USDA Forest Service Region 5 Sierra Cascades

Dialog Report #7

Recreation: Social and Economic Benefits and Impacts

Dialog Held September 27, 2012

Lions Gate Hotel, Near Sacramento, California, and Inyo National Forest, Bishop, California

Overview

On September 27, 2012, the Forest Service held its seventh Sierra Cascades Dialog, *Recreation: Social and Economic Benefits and Impacts*. This Dialog's goals were to understand trends in recreation and access and explore the role of recreation and access in benefiting the economy, society, and environment.

Approximately 100 stakeholders participated in the five-hour Dialog in Sacramento and 20 stakeholders, in Bishop, California. Participants included Forest Service staff and stakeholders representative of diverse interest groups, including conservation/ environmental, fire safe councils, contractors, county governments, forest products industry, land managers, local elected officials, private landowners, recreation, rural communities, scientists, state government, and water agencies. Although one Tribal member attended, no other Tribal members were present. Youth were also missing from the audience. In addition, participants identified themselves by the many forms of recreation that they enjoy, including backpacking, hiking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, bicycling, camping, hunting, motorized access, snow sports, rock climbing, recreational residents, and water sports.

The intent of the Dialog is for stakeholders to engage in conversation on land management issues of regional importance for the Sierra Nevada and the Cascades. The goal of the Dialog is to create shared understanding among participants with diverse opinions. Dialog outcomes inform future Forest Service decisions. The first Dialog helped the Region to refine the Leadership Intent for Ecological Restoration. The second Dialog on *Values, Attitudes and Beliefs* has informed the Region's biological assessment for forest planning and led to the science synthesis. The third Dialog on *Improving Rural Economies* built on work underway in partnership with County elected officials, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the Biodiversity Council, and other initiatives around the state. The fourth Dialog on *Science Synthesis* identified questions that stakeholders would like the science synthesis to answer. The fifth Dialog vetted a Collaborative Model for each early adopter forests to use during Forest Plan revision. The current Collaborative Guide includes Dialog participants' suggestions, and the Forests are now creating Collaboration & Communication Plans, recommended in the guide, with stakeholders. The sixth Dialog on *Recreation: Social and Economic Benefits* will inform

future planning by deepening understanding about demographic trends and the implications for Forests.

This document summarizes the content of the discussion to the extent possible since participants worked in small groups. Notes from each tabletop discussion are included in their entirety in a separate attachment.

Forest Service Integrating Recreation into Planning

Joe Stringer, Region 5 Director of Ecosystem Services, welcomed the group and talked about the benefits recreation provides to recreationists and local communities, and him personally. He acknowledged the mistrust that exists between the recreation community and the Forest Service. The Forest Service held this particular Dialog to demonstrate its commitment to engaging the public on recreation issues. In previous Dialogs, recreation and tourism as an economic engine for rural communities near the forests emerged repeatedly. This Dialog provided an example to examine how current trends, including changing population trends, might affect recreation in the Sierra Cascades.

Recreation in the Sierra Cascades: Trends, Conditions, Benefits

Professor Emilyn Sheffield, Chico State University, gave a detailed presentation on sustaining recreation given the changing demographics in our society. Dr. Sheffield spoke about the significant economic impact of recreation. Trends indicate that California's population is increasing by 400,000-500,000 people each year, with population projections of 50 million people in California by 2040. The most rapid growth will be in the Central Valley. The senior segment is growing three times as fast so California will have an older population. Also, California will be ethnically diverse.

Dr. Sheffield also discussed the impact of California society becoming primarily an urban community. The prominence of personal communication devices is changing the way people communicate and relate to one another.

The typical visitor to come to a forest drives several hours; about half come just to relax and a third come to ski. One in five visitors come to hike. Fifty percent of visitors stay overnight in a hotel. Hotel room revenue is doubled by dollars spent on meals and entertainment.

Dr. Sheffield projects and recommends that sustainable recreation needs to account for **recapturing boomers.** The aging population means that boomers are going to want to recreate—in the ways that they can. Boomers have disposable income that can help local economies. **Families and children** are another likely frequent visitor to forests. Families find meaning in visits to nature and want to establish this pattern of visiting nature for their children. Finally, Dr. Sheffield suggests reaching out to **millennials** as the

next great land stewards. She has experience at the university that suggests that millennials, i.e. young adults, are ready to "step up" and participate in stewardship activities to protect and restore the land.

Questions & Discussion

During a questions and answer period, the following points emerged.

Connecting people to the land and the resources it provides, such as clean water, is essential.

Research does not currently show what percentage of the estimated $64 billion spent on recreation goes to the counties.

Citizen stewards have a role to play and are the opportunity "of the era." However, stewards need supplies, tools, and training. Young people want to lead and engage in these activities.

Increasing populations could lead to increased conflict. Dialoging about how to balance numbers to find solutions will be necessary. The fire safe community is a scalable model.

Mules and horses allow older people to get into the forest. Older boomers need a variety of assistance and conveyance methods.

Technology advances will keep some people at home, but others may use technology in an enabling way. Handheld devices can serve citizen scientists.

Dialog participants do not reflect the diversity of California's population.

Panel Insights on Recreation and the Triple Bottom Line (Economy, Society & Environment)?

Panelist represented different recreation groups and talked about recreation in the context of economic, societal, and environmental benefits. Collaboration and communication are critical to success. Panelists suggested that stakeholders need to set aside prejudices, talk, listen, and craft solutions for future generations. Outreach is an important component, especially attempting to reach college age and young people. A Panelist cited the role of the older generation in passing down the legacy of appreciating nature. Creating meaningful access for disabled stakeholders should also be a consideration.

PANELISTS

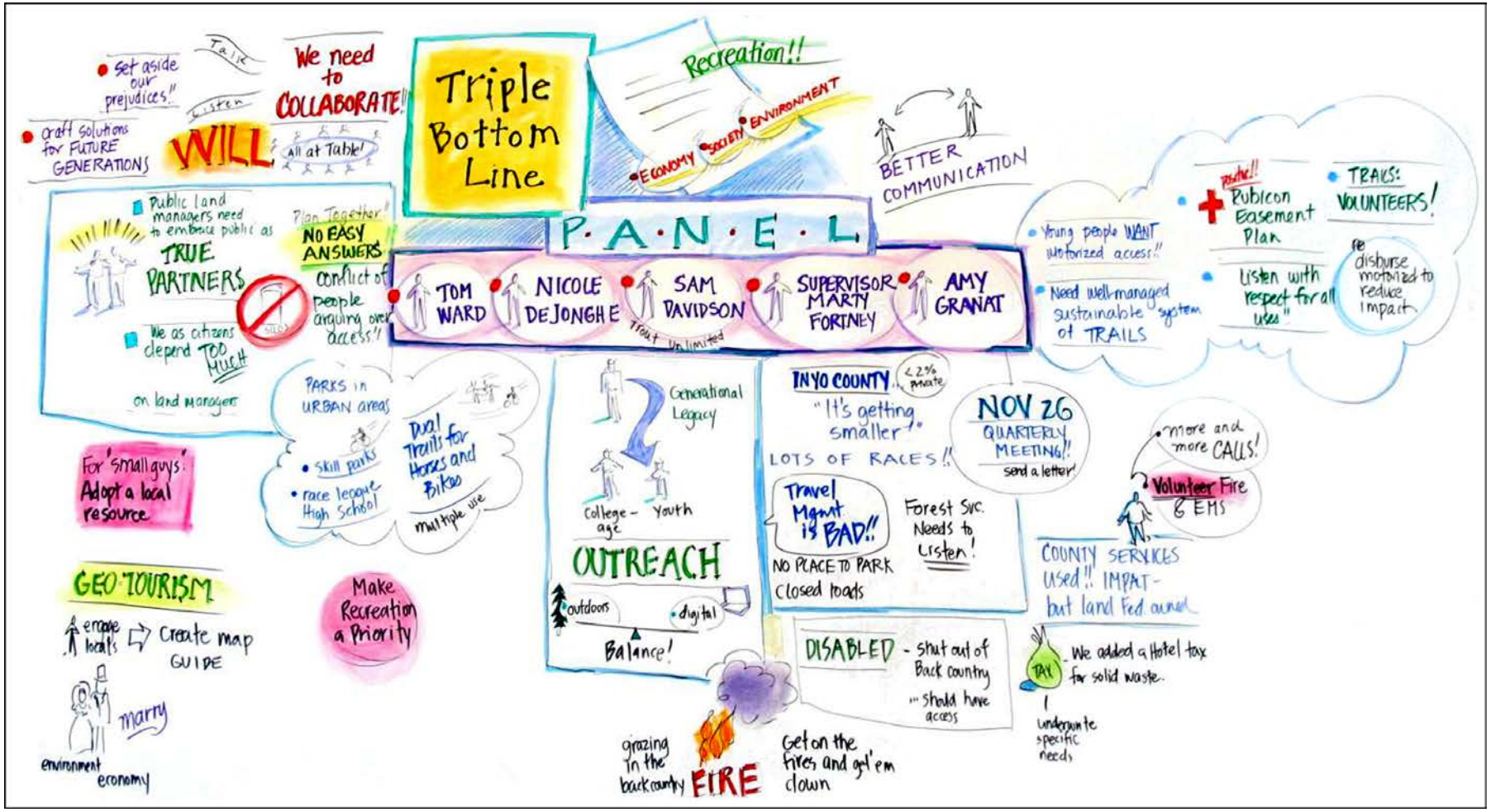
Sam Davidson, Trout Unlimited

Nicole DeJonghe, Senior Program Director and Director of Geotourism, Sierra Business Council

Supervisor Marty Fortney, Inyo County Board of Supervisors

Amy Granat, Managing Director, California Off-Road Vehicle Association

Tom Ward, California Policy Director, International Mountain Bicycling Association


Triple Bottom Line
Recreation!!
ECONOMY
SOCIETY
ENVIRONMENT
BETTER COMMUNICATION
P·A·N·E·L
TOM WARD
NICOLE DEJONGHE
SAM DAVIDSON
Trout Unlimited
SUPERVISOR MARTY FORTNEY
AMY GRANAT
set aside our prejudices!
craft solutions for FUTURE GENERATIONS
Talk
Listen
WILL
We need to COLLABORATE!
All at Table!
Public land managers need to embrace public as TRUE PARTNERS
We as citizens depend TOO MUCH on land managers
Plan Together!
NO EASY ANSWERS
conflict of people arguing over access!!
For 'small guys': Adopt a local resource
PARKS in URBAN areas
skill parks
race league High School
Dual Trails for Horses and Bikes
multiple use
GEO TOURISM
engage locals
Create map GUIDE
marry
environment
economy
Make Recreation a Priority
Generational Legacy
College-age
Youth
OUTREACH
outdoors
digital
Balance!
INYO COUNTY
<2% private
"It's getting smaller"
LOTS OF RACES!!
Travel Mgmt is BAD!!
NO PLACE TO PARK
Closed roads
Forest Svc. Needs to Listen!
NOV 26
QUARTERLY MEETING!!
send a letter!
DISABLED - shut out of Back country
... Should have access
grazing in the backcountry
FIRE
Get on the fires and get 'em down
Young people WANT motorized access!!
Need well-managed sustainable system of TRAILS
Pushe!!
Rubicon Easement Plan
Listen with respect for all uses!!
TRAILS: VOLUNTEERS!
re disburse motorized to reduce impact
more and more CALLS!
Volunteer Fire & EMS
COUNTY SERVICES used!! IMPACT - but land Fed owned
TAX
- We added a Hotel tax for solid waste.
Underpinte specific needs

Dialog Insights on Recreation and the Economy, Society and Environment

Public Activities on the Ground

Working with younger citizens for on-the-ground stewardship projects is desirable. The Forest Service could take an active role in setting up more stewardship opportunities.

Local media and articles in small papers put the word out on projects and opportunities. Need for more regional efforts to engage greater audience.

Tourism boards can play a role in sharing information and building local dialogs.

Considering incompatible uses, how do we address inappropriate restrictions from some group's perspective?

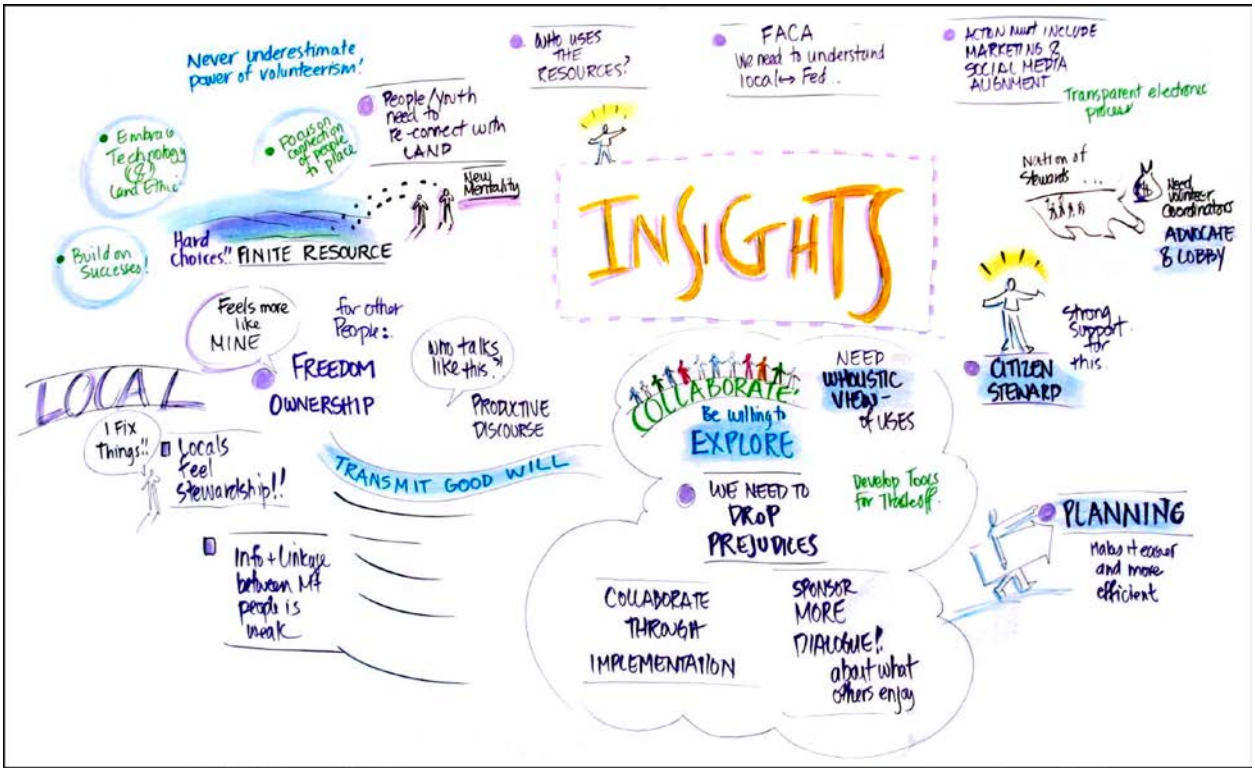
Citizen involvement through stewardship is critical to achieving the triple bottom line.

Advocate groups need to work collaboratively together to create proposals.

Public Participation

Role of public in forest planning needs to be increased. How can we begin thinking of the concept of "citizen" as front and center in what we do in the future? How can citizens play a bigger role in achieving the triple bottom line?

"Vision 2020" is needed. Suggest creating concise vision statement to articulate how



various communities want to see and work within forests. A strong vision statement articulating what the "vision" is for recreation in the region.

Dialogues need to be broader, more diverse, and less exclusive.

Need 3rd party facilitator/convener to help groups work together. University staff could help with dialogs.

Would like all forest decisions to consider social, environmental and economic factors.

Technology can serve as a bridge to provide information. Social media can help with outreach to users in urban areas.

Need for Increased Accessibility

Making forest accessible is important. Americans with disabilities need more access and how do we include blind individuals. Need to include all disabilities.

How do we allow increased access? There is no point of discussing how to allow additional user groups until we determine how to increase access of the groups that are already trying to access the lands.

What are the incremental actions that can be taken now to increase access?

User conflict is an important issue to address. User groups need to come together and address access and resource protection issues and to commit to "do no harm"—must have **more user responsibility**.

Collaboration

Collaboration through implementation offers great opportunity. The Pacific Crest Trail and Outdoor Alliance have formed successful partnerships with the Forest Service.

Collaborative processes and groups can lead to successful decisions, but follow-though is needed. Success can fall through if parties retreat to their "silos."

Dialogues should continue between the users of public lands in order to find common ground amongst various interest groups, integrate different interests, and "make a difference."

A consensus amongst various users groups should be reached on the new forest plans to avoid litigation and to provide for all types of recreational use.

Parties need to know about the Federal Advisory Committee Act requirements and local government constraints.

Education

Outreach and education on ecosystem services are paramount not just for children, but also adults. The more we understand ecosystem services and the benefit they provide everyone the more interested people will become in recreation, and protecting (and

giving back to) these natural areas because people will feel like they have an ownership interest in these lands and protecting them.

Need education on stewardship and "ethics" of land use.

There needs to be more outreach to underrepresented groups. Many people do not even know that these dialogues are taking place; they need to contribute their voice to help guide our decisions on how to use public lands.

Pacific Crest Trail

The Pacific Crest Trail is a case study in the issues discussed in the Recreation Dialogue: it attracts visitors because of its unique recreational experience; it supports local economy as many businesses, such as B&Bs, are set up to be integrated into the experience of hiking it; and it provides environmental services, such as protecting the headwaters that flow through it.

We need to protect the trail corridor from those things that threaten to impair its value (such as the encroachment of development as California's population increases). The trail corridor needs to be mapped, a plan developed to protect the view shed, and uses managed to protect the area surrounding the trail.

Build relationships with communities

- Look at successful models
- Invest in the communities (buy land to support user groups)
- Become part of the community
- Participate in local economy
- Involve the Board of Supervisors and work with them
- Become part of the culture
- Have events like "clean up the park, have local official give speech, invite the community
- Provide something for the community to participate in
- The idea was to "move forward together" in building the support and culture
- The Summit of Partnership identified the key to a successful community event is "good people" and "baked goods"

Closing

Ramiro Villavazo, Director of Public Services, Region 5, closed by talking about how the Forest Service is committed to listening and working together. Listening to everyone during the day reminded him about the important benefits that recreation provides: health, spiritual and economic. He articulated that recreation could work closely with ecological restoration, which is essential for overcoming the challenge of funding. He believes that conflict can be turned into cooperation and working together to realize the benefits.

Graphics by Paula Hansen

Related Documents

Dialog 7 Recreation **Small Group Notes**

Dialog 7 Wall Charts & Wall Charts Transcribed