nothing more than a land and water grab*
- ◆ *Thank you for doing this public outreach.*

C. Education

Many people mentioned various aspects of education about the forest. Attendees noted that:

- People talked about the need to educate young people to appreciate the forest as cultural heritage as well as a valuable resource. They felt that today’s youth are losing skills associated with the forest, such as hunting, fishing and outdoor skills.
- Participants felt that visitors needed education in how to treat the forest with respect, as well as understanding its cultural importance. Comments referred to trash, overuse of the forest, and areas of proper use.
- Attendees brought up the need for education in the ecosystem of the forest. This included: wildlife, watersheds, flora and climate change.
- ◆ *Young people are able to enjoy the [wild] and gain a greater understanding of the importance of conserving places like this. Some young people may have never been to a [wild] area like the CNF, and I think it is important for everyone to have such an opportunity*

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- ◆ *[The forest is] A place where children and grandchildren can learn about outdoors, nature, leave-no-trace, and develop self-confidence (in nature), outdoor skills, and pride.*
- ◆ *Keeping the mountains free of trash is very important. Keep [the] public educated.*
- ◆ *What I believe happens is locals do have respect for the forest and the wildlife, but outsiders do not realize how littering and going off road impacts our daily lives and ruin the beauty of the forest.*
- ◆ *Too many people take [the forest] for granted by littering and speeding down the dirt road and just being completely careless.*
- ◆ *The Carson has been a key provider in providing life lessons and experiences of a lifetime.*

CULTURAL/HISTORICAL/TRADITIONAL USES

Attendees discussed traditional uses within two contexts:

- A. Land Grants and Land ownership
- B. Traditional uses

A. Land Grants and Land ownership

In some communities, cultural/historical uses were viewed by some through the background of historical land ownership. Some strongly expressed the view that major areas of the Carson National Forest were originally land grant community properties that they felt should remain under the control of their communities.

- ◆ *We love our wood, camping and hunting and fishing. Because it was ours at one time and Carson took it from us.*
- ◆ *The southern edge of the CNF is the ancestral lands of the people of the community of Truchas. The Francisco Montez Vigil Land Grant was our land.*
- ◆ *The CNF has been more [active] in meeting with county land grants. Meeting with our land grant council and entering into an MOU with SW Regional Forester is a step in the right direction.*
- ◆ *The Trampas land grant area managed by USFS must prepare to change its policies in management. We will be demanding that recreation will be done at a minimum within the Las Trampas land grant.*
- ◆ *The CNF is important to the heirs of San Joaquin del Rio de Chama land grant. As land based people (heirs) of Northern NM, we have harvested wood, herbs, grazed and farmed the forest for its resources.*

In Truchas it was explained that the residents were originally the “20th tribe”, but were not recognized as such by the US Government. It was stated that as a result of legal machinations, their land grant, that was originally over 250,000 acres, was reduced to about 15,000 acres.

In Canjilon, a few local residents asked that the Forest Service provide a lawyer for this Plan process to assure that they receive due process. They stated that at the turn of the last century they had not received due process, and their land was taken.

B. Traditional Uses

The forest traditionally has provided—and continues to provide—material sustenance in a number of areas, separate from strictly economic activity:

- Cutting firewood or harvesting lumber or vigas
 - Grazing
 - Hunting and fishing
 - Collecting medicinal herbs
 - Diversion for acequias
- ◆ *I use the forest traditionally as my parents, grandparents and great-grandparents did, and there are now limits, because we are no longer allowed to graze our livestock, gathering herbs for medicine, nuts for food, wood for fuel, latillas, fence posts and vigas for buildings for our children.*
 - ◆ *The forest provides my family with food like fish, and if we draw for a hunt, it provides us with elk meat.*

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- ◆ *We are in fourth to fifth generations of using the renewable resources. We try to learn and use them wisely*
- ◆ *Keeping the local customs, traditions, and uses are important to me. This means having the FS respond and provide for uses such as fuelwood, grazing, hiking, hunting, camping, piñon nut gathering, picking herbal and medicinal plants.*
- ◆ *The CNF is important to me and my family because it is where I get all the things I feel I need, like working wood, grazing areas, fuel wood areas and such.*
- ◆ *It has changed from providing the locals with all the necessities of life – grazing, wood, water, ... riding horses. [The forest has become]A recreation area for the rest of the world.*
- ◆ *I hope the Carson Forest will continue to allow my children and grandchildren to be able to camp, fish, hunt, hike, gather wood, herb gather, snowmobile, and enjoy the forest like we do now.*

ECONOMIC:

Economic activity in the Carson falls into four categories:

- A. Animal husbandry
- B. Extraction of forest materials
- C. Recreation
- D. Economic sustainability

Many participants said that they are concerned that economic activity be sustainable, not only to maintain the vitality for families and communities but also for the long-term health of the forest. For some participants, economic activity in the Carson National Forest represents their full-time employment and income. For others, such activity provides supplemental income, sustenance or pleasure.

- ◆ *Unfortunately, our small towns are dying and our youth are seeking futures elsewhere. We need to have better [and] more family support from forest management to restore our economics and provide a sustainable future for all.*
- ◆ *[CNF should] Ask for more funding to create more jobs for local people, logging, thinning extraction of other natural resources*
- ◆ *[What's important about the forest for me is] My job*

A. Animal husbandry

Many permittees engage in ranching—grazing sheep, cattle or horses as a full-time activity, as their livelihood. For others, grazing of a few animals supplements their work income or food supply for their families. There is concern about changes in Forest Service policies related to grazing.

- ◆ *Except for the CFRP project, there are fewer jobs related to the forest , fewer ranchers, almost no sheep....*
- ◆ *I love to send cattle to market and try to feed people all over the world. This is a way to make a living.*
- ◆ *It is my understanding that range management practices have improved in the past decades (cattle stocking numbers and rotation practices have changed).*
- ◆ *[The forest is important] for grazing animals, cattle, goats, sheep, horses*
- ◆ *It is important to my livelihood; without summer range for my livestock, I would be unable to support my family.*
- ◆ *[I see] Cuts on cattle grazing*
- ◆ *[I see] Federal agencies making concerted efforts to get rid of livestock grazing*

Attendees noted some negative impacts in the forest from grazing activities

- ◆ *[I see] spread of thistle ... decrease in riparian habitat ... due to grazing*
- ◆ *Excessive competition due to over-stocking lend[s] to greater susceptibility to insect and disease*

B. Extraction of forest materials

Harvesting of forest resources can also be a strictly economic activity, in addition to traditional forest uses. Extraction uses include:

1. Wood products

- ◆ *We need more sawmills and other wood processing plants for non-commercial small diameter timber and less bureaucracy/red tape*
- ◆ *Firewood is an important product, and timber, on suitable areas.*
- ◆ *Logging and thinning go hand in hand to keep our forests healthy*
- ◆ *Lack of economic opportunity – loss of timber industry*
- ◆ *[We need] To have timber project (either thinning or timber). [And] To have trained crews within these communities to slow exodus of our youth to the cities.*
- ◆ *Going for wood is a necessity for many families*
- ◆ *Communities are land based – need for fuel wood / heat – resources, vigas and latillas.*
- ◆ *Ask for more funding to create more jobs for local people, logging, thinning, extraction of other natural resources*

2. Mining

There were few comments regarding mining in the forest. Only one attendee viewed mining as a positive economic activity, while other commentators felt that mining contributed to the degradation of the forest:

- ◆ *[It is an important resource because] over 90% of our minerals are imported*
- ◆ *...would like to see the resources ... well managed, so as to keep the wild “wild” without the issues of ... mining...to excess.*

3. Oil and gas

In general (with a few exceptions) there was concern about the negative impacts of oil and gas to the water table and the forest.

- ◆ *[I've seen] too much oil and gas extraction. ... – too much oil and gas extraction – again*
- ◆ *[I fear the] threat of industrialization by oil and gas industry.*
- ◆ *[Oil and gas permitting process should] include a lot of bond money for cleanup and restoration - \$15 to \$20 million to clean up one contamination site.*
- ◆ *I do not want to see the land become fragmented by...oil and gas development.*
- ◆ *Watershed[is] at risk to gas/oil development – horizontal (directional drilling is coming)*
- ◆ *OPEC [is] funding special interest groups to continue litigating federal agencies to stop oil and gas exploration on lands administered by federal agencies*
- ◆ *I hope there is no fracking destruction that ruins our forest.*

In Bloomfield (San Juan Basin) there is considerable dependence on the oil and gas industry for the economy. It is well established and long-term. Attendees there were very positive about oil and gas development and the industry's interaction with the CNF.

The only concern brought up in the Bloomfield meeting was the desire to maintain the existing positive relations, to speed permitting and facilitate negotiation with transporters. Overall the attendees there indicated that the Forest Service personnel worked well with them.

- ◆ *Working in the oil and gas industry with leases in the forest we want to ensure that wells can be drilled and gas transportation can be conducted per our agreements with these transporters.*

- ◆ *Working in forest and maintaining good best management practices between agencies – for oil and gas development helps maintain good economics for our basin and surrounding communities.*
- ◆ *Oil and gas staff works well with industry*
- ◆ *Continue to have open lines of communication with oil and gas industry.*
- ◆ *NEPA process seems to follow more smoothly/seamless*

C. Recreation

Recreational activities in the forest provide economic benefits for nearby communities. Visitor expenditures include supplies, lodging, dining, equipment or equestrian rental, and guiding services to support:

- Hunting/fishing
 - Hiking/biking/camping
 - Equestrian
 - Skiing
 - Off-Road Vehicles
- ◆ *My employment is directly tied to the recreational opportunities available to Philmont’s campers in the Valle Vidal and opportunities for conservation work and related education.*
 - ◆ *Because of partnerships with businesses, especially Enchanted Forest XC ski area and Red River ski area, the Carson has given me job opportunities.*
 - ◆ *It provides a place for visitors/tourists to hike/visit and that brings some commerce to the... area.*
 - ◆ *It provides me with a livelihood – ski instructor and lodge owner operator. Our customers come to use the forest, ski, fish, hike, camp, etc.*
 - ◆ *[I appreciate] Hunting and fishing and recreation tied to jobs*
 - ◆ *Allowing recreational uses helps the local economy of lodging, restaurants, outfitters, guides.*
 - ◆ *Tourists from all over the globe [come to CNF] to hike, ski, horseback ride*
 - ◆ *We sell more ATV and fishing permits than anywhere else in the state.*
 - ◆ *I’m also an employee and skier of TSV. Recreation opportunities and tourism are important to me.*
 - ◆ *Family also has an outfitting business next to the forest.*

D. Future economic sustainability and change

Many persons raised concerns about the economic sustainability of the forest, and the relationship of economic activity to the overall sustainability of the forest. Several attendees noted changing emphases of economic activity.

- ◆ *We have no right to “use up” what we have been given.*
- ◆ *I hope that CNF will continue to be a place that continues to use sustainable land/wildlife/livestock management projects so that it can be used as a model for good forest practices.*
- ◆ *Wood is only sustainable if forests are sustainable.*
- ◆ *[CNF]Provides or can provide economic opportunity to sustain our rural communities preventing total sell out to condos and recreational homes*
- ◆ *As oil and gas depletes, hopefully they won’t know that we were ever here.*
- ◆ *Except for the Collaborative Forest Restoration Project, there are fewer jobs related to the forest – no timber processing, fewer ranchers, almost no sheep...*
- ◆ *Sustainable harvesting in La Mesita – great job and well done*
- ◆ *[I hope to see the forest preserved for future generations]By finding ways to access and use the resources in a timely cost effective way to provide jobs and income to the local community.*
- ◆ *[CNF should] Help all permittees survive instead of killing them.*

- ◆ *[I see] Economic changes--less logging, mining and range, more recreation*
- ◆ *[I've seen a change to] More recreational activities, larger part of current socio-economic situation [Similar sentiments were observed in multiple areas]*

FIRE:

Attendees indicated that fire in the forest has both destructive and constructive impacts. In addition to loss of trees and vegetation and destruction of residences and work, fire can help in maintaining forest health by clearing brush and small and dead trees.

Many people were concerned about uncontrolled wildfires:

- ◆ *Protecting the forest from wild land fires must be a focus.*
- ◆ *The forest seems so crowded with trees and bushes (ladder fuels) that I'm worried about wildfire sweeping through. Prescribed burns seem quite dangerous; what are other ways to reduce catastrophic fire risk?*
- ◆ *The Tres Ritos valley is over-fueled, and I am fearful of fires.*
- ◆ *This forest is a wild land fire's dream. It's not "if" but "when" this forest will burn if something's not done and soon. Not 4 years from now as a starting point. I do not want to see this forest burn.*
- ◆ *[I've seen] Too many large scale wildfires over 1,000 acres*

Other concerns included:

- ◆ *Forest fires lead to water issues.*
- ◆ *Loss of housing due to forest fires.*

Comments related to management included:

- ◆ *To promote a health forest – thinning projects; prescribed burning; allowing fires to burn when feasible*
- ◆ *[I see] More wild fires / no onsite equipment and management to fight fires in big timber*
- ◆ *Prescribed burn must be really confined to designated burn spots in openings away from standing tree stands.*
- ◆ *Protect the watershed by allowing the local access to remove all hazardous fuels useful for firewood.*
- ◆ *[I see] Better fire management: controlled burns.*
- ◆ *Grazing does help to clean the underbrush. Goats and sheep can help clear more which could improve grazing as well.*
- ◆ *Protect the watershed by allowing the local access to remove all hazardous fuels useful for firewood.*

NATURE:

Attendees expressed a wide range of views regarding nature, ecology and wild areas.

Value of Wild Areas

Many attendees place a value on wild areas not only for their intrinsic value but also for biodiversity and a place where young people can learn important values; for these reasons, they want to see it preserved.

- ◆ *I believe that the health and integrity of the forest's diverse ecosystems should be the guiding factor in all management decisions. Activities that are detrimental to natural systems should be appropriately regulated whether they involve recreational, commercial, cultural, or any other users.*
- ◆ *Nature is a baseline for understanding humanity.*
- ◆ *I hope the forest will serve future generations as a bank of biodiversity that keeps our flora and fauna abundant for all to enjoy, learn from, and benefit from on a landscape level.*

- ◆ *Young people are able to enjoy the [wild] and gain a greater understanding of the importance of conserving places like this.*
- ◆ *Healthy ecosystems [are important to me]*
- ◆ *[I would like to see] Greater management focus on recreational uses and ecological preservation.*

But concerns were also expressed

- ◆ *Forests are being managed for wildlife and recreation purposes only [--a change I've seen]*

Animal Species

Attendees noted the decrease of a number of indigenous species, especially due to the impact of invasive species as well as loss of habitat. For many (but not all) this was a cause of concern.

- ◆ *[I see] Loss of species (bison, wolf, grizzlies, beaver), introduction of invasives*
- ◆ *The Carson needs to be protected to keep wildlife safe, to keep all species alive and well, and numerous to keep hunting going*
- ◆ *[I appreciate the forest for] Watching birds and wildlife*
- ◆ *[I appreciate the Carson for the endangered] Rio Grande cutthroat trout habitat*
- ◆ *Brown trout [an invasive species] dominate more streams than even 10 years ago*
- ◆ *[I would like to see] reintroduction of species (gray wolf, beaver, bison).*
- ◆ *I hope [to see] elk, deer, turkey and other game (wild) for our grandkids*
- ◆ *The increase of use has created areas that are losing their habitat from increased traffic.*
- ◆ *[It is important to] Maintain ecological aspects of wildlife*
- ◆ *Closure for elk calving is dumb. Killing all the bears was dumb.*

Concerns were also expressed regarding policies felt to be overprotective:

- ◆ *[I would like to see] Less environmentalists for endangered species*

The increase in the elk population was noted as problematic in many areas, especially Canjilon, La Jara and Tres Piedras.

- ◆ *[I've seen a] decrease in riparian habitat in some places due to grazing and increase in elk population.*
- ◆ *Too many elk...impacting the forest,...taking over our private land.*
- ◆ *Too many elk competing with our cattle and tearing down fences.*
- ◆ *Deer populations [used to be] healthy and [there were] no elk*
- ◆ *Forest Service allows too many elk and blames ranchers for poor range conditions*

Wild horse populations were also seen as a problem in the Tres Piedras area

- ◆ *[I see] Big numbers of wild horses and it hasn't been addressed*
- ◆ *[I see an] increase of junk/feral horses*

Insects and Invasive Species

Attendees noted the impact on trees from drought and insects.

- ◆ *Trees dying due to caterpillars, bark beetle, drought, other things. Aspens dying, cottonwoods coming back*
- ◆ *Standing dead trees are the result from drought, insects and too many trees*
- ◆ *22 years ago – healthy forest – beetle infestation killed a tremendous amount of trees. Dead, brown trees everywhere you look. Perfect for a wildfire.*
- ◆ *The drought has had a huge effect on the forest and made it more fragile. NM does not get a lot of rain, so it takes a long time for the vegetation to grow back.*

- ◆ *Beetle kill and worm damage is really frightening*

Attendees noted the increase in invasive plants and the negative effects.

- ◆ *Ecologically, the forest change I have seen is the expansion of invasive species populations. I believe this represents an enormous threat to all of us who depend on the National Forest.*

PARTNERSHIP

In every area, attendees suggested partnerships. They generally felt that the Forest Service does not have the personnel or funding to completely maintain the forest, and that partnerships will be needed in the future.

Partnership opportunities included:

- Fencing and stock tank maintenance.
- Harvesting small-diameter trees to reduce fire risk and provide firewood.
- Road maintenance.
- Monitoring trails for erosion and missing signage.
- Reporting scofflaws.
- Site specific economic development projects.
- Education programs.

Some fulltime attendees (especially ranchers) said the lack of adequate funding forced them into reluctant partnerships to maintain their existing infrastructure; i.e., when Forest Service maintenance was not forthcoming, they went ahead and made the needed repairs.

- ◆ *Forest staff hasn't kept up with increased use – budgets reduced*
- ◆ *Forest Service has cut back on their end to improve the forests and become more dependent on permittees to take up the slack.*
- ◆ *FS no longer maintains improvements such as fences, stock tanks, springs, etc. The permittees are unfairly saddled with the maintenance, even rebuilding old fences.*

In several cases, attendees felt existing partnerships had improved:

- ◆ *[I have seen a change:] More dedication to partnership, both with Del Norte M&B Alliance and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps.*
- ◆ *Ten years ago, we were both wary of each other and existed in a kind of nervous acceptance of the idea that neither would ever go away. In the past 3 years both of us have embraced the partnership between us.*

Attendees described successful partnerships:

- ◆ *By allowing young people to learn how to build trail by building trail, individuals become invested in their public lands and become equipped to give back to them through land stewardship.*
- ◆ *[Important to me is] RMYC [Rocky Mountain Youth Corps]: Project partner; youth employment; training and education opportunities.*
- ◆ *The partnerships between Philmont and the Questa ranger district have brought new, user-friendly with bike trails to the Carson, as well as invasive species management.*
- ◆ *Maintenance of roads to accommodate the industry traffic has improved through partnership agreement with [the Bloomfield area oil and gas] industry to maintain them.*
- ◆ *Partnerships with NGOs such as the Quivira Coalition have improved the condition of the watersheds.*

Attendees hope to see more partnerships in the future:

- ◆ *Since we all depend upon the forests for our acequias, maybe partnerships with acequia groups, local schools, etc.*
- ◆ *I hope USFS will be more partner oriented with the citizens and communities.*

- ◆ *Local schools would monitor water quality and wildlife.*
- ◆ *For some – hiking trails or viewing wildlife or livestock in such a wide-open capacity are once in a lifetime experiences that we (my employer) is lucky to partner with a federal agency in providing.*
- ◆ *By collaboration (partnerships) with other land management agencies within the forest boundaries and/or partners to better serve the people and communities that are within the CNF.*

RECREATION

Attendees expressed their appreciation of recreation in the forest. Areas of recreation that were discussed included:

- Biking, hiking and equestrian
 - Motorized vehicles
 - Hunting and fishing
 - Camping
 - Skiing
- ◆ *[I] Can use the land to heat my home, water my land, provide food, but [I] can play there too by fishing, hiking, spending time with family, horseback riding, etc*
 - ◆ *Much of my exercise/recreation is in the forest (hike, bike, ski).*
 - ◆ *The Carson NF is beautiful and without the recreational opportunities provided I would move.*

Some attendees felt that these uses should be separated.

- ◆ *The opportunity to backpack for a week or more (both on trail and off) is difficult to come by in many places. I think we should preserve the undeveloped feel of the CNF for recreators, wildlife populations and dreamers alike.*
- ◆ *[The Forest Service should] restrict ATV and Dirt bikes in areas where hiking occurs*
- ◆ *Keep trails separate for multiuse (not having mountain bikers interfere with hikers)*
- ◆ *[We need] Separated mountain bike trails*
- ◆ *Don't close in all trails for bikers*

A. Biking, Hiking, and Equestrian

Attendees enjoy non-vehicular movement through the forest. Reasons include: exercise, appreciation of nature, or for access to areas to hunt or fish. Non-vehicular users were found in almost every area of the Carson.

Hiking

Many attendees appreciated the opportunity to walk in the Carson National Forest.

- ◆ *The Carson National Forest is important to me because it offers a beautiful area to go backpacking.*
- ◆ *[Important because I've spent] 39 years hiking and backpacking Red River*
- ◆ *[Important for] Hiking and backpacking especially*
- ◆ *I love hiking and being outdoors.*

Biking

The Carson National Forest is increasingly being used for biking.

- ◆ *Recognize mountain bikers as an important user group.*
- ◆ *I have ... been involved with the new mountain biking trail around Whitman Vega. I see this new trail as a very positive change to the Valle Vidal.*
- ◆ *[I would like] Specific mountain bike trails or even parks*
- ◆ *ID areas that can be developed for mountain bike trails. For example in Gallup NM the Forest Service just cleared over 100 miles of trails ... specific to mountain bike*

- ◆ *Being able to explore public lands on foot and by bicycle is the primary reason I have chosen to raise my family in Taos NM.*

Horseback Riding

Some attendees enjoy using The Carson National Forest for horseback riding.

- ◆ *It is important as it provides for...horseback riding*
- ◆ *I enjoy hunting, fishing, horseback riding – an outdoorsman for 60 years.*

However, equestrian use raised some concerns:

- ◆ *[There is] too much horse camping and horse use of the Carson – I cannot seem to be able to escape the odor of horse manure in any of the camping areas*
- ◆ *[The Forest Service should] perhaps separate horse camping from tent camping.*
- ◆ *Lumping horses as low-impact, but not bicycles (inconsistency)*

B. Motorized Vehicles

Most meetings included some recreational vehicular users. They typically wanted designated areas for ORVs. While they recognized the need for separate quiet and natural areas, they also wanted some access to those areas.

- ◆ *It's important to me because I use it for hunting and fishing and for wood, and for camping and it's a place to ride my motorcycle and a place to get away from everything.*
- ◆ *The forest is important for relaxation by motorized/cycle trail use, by its beauty and resource for firewood collection.*
- ◆ *[I've seen] Vehicular recreation use increase*
- ◆ *I love being able to ... ride my dirt bike on the forest roads and trails.*

Some non-vehicular users expressed concerns about ORVs or All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) in the forest.

- ◆ *De-emphasize the use of ATVs forest-wide.*
- ◆ *[I see] too many four-wheeler access*
- ◆ *[There are a] lot more people on four wheelers or motorcycles*
- ◆ *[I see] More ATV use on and off the road*
- ◆ *[The Forest Service should] restrict ATV and Dirt bikes in areas where hiking occurs*
- ◆ *It's become more crowded and noisy with ATVs in summer and snow mobiles in winter – seems like you have to go deeper, further from roads to find quiet recreation, which doesn't make sense, since quiet recreationists aren't able to travel near as far and quickly.*

C. Hunting and Fishing

Attendees appreciate the hunting and fishing available. Some grew up hunting and fishing in the Carson.

- ◆ *I'm a fifth generation native of Northern NM. I enjoy hunting, fishing....*
- ◆ *It is nice for the family members that like to hunt.*
- ◆ *I hope the Carson will provide the public sustainable hunting and fishing opportunities.*
- ◆ *[What's most important in CNF to me is] Hunting, fishing*
- ◆ *I hunt, fish and enjoy looking at wildlife*
- ◆ *Another important aspect is hunting and fishing to put food in our freezer.*
- ◆ *Continue river conservation and fish stocking*

D. Camping

Attendees enjoy camping in the Carson.

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- ◆ *[I] Spend about a week a year camping ...*
- ◆ *I appreciate the forest because it has provided my family and I with many memories when we would spend time camping [and] picnicking*
- ◆ *[I would like to see] More camping sites*
- ◆ *I use the forest for camping and hiking with my family.*

However concerns were expressed about maintenance, policing and trash.

- ◆ *[I have seem more] Careless campers*
- ◆ *I have noticed a diminishing amount of quality camping and backpacking areas*
- ◆ *In the campground it could use some more trash cans*
- ◆ *Recreation areas left in disrepair – Canjilon Creek campground.*
- ◆ *Facilities and campgrounds have gone downhill.*

E. Skiing

Attendees enjoy both downhill and cross-country ski areas in the Carson.

- ◆ *I hike, I downhill and x-country ski.*
- ◆ *It provides me with a livelihood – ski instructor*
- ◆ *[I want] Better bigger ski areas!*
- ◆ *[I would like to see] Our ski area grow [and add] much needed trails.*
- ◆ *The ski area is why we are here, retired.*
- ◆ *[Important to me because] I can ski it*

REGULATION AND MANAGEMENT:

Attendees used the opportunity afforded by the planning meetings to express many opinions regarding regulations and enforcement, maintenance, and management priorities in the Carson.

A. Need for regulation and enforcement

Attendees expressed concern that the existing rules and regulations are not being enforced, at least in part due to budgetary constraints experienced by the Forest Service. The impact shows up in illegal harvesting (especially woodcutting) as well as inappropriate and damaging uses of the forest.

- ◆ *Forest staff hasn't kept up with increased use – budgets reduced*
- ◆ *The CNF does not have a workforce to manage the forest effectively. It is NOT funded to do its job.*
- ◆ *Although I'm averse to a group punishment scenario, I do believe the rules in effect should be followed and enforced. I know budget constraints prohibit such enforcement, but we need to do our best.*
- ◆ *What I would like to protect is the forest itself. You constantly see careless people doing things that put our forest in danger. Have more patrol in the forest so that people are obeying the laws.*
- ◆ *Protect from poachers (tree poachers that take the wrong trees). Enforce the laws. Keep confidentiality when someone reports an incident. Ticket for littering and dumping.*
- ◆ *Wood harvesters need to be accounted for and overseen by the Forest Service.*
- ◆ *[I've had] Few, if any, encounters with "rangers" – I see the need for more people out on the trails for safety, law enforcement, and engagement with those who use the forest.*
- ◆ *I hope that in the future that we won't have hunters taking calves*
- ◆ *[I've seen] better enforcement of backcountry camping restrictions, ½ mile from all road areas.*
- ◆ *Some people don't respect the beauty surrounding us. Building too many homes, no rules are being enforced.*

- ◆ *[I see] More day-use people disrespecting the forest rules and regulations, especially non-motorized travel areas.*

Many people mentioned their concerns with the growing problem of trash and litter in the forest.

- ◆ *Another issue for me in the mountains is the level of trash I see. It's pretty bad.*
- ◆ *Keeping the mountains free of trash is very important. It saddens one when my family and I go camping. Trash left on campgrounds.*
- ◆ *[I've seen] Increased litter along roads.*
- ◆ *Constant litter, and no one to fine them. There are no consequences?!?*

B. Too many rules

A number of attendees complained that an increase in the number and enforcement of rules and regulations have impaired their ability to use the forest in the ways to which they had become accustomed. Some questioned the need for such restrictions.

- ◆ *[It is] More and more difficult to obtain permits in general, whether it is for grazing or woodcutting, etc....*
- ◆ *[I've seen a] Change in community advocacy and support from the ranger district. Less diplomacy, more rules/regs/black and white. The new rules have made it difficult to remove firewood for cooking and heating.*
- ◆ *A stronger push to try to limit grazing times and numbers in order to appease government.*
- ◆ *Changes I have seen in FS have most been negative. My grazing permits have had reduced forest days. All changes have been geared to special interest groups.*
- ◆ *Increased restrictions on cattle grazing and excessive restrictions lead to economic and social problems.*
- ◆ *The forest management appears to be restricting most of (past) local activities in favor of pleasing the tourist.*
- ◆ *Why do there have to be permits for the free use?*
- ◆ *Excessive restrictions (closing roads, no live tree cutting, no large tree cutting) are resulting in unhealthy forest conditions – over-stocked, too much living and dead fuel.*
- ◆ *Travel management is too restrictive*
- ◆ *[There is too much] Red tape and the unnecessary paper trail to accommodate a concern, for example, to build earth tanks*
- ◆ *More rules and regulations with enviro groups.*

C. Enforcement priorities

A number of participants said that they were concerned about selective enforcement of rules and regulations, and also that Forest Service law enforcement officers focused on matters not directly related to the forest.

- ◆ *[I've seen] Selective enforcement of rules.*
- ◆ *Law enforcement – we have several law men telling us what to do—who is in charge?*
- ◆ *[I've seen] More abuse of police powers by federal agencies*
- ◆ *[I've seen] Law enforcement officers overstepping their authority, harassing people, checking for driver's license, vehicle insurance, etc. They should be enforcing federal laws, catching wood thieves, vandals, etc.*
- ◆ *Law enforcement [does] not protect natural resources; [Instead they are] doing everyday law enforcement.*
- ◆ *A realization that CNF does help tourism and so multiple uses need to be accommodated, including tolerance for pot since Colorado's legalization of it.*

D. Forest management

Management concerns were expressed in two arenas—planning decisions and infrastructure.

Planning decisions

Attendees spoke about the need to manage the forest sustainably—or even regeneratively. Concerns were mentioned about increased usage, budgetary constraints and, for some, an overemphasis on endangered species and fear of decision making.

- ◆ *You have a tough job trying to balance preservation with the enjoyment of the forest. I hope you can continue to obtain the funding you need to continue to try to protect a limited, valuable resource.*
- ◆ *The increase in the amount of people that visit the forest, and the different things that they are interested in – ATV, camping, hiking, etc. This complicates the problems that the forest people and livestock owners have to deal with.*
- ◆ *I feel that our forests need to be managed sustainably.*
- ◆ *I would like to see ..., not just sustainable forestry, but regenerative forestry.*
- ◆ *I also would like to see the resources the region provides well managed, so as to keep the wild “wild” without the issues of deforestation, over-hunting or over-fishing, or mining resources to excess.*
- ◆ *Feds treat the Threatened & Endangered Species Act like it trumps all other public land laws*
- ◆ *Others are made paranoid by lawsuits and so are [too] cautious about making decisions.*

Infrastructure

Attendees expressed concern about the decline in infrastructure maintenance, and the desire that maintenance and development receive higher priority in Forest Service decision making.

- ◆ *I hope that in the future that we can have better fences that we put up every summer so that the cattle will stay in better and not get out into campgrounds or where they are not supposed to be.*
- ◆ *[I've noticed] Significant decline in the maintenance and upkeep of the assets: trails, stream, actual health of the forest*
- ◆ *We are in need for more stock tanks to supply water for livestock*
- ◆ *The forest will serve future generations as an example of a healthy, diverse landscape if the FS considers a healthy fire regime, non-destructive forest thinning, watershed improvement projects in degraded streams, invasive species removal, and improved range management practices*
- ◆ *[There is a need to] Hire more staff for EIS and NEPA projects to allow for new trails to be developed.*
- ◆ *FS should change focus – put the funding into field projects – less overhead – more employees in the field.*
- ◆ *No money to do projects but money is found when there is an adverse action like in the Jemez Ranger District to erect a pipe fence to keep livestock out but not elk*

SITE-SPECIFIC COMMENTS:

Attendees brought up a number of site-specific project comments. These are not part of the broad scope in the process of creating the Forest Plan, but are included here to indicate some of the interests expressed in local meetings.

- ◆ *Need plenty of income opportunities for [Red River] – jeep roads, ATV roads, horseback trails, skiing, downhill, x-ctry, fishing; increase opportunities; stop removing/closing access.*
- ◆ *A forest trail or even paved bike path criss-crossing the river down to Questa.*
- ◆ *Improve trail Goose Lake*
- ◆ *Open Bitter Creek trail from RR to E(illegible)*
- ◆ *Hire more staff for EIS and NEPA projects to allow for new trails to be developed. Specifically the Bull of the Woods to Middle Fork connector trail.*
- ◆ *Protect our watershed – Pioneer, Placer Creek, Bitter Creek all have problems, Upper Red River – impaired!*
- ◆ *Revitalizing the Vallecitos sawmill, for generation of income.*

- ◆ *Assist communities with acquiring property for community cemeteries – another NEPA process.*

WATER AND WATERSHED:

Citizens addressed several aspects of water and watersheds within the Carson. These included the importance of the Carson as a source of water, the need for protecting this valuable and diminishing resource, and the various uses of water and infrastructure development.

Importance of water and watershed

The Carson was viewed as an important source of water, not only for the local areas but statewide as well.

- ◆ *[What's important to me is] Water, water, water!!!*
- ◆ *The Rios Gallina and Chama watersheds supply the rest of the state and parts of Texas and Mexico.*
- ◆ *The Carson serves as the headwaters to the entire state.*
- ◆ *Our watershed is very important to me as it provides our drinking water.*
- ◆ *The Carson is one of the largest watersheds in NM which is imperative to our recreational, ecological and economical future.*
- ◆ *[Important for] Recharge for watershed (Rio Chama, Morrison aquifer, Rio Grande)*

Protection

Attendees discussed the need to protect watersheds from drought, gas/oil development and pollution. (Note: additional comments regarding the impact of climate change on water supplies are given in the Climate Change section above.)

- ◆ *Water quality is of utmost importance.*
- ◆ *Drought conditions in the CNF can destroy the forest and future of communities in this watershed.*
- ◆ *[The] Watershed [is] at risk to gas/oil development – horizontal (directional drilling is coming)*
- ◆ *I am concerned about maintaining ... healthy and resilient ecosystems and watersheds and clean water.*
- ◆ *Rio Chama watershed is one of the most fragile watersheds in the world.*
- ◆ *[There is] Too much water pollution!*
- ◆ *Protect the watershed by allowing the local access to remove all hazardous fuels useful for firewood.*

Uses

Water uses discussed included domestic consumption, irrigation, grazing, recreation, and support for wildlife.

- ◆ *Runoff... from the Carson ... is used for irrigation and drinking water*
- ◆ *As a permittee on CNF, I value our water supply for our cattle. The water supply is [also] being used by wildlife.*
- ◆ *[I see] some reduced recreational opportunities due to lack of water resources, less fishing*
- ◆ *As an angler, I value the Carson as a place that preserves watersheds and native trout habitat for future generations.*
- ◆ *I think we need to make manmade ponds to save water for the animals and wildlife*
- ◆ *The water supply is being used by wildlife, and we are in need for more stock tanks to supply water for livestock and wildlife, and we could plan to use Game & Fish money that is made available for wildlife.*
- ◆ *Forest Management Planning Rule (FMPR) does not recognize stock water rights owned by ranchers. Makes grazing political where it's managed by a consensus*

A closing thought:

- ◆ *Let common sense rule!*