

DIALOG REPORT #2

VALUES, ATTITUDES & BELIEFS: SHAPING THE ASSESSMENT FOR REGIONAL FOREST PLANNING

DIALOG HELD FEB. 24, 2011, GARDEN PAVILION, MCCLELLAN, CALIFORNIA

OVERVIEW

On February 24, 2011, the Forest Service held its second Sierra Cascades Dialog focusing on *Values, Attitudes & Beliefs: Shaping the Assessment for Regional Forest Planning*.

Over the next several years, most National Forests in California will be developing their strategy for long-term management through forest plan revision. A new forest planning rule will soon take effect, emphasizing increased resiliency and restoration of ecosystems as guiding policy for management. The concepts of ecosystem restoration and resiliency provide a range of options regarding how the Forest Service manages its landscapes to reflect societal values. This Dialog was a step in the regional assessment process to deepen the Forest Service's understanding about the values, attitudes, and beliefs of Dialog participants. (See [White Paper: Values, Interests and Positions: Public Engagement in National Forest Management](#).)

Approximately 125 stakeholders participated in the day-long Dialog on *Values, Attitudes & Beliefs*. Participants included Forest Service staff and stakeholders representative of diverse interest groups, including Conservation/Environmental, Fire Safe Councils, County Governments, Forest Products Industry, Land Managers, Local Elected Officials, Private Landowners, Recreation, Rural Communities, Scientists, State Government, Tribes and Water Agencies. Youth were missing from the audience, and organizers will make efforts to increase participation at subsequent dialogs.

The intent of the Dialog is for stakeholders to engage in conversation on land management issues 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.

This document summarizes the content of the discussion to the extent possible. Participants did several activities. One reflecting on a values continuum by oneself and with one other person. Participants also worked in small facilitated discussions to think about what types of public lands benefits are desirable. Participants articulated what they value about the forest and desired conditions for the Sierra Cascades. Each facilitated small group shared its recorded notes (captured on [flip charts LINK](#)) with the organizers. This report attempts to synthesize the large group discussion and the contents of the flip charts. [All the flip chart notes are available in a separate document LINK.](#)

VALUES AND INTERESTS—THE CONNECTION TO FOREST PLANNING

Forest Service Region 5 Social Scientist Deb Whitall presented the science behind values, attitudes and beliefs and the connection between the Dialog and forest planning.

[\[Presentation Link\]](#)

A diverse society has a complex set of social, economic, political and ecological values that frequently clash over how best to manage public lands. Values are the ideas that people have about what is good and what is bad. Conflict can result from a clash of values. However, conflict often presents itself as positional statements. Positions are what people say they want (“I want to build a campground here”); their interests are the reasons why they take that position (“because I want a quiet camping spot with a good view of the mountains.”) and are based on values (“being in a natural setting is a spiritual experience”). Differing stakeholder interests can often be compatible even when their positions seem to be in opposition. When conflict results from a clash of values, sometimes stakeholders are still able to identify interests to resolve that conflict. Understanding values helps to form a respectful and deepened understanding of one another. This deepened understanding can help build bridges toward common interests and help manage the complexity of our diverse society with differing values.

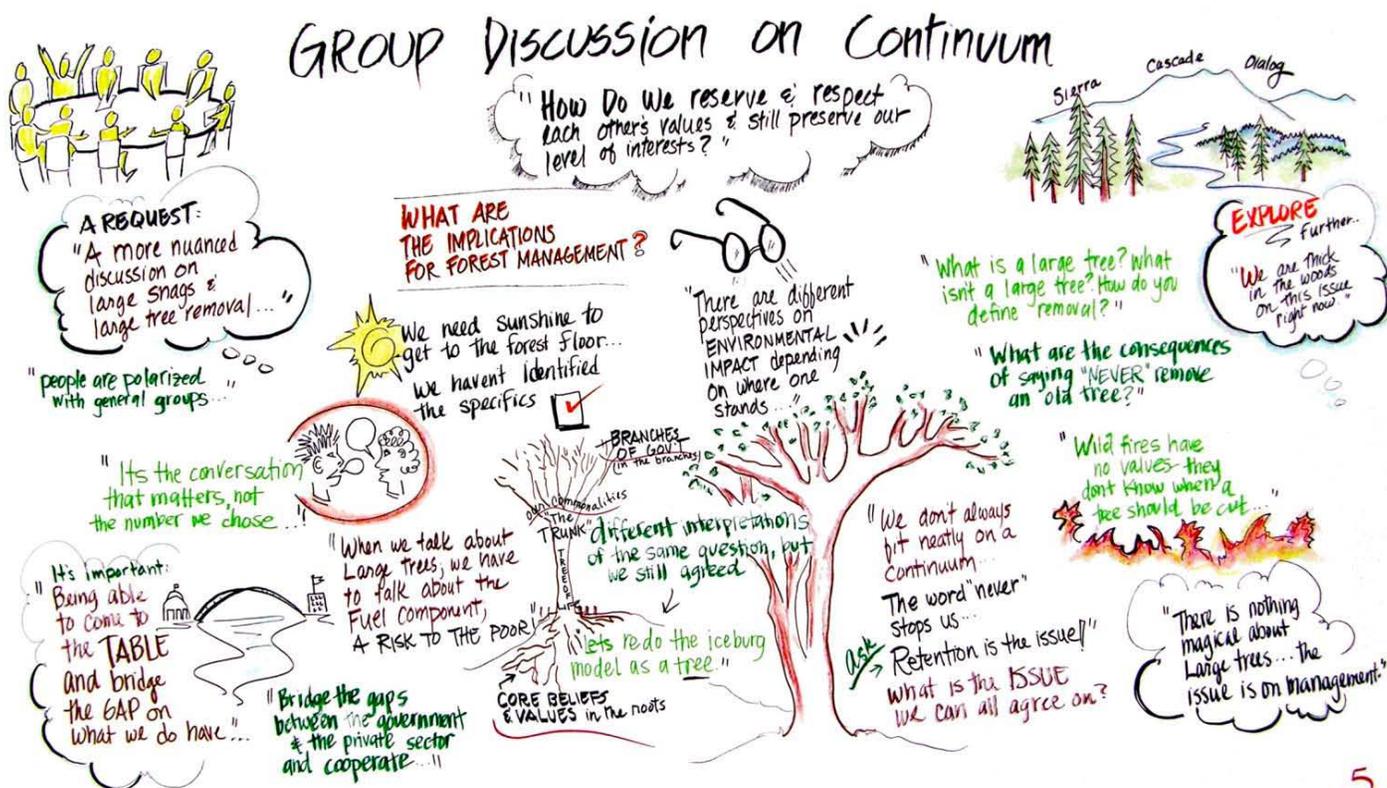
Values are defined as, “...relatively enduring conceptions about the important principles of life, such as what is good or bad and desirable or undesirable; people in a given society or culture share values as well as beliefs. As used here, values also refer to people’s orientations to nature and public lands management, specifically what types of public land opportunities or benefits are viewed as the most desirable.” In the Technical Guide for Forest Service Land and Resource Management, Planning and Decision-making (PNW-GTR-788, 2009. p.5)

The Forest Service, in the Pacific Southwest Region, is examining values and interests in analytical and decision-making processes to overcome conflict and stalemate regarding management of national forest system lands. The concepts of ecosystem restoration and resiliency provide a range of options regarding how the Forest Service manages its landscapes to reflect societal values. The Forest Service can emphasize different ecosystem values to address various ecological, political, social and economic considerations. This Dialog was an effort to deepen the Region’s understanding of stakeholder values as the Region moves forward with its regional assessment of values, attitudes and beliefs to inform forest management planning.

DISCUSSION ON THE SCIENCE OF VALUES, ATTITUDES, AND INTERESTS

After this initial presentation, participants discussed the **need for a broader perspective** on these concepts of restoration, ecosystem services, and planning. A healthy resilient forest has diverse vegetation with high quality wildlife, habitat and healthy watersheds

that can survive the impact of economic demand and changing climates. Participants noted, "Our values are based on our current relationships with the forest." And, "the forest for me is a spatial relationship..." Another articulated the need for **more mutual understanding of timber perspectives**. And participants raised the question of "what about all of our economic commodities, how can that be factored into the equation." Some observed that basic forest management positions can be disconnected: habitat is a part of restoration.



Many participants remarked that the values continuum exercise provided an important opportunity for them to begin to understand the rationale for beliefs and values that are different than their own. One person said, "Dialog is the beginning of understanding." Another commented, "Understanding is the foundation for compromise."

WHAT TYPES OF PUBLIC LANDS BENEFITS DO YOU BELIEVE ARE MOST DESIRABLE?

Participants engaged in small group facilitated dialogs to grapple with this question. Participants responded to two statements: I value the forest because... and desired conditions for the Sierra Cascades. Below are examples (or a synthesis) of value

statements and desired conditions shared by participants (see [Flip Charts: Values and Desired Conditions](#) for a complete list of statements captured on flip charts):

I VALUE THE FOREST BECAUSE...

- Of its unique concept – the preservation of land for the public.
- The sum is greater than its parts.
- Of its existence value, and knowing that it is there and having the opportunity to be with it.

COMMUNITY

- It keeps our rural communities rural.
- It nurtures local communities and opportunities for the future.

UNITY

- We all own it, we all value it.
- It provides us an opportunity to come together for something bigger than ourselves.

SPIRITUAL

- Spirit and history are present there.
- Children have a chance to connect to the land and become happy, productive citizens.
- It is a majestic space (and that means a lot of things).
- Provides opportunity to connect with nature and wildlife.
- Helps us be humble (feeling small in the universe).
- Forests bring us back to the core of who we are as humans.
- It is “home” (means a lot of things).

HISTORY

- It is part of our history and heritage.
- Of its stability and slow rate of change, generations can be attached to a similar familiar memory/place.

BEAUTY

- I appreciate its beauty.
- Of its quiet.
- Of its complexity.
- It is an aesthetic background for life.

BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

- It provides habitat for plants, animals, and people.
- Public forests are the last remaining reservoirs for plants and animals, including rare and endemic species

RESILIENCE

- It’s a reservoir for wildness and nature.

- When forests are properly managed, they will meet the environmental, social and economic needs of a growing society.
- Of the ecological values it provides, the processes it goes through, and its ability to bounce back and sustain itself.
- It provides sustainable goods and services, including ecological services for current and future generations.
- Its flexibility and forgiving quality, and ability to heal itself. It is a blueprint for healing.

ECONOMIC

- It provides production of goods and services.
- It supports local and rural lifestyles and communities.
- It provides jobs: ranching, logging, mining, tourism and recreation.

RECREATION

- Wildlife viewing: coyotes, foxes, deer.
- It's a recreation area for hunting and fishing.

FORAGING

- Wild berries, nuts, basket weaving fibers, mushrooms, wood fiber, fish and wildlife, medicinal uses, and woodcraft (which is different than the timber industry).

MANAGEMENT VALUES

- The original charter provided for multiple use, including economic and recreation opportunities.
- Allows for a balance of human enterprise and nature when properly managed.
- It is a place to steward for the future.

MEDICINAL

- Provides medicine and medical advances.

RESOURCES

AIR

- It is the lungs of the organism we are part of, cleansing the air.
- It is a buffer for climate change and the most stable type of carbon storage.

WATER

- It provides water—the origin of the web of life.
- It contributes to healthy watersheds and snow storage.

WOOD

- It provides timber for all public uses.
- It provide firewood and Christmas trees and for building houses.

SHARED OWNERSHIP/ACCESS

- It allows for participation in conservation decisions, common ownership, and the opportunity to work collectively for a common good.
- Provides a sense of identity and place.

DISCOVERY

- Hundreds of ecological mysteries yet to be discovered.
- Discovery of its freedom and wildness.
- Forests are a place that allows for amazing learning about the ecosystem and nature.
- As a society, it provides the opportunity to understand our place in nature.
- It provides opportunities for scientific research.

FOREST SERVICE

- I value Forest Service staff for their education and expertise.

SIERRA
CASCADE
DIALOGUE

I Value the Forest Because...



DESIRED CONDITIONS

FUNDAMENTAL CONNECTION TO THE LAND

- Ecological restoration: processes of ecology and management.

DIVERSITY

- Plant and animal diversity...we are the last refuge for wildness.

HONOR INTRINSIC VALUE

- Provides a sustainable environment for quiet, pollution-free, safe recreation that allows me to rejuvenate and improve both physical and mental health in winter as well as summer.

SPIRITUAL AND HISTORIC

- Allows me to connect with my ancestors.
- Has healing qualities for one's spirit.
- Ensures policies respect history, in an inclusive way, and preserves evidence of human inhabitation (i.e. historic cabins and structures).
- Holds historic value for cultural and archaeological resources.

MULTIPLE USE CONCEPT

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

- Balance between urban area recreation and providing economic benefits locally.
- Local economics means maintaining jobs.
- Recognition of poverty as a threat to forests. It creates forest degradation.

ACCESS

- There is adequate access to the forests for gathering wood, game and fish.

RECREATION

- Provide a range of high quality recreation opportunities that protect resources.
- Provide recreation activities which are dependent upon public forest land (and can't be provided elsewhere).
- Provide equine trail riding including parking for loading horses safely.
- Provide all types of recreation: active recreation; quiet recreation opportunities; and developed recreation (camping, skiing, kayaking, rafting).

ROADS

- Keep road-less areas road-less; restore unneeded roads back to natural habitat.
- Ensure the road system allows access for service, recreation activity, and adjacent landowners.
- Restore hydrologic connectivity and processes by removing roads that are causing disconnect.
- Downsize road systems and budget for road maintenance to ensure that money is available to provide consistent maintenance of all roads.

WOOD

- Through restoration efforts, a valuable product can be used to meet many of our wood product markets.
- Promote the utilization of small diameter trees and biomass that support small logging contractors.
- Provide wood fiber to society; local wood would be good.

RESOURCES

PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

- Scale of restoration is increased to a larger landscape scale that also benefits communities.
- Healthy, productive, sustainable forest with appropriate diversity of species and sizes for small rural communities adjacent to the forest.
- Forest conditions are proactively (not reactively) managed for climate change.
- Vegetation conditions have structural, compositional & functional characteristics that are appropriate for current conditions & resilient to climate change.

ECOSYSTEMS

- Protect and restore representative ecosystems' function, such as riparian communities, waterways, meadows, and early succession areas.
- Reintroduce species diversity.
- Meadow restoration is a high priority.
- Manage for heterogeneity across landscape.

RESILIENCE

- A landscape that is resilient to disturbance and recovers its form and character.
- Areas suitable for wilderness are recommended for wilderness.
- Invasive plant species eradicated.
- The forests are multi-aged.

WILDLIFE

- Intact wildlife corridors and high quality habitat that help maintain biodiversity.
- Wildlife movement is not inhibited by uncharacteristic disturbance.
- Management sustains biological diversity of all animals native to the forest and sustains ecological processes and habitat that sustain bio-diversity.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

- The restoration of meadows and water storage is a priority.
- Healthy watersheds for wildlife and human needs.
- Manage forests and watersheds to provide quality and quantity of water.
- The forests have snow-pack retention.

FIRE MANAGEMENT

- Create a landscape where a natural fire regime can be restored.
- Vegetation stands are "healthy" enough to let fire take its course in the landscape (outside the wildland-urban interface).
- A return to its natural fire resilient state similar to thousands of years of tribal fire use.
- Mixed intensity wildfire and tree mortality from native insects are important and natural ecological processes that create valuable habitat for wildlife, including snags, downed logs and brush.

- Allow controlled under-story fires for fire prevention.
- Encourage biomass and thinning projects to reduce fire hazard.
- Forest should be thinned where appropriate to minimize event of uncharacteristic fire within wildland-urban interface (WUI), particularly close to community.

MANAGEMENT

- Allow natural disturbances and processes to function based on geographically specific vegetation; allow it to be a self-limiting system. (Also, stop demonizing natural disturbances like fire).
- Consider and balance non-economic values of the forest, such as scenery, solitude, emotional escape, with economic uses.
- Manage the forests at multiple scales to address the interconnected relationships – economic, social, ecological (triple bottom line).
- Thinning projects are measured and monitored to include other values than fire (e.g., effects of thinning on wildlife, watershed health).
- Success was the Yosemite when John Muir came with tribal ecosystem management. We need to incorporate traditional ecosystem processes; however, climate change may require a change from these practices.
- Achieving a dynamic equilibrium and managing for changes through sustainable management of biological and hydrologic resources and people (there are multiple uses and a lot of expectations so need to find a way to deal with complex issues).
- Managed consistent with biological changes in processes (vegetation community conversion) and social needs (don't just try to /restore to past point in time).
- Interagency long range planning across all-lands.
- Management needs to be flexible, not rule governed. Decisions should be made forest-by-forest and closer to the ground.
- Science and technology are integrated into management to benefit local economies.

MONITORING

- Monitoring plans are science-based, adequately funded, and collaborative
- We use past experience to test our hypotheses

BUDGETS/ECONOMICS

- Expand stewardship contracting for hazard fuel reduction and restoration activities; build sustainable local capacity to carry out contracts.
- Ensure that forests reap the benefits of harvesting and that fees from harvesting are funneled directly to the maintenance and conservation of the forests, not to the general fund.
- Quantify the ecosystem services that forests contribute to downstream communities and society as a whole and use those figures in determining fair and adequate budgets for forest management.
- Increase the sources of forest revenues for the counties (e.g., water, carbon sequestration).

- Job training funds to employ unemployed forest workers to improve conditions
- Local economies are sustained with the harvest of small diameter trees
- Opportunities for green jobs and connecting youth to nature

WORKING TOGETHER

MUTUAL RESPECT

- Consider requests and explain why: listen, act and explain

COLLABORATIVE

- Support collaboration
- Local collaborative are private and public partnerships to preserve habitat and history

COORDINATION

- Improve coordination and cooperation capacity. For example, working with each federal agency on trail building is dramatically different (FS, National Park Service, BLM).

LOCAL / NATIONAL INTERACTION

- Be responsive to local jurisdictions and local desires
- Conduct social/economic analysis of Forest Service's actions as they pertain to local communities
- Balance the needs of local/rural community with national debates/interests

PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

- Ensure real integration of stakeholder concerns and local desires into management decisions.
- Provide tools and resources to help local rural communities build capacity for management and leadership

CONCLUSION

The group spent considerable time discussing the relative importance local communities should play in forest planning. Some believe that local communities are directly tied to forest management through revenues that are returned for local schools and roads. Others believe that all citizens have equal standing. The group did not attempt to resolve these differing values.

Having stakeholders understand each others' values, attitudes and interests are critical to analyzing conflict and reaching agreement for the future of public lands management. The parallel between participants' articulated values and desired conditions for the Sierra Cascades underscores that foundational values shape management choices and the future of the National Forests in the Sierra Cascades.