

Aspects of Beliefs and Values Regarding Resources and Management of the Ashley National Forest



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The information presented in this document provides a different set of information than either survey or socioeconomic assessment data. This information was collected and synthesized to identify local perspectives about points for dialogue regarding forest resources and management. However, the findings in this document are part of a suite of socioeconomic data relevant for describing the connections of communities and interested parties with the Ashley National Forest. Other documents in this suite focus on economic and demographic conditions and trends in adjacent communities (Eichman 2008; Utah 2005). This work focuses on values and beliefs about the Ashley National Forest and its management.

Between late March and early May of 2008 approximately 60 persons participated in discussions to identify values and beliefs about the Ashley National Forest and assessments of forest management issues and concerns. These discussions were guided by a Discussion Guide and implemented using an open-ended discussion approach designed to develop this information from the perspective of project participants. These discussions ranged in duration from about 45 minutes to 3 ½ hours with an average of about 1 ½ hours. This resulted in approximately 250 pages of field notes. Additionally, some participants submitted written comments or documents as additional information relevant for the project. The field notes were coded using a combination of pre-defined and emergent codes. Pre-defined codes are based on the contents of the Discussion Guide and the emergent codes are topics that developed from participant statements. These data were then grouped by similarity and examined for common themes. Representative statements were then selected to illustrate the organizing idea in the theme. These themes were grouped into larger categories that are the basis for presentation of the findings. The analysis is structured and informed by theory about sense of place (Jackson 1994; Basso 1996) and the social and cultural construction of human-nature relationships (e.g., Ritchie 1977; Williams 2004).

The social context of the Ashley National Forest (ANF) consists of primary rural communities in northeastern Utah and southwestern Wyoming. The four most directly associated counties have a total population of about 80,000 persons while the larger group of associated counties in Wyoming and Utah totals about 521,000 persons with the majority of this additional population accounted for by Utah County with 476,760 persons. The Ute Indian Reservation shares a substantial boundary with the Ashley National Forest and contributes more than 3,000 persons to the region's population.

Rural lifestyles are based in historical and contemporary use of natural resources such as ranching, farming, mining, and timber harvesting. These natural resource based lifestyles have resulted in several periods of boom and bust in local economies, with an ongoing boom related to oil and gas development. "Close to the land" values and lifestyles result in substantial interest in the use, management, and future of the Ashley National Forest.

The findings about beliefs and values are grouped into six categories: beliefs and values about the Forest Service as an Institution as well as specific beliefs about management of the Ashley National Forest; forest characteristics and existing conditions; forest resources; management issues and concerns; tribal values and beliefs; and public involvement.

The Institution of the Forest Service and the Ashley National Forest

Findings regarding beliefs and values about the Forest Service as an institution and specifically about the ANF have overlapping content. Beliefs about the agency as an institution suggest the agency's capacity to fulfill its mission is affected by limited budgets, limited personnel resources, and changing personnel expertise. The apparent loss of

expertise combined with a perceived limited presence of “boots on the ground” in the forest suggests to participants that the agency may not have sufficient knowledge of effectively management resources. Additionally, turnover in key leadership positions affects the continuity of management and the working relationship with adjacent communities and interested parties. Participants also suggest the mission of the agency has become muddled and unclear to community observers. Participants describe an agency in which its manager’s “hands are tied” by litigation and therefore reluctant to make decisions. Participants also express concern about the overall level of law enforcement resources within the agency at a time when problem behavior about users is increasing.

Specific beliefs about management of the ANF make a general observation that working relationships with forest managers are constructive. However, there is specific concern about the responsiveness of the ANF to citizens and local government, communication styles that are not customer friendly, and a desire for more District based decision making and management authority. Participants also express positive evaluations of the efforts to engage partners and Cooperating Agencies, but frustration with the content of those relationships and the outcome of the working relationship.

Both sets of beliefs suggest a perception of the agency as compromised by budgets, personnel resources, and knowledge of local conditions at a time when demands for use are increasing and forest conditions and facilities are deteriorating.

Forest Characteristics and Existing Conditions

The ANF is described as a “local forest” that is highly valued and extensively used by residents of adjacent communities. Historically, grazing, mining, and timber harvesting have been traditional activities on the forest. However, today most participants suggest the primary use of the forest is for recreation purposes. Accessibility and the size of the forest offer opportunities for recreation opportunities that disperse users into low country and high country areas.

There is some notable variability in assessments of forest conditions. Some participants suggest the forest is in poor health, primarily because of bark beetle infestations that are aesthetically unpleasant and pose a significant fire danger. Additionally, the dense stands of timber and undergrowth are evaluated as posing significant threats to watershed health, especially the availability of water for agricultural and culinary purposes. Other participants suggest the forest is healthy and without major compromise other than an increase in the volume of visitors, a decline in the maintenance of facilities such as campgrounds, trails, and roads, and growing damage from off-road vehicle use.

Beliefs and Values: Forest Resources

This information was grouped into three categories: recreation and aesthetic values, other natural resources, and special designations. The most prominent use and amenity resources identified by participants include aesthetics, dispersed camping, the opportunity for experiencing the human connections with the natural work, open space, quiet and solitude, and recreation. The most prominent ecosystem components in the data are oil and gas resources, vegetations resource for grazing and timber, water, and wildlife. Participants identified three broad categories of existing or proposed special designations that are valued or controversial: The High Uintas Wilderness Area, The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, and the High Uinta-Flaming Gorge Scenic Byway. Although all of these resources are valued, there was near unanimous agreement that water is the most significant resource associated with the Ashley National Forest. Participants emphasize that water is the “life blood” of the region. The quality and amount of water will determine the current and future health of the forest and impact those who use and depend on those resources.

Management Issues and Concerns

Participant statements about management concerns or desired changes in current management direction were grouped into categories that somewhat overlap with the discussion of forest resources. These categories are access and recreation; ethics, education and enforcement; forest conditions and resources, special designations, and Ashley National Forest approaches to management and implementation.

Access and recreation topics include a strong emphasis on providing access and addressing road closures, maintaining and expanding opportunities for dispersed camping, addressing the opportunities for off-road recreation, addressing the damage and disturbance to other visitors of off-road recreation, developing opportunities for quiet recreation, and addressing trail and road maintenance and the communication about and effects of road closures.

Concerns about ethics, education, and enforcement are directly related to perceptions about the presence of litter, vandalism of facilities, and problem behavior among some forest users. These conditions are attributed to a change in land ethics that participants suggest can be remedied by a combination of education and enforcement efforts.

Management concerns about ANF resources and conditions include recognition of the benefits and costs of current grazing practices, protection and cultivation of historic and archaeological resources, the economic benefits and environmental costs and benefits of oil and gas development, the interaction of fire suppression, beetle kill, and timber conditions, the role of timber harvesting in addressing forest health, the importance of water and watershed conservation to agricultural and other users, and effective management of wildlife habitat.

Special designation concerns are grouped into three categories: the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness and roadless areas. The primary topics of concern about management of the NRA concern the benefits of energy development versus its influences on user experiences and forest conditions, the importance of considering the economic costs and benefits of the NRA to adjacent communities, the use of fees collected, the appropriateness of fee collection, the effects on the quality of user experiences and local businesses of the volume of summer use on the Green River, and the economic and social costs of proposed water diversion from interests in Colorado. Participant statements about wilderness show consistency about the value of existing wilderness and polarization about adding additional wilderness. Opponents suggest that wilderness and other special designations limit management options and “lock up” the resource for use by an “elite” few. Proponents of additional wilderness and roadless areas suggest that these are limited resources that provide heritage as well as ecological and wildlife benefits. Preservation of these types of lands is valued because they are reserves of natural processes that are usually not observable outside such designated areas.

Forest Service Management Approaches

Although there is a generally positive evaluation of ANF managers and their decision making, there is also a desire for improvement and change in specific areas. Participant statements cluster into concerns about community relationships and customer service, a desire for more attention to economic development and the effects of decision making on rural economies, the costs and benefits of multiple-use as a management strategy for the future, a desire for attention to the effectiveness of planning, document preparation, and what can be accomplished within existing budget and personnel constraints. Participants also emphasized the importance of facilitating the use of volunteers as a means to address some of the existing maintenance issues on the ANF. The final thought that is common to

many of the other elements is a desire for sincere and authentic interaction with interested publics and transparency in the planning, decision-making, and implementation process.

Tribal Issues and Concerns

Contacts were made with the Ute Tribe Government. Discussions with some department personnel suggest there are solid working relationships around natural resources management and fire response issues, but a need for improvement in addressing concerns about cultural uses of the ANF by tribal members. Discussion suggest that tribal members use ANF lands for gathering of traditional plants and other vegetation, visiting sacred sites, and other uses related to cultural traditions. Participants emphasize there is an undeveloped opportunity by the ANF to include in its heritage programs Native American history and traditions that are part of the history of this region. Discussions also suggest a strong desire for additional work by the tribe with ANF managers on the process of Forest Plan revision.

Public Involvement

Participants describe diverse desires for public involvement that range from traditional open houses and public meetings to other approaches such as using local venues and organizational meetings. Participants also expressed a strong need for an authentic process that considers public desires as an integral part of the decision-making process. Participants suggest that such processes should address the social, economic, and cultural diversity of adjacent communities, including important differences among the states and adjacent counties.

1 INTRODUCTION

You can't overlook what an important piece of people's lives this forest is. It goes way beyond anything you can fathom in your own mind. ... This is a lifestyle that I inherited from my dad and I want to pass it on to my kids. This is a whole lifestyle. That forest, and you can throw in BLM lands, is not disconnected from people's everyday life around here. This is where we have our deer camp, this is where we have the family reunion every year, this is where we had our camp when we went up and cut firewood. And, I want to take my kids up there and my grandkids up there.

The future of the Ashley National Forest (ANF) is likely to be a product of global environmental conditions, political processes, forest management decisions, and interest by concerned citizens. The first two factors are macro-variables that are difficult to incorporate in a forest-specific land resource management plan. However, these factors are among the sideboards that affect planning for the future of the ANF. Forest planning decisions and the interests of concerned citizens are variable. This document addresses aspects of public values and beliefs about the resources and management of the Ashley National Forest. ANF managers and concerned citizens can use this information as a starting point for understanding public values and expectations about the future of this national forest.

The presentation of these findings about public beliefs and values is intended to develop "points of dialogue" for ongoing consideration during development of a plan for the future of the ANF. A "point of dialogue" is an issue, concern, or perspective that often contains diverse and sometimes conflicting perspectives. These perspectives consist of or are informed by values and beliefs about natural resources, the social environment, the relationship of humans with nature, and other explicit and implicit variables (e.g., Kempton, Boster, and Hartley 1995). A point of dialogue can be a starting point or a catalyst for ongoing discussion about the issues and concerns that will construct the future of the ANF. Points of dialogue often address issues without clear outcomes. They are "messy" or complex issues that require further discussion and clarification in order to assess their full implications for forest managers and concerned citizens (Shindler and Cramer 1999; Stewart et al. 2004). Engaging in dialogue about such concerns can be step toward taming wicked problems that otherwise persist as roadblocks to progress in managing resources valued by citizens and forest managers.

2 APPROACH AND METHODS

My kids and I used to ride into the backcountry on our horses six or seven times a year. My family did that when I was growing up. That experience creates memories that you can't change. It is a sharing of experiences with my wife and kids in the backcountry. It is more than just a forest to us; it is part of our way of life.

Physical environments are visited, cherished, ignored, and otherwise actively and passively interact with human experience. Places occupy multiple dimensions in human life. They are points on a map, a memory of a family outing, a photograph, the remembered scent of a pine forest, a meadow for grazing cows, or an expression of cultural history. Some geographic spaces inspire human experience and enrich the lives of people who visit or know some of the earth's dramatic landscapes. Landscapes are thus more than a ridge top or an aesthetically pleasing lake: they are thoughts, cognitions, sentiments, and understandings

that link human experiences, community, and personal identity with geographic spaces. Contemporary social and psychological science describes such connections and attachments as a “sense of place” (Eisenhour, Krannich, and Blahna 2000; Jackson 1994; Basso 1996).

The Ashley National Forest is both a physical and sociopolitical space. But, what kind of space is it in the minds and experiences of those who live near it or otherwise value it? What is the meaning of this space and how does it affect the lives of people who value it? These are the types of questions this work proposes to address by applying a sense of place approach. This approach suggests that places such as the Ashley National Forest are “constructions” of human experience and cognition: that is, people interpret and invest places with meaning that results from a combination of personal and community experience, knowledge, and emotional response to their environment (e.g., Williams 2004). A “place” becomes both a geographic and personal/community space constructed from values, beliefs, and experience.

This approach is implemented using ethnographic discussion methods (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte 1999; Spradley 1979) to identify how individuals attentive to the Ashley National Forest construct the meaning of this landscape from values, beliefs, and experiences. A discussion guide (Appendix) was developed and used to structure open-ended discussions (Bernard 1995; McCracken 1988). Potential project participants were identified through consultation with the Forest Service, county government officials, and other locally knowledgeable persons.

Existing socioeconomic documents were reviewed during January of 2008 as preparation for an initial field visit in February of 2008. The initial field visit discussed methods and procedures with the Forest Service and identified preliminary contacts based on discussions with local government officials, Forest Service staff, and other locally knowledgeable persons. The first field visit for data collection began in late March and had duration of 13 days. A follow-up field visit for five days was conducted in early May of 2008.

More than sixty persons participated in discussions for this project. The majority of these discussions were one-on-one with individuals, although several persons participated in some of discussion sessions. The duration of the discussions was between forty-five minutes and three and one-half hours with an average time of one to one and a half hours. Additionally, causal contacts were made with local businesspersons, recreational users of the forest, and individuals with particular knowledge about forest use and management. These casual contacts were intended to develop the understandings about specific points identified in the longer discussion sessions. The results of all discussions were recorded in approximately 250 pages of fieldnotes, which are the basis for the analysis presented in this document.

These data were coded using both pre-defined and emergent codes, that is codes that are developed from the unique information that emerges from the data (Dey 1993; Strauss 1987). The coded information was organized into topic groups and then examined for themes to describe the identity, values, and benefits about the Ashley National Forest. The organizing categories and themes within those categories are the basis for the organization of this report.

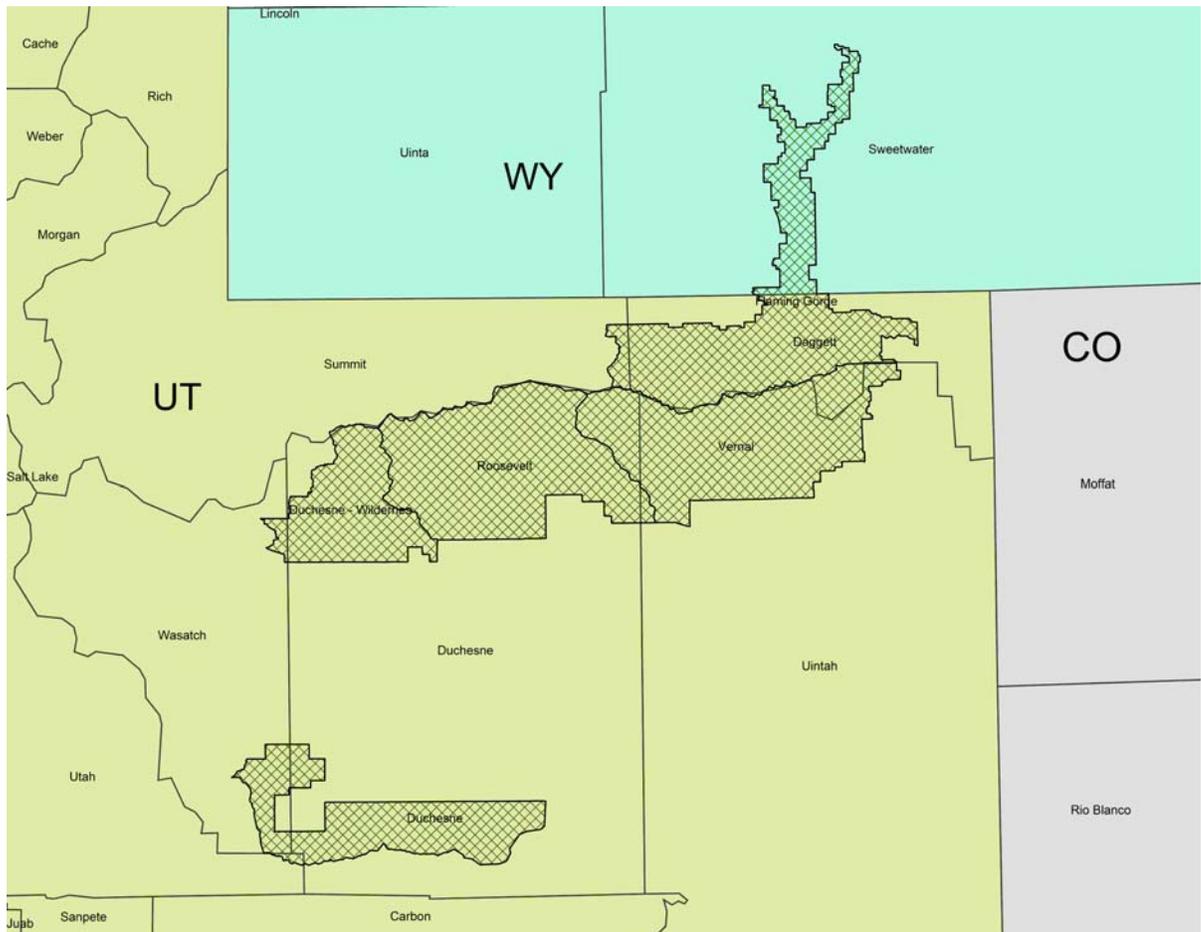
The information presented in this document provides a different set of information than either survey or socioeconomic assessment data. This information was collected and synthesized to identify local perspectives about points for dialogue regarding forest resources and management. These perceptions and assessments of participants may be factually correct or in error, but most importantly they express a range of points of view from selected individuals that frame issues and imply solutions relevant for forest management and planning. This information may also be used in conjunction with socioeconomic data

(Eichman 2008) to understand issue amplification (e.g., Masuda and Garvin 2006), assessments of agency effectiveness, or other relevant factors affecting public evaluation of forest planning and management. The information from this work thus offers a local perspective about key issues from concerned publics that can be placed within a broader context of information about the social environment for the Ashley National Forest.

As noted previously, the strategy used here identifies major themes expressed in the discussions about ANF resources and management. It is recognized that this strategy does not fully address the complexity of the issues of concern to project participants. Similarly, the effort to construct “points of dialogue” means that not every point made by every participant is included in this discussion. This effort is to represent the major ideas as basis for future discussions among stakeholders, the Forest Service, and others participating in the planning process. For those who read this document and find there are omissions of important key issues, it is hoped this will provide the stimulus to bring these issues to the attention of forest managers and planners.

3 THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Figure 1: Ashley National Forest and Adjacent Counties



The majority of ANF lands are located within Daggett, Duchesne, and Uintah counties in Utah and Sweetwater County in Wyoming. Smaller portions of the ANF are also located in

Summit and Wasatch counties in Utah. Uinta County, Wyoming also has economic and social ties to the ANF. The Governor’s Office of Budget and Planning (Utah 2005) and a TEAMS Enterprise (Eichman 2008) economic assessment provide detail about the demographic and economic conditions in these counties. These reports indicate that in 2006 total population of the four major counties is more than 80,000 persons. Uinta County, Wyoming (20,213), Summit (35,469), Utah (464,760), and Wasatch (20,255) counties in Utah add more than 521,000 persons to this social environment. However, data from the National Visitor Use Monitoring Survey (NUVM) as referenced in documents prepared by the Ashley National Forest indicate a larger population within the broader social environment:

About 75 percent of Utah's more than 2.5 million people live within four counties along the Wasatch Front. The current population growth in Utah is expected to continue, and to double by 2035. This information is important because NVUM reports indicate that 75 percent of visitors to the Ashley National Forest come within 214 miles of the Forest, and this distance zone includes most of the land in the Wasatch Front counties.¹

The major population centers in each county are summarized in the following table adapted from the TEAMS Enterprise socioeconomic analysis:

Table 1: Population of Counties and Communities

<u>County</u>	<u>2006</u>
<i>Daggett County</i>	947
Manila	303
<i>Duchesne County</i>	15,701
Roosevelt	4,681
Duchesne	1,506
<i>Summit County</i>	35,469
Park City	8,044
Coalville	1,419
<i>Uintah County</i>	27,955
Vernal city	8,163
<i>Utah County</i>	464,760
Provo	113,984
<i>Wasatch County</i>	20,255
Heber	9,775
Midway	3,117
<i>Sweetwater County, WY</i>	38,763
Green River	11,933
Rock Springs	19,324
<i>Uinta County, WY</i>	20,213
Evanston	11,567
Lyman	1,962

In addition to the demographic and socioeconomic context described in the TEAMS Enterprise economic report and information from the Governor’s Office of Planning Budget,

¹ This text is from a document in preparation by Recreation Staff of the Ashley National Forest.

there are other noteworthy characteristics of this social environment that provide context for presentation of beliefs and values about forest resources and their management. These other characteristics include regional history, social geography, distribution of population growth, the character of rural economies, and the rural lifestyles of adjacent communities. Each of these points is briefly developed below.

3.1 Historical Context

Prior to visits from Spanish explorers Fathers Silvestre Velez de Escalante and Francisco Dominguez around 1776, ancestors of the present day Ute Tribe were among the Native American inhabitants whose traditional territory included portions of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, and beyond. Until their initial contact with Escalante, Dominguez, and other Spanish explorers, the Ute ancestors maintained a lifestyle that was consistent with the traditions of other southwestern and Great Basin Native Americans (O'Neil and MacKay 1979; Conetah, MacKay, and O'Neil 1982). Subsequently, other explorers including Bridger, Ashley, and Carson continued to make contact with the Ute, but it was not until the arrival of Mormon settlers in 1847 that more sustained contact ensued. A history of conflict and dispute, similar to that of other tribal peoples in the western United States, eventually resulted in the relocation and confinement of tribes to reservations, including the present-day tribal lands at Fort Duchesne (Nelson 1997).

Lands outside the Uintah Basin were a focus for early Mormon and other settlers. Initially, there seemed to be little interest in Uintah Basin lands described as a "vast contiguity of waste...valueless excepting for nomadic purposes, hunting grounds for Indians and to hold the world together." In the late 1870's some early settlement began and this accelerated with the opening of Indian lands in the early 1900s. Mining, dairy cows, ranching, herding sheep, farming, and timbering were among the activities that focused the economies and lifestyles of the early settlements (Nelson 1997:13-19). The development of natural resources was fundamental to the history of these communities. Marketing alfalfa, oil and gas, and other resources also contributed to various cycles of "boom" and "bust" that appear to have characterized the history of this region (Burton, Utah State Historical Society., and Uintah County (Utah). County Commission. 1996).

3.2 Socioeconomic Context

How would I describe our community? This is a small, somewhat isolated, rural community with a politically conservative orientation. If you like the out of doors, this is a great place to live. By far our greatest asset is our public lands. We don't want them to become a tourist destination, but they add to the quality of our life here.

Counties in Wyoming and Utah express a strong sense of attachment to the Ashley National Forest and other public lands. These are rural communities with traditional lifestyles that value natural resources for both instrumental and amenity uses. This section briefly summarizes some of the demographic and economic highlights about this context.

3.2.1 DEMOGRAPHY AND SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY

We are remote, rural communities. We don't have a railroad and we don't have an interstate. We are a few miles from nowhere here and we like that.

The physical geography of this region of Utah appears to influence social geography. The Uinta Mountains are one of the few east-west mountain ranges in the continental United States. Communities on the southern side of this range include those in Uintah, Duchesne, and Wasatch counties while the North Slope is home to Daggett County, Utah and Sweetwater and Uinta counties, Wyoming. On the northern side of the mountains, Evanston (~12,000) in Uinta County and Rock Springs (~20,000) in Sweetwater County are the largest population centers. Daggett County, Utah expresses the predominately-rural character of the region with a total population of less than a thousand. On the southern side the communities of Vernal (~8,000), Roosevelt (~4,700), and Heber City (~10,000) also express the rural character of communities in this region. However, the presence of large urban centers within a one day or less drive from the forest also contributes to the social environment of the ANF. Denver, Colorado, Salt Lake City and other communities of the Wasatch Front (communities from Logan, Utah to roughly Provo, Utah near the Wasatch Mountains) are important sources of visitors and others interested in the future of the Ashley National Forest.

The distribution of population growth among the associated counties is also noteworthy. Counties on the northern side generally had less population growth between 1990 and 2006 than counties on the southern side and the Wasatch Front. As noted in the TEAMS Enterprise report, from 1990-2006 Daggett County experienced a 37% increase and Uinta County, Wyoming increased 85%, while Sweetwater County decreased about .2% (Eichman 2008:4-5). Uintah County and Duchesne County on the south slope increased 26% and 24% respectively, while Wasatch County increased 101%, Utah County 76%, and Summit County 129%. Counties directly adjacent to the ANF have experienced modest population growth, but the larger urban areas that supply visitors to the ANF have higher rates of population growth. Participants in the rural communities associated with the ANF perceive change associated with population growth. Some of this change is attributable to a perceived influx of oil and gas workers and some is associated with growth associated with rural and residential development:

In the past we were a small town and it felt like a small town. We have one stop light and a few families. But now we have a lot of stoplights, there are lots of second home subdivisions, and the pace of life has changed. We are not a small town anymore.

The ANF also shares a boundary with the Ute/Ouray Indian Reservation that is located within three counties of the Uintah Basin. The Utah Governor's Office of Budget and Planning Report describes this Reservation and its population as follows:

The Ute Indian Tribe is made up of three bands— the Uintah, the White River, and the Uncompahgre. According to the Tribe's Department of Vital Statistics, the enrolled membership of the Ute Tribe is presently 3,120 members. Eight-five percent of members presently live within the boundaries of the Reservation.

The presence of Indian lands in the midst of relatively large holdings of federal lands is a noteworthy characteristic. This highlights the social importance of the ratio of public to private lands in this region:

We have a laid-back lifestyle here and we value the opportunity to do things out of doors. Public lands here allow us that opportunity, but there is so much public land that it limits private development and our ability to grow.

For those in agriculture, the ratio of public to private lands has direct implications for local economies and lifestyles:

Because there is limited private land and a lot of public land, people in ranching depend on access to the forest for grazing, especially in the summer. Many of the operations here could not exist without access to public lands. If we lose people in ranching, we lose an important part of the values and lifestyles that makes our community what it is.

This social geography indicates this area is characterized by mostly rural communities with significant urban populations nearby. Additionally, ANF lands border the Ute reservation that contains a significant Native American population. Public lands represent a relatively large percentage of the county lands adjacent to the ANF and this appears to amplify public interest in forest management.

3.2.2 RURAL LIFESTYLES

Among those counties directly adjacent to the ANF, rural lifestyles predominate.

People here enjoy having their own space. People like outdoor activities, especially hunting, fishing, and going camping with their extended families. The out of doors is what we are all about.

This is a place of small towns that are out of the way. There are mostly small farms and a close to the land lifestyle. Church and family are important to us. Hunting and fishing have always been a part of our way of life.

These lifestyles appear to have direct ties to the ranching, farming, mining, and logging history of the Uintah Basin. These traditional natural resource based lifestyles continue to exist.

We are a live off the land kind of people here. Without oil and gas, ranching, farming, and timbering we would not be who we are. That is what established this land. This is our wild west. People who live in the wild west like to go out into the forest and shoot cans, snakes, and be who they are.

We feel a strong ownership for the land. We are blue-collar folks who work long and hard. We don't like a person telling us what to do and don't do and come in here and take away something that has been part of our heritage. This is land used by our great grandparents and that connection creates a sense of ownership, even when we don't own it. It is 'ours' and we feel that strong ownership. Sometimes the Forest Service does not understand that connection and true love people have for this land.

The importance of the agricultural heritage in this region is noted as especially important:

In the recent past agriculture was what sustained this county. Oil and gas has always been up and down, but agriculture has been steady. We are mostly family farmers raising beef cows, some alfalfa, corn, and a few other crops. A large operation here is five hundred cows, but I would guess most

are less than 200 and probably many less than 50 head. Duchesne County probably has more cows and the Vernal area has more crops.

I grew up in agriculture. Now, most people who are in ranching or farming probably have a second job just because of the industry. But, there is a strong lifestyle value in being in agriculture. It is important to me to maintain that lifestyle because it is an opportunity to teach my kids the value and benefit of hard work. That is a priceless value that our kids learn from being in agriculture.

Such statements indicate a strong connection between rural lifestyles, community values, and the Ashley National Forest. Similar sentiments are expressed in the following comments that describe the perceived quality of life resulting from these connections:

We have been listed as among the best places to live in the west. We have development coming in here and saying we have a great opportunity to attract people to the community. We know that the quality of life here is related to the value of our land and the presence of public lands makes the area more desirable.

We have a good quality of life here. Crime is not what it is in the cities; there is a good wholesome atmosphere to raise kids. There is a lot of opportunity for out of door activity. Lakes, streams, hunting, boating, and places like Flaming Gorge really add to the quality of life here. We don't have all the retail we would like, but with the Internet you can get almost anything you want.

The presence of oil and gas resources in northeastern Utah and southern Wyoming has resulted in cycles of development and limited activity: boom and bust. A recent "boom" in this industry has stimulated local economies as well as affecting the quality of life in adjacent communities. Participants in this work note that these affects include population growth, increased diversity among residents, increased employment, higher wages, increased housing prices, decreases in the availability of affordable housing, increases in substance abuse, and an overall "busy" pace of life.

This most recent boom has caused increased cost of living for most of us, higher real estate prices, increases in traffic, housing shortages, and our infrastructure overall is just strained to the max.

Other observations about the quality of life effects of oil and gas development are more critical as suggested in this excerpt from a written comment:

I wonder if and when we will be happy, and how much we will need to be happy? Of course we want our children to grow, work and prosper near home. But how much of this kind of growth is too much? When the garbage along the Bonanza Highway tops the fence lines? This false affluence fosters filth, and that's the future we are giving to Uintah Basin kids.

These close to the land and resources lifestyles also appear to result in an assessment of local knowledge as more informed than the opinions of those who live distant from the forest:

People who live in the city don't really know what wilderness is. They don't know the land the way we do because we are close to it every day. The city people don't know the facts from their own experience; they know what they have learned from some email list. They tend to be the ones who oppose the Forest Service without knowing the facts. The people who live here are the ones offering the solutions to forest problems and not just saying 'stop it.'

3.2.3 THE CHARACTER OF RURAL ECONOMIES

The TEAMS Enterprise draft assessment of economic conditions describes the employment and income for different economic sectors within counties adjacent to the ANF. These data indicate that natural resources account for about 9.8% of employment with mining (mostly oil and gas) and the combined sector of agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing accounting for the majority of that employment (Eichman 2008:5-6).² Other sectors with a noteworthy share of employment include Retail Trade (17.5%), Government (16.1%), Construction (12.2%), Health and Social Services (9.2%), and Services (7.1%) (Eichman 2008:7). Personal income data shows that the Natural Resources sector has the highest share with 20.4% with mining accounting for the majority of that income (18.9%). Other noteworthy sectors are Government (18.1%), Construction (16.2%), and Health and Social Services (6.9%) (Eichman 2008:10). This assessment also implies that the natural resources on public lands add to economic diversification. That is, new residents are attracted to the amenities provided by open spaces, scenery, recreational opportunities, and other natural resource values (e.g., McGranahan 1999).

The Ashley National Forest has a role in providing amenity values as well as other economic benefits, including fiscal benefits to adjacent counties, employment and income related to grazing, mining, forest products, forest restoration, and recreation, including a noteworthy contribution by out-of-area sports fishermen attracted to the Green River and Flaming George Reservoir (Eichman 2008:10-17). Some participants emphasize that given the small scale of local economies, large impacts can result from relatively small changes.

The broad picture of the socioeconomic environment of this forest suggests this is a geographic area distant from urban areas with a relatively low population density concentrated in a few communities. The settlement and subsequent development of this relatively isolated region indicates a history of extractive use of natural resources, including those of the Ashley National Forest. These industries have shaped lifestyles and affected values and beliefs about natural resources. As with other communities in the west adjacent to public lands, demographics and economic conditions have changed and these changes affect the use and understandings about forest resources (e.g., McCool and Kruger 2003; Krueger and Casey 2000). The growth of urban areas, within a half day's drive of the forest (combined population of communities along the Wasatch Front, including Salt Lake City, now exceed 2,000,000 people) is resulting in more visitors seeking a quality of experience that may present conflict with those in adjacent rural communities where values are often different (e.g., Shields et al. 2000).

² These data address the broader economic environment but not employment and income specifically related to the Ashley National Forest. The TEAMS analysis also includes an economic dependence analysis that is more specific to employment and income directly related to the ANF.

4 BELIEFS AND VALUES ABOUT FOREST MANAGEMENT

When presented with a relatively open forum in which to discuss the Ashley National Forest, project participants frequently began with comments about the Forest Service as the managing agency. These comments can be categorized into two groups: institutional and forest-specific. The institutional responses have content about agency-wide issues such as budgets, personnel expertise, and the effects of turnover in leadership positions. Forest-specific issues have content about the management style, responsiveness, presence, law enforcement needs, and other topics specific to Ashley National Forest management.

These beliefs and values are noteworthy because they affect the overall planning environment, especially public assessments of the ability and capacity of the ANF to develop and implement meaningful plans for the future of this forest (cf., Cvetkovich and Winter 2002).

4.1 Institutional Issues: The Forest Service as Managing Agency

Participants identify specific issues about the capacity of the Forest Service to meet its mandates. These specific concerns exist within a more generalized assessment that budget cuts, personnel, changes, and litigation are among factors that contribute to current conditions within the agency. For example,

The philosophy of the agency is changing. Some of that is budget cuts and change in personnel. It seems they think it is too much trouble to deal with people. Most every meeting we go to with them, they tell us they can't do something because of budget.

At some point in a conversation with them about almost anything they are going to raise budget as an issue. They will say, 'we would consider that, but' They had to close the campground at Strawberry because of no budget to deal with trees that might fall.

Without sufficient budget to maintain existing facilities and resources and without the expertise and knowledge to understand how forests function, publics appear to have a broad concern about the future direction of the Forest Service. Such an assessment is part of the social environment for the ANF and it may affect public expectations about what can or should be accomplished for the future. Such an assessment also provides local managers with the opportunity to communicate about what can be done and not only what is limited by budget, personnel, and legal issues.

4.1.1 MISSION CLARIFICATION

Participants expressed beliefs about their uncertainty regarding the mission of the Forest Service and ANF managers. For example,

People don't know what they do anymore. We don't see them out on the forest and all we know is that they get sued a lot.

A related theme is the confusion about the responsibility of the agency and its concessionaires:

You know, I am not really sure what the Forest Service does and what the concessionaires do. It is just unclear to me who has what kind of responsibility and if the concessionaires are doing what they are supposed to do and the Forest Service is doing what they are supposed to do. I think there is a gap somewhere that needs to be filled.

This theme may have more direct application to the ANF, but it is part of a larger set of beliefs regarding uncertainty about the agency's purpose and mission. These beliefs also include an expression of concern about the mission of the Forest Service:

They have shifted from being out in the forest to being more of a policing agency. We have lost our timber industry, there is more disease in the forest, and there are massive stands of dead timber just waiting for a fire to happen. What are they doing about that? They seem to have lost their way as forest managers.

Are they supposed to be protecting it, harvesting trees from it, or making campgrounds? How does multiple-use fit into what they do these days? I am not sure what they are supposed to do.

These beliefs imply a need for ongoing clarification of the agency's mission and the role of the Forest Service in managing resources and providing services.

4.1.2 TURNOVER AND MANAGEMENT CONTINUITY

Among the most common participant statements about the agency is concern about the turnover in leadership positions such as District Ranger and Forest Supervisor. Participants often note they recognize that promotion within the agency usually means transferring to another duty station. They also emphasize that this agency policy has specific affects on community relationships, the knowledge of local managers about forest conditions, and long-term planning and project implementation. For example,

For the most part, the Ashley is doing well. But, they don't realize how the turnover in leadership affects us. Our Ranger does a good job of helping us through the bureaucracy, but when he leaves, what happens then? Dealing with the Supervisor's office is like dealing with any big bureaucracy and when they change Forest Supervisors it takes time and effort to build up communication and re-establish expectations. It is very hard on working relationships. They seem to have lost their feel for working with communities.

Some participants emphasize the "loss of institutional knowledge" and how management approaches are disrupted by management changes:

With the changes in Rangers and Forest Supervisors you see the problem of a loss of institutional knowledge. The wild and scenic issue is a good example of that. They have tried to be responsive, but there has been that loss of knowledge that creates a problem. Now we may have to push for a legal understanding to make up for the different understandings we have with them. Those different understandings come from that loss of institutional knowledge by them (USFS).

I went in to talk to them about why they closed a particular road. There was some past history when we talked to them about the same road, but those people had moved on. The problem is that they don't have any history and they don't know their own history about the roads here. Part of that is the change in managers.

The disruption of management continuity is perceived to result in the application of resource management approaches that reflect the philosophy of the Ranger or Forest Supervisor more than the ecological conditions and constraints of the ANF and the Forest Plan.

One of the effects of the turnover in leadership is that long-term projects do not get done. Managing a forest takes a long-term perspective, but when the Rangers and the Forest Supervisor rotate through, then what gets lost is that long-term view. Each new person brings with them their ideas and approach and that lasts a few years and they are gone, then it starts all over again. The Forest Plan should take care of that, but it does not seem to be a working document and it needs to be. Sometimes it seems that for them, this is just a job. But, for those of us that live here, the forest is a way of life.

4.1.3 EXPERTISE AND BOOTS ON THE GROUND

Perceived expertise and presence in the field (boots on the ground) are related themes that suggest concerns about the knowledge and roles of agency managers. Participants perceive personnel changes have resulted in a loss of expertise that adversely affects forest management. The organizing ideas about this theme are expressed in the following statements:

We need to have people in the Forest Service who know the resources and how to manage them. They are losing people who know the resources and replacing them with 'people managers' and not 'forest managers.'

In the past we had forest managers who understood the land and the people. Now we have people who go to meetings. Today the managers don't have the same land ethic and they don't know what is going on out there (on the forest.) The Rangers used to be the ones who pulled the wagon, now it is the environmentalists who do that. Someone needs to be leading the pack and the Forest Service is not doing that now. People don't know what they do and what their mission is. All we know is that they go to a lot of meetings.

Participants also describe agency personnel as more office-bound and less visible in the field. For example,

In most parts of the forest you don't see any one from the Forest Service. They are just not there. It did not used to be like that and it makes you wonder if they know what is going on in the forest. How can they plan for the future and not know what is happening out there?

They need more boots on the ground. They need to get away from their computers and get out in the forest. There is some tree hugger mentality in the office, but the guys in the field are the ones who know what is going on.

As the population has grown we are seeing more vandalism in the campgrounds, especially on holidays and weekends. I would like to see more of a Forest Service presence at those times especially.

There used to be more people in the field than in the office, but that has changed: you hardly ever see someone from the Forest Service in the field. Not only that, they contract a lot of their services out and so you have to ask, what are they doing?

Participants perceive an increased presence provides more direct knowledge of forest processes that is needed for effective management. More presence also provides an opportunity to interact with publics using the forest. This desire for more interactions is perceived as an opportunity to mitigate abuse as well as educational opportunities for forest visitors.

4.1.4 LAW ENFORCEMENT

The quality of visitor experiences is perceived to be affected by increases in abusive uses of the forest and violations, knowingly or not of rules, regulations, and laws. Although participants perceive education and information as important components of addressing such behavior, there is also an assessment that law enforcement is insufficient to meet the volume of abusive behavior:

They have only one law enforcement officer for the whole lake and that person was only here about three weeks of the season. There isn't enough enforcement on the entire forest and that is contributing to some of the problems with facilities.

There needs to be more law enforcement presence because of the ATV problems. Ultimately, law enforcement is not the solution to all the problems. Education is really needed to try and promote the ethics and values about using the forest responsibly.

Although some participants expressed concern about ticketing violators as opposed to using violations as educational opportunities, there is concern that there is a need for a greater law enforcement presence.

4.1.5 EFFECTIVENESS

Participants express a belief that active management and effective planning have been seriously affected by litigation and catering to local interests. For example,

Some of the laws and the lawsuits that have been brought by the environmentalists have stopped management. There is no active management on the Ashley. They make decisions to avoid litigation. How can you manage if your decision making is based on that approach?

They have to remember this is not a county forest and it is not a state forest. It is a national forest. They favor local input way too much and they make decisions to please the county commissioners rather than doing what is right for the resource.

Such beliefs are part of a larger evaluation of the agency as making decisions based on litigation issues or constituent pressure rather than the best forest management practices. Again, this contributes to a more broad-based assessment of the Forest Service as limited in its capacity and willingness for effective management. This suggests the opportunity for ANF managers to clarify their decision making process and the relationship of these decisions to ecological, social, and economic sustainability.

4.2 Ashley National Forest Management

In addition to beliefs about the Forest Service as an institution, participants also expressed specific assessments regarding management of the Ashley National Forest. Some of these specific concerns are related to and influenced by the institutional beliefs. However, they are distinguished here as issues that appear to have content directly related to local management. In general, the majority of comments about the ANF management are similar to those in the statements below:

They are doing a pretty good job overall. They deserve a pat on the back for the good things they are doing.

They have a great staff and we cooperate well with them. They meet with us regularly and they are not too bureaucratic. But, I am not sure they can do much to change the current situation on the forest. Their hands are tied.

The Forest Service does a good job. They care about the resource. They care about how they are perceived by the public and they look forward. They have good management. I think the Forest Service is doing a really good job. I am happy with the facilities I use and the forest seems to be in good shape, so overall I think they are doing well in what they do.

I get along with them fine, they are nice folks. They try to listen, they seem to be doing a good job, but really their hands are tied to do much about the current state of the forest.

In general, we have a very good working relationship with them. They listen to us, but their hands are really tied. For the most part, they notify people, they ask for input, and they are trying to be aware of community needs. They try to remain neutral in their decision making.

This assessment of “a good job” also entails a perception that a variety of factors (e.g., budget, personnel, litigation, etc...) “ties the hands” of current managers. The implication is that although managers do a good job at what they can do, they are unable to do what needs to be done. One implication of these perceptions is that current management and the public may benefit by clarification of the decision space of local managers and the sidebars that influence their decisions and actions.

The themes below organize some of the central ideas expressed by participants about management of the Ashley National Forest.

4.2.1 WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

County governments and other cooperating agencies as well as environmental and other interest groups have ongoing working relationships with the ANF. Generally, these working relationships are described as positive, although with some caveats. For example,

We have a good working relationship with them. They meet with us regularly and we are a Cooperating Agency. We have a seat at the table, but sometimes they do take issues off the table. The Forest Service tends to tell us that they have their rules and regulations, but the BLM seems to be more willing to hear our point of view.

The above statement also expresses a concern about bureaucratic style that is a prominent theme in other comments about working relationships with the ANF:

I would like to see them step back from their bureaucratic stance and be logical. They work with us and deal with us from a manual. If they stepped back from the manual and listened to us rather than just telling us, 'this is our process', then I think we could work some things out better.

We deal with more (national forests) than the Ashley and we had to create a government entity to work with us to deal with the Forest Service. There has been an alienation of the community-agency relationship, not particularly with the Ashley, but with the Forest Service in general. Local governments are key players and we are among the most affected by what they do. But they are not listening to us.

4.2.2 RESPONSIVENESS

Responsiveness is the organizing idea for beliefs about the character of interactions between the ANF and its constituents. Responsiveness entails how the bureaucratic process influences perceptions of the activities and services provided by the ANF. For example,

There is a plan to deal with the need for more trailheads. So, we sat down with the Forest Service and there was a plan for the new trailhead to be committed in phases. Phase I was signs, but they did not follow through. ... We even signed up for 200 hours of volunteer work to get something done. The way they are doing this it will take five to six years and we need the trailhead yesterday. We are getting fed up with their lack of follow-through.

They need to simplify the bureaucratic process. It is too complicated and too time consuming to get anything done with them.

It takes patience to work with them. They operate on a different time frame than most of us understand. It can take a year or sometimes years to get something done with them. Part of it is turnover and the loss of continuity and part of it is just bureaucracy and the mind set.

It has become a tremendous bureaucracy with more people in the office, more paper work, and the forest is going to h**. They are not providing the same services to their visitors that they did when I was growing up, but they have a bigger budget and more people.

Such beliefs express a strong desire for a less complicated and more problem solving style of working with interested publics and Cooperating Agencies. These beliefs also suggest a desire for a consideration of both the agency and public timelines for development and completion of projects. Clarification of the time constraints that are built-in to the bureaucratic process may help to address some of these beliefs, but there is also a need for consideration of public needs for better responsiveness.

County governments expressed some specific concerns that are typified in the following statements:

I am not particularly happy with the direction the Forest Service is taking, but they do listen to us and we meet with them regularly. They tell us what they have planned and that is very positive. They try their best to be even-handed.

The Ashley is not bad, but we would like to see them coordinate with our Public Lands Policy. We would like them to coordinate with us at the appropriate level of government and understand our planning process and priorities.

County officials positively evaluate their regular meetings with ANF managers, but they also expressed desires for a broader understanding of county needs and processes, especially the interaction of county land and resource plans and ANF plans and management actions.

On the other hand, some citizens expressed a desire to ensure ANF managers reach out to the broader community of citizens who may have different concerns about land and resource management issues:

The community of interest is larger than the county commissioners and the local residents. They are important, but they can put on blinders to suit their own needs. We need to make sure that all of the values of the forest as a national resource are taken into consideration.

There is also a theme in other statements about a perceived need to improve the customer service orientation of the ANF:

Their attitude has changed. It used to be they had a good customer orientation, but now the attitude is not 'How can I help you?' but it is more about going through channels and road blocks and the attitude that they can't do something for one reason or another.

They keep bankers hours: they are open nine to five and closed on weekends. When are people using the forest? It would be nice to be able to find someone other than an enforcement officer in the forest at a time when we aren't working.

These types of statements suggest there is an opportunity for the ANF to work with citizens to develop a customer service approach that meets agency and community needs.

4.2.3 COMMUNICATION

County governments as well as a range of others noted there is ongoing and often regularly scheduled contact with the Forest Supervisor and other ANF managers. Participants expressed beliefs this outreach is constructive and has positive benefits.

I will give them credit for meeting with us regularly. It provides the opportunity for us to raise issues and to be informed about what is going on in the forest.

Within this overall positive evaluation, participants also expressed beliefs suggesting some frustration with the process and the outcome of these engagements. For example,

We try to get our points across to them, but, no matter what we say, nothing happens. They will sit and listen and they say 'uh, huh' just like you are doing, but they are going to do what they want no matter what. They listen to us, but nothing happens.

While they do meet with us regularly, they do a lot of head nodding and head wagging, but nothing happens. Yes, they seem to be listening, but they are not hearing what we say and they seem to do little based on what we say.

Participants also suggest there is a need for improved communication about forest resources, recreation opportunities, and management actions. The timing of public meetings and the forums for communicating with the ANF appear to be particular concerns:

We are out in the forest more than they are. What they need to be doing is some cooperation with people who can get the word out. They could use storekeepers, guides, and outfitters to give them input and share information about what is happening on the land. But, I don't see them doing that sort of thing and I don't think they are even interested in that. They need to let the public be part of the process, all of the public, not just the affluent ones that have the time and money to go to their meetings during the middle of the day when the rest of us are working. The general public does not hear the information they need to make an informed opinion, so who is responsible for that?

There is a way for the public and the Forest Service to be more eye-to-eye. What would be nice is a forum where there is an opportunity to talk about what is going on and share ideas and information. Not just have them tell us, but the share information. We don't have that kind of forum now.

4.2.4 DECISION MAKING AND LOCAL CONTROL

Assessments of the effectiveness of ANF management are expressed in comments about the types of decisions made and who should make those decision. A noteworthy theme in the data suggests that the farther the decision maker is from the forest, the less effective their decisions. For example,

Decisions are being made without an understanding of local conditions. As a whole, I don't put the blame on the local office. The big decisions about forest management come from Washington and not Vernal or even Logan.

We hear about budget shortfalls all the time. That is how they explain almost everything that does not get done. But, I think it is more budget foolishness and misplaced priorities. Here is an example. They built a bridge across the East Fork that was not needed and they built this fancy

rest stop at Whiterocks. Maybe someone from Washington thought that was a good idea, but it shows how priorities get misplaced and money is wasted.

Participants expressed more positive evaluations of District-based decision making and some reservations about the bureaucracy they experience when working with the Supervisor's Office in Vernal.

I think management would be better overall if they took more of a District approach rather than make blanket, forest-wide rules. The Rangers on the District know their conditions and if they listen to local people, then you can tailor management.

I give them credit for how they are managing Flaming Gorge. They have done a good job there. That area takes more abuse than anywhere around here (Uintah County), but they manage it well. Usually the local Ranger knows what is best here.

In general, when we work with our Ranger in Duchesne, things are fine and he understands our issues and tries to work with us on how to get things done. But, when we go to the Supervisor's office it is a different story. It is harder to get things done and more bureaucratic. They seem to know less and I would like to see them rely more on the District Rangers who know more about local conditions.

These assessments of local knowledge as necessary for effective decision making are part of a larger set of evaluations of how budget, personnel, and expertise influence management effectiveness.

4.3 Partnerships and Collaborating Agencies

Three themes address existing relationships of the ANF with interested parties and local governments: (1) the role of Cooperating Agencies, (2) the role of permittees and concessionaires; and (3) the mutual benefits of developing partnerships for the future. Beliefs about the roles of Cooperating Agencies are expressed in the following statement:

We are a Cooperating Agency and we should be collaborating up front. Right now the collaboration is more that we go to meetings and they tell us what is being done. We tend to get in at the draft stage of things and not in the concept phase. We want to be in the process early and be involved in more than just responding to a draft.

Other participants express skepticism about the authenticity of agency desires to conduct serious work with Cooperating Agencies:

We are not sure what being a cooperator means right now. It means that you are just slightly, momentarily informed in advance of when the public finds out everything. ...

These statements express sentiments expressed in other comments about the desire for a role in partnerships that includes conceptualizing as well as developing the specifics about management priorities and activities.

Other participants suggest that Ashley managers are not seriously considering the role of Cooperating Agencies, in part because they ask hard questions:

There is a lack of desire to treat counties as a cooperator. They would rather the counties and conservation districts just be a part of the public. ... I think they pay us lip service and let us talk. They listen and they are good people. I am not saying they are not good people, but they don't do anything. ... They need to come back to the counties and conservation districts as opposed to the state where they are getting the warm and fuzzies. ... The counties have been asking the hard questions ... providing the substance ... and (we have) been chastised as being not conducive to a speedy process and disruptive. They wanted to muzzle us because we asked the hard questions. I was called on the carpet by the Forest Supervisor for being disruptive because I asked the wrong question. ... We have issues now, but it is vastly different than the (past forest managers). There is still this overall feeling that they are involved with the counties absolutely because they have to be....

Permittees and concessionaires express the belief that in some instances they have replaced the Forest Service as the front-line staff that are knowledgeable about the resource and its conditions:

People who deal with visitors to the Ashley National Forest are not the Forest Service. It is the volunteers and permittees. Most Forest Service employees sit behind a desk. They are not out talking with people who use the forest and they can easily get out of touch with the people using it. They can also easily get out of synch with the demands. If you want to know what is going on in the forest, you usually don't talk to the Forest Service.

These beliefs also entail the idea that permittees and concessionaires can make a stronger contribution to forest conditions and visitor experiences if the ANF would better use their on-the-ground experience and knowledge. Additionally, permittees and concessionaires express beliefs about the benefits of a working partnership with the ANF:

There is room for mutual benefit in our relationship, but there is a tendency to treat us as someone to regulate rather than as a working partner. We would like to see them change that relationship so that our roles as partners are fully realized.

The third organizing idea regarding partnerships is the potential benefit to the ANF of partnerships with local organizations and community groups. These beliefs indicate a perceived need for agency assistance in managing forest resources that can be addressed by partnerships with community groups.

By in large, we are free from many of the conflicts on other forests. There are not many conflicting uses, there are some, but it is not strong conflict the way you see it in other places. We have the opportunity to develop some meaningful partnerships with Forest Service and local communities to help the forest meet a variety of needs. All the Forest Service has to do is act like they want some input from the people using the forest. Many Forest

Service employees are out of touch with the people who are using the forest.

5 BELIEFS AND VALUES ABOUT FOREST CHARACTERISTICS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The planning environment for the ANF is influenced by beliefs and values about forest characteristics and existing conditions. These beliefs are indicators of general assessments of desired conditions and the needs for change. That is, such beliefs suggest concerns and issues that may be addressed by the forest planning and management.

5.1 Characteristics

A prominent theme in participant statements is attachment to the ANF. These statements express a belief in the ANF as a “local” forest. For example,

People think of this forest as their land. There is a strong sense that we don't like to be told what to do with it.

People who live here think this is their backyard and they can do what they want. They don't like regulations and restrictions. It is just the way we have always thought about it: it is ours and don't tell us what to do.

The forest is a very personal resource for people here. It has always been a place where we go to for relaxation and it is used a lot for family reunions.

There is some variation in assessments of the care local residents have given to maintaining this resource:

It is a forest used mostly by local people. It is a local forest. It used to be a source of jobs for people in the community, but now it is mostly a recreation forest. People love it and care for it and there isn't as much abuse of it as people say.

It is used mostly by local people, some from the Wasatch Front come here especially during family reunion times, but it is a local forest. And, it is not in good shape with all the litter and the ATV abuse is especially bad. People are not caring for it the way they should.

A value related to the “local” character of the forest is accessibility. Participants expressed a strong belief in the importance of easy access to a nearby resource:

One of the important things for us is that the Ashley is very accessible to us. It is close by and there is an openness to it we really enjoy. There are fewer people than some other forests nearby and there is just more space to it.

It is a great little forest. It is close to us, but still remote. It has an east-west mountain range, the Flaming Gorge Reservoir, pristine streams on the north and south slopes, and an incredible number of lakes. It is just an abundant and accessible resource that people here (Wasatch Front) use because it is not crowded. The more people that move here (the more they) create demand on the closest resources. So, we need places like the Ashley.

Although the ANF is valued because it is both “local” and “accessible” it is also perceived as remote or at least removed from the pressures of more urban areas:

The Ashley is a remote forest. It is out of the way and they think their sphere of influence is the Uintah Basin and the energy industry. They have always had independence from the Regional Office and they have been influenced more by the conservative character of local politics.

What I like about this forest is that it is not right next to a major metropolitan area. You can go out and find a quiet place that is out of the way and without too many people. We have wilderness, which is a tremendous asset and ours is unique because the Uinta Mountains go east and west. It is also a wonderful place to view wildlife.

Here on the Wasatch Front we have lots of people moving here with disposable income or they are retired. They want to do it all. They want to snowmobile, ride horses, ride ATVs, backpack, ski, and do it all. The national forest is their playground and the demand is increasing for more playgrounds. One of the reasons people here like the Ashley is that it is close, but not that close. It has that feeling of being out-of-the-way. You can go to the spa in the morning and still have time to be out on the trails in the afternoon.

There are several noteworthy beliefs about the physical characteristics of the forest, including variety in vegetation and landscape features and the overall size or perceived “bigness” of the ANF. The values of the varied vegetation and landscape are expressed in the following comments:

I like this forest because you can have a variety of experience. There is also a range of landscapes and vegetation. People here have a love, not just a like for these mountains. When people go hunting or fishing here, it is not just about getting your limit, but it is going there for the experience of being in the mountains. My dad went to the mountains with us and now my brothers take their kids to the mountains. The forest is part of us, it is not just about how it is used.

What I like is how you can go from low to high elevation and see the vegetation change. You get on an old jeep road and then walk over a stream and you can be in thick vegetation and surrounded by lakes and mountains. There is wildlife and solitude. That is how I think of the forest.

I go to the Ashley maybe five times a year or so, mostly to the eastern portion of the forest because it is close to where I live. I fish in the lakes, and like to hike, and I like to camp. I like going there because there are such a variety of resources. You can see wildlife and have a peaceful experience without too many other people being around.

The size or perceived “bigness” of the ANF is also a valued characteristic:

Compared to other forests, this area is spread out and there is room to travel and find some solitude. That is one of things I appreciate, the open space and the opportunity to get away from town.

The Ashley is a big forest. And there are undeveloped areas that are large. There is the opportunity to get away and to do that bigness really matters.

The forest is big enough that you can take a multi-day pack trip. You can't do that everywhere, so groups like the Boy Scouts and others who want to be out longer have that opportunity.

“Bigness” implies that there is the opportunity for everyone to have a place where they can find the quality of experience they desire, although there is some assessment of increased pressure:

We have some population pressure, but not like the Wasatch-Cache. We are in relatively good shape because we still have plenty of room for people to find what they want and there are no REAL user conflicts they way there are on other forests.

I have lived here all of my life and I am an avid fly fisherman. When we go up on the mountain, we don't like to be crowded so that means we head for the high country most of the time. But, things are changing. Places we used to go when we were kids, you would never see another person, but now those same places are more crowded. It means you have to keep going higher to get away from people. There are also more ATVs on the trails and they have so much access it scares me. But, there is still room up there. We just need to make sure there is room for everyone to have what they want.

Participants also describe the ANF as primarily a recreation forest. There is acknowledgement of other uses such as cattle and sheep grazing and some timber harvesting, but a strong theme is a belief in the recreational character of the ANF:

The Ashley has changed from more of an industrial forest to a recreational forest. Recreation is the primary use now. The other uses like timbering and grazing are important, but especially for people from the Wasatch Front, the Ashley is a recreation destination.

This is a recreation forest. So, our problems are more related to recreation than anything else. There is a little timber and a little grazing, but the biggest use I see is in recreation.

People use the forest mostly for recreation. It is a big time spot for hunters in the fall and people camp there in the summer time, especially at family reunion time. There are some out of town visitors in the fall and summer, but there is more local use. Some people gather firewood and there is a little timber, but it is really a local recreation forest.

5.2 Existing Conditions

In addition to observations about forest characteristics, participant statements also contain descriptions and evaluations of forest conditions and the quality of visitor experiences. Such information provides a basis for understanding community perspective on environmental quality and user experiences.

There are two contrasting assessments of overall forest conditions: one perspective suggests the forest is healthy and in relatively good shape and the other perspective suggests forest health is compromised by bark beetle infestations. The positive assessments of forest health are expressed in such statements as:

I grew up here in Roosevelt. Compared to when I was growing up, I think there is less water on the forest. There is much more access and more people are in the forest, especially ones on ATVs. Overall, I think it is similar to what I remember it as a kid. There is great quality in that landscape.

The forest is not in bad shape. I would like to see them manage the forest to stay as it is, but they need to consider the effects of increased population and more uses. They need more people on the ground and more enforcement as population grows.

Among those who perceive forest health as “poor” the explanations for this condition focus on the aesthetics of beetle infested trees and the fire danger they pose. These conditions are perceived to be caused by either insufficient timber harvesting and grazing or by management practices that have not taken into consideration the ecological conditions of this forest. There is also a strong perception of the need to harvest timber because it should be used and not allowed to burn or rot:

My family has been here (Daggett County) a few generations. We grew up using the forest. We gathered firewood, hunted, fished, went horseback riding, and spent a lot of time in the forest. Today the forest is in pretty poor health because of the beetle kill. We need to have some timbering to thin it out and reduce the fire danger.

I just get sick and tired of how the forest looks because of the disease. The timber is going to waste and we are not getting anything out of it. Timber re-grows and we need to use it. The Forest Service is not the Park Service. The point isn't to preserve it, but to use it. If we have wise use of resources, then you will have the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Don't just let the trees rot.

We are concerned about the Douglas fir bark beetle. It needs to be managed or else we are going to go down the same road as what happened in Yellowstone. A big fire is on the horizon. They need to salvage that timber that is beetle kill and get a useable product out of it. They have moved away from that kind of thinking.

A different perspective emphasizes past management strategies and particularly fire suppression as a contributing factor to degraded forest health:

Management has created the current dilemma by managing outside the ecological constraints of this landscape. This landscape has a lifecycle of growth, beetle infestation, and then fire. After a fire that cycle starts all over again.

The forest has the problems of density and intense beetle problems because of past fire suppression to conserve timber. That has created the situation we have today and not a lack of timber harvesting.

There has been a lot of degradation of the ecosystem in more recent years. Fire has played a big part in that. The loss of multiple-use has contributed to the fire conditions on the forest. If they took all the money they spent on fire and put it into the ecosystem, then they would have a showcase forest.

Another prominent theme in assessments of degradation of forest conditions concerns perceived damage from off-road vehicle use:

I have noticed a lot of damage to places I visit in recent years. It is mostly due to ATV use, but as they have closed roads, things seem to be improving.

In my lifetime I have seen the forest go from being in good shape to being threatened by the damage caused by off-road vehicles. They go across meadows, they tear up trails, and they go anywhere they want to. There are responsible riders, but the ones that are not can cause a large amount of damage in a short space of time.

Perhaps the most prominent theme about existing conditions concerns the level of maintenance for trails, campgrounds, and other facilities. Although the specifics about trails and campgrounds are described in more detail in the next section of this document, the point for this discussion is the evaluation of facility maintenance as a component of existing conditions. The following statements express these types of beliefs:

I have been going there most of my life. What I see is that compared to the past there is more dead timber and denser tree stands in the wilderness. There are more dry and rough grasses than in the past, but you don't see much in the way of noxious weeds in the wilderness. Outside the wilderness, the forest is thicker. Those are some of the differences, but the biggest difference is that the trails are not as well maintained and the campgrounds are not either.

This is an easy access area for people from the Wasatch Front. The campgrounds are well used. People are looking to the forest as primarily a recreation resource. Increased population and development is increasing demand for use of the forest, but maintenance and repair is not keep up with demand.

The campgrounds, trails, and roads all need repair and maintenance. They don't seem to have the budget to do it, but use is increasing and so are the problems. I know they have trouble getting seasonal help now because of the competition with the oil fields and trying to find housing for seasonal workers.

Forest conditions are also perceived to be degraded by the presence of litter on trails and in campgrounds. Participant statements describe trash in campgrounds, beer cans and litter on trails and in campgrounds, and sites where camp trailers and recreation vehicles have dumped their sewage. The severity and extent of this litter and trash contributes to a

perception of degraded conditions. These sentiments are expressed in the following comment:

Since I was a kid, there is a place I have been going to up in the mountains. Last year we went up there and there was garbage all over the place. We collected a dozen beer cans in a quarter mile walk up the creek. It was a teaching experience for our kids, but it was disturbing to me because of how it has changed from what it used to be because people are trashing it. I hate regulations, but there needs to be some education about littering and caring for the land.

6 BELIEFS AND VALUES ABOUT FOREST RESOURCES

Participants discussed a range of beliefs and values about the ANF and its resources. These beliefs and values are organized into four groups:

- Use and amenity resources describe beliefs and values about visitor interaction with ANF resources or values that enhance visitor experiences.
- Ecosystem component refers to beliefs and values about physical resources of the ANF.
- Special designations such as roadless areas, wilderness areas, scenic byways, wild and scenic rivers, and similar landscapes and features of the ANF.

For presentation purposes these categories are used to aggregate diverse comments about particular resources and types of activities associated with the ANF. However, participant beliefs and values about each of these types of resources appear to be informed by an organizing framework to natural resources. A framework is composed of core and entailed beliefs organized by some fundamental propositions. These frameworks are important because they appear to be the basis for explaining problems, processes, and solutions (e.g., Holland and Quinn 1987; Hutchins 1995), including the human-nature relationship (Kellert 1995). Some common frameworks about the human-nature relationships in American culture re: utilitarian (focused on the use of resources), intrinsic or biocentric (focused on the biological processes in nature), anthropocentric (focused on the benefits of nature for man), as well as other types that the literature suggests exist in various regions of the United States (Ellen and Fukui 1996; Kempton, Boster, and Hartley 1995; Soul e and Lease 1995).

Frameworks about human-nature relationships are often transparent: we use them to construct and interpret nature and our relationship with it, but we are not necessarily conscious of the framework's structure. This transparency can contribute to misunderstandings and conflicts about specific issues because the explanatory models that are part of the framework may imply different assessments of problems and solutions. For example, a "utilitarian" view of nature implies humans have a moral responsibility to cultivate nature for human benefit whereas a "biocentric" view implies nature benefits most when human intervention is limited. Or, one person looks at a snag in the forest and sees board feet while another sees woodpecker habitat: both see the same tree, but interpret its purpose and meaning in significantly different terms. Similarly, participants who have utilitarian values and beliefs tend to view multiple-use primarily in terms of its social and economic benefits. Participants who hold what can be termed intrinsic or biocentric values and beliefs evaluate multiple-use in terms of its benefits and threats to ecological integrity and biodiversity. Individuals with utilitarian views tend to evaluate grazing as an asset to forest health, a benefit to the custom and culture of ranchers, and as providing economic

benefits to adjacent communities. For those with intrinsic values and beliefs, grazing is evaluated as a threat to riparian areas and providing little economic benefit in relationship to the potential threats to ecological integrity.

Although the utilitarian and intrinsic perspectives are not the only ones affecting public beliefs and values about forest resources, they are commonly expressed in participant comments. This suggests careful attention to clarification of the values and beliefs about particular issues in public dialogue about these topics.

The following statements are indicators of different frameworks that appear to affect assessments of forest resources. The first two statements express a framework about the interconnections among natural and amenity resources. This framework suggests the importance of considering the interactions among all forest resources:

There isn't just one resource that is important to me. This is a forest that has some grazing, some timbering, and opportunities to hunt and fish. I like dispersed camping and I like to hike. Motorized use has changed where I like to go. Solitude is important to me and the forest is a source of wild country. It is an important watershed and it is important habitat for wildlife. There are also some important archaeological and historical resources on the forest.

The forest has recreational value, but there are also watershed, historical, and ecosystem values. Even the recreational users need to protect the resource as much as anyone. The managers need to promote an understanding of the values of all uses and not just a few types of uses.

A second framework expressed in participant statements is consistent with what is often termed a "utilitarian" perspective on the human-nature relationship:

These forests need active management. You can't log a forest without making some mess, but you can clean that up. Yes, there were some mistakes in the past, but we need to get past those. The forests and the rivers recover quickly and that past damage can be repaired. The earth is here for man to use its resources and respect for the earth means using its resources wisely.

An intrinsic or biocentric framework is expressed in the following statements:

The health of this forest is all about natural processes. Roadless and wilderness areas are the places where those natural processes are allowed to occur without human intervention. Those are the places we need to protect because they are the source of health for the forest.

We take care of Mother Nature and she takes care of us. I love being in contact with nature. I love the feeling it gives me, it is a sense of belonging like belonging to a family only more so. I don't believe we have to control nature. We are part of it and we are the top of the food chain. In the past we had more of an understanding about nature and we had a connection that has changed as we have developed and population has grown. There is a bigger picture we have to keep in mind when dealing with nature.

A common framework expressed among a variety of participants in this work is what can be termed a “conservation” perspective. The following statements typify this framework:

We need to take care of the forest. We know that because our livelihood depends on it. We love this land and we want to care for it, but we think we can use it and care for it at the same time. There is no contradiction there.

People that live in this county have a multiple-use point of view. It is not just one resource, but finding a balance with recreation, oil and gas, timbering, and grazing. All those resource are part of the multiple-use approach we favor toward forest resources.

In presenting the following discussion of individual resources it is important to emphasize how these appear to be embedded within distinct frameworks that imply different problems, processes, and solutions. However, it is also useful to present the particular resources that participants identify as important as described in the following sections.

6.1 Recreation and Aesthetic Values

This grouping of resources addresses values and beliefs about the use and benefits to the quality of experience among those who use or who are interested in the ANF. Participants expressed beliefs and values that were organized into the following categories: aesthetics, camping, connections with nature, open space, quiet and solitude, and recreation.

6.1.1 SCENERY

There are two primary themes about the aesthetic values associated with the Ashley National Forest: (1) the visual character of the forest enhances user experiences and expresses the overall health of the forest; and (2) particular visual characteristics of the forest are indicators of poor forest health. The first primary theme is indicated in the comment below:

You have to appreciate this type of landscape, but it is beautiful to me and it adds to the quality of life here. We like to ride the Red Cloud loop just for the scenery. You can see elk, deer, bear, and all kinds of wildlife in the forest too. But, the scenery is what I enjoy the most.

A similar set of sentiments is expressed in this excerpt from a written comment by a project participant:

(We) drove down to the White River on the Bonanza Highway early this morning. Under a blue sky we climbed out of Vernal, dropped down to the Green River and ascended a long hill to the top of a vast plateau. As we drove along the rising sun swept the distant snow crowned Uinta Mountains to the north, and crept along to illuminate Split Mountain Gorge. The 360 degree view is magnificent. One passes along through miniature geological outcrops and anomalies: gray, mauve and orange. Pronghorn race along trailing their young. The road is open and free (and) you can drive along daydreaming, with your arm out the window and little regard for the yellow center stripe.

These are straightforward if not poetic expressions of how scenic values enhance user experiences. Other participant statements suggest that the more remote wilderness and

roadless areas with their alpine scenery and lakes are important visual attributes of the forest that contribute to user experiences and the overall quality of the forest.

The second primary theme concerns visual characteristics, especially dense stands of timber and downfall. Participants evaluate these conditions as aesthetically unpleasant and an indication of poor forest health. For example,

When I was younger the forest was more open. We had fewer trees and less undergrowth. I don't like the way these dog hair stands of trees look and to me it shows that the forest is not in good health. I would like to see some thinning to clear things out and improve the look of the forest.

6.1.2 CAMPING

Participant statements indicate that opportunities for camping are especially valued resources in the ANF. The importance of these values suggests they should be distinguished as particularly important for ANF users and interested parties. A central organizing idea about camping is the importance of dispersed camping for residents of adjacent communities. For example,

One of the important things about life here is the opportunity for dispersed camping. People want to have that chance to get away and camp outside a campground. They don't want to be next to other people that are not part of their group. That opportunity to get away and camp in the woods is very important to our way of life.

Dispersed camping is often associated with family outings and summer family reunions where members of extended families camp together.

Camping and family outings in the forest are part of our culture and heritage. Those types of uses have gone on for a long time and I cannot imagine living here without the opportunity to camp in the forest.

There is more camping now than in the past, even considering population growth. During family reunion time in July and August it is especially busy. About half the people camping are from out of the area and the other half are local, but it is a busy time and people enjoy having the opportunity to camp.

Participants note that the opportunity for dispersed camping is may be affected by increased population pressure:

Even though we have some big groups that camp in the forest, it is a big enough forest that you can find a camp. But, in the future that may not be possible because the demand is increasing so much.

And, future opportunities for dispersed camping may depend on a self-regulating land ethic among campers:

In the past people had the freedom to camp anywhere they wanted. Most local people did not trash the forest. They took care of their campsites because we have the land ethic and it is where we recreate. You have to be

a responsible user when you camp out of the campgrounds where there is someone to take care of you.

Participants also describe different types of camping opportunities that are available in the “high country” and “low country.” For example,

Camping in the high country is different than camping in the low country. I like the rules they have for high country camping. Not everyone likes those rules, but I think it keeps the quality of the camping in the high country.

Folks that camp in the easily accessible lower parts of the forest for the most part don't mind nearby campers, but they do like to be away. When you pack up to the high country you are usually trying to get away from other campers. We are high country campers. We ride our horses up and find a lake and just enjoy the scenery.

Another noteworthy theme about camping is its importance as a means for residents of the lower elevations to escape the summer heat:

Local people use the forest in the summer for camping. It is close and it is cooler in the mountains. I have a small gripe with some people who take their camp trailers up there and leave them all summer. Some of them move from campground to campground. It is like they turn the forest into a summer home. They get out of the heat and commute to work. It is a long established pattern here.

This long established pattern is problematic for some who perceive the campgrounds are occupied by those seeking a break from the summer heat, but for others this is an acceptable practice that is an expression of local custom and culture.

6.1.3 CONNECTIONS WITH NATURE

The presence of national forests is valued by participants because of the opportunity for experiencing the connection of humans with the natural world.

The national forest is a place where you can learn about the natural cycles of the world and the connections we have with nature. You can see the ecological processes and what makes an ecosystem healthy or unhealthy. Each forest has a particular set of resources and we have to be conservative in how it is managed because we need something left over for future generations.

The last sentence in the above statements entails the value of national forests as a “future savings account” for nature. That is, national forests are landscapes that offer the opportunity to conserve natural processes for future generations.

These connections of humans with natural processes have a spiritual component for some participants as expressed in the following comment:

It is my cathedral, my opportunity to connect to something larger than myself. That is one of the most important values to me of the forest, that opportunity to see something larger than my own experience.

The human-nature connection is also expressed in the presence of a landscape that offers the opportunity to have an experience of “back to basics” that contrasts with modern life.

The forest is a place where you can lose your connections to the modern world. It is a place where you can see the connection of humans with the larger world and the critters that are in the forest.

6.1.4 OPEN SPACE

A corollary to the ANF characteristic of “bigness” previously described is “open space.” Participants appear to value the idea of the forest providing open space because it both limits future development and enhances the existing environmental, landscape, and lifestyle values associated with the forest. For example, the following statement indicates how open space contributes to quality of life in rural communities:

There is a lot of open space on this forest. We have room to roam even though things are getting more crowded. It is still a big forest. That open space is something that is an important value on this forest because you don't feel confined the way you do in town.

Open space also contributes to the aesthetic qualities of landscapes within the ANF:

We have some big vistas here. I like looking up at the mountain and seeing nothing between my fields and the forest. Deer and elk come out of there and feed on our fields and the wildlife gets a benefit from us being here. I like the idea of a place with no houses.

6.1.5 QUIET AND SOLITUDE

The presence of natural sounds and the absence of man-made sound is a value expressed in a range of participant statements.

If you are a quiet person in the woods, you are less disruptive to the environment and to other users. Quiet is one of the things that is important to me because there are so few places to find it. Sit by this highway anytime of the day now and all you hear is noise and trucks roaring by. Getting away from that has value.

I enjoy the quiet of the forest. We are getting more sound pollution in the forest and we need to address it. I enjoy that opportunity to connect with natural sounds. We need places like that and the forest is one the last places where we have that opportunity.

Expressions of the value of quiet are also associated with a desire to experience natural sounds without interruption of motorized users:

What I am looking for when I go to the forest is places where there is quiet and I can just reflect on the experience of being in the forest. I don't want that experience to be interrupted by a motorized vehicle. Those kinds of places are in danger of disappearing and we need to make room for that type of experience in the future of this forest.

Solitude or the opportunity to be in the forest undisturbed by other humans is also a value associated with the ANF. Participants describe the opportunities for solitude as enhancing their experience of the forest in the following statements:

I like the opportunity to be in an area where there are few people. There are just so few places we can do that. As this area grows, those opportunities for solitude need to be preserved. They are some of the highest values about this national forest for me.

We backpack to the High Uintas to get away from the city and to be alone. We like that there are places relatively close by to Salt Lake where we can hike in and feel we are not going to see another soul. Then we can be back in the city and back to our usual life after our time in the mountains, but getting away and having that feeling of being away is important to us.

We ride ATVs. They are a means to an end for us. We use them to get to an area and fish or just sightsee. Some of the areas I want to get to would take me a few days to get their on foot, but the ATV gets me there quicker. Once I am there, I appreciate the quiet, the solitude, and just the aroma of the forest and the peace and quiet.

6.1.6 RECREATION

Recreation activities are an important value for users of the ANF. These activities include backpacking, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, off-road vehicle use, hiking, mountain bike riding, bird watching, and sightseeing. In general, participants perceive there are ample opportunities for recreation. Additionally, participants value the variety of recreational options available on the ANF:

On this side (northern) of the forest there are lots of recreation opportunities. There isn't a capacity issue here yet. ... There is the option for both summer and winter recreation and that variety is important to us.

From here (Heber City) we go to the Ashley for camping and hiking in the summer and hunting in the fall. It seems there are plenty of places to go that are not crowded.

You can fish in the river or go for bigger fish on the lake. We go horseback riding. The hunting is pretty good and the camping is good too. If you want to pack into the wilderness, then you can find some good camping and fishing there too. Sometimes we just like to take a drive in the green part of the forest to get away. That variety is what we like.

Whether it is off-road vehicle use, hiking, or other activities, another important recreational value is accessibility:

The quality of the experience here is very high. You can drive a short distance and be on a trail away from all the pressures of modern life. In a short time you can be on a trail on Dry Fork and escape to a natural setting. I like to walk into beautiful places and access to those types of places in the front country is important. Those lower elevation areas where you can have a high quality experience are important to me.

We go driving along the Red Cloud loop a lot when the road is open. It is an important way for people here to access the forest and it is well used by local people for camping and sightseeing. It is relatively close to town and it is not a big long drive to get there.

We like to ride there because it is close and there are trails we know we can ride on. Everyone seems to get along on the trails if you are respectful.

A less prominent but noteworthy theme is the opportunity for dispersed recreation. That is, participant statements suggest an important recreational value is the presence of a large area of land in which different types of users can find the recreational opportunity of their choice.

The Forest Service has done a good job on opening some improved roads and that has been a good thing. It has dispersed use into a wider area and that helps.

User conflicts are perceived to be associated with concentrating use. A large area where recreation is dispersed is perceived to minimize user conflicts.

6.2 Other Natural Resources

A second major grouping of participant statements describes values and beliefs about particular physical resources of the ANF ecosystem. These resources include oil and gas, vegetation (timber and grazing resources), water, and wildlife. Additionally, some participants expressed values about the benefits of a healthy ecosystem to humans and overall environmental health:

We benefit from the clean air, clean water, and the ecological benefits that come to our environment and our way of life. All of those things are important for a healthy environment and the forest provides that for us. We have to realize that if the environment goes down then we go down with it.

6.2.1 OIL AND GAS

The oil and gas activity on ANF lands is limited in comparison to adjacent BLM and reservation lands. However, during the data collection portion of this work oil and gasoline prices were increasing daily and this appears to have contributed to participant awareness of oil and gas as resources associated with the ANF. In general, participants describe oil and gas resources as a potential benefit to the nation's energy needs as well as providing economic benefits to adjacent communities. Some participants suggest that oil and gas development may be a necessity and the Ashley National Forest should "do its part" to provide this resource. Other participants suggest the potential energy benefits are less than the environmental and social costs. Those expressing these beliefs suggest this is a resource that may be suitable for limited development in some portions of the forest such as the "South Unit" but not in other areas where other forest values can be compromised. Since many of these beliefs express evaluations of the costs and benefits of future development, the details about oil and gas beliefs and values are discussed in Section 7.3.4, addressing management issues and concerns.

6.2.2 VEGETATION: TIMBER AND GRAZING

The primary vegetation resources identified by participants are timber and grass for cattle and sheep grazing. Participants describe timber has having aesthetic and economic value. For example,

I enjoy seeing the trees in the forest. Going up the mountain and out of the basin you get into the trees and they are beautiful to look at. The quakies (Quaking Aspen) are especially beautiful, but so are the pines. It adds to the interest and the beauty of this forest.

Timber on this forest is mostly small. In my mind timber is not one of the best assets of this forest. But, with the kind of timber and vegetation we have, there is an opportunity to use wood fiber here locally. So, it may not be saw logs, but the timber is a wood fiber asset.

Some participants also suggest that firewood gathering is a traditional activity for some families; and, this gathering is believed to have direct benefits for forest health:

People here go to the forest to collect firewood. Our family has done that for generations. It is important to local people to be able to get firewood off the forest. The wood needs to be used, so why not let us collect it for firewood? What we see up there is a dead and dying forest and they need to protect it more. If you can care for it by doing some thinning, cutting down some trees, and allowing collection of firewood, then why not?

As noted in the discussion of forest characteristics and existing conditions, a commonly expressed belief in this work is that timber is too dense and not in good condition:

Timber is an underused commodity on this forest. They used to do lots of thinning to grow better timber, but that isn't done now. There are some very dense stands. We call them black stands and they are places where the light cannot even penetrate the ground. The forest is so overgrown that it needs to be cut for the health of the forest and to prevent a big fire like we had at Neola.

The forest has these dog hair stands of lodgepole pine with no vegetation growing underneath the forest canopy. That does not support wildlife and I think they should harvest some of that timber to support wildlife and to promote diversification of the vegetation.

It has been maybe twenty-five years since the beetle kill became noticeable and since then there have been hardly any timber sales and there hasn't been much other management. The timber in the forest is not in good shape.

Grass and other vegetation for grazing are identified as valued resources for the ANF. Economic, lifestyle, and benefits to forest health are described as important values associated with cattle and sheep grazing of these resources:

Grazing is an important resource on this forest from a couple of perspectives. It supports a way of life, it has benefits for forest health, and

it provides some necessary disturbance for the land. And, we make improvements and do maintenance that benefits other users.

There are also contrasting beliefs that evaluate grazing as degrading environmental quality and adversely affecting the experience of other forest users. These sentiments are expressed in an excerpt from written comments by a project participant:

... this will be the last week I can enjoy the river bottom. The cows are there. Within a short time everything growing will be eaten, trampled, BE'd** upon, reeking with the odor of too many cows on a small stretch of desert land, or it will simply just be turned to dust. Biological soils are just that way.

Other participants note that damage to riparian areas attributed to cattle may also result from other sources:

There is some blame on cattle for damage to riparian areas that you can't really be sure about that. Cattlemen keep cows out of riparian areas, but the elk come in and cause problems. They tear down the fences and cause damage. We have lots of streams here, so the cows can spread out. But, the elk go everywhere and they eat the candy on the landscape. The cows eat the rough stuff, the undergrowth that needs to be cut down. The elk they eat the good stuff.

Many of the beliefs and values about vegetation resources are expressed as needs for change type issues that are presented in the Management Issues and Concerns section.

6.2.3 WATER

Water is the heart of this mountain. It makes or breaks this whole chunk of country around here.

The strongest theme about natural resources of the ANF is the value of water and watersheds.

The most important resource on this forest is the water. Water quality and water volume are the resources that need to be the focus of management on this forest.

The watershed values on this forest are among the most important. We can use those resources and manage them so that everyone benefits. But, they are about the highest value resource on the forest.

The number one resource for our county is water. The watershed is the source of water for our community and without it we cannot grow or sustain ourselves. That is the most valuable resource on the forest.

Participants stress the importance of the "yield" of water that comes from the Ashley National Forest and the relationship of water to timber:

I don't care which side of the mountain you are on the yields that come off that mountain (is important). ... When you have trees your watershed yields

are diminished. And, we have a mountain that is well outside its historic composition of timber species. Grass and shrub lands are reduced that are not only important for watershed, but also important to wildlife. But, the bottom line is we are reducing and with locking up these areas where you can do (vegetation) treatments...

Rivers as well as the lakes and reservoirs are also valued for their recreational benefits:

The reservoirs here are an important asset. People are going to the reservoirs to enjoy some time near the water. So, if you are looking for solitude, don't go to the reservoirs. But, there are plenty of people who do go because they are accessible. There are other small lakes that are not that far away where there are fewer people. Depends on what you are looking for.

Participants also express strong beliefs about the need for the conservation of water. Although the perceived solutions to water conservation are varied, there appears to be some agreement about the value of water and watershed management. For example,

The watersheds on the forest are critical resources. The forest needs to be managed as a watershed for the health of the forest. Part of that means controlling the conifers and the quakies (Quaking Aspen). If you can open up some of the dense stands of timber, then you get more grasses growing and that increases the water yield. With a closed canopy water does not reach the ground. Timber management and watershed health go hand in hand.

Another common topic addressing water resources is the potential designation of waterways as wild and scenic rivers. The specifics of this controversial topic are addressed in more detail in Section 7.4.2.

6.2.4 WILDLIFE

Participants describe wildlife as diverse with strong populations of big game such as elk, moose, and deer as well as other non-game species:

Wildlife is VERY important here. The Uinta Mountains have great opportunities for wildlife viewing and for fishing. It is a high quality resource with as much non-game wildlife value as anything.

I enjoy the opportunity to just go riding in the forest and watching the animals. I can take the loop road and you sometimes see sheep, deer, and a variety of other things. The animals are part of what makes the forest enjoyable for me.

Participants also emphasize the importance of hunting and the role of wildlife on the ANF in providing a high quality hunting experience for a variety of game:

Hunting is huge here. People look forward to hunting season and their trips to the mountain. Generally, we have some of the best hunting around and it is our little secret. There are some outfitters and people come from a ways, but the pressure is not too bad. But, I have a few friends who have

hunted here all their life and they say they don't even go anymore because there are too many people.

Hunting is a big asset for this forest. People come here from out of the area to hunt. I used to go out more than I do now. It is just more crowded during hunting season. When I do go out, it is as much to smell the pine trees, seeing the mountains, and listening to the streams as it is anything.

In addition to game and non-game animals, participants also describe birdlife as well as the fishery resources of the ANF as important resources:

We have a very high quality fishery here, especially on the lake (Flaming Gorge) and in the Green River. The lake trout grow to huge sizes and people come from all over to fish for them. The trout fishery in the river is world class. The fish here are as important as any resource this forest has.

I went down to a southern part of the forest birding (bird watching) and I was amazed. There is such a variety with cranes and raptors. The bird life on this forest is one of its assets that people don't realize or appreciate.

6.3 Special Designation Resources

Participants describe the Ashley National Forest as containing actual or potential resources that have special federal designations such as the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, the High Uintas Wilderness, and the Flaming Gorge and High Uintas Scenic Byway. These are valued resources that participants describe as collectively contributing the quality and character of this forest. Public understandings of these special designations coexist with technical definitions of inventoried roadless areas, designated wilderness, and similar designations. The discussion in this section expresses the content of public understandings that may or may not correspond to the technical and legal definitions of these special designations. Among these public understandings, this section presents prominent beliefs about the National Recreation Area (NRA), the Flaming Gorge and High Uintas Scenic Byway, and the High Uinta Wilderness and Roadless areas.

6.3.1 HIGH UINTAS WILDERNESS AND ROADLESS AREAS

Wilderness and roadless areas are discussed together since participants often link their beliefs about these two designations. While the High Uintas Wilderness Area (HUWA) and forest roadless areas are generally regarded as a substantial asset of the Ashley National Forest, these are also controversial assets. The content of these beliefs about the HUWA and ANF roadless areas are described below.

Inventoried roadless areas are areas identified in a set of inventoried roadless area maps, contained in Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation, Final EIS, Volume 2. Some participants express beliefs about the potential inconsistency the concept of roadless areas roadless areas and the reality on the ground:

There are roads in roadless areas. Why close those roads?

There is also a theme consistent with beliefs about other designated resources, that the roadless designation constricts management options. Participants suggest that areas can be managed to preserve the remote qualities of roadless areas without restricting other management options such as timber harvesting, fire protection roads, and other active

management options. There is also a belief that roadless areas are “de facto” wilderness areas, which is also perceived as limiting management options. A similar belief that is supportive of roadless areas is expressed in the following comment:

Roadless areas often have wilderness values. They don't have to be designated to keep those wilderness values. But, if we don't protect those places, then they are lost forever.

Roadless areas are also valued because they offer the opportunity for the restoration of ecological processes that are believed to have been damaged by past management practices.

This is a forest that has been managed outside the ecological constraints of a lodgepole pine forest. That type of forest has a natural cycle to it that has been interrupted by fire suppression and timber management that did not consider the ecological constraints of this forest. Timbering has been about supporting an industry and not managing within the ecological constraints. For this forest to recover, we don't need more timber cutting. What we need is proper timber cutting. Most importantly we need places where natural processes can restore the health of the ecosystem. Roadless areas are the place where that can happen. Roadless areas need to exist for the recovery and ecological health of the Ashley.

Beliefs and values about wilderness areas overlap with those about roadless areas, especially the value of these more remote areas as opportunities for solitude, inspiration, and high quality recreational experiences:

We go to the wilderness on the Ashley every year. It is a place where there are no ATVs and you can get away from the noise. We go to find a place we can sit and enjoy the scenery and talk about our horses and mules. We tell stories and lies and catch a few fish on the lakes. We need to have those kinds of places where you can get away.

Wilderness is extremely important to me, even if I just go and peek into it every once in awhile. It has a value in our psyche that you can't put a dollar value on. I never darken a church doorstep, but wilderness has a kind of spiritual value that is renewing for me. I can't even put it into words. It goes beyond words and is somehow bigger than our everyday lives.

I have been going to the wilderness since I was a kid. I describe it as a peaceful and adventurous place. If you go far enough into it, there is enough of it, but it is hard to get in far enough. The quality of the experience is very good and I like the opportunity to get away. Compared to being in the city, it gives us a place to be simple. As far as I am concerned, the more wilderness we have the better.

The relatively large size of the HUWA (456,705 acres of which 60% is managed by the ANF) is an important attribute of this resource because it offers the opportunity to experience a natural environment with limited human activity:

You can disappear into the wild and lose the connection to the developed world. It is a large enough area to disappear into. That is a unique value.

The remote and natural character of wilderness is perceived to be important wildlife habitat and as a place where natural processes predominate:

It is important to me that there are areas that are being preserved. Our forests are threatened by extractive uses and there needs to be places like wilderness and roadless areas where the ecosystem is intact and wildlife has habitat. The wildness and solitude are important and just knowing there is a place where nature functions naturally, that is important. Some of those places on this forest are not even designated.

Some wild areas need to exist, both wilderness and roadless areas, where we can see what the resource looked like when there is no human activity.

I put a high value on wilderness. ... Even if I could not go up to the wilderness, it is important to me to know that it is there. Knowing there are wild areas where there is a place for wildlife is important to me. I also like knowing there are places where I can get away from ATVs.

The value of wilderness as wildlife habitat emphasizes places undisturbed by off-road vehicle use:

What we have (wilderness) needs to stay. We need places where there are no ATVs and places that are protected from human damage. Wilderness is also a place where wildlife has a place they can be undisturbed.

Wilderness? We need more of it. Wilderness is the epitome of the non-motorized experience. It is the opposite of urban life and it is crucial to have those types of places. More and more wilderness is important as a place to protect wildlife because they need a place with limited human presence and especially refuge from motorized vehicles.

There are also expressions of belief that the HUWA has value because of its ecological, wildlife habitat, and heritage values.

The mountains on the Ashley are among the most remarkable assets in the region. The wilderness is so large and it needs to be even larger. It is an undeveloped area of the Northern Rocky Mountain ecological zone. It is a unique resource including the value to wildlife as part of a corridor between the northern and southern Rocky Mountains. This is a mountain range that represents the west and we are losing what was the west. There is tremendous value in having that heritage preserved.

Although some participants perceive a need for more wilderness, there are strong sentiments that the existing resource is sufficient, particularly because of the management constraints associated with this designation:

We like going to the wilderness, but we have enough of it. The problem with making more of it is that it just places too many restrictions on what you can and can't do there. The Forest Service does too much of the 'can't do this' and 'can't do that' and there are other ways to manage so that restrictions don't get in the way.

We have a lot and we don't need a whole lot more. It comes with too many restrictions.

There is also a theme that measures the value of wilderness by the amount of visitor usage:

Wilderness is a great resource we have, but it is not used by too many people. It is remote and hard to get to and most people are not set up to go there. There are a number of families I know that have the tradition of going to the High Uinta to camp and fish.

I have never been up there, but I know a few go up there. Why do we need more of something that people do not use much?

And, associated with this theme is the belief that wilderness restricts access to those who are in good health or who have the time and funds to travel to it:

The reason people have trouble with wilderness here (Uintah County) is that it limits who can enjoy it. If you are young and healthy, you can enjoy it, but if you are older and can't hike so far, then you can't.

If you are an avid backpacker or you can hire an outfitter, then you can go to the wilderness. There are some easily accessible areas, but those get hit hard. There are others that are not well used. I don't get much time off because I work a lot. I don't have the time to get to the wilderness, so it is not much value to me as a place to go. It seems like more of a place the elites go. They have the money or they can take off work and not worry about it. The well heeled are the ones using it and the rest of us just work too much to get to it.

There are also related beliefs that expansion of existing wilderness offers adjacent communities few if any economic benefits as a resource of the forest:

We don't see many positive benefits, economic or otherwise, from wilderness. People going to the wilderness buy their supplies outside the county, so we get little benefit from that.

Most of the people that go the wilderness from out of the county never stop in our stores or buy much more than a coke and use the restroom. We don't see any use in having more of that kind of resource.

Among the other beliefs about the costs and benefits of additional wilderness, those who emphasize the costs belief that additional wilderness would constrain future water resources:

It also impacts our water because all our water originates there and there have been hardly any water conservation efforts in the wilderness. We are losing water because of the wilderness that we need for now and the future.

If you expand the wilderness, then you eliminate the potential for watershed management. People here need the water; the community needs the water, so expanding the wilderness is not going to help our water needs.

Although most participants express beliefs about the value of existing wilderness, there is controversy about the benefits of additional wilderness and roadless areas that are managed similar to wilderness areas.

6.3.2 NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

The Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area is identified as a valued recreation resource for local residents as well as visitors who come to camp, fish, hunt, and enjoy the scenery. The varieties of recreational opportunities are especially noteworthy:

The lake is a national resource. You can water-ski, fish, or just get out on the water to enjoy yourself. There are beautiful canyons to get away in, but if you want to be in a campground, there are those too. There is a diversity of opportunity that attracts a wide range of people at all times of the year. You can ice fish in the winter and sail your boat in the summer or catch a trophy fish. It is a great resource.

The NRA makes this part of the forest unique. We have a world-class fly-fishing river and a ninety-one mile long lake. We have marinas and more developed lodging. We get a lot of different types of users here because of the unique resources. They come from the Wasatch Front, Wyoming, Denver, and Fort Collins. The people who can here in six hours or less are our visitors.

Some participants also note the NRA has important economic benefits for adjacent communities:

Flaming Gorge is a huge resource for the Ashley. It is close to Salt Lake City and people can get away there for fishing and boating. The fishing is a huge economic benefit to the forest and that spills over into the nearby communities.

Although there are varieties of recreational opportunities in the NRA, participants emphasize the value of water-based recreation opportunities:

The river (Green River) is the crown jewel of this forest. It is a huge asset of the Ashley that brings people from all over the world to this forest.

In our county we are totally multiple-use of the forest. There is some grazing and a little timbering but our primary connection to the forest is through the NRA. It is water-based recreation for us, that is the big attraction and it is getting bigger. There is trophy fishing on the Gorge (Flaming Gorge reservoir) and in the river (Green River). You can sail and houseboat or camp near the water. Even though we are not too far from Salt Lake City, it is not very crowded and that is important for our recreation.

We live here because of the outdoor and the availability of high quality recreation opportunities. For us, it is access to the forest and the lake (Flaming Gorge Reservoir) that is important. We are big users of the marinas. We go there maybe 15-20 times a year. People come here from all over, Salt Lake City and Denver, but the lake is our backyard. We use it more than the river (Green River).

People come to the lake looking for the water experience. At first they usually don't understand the size of the lake. They start as day-users, then evolve into tent campers, and they progress to fishing boats and then maybe a cruiser.

Although water recreation is especially valued, participants also express beliefs about the importance of the scenic and aesthetic resources of the NRA:

If you have never been to Red Rock Canyon you have missed one of our national treasures. It is a world-class place that has benefit to more than just Utah. The scenic values there are incredible.

6.3.3 SCENIC BYWAY

The Flaming Gorge- High Uintas Scenic Byway is described as both a scenic and economic asset that enhances user experiences of the ANF and the quality of life in adjacent communities.

The Scenic Byway is a big draw for tourists. But, 191 is a bad road when the trucks are on it and you are trying to get through all the switchbacks. But, it is a beautiful drive and you can get to Manila and rent a houseboat.

The National Scenic Byway is an important resource of the forest. People like to hunt, fish, and camp, and those are key activities, but so are the scenic drives. There are very high scenic values on the Byway and you get a sense of the open spaces that are also an important part of this forest.

The Scenic Byway has incredible intrinsic qualities that are an asset for our community. We enjoy taking visitors on a ride over the mountain and seeing the views. It is another one of those resources that enhances the quality of life here.

7 MANAGEMENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Participants identified several specific issues in response to open-ended questions about any concerns they have for the present or future of the ANF. Field notes from these discussions were coded by topic and then sorted into groups by content similarity. These initial similarity groups were sorted and resorted by similarity resulting in the following categories: access and recreation, ethics, education and enforcement; forest conditions and resources, special designations, and management approaches and implementation. Each of these categories contains specific topics addressing a need for change or desired condition.

7.1 Access and Recreation

Access and recreation topics are among the most prominent issues and concerns expressed by participants in this work. As noted earlier, participant statements emphasize the recreational identity of the Ashley National Forest and the importance of providing access for diverse recreational opportunities. These sentiments are expressed in comments such as:

My desire is for the Forest Service to develop the recreational opportunities on this forest. My priorities are seasonal boating and fishing, hiking, camping, and other non-motorized activities. There is some winter

recreation with cross-country skiing and some snowmobile trails. Mostly I would like to see non-motorized recreation developed more.

There is a multiple-use mandate and recreation is part of multiple-use. The demand for recreation on public lands is increasing as uses move away from timber and grazing. But, there is a mismatch in their management and personnel and the needs of forest users. They need to realize that the uses are diversifying and that recreation is not just tent campers and backpackers. They need to plan for future recreation diversity and demand.

What they should be doing is looking beyond the trees and managing all of the resources of this forest. I would like to see them respond to the demand for recreation and the need people have to get away from the crowds when they are on the forest.

The specific issues and concerns developed in this discussion include access, camping opportunities, maintenance, motorized recreation, quiet recreation, and trails and roads.

7.1.1 ACCESS

Access to the ANF was identified primarily as an issue for recreation users. Forest access is among the most prominent concerns expressed by participants. These concerns evoke strong sentiments about present and future management of the ANF as expressed in the following comments:

Access is a huge issue for us. There is more pressure from backpackers, mountain bikers, trail riders, and others who want to be in the forest. We ride ATVs, and we don't need to go everywhere, but we need access and it is a top priority for what they do in the future.

The accessibility of the forest is a big deal for me. I like being able to drive 20 minutes out of town and then run out of buildings. You can go to a friend's house and they have cows and horses in the back yard. It is that casual, rural way of life that is close to large open spaces and opportunities to hunt, fish, and hike that gives us a high quality of life here.

It is all about access. They need to focus on access or else people will not be able to get beyond that. Did I mention that access is important?

Access issues are related to off-road vehicle use as well as other concerns about trails and roads that are discussed in separate sections below. However, the more general concerns about access include policies and practices that appear to "lock out" users from the forest, the effects of road closures, limiting or controlling access, and rights of way issues.

A widely expressed belief is that agency policies and management approaches have the effect of "locking out" users:

If I were God, I would do away with the Forest Service because they are not doing what they are supposed to be doing. They used to take care of the forest and maintain the trails and campgrounds, but that is not happening now. They seem to be trying to preserve the forest and in the process they seem to want to keep us out. I think it is part of the philosophy to keep us

out now. We need access to the forest for recreation. It is about the most important issue we have about how things are managed.

They are starting to lock up national forest lands. Roadless areas and wilderness areas are used by just a few people, but they want more of them. They are closing roads and not maintaining trails. Our area is growing and we need more places for people to recreate. Locking it up at a time when we need more of it (national forest lands) is taking things in the wrong direction.

A principal concern associated with beliefs about being locked out is policies and procedures for closing roads. For example,

They have an obligation to come to the public and the county when they close roads. People in this county oppose closing roads, especially in Flaming Gorge (NRA). If for some reason they need to close a road, then they need to work with us on providing access somewhere else. They are falling down on the job of providing access when they close roads. I know there are problems with people getting off the roads, and when they do that, there should be a penalty. But, any existing road should be open.

In the counties on this side of the mountain (north side), the primary issue with the Forest Service is closing roads. When they close roads they affect multiple-use in a variety of ways. They don't seem to understand that closing roads has a big effect on people here and they do it without talking to people about the overall effect.

In general, participants suggest that road closures occur without sufficient public notice or consideration for the effects of the closure on overall access:

There is one area where there has been historic and traditional access to one ridge, but the Forest Service has started to restrict access by closing roads. If there is what they determine as a redundant road, then they close one. The problem is that they are not informing the public about these closures and it makes people mad. When they close a road where there has been traditional access, then people tend to drive around the gate and cause damage.

Most of us want to conserve the resource and be responsible users. If they tell us the plan and what they are going to do and why, people are likely to support it even if they don't like it. The tendency for them is to close a road without telling people and then they get pissed off.

Some participants suggest the procedure for closing roads should have more management review in order to ensure the concerns of interested publics are fully considered:

It appears that the decision to close a road is now made at a very low level. Before any road is closed, the decision should involve the highest levels of management. It is that serious an issue to us and involving higher management in the Forest Service when a road is closed is a first step in addressing the problems it causes for us.

Controlled access and rights of way issues are two other prominent themes about access to the ANF. Controlled access addresses the concern about increasing pressure and the need to limit access to particular uses in certain areas. For example,

The forest needs to be managed in a way that people can enjoy it. We support multiple-use. Access is going to be important in the future, especially any road closures. Controlled access for ATVs is also going to be a big issue. Everyone needs a place to go and enjoy the forest and have the kind of experience they are looking for. That is what we want to see for the future.

A real asset of this forest is that it is so close to us. In a half an hour I can be in the forest. It also makes the opportunity to find areas where there is no motorized use harder because of all the growth in Vernal.

We work hard and the time off we have is important. We are heavy forest users, but it seems that when we go out what we find is that they have either closed the roads we want to use or the campgrounds are all messed up. Maybe there are a few places where there needs to be some protocols about use.

Participants also expressed concerns about closing of private lands adjacent to the ANF.

Rights of way access across private land to access the forest is a big issue for the future. The Forest Service seems to be letting the county take the lead on that, but they should be more proactive. There are places on the forest that people are getting locked out of long established trails. You can't lock people out of the public lands. You have to protect private landowners, but we need access to public lands.

I have a friend that lives in ... and he has property next to the forest. He is closing off the roads into the Ashley because of all the problems he is having. He is a friend, so I can still use the road, but there are going to be some unhappy people who can't get into their favorite spots.

7.1.2 CAMPING OPPORTUNITIES

The preference for dispersed camping, providing for a range of camping opportunities, and the effects of camping restrictions are the prominent topics in the expressed concerns about camping on the ANF. Participants expressed particular concern about changing rules for dispersed camping:

This 150-foot camping rule is a problem. It is going to be an enforcement problem and they are not going to have the support behind them on this one. In the past you could camp 300 feet off the road, but it was not really enforced. People had their spots and it all seemed to work out. I think the 150-foot rule is going to lead to problems. It is a bad rule that comes from Washington and does not consider how locals use and respect the forest. There will always be some bad apples, but most people are respectful when they camp.

This 150-foot rule is going to lead to abuses because it will concentrate people more. The dispersed camping is important to people and they respect the land.

Participants note that the desired future condition for camping on the Ashley National Forest is more opportunity for dispersed camping, but the proposed 150 foot rule is believed to reduce those opportunities.

What is 150 feet as compared to 300? I can tell you what that is. That is reducing the availability of dispersed camping opportunities by one-half....

Although some participants express beliefs that there are enough camping opportunities for existing demand, there is concern about an upward trend in the demand for the number and types of camping opportunities. For example,

The demographics of campers have changed and rather than a few tents and a wash bucket, people want comfort in their camping experience. I know the Forest Service is aware of that, but they are not responding to the changes. They need to step it up and improve some of the facilities so they match the needs of users.

With closing facilities and changing rules there is a growing pool of people being forced into a smaller and smaller area. Rather than dispersed users throughout the forest, there is a city of camps and tents. Then they say there is damage from too many campers and they close it down. This is not a park. It is a place where people want the opportunity to camp and to have services that allow them to enjoy the limited time they have off.

They have placed restrictions on use in the backcountry. There are restrictions about group size and large families that like to camp together have been affected. I would like to see that changed.

7.1.3 FACILITIES MAINTENANCE AND RECREATION DEMAND

Participant statements express beliefs about the need for ongoing maintenance of existing facilities as well as addressing future recreational demands.

In the past the Forest Service built recreational facilities when they had good budgets. Then, their budgets declined and so has their capacity to maintain those facilities and to develop new ones. The last Forest Service funded trail was maybe fifteen years ago. The trails program is understaffed and under-funded and in general maintenance of trails and campgrounds is an issue.

Not every campground needs maintenance, but most of the places we go to are not in good shape. The toilets may not work, there are no trashcans, and things just seem to be going downhill. Overall, they need to put some effort into the facilities to bring it up to par.

There is some expectation of future decline in facility maintenance as demand associated with population growth and diversification.

We are going to see increased use of the forest in the future just because of population growth. The forest will need to be proactive and plan for those areas to develop to respond for increased demand. Otherwise the campgrounds and other facilities are going to suffer.

I don't want them to build anything new until they can fix what they have. There are some serious maintenance problems they need to work on. It is not going to get any better, especially if this area grows like people say it will.

The horse users of the forest see the facilities as underdeveloped. There are not enough corrals, the parking areas are not big enough, and there are problems with the unloading areas that need to be addressed. This is an area the Forest Service could improve in the future.

7.1.4 MOTORIZED RECREATION AND OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Issues and concerns about motorized use on the Ashley National Forest are consistent with those for other national forests in west: motorized use is growing and controversial. While there are a variety of users who oppose motorized use or certain types of motorized use, there are also strong beliefs among motorized users that their use is legitimate and should be accommodated. The perceived trajectory of motorized use on the ANF is expressed in the following comments:

Our county has one of the highest ATV registrations in the state. There is a huge demand here for OHV recreation and we need large areas for people to ride. This forest is big enough for all of us.

The forest is providing for motorized use. They are doing a decent job of addressing the demand for OHV use. You have to provide for it even if you don't want that kind of activity because there is so much demand.

Motorized users and their supporters perceive there are insufficient trails and other riding opportunities:

Our trail system for off-road vehicles is not what it is on other forests I visit. We could use a decent trail system that connects us to some other nearby forests.

The forest needs more places for people to ride legally. They could develop trails for groups to ride.

The critics of motorized use perceive existing use is damaging forest resources and adversely affecting the experience of other users:

The greatest impact to the forest is from people using their 4x4s and ATVs. It is not the pine beetle or the fires that is ruining this forest. It is people using their ATVs.

A big issue on the forest is ATV use. The forest has become a motorized domain. The forest admits there is a problem, but all they do is provide more access. The Ashley epitomizes the view that it is important to respond to ATV demand by making trails. The more motorized access you provide

the more motorized use there will be. By responding to the motorized users with more access they are depriving other users of the experience they wish to have in the forest. They have to acknowledge that all types of uses have value, but they are not doing that.

They have lost the balance in off-road vehicle use. There is so much of the trail system open to OHVs and they are changing the experience for all of us. I see their right to use the forest, but we have a right to be away from them and have the kind of experience we want too. I would like to see more balance in how they are managing OHV use on this forest.

The resource damage from motorized use is generally perceived to result from riding off trails:

You can see meadows where they have been and they are torn up. They ride around closed gates and tear up the landscape and they go across country and make new trails and cause erosion. That hurts water quality and in our environment that is a real problem. I don't have a problem with them on trails, but they need to keep them on the trails so they won't cause damage.

I have lived here all my life. I go out on public lands several times a week and what I see breaks my heart. The ATV people are going anywhere they want without any regard for the land. They are tearing it up. I see that more on BLM land than on the Forest Service, but that will be next. After they have ruined the high desert, then they will take down the mountains. It needs to be stopped so that my grandkids will know what the forest is. I want it to be there for their future.

The ATV machines have been getting bigger and more powerful so they can go almost anywhere. There are a number of old logging roads that make fine opportunities for ATV trails and I hope the Forest Service keeps those trails open. I never thought I would have one, but I do. I only ride it on the trails and I would like to continue to have that opportunity. The problem comes when they go off-trail and tear up the county.

Designated use areas are a commonly noted solution to the effects of motorized use:

Designated use areas are alright with me. We have the wilderness so that is a big portion of the forest open to non-motorized use. There are some areas that are best suited to particular uses, so I support that idea.

Designated areas for ATVs are the way to go. They need a place to go, but they can't go everywhere.

It seems that all of the forest is open to OHVs and that is not acceptable to me. What is acceptable is loop trails for them and a 'closed unless open' approach. I can see the need for some 'open ride' areas, but those need to be small areas because of the damage that will happen. I want to see large areas of the backcountry that are off limits to OHVs so people can have the experience they want to have.

Although increased education for motorized users is described as a necessary part of the solution to abuse and damage to forest resources, participants also describe a need for enforcement:

The travel management plan will take lots of enforcement because there is no local culture of self-enforcement. People here don't like rules and regulations and they think the forest is their own. One LEO (law Enforcement Officer) per District is not going to do the job. That worries me because I think it means that places for non-motorized use of the forest are in danger of being lost.

Supporters of motorized use suggest that although there is some recognized problem behavior, their use of the ANF should be accommodated:

There is the potential here for all uses without locking up some of it. Some users want certain areas locked up from motorized use. I can see some areas that are pristine and sensitive and those are areas I can see where motorized use can be limited. If you have proper signage, then you don't have to make it a formal designation. The non-motorized users have big areas open to them. They have wilderness and on the Dutch John side there is room for horsemen. They have big areas and they don't need to lock us out of the forest. We have the right to be there as much as anyone else.

I ride my bike (motorcycle) out there and I stay on the trails. I obey the rules and I expect others to do the same. As long as I obey the rules, give me a reason that my use is less acceptable than others. We have a right to be there as much as anyone else.

Some proponents of motorized use suggest that this use has potential economic benefits to local communities:

We would like to have an ATV trail from here (Manila, Daggett County) to Vernal. We know it is a long way off, but we told the Forest Service we would work with them to maintain the trail. It would be a big draw for people from outside the community and help our economy.

If you provide access for 4x4s and ATVs, then it can be managed. If you don't provide access, then they will take it and make a lot of social trails. With good management, it can work and provide some economic benefit to the counties.

Providing for motorized recreation has been an issue on this part of the forest (north slope). I am not saying it is good or bad, but the county sees motorized recreation as a source for economic development and they pressure the Forest Service for more opportunities. There are other folks who don't see it the same way as the county does.

A final theme is expressed in the following comment that suggests a desire for balance and reasoned decision making about motorized use of the ANF:

I expect the Forest Service to stand up for the resource and not give in to the ATV crowd and their demands for new roads. I expect them to keep the

wholeness of the forest in mind when they are managing and not just the people who are demanding more.

7.1.5 QUIET RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

The prominence of concerns about noise related to motorized use of the ANF may influence expressions of concern about the opportunity for quiet recreation. Nonetheless, there is an expressed desire for future promotion of quiet recreation opportunities.

They have information about ATV use, but they really need to have information about quiet use of the forest too. They need to make an attempt to show people that we need to have quiet recreation too.

There is some controversy over motorized and non-motorized use of the forest. Hunters and OHV users and snowmobiles and cross-country skiers seem to have the most at issue. It is a noise issue. I ride bikes (motorized bikes) and I see the need for quiet in the forest, so I support the idea of having areas where you don't hear that sound.

7.1.6 TRAILS AND ROADS

Issues and concerns about trails and roads are directly related to access and motorized recreation issues. However, there are some distinct concerns regarding maintenance, demand, trail types, signage, and dispersed use that should be distinguished from these related topics.

Participants express a general concern about ANF facility maintenance, but there is a particular concern about trail and road maintenance. This concern is expressed by a variety of users and it is among the mostly commonly coded topics in this work. The content of this concern is expressed in the following statements:

It is an awfully big forest, but in the low country there are not that many trails and there is a lot of deadfall. We end up using game trails because the system trails are not in good shape.

The trail system is broken on the Ashley National Forest. There are not enough of them and the existing trails need maintenance. It used to be you would see trail crews in the summer, but you don't see them on the forest now. You can't do all the work that needs to be done with volunteers.

They need a maintenance crew for trails. They say they don't have the money, but they need to maintain the trails. There is a lot of damage on the trails related to the lack of maintenance. If you come across a tree across the trail, you go around it. If there are 300 down trees, then soon you have a lot of social trails. Maintaining the trails can help solve some of the social trails problems. If we try to do it, then you get into trouble or get a ticket.

Trail maintenance is a big problem. We are frequent trail riders on our mountain bikes and we see trails that have had trees fall over them and nothing is being done about it.

Maintenance issues are perceived to result from a gap between demand and available resources:

They are just not giving enough support on the ground to trails. There is a lot of pressure on existing trailheads like the one at Dry Creek and the Flume trailhead. We need some new trailheads to accommodate the increase in demand.

Another specific concern is for better signage and maps about the existing trail system:

After maintenance, the trail system here needs signage. They need to get those guys in the office out from behind their computers and put a chain saw in their hands to maintain the trails and make some signs.

Trails signs are a big need. They need to make those a priority. I want to see them have good signage in place before they spend too much time on a Forest Plan.

We go out and we like to camp off the roads. I know one of the things that we would like to see is more maps and more information about where the recreation opportunities are in the forest.

Some of the problems with damage have to do with people not knowing where they can go. Updated trail maps and especially signs would help.

The desire for trails to accommodate particular uses such as mountain biking and hiking represents another theme in the data:

There are plenty of trails for hiking and ATVS, but there are not enough dedicated trails for mountain bikers. We have the potential to have some of the best trails in Utah here, but there isn't enough awareness about the need for mountain bike trails.

We can have trails for hikers where the landscape does not favor motorized use. It will come down to some trade-offs where some areas can be designated non-motorized, but if they try to do some blanket policy, there is going to be pressure from the county and the Blue Ribbon Coalition.

There are not too many problems with our horses and other users, but it is starting to be more frequent. We would like to see an area where we can ride and not have any conflict with hikers or ATVs.

Trails and roads are perceived to be a key to dispersing users and limiting the damage that results from concentrated recreation use:

They are talking about more roadless and I would like to see them coordinate with the county when they plan to close down a road. The problems is that roads are a limited resource and if you close one road or limit one use, then those people go somewhere else. It concentrates people into smaller and smaller areas. They need to keep that big picture in mind: it is not just closing one road, but how doing that affects other roads and users.

If you are trying to provide access for the public, then why close off areas (roadless areas) like that? I would like to see some of the spur roads open to spread out the use, rather than concentrating use the way restricting access

does. If there were spur roads and adequate signage to direct people where to go, then you would open up the resource and disperse use.

They used to have more than 1,800 miles of roads, but the funding has been cut and the roads are not being maintained when the needs are really increasing. The last few years they have kept the gates closed until the roads have dried out. People I know don't mind that a bit because it keeps the roads in good shape. If they have more open roads, there will be more space for people to use.

7.2 Ethics, Education and Enforcement

Litter, vandalism, and problem behavior among forest users is a concern that participants attribute to a combination of changes in land ethics, a need for information and education about proper use and behavior in the forest, and the availability of enforcement resources.

Participant comments about litter express the more general concern about the need for education and enforcement:

Litter is also a problem. People are not cleaning up after themselves like they used to. Those kinds of people are doing more harm to the forest than the loggers or the ranchers grazing cows.

We go out on forest roads a lot and they can definitely use some maintenance. There are a lot of wildcat roads from ATVs and there is more trash in the woods. The trash isn't because there are more people out there. It is the mindset of the ones that are using it.

There is a growing problem with litter and campers. There needs to be more public education about the proper use of the forest. It may seem common sense that you don't dump your sewer out on the forest or leave your disposable diapers there, but people don't seem to care. Maybe part of it is enforcement, but public education is a big part of litter.

The causes of problem behavior and damage to resources and facilities are often attributed to a change in land ethics:

My generation did not have video games. We were outside and in the forest doing things. That is how we learned about how to treat the land. Now, kids have more that keeps them at home and out of the forest. They know less about what is going on out there. I would like to see the Forest Service educate kids about the forest and land values.

There has been a generational shift they need to be aware of when they think about their role in today's world. Many people have not been exposed to the outdoors and they were not brought up with traditional land ethics. The younger people don't have a foundation of information to rely on when they use the forest. There is this disconnect between the younger users and what they do in the forest and current forest management.

In the past people had a stronger land ethic and the uses could be more self-regulated. Now, people know less about the land and their ethics are

different. Those types of self-regulated uses do not fit with forest conditions today and something has to change.

The perceived solutions to the effects of changes in land ethics and environmental knowledge is a combination of education and enforcement. Participants suggest that educational efforts by the forest service and partners are a step toward addressing current problems:

I would like to see the Forest Service work with partners to educate people about using the forest. Values have changed. People don't seem to have the same land ethic we had when we were growing up. We visited the mountains and we were always taught to respect nature. But, the litter, vandalism, and abuse we see up there now show a need for some education about how to use those resources.

There is a particular need to educate the public about how to use the river (Green River), but I would like to see the Forest Service develop or work with other agencies to develop an environmental education program for the schools. This could be the channel to develop environmental awareness, teach values and ethics about the land. Right now there is a big disconnect between the uses of the land and the values people have about it.

Land management agencies need to have a commitment to environmental education. We as individuals can teach our kids, but there are people who are just environmentally stupid. You can correct some of that with environmental education.

Although education is perceived to be one aspect of the solution, participants also express a desire for additional enforcement activities and resources:

There are more and more people going out and using the roads in the forest, but they seem to have only a few people to patrol. They need more of a presence to control the problems.

The ATV issues are big. They could spend half of their budget on law enforcement and still not get it done. They need us behind them.

There really needs to be more Forest Service presence to educate people. There are people breaking the law who don't know it because there isn't anyone to tell them about the proper way to use the forest.

They have hired the sheriff's office for the weekend to do some much-needed enforcement and to provide some emergency services. They do a good job of not harassing people and they provide some presence that the Forest Service does not have.

Although participants note there is potential benefit to increased enforcement, there is also a preference to focus on education:

They are missing opportunities to educate people when they do heavy-handed enforcement. Their attitude seems to be to tell you what you can't do, what not to do, and to chew you out. I would like to see them enforce the rules, but have an attitude of educating users.

7.3 Forest Conditions and Resources

Sections 5 and 6 of this document identify some management issues and concerns about existing forest conditions and resources. In addition to those issues and concerns this section identifies additional topics for dialogue about forest management. Topics addressed in this discussion are grazing, historic and archaeological resources, invasive species, oil and gas, timber and fire, watersheds, and wildlife.

7.3.1 GRAZING

The primary issues and concerns about grazing address the socioeconomic and environment costs and benefits of grazing and the knowledge and expertise of the Forest Service and grazing permittees. The majority of statements addressing grazing suggest that it is an acceptable use if regulated and monitored so that it does not degrade environmental quality. However, these statements also express particular assessments of grazing costs and benefits. Supporters of grazing emphasize that it provides benefits to forest health, wildlife, and open space while also contributing to sustaining a valued lifestyle. The following statements express key ideas of supporters about the role of grazing in present and future forest management:

Grazing should continue to be part of the use of the forest. It helps to manage the land, especially the lands between the low country and the high country. There was some over-grazing in the past, but today the agricultural users are more knowledgeable and more responsible because we know our survival depends on it. You can't make a living in agriculture around here without access to Forest Service land, so we take care of it. We want to continue to see grazing as a part of forest management.

I don't see it as a one-way street: the forest gets benefit and so do I. The forest gets the open-space and a lot of habitat for wildlife and I get a grazing allotment that helps me to maintain that open-space and wildlife habitat and stay in business.

We need to keep grazing as part of the mix in forest management. Some people think that you can stop grazing until you need it and then put cows back on the forest. But, cows learn the range. They learn not to go in certain places they are not supposed to. You can't just put them on and off the range like a lawn mower. Cows learn how to survive on a particular range.

These and other statements express a desire for decision making and planning to consider the benefits to forest health from grazing including mitigating vegetation that contributes to fire danger as well as soil disturbance that is believed to benefit vegetation. Other statements suggest there are benefits from grazing to wildlife associated with water development for grazing. Ranches adjacent to ANF lands are also believed to provide wildlife habitat and open space that compliments the aesthetic and environmental quality of the ANF.

Sustaining grazing is also perceived to offer benefits to the custom and culture of rural communities. The work ethic of ranching is believed to express fundamental American values that are embedded in the culture of the west. Ranching participants emphasize that rural values and lifestyles can be undermined by some management practices. For example,

They have brought in animals like the Big Horn sheep that are not compatible with domestic sheep and that has meant that some families have gone out of business. We need to keep the multiple-use idea in mind to preserve local culture and heritage.

Participants also suggest that custom and culture should be a management consideration because of the direct benefits to ecosystem functioning and their overall contribution to American values. Additionally, ranching participants describe the need for the Forest Service to understand the traditional interactions of grazing uses and ranching viability in this ecosystem. These participants suggest that in the past there was more economic diversity that supported ranching operations. However, local economies are now less diversified which presents fewer options to sustain ranching economies. These participants express a desire for more consideration of these changed conditions and interactions between ranching and grazing management:

All of our lands are intermingled and intertwined. The value of our base property is tied to our ability to use our federal permits, whether it is on the forest or the BLM. ... It is part of the culture and part of the nature of the range livestock industry that is here going on over a 120-130 years. ... You wonder why the Forest Service is in the Department of Agriculture. It is basically because of products produced off the forest.

Critics of grazing have concerns about particular practices and locations for grazing, but there is some general support for well regulated and location appropriate grazing.

People call me a tree hugger, but I can support grazing if it is regulated and there is oversight. I see that it has a place on the forest in a multiple-use way of doing things.

I am not opposed to grazing per se, but it should be compatible with species diversity. Close monitoring is important to make sure that compatibility exists. I also support retiring grazing permits and using the allotment for Big Horn sheep. The same for wilderness grazing permits: I would like to see those retired or vacated.

More ardent grazing critics suggest that grazing in some locations on the ANF is problematic. The following comments describe perceived conditions on some south-slope grazing allotments:

With the conditions I see in the forest, we have to start asking who is being served by allowing grazing? We need to know the specifics of the social and economic benefits of grazing to understand how the forest and the public are benefiting by allowing grazing. Remember, it is not a right to graze it is a permitted use.

In our canyon and other places on this forest, I have not seen much in the way of land used for grazing that is undamaged. When you put together cows and elk on this landscape, then the cumulative effects are substantial. There needs to be some serious reevaluation of grazing if it cannot be managed so there is no damage to the resource. You just can't graze everywhere.

Critics emphasize the importance of the fit of grazing with appropriate ecological and geographic characteristics and the necessity for monitoring that ensures ecological integrity. There are also some critics who prefer more separation of recreational users and grazing:

If I had my preference I would like to see cows kept away from hiking trails. Nobody likes to step in a cow pie while they are hiking. The smell and the flies can be annoying. So, keep the cows away from the hiking areas.

Critics of grazing on national forest lands also suggest that changes in ranching have resulted in fewer full-time ranchers. One perceived effect is a decline in knowledge and experience about range practices that contribute to sustainable grazing. The effects of this perceived decline is a need for more oversight and monitoring:

It seems as if most of the people in ranching are part time. They are maybe third generation ranchers and they are doing it as a hobby or they have to work at another job to make ends meet. The problem is that they have lost some of the knowledge that comes from everyday all the time ranching. That means the Forest Service needs to monitor grazing more closely to prevent damage, especially to riparian areas where a little damage can have a big effect.

Ranchers suggest that despite some past grazing management issues, current grazing on the ANF is responsible and guided by traditional land ethics.

I believe in using and not abusing the forest. I was taught that way by my father and I am teaching my kids the same. Now, there was a time in the past when there was some abuse. People did not have the practical knowledge they needed then. That has changed and we have good grazing practices now because we have kept pace with the times. There are people who oppose grazing, but they have never been on a horse or never moved a cow from one meadow to another. The Forest Service needs to know how we operate so they can manage grazing better on this forest.

7.3.2 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Residents of adjacent communities who participated in this work generally expressed a strong interest in regional history and culture. Concerns about management of ANF historic and archaeological resources include protecting resources exposed to commercial activity, including oil and gas development, interpretation of existing resources, and promoting existing historic and archaeological resources.

Concerns about the conservation and preservation of historic resources suggest that commercial activity as well as recreational users can expose historic and archaeological resources to potential damage. For example,

They have done a good job of preserving some of the historic resources on the forest. They need to keep doing that. They should pay more attention to archaeological resources, especially in those areas where there is oil and gas development.

This is a forest rich in history. There are some old fire towers, historic ranches, old mines, some roads and trails used by the military, not to mention the Indian sites. These are as important to take care of as the rest

of the forest because it represents our history as a people. Some of these places are easily damaged and I would like to make sure they give proper consideration to protecting those resources.

The conservation of archaeological resources is considered especially important:

There is an abundant Native American history here, especially in the archaeological sites. There are petroglyphs and other sites that need to be protected. These are places that need to be respected.

Participants also express a desire for the promotion and interpretation of heritage resources:

There used to be more interest in the history and interpretation of the forest, but they do less of that now. I think it is a big part of what they should be doing and they need the budget and the people to make it happen.

There are some opportunities to develop heritage tourism that could be focused around some of the old sites and the way of life that used to be here. There are some historic ranches like the Rainbow Glass Ranch that are good opportunities for including in a program like that. There may be some funding limitation, but it is a good opportunity for a partnership that could benefit visitors.

7.3.3 INVASIVE SPECIES

The presence of invasive species particular noxious weeds such as salt cedar, Russian-olive, knapweed, and a variety of thistles were noted as an important issue for current and future management. Participants expressed beliefs that noxious weeds are increasing and threaten native species.

Noxious weeds are a big problem on the forest and they need to manage those better.

Invasive species have become a big problem on the forest, from all kinds of uses. I would like to see them focus on encouraging native species as well as effectively addressing the noxious weed problem.

There is some attribution of the spread of noxious weeds to increased recreational use and a lack of awareness about how noxious weeds spread:

There are more people going more places in the forest. Someone drives in with their camp trailer and that becomes a way that weeds spread from one place to another. It is more of a problem than people realize and some education would help to do something about it.

Participant statements also suggest that management of off-road vehicle use is a component of managing noxious weeds:

Invasive species can destroy this forest. They are one of the issues that I don't think get enough attention, especially with how ATVs and new roads can spread them everywhere they go. I think the forest has one guy, some

roundup, and a GPS. That is not going to make a difference for the threat they pose.

7.3.4 OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

The primary themes regarding oil and gas development concern evaluations of the suitability of national forest lands for oil and gas development, evaluations of regulatory safeguards, environmental costs and energy benefits, and the economic benefits to adjacent communities.

Participants also note that given the development activities on other public and private lands, they believe the best use of national forest lands might be for purposes other than oil and gas activity:

I work in the industry, but it is important for me to have some place to go where there isn't an oil well. I like a place where you can go and have an experience without the noise and the people and the sight of rigs everywhere. If you develop oil and gas on the national forest, then it is just another oil patch and not a fun place anymore.

There should be some places that are off limits to oil and gas development or they should be the places of last resort. The forest is one of those places of last resort to me. I don't know that I would want to go to East Peak and see an oilrig there. But in some places, I can see it. If it is done in a responsible manner and they post a bond and restore things back to their natural state, then I can support it if we need to do it.

7.3.4.1 Suitability

Other statements suggest that given the nation's energy needs, the National Forest System has a role in meeting those needs if the resource is available and can be developed responsibly:

I guess it depends on where the resource is. What we have to keep in mind is that we need the energy and we need to be looking at domestic sources to move us away from foreign oil. If the resource is on Forest Service land, then we have to get it if we need it.

Most of the discussion about suitability concerns particular locations such as the South Unit, the NRA, and the more "green" areas of the forest. Although some participants expressed concern that the South Unit is an ecologically important part of the forest and should be off-limits to oil and gas development, other statements indicate this is a suitable area for potential development:

Oil and gas development on the South Unit should be fine given the regulations that exist. In the end that probably is not a Forest Service call. But, if there was going to be development on the Uinta side, then I would squawk loudly.

Some participants expressed the belief that any portion of the ANF is suitable for oil and gas development. However, most comments suggests that although some ANF lands may be suitable, the "green" portions of the forest have higher aesthetic, ecological and recreational value and these should be "off limits."

7.3.4.2 Economic Benefits

As noted in Section 6.2.1, participants expressed beliefs that oil and gas development benefits local economies. Participants note there are social costs to the boom associated with oil development. There is also recognition of ongoing economic benefits and the potential for future benefits if these resources are developed on ANF lands. In counties with limited or no oil and gas development on ANF lands, participants expressed the belief that priority should be given to development activity that can benefit local economies without adversely affecting lifestyles and the overall quality of life in these communities.

7.3.4.3 Safety and Regulations

Concerns about oil and gas development on ANF lands focus around safety and regulatory oversight. Suitability and potential economic benefits are each closely tied to beliefs that oil and gas development is either sufficiently regulated or that political pressure and influence undermine the regulatory framework. Suitability and economic benefit are evaluated in terms of beliefs about the adequacy and implementation of regulator frameworks. For example,

We are booming here now because of oil and gas, but we have a fragile economy. We can look back not too many years when people were looking for opportunities to get their kids out of this community because there was no future for them here. Housing prices went down, there was no work, businesses closed, and we were in the tank. We are doing well now, but this is a fragile situation and we would like to see the Forest Service develop oil and gas where they can. It can be done responsibly and there are regulations in place to see that it is done that way. It would allow our kids to stay here and we know it can be done in a responsible way. I was raised to protect public lands and our federal government has lots of protection, so I think we can develop those resources and protect the environment too.

It does not make much difference to us. If there was a need to develop the oil and gas, then I would support it if the forest remained safe.

On the North Slope in the Henry's Fork area they have done a good job with it and it shows you that it can be done successfully. I don't want to see them go crazy with oil and gas, but if they want to develop the south area, then I think they have the rules and regulations in place to do it right. If it was done properly, then I can support it.

Critics suggest that although the regulatory framework may be substantial, social and political pressures can undermine its effectiveness:

I have not lived here that long, but I hear people say that oil and gas development is fine because of all the hoops they have to jump through. They think it is well regulated. I don't see that. I think there is a lot of paperwork that is rubber stamped without real oversight. There needs to be real oversight and not just bowing to political pressure to produce oil and generate local revenues.

I have concerns that they will give in to political pressure when they make decisions about oil and gas development. There is tremendous pressure

from Washington to develop those resources at any cost. I think they are afraid to speak up for what is right because of that pressure.

7.3.4.4 Impacts to Resources and User Experiences

Concerns about oil and gas development include assessments of the effects of oil and gas development on other forest resources and user experiences. Some statements express concern about the possible impacts to recreational users from oil and gas development:

There is an awful lot of public land being developed for oil and gas. Why the National Forest too? I don't want to see oilrigs when I go to the forest; you see them so many other places. If they allow oilrigs, it would change the place. People enjoy a place where there isn't that kind of development. There is not a lot of great public land left and it is a valued and limited resource. We need to keep some of it from development and I would like to see the Ashley as a place free from oilrigs.

Other statements suggest that it is in the national interest to develop these resources. As noted above, participants suggest that with proper oversight and regulation, oil and gas development is compatible with existing resources and user experiences:

I don't see any incompatibility with oil and gas development and Forest Service lands. For the national interest, we need to develop those resources. We have plenty of places to get away and we need the energy. You also have to remember that this kind of development is temporary and not permanent. I have visited other places where public lands were reclaimed after mining. It can be done responsibly so the land can be even better than before mining.

I am a big preservationist, but we have to do what we have to do. We have areas that are set aside already and we should keep what we have. But, we need to sustain our lifestyles. We should develop the resources if we need them, but we need to protect what we have.

Other statements evaluate oil and gas development as having too large an impact on local resources for too little national benefit:

We have to look at the costs and benefits of oil and gas development on Forest Service lands. If they pulled all of the oil out of here it would only run Chicago for a couple of days. So, is it worth it? Where do we stop with develop that has only a short-term benefit, but a very long-term impact on a landscape? Getting to the oil here is some of the hardest drilling and the value in relationship to the benefit is questionable.

7.3.5 TIMBER AND FIRE

The major theme about timber resources links existing forest conditions with fire concerns and the potential economic benefits of increased timber harvesting. Additionally, participant statements express concerns about the conservation of limited old growth resources and Aspen.

The link between existing forest conditions, fire, and future forest health is a component of many participant statements about timber resources and fire danger. The most prominent linkage is between fire danger and beetle damaged trees.

The beetle kill in this part of the forest is scary. It is such a problem that they had to close the LDS Stake Camp. It is surrounded by forest with a lot of beetle kill. They need to allow more logging so that the fire danger is controlled and people can use the forest.

The theme of linking beetle damage with fire danger is consistent in participant statements, but the evaluations of the causes and solutions vary. As in the above statements, one theme evaluates the solution to beetle damage and fire danger as more aggressive timber harvesting.

Timber has become a threat. I think they need to either burn it all off or go back to timbering and manage the resource so we can manage for watershed values. When we have a fire now they are way hotter than they should be and they cause more damage. Managing timber (timber harvesting) is necessary to help with watershed health and forest health.

The problem with fires is that they can get big and too hot because of the beetle kill and the undergrowth. The forest is too thick and there needs to be some harvesting to improve the conditions and lessen the fire danger.

Thinning, timbering, and firewood gathering are ways to restore forest health. There is nothing wrong with a utilitarian use of the forest. On any given tract of land, logging is not necessarily acceptable, but there are opportunities and those should be used to restore forest health.

This forest needs to harvest some timber. Right now we don't have any controlled management. Harvesting timber would help the watershed and open up the forest and make it healthier. There is a lot of deadfall in the forest and that needs to be taken care of too.

A related theme is an emphasis on the use of timber harvesting as a “controlled” method of management that contrasts with natural and prescribed burns:

(Timber harvesting) is a tool you can control as opposed to a fire like the one at Neola this year. The Forest Service said in the news, 'it needed to burn anyway.' That could have been hauled off and used.... It could be used for a lot of things. It supplies a local market, it supplies some employment, but it is a major tool that is disappearing. ... There is only one replacement for that tool and that is fire or just let forest health go to he**.

Some participants emphasize the significance of connections between timber, fire, and watersheds. These participants suggest that water availability and quality is affected by timber management policies that are perceived to contribute to conditions that result in fires that impact watersheds. And, this perspective suggests these watershed impacts directly influence local economies and lifestyles:

Part of the issues we have raised and have been ignored is the impact that catastrophic fire or even smaller fires have where land flows into irrigation diversion facilities (and municipal water supplies). ... The ability to go in and maintain those facilities means everything to communities A growing town like Vernal, Rock Springs, and Manila ... (needs a water supply). ... When you get off the mountain, this is the arid west. Show me any economy that is not based on the availability of water. All our economy in

the west ... and out town would not be here if it was not for water. There is a growing need for water and what they are proposing for water is going to diminish that supply.

The intensity of some of the expressed sentiments appears to be related to beliefs about the importance of using timber rather than allowing it to be “wasted” by natural or prescribed fire:

They don't want us to touch it. They want to let it stand and go to waste and I think that is ludicrous. (They) want to let it burn ... and that introduces other environmental problems. My view is that they just don't want to do anything with that timber. ... That timber should be put to beneficial use as a biofuel ... and as lumber. I think it should be harvested and I think the Forest Service view on that is let it stand and let it go to waste.

They went from the extreme of put out every fire to let it burn and use prescribed fire. This is a total waste of the resource. I know that lawsuits have limited what they can do, but at some point they have to stand up and do the right thing and not waste the resource.

I guess I can see the reasoning for letting it burn, but the timber and undergrowth are dense and when it burns the fires are too hot and it hurts the land. In the long run the forest would be healthier if we did some timber harvesting that would have local economic benefit and did some prescribed burns where necessary. But, timber harvesting is a better use of the resource than letting it burn up.

Trees are just like any other crop. We need to have some timbering in those areas where you can take some trees and get some use out of them. The timber here is small, but there are some areas where you can harvest and get some use out of it.

While some statements link the cause of and solution for existing conditions as timber harvesting, other participants suggest past forest management policies and practices are the cause of current conditions:

The ecosystem here has suffered because of a history of fire suppression. There has been a buildup of fuels from all of those years of fire suppression. They need to change that and get aggressive about using prescribed burns and natural fires to get the ecosystem back in shape. In roadless and wilderness areas I would like to see the lightning strike fires burn so they can do what this ecosystem does to regenerate itself. You have to have perimeters and defensible space too.

Prescribed burns received some focused comment from participants in Daggett and Sweetwater counties. These comments concern providing information about prescribed fire schedules and coordinating prescribed fires with patterns of use in the NRA:

It is hard to understand why they have to do prescribed burns. ... Some of the prescribed burns have not been well controlled and have caused more problems than they solved. We see the need for removing the undergrowth,

but there is a lack of understanding and not enough information for the public to understand why the burns are needed. The Forest Service should provide more information and it would help to calm people down about the prescribed fires.

The prescribed burns have caused some problems in the NRA, especially on the river. There is a health issue there for the users who are fishing and rafting. There needs to be some sensitivity to when they do the prescribed burns so the impacts on the public using the river are minimized.

Another concern for future management of the ANF is the conservation of limited old growth resources. These resources are perceived to have benefit as wildlife habitat and as a scarce resource that should be conserved in an arid ecosystem:

Timber is not one of the highest values on this forest, but there is some old growth and that is a resource that should be conserved. There is a higher value to old growth here because it is not easily replaced. It is also important habitat for species like the Flamulated Owl.

Another prominent theme about the future management of timber resources stresses the importance of maintaining sufficient timber harvesting to keep industry expertise available. This expertise is believed to provide the capacity to conduct thinning, restoration, and harvesting as well as providing local economic benefit. Participants expressing this belief suggest that timber harvesting requires expertise that must be maintained over time through ongoing work. Participants suggest that without this infrastructure, the capacity of the ANF to manage timber will be severely compromised. Additionally, participants suggest that maintaining this infrastructure is necessary to plan for a variety of future uses of ANF timber resources:

A portion of revising the Plan is future desired conditions. That is what you are looking for down the road 20, 30, 40, 50 years from now. They better start looking at ... cellulose ethanol. What would help this forest is to plan ahead to keep the infrastructure, the logging infrastructure stable so that when that technology comes on line in five or six years, then they are ready to go.

A final theme about timber management is a desire to consider timber resources as more than lumber. This perspective suggests that timber has future uses that require a change in how the Forest Service assesses and plans for management of these resources:

We are using a food source as a fuel in a world where people are starving to death so we can drive our cars. There is a substitute fuel source in the forest. There is an industry that could be brought back to do that. The argument that we are just going to lose a few jobs (if there is no local timber industry) is an argument is isolated because the issue is much broader than that. ... It is so critical that we come to the realization that we have our heads in the wrong place on this issue.

7.3.6 WATERSHED CONSERVATION

Section 6.2.3 describes participant assessments of water as perhaps the most important resource of the Ashley National Forest. Issues and concerns about water resources include emphasizing water resources as a priority for planning and management decision making.

Water is essential for the growth of our county. Without water we are dead. So, watershed management needs to improve. Things like the wild and scenic that can limit our access to water is a problem.

It is important for them to preserve watersheds and water resources. This is a key issue and preserving water should be the priority for them. If that means they need to limit access to where water is present, then they need to do that. They need to keep the water resources in good condition so they are not lost.

The desire to preserve management options in order for effective management of resources is a strong theme in participant statements:

The watersheds need to be managed for quality and volume. I am concerned about the wild and scenic because it will lock up the resource and ties up water usage. Water is vital to our economic growth and it is the most important resource on the forest.

We need to make sure that whatever they do with wilderness, wild and scenic, and roadless that they preserve the ability to build and maintain water storage infrastructure in the mountains. Our future depends on that.

Participants also express a desire to ensure all that watersheds are maintained to provide both the amount and quality of water that is needed by different users. Agricultural interests emphasize the need for management and planning that supports their ability to gain access to water and to maintain existing water storage facilities.

If there is more wilderness and population growth continues, then they are going to take water for residential use from the agricultural users. We need to manage our watersheds so that everyone gets the water they need.

(Their management of timber) is jeopardizing our water. Whether it is for municipalities or for our agriculture, or wildlife habitat or livestock habitat as well as our vistas and what we see in our landscapes. ... We are the headwaters and we are not only jeopardizing Wyoming's water in the Green River Basin, we are jeopardizing the Colorado River system. ... A whole lot more people are impacted when you starting jeopardizing the Colorado River system. Our forest health is tied to how we manage those watersheds and how we can get in and keep our yields healthy and keep our water quality healthy. ... They push back on the south slope and it gets pushed over the top of the hill onto the north slope.

A strong perception is that energy development and overall population growth will result in additional demands for water that originates on the Ashley National Forest. Some interests perceive the need to ensure future residential development has an adequate water supply while other interests are concerned about ensuring adequate water to maintain the ecological health of the ANF.

Water is our most precious resource. I don't want to see water used for residential development. We need it for too many other purposes that have to do with how the ecosystem functions.

7.3.7 WILDLIFE

Participants expressed issues and concerns about coordination of habitat management with state wildlife agencies, ensuring habitat to maintain species diversity, ensuring adequate wildlife protection, and management of fisheries in the NRA. Although some participants are concerned about the effects on grazing related to introduction of Big Horn sheep, there is also a desire to see coordinated management to sustain reintroduced species:

The Forest Service could help wildlife by working more with the Division of Wildlife and standing up for wildlife. Mountain goats and Big Horn sheep are important resources and I would like to see them focus on habitat and the viability of those species.

Some participants emphasize the need to recognize the unique wildlife habitat of the Ashley National Forest and its role as a corridor between different ecological zones in this region.

Some participants express concern that management decisions should generally not give a priority to wildlife habitat over human uses of the ANF.

They are keeping people out of some areas because of the Goshawk. I don't think that is the right thing to do. Those birds have taken care of themselves for as long as humans have been around and they can coexist with us. I don't think it is right when they tell us we can't camp there because of that hawk.

Others perceive a need to ensure future management decisions ensure wildlife habitat has at least equal footing with other factors that affect management decisions.

There is a need for increased protection and more precise language in the Forest Plan about wildlife viability and areas where wildlife is under less pressure. These are areas of special biological value that are even more important as the counties grow and urbanize. Wildlife needs to have a place too and the national forests are one of the few large undeveloped areas where wildlife can be secure. There is also a need for connectivity in wildlife habitat and that needs to be considered in future planning.

Some participants emphasize the importance for future management to address the interaction of wildlife with off-road vehicle use.

They are trying to restrict four-wheel use. The four wheelers are really disturbing wildlife and that upsets me as an avid hunter. I think the restrictions are good because I want to be able to hunt without them scaring off the wildlife.

I ride an ATV but during hunting season I just use it to get to my camp. I walk after that when I am hunting. I can't tell you the number of times I have seen people on ATVs chasing animals during hunting season. There needs to be something done about those hunters who don't know about harassing wildlife and hunting from their ATVs.

Comments in the next section of this report (7.4.1) address a range of concerns about fisheries and pressure on the Green River.

7.4 Special Designations

Issues and concerns about special designations have three major groupings: those concerning the National Recreation Area and the other concerning wilderness, roadless areas, and wild and scenic river designations.

7.4.1 NRA

Section 6.3.2 describes participant values and beliefs about the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. The information in this section focuses on participant assessments of needs for change and desired conditions. Although this discussion overlaps some with the previously noted section, there are some distinct differences about desired changes that are better developed in this section. The major themes identified include energy development, economic development, fees, fisheries and pressure on the green River, and potential water diversion from the NRA to Colorado water interests.

7.4.1.1 Energy Development

Some participants expressed a desire for consideration of energy development on the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area. Some of the beliefs expressed suggest the ANF, including the NRA, should have a role in the nation's energy future:

There has been a proposal to put an energy pipeline across the NRA, but that is not going anywhere. We need to figure out a way to support energy development and the Forest Service has to do their part.

They say that the NRA cannot be used for a utility corridor. Part of the NRA is a roadless area and that means you can't have the utility corridor running through it. I think they need to keep more of a multiple-use approach to the NRA. Recreation is part of multiple-use, but there are other uses too. They seem to have more of a preservation mentality rather than a multiple-use philosophy. We are part of the energy development resources of the nation and we need to keep that in mind when they make decisions about what can be done.

Other participants suggest that energy development is incompatible with the NRA:

Take a look at what happened at Jack's Creek. The trees down slope died and it was an ugly site. Is that what we want to see in the NRA? Do you want to see that when you are floating the river? That is not what the NRA is about.

Most of the comments expressed about potential oil development in the National Recreation Area were from participants in Daggett and Sweetwater counties. These comments suggest this is likely to be a topic that will need consideration in the future:

There is more interest in oil shale development and in the future that is going to be an issue for the NRA (National Recreation Area). You see all that red rock around the Gorge (Flaming Gorge Reservoir) and that is an indicator of oil shale. So with oil and over \$111 a barrel, there is the potential to develop that resource. People may be looking to the Gorge as a source. There is also some oil shale potential in the Checkerboard Area at the north end of the river. They are naïve if they think there will be no

interest in that resource. You have to start thinking about the highest and best use of a resource like that in the upper river.

7.4.1.2 Economic Development

Participants residing in counties adjacent to the NRA note there are existing economic benefits that can be enhanced. The existing economic benefits derive from NRA visitors who patronize local businesses and from local businesses that support boating and other NRA activities.

The NRA is a destination for people from all over. When they come to visit the NRA, they do other things in our community and that is an economic benefit to us. There are a lot of Rock Springs businesses tied to the use of the Gorge, both for visitors and residents.

Some participants emphasize that the capacity of the entire NRA is capable of additional development for camping, boating, and other lake-based recreation. The emphasis on the potential for additional lake based recreation is expressed in the following comments:

There are only four marinas on the whole reservoir. I would like to see them open more and create some more economic benefits to the communities in this area.

There is some growth potential here at the lake. We are undiscovered, but used a fair amount by local people, especially from Wyoming. We don't want the Gorge to become another Lake Powell, but there is some serious growth potential here. Some people are willing to put up with more limited facilities in order to keep the quality of the experience here. It is like with hunting: the last thing someone wants to see is another hunter on the ridge where they hunt their elk. So, we tell them the wind blows and it is cold and we are willing to try to keep somewhat quiet about what we have.

The lake (Flaming Gorge Reservoir) is so clean and undeveloped and it is a great asset for our region. But, we would like to see some development that would benefit the communities here. We have a small tax base, limited private land, and very limited resources overall. More development of the lake would be a big help to us.

Some participants also suggest that additional development may provide some economic benefit to local communities, but there is concern that the overall quality of recreational experiences will decline if the NRA continues to develop.

7.4.1.3 Fees

Some participants express support for fees with the condition that the monies collected are used to maintain and improve local facilities. There is less support if the fees collected are used for other expenditures. Other participants express opposition to any fees based on the belief that existing tax dollars should meet the needs of managing the NRA. Statements suggesting conditional support for fees include the following:

Make sure the public knows the benefits from the fees that are charged. If there is no gain to the local forest, then people are going to be less

supportive. There was a fairly large increase for the NRA fee recently and for people to support the program, they need to show some benefit.

They collect a fee, but the campgrounds and other facilities really need some repair and maintenance. If they are collecting fees, then we expect them to do a better job of maintaining the facilities.

Other conditional support statements express a desire to see more funding for NRA facilities rather than other purposes:

With the fee system, the money was supposed to come back into this area, but it is not happening. The money goes to only some of the facilities. Most of the passes for the NRA are sold in Wyoming and they don't see much benefit from the fees. They are not developing the desert area of the forest as much and that is a concern. The camping, boating, and fishing facilities are not getting the attention they need. They sold the recent fee increase with the idea they would improve the facilities and not use it for administration. What happened?

The opposition to fees suggests that paying for use of facilities represents a type of "double taxation" that is unfair:

Local people here are not very understanding of the fees. The NRA was built with public funds. We pay taxes for the Forest Service to do their job of maintaining it. People feel it is a double tax to have to pay a fee to use the NRA.

Some participants observe that more users than not support fees if they used to maintain and improve facilities and that opposition, such as expressed in the previous comment, is based in the custom and culture of rural communities:

The fee program for certain NRA areas has been controversial. That is a result from this being a rural ranching area and people are mostly consumptive users. On the other hand, people from the Wasatch Front are mostly non-consumptive users and they tend to understand. They come to see elk and other wildlife and enjoy the forest scenery. The locals come to the forest to shoot an elk and gather firewood. So, there is some controversy about fees based on where you live and what your perspective is.

7.4.1.4 Fisheries and River Pressure

Concerns about the Green River fishery, the volume of visitor use, and the safety and ethics of boaters are noteworthy themes in the data. Fishery issues address concern about restrictions on the methods of angling and a perceived decline in the size of fish in the river. For example,

There are some elitist that wanted the rules changed so that you can't use bait in the river. I don't understand why some people can fish the way they want and others can't. It doesn't seem fair to me and it is just another example of locking us out of the forest. If I had my way we could fish with bait in the river.

When I first started fishing here the fish were bigger than they are now. There are still plenty of fish, but when you see a decline in the bigger fish then you start to wonder about the entire fishery. I would like to see them look into it.

The most prominent theme about the Green River and its fishery is the volume of use during the summer months when rafters and fishermen share the river:

The Green River is a tremendous resource, but it is being over-used at certain times of the year. I think they need to look at limiting public access. People come here from all over the world to fish and have a high quality experience. But, they have to deal with hordes of rafters and the kick boats and all of that leads to the perception the river is over-crowded. If they want people to have a high quality experience, then they need to look at restricting access.

The amount and style of use has really changed since I first came here a long time ago. In the past it was more rafting than fishing and now it is more fishing than rafting. The rafters have a short season in the summer time. They spend way less money than the fishermen do even though there are probably more of them. The river itself has not changed much, but the use has, especially with novice boaters on the water, and it seems to me the management plan for the river is not in synch with the type and volume of use and the issues that come with that use.

There are so many people fishing the river in the summer that I don't even go there anymore. Between the fishing and rafting it is not a place you can have a quality recreation experience because of the numbers of people there.

Commercial interests express concern that the volume of use has adverse effects on guides and outfitters. These outfitters are not only losing clients because of perceived crowding they are also blamed for being a major contributor to perceived overcrowding:

We are losing clients every year because of the crowded conditions. Among all of us outfitters we can put 25 boats on the water in the morning, but our clients are seeing 20 boats in front of them and 20 boats behind them. It is the general public in those boats and not the guide boats that are contributing to the perception of over-crowding. The public seems to think it is the outfitters causing the problem, but it is not us. We have restrictions on what we can do. I think the Forest Service does not have a good handle on this issue and they don't want to impose limits because of public outcry. But, there are times when there are just too many people. Maybe they need to think of some kind of lottery system before the fishing is really gone.

The effect of this crowing is not only a perceived decline in the quality of user experiences, but also concern about the environmental effects of human waste:

Flaming gorge is a well-used resource here. School groups, church groups, the Boy Scouts, and lots of fishermen use the river. From a user point of view, these large groups really degrade the quality of the experience on the river.

There is a real need for public education about how to float on the river in an environmentally friendly and safe way. They really need to do more public education, especially on how to deal with waste.

There are so many rafters on the Green (River) in the summer that they need to think about making a waste system mandatory for people floating the river.

They have done some work on the river with toilet systems, but there is a lot more work to do. I would like to see more effort go to toilet systems and safety on the river.

Participants who comment about the crowded conditions generally express some support for management action to limit the number of river users:

The river is getting beat to death. There are about ten major outfitters, but we account for probably less than ten percent of the use during the peak season. We would like to see consideration of some type of system to regulate the number of people at certain times of the year.

The Green River is a great resource. People from here (Vernal) go over in the summer time to raft and to fish. It gets very busy and maybe they need to think about some daily permit process so everyone gets the kind of experience they are looking for.

Other participants emphasize that river safety is a topic that needs focused attention in future planning and management efforts:

We raft on the river in the summer time and we have seen a need for some regulations about how many people can be in a raft. It is a safety issue. People need to go prepared with a life vest, an air pump, and be ready for an emergency. I think the Forest Service has just put their head in the sand about boating safety on the river.

7.4.1.5 Water Diversion

Some participants expressed a concern about the potential for water diversion from the NRA by water interests in Colorado. These concerns suggest that such a diversion would result in adverse environmental and economic impacts:

There is a proposal for Colorado to take water from the Gorge (Flaming Gorge Reservoir). Recreation is the primary use of the Gorge around here and the second important use is grazing. Taking water from the Gorge might impact both of those uses. We would like to see more infrastructures for recreation uses and more support for livestock grazing.

It has something to do with the Colorado River Compact and I think is a commercial interest group that wants to take water from the Gorge. I think they need to manage their growth better before they decide to take water out of the lake. It would impact our use significantly because we are a water-based recreation community.

Because Rock Springs is a water-based recreation community, we are concerned about the water diversion potential that Colorado is talking about. It could hurt our marinas and our fishing and we do not want that to happen.

Participants expressed a desire for future planning and management activities to preserve existing water resources of the Green River and to ensure agricultural, recreational, and commercial interests are not adversely impacted by any planned water diversions.

7.4.2 WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS

There are three prominent issues expressed about the potential for wild and scenic river designations: (1) opposition to any such designation because it is perceived to limit management options and potentially increase pressure on the resource; (2) support for the designation because it will protect a unique resource for future generations; and (3) the possible adverse effects on water supply that might result from such a designation.

Concerns about the restriction of management options are expressed in the following comments:

My problem isn't with things that don't work, but it is with things that are working fine and they are trying to change that: if it ain't broke, don't fix it. The Forest Service has done a good job of managing in Uinta Canyon, so why designate it wild and scenic when things are doing just fine? If they make a designation then that limits our ability to use water and to access an area. That is going the wrong direction.

I am not sure we need the wild and scenic designation or that there are even streams that qualify for that designation. One of the problems is the buffer zones. They shut down adjacent uses and that locks things up too much.

Support for using this designation where appropriate is expressed in the following comment:

I am supportive of the wild and scenic designation. There is as much need for preservation on this forest as other types of management. People say that those types of designations take away flexibility for future management, but I think they build in long-term stability to the resource. It is a way to insulate a limited resource from short-term thinking and responding to short-term needs. We can give up some flexibility in order to preserve the resource.

A common theme about the management of watersheds is the concern about both water quality and water supply for forest health as well as residential, agricultural, and recreational users. Some participants expressed concern about the potential effects of this designation on providing adequate water supply:

Water is the life of this region. We have a limited supply and the mountains are the source. I would not want the Forest Service to support the wild and scenic if it will lock up the water supply. Local users need it and they need to manage with an understanding of our water environment and our community needs for now and the future.

7.4.3 WILDERNESS AND ROADLESS AREAS

The prominent themes about wilderness and roadless areas include issues of supply and access, the ecological costs and benefits of wilderness, the interaction of these designations with water issues, and pressure on the use of these areas.

As noted in the prior discussion of wilderness beliefs and values (Section 6.3.1) participants generally support existing wilderness. However, there is a strong divergence of belief about the desirability of adding to the existing High Uintas Wilderness.

Adding more wilderness is important to me. I expect the Forest Service to do all they can to increase and protect wilderness and to keep rivers wild.

I am in favor of Wilderness Study Areas and I am in favor of making those places designated wilderness because it protects those areas for posterity. When the local manager moves on or if one is more susceptible to local or national political pressure, then we can lose a valuable resource. To protect those areas for the future we need to be thinking fifty years ahead and not about the next phone call from the county commissioner.

They are growing wilderness all the time. They are attempting to grow wilderness. ...They accomplish that through defacto wilderness. ... It is not something we support.

Access to existing and future wilderness is a related concern. Some participants suggest that adding additional wilderness only restricts access to those who have the financial means, good health, and good physical conditioning. Those who oppose additional wilderness also suggest that it “locks up” a larger portion of the forest that is not accessible to all users:

We hate to see the Forest Service catering to just a few people who use the wilderness. They say that the Wasatch Front people need more wilderness, but it will just lock it up so that it will not get that much use. Do we really need that much more land locked up? It is also just going to make the area below the wilderness that much more crowded for those of us who don't have the time or inclination to go up there.

We don't need any more wilderness. All you are going to do is make bigger area that does not get used much. There needs to be more access outside the wilderness and adding more to it is only going to increase the pressure on the area outside the wilderness boundaries.

Other participants suggest that arguments about an aging population or those who are handicapped being unable to access the wilderness are more rhetoric than reality:

We need places like wilderness. I know that there are people who say they are too old or that the handicapped can't get up there. But, before they make the High Uinta handicapped accessible, they need to make the ... library accessible to the handicapped. If people want to go to the wilderness, then let's find a way to get them there using mules or some other solution. We need to have a sustainable solution to access to the wilderness.

Agricultural participants emphasize the need to ensure that any decisions to add additional wilderness do not affect their access to water facilities and the volume and quality of their water supply:

Water is the key resource here. We need to be able to maintain and care for the reservoirs that are in the wilderness. We were assured by our congressionals that we could maintain them. In the future I would like to see the Forest Service work with us to make sure we continue to have access to those reservoirs to do maintenance.

Opponents of additional wilderness express concern that such an action limits future management options as well as potentially increasing the pressure on these resources:

They should not limit their management capabilities with roadless designations and the like. Don't put your management options in a box and limit what can be done with designations.

I see some need for roadless areas because of the beetle kill problems, but in general the less we have the better because it limits the opportunities for timber harvesting and active management.

Wilderness and wild and scenic only bring more people in to use the resource and increase the pressure for a place to get away. It limits the management options of what you can do on those lands. It seems you do more harm than good with those kinds of designations because it attracts more use and limits what you can do to fix the problems they cause. It doesn't make sense to me.

Participants with this perspective also suggest that American culture and recreational patterns are changing such that there is a mismatch between such designations and these patterns. That is, these participants observe there is less demand for backpacking and wilderness use and more demand for developed recreation. Given these types of changes, special designations are perceived to limit the management options that can meet such changing needs.

Supporters of wilderness and roadless areas emphasize the need to protect a resource that provides important ecological benefits to the ANF and its resources:

I would like to see preservation of areas that are roadless. Those places need protection, especially those areas in the higher elevations where there is old growth timber. There are also places where Ponderosa Pines need protection because they are a scarce resource and provide habitat for wildlife.

Ideally, I would like to see the roadless areas that are contiguous to the wilderness added to designated wilderness. But, if that is not going to happen, then those areas should remain as roadless and I can see fewer restrictions in those areas. Roadless and wilderness areas are important because of the wildlife benefits, the quality of experience they offer, and most importantly for their watershed values.

7.5 USFS Management Approaches and Implementation

Participants expressed a desire for addressing some specific management and decision making issues. Although such topics are not usually part of a Forest Plan revision process, such beliefs and values are likely to influence the perceived ability of the agency to manage forest resources. Consequently, these issues are briefly addressed as part of the overall set of beliefs and values that are likely to influence present and future planning and management efforts.

As noted in Section 4.2, participants have some criticism of existing management styles and approaches, but there is also an overall positive evaluation expressed in the data collected for this project. Nonetheless, there is also some fundamental criticism of management approaches and philosophy and some participants desire to see redirected because of fundamental concern about conditions and agency response to those conditions:

The forests belong to us and we are going to take them back ... I think the redirection should be, that the forest belongs to the people and the people want to use that forest, multiple-use, and we want to be able to get in it and use it from an economic standpoint. Grazing, lumbering, timbering and for recreation for hunting, fishing, and camping are important. Watershed health is extremely important and ... we have to have a healthy forest. With access and multiple-use, that is the way you can maintain a healthy forest rather than just burning it down.

This fundamental sense of concern coexists with other evaluations of the agency as “doing ok.”

In addition to the specific concerns developed in this section, there are some general beliefs about management approaches and interactions with interested parties, including ensuring equity, avoiding favoritism, and managing with a broad scale view of the health of the forest ecosystem. These beliefs are expressed in the following statements:

There is a tendency for the Forest Service to be more responsive to the county and the traditional users like ranchers than to others. I would like to see them manage in a way that thinks far into the future with consideration for what we are going to have in the future, what our children will have in the future. They should be asking questions about the whole range of benefits that come from a decision and not just a few people. Forests are limited resources with national value and that is the management philosophy I would like to see implemented.

It is not so much any one issue as the whole approach I would like them to consider. Sometimes they manage based on who screams the loudest or on the number of users of a particular type. What I want them to do is make decisions based on the full-range of user experiences, not just the most, but the full range of uses. If you start counting heads to make your decisions, then something will go very wrong in managing this forest.

What I would like to see them do is manage with the idea that they should be managing the forest for the greatest good for the greatest number of people. If they keep that in mind, then they will be okay.

A range of comments from sometimes opposing points of view share a desire for the Forest Service to perform an arbiter role. This role would include providing a clear basis for decision-making as well as facilitating mutual understanding among conflicting interests about the basis for those decisions. Inherent in this desire is a concern that one or more interested parties may have more influence in the process than others. The desired role of the agency as facilitating mutual understanding is perceived as one means for all parties to evaluate the decision process regarding controversial issues. The following two statements express this desire from different perspectives:

It may be ATV access or grazing or any number of controversial issues. The important thing is the expectations about the kinds of values that need to be accommodated in using the forest. Among the conflicting viewpoints, the Forest Service needs to be the arbiter of uses and they need to make decisions to do what is right to support ecological functioning. ... They should not be a cheerleader for any one particular type of use or value. They need to be setting a direction based on a philosophy of land management and stick to it. Right now the Ashley does not have a philosophy about the land. They have a philosophy about planning, but not about the land. ... I would like to see them have this role of arbiter and not cheerleader for one point of view or another.

My point is simple. Get us in the same room with the people who don't think we (motorized users) should be riding in the forest. The Forest Service should be in there with us and we can work it out. That way there are no separate meetings, no closed doors, it is all out on the table and we can hash it out.

Although these statements express different points of view about what might be the “right” outcome from the desired role of the agency as arbiter, there is a shared desire for an agency role in facilitating a transparent outcome.

7.5.1 COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Although participants expressed general satisfaction with customer service and community relations, there were strong views expressed about areas for improvement. These areas include being more responsive and timely to citizen and organizational requests for information or permitted uses, streamlining and changing the bureaucratic mindset that inhibits more effective community relationships, and improving relationships with the full range of permittees.

Participants expressed strong sentiments about the pace of bureaucratic processes at the ANF and frustration about responsiveness to user requests for information and permits.

They move at a very different pace than the rest of us. The pace of bureaucratic progress is frustrating. The motorized people seem to be making more headway than the rest of us. I know some people had done some mapping of trails and offered the map to the Forest Service and their response was to say, 'give it to us in a couple of years when we are ready.' That isn't the kind of attitude that gives you confidence.

Although they listen to us, their responses to letters and phone questions are very slow and sometimes they don't respond at all. If they would just

respond to letters it would help me to know they are listening to my concerns.

Responsiveness and timeliness are related to desires to streamline the bureaucratic process on the ANF:

We have tried to work with them and it is very frustrating. We are responsible users of the forest and we care about setting a good example. But, the bureaucracy to get a permit is outrageous. They are accommodating of public needs and sometimes it seems they are just trying to keep us off the forest. It is like they think it is their forest and not public land.

You can't get a straight answer in a timely manner from them. They are indecisive and take forever to make simple decisions. We have been working on an event that takes significant pre-planning and coordination with our members. We need them to make timely decisions, but they seem uninterested in our needs. They are alienating some of their core constituents with their indecision and unresponsiveness. Many of us are volunteers and we have brought our kids up on this forest and we have proven our commitment to the forest. But, they don't seem to care. They seem intent on keeping us off the forest because it is 'their forest.'

Concessionaires, outfitters and guides, ranchers and other permitted users express a desire for a partnership approach to relationships between the ANF and its permittees. Existing relationships are described as cordial, but there is the desire for cultivating mutual respect in working relationships:

Most of the permittees on this forest are not corporations or big businesses. We are individuals and small businesses that try to cultivate a positive working relationship with the forest. A positive working relationship of mutual respect is what we want.

We work with the Forest Service as permittees. Sometimes the working relationship suffers because they have the attitude 'we are the Feds and you do what we say.' If they keep a positive attitude about working with us and joining with us, then the forest will benefit.

A related theme, especially among agricultural interests, is a desire for the ANF to consider the potential benefits of including local knowledge about forest conditions and process in planning and decision making:

We have been on the land a long time and we know something about how this ecosystem works. Sometimes I think the knowledge of the Forest Service lags behind their expertise when it comes to managing this land. I would like to see them incorporate information from the local producers (agriculture) who have some experience managing the land. Sometimes the new manager from Arkansas or wherever does not know our area well. We can help them out.

Outfitters and guides as well as concessionaires expressed a desire for better understanding of how ANF management decisions and administrative policy influence their business cycles and operations.

One of the problems of working with the Forest Service is that they really don't have an understanding of the business cycle for concessionaires and others that work with them. If they just understood some of the basics, then the decisions they make and how they do things would limit the frustration of working with them.

7.5.2 ENHANCE THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF PUBLIC LANDS

Participants expressed a desire for planning and management decision making to consider the economic costs and benefits to adjacent communities. For example,

The counties around the forest are different and have different needs. We would like to see them consider the economic benefits to counties of what they do. When they close roads or restrict access, it hurts our county economically because fewer people come to use the forest.

Our communities have a very small economic base. The forest contributes, but it could be more of an economic asset. I would like to see them manage in a way that provides more economic benefit to the county, like oil and gas development where it makes sense. I think the new Plan needs to deal with the opportunity to develop oil and gas on the South Unit.

Other sentiments express a desire for a more active role in the economic development of adjacent communities:

We would like to see the Forest Service take the lead on some economic development issues. That would make a huge difference in a small economy like ours. That is what they forget: a few jobs make a big difference. A few businesses make a big difference because of how they are connected to each other. They used to do some small grants and it was very helpful.

In this area (Daggett County), there are very rural communities. Our aspirations are for heritage tourism and other activities that can provide economic development. The major employee in our county is the Forest Service. We would like to see them involved in helping to develop that kind of tourism.

There could be a lot more benefit to the public by using the deadfall and standing timber for economic benefit. Right now they are just burning it up and it is going to waste. That is a resource that can have economic benefit to us. It seems crazy that we have people importing timber from long distances when we have a supply here.

This more active role includes managing timber sales that support local economies:

They have been pricing the folks on the mountain here out of the business. ... I have met with some timber people and ... one of the things that kept coming up is the poor quality timber they can see (on the mountain) and pay

more for it than I can buying it over in Colorado and trucking it back here to a mill.

Participants express a desire for a more active approach that considers as well as understands local economies and how management decisions affect the small timber industry of this region, especially in the counties on the northern side of the forest.

All of the counties adjacent to the ANF note the relatively large proportion of public lands that constrains development and also results in additional costs. For example,

Right now the NRA is a problem because it is a big attraction and people visit in pretty good numbers. But, what happens is the Forest Service is not out there when the people are so our county ends up bearing the cost of EMT responses and law enforcement calls. If they are going to be attracting people to use the resource, then they need to plan for the economic costs to the counties for providing services to those visitors.

Some of the counties do get substantial economic benefits from oil and gas benefits, but we do not. There are more costs for us because of the truck traffic along our roads and we have to maintain HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials) responses capability.

In addition to more direct involvement in economic development, some statements also express a desire for consideration of the distribution of socioeconomic benefits among adjacent counties:

Vernal gets a disproportionate amount of the benefits of the Forest Service being here. Most of the Forest Service human capital is in Vernal. I would like to see them spread that capital around more and have more staff outside the Supervisor's office.

We are a small county. Recreation, government, and agriculture are the source of employment here. We don't receive benefits from energy development. We have limited human and community resources. Any small difference for our economy is a difference. We would like to see that the Forest Service understands our situation and is willing to work with us when they make decisions that can help our economic conditions and offer some human capital.

Some statements also express a concern that the amount of public lands in adjacent counties results in a burden that should be mitigated:

Daggett County and communities like Green River (Wyoming) are land locked and can't grow because they are surrounded by public lands. They (Forest Service) need to be thinking about ceding some land to places like that so they have the opportunity to grow.

We are a county with a high percentage of public lands. Wilderness and wild and scenic are fine, but we bear the cost of those resources and we don't receive many benefits. If the nation values public lands so much, then why isn't PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) fully funded? If wilderness is a national value, then why should we locals bear the burden when the nation, the congress does not fund the cost we bear?

7.5.3 MANAGEMENT APPROACHES: MULTIPLE-USE AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

There are themes in the data about desires for reinforcing or changing the approach to resource management on the ANF. These themes include adjusting the multiple-use concept to meet current conditions, ensuring the full range of resources are addressed in the approach to ANF management, and actively working to achieve a balance in decision making about resource management.

The central topic for discussion concerning management approaches is the notion of multiple-use. For some participants, multiple-use is perceived to refer to support for traditional uses such as timbering, grazing, and mining. For others multiple-use should include consideration of the full range of resources and respect for the quality of all user experiences. For example,

Multiple-use means respecting the rights of all users to be in the forest. Grazing, timber, wildlife, and recreation are the multiple-use values that are important to me. People talk about the damage from grazing and timbering, but the recreationists can do as much or more harm to the forest. The forest benefits from logging and grazing because they improve forest health and provide habitat and water for wildlife.

What I want to see in the future is the forest to continue multiple-use as a philosophy of management. That does not mean every use on every acre. I feel the resource should be used on a sustained yield basis.

I support the idea of multiple-use, but it does not mean every use in every place. When multiple-use is part of how decisions are made then they need to pay attention to the quality of experiences of all users. They can't effectively manage the forest if they only manage one or a few resources. You have to look at the whole thing and not give emphasis to just one resource.

Supporters of multiple-use also suggest a need for more consideration of the stewardship and conservation ethics of users who can contribute knowledge and experience to planning and decision making:

People from all over want to come here and see the resources we have. That is because we have taken good care of them. We try to keep our backyard in good shape and use the forest in a way that takes care of it. We have a legacy in our resources and way of life we want to pass on to our children and their children. We have a contribution to make. We would like to see them use our local knowledge and stewardship.

Themes about multiple-use emphasize the need for a restoration of "balance" in how the concept is implemented:

The pendulum used to be too far one way, toward extracting resources, and now it is too far to preservation. We have resources on the forest and we need to find a way to use it and not abuse it. ... There should be a way to store that carbon in a 2x4 rather than burn it up.

They have a major balancing act to do. We appreciate the pristine nature of the forest, but multiple-use is important too. Timber, grazing, and mining should receive the same attention as other uses of the forest. Those can be done in an environmentally friendly way to create a balance of uses.

We want to see the forest used in a sustainable way. You can develop the resources, have grazing and timbering, without exploitation.

We go to with them and they tell us they can't do something because of budget. Their philosophy seems to be that they don't want commercial use of the forest anymore. The National Forest System was set up to harvest resources. That is why they are in the Department of Agriculture. Trees are a renewable resource, but they are tending toward the preservation side, more like the Park Service. They need to get back to a better balance in how they manage the forest.

Participants also express concern about matching personnel to the management tasks. Some participants applaud the diversification of the agency and its shift to a wider range of specialists:

There is a new crop of "ologists" in the agency and that is a good thing. They have a broader point of view not than just what is good for timber or what is good for cows. There are more resources that need to be managed and I think they need to continue to consider all the resources and how they interact. They have the people to do that, but they just need to be in the field more so they really understand what is going on.

Other participants are more critical. They suggest the shift from foresters with a broad view of ecological processes to the existing team management approach has resulted in fragmented management.

A forester had to look at the entire forest. Then as they brought in the wildlife biologist and the plant biologist and amphibian person and all these ... ologists, this pushed the guys who had to look out for the entire ecosystem out of the way. We started to manage some places for a single animal or a single plant or a single use.

Other statements are more skeptical of what is perceived to be a mismatch in personnel and the resources they manage:

The Forest Service employs tree people, but the forest has changed. The major use of the forest for people here in Rock Springs is recreation. There are some other uses like grazing, but the majority of people use the forest for recreation. But, the Forest Service does not know recreation. They know trees. They don't have enough people with the education and knowledge of recreation to deal with the demand. It is not just managing the trees anymore. They have to be able to see past the trees to meet the demands in the future.

They need to get back to the Organic Administration Act and read that. Most of the employees I speak with that are under the age of 30 couldn't recite to me what the purpose of the forest is. ...

7.5.4 CONSTRAINTS ON EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

The data contain four prominent themes about constraints that affect existing management and decision making. The first theme emphasizes the affect of limited budgets that are believed to compromise agency effectiveness:

The current managers have some vision and they are trying to be leaders, but their hands are tied. They are short on funds and everyone has too much responsibility. They are consolidating Districts and I would like to make sure they realize how important their people are to our community. They are an important resource that helps us.

The Forest Service needs to invest in the resource, but they are not getting the funding they need. We know that. But, more funding does not mean more people to write people tickets. The perception is that the Forest Service is restricting people and not providing services to its users.

Their hands are tied. They say they want to do many of things we want them to do, but they don't have the money or the people.

A second theme is a perception about limited problem solving applied to key issues that influence user experiences and overall forest management:

What I see is that when there is a problem in the forest rather than address it head-on and deal with it, they close it down. For example, we see them closing off riparian areas because of damage. Rather than close it down, why not look for other solutions to address the problem. The close it down mentality is what bothers me.

The third theme addresses the need to mitigate the effects of turnover in key leadership positions. As noted in Section 4.1.2, turnover is believed to disrupt community relationships and adversely affect planning for long-term projects. Participant statements are explicit about the need to mitigate the adverse effects of this type of turnover:

Continuity of leadership has been an issue. A new person will come in with their expectations of change from their perspective and not consider local input. We are a local forest and if you come from a drive-through forest it is different than here. We are a participating forest and people just don't drive through it and forget it. It is our forest and we care about it. It is part of who we are. We would like them to work with us when a new person comes in so that we can do something about maintaining continuity.

A fourth theme addresses the consequences of the preparation of management documents that are perceived to be insufficiently developed:

I have seen them write documents, it was a south slope document that was poorly written. ... You gotta write good solid documents and put the resources that are needed to do that. And, they have not been doing that. .. They need strong groundwork (to prepare and issue management documents).

7.5.5 FACILITATE THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS

Limited budget and personnel resources are perceived to contribute to declining facilities and threats to forest health. Participant statements suggest that volunteer resources can mitigate some of the problems with existing conditions. However, participants generally evaluate a need for more focused attention to engaging volunteers:

They make it hard to help them out. If you want to clean a trail and remove a tree from across a trail, then you have to jump through a bunch of hoops. You can't just do what needs to be done. Now, I understand the need for some of the regulations, but what if they just designated a person at the Forest Service to work with us to help facilitate that process and get something done. They don't seem very interested. There is an untapped volunteer resource here that could help. The ATV groups are making some progress there, but there is a wider group of people willing to help.

I would like to see them use volunteer trail patrols to deal with the trail conditions. The BLM does that and the Ashley could do it too. They could help with educating the public and provide information and maps about proper trail use up on the mountain.

One of the biggest problems on this forest is the maintenance of trails and facilities. They tell us they don't have the budget and they don't have the people. There are people who are willing to volunteer to help out. But, they need some leadership and direction to enlist volunteers and work with the community to get some things done. They are losing an opportunity to improve the conditions and work with the public that cares about the forest. They just need to make the effort to organize the people willing to help.

There is also a theme that in some communities the human capital is insufficient to help with such tasks as maintenance and providing education to forest users. This theme emphasizes the responsibility of the agency to meet its mandates:

Things are very busy here and people don't have the time to volunteer. We have an hour or so free and that is not time we can give to volunteering. We pay our taxes and we might even be in favor of some fees, but they have to get the job done on their own.

7.5.6 TRANSPARANCY IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Local governments and cooperating agencies as well as citizens emphasize the significance of creating transparency in forest planning and management. Although participants have different degrees of participation in past planning and management, there is strong consensus about a desire for better understanding of the relationship between public input and planning and management outcomes. Some of this concern for transparency results from:

- Assessments that some interested parties have more influence or more power to influence agency decision making.
- Skepticism about the sincerity of the public involvement process that appear not to seriously consider public input.

- Assessments that despite substantial involvement and comment, the relationship between plans and management decision and public comment is unclear.

The essence of these sentiments is expressed in the following comment:

I have concerns about their administrative process. We have tried to be a Cooperating Agency with them. We want to be in the planning process up front. But, we can take our experience with the Wasatch-Cache as an example. We invested serious time and effort in that planning process and it is still a mystery with how they came up with their alternatives. It is as if they did not hear our input at all. We could not see any result in the outcome from our input. Since we are a Cooperating Agency and they should be listening to us, what happens with the general public?

This comment succinctly expresses a commonly expressed sentiment about the need to clarify the relationship of public involvement and the outcome of decision making and planning activities. Participants desire more transparency as a means to improve the administrative process and its implications for resource management.

8 TRIBAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS ABOUT FOREST MANAGEMENT

There is a formal consultation process for agency interaction with tribal governments (USDA Forest Service 1997). The information in this section is not presented as a consultation, but as information that may be useful to further an effective consultation process between the ANF and tribal governments.

To develop information an initial contact was made with the Ute Tribe Business Committee. This resulted in a referral to several departments where discussions were conducted about the use of the ANF by tribal members. Some preliminary information was developed about tribal desires for the consultation process and evaluations of existing working relationships. The information presented in this brief discussion should be considered as an initial step on a road to understanding and developing the implications of tribal concerns about management of the ANF.

The following points are themes that future work may productively develop.

- The interface of tribal lands with the ANF indicates a concern for the interaction of fire and fuel issues that affect lands on either side of the boundary. There is some expressed desire to see a less dense forest on ANF lands adjacent to tribal lands:

On timber issues, we think they should cut more to reduce the thickness of the stands. The forest isn't unhealthy, but the timber is thick and the mills could use the wood.

- The primary interaction between the tribe and the ANF has been around fire response and fire protection issues. Participants suggest there is a cooperative working relationship about fire protection and response issues.

We have a number of informal meetings with the Forest Service around last year's fire. People seem to feel like they can call the Forest Service directly to ask about fire issues.

Other participants suggest there is an opportunity to improve working relationship about cultural issues and traditional uses:

On some issues we have not had a close working relationship with the Ashley. We have not had an open dialogue about some of the cultural issues such as getting teepee poles and gathering plants and foods. People don't feel like they have access to all the areas.

- **Some sources report there is limited use of ANF lands by tribal members because of regional history and uncertainty about what types of uses may or may not be allowed.**

People have felt they were prohibited from using Forest Service lands. They have had that feeling so long that we really don't go there that much.

There are some historical issues and issues associated with different Ute bands that may inhibit cultural uses of Forest Service lands.

- **An important use of ANF lands by tribal members is gathering of traditional plants used for food and other purposes.**

There is some gathering on Forest Service land for things like Indian potatoes. Those are around 7,500 feet. And, there are wild onions and garlic that are also gathered.

- **Participants suggest there are opportunities to improve mutual understanding and working relationships about cultural issues:**

Our Plant Project is a chance to reconnect traditional knowledge with the present. That is an opportunity for the Forest Service to work with us.

- **There are other cultural uses of the Ashley by some tribal members that include participation in traditional ceremonies and visiting sacred sites:**

There are also some cultural uses that have to do with visiting sacred sites, and some places for fasting. We seem to have good coordination with them on cultural resource issues.

- **Improving understanding about cultural resources is an opportunity for future dialogue, especially developing tribal understandings that may be different than Forest Service approaches:**

People tend to see archaeology as only dealing with the tangible, but we think of it differently. To us cultural resources are layers of the non-tangible to the tangible. This is the more holistic view that is the big picture. We would like to have more dialogue with the Forest Service about the big picture of archaeology and our cultural resources.

- **A desire to protect information about topics such as archaeological sites, sacred sites and cultural practices is often termed cultural privacy. Some participants suggest there is a need to develop mutual understanding about cultural privacy issues to address the desires of the tribe for management of these resources:**

There are some issues about cultural privacy that we have worked on with the White River Forest planning process. There was some sensitivity to those issues in their planning process and I think the Ashley could benefit by seeing what the White River did in their work with the tribe.

- **There is also a desire to include tribal history and traditions in the heritage programs sponsored by the Forest Service:**

I heard there was a Boy Scout trip not too long ago and they had a heritage program with it and they asked some of the mountain men people to speak to the group. We have never been asked to participate in those kinds of programs, but there is a long tribal history with a lot of knowledge about the land and the history of the area. I would like to see them promote the Indian history of the land, but they focus on the non-Indian history. There is a lot of knowledge about the traditional uses of the land that could be shared.

- **Participants also expressed other particular issues and concerns which include a desire to clarify the appropriate person at the ANF to assist with problem solving:**

We would like to see them promote the ability to gather, but we are not sure who we talk to at the Forest Service about these issues.

We are concerned about water and air quality, but we have a more holistic approach to cultural resources and it would be helpful to have more dialogue on those issues. We would like to have better collaboration, but it is not clear who we go to.

There have been a few issues that have emerged from the Neola fire that show a need for more collaboration. The issue is who to talk to about that.

- **There is an expressed desire to work with the ANF on the Forest Plan revision process:**

As far as I know there has been little to no collaboration with the Ashley on their Forest Plan. We have participated with other forests for ongoing plan revisions, but the Ashley has not reached out to us and especially to the Tribal Council. That would improve collaboration. It is also important to work with the individual departments in the Tribal Government.

In response to a question about methods to improve mutual understanding and working relationship with the tribe, one participant responded:

The most important thing they can do is to acknowledge that the tribe is here. If they can consider different ways to work with us and have more ongoing contact with us, then we can build a better working relationship.

Tribal participants also suggested that government agencies appear to under-appreciate tribal resources that can be allocated to responding to requests for information and requests to attend meetings:

We have very limited resources to respond to the requests we receive. That stack over there is documents that we have been asked to review and

comment on. We don't have enough resources to make the kind of review and comments we would like.

- **As a closing comment, one participant offered the following assessment for next steps:**

It is important for them to develop an understanding of how we do business and the constraints we have. We are a tribal government and it is important to work with us at appropriate levels. The Council as well as the departments are important for interaction between the forest and us. We share a large boundary and we have mutual interests. Maybe this Forest Plan process is a way for us to start working on issues that concern both of us.

These brief points suggest some opportunities for future interaction with the tribe about their resource and cultural issues that may be affected by future planning and management activities. These may be useful starting points to develop concerns about tribal uses of ANF lands, the management of natural and cultural resources, the process of problem solving issues with the ANF, and the inclusion of the Native American history and traditions within ongoing or future heritage programs.

9 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Planning and implementing any public involvement effort requires some understanding of the social environment, public assessments of management issues, and the incentives and constraints associated with engagement strategies (Russell 2006, 2006; Wondolleck and Yaffee 2000). Part of the discussion agenda for this project asked some participants about their views concerning engagement strategies appropriate for their community. Responses to these topics were diverse. Some of the central ideas in these responses are identified in the following points:

- **Continuing with ongoing meetings with county governments, collaborating agencies, and interested parties is a useful means to share information and gather ideas. Some participants express a desire for more of a partnership approach in which ideas are shared and discussed rather than a forum in which either party states a position or concern without discussion and an exchange of ideas.**

To their credit, they meet with us regularly. But, meaningful public involvement is more than sitting down to talk. They tell us they want to hear what we think, but there is no exchange of ideas or information. We ask questions and give them input and they will say to us, 'We don't know what we are going to do. We will get back to you in a couple of months.'

- **A related point is the importance of authenticity in the public engagement process. An often expressed point of view is that public involvement processes are "checking the boxes" without a sincere interest in public contributions. This common assessment is a barrier to public participation that is expressed in the following comment:**

People have given up on public participation. What they say falls on deaf ears and it too frustrating for people. They are going to do what they want to do anyway, so why participate?

The desire for authenticity also extends to ongoing engagements between different parties and ANF managers:

If I had only three things I could change about the current forest management, one of them would be the public involvement process. Right now it appears to operate on a wink and a nod. They have a set of regular meetings with folks and they say they want to hear what we have to say, but they don't discuss the issues with us. We talk, they say they will get back to us and not much happens. We need to be in a dialogue about the issues and have all the parties who are interested participating. The Forest Service needs to be collaborating and not managing with categorical exclusions that only result in appeals. There needs to be discussion for progress to happen.

- **In some adjacent communities agencies such as BLM and the Bureau of Reclamation also have mandates for public involvement. One result is meeting fatigue or too many demands for involvement. Despite this constraint, participants express a desire for some forum in which they can be heard:**

I don't go to many meetings. I am just too busy and there are too many things to attend anyway. But, I don't want to see them just give up and not do anything. We need a place to have our say.

- **There is also a desire for an inclusive public involvement process that recognizes the political and cultural diversity within adjacent communities. Although there is some general recognition of the importance of the ANF having a government-to-government relationship with adjacent counties, there is also concern that citizen concerns do not necessarily overlap with those of county government:**

I think it is essential for them to have some type of public forum for people to express their points of view. There are people here who may not share the same point of view as the county commissioners and we need the opportunity to be heard as much as they do.

Concerns about inclusiveness also extend to communities in the Wasatch Front where there is strong interest in providing an opportunity to express their concerns.

In the past the Ashley has not been too responsive to public input beyond the county commissioners in local communities. With a change in Forest Supervisors they have reached out beyond the Uintah Basin and local politics. They need to continue to work with people beyond the Basin.

We are hikers and backpackers and occasional mountain bikers on the Ashley. We don't have much of an opportunity to express our view, but if they are revising their Forest Plan it would be nice for them to reach out to people here. They could do something like set up a table at REI and offer information and the chance for people to have a say. That might be a good start. We are happy to see they are considering us in this process.

- **The opportunity to express and perhaps address the effects of conflicting points of view is also a noteworthy theme in participant statements about public involvement.**

An appropriate forum with a role for the Forest Service are believed to be one means to address this concern:

There needs to be an opportunity for constructive dialogue among all the interested parties and the Forest Service. Collaboration and dialogue can help to solve some of the problems. The Forest Service has a role in mediating that dialogue and promoting education about the key issues.

I would like to see a TWIG like process (Topical Working Group) for Ashley public involvement. When there are polarized interests then there is a benefit to that type of process. It benefits the participants who can exchange ideas and the forest can learn about possible solutions to problems that are hard to solve. But, you need good facilitators to make that process work well.

- **Wyoming counties express a strong desire for consideration of their interest in planning and management decision making beyond NRA issues. These counties suggest there is limited interest by the agency in engaging Wyoming counties, despite the strong interests in and attachments to the water, wildlife, timber, mineral, and other resources of the Ashley National Forest. Recognition of the potential differences in state and county differences is an important consideration for future public engagement efforts.**

Based on these comments, the following implications for public involvement can be a productive starting point for developing the next steps for engaging publics with the ANF:

- **Further develop the distribution of interests and concerns in the different geographic and sociocultural regions adjacent to the ANF. This process can include involving community-based efforts that can work cooperatively with the agency to understand custom and culture issues, community boundaries, resource values, and the interactions of community with the ANF.**
- **Build on and augment the human capital in adjacent communities by working with local interested parties. Local organizations and community groups are opportunities to build and extend working relationships that can result in broader understandings about the Forest Plan and overall management of the ANF.**
- **Use local forums and outreach to engage in discussions with interested parties and partners about strategies to involve a wider range of public participants.**
- **Clarify the mission and sidebars that affect management of the ANF. Emphasize what can be accomplished and the decision-space that is available for producing a Forest Plan. While some local residents have a clear understanding of the agency's mission, there appears to be a strong need to clarify and reinforce the mission and purpose of the agency.**
- **Continue to foster partnerships and relationships with collaborating agencies. These relationships present an opportunity to engage groups with a strong sense of local stewardship and a desire to enhance the quality of community life. Partnerships with local organizations and other interest groups have the potential to assist the ANF in developing and implementing effective plans.**

There is an abundance of good will and positive evaluations about the management of the Ashley National Forest. There is also some criticism that is more often than not offered in a spirit of improving the working relationship for the benefit of forest resources and the interaction of citizens with these resources. There is also hope that such partnerships will be a basis for improving overall management of the Ashley National Forest and ensuring local as well as national needs are addressed.

APPENDIX: DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Guide is not a list of standard questions, but rather a set of topic areas for discussion. The specific questions asked for each topic area depend on the knowledge and perspective of project participants. Not every topic may be covered in each discussion, but the topics below represent the range of desired information for this project. The focus of the discussions is to understand the issues and concerns about forest management as perceived by a range of stakeholders and other interested parties.

- **Identity.** Each participant will be asked to describe their interest in forest management and any particular perspective or interest/stakeholder group with which they are affiliated.
- **Context.** Each social environment is a context that influences how individuals perceive and define issues and problems, especially those related to values, beliefs, and attitudes associated with natural resources (Kempton, Boster, and Hartley 1995).
 - **Sense of Place.** “Place” is a value that may have fundamental importance for the attachment of individuals and groups to a forest and its resources. This topic will elicit the characteristics of communities and landscapes that are meaningful for participants. For example, a possible question is: “How would you describe this place to someone who has never been here?” Or, “How would you describe what is unique about this community/forest?”
 - **Lifestyles.** Some metropolitan areas will have diverse ways of living while more rural areas may be less diverse. This topic area will identify the range of lifestyles and their associations with forest resources.
 - **Socioeconomic Issues.** Ongoing community issues may influence the perception of what is an important management issue or valued resource (cf. Baker and Kusel 2003; Kruger 2003). This topic area will identify any ongoing or historical issues influencing assessments of resource values and management issues. For example, an initial question might be, “How has this community changed in the last 10-15 years?” And, “What are the important sources of change?” And, “What are your thoughts about the challenges for this community/region?” And, “What groups are most and least affected by forest management?”
 - **Uses.** This topic will elicit knowledge about the range of uses of the ANF to determine the content of values and beliefs about use of the forest and its resources. Probes will develop perceptions of the following types of uses: boating, camping, ecosystem restoration, fire management, fishing, grazing, hiking, hunting, silviculture, trail riding, and wildlife management. Perceptions of the intensity and frequency of uses as well as areas of potential conflict among users will also be developed.
 - **Resources.** This topic area directly addresses the types of resources participants perceive as present on forests lands. This is a basis for development of values, beliefs, and attitudes. Discussion of this topic area might begin with a question such as, “A place is often thought of as the sum of its parts. Can you describe the parts, the types of resources of this forest?” Specific types of resources can then be probed if discussion is limited.
 - Physical / Geographic.
 - Economic
 - Social/Cultural
 - Spiritual
 - Other.....

- **Special Designations.** This topic area will identify any existing special designations and evaluations and issues associated with those landscapes or bodies of water. Additionally, any perceived needs for additional areas and issues associated with potential special designations will be developed, including those concerning Roadless Areas, Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Research Natural Areas. Participants will be asked to locate these landscapes on maps as a means to initiate discussion of existing or proposed special designations. This discussion will also develop the perceived values and benefits associated with places for special designations.
- **Benefits and Values.** This discussion topic develops the perceived benefits of the ANF as well as the specific resources and any places of special designation. Products, services, and opportunities associated with these public lands will be elicited and discussed, including the distribution of benefits among communities of place and interest. An initial question to begin discussion of this is topic might be, “Can you describe the types of benefits your community/group receives from this national forest?” Probes will develop the economic, social, and other benefits of identified resources and places.
- **Desired Futures.** Values and beliefs that potentially motivate action (D'Andrade and Strauss 1992) can be elicited by asking participants about their desired futures for the ANF. For example, this topic can be introduced as follows: “How would you describe the forest when you first became aware of it?” And, then: “If you think about how you want the forests to be when your children are grown, what is your vision?” After particular desired futures are elicited, then participants will be asked what strategies the USFS should use to achieve the desired futures.
- **Key Management Issues.** This topic will identify participant assessments of the significant issues for plan revision and their priorities among the identified issues. This topic can be introduced with a question such as, “What do you think is broken, and what needs to be fixed as the USFS revises existing plans?” The discussion will also identify those areas where USFS plans are perceived to be successful. For example, “What has the USFS done well in its management of lands and resources here?”
- **Closing.** Participants will be asked if there are any issues or topics they wish to discuss before ending the group. Each participant will be asked if there are any outstanding issues or topics that should be in the record.

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Ashley National Forest

Economic Environment and Contribution Analysis

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for:

Ashley National Forest

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DRAFT

Introduction

The Ashley National Forest falls predominantly within 4 counties on the northern border of Utah and Wyoming. Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater (in Wyoming) and Uintah counties contain almost the entire planning area and draw their social and economic character from the National Forest. Sweetwater County contains a small portion of the Interstate 80 corridor and benefits from the social and economic opportunities a thoroughfare of this nature offers. Small portions of the National Forest also fall within Summit, Utah and Wasatch counties but to a much lesser extent. These counties have closer social and economic affiliations with the Wasatch front rather than the Ashley National Forest area. Uinta County, Wyoming is also included in the analysis area given social and economic ties to the ranching, logging and wood products industry. These counties reflect similar trends and values in the remaining areas adjacent to the Ashley. Special attention will be given to smaller communities that contain characteristics unique to the area.

The following description of the Ashley National Forest will focus more on the counties that contain most of the planning area (Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater and Uintah counties). The analysis of the functional economic area impacted by management of the Ashley National Forest includes these counties in addition to Uinta County, Wyoming and a portion of eastern Summit County, Utah. Estimates of the area economic contribution of Ashley National Forest management were developed with an input-output modeling tool called IMPLAN. Input-output models describe commodity flows from producers to intermediate and final consumers. The total industry purchases are equal to the value of the commodities produced. Industries producing goods and services for final demand purchase goods and services from other producers. These other producers, in turn, purchase goods and services. This buying of goods and services continues until leakages from the region stop the cycle. The resulting sets of multipliers describe the change of output for regional industries caused by a change in final demand in an industry. The IMPLAN database describes the economy in 509 sectors using federal data from 2006¹. These sectors are further aggregated below to better identify areas relevant to Forest Service management activities.

Certain defining features of every area influence and shape the nature of local economic and social activity. Among these are the local history, population, the presence of or proximity to large cities or regional population centers, types of longstanding industries such as agriculture and forestry, area racial and cultural characteristics, predominant land and water features, and unique area amenities. The Ashley National Forest operates as a steward of many of these area resources and opportunities and thus plays a principal role in the community. This document gives further insight on the character and extent of these community connections.

History

Much of the area draws its historical and cultural traditions from the greater Uintah Basin area. People identified with the Fremont Culture occupied the Uinta Basin about 3000 years ago. Their agrarian lives contrasted to the hunters and gathers that preceded them. The people of the Fremont Culture lived in kivas (semi-buried shelters) and were sustained primarily by corn agriculture hunting, and fishing. From about 1300 to the present, the basin has been occupied by a band of the Utes, the Uinta people. Throughout prehistory and history, the Uintah Basin has provided food, clothing, and shelter and has sustained the cultural traditions and the daily life of its inhabitants.

In 1776, the Dominguez and Escalante expedition entered the Uintah Basin opening the area to Spanish, and later Mexican, American, and British fur-trappers. The rush for fur bearing animals that followed was the areas first economic boon. Two trading posts were established in the basin; Fort Robidoux,(1830s-44) and Fort Kit Carson (1833-34). In the 1840s Captain John C. Fremont visited the area on an US Government expedition. Later, John Wesley Powell floated down the Green River from Green River,

¹ IMPLAN data is derived from a variety of sources included the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System (REIS), Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census, etc.

Wyoming in 1869 and again in 1871 on expeditions. In the early 1870s, Mormon ranchers and other whites, who used the land predominantly for cattle ranching, began filtering into the Ashley Valley,. In 1880 Uintah County was formed from Wasatch County.

Soon after, asphaltum minerals were discovered in the area ushering in a second wave of area expansion. Indian reservations were opened to outside development by miners and settlers. In 1905, thousands of homesteaders rushed to Grand Junction, Colorado, and to Vernal, Price, and Provo, Utah to register for a land drawing. The area proved difficult to homestead and many gave up their farming efforts. However by 1915, the population had grown enough for Duchesne County to be formed from Wasatch County (Fuller, 2007).

Commercial oil production began in 1948 by the Equity Oil Company which had an initial flow of about 300 barrels a day from its Ashley Valley No. 1 well. With the increase in the price of crude oil in the 1970s commercial oil production took off. Growth in jobs and personal income occurred alongside shortages of housing and increased school enrollments. During the fall of oil prices in the early 1980s, area economic well being decreased. Production and accompanying economic impact to the area have varied with prices. The Uintah Basin is currently experiencing economic growth due to increased oil and gas activity (University of Utah. 2007).

In the recent past, the area has become more dependent on tourism and the service sectors. The Uintah Mountains, Blue ribbon trout streams, and the Flaming Gorge attract visitors and residents to the area. Growth in counties along the Wasatch Front has provided some of this increased visitation. For example, Park City has acquired a reputation as an upscale getaway, bringing recreationists and new development to the area.

Demographic Overview

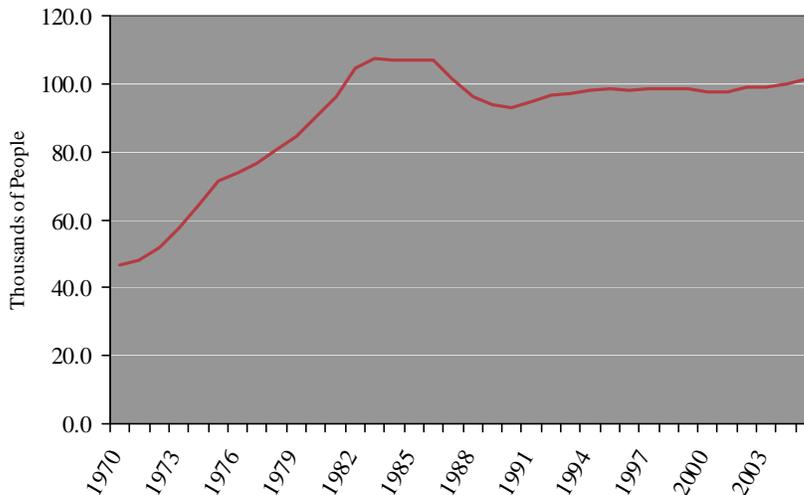
According to the US Census Bureau, Daggett and Duchesne counties increased in population by 48 and 46 percent between 1990 and 2006. Uintah County's population also increased during this time period but to a lesser extent of 26 percent. Between 1990 and 2006 Sweetwater County experienced an overall 0.2 percent decrease with a slight increase in population between 2000 and 2006. Uinta County, Wyoming increased by 8 percent between 1990 and 2006. Counties along the Wasatch Front, adjacent to the Ashley National Forest, experienced much greater changes in population size over this period; Summit County increased by 129 percent while Utah and Wasatch counties increased by 76 and 101 percent respectively. These population changes have driven increases in recreation use, leading to adjustments in the economic structure of the Ashley National Forest area.

The four counties containing large portions of the national forest have relatively small population densities ranging from 1.4 people per square mile in Daggett County to 6.2 in Uintah County. Uintah County, WY is slightly higher containing 9.7 people per square mile, while counties along the Wasatch front adjacent to the Ashley have much higher population densities.

	1990	2000	2006	Change
UTAH	1,722,850	2,233,169	2,550,063	48%
<i>Daggett County</i>	690	921	947	37%
Manila	207	308	303	46%
<i>Duchesne County</i>	12,645	14,371	15,701	24%
Roosevelt	3,915	4,299	4,681	20%
Duchesne	1,308	1,408	1,506	15%
<i>Summit County</i>	15,518	29,736	35,469	129%
Park City	4,468	7,371	8,044	80%
Coalville	1,065	1,382	1,419	33%
<i>Uintah County</i>	22,211	25,224	27,955	26%
Vernal city	6,644	7,714	8,163	23%
<i>Utah County</i>	263,590	368,536	464,760	76%
Provo	86,835	105,166	113,984	31%
<i>Wasatch County</i>	10,089	15,215	20,255	101%
Heber	4,782	7,291	9,775	104%
Midway	1,554	2,121	3,117	101%
WYOMING	453,588	493,782	515,004	14%
<i>Sweetwater County</i>	38,823	37,613	38,763	- 0.2%
Green River	12,711	11,808	11,933	- 6%
Rock Springs	19,050	18,708	19,324	1%
<i>Uinta County</i>	18,705	19,742	20,213	8%

Source: US Census Bureau, Population Finder

Figure 1. Annual Population Change within Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater Uinta, WY and Uintah, UT Counties



Commuting data for Duchesne and Uinta counties suggest they can be described as bedroom communities since income derived from people commuting out of the county to work exceeds the income from people commuting into the counties (BEA REIS, 2005). Daggett, Sweetwater and Uintah counties can be described as employment hubs since income derived from people commuting into the counties to work exceeds the income from people commuting out of the county.

The degree of commuting varies; in 2005 the difference between the outflow and inflow of earnings was 37.3 percent of total county income for Daggett County while only 3.3 and 7.7 percent in Uintah and

Sweetwater counties respectively. Due to Daggett counties small population it is not surprising that area income would be generated by those living outside of the county. Duchesne and Uinta counties had a 12.7 and 14.9 percent net difference in income in 2005 indicating a moderate level of commuting for the area. Many of those commuting to the employment hubs may in fact be commuting from these bedroom communities.

The population in all five counties has aged since 1990. Daggett County is comparatively older than the rest with an average age of 39.2 years in 2000 – up from 31.9 years in 1990. In all five counties the age group less than 20 years of age has decreased as a share of the total population while those older than 40 have increased. Between 1990 and 2000 the largest and fastest growing age groups were between 40 and 54 years old. During the same 10 year period the age groups between 25 and 39 years old has shown marked decreases. All five counties demonstrate similar trends; an aging population occurring alongside decreases in the younger generation (US Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000).

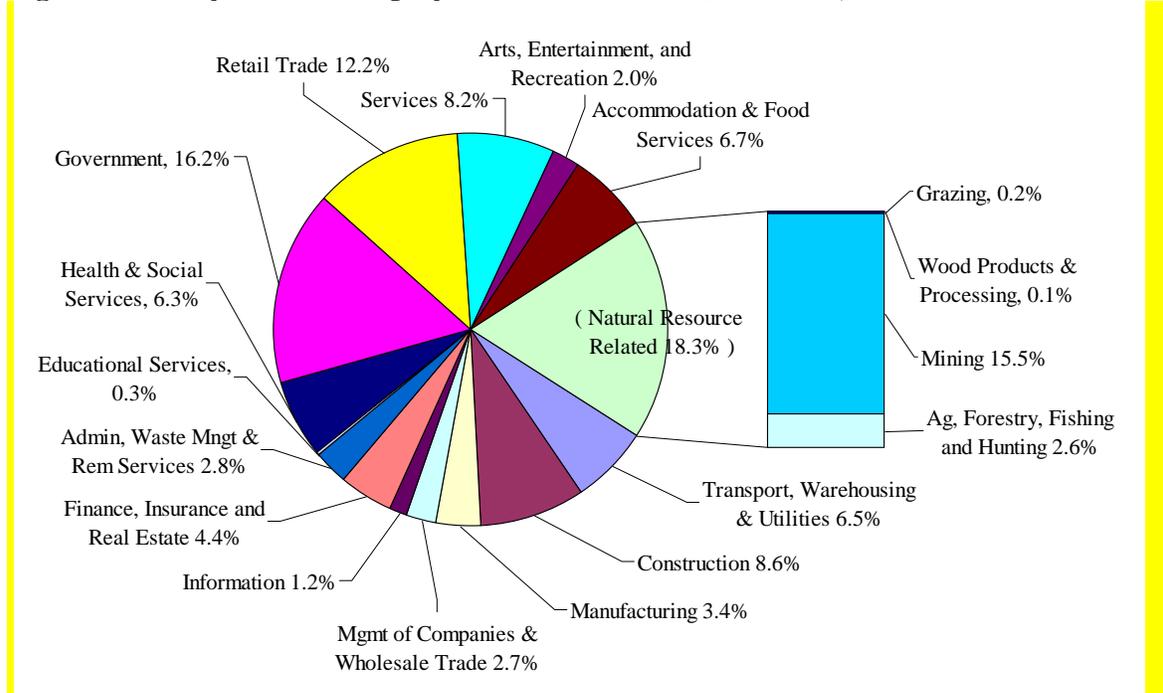
In 2000 Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater Uinta and Uintah counties were respectively 94.6, 90.2, 91.6, 94.3 and 87.7 percent white (EPS, 2007). In the year 2000, Native Americans comprised 0.8, 5.4, 1, 0.9 and 9.4 percent of the population in these counties. People of Hispanic decent have increased in number and percent of total population in these counties between 1990 and 2000 (Table 1). In Daggett and Uintah counties these increases in population accounted for approximately 19 and 9 percent of the total population increase over this time frame.

	1990		2000	
	#	%	#	%
Daggett	20	2.9%	64	6.9%
Duchesne	368	2.9%	455	3.2%
Sweetwater	3503	9.0%	3606	9.6%
Uinta	801	4.2%	1095	5.5%
Uintah	743	3.3%	1004	4%

Economic Specialization and Employment

The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project identified communities that were specialized with respect to employment. A community was designated specialized if employment in that sector was at least as great as ten percent of total employment for that community (USDA Forest Service, 1998). As seen in figure 2, the analysis area can be characterized as specialized with respect to Government, Mining, and Retail Trade (IMPLAN, 2006). Over time economic specialization has changed. The degree of change is reflected in figure 3 below, where total employment in Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater and Uintah counties is disaggregated into six industry sectors (EPS, 2007).

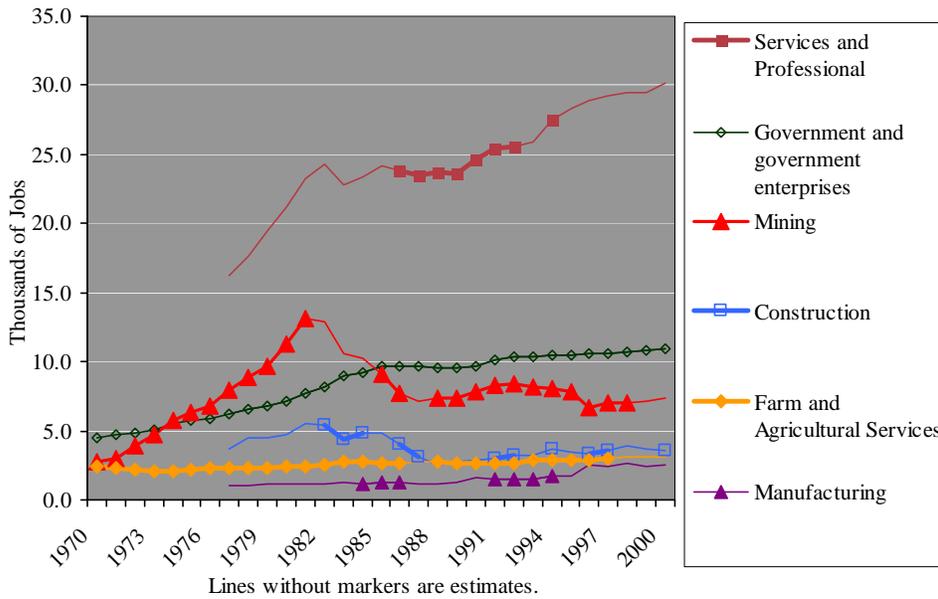
Figure 2. Analysis Area Employment Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)



From 1970 to 2005, total employment in these counties increased by 222 percent (from 20,454 to 65,975 jobs classified as full and part-time employment). The state of Utah saw an increase in total employment of 232 percent, while Wyoming saw a 126 percent increase over this period. The employment growth seen in these counties is largely due to increases between 1977 and 2000 in Service and Professional and Government sector employment; which respectively accounted for 52 and 19 percent of 2000 total employment. These shares are up from 1977 indicating an increasing area specialization in these sectors. These increases largely offset a decreased dependence on Mining and Construction sector employment; their shares of total employment decreased by 8.6 and 3.5 percent (EPS, 2007). Slight increases in the Agricultural Services sector (includes forestry related services) and the Manufacturing sector (includes paper, lumber and wood products manufacturing) accounted for 1.8 and 7.2 percent of new employment as well.

The Agricultural Services and the Manufacturing sectors have provided a small but consistent portion of total area employment. Mining and Construction have seen historic decreases in employment, however the Service and Professional sector has maintained a steady increase in area importance. Much of this Service and Professional sector growth can be attributed to opportunities and quality of life provided by natural amenities on the Ashley National Forest. Population and employment change is highly related to natural amenities (Knapp and Graves 1989, Clark and Hunter 1992; Treyz et al. 1993, Mueser and Graves 1995, McGranahan 1999, Deller 2001, Lewis et al. 2002) often provided by National Forest lands.

Figure 3. Employment History of Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater, Uinta, WY and Uintah, UT Counties (by SIC)



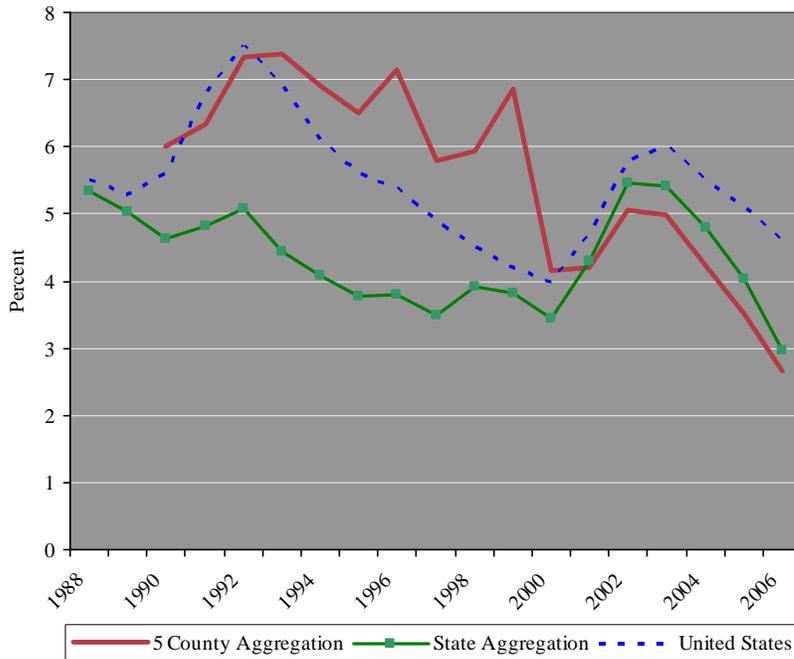
Economic Well-Being and Poverty

While the Service and Professional sector has historically offset decreases in Mining, Manufacturing and Construction, these jobs may not pay as much, which could decrease area economic well being. The private sectors examined can be lumped into Goods-Producing sectors (Natural Resources, Mining, Construction, and Manufacturing) and Service-Providing sectors (Trade, Transportation, Utilities, Finance, Education, Health, etc.). In 2005 the Goods-Producing and Service-Providing sectors paid on average \$55,206 and \$27,506 per year (EPS, 2007). From these statistics it is apparent that while the Service and Professional sector has offset decreases in Mining and Manufacturing, these jobs do not pay as much. The welfare implications of these changes are not so clear. The out-migration noted above suggests people may be moving away instead of taking lower paying jobs in the Service-Providing sectors.

Job growth during the 70's outpaced their states and the nation in analysis area counties except Uinta and Daggett counties. The economic downturn of the 1980's adversely affected the area as job growth slowed and population growth declined (see figures 1 and 3 above). In the 1990s population increases and job growth recovered, however analysis area counties in Utah stayed below state levels. From 1970 to 2005, personal income in the analysis area added \$2.3 billion, per capita income rose from \$17,318 to \$31,121, and earnings per job increased from \$33,181 to \$40,110 (all measures adjusted for inflation).

From 1988 to the early 2000's, unemployment in Duchesne, Sweetwater, Uinta and Uintah counties remained close to or above the national and state levels of unemployment. Daggett County experienced unemployment below or close to national and state levels during this time frame. In recent years, unemployment has dipped below national and state levels in Sweetwater, Uinta and Uintah counties while rising above in Daggett. Duchesne County's unemployment rate dropped below the national rate in 2005 and then further dropped to the state rate at 2.9 percent in 2006 (see figure below).

Figure 4. Unemployment Rate of the Five Counties within the Analysis Area (Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater Uinta, WY and Uintah, UT Counties)



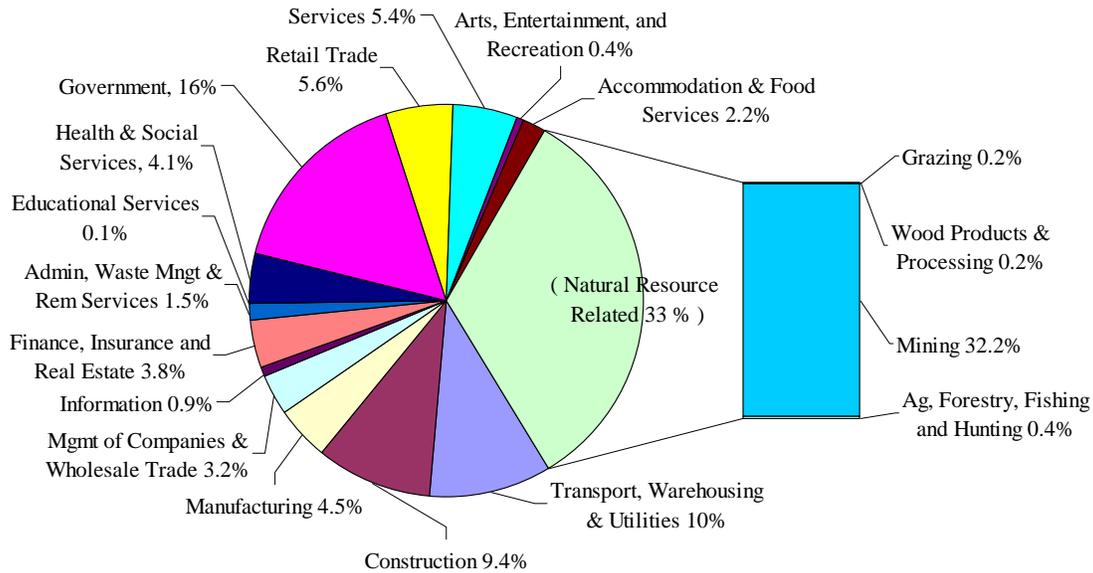
The share of Duchesne and Uintah County residents living below the poverty level was above the state share in Utah between 1979 and 1999. Daggett County population below poverty was above the state share before 1989 but decreased to 5 percent by 1999, well below the state poverty rate of 9 percent. Both Sweetwater and Uinta County populations living below the poverty level remained below Wyoming’s level between 1979 and 1999. (US Census Bureau, USA Counties, 2007).

Components of Personal Income

Further examining trends within personal income provides insight to the area economy and the connections to the Ashley National Forest. There are three major sources of personal income: (1) labor earnings or income from the workplace, (2) investment income, or income received by individuals in the form of rent, dividends, or interest earnings, and (3) transfer payment income or income received as Social Security, retirement and disability income or Medicare and Medicaid payments.

In Daggett, Duchesne, Sweetwater, Uinta and Uintah counties, labor earnings were the largest source of income accounting for 75 percent of all income in 2005 (see figure 5 below for disaggregation of 2006 labor income). This is relatively similar to Utah (74 percent of total) and higher than Wyoming (64 percent of total). The Mining and Government sectors were the largest components of labor income in 2006 (figure 5 below). It should be noted that the contributions of the Ashley National Forest represent only a portion of the economic activity reflected in the natural resource and tourism related sectors.

Figure 5. Analysis Area Labor Income Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)



Additionally 13 percent of 2005 personal income was investment income in the four counties. While labor earnings share of personal income has decreased from 1970 to 2005 (from 78 to 75 percent), the share of non-labor income has risen (from 22 to 25 percent). Investment income remained at 13 percent of total personal income while transfer payments rose from 9 to 13 percent of total personal income. While many might attribute the increase in transfer payments to an increase in welfare, data shows age related transfer payments increased from 49 to 53 percent of total transfer payments while the share of transfer payments from welfare remained unchanged and unemployment payments decreased (EPS, 2007).

These patterns may reflect the aging population noted above, whom are more likely to have investment earnings than younger adults. As the population of the area continues to age, the share of income from these non-labor sources should continue to rise as long as residents continue to stay in the area after retirement or new retirees move in. Rural county population change, the development of rural recreation and retirement-destination areas are all related to natural amenities (McGranahan, 1999). Many of the natural amenities in the area are managed by the Ashley National Forest.

Ashley National Forest Contributions to the Area Economy

Land within the Ashley National Forest contributes to the livelihoods of area residents through subsistence uses as well as through market-based production and income generation. Public lands provide products of value to households at no or low cost (permit fees). These products include fuelwood, boughs, Christmas trees, wood posts, livestock, and materials such as sand and gravel. Other products with subsistence value may include fish, game, plants, berries, and seeds. In addition, use of these products is often part of tradition and sustains local culture.

Contributions to the area economy through market based production can be measured using the IMPLAN input-output model mentioned above. Using the most recent data available, IMPLAN response coefficients², were applied to forest outputs and expenditures to estimate the area economic contribution of the Ashley National Forest. While the discussion above examines the current situation and historical context, this analysis examines the linkages and interdependencies among businesses, consumers, and the Ashley National Forest resources on which some area economic activity depends. IMPLAN allows a more complete examination of these linkages.

² Rates of change in employment and labor income as final demand changes.

IMPLAN not only examines the direct contributions from the Ashley National Forest but also indirect and induced effects. Indirect employment and labor income effects occur when a sector purchases supplies and services from other industries in order to produce their product. Induced effects are the employment and labor income generated as a result of spending new household income generated by direct and indirect employment. The employment estimated is defined as any part-time, seasonal, or full-time job. In the following tables direct, indirect and induced impacts are included in the estimated impacts of national forest contributions³.

Table 3. National Forest Estimated Annual Employment Contribution by Resource Program			
Resource Program	Number of Jobs Contributed		
	Total Program	Estimated Impact of the Recreation Activities of Local Residents	Program Net of Local Resident Recreation
Recreation	792	120	672
Wildlife and Fish Rec	417	69	348
Grazing	17	0	17
Timber	42	0	42
Minerals	0	0	0
Ecosystem Restoration	24	0	24
Payments to States/Counties	23	0	23
Forest Service Expenditures	244	0	244
Total Forest Management	1,559	189	1,370

Table 4. National Forest Estimated Annual Labor Income Contribution by Resource Program			
Resource Program	Thousands of 2008 Dollars		
	Total Program	Estimated Impact of the Recreation Activities of Local Residents	Program Net of Local Resident Recreation
Recreation	\$18,740	\$3,131	\$15,609
Wildlife and Fish	\$9,657	\$1,654	\$8,003
Grazing	\$209	\$0	\$209
Timber	\$967	\$0	\$967
Minerals	\$11	\$0	\$11
Ecosystem Restoration	\$773	\$0	\$773
Payments to States/Counties	\$1,083	\$0	\$1,083
Forest Service Expenditures	\$11,406	\$0	\$11,406
Total Forest Management	\$42,846	\$4,785	\$38,062

Recreation

The Ashley National Forest provides a wide array of recreational opportunities which are enjoyed by local and non-local residents. The large expanse of relatively undeveloped lands, unique opportunities on those

³ Expenditures by local residents for recreation on the National Forest do not introduce “new” money into the economy. If local residents could not recreate on the National Forest, they might find other forms of recreation in the area and continue to spend their recreation dollars in the local economy. Therefore, this portion of employment is not necessarily dependent on the existence of the National Forest and is thus separated.

lands, and the fish and wildlife sustained by habitats on this land attract these visitors. On their way to the planning area and once they arrive these visitors spend money on goods and services they would spend elsewhere if these opportunities did not exist. In this manner the opportunities on the Ashley NF contribute to the local economy by attracting these visitors. The National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) effort estimated there were 1,416,867 visits to the Ashley National in 2001 (Kocis et al., 2002).

Analyses of expenditures reported by national forest visitors show the primary factor determining the amount spent by a visitor was the type of trip taken and not the specific activity or forest visited (Stynes and White, 2005, pg 2). Six commonly used trip type segments are defined below;

- Visitors who reside greater than 50 miles from the forest and visited the forest:
 1. Non-local residents on day trips
 2. Non-local residents staying overnight on the forest
 3. Non-local residents staying overnight off the forest
- Visitors who live within 50 miles of the forest and visited the forest:
 4. Local residents on day trips
 5. Local residents staying overnight on the forest
 6. Local residents staying overnight off the forest

A seventh category of trip types is not included, non-primary visits, since we are only interested in visitors who's primary activities are on the Ashley National Forest. In accordance with the report prepared for the US Forest Service by the American Sportfishing Association (2006), total visits were divided up into these trip types using the proportions provided by Stynes and White (Stynes and White, 2005 pg 26-28). The largest trip-type segment and spending category was Non-local residents staying overnight off the forest which numbered approximately 228,000 visits.

While providing recreation opportunities to local residents is an important contribution, the recreation expenditures of locals do not represent new money introduced into the economy. If national forest related opportunities were not present, residents would likely participate in other locally based activities and their money would still be spent in the local economy. After separating the contributions made from local residents, Recreation contributes the most to the area economy of all resource programs (table 3 and 4), providing 75 and 62 percent of the total Ashley NF employment and labor income contributions.

Grazing

Within the planning area agriculture plays an important economic and social role. Of Utah's 29 counties, Duchesne and Uintah counties were the 6th and 9th largest cattle producers. The most recent Census of Agriculture (2002) reports the five county analysis area had 2,373 farms and ranches and of these 53 percent were engaged in cattle production; this share of farms and ranches involved in cattle production is down from 73 percent in 1997. The total cattle inventory in 2005 was 167,000 with 67,400 sheep in the five county analysis area. In 2006 grazing on Ashley National Forest Land involved 105 operators.

The authorized level of grazing on the Ashley National Forest was approximately 72,000 head months (HMs) in 2006. This is the maximum number of HMs that could be offered under ideal forage conditions. However actual HM use varies due to factors such as drought, financial limitations on operators, market conditions and implementation of grazing practices to improve range conditions. Between 2001 and 2006 an average of 55,466 cattle, horse, and sheep HMs have been utilized annually. Table 5 below provides actual and authorized use numbers between 2001 and 2006. Over this time period an average of 57,500 animal unit months (AUMs) were authorized for cattle. The numbers of cows that could be grazed on this average would total about 4,790 head which was 2.9 percent of the five county analysis area cattle inventory in 2005.

Table 5. Annual AUM Authorizations in the Planning Area

Year	Actual Use	Authorized Use	Percent of Authorized
2001	66,431	92,335	72%
2002	48,583	76,086	64%
2003	52,701	88,110	60%
2004	54,317	63,842	85%
2005	42,608	63,049	68%
2006	68,157	72,037	95%

Source: USFS I-web

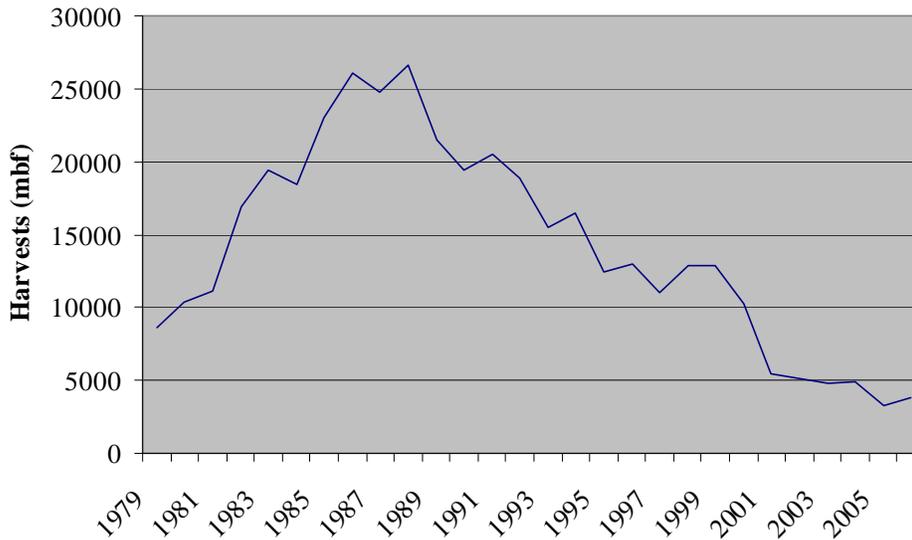
The actual use levels of grazing on the Ashley National Forest supports approximately 17 jobs and \$209,000 in labor income to the analysis area on an average annual basis (tables 3 and 4). While these impacts are comparatively less than other Ashley National forest resources contributions it should be considered that these leases are an important compliment to livestock producers' grazing, forage, and hay production.

A thin profit margin often separates livestock producers from negative net earnings. Often, employment outside the ranch augments livestock producer income. Federal grazing land is particularly valuable because of the low grazing fees charged for use of this land. Fees charged by USFS for grazing are calculated using the formula required under federal grazing regulations found at 43 CFR 4130.81(a)(1) and are considerable less than those charged for private grazing land. In 2006 the statewide average AUM price for private land was \$11.7 in Utah and \$15.1 in Wyoming (National Agricultural Statistical Service, 2007). The federal formula yielded a fee of \$1.35 per AUM in 2007 which is down from \$1.56 in 2006. This federal land is the least expensive grazing land available, hence use and access is highly coveted by area cattle producers even though additional costs are usually incurred to use these lands. The benefit to these producers of this low cost forage is estimated to be \$680,000 in 2006.

Forest Products

While Uinta County is Wyoming's second smallest county by land area, it contains a high concentration of wood product processing facilities and is second amongst all Wyoming counties for number of wood product processing facilities. There were nine total primary wood product processing facilities in Uinta County in 2000, which included 3 sawmills, 2 post and pole facilities, 1 house log facility, and a log furniture manufacturer (USDA Forest Service, 2005). In 2002 Duchesne and Uintah counties had 3 sawmills, 1 post and pole facility, and 6 house log facilities (Morgan et al. 2006). Patterns of timber market integration suggest the timber harvested in the area stays in the area. Nearly all of the timber harvested by the Ashley stays in the area (personal communication with Kelly Wilkins, Resource Specialists and Contracting Officer, Vernal Ranger District).

Annual harvests from the Ashley National Forest have decreased from a high of 26,669 thousand board feet (mbf) in 1988 to just 3,789 mbf in 2006 (Figure 6 below). Utah's industrial timber harvest was 41.3 million board feet (mmbf) in 2002 of which 12.5 percent was from Ashley National Forest timber. This is down from the share in 1992 when Ashley National Forest harvests accounted for 29 percent of Utah's total industrial timber harvest.

Figure 6. Ashley National Forest historic timber harvests

Harvest levels on the Ashley National Forest have supported approximately 42 jobs and \$967,000 in labor income to the analysis area on an average annual basis (tables 3 and 4). In addition to sawtimber, these contributions include estimated impacts from poles, posts and fuelwood provided by the Ashley National Forest.

Minerals

Saleable mineral use on the Ashley National Forest is limited to small amounts of crushed stone, dimensional stone, sand and gravel removed for commercial and community use. These uses have provided less than one job and \$11,000 in labor income to the analysis area on an average annual basis (tables 3 and 4).

Leasable mineral development, which includes oil and gas, is more common in the area and occurs on the Ashley National Forest. Utah has consistently ranked in the top 15 oil-producing states and has experienced a rise in natural gas production. During 2005, Utah ranked 15th in crude oil production out of 31 states and two Federal Offshore Areas and 11th in dry natural gas production out of 33 states and the Federal Offshore Area in the Gulf of Mexico. The Uintah Basin is the largest oil and gas producing area in the state of Utah and almost all of the exploration and production activity occurs in Duchesne and Uintah counties (University of Utah, 2007).

Production of both crude oil and natural gas continue to increase in Duchesne and Uintah counties. From a low of 7.3 million barrels in 2002, crude oil production in the two counties increased to 11.4 million barrels in 2006. Between 1997 and 2006 natural gas production in the two counties has increased from 81.2 to 226 billion cubic feet (bcf). Production is rising faster in the area than in the state of Utah as a whole. While crude oil production increased by 55 percent in Duchesne and Uintah counties between 2002 to 2006, production in the state increased by 30 percent. Between 1997 and 2006 natural gas production in the area increased by 178 percent while the state as a whole increased by 31 percent (Utah DNR, 2007).

Applications for Permits to Drill (APD) appear to have leveled off in both Uintah and Duchesne counties following a four year steady increase in applications; in 2007 APDs in Duchesne were down to 371 from their peak of 447 in 2006 and in Uintah County decreased to 978 from 1363 in 2006. This is also true for commenced drilling (spuds) in Duchesne County however in Uintah county spuds continue to increase (Utah DNR, 2007). Approximately 1200 APDs were issued on BLM land in 2006 while the Ashley National Forest issued approximately 10 APDs (personal communication with Peter Kempenich).

While the area relies heavily on oil and gas exploration and production, the Ashley National Forest likely contributes only a very small proportion related economic activity.

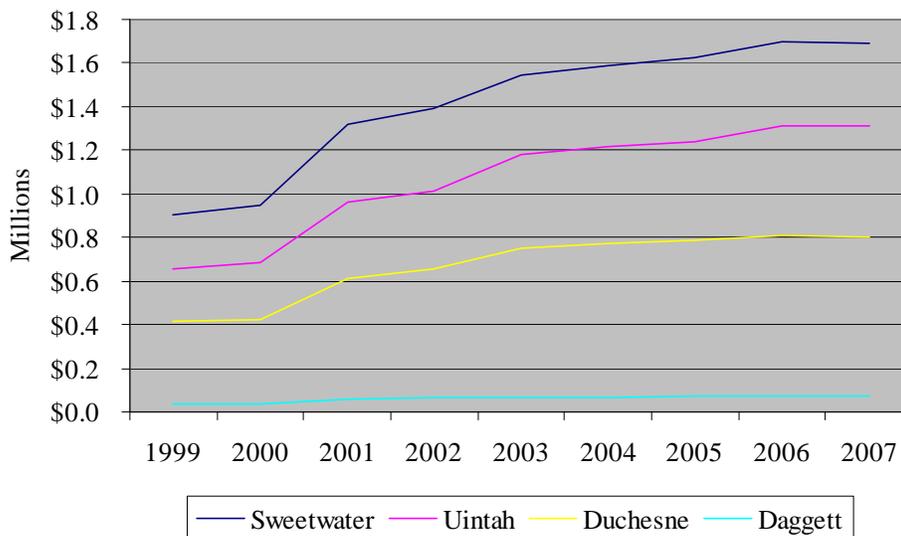
Ecosystem Restoration

Prescribed Burning, mechanical treatment of fuels, culvert replacement, road obliteration and road closure are intensive projects that provide jobs and labor income to the area economy. It is estimated that these projects support \$773,000 in labor income and 24 jobs to the area economy on an average annual basis.

Revenue Sharing

In 1976, Congress passed legislation to provide funding to counties through Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) in order to compensate for tax revenues not received from Federal lands. These taxes would typically fund various services that are provided by counties (road maintenance, emergency services, and law enforcement). The PILT payments are determined using a formula which accounts for the county acreage of federal land, county population and the previous year’s revenue sharing from resource uses on federal land (timber, range, mining etc.). These PILT payments add to revenues that these counties routinely receive through local property taxes. Figure 7 displays previous year’s payments. Given the high proportion of federal entitlement acreages to the populations in these counties, payments to counties are limited by their population size. The recent but slight decreases in payments seen in Sweetwater and Duchesne counties are a result of increases in previous year’s revenue payments to those counties.

Figure 7. Payments in Lieu of Taxes for analysis area counties containing portions of the Ashley National Forest



Source: USDI PILT database

In addition to PILT payments, counties receive a portion of the revenues generated on National Forest System lands. Historically, counties have received 25 Percent Fund payments. These payments returned 25 percent of all revenues generated from forest activities, with the exception of certain mineral programs, and were paid based on the number of National Forest System lands within each county. These funds are used for the upkeep and maintenance of public schools and roads. These payments are affected by changes in resource output levels as a result of direction provided in the Forest Plan.

In 2000, Congress enacted the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination (SRSCS) Act, designed to stabilize annual payments to states and counties for the next six years beginning in 2001. The formula for computing annual payments is based on averaging a state’s three highest payments between 1986 through 1999 to arrive at a “full payment amount.” The Act also creates citizen advisory committees and gives local communities the choice to fund restoration projects on federal lands or in counties. The

SRSCS requires a county that elects to receive its share of the full payment amount to spend no less than 80 percent and no more than 85 percent of the funds in the same manner as the 25 Percent Fund payments are expended. The balance of the payment must be reserved for special projects on federal lands or for county projects, or the reserved fund must be returned to the General Treasury. If a county's share of the full payment amount is less than \$100,000, all of the funds may be spent in the same manner as the 25 Percent Fund payments.

Counties could choose to continue to receive payments under the 25 Percent Fund or to receive the county's proportionate share of the state's full payment amount under SRSCS. All counties in the analysis area elected to receive their proportionate share of the State's full payment amount.

The PILT and SRSCS payments to each county that were associated with Ashley National Forest Lands are listed below in Table 6. PILT payments associated with the Forest are estimated based on the share of Ashley National Forest entitlement acreage from the total entitlement acreage in that county.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Daggett					
PILT	\$43,491	\$45,591	\$47,551	\$49,612	\$50,737
SRSCS	\$60,143	\$59,564	\$ 61,656	\$63,074	\$63,705
Total	\$103,634	\$105,155	\$109,207	\$112,686	\$114,442
Duchesne					
PILT	\$534,356	\$613,361	\$632,468	\$644,177	\$656,906
SRSCS	\$167,287	\$165,959	\$171,495	\$175,439	\$177,194
Total	\$701,643	\$779,320	\$803,963	\$819,616	\$834,100
Sweetwater					
PILT	\$28,132	\$31,326	\$32,173	\$32,852	\$34,370
SRSCS	\$21,239	\$21,070	\$21,773	\$22,274	\$22,497
Total	\$49,371	\$52,396	\$53,946	\$55,126	\$ 56,867
Uintah					
PILT	\$149,224	\$173,777	\$178,712	\$182,442	\$193,213
SRSCS	\$62,083	\$61,590	\$63,645	\$65,109	\$65,760
Total	\$211,307	\$235,367	\$242,357	\$247,551	\$258,973

Source: USDI 2007, USDA Forest Service 2002 - 2006

Payments to states and counties associated with the Ashley National Forest provide approximately 23 jobs and \$1.08 million in labor income to the analysis area on an average annual basis (tables 3 and 4).

Non-market economic value

The value of resource goods traded in a market can be obtained from information on the quantity sold and market price. Since markets do not exist for some resources, such as recreational opportunities and environmental services, measuring their value is important since without these value estimates, these resources may be implicitly undervalued and decisions regarding their use may not accurately reflect their true value to society. Because these recreational and environmental values are not traded in markets, they can be characterized as non-market values.

Non-market values can be broken down into two categories; use and non-use values. The use-value of a non-market good is the value to society from the direct use of the asset; on the Ashley National Forest this occurs as recreational fishing, hunting, boating and bird watching. The use of non-market goods often requires consumption of complimentary market goods; such as lodging, gas, and fishing equipment.

Non-use values of a non-market good reflect the value of an asset beyond any use. These can be described as existence, option and bequest values. Existence values are the amount society is willing to pay to guarantee that an asset simply exists. An existence value of the Ashley National Forest might be the value of knowing that pristine alpine wilderness exists in the High Uintah Wilderness. Other non-use values are thought to originate in society's willingness to pay to preserve the option for future use; these are referred to as option values and bequest values. Option values exist for something that has not yet been discovered; such as the future value of a plant as medicine. On the Ashley National Forest bequest and option values might exist for timber or numerous plant species.

Non-market use and non-use values can be distinguished by the methods used to estimate them. Use values are often estimated using revealed preference methods or stated preference methods while non-use values can only be estimated using hypothetical methods. While use and non-use values exist for the Ashley National Forest, evaluation may not be feasible during the planning process. However this does not preclude their consideration in the planning process.

Ashley National Forest Contributions by Industry

Table 7 shows the estimated employment and labor income generated by activities on the Ashley National Forest relative to the analysis area economy. The Ashley National Forest related employment and labor income contributions listed here exclude those made from local resident recreation. Appendix B displays contributions by industry from both local and non-local recreation. In total, management activities of the Ashley National Forest account for 2 percent of jobs and 1.2 percent labor income in the analysis area (table 7).

The industry sector with the highest level of dependence on Ashley National Forest contributions is the Accommodation and Food Service sector accounting for 11 percent of sector employment and labor income. The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector is the second most dependent sector relying on the Ashley for 4.5 and 8.3 percent of its employment and labor income.

While data was not available to examine contributions from the Ashley National Forest uses by county or community, the labor income and employment generated from activities on the Ashley may be more important to these smaller communities within the analysis area. Consequently, changes in activities on the forest could result in localized effects in areas that are more dependent on forest management. For example, the industry sectors with the highest levels of dependence on the Ashley National Forest were noted above to be the Accommodation and Food Service and the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sectors. In Sweetwater and Daggett counties the Accommodation and Food Services sector accounted for 7.8 and 12.7 percent of total area employment in 2006 (Appendix A figures 14 and 16). The Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector accounted for 8.6 percent of total employment in Daggett County as well. These higher levels of dependence on these sectors, relative to other counties in the analysis area, indicate changes in management or activity on the Ashley could result in greater impacts to these counties.

Industry	Employment (jobs)			Labor Income (Thousands of 2008 Dollars)		
	Area Totals	ANF Related	% of Total	Area Totals	ANF Related	% of Total
Agriculture	2,182	62	2.9%	\$20,122	\$731	3.6%
Mining	12,264	8	0.1%	1,183,777	\$1096	0.1%
Utilities	921	5	0.5%	\$87,203	\$432	0.5%
Construction	6,830	19	0.3%	\$346,456	\$993	0.3%
Manufacturing	2,769	25	0.9%	\$174,461	\$646	0.4%
Wholesale Trade	1,916	43	2.3%	\$109,941	\$2565	2.3%
Transportation & Warehousing	4,217	30	0.7%	\$279,188	\$1718	0.6%
Retail Trade	9,633	275	2.9%	\$204,465	\$4582	2.2%
Information	951	10	1%	\$34,017	\$291	0.9%
Finance & Insurance	1,268	12	0.9%	\$45,541	\$408	0.9%
Real Estate& Rental & Leasing	2,212	17	0.8%	\$93,294	\$535	0.6%
Prof. Scientific, & Tech. Services	2,278	19	0.8%	\$96,507	\$637	0.7%
Mgmt. of Companies	217	1	0.5%	\$9,581	\$54	0.6%
Admin., Waste Mgmt. & Rem.	2,244	22	1%	\$54,187	\$544	1%
Educational Services	271	2	0.8%	\$3,038	\$25	0.8%
Health Care & Social Assistance	5,004	37	0.7%	\$150,598	\$1160	0.8%
Arts, Entertainment, and Rec.	1,600	72	4.5%	\$14,253	\$1179	8.3%
Accommodation & Food Services	5,346	561	11%	\$79,661	\$8683	11%
Other Services	4,214	54	1.3%	\$102,659	\$843	0.8%
Government	12,866	283	2.2%	\$589,579	\$15654	2.7%
Total	79,203	1,556	2%	3,678,527	\$42776	1.2%

Within the analysis area the two largest sectors are Government and Mining (see figures 2 and 6) which includes oil and gas related activities. Since data was unavailable on current levels of oil and gas exploration and production on the Ashley National Forest, it is difficult to say how much of the Mining sector can be attributed to activity on the forest. However 2.2 percent of employment and 2.7 percent of labor income within the Government sector is dependent on Ashley National Forest related activities (table 7). As noted above, smaller communities within the analysis area may be more dependent on these sectors and thus more susceptible to changes on the Ashley National Forest. All analysis area counties are relatively dependent in terms of employment and labor income on the Government and Mining sectors (see Appendix A). Daggett County depends on the Government Sector for 44 percent of its employment and 68 percent of its labor income (figures 16 and 17).

Tourism and recreation related industries provide approximately 29 and 13.5 percent of employment and labor income respectively within the analysis area (Figures 2 and 5). Tourism and recreation related contributions are associated with Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, and the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation sectors. The percent of jobs generated in these sectors as a result of Ashley National Forest contributions are estimated at 2.9, 11, and 4.5 percent. The percent of labor income generated in these sectors as a result of forest activity are estimated at 2.2, 11, and 8.3 percent (Table 7).

Natural resource related industries provide approximately 18 and 33 percent of employment and labor income respectively within the analysis area (Figures 2 and 5). The sectors most closely connected to activities associated with the timber management and grazing program areas are manufacturing and agriculture. The Forest contributes an estimated 2.9 and 3.6 percent of jobs and labor income in the agriculture sector and 0.9 and 0.4 percent of employment and labor income in the manufacturing sector.

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Appendix A

Uinta County, Wyoming

For 2006 total labor income and employment are estimated to be \$ 502 million and 13,470 respectively. **Figures 8 and 9** below display the distribution of employment and labor income in sectors of the Uinta County economy. Sectors related to tourism and natural resources are highlighted. It should be noted that the employment and labor income associated with these sectors are only partially related to tourism and natural resource related activity and cannot be completely attributed to activity from tourism or natural resource management. In Uinta County the largest employment sector is retail trade and the largest component of labor income is mining.

Figure 8. 2006 Employment Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)

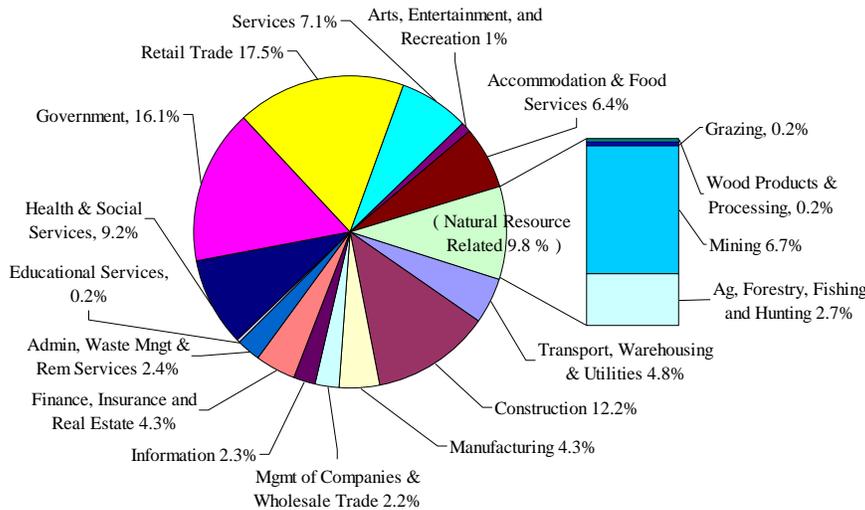
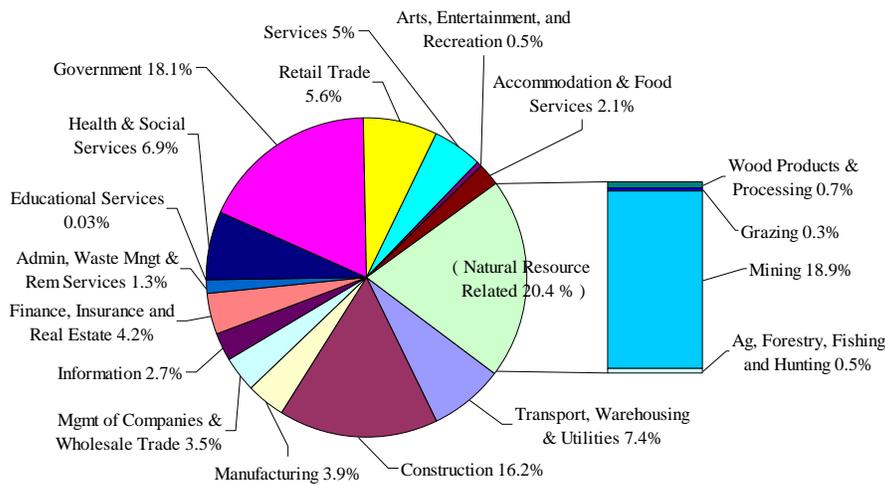


Figure 9. 2006 Labor Income Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)



Uintah County, Utah

For 2006 total labor income and employment are estimated to be \$ 772 million and 15,780 respectively. **Figures 10 and 11** below display the distribution of employment and labor income in sectors of the Uintah County economy. Sectors related to tourism and natural resources are highlighted. It should be noted that the employment and labor income associated with these sectors are only partially related to tourism and natural resource related activity and cannot be completely attributed to activity from tourism or natural resource management. In Uintah County mining makes up the largest share of employment and labor income.

Figure 10. 2006 Employment Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)

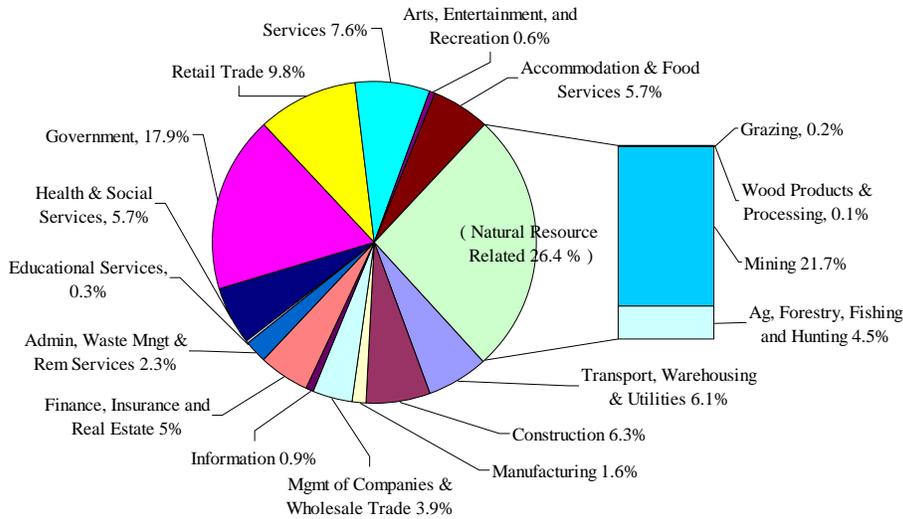
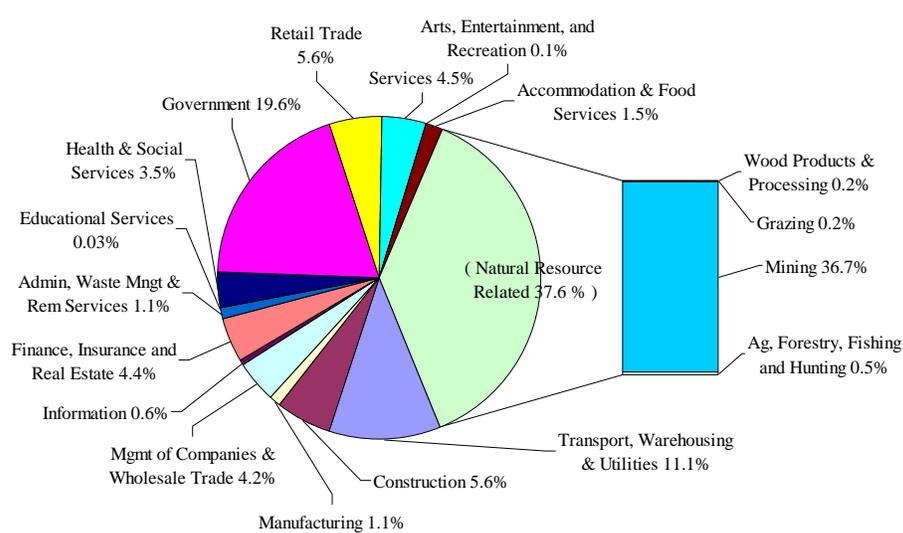


Figure 11. 2006 Labor Income Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)



Duchesne County, Utah

For 2006 total labor income and employment are estimated to be \$ 336 million and 8,820 respectively.

Figures 12 and 13 below display the distribution of employment and labor income in sectors of the Duchesne County economy. Sectors related to tourism and natural resources are highlighted. It should be noted that the employment and labor income associated with these sectors are only partially related to tourism and natural resource related activity and cannot be completely attributed to activity from tourism or natural resource management. In Duchesne County mining makes up the second largest share of employment behind government and the largest share of labor income.

Figure 12. 2006 Employment Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)

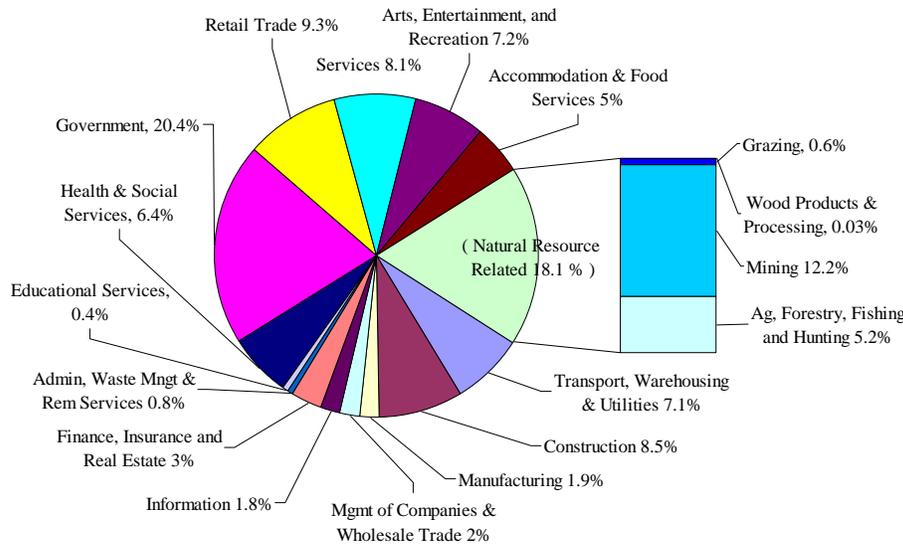
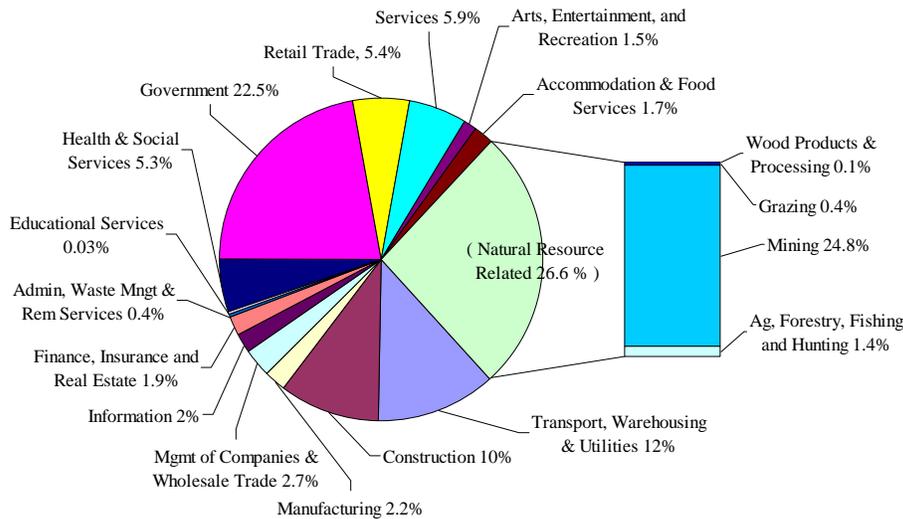


Figure 13. 2006 Labor Income Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)



Sweetwater County, UT

For 2006 total labor income and employment are estimated to be \$ 1.7 billion and 31,050 respectively. **Figures 14 and 15** below display the distribution of employment and labor income in sectors of the Sweetwater County economy. Sectors related to tourism and natural resources are highlighted. It should be noted that the employment and labor income associated with these sectors are only partially related to tourism and natural resource related activity and cannot be completely attributed to activity from tourism or natural resource management. In Sweetwater County mining makes up the largest share of employment and labor income.

Figure 14. 2006 Employment Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)

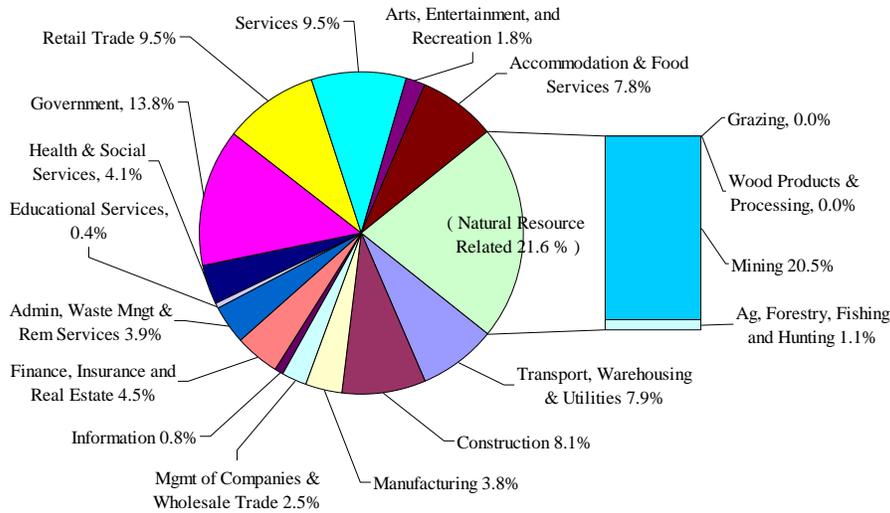
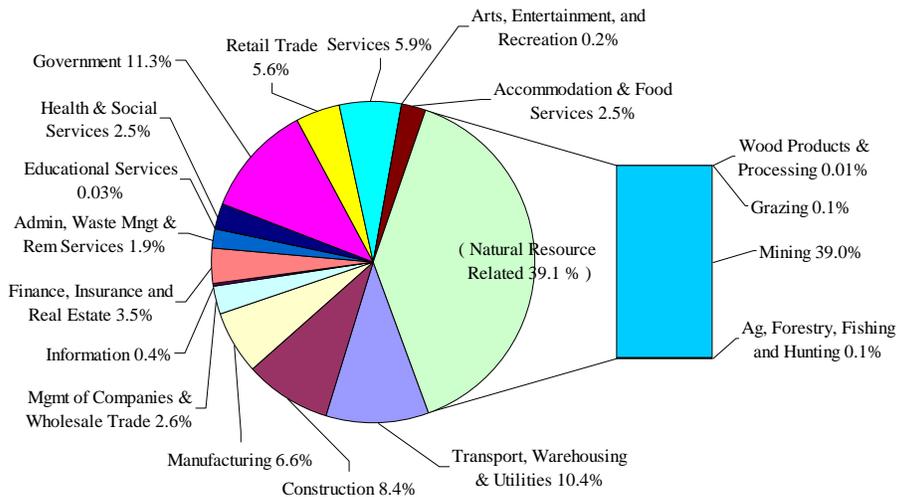


Figure 15. 2006 Labor Income Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)



Daggett County, Utah

For 2006 total labor income and employment are estimated to be \$ 22.4 million and 526 respectively.

Figures 16 and 17 below display the distribution of employment and labor income in sectors of the Daggett County economy. Sectors related to tourism and natural resources are highlighted. It should be noted that the employment and labor income associated with these sectors are only partially related to tourism and natural resource related activity and cannot be completely attributed to activity from tourism or natural resource management. In Daggett County government makes up the largest share of employment and labor income.

Figure 16. 2006 Employment Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)

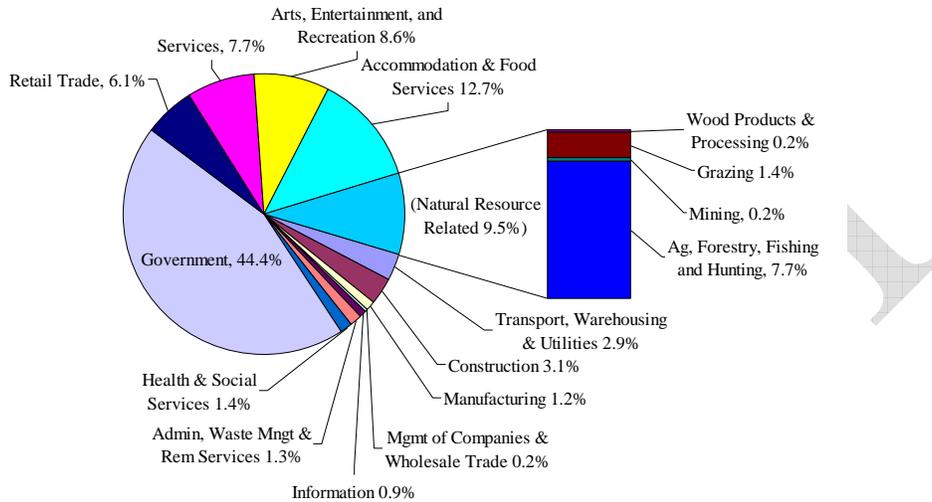
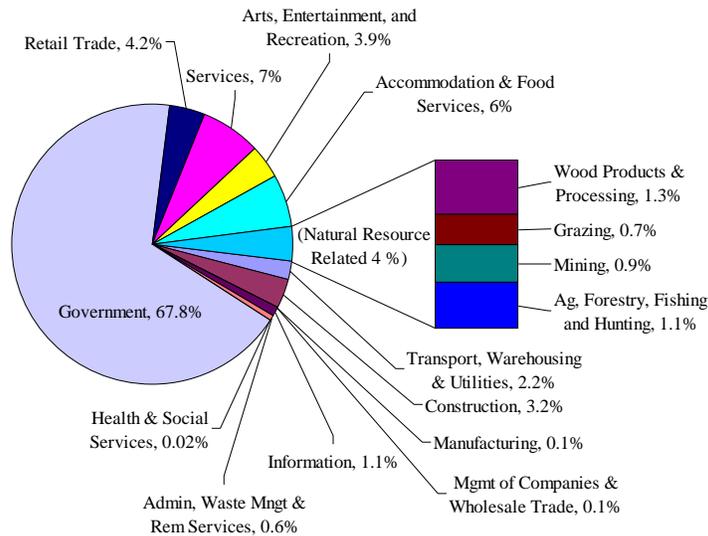


Figure 17. 2006 Labor Income Distribution (IMPLAN, 2006)



Appendix B

Industry	Number of Jobs Contributed		
	Total Industry	Estimated Impact of the Recreation Activities of Local Residents	Program Net of Local Resident Recreation
Agriculture	62	4	58
Mining	8	1	7
Utilities	5	1	4
Construction	19	1	18
Manufacturing	25	2	22
Wholesale Trade	43	8	35
Transportation & Warehousing	30	4	26
Retail Trade	275	49	226
Information	10	1	9
Finance & Insurance	12	1	10
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	17	2	15
Prof, Scientific, & Tech Services	19	3	16
Mngt of Companies	1	0	1
Admin, Waste Mngt & Rem Serv	22	3	19
Educational Services	2	0	2
Health Care & Social Assistance	37	4	33
Arts, Entertainment, and Rec	72	10	62
Accommodation & Food Services	561	64	497
Other Services	54	8	47
Government	283	23	259
Total Forest Management	1,556	189	1,367

Industry	Number of Jobs Contributed		
	Total Industry	Estimated Impact of the Recreation Activities of Local Residents	Program Net of Local Resident Recreation
Agriculture	\$731	\$32	\$700
Mining	\$1096	\$184	\$913
Utilities	\$432	\$47	\$385
Construction	\$993	\$29	\$963
Manufacturing	\$646	\$70	\$576
Wholesale Trade	\$2565	\$500	\$2065
Transportation & Warehousing	\$1718	\$209	\$1508
Retail Trade	\$4582	\$823	\$3760
Information	\$291	\$36	\$255
Finance & Insurance	\$408	\$40	\$368
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	\$535	\$61	\$474
Prof, Scientific, & Tech Services	\$637	\$79	\$558
Mngt of Companies	\$54	\$8	\$46
Admin, Waste Mngt & Rem Serv	\$544	\$63	\$481
Educational Services	\$25	\$3	\$22
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$1160	\$124	\$1036
Arts, Entertainment, and Rec	\$1179	\$167	\$1012
Accommodation & Food Services	\$8683	\$940	\$7743
Other Services	\$843	\$106	\$737
Government	\$15654	\$1264	\$14390
Total Forest Management	\$42776	\$4785	\$37991